

The Franklin's Tale¹*The Introduction*²

"In faith, Squier, thou hast thee wel yquit^o *acquitted*
 And gentilly. I praise wel thy wit,"
 Quod the Frankelain. "Considering thy youthe,
 So feelingly thou spekest, sire, I allowe^o thee: *praise*
 5 As to my doom^o ther is noon that is heer *judgment*
 Of eloquence that shal be thy peer,
 If that thou live. God yive thee good chaunce,
 And in vertu sende thee continuaunce,
 For of thy speche I have greet daintee.^o *delight*
 10 I have a sone, and by the Trinitee,
 I hadde levere^o than twenty pound worth land, *rather*
 Though it right now were fallen³ in myn hand,
 He were a man of swich discrecioun
 As that ye been. Fy on possessioun
 15 But if^o a man be vertuouus withal! *unless*
 I have my sone snibbed^o and yit shal *scolded*
 For he to vertu listeth nat entende,^o *attend*
 But for to playe at dees^o and to dispende,⁴ *dice*
 And lese^o al that he hath is his usage. *lose*
 20 And he hath levere talken with a page^o *servant*
 Than to commune with any gentil wight,
 Where he mighte lerne gentillesse^o aright." *gentility*
 "Straw for thy gentillesse!" quod oure Host.
 "What, Frankelain, pardee sire, wel thou woost^o *know*
 25 That eech of you moot^o tellen atte leeste *must*
 A tale or two, or breken his biheeste."^o *promise*
 "That knowe I wel, sire," quod the Frankelain.
 "I praye you, haveth me nat in desdain,
 Though to this man I speke a word or two."
 30 "Tel on thy tale withouten wordes mo."
 "Gladly, sire Host," quod he, "I wol obeye
 Unto youre wil. Now herkneth what I saye.
 I wol you nat contrarien⁵ in no wise
 As fer as that my wittes wol suffise.
 35 I praye to God that it may plesen you:
 Thanne woot I wel that it is good ynow."^o *enough*

The Prologue

Thise olde gentil Britons^o in hir dayes *Bretons*
 Of diverse aventures maden layes,

1. The Franklin says that his tale is a Breton lay, a subgenre of romance, but his source is probably rather an old story told by, among others, Boccaccio. But in any case, features found in Breton lays also occur in *The Franklin's Tale*: a rash promise that must be kept, a supernatural intervention in a plot containing a love situation, stylistic simplicity, and a generally optimistic spirit.

2. The Squire has been speaking for more than 650 lines but has not made much narrative progress in his enormously overplotted Oriental tale

of Cambyuskan and his three children when the Franklin speaks, apparently interrupting the story. It is uncertain, however, whether the Franklin's words represent an intentional interruption or whether they were written to be spoken at the end of *The Squire's Tale*, which Chaucer intended sometime to complete.

3. I.e., delivered.

4. Spend money.

5. Act contrary to.

- Rymeyed⁶ in hir firste Briton tonge;
 40 Whiche layes with hir instruments they songe,^o *sung*
 Or elles redded^o hem for hir plesaunce; *read*
 And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
 Which I shal sayn with good wil as I can.
 But sires, by cause I am a burel^o man, *ignorant*
 45 At my biginning first I you biseeche
 Have me excused of my rude speeche.
 I lerned nevere retorike,^o certain: *rhetoric*
 Thing that I speke it moot^o be bare and plain;
 I sleep^o nevere in the Mount of Parnaso,⁷ *must*
 50 Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero;^o *slept*
 Colours⁸ ne knowe I noon, withouten drede,^o *Cicero*
 But swiche colours as growen in the mede,^o *doubt*
 Or elles swiche as men dye or painte; *meadow*
 Colours of retorike been too quainte:^o *unfamiliar*
 55 My spirit feeleth nat of swich matere.
 But if you list, my tale shul ye heere.

The Tale

- In Armorik,^o that called is Britaine,^o *Armorica / Brittany*
 Ther was a knight that loved and dide his paine⁹
 To serve a lady in his beste wise;
 60 And many a labour, many a greet emprise^o *enterprise*
 He for his lady wroughte er she were wonne,
 For she was oon¹ the faireste under sonne,
 And eek therto come of so heigh kinrede^o *kindred*
 That wel unnethes² dorste this knight for drede
 65 Telle hire his wo, his paine, and his distresse.
 But atte laste she for his worthinesse,
 And namely^o for his meeke obeisaunce,^o *especially / obedience*
 Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce^o *suffering*
 That prively she fil of³ his accord
 70 To taken him for hir housbonde and hir lord,
 Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wives.
 And for to lede the more in blisse hir lives,
 Of his free wil he swoor hire as a knight
 That nevere in al his lif he day ne night
 75 Ne sholde upon him take no maistrye^o *dominion*
 Again hir wil, ne kithed^o hire jalousye,
 But hire obeye and folwe hir wil in al,
 As any love to his lady shal^o— *ought*
 Save that the name of sovereynete,^o *sovereignty*
 80 That wolde he have, for shame of⁴ his degree.
 She thanked him, and with ful greet humblesse
 She saide, “Sire, sith^o of youre gentillesse *since*
 Ye profre me to have so large⁵ a reine,

6. Composed in rhyme.
 7. Parnassus, home of the Muses.
 8. I.e., rhetorical figures.
 9. I.e., made every effort.
 1. I.e., one of.

2. With difficulty.
 3. I.e., fell in.
 4. Out of respect for.
 5. I.e., free.

- Ne wolde nevere God bitwixe us twaine,
 85 As in⁶ my gilt, were outh^o werre^o or strif. *either / war*
 Sire, I wol be your humble, trewe wif—
 Have heer my trouthe⁷—til that myn herte breste.¹⁰ *break*
 Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste.
 For oo thing, sires, sauffy^o dar I saye: *safely*
 90 That freendes^o everich^o other moot^o obeye, *lovers / each / must*
 If they wol longe holden compaignye.
 Love wol nat be constrained by maistrye:^o *force*
 Whan maistrye comth, the God of Love anoon
 Beteth his winges and farewel, he is goon!
 95 Love is a thing as any spirit free;
 Wommen of kinde^s desiren libertee,
 And nat to been constrained as a thral^o— *slave*
 And so doon men, if I sooth sayen shal.
 Looke who that is most pacient in love,
 100 He is at his avantage al above.
 Pacience is an heigh vertu, certain,
 For it venquisheth,^o as thise clerkes sayn, *vanquishes*
 Thinges that rigour sholde nevere attaine.⁹
 For^o every word men may nat chide or plaine:^o *at / complain*
 105 Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so mote I goon,¹
 Ye shul it lerne, wherso^o ye wol or noon. *whether*
 For in this world, certain, ther no wight is
 That he ne dooth or saith somtime amis:
 Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,²
 110 Win, wo, or chaunging of complexioun³
 Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken.
 On every wrong a man may nat be wroken:^o *avenged*
 After the time moste^o be temperaunce *must*
 To every wight that can on governaunce.⁴
 115 And therefore hath this wise worthy knight
 To live in ese suffrance^o hire bihight,^o *toleration / promised*
 And she to him ful wisly^o gan to swere *surely*
 That nevere sholde ther be defaute^o in here. *defect*
 Here may men seen an humble wis accord:
 120 Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord—
 Servant in love and lord in mariage.
 Thanne was he bothe in lordshipe and servage.⁵
 Servage? Nay, but in lordshipe above,
 Sith^o he hath bothe his lady and his love; *since*
 125 His lady, certes, and his wif also,
 The which that⁶ lawe of love accordeth to.
 And whan he was in this prosperitee,
 Hoom with his wif he gooth to his contree,
 Nat fer fro Pedmark⁷ ther his dwelling was,
 130 Wher as he liveth in blisse and in solas.^o *delight*

