Re-Examining the Female Voice in Chaucer's Italian-Sourced Works: A Study in Paleography, Textual Transmission, and Masculinity

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Loyola University Chicago

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

RE-EXAMINING THE FEMALE VOICE
IN CHAUCER’S ITALIAN-SOURCED WORKS:
A STUDY IN PALEOGRAPHY, TEXTUAL
TRANSMISSION, AND MASCULINITY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

BY
STACEE M. BUCCIARELLI
CHICAGO, IL
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For Antonio, Gemma, and Violetta
I sette right noght, of al the vileyny
That ye of wommen write, a boterflye!
I am a womman, nedes moot I speke....

—Proserpyne, *The Merchant’s Tale*
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<tr>
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<td>MSS</td>
<td>Manuscripts</td>
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<td>Middle English Dictionary</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about women during the Middle Ages; topics range from studies on estates and roles of women to examinations of female authors within the context of nearly every field of academic criticism. Through any given lens, it is possible to ascertain information about how a medieval woman lived, how she dressed, or how she behaved within the confines of her prescribed roles of daughter, maid, wife, mother, or widow. Moreover, the words of Heloise, Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, Marie de France, Christine de Pizan, among other lesser known women, provide ultimate insights toward understanding the lives of some medieval women. But research on women in medieval literature, though abundant, is often focused on broad questions of narrative. Missing from the extensive milieu of scholarship is an examination of the representational medieval female voice, a term that is hereto defined as encompassing the thoughts and speech of women in literature. Representations of women in select Chaucerian narratives allows for a detailed analysis of the medieval female voice within the largely male worlds (both actual and literary) in which they were created.

Questions of female voice have historically been carried out within the realm of women’s studies. Carolyn Dinshaw, to cite one prominent example, offers ground-breaking analysis of gender identities but fails to situate her investigation outside the binaries of masculinity and femininity. For example, she claims that “whoever exerts
control of signification, of language and the literary act, is associated with the masculine (10), and one of her most celebrated tropes is what she calls “reading like a man” (29). She also notes the “complexity with which language and literary acts, gender, and power are interrelated” (9); yet rather than develop the idea of signification, a representational world in which female voice is created and situated, she lapses into a discussion on the feminization of the male. Dinshaw might have taken that opportunity to explore whether her statement applies solely to male scribes and authors or might also be applied to the speaker of said signification, i.e. possibly a woman. Of course, it is at this point that discussions about the “masculine female” become relevant. And what might the significance be for a medieval female who is “associated with the masculine?” How is she, or rather, must she be, defined?

In light of the onslaught of feminist theory, one might find it strange that this particular area is left largely unexplored. Still, one might describe the medieval female voice with the same language used by the field to describe the medieval women themselves; her voice is marginalized, or perhaps, even disregarded. One reason may very well be due to the uncritical, archetypal gender research that, as Albrecht Classen points out, denigrates women by categorically aligning them with Eve while propagating the belief that women can only spew lies (69-70). These viewpoints are represented regularly throughout medieval literature. For example, in The Merchant’s Tale, January’s words on deceitful women epitomize misogynistic attitudes attached to the medieval female voice. He states:

“Th’ experience so preveth every day
Similar reasoning in criticism desensitizes readers to the value of represented female voices in literature and prompts value-related questions. Classen suggests there are but two alternatives regarding women’s voices: “to listen to those female voices that reflect upon their own lives, or to allow male voices to speak and malign women out of deep-seated gynophobia and misogamy” (69-70). The implication that those are the only choices for the female voice is far more severe and limiting than it first appears. Read in the context of the “women spew lies” category, not only does the assessment render literary female voices that provide insight into their own lives unimportant (while simultaneously supporting the belief that whatever is said is likely deceitful or untrue), it suggests that the only alternative is the male voice. But this dichotomous thinking is precisely what scholars need to evolve past in order to more fully understand how the medieval female voice is represented in literature.

Another reason scholarship may be lacking in this area is due to regular claims that the medieval female voice, real or fictional, is somewhat elusive. For example, Kim Phillips points out that there is a general problem in seeking the medieval female voice through records, because wills, letters, deeds, and charters, if located, were, in most cases, created by men (177). Once again, and even outside of literary representations, scholars are immediately directed to the realm of men in their attempt to seek information about the medieval female voice. Phillips goes on to say that identifying female perspectives and voices often leaves the researcher
with an overbearing notion of female silence. But, she argues, it is a worthy exercise that yields a “range of viewpoints” (196).

Phillips’s incitement to further the exploration of this area is precisely what is needed in today’s scholarship. Generally, feminist discussions that lead to the realm of men tend to stop with the identification of the male’s involvement. However, with regard to the female voice, one should not simply claim that the only female voice is really the voice of a man and then abandon the topic. Though any analysis of the represented medieval female voice must address the role that men played in its creation and development, that masculine realm must be more fully explored as it likely holds additional clues toward understanding the intricate function of the medieval female voice itself.

The elusiveness that Phillips addresses (arguably more so for the real medieval female voice as opposed to the represented one) supports scholarly claims built upon a lack of an abundance of historical records; but there are indeed some to be examined and their value should not be dismissed based on scarcity. Further, when speaking of representational medieval female voices, there is a plethora of literature, some first-hand accounts, and additional ephemera to help scholars more clearly decipher the mysteries of the medieval female voice. As Phillips suggests, there is substantially more to be learned about the medieval female voice, which is precisely the goal of this project.

Not to be dismissed, however, are some provocative works that do in fact address the medieval female voice, including those by Albrecht Classen, Doris Earnshaw, and Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner. For example, Classen offers a
comprehensive examination of the medieval female voice (via predominantly German examples) along with pointed insights about its creators. He says:

The more these male authors express their criticism and contempt of women, the more do they reveal surprising perspectives regarding the actual gender relations in their society. After all, fear, to mention just one aspect in this extensive complex, reflects as much about those who are filled with fear as it reflects upon those who are the cause of fear. (70-71)

Classen acknowledges the complexity involved in a study of the medieval female voice and he foregrounds its impermeable relationship with men. However, his study is heavily rooted in actual voices and he falls short in his chapter on represented female voices. Where one might expect analysis of literary female voices, Classen shifts to a position of social commentary and highlights domestic violence. He does not try to disguise his efforts as he clearly states:

Instead of focusing on the topic of women’s voices directly [...], the purpose here is to investigate, above all, male perspectives concerning their female partners within marriage and the degree to which male authors noticed, commented on, and dealt with violent treatment of women. (187)

He redirects a promising chapter into one that emphasizes a poet’s position on domestic violence rather than discussing the female voice. He says as much with his summary:

Obviously poets could not do much at all to stop domestic violence, but they successfully expressed their profound concern about this violation of individual rights and formulated their protest against this kind of physical perpetration, mostly at the hand of husbands. By presenting examples of domestic violence in its highly negative connotations, some of the medieval and early-modern poets engaged in a struggle against domestic violence. (228)
A chapter that one hopes will address the female voice has been turned by Classen into anything but. He highlights the problems for the male authors as they created female voices rather than addressing the relevance of the female voice itself.

Earnshaw and Bruckner’s works offer a more nuanced analysis with new perspectives on medieval female voices. Each work addresses the female voice within medieval lyrics of female singers called *trobairitz*. Earnshaw’s goal is to identify why women of southern France seemed to have bolder voices than their contemporaries. She presents conclusions such as:

> It is probable that the model of female speech that valorizes assertiveness and rationality gave the incentive to participation in public song to women of wealth and rank in Occitania. Women in other areas, with the same gifts, confronted with a speech model characterized by anxiety, lament, submission, and archaic or primitive styles were negatively conditioned for song composition. (159)

Earnshaw is looking for a cause while Bruckner, on the other hand, seeks to remove the veil of fiction that has been applied to these female singers. She suggests that much of the identified female voice is hidden under the pretense of what the lyric is designed for; it is disguised within performance. Bruckner states:

> In the context of this lyric tradition we may never get the direct, spontaneous expression of a ‘real’ woman's voice, even when we hear real women poets speaking in the first person. They, like the troubadours, operate in a lyric whose fiction is to make us believe its own claims to speak truthfully from the heart. If the song succeeds, we believe that fiction for the space of performance. (890)

Bruckner offers her work as an entry into what should be a larger and ongoing dialogue about the medieval female voice.

> Although the above scholarship focuses on the medieval female voice, the topic is regularly given short shrift in most works. For example, while David Wallace offers
insightful critiques on the complexities of Chaucer’s female characters, his focus is on rhetoric and the employment of rhetorical devices, such as Albertano’s *ars dicendi et tacendi*, within the larger scope of polity in *Chaucerian Polity*. And while one can be grateful that these scholars further the discourse, the above scholarship limits the medieval female voice to its anthropological existence, relegates it to the margins, or is so specific that a broader application of the study is difficult. For example, though Earnshaw and Bruckner both identify the female voice as a complex entity, both studies are limited by the parameters of the lyric. These studies, while critical and ground-breaking, have nonetheless left a lacuna in the field.

The present study aims to expand upon the foundations established by scholars such as Classen, Earnshaw, Bruckner, and Wallace by examining the medieval female voice through a selection of speeches in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. In so doing, this study accepts Bruckner’s invitation to “continue our dialogue about women in the Middle Ages” (891).

This lacuna in conjunction with the birth of masculinity studies and the work of Ruth Karras, Allen Frantzen, Victor J. Seidler, and Harriet Spiegel, among others, and an interest in re-examining texts through alternative perspectives, create opportunity for original and extensive scholarship in the field of the Chaucerian female voice. In *Boys to Men*, Ruth Karras undertakes a stimulating discussion on medieval masculinity, which, she believes, did not exist in any single form (3). Scholars like Karras offer a better and more liberating framework with which to explore the complexities involved in analyzing the medieval female voice.
Accordingly, this study evaluates the alterations made (by Chaucer and scribes) to five Italian-sourced female voices. The women of The Knight’s Tale, The Merchant’s Tale, The Franklin’s Tale, and The Clerk’s Tale (Emelye, Ypolita, May, Dorigen, and Griselda, respectively), among others, will be critically analyzed in order to better understand the relationship between masculinity and the female voice. These specific women were selected for their extensive textual traditions; extant manuscripts permit a detailed analysis of these voices, thus, providing a traceable and observable account of the alterations to female voices. The manner in which the traditions associated with masculinity acted upon a text is crucial to understanding representations of the medieval female voice. It also invites a discussion of how these women in turn affected masculinity.

The medieval female voice is defined as any instance of thought or speech by a female character. These thoughts and speeches have been counted and compared against the source texts in an attempt to locate specific changes made to Chaucer’s versions. This study examines and compares manuscripts in which these voices appear in order to provide new, possibly quantifiable, evidence and research to the field of Chaucer studies. Is there any proof that might suggest scribal responsibility for voice alteration during the transmission process? If, how, and when female voices were altered will be discovered in conjunction with the significance of said alterations. Manuscript research has revealed much about spurious links and the famous “S” of the Shipman’s Tale affecting tale order.¹ Similarly, analysis of the represented female voice may too reveal much about the

¹ Norman F. Blake discusses why it is so difficult to edit Chaucer, and in particular, to determine tale order. Chaucer’s own edits rendered the copy text so difficult to read that scribes often had to decide what
variant versions of these women. Scribal variants will be assessed in order to determine the nature of changes to any one particular voice. Is scribal intrusion or is Chaucer responsible for the alterations? Is it provable? Close examination of these textual areas will determine the answer, and offer insight into how traditions associated with masculinity, and the male world in which they were created, altered those voices.

Though not considered extensively in this study, Criseyde remains a popular example of how a study of female voice intertwines with masculinity and textual studies. Consider the scene where Criseyde is transferred back to the Greeks. In Boccaccio’s *Il Filostrato*, Criseida voices an internal complaint and then she accepts her fate:

> “Ahi crudel Giove, e fortuna noiosa, Dove me ne portate contro voglia? Perchè v’ aggrada tanto la mia doglia?

> Voi mi togliete, crudi e dispietati, Da quel piacer che più m’andava a core; E forse vi credete umiliati Esser con sacrificio e con onore Alcun da me, ma voi sete ingannati; In vostro vituperio e disonore Mi dorrò sempre, infin che non ritorno A riveder di Troilo il viso adorno.”

> Quinci si voles disdegnosamente Ver Diomede, e disse: “andianne omai, Assai ci siam mostrati a questa gente; La quale omai sperar può de’ suoi guai Salute, se ben miran sottilmente All’ onorevol cambio che fatt’ hai Che hai per una femmina renduto Un sì gran re e cotanto temuto.” (V.6-8)

Chaucer meant. For example, in one instance, as Chaucer changed his mind about which pilgrim would speak next, he kept erasing and re-writing a new name over and over. Eventually, all that remained legible was a capital S, and so scribes “interpreted this S as they thought appropriate” (102). This means that the Squire, the Summoner, the Second Nun’s Priest, or the Shipman might have all been candidates for the next tale. See Norman F. Blake, “On Editing the Canterbury Tales,” *Medieval Studies for J. A. W. Bennett Aetatis Suae LXX*, ed. P.L. Heyworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).
(“Oh, cruel Jove and annoying fortune, where do you take me against my will? Why do you so enjoy my grief? You, cruel and heartless, you take me away from the pleasure that was dearest to my heart. Maybe you believe you are humiliated with the sacrifice or with the honor I have shown you, but you are fooled. I will always give you vituperation and dishonor if I do not return to see Troilus’ adoring face.” Then disdainfully she turned to see Diomede and said: “Let us go already, we have shown ourselves to these people long enough, it [the people] will have hope instead of trouble. Greetings, even if they look thinly upon the honorable change you have made, that you have rendered a woman for a great and feared king.”) (Translation mine.)

But in Chaucer’s version, the generally more vocal Criseyde (compared to the source) is so overcome with grief that she cannot even speak. Her words are whittled down to one: “Allas!” (Troilus V.58). Chaucer is removing the female voice, but to what effect?

Similar changes have been made to Ypolita, whose silence, according to some scholars, serves only to show the extent of male dominance over female voices. This particular alteration to Criseyde’s voice is within the contexts of matters of state and polity and becomes the ideal example to contend with Wallace’s claims that Chaucer’s women are generally more powerful than their sources because Chaucer tends to allow them to participate in matters of authority and fellowship (Chaucerian Polity 82). The question here (as with most female voices) becomes, is she really participating? Or does she participate in the way that Griselda or Ypolita participate in matters of authority, that is, through the stereotypical medieval female responses of excessive emotion or tears that reflect clichés associated with female hysteria?

Alternatively, for Criseyde, her silence speaks louder than her words at this point. Wallace believes that her “muwet, milde, and mansuete” status is a sign of “stillness,” which he says is a state that “the individual must consciously struggle to achieve” (Chaucerian Polity 238). This at once places the woman into a masculine world, as these
are the intellectual attributes that might be addressed in terms of the scholarly discourses established for medieval men.

More specifically, and through many more examples, this study addresses questions such as the following. How does the female voice participate in discourses dominated by masculinity? In turn, how does the female voice affect masculinity? How does the removal or addition of the female voice affect the representation and/or reception of the female? How many of these alterations can be attributed to Chaucer himself rather than scribes? Is there evidence of scribal interference? Are these changes the result of translations? And what affect do these alterations have upon textual authority? Where are masculine influences evident? Some of the alterations might strengthen the perception of a character, or, at the other end of the spectrum, leave the reader with a sense that female speech is useless, unnecessary, or “redundant.” What is one to make of claims such as this? In addition, other sociological phenomena are also addressed. For example, the role of the female voice must be contextualized in terms of medieval social norms including an historical analysis of when it was appropriate for medieval women to speak and what was appropriate for them to say.

This endeavor aims to show that it is more fruitful to examine alterations to the female voice via alternative theoretical approaches. Under this premise, one can broaden the analysis from the restrictive realm of women’s studies and contextualize these alterations on a grander scale of textual and paleographical studies in conjunction with masculinity studies. Not only does this project compare and examine the changes that Chaucer made to the female voice as well as the significance of those alterations, but it provides careful analysis of manuscripts and accounts for the paleographical evidence of
these changes in order to contextualize said changes in terms of male textual production and transmission of the female voice. This permits the female voice to be analyzed in terms of, and defined by, new traditions. What lacks in current scholarship is an assessment of voice outside of female contexts; female voice is not just about women, but is equally about men and textual history.

This project stems from current critical theories and conversations within the fields of women’s studies, masculinity studies, and textual studies. Lacking is an adequate definition of female voice among literary scholars; however, generally speaking, current scholarship tends to oversimplify the relationship and importance of female rhetoric and/or language. In somewhat similar language to Dinshaw’s, Priscilla Martin, for one, notes that “language privileges the male [and] that the female subject has particular problems in entering its symbolic order” (218). But she is not alone in her oversimplification of Chaucerian female speech. It appears that, when scholars refer to modern feminist discussion concerning the matter of female voice, what, or rather who, they are referring to is Dinshaw. Dinshaw appears to have defined the field and established all boundaries concerning female language. “Reading like a man” became the engaging discussion for many medievalists. And while this discussion has been provocative, it has left less controversial issues surrounding female voice largely unexplored.

Jonathan Culler’s structuralist approach to persona, point-of-view, and discourse offers a more insightful means of entry to the discussion of female voice. Culler reminds his readers that speech acts are always subject to narrative and authorial influence. Culler’s analysis is more applicable to this project in that he whittles the text down to
Barthes’s question: “Who is speaking?” (200). Barthes’s simple question forces readers to remember that the male is always present, even in a female voice. This problematic relationship is witnessed by statements such the following from Elaine Treharne: “The ultimate powerlessness of the female voice is that, in reality, it does not exist, for this is not a woman speaking here giving voice to the concerns of female experience, it is a male author enacting the role of woman, silencing her” (114).

Another topos that gained much popularity of late concerned concepts of female power. Even Anne Laskaya notes that “it is possible to read articles claiming Griselda more powerful than Walter in the *Clerk’s Tale* and Custance more powerful than the men residing in the *Man of Law’s Tale*” (141). While helpful in many instances, discourses on power are often as limiting as the act of relegating female voice to the field of women’s studies. Laskaya is aware of this and she reconciles the current debate on how to define the female voice outside of “reading like a man” with tensions about female power by contextualizing it within the discourses in which it was created. The application of masculine discourses can help to define and alter perceptions of the medieval female voice.

This project also addresses the medieval female world, which in most cases was wholly domestic, and it considers how the female voice impacted the representation of the medieval woman. David Wallace provides excellent context for the medieval female voice: household rhetoric. His discussion of the violence that occurs within the household can also be examined within the discourses established by Karras and Laskaya, as violence against women played a crucial role in establishing masculinity. Additionally, medieval females, likened to animals by some scholars (Karras compares the similarities
within her established discourses for masculinity (109) and Wallace elaborates on the wife and crow equivalency in the Manciple’s Tale (Chaucerian Polity 252),\(^2\) or likened to property by medieval law, occupied a marginal space in the male-dominated world. Yet, as Karras discusses, women, and the domination of them, were a defining factor for establishing the masculinity of the medieval male. The male/female relationship is fraught with tension and though the male and female worlds may seem quite polar, closer examination shows how intricately woven and interdependent they were.

Instances of the female voice, and how they define said females, provide clues to the tensions between the male and female worlds. Of note here is that the medieval female voice is much altered from the “woman as hero” voice of Old English literature that Jane Chance discusses (xiii-xvii). The medieval female voice is deemed “mannish” when she utters words believed to be outside of her prescribed role… and one of her most prescribed roles is that of “silence!” (Laskaya 40). Does this mean that Chaucer’s women are largely “mannish” as they often speak outside of their prescribed roles? Or rather, the question should be, how could these medieval females with their inappropriate voices not be “mannish?” They were created by men, after all.

Laskaya suggests that the medieval female voice was used largely to define the woman in terms of men. Their voices were used to receive answers to questions of particular female concern, i.e. what is the proper way to submit to men (42). But in her study, which focuses on femininity and not masculinity, she reminds her reader that all of

these questions ultimately return to a focus centered upon men, not women. This point is reiterated by Peggy A. Knapp who points to Dorigen, Griselda, and Criseyde, as examples of women whose own intelligence is eclipsed by the need to please their men (90-97). Moreover, Laskaya identifies the women of *The Canterbury Tales* as a gateway to understanding men: “The fictional women in the *Canterbury Tales* are all creations of men, and they will bear, in one way or another, traces of their creators” (43). Likewise, this project uses those women’s voices (taking into account the alterations from the source texts and the transmission process) and evaluates them within those masculine worlds. Like Culler and Barthes, who remind scholars to ask, “Who is speaking?” so too does this project question the voices of Chaucer’s female characters in light of the males (whether author or scribe) who created them.

The second critical function of this study is an examination of scribal influence on the female voice. Medieval scribes were copyists, for the most part, and a number of concerns arise due to the general nature of manuscript transmission. Linne Mooney’s work on the critical nature of the medieval scribe provides a starting point for the conversation about how males affected the text during the transmission process. More specifically, Peter Shillingsburg argues that changes during transcription are a natural result of the “decoding and re-encoding of symbols in a sign system” (15). He also states that when working with manuscripts,

Decisions have to be made constantly about ambiguous forms and small marks that could be accents or insect droppings or flecks of ash or blood or ambiguously formed letters. Regardless of how trivial or insignificant any one reader might find these elements, two things remain true about them: that the transcriptions either do or do not recognize and incorporate them and that some other reader will find them to be significant, such that a transcript that ignores them will be misleading. (15)
Often, multiple scribes were working on a single manuscript, not in proximity to one another, and the author was removed completely. Consequently, scribes wielded significant power in determining the product.

M.B. Parkes addresses additional problems of scribal copying. The male medieval scribe made any number of alterations to the text, some intentional (translating the exemplar into local dialects) and some unintentional (eyeskips, for example) (*Their Hands Before Our Eyes* 66-67). Scribes also had a reputation for interfering with the text, “substituting what they regarded as a more appropriate reading in a particular context” (Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes* 68). There is even some indication that scribes exhibited signs of intellectual ownership in the form of scribal signatures (Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes* 44-45). Regardless of whether an alteration was intentional, the result of a mistake, or due to an ambiguous exemplar, there is a change in the text. A new text is created. At this point, the study enters the discussion of textual criticism and situates Chaucer’s and the Italian source’s texts within the theories and discourses on final intentions, authority, and textual versions. This study’s methodology is concerned with alterations from source texts, or medieval editing so to speak; therefore, the theories of Tim Mahan, Allistair Minnis, N. F. Blake, and Hoyt Duggan will be addressed.

Current scholarship has emphasized the abstract and conjectural elements of the female voice, yet concrete textual evidence rarely appears alongside it. This project marries the two, providing new and extensive textual research to better understand the complexities of the female voice. This project contributes to the
current discourse and builds upon key concepts established by Carolyn Dinshaw, Anne Laskaya, Ruth Karras, David Wallace, Jonathan Culler, M.B. Parkes, Peter Shillingsburg, among others. And in addition to contributing to current theoretical scholarship, this study also includes a textual component that provides a historical account of where the medieval female voice was altered. To do so, this project identifies and evaluates the female voice through the exploration of scribal interference in addition to Chaucer’s changes, which provides for a new and alternative understanding of Chaucer’s female characters. A re-examination of specific points in Chaucer’s works through these new lenses will show that alterations to the female voice deserve far more critical analysis than they have been afforded in the past.

The first two chapters address the theoretical aspects of an analysis on the represented medieval female voice. The last two chapters situate this examination within textual studies’ discourses and present a number of case studies on altered female voices. In Chapter 1 the examination of the medieval female voice is contextualized within the traditional archetypes associated with it. It addresses domestic spheres and the language of the medieval woman, including household rhetoric, wifely counsel, and silence. It provides the starting point for understanding what was considered acceptable female speech in the dichotomy of the real world set against the idealized world of conduct books and rhetorical manuals. It then moves toward a discussion that begins to establish the female voice outside of the conventional and categorical realm dictated by medieval gender prescriptions. Chapter 2 securely defines the space for the female voice within the new context of
This chapter identifies the complex and reciprocal relationship that masculinity has with the female voice. It also notes how masculinity reacts to female voices that are deemed threatening. And finally, this chapter seeks to reconcile the crux that the literary female must, in some form, be representative of the males that created it. Chapter 3 addresses the significance of males upon the female voice, both through the creation and transmission processes. It begins with a superficial analysis of source texts and Chaucer’s altered manuscripts in order to provide historical and methodological contexts. It explores the nature of Chaucer’s history and relationship with Italian source texts and it addresses some of the most recent concerns of textual criticism, including authorship. It also demonstrates the important and crucial role of the medieval scribe and how he affected a text during the transmission process. This chapter aims to contribute to current textual criticism discourses, and, ultimately, the chapter will question the very nature of the female voice by asking, “Who is speaking?” Chapter 4 closely examines instances of variation to the female voice across a number of witnesses. Four case studies are presented, each with a critical evaluation of source material, Chaucer’s alterations, and subsequent scribal variants. The results of the variants are contextualized in terms of the medieval prescriptions and masculine forces that were evaluated in the first part of this study.

In short, this endeavor aims to understand the medieval female voice by exploring the factors that shaped it and then to release it from its preconceived interpretations brought about by masculine imposed restrictions including those associated with its creation, transmission, evolution. Anne Laskaya tells scholars that female silence is the
most prevalent prescribed female behavior (40). But, rather than merely relegate the medieval female voice to the realm of silence, the goal should be to understand the cause for silence. For example, the prescribed behavior of female silence is often the result of subjugation, servitude, commodification, exchangeability, or abuse. And the man’s role as subjugator not only influenced the female voice, in terms of how and when it is used in the public and private realms, but it simultaneously, and possibly unintentionally, became a reflection of the man’s own masculinity, or even his perceived masculinity. The interconnectivity between the medieval female voice and its masculine influences cannot be understated, but it can be more fully explored.
CHAPTER I

THE MEDIEVAL FEMALE VOICE

The medieval female voice exists in two forms: real and representational. This study is about the latter, but it would not be complete without the inclusion of the former. And while the real female voice and its influences are critical sources for representations of the female voice in literature, literary examples will be the primary means for illustrating new scholarship in this largely ignored area. An examination of select instances of the female voice in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* can lead to the new scholarship that both Kim Phillips and Matilda Bruckner believe a study of the female voice will yield.

For all intents and purposes, the represented medieval female voice is defined as any instance of internal or external language by a female character. Instances of direct speech will be considered alongside internal monologues (when the thoughts of female characters are expressly declared in literature). For example, in *The Clerk’s Tale*, the Clerk states:

She thoghte, ‘I wole with othere maydens stond,  
That been my felawes, in oure dore and se  
The markysesse, and therfore wil I fonde  
To doon at hoom, as soone as it may be,  
The labour which that longeth unto me,  
And thanne I may at leyser hire biholde,  
If she this wey unto the castel holde.’ (IV.281-287)
Griselda’s internal thought, set off by quotations, must be considered a representation of the medieval female voice. Additionally, rhetoric, though categorically included as a component of the female voice, carries the added and specific values of logic and reason.

Because literary analysis is the primary goal of this project, the definition of the medieval female voice is largely contextualized by its literary existence. However, as previously stated, it is not limited to its literary existence as examples of real world voices offer context for their literary representations. A medieval woman’s real voice, and the power it wields or does not, undoubtedly shape its literary counterpart; the real and the representational voice cannot be exclusive of one another. Consequently, and because of this relationship, readers of texts such as The Wife of Bath’s Prologue can be disarmed and altogether surprised by her voice. Because guidelines for the real medieval female voice provide context for what is considered an appropriate medieval female voice, one can be taken aback when a representation of that female voice does not conform to prescribed expectations.

However, these prescriptions and their corresponding behaviors are not meant to assist in the generalization of medieval women or their voices. For one to generalize medieval women into any suggested category is a gross mistake. Each representation of a medieval woman is a representation of one specific woman subject to her own individual circumstances. And the singular medieval woman, whether real or representational, should in no way be confused with the plural women. A farmer’s wife can hardly be assessed on the same scale as the wife of a nobleman, or any other woman, anymore than one can view the frivolous Prioress or the headstrong Wife or the angelic Emelye as
representative portraits of any particular group of medieval women. Nor should medieval wives be indeterminately grouped together with all medieval women who happened to be married. Still, it remains a worthy endeavor to examine women of similar situations and circumstances in order to see how the voices of medieval women, wives in particular, are represented.

A similar discernment must be used when discussions of female power are presented. Power is a commonplace motif in many evaluations of women, but like some feminist labels, discussions about female power can be likewise restrictive and it is not without trepidation that this term is used. For example, some scholars find the need to assert that even the most powerless literary characters are powerful. Anne Laskaya notes that, within a Christian framework, “it is possible to read articles claiming Griselda more powerful than Walter in the Clerk’s Tale and Custance more powerful than the men residing in the Man of Law’s Tale” (141). Discussions of power become problematic because they limit the potential for a deeper analysis of the topic. With that said, in order to understand the role of the medieval female voice, one must realize that the medieval female, whatever her estate, would have been in an ever-present power struggle with her male and female contemporaries. Therefore, when the motif of power is addressed, it is used solely as an entry point to understand the medieval woman’s voice as it existed in a structuralized and patriarchal environment. And one such environment is the domestic sphere, or rather, the real domestic sphere, which is oftentimes in contrast with the idealized world of the domestic sphere and female language that is presented in conduct books and rhetorical manuals of the era.
The Real Domestic Sphere: Roles and Relationships that Define Household Rhetoric

Prescriptions of Silence

The real-world roles of medieval women as daughter, maid, wife, mother, and widow forced women into distinct relationships with men, and sometimes women. Female speech in the domestic realm, or what David Wallace calls household rhetoric,¹ would have then been influenced by the woman’s marital relationship and her circumstances. However, her participation in household rhetoric was likely limited. Anne Laskaya reminds readers that one of the most popular prescribed roles for the medieval female is that of “silence” (40). The prescription of silence then becomes a defining factor for the medieval wife’s behavior. But, more importantly, silence is also a product of her role as wife, and it is likely the result of circumstances within her marital relationship.

It was not uncommon for a medieval wife’s relationship with her husband to reflect her lack of power or his dominance. The husband’s dominance over his wife can be displayed through forms of power, including subjugation, servitude, exchangeability, commodification, and abuse. These real-world circumstances in marital relationships then become factors that influence, affect, and often remove the medieval female voice within the domestic realm. Obedience, for instance, under the umbrella of subjugation and servitude, is one such factor that appears to be a cause of female silence.

¹ Wallace explores the political nature of household rhetoric in his chapter of the same name (Chaucerian Polity 212-246).
The medieval wife’s position was subject to canon law and Roman law, both of which, as Dyan Elliott points out, served to “ratify the husband’s position of authority” (40). And the husband’s position of authority was extensive. Not only did the husband control the wife’s lands that she herself brought to the marriage, he also controlled her will and testament and he even played a part in her spiritual autonomy. The canonical Decretum established that the wife was “bound to obey [her husband] ‘on account of her condition of servitude’” (Elliott 45). Such conditions cannot but affect the wife’s voice, possibly pushing her into the realm of muteness. Some conditions of servitude may have even required that the wife not speak at all. The wife’s silence deprives the woman of her ability of self representation and identification through speech. In the real domestic sphere, the result is a loss of individual identity as the wife can no longer be defined as a person separate from her husband, only one beholden to him.

This status of the medieval woman as a subordinate wife is a relationship commonly exploited in Chaucer’s representations of female characters. Griselda and Prudence are but two women who illustrate the paradigm shift from the heightened and formal romance of medieval lais\(^2\) (where women were elevated according to the guidelines of courtly love) or from the “woman as hero” motif of Old English literature. Chaucer accurately presents some wives in patriarchal social existences that adhere to canon and Roman laws regarding wifely obedience and servitude. For example, in The Merchant’s Tale, the Merchant reminds his audience over and over

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\(^2\) Chaucer does however employ this genre as well. See the The Franklin’s Tale, for one example.
again that a wife must be “buxom” (IV.1287, 1333), or “humble, gentle, obedient, submissive.” ³ And this type of obedience is regularly linked to female silence.

The Merchant continually reiterates the obedient, servile, and silent nature that a wife should possess with lines like, “Al that hire housbonde lust, hire liketh weel; / She seith nat ones ‘nay,’ whan he seith ‘ye.’” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1344-1345). And although he claims that “a wyf is Goddes yifte verraily” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1311), the Merchant immediately associates the wife with various forms of property in the list that follows his declaration of her worth.⁴ Thus, the Merchant wittingly, or unwittingly, assimilates the wife into a class occupied by animals, or rather, the space that animals occupy, i.e. a “pasture” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1313). Moreover, these analogies equate the wife with entities that do not speak. And while May is often categorized as a wife who upends traditional medieval marriage laws, the fact remains that she is also likened to a piece of property in a manner similar to that established by the Decretum.

May’s voice (or in this particular instance, her lack of voice) becomes a means to represent one way in which wives participated in household rhetoric in real domestic settings. Her silence is overt during three main scenes: (1) May’s wedding was arranged as a business transaction by January, his council, and her father without her input (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1691-1695); (2) May is obligated to perform wifely duties that render her mute (“The bryde was brought abedde as stille

³ Middle English Dictionary. Additional definitions include: “humble or mild in speech” and also “obedient to a person, command, law, etc.”

