

SOURCES AND ANALOGUES OF THE CANTERBURY TALES • II

The **G**eneral **P**rologue

The **K**night's Tale • The **M**iller's Tale

The **M**an of **L**aw's Prologue and Tale

The **W**ife of **B**ath's Prologue • The **W**ife of **B**ath's Tale


The **S**ummoner's Prologue and Tale

The **S**hipman's Tale • The **P**rioress's Prologue and Tale

Sir **T**homas • The **C**anon's **Y**eoman's Tale

The **M**anciple's Tale

Chaucer's **R**etraction



Robert M. Correale
and Mary Hamel

SOURCES AND ANALOGUES OF THE CANTERBURY TALES

Volume II

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Foreword

This volume has its origin some thirty or more years ago, when one of the objects of setting up D. S. Brewer Ltd was to publish an updated version of the much-valued *Sources and Analogues to the Canterbury Tales*, edited by Bryan and Dempster, which was by then in need of revision, expansion, and some translation. Since then the value of studying sources and analogues in relation to a text – quite beyond the simple identification of a real or possible source – has been ever more appreciated, while at the same time the bulk of the material available has greatly increased.

After some false starts, the project was taken up by the New Chaucer Society, who asked Professor Robert Correale to serve as General Editor. Delays continued, perhaps inevitable on such a complex and large volume; and some involved felt a more suitable publisher might be found, but on being approached, all in their wisdom declined. The book subsequently fell into some abeyance, until at the Paris Congress of the New Chaucer Society, in 1994, Professor Gila Aloni, then recently awarded her doctorate by the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne), galvanised editors, contributors, and project alike with her enthusiasm. Professor Derek Pearsall agreed to act as Chair of a new committee, and Professor Correale and others were approached again, with Professor Mary Hamel kindly agreeing to act as Associate General Editor. Some scholars, whose work had been started and completed, agreed to re-activate and revise their contributions; others, new to the project, were recruited.

The whole project obviously owes an enormous debt to the contributors, and especially to the principal editors; they have worked selflessly for many years, often carrying a heavy teaching load, and sometimes hindered by ill-health. It is right here also to acknowledge with gratitude the support of their universities (particularly for the American contributors) for an otherwise unfunded project. Many other individuals, indeed too many to name here, have also generously contributed their time and learning; but I would particularly like to thank Professor Jill Mann for her help at a late stage in the project's development.

It gives me great pleasure to see the volume finally in production.

Derek Brewer
Cambridge, 2004

Preface

This second volume of *Sources and Analogues of The Canterbury Tales* completes the project, sponsored by the New Chaucer Society, to revise and expand the collection of Chaucer's sources published by Bryan and Dempster in 1941.¹ Appearing here for the first time in any such collection are investigations of the sources and analogues of *The General Prologue* and analogues to Chaucer's *Retraction*. The other chapters cover the remaining tales not included in Volume 1 – those of the Knight, Miller, Man of Law, Wife of Bath, Summoner, Merchant, Physician, Shipman, Prioress, Sir Thopas, Canon's Yeoman, and Manciple.

In addition to the new first-time chapters, readers will find several other significant differences between the source materials printed here and those in Bryan and Dempster. A new and greatly extended discussion of *The Knight's Tale* includes not only a summary of the *Teseida*, but also all the relevant passages from it and from Chaucer's other principal sources in Statius and Boethius. Other additions include one major and six "minor" sources of *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, the sources of the prologues to the tales of the Man of Law, Summoner, and Prioress, and a number of new analogues, especially to *The Prioress's Tale* and *The Canon Yeoman's Tale*. Three new stories from *The Decameron* have also been added, two identified as analogues to *The Merchant's Tale* and one as an analogue to *The Shipman's Tale*, providing further evidence of the belief among many contemporary scholars that Boccaccio's work was an important influence on the development of *The Canterbury Tales*. At the same time, many analogues in Bryan and Dempster have been dropped by individual contributors because they are too distant in time or place from Chaucer's work, or are lacking in word-for-word correspondences, or differ substantially in narrative structure or other plot motifs. One example of such pruning occurs in the chapter on *The Miller's Tale*, where only one of the four analogues found in the earlier volume, the Flemish fabliau, is judged to be closest to Chaucer's tale, close enough even to be considered its "near source."

The format and purpose remain the same as in the first volume. Each chapter contains a review of the research done over the past sixty years on such matters

¹ W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster, eds. *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (1941; rpt. Humanities Press, 1958). Additional analogues are printed and discussed by Larry D. Benson and Theodore M. Andersson, eds. in *The Literary Context of Chaucer's Fabliaux* (Indianapolis, IN, and New York, 1971).

as the origin of Chaucer's sources, their transmission down to his time, and evidence of his indebtedness to them. The arrangement of chapters again follows the order of the tales in *The Riverside Chaucer*. Modern English translations are provided for all foreign language sources, generally on facing pages for lengthy texts, but also immediately following shorter passages in chapters like *The General Prologue and Retraction* and elsewhere where brief excerpts are quoted. The individual contributors have made the decisions about what texts to include, whether to reproduce them from printed editions or re-edit them from original manuscripts according to current editorial practice, and whether to use their own translations or those of others. Some well-known sources (in *The Knight's Tale*, *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*) have been newly edited from surviving texts similar to those Chaucer presumably knew and used.