6. As a result of.

7. Troth, word of honor.

8. By nature.

9. I.e., overcome.

1. So may I walk, an oath.

2. I.e., planetary influences.

3. The balance of humors in the body.

4. Is capable of self-control.

5. Position of a servant.

6. As.

7. Penmarch, in Brittany.

Who coude telle but he hadde wedded be
 The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee
 That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wif?
 A yeer and more lasted this blisful lif,
 135 Til that the knight of which I speke of thus,
 That of Kairrud⁸ was cleped^o Arveragus, *called*
 Shoop him⁹ to goon and dwelle a yeer or twaine
 In Engelond, that cleped was eek^o Britaine, *also*
 To seeke in armes worshipe and honour—
 140 For al his lust^o he sette in swich labour— *pleasure*
 And dwelled ther two yeer, the book saith thus.
 Now wol I stinte^o of this Arveragus, *cease*
 And speke I wol of Dorigen his wif,
 That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes lif.
 145 For his absence weepeth she and siketh,^o *sighs*
 As doon these noble wives whan hem liketh.¹
 She moorneth, waketh, waileth, fasteth, plaineth;^o *complains*
 Desir of his presence hire so distraineth^o *afflicts*
 That al this wide world she sette² at nought.
 150 Hir freendes, whiche that knewe hir hevvy thought,
 Conforten hire in al that evere they may:
 They prechen hire, they telle hire night and day
 That causeless she sleeth^o hirself, allas; *slays*
 And every confort possible in this cas
 155 They doon to hire with al hir businesse,^o *assiduousness*
 Al for to make hire leve^o hir hevynesse. *abandon*
 By proces,³ as ye knowen everichoon,
 Men may so longe graven^o in a stoon
 Til som figure therinne emprinted be:
 160 So longe han they confortd hire til she
 Received hath, by hope and by resoun,
 The emprinting of hir consolacioun,
 Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan assuage:
 She may nat alway duren^o in swich rage.^o *remain / passion*
 165 And eek Arveragus in al this care
 Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his welfare,
 And that he wol come hastily again—
 Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slain.
 Hir freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,^o *diminish*
 170 And prayed hire on knees, for Goddes sake,
 To come and romen hire in compaignye,
 Away to drive hir derke fantasye,
 And finally she graunted that requeste:
 For wel she saw that it was for the beste.
 175 Now stood hir castel faste by the see,
 And often with hir freendes walketh she,
 Hire to disporte upon the bank an heigh,
 Wher as she many a ship and barge^o seigh,^o *vessel / saw*
 Sailing hir cours wher as hem liste go—

8. Kerru, a town in Brittany.

9. Prepared.

1. It pleases.

2. I.e., valued.

3. Course of time.

- 180 But thanne was that a parcel^o of hir wo, *component*
 For of hirself ful ofte, "Allas!" saith she,
 "Is ther no ship of so manye as I see
 Wol bringen hoom my lord? Thanne were myn herte
 Al warisshed^o of his bittre paines smerte." *recovered*
- 185 Another time ther wolde she sitte and thinke,
 And caste hir yēn downward fro the brinke;
 But whan she sawgh the grisly rokkes blake,
 For verray^o fere so wolde hir herte quake *real*
 That on hir feet she mighte hire nat sustene:^o *sustain*
- 190 Thanne wolde she sitte adown upon the greene
 And pitously into the see biholde,
 And sayn right thus, with sorweful sikes^o colde:⁴ *sighs*
 "Eterne God that thurgh thy purveyaunce^o *providence*
 Ledest the world by certain governaunce,
 195 In idel,⁵ as men sayn, ye nothing make:
 But Lord, these grisly feendly^o rokkes blake, *hostile*
 That seemen rather a foul confusioun
 Of werk, than any fair creacioun
 Of swich a parfit^o wis God and a stable, *perfect*
- 200 Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?
 For by this werk south, north, ne west ne eest,
 Ther nis yfostred^o man ne brid^o ne beest: *fed / bird*
 It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
 See ye nat, Lord, how mankinde it destroyeth?
- 205 An hundred thousand bodies of mankinde
 Han rokkes slain, al^o be they nat in minde: *although*
 Which mankinde is so fair part of thy werk
 That thou it madest lik to thyn owene merk:⁶
 Thanne seemed it ye hadde a greet cheertee^o *affection*
- 210 Toward mankinde. But how thanne may it be
 That ye swiche menes^o make it to destroyen?[—] *means*
 Whiche menes do no good, but evere anoyen.
 I woot wel clerkes wol sayn as hem leste,⁷
 By arguments, that al is for the beste,
- 215 Though I ne can the causes nat yknowe.
 But thilke^o God that made wind to blowe, *that*
 As keepen my lord! This⁸ my conclusioun.
 To clerkes lete^o I al disputioun,^o *leave / disputation*
 But wolde God that alle these rokkes blake
 220 Were sonken^o into helle for his sake! *sunken*
 These rokkes slain myn herte for the fere."
 Thus wolde she sayn with many a pitous tere.
 Hir freendes sawe that it was no disport
 To romen by the see, but discomfort,
- 225 And shopen^o for to playen somwher elles: *arranged*
 They leden hire by rivers and by welles,^o *springs*
 And eek in othere places delitable;^o *delightful*
 They dauncen and they playen at ches and tables.^o *backgammon*