⁴ The list he offers includes other forms of property, such as “londes, rentes, pasture, or commune” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1313).
as stoon” (*The Merchant’s Tale IV.*1819)); and (3) May is heavily guarded much like a prisoner, which results in tears rather than speech. The Merchant tells us:

That neither in halle, n’ yn noon oother hous,
Ne in noon oother place, neverthemo,
He nolde suffre hire for to ryde or go,
But if that he had hond on hire alway;
For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May. (*The Merchant’s Tale IV.*2088-2092)

May’s subjugation, obedience, and servitude lead to her silence, which accurately represents some of the conditions of a real medieval wife. There is, however, an undeniable argument for May as the epitome of wifely defiance and insubordination. Yet no matter how critically she is evaluated as an insolent wife, conditions of servitude are undeniable. She is ultimately subjugated by her husband and this relationship affects how she participates in household rhetoric.

Another factor that influenced the medieval female voice in the real domestic sphere is the possibility for substitution with another woman. Scholars such as Carolyn Dinshaw suggest that real medieval women were transposable and exchangeable. Dinshaw notes that “women are interchangeable […] as a passage of a woman between men” (144). The real world domestic condition of interchangeability is also observable in Chaucer’s representations of his wives. Such is the case with Griselda, who is inarguably an exchangeable wife. She declares as much herself when she states that she “wol gladly yelden hir [another woman] my place” (*The Clerk’s Tale IV.*843). Even January’s May might be considered

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5 Dinshaw’s primary application for her discussion of interchangeable women concerns the principles of *translatio*. According to Stephen G. Nichols Jr., “*Translatio* was a metaphoric process whereby one construct assumed the symbolic signification of another considered greater than itself” (qtd. in Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 248 n11). However, this concept is also applicable to discussions about forces that shape the female voice.
exchangeable in that May could have been any other beautiful, young woman, if January had come upon that other woman first. Chaucer tells his readers that January was merely looking for a wife, any wife (“som mayde fair and tendre of age” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1407)). January then goes on for thirty two lines about the wife’s required age, informing his audience that if she were to be old (any age above twenty), he’d prefer to be eaten by hounds. May fit the bridal profile, but so might have any other fair maiden. May is then interchangeable with any other woman who happened to be young and pretty, and who would reflect well upon the husband’s masculinity.

Like subjugation, interchangeability between women can result in female silence. Dinshaw notes, that in exchanges, “Women are also functionally mute in this paradigm” (144). She further notes that “the recognition of their desires is not material to the operation of the system of exchange” (144). In the transaction that secured May for January, May was indeed “functionally mute;” she had no voice or input on the matter. In support of Dinshaw’s assessment, May’s desire, along with her voice, is immaterial to a male-driven outcome. The Merchant says:

They wroghten so, by sly and wys tretee,
That she, this mayden, which that Mayus highte,
As hastily as evere that she myghte
Shal wedded be unto this Januarie. (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1673-1695)

The real-world condition requiring wifely silence is hereby echoed in Chaucer’s portrayal of a marriage: a marriage designed by men who are seemingly aware of the potential for female exchangeability or interchangeability.
Likewise, Emelye’s betrothal (ironically, to interchangeable men) is similarly handled by Theseus, who literally speaks for the woman. He says, “I speke as for my suster Emelye” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.1832), and he further declares that it is his will that Palamoun and Arcite “derreyne hire by bataille” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.1853). This example presents a combination that not only suggests the wife is property that must be claimed, but it also presents her as mute and transferrable. And the ensuing result is, once again, her silence. As examples like these prove, literary representations that echo real-world domestic conditions are an ideal means to show how masculine forces can render women speechless in domestic settings.

Wallace offers an alternative perspective to the interchangeable and exchangeable subjugated woman; he suggests she may be a commodified woman. Wallace notes that women were often “commodified as voiceless figures” (*Chaucerian Polity* 19). These women serve as representatives (in appearance only) of the dominant males in their lives. In *The Canterbury Tales*, one need only look as far as the first pilgrim’s tale for an example. Theseus could hardly return from conquering Scythia with a lesser woman than Ypolita, queen of the Amazons. She figures as a perfect example of a voiceless sign for the conquering hero to present to his public. This is particularly important considering that the peple figure so prominently in this tale. Like Laskaya, Wallace understands how significant female silence is, but he gives female silence added depth and value by tying it to the public perception of the men they serve. His attention to the wife as a mute commodity or a
silent sign figures into his greater discussion on polity, but here, it illustrates its intimate connection to female silence.\(^6\)

In addition to subjugation, servitude, exchangeability, and commodification, the medieval wife was also susceptible to abuse within the real domestic sphere. It was not uncommon for the medieval wife to suffer violence in her domestic relationships. Wallace addresses violence against women in the domestic sphere through language itself. He notes, “A tortured wife facilitates symbolic expression of a new kind of political rhetoric: that of tyranny” (Chaucerian Polity 256). While Wallace’s interests are rooted in polity, his analysis on tyranny is equally applicable to women, real and representational, in the domestic realm. Should tyranny exist (on the wife’s part) in the small private space of the household, it would be met with tyrannical violence (on the husband’s part). These types of threats affect female voices and are intricately woven into the display, or lack of display, of the medieval woman’s voice.

Consider a case discussed by Dyan Elliott: a fifty-year-old man married a twenty-year-old maid, imprisoned her, and “subjected [her] to daily beatings” (43). This real-world example is echoed in much of The Merchant’s Tale, where a possessive elder January practically imprisons the young May. Overt instances of abuse can be found in literary examples such as those in The Decameron, where, as Wallace notes, rebellious female voices are “subdued by the threat of physical violence” (Chaucerian Polity 30). However, the most popular instance of wifely abuse is arguably found in The Wife of

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\(^6\) Wallace adds further context for wives as signs when he says, “Women are figured as signs through which any man can read the wealth and prestige of Florence” (Chaucerian Polity 19). Wallace’s declaration is apropos not only to medieval Florence but more generally to medieval times. The idea of women as signs, as symbolic representations of their city states, trickles down from the greater polity that concerns Wallace to the more intimate settings of the small towns and households. And even though women act as mere signs, they are in fact very important reflections of their husbands.
Bath’s Prologue. The Wife’s partial deafness is a direct result of her voice and the manner in which she participates in household rhetoric. As she attempts to persuade husband number five from reading, she suffers physical abuse. This instance exemplifies Alcuin Blamires’s belief that “Chaucer’s writings largely [...] inscribe men as authors of angry violence” (36).

Though it would be overreaching to claim wifely abuse as the standard, it is equally wrong to gloss over the fact that it was not uncommon. Avraham Grossman for one notes that in “some communities, the woman was asked to receive the beating silently and with understanding” (53). He shows how physical violence, or the threat of physical violence, is linked to, or becomes a motivating factor for, female silence in the real domestic sphere. Once again, Laskaya’s argument that silence is the prescribed and expected behavior for the medieval female finds support.

Ultimately, the wife’s voice, or lack of it, is directly affected by conditions of abuse along with subjugation, servitude, exchangeability, or commodification. In these instances, Chaucer’s representations of female silence present an overbearing and accurate portrait of a woman in the real domestic sphere. However, there are always exceptions. For while Criseyde is mute at the moment of exchange, the same can hardly be said of Griselda.

**The Power of Wifely Eloquence**

While female silence is the prescribed behavior found in both the real and represented domestic spheres, there remains an alternative: speaking. When medieval wives were not silent, when they did find their voices, they often used them as weapons
more powerful than their male counterparts’ physical ones. One manner in which the
medieval woman (real or fictional) does this is through what Wallace calls wifely
eloquence (Chaucerian Polity 5f). Wifely eloquence can be described as the “rhetorical
powers of a skilled female advocate,” and in particular, a wife (Chaucerian Polity 214).
A large portion of wifely eloquence is dependent upon the wife’s ability to counsel her
husband. Wallace chooses to define eloquence in terms of rhetoric, and thus he insinuates
that the wife has some level of knowledge in the arts of language and persuasive speech.
Though every instance of a wife’s household language should not be thought of as
calculated, wifely eloquence remains the primary tool that removes women from an
economy where women were “commodified as voiceless figures” (Wallace, Chaucerian
Polity 19). In the real domestic sphere, wifely eloquence permits wives to escape
prescriptions of silence, and it allows their voices to become significant participants in
the household rhetoric of wifely counsel.

In fictional representations, Wallace correctly states, “When it comes to
counseling powerful and angry men in Chaucer, men are nowhere to be found”
(Chaucerian Polity 237). He continues, “This is a job best left to wives such as Prudence,
Griselda, and Alceste” (Chaucerian Polity 237). Dyan Elliott echoes this sentiment,
stating that “Prudence becomes a preacher to her husband, assuaging her husband’s anger
at a recent outrage suffered by his household and urging forgiveness” (46). Even
Chaucer’s Merchant lauds the value of wifely counsel:

He may nat be deceived, as I gesse
So that he werke after his wyves reed.
Thanne may he boldely beren up his heed,
They been so trewe, and therwithal so wyse;
For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse,
Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede. *(The Merchant’s Tale IV.1356-1361)*

The Merchant’s words insinuate a certain popularity associated with wifely counsel, although they do not address the possibility that her words might result in any other outcome aside from one that benefits the husband. However, the wife’s careful use of language yields desired results, or rather, *her* desired results, and therein lies her power.

The power a wife wields through counsel is insurmountable even if it is unacknowledged. Wallace expounds on the power of female counsel for particularly violent men. He states:

> Women, when alive and well in the *Canterbury Tales*, prove uniquely capable of preventing masculine anger from rigidifying into masculine violence. Ypolita, Emelye, and ‘wommen alle’ (I.1757) dissuade Theseus from the summary execution of the young Theban knights. Guenevere ‘and other ladyes mo’ (I.894) dissuade Arthur from *quiting* the violence of rape with the violence of beheading. And Prudence crowns this development by easing the urge for magnate vendetta and achieving a peaceful end. The price of such success for women is that their complex and dangerous work of household rhetoric, vital to the health of the body politic, will not be acknowledged as political work; assumed to occur in private, it can expect no public acknowledgement. Prudence, after all, is an allegorical abstraction and not a real woman. *(Chaucerian Polity 245-246)*

While Wallace ends his powerful passage with the distinct reminder that literary women are not real women, no less powerful is the concept of wifely eloquence.

> Wifely eloquence, as a part of household rhetoric, is the means through which the medieval wife navigates and controls her domain, including her husband and her home. It is also a way for her to escape the private domestic sphere and enter into the public male world of discourse. Her voice becomes the means for her movement beyond the boundaries and limitations that were established by men. But there are unexpected consequences. Her voice, while responsible for removing her from the prescribed role of silence, is also now responsible for her new categorization as an entity outside of her
prescribed gender role. The consequences include new labels that deem her anything but feminine. Anne Laskaya notes, “Women who stepped beyond proper roles prescribed by the culture were called ‘mannish’ or labeled ‘viragos’ and were severely chastised” (40). For the female voice, these labels were made possible, in part, because of the unrealistic and idealized guidelines for female speech set forth in medieval conduct books and rhetorical manuals.

**Idealized World of Conduct Books and Rhetorical Manuals**

In theory, the conditions of the real domestic sphere might be considered in opposition to (or possibly the result of) the representations of female behaviors and voices idealized in conduct books and rhetorical manuals. During the late Middle Ages there is a profusion of books regarding the appropriate behavior for women. Kathleen Ashley and Robert Clarke believe this abundance was due to “a combination of sociohistorical forces [that] was changing religious practices, class structures, patterns of consumptions and political identities” (x). They continue, “In this period of flux, conduct books provided a guide for literate readers to negotiate new sets of social possibilities” (x). Herein lies the irony: many of the codes that applied to women reiterated prescribed behaviors and did not promote “new sets of social possibilities” for that particular group. Moreover, these books often excluded the very audiences they were purportedly meant for as many medieval women were not, in fact, literate. As such, these conduct books and rhetorical manuals become an example of man’s idealized representation of what the female voice should be. These guidebooks offer insight into how particular rules governed the ideas of ideal speech for medieval wives. Further, these books, as propagators of upholding the
standards of female speech, can help one understand why the female voice was subject to such harsh critique (including labels such as mannish) when it did not conform to specific, albeit absurd, guidelines.

**The Good Wife’s Voice**

Consider some of the acceptable behaviors established in *The Good Wife’s Guide (Le Ménagier de Paris): A Medieval Household Book*. The guide contains a series of directives from a husband to his new, fifteen-year-old wife. It details everything from how to pray and dress to how to obey, cook, and generally care for a husband. It also addresses wifely obedience and proper female speech via two familiar tales: Griselda and Prudence respectively.

The author uses Griselda as an exemplum for wifely obedience. Here, as mentioned above, obedience is one of the factors that affects the female voice, or more accurately, female silence. But the author of *The Good Wife’s Guide* establishes that the appropriate form of obedience (via speech and silence) is entirely dependent upon whether the wife is physically located in the public sphere or in the private sphere. In the section, “Obedience (including the Story of Griselda),” the husband notes that silence is the expected behavior for a wife while in public. The fictitious husband states, “The 4th section charges that you not be arrogant or answer back to your future husband or to his words and do not contradict him, especially in front of others” (104). In another example that falls under the heading, “Behavior and Attire in Public,” the husband tells the wife that when she is on her way to church she may not “laugh nor stop to speak to anyone on the street” (59). Just as in examples found in the real domestic realm, the predilection for female silence is
overtly detailed in the idealized world of conduct books. However, the authors of these types of books foreground a distinction between what is to be said or done dependent upon whether the wife is in the public or in the private world.

These conduct books also acknowledge the importance of wifely counsel, but, again, only within the private sphere or the household. The female reader of any medieval conduct book would be constantly reminded that wifely counsel is not an acceptable public behavior. Counsel should be relegated to appropriate location as dictated by the examples from Prudence or Griselda; both wives provide advice from within their respective private domestic worlds. This distinction reconfirms Wallace’s assessment that the domestic realm is the space where wifely discourse and counsel appear to have been acceptable (*Chaucerian Polity* 234ff). Wallace also addresses the relevant distinction between public and private spaces that is so prevalent in these guidebooks. He states that a male’s submission to his wife on corporal and spiritual matters “would not be tolerated in the public realm” (*Chaucerian Polity* 234). These guidebooks indoctrinated readers into accepting what men believed to be appropriate forms of public and private speech for a wife, including the very detailed and differentiated behaviors for each space.

Peculiarly, in *The Good Wife’s Guide*, the same silent wife who is instructed to speak to no one on the way to church must be viewed by other church goers as the most vocal and devout of women once seated in church. The guide directs her thusly: “constantly mov[e] your lips in orisons and prayers” (59). Ironically, her pretense at speech is the very act that presumably prevents her from actually speaking to anyone else. Though she moves her lips, she remains silent.
When authors of guidebooks did advise women to speak, they advised them to do so with great caution. The wife navigated a treacherous and possibly abusive path with invisible boundary lines concerning what was indeed acceptable speech or counsel. If she crossed any arbitrary boundary, she might have found herself in a precarious situation with an irate husband. In fact, on par with conditions found in the real domestic world, it seems that she was to expect anger and abuse from her husband. In the chapter, “Providing Your Husband with Good Counsel (including the Story of Melibee),” the husband says:

See to it that you placate his proud cruelty with patience and gentle words [...]. If you cannot prevent him from abusing you in anger, take care not to complain to your friends or anyone else, since should he discover your conversations, he would be bound to regard you unfavorably because of this disclosure, and he would not forget about it. Rather, go into your chamber and weep gently and quietly in a low voice and complain to God. That is what wise ladies do. (149)

Not only does this passage suggest that any abuse must be suffered quietly, a motif also present in medieval rabbinical texts, this guidebook explicitly states that the wife must suffer solitarily without confiding in friends lest she be unwise. It appears that if the medieval wife is not figuratively isolated by the prescribed role of silence in the real domestic world, she can be physically isolated, as dictated by the idealized guidelines of conduct books, on account of having given improper counsel.

In addition to physical abuse, medieval conduct books also instilled a fear of abandonment for unruly wives. The husband in *The Good Wife’s Guide*, under the heading, “The Care of the Husband’s Person,” reminds his wife that “‘there are three things that drive a good man from home: a roofless house, a smoky chimney, and a
quarrelsome woman” (138). He continues to scare the new wife by stating that, should she fall short in any of her duties, it would be reason enough for him to leave her. He says, “If he finds outside the family a safe refuge and the help of a woman who welcomes him […] he will follow her and desire her company, wanting to sleep and warm himself between her breasts” (139). The fear of potential abandonment might have been enough to ensure a wife’s adherence to the rules. Because the medieval wife was, most likely, entirely dependent upon her husband for her wellbeing, her home, and her food, the possibility of the loss of those necessities might ensure that she would not become “quarrelsome.” Ultimately, the fears and potential forms of abuse (physical and psychological) designated by idealized medieval conduct books could affect how and when the wife used her voice.

*Ars dicendi et tacendi*

In addition to the rules of conduct books, like those in *The Good Wife’s Guide*, how and when the medieval wife’s voice were used was also governed by treatises that addressed the nature and appropriateness of her speech. She was expected to adhere to the principles of *ars dicendi et tacendi* as established by Albertano di Brescia in his *Ars di loquendi et tacendi*. This meant that women must not only know what type of speech was appropriate, but they also needed to know when it was acceptable to speak. These same rules are found in representations of female voices in literature. Authors could use women as idyllic examples to highlight female adherence to these rules, or authors could present the female voice.

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7 These same words are repeated by none other that the Wife of Bath herself. She states, “Thow seyst that droppynge houses, and eek smoke, / And chidyng wyves maken men to flee / Out of hir owene houses; a, benedicitee!” (*The Wife of Bath’s Prologue* III.278-280).
within contexts that illustrated the repercussions for disregarding the rules of female speech.

In his assessment of Chaucer’s women, Wallace connects the appropriateness of the arts of female speech and silence to both the public and private worlds. He notes that women “must wait at the margins of masculine-generated public speaking and then know just when (quando in the terms of rhetorical treatises) to time the moment of intervention” (Chaucerian Polity 118). Wallace believes that Prudence perfectly illustrates the art of speaking and silence:

She begins with tacendi, recognizing that Melibee must be allowed to weep ‘for a certein tyme’ before he can be considered amenable to arguments. The importance of maintaining silence is then underlined before the crucial moment of dicendi, linguistic intervention, is signaled. (Chaucerian Polity 232)

Wallace notes the cognizance that Prudence has regarding quando, pointing to her awareness that she must wait for her time (“whan she saw hir tyme” (The Tale of Melibee VII.980 qtd. in Chaucerian Polity 232)). This is precisely what is directed in Albertano’s treatise. Albertano states:

Regarding the occasion of speech, follow the words of Solomon: There is a time for speech and a time for silence. The modulation of speech and silence is important, says Seneca. Keep silent until it is necessary for you to speak. Not only keep yourself silent but expect it of others as well. Then, when it is your turn to speak, you will be heard. (6.237-9)

It follows then that because Chaucer’s Prudence adheres to the treatise’s principles, her voice is heard. Moreover, according to treatise, her advice is taken primarily because she was wise enough to wait. Prudence abides by many of Albertano’s rules, such as “speak[ing] gently, without harshness, since, as Solomon says, harsh speech stirs anger and gentle words turn it away” (2.81). She becomes an example to showcase the proper
use of the female voice. One may not be surprised that she serves as an exemplum, as Albertano’s work was, in fact, a source for *Melibee*. Still, and nonetheless, it is difficult to reconcile her adherence to the rules as a reason for the effectiveness of her voice. The crux lies in her accurate display of the oppressive guidelines set forth for women in guidebooks and treatises. The strict rules regarding female speech become the means that permit her female voice to loom large and effective throughout *Melibee*.

On the other hand, because medieval women, real and fictional, were at constant risk of failing to follow any given rule of female speech (particularly in literary representations), they could become negative examples of women who misuse speech. These fictional wives become the means to illustrate the dire consequences for disobeying the rules of female speech. Wallace notes that when the “*artes* have been misapplied” (*Chaucerian Polity* 5), the consequences are drastic and fatal. Edward Wheatley echoes this sentiment in the context of the widow of Ephesus’s actions (82-83), showing that as far back as the *Satyricon*, it appears that “feminine work does not end well” (83). Feminine work via the female voice does not end well for women who dismiss the rules of female speech. One such instance is witnessed in Dorigen.

In *The Franklin’s Tale*, Dorigen offers her rash vow and rebukes all the principles of *ars dicendi and tacendi* by speaking quickly and without hesitation. Dorigen’s misapplication of the arts allows her to become a negative example of what can happen when rules are violated, i.e. ensuing mayhem. Dyan Elliott believes *The Franklin’s Tale* is:
[...] an eloquent demonstration of the havoc that results from granting legal autonomy to wives. Dorigen conforms with the stereotype articulated by canonist William Lyndwood (d. 1446), who cautions clerics against women ‘who are accustomed to emit vows more readily than men, especially when they are placed in some sort of tribulation or distress.’ (46)

Is one to believe that a delicate woman in distress should not be held accountable for her untimely speech? Does her very femaleness become a factor for her behavior or is it an excuse? In contrast to the depiction of female speech as mannish when the rules are broken, here, the wife’s abandonment of prescriptions is not mannish, but is the epitome of femaleness. Female stereotypes ironically permit her to appear faultless for offering her rash vow because her words are simply a product of her gender and something she can do nothing about. Alcuin Blamires points out, “Ready answers, clever quick thinking, are not the sorts of skills advocated by the medieval discourses on prudence and counsel” (70). He continues, noting that historically, “Moral-philosophical writings conspired to construct the female intellect to be suited to the quick or ephemeral and unsuited to the leisurely or reflective” (70).

Accordingly, Dorigen is bound by her nature and by her gender.

Dorigen’s rash words are the result of the misapplication of the artes for the medieval female voice. Moreover, the wife’s obliviousness to the rules of speech aid in her categorization as the embodiment of the “reckless speech” (Blamires 39). Dorigen’s powerful words have devastating results, and Albertano reminds us that “words are like arrows [...] easy to shoot off, hard to retrieve” (qtd. in Chaucerian Polity 254). Wallace uses Albertano’s words in the context of The Manciple’s Tale, highlighting the notion that a “Thyng that is seyd is seyd, and forth it gooth” (IX.355). Similarly, once Dorigen speaks without proper reflection, one can observe the events that unfold around her.
Blamires might suggest this is an example of the “destructive power of the tongue” (43). Ultimately, Dorigen creates turmoil for herself, her husband, and her suitor, and her words force the values of speech (both feminine and masculine) to be put to the most extreme of tests. Whether this is the result of an impossibility to adhere to idealized standards, or it is the result of excuses granted under the guise of gendered female stereotypes remains uncertain.

For however much medieval conduct books and treatises tried to control wifely speech, the prescriptions remained in constant tension with the real medieval woman’s voice. Kim Phillips acknowledges the problem and limitations of women’s conduct books in that they “attempt to homogenize the behavior and values” of women rather than present an actual, and truer, range of perspectives held by and about medieval females (*Medieval Maidens* 196). The consequences for rebuking prescriptions invite the labels previously discussed. If the real female voice was not accurately represented by the idealized representations in conduct books, the real medieval wife’s voice could be categorically disassociated from its female gender. Anytime the wife misuses her voice, according to the guidelines established in conduct books or rhetorical manuals (whether she is speaking publically, whether she is speaking at the wrong time, or whether she is speaking about inappropriate material), her voice becomes the anti-female, mannish voice. Susan Shapiro might suggest even more extreme disparagements in such a scenario. She points to declarations that note when women “infringe” on masculine territory, they “are not just mannish, but positively hermaphroditic; freakish, unnatural, desexed,

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8 Blamires also lauds Wallace for his understanding of the destructiveness of speech (43).
undesirable, probably sterile, and wholly unattractive creatures” (519). These mannish female voices are, however, more accurately examples of real, multifaceted medieval female voices.

**Blurring the Lines of Household Rhetoric and Wifely Counsel: the Power of Female Speech**

The unrealistic worlds of conduct books and rhetorical manuals mean that women, both real and in literature, can be idealized like Prudence, or used as cautionary examples, like Dorigen. But what of wives who blur the lines between the ideal and the real? Some wives, who reside between the absolutes, use the ideals of acceptable female speech within the framework of wifely eloquence and household rhetoric to render themselves more powerful.

The medieval female voice of counsel, in particular, was undeniably powerful. When represented in literature, scholars readily remind one that, in most instances, a male author is behind the choice to allow such womanly speech or counsel in the first place. Yet the fact remains that in much of Chaucer this task is precisely left to the female characters. What is inarguable is that without wifely counsel, many tales would take quite a different turn of events. If Ypolita was unable to persuade Theseus not to execute Palamoun and Arcite, the knights would have likely battled to the death in the forest. Or what might have happened if Prudence wasn’t able to calm her husband? What if Phoebus had accepted his wife’s counsel? All of these women drive the plot forward and cause events. They act as an
operative force on the text and take on a role similar to that of a Mover or, to borrow V.A. Kolve’s term, a “shaper.”

The voices of medieval wives in Chaucer’s literature render effects. They do not often speak for frivolity’s sake or pley, but rather they speak to enact some sort of change. This view is in contrast to Wallace’s suggestion that a woman cannot act as the Mover (like Theseus does) because a woman is continually waiting on the sidelines for the appropriate time to speak (Chaucerian Polity 232). Wallace seems to be claiming that passivity prevents wives from securing a powerful role, like that of a Mover. However, because women do in fact wait on the sidelines for the perfect moment to speak, women ensure the effectiveness of their speech, á la Albertano of Brescia’s directives. In Chaucer’s works, timing is one of the reasons wives are heard and why their voices can manifest a change or event. Wives do “move” situations and their voices are responsible for shaping outcomes, albeit (as Dorigen proves) these outcomes are not always the idealized acts of creation or restoration of order traditionally associated with “shapers.”

Household rhetoric in the form of wifely counsel, even foolish wifely counsel, will also still cause action. N. S. Thompson states, “The power of words is very nearly supreme and exhibits an independent authority: words may influence the perception of reality from a position of falsehood as much as from a position of moral virtue” (Chaucer 116). The men who created the rules of female speech were ever-aware of the possibility of deceit and falsehood. And these same fears are found in literary representations. A perfect example of how words “influence the perception of reality” can be found in Alisoun, the carpenter’s devious wife from The Miller’s Tale.

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9 V.A. Kolve deems the deities Jupiter and Saturn as “shapers” who are always seeking to avoid chaos and restore order (126).
Alisoun’s agenda, carried out through cunning wifely counsel, is to cuckold her husband and to turn him into the mad fool. Though her husband is fearful that his poor Alisoun will die in the flood, and though he goes through great pains to save her, those efforts do not outweigh the jealousy and rage he has shown toward Alisoun. On at least two occasions she fears for her life at the hands of her husband, and Nicolas provides her the perfect opportunity to change her fate. But it is Alisoun’s words that ensure Nicholas’s plan will go off without a hitch. She shows her adeptness at counsel and manipulation (first from the point of view of the narrator and then by her own words) during the scene when John comes to tell her about the flood:

And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
What al this queynte cast was for to seye.
But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye,
And seyde, ‘Allas! go forth thy wey anon,
Help us to scape, or we been dede echon!
I am thy trewe, verray wedded wyf;
Go, deere spouse, and help to save our yf.’ (The Miller’s Tale I.3604-3610)

Her dramatic words cause immediate action and readers are told that “he gooth and geteth hym a knedyng trogh, / And after that a tubbe and a kymelyn” (The Miller’s Tale I.3620-3621). This is an instance where the woman is indeed influencing reality from a point of falsehood.

Moreover, if one presumes that Chaucer’s women, like Alisoun, are adhering to (or attempting to adhere to) the art of tacendi et dicendi in their deployment of wifely counsel (foolish or otherwise), then they must also be aware of the power and effect their words will have. Wallace notes that according to Albertano, “one should speak ‘only if you know not only your reason for speaking but also the impact your speech will have’” (Chaucerian Polity 252). He continues: “The effect (‘effectum’) of ill-considered speech
‘may prove horrible’” (Chaucerian Polity 252). If one presumes that medieval wives are following these dicta in their literary representations, then one can presume that they must also be aware of the power they brandish via their voices. This awareness can prove problematic for husbands like John whose wives are working against them. As observed, Alisoun’s sly counsel secures her position as the role of “shaper.” Her motive to cuckold John is the result of an unwanted marriage, fear of physical abuse, and her love of another. She knows precisely what she’s doing, and it is no surprise to the reader that she takes joy when John is deemed mad. Her words help enact a plan that yields very specific results. Her voice not only permits her an affair with Nicholas, but it has ensured her freedom from John’s jealousy and imprisonment.10

Literary representations of the female voice have an opportunity to upend male-created designs and functions for the female voice. Along with the possibility of helping their husbands, medieval women, via their voices, also created an opportunity to help themselves. These complications and inconsistencies may be an inherent problem for women who are navigating within a male-defined linguistic space. In addition to the problems vocal wives create for men, whether from calculated or reckless speech, the female voice also tends to upset gender dynamics. Whether intended or not, these speaking and mannish women have now entered into an unfamiliar and masculine territory. Matilda Bruckner states as much in terms of connecting female speech to the public (and traditionally masculine) realm:

The act of speaking out—and its converse, remaining silent—have emblematized a whole spectrum of feminist projects. While silence has become the metaphor of a suppressed female other, women’s prise de parole signifies an act of power, a

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10 The Miller describes John as follows: “Jalous he was, and heeld hire narwe in cage” (The Miller’s Tale I.3224).
self-empowerment that announces their entry into language and the public spheres of social interaction. (867)

Wives used their voices to push past their marked categories. For example, wifely eloquence calls for counsel to the husband, thus allowing the wife a participatory (albeit private) role in masculine matters. But at some point, the line between private and public disappears. The woman begins to speak about politics, the economy, and other traditionally non-female topics. Such is the case with Prudence. N. S. Thompson shows how she portrays the value of woman’s speech in the male world:

By her participation and advice, Dame Prudence shows that women may successfully be included in the debate about the affairs of life, even if they do not act in them. She defends her sex on no less an authority than Christ and reminds her husband that God created them to be the ‘help of man.’ (Chaucer 123-124)

These statements confirm that a woman’s voice was a means for her to participate in worldly and masculine matters, whether she was in the public or the private realm.

Similarly, Sue Sheridan Walker believes that “medieval women were caught in the tension between the customary and the possible” (5). It is this tension that allows for a multifaceted female voice that, in literary representations, can depict female speech influenced by actual or idealized situations. The female voice can be a model rooted in the fictitious world of appropriate decorum or it can be reflective of real domestic circumstances or it can exist somewhere between the extremes. This perspective allows for a spectrum of the female voice that ranges from silence to mannish outspokenness. But it is at this point that the female voice becomes somewhat fluid and difficult to categorize. These female voices (and the women themselves) are caught somewhere between their prescribed roles and masculine territories. Consequently, the medieval female voice becomes troublesome not only
for the male husbands, real and fictional, but it is also problematic for critics who
have a difficult time reconciling strong female characters with their prescribed
roles.\textsuperscript{11}

CHAPTER II

MASCULINITY AND THE MEDIEVAL FEMALE VOICE

In the past decade Ruth Karras has brought needed scholarly attention to the relationship between medieval men and medieval women. Her discussion of the medieval man’s subjugation of the medieval woman extends past claims that it was rooted in a masculine need for dominance and power over the female sex. She asserts that women were positioned as the means through which men would demonstrate dominance and power in efforts to increase their perceived masculinity among other men. In the context of knighthood, for example, she states, “He used women, or his attractiveness to women, to impress other men” (25). She notes that the masculinity of a member of this particular group of men was “defined in large part by his relation to women” (25).¹ Women have not left the realm of the subjugated in her discussion (as they are commodified, absent, or regarded as inadequate), but Karras contextualizes women outside of the standard parameters of women’s or gender studies. Karras places women at the heart of definitions of masculinity.

Kim Phillips likewise addresses masculinity in her discussion of medieval women. She elaborates on the reciprocal relationship between the sexes noting that medieval men were also responsible for definitions of medieval women. In her review,

¹ Karras examines masculinities for three groups of men: the knight, the scholar, and the craft worker. In contrast to the knight, the university scholar’s masculinity is defined by “the absence of women” (25), while the craft worker’s masculinity, she says, is defined “not only in opposition to women but in opposition to other men” (109).
she implores scholars to “recognize that [a] greater understanding of this opposite category [masculinity] is necessary for a fuller history of medieval women” (242). She asks, “How can we understand medieval views and institutions of gender—from misogyny to legal structures—without a sense of medieval notions of men as well as women?” (242). Phillips sees the necessity to include men and masculinity as a component of medieval female history. Her view, combined with Karras’s identification that women also affected the perceived masculinity of medieval men, helps scholars establish a fuller portrait of the complex medieval female.

The important relationship between men and women is also evident in representations of the medieval female voice in literature. The medieval female voice is affected by and affects masculinity in both real and manufactured ways, because the medieval female voice is inseparable from what Allen Frantzen terms “the symbolic structure” (37). Frantzen states:

The phrase ‘symbolic structure’ may sound exotic but it involves two familiar assumptions. First, authors give us versions of reality, artistic representations, not reality itself. Second, artistic representations are produced by means of codes, formulas, and literary traditions: they encode the stock of expressions of a period, materials from which authors draw, and not necessarily in a slavish fashion. (37)

Consequently, the fictionally represented voices of the maiden, the wife, and the widow are subject to the limitations established by patriarchal society, the maleness of the author himself, and the author’s desire (or lack of it) to represent those limitations faithfully. Yet, though the female voice is often within the limits established by medieval society (i.e., women should be relegated to the feminine and domestic sphere where female voices can carry out the function of *ars tacendi et dicendi* and women can practice
silence or wifely counsel in private), fictional women’s voices can complicate social relations and confront definitions established by the symbolic structure. Three categories illustrate the means by which literary representations of the female voice disrupt traditional notions of acceptability: (1) the woman’s manner and deployment of speech; (2) her ill-adherence to the rules of female speech; and (3) her overt exhibition of power through speech.\(^2\)

**The Threatening Female Voice Confronts Symbolic Masculinity**

The first category involves the woman’s very participation in speech and language. Karras suggests the perception of masculinity among medieval university scholars was defined, in part, by the absence of women.\(^3\) However, just because men did not allow women at university does not mean that women were content with their exclusion, nor does it mean that women did not find a way into male academia. Karras notes that records speak of one woman who heard university lectures while hidden behind a curtain and another who disguised herself as man so that she could attend classes (184 n36). Hard as they tried, men could not keep women contained within the boundaries they had established for them. If knowledge and intellect are perceived as elements of the masculine world,\(^4\) then woman’s desire to participate in those exclusive fields would have been perceived as a threat to masculinity. The threat, in these examples, was handled through exclusion. However, exclusion was not enough to deter

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\(^2\) The first two categories inherently invoke the power that is addressed separately in the third category.