Our primary purpose has been, as it was for Bryan and Dempster (p.viii), to describe, within the boundaries of our present knowledge, all the important known written *literary* sources and analogues of *The Canterbury Tales*, and to present them as accurately and as attractively as possible, leaving questions of how Chaucer used them for his own artistic purposes to be answered by others. At the same time, contributors have not been unaware of, or insensitive to, the changes that have occurred in the field of source-study over the past several decades. In their opening essays several have mentioned, or alluded to, ways that non-literary sources – such as memory, manuscript production and illumination, and iconography – have influenced the creation of the *Tales*. In years to come, increased interest in these and similar kinds of “sources” by Chaucerians may very likely play a more important role in shaping the contours of the successor to this volume and future collections of the sources and analogues of Chaucer's work.

The general editors are grateful to the many people who have aided us in various ways during the production of this second volume. We are indebted to the contributors who gave generously of their time and expertise to write on the individual tales, and to their colleges and universities for the financial aid and other assistance they have received. The editors also express their thanks and appreciation to the many scholars whose learning and assistance the contributors themselves have acknowledged in their individual chapters. We also thank the members of the editorial board for their insights and advice, and our many colleagues in the New Chaucer Society who offered moral support and encouragement over the years.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to Professor Jill Mann for her help in correcting and improving translations in Volume I. She has also carefully vetted every chapter in the present volume, has again offered invaluable assistance with many translations, and has helped us to avoid various kinds of errors.

The English department at Wright State University has continued to support our efforts, and we thank Dr. Henry Limouze, department chair, and his excellent secretarial staff – Leanne Moeller, Jennifer Sheets and Lynn Morgan – for their many personal and professional kindnesses. Three former WSU administrators,

the late Dean Eugene Cantelupe and former department chairs Peter Bracher and Lawrence Hussman, also provided encouragement and financial help during the early stages of the project. Bert Nagy, Christopher Correale and the staff at the WSU CaTS help desk provided timely assistance with computer problems, as did Jan Barbour with photocopying.

We are especially happy to acknowledge our gratitude to the editors and staff at Boydell & Brewer, in particular to Caroline Palmer, editorial director, for her good sense, sound advice, and encouragement during all the time she has worked with us in preparing these two volumes. Our thanks also go to Pam Cope, copy-editor and designer; Ken Shiplee, typesetter; and Vanda Andrews in production – whose talents and just plain hard work have contributed enormously to the successful completion of these books.

Finally, I am grateful to my wife Jeanne for giving so much of her time and energy to help us in a number of important areas, particularly by carefully reading and checking all texts and notes for accuracy. And much more importantly I am grateful for her love and support, her many personal sacrifices, and her constant encouragement in the face of difficulties during all the years we have worked together on this project.

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The General Prologue

ROBERT R. RAYMO

Chaucer was familiar with many of the framed story-collections circulating in the medieval west and he absorbed and occasionally followed their innovations, but Boccaccio's *Decameron* was the only one to exert a decisive influence upon him in the composition of *The Canterbury Tales*. How thoroughly he knew it, when and where he became acquainted with it, and in what form are still matters of conjecture. Nevertheless, his debt to the *Decameron* for the overarching structure and plan of the Tales as well as for crucial aspects of narrative technique and content is well established and represents the broad consensus of modern scholarship.¹ The parallels between the *General Prologue* and Boccaccio's *Introduzione* are also striking. Both groups of people meet by chance, agree to go off together the following morning and to divert one another with stories under the direction of a master of ceremonies. Both authors, moreover, defend their literary autonomy by the use of similar authenticating devices (Chaucer in the *General Prologue*, Boccaccio in his *Conclusione Dell'Autore*) and see their tales as offering both profit and pleasure.

These similarities, however, are of a general nature. For a precise source of the *General Prologue*, Helen Cooper proposes the A-text of *Piers Plowman* as having the "strongest claim to being his direct model":

[It] opens with a prologue that contains a spring setting followed by an estates satire, of the people working (or not) in the 'field of folk' that is an epitome of late fourteenth-century England. They include ideal ploughmen, merchants who appear to be thriving, priests who run off to London chantries to sing for silver, friars who dress in fine copes and give absolution in return for cash, a venal pardoner, rich sergeants-at-law, and a group of assorted burgesses, mostly clothworkers, ending, as does Chaucer's list of guildsmen, with cooks. The Prologue and the other Sections of the A-text provide analogues to some

For research assistance and other kinds of help in the preparation of this chapter, I am grateful to the following: Robert Correale, Paul Gans, Kevin Petersen, Nancy Regalado, Judith Sands, Ruth Sternglantz, Kathryn Talarico, George Thompson, and, above all, my wife, Judith Glazer Raymo.

¹ Helen Cooper makes the case in her essay on "The Frame" in vol. 1 of *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 7–18. See also *The Decameron and the Canterbury Tales: New Essays on an Old Question*, ed. I. M. Koff and B. D. Schildgen (Madison, WI, 2000); and N. S. Thompson, *Chaucer, Boccaccio and the Debate of Love: A Comparative Study of the Decameron and The Canterbury Tales* (Oxford, 1966). Quotations from the *Decameron* are taken from the edition of V. Branca (Florence, 1976).