4. I.e., grievous.

5. I.e., without purpose.

6. Mark, i.e., image.

7. May please.

8. I.e., this is.

	So on a day, right in the morweteide, ^o	<i>morning</i>
230	Unto a gardin that was ther biside, In which that they hadde maad hir ordinaunce ^o Of vitaile ^o and of other purveyaunce, ^o	<i>arrangements</i> <i>food / provisions</i>
	They goon and playe hem al the longe day. And this was on the sixte morwe ^o of May,	<i>morning</i>
235	Which May had painted with his softe showres This gardin ful of leves and of flowres; And craft of mannes hand so curiously ^o	<i>skillfully</i>
	Arrayed hadde this gardin trewely That nevere was ther gardin of swich pris, ^o	<i>excellence</i>
240	But if ^o it were the verray Paradis. The odour of flowres and the fresshe sighte Wolde han makid any herte lighte That evere was born, but if too greet siknesse, Or too greet sorwe heeld it in distresse,	<i>unless</i>
245	So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce. At after-diner gonne they to daunce, And singe also, save Dorigen allone, Which made alway hir complainte and hir mone, ^o	<i>moan</i>
	For she ne sawgh him on the daunce go 250 That was hir housbonde and hir love also. But nathelees she moste ^o a time abide, And with good hope lete ^o hir sorwe slide.	<i>must</i> <i>make</i>
	Upon this daunce, amonges othere men, Daunced a squier bifore Dorigen	
255	That fressher was and jolier ^o of array, As to my doom, ^o than is the month of May. He singeth, daunceth, passing ^o any man That is or was sith ^o that the world bigan. Therwith he was, if men him sholde describe, ^o	<i>gay</i> <i>judgment</i> <i>surpassing</i> <i>since</i> <i>describe</i>
260	Oon of the beste-faring ^o man on live: Yong, strong, right vertuuous, and riche and wis, And wel-biloved, and holden in greet pris. ^o And shortly, if the soothe I tellen shal, Unwiting of ⁹ this Dorigen at al,	<i>handsomest</i> <i>repute</i>
265	This lusty squier, servant to Venus, Which that ycleped ^o was Aurelius, Hadde loved hire best of any creature Two yeer and more, as was his aventure. But nevere dorste he tellen hire his grevaunce:	<i>called</i>
270	Withouten ceppe ^o he drank al his penaunce. ¹ He was despairid, no thing dorste he saye— Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wraye ^o	<i>cup</i>
	His wo, as in a general complaining: He saide he loved and was biloved no thing; ²	<i>disclose</i>
275	Of which matere made he manye layes, Songes, complaintes, roundels, virelayes, ³ How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,	

9. Unknown to.

1. Suffering; i.e., he suffered in silence.

2. Not at all.

3. The lover unable to declare his love conven-

tionally expressed his frustration by writing verse: Aurelius produced five kinds of verse, but only roundels and virelays are strictly defined forms.

But languisheth as a fury dooth in helle;
 And die he moste^o he saide, as dide Ekko *must*
 280 For Narcisus that dorste nat telle hir wo.⁴
 In other manere than ye heere me saye
 Ne dorste he nat to hire his wo biwraye,^o *disclose*
 Save that paraventure^o som time at daunces, *perchance*
 285 Ther yonge folk keepen hir observaunces,⁵
 It may wel be he looked on hir face
 In swich a wise as man that asketh grace;
 But no thing wiste^o she of his entente. *knew*
 Nathelees^o it happed, er they thennes^o wente, *nevertheless / thence*
 By cause that he was hir neighebour,
 290 And was a man of worshipe and honour,
 And hadde⁶ yknowen him of time yore,⁷
 They fille^o in speche, and forth more and more *fell*
 Unto his purpos drow^o Aurelius, *drew*
 And whan he sawgh his time, he saide thus:
 295 "Madame," quod he, "by God that this world made,
 So that I wiste^o it mighte youre herte glade,^o *knew / gladden*
 I wolde that day that youre Arveragus
 Wente over the see that I, Aurelius,
 Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come again.
 300 For wel I woot my service is in vain:
 My gerdon^o is but bresting^o of myn herte. *reward / breaking*
 Madame, reweth⁸ upon my paines smerte,
 For with a word ye may me slee^o or save. *slay*
 Here at youre feet God wolde that I were grave!^o *buried*
 305 I ne have as now no leiser more to saye:
 Have mercy, sweete, or ye wol do^o me deye."
make
 She gan to looke upon Aurelius:
 "Is this youre wil?" quod she, "and saye ye thus?
 Nevere erst," quod she, "ne wiste I what ye mente. *before*
 310 But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente,
 By thilke^o God that yaf me soule and lif, *that*
 Ne shal I nevere been untrewed wif,
 In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit.
 I wol be his to whom that I am knit:^o *joined*
 315 Take this for final answeere as of me."
 But after that in play thus saide she:
 "Aurelie," quod she, "by hye God above,
 Yit wolde I graunte you to been youre love,
 Sin^o I you see so pitously complaine, *since*
 320 Looke what day that endelong^o Britaine *along*
 Ye remeve^o alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon, *remove*
 That they ne lette^o ship ne boot^o to goon. *hinder / boat*
 I saye, whan ye han maad the coost^o so clene *coast*
 Of rokkes that there nis no stoon yseene,
 325 Thanne wol I love you best of any man—
 Have heer my trouthe^o—in al that evere I can. *word*

4. Echo was unable to communicate her love for Narcissus and eventually died in despair.
 5. Carry on their rituals.

6. I.e., she had.
 7. Long past.
 8. Have pity on.

For wel I woot that it shal nevere bitide.
 Lat swiche folies out of youre herte slide!
 What daintee° sholde a man han by his lif *delight*
 330 For to love another mannes wif,
 That hath hir body whan so that him liketh?⁹
 Aurelius ful ofte sore siketh:° *sighs*
 “Is ther noon other grace in you?” quod he.
 “No, by that Lord,” quod she, “that maked me.”
 335 Wo was Aurelie whan that he this herde,
 And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde.
 “Madame,” quod he, “this were an impossible.
 Thanne moot° I die of sodein deeth horrible.” *must*
 And with that word he turned him anoon.
 340 Tho° come hir othere freendes many oon, *then*
 And in the aleyes° romeden up and down, *paths*
 And no thing wiste of this conclusioun,
 But sodeinly bigonne revel newe,
 Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe,
 345 For th’ orisonte° hath reft¹ the sonne his light— *horizon*
 This is as muche to saye as it was night.
 And hoom they goon in joye and in solas,° *delight*
 Save only wrecche° Aurelius, allas. *wretched*
 He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte;
 350 He seeth he may nat from his deeth asterte;° *escape*
 Him seemed that he felte his herte colde;
 Up to the hevene his handes he gan holde,
 And on his knees bare he sette him down,
 And in his raving saide his orisoun.
 355 For verray wo out of his wit he braide;° *went*
 He niste² what he spak, but thus he saide;
 With pitous herte his plainte° hath he bigonne *lament*
 Unto the goddes, and first unto the sonne:
 He saide, “Apollo, god and governour
 360 Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flower,
 That yivest after thy declinacioun³
 To eech of hem his time and his sesoun,
 As thyn herberwe⁴ chaungeth, lowe or hye;
 Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable° yë *merciful*
 365 On wrecche Aurelie which that am but lorn.° *lost*
 Lo, lord, my lady hath my deeth ysworn
 Withouten gilt, but° thy benignitee *unless*
 Upon my deedly herte have som pitee;
 For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if you lest,⁵
 370 Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.⁶
 Now voucheth sauf that I may you devise° *describe*
 How that I may been holpe,° and in what wise: *helped*
 Your blisful suster, Lucina⁷ the sheene,° *bright*
 That of the see is chief goddesse and queene—