\(^3\) In her analysis of the university student, Karras also aligns women with animals. She says, the university scholar “proved his manhood by his rationality, which distinguished him not only from women but also from beasts” (67).

\(^4\) Lynn Staley, for one, discusses how rationality and logic are associated with male (as opposed to female) language (*The Powers of the Holy* 253).
women from participating in matters of masculine intellect. In order to learn what men learned, some women literally hid in the shadows.

Likewise, in literature, women’s efforts to further their perceived intelligence cannot be contained. Their attempts manifest in their use of language as a specific means to impart knowledge. The female authors Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, Christine de Pizan, and Marie de France all use language as a means to express female knowledge, and thus their voices become problematic for definitions of masculinity. Roberta Krueger claims that “Margery asserts her authority as a teacher and insinuates a female voice into a tradition that she explicitly describes as male and patrilineal” (177). And Karma Lochrie discusses the effects of Margery’s voice upon upon the men who are subsequently threatened by it. She notes that “one monk curses her, saying that he wished she were closed up in a house of stone” (248). In this example, man’s immediate reaction is to remove the threat by enclosing it in its proper place: either an anchoress’ cell or, literally, a domestic structure. In either case, the woman is closed off from the outside, public world insinuating an inherent, threatening quality to her voice.

Lochrie also notes Christine de Pizan’s controversial elevation of female speech as divinely granted when she reminds readers of Christine’s words: “‘God has demonstrated that He has truly placed language in women’s mouths’” (qtd. in Lochrie 249). Christine’s assertion elevates female speech to a level that would seemingly be unattainable by most men. Her female voice would then supersede the realm of masculine intellect, and it would enter into “a model of wisdom, boldness and ‘great force of will’” (Lochrie 249). The elevation and authority of female speech would also ensure a negative reaction from medieval men who subscribed to the “cultural idioms identifying it as
‘blameworthy and of such small authority’” (Lochrie 249). Whether of divine origin or as a means of expressing authority, women’s speech could and did participate in masculine intellectual conversations. Consequently, and because of the authority associated with women’s voices, these men (in a manner similar to the female exclusion exhibited by university scholars) wished outspoken women would forever be locked up and silenced through isolation.

Echoes of these threatening voices are also observable in fictional representations of women in literature. Consider the voices of women such as the Wife of Bath or Dorigen. The voices given to these women indicate that they know more intellectually than women of their status should. Both women recount parts of Latin treatises in their speeches. The Wife not only expounds upon her knowledge of Jerome’s *Adversus Jovinianum*, but the deployment of her speech, as Christine Ryan Hilary notes, also “follows a conventional pattern like that in ‘Golias de conjuge non ducenda’” (867). Alyson’s knowledge, which she displays through her language abilities and delivery format, also exemplifies the complex and reciprocal relationship between the female voice and masculinity. For example, the Wife’s words simultaneously insinuate her “desire to dominate the male” and are also “the twisted result of her domination by males” (Hilary 873). For, although Alyson displays her adeptness with Latinate, masculine knowledge via masculine deployment techniques, her voice is ultimately undercut by her use of antifeminist treatises. Moreover, the Wife’s knowledge of Latin texts is tempered by its original delivery format: the knowledge arrives via Jankyn who reads from the *Book of Wikked Wives*, presumably in the vernacular. Ultimately, Alyson’s

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5 *Golias de conjuge non ducenda* is an example of the “satirical attacks upon the female sex which were common in the Middle Ages” (Apocalypsis GoliÆ Episcopi).
desire to dominate men is complicated by the content of her literary weaponry, which shows the degree to which male domination permeates.

A similar example is witnessed in Dorigen’s lament. Joanne Rice notes that Dorigen also “summarizes six chapters of Jerome[‘s] Adversus Jovinianum” (900). But again, Dorigen, like the Wife, might have heard these stories in translation, complicating her relationship with the Latin texts and masculinity. And though the content of their speeches is difficult to reconcile, the fact remains that these women, via their speech and knowledge of Latin texts, are encroaching upon territories exclusive to masculine discourse. Like the women attending university, or like the women using authoritative or divine speech, these female characters complicate prescriptions designated by the symbolic structure.

Second, female characters who do not adhere to the established concepts of appropriate decorum for female speech move beyond the socially perceived safety of their prescribed roles. Medieval female speech is traditionally and symbolically constrained by definitions that portray it as chatty gossip, domestic governance, private counsel, or nonexistent (i.e., silent). Lynn Staley further contextualizes symbolic limits placed upon female speech when she states, “In terms of medieval language of gender, what is male was construed as rational and potent and what is female as irrational and in need of restraint” (253). Yet, in Chaucer’s representation of his female characters, this is not always the case. Staley rightly acknowledges that “Chaucer plays variations upon these constructions” (253). Female representations can show logic and command of voice that oftentimes exceeds the abilities of their male counterparts. Staley offers the example of the male eagles, Almachius, and Melibee as masculine figures who are not “rational or
potent and are seriously upstaged by the ladies who refuse to engage in male
demonstrations of might and noise” (253). Criseyde’s speeches similarly prove that she
exhibits rational logic as opposed to the expected, stereotypical female irrationality. She
weighs her possible futures logically, reasonably, when she says, “‘Allas! Syn I am free, /
Sholde I now love, and put in jupartie / My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?’” (Troilus
and Criseyde II.771-773). Pertolote is similarly rational as she advises Chauntecleer
about his dream using the logic of one ancient Roman master. Pertolote says, “‘Lo
Catoun, which that was so wys a man, / Seyde he [Catoun] nat thus, ‘Ne do no fors of
dremes’?” (The Nun’s Priest’s Tale VII.2940-2941). Chaucer’s representations of
female voices challenge the symbolic rules governing female speech through the female
character’s display of rational logic and through her command of language and intellect.

Along with reason and rationality, control over one’s language is perceived as a
masculine trait. Carolyn Dinshaw suggests that “whoever exerts control of signification,
of language and the literary act, is associated with the masculine” (Chaucer’s Sexual
Poetics 10). Rather than develop the idea of signification, a representational world in
which female voice is created and situated, Dinshaw lapses into a discussion on the
feminization of the male. She might have taken this opportunity to explore the role of
women who use language and act in the literary world and examine how those signs are
read. For example, the Wife’s adeptness with language is confirmed by the Friar, who
tells the Wife, “‘Ye had seyd muche thyng right wel’” (The Friar’s Prologue III.1273).

The Wife’s voice and control of language also permit her to claim power over her
immediate world. Alyson’s language is provocative, and it does not stay within the
designated scope of symbolic female speech. Two consequences for her actions include:
(1) she is perceived as masculine or less than feminine, and (2) she gets everything she desires. In her own words, the Wife states, “‘He yaf me al the bridel in myn hond / To han the governance of hous and lond, / And of his tonge, and of his hond also’” (The Wife of Bath’s Prologue III.813-815). Her control over signification is read as adeptness by her companions, is complicated by nature of her Prologue and its final outcome, and is a direct challenge to masculinity. This is hardly the representation of signification that Dinshaw says is “dependent upon the passivity, blankness, or absence of woman” (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 16). The Wife’s control of language has given the Wife respect and power. And power is at the heart of the third category that illustrates how female speech upsets the symbolic structure.

In addition to the woman’s use of language and her propensity for speaking outside the prescriptions of decorum, the third category that complicates gender relations involves the power that the female voice wields. Chaucer’s women are subject to the terms of the symbolic; he crafts their voices in such a way that their exhibition of power must be influenced by real-world traditions. For example, the power of representational female speech is shown by the woman’s participation in affairs of state, by her ability to control masculine displays of anger, by her enactments of representations of “trouthe,” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1479) and by her talent to control female sexuality. Each of the above displays of power would also have an equally diminishing effect upon masculinity.

Consider Griselda’s ability to pacify an entire state. The Clerk says:

Nat oonly this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
Koude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,
But eek, whan that the cas required it,
The commune profit koude she redresse.
Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse
In al that land that she ne koude apese,
And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese. (The Clerk’s Tale IV.428-434)

Notice that Chaucer’s Clerk first tells readers that Griselda is adept at “the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse” (IV.429). He reminds his audience that the execution of wifely duties is her primary concern. However, he also says that Griselda’s wit and wisdom are what permit her to promote common interests and to settle the disputes and discord of a nation. She is granted a role that is rooted in traditions of wifely counsel, which by definition is enacted in a predominantly private, domestic atmosphere. Yet Griselda affects affairs publicly. Therefore, she acts outside prescriptions of the symbolic when she uses her voice in a public display of female authority. Moreover, her words are her own, and should not be confused as a substitution for her husband’s male voice.

Griselda also challenges masculine power in that she, at the time of her banishment, has the support of the people. Because Griselda has the support of the people, she could, hypothetically, command the people to carry out any act of rebellion and combat Walter’s tyranny, all with the power of her voice. Control over a group, a mob, is a sign of power, and can be considered a definitive threat to masculinity. This type of control exemplifies Staley’s categorization of Griselda as masculine. Staley believes that “in relation to contemporary gender codes, Griselda appears the most ‘masculine’ of the figures in the tale and more truly threatening to tyrannical power” (“Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity” 254).

Another example illustrating the power the female voice has over masculine affairs is found in the women of The Knight’s Tale. Ypolita and Emelye are able to pacify Theseus’s rage. In this representation, the female voice mediates masculine temper,
promotes peace, and saves lives. A similar argument can be made for Prudence, who is likewise responsible for calming masculine rage and preventing further violence. Like Griselda, each of these women subverts the symbolic. Ypolita, Emelye, and Prudence’s voices influence masculine behaviors, and their power to do so can only be perceived as a threat to the power of their men’s perceived masculinity.

In other instances, the female voice’s power can be seen through its ability to participate in masculine symbolic standards of speech and behavior. Consider that Dorigen must uphold her word lest she commit the largest social disgrace (according to Arveragus): the inability to publicly uphold “trouthe” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1479). Arveragus states, “‘Trouthe is the hyest thyng that man may kepe’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1479). Yet, Dorigen’s words demand that she participate in masculine definitions of “trouthe,” as well as maintain her feminine identity as a wife. Like Griselda, the wife who counsels a nation, Dorigen’s voice is participating in symbolic representations of both the masculine and the feminine worlds. Also, like Griselda, who the Clerk reminds readers is a wife first and foremost, Dorigen’s role as wife is prevalent. Her public representation is of utmost importance and she must do whatever she can to ensure that reputation is perceived intact.

This representation mirrors the real traditions that affected medieval marital relationships. The public perception of the wife (as seen by her beauty, honor, and publicly perceived reputation) would have affected her husband’s perceived masculinity. Karras states that men “would be identified by whom they married rather than by what craft they practiced or what prowess, physical or intellectual, they demonstrated” (156).

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This same tradition is echoed in *The Franklin’s Tale*, where a husband is also judged by the quality of the wife he keeps, and, presumably, the ability of his wife’s speech. Dorigen’s voice is powerful not because it enacts representations of the symbolic structure, but because it simultaneously diverges from them. Moreover, Dorigen’s seemingly private, wifely world is moved into the public realm (literally onto a busy street) where she must uphold the power and weight of her words in accordance with masculine standards.

Finally, fictionally represented wives could use their power to change their lives. In *The Merchant’s Tale* May uses the power of her voice to unchain herself from an unwanted and impotent husband. Her power is displayed through her craftiness in organizing an affair and in her adeptness for telling quick-witted lies, which is a power granted her by the goddess Proserpyne during a divine battle with Pluto. In retaliation to Pluto granting January the return of his eyesight (so that he may witness his wife’s deceit) Proserpyne states:

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“Now by my moodres sires soule I swere
That I shal yeven hire suffisant answere,
And alle wommen after, for hir sake,
That, though they be in any gilt ytake,
With face boold they shulle hemself excuse,
And bere hem doun that wold hem accuse.
For lak of answere noon of hem shal dyen.
Al hadde man seyn a thyng with bothe his yen,
Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,
And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtilly,
So that ye men shul been lewed as gees.” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2265-2275)
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Ready and divinely granted answers become a part of the feminine skills repertoire and remain in accordance with definitions established by the symbolic structure. For May, quick-witted lying permits her power because her words enable her to control her
sexuality and her immediate world. The power to control sex can be viewed as inherently linked to adverse problems for masculinity. For example, Dinshaw suggests that sex cannot be separated from power at all. She says, “Women are the conduit by which power is passed on; they bear sons” (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 57). Thus, May is not only using her words to enable her to have the lover she wants, but the consequences of her actions can become a powerful and eternal attack upon masculinity through the likely pollution of an aristocratic lineage. May’s words, intertwined with sex and power, can annihilate masculinity for future generations.

The represented female voices discussed above all pose a threat to masculinity. Whether it is due to their language abilities, their insubordination to the rules of prescribed female speech, or their use of speech to enact forms of power, these women are problematic if they are to be held accountable for increasing perceptions of a man’s masculinity. Women cannot define men if they are perceived to be acting and speaking like men. These representational women shed all the stigma attached to their gender’s speech and as such, they challenge and confront definitions of masculinity.

**Masculinity Retaliates against Threatening Female Voices**

Serinity Young notes that men’s fear of female power is rooted in the fear of lessening masculinity or in the fear of perceived lessening of masculinity. She states, “Underlying the belief that women can weaken men's power, [...] is the fear that women can weaken masculinity and cause it to drift toward femininity” (32). The perception of a weakened state of masculinity is regularly retaliated against by the affected male. In general terms, medieval men subjugate medieval women. But if one is to believe Young, men have no choice to do otherwise. In non-fictional settings, Young sees the male need
to subjugate women as the only response to fears of their perceived lessening of masculinity. She says, “Male restrictions on women are thus seen to be about the fear of losing masculinity and of being infected by femaleness. [...] Basing male power on the subjugation of women is predicated on the male belief that women can undermine the masculine” (32). The restrictions that Young discusses are also applicable to representational female voices. The manner in which threats to masculinity are handled in literature reconfirms the inseverable tie to the symbolic structure. Just as in the real world, fictionally represented women also suffer consequences when they speak outside of their prescribed roles and “undermine the masculine.” The repercussions for the masculine, threatening, de-feminized female and her voice include the following: silence, devaluation, and abuse. 7

**Literal Silence**

The role of the silent woman is part of medieval doctrine. Saint Paul states that a woman should not “use authority over the man” and that she should “be in silence” (qtd. in Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 19). And Juvenal and Aristotle believe, respectively, that “wives shouldn’t try to be public speakers; they shouldn’t use rhetorical devices; they shouldn’t read all the classics—there ought to be some things women don’t understand” (qtd. in Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 19) and that “silence is a woman’s glory” (qtd. in Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 19). Female silencing, a type of forced invisibility, is also present in historical records. In one instance, masculine fear

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7 In the previous chapter female silence, as a prescribed behavior, was shown to be a result of the husband’s dominance over his wife. Specifically, silence was a response to masculine power displays, including subjugation, servitude, exchangeability, commodification, and abuse. However, silence is not only the result of such physical conditions; silence can also be an act in and of itself bestowed upon women purposely due to fears of lessening masculinity. Thus, female silencing in literature becomes as significant an act as devaluation and abuse.
leads to the omission of the female voice, and her subsequent identity, from church documents. Consider three women, who worked for a parish in Salisbury, who are identified in public records as “Butler’s wife, Pratt’s wife, and Webb’s wife” (Phillips, *Medieval Maidens* 190). These wives became nameless women, wives whose voices were removed from history, no matter how important their church role might have been.

A similar silencing also occurs in *The Canterbury Tales*. The most obvious example occurs within the text of *The Knight’s Tale*. The entire Amazonian back story is removed and the voices of the female clan are silenced. Juliette Dor believes that because the tale is male-centric, the female voices are inconsequential. She states that “the focus is on the praise of Theseus,” which renders “the female warriors nearly invisible” (173). Dor elaborates on the logic behind such a narrative move:

> It was central to avoid a number of taboo subjects, such as the Amazons’ reversal of gender roles, assassination of the male population, manly courage, and cult of Diana, as well as their exceptional capacity to fight and to govern. It was even more crucial to hide the inglorious stratagem contrived by his knightly paragon to eventually subdue these disturbing females. (172)

Here, real-world anxiety about powerful female voices bleeds into literary representations. In *The Knight’s Tale*, Ypolita’s leadership, her negotiating skills, and her noble surrender (all present in Boccaccio’s version) are removed from Chaucer’s narrative. Ypolita, like the church wives, is now identified by her status as Theseus’s wife rather than for her own accomplishments.⁸

But it is not just the women in the tales that are subject to being silenced. Felicity Riddy notes that silencing goes beyond the narrative of the individual tales. She describes

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⁸ Even Alyson, the Wife of Bath, is better known as simply, the Wife. Also consider Prudence and Constance, women whose names are synonymous with acceptable female traits as established by medieval standards.
the ending of *The Franklin’s Tale* as a tool to silence women who are actually on the
pilgrimage. She states:

Now it is the women’s turn to be silenced and contained. The Franklin’s final,
knowing question – ‘Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?’ (1622) – refers
only to the male characters in his story and is addressed only to the ‘Lordynges’
among his listeners, recreating that circle of closed gentility. Responding to the
tale’s interrogative ending seems to be a part of a language game that the women
pilgrims are expected to watch but not to play. (65)

This masculine fear of female language and female voices is then intertwined into the
narrative of *The Canterbury Tales* on multiple levels. The female voices can be subject to
silencing from any man (including Chaucer) at any time, whether the represented male is
a character in the tale, telling the tale, or a listener on the pilgrimage.

Yet, even in attempts to silence women, the threat to masculinity can remain. For
every example, May, who is a perfect portrait of a silent and voiceless woman in the beginning
of *The Merchant’s Tale*, is still able to lessen January’s masculinity. January chose May
based on her outward appearance and seemingly silent acquiescence. She exhibits no
vocal input regarding the marriage agreement, and she represents the ideal, silent female
who would serve to increase perceptions of January’s masculinity among other men.

However, it is his interpretation of this silent woman that is at the root of January’s
decimated masculinity through cuckolding. Helen Cooper notes that January’s “idea of
womanhood is reduced to the merely visual; and the inadequacy of such vision becomes
the central theme of the Merchant’s Tale” (71-72). Not only does the silenced woman
affect January’s masculinity, but she also represents the embodiment of the medieval
man’s physical blindness in his creation and endorsement of the prescription of silence as
a desired feminine quality.
Staley also categorizes Griselda as one of Chaucer’s silent wives. She states, “Griselda, with the exception of one startlingly knowledgeable speech, does not challenge Walter; her effectiveness, such as it is, lies in her evenhanded and finally undervalued rulership (which is delegated to her by Walter) and in her silence” (“Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity” 182). While she is not incorrect in noting Griselda’s silence is a means to her “effectiveness,” Griselda is not as silent as Staley presents her. Griselda proves to be a much more complicated female voice, one that cannot easily be contained in the category of silent female.9

Rendering women invisible or voiceless becomes a paradigm for how men react when masculinity is called into question. But another manner of confronting the powerful female voices of mannish women (what Dor calls viragos (172-173)), is to highlight difference. This is accomplished by alienating these problematic voices to the category of foreignness so that alterations to the norm are more easily digestible. Such is the case for the once vocal Amazonian women of The Knight’s Tale.10 Cordelia Beattie believes that “these narratives written about distant lands, written before European colonial activity in central and east Asia, provided space for imagining strong, independent women, ‘fantasy figures’ of femininity, which would not be acceptable closer to home” (9). This distancing becomes a justifiable way for men to silence women and then relegate their outspokenness to a quality of foreignness, which presumably mitigates the negative impact upon their own masculinity. The woman’s voice is represented as unsettling for

9 See Griselda’s case study in chapter four for a thorough analysis of her voice.

10 Dor presents an argument that contextualizes the foreignness of the Amazon women in terms of their relocation to the West. She states, “The sisters are pictured by him as two regular women; they are of foreign origin, but the Duke displaced them to the West and colonized them. Whether they are integrated into what used to be a hostile milieu does not worry the latter at all and it does not even occur to him that the domestication of their cultural and religious alterity might have been unsuccessful” (172-173).
the men whose masculinity may be compromised by it, and, consequently, the woman is repeatedly silenced, sometimes more.

**Literal Devaluation**

The next manner of combating the powerful female voice is through its devaluation. In representational depictions, devaluation is accomplished by reducing the woman’s words to stereotypes or by illustrating female ineptness with language. Recall the medieval adoption of antifeminist treatises, like Juvenal’s, which state that “women shouldn’t try to be public speakers, [or] use rhetorical devices – some things women shouldn’t understand” (qtd. in Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 19). However, women were not consistent portraits of silence, nor did they adhere to Juvenal’s suggested guidelines. As such, when women were permitted a voice, it became the ideal opportunity for men (authors or fictional representations) to cast them as nothing more than the stereotypical expectations of the symbolic structure.

One of the stereotypes was that women were overly talkative. Alcuin Blamires captures this sentiment in his discussion of the allegations in Andreas’s *On Love*. Blamires notes that “women can’t keep quiet,” that “secrets burn them up inside,” and that “women cannot restrain their tongues from talking” (133). Likewise, Lee Patterson states that “antifeminist literature presents woman as an inveterate and interminable talker, wagging her tongue like the clapper on a bell” (660-1). The Wife of Bath becomes the embodiment of this attitude. She speaks freely and without restraint. As Blamires says, “She will disclose anything and everything to her group of intimates” (140). The Wife does not adhere to the rules of *decorum* for her gender and, consequently, she can be reduced to a stereotype. Lee Patterson states that in “literature a woman's voice is not
merely part of her weaponry but the very mode of her existence” (660-1). This
indeterminate tongue-wagging depicted by literary representations of women, like the
Wife, means that not only is she unable to escape the stigma attached to her stereotypical
words, but she is also subject to judgment because of it. Women like her are not just
garrulous women, but they become foolish in their attempts to participate in the
masculine world of speech and rhetoric. Commonplace was the connection between
language and intellect. In his summation of attitudes on speech in the Book of Proverbs,
Blamires writes, “Multitudes of words, pouring out of words, unguarded speech and an
unrestrained tongue, these are the marks of the fool” (221). Not only did men present
literary women as caricatures of female stereotypes, but men then judged women harshly
for it.

Masculine judgment against female speech in literary representations is also
shown ironically with the woman’s own words. Consider that the Wife misappropriates
Paul’s words in the Bible (Hilary 866), that the Wife and Dorigen both recount
antifeminist treatises, and that the Prioress flaunts her superficial knowledge of Latin
(with her neck charm that reads “amor vincit omnia” (General Prologue I.162)), only to
be apparently oblivious to the Nun’s Priest’s mistranslation of “Mulier est hominis
confusio” (The Nun’s Priest’s Tale VII.3164).¹¹ Dorigen is also perceived to be a vocal
failure in that her lengthy words are nothing more than a misuse of language, according
to Robert Edwards. He states, “She is a victim of her own blindness, her blithe
assumption that reality can be separated from play in a world of relationships founded on

¹¹ The Nun’s Priest translates the Latin as “‘Wommen is mannes joye and al his blis’” (The Nun’s Priest’s
Tale VII.3166). The correct translation is “Woman is man’s ruin.” The Prioress, though present, does not
respond which invites the opportunity for one to assume that she believes his translation accurate.
language” (238). Dorigen is unable to participate in masculine discourse because, as Juvenal predicted, she does not understand the rules. Moreover, Edwards suggests that Dorigen’s lengthy lament serves to highlight her difference from the women she presumes are like her:

For all her claims to share the predicaments of exemplary figures from the classical past, Dorigen is profoundly isolated. She speaks to a moral universe of remote analogues who do not share the source of her pathos. She sees Fortune as the cause of her predicament, but it is Fate that haunts the others. Her situation is thus closer to the figures of Ovid’s *Heroides*, bound to each other by the abstract resemblance of their situations yet isolated in the artificiality of their utterances. (238-239)

Dorigen, in her attempt at seemingly learned language and history, is undercut by her lack of a contextual understanding of her words and a relative understanding of the plight of these classical women. Her speech then becomes, as Edwards says, artificial.

These examples validate claims presented by Jane Thompkins, who commits to a position that women’s speech can be valued less than men’s. She states that for some women, “words are always in vain, they are chaff, less than nothing, another sign of her degradation” (49). While this may be true for some women, it is not true for all. Consider the position of the Nun’s Priest, who confirms that even in a devalued state, female speech is not “less than nothing,” but it is the source of man’s woe. He expounds on how unfortunate it was that Chauntecleer took Pertelote’s advice when he says, “My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere, / That tok his conseil of his wyf, with sorwe” (*The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* VII.3252-3253). The Nun’s Priest believes that Pertelote’s counsel, as women’s counsel, is disadvantageous to men, and he reiterates its inescapable link to the symbolic structure. He claims:

Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;
Wommannes counseil brought us first to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradys to go
Ther as he was ful myrie and wel at ese. (The Nun’s Priest’s Tale VII.3256-3259)

More than devalue and relegate the female voice to categorical foolishness, the Nun’s Priest’s representational recollection of antifeminist sentiments reminds readers of the woman’s role in the Fall and its accompanying stigma.12

These literary examples serve to fulfill the masculine prophecy that “‘wommen ben wise in short avysement’” (Troilus and Criseyde IV.936). These female voices are devalued because these women “speak at the moment when one should hold one’s peace [which] is deemed a failure of discretion and self-control” (Blamires 221). These types of devaluations are precisely what Karras argues is a necessary component of the male need to disassociate with, or subjugate, the feminine as a means to qualify their own masculinity. Straightforward assertions that claim “wommen ben wise in short avysement” will certainly find support in textual examples, yet representational female voices are not always so easily categorized.

Though these women are perceived as nothing more than their stereotypes, as established by the symbolic structure, Talbot Donaldson offers the possibility that Chaucer was working on multiple levels when it comes to the apparent foolishness of female voices. At first reading, one might believe a female character’s voice to be chaff, but on closer inspection, it can be more effective and complicated than initially perceived. Donaldson explores how language shapes our perceptions of Emelye, May, Criseyde, and the Prioress as deceptive heroines. These women, among others, can

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12 References in the Arcrene Riwle discuss Eve’s responsibility in the Fall, and Dinshaw connects that relationship to a type of female, fallen language (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 6). She concludes that woman, as represented by Eve, is “associated with its letter [as opposed to its utterance], divided from intent or spirit, [and is] fragmentary, limited, and unstable” (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 7).
appear foolish, but as the adage goes, appearances can be deceiving. Donaldson believes the apparent foolery by these women, the Prioress in particular, works not only to subvert the males in the tales, but it also applies to male critics like himself who now confront them (64). Here, the female voice can hardly be the chaff that Thompkins believes it to be.

**Abuse**

The last, and most brutal, means that men use to counter powerful female voices is through abuse. The literary representations of these violent acts reflect real-world violence against women. Karras repeatedly notes that medieval men exhibited physical control over medieval women through rape and other forms of violence. She says, “[Young men] used rape as a tool of social control, directing it especially against women who did not conform to the social roles expected of them” (148). She also notes that “a main way in which students interacted with women of the town was through violence” (77). Sexual violence in literary representations appears as non-consensual sex under the misnomer of the marriage debt for women like May, who “obeyeth” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.1961) her husband’s request for what is described as terrible sex (leading May to claim that she “preyseth nat his [January’s] pleyying worth a bene” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV. 1854)), or is literally represented in the tales they tale, such as in *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*. Further, Dorigen is essentially prostituted in the name of “trouthe,” while the Shipman’s wife actually trades sex for money.

These female representations of women who are subject to non-consensual sex are the means through which male fear of diminished masculinity is enacted. Dinshaw applies this same form of subjugation to the actual text itself. She likens the text to a
woman being written upon, which she uses to confirm her perception that the text is essentially a victim of rape (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 11-12). And though she acknowledges the fictional rapes in Chaucer (independent of female voice), she concentrates her argument on the figurative rapes, which, she says, are “the writer’s intent raped by the scribe’s pen [and] the text as woman’s body violated by the interpretations of literary and exegetical tradition” (11). Less abstractly, Karras notes that not every sexual offence is due to retaliation against powerfully perceived women, but that some men are naturalized toward sexual violence. The idea that violence against women is indoctrinated as part of the establishment provides context for these fictionally represented women who are subjected to such violence without any repercussions for the offender. Consider that in the Wife’s story, the rapist is not only set free, but he ends up living happily ever after with his beautiful bride.

Violence against women in The Canterbury Tales comes in all forms, not just the rape that Karras discusses. Consider the psychological torture that Walter puts Griselda through in The Clerk’s Tale. Victor J. Seidler might assert that this is an example of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s notions regarding the primitive, instinctual reaction that is displayed by men. He quotes Wittgenstein, who says, “‘Our language is merely an auxiliary to, and further extension of, this [primitive] behavior’” (139). Like the men Karras discusses, who are naturalized toward violence, these claims appear to dismiss masculine brutality of language (and by extrapolation its involvement in psychological

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13 Dinshaw is first referring the the popular belief that Chaucer was upset with his scribe, as described in “Chaucer’s Words unto Adam, His Owne Scribeyn.” Next, Dinshaw addresses beliefs established by her trope of “reading like a man.”

14 Karras discusses how male students studied Latin stories that included rapes; thus, she says, they were indoctrinated with forms of “naturalized sexual violence” (77).
torture) as a justifiable component of man’s instinctive nature. Just as Petrarch places no judgment upon Walter’s actions, Wittgenstein’s claim would also present Walter as faultless, because his conduct and vocal censure of his wife is simply a product of male instinct. Likewise, one could not fault January, whose maniacally possessive behavior traps May within the chains of an arranged marriage, or Theseus, who, by acting out the political role of captor, enslaves his wife and sister-in-law as prisoners of war. These examples mirror the lack of punishment, due to representational paradigms of naturalized sexual violence, that occurs for characters like the knight in *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*. Men have found a means to justify their behaviors, both in and out of literature, and the justification is an ever-present element of socially accepted paradigms.

In addition to sexual violations and psychological torment, other forms of symbolic violence are portrayed in the *Tales*. For example, the Wife is the most discussed recipient of physical abuse. She openly tells the company of the abuse she received for having torn a page from her husband’s book of “wikked wives” (*The Wife of Bath’s Prologue* III.685). She states, “‘He smoot me so that I was deef’” (*The Wife of Bath’s Prologue* III.668). And later she reiterates that she was “beten for a book” (*The Wife of Bath’s Prologue* III.712). This representation of domestic abuse is a fictional representation of real domestic violence. David Wallace notes that women were often “subjected to forms of violence, particularly domestic violence, that were never recorded in courts of law” (*Chaucerian Polity* 221). With no hope for punitive justice, women were left to suffer in silence. It was commonplace for women to “[face] masculine anger within the closed limits of a *familia* or household” (Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 213). This type of private suffering is also seen in *The Tale of Melibee*. Prudence’s daughter
suffers a horrible attack, yet Prudence must deal with the aftermath within the confines of private domesticity. But the most extreme case of domestic abuse in the Tales is found in The Manciple’s Tale. In the privacy of the domestic realm, masculine rage leads to murder: Phoebus’s solution to his cuckolding is to kill his wife with an arrow.\(^\text{15}\)

As shown, attacks upon masculinity are handled quickly and swiftly in literature. For every suspected threatening female voice, there is a subsequent means for undermining that threat or power. Whether it is by the woman’s own speech (through vocal displays of misunderstanding or misappropriating historical texts, through rash commitments, or through excessive laments), by the chastisement of men (who represent women through symbolic stereotypes, through the addition of added text such as the Envoy in The Clerk’s Tale,\(^\text{16}\)) or through the removal of women from the dialogue as in the Franklin’s demande), or by abuse (physical or psychological), female voices are constantly subject to masculine authority.

The symbolic structure requires that women be silenced, devalued, and abused in fictional representations just as they are in the real world. But these aggressions are complicated by the power dynamics between the sexes. Women are abused. Men are the abusers. But does men’s abuse always serve to increase their masculinity? Derek Pearsall describes tyrannical marriages as “the exercise of absolute power over a powerless

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\(^{15}\) Ironically, her words are not what prompts the action, but, rather, it is on account of the crow’s speech. The crow’s “indiscreet speech” (Blamires 43) aligns the crow with women. This alignment similarly reflects the relationship Karras established in her positioning of both women and beasts in contrast to male university students. Wallace and Blamires offer excellent analysis of the power of words, which can also act like Phoebus’s arrow. See Alcuin Blamires, *Chaucer, Ethics, & Gender* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 43-44, and David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 253-254.

subject” (qtd. in Staley, “Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity” 234). If women are perceived as powerless and men as powerful, can masculinity really be increased by exercising power over the powerless? It would seem that this is cowardice concealed as masculinity. However, it is difficult to reconcile equal amounts of powerlessness among these women, especially as some female characters do exhibit substantial power, which appears to prompt the need for masculine retaliation. If these women, and their voices, were not deemed threatening in some capacity, then the representational male’s need to abuse them might not be so prevalent in literature.

The Unavoidable Crux of Representational Female Voices and Its Solution

Problems of representational female voices do not end with discussions of power. These voices are further complicated by their very existence as products of male-derived narratives. Aside from a handful of known medieval female authors, any form of a medieval woman’s voice was tempered by men. Men are the manufacturers of these medieval representations. Dinshaw and Wallace state, “It is naive, however, to try to separate authentic female voices from masculine textual operations” (Dinshaw and Wallace, Introduction 5). Men created the female voice, and they asserted masculine prescriptions upon it; thus, the medieval female voice is often a stereotypical one that was manufactured within, and adheres to, the confines of the symbolic structure.

Consider the female voices one might deem strong or powerful and somewhere in their words, one can locate a textual undercutting of that power or value. For example, the Wife admits that “man is moore reasonable” (The Wife of Bath’s Prologue III.441) and that she is guilty of prattling when she proclaims her speech “a verray jangleresse” (The Wife of Bath’s Prologue III.638). By her own words, which are the words that
Chaucer gave her, she affirms her place in the symbolic structure. Likewise, Dorigen’s rash promise shows the irrationality of female thought, or as Edwards would call it, the “artificiality” of her “utterances” (239). Dyan Elliot suggests that displays of tongue-wagging and rash vows might be indicative of stressful situations. She states, “Dorigen conforms with the stereotype articulated by canonist William Lyndwood (d. 1446), who cautions clerics against women ‘who are accustomed to emit vows more readily than men, especially when they are placed in some sort of tribulation or distress’” (46). These types of claims about female fragility and lack of reason in the masculine world of language appear throughout Chaucer’s writing. Because there is no escaping masculine influence upon representations of the female voice, critics like Harriet Spiegel can ask, “How can a woman speak in a positive female voice in a genre [that is male]?” (112). This is a valid question that is taken up by many scholars who suggest there can be no authentic female voice in masculine representations. Consequently, scholars often look to paradigms of performativity as a means to reconcile the actual function of the female voice within the confines of the symbolic structure.

In the real world it became a trend to see powerful female voices as a means through which women attempted to perform masculinity. Judith Butler believes that “acts, gestures, and desire” are performative functions and that the result is “fabrication manufactured and sustained though corporeal signs and other discursive means” (2497). Dinshaw qualifies Butler’s ideas when she says, “Women could perform like men, but not with equal ease” (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 9). Therefore, if one is to designate female speech as an attempt at performing masculinity, everything a female character says would dissolve into an act of pretense; this means her voice could never be fully
realized as anything but impartially masculine and poorly performing at that. Claims such as Dinshaw’s suggest that depictions of the female voice are fragmented or incomplete, not only in their representational forms but also in their participation in performativity. But rather than dismiss the female voice as less than whole, it is more fruitful to see its inherent value, a value that cannot dissipate as suggested by notions of inadequate performativity.

Patterson appropriately establishes the value of female language outside of concepts of performativity when he states:

Language and character always interpenetrate, of course: the Wife of Bath can never be anything other than the words she speaks. But to a degree that we have perhaps not fully realized, the conventions of her discourse provide not only her means of expression, and not only its content, but its very occasion and value. Her act of speaking is itself significant, and this is a significance that is implicit in and emerges from the form of her speech. (658-9)

This is a bold statement that attributes significant value to the female voice. It implies that there is a force and action that can be qualified as masculine-like, which ultimately finds support in that her voice was penned by a male. Thus, how could she not represent masculinity in one form or another? Dinshaw would likely disagree. She might argue that even the Wife is incapable of acting masculine because she is merely playing at mimesis, which “mimics the operations of patriarchal discourse” (115). This type of thinking undermines the value of the female voice, lowering it to the quality of a crow, or any other animal that can only mimic language but never truly participate in it. This is not surprising when one imagines the female voice as a component of the symbolic structure with its mandated adherence to male-imposed limitations.
For female voices, definitions of performativity require that at some point the fabrication must disappear and expose the women as women. This also reinvigorates the “less than men” paradigm that is so readily associated with ideals of performativity. But can these assertions be applied to manufactured narratives? If the fabrication of the female voice disappears, one is left with the male voice, ultimately that of the author. Again, scholars unveiled the man behind the woman. Can this then truly be performance if the man is creating the voice that is performing masculinity or causing its demise? The author, or the male narrator, is responsible for that perceived performativity. It complicates any clear answer as to whether these representational female voices are even capable of performing masculinity, although they are clearly detracting from it in many of the tales. It might be more appropriate to say that they are masculine representations of female characters through which masculinity is enacted, not performed.

And while representational female voices are inexorably linked with masculinity (as they are either affected by or are affecting masculinity), might they also exist in a space that is not reliant upon masculinity? In order to see the female voice as an unproblematic entity in terms of gender discourses, it must be removed from the stereotypes of categorization. Instead of a problem, it needs to become the solution, a solution to a misconstrued model which dictates that female language must either be relegated to a designated and acceptable female space, such as the household, or it must intrude upon masculinity through performance or pley.

The female voice must instead be viewed as the solution to the problem that there is no particular categorization for it to exist within. By viewing the female voice as a new entity unto itself, one can solve the problem of its imperfect fit anywhere else. Like the
female voices that serve as resolution in narratives, \(^{17}\) female voices on the whole must be perceived as a resolution to a problem instead of the problem itself. Ferdinand de Saussure suggests that all language is about difference (974), and the difference between masculine and feminine language, both real and symbolic, may be the space required to understand the medieval female voice in new terms. The result of this call for change can only be realized by accepting the female voice as a form of resolution instead of a problem and to acknowledge it as something new unto itself; the difference allows for the existence of a female voice outside of gender trappings.

If one perceives the medieval female voice to exist within a new space, a “space between” birthed by language difference itself, it becomes a new entity, one that could also be indicative of a new language. Robin Waugh’s analysis of the *Svarfdæla saga* suggests that women’s language is menacing, and she claims that menacing language presents an opportunity for female language to exhibit new values. She suggests that the manner in which the female voice is “shaped and deployed” can “threaten her society with the possibilities of a new language in general and new semantic possibilities in particular” (171). \(^{18}\) Maybe one can associate this new language as a varietal form, according to Roger Fowler’s definition, by placing it in neutral, non-gendered territory (186). \(^{19}\) Or maybe it can qualify as a form of antilanguage. Fowler defines antilanguage

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\(^{17}\) The female voice as resolution is discussed by Lee Patterson who believes the Wife, for example, serves a functional role in the narrative. Patterson states, “The Wife of Bath functions [as] agent and paradigm of resolution. At once embodying and eliciting the ambivalence that pervades medieval culture as a whole, these garrulous old women enter their poems at crucial revisionary moments” (659).

\(^{18}\) Waugh also rightly situates this new female language within the social context. Here, as in Chaucer, one sees that woman’s encroachment into masculine social world, via her voice, is problematic primarily because it continually threatens prescribed gender roles.
as “a type of sociolect which relates to the standard in a radically antagonistic way” (188). He states that it is used by deviant groups as an “instrument of solidarity or like-mindedness” (188). Just because these terms did not exist in the Middle Ages does not mean that the events he describes did not occur. Fowler’s descriptions of antilanguage appear to capture sentiments about medieval female voices and permit female voices to escape the confines of the symbolic structure. If one considers female speech as its own sociolect, it would recategorize the female voice from a problematic classification to one with a resolutory status.

Thinking of the female voice as part of a new language, or antilanguage, may seem hyperbolic. And though this claim would unlikely find consistent scholarly support, the result of such thinking presents a new perspective for categorizing the female voice as resolutory instead of problematic. If one strips away the hyperbolic terminology, this line of reasoning attributes substantial power and value to a group bound by a language of their own. These female voices are powerful and valuable not only because they challenge masculinity, but because they exist in in their own right in a newly created “space between” environment. This view is in opposition to critics who believe the female voice must always be moving toward the masculine. If the female voice is the embodiment of new values, it can occupy a path from femininity to masculinity and back, and it can linger in the space between. This new female language is then a language that can exist outside of gendered categories as a separate entity. Newness implies change and

19 ‘‘Variety’ is a very useful, general, neutral concept denoting any distinctive and recognized form of language which has a specific communicative role in society. A variety is not necessarily something ‘less’ than a language, indeed the beauty of the term ‘variety’ is that it can include whole languages if a culture is diglossic or multilingual’ (186).

20 Fowler also discusses antilanguage as a new, non-gendered occurrence of speech (189).
this change becomes a major concern for men as recipients of, or participants in, female discourse. Wallace comments on change in *The Tale of Melibee*, and notes how troublesome it can be for men:

> The only hope of averting the disasters that follow from the rigid anger of an absolute ruler lies, as Prudence argues, in “chaunge.” Since the idea of a man working “chaunge” in the breast of a more powerful male upsets all norms of heterosexual propriety, it follows that a woman, and a woman’s body, must be placed in the line of fire. (*Chaucerian Polity* 237)

As previously discussed, women were indeed “placed in the line of fire.” In addition to various forms of physical abuse, their speeches were regularly undermined by the authoritative male who, constrained by the symbolic order, would not permit their language to stray too far from ideas of appropriate female speech and/or stereotypes. Wallace’s analysis reiterates the ever-present male’s need to enforce subjugation while acknowledging the inevitability of change. The female voice, as harbinger of change, is now subject to interpretation both inside and outside of gender stereotypes; it becomes an illustration of how a woman’s speech participated in, and was the result of, the dynamics between genders and their categories. The female voice, in all its complexity, captures the sentiments of broader statements like those expressed by Patterson. He says, “Medieval feelings are rarely any less complicated than modern ones, and this straightforward categorization is continually subverted by qualifications and complexities” (659).

This assertion that the female voice can exist in a new, liminal “space between” may appear in conflict with claims that there can be no true representational female voice (as female voices are ultimately created by male authors). To solve the problem of the ever-present male, Augustine offers an escape clause for female voices, even voices created by men. In her discussion on language, Dinshaw summarizes Augustinian
thought about language as follows: “the word we speak is only a fragment of what we think,” and “there is always something left over, unexpressed” (qtd. in Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 171-172). The perception of the fragmentary nature of speech would naturally be carried over by the guidelines of the symbolic structure. So while man might have given these representational women their voices, man could not account for the space between the lines, between the women’s words.

This liminal area (which both mirrors and contributes to the possibility for language to exist in the “space between” gender trappings) is the space in which only women can command, and it holds the inferences built exclusively by female speech, inferences that could never be understood or symbolically represented by men. Recall that the symbolic structure is influenced by the limitations established by patriarchal society, the maleness of the author himself, and the author’s desire (or lack of it) to represent those limitations faithfully. Quite possibly, it might not be the author’s desire, or lack of it, to accurately represent the female voice, but his *inability* to express a real female voice. What these women do not say, because the men cannot say it for them, allows them separation from the men that penned them. N. S. Thompson states, “Such is the destabilized world of signs. They can be ambiguous. They are certainly open to much interpretation” (*Chaucer* 57). His sentiments are echoed in any representation of any female voice, thus proving how complicated the female voice is in its relationship with masculinity. The medieval female voice operates on many levels, seen and unseen, and just as Karras believes that masculinity did not exist in any single form (3), one can conclude, neither did the medieval female voice.
CHAPTER III

AUTHOR AND Scribe: MALE PRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION OF

THE FEMALE VOICE

The complex relationship between men and the literary female voice does not end with male-contrived boundaries for its existence or with an awareness that it challenges perceptions of masculinity. The intricate relationship is further nuanced by men’s role in the production and transmission processes of the female voice, reconfirming that most of the extant examples of the medieval female voice are the products of men. By focusing on particular female voices with observable textual histories, one has an opportunity to discover a more complete view of their literary representations via the evolution and transformation, intentional or accidental, that occurs at the hands of men.

The Source Texts and Chaucer’s Altered Manuscripts

Any examination of textual history must account for change at the earliest, observable moment. As such, and in order to better understand the context in which Chaucer altered some of his source material, he must be situated historically within the landscape of medieval authorship. In short, Chaucer’s mercantile background primed him for what would become an international career as a customhouse worker. David Wallace notes that “by the time Chaucer took office, Italians were the only group to take part in the export of English wool” (Chaucerian Polity 13). It is not surprising then that Chaucer spent time in Genoa, Florence, and Lombardy,
where he was exposed to the works of Italian authors like Boccaccio. But the works he was exposed to must be contextualized with the manner in which he was exposed to them. Chaucer was accessing these works concurrent with, as Wallace discusses, turbulent political times, mercantile growth, city-state wars, insurrection, the collapse of the Florentine republic, and plague aftermath (*Chaucerian Polity* 13-64).

There is however some speculation about which texts Chaucer was actually exposed to while in Italy. Peter G. Beidler, in his essay “Just Say Yes, Chaucer knew the *Decameron*: Or Bringing the *Shipman’s Tale* Out of Limbo,” explores the origins of doubt regarding Chaucer’s familiarity with some Italian source material. He refutes the claims of the Cummings-Farnham-Wright-Tedeschi-Reiss school that deny that Chaucer knew the *Decameron*. But irrefutable is the fact that some of these works “circulated widely, especially along trade routes” (Beidler 40), and Chaucer likely came in contact with them.¹ Karla Taylor also explores the rich history that Chaucer had with the Bardi family of Florence and Naples (49), and it is not unreasonable to think that he might have encountered some of these works while in their employ. Beidler ultimately, and very strongly, supports Helen Cooper, who says it best:

> It strains credibility less to believe that Chaucer knew the *Decameron*, than to believe that the circumstantial evidence for his knowledge of it is all mere coincidence, or that he found the inspiration for the *Canterbury Tales* in Boccaccio’s uninspired imitators. (qtd. in Beidler 40)

¹ It is also important to note that Beidler offers an important terminology for textual historians as he differentiates between source, hard analogue, and soft analogue.
Cooper’s assertion ultimately finds support in more recent scholarship. Doubt about Chaucer’s exposure to certain Italian texts is definitively quelled by Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel’s extensive work, Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales. In their collaborative volumes, their contributors meticulously show that Chaucer indeed encountered Boccaccio’s Teseida, Il Filocolo, Il Filostrato, and Decameron, Petrarch’s Historia Griseldis, and Dante’s Commedia, in addition to many more sources and analogues. Chaucer, as an international merchant and multi-lingual English court writer, was then positioned perfectly to bring these newly encountered texts to an English audience. However, by the time these particular Italian narratives reached English eyes and ears, many of the works (and female voices) were altered, inconsequentially or profoundly, by Chaucer.

There are a number of reasons why Chaucer might have altered his sources and the female voices he found in Italian texts. For one, some of the works that resonated with Italians might not be so readily received in England. For Chaucer, these Italian texts, and their female voices, were contextualized by the socio-political climate of medieval Italy. John Larner notes the difficulty an author like Chaucer would have encountered in trying to relocate an Italian poem. He says, “The preoccupations of a city-state society were to prove for a long time difficult to transplant to English soil” (30). Therefore, when Chaucer’s text differs from Boccaccio’s or Petrarch’s or Dante’s text, it is not unreasonable to assume that Chaucer was simply adapting the works and characters to provide a more suitable
experience for his new English audience. Taylor would call this act a translation “into [Chaucer’s] own cultural present” (57).2

The inability to translocate Italian poems is highlighted by Wallace who discusses the repercussions of the increased slave trade in Tuscany after the Black Death in 1348. Young slave girls were likely placed in kitchen households of the aristocracy (or even the merchant class), and their presence “in the household clearly undermined, and was designed to undermine, the newfound symbolic importance accorded to Florentine women” (Chaucerian Polity 20). The connection of these kitchen slaves to men’s perceptions regarding the pleasures of food and sex is observable in one of Boccaccio’s characters, a “female servant who argues for the realistic acceptance of rampant sexual promiscuity” (Chaucerian Polity 21). He uses this example to show how Elissa (the Florentine woman who is the head of her household in Boccaccio’s tale) relates to her kitchen slave. Wallace states:

For men of a certain social class, the kitchen is a site that promises good humor, good food, and an escape from serious concerns. For women of the same class, it threatens control over the household, the one area of political life that they might aspire to rule, and draws them into endless same-sex rivalries and suspicions. Florentine women readers of the Decameron might well understand, then, why Elissa feels moved to repress this female-headed kitchen rebellion with the kind of physical intimidation to which any female slave—or any fiorentina—could legally be subjected. (Chaucerian Polity 21)

Boccaccio exploits the triangular tension in the household between husband, wife, and young, female kitchen slave. Elissa’s actions are contextualized in terms of the

2 Taylor uses Chaucer’s credit of Petrarch, as opposed to Boccaccio, for his Griselda as a means for making the tale more palatable for an English audience, who was presumably more familiar with Latin works than those in the Tuscan vernacular (57). This sentiment is also seen in Troilus and Criseyde when Chaucer declares that the fictional Lollius, who also wrote in Latin, was his source.
increased Tuscan slave trade. But there is no evidence of increased slave trade in England during this same period. So, while Elissa might be relatable to an Italian audience as the iconic, irate woman who must physically quell the kitchen rebellion, she might not be so relevant in London. Because of examples like this, Wallace’s consideration of “whether the native space of the Canterbury Tales is to be construed as English” (Afterword 318) is apropos.

Another reason for alterations to female voices might reside in Chaucer’s apparent enjoyment in confounding audiences and critics with his moral views on gender stereotypes. Once again, consider Elissa and her first introduction in the Decameron. She says, “Veramente gli uomini sono delle femine capo e senza l’ordine loro rade volte riesce alcuna nostra opera a laudevole fine” (Introduzione 35, 76) (Truly, men are the boss of women and without their orders, very rarely does our own work end praiseworthily) (translation mine). The voice Boccaccio affords her is in line with medieval conduct codes and appropriate speech decorum for her sex. But can one claim that Chaucer too held the same view about gender stereotypes and voice? If so, why might he have eliminated her character while creating or reproducing similarly voiced female characters in his own works?

Though difficult to surmise a single answer, this question is worth exploring as there are opposing schools of thought: Chaucer either subscribed to medieval prescriptions regarding acceptable forms of the female voice, or he was avant-garde in his literary portrayal of women. The silent suffering Griselda, the wailing Ypolita, and the abused Wife (who readily confirms the lack of merit in female speech with
lines like, “Thus shulde ye speke and bere hem wrong on honde, / For half so boldly kan ther no man / Swere and liyen, as a womman kan” (The Wife of Bath’s Prologue III.226-228)) are but some of the examples supporting critics’ choice to align Chaucer with stereotypical medieval thought on the appropriate speech decorum for women. Consequently, it is not unheard of for scholars to mention Chaucer, or his female characters, and misogyny or antifeminism in the same sentence. For example, Taylor notes the acceptance of the Wife as the embodiment of “the clerical and bourgeois antifeminist traditions represented in and by the ‘book of wikked wyves’ (III. 685)” (53). Those quick to call Chaucer an antifeminist also regularly cite his removal of nearly the entire first book of the Teseida. The Amazonian back story, what J. A. W. Bennett deems is an example of “‘Women’s Lib’, as espoused by Hippolyta’s Amazons, resolved to die for liberta” (92), is whittled down to a queenly wail in Chaucer’s version.

But to dismiss Chaucer as a vessel for propagating medieval antifeminism does not securely fit with some of the portraits and voices he gives to his female characters. While the Wife might be at a disadvantage because of her sex, she is seemingly unaware of this disadvantage. Though she might attest to the disreputable characteristics of female speech, Chaucer complicates any one particular view of the Wife because he makes her strong, smart, vocal, and subversive. There are
numerous essays dedicated to her status as a feminist hero, one who uses her mind and voice to outwit her male counterpart on her quest for sovereignty.³

However, Susanne Sara Thomas believes the Wife to be problematic. Because Chaucer’s Wife can be interpreted through any number of lenses, the perception of Alyson remains obscure. Thomas concludes that “the meanings of both sovereignty and wyf remain elusive [and even] the knight himself [is] not able to adequately define either one of them” (96). Thomas is not alone in her assessment that Alyson is a complex character. Kenneth J. Oberembt challenges critics who deem the Wife “a subversion of the principle of patriarchal order” (287), because he believes that serves to minimize the agency of Alyson; to do so would be to disregard what Oberembt calls the “comic spirit that superintends her performance” (288). But must the Wife be one or the other? Is she a medieval gendered stereotype or a subversive medieval feminist? And more pointedly, how is she different from an Italian source?

Chaucer is working on multiple levels and to assume that one character can be representative of an entire movement, whether based upon misogynistic attitudes or the promotion of women’s liberation, is to diminish the complexity of his work entirely. More aptly, one might view the Wife as an amalgamation of female characters, some of which are found in Italian sources. Hubertis M. Cummings offers some similarities between Chaucer’s Wife and one of Boccaccio’s texts:

The woman described by Boccaccio [in Corbaccio] resembles the Wyf in her exceeding lustfulness of temperament; in the cunning with which she manages her husbands; particularly in her sly upbraiding of her husband for

pretended relations with other women (cf. W. B. Pro., 587-92, and Corbaccio, 231-32); in her desires for amorous relations with young men (cf. W. B. Pro., 596-626, and Cor. 231-32); and finally in her belief that to her should belong sovereignty or mastery over her husband (cf. W. B. Pro., 813-28, and Cor., 187-88). (47)

Because she is such a complex character, scholars such as Thomas and Oberembt are rightly confounded by Chaucer’s Wife. The fact that Chaucer has a character like Alyson is inconsistent with the notion that he chose to eliminate a character like Elissa in light of the latter’s vocal display of medieval gender stereotypes. Moreover, viewing Chaucer solely as a supporter of feminist ideologies because he chose to eliminate Elissa is problematized by Chaucer’s indifference in applying decorum principles to both men and women.

Consider Alcuin Blamires’s assessment of The Manciple’s Tale. He states:

The crow, which would insist on uttering facts, is male; the voice which conversely would insist on guarding the tongue is reportedly female, the voice of the mother. Chaucer, making the voice of restraint a voice that nevertheless becomes garrulously repetitive, teases us with propositions about propriety, about restraint and unrestraint, detraction and the right use of eloquence, while juggling the stereotypes his period usually attached to these propositions. (225)

Chaucer seems to have been painfully aware of gender stereotypes, and, as Blamires states, he is playing a “game with readers, one in which, moreover, gender has an unusual part” (225). The careful complexity Chaucer bestows upon the voices of his female characters leads to inconclusive evidence that he chose to eliminate or modify certain female characters based upon their inclination or reluctance toward predictable gender stereotypes.
Another possibility for Chaucer’s textual variations might be rooted in a desire for vernacular works to exist “independent of court patronage” and aristocratic worldviews (Taylor 57). Taylor proposes that the examples set by Boccaccio and Dante, who both offered a classical-style of vernacular poetry in a secular and civic social context, inspired Chaucer to do the same (57). If Chaucer was indeed modeling himself after Dante and Boccaccio, who, in true Humanist tradition, removed poetry from its aristocratic and Latin restraints, he used poetic license to similarly alter female voices.\(^4\) Taylor argues that Chaucer’s reliance upon foreign, Italian literature immediately distances him from English court poetry (49). But for Chaucer, it is more than simply using foreign texts as a means of distancing himself from the court; it is about social positions as well.

Taylor believes that differences between Boccaccio and Chaucer “might be explained by their quite different positions with respect to their audience” (59). Unlike John M. Ganim, who believes Chaucer and Boccaccio offer a “similar response to a shared cultural situation” (129), Taylor argues that Boccaccio was central to his audience while Chaucer was marginal (59). Chaucer’s marginal position, one not truly part of the court, might then be a reason for some textual changes, such as the more literal and “less flawless” (73) metaphorical garden in *The Franklin’s Tale*. Taylor suggests that Chaucer’s change of location from a garden to a city street is decisive and representative of his need to depart from courtly and

\(^4\) If one subscribes to the common assumption that Chaucer was attempting to create poetics removed from aristocracy and court, then it might support the removal of a character like Elissa, who represents class status as an aristocratic member of the *brigata*.
aristocratic idealism. She says, “The problems of the garden are resolved only because Dorigen never reaches it again, but instead meets Aurelius in a busy city street with no hint of the artificial nostalgia associated with the noble locus amoenus” (74).

Robert R. Edwards similarly agrees that Chaucer exhibits a shift “from a courtly world to a domain of mixed and competing practices that reflect an urban setting and a mercantile culture” (“Rewriting” 231). He sees the “aristocratic vision” of Boccaccio’s version and links the female voice of Dorigen to “underlying social formations” (“Rewriting” 238). However, at odds with this assessment is the privatization of Dorigen’s lament. While Chaucer grants her a complaint not seen in the Italian source, it is private, seemingly linking her with the old aristocratic ways of the original tale. Edwards notes that she is speaking “to a moral universe,” and that she remains “isolated in the artificiality of [her] utterances” (“Rewriting” 238-9). What Edwards believes is aristocratic is also private, and Chaucer’s move to shift the “private into the social and public arena” (“Rewriting” 240), which Edwards connects to Arveragus’s public shame motif, is ultimately witnessed through the location of the public street and not the aristocratic, private garden.

The above examples show that some of the alterations Chaucer made to Italian sources are the result of the need to adapt the text for a new audience and a new social climate, the desire to complicate or pley with expected gender stereotypes, and to distance his writing from the private aristocracy of the court. It appears that when Chaucer altered a female voice, as he did with Dorigen, he did so purposefully and with
intent. It seems quite impossible to assert that he made such a profound change to her character because of an accident. Yet, there are some changes that cannot be attributed to intention. There are reasons sourced in medieval processes of textual memorization and transmission that explain why Chaucer may have changed a character, some of which include: working from memory, trying to reconcile working from more than one text, having incomplete texts or missing glosses, and making translation errors and mistakes.

Chaucer created some of the most important literature of the Middle Ages, but he was not immune from making mistakes. If, as Michael Leonard Koff has suggested, Chaucer did not have a copy of the Decameron, one must acknowledge the possibility that he was remembering what he had read (281). Janet Coleman notes that this type of detailed memory recollection was not an unusual talent in Chaucer’s time: “They would use the memory tricks of a culture dependent on an oral verse tradition that passed on the valued characteristics of heroes and heroines by means of a rhymed or alliterative collocation, the formulaic memory tag” (36-37). However, memories are not perfect and a poet could forget a word, line, or stanza. Koff says as much when he suggests that misremembering may be a reason for the “the absence of convincing citations from Decameron 10.10” (281).

Moreover, Chaucer himself appears to have acknowledged the potential for mistakes as he regularly reminds readers that some of his narratives are told “in remembraunce” (The Franklin’s Prologue V.714). Thomas H. Bestul points to Chaucer’s Monk as an example of memory at play in Chaucer’s work. He says:
The Monk in the Prologue to the Tales states that he has some hundred tragedies in his “celle” (line 1972), which may be a reference to the cell of his memory. [...] A composing process on Chaucer’s part that relied more on memory than on written sources lying at his elbow would account for the occasional close resemblance of certain phrases, lines, and paragraphs to particular written works, while other parts of the tragedy are quite different, remembered from other prototypes. (413)

His claim finds support in the following disclaimer found in The General Prologue:

For this ye knowen al so wel as I:
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he ever so rudeliche and large,
Or ellis he moor telle his tale untrewe,
Or fayne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another. (I.730-738)

Janet Coleman suggests that this is direct evidence of Chaucer’s opinion that the only way to be a poet was “either to memorize every word of someone else’s story (using the original author’s language even if your own diction were plainer), or to find new words and make up a tale, fantasize, or even lie, and then one word or another would do” (37). This suggests that Chaucer was aware of his own mnemonic shortcomings and that he sought justification for textual variation. But memory was not the only factor working against Chaucer.

Not only did Chaucer have to remember more than one work, as Bestul claims, but for the works his did have “lying at his elbow,” he needed to consolidate them. N. S. Thompson offers proof of such consolidation when he shows how

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5 Janet Coleman then uses The General Prologue as means for connecting plain language to a wider audience, as did Christ, which might also be the means for a poet to engage a wider, English audience as opposed to an Italian one.
Chaucer used five specific and separate elements from a number of manuscripts to create *The Merchant’s Tale*. He presents the following five consolidations: “January as a ‘named’ Lombard merchant,” the depiction of January as “*senex amans*,” “God and St. Peter and/or Jupiter and Venus become Pluto and Proserpine,” sympathy for May, and May’s struggle with Damien (“The Merchant’s Tale” 485-6). Likewise, if, as Robert R. Edwards proposes, Chaucer was working from a number of sources and analogues in his construction of *The Franklin’s Tale*, he would have had some difficulty creating one text from many. Edwards posits: “The variants recorded from the Love Question manuscripts suggest how Boccaccio’s concluding question about generosity (*liberalità*) might have transformed into the Franklin’s question about freedom (*libertà*)” (“The Franklin’s Tale” 217). This particular example might as easily have been a product of translation as it was due to misremembering or consolidation.

The difficulty of translation cannot be overstated. Because Chaucer was using Italian source texts, he took on the role of translator. He reminds his audience as much, and frequently, in his works. For example, Alceste is but one voice who reminds readers that Chaucer should “‘translaten that olde clerkes writen’” ([*Legend of Good Women* F Prologue 370]). This might also explain the above change from “generosity” to “freedom.” Chaucer’s level of fluency in Italian is not known, and it is reasonable to concede, based on his knowledge of Latin and French, he might have translated *liberalità* as “freedom” instead of “generosity,” wholly changing the question posed.
Another example is apparent in what Taylor believes to be Chaucer’s certain misreading of “‘stylo alto’ for ‘stylo alio’” (57). She argues that Petrarch’s goal of turning Boccaccio’s Griselda into “stylo alio” (*The Clerk’s Prologue* IV.41), that is, into the different, elevated language of Latin, is mistranslated by Chaucer as “‘heighe stile’ (IV.1148)” (57). This might also be the case with Dorigen’s oath. In Boccaccio’s version, he uses the word, “sramento” (*Decameron* 1137, 10.5.11); but Chaucer makes it “serement” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1534), changing her oath from a legal agreement to a serious promise (Taylor 71, 81 n67). Taylor also notes that this word might have been “difficult or unfamiliar” to Chaucer and his peers because, while “‘serement’ is the reading of both Ellesmere and Hengwrt MSS, […] later manuscripts have either ‘seuerte’ (surety) or ‘surement’ (assurage, pledge)” (81 n67). These alterations might easily be explained in light of an unfamiliarity with foreign words during an act of translation.

But there were even more concerns that Chaucer faced as he was translating (or “makyng”) his texts. In addition to the problems that arise for a poet who was using sources as he wrote, one must also consider that Chaucer was accessing incomplete, or possibly damaged, sources. For example, concerning the source of *The Knight’s Tale*, William E. Coleman notes the difficulty in determining “what Chaucer’s copy of the *Teseida* contained or what it lacked,” especially considering the “untrustworthy text of the *Teseida*” (98-99). Boccaccio himself might have even been responsible for some of the confusion surrounding the original text as he “was in the habit of making subsequent copies of his works – often producing a variant
version in the process” (William Coleman 99). Coleman meticulously shows that, while there is no way to determine which copy Chaucer had (as the surviving copies were not in circulation in the 1370s), the copy he did have was likely a corrupt variant and that his manuscript “lacked Boccaccio’s gloss” (110). He uses the example of conflation between the souls of Arcita and Troilus, in Boccaccio and Chaucer’s versions respectively, to show that, if Chaucer was working from a manuscript with a gloss, this might not have happened. He states:

Boccaccio describes Arcita’s soul ascending “ver la concavità del cielo octavo,/ degli elementi I convexi lasciano” [toward the concavity of the eighth heaven, leaving the convex elements behind] (*Teseida* 11.1.4-5). Chaucer describes the soul of Troilus rising “Up to the holughnesse of the eighthe spere,/ In convers letyng everich element” (*TC* 5.1809-10). While Chaucer clearly had the critical reading of the first line, his MS must have had a variant reading at the second line. (In fact, the line is corrupt in about half of the extant MSS.) The gloss to *Teseida* 11.1.4-5, which describes the distinction between concave and convex surfaces, occurs in all three versions of the commentary, however. (110 n123)

William Coleman’s careful research does more to show exactly where and how Chaucer alters his source for *The Knight’s Tale* than any other scholarship.  

Chaucer’s alterations, whether by choice or accidental translation error, affect one’s interpretation of the subsequent work and in particular, the characters. It is not surprising then that scholars have considered Chaucer’s writing to be “elusive” (Taylor 49). Part of that elusiveness stems from trying to establish why he made certain changes to source texts. But unless one can point to a specific textual mistake (in translation or

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due to any of the above reasons), the subjective reasons Chaucer made certain changes will forever remain speculative. In addition to the possibilities discussed above, others scholars, including Piero Boitani, have suggested that Chaucer was “experimenting with narrative” (4), or that he was medievalizing a poem through philosophical and classical means (Janet Coleman 57). Whatever the reason, the result of those alterations is definitive: his changes complicate a reader’s perception of a character. C.S. Lewis believes that Chaucer’s “deliberate” changes yield characters that are “more sympathetic and complex” (qtd. in Ganim 129). Chaucer’s decision to silence a woman, to offer her additional words, or to allow her to express internal thoughts, all affect how one perceives her character. The removal or the alteration of a female voice can render the woman irrelevant or increasingly critical to the narrative. In some instances, Chaucer’s changes also create a pathos that was not originally present in the source material. So while one can never precisely state why Chaucer made a change, one can still examine the effects of those narrative experiments.