9. It pleases.

1. Deprived of.

2. Knew not.

3. Who give, according to your position in the sky.

4. Lodging, i.e., one of the astrological houses in

which the planets reside in alternation.

5. It pleases.

6. Except for my lady, you may help me best.

7. I.e., Diana, the moon.

- 375 Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
 Yit emperisse^o aboven him is she— *empress*
 Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desir
 Is to be quiked^o and lighted of youre fir, *quickened*
 For which she folweth you ful bisily,^o *constantly*
- 380 Right so the see desireth naturelly
 To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse
 Bothe in the see and rivers more and lesse;
 Wherefore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste:
 Do this miracle—or do^o myn herte breste^o— *make / break*
- 385 That now next at this opposicioun,⁸
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,
 As prayeth hire so greet a flood to bringe
 That five fadme^o at the leeste it overspringe^o *fathoms / overrun*
 The hyste rok in Armorik Britaine;
- 390 And lat this flood endure yeres twaine:
 Thanne certes to my lady may I saye,
 'Holdeth youre heeste,^o the rokkes been awaye.'
 Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me!
 Praye hire she go no faster cours than ye—
- 395 I saye this, prayeth youre suster that she go
 No faster cours than ye thise yeres two:
 Thanne shal she been evene at the fulle alway,
 And spring-flood lasten bothe night and day.
 And but^o she vouche sauf in swich manere *unless*
- 400 To graunte me my sovereign lady dere,
 Praye hire⁹ to sinken every rok adown
 Into hir owene derke regioun
 Under the ground ther Pluto dwelleth inne,
 Or nevere mo^o shal I my lady winne. *more*
- 405 Thy temple in Delphos^o wol I barefoot seeke. *Delphi*
 Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheeke,
 And of my paine have som compassioun."
 And with that word in swoune^o he fil^o adown, *swoon / fell*
 And longe time he lay forth in a traunce.
- 410 His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,^o *pain*
 Up caughte him, and to bedde he hath him brought.
 Despaired in this torment and this thought
 Lete^o I this woful creature lie— *leave*
 Chese¹ he for me wher^o he wol live or die. *whether*
- 415 Arveragus with hele^o and greet honour, *prosperity*
 As he that was of chivalrye the flowr,
 Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men:
 O, blisful artou now, thou Dorigen,
 That hast thy lusty housbonde in thine armes,
- 420 The fresshe knight, the worthy man of armes,
 That loveth thee as his owene hertes lif.
 No thing list² him to been imaginatif
 If any wight hadde spoke whil he was oute

8. The position of the sun and moon when they are at a 180° angle from one another as seen from the earth.

9. I.e., Diana in her capacity as goddess of the

underworld.

1. Let him choose.

2. It pleases.

To hire of love; he ne hadde of it no doute:
 425 He nought entendeth³ to no swich matere,
 But daunceth, justeth,^o maketh hire good cheere. *jousts*
 And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,
 And of the sike Aurelius wol I telle.
 In langour and in torment furious
 430 Two yeer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
 Er any foot he mighte on erthe goon,
 Ne confort in this time hadde he noon,
 Save of his brother, which that was a clerk:
 He knew of al this wo and al this werk,
 435 For to noon other creature, certain,
 Of this matere he dorste no word sayn.
 Under his brest he bar it more secree^o *secret*
 Than evere dide Pamphilus for Galathee.⁴
 His brest was hool^o withoute^o for to seene, *whole / outwardly*
 440 But in his herte ay^o was the arwe keene; *ever*
 And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure⁵
 In surgerye is perilous the cure,
 But^o men mighte touche the arwe or come therby. *unless*
 His brother weep^o and wailed prively, *wept*
 445 Til at the laste him fil in remembrance⁶
 That whiles he was at Orliens^o in France, *Orléans*
 As yonge clerkes that been likerous^o *desirous*
 To reden artes⁷ that been curious,^o *occult*
 Seeken in every halke and every herne⁸
 450 Particuler⁹ sciences for to lerne,
 He him remembred that, upon a day,
 At Orliens in studye a book he sey^o *saw*
 Of magik naturel,¹ which his felawe,
 That was that time a bachelere of lawe—
 455 Al were he² ther to lerne another craft—
 Hadde prively upon his desk ylaft:^o *left*
 Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns
 Touching the eighte and twenty mansiouns³
 That longen^o to the moone—and swich folye *belong*
 460 As in oure dayes is nat worth a flye,
 For holy chirches faith in oure bileve^o *creed*
 Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
 And whan this book was in his remembraunce,
 Anoon for joye his herte gan to daunce,
 465 And to himself he saide prively,
 “My brother shal be warisshed^o hastily, *cured*
 For I am siker^o that ther be sciences *sure*
 By whiche men make diverse apparences,^o *apparitions*
 Swiche as thise subtil tregettoures^o playe;
 470 For ofte at feestes have I wel herd saye *magicians*