Chaucer and Scribes: New Findings

The significant role that male scribes had upon Chaucer’s works is a topic that has been brought to the fore in light of new findings in the field. Linne Mooney’s identification of Adam Pinkhurst as Chaucer’s main scribe, the scribe responsible for the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts, sheds new light on a area of previous conjecture. Mooney has famously linked Adam’s hand in the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts through the following: his Scriveners’ Company of London membership signature, his writing in the Mercers’ Company of London petition to the King’s Council, and his script
in the Mercers’ Company accounting records (“Chaucer’s Scribe” 98). The timing, she proves, coincides with the “Adam” of Chaucer’s poem, “Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn,” who “was making the first copies of Boece and Troilus and Criseyde for Chaucer in the mid-1380s” (“Chaucer’s Scribe” 98). She uses these findings to support claims about “the mercantile involvement in the production of Middle English texts” (“Chaucer’s Scribe” 98). Mooney’s emphasis on mercantilism links scribal copying to male scribes, in particular. Connecting secular manuscripts with mercantile production substantiates the notion that most of these particular scribes, and possibly all of Chaucerian manuscript scribes, were indeed male. This is not surprising since most female scribes were nuns who were responsible for religious rather than secular manuscripts. George Haven Putnam chronicles a number of identified female scribes who were nuns (51-54), as does Eileen Power, who suggests that any form of “secular learning had no place among [female scribes]” (254). In more recent years Alison Beach’s specific work on German monasteries also indicates the connection between monastic women and “theological and exegetical texts” (23). And while there are a number of

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7 Since her initial work, Adam Pinkhurst has been identified as the scribe for at least five additional manuscripts or manuscript portions (in addition to Ellesmere and Hengwrt), three of which belong to Chaucer, including the two folio fragments in the Hatfield House Cecil Papers, Box S1. See Linne R. Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” *Speculum* 81.1 (2006): 113-4 and Linne R. Mooney, Simon Horobin, and Estelle Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, 10 April 2013 <http://www.medievalscribes.com>.

8 In a similar argument, Deborah Cameron relies on the sheer number of male-copied versus female-copied manuscripts in existence. She states, “One result is a body of evidence in which male-authored texts far outnumber female-authored ones. […] In the pre-modern era fewer women than men were in a position to produce any kind of writing” (293). See Deborah Cameron, “Issues of Gender in Modern English,” *A Companion to the History of English Language*, ed. Michael Matto and Haruko Momma (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) 293-302.
documented female scribes, to date there is no proof that any of Chaucer’s manuscripts were copied by a female scribe.

Mooney has advanced scholarship regarding medieval scribes with her online database project, *Late Medieval English Scribes*. Her research has proven invaluable for any scholar interested in scribal hands and their role in the academic understanding of medieval texts. Her work stresses the importance of scribes, with particular interest to their hands, as she hopes to better understand the scribe’s place in history (“Professional Scribes” 141). More directly, Mooney shows how influential scribes were in affecting the versions of texts that scholars have today.

**Altered Voices**

To illustrate scribal significance, N. F. Blake details the complex textual history (or to borrow C. David Benson’s terminology: another fine manuscript mess) for determining tale order due to scribal interference (103 ff). He attributes the chaos to the fact that either scribes were confused by Chaucer’s original work or were copying from multiple circulating manuscripts that equally confused tale order (103). There are also Chaucerians who believe that the author did not intend a specific tale order, leaving scribes even more confused as they tried to connect narratives in a logical way. What is important is that manuscript transmission errors likely played a role in the present-day confusion of tale order. Whether scribes were guilty of incorrect copying, copying corrupt versions, or trying incorrectly to create a cohesive storyline, scribal interference infiltrates the material and at the root of this interference is the act of copying itself.
A number of concerns arise from the general nature of manuscript transmission. Peter Shillingsburg argues that changes during transcription are a natural result of the “decoding and re-encoding of symbols in a sign system” (15). He also states the following regarding working with manuscripts:

Decisions have to be made constantly about ambiguous forms and small marks that could be accents or insect droppings or flecks of ash or blood or ambiguously formed letters. Regardless of how trivial or insignificant any one reader might find these elements, two things remain true about them: that the transcriptions either do or do not recognize and incorporate them and that some other reader will find them to be significant, such that a transcript that ignores them will be misleading. (15)

Consequently, scribes wielded significant power in determining the product. Their decisions could then affect subsequent versions of the text, and that, in turn, affects one’s interpretation of any given character. Mooney says as much in her declaration that scribes “exercise[d] control over the quality of exemplars distributed for further dissemination of Middle English texts” (“Chaucer’s Scribe” 121-123).

At the textual level, Malcolm Beckwith Parkes addresses some of the more nuanced problems of scribal copying. The medieval scribe made any number of alterations to the text, some intentional (translating the exemplar into local dialects) and some unintentional (eyeskip, for example) (Their Hands Before Our Eyes 66-67). Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham offer a number of ways in which a scribe might inadvertently alter a text. There are numerous examples to indicate that scribes often inverted word order, misread an author’s foul (likely wax) copy, or copied a damaged or corrupt exemplar (35-6). It is not difficult to see how a scribe might misinterpret a letter or word if he were working from an exemplum that had already been corrected via
scraping, which, depending on the force of the scraper, could have damaged the
parchment on both sides of the folio or rendered the wax unreadable.

It is also not surprising that scribes made simple copying errors in light of
scriptorium working conditions. Scribes freely annotated manuscripts with their
grievances about “the arduousness of their work” (Clemens and Graham 23). One scribe
writes: “I will describe it for you, if you want to know how great is the burden of writing:
it mists the eyes, it curves the back, it breaks the belly and the ribs, it fills the kidneys
with pain, and the body with all kinds of suffering” (Florentius of Valeránica qtd. in
Clemens and Graham 23). Bodily pain aside, some particular copying errors were more
common than others. Clemens and Graham suggest that the “most common scribal error
was eyeskip, which would occur when the same word, phrase, or sequence of letters
appeared twice in close succession in the text being copied” (35). A possible example of
eyeskip is observable in the omission of the “stanza on Adam, the first man and cause of
mankind’s fall, which Pinkhurst omitted from fol. 89v of the Hengwrt copy of the Monk's
Tale (The Canterbury Tales 7.2007-14)” (Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe” 104). Mooney
states, “Ralph Hanna in the Riverside edition notes that this omission was probably due
to eyeskip, because line 2015 also begins ‘Loo;’” however, Mooney doubts the validity
of that allegation in light of Adam being considered an “accurate copyist” and his
“sensitivity to material including his name” (“Chaucer’s Scribe” 104). Her implication
that this was an intentional omission suggests that scribes were doing more than
accidentally corrupting a text.
Intentional scribal changes imply that a scribe was asserting his perceived adeptness at his craft. One indication of this might be scribes’ insertion of intellectual ownership in the form of scribal signatures within manuscripts (Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes* 44-45). Additional support can be found in emendations, glosses, and marginalia that were added by scribes, who were seemingly acting in a very authorial manner. In defense of scribes, some changes might not have been so forthright. For example, multiple scribes were often working on a single manuscript without the benefit of the author’s input (Clemens and Graham 22). Consequently, there would have been no way for a scribe to know what was correct or intended. Textual changes were inevitable. This, of course, only confirms what Shillingsburg suggests: scribes were forced to make alterations.

In a more provocative assertion, Parkes suggests that some scribes “substitute[ed] what they regarded as a more appropriate reading in a particular context” (*Their Hands Before Our Eyes* 68). To understand why scribes might have felt autonomous, as evidenced by the instances of freely altered texts, consider the suppositions proposed by Derek Pearsall and Tim William Machan. Both have wisely posited that the problem stems from modern perceptions of scribes in conjunction with an idealization of authorial intention. Pearsall offers scribes some latitude when he says that scribal changes are symbolic of the nature of “recomposition” (111). Pearsall states, “Each act of copying was to a large extent an act of recomposition, and not an episode in a process of decomposition from an ideal form” (111). Machan, on the other hand, shifts more directly the responsibility onto modern scholars and interpreters of texts:
To attribute to any scribe the desire to reproduce exactly what was in front of him is to impute specific conceptions of scribal role, authorial intention, and the definition of a text, and it is only with regard to these imputed conceptions that a scribe can be said to have failed. ("Scribal Role" 151)

Are scholars ingrained with a notion that the scribe fails if he alters the text? If so, where might this predisposition originate? Though it is an overstatement to suggest that judgment originates with Chaucer himself, Chaucer has, on occasion, addressed the shortcomings of a scribe. His poem, “Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn,” is textual evidence enough to illustrate his strong interest in scribal accuracy:

Adam scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
Boece or Troylus for to wryten newe,
Under thy long lokkes thou most have the scalle,
But after my makyng thow wryte more trewe;
So ofte adaye I mot thy werk renewe,
It to correcte and eke to rubbe and scrape,
And al is thorugh thy negligence and rape. (1-7)

Chaucer tells readers (sincerely or jokingly) that Adam’s carelessness with the author’s words is commensurate with rape. Here, one can only understand that any variation from an exact reproduction (and one that must subsequently be righted by Chaucer himself) is a criminal act on the part of the scribe. This example is, however, only valid if one can confirm that there was a scribe who was working from an authorial copy text.

Chaucer’s poem offers a glimpse into the medieval world of an author’s attitude toward a scribe. His attitude might be justified if he were to have learned what would become of some of his texts. For example, Beverly Kennedy discusses The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and five passages that have been appended with new text at the behest of the
scribe. This example in particular serves to illustrate how scribal alterations can modify a female voice, and subsequently, the understanding of her character. In short, Kennedy shows that a set of textual additions (“crude puns on “nether purse” and “cheste” (344); a “sado-masochistic nightmare” (345); highlighted “lechery and aggressiveness” (345); excessive immoral promiscuity (345-346); and the more general shift of blame for original sin from Eve to all women” (346)) have astounding effects for the character of the Wife. The misogynistic textual changes make “Dame Alys more like the antifeminist stereotype of the lascivious and unfaithful wife” (Kennedy 343). Scribal interference results in a permanent alteration of the Wife in Cambridge Dd.4.24.

Not only did this particular scribe alter the text, he also appeared to take a sense of ownership for the work by adding his name in the margins. Kennedy posits that when the scribe adds personal marginalia (like “Quod Wytton” and "Amen quod Wytton"), “it is as though he had been reciting the text as he copied it”(343). This leads her to believe that Cambridge Dd.4.24 is “the work of a well-educated amateur, copying Chaucer's book for his own enjoyment” (343). Her assumption is remarkable because it concedes that there is another reason scribes might have altered texts: simply for personal pleasure. Possibly, this manuscript was never meant for circulation, but its mere existence precludes its elimination from consideration as a variant scribal copy. It becomes part of The Wife of Bath’s Prologue’s textual history and an example of scribal power.

Kennedy cites Manly and Rickert’s textual evidence as proof that the new text was scribal as opposed to Chaucerian revision, as originally believed by Walter Skeat (344).
Because scribes held such influential positions with regard to the creation of a text’s version, it raises the question: whose text is it? Regardless of whether an alteration was intentional, the result of a mistake, or due to an ambiguous exemplar, the result is that there is a change in the text. A new text is created. And this complicates a clear understanding of textual authority.

Chaucer the Auctor: “Who is Speaking?” and the Textual Debate

The question of authority is problematic when one considers the number of transmission points for medieval texts, not to mention the inherent complexity of its very definition. Yet authority is a primary textual concern in light of the changes that Chaucer and scribes made to female voices. However, there should be no confusion with a supposed attempt to discover final authorial intention. Rather, one should seek to examine how Chaucer’s authority (or his perception of his authority) relates to the representations or re-creations of the female voice.

In his role as translator of Italian texts, Chaucer is all too aware of the accompanying perils. Machan notes that Chaucer’s attitude on translation is readily observed by the Second Nun’s discourse on “translacioun” (VIII.25), here reprinted. She says,

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10 Tim William Machan most clearly shows the meanings as “authored,” “authoritiveness,” “authenticity,” and “authorization” (Textual Criticism 93).

11 A study on manuscript variation, whether at the hand of the author or the scribe or whether it is specific to the female voice or not, requires that one contextualize these variants within the field of textual studies. This is not a new area of scholarship and present manuscript scholars benefit from the work of textual critics A. J. Minnis, Tim William Machan, and Derek Pearsall, among many others. The field is also quite large, so here the discussion is narrowed to very specific transmission concerns with regard to authority, as these concerns are most pressing in a discussion of Chaucer, scribes, and the female voice.
Yet preye I yow that redden that I write,
Foryeve me that I do no diligence
This ilke storie subtilly to endite,
For bothe have I the words and sentence
Of hym that at the seintes reverence
The story wroot, and folwen hire legend,
And pray yow that ye wole my werk amende. (The Second Nun’s Prologue VIII.78-84)

Machan suggests that this “conventional and uncomplicated” take on translation becomes troublesome because Chaucer purposefully altered source material (Textual Criticism 115). He believes this exemplifies Chaucer’s “anxiety of originality” (Textual Criticism 116). Chaucer complicates his own authorial relationship with the text by denying his own authority while simultaneously commanding it. Consider the following passage:

Forwhi to every lovere I me excuse,
That of no sentiment I this endite,
But out of Latyn in my tonge it write.
Wherefore I nyl have neither thank ne blame
Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
Disblameth me if any word be lame,
For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I. (Troilus and Criseyde II.12-18)

Even though Chaucer regularly deprecated himself and his work as a product of translation or remembrance, he was in fact acting as an auctor. Yet many scholars have shown that, at times, Chaucer’s alterations can be equated with scribal emendations. For example, Peter Allen notes that Chaucer had an agenda for alterations as witnessed by his employment of specific rhetorical devices like occupatio (426). But Allen’s examples only serve to illustrate Chaucer’s disregard for the authority of the source material. Chaucer’s alterations might also be construed in terms of textual interference. Hoyt N. Duggan, in his analysis of Piers Plowman, reminds scholars that this was not an
uncommon scribal penchant: “Kane had pointed to the tendency of scribes to interfere actively in the text, sometimes changing readings in such a way as to ‘regularize or increase alliteration’” (216). 12

It might seem absurd to afford Chaucer a status similar to that of a scribe, “the lowest figure in the literary hierarchy” (Wallace, _Chaucerian Polity_ 71), but it is not to say that he did not view himself in such a way. Chaucer was writing at a time when medieval authors felt they could offer nothing greater than what was already written by _auctors_ like Boethius or Ovid. There would have been inherent anxiety for any author writing at the time. Imagine the audacity of a medieval author, who only recently began adding his name to the work, to presume himself worthy of the title of _auctor_, a term that Alastair J. Minnis believes is synonymous with “intrinsic worth and authenticity” (10). It is no wonder then that Chaucer struggled with his role and hid behind the “shield and defence” of terms like translator and compiler (Minnis 210).

On the other hand, Chaucer seems to have understood the authority (and authoritativeness) he had over his work. So while he humbly proclaims himself nothing more than a “lewd compilator” (Treatise on the Astrolabe 61-62), he positions some of

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12 Of course, scribal interference can further complicate issues of authority. Richard Dwyer suggests a “value of scribal participation” (222) going so far as to imply that authors created works with the understanding that their text would be revised without their authority. He says, “The inspired scribe filling in the gap in the record is central to a proper appreciation of one of the ways medieval man created literature” (221). Dwyer’s overt appreciation for scribal alteration, which he suggests can make a text more readable or available to wider audiences, removes some of the authority of the author’s version; but, he argues, this notion that scribes are removing authority is a “modern attitude toward scribal tinkering, and the one we ought to overcome” (221). While Dwyer’s assertions do not find unanimous support, it is reasonable to consent that scribes did play a significant (not necessarily an enriching) role in the final text. See Richard A. Dwyer, “The Appreciation of Handmade Literature,” _The Chaucer Review_ 8.3 (1974): 221-240.
his work as having *auctoritas* by connecting it to the greats like the imaginary “Lollius” (*Troilus and Criseyde* V.1653) or “Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan and Stace” (*Troilus and Criseyde* V.1792). Minnis implies that Chaucer was cognizant of his authorial position. He states, “[Chaucer] ascribed material taken from [‘modern’ writers’] works to ‘ancient’ *auctores*. He wished to use the names of the *auctores*, to ‘cash in’ on their antiquity and *auctoritas*. Thus, he created the illusion that his ‘storie’ was indeed ‘ancient’” (210). So while Chaucer might have denounced himself as less than an author, he was nonetheless, an authority. This is particularly important because Chaucer intentionally made very pointed changes to some female voices. However, the alterations to female voices seem inconstant, which may be indicative of Chaucer’s struggle with the voices of certain women; these voices might then exemplify the “anxiety” of his own authority.

The changes Chaucer makes to some female voices like Ypolita or Criseyde can render one’s perceptions of them as unimportant or increasingly cunning. But what one cannot do is assert a single, general assumption about the voices Chaucer granted his female characters. What is obvious is that female voices seem to have been a source of complexity for Chaucer. Allen points to Chaucer’s sentiments on writing the *Legend of Good Women* as proof that Chaucer was “wearied by writing about women” (427). And Mary Bowman claims that Chaucer is “only partially successful in his effort to present a woman's perspective” (241). Bowman believes the problem stems from the inherent limitations of male authors trying to capture female voices within “conventionally masculine discourses” and “male-dominated language” (240). It’s not surprising then that these voices, as suggested by Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, “tell us more about
male anxieties in an atmosphere of misogyny […] than they do about female speech” (214). Because they were not privy to the intimacies of female conversation, men, including Chaucer, needed to fill in the gaps:

Men knew what women talked about in mixed company, but were unable to supply the lacunae, the words and topics omitted because women were inhibited by the very presence of males. Men could not know what women said when they were secure in their own space, free of masculine supervision. (Mendelson and Crawford 214)

But this does not prevent men from shaping today’s representations of the medieval female voice. It does not prevent Chaucer from writing an original complaint for Dorigen or from altering Griselda or Ypolita.

Likewise Anne Laskaya contextualizes literary female voices in terms of the men who penned them. She says, “The fictional women in the Canterbury Tales are all creations of men, and they will bear, in one way or another, traces of their creators” (43). One of these traces might be what Judith Laird suggests is Chaucer’s predilection to “invariably construct women in terms of their relationships with men” (60).\(^\text{13}\) Does this mean that Chaucer was using his authority to construct or adapt female characters so that they might harmoniously exist in a masculine world? Was he authoritatively making assumptions about women that would have been in line with medieval notions about the sexes? Might Chaucer have used his authority in a predominantly male-centered manner at the expense of female voices? These are not absurd questions if one considers that, as

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\(^\text{13}\) Laird’s research specifically highlights the differences between a male and female author (Chaucer and Christine de Pizan) with regard to their presentation of female characters. See Judith Laird, “Good Women and Bonnes Dames: Virtuous Females in Chaucer and Christine de Pizan,” The Chaucer Review 30.1 (1995): 58-70.
Richard Green states, Chaucer was writing primarily for an audience of men, not women (150-151).\footnote{Though Green acknowledges direct addresses to women in Chaucer’s works (“like the Clerk's envoy to ‘archewyves,’ or the Physician's advice to ‘maistresses’”), he notes that there would have been only a very small amount of women in the audience of such a reading (150-151).}

Chaucer and the textual concern surrounding his authority problematizes perceptions of the voices of his female characters. It forces one to realize his female voices are complex creations, and it further convolutes the need for scholars to identify “who is actually speaking?”\footnote{Jonathan Culler relates the act of speaking with authority and foregrounds Barthes’s question: “Who is speaking?” (200). Barthes’ simple question forces readers to remember that the male is always present, even in a female voice. See Jonathan Culler, \textit{Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).} These female voices highlight textual critical concerns about authority and the value and origins of their voices. These female characters’ voices are the voices of Italian authors, the voices of the possibly real-world women they represented, and the voices reflective of a social dynamic that required them to be situated within masculine language and environments. They are the voices of male discourse, possibly made for male consumption, and arguably, even the voice of Chaucer himself (as in the case of the Second Nun). But what remains is that Chaucer’s versions of these women confirm Jonathan Culler’s belief that speech acts are always subject to narrative and authorial influence (200). Bowman exemplifies this assertion when she shows how Dorigen, though seemingly masterful, is ultimately belittled through Chaucer’s authority and the Franklin’s narration (241-244). As evidenced, the roles of author and scribe, as well as the processes involved in manuscript transmission, ensure
that any represented medieval female voice will forever be masked in the complexities stemming from its creation and evolution within a predominantly masculine world.
CHAPTER IV
THE MANUSCRIPTS

The textual and paleographical evidence for specific female voices in *The Canterbury Tales* further illustrate the critical role men had in shaping representations of the female voice. A close examination of variation among these speeches provides irrefutable evidence that the representational female voice’s impermeable and convoluted relationship with men originated with the composition and the transmission processes. These particular case studies were selected for their extensive textual traditions which provide scholars traceable lineages of variation.

In total, there are eighty-two known authorities (arguably eighty-three) that contain *The Canterbury Tales*.¹ But in accordance with the established methodology, and to best illustrate the female voice’s textual relationship with masculinity, the manuscripts examined must have been created by identifiably male scribes. Therefore, the list of witnesses has been substantially narrowed. Of the eighty-two authorities only nine manuscripts, or manuscript fragments, of *The Canterbury Tales* are by known and named male scribes. They are:

(1) Cp–Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198 by John Marchaunt

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¹ Ralph Hanna III suggests the Morgan Fragment of *The Pardoner's Tale* be counted as a separate witness (Textual Notes to *The Canterbury Tales* 1118). Also, though the total number of *The Canterbury Tales* manuscripts is eighty-three, eleven must be dismissed entirely as they do not contain the relevant tales. Those eleven are: Ar (*Melibee* only), Do (single leaf of *The General Prologue*), Ds² (2 folios from *The Man of Law's Tale*), Ee (*The Man of Law's Tale* only), Hn (*Melibee* and *The Monk's Tale* only), L² (2 folios from *The Parson's Tale* only), Ox¹ (2 folios from *The Miller's Tale* and part of *The Reeve's Tale*), Pp (*Melibee* and *The Parson's Tale*), Sl¹ (*Melibee* only), St (*Melibee* only), and Tc³ (*The Monk's Tale* only).
(2) Dd–Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.4.24 by Rychard Wytton

(3) El–San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS El 26 C.9 (Ellesmere) by Adam Pinkhurst

(4) Gl–Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1.) by Geoffrey Spirling

(5) Ha4–London, British Library, MS Harley 7334 by John Marchaunt

(6) Hg–Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D (Hengwrt) by Adam Pinkhurst

(7) Ma–Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 113 by John Brode

(8) Np–Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29 by More (The Clerk’s Tale only)

(9) Ps–Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fonds Anglais 39 by John Duxwurth

In addition to the above, there are five manuscripts by scribes who have possible names but lack conclusive proof of male identity, eighteen manuscripts in which the scribe is identified only by scribal hand, and an additional thirty-six manuscripts by completely unknown scribes (see Appendices A and B).

The list of the nine selected manuscripts relates to Manly and Rickert’s schemata as follows. In the better tradition independent manuscripts list are El and Hg. In the better tradition a grouping are Dd and Ma. From the independent large composite grouping is Ha4. From the large composite c group is Cp. And from the
large composite d group is Gl (Hanna III, 1120). Np and Ps do not appear in Manly and Rickert’s schematic.\textsuperscript{2}

Further, \textit{The Riverside Chaucer} third edition, used as a base text or a copy text for this collation of female speeches, is not without fault. Ralph Hanna III notes that the editors of \textit{The Riverside Chaucer} have opted for an “eclectic (and perhaps not completely consistent)” edition (1120). This means that, though the editors have chosen to follow El as the best text, they also introduce “a substantial number of additional Hg readings” (1120). Their eclectic text complicates efforts to collate and/or reach an ideal copy text; yet, their text remains the current standard for Chaucer scholars. With that said, here presented is new evidence irrevocably linking authorial and scribal variation to the medieval female voice for five women of \textit{The Canterbury Tales}.

\textbf{Case Study I: Emelye & Ypolita in The Knight’s Tale}

Textual history for narratives contained in manuscripts proves challenging for the modern scholar. As one attempts to connect a manuscript to its predecessor or to provide a critique génétique for a particular work, he or she is often left speculating due to a lack of physical evidence. However, close textual readings, when possible, help scholars piece together a potential history and provide context for today’s version of the work. Such is the case concerning the complicated textual history for the women of Chaucer’s \textit{The Knight’s Tale}. Emelye and Ypolita have

\textsuperscript{2} The textual tradition further requires that tale order be noted, as tale order is inconsistent in the majority of manuscripts containing \textit{The Canterbury Tales}. However, because focus is on particular voices within four tales, tale order is not crucial to this project. For more on tale order see Ralph Hanna III, Textual Notes to \textit{The Canterbury Tales. The Riverside Chaucer}, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) 1118-1135. He presents six variant tale order combinations contained in the extant copies of \textit{The Canterbury Tales} manuscripts (1121).
had long and arduous textual journeys. Not only are the women of The Knight’s Tale greatly altered from the Boccaccian source, but, for this tale in particular, there is enough textual evidence to support the claim that they have one of the most complex textual traditions found in Chaucer.

**Sources for The Knight’s Tale**

Boccaccio was known to have regularly revised and altered the Teseida, leaving a number of authentic witnesses as possible sources for Chaucer’s The Knight’s Tale. The stemma for the Teseida is unruly, but William Coleman offers a concise and digestible version of this particular textual history (87-91). Needless to say, with so many authoritative manuscript versions of the Teseida circulating during Chaucer’s era, it is nearly impossible to determine which copy Chaucer used as a source for his own anglicized version of the Teseida. However, Coleman has done a very respectable job of piecing together the historical evidence, and he posits that Chaucer likely used Pavia MS 881 or Vz, Biblioteca Marciana, Cod. Marciano it. IX, 61. Coleman notes that Chaucer would have had the opportunity to work with the Pavia manuscript during his stays in northern Italy. Based on Robert Pratt’s findings, Coleman states,

The Visconti dukes, who were unusually generous in allowing copies of their manuscripts to be made, might have been particularly inclined toward generosity in dealing with a book-loving English emissary who, as a young man, had been connected with the household of the late prince Lionel. (98)

However, the Pavia manuscript is a lost manuscript and, therefore, one cannot irrefutably prove it as a source.

Vz, also known as the Marciana Library manuscript, even with its faults, has recently been determined to be the prime candidate, or at least the closest approximation,
for containing the version of the *Teseida* that Chaucer used. Though Vz is in the *alpha* family’s *kappa* group, which is known as the “most corrupt and error filled group in the whole *Teseida* manuscript corpus” (Battaglia qtd. in Coleman 116 n154), the following list serves as an attestation to its validity over other potential sources (summation of Coleman 114-116):

1. variant description of Theseus’s battle insignia as rich (*le ricche insengnie*) which may have resulted in Chaucer’s additional description, “Of gold ful riche” (I.979);

2. variant reading of *in tutto suo sergiente* (sergeant in charge of everything) instead of *in tutto suo segreto* (in all your secret/confidence) as the reason for Chaucer’s Arcite being upgraded to squire instead of a servant;

3. variant reading of *cacciando al lor diletto e ucciellando* (hunting for diversion/delight and hawking), instead of the hunters simply calling to one another or to their dogs, can explain the line, “For in his huntyng hath he swich delit” (I.1689);

4. variant reading of *orati* (worship) instead of *ornati* (adorned) explains Palamoun’s prayer of worship;

5. variant reading of *manifesto molto* (very easily seen) before the people, instead of the non-variant description of *magnifico molto* (very magnificent), can explain Chaucer’s presentation of Theseus at the window where he could be seen by all;

6. variant reading of *pieni* (full) rivers as opposed to *perenni* (perennial) to explain the passage of time indicated by rivers drying up and the formation of *alti monti* (tall mountains) which turn into the “brode river” and “grete tounes” (I.3024-5);
(7) the elimination of sparrows and cooing in *The Parliament of Fowls*, where only doves are present (*PF* 237-8), is thought to have originated in this manuscript description of the temple of Venus;

(8) there are only three rubrics in Vz (one book division and two narrative descriptions), one of which is about the *infernale furia* (infernal fury) which is the only one Chaucer turns into the narrative as “a furie internal” (*I*.2684);

(9) Vz exhibits missing text as it ends at XII.83 which coincides with where Chaucer stopped using the *Teseida*, it lacks glosses and attribution, and it is also called *Teseo*;

(10) Vz is a northern text substantiating notions that Chaucer most likely encountered a northern version while in Lombardy with the Visconti dukes.

Coleman believes that in addition to Vz’s “twenty one positive variant readings” (114), the above instances, particular only to Vz, help explain Chaucer’s variations from the more consistent editions of the *Teseida*. Ultimately, and even though there are two authoritative Boccaccio manuscripts (the Laurentian Library autograph (Aut) and the Biblioteca Nazionale dei Girolomini MS (NO)), there is no way to definitively identify Chaucer’s source. However, most of today’s scholars believe that the manuscript Chaucer used did not include any of Boccaccio’s glosses. And with the number of consistencies with Vz, it appears that Vz must be considered as close to Chaucer’s source as one can currently prove.

Two other Italian sources for *The Knight’s Tale* include Publius Papinius Statius’s *Thebaid* and Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius’s *De consolatione philosophiae*. Both

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3 The lack of gloss and attribution is consistent with beliefs that Chaucer’s source copy lacked both. If Chaucer had had either, he might have cited Boccaccio as a source and he may not have made certain mistakes that were easily clarified through Boccaccio’s glosses (William Coleman 109-110).
authors contribute directly and indirectly to *The Knight’s Tale*. For example, Boethius’s work, though only sourced in eighty-seven lines, is seen as influential on a grander, thematic scale. *The Knight’s Tale*, viewed as an “abridgment, revision, and rearrangement of the *Teseida,*” permits the showcasing of Boethian concepts (such as divine providence) through specific means (William Coleman 88). Coleman believes that Chaucer’s nod to Boethius is evident through “summarizing, limiting the locales of the story, by reducing its epic elements, and by omitting many of Boccaccio’s characters while recasting the others so as to eliminate many of their individual traits” (89).

However, Boethian influence is most vocally expressed in three male speeches by Arcite, Palamoun, and Theseus, respectively (William Coleman 95). Of course, these specific instances of influence are worthy of discussion, but in an analysis of speeches voiced by the female characters, Boethius’s direct contribution as a source of specific lines is overshadowed by the more direct Boccaccian source.

Likewise, Statius, the primary source for just twenty-two lines, is seen as influential not only for specific lines and general themes, but also, arguably, in terms of Chaucer’s “rationale for revising” events (William Coleman 93). Statius’s themes, however, may be more apropos to analysis of female speech. Based on David Anderson’s work, Coleman suggests that Emelye, who is presented “as a two-dimensional character who lacks much of the interesting detail in Boccaccio’s portrait of Emilia may be a means for him to emphasize Statius’s observation that political conflict often exacts an enormous sacrifice for a disproportionately small reward” (94). Interestingly, using these terms, *The Knight’s Tale* (or the political themes within it) can
be viewed as cause for the sacrificed female voice. But does that mean Emelye’s revised and limited character is representative of the “enormous sacrifice” or the “small reward?”

As important as Statius and Boethius are, greater concern must be given to the direct sources for the speeches hereafter examined. For example, though Statius is mentioned twice in *The Knight’s Tale* (the epigram is a quote from Statius and then Statius himself is mentioned during Emelye’s visit to Diana’s temple (I.2294)), Statius’s lines, with regard to Emelye’s speech (I.2297-2330), are only the model for Boccaccio’s lines (See Coleman Table 1: Sources of *The Knight’s Tale* 129) and are not relevant for the two other instances of the female voice within the tale. The speeches examined (I.1756-7, I.2297-2330, I.2362-2364) have their source either in Boccaccio’s *Teseida* (with Statius as an influence) or are additions by Chaucer.

**Chaucer’s Alterations to Source Material in *The Knight’s Tale***

Due to its reference in *The Legend of Good Women*, most scholars, including Vincent DiMarco, believe *The Knight’s Tale* was composed sometime before 1386 or 1388 (DiMarco 826). As Chaucer composed his version of the Theseus tale, it is apparent that he opted for narrative change. Because there are a number of extant manuscripts in which to observe Chaucer’s alterations from the Boccaccian source, scholars can examine specific instances of variation. For example, DiMarco notes that “there is nothing in Tes. to correspond to the intercession of the ladies” on behalf of the fighting brothers (834 n1742-60). Of course, this is just one occurrence where Chaucer altered his source, and whether that was due to Statian influence or not remains to be seen. What is certain is that scholars can claim with certainty that Chaucer altered his narrative version significantly. Chaucer used “695 of the 1238 octaves (or 56%) of the *Teseida*” for general borrowings,
and for specific borrowings, “he used only 185 octaves (or 15%) of the Teseida” (William Coleman 89 n8). With such a large portion of newly created, or reenvisioned text, one can expect Chaucer’s version to read quite differently from those that precede it.

To understand the impact of Chaucer’s alterations upon the female characters, one must first identify what was omitted from Boccaccio’s text. For instance, Chaucer neglects to include the entire Amazonian history that comprises most of Libro Primo of the Teseida. This is a controversial topic for many scholars. J. A. W. Bennett suggests that many editors assume that Chaucer simply ignored the first book of the Teseida, prompting readers to perceive that particular book as an “unusually avant-garde presentation of the cause of ‘Women’s Lib’” (92). His assertion acknowledges the possibilities that Chaucer either overlooked the book or chose a pointedly misogynist path that diminished the role of women. Juliette Dor, on the other hand, sees this omission in terms of the role of knighthood and masculinity in conjunction with viragos. She politicizes the silencing of the women through the western male’s need to silence the “other,” or the foreign. She suggests that this is shown by the masculine need to turn strong Amazonian female warriors into “traditional women” whom chivalric ideals can be enacted upon (174). Interestingly, she seems to place fault with the Knight rather than with his creator.

Further, Chaucer scholars often diminish the substance of Teseida Libro I by summarizing it as a back story, one that highlights Teseo’s journey and subsequent conquering of Scizia (Scythia). But this book is not, as advertised, primarily about Teseo. This book includes 138 octaves that provide historical context and situate the female characters within a warrior environment. It is in Libro I that the reader learns of the
Amazon women’s acts of male genocide. The reader is also told that these women are
democratic in their election of a new leader through the manner in which they elect gentle
Ipolita, master of war, as their queen: “Ma delle donne che ’l luogo produce / elesser per
reina en la lor terra / Ipolita gentil, mastra di guerra” (Teseida I.8). Further, the reader
learns that Ipolita is a formidable opponent who forces Teseo’s retreat, prompting him to
solicit Mars for guidance (Teseida I.58-65). Also in Libro I, the reader learns that Ipolita
and the women withstand Athenian attacks for months (Teseida I.94), that Ipolita can
both read and write (Teseida I.96, I.114-115), and that the Amazon queen ultimately
surrenders (after counsel) to ensure her women suffer no harm (Teseida I.116-122). And
finally, the reader is told of Emilia’s unparalleled beauty, in contrast to Ipolita’s
characterization via virtue and beauty, and that Emilia is betrothed to Acate (Teseida

In association with these lost narratives, one finds the loss of a significant amount of
corresponding female speech. The speeches, including the voice of an overtly masculine
woman, are whittled away, comparatively, to almost nothing in Chaucer. Consider the
following omissions in The Knight’s Tale:

(1) 111 lines of Ipolita’s speech as the newly elected queen, including her warning about
the forthcoming attack by Teseo (Teseida I.23-36);

(2) 3 lines of Ipolita’s speech where she informs Teseo that she refuses to give up the
land and that she intends to fight (Teseida I. 36);

(3) 22 lines of Ipolita’s speech of encouragement to her women while Teseo and his men
are camped outside the city walls (Teseida I.86-88);
(4) 71 lines of indirect speech (the letter Ipolita composes for Teseo) showing Ipolita’s leadership (Teseida I.99-108). In the letter she warns Teseo not to besiege the city, noting that the walls have been reinforced and that the men will lose. She reminds him that many will die and speaks of Egeus. She asks to be left alone in peace and she requests his honorable actions while wondering why war must be a game;

(5) 48 lines of Ipolita’s concession speech about how her advisors suggest surrender in order to prevent casualties (Teseida I.116-22).

The summation is a total of 255 lines that Chaucer did not include in his narrative. And this is just in Book 1. Ironically, in Libro I, Ipolita says, “Ch’io non ponga in piu parole” (Teseida I.35). In her own speech, she states that she will “not waste words.” Chaucer found a literal manner in which portray her sentiments in his version.

In Teseida Libro II, one finds more detractions of textual examples of female speech. In Chaucer’s version of the events, he excises 12 lines of Ipolita’s speech. For instance, as Teseo directs Ipolita to remain in Athens while he avenges the deaths of the Theban men, she forthrightly reminds him that she is an Amazon woman who can contribute a worthy opinion (Teseida II.41-42). Chaucer eliminates her contribution altogether by telling his readers that Theseus,

Sente anon Ypolita the queen,
And Emelye, hir yonge suster sheen,
Unto the toun of Atthenes to dwelle,
And forth he rit; ther is namoore to telle. (The Knight’s Tale I.971-974)

Interestingly, while Chaucer removes Ipolita’s voice almost entirely, he chose to maintain the speech of the elder Theban widow (Teseida I.27-34; The Knight’s Tale I.915-951). She was possibly allowed a voice because she easily fit into the western (and relatable),
stereotypical categorizations of the damsel in distress motif. This is a valid speculation when one considers that her wailing and pleading only serve as an opportunity to strengthen perceptions of Teseo’s/Theseus’s generosity and virtue. Immediately after hearing her pleas, the Knight tells readers that Theseus reacts magnanimously:

This gentil duc doun from his courser sterte  
With herte pitous, when he herde hem speke.  
Hym thoughte that his herte woulde breke,  
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so maat,  
That whilom weren of so greet estaat;  
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,  
And hem conforteth in ful good entente,  
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knyght,  
He wolde doon so ferforthly his myght  
Upon the tiraunt Creon hem to wreke  
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke  
How Creon was o Theseus yserved  
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved. (The Knight’s Tale I.952-964)

Chaucer might have thought the noble elder more crucial a character because she served to strengthen the portrait of Theseus as diplomatic, fair, and chivalric, all of which are motifs that are carried out to great extent later in the poem. One can argue that Ipolita’s character only serves to elaborate the portrayal of Theseus as a conqueror, something readers can surmise independently from the context of the poem and Statius’s epigram. Therefore, Ipolita’s is a dispensable voice whereas the woman of Thebes’s voice is not.4

In his treatment of Libro III of Teseida, Chaucer does something seemingly at odds with Boethian idealism. He omits the role of Cupid and Venus as masters of human destiny. These gods are the spinners of Fortune’s wheel in the Teseida for they alone determine that Palemone and Arcita should have love in their lives; it is only after the

4 Inconsistently, Chaucer then omits the thanks and praise from the Theban women after their husbands’ bodies are returned (Teseida II.82-83).
gods’ intercession that the men see Emilia (Teseida III.1-11). In a significant alteration, Chaucer opts to have Emelye enter the garden out of duty to “doon honour to May” (The Knight’s Tale I.1047). Moreover, though she does not speak directly to the men, she sings with an “angelica voce” (“angelic voice”) (Teseida III.10). And while Chaucer also notes that “as an aungel hevenysshly she soong (The Knight’s Tale I.1055), he omits the fact that she intentionally, out of “vanitate” (“vanity”) (Teseida III.30), flirts with the men each day. Rather, Chaucer lets her fade into the background of the story, highlighting the love-sickness of the men rather than place importance on her flirtations. Boccaccio, on the other hand, makes her even more scandalous because the reader is aware that her flirtations occur while she is affianced to Acate. It is not until Libro IV (line 35) that the reader learns of Acate’s death. Boccaccio’s version permits the reader to witness her knowingly immoral behavior. William Coleman aptly states, “The coy and flirtatious Emilia of the Teseida loses much of her voice and personality in The Knight’s Tale.” He continues, “Deprived of the dialogue Boccaccio composed for her, Emily speaks just two sentences invented by Chaucer (I.2362-4)” (91). While Coleman is correct in stating that she is deprived of much of her characterization, primarily through speech, she does indeed speak more than two sentences. A closer reading shows that she exclaims with the other women who are distraught by the fighting of the “gentil men” of “greet estaat” (The Knight’s Tale I.1753), and she has a significant and lengthy prayer to Dyane (The Knight’s Tale I.2297-2330). Still, Coleman’s assertion that Emelye’s coyness is diminished is further supported by additional examples of omitted text from the Teseida.

5 In Teseida, Arcite hears Emilia singing, goes to the window to see her, and only then does he wake Palemone so that he may see her as well (Teseida III.11-13). Chaucer has Palamoun see Emelye first and it is Palamoun’s scream of desperation that wakes Arcite, who then comes to the window to see Emelye (The Knight’s Tale I.1063ff).
Consider the moment that Emilia becomes aware of Arcita’s (now disguised as Penteo) gaze and pretends not to notice:

Come io dico, saviamente amava,
né si lasciava a voglia trasportare,
e a luogo e a tempo rimirava
Emilia bella, e ben lo sapea fare;
e ella savia talor se ne addava,
mostrando non saper che fosse amare;
ma pur l'età già era innanzi tanto,
che ella conosceva di ciò alquanto. (Teseida IV.61)

(Like I said, he [Penteo] wisely loved / but he didn’t let or wasn’t willing to transport it (to make it known) / and at places and at times he admired / beautiful Emilia, and he knew how to do it well / and she wisely at times left / showing (pretending) not to know that it was loving / but also the age (degree) was already a lot (substantial) / that she knew of it a lot (and she knew of its depth))

This passage unequivocally depicts her coyness, her flirtations, and her awareness of her own power, all of which serve to make her a fuller, rounder character compared to her representation in Chaucer’s version.

Though Chaucer takes Emelye and Ipolita’s voices away, he does permit them an additional scene that includes a shared line of speech, and one not found in Teseida:

The queene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladyes in the compaignye.
Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That evere swich a chaunce sholde falle.
For gentil men they were of greet estaat,
And no thyng but for love was this deabaat;
And saugh hir blody wounds wyde and soore,
And alle crieden, bothe lasse and moore,
“Have mercy, Lor, upon us wommen alle!”
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle
And wold have kist his feet ther as he stood. (The Knight’s Tale I.1748-1759)

Though they speak just one sentence, their collective voices prove powerful enough to halt death sentences, mirroring the speech of the grieving woman of Thebes who
similarly make Theseus change his mind. The elder woman says, “Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.950). Interestingly, Coleman’s translation of Emilia’s “compassionate” glance at the wounded men (“pietosa” (*Teseida* V.101)) presents Emilia as kindhearted, showing her willingness to receive one of these men as her husband. However, the more accurate translation of “pietosa” is “pitifully,” which casts her as someone less compassionate and not necessarily willing to wife. This translation is more in line with her lack of a response to Teseo’s comments on love and marriage and her statements in the prayer to Diana. Interestingly, the symbolic representation that Chaucer casts upon the female voice in this example also serves as an illustration of the power of female speech, even in their cries, as the critical voice that checks masculine anger.

From Libro VII, Chaucer removes 4 lines of Emilia’s speech in which she directs her servants to prepare Diana’s temple for her worship (*Teseida* VII.71) Chaucer then takes significant liberty with Emelye’s prayer to Dyane. The side-by-side comparison of the lengthiest female speech in the narrative is substantially altered in Chaucer’s version (see Appendix C). Chaucer turns 79 lines of Emilia’s speech into Emelye’s 34 lines, reducing her vocal impact in this chapter by 46%.

For the most part, as shown, Chaucer reduces the importance of Emelye’s role in the narrative. Yet, in her connection and response to Dyane, he seems to give her a heightened spirituality that she may lack in Boccaccio. Chaucer gives her three additional lines, in which she states, “‘What amounteeth this, allas? / I putte me in thy proteccioun, / Dyane, and in thy disposicioun’” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2362-2364). Chaucer further notes that Emelye is “astoned” (I.2361), and he permits her to respond to Dyane’s message and
the quivering bows. Though Emelye does not fully comprehend the message, she recommits herself and relinquishes control to the goddess. Boccaccio does not permit a vocal response, but rather he tells readers that “e cosi nella camera dubiosa / si ritornò com’ella n’era uscita” (“like this, she returned to her room, doubtful, like she had been when she left”), and that she spent the night distressed (Teseida VII.93). So while Boccaccio leaves Emilia confounded and doubtful, Chaucer permits her to reiterate her commitment to the goddess. The effect is that Chaucer removes substantial doubt from her character compared to her portrayal in Boccaccio’s version. Moreover, Emelye’s newly added lines confront assertions that most of Chaucer’s changes serve to reinforce a narrative that focuses on Theseus’s strengths. Here, the voice strengthens the female character, independent of its ability to increase the perceived masculinity of the male protagonist.

Next, Boccaccio, unlike Chaucer, continually reminds his readers of the women’s beauty. Boccaccio highlights the flirtations, the attractiveness, and the sensuality of the female form, whereas Chaucer’s revisions remove most of the portions that address the “looking upon” nature of their beauty. For example, when they assemble for the tournament, Boccaccio takes the opportunity to remind readers that “Ipolita vi venne, in veritate / più ch’altra bella, e Emilia con lei, /a rimirar non men vaga che lei” (“Ipolita came, in truth, more beautiful than the others, and Emilia with her, to gaze/look upon was no less”) (Teseida VII.113). These instances may serve to cast Chaucer’s women into the background of the narrative by removing any instance that would draw attention to them. In agreement with Coleman, one can easily assert that these characters are less developed than their previous incarnations.
In Teseida Libro VIII, which is now Book IV of The Knight’s Tale, 111 lines of Emilia’s speech is omitted. For example, as she opines over which man she should marry while watching the tournament (Teseida VIII.96-109), Chaucer tells his reader nothing of her mental strife. Maybe Boccaccio’s Emilia was swept up in the madness and excitement of the tournament, lending credibility to her symbolic representation as an impressionable creature, but regardless of Boccaccio’s intentions for including this speech, Chaucer eliminated it entirely.

Additionally, Emilia’s fickleness is reiterated in Teseida when one sees how quickly her heart shifts from uncertainty to love for Arcita (Teseida VIII.124-126). The narrator notes that once Emilia believes Arcita to be the winner, “Né più di Palemon già le calea” (“No more of Palemon did she think”) (Teseida VIII.124), she immediately deems Arcita “maggior l’ardimento” (“of greater strength”), “più gentilezza” (“kinder”), and “più cortese” (“more courteous”) (Teseida VIII.126). In The Knight’s Tale, the reader only knows that once Arcite is proclaimed victor, “she agayn hym caste a freendlich ye” (I.2680). Consistent with similar alterations to her character in terms of symbolic representations, her ardent fickleness is swapped for demure, appropriate female behavior in Chaucer’s version.

Similarly, in Libro IX of Teseida, Boccaccio’s Emilia has ample thoughts and words about Arcita’s unfortunate fate, which she expresses in 5 lines of speech. She listens, comforts, and stays by his side (Teseida IX.27); whereas in Chaucer’s tale, Emelye remains silent until the moment of Arcite’s death. It is only when Arcite’s corpse is torn from her body that the Knight states, “shrighte Emelye” (The Knight’s Tale I.2817). Moreover, Boccaccio gives her yet another speech consisting of 130 lines.
(Teseida X.68-85), all of which is missing in Chaucer. And in Boccaccio, Palemone offers himself as her prisoner. Her response of 80 lines (Teseida IX.66-75), where she proclaims her love only for Arcita and encourages Palemone to seek love elsewhere, is also omitted in Chaucer’s version. Further rounding out the character of Emilia, Boccaccio gives readers the marriage details between Arcita and Emilia (Teseida IX.81-83). But more importantly, the reader has her reactions to what happens after the brief ceremony. As Arcita succumbs to his wounds, he encourages Emilia to love Palemone, prompting the 8 lines of speech in which she proclaims her love only for him (Teseida X.59). Emilia is given another 8 lines to highlight her attachment and love for Arcita (Teseida 11.5) at the moment he passes. She then, along with Palemone, is responsible for the closing of his eyes. She is always active in Boccaccio. She weeps (as opposed to shrightly) and she mourns, yet she remains an active participant in Arcita’s death scene. All of these omissions in The Knight’s Tale diminish her character and push her farther and farther to the edge of the narrative. Her voice and actions, once important and powerful, especially at the moment of the loss of her love, are transformed by the word shrightly, a sympathetic yet predictable response, into a caricature of the symbolically represented female.

Interestingly, Chaucer reinvokes his image of the weeping wives from Book I of The Knight’s Tale at this point. Like Boccaccio, Chaucer indicates that the townspeople, the women in particular, are lamenting Arcite’s death in a manner on par with how they mourned Hector’s death. But rather than narrate these events, Chaucer chooses again to give a voice to the collective female mourners, who cry, “Why woldestow be deed?” and “And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye?” (The Knight’s Tale I.2835-6). This theme of
the collective “peple” reoccurs in Chaucer’s works and will appear again in *The Clerk’s Tale*. But do these collective mourners serve as a testament to the adage that there is strength in numbers? Is it more significant if there is a shared female voice instead of an individual one? And does it matter if the collective female voice is only that of wailing women?

In both works, Emilia and Emelye continually weep and remain near Arcita/Arcite during the funeral, but Boccaccio grants her more page space when he gives an *octavio* explaining how she could not apart from his body (*Teseida* XI.31), another 20 lines of vocal expression (*Teseida* XI.41-43), and 2 more in the form of a final proclamation of her love (*Teseida* XI.45). She faints at least twice in Boccaccio’s version as well. Once again, Boccaccio gives her more depth, here, through fragility, that is lacking in Chaucer’s representation.

Another crucial alteration in Chaucer’s version has to do with Emelye’s marriage. Theseus proclaims, after the passing of “certeyn yeres” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2967), that Emelye and Palamoun should halt mourning and marry. This of course happens quickly and without a word from Emelye. In Boccaccio’s *Teseida*, mere days have passed, and it is the people who push for the marriage of Palemone and Emilia primarily because it was the last request of Arcita (XII.3). Emilia responds to Teseo’s request that she marry Palamone with another 30 lines of speech. Here, she claims that she will do as requested. However, she also announces her fears that the gods, having already killed Acate and Arcita, will also kill Palemone. Her words serve to deepen her character and show that she is more than a flirty, inconstant woman; she is now a woman whose concern for others appears to trump her concern for herself. Moreover, readers are given extensive
details of her beauty on her wedding day, of the marriage ceremony, and that the
marriage is consummated that evening (Teseida XII.52-79). Her story is complete. She
finalizes the relationship between Palemone and Arcita. She transforms from the coy
seductress to the loyal wife. And though her arc portrays her in many of the stereotypical
manners expected of a medieval female according to the symbolic structure, she is
sometimes represented as more than the stereotype, especially in her active role in
Arcita’s death.

All of these omitted narratives, that serve to construct the women as major
characters within Boccaccio’s tale, have an expected inverse effect in Chaucer: deprived
of their voices, these women are moved to the liminal space between mattering and
irrelevance. While one may speculate as to why Chaucer omitted so much, his own words
appear to speak to the matter. Through the mouthpiece of the Knight, readers are told:

    And certes, if it nere to long to heere,
    I wolde have toold yow fully the manere
    How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
    By Theseus and ny his chivalrye;
    And of the grete bataille for the nones
    Bitwixen Athenes and Amazones;
    And how asseged was Ypolita,
    The faire, hardy queene of Scithia;
    And of the feste that was at hir weddyng,
    And of the tempest at hir hoom-comynge;
    But al that thyng I moot as now forbere.
    I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
    And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
    The remenant of the tale is long ynough.
    I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;
    Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
    And let se now who shal the soper wynne;
    And ther I lefte, I wol ayeyn bigynne. (The Knight’s Tale I.875-892)
This speech informs readers that the Knight, and possibly Chaucer, believes the entire tale is “to long to heere.” And as the remainder of the tale is already “long ynough,” he doesn’t want to take valuable time away from the other travelers who deserve equal opportunity to win a free meal. But this speech also informs a perspective of masculinity and its effect upon the female world. The manner of occupatio highlights primarily a male perspective with literal passivity situated with the women. Consider the language “wonnen was the regne of Femenye,” “by Theseus,” “his chivalry,” and “how asseged was Ypolita.” With just these first words from the Knight, readers are aware that this is a man’s tale, which may serve to lessen the surprise when the female voices are diminished or removed. However, one can hardly expect the narratives to be identical when the goals of each author were different. The entire work, as presented by Boccaccio, was all for a woman. Fiammetta was his motivation for recounting the tale of Teseo. It is no wonder that women might have larger parts, bigger voices, and a more extravagant representation overall. For Chaucer this was not the case. Chaucer’s The Knight’s Tale, serves as an example of pley on the way to Canterbury with the goal of winning a free supper. Boccaccio’s love/muse and Chaucer’s game are motives about as far apart as Canterbury is from Thebes.

Complicating any clear view of what Chaucer did to Boccaccio’s tale is the idea that he removed much of the problematically symbolic representations of a female character through the removal of her voice and instances of weeping and fainting. One could argue that he was trying to remove these females from their symbolic restrictions, but that argument fails to explain why the female voice was so drastically reduced. Their characters were overwhelmingly silenced, as expected within the realm of male-
dominated discourses, but this may also be an instance of Statius’s notions about enormous sacrifices: these women became the sacrifices who enabled *The Knight’s Tale* to speak to a new, English audience who, as the above language implies, may have been more concerned with Theseus than with wailing women.

**Scribal Variation in *The Knight’s Tale***

In addition to Chaucer’s adjustments, there are also alterations at the hands of scribes. Men, particularly John Marchaunt, Rychard Wytton, Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey Spirling, John Brode, and John Duxwurth, had opportunity to further alter Ypolita and Emelye (see Appendices D, E, F, G, and H for full collation and line variants of all female speeches considered in this dissertation with manuscripts Cp, Dd, El, Gl, Ha⁴, Hg, Ma, and Ps).

Ypolita, who was previously such a strong representation of female power is given just one line of speech in all of *The Knight’s Tale*. And she cannot even claim this line as her own. She jointly exclaims, along with Emelye and the other women, “Have mercy, Lord, upon us wommen alle!” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.1757). There are two other moments where the queen’s actions or voice are noted, but not in direct speech.⁶ While 267 lines of her speech were removed, the one line that she did have was, fortunately, not further corrupted by a scribal hand in all but one of the examined manuscripts. Most of the variants on this line have to do with spelling. For example, John Brode in the Rylands manuscript (Ma) opts for “lorde.” And of course there are the expected *u*/ν substitutions as seen in El and Hg, Gl, Ps, and Ha⁴ by the respective scribes Adam Pinkhurst, Geoffrey

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⁶ The Knight says, “The queene anon, for verray wommanhede, / Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye (I.1748-1749). The Knight also tells us: “And alle crieden, bothe lasse and moore” (I.1756).
Spirling, John Duxwurth, and John Marchaunt. However, in Ma, John Brode alters the line to read “Have m(er)cy lorde upon (th)is7 women all.” The effect of this seemingly small change from “us” to “this” places the exclamatory remark in the mouth of the narrator rather than the women themselves. So while Chaucer robbed Ypolita of 99% of her voice, Brode made sure that she was silenced completely and forever in the Rylands manuscript, taking away her one line of speech simply by changing a personal pronoun to a demonstrative one.

Chaucer permits Emelye two speeches, in addition to the jointly cried, “Have mercy, Lord, upon us wommen alle!” (The Knight’s Tale I.1757).8 First, her 34-lined speech to Dyane is as follows (see Appendix C for the direct comparison to the same speech in Teseida, which is 79 lines):

“O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,
Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte cruelly.
Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,
Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye,
A mayde, and love huntyngge and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe.

7 In this instance, and future occurrences except where noted, (th) is the representation for the modernization for p (thorn) and not an expanded abbreviation.

8 As with Ypolita, the Knight also informs readers of some of Emelye’s utterances that are not represented by her direct speech. He says, “And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong” (I.1055); “But hou she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle” (I.2284); “For she was wel ny mad and gan to crye” (I.2342); “Shrighte Emelye” (I.2817); that she was “swownynge” (I.2819); and that she was “passynge othere of wepynge” (I.2885). He also tells readers through occupatio, “how she weep bothe eve and morwe” (I.2821), “ne what she spak, ne what was hir desir; (I.2944).
Noght wol I knowe compaignye of man.
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and kan,
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so soore,
This grace I preye thee, withoute moore,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two,
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so
That al hir hoote love and hir desir,
And al hir bisy torment, and hir fir
Be queynt, or turned in another place.
And if so be thou wolt nat do me grace,
Or if my destyne be shapen so
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
As sende me hym that moost desireth me.
Bihoold, goddesse, of clene chastitee,
The bittre teeris that on my chekes falle.
Syn thou art mayde and kepere of us alle,
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
And whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve.” (The Knight’s Tale I.2297-2330)

As expected with longer speeches, there is more opportunity for variation and scribal corruption. Though most of the manuscripts present texts quite similar to The Riverside Chaucer (varying mostly in dialectal spellings, commonplace abbreviations, use of ȝ (yogh), and eyeskips), it is here that one begins to see some scribal habits and patterns particular to each copyist. For example, in this particular speech, Geoffrey Spirling in Gl might be said to capture some of what Chaucer complained about in his poem, “Chaucers Wordes Unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn.” Consider that the line, “Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe” (The Knight’s Tale I.2300) is altered to “Goddess of maydenes that mynd hast y know” (Gl 11r). There is also a mistake on “that” with a rubbing out of the parchment on the word. And Spirling omits the word “herte,” not even bothering to amend himself as there is a marginal correction adding “herte” in a different hand. He also makes another mistake on the “f” of “lyfe” (The Knight’s Tale I.2305), he
omits the word “no” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2306) which alters the meter, and he writes “tornente” for “turned” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2321) (with another marginal note of what appears to be “turnde” in another hand) (Gl 11r). For reasons like these, Spirling could be considered an incompetent scribe and therefore one whose ineptness might alter the representation of this particular female voice. However, though he makes many mistakes, Spirling’s errors have not yet altered the overall representation of Emelye.

In Emelye’s speech, there are only a handful of scribal alterations, none of which truly alter the character from the one that Chaucer presented. Some variations include transposition via possible eyeskip as exemplified by John Duxwurth in the Paris manuscript. He writes, “Queene of Pluto the reigne derk and lowe” (Ps 13v) rather than “Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2299). And Rychard Wytton’s variants may stem from difficulty in identifying a specific letter. For example, a c/t confusion might account for his presentation of “trewely” (Ha 4 31) rather than “cruely” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2302) in his description of Attheon’s rage. However, some lines seem generally problematic for almost all of the scribes. The line “And if so be thou wolt nat do me grace,” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2322) is a perfect example. Adam Pinkhurst, in the Ellesmere manuscript, writes, “And if so be thou wolt nat do me no grace” (El 25r), but he changes it slightly to: “And if so be thou wolt noght do me grace” in his Hengwrt manuscript (Hg 31r). While John Brode writes, “And if so be ye wol not do me grace” (Ma 27r); John Marchaunt writes, “And if so be (th)ou wolt not do me g(ra)ce” (Cp 32v); and Geoffrey Spirling writes, “And if so be thou wilt do me grace” (Gl 11r). John Duxwurth writes, “And yif so be thou wilt not do me grace” (Ps 13v), while Richard Wytton writes the line as, “And if so be (th)ou wylt nat do me grace” (Dd 30r). This one
line is presented so many different ways. Though they are not crucial to character
definition, this example serves to show how extreme the variation can be among
manuscript copies.

For this speech, only Rychard Wytton significantly alters a word. Chaucer writes,
“And hir fir / Be queynt” (The Knight’s Tale I.2319-2320), which is the reading
maintained by all scribes except for Wytton who writes “quenched” (Dd 30r).

Interestingly, Wytton is the only one who changes this word for its modern meaning. And
of further interest is that this is one of the earliest manuscripts dating to as early as 1390.
But what cannot escape Chaucerian scholarship is the noteworthiness of this particular
word in this particular context. In The Miller’s Tale, the Miller uses the word “queynte”
to describe Nicholas’s behavior as well as genitalia:

    Now, sire, and eft, sire, so befel the cas
    That on a day this hende Nicholas
    Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
    Whil that hir housbonde was at Oseneye,
    As clerkes be ful subtile and ful queynte;
    And prively he caughte hire by the queynte. (The Knight’s Tale I.3271-3276)

The text’s glossary notes that the word can mean “ingenious” and “clever” as well as
“pudendum” for these two instances. More generally, and elsewhere in The Canterbury
Tales, the word maintains the former meanings in addition to meaning “quenched.” In the
context of Emelye’s speech to Dyane, it seems that Wytton wanted to ensure that the
possibility for misinterpretation would not exist in the form of sexual innuendo in the
prayer. His choice to alter the word shows definitive scribal intention to vary a text and
create a less ambiguous character. He appears to attempt to ensure that the meaning
cannot be misconstrued, his very act confirming the Miller’s stance on the cleverness of clerks themselves.

One last oddity with regard to scribes and this particular speech includes John Marchaunt’s use of the word “dirk” (Cp 32v) rather than “derk” (The Knight’s Tale I.2299). He is the only scribe to make such a blatant alteration to a very specific word. The line reads, “Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe” (The Knight’s Tale I.2299). To suggest subtext that is not there is highly speculative, but it remains that altering such a word has major implications. This change can alter the reading from being about Pluto, the king of the underworld, to Pluto, who possesses a “low dagger.” In the context of a speech on maidenhood and purity, it seems unlikely that such a scandalous reading is even possible. Yet, there appears to be no reason for John Marchaunt to have opted for an “i” instead of an “e.” This change cannot be dialect-related and all the other scribes copied the word faithfully, presumably. Also, there is no way to confuse these letters in an exemplar as “i” and “e” are written very, very differently from one another. Was Marchaunt acting in accordance with stereotypes of clerks, who the Miller has already described as being “ful queynte” (The Miller’s Tale I.3275), and inserting hidden meaning for whomever might read this particular manuscript? Within this grouping of collated manuscripts and analyzed speeches, Marchaunt appears to have been a competent scribe, known for his abbreviations, not for his variants, increasing the level of surprise at such an alteration. Regardless, this one letter change can insert a sexual element into a speech specifically designed to proclaim an aversion to such things, and it complicates Emelye’s character almost beyond understanding.
The final speech examined in *The Knight’s Tale* includes 3 lines that were added by Chaucer and given to Emelye. After Diana’s statue moves and her bows shake, Emelye says,

“What amounteth this, allas?
I putte me in thy proteccioun,
Dyane, and in thy disposicioun.” (*The Knight’s Tale* I.2362-2364)

These lines, all of which are included in all the manuscripts, show no significant scribal alterations aside from one. John Brode in Ma opts to add the word “fully” to “I putte me in thy proteccioun” so that it reads, “I put me fully in thy proteccion” (Ma 27v). His insertion of the adverb lends itself to establishing Emelye’s character as one with even greater determination to serve Dyane than Chaucer allows her. This instance is arguably a case where the scribe does indeed alter the female voice, giving her more depth than she previously had in other manuscripts.

**Case Study II: May in *The Merchant’s Tale* **

**Sources for *The Merchant’s Tale***

*The Merchant’s Tale* is systematically divided into three parts, though not consistently the same three parts. M. Teresa Tavorina suggests the tale be divided into the marriage counsel, the wedding (including Damian and May’s developing relationship), and the deception narrative (884). In terms of sources and analogues, N. S. Thompson offers the three parts, which are subsequently adopted for this analysis, as the advice on marriage, the description of the aged husband and young wife, and the pear tree narrative (“The Merchant’s Tale” 479). There are, as Thompson notes, analogues of these three motifs dating back to the ancient Orient, but it is not until the late fourteenth century that there are truly “concrete” fragments one can point to (“The Merchant’s Tale” 479-480).
And though there are nine possible sources or analogues for the three parts of the narrative, those of Italian origin that also offer context for May (and her speeches) include only *La comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*, *Decameron II.10*, *Decameron VII.9*, and *Il Novellino*.9

The textual history for *The Merchant’s Tale* is not as complicated or concrete as that of *The Knight’s Tale*. For Ypolita and Emelye, scholars can point to a likely and direct source manuscript for Chaucer’s copy of Boccaccio’s *Teseida*. However, one can do no more than speculate upon the copy of the *Decameron or Il Novellino* that Chaucer used as his source. Moreover, Chaucer is not retelling a complete narrative as he did with *The Knight’s Tale*. Rather, he combined motifs and topoi from various sources to create something entirely new. And, if one presumes that he used the Italian novella as inspiration for the more elaborate story found in *The Merchant’s Tale*, then Chaucer did the opposite of what he did in *The Knight’s Tale*, where narrative elements are reduced and major characters are recast as minor ones. For the women of *The Knight’s Tale*, the result was particularly devastating. However, in *The Merchant’s Tale*, Chaucer creates multi-dimensional characters and develops what Thompson notes were previously undeveloped plots with anonymous characters and settings (“The Merchant’s Tale” 481).

**Chaucer’s Alterations to Source Material in *The Merchant’s Tale***

Though scholars cannot look to a specific source manuscript for this particular tale, it is still possible to examine relevant narrative elements found in the sources. First,

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9 N. S. Thompson also identifies other Italian sources such as Albertano of Brescia’s *Liber consolationis et consilii*. However, Albertano of Brescia is connected only to the counsel on marriage and is inconsequential to any of May’s speeches; therefore, it will not be further referenced. However, Boccaccio’s *La comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* and his *Decameron II.10*, though not a direct source for any of May’s speeches, are relevant and will be considered in the context of the *senex amans* motif below.
though not directly applicable to May’s speech, is Chaucer’s reliance upon Boccaccio’s
*La comedia delle ninfe fiorentine* (also known as *Ameto*) and *Decameron II.10*. These
works are of particular interest for Chaucer’s description of the *senex amans*, or “aged
lover.”

Much care and scholarly attention have been given to this topic with particular
interest to point-of-view. Most notable is that, unlike any of the other analogues, Chaucer
carries forward the female perspective on the aged man’s lovemaking (Thompson, “The
Merchant’s Tale” 483). The perspective begins when Chaucer’s Merchant prefakes the
sexual act with the following description of the *senex amans*:

*And Januarie hath faste in armes take*
  *His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.*
  *He lulleth hire; he kisseth hire ful ofte;*
  *With thikke brustles of his berd unsofte,*
  *Lyk to the skyn of houndfyssh, sharpe as brere—*
  *For he was shave al newe in his manere—*
  *He rubbeth hire aboute hir tendre face.* *(The Merchant’s Tale IV.1821-1827)*

Next, the reader is able to learn of January’s physical unattractiveness in the light of the
following morning *(The Merchant’s Tale IV.1844ff)*. And it is at this moment that one is
given the first insight from the female perspective of May. Though the description of
January’s appearance (“The slakke skyn aboute his nekke shaketh / While that he sang,
so chaunteth he and craketh” *(The Merchant’s Tale IV.1850)*) is not necessarily from
May’s point-of-view, the Merchant implicitly relates her thoughts of disgust. He says,

*But God woot what that May thoughte in hir herte,*
  *Whan she hym saugh up sittyng in his sherte,*
  *In his nyght-cappe, and with his nekke lene;*
  *She preyseth nat his pleyyng worth a bene.* *(The Merchant’s Tale IV.1851-1854)*
Up to this point in the narrative, the reader has only been told of May’s youth and beauty. But these lines present the first glimpse into her character, into her thoughts. The assuredness of her upcoming actions now has contextual roots in her overt dissatisfaction with her husband’s lovemaking and appearance.