3. Pays attention.

4. Pamphilus and Galataea are the lovers in the medieval Latin *Pamphilus de Amore*.

5. Superficially healed wound.

6. I.e., he happened to remember.

7. Study subjects.

8. Every nook and cranny.

9. Out of the way.

1. Natural magic employs astrological knowledge rather than spirits.

2. Although he was.

3. I.e., daily positions.

That tregettours withinne an halle large
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,^o *ship*
 And in the halle rowen up and down;
 Som time hath seemed come a grim leoun;
 475 Som time flowres springe^o as in a mede; *grow*
 Som time a vine and grapes white and rede;
 Som time a castel al of lim^o and stoon— *lime*
 And whan hem liked voided⁴ it anoon:
 Thus seemed it to every mannes sighte.
 480 Now thanne conclude I thus: that if I mighte
 At Orliens som old felawe yfinde
 That hadde these moones mansions in minde,
 Or other magik naturel above,
 He sholde wel make my brother han his love.
 485 For with an apparence a clerk may make
 To mannes sighte that alle the rokkes blake
 Of Britaine were yvoided everichoon,
 And shippes by the brinke comen and goon,
 And in swich forme enduren a day or two:
 490 Thanne were my brother warisshed^o of his wo; *cured*
 Thanne moste^o she needes holden hir biheeste,^o *must / promise*
 Or elles he shal shame hire at the leeste.”
 What sholde I make a lenger^o tale of this? *longer*
 Unto his brothers bed he comen is,
 495 And swich confort he yaf him for to goon
 To Orliens, that up he sterte^o anoon, *started*
 And on his way forthward thanne is he fare,
 In hope for to be lissed^o of his care. *assuaged*
 Whan they were come almost to that citee,
 500 But if it were a two furlong or three,
 A yong clerk roming by himself they mette,
 Which that in Latin thriftily^o hem grette,^o *properly / greeted*
 And after that he saide a wonder thing:
 “I knowe,” quod he, “the cause of your coming.”
 505 And er they ferther any foote wente,
 He tolde hem al that was in hir entente.
 This Briton clerk him axed^o of felawes, *asked*
 The whiche that he hadde knowe in olde dawes,^o *days*
 And he answered him that they dede^o were; *dead*
 510 For which he weep^o ful ofte many a tere. *wept*
 Down of his hors Aurelius lighte anoon,
 And with this magicien forth is he goon
 Hoom to his hous, and maden hem wel at ese:
 Hem lakked no vitaile that mighte hem plese;
 515 So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
 Aurelius in his lif saw nevere noon.
 He shewed him er he wente to soper^o *supper*
 Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer:
 Ther saw he hertes^o with hir hornes hye, *harts*
 520 The gretteste^o that evere were seen with yë; *greatest*
 He sawgh of hem an hundred slain with houndes,

4. Caused to disappear.

And some with arwes bledde of bittre woundes.
 He saw, when voided⁵ were thise wilde deer,
 Thise fauconers^o upon a fair river, *falconers*
 525 That with hir hawkes han the heron slain.
 Tho sawgh he knightes justing^o in a plain. *jousting*
 And after this he dide him this plesaunce,
 That he him shewed his lady on a daunce—
 On which himself he daunced, as him thoughte.
 530 And whan this maister that this magik wroughte
 Sawgh it was time, he clapte his handes two,
 And farewel, al oure revel was ago.
 And yit remeved^o they nevere out of the hous *moved*
 While they sawe al this sighte merveilous,
 535 But in his studye, ther as his bookes be,
 They sitten stille, and no wight but they three.
 To him this maister called his squier
 And saide him thus, “Is redy oure soper?
 Almost an houre it is, I undertake,
 540 Sith I you bad oure soper for to make,
 Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
 Into my studye, ther as my bookes be.”
 “Sire,” quod this squier, “whan it liketh you,
 It is al redy, though ye wol right now.”
 545 “Go we thanne soupe,” quod he, “as for the beste:
 This amorous folk som time mote^o han hir reste.” *must*
 At after-soper fille^o they in trettee^o *fell / negotiation*
 What somme^o sholde this maistres gerdon^o be *sum / reward*
 To remeven^o alle the rokkes of Britaine, *remove*
 550 And eek from Gerounde⁶ to the mouth of Seine:
 He made it straunge,⁷ and swoor, so God him save,
 Lasse^o than a thousand pound he wolde nat have, *less*
 Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.
 Aurelius with blisful herte anoon
 555 Answerde thus, “Fy on a thousand pound!
 This wide world, which that men saye is round,
 I wolde it yive, if I were lord of it.
 This bargain is ful drive, for we been knit.⁸
 Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe.
 560 But looketh now, for no necligence or slouthe,^o *sloth*
 Ye tarye us heer no lenger than tomorwe.”
 “Nay,” quod this clerk, “have heer my faith to borwe.”⁹
 To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him leste,^o *pleased*
 And wel neigh al that night he hadde his reste:
 565 What for his labour and his hope of blisse,
 His woful herte of penance^o hadde a lisse.^o *suffering / alleviation*
 Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
 To Britaine tooke they the righte^o way, *direct*
 Aurelius and this magicien bside,

5. Made to disappear.

6. The Gironde River.

7. I.e., difficulties.

8. I.e., this bargain is fully made, for we are in accord.

9. As a pledge.

- 570 And been descended ther they wolde abide;
 And this was, as thise bookes me remembre,¹
 The colde frosty seson of Decembre.
 Phebus wax^o old, and hewed^o lik latoun,^o *grew / colored / brass*
 That in his hote declinacioun²
- 575 Shoon as the burned^o gold with stremes^o brighte; *burnished / beams*
 But now in Capricorn³ adown he lighte,
 Wher as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel sayn:
 The bittre frostes with the sleet and rain
 Destroyed hath the greene in every yeerd.^o *yard*
- 580 Janus⁴ sit^o by the fir with double beard, *sits*
 And drinketh of his bugle horn⁵ the win;
 Biform him stant^o brawn^o of the tusked swin, *stands / flesh*
 And "Nowel!" crieth every lusty man.
 Aurelius in al that evere he can
- 585 Dooth to this maister cheere and reverence,
 And prayeth him to doon his diligence
 To bringen him out of his paines smerte,
 Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte.⁶
- This subtil clerk swich routhe^o hadde of this man *pity*
- 590 That night and day he spedde him⁷ that he can
 To waiten a time of his conclusioun⁸—
 This is to sayn, to make illusioun
 By swich an apparence^o or jogelrye⁹ *apparition*
 (I ne can^o no termes of astrologye) *know*
- 595 That she and every wight sholde weene^o and saye *think*
 That of Britaine the rokkes were awaye,
 Or elles they were sonken^o under grounde. *sunk*
 So at the laste he hath his time yfounde
 To maken his japes^o and his wrecchednesse¹ *tricks*
- 600 Of swich a supersticious cursednesse.^o *wickedness*
 His tables tolletanes² forth hath he brought,
 Ful wel corrected; ne ther lakked nought,
 Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,³
 Ne his rootes,⁴ one his othere geres,^o *paraphernalia*
- 605 As been his centres and his arguments,⁵
 And his porporcionels convenients,⁶
 For his equacions in every thing;
 And by his eighte spere⁷ in his werking^o *operation*
 He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove⁸

1. Recall to me.

2. I.e., celestial position.

3. The house of the goat.

4. The god with two faces who knew both past and future, perpetuated in the name *January*.

5. Wild ox horn.

6. I.e., stab his own heart.

7. Hurried.

8. To watch for a time for his astrological operation.

9. Optical illusion.

1. Miserable performance.

2. Astronomical tables based on the latitude of Toledo, Spain.

3. Neither his table of collect years nor his table

of expanse years: the former recorded planetary movements for long periods such as twenty years, the latter for short periods of one year.