Though the female perspective is carried forward, Chaucer also alters May a great deal from the analogues. For example, in *La comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*, Agapes is the voice who tells her story and Boccaccio gives her ample words to describe her elderly husband. She goes on for twenty-two full lines of prose about how horribly he looks (*Ninfe* 774). Some of the descriptions that are present in Chaucer’s adaptation include: (1) “la barba grossa e prolissa, né più né meno pugnente che le penne d’uno istrice” (“his thick and overgrown beard, more or less as sharp as the quills of a porcupine”); (2) “e sottile collo né osso né vena nasconde, anzi, tremante spesso con tutto il capo, muove le vizzie parti” (“and his thin neck hides neither bone nor vein, rather it trembles with the all of the head, shaking the withered parts”); and (3) “e così le braccia deboli e il secco petto e le callose mani e il già voto corpo” (“and the debilitated arms, the dried-up chest, and the calloused hands, and the already empty body”) (*Ninfe* 774).

Agapes is also responsible for offering the garden metaphor for her husband’s inability to perform. She states, “Gli orti di Venere invano si fatica di cultivare; e cercante con vecchio bomere fendere la terra di quelli disiderante i graziosi semi, lavora indarno” (“The gardens of Venus, are cultivated in vain efforts; and seeking to use an old plough to cleave the earth that desires delightful seeds, he works in vain”) (*Ninfe* 774-775). This may be, as Thompson speculates, the source for Chaucer’s “development of January’s garden into his place of sexual obsession” (“The Merchant’s Tale” 483).
Likewise in *Decameron II.10*, Bartolomea is the voice that describes her husband’s short-comings. Boccaccio’s premise is that the old man cannot satiate the young wife’s sexual appetite. However, in Boccaccio, Bartolomea’s unfulfilled sexual desires cause her “grave malinconia” (“grave melancholy”) (*Decameron* II.10.10). Her husband, seemingly even less sexually charged than January, touches her maybe once a month and not at length (“cui forse una volta ne toccava il mese e appena, lugamente tenne” (*Decameron* II.10.10)). Bartolomea seems more sexually aggressive than May (or Agapes for that matter), but there is an even greater change that Chaucer makes from this version of the tale. In *Ninfe* the wife complains, but she does not complain directly to the husband. In *Decameron*, this is not the case. Boccaccio permits overt defiance on Bartolomea’s part. She chooses to live adulterously with Paganino di Monaco. And when her husband Ricardo di Chinzica sails to Monaco to claim her at any price, Bartolomea refuses him. She bluntly tells him that his impotence repulses her, that she spends her days in bed with Paganino, and that if Paganino should ever leave her, she would never return to him (*Decameron* II.10.37-39). She caps her speech by echoing the dried-up man motif when she tells him that he is so old and “juiceless,” should he be squeezed, he would not even make a small bowl of sauce (“di cui, tutto premendovi, non si farebbe uno scodellino di salsa” (*Decameron* II.10.40)). This appears to have been quite the insult, for Ricardo sails home with utmost sorrow.

Unlike May, Bartolomea is bluntly outspoken and she speaks directly to her husband. Whereas May is deceptive and calculating, she is so unbeknownst to January. This is a rather significant change in Chaucer’s portrayal of the wife. Boccaccio has his wife confront, defy, and berate her husband to his face. If Bartolomea were to face off
with January, he would not be able to match wits with her. For example, considering *The Merchant’s Tale* in its entirety, the reader knows that January remains forever duped. But in *Decameron II.10* (which is only a source for the *senex amans* motif), Bartolomea’s speech blatantly addresses the husband’s mistakes. His errors are immediately reiterated by the narrator who states, “La sua [Ricardo] follia d’aver moglie giovane tolta essendo spossato” (“his [Ricardo’s] foolishness of taking a young wife when he was prostrated”) (*Decameron* II.10.42), which essentially leaves Ricardo in a much worse position than his counterpart in Chaucer’s version. Ricardo returns to Pisa, wanders the streets as a madman, and dies shortly after. Because Chaucer keeps May’s adultery and disgust hidden from her husband, and because Chaucer deprives her of direct vocal disgust in the *senex amans* scenes (both Agapes and Bartolomea speak their protests against the husband, May does not directly), does Chaucer make his wife more sympathetic? Kinder? Civil? Or has she become a weaker version of her predecessors? She would appear to be acting in accordance with prescriptions of female speech, including *ars tacendi et dicendi*. However, in this instance, wifely silence is a critical component in the wife’s own agenda and it reiterates how prescriptions of female speech can hinder rather than assist in perceptions of masculinity.

Chaucer is consistent in his removal of the voice of a female character who, like Ypolita, once had substantially more lines of speech. At this point in *The Merchant’s Tale*, where the other women have had much more to say, there is only a musing from May. One can only determine her perspective (that her husband’s “pleyyng” was not worth a “bene”) via the narrator. Removing the description and her subsequent disgust of January from the mouth of May to the mouth of the Merchant might be due to the nature
of the narrative frame. It might make sense for the Merchant, as teller, to explain all this. But the argument is weakened by the fact that both *Ninfe* and *Decameron* are also frame narratives. Why then might Chaucer have made such changes? Answers may lie in May’s forthcoming speeches and the changes Chaucer opted for against the analogues of the fabliau pear tree plot.

In similar fashion to its sources and analogues, the *senex amans* motif is upheld in *The Merchant’s Tale*, but the manner in which it is presented has been changed. May plays a minor role compared to Agapes and Bartolomea. But more textual evidence on May’s evolution is found in the changes Chaucer made to *Il Novellino* and *Decameron* VII.9. The first difference between these two analogues and *The Merchant’s Tale* is the motivation for the wife’s betrayal. Previous analogues either did not mention the lover or did not give the wife agency in choosing her lover (*Ninfe* and *Decameron* II.10, respectively). In *Il Novellino*, the unnamed, neighborhood lover falls so desperately in love with the unnamed wife, that pity is the driving force for her decision to commit adultery. She even tells him directly, “Di te m’incresce, e però oe pensato di servirti” (“Of you my thoughts grow, and for this (but) I had thought to serve you”) (*Il Novellino* 199). The concept of pity is taken up by Chaucer. After May proclaims her love for the lovesick Damyan, the narrator notes, “Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte!” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.1986). And lines later he tells readers once again how “this gentil May, fulfilled of pitee” (IV.1995) writes her letter.

In *The Merchant’s Tale*, January seems to be even more of a cuckold than his counterparts; Chaucer’s January is responsible for orchestrating May’s first encounter with Damyan, presenting the opportunity for Damyan to proclaim his love for her. This is
a critical moment in Chaucer’s version, for only after May is linked with Damyan (in true courtly love fashion) does she have her first words of internal speech. May says:

“Certeyn,” thoghte she, “whom that this thyng displese
I rekke noght, for heere I hym assure
To love hym best of any creature,
Though he namoore hadde than his sherte.” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.198-1985).

The next line, “Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte!” is given to the Merchant. This is one particular instance that can complicate a reading of May. The Riverside Chaucer editors decided the appropriate location for the quotation marks to be after “sherte.” But the editors could have as easily included the line about pity in her speech, especially considering that the wife’s pity was previously voiced by the wife herself in Il Novellino. Moreover, the word “herte” in “Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte!” is visually connected with the preceding line through its rhyming couplet and is also placed as the concluding line in verse before the next verse (that examines women more generally) begins. The established methodology dictates that this line not be included in May’s speech. Yet, the possibility remains that she might have once spoken this line, providing a personal description of how she might have viewed herself. Regardless, the reader understands that pity is the primary motivation for Chaucer’s May in this scene.

In Decameron VII.9, the motivation is quite different. Lydia falls so desperately in love with Pirro, her husband’s “famigliari” (“family,” but in this instance it means “close helper” or “servant”) (Decameron VII.9.6) that it causes her distress. Boccaccio tells readers that “di costui Lidia s’innamorò forte, tanto che né dí né notte che in altra parte che con lui aver poteva il pensiere: del quale amore o che Pirro non s’avvedesse o non volesse niente mostrava se ne curasse; di chi la donna intollerabile noia portava
all’animo.” ("Lydia fell strongly in love with him, such that day and night she should not stop thinking about him: of this love, that Pirro was not aware of or did not want, he showed no care; of which the lady had intolerable trouble in her soul.") (*Decameron* VII.9.7). Boccaccio’s Lydia is a much more aggressive character. Not only does she send her maid multiple times to convince Pirro of her love, but she then performs a series of unthinkable tasks to prove her love to Pirro: she kills her husband’s favorite hawk, she removes hairs from her husband’s beard, and she pulls out one of her husband’s teeth.

Chaucer’s change in motivation makes May possibly more desirable to his contemporary audience and their ideas regarding acceptable motivations for infidelity. For Boccaccio, love was an excusable reason, for Chaucer it was pity.

Another noteworthy alteration is that Chaucer’s wife possesses an awareness of Damyan’s social status, noted by the line, “‘Though he namoore hadde than his sherte’” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.1985). Previously, the lover was non existent (*Ninfe*), a pirate (*Decameron* II.10), a neighborhood man (*Il Novellino*), and a servant (*Decameron* VII.9). And while Boccaccio gives his readers the most detailed description of the lover, he presents the details through the mouth of the narrator (Panfilo), not Lydia. He says that there is a “giovinetto leggiadro e addorno e bello della persona e destro a qualunque cose avesse voluta fare, chiamato Pirro: il quale Nicostrato oltre ad ogni altro amava piú di lui si fidava” (“young, elegant man that is adorned beautifully and is handsome and is skilled at doing all types of tasks, called Pirro, whom Nicostrato loved above all others and who was trustworthy”) (*Decameron* VII.9.6). Boccaccio also indicates an advanced social rank of this “giovinetto” by explicitly noting Pirro’s beautiful clothes and adornments. Additionally, the pirate Paganino presumably has some wealth if he commands a fleet of
pirate ships and can keep a wife on his island. In *Il Novellino*, the reader knows nothing of the lover’s status or wealth. Even so, May is most like the unnamed wife of *Il Novellino* who also chooses her lover out of pity. But it is Chaucer who first presents a somewhat poorer lover. May’s antecedents are either taken against their will (Bartolomea) or they fall in love before the man does (Lydia). May makes a conscious decision to love him wholly, even if it should be in poverty. However, this is a figurative claim because Damyan is a squire, likely from a noble family, and would have likely been on the path to knighthood. Still, in so doing, Chaucer makes May a possible metaphorical mouthpiece for some of the social tensions of his age.

Also consider the differences among the three women, all of whom are responsible for devising the pear tree episode. The unnamed lady of *Il Novellino* tells her lover, “‘Vattine nel giardino nostro, et sali in su ’n uno pero che v’è molte belle pere, et aspettami là suso, ed io veròe là sùe a te’” (“Go to our garden and go up a pear tree that has the very pretty pears, and wait for me and I will come up to you.”) (57). Lydia, likewise, once in the garden with both men, begins the elaborate game of which the reader knows Pirro has already been informed (“che già aveva fatto informar Pirro di ciò che avesse a fare” (“that she already informed Pirro of what she was going to do”)) (*Decameron* VII.9.58). Chaucer’s May, not only “in warm wex hath emprented the clyket” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2117), but she also tells Damyan what to do. The Merchant tells his audience that “on Damyan a signe made she, / That he sholde go biforn

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10 In this instance, Chaucer explicitly separates love from marriage. Marriage is tied to status as shown by May’s continued marriage to the wealthy old man; yet love is exclusive of it as shown through her continued adulterous affair with the poor lover.
with his cliket” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2150-2151) and that “with hir fynger signes made she / That Damyan sholde clymbe upon a tree / That charged was with fruyt, and up he wente” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2209-2211). She is also responsible for January’s actions as readers learn that he only enters the garden “thurgh eggyng of his wyf” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2134)). But it is only in their role as instigators of the pear tree episode that these wives are alike.

The three women respond quite differently to being caught with the lover. First, the unnamed wife of *Il Novellino* admits that she was having intimate relations with her lover as her husband regains his sight. God and St. Peter watch from above as she proclaims her act is what is responsible for the husband regaining his sight. When questioned, she quickly responds, “‘S’io non avessi fatto chosíe con chostui, tue non n’averesti mai veduto lume’” (“‘If I had not done this with him, you would have never seen the light’”) (*Il Novellino* 57). Her excuse, which God knows is going to be a quick-witted lie, becomes a statement about the deceptiveness of women in general. Placed in the mouth of God, the stereotype carries even more weight. Second, Lydia’s extravagant pear tree charade is the most complicated of the three versions. Boccaccio has her devise an elaborate hoax about the magical abilities of the pear tree. She convinces Nicostrato that what one sees from the vantage point in the tree is not what one really sees at all. Moreover, she involves Pirro in the ruse and he also participates in the lie. Here, though the husband is not blind, she convinces him that his eyes have deceived him (“‘si lasciò abbagliar gli occhi dello ‘ntelletto’” (“‘the eyes of reason are bedazzled’”) (*Decameron* VII.9.78)) as she makes love to Pirro right in front of him. Third, May, like the wife in *Il Novellino*, also has a blind husband who regains his sight at the moment of her sexual
transgression. And May, like the unnamed and quick-witted wife, also admits that her act is what causes her husband to see. She says,

“Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,
As me was taught, to heele with youre eyen,
Was no thyng bet, to make yow to see,
Than strugle with a man upon a tree.” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2371-2374)

However, the main difference, aside from the “strugle” taking place in the tree as opposed to on the ground, is that May deceives her dupe of a husband that much more by claiming that she was merely struggling. So while Chaucer maintains the role of the wife as the primary instigator in the pear tree episode, he makes May less calculating than Lydia and less honest than the unnamed wife. Chaucer’s alterations are consistent with medieval prescriptions about female speech. In the above example, May becomes possibly less intelligent and her role as a liar is emphasized. These two assertions coincide with examples that have shown men’s desire to exclusively inhabit the realm of intellect as well as propagate misogynistic stereotypes of the deceitful women motif. One cannot easily claim that was Chaucer’s intention in making these alterations to the wife in this narrative, but one can easily see how those alterations could be interpreted as such.

Complicating any one assertion regarding Chaucer’s alterations is the fact that Chaucer seems to have given May more complexity and depth of character by permitting her a voice during the crucial moments of the tale. May has substantially more lines than the unnamed wife or Boccaccio’s Lydia. But do these lines merely serve a misogynist agenda? For example, Boccaccio’s Pirro is the mouthpiece who proclaims the wife’s

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11 Support for May’s greater dishonesty might be found in her claim that she is pregnant (“a womman in my plit” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2335)). She is the only wife to offer such a claim, and it is likely that her claim is false and merely a part of the ruse.
honesty. Chaucer presents a similar speech (not found in *Il Novellino*), but he gives it to May, who says:

“I have,” quod she, “a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also myn honour,
And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour.
Which that I have assured in youre hond,
Whan that the preest to yow my body bond;
Wherfore I wole answere in this manere,
By the leve of yow, my lord so deere
I prey to God that nevere dawe the day
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,
If evere I do unto my kyn that shame,
Or elles I empeyre so my name,
That I be fals; and if I do that lak,
Do strepe me and put me in a sak,
And in the nexte ryver do me drenche.
I am a gentil womman and no wenche.
Why speke ye thus? but men been evere untrewe,
And wommen have repreeve of yow ay newe.
Ye han noon oother contenance, I leev,
But speke to us of untrust and repreeve.” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2188-2206)

While this may be a case of “the lady doth protest too much,” it is also a sign that Chaucer chose to allow May to personally create a false portrait of herself as a wholesome, honest, and loyal wife. In doing so, Chaucer creates a wife who is characteristically more corrupt than her *Il Novellino* counterpart and who seems to have no concept of the innate treachery of the fairer sex. *Il Novellino* forces the villainy of women in reader’s faces, but Chaucer allows the tale to end without explicitly declaring the narrative an antifeminist tirade by its lack of *moralitas*. However, Chaucer’s Merchant, in his *Prologue* (and also in the *Epilogue*), leaves no uncertainties that the tale is just that. The following frames the tale within the context about the evils of women, and wives in particular:

“Wepyng and waylyng, care and oother sorwe
I know ynogh, on even and a-morwe,"
Quod the Merchant, “and so doon other mo
That wedded been. I trowe that it be so,
For wel I woot it fareth so with me.
I have a wyf, the worste that may be;
For thogh the feend to hire ycoupled were,
She woulde hym overmacche, I dar wel swere.
What sholde I yow reherce in special
Hir hye malice? She is a shrewe at al.
There us a long and large difference
Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience
And of my wyf the passyang crueltie.
Were I unbounden, also moote I thee,
I wolde nevere eft comen in the snare.
We wedded men lyven in sorwe and care.” (The Merchant’s Prologue IV.1213-1228)

This antifeminist view is observable in half of the analogues, but not in those that Boccaccio presents. For example, Boccaccio’s two Decameron tales emphasize the right of the wife to enjoy a healthy sex life. The tales do not include an epigrammatic moral about female deception. Rather, these tales highlight the foolishness of men. Boccaccio tells readers that Riccardo realizes his own stupidity and dies shortly thereafter, while Nicostrato remains “il misero marito schernito” (“the pitiful scorned/duped husband”) (Decameron VII.9.80). This is a version of the popular Italian cornuto (literally “horned”) genre. To be a cuckolded husband was a topic of many tales and part of popular Italian tradition. It is no wonder then that Boccaccio saw fit to highlight the husband’s status rather than focus on the wife. Though Chaucer gives a great deal of counsel on the perils of marrying a young and beautiful wife, he appears to concentrate on May’s deception by giving her ample lines in which to be deceptive.

Her second speech is probably the most crucial for her character development in the narrative. Here, she proclaims that she is most dutiful and loyal in her role as wife,
declaring herself “a gentil womman and no wenche” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2202).

Importantly, these are her first official words and they are lies. Moreover, she is the only woman to make such a proclamation. Not a single wife in any of the sources or analogues suggests that she be drowned in a river. May states, should she ever be disloyal, “Do strepe me and put me in a sak, / And in the nexte ryver do me drenche” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2200-2201). Her proclamation begins at line 2188, after 943 lines of the the narrative, and a mere 230 lines from the end of the tale. It is not until the last 20% of the narrative that even she finds her voice. So while she has a small percentage of vocal impact overall, only 68 of 1174 lines, or 5.79%, once she begins to speak, she commands 27.7% (64 out of 231 lines) of the tale. In La comedia delle ninfe fiorentine, Agapes has 100% of the lines, as she is the teller of the tale. In Decameron II.10, Bartolomea speaks for 25.64% of the narrative (50 of 195 lines). In Il Novellino, the wife speaks 22.22% of the tale (10 of 45 lines). And in Decameron VII.9, Lydia’s voice accounts for 28.62% of the tale (83 of 290). When viewed alongside the analogues, May has a comparable amount of speech once she begins speaking. However, when looking at the entire narrative, Chaucer gave May a substantially minor vocal impact compared to the other wives. This is a rather large change on Chaucer’s part, and indicative of the more complicated and complete narrative that he tells.

Chaucer complicates the analysis of his overall alterations to this tale (especially when juxtaposed against the The Knight’s Tale, where one can observe line by line changes) because, depending upon which narrative one compares with the tale, Chaucer gives readers either a more or a less complicated wife through the removal or addition of lines to her speeches. This is an inherent problem of any compilation tale that uses four
sources or analogues as its inspiration. Whereas *The Knight’s Tale* had one immediate direct source, *The Merchant’s Tale*, with its multiple sources, presents new challenges for evaluating a wife that has roots in four different women. Chaucer’s wife could be nothing but a new version of her predecessors. May had to be different simply because she did not exist in any other version prior to the Merchant’s story; like the tale itself, May is also a compilation. Accordingly, at times the voice Chaucer gave May conforms to prescriptions dictated by symbolic female speech and at others, it challenges them.

**Scribal Variation in The Merchant’s Tale**

In total, Chaucer gave May eight speeches that provide character insight via her own words. Those speeches have been compared in the following manuscripts: Cp, Dd, El, Gl, Ha⁴, Hg, Ma, and Ps (for full collation of each speech see Appendix E). The scribes themselves are: John Marchaunt (Cp and Ha⁴), Rychard Wytton (Dd), Adam Pinkhurst (El and Hg), Geoffrey Spirling (Gl), John Brode (Ma), and John Duxwurth (Ps).

May’s first speech, as previously mentioned, is actually a thought, not an outright speech. However, the established methodology dictates that expressed thoughts in

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12 Chaucer offers additional insight to May’s character in *The Merchant’s Tale* via the Merchant. The Merchant tells readers that regarding January’s pley, “She preyseth nat his pleyying worth a bene” (IV.1854). And he notes that she dutifully plays the role of wife, “Confortyng hym as goodly as she may” (IV.1935). More insight to her character is given in the Damyan scenes. The Merchant states, “This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee, / Right of hire hand a letter made she, / In which she graunteth hym hire verray grace” (IV.1995-1997); “And bad hym been al hool” (IV. 2007); “Ful ofte wepeth fres she May” (IV.2092); and that she and Damyan have been “writing to and fro” (IV.2104). The Merchant also states, “That Januarie hath caught so greet a wil, / Thurgh egging of his wyf, hym for to pleye / In his gardyn” (IV.2134-2136). And finally, when January asks her to kiss him and “‘rome aboute’” (IV.2184), she has her first official words. However, this speech is prefaced by the following: “But first and forward she bigan to wepe” (IV.2187).
quotations be considered a distinct speech. As she vows to ease the pain of lovesick Damyan, the text reads as follows:

“Certyne,” thoghte she, “whom that this thyng displease
I rekke noght, for heere I hym assure
To love hym best of any creature,
Though he namoore hadde than his sherte.” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1982-1985)

In this speech, there are few differences between the manuscripts. As expected, there are popular scribal differences including the yogh, the u/v substitution, abbreviations, and spelling variations. Spirling adds “shall” before “displease” (Gl 43v) and Duxwurth substitutes “so” for “that” making the line read “whom so this thyng displease” (Ps 54v). The addition of “shall” presents a reiteration of inevitability while “so” creates a greater extent of her displeasure. Here, two scribes slightly alter the line, creating only mild changes in May’s voice, but changes nonetheless.

Duxwurth has the most altered line for “I rekke noght, for heere I hym assure” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1983). He writes, “I rekke not, here am I als sure” (Ps 54v). This variation changes the emphasis from assuring Damyan to the adverbial expression indicating her own sureness. Here one might argue that Duxwurth, by emphasizing her internal conflict rather than her desire to ease Damyan’s pain, makes her more self-centered. Or, the line might also be interpreted with her seeming even more sure that she will love Damyan “best of any creature.” Either way, Duxwurth’s change provides scholars an opportunity for a variant interpretation of her speech, and thus, her character.

13 The editors of The Riverside Chaucer who ended the speech with “Though he namoore hadde than his sherte” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.1985). But the following line “Lo pitee renneth soone in gentil herte!” (IV.1986), which the editors give to the Merchant, might have once been a part of May’s speech.
May’s second speech is her first outright vocal contribution, and it is also her longest speech in Chaucer’s *The Merchant’s Tale*. This speech is also her most crucial speech in the narrative. These are her first words and they speak only to medieval stereotypes. We know that her protestations are untrue and serve primarily to further secure the status of her soon-to-be cuckolded husband. Her lies are part of the complicated deception scheme, and Chaucer permits her to ramble on at length. She states,

“I have,” quod she, “a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also myn honour,
And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour,
Which that I have assured in youre hond,
Whan that the preest to yow my body bond;
Wherfore I wole answere in this manere,
By the leve of yow, my lord so deere
I prey to God that nevere dawe the day
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,
If evere I do unto my kyn that shame,
Or elles I empeyre so my name,
That I be fals; and if I do that lak,
Do strepe me and put me in a sak,
And in the nexte ryver do me drenche
I am a gentil womman and no wenche.
Why speke ye thus? but men been evere untrue,
And wommen have repreeve of yow ay newe.
Ye han noon oother contenance, I leeve,
But speke to us of untrust and repreeve.” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2188-2206)

This speech contained many differences across the manuscripts. The most corrupt of the eight was John Brode’s manuscript copy, Ma. The first major variant is found in the very first line. Brode’s version has her immediately involving God, a twist not found in Chaucer’s version. He writes, “I have, quod she, god woot a soule for to kepe” (Ma 96r). His addition of “God knows,” changes the line and her character. Not only is there an added emphasis placed upon her declaration, but she also implicates God as having
knowledge about her forthcoming deception. Brode also alters the line “And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2204) so that it reads “And women have of you ay reprefe newe” (Ma 96r). And finally, the biggest variant in Brode’s manuscript is that he fails to include the last two lines of her speech. This variant is only shared with Marchaunt’s Harley manuscript. Brode’s (and Marchaunt’s) May ends her speech at the above mentioned line and then she immediately sees Damyan sitting in the bushes. These scribes reduce May’s vocal impact and deny her the opportunity to take a final masked jab at the male species. Intentional or not, the result is a literal example of a male scribe enacting the principles associated with female silencing upon a female voice.

Geoffrey Spirling also does not fail to alter Chaucer’s words. In the second line of this speech, he makes a common scribal mistake and writes “and and” (Gl 44v) instead of “and,” giving May a scribal stutter. He also skips the word “tendre” (Gl 44v) in the next line, but realizes his mistake and adds it above the line with carets before the word “ilke” instead of after it. Spirling also provides an example of how dialect change shows up as a textual variant. In the hond/bond couplet, Spirling writes “hande” and “bande” (Gl 44v), which would likely have been common around Norwich. He also alters the line “By the leve of you” to “With the leve of you” (Gl 44v). This is a small change, but one wonders if it might have been a colloquial mistake for Spirling, who was involved in government affairs. There is nothing to indicate that “with” was used in mayoral offices in Norwich, but it seems to be a decisive alteration as “by” and “with” were not likely to be confused or miscopied. Also notable on this line is Wytton’s change to “By the leue of ȝow that

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14 The only other manuscript that shares this variant is Dd by Richard Wytton. He writes, “god wot” (116v).
been my lorde so dere” (Dd 116v) rather than “By the leve of yow, my lord so deere” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2194). His change seemingly strengthens the relationship between the two as he has May situate their relationship in terms of the present tense of “to be.” Wytton’s subtle addition serves to complicate perceptions of May, who further reinforces the bond between her and her husband.

Spirling (Gl), as well as Marchaunt (Cp) and Duxwurth (Ps), also change “I prey to God that nevere dawe the day” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2195) to the more specific “that day” (Gl 44v, Cp 157r, Ps 55v). Here, “that” is used to “denote a specific time or period” (Middle English Dictionary), and in this context, the scribes seem to suggest that day is imminent. Or else, there is always the possibility that the exemplar did indeed have “that” instead of “the” as nearly half of the manuscripts present the word as such. Spirling also qualifies “as womman may” to “as any woman maye” and he makes a mistake on “contenance” which he subsequently corrects above the word (Gl 44v). However, the largest change he makes involves the manner of her proposed punishment. All manuscripts maintain a version of “Do strepe me and put me in a sak, / And in the nexte ryver do me drenche” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2200-2201). But Spirling writes “Do forys me,” (Gl 44v) implying that she may not go willingly. By opting for “forys” instead of being stripped naked, he is making May a more willful character or he is exaggerating her speech on the whole.

There are two other interesting alterations to this speech. The first is found in Adam Pinkhurst’s Hg manuscript and also in Rychard Wytton’s Dd manuscript. Both scribes capitalized “river,” which would indicate a very specific place. In so doing, they place May in a very certain, albeit unknown location. Maybe Pinkhurst was envisioning
the River Thames in London where he worked, or a river in Surrey where he was born (Mooney, “Pinkhurst”). Likewise, possibly Wytton was thinking of his own River Cam in Cambridgeshire. Or were they referring to one near January’s birthplace in Pavia, Lombardy? This would mean that the river had to be either the Po or the Ticino. If this is true, this means that these scribes would have May suffer her offenses in one of the most public places in town. Therefore, by singling out a specific river, Pinkhurst and Wytton strengthen her calculated, deceptive speech. But this raises another question: would these scribes have even known which rivers were in the town of Pavia? If not, the argument that they were likely thinking of rivers closer to their immediate vicinity is strengthened. If this is the case, then there is conclusive proof of scribes placing a part of their own history into the narrative. Pinkhurst only makes this change in the Hengwrt manuscript. His Ellesmere manuscript keeps the lowercase r of river (El 112v).

Second, Duxwurth has the variant reading for the last two lines as “Yee can non othre contynaunce I leue / But euer speke to vs of vntrust and repreue” (Ps 55v). Duxwurth changes “have” to “can” and adds the word “euer.” Rychard Wytton also opts for the word “canne” in the first line and alters the second line to “as of vntrust and repreue” (Dd 116v). These changes in May’s speech indicate not only that she believes husbands will always and forever speak to their wives of reproof, but by using “can” she suggests that men are incapable of even possessing the ability to speak to women about anything other than their shame. Wytton makes a similar alteration by using “canne,” but he also uses “as,” essentially making women the embodiment of “vntrust and repreue.” These subtle alterations make May more self-assured, possibly even more self-righteous,
and more innately doomed by her femaleness. Moreover, though these alterations speak to medieval stereotypes, these scribes also present the speaker as more opinionated than they might have intended, which ultimately challenges those same medieval stereotypes.

In May’s third speech, it becomes clear that John Marchaunt’s manuscript (Cp) contains the most corrupt version of this tale. This is not because of scribal errors but rather because of peculiarities of the codex itself. Estelle Stubbs catalogs the effects upon all of the tales contained in this manuscript in her 2007 article on the Corpus Christi College MS 198. In summation, when the manuscript was rebound in 1987, scholars found parchment substitution that she suggests is quite significant as it can mean there was a “revision of, or additions to the text, a change in the position of some tales or [that it was used] to facilitate the inclusion of material perhaps originally copied into self-contained booklets” (145-156). She states,

It is notable that in the middle portion of the manuscript where most examples of vellum substitution can be seen, the Cp texts of the Clerk, Merchant, Franklin and [Second] Nun have more missing lines, more line reversals and more variants than in any other group of tales in the manuscript. (147)

However, these folios are not the primary concern for scholars examining The Merchant’s Tale. Stubbs points out that there are six missing folios as well (146).

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15 Additional variants occur in Ma. Brode writes “Or els if (th)at I empeire so ne name” (96r) rather than “Or elles I empeyre so my name” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2198). In Ps, Duxwurth writes “And wommen haue (th)ei repreuyd euer of New” (55v) rather than “And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2204). And in Ha4, Marchaunt fails to include the last two lines of this speech (145v). The lines, “Ye han noon oother contenance, I leve, / But speke to us of untrust and repreeve” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2188-2206) are omitted in Harley 7334.

16 Stubbs goes on to address how the parchment additions connect to the change of ink in Ha4 in specific tales (145-146).
Unfortunately, also missing are the rest of May’s speeches. So while it is impossible to collate Cp from this point forward, one can assume that John Marchaunt might have presented a fairly honest portrait of May, as he was a skilled and diligent scribe. Stubbs notes that the Corpus manuscript gives the impression of a “masterly example of the professionalism of its scribe” (144). But with regard to May’s speeches (and also some of Dorigen’s), it will forever remain unknown as to just how masterful a scribe he really was.

May’s third speech, which sets in motion the actual events of the pear tree episode, is as follows:

“Allas, my syde!
Now sire,” quod she, “for aught that may bityde,
I moste han of the peres that I see,
Or I moot dye, so soore longeth me
To eten of the smale peres grene.
Help, for hir love that is of hevene queene!
I telle yow wel, a womman in my plit
May han t
[97r, 118r]

There are but a few notable variants in this short speech. First, Ma’s scribe, Brode, and Dd’s scribe, Wytton, both have her ask for just one of the pears (“oon” (Ma 97r), “on” (Dd 118r)). This seems at odds with her “greet appetit” (IV.2336). Brode and Wytton might then be said to present May as a person making the expected mistakes of one caught up in a lie. Brode also makes an error on the “h” of “heuen” (97r), which he self-corrected.

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17 Stubbs presents her very thorough data in a chart that indicates missing folios, missing tales, and parchment changes for the Corpus manuscript (134-138).
The most interesting variation in this speech is found in Duxwrth’s Paris manuscript. He gives May an extra line of speech that is elsewhere given to January. After she says, “That she may dyen, but she of it have” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2337), one expects to find: “Allas” quod he, “that I ne had heer a knave / That koude clymbe! Allas allas,” quod he, “For I am blynde!” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2339-2340). But Duxwrth gives this variant: “Allas quoth she that I ne had here a knave / that couth clymbe. ‘Allas allas quoth he / For I am blynd’” (Ps 56r-56v). Duxwrth was very clear in his presentation, and he distinctly separates the words that belong to January.