4. Tables for making astrological propositions concerning planetary position, degrees of influence, etc.

5. Centers and arguments are astronomical instruments for determining the positions of planets in relation to fixed stars.

6. Fitting proportionals, i.e., special tables for scaling down more general planetary motions to the most particular.

7. Sphere, i.e., the sphere of the fixed stars.

8. He knew full well how far a star ("Alnath") in the head of the sign Aries had moved.

- 610 Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above
That in the ninte spere considered is:⁹
Ful subtilly he calculed^o al this. *calculated*
- When he hadde founde his firste mansioun,¹
He knew the remenant by proporcioun,²
615 And knew the arising of his moone weel,
And in whos face and terme³ and every deel,^o *part*
And knew ful wel the moonnes mansioun
Accordant⁴ to his operacioun,
And knew also his othere observaunces^o *rules*
- 620 For swiche illusions and swiche meschaunces
As hethen folk useden in thilke^o dayes;
For which no lenger maked he delayes,
But, thurgh his magik, for a wike^o or twaye *week*
It seemed that alle the rokkes were awaye.
- 625 Aurelius, which that yit despaired is
Wher^o he shall han his love or fare amis, *whether*
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;
And whan he knew that there was noon obstacle,
That voided were thise rokkes everichoon,
630 Down to his maistres feet he fil^o anoon, *fell*
And saide, "I, woful wrecche Aurelius,
Thanke you, lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen^o from my cares colde." *helped*
And to the temple his way forth hath he holde,
- 635 Wher as he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saw his time, anoon right he,
With dredful^o herte and with ful humble cheere, *fear-struck*
Salued^o hath his sovereign lady dere. *greeted*
- "My righte⁵ lady," quod this woful man,
640 "Whom I most drede and love as best I can,
And lothest were of al this world displese,
Nere it⁶ that I for you have swich disese
That I moste^o dien heer at youre foot anoon, *must*
Nought wolde I telle how me is wo-bigoon.
- 645 But certes, outhere^o moste I die or plaine:^o *either / complain*
Ye sleen^o me giltelees for verray paine;
But of my deeth though that ye have no routhe,^o *slay*
Aviseth you⁷ er that ye breke youre trouthe. *pity*
Repenteth you, for thilke God above,
- 650 Er ye me sleen^o by cause that I you love. *slay*
For Madame, wel ye woot what ye han high^o— *promised*
Not that I chalenge any thing of right
Of you, my sovereign lady, but youre grace:
But in a gardin yond at swich a place,
655 Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten^o me, *promised*

9. From the head of that fixed star Aries, which is considered to be above, in the ninth sphere.

1. I.e., the first position of the moon.

2. He knew the remnant (rest of the positions) by the use of proportion.

3. Face and term are sectors of the signs of the

zodiac.

4. I.e., to be conformable.

5. Own true.

6. Were it not.

7. Consider.

And in myn hand youre trouthe plighen ye
 To love me best. God woot ye saiden so,
 Al^o be that I unworthy am therto. *although*
 Madame, I speke it for the honour of you
 660 More than to save myn hertes lif right now.
 I have do so as ye comanded me,
 And if ye vouche sauf, ye may go see.
 Dooth as you list, have youre biheeste^o in minde, *promise*
 For quik^o or deed^o right ther ye shal me finde. *living / dead*
 665 In you lith^o al to do^o me live or deye: *lies / cause*
 But wel I woot the rokkes been awaye."
 He taketh his leve and she astoned^o stood: *astonished*
 In al hir face nas a drope of blood;
 She wende^o nevere have come in swich a trappe. *thought*
 670 "Allas," quod she, "that evere this sholde happe!
 For wende I nevere by possibilitee
 That swich a monstre^o or merveile mighte be; *wonder*
 It is agains the proces^s of nature."
 And hoom she gooth a sorweful creature.
 675 For verray fere unnethe^o may she go.^o *scarcely / walk*
 She weepeth, wailleth al a day or two,
 And swouneth^o that it routhe^o was to see. *swoons / pity*
 But why it was to no wight tolde she,
 For out of town was goon Arveragus.
 680 But to himself she spak and saide thus,
 With face pale and with ful sorweful cheere,^o *countenance*
 In hir complainte, as ye shal after heere:
 "Allas," quod she, "on thee, Fortune, I plaine,^o *complain*
 That unwar^o wrapped hast me in thy chaine, *unawares*
 685 For which t' escape woot I no socour^o— *help*
 Save only deeth or elles dishonour:
 Oon of these two bihoveth me to chese.^o *choose*
 But nathelees yit have I levere to lese^o *lose*
 My lif, than of my body to have a shame,
 690 Or knowen myselfen fals or lese my name,
 And with my deeth I may be quit⁹ ywis.
 Hath ther nat many a noble wif er this,
 And many a maide, yslain herself, allas,
 Rather than with hir body doon trespas?^o *sin*
 695 Yis, certes, lo, these stories beren witness:
 Whan thrifty tyrants ful of cursednesse^o *wickedness*
 Hadde slain Phidon¹ in Atthenes atte feeste,
 They comanded his doughtren for t'arreste,
 And bringen hem biforn hem in despit^o *scorn*
 700 Al naked, to fulfille hir foule delit,
 And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce
 Upon the pavement—God yive hem meschaunce!
 For which these woful maidens, ful of drede,

8. Due course.

9. Freed from dilemma.

1. The story of Phidon's daughters and the thirty

tyrants, as well as all the following stories about virtuous women, are from St. Jerome's tract against Jovinian.

- Rather than they wolde lese^o hir maidenhede, *lose*
 705 They prively been stert² into a welle,
 And dreinte^o hemselven, as the bookes telle. *drowned*
 They of Messene lete enquere and seeke³
 Of Lacedomye^o fifty maidens eke, *Lacedaemonia*
 On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye;
 710 But ther was noon of al that compaignye
 That she nas slain, and with a good entente
 Chees^o rather for to die than assente *chose*
 To been oppressed^o of hir maidenhede: *ravished*
 Why sholde I thanne to die been in drede?
 715 Lo, eek, the tyrant Aristoclides
 That loved a maiden highte Stymphalides,^o *Stymphalis*
 Whan that hir fader slain was on a night,
 Unto Dianes temple gooth she aright,
 And hente^o the image in hir handes two; *seized*
 720 Fro which image wolde she nevere go:
 No wight ne mighte hir handes of it arace,^o *tear*
 Til she was slain right in the selve^o place. *same*
 Now sith^o that maidens hadden swich despit^o *since / indignation*
 To been defouled with mannes foul delit,
 725 Wel ought a wif rather hirselveslee^o *slay*
 Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
 What shal I sayn of Hasdrubales⁴ wif
 That at Cartage birafte^o himself hir lif? *deprived*
 For whan she saw that Romains wan^o the town, *won*
 730 She took hir children alle and skipte adown
 Into the fir, and chees rather to die
 Than any Romain dide hire vilainye.
 Hath nat Lucrece yslein herself, allas,
 At Rome whan that she oppressed^o was *raped*
 735 Of^o Tarquin, for hire thoughte it was a shame *by*
 To liven whan that she hadde lost hir name?
 The sevene maidens of Milesie^o also *Miletus*
 Han slain hemself for verray drede and wo
 Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde oppresse:
 740 Mo^o than a thousand stories, as I gesse, *more*
 Coude I now telle as touching this matere.
 Whan Habradate^o was slain, his wif so dere *Abradates*
 Hirselveslow,^o and leet hir blood to glide *slew*
 In Habradates woundes deepe and wide,
 745 And saide, 'My body at the leeste way
 Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.'⁵
 What sholde I mo ensamples^o herof sayn? *examples*
 Sith^o that so manye han hemselven slain *since*
 Wel rather than they wolde defouled be,
 750 I wol conclude that it is bet^o for me *better*
 To sleen^o myself than been defouled thus: *slay*
 I wol be trewe unto Arveragus,

2. Have jumped.

3. Had inquiries and searches made.

4. Hasdrubal was king of Carthage when it was

destroyed by the Romans.

5. If I can help it.

Or rather slee myself in som manere—
 As dide Demociones^o doughter dere, *Demotion's*
 755 By cause that she wolde nat defouled be.
 O Cedasus,^o it is ful greet pitee *Scedasus*
 To reden how thy doughtren deide, allas,
 That slowe hemself for⁶ swich manere cas.
 As greet a pitee was it, or wel moor,
 760 The Theban maiden that for Nichanor^o *Nicanor*
 Hirselves slow right for swich manere wo.
 Another Theban maiden dide right so:
 For oon of Macedonie hadde hire oppressed,
 She with hir deeth hir maidenhede redressed.⁷
 765 What shal I sayn of Nicerates wif
 That for swich caas birafte hirsself hir lif?
 How trewe eek was to Alcebiades⁸
 His love, that rather for to dien chees^o *chose*
 Than for to suffre his body unburied be.
 770 Lo, which a wif was Alceste,⁹ quod she.
 “What saith Omer¹ of goode Penolopee?
 Al Greece knoweth of hir chastitee.
 Pardee, of Laodomia² is writen thus,
 That whan at Troye was slain Protheselaus,
 775 No lenger wolde she live after his day.
 The same of noble Porcia³ telle I may:
 Withoute Brutus coude she nat live,
 To whom she hadde al hool^o hir herte yive. *whole*
 The parfit wifhood of Arthemessie⁴
 780 Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye.
 O Teuta⁵ queen, thy wifly chastitee
 To alle wives may a mirour be!
 The same thing I saye of Bilia,
 Of Rodogone and eek Valeria.”⁶
 785 Thus plained^o Dorigen a day or twaye, *lamented*
 Purposing evere that she wolde deye.
 But nathelees upon the thridde night
 Hoom cam Arveragus, this worthy knight,
 And axed^o hire why that she weep^o so sore, *asked / wept*
 790 And she gan weepen evere lenger the more.⁷
 “Allas,” quod she, “that evere I was born:
 Thus have I said,” quod she; “thus have I sworn—”.
 And tolde him al as ye han herd bifore:
 It needeth nat reherce it you namore.

6. I.e., for fear of.

7. Made amends for.

8. Alcibiades' mistress risked death by burying his body after he had been decapitated by the Spartan Lysander; she did not, however, lose her life as a result.

9. Alcestis, the proposed heroine of Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, died in her husband's place.

1. Homer relates Odysseus's return from Troy to his faithful wife, Penelope.

2. Laodamia followed her dead husband, Protesilaus, to the underworld.

3. Portia swallowed burning coals on learning of Brutus's death at the battle of Philippi.

4. Artemesia built for her husband, King Mausolus, the famed tomb called the Mausoleum.

5. Teuta, queen of Illyria, was unmarried; Dorigen seems to be stretching a point.

6. Bilia's prowess seems to have consisted in enduring her husband's bad breath in uncomplaining silence. Rhodogone slew her nurse, who suggested that she remarry. Valeria refused to marry again.

7. Always more and more.

795	This housbonde with glad cheer ^o in freendly wise	<i>manner</i>
	Answerde and saide as I shal you devise:	
	“Is there ought elles, Dorigen, but this?”	
	“Nay, nay,” quod she, “God help me so as wis, ^o	<i>surely</i>
	This is too muche, and ^o it were Goddes wille.”	<i>if</i>
800	“Ye, wif,” quod he, “lat sleepen that ^o is stille.	<i>what</i>
	It may be wel paraunter ^o yit today.	<i>perhaps</i>
	Ye shul youre trouthe ^s holden, by my fay, ^o	<i>faith</i>
	For God so wisly ^o have mercy upon me,	<i>surely</i>
	I hadde wel levere ystiked ^o for to be,	<i>stabbed</i>
805	For verray love which that I to you have,	
	But if ^o ye sholde youre trouthe keepe and save:	<i>unless</i>
	Trouthe is the hyeste thing ^o that man may keepe.”	
	But with that word he brast ^o anoon to weepe,	<i>burst</i>
	And saide, “I you forbede, up ^o paine of deeth,	<i>upon</i>
810	That nevere whil thee lasteth lif ne breeth,	
	To no wight tel thou of this aventure.	
	As I may best I wol my wo endure,	
	Ne make no countenance ^o of hevinesse,	<i>appearance</i>
	That folk of you may deemen ^o harm or gesse.”	<i>suspect</i>
815	And forth he cleped ^o a squier and a maide:	<i>called</i>
	“Go forth anoon with Dorigen,” he saide,	
	“And bringeth hire to swich a place anoon.”	
	They tooke hir leve and on hir way they goon,	
	But they ne wiste ^o why they thider wente:	<i>knew</i>
820	He nolde no wight tellen his entente.	
	Paraventure an heep of you, ywis, ^o	<i>indeed</i>
	Wol holden him a lewed ^o man in this,	<i>stupid</i>
	That he wol putte his wif in jupartye. ^o	<i>jeopardy</i>
	Herkneth the tale er ye upon hire crye:	
825	She may have better fortune than you seemeth, ¹	
	And whan that ye han herd the tale, deemeth. ^o	<i>judge</i>
	This squier which that highte Aurelius,	
	On Dorigen that was so amorous,	
	Of aventure ² happed ^o hire to meete	<i>happened</i>
830	Amide the town, right in the quikke ^o streete,	<i>busiest</i>
	As she was boun ^o to goon the way forth right ^o	<i>prepared / direct</i>
	Toward the gardin ther as she hadde hight; ^o	<i>promised</i>
	And he was to the gardinward also,	
	For wel he spied whan she wolde go	
835	Out of hir hous to any manere place.	
	But thus they meete of aventure or grace,	
	And he salueth ^o hire with glad entente,	<i>greet</i>
	And axed ^o of hire whiderward she wente.	<i>asked</i>
	And she answerde half as she were mad,	
840	“Unto the gardin as myn housbonde bad, ^o	<i>bade</i>
	My trouthe for to holde, allas, allas!”	
	Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,	
	And in his herte hadde greet compassioun	
	Of hire and of hir lamentacioun,	

8. Pledged word.

9. Legal bond.

1. It seems.

2. By chance.

- 845 And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,
 That bad hire holden al that she hadde hight,
 So loth him was his wif sholde breke hir trouthe;
 And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,^o *pity*
 Considering the beste on every side
- 850 That fro his lust^o yit were him levere abide³ *pleasure*
 Than doon so heigh a cherlissh wrecchednesse⁴
 Agains franchise^o and alle gentillesse; *generosity*
 For which in fewe wordes saide he thus:
 “Madame, sayeth to youre lord Arveragus
- 855 That sith^o I see his grete gentillesse *since*
 To you, and eek I see wel youre distresse,
 That him were levere han shame—and that were routhe—
 Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre trouthe,
 I have wel levere⁵ evere to suffre wo
- 860 Than I departe^o the love bitwixe you two. *divide*
 I you releesse, Madame, into youre hond,
 Quit every serement^o and every bond *oath*
 That ye han maad to me as herbiforn,
 Sith^o thilke time which that ye were born. *since*
- 865 My trouthe I plighte, I shal you nevere repreve^o *reproach*
 Of no biheeste.^o And here I take my leve, *promise*
 As of the treweste and the beste wif
 That evere yit I knew in al my lif.
 But every wif be war of hir biheeste:
- 870 On Dorigen remembreth at the leeste.
 Thus can a squier doon a gentil deede
 As wel as can a knight, withouten drede.”^o *doubt*
 She thanketh him upon hir knees al bare,
 And hoom unto hir housbonde is she fare,
- 875 And tolde him al as ye han herd me said.
 And be ye siker,^o he was so wel apaid^o *sure / pleased*
 That it were impossible me to write.
 What sholde I lenger of this caas endite?
- Arveragus and Dorigen his wif
- 880 In sovereign blisse leden forth hir lif.
 Never eft^o ne was ther angre hem bitweene: *again*
 He cherisseth hire as though she were a queene,
 And she was to him trewe for evermore.
 Of these two folk ye gete of me namore.
- 885 Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,^o *lost*
 Curseth the time that evere he was born.
 “Allas,” quod he, “allas that I bihighte^o *promised*
 Of pured^o gold a thousand pound of wighte^o *refined / weight*
 Unto this philosopre. How shall I do?
- 890 I see namore but that I am fordo.^o *ruined*
 Myn heritage moot^o I needes selle *must*
 And been a beggere. Here may I nat dwelle,
 And shamen al my kinrede^o in this place, *kindred*
 But^o I of him may gete bettre grace. *unless*

3. I.e., rather abstain.

5. Had much rather.

4. I.e., low-born, miserable act.

- 895 But natheles I wol of him assaye
 At certain dayes yeer by yere to paye,
 And thanke him of his grete curteisye
 My trouthe wol I keepe, I nil nat lie.”
 With herte soor he gooth unto his cofre,
 900 And broughte gold unto this philosophre
 The value of five hundred pound, I gesse,
 And him biseecheth of his gentillesse
 To graunten him dayes⁶ of the remenaunt,^o *remainder*
 And saide, “Maister, I dar wel make avaunt^o *boast*
 905 I failed nevere of my trouthe as yit,
 For sikerly^o my dette shal be quit *surely*
 Towardes you, how evere that I fare,
 To goon abegged^o in my kirtel^o bare. *abegging / undergarment*
 But wolde ye vouche sauf upon suretee^o *security*
 910 Two yeer or three for to respiten⁷ me,
 Thanne were I wel, for elles moot^o I selle *must*
 Myn heritage: ther is namore to telle.”
 This philosophre sobrelly answerde,
 And saide thus, whan he thise wordes herde,
 915 “Have I nat holden covenant unto thee?”
 “Yis, certes, wel and trewely,” quod he.
 “Hastou nat had thy lady as thee liketh?”⁸
 “No, no,” quod he and sorwefully he siketh.^o *sighs*
 “What was the cause? Tel me if thou can.”
 920 Aurelius his tale anoon bigan,
 And tolde him al as ye han herd bifore:
 It needeth nat to you reherce it more.
 He saide, “Arveragus, of gentillesse,
 Hadde levere die in sorwe and in distresse
 925 Than that his wif were of hir trouthe fals.”
 The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als,^o *also*
 How loth hire was to been a wikked wif,
 And that she levere hadde lost that day hir lif,
 And that hir trouthe she swoor thurgh innocence:
 930 She nevere erst^o hadde herd speke of apparence.^o *before / illusion*
 “That made me han of hire so greet pitee;
 And right as freely^o as he sente hire me, *generously*
 As freely sente I hire to him again:
 This al and som,⁹ ther is namore to sayn.”
 935 This philosophre answerde, “Leve^o brother, *dear*
 Everich of you dide gentilly to other.
 Thou art a squier, and he is a knight:
 But God forbede, for his blisful might,
 But if a clerk coude doon a gentil deede
 940 As wel as any of you, it is no drede.^o *doubt*
 Sire, I releesse thee thy thousand pound,
 As thou right now were copen¹ out of the ground,
 Ne nevere er^o now ne haddest knowen me. *before*

6. I.e., extended terms.

7. Give respite.

8. It pleases.

9. This is all there is to it.

1. Had crept.

For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee,
 For al my craft° ne nought for my travaile.°
 Thou hast ypayed wel for my vitaile:°
 It is ynough. And farewel, have good day."
 And took his hors and forth he gooth his way.

art / labor
food

Lordinges, this question thanne wol I axe now:
 950 Which was the moste free,° as thinketh you?
 Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
 I can namore: my tale is at an ende.

generous