Duxwrth gives May more words and her deceit grows considerably, further situating May within medieval stereotypes of female deceit. She further emasculates him in this manuscript because she reiterates his inability to climb through her request for a knave. In other versions it is January’s idea that he find another man to serve his wife. In Ps, it is the wife who asks for another man, making her husband feel all the more inadequate and making May seem all the more spiteful. Yet, giving her these lines also makes sense for the narrative. May is well-aware that no other man would be roaming about in the private, locked garden, so her request bears the fruit of the next part of her scheme: that she climb the tree herself.

May says,

“Ye, sire, no fors,” quod she;
“But wolde ye vouche sauf, for Goddes sake,
The pyrie inwith youre armes for to take,
For wel I woot that ye mystruste me,
Thanne sholde I clymbe wel ynoth,” quod she,
“So I my foot myghte sette upon youre bak.” (*The Merchant’s Tale* IV.2340-2345)
Duxwurth makes a significant alteration to this speech as well. He removes the center of the speech, only permitting her the first and last lines. This is likely an accidental eyeskip error on Duxwurth’s part as he picks up the narrative after the second “quod she” (Ps 56v). There is no gloss or marginal note indicating that he was even aware of the mistake. Still, readers of this manuscript are now missing a large part of the pear tree narrative, and her speech lacks needed context to understand why she wants to place her foot on his back. Missing is the visual description of a blind old man holding his arms around the pear tree in addition to May’s stated awareness of her husband’s mistrust. Duxwurth’s is the only significant variation among the manuscripts for this speech. And though it is the likely result of scribal error, he still silences her, removing most of her voice in this speech.

May’s next speech is her response to January’s outburst at what he sees occurring in the tree. She says,

“Sire, what eyleth yow?  
Have pacience and resoun in youre mynde.  
I have yow holpe on bothe youre eyen blynde.  
Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,  
As me was taught, to heele with youre eyen,  
Was no thyng bet, to make yow to see,  
Than strugle with a man upon a tree.  
God woot, I dide it in ful good entent.” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2368-2375)

This speech, that addresses all of the stereotypes about the nature of the wife (including her attack on the man’s ability to reason), is one of the least altered speeches in the examined manuscripts containing this tale. Only Duxwurth makes a change to the line “As was me taught” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2372). He writes “Thus” rather than “as” (Ps 56v), but this is not a significant change to present an altered vocal representation of
May. He also turns “strugle” into the gerund “stroglyng” (Ps 56v). Perhaps there is a weak argument that opting for “struggling” rather than “struggle” makes her activity less severe. But what is more fruitful is to address the phenomenon that these particular lines are most alike out of all her speeches across all the manuscripts. Might the male scribes have paid particular attention to her female voice at this crucial moment? Were they more likely to make fewer errors because this is the climax of the narrative and what she says is extremely important? Might it also be because of the content of her speech?

The same lack of variation continues with May’s subsequent protestations. As she continues to claim that the struggle was merely “medicyne” for the blind (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2380), there is only one notable scribal variation. In the line “Ye han som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2383), Brode (Ma), Duxwurth (Ps), and Wytton (Dd) opt for “glemeryng” (Ma 97v), “glymryng” (Ps 56v), and “glymeryng” (Dd 118v), respectively. Again, as with the “thus” and “as” substitutions, these words essentially mean the same thing and do not affect the perception of May. Perhaps this is just a product of location as all three scribes hailed from townships north of London (Brode is from Warwick, Duxwurth from Lincolnshire, and Wytton from Cambridgeshire, all approximately 100 miles apart).

Continuing on with her seventh speech, which begins, “Ye maze, maze, goode sire,” quod she” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2387), there is only an eyeskip mistake by Spirling in Gl. He adds an additional “q(uo)d” before “good ser” as well as after “good ser” (Gl 45v) to no detriment of her voice or her character.

But her last and final words do show one major variant in Brode’s Ma manuscript. Just as Brode omitted two lines from her second speech (“I have” quod she “a soule for to
“kepe...” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2188ff)), he also omits two lines from her final speech (Ma 97v). He does not include, “Til that youre sighte ysatled be a while, / Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigile” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2405-2406). This might have been a choice on the part of the scribe, if, say, the explicit had already been written and space was a concern. Why not cut out a redundant couplet? This particular manuscript is a one-column per page, economical manuscript that lacks decoration, color, and illumination. Moreover, the explicit and incipit seem to have been written as the tales themselves were finished or started, and by Brode himself. So either this was an error and he missed a couplet, or he was copying a variant version of the narrative. But if Chaucer had those lines in the exemplar from which Brode was working, which is presumable considering they appear in all other manuscripts where the tale exists (aside from Cp due to its missing folios), then their omission must alter May’s character. While the general gist of her speech is unaffected, the overall effectiveness of her total vocal percentage of the tale is diminished. Brode has now taken away a total of four lines from May, again committing the act of silencing the female voice.

Brode also makes some minor alterations such as opting for “awaked” (Ma 97v) rather than “adawed” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2400), “seyn” (Ma 97v) rather than “wene” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2396), and changing “a day or two yseyn” (The Merchant’s Tale IV.2404) to “hath a day seen I sayn” (Ma 97v). Wytton makes exactly the same alterations to these lines. However, these variants are not enough to create a different vocal representation of May.

Finally, one cannot be sure of what Pinkhurst might have had May say in lines IV.2401-2402 of The Merchant’s Tale, as the Hengwrt manuscript has a partially
damaged folio, 152v. However, having his other manuscript E1, as a reference, one can logically presume that he did not make any drastic or significant alteration to the speech.

Overall, evidence shows May is indeed altered in a variety of ways. Whether it is by Chaucer’s hand, who makes her into a wholly new and more complicated creature than her predecessors, or by the scribes who alter her ever-so-slightly through omitted lines or mistakes, May’s textual journey has proven to be just as complex as she is. Most evidence, however, indicates that at the hands of men, May has become the embodiment of medieval stereotypes regarding the female voice. She was either repeatedly silenced or, when given more vocal impact, her voice reconfirmed her place within the symbolic structure as nothing more than a deceitful woman.

**Case Study III: Dorigen in The Franklin’s Tale**

**Sources for The Franklin’s Tale**

There are thirteen accepted sources and analogues for the narrative in *The Franklin’s Tale*. Of these, and according to Robert R. Edwards, only one story (used in two separate works by Boccaccio) is considered Chaucer’s “major narrative source” (“The Franklin’s Tale” 212). The sourced elements are found in Libro IV of Boccaccio’s *Il Filocolo* and are also observable in a pared-down and slightly altered version in the fifth tale of the tenth day in his *Decameron*. ¹⁸ Edwards accurately describes the main elements of *Il Filocolo IV.31-34* as:

The lady’s request for an apparently impossible feat; the lover’s employment of a magician; the obligation to keep a promise; the three successive acts of generosity by the husband, unwanted suitor, and magician; and the final question about

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¹⁸ It was not unusual for different versions of one tale to appear in Boccaccio’s works; he regularly redacted his narratives in multiple manuscript copies. Consider the complex manuscript history of *Il Filostrato*, for example.
which of the three was the most generous (“the moost fre” V.1622). (“The Franklin’s Tale” 214)

Any Chaucer scholar would indeed categorize these events as the main events in *The Franklin’s Tale*. However, there has been a lively scholarly debate regarding Chaucer’s actual knowledge of Boccaccio’s works, particularly *Il Filocolo*. In this instance, the confusion stems primarily from Chaucer himself who, via the Franklin, states:

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Thise olde gentil Britouns in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes
Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge,
Which layes with hir instrumentz they songe
Or elles redden hom for hir plesaunce;
And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
Which I shal seyn with good wyl as I kan. (The Franklin’s Prologue V.709-715)
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These words sent scholars off in search of the Breton lay that Chaucer was trying to remember as he crafted the narrative. Edwards summarizes the complex history of this quest, noting that Thomas Tyrwhitt and W.H. Schofield argue for a lost source, while Laura Hibbard Loomis suggests the mentioning of the lay derives from Chaucer’s familiarity with the Auchinleck manuscript. However, Kathryn L. Hume and Alastair J. Minnis solve the problem of the lost lay by identifying the invocation as a “rhetorical strategy” and not a proclamation of source (“The Franklin’s Tale” 212-213). Their theory remains the current accepted explanation for the introduction of Chaucer’s reliance upon the genre for this tale.

After removing the possibility of a lost Breton lay, scholars then began to question Chaucer’s knowledge of *Il Filocolo* (and *Decameron*), even though the list of

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19 If Hume and Minnis (whose current theory stands) are correct, Chaucer has played the most brilliant and eternal game with his readers. He has sent scholars off on an impossible quest, much like the impossible task Dorigen sets for Aurelius.
above events, which are also contained in a frame narrative, are evidence beyond refute. The dispute lies more with the author’s access to, and interpretation of, Boccaccio’s *Il Filocolo* more than upon Chaucer’s knowledge of the content. Helen Cooper and David Wallace appear to be on opposite ends of the argument, the latter arguing that Chaucer was indeed familiar with the work. Wallace highlights the Italian sources in terms of the “larger, more abstract concepts and ideas” that they shared with Chaucer’s version (“Chaucer and the Early Writings of Boccaccio” 39). Moreover, the debate evolved to address whether Chaucer sourced the version of the tale found in *Il Filocolo* or the one found in *Decameron*. Pio Ranja laid those questions to rest with his article crediting the Menedon story in *Il Filocolo IV* as the dominant source for *The Franklin’s Tale* (Edwards, “The Franklin’s Tale” 213, Battles 39). More recently, N. S. Thompson suggests that Chaucer used both sources, or at the very least, he used *Decameron* as well as a version of *Il Filocolo*’s “Love Questions,” which circulated independently (Edwards, “The Franklin’s Tale” 214).²⁰

The manuscript history of *Il Filocolo* is complicated, as expected. As for which Italian manuscripts were witnesses for Chaucer’s version, scholars find themselves in the expected dilemma. With no concrete proof, one cannot know which manuscript Chaucer used or remembered, or which version, redaction, or variant version of the original tale

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²⁰ Dominique Battles posits that *Il Filocolo* is influential beyond Menedon’s story. She reconciles Chaucer’s separation of Arveragus and Dorigen (a change to Menedon’s tale where the husband and wife remain together) by turning to the overall narrative. She notes that “the Filocolo, in effect, revolves around the dilemma of reuniting the lovers” (45). This theme is not present in Menedon’s tale, but is a major motivation in the frame and she, like Wallace before her, suggests that Chaucer must have known more of the lengthy narrative than just the “Love Questions.” She makes similar arguments for Chaucer’s placing importance on the sea, which also has a significant role in *Il Filocolo*, though not in Menedon’s story. See Dominique Battles, “Chaucer’s ‘Franklin’s Tale’ and Boccaccio's ‘Filocolo’ Reconsidered,” *The Chaucer Review* 34 .1 (1999): 38-59.
was contained in that particular manuscript. As such, scholars rely heavily upon the text presented by Vittore Branca in *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*. Branca’s version, compiled by Antonio Enzo Quaglio, has sourced the forty-seven extant manuscripts containing *Il Filocolo*, or portions of it (aside from the B and B1 Berlin manuscripts that were lost to war), as well as six additional print editions from 1472-1938 (706-707). However, Edwards has recently offered an excerpt in *Sources and Analogues* that presents a different tradition. He uses B, RI, Vch, Vo, and Vrl, in his presentation of *Il Filocolo IV.31-4.34*, noting that the Vch manuscript is part of a subgrouping that “Quaglio regards as a less reliable source for Boccaccio’s work” (“The Franklin’s Tale” 220). The same complex history is also true of *Decameron X.5*. The *Decameron* manuscripts total sixty-seven, one of which is an actual autograph, and Rhiannon Daniels notes that it was copied after the initial publication of the work in the 1370s complicating its textual tradition (77). However, for both narratives, Branca’s edition is currently the critical edition accepted by scholars and it is used for the following comparative analysis.21

**Chaucer’s Alterations to Source Material in The Franklin’s Tale**

The wives of the Boccaccian narratives are as different from one another as they are from the version of the wife presented in Chaucer’s *The Franklin’s Tale*. In terms of their literal vocal impact upon the narrative, they contribute progressively more and more. In *Il Filocolo*, the wife is unnamed, and she plays a minor role in an overall narrative about masculine relationships. The lady has only five distinct speeches that

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21 Rhiannon Daniels offers a very thorough analysis of the *Decameron* manuscript tradition. See Rhiannon Daniels, *Boccaccio and the Book: Production and Reading in Italy 1340-1520* (London: Legenda, 2009).
account for a mere 5.97% of the tale, only 3.69% if including the ensuing debate about who is most generous in Libro IV.32-4.33. Here, Boccaccio focuses on the generosity of the men including the unnamed husband, the lover Tarolfo, and the magician Tebano. He spends a great amount of the text describing Tarolfo’s wandering and Tebano’s three-day long magic spell. In Decameron X.5, Dianora is given one less speech but she has five additional lines compared to her counterpart in Il Filocolo; yet because the tale is much shorter, she now commands 17.54% of the narrative, a substantial increase. In Boccaccio’s retelling of the same story, he pared down events significantly. For example, the great detail that went into Tebano’s magic is summed up with “sue arti fece” (“made his art”) (Decameron X.5.10), and the magic occurs over the course of just one night, not three. What Boccaccio did not do was detract lines from the lady in his recrafting of her as Dianora. In fact, he gave her even more lines, making the female role more complex than its previous representation.22

An examination of Dorigen’s speeches compels one to believe that Chaucer wanted his female character to have a greater role than her predecessors. In The Franklin’s Tale, Dorigen has eleven distinct speeches and one hundred and seventy-five lines of direct speech. This is exponentially more than the wife of Il Filocolo IV.31 or Decameron X.5. However, because the narrative is of greater length than its

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22 Two notable changes from Boccaccio’s previous version are: (1) Dianora makes the impossible request of a May garden in January via a go-between woman, meaning Dianora does not speak with the lover, Ansaldo, directly; and (2) when she offers herself to Ansaldo, Boccaccio specifically tells readers that she goes there “senza troppo ornasi con due suoi famigliari” (“without too many adornments and with two servants”) (Decameron X.5.17). Compare this with the lady of Il Filocolo who, “ornatasi e fattasi bella, e presa compagnia” (“adorned herself and made herself beautiful, and took a company/large group of servants”) (Il Filocolo IV.31.47-48).
predecessors, Dorigen’s voice commands but 20% of the tale. Still, this is more vocalization than was afforded the wife in any previous version.

In addition to giving her more lines, Chaucer made a number of significant alterations to the wife. Consider the introduction to the wife in the analogues. The first lines from the lady in Menedon’s story inform readers of her belief that should she ignore Tarolfo’s advances, it would be to no avail. The reader knows little about the lady other than that she is beautiful (“essendo belissima” (Il Filocolo IV.31.3)), which is consequently the source for Tarolfo’s love. But Boccaccio seems to have rethought her character by the time he creates Dianora in Decameron. In this version, readers learn that Dianora is “piacevole e di buona aria” (“pleasant and of good air (good natured)”) (Decameron X.5.4), and that she is pursued by Ansaldo because of her “valore” (“worth”) (Decameron X.5.4). Her first words involve the impossible task of creating a May garden in January. She also divulges the news that she has hidden the lover’s advances and the impossible task request from her husband. While these two wives are responsible for quickly moving the plot forward, they remain one-dimensional compared to Dorigen. Chaucer’s wife does not make the impossible task request until her fifth speech (The Franklin’s Tale V.989). All of her prior speeches serve as character-building constructs rather than to advance the plot. Consider the first speech that Chaucer gives to Dorigen. She says (to Arveragus):

“Sire, sith of youre gentillesse
Ye profre me to have so large a reyne,
Ne wolde nevere God bitwixe us tweyne,
As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.
Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf—
Have heer my trouthe—til that myn herte breste.” (The Franklin’s Tale V.754-759)
The reader does not need to be told of her beauty or her worthiness, per se, as her own words begin to identify her character and nature. She defines herself. She is humble and faithful and her worth becomes self-evident. This alteration rebukes medieval prescriptions that suggest the wife be identified by and through her husband. Chaucer’s Dorigen begins to eschew stereotypes as she is afforded a voice to express her own self worth.

Dorigen’s first speech is also critical in identifying the narrative shift in this version of the tale. Here, the tale is contextualized within new parameters not present in Boccaccio, those of “trouthe” (The Franklin’s Tale V.759) and “soveraynetee” (The Franklin’s Tale V.751), particularly within a marriage. Dorigen’s worth is never in question, and this is reiterated, not only by the Franklin, but also by the numerous “ne shal I nevere been untrewe wyf” (The Franklin’s Tale V.984) type of speeches. She introduces the main concepts that will later be reinforced outside of the marriage as a means of upholding social ideals. For proof, one need only be reminded of Arveragus’s words: “‘Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1479). Chaucer’s Dorigen is instantly worthier than either of Boccaccio’s wives, whose very “trouthe” may be in question from the start as evidenced by their devious decisions to keep the scandalous events hidden from their husbands.23 One might argue that Chaucer was creating a wife, as compared to the wife of the sources or analogues, that departed from the confines of the symbolic structure. He has Dorigen uphold typically male

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23 It must be noted that Dorigen was not afforded an opportunity to hide anything from her husband because in Chaucer’s version, the married couple is separated. Boccaccio’s husbands and wives remain together during the narrative. So while Dorigen did not conceal anything from Arveragus, one cannot know if she would have if he had remained home in Pedmark.
traditions, like those of “trouthe.” In so doing, Chaucer complicates Dorigen’s positioning in terms of definitive medieval female stereotypes, for she is both symbolically represented and simultaneously rebukes that same symbolic representation.

In addition to the above noted themes, Dorigen also incites a newfound pathos at the perceived helplessness of her situation. This is first witnessed in her “Eterne God” speech (The Franklin’s Tale V.865-893), where she complains about the “grisly feendly rokkes blake” (The Franklin’s Tale V.868) and questions God’s involvement in the “werk unresonable” (The Franklin’s Tale V.872). Her voice is used to highlight the helplessness of her situation while it simultaneously draws attention to the helplessness of “mankynde” (The Franklin’s Tale V.882) in general. Further, her voice is used to Christianize the poem; from the start, Dorigen’s words create a depth and a spirituality that her character lacked in both Italian analogues. And this all occurs before the impossible request/rash promise scene.

Next, the women differ in the manner in which they make the impossible request. As previously mentioned in the discussion on “trouthe,” the motivations for these wives are different. The lady of Il Filocolo devises a “sottile malizia” (“subtle malice”) (Il Filocolo IV.31.7), which is, of course, the request for a May garden in January. But this lady acts out of fear that her husband might suspect her of adulterous incitement and collusion, or worse, of “malvagia” (“evil”) (Il Filocolo IV.31.44). Dianora makes the same request (via a go-between), yet now, the slightly malicious act is described as something “maraviglioso” (“marvelous”) (Decameron X.5.12). Ironically, the lady’s husband acts nobly, showing that her fears may have been unwarranted. On the other hand, Dianora may have had just cause as her husband, Gilberto, “si turbò forte” (“was
greatly troubled”) (Decameron X.5.14) and was possessed of “l’ira” (“wrath”) (Decameron X.5.14). Dorigen’s impossible request deviates from the former’s devious acts that were characterized by adjectives like malice and evilness. Dorigen’s request is less sinister, even masculine. Chaucer manages to create this perception by the type of request and the manner in which she proposes it.

Dorigen’s request is that Aurelius remove the “feendly rokkes blake” (The Franklin’s Tale V.868) and make “the coost so clene” (The Franklin’s Tale V.995). This is a grand departure from Boccaccio’s impossible task of creating a May garden in winter. The garden request might truly be nothing more than “sottile malizia” as it serves no greater purpose than amusement. However, Dorigen’s request is commendable as the removal of the rocks will not only save lives, but would presumably permit her husband’s safe return. Her impossible request is more complex, less malicious, and at once Chaucer creates greater depth for the female character who places the safe return of her husband, and the safety of other sailors, above the predictable female need for a garden diversion. Once again, Dorigen’s voice is the embodiment of a female character who challenges definitions of the symbolic order. In changing the nature of the wife’s request, Chaucer created a more complex version of the wife that confronts medieval prescriptions about impractical female voices.

The second difference is in Chaucer’s choice of wording before the rash promise. After Aurelius proclaims his love for Dorigen and she denies him, there is the line, “But after that in pley thus seyde she” (The Franklin’s Tale V.988). These words precede the request which begins on the next line. She speaks directly to Aurelius, advising him to “‘lat swiche folies out of youre herte slyde’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1002), and she even
insults him with the quip, “‘What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf / For to go love another mannes wyf, / That hath hir body whan so that hym liketh?’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1003-1005). These words are now contextualized within the realm of “pley.” But what is significant in this passage is that she must maintain “trouthe” even in “pley.” These clever alterations show how Chaucer adapts, or evolves, the female protagonist in his version and permits her to play with traditions conventionally tied to the masculine realm.

Arguments about the validity of the rash promise abound, but they center on how the previous vow to Arveragus takes precedence over the second one to Aurelius. Might it not as easily be negated because it was made in “pley?” Here, Chaucer shows the importance placed upon the verbal agreement, gender aside, whether it is made in earnest or in “pley.” He upholds Dorigen to the same standards as his male characters. Her adherence to values of “trouthe” exemplifies what Alison Ganze sees as Dorigen’s relationship with masculine concepts of “trouthe.” She discusses how scholars view Dorigen’s “trouthe” as fidelity to Arveragus, rather than to her word. Ganze offers scholarship such as that of Effie Jean Mathewson, who says, “Trouthe is a knightly concept, belonging to the masculine world [Arveragus] inhabits, not a part of Dorigen’s moral existence, which does not extend beyond the concerns of maidenly and wifely virtue” (Mathewson qtd. in Ganze, 315). However, Chaucer gives Dorigen no choice but to uphold her rash promise, and this places her in a stereotypically male world, if one subscribes to Mathewson’s views on “trouthe.” But this argument falls short because her husband is the one who forces her to uphold the male concept of “trouthe,” while she must forgo the female concept of “trouthe” defined by her fidelity to Arveragus. Each
stance complicates a clear view of Dorigen as either a symbolically represented female trapped by male-designed and enforced prescriptions or as a pioneer female voice participating, and participating well, within the masculine realm.

The next significant alteration that Chaucer makes is at the moment Dorigen realizes the impossible task was in fact possible. When Dorigen goes to the coast and sees that the rocks have gone, “She astoned stood; in al hir face nas a drope of blood” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1339-1340). Her shock is captured by her words:

“Allas,” quod she, “that evere this sholde happe!
For wende I nevere, by possibilitee
That swich a monstre or merveille myghte be!
It is agayns the proces of nature.” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1342-1345)

Compare this with the lady of *Il Filocolo*, who, deprived of her own speech, marvels at and admires the wondrous and beautiful garden. Boccaccio tells readers, “Questo parve alla donna bellissima cosa e mirabile, né mai un sì bello ne le pareva avere veduto” (“This seemed to the woman, a beautiful thing and wondrous, nor it seemed had she ever seen one so beautiful”) (*Il Filocolo* IV.31.41). And in *Decameron*, Dianora was curious to see the garden (“sì come vaga di vedere cose nuove”) (“she wanders around looking at the new things”) (*Decameron* X.5.12)). Once in the *locus amoenus*, Dianora is filled with admiration (“e non senza maraviglia commendatolo assai” (“and not without marveling, she greatly commended it”) (*Decameron* X.5.12)). Boccaccio’s women are filled with amazement upon the realization of the perceived impossible feat, and it is not until they must face their husbands that worry truly sets in. In this sense, Chaucer makes Dorigen worthier in that she never wavers in her resolve no matter how miraculous the feat. Chaucer does not permit her to marvel at or admire the work by undercutting the event
with language of amazement. Rather than use words like “belissima” (“beautiful”), “mirabile” (“wondrous”), “bello” (“good-looking”), and “maraviglia” (“marvel”), Chaucer uses “monstre” (“a wonder, prodigy, monstrous thing or event; omen, portent”) (Middle English Dictionary) and “merveille” (“an unnatural occurrence or circumstance; a wonder of nature or art; a monster or monstrosity (Middle English Dictionary) (The Franklin’s Tale V.1344), and he has Dorigen claim that this “trappe” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1341) “is agayns the proces of nature” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1345). Chaucer has removed the possibility for Dorigen to see the fruition of the impossible task as anything positive. Her words maintain the steadfastness of her character and indicate a level of internal value not present in the other wives. Here, Dorigen also serves as a Boethian mouthpiece for views on the supernatural. Compare her language with Chaucer’s Boece (“Thilke merveylous monstre Fortune” (II.pr.i.17)), and one can see how Chaucer is contextualizing her reactions while preparing readers for her imminent “Allas, on thee Fortune I pleyne” speech.

In addition to changing the nature of the impossible task, Chaucer’s insertion of Dorigen’s lament to Fortune is the second major alteration he made to his version of the narrative. Only Chaucer presents such a vocal wife and one who knows a substantial amount of history. The lady of Il Filocolo simply remains quiet until “non potendosi ella a’ continui stimoli del marito” (“she could no longer handle the continued provoking by her husband”) (Il Filocolo IV.31.44). And, of Dianora, the reader is told that “la donna per vergogna il tacque molto: ultimamente, constretta, ordinatamente gli aperse ogni

24 According to the Middle English Dictionary, “merveille” can also mean, “a thing, act, or event that causes astonishment or surprise; a wonderful feat.” This, though more closely related to Boccaccio’s usage, is in contrast to her following words that clarify the feat as anything but wonderful.
“The woman was quite silent for shame; at the end, forced, she opened up and told him everything”) (Decameron X.5.13). For Chaucer, this would not do. He gives Dorigen the lengthiest speech of any of the women examined in this study. For one hundred and two lines, Dorigen recounts the noble wives who have chosen death when forced to abandon their fidelity or honor. So why might Chaucer have made such a lengthy alteration to previously mute wives?

Joanne Rice offers the best summation of what Chaucer might be doing with the lament. She notes that the presentation of Dorigen’s speech, which summarizes six chapters of Jerome’s Adversus Jovinianum in a list format, was a common medieval technique (900). But even though the “gathering of such lists of exempla” was not unusual, she notes that many have “complained about the passage’s inordinate length, rhetorical excesses, apparent disorganization, and display of learning of its own sake” (900). Examining this speech repeatedly in various manuscripts might lead one to agree with Rice. It is astonishing to think that Chaucer might have intended the list to be even longer. However, the speech has also been characterized as having a certain systematic organization with its groupings of “women who commit suicide to avoid rape (1367-1404), women who commit suicide after being raped (1405-38), and notably faithful wives (1439-56)” (Baker summarized by Rice 900). Still, the rhetorical strategy, which Chaucer may be ridiculing, is viewed oppositely as “an effective narrative device for

25 Walter William Skeat notes that the Latin glosses at the end of the list of exempla are presumably Chaucer’s notes, which indicate that he left the list incomplete (Skeat (5:399) qtd. in Rice 900).

26 Rice offers this as the opinion of Manly and Rickert as well as Spearing (900).
postponing the tale’s denouement” to “a complete alienation from Christian principles by its toying with the pagan virtue of honor through suicide” (900). 27

Notably absent from the number of explanations regarding the lament, is the fact that the absurdly long lament establishes Dorigen as a literate historian who either knows Latin, or at the very least, knows the Latin stories in translation. And whether she is postponing the narrative or challenging Christianity becomes all the more relevant because she is the one doing it. Chaucer alters the wife character and permits her to be the vessel through which any number of explanations for the lament become possible. But Dorigen and her female voice are the keys. The other wives are mute up until the point of disclosure. Dorigen complains to Fortune, and not only does she exhibit uncommon medieval wifely knowledge and literacy, but she also presumably recounts this list of women because she equates herself with these particular pagan women. Even if, according to Edwards, there are problems with the speech’s “artificiality of utterances” (“Rewriting” 238), as discussed in chapter two, there can be no disputing the fact that there is a newly created psychological depth to the female character. Subsequently, Chaucer’s wife is unlike any wife in the tale’s sources or analogues.

Another significant alteration is the manner in which the wife’s debt is to be paid. While all three women pay the debt at the command of the husband, the lady of Il Filocolo dresses for the occasion. She dolls herself up and takes a large group of people to Tarolfo’s house. There, “di vergogna dipinta” (“of painted shame”), she tells him,

presumably in front of the company, “‘Per essere a tutti i tuoi voleri sono venuta; fa di me quello chi ti piace’” (“I have come to fulfill all your wishes; do with me what you like””) (*Il Filocolo* IV.31.48). Boccaccio alters the events in *Decameron*, taking particular care to note that Dianora does not beautify herself and that she only takes three people with her. This is rather altered from the entourage that she had in *Il Filocolo*. Moreover, once at Ansaldo’s home, the admission of the debt to be paid is not a private matter. The narrator says, “In una bella camera a un gran fuoco se n’entrar tutti” (“In a beautiful room with a large fire, he entered everyone/brought everyone in”) (*Decameron* X.5.18).

Ansaldo then publicly questions why she has come, to which she replies:

> “Messer, né amore che io vi porti né promessa fede mi menan qui, ma il comandamento del mio marito, il quale, avuto più rispetto alle fatiche del vostro disordinato amore che al sui e mio onore, mi ci ha fatta venire; e per comandamento di lui disposta sono per questa volta ad ogni vostro piacere.”

(*Decameron* X.5.20)

(“Sir, neither love of you or my faithful promise has brought me here, but the command of my husband, the which had more respect for the pain of your disorderly love than for his or my honor, he has made me come; and because of my husband’s order, only for this time, I am for your every pleasure.”)

In terms of paying the carnal debt, Dorigen becomes representative of something much larger than the female pawn in the middle of the men’s game. Before sending Dorigen on her way, Arveragus says, “‘I yow forbade, up peyne of deeth, / That nevere, whil thee lasteth lyf ne breeth, / To no wight telle thou of this aventure’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1481-1483). Adding to the level of secrecy, readers are told that though Dorigen departs with a squire and a maid, “they ne wiste why she thider wente / He nolde no wight tellen his entente” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1491-1492). Interestingly, where the other women head to the unrequited lover’s home, Dorigen departs for the garden, the
medieval *locus amoenus*, where Aurelius first declared his love. But she never makes it there. She happens upon Aurelius in a town street where she proclaims “half as she were mad” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1511) that she is on her way to the garden to uphold her “trouthe” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1513). So while the declaration that she will keep her promise is made on a public street, her words give nothing away regarding the nature of the debt. Her language is entirely different from the lady’s and from Dianora’s, who both clearly state that they are there for carnal reasons. Further, Rice notes that “the emphasis on the movement toward the garden (through repetition) becomes significant since the characters never reach the garden and thus avoid the implications of the fall” (Rice summarizing Kee 900). Where the previous wives enter the houses, prepared for the debt to be paid, Dorigen remains removed from the location and the stigma attached to it. Again, Dorigen is positioned as a worthier wife, as Chaucer repeatedly protects her reputation, even in the most precarious and public of settings.

Chaucer’s Dorigen belongs to a wholly different class of wives than seen in the analogues. Aside from the general narrative elements, it is difficult to see the lady of *Il Filocolo* or Dianora as Dorigen’s source. Chaucer’s wife is complicated, driven by medieval masculine concepts like “trouthe,” and even acts as an extension of her husband’s ability to honor “trouthe.” This is a wife more psychologically involved in her husband’s affairs. While all wives act as their husband’s public representative, Dorigen’s role is heightened as she becomes the embodiment of medieval concepts concerning private and public spheres. Her commitment to honor his wishes takes place “amydde the toun, right in the quykkkest strete” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1502). She becomes his public representative, literally on a busy, public street. Moving the scene from the privacy of a
home to the public realm means that Dorigen can, and does, affect masculinity in a new overt manner. Moreover, she challenges concepts of Christianity, and she opines in a well-versed and knowledgeable manner. She is representative of the concepts of goodness and worthiness, especially witnessed by her impossible task request and through Chaucer’s protection of her in that she is never permitted to reach the garden. The concept of the wife who must keep her promise has risen above pawn status in Chaucer’s tale. He elevates her to a position where her actions are complex and psychologically motivated. David Wallace aptly notes:

The most radical differences between the two narratives stem from Chaucer’s decision to bring his female protagonist to prominence. The brilliant stroke of connecting Dorigen’s anxiety about her husband with the task she sets her aspiring lover brings an extra dimension of psychological complexity to Chaucer’s Tale. (“Chaucer and Boccaccio’s Early Writings” 154)

Her female voice complicates a specific position in terms of a spectrum of masculinity or of its relation to the symbolic structure by at once adhering to and confronting all prescriptions about the female voice. She speaks more than her predecessors, she speaks with more values than her predecessors, and she speaks in terms of masculine concepts of “trouthe” that are wholly unknown to her predecessors. Chaucer took such enormous amounts of liberty and care with her character that, on the whole, Dorigen barely resembles Boccaccio’s creations. Now, it will be determined if subsequent scribes afforded Dorigen as much consideration as Chaucer did.

**Scribal Variation in The Franklin’s Tale**

The manuscripts considered for scribal analysis are: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198 (Cp) by John Marchaunt; Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.4.24 (Dd) by Rychard Wytton; San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS El
26 C.9 (El) by Adam Pinkhurst; Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 197
(U.1.1.) (Gl) by Geoffrey Spirling; London, British Library, MS Harley 7334 (Ha¹)
by John Marchaunt; Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D
(Hg) by Adam Pinkhurst; Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 113 (Ma)
by John Brode; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fonds Anglais 39
(Ps) by John Duxwurth.

*The Franklin’s Tale* exists in its entirety in nearly all of the manuscripts
aside from Marchaunt’s Harley manuscript where there is an unfortunate loss of
quire 21 between folio 156 and folio 157 (Manley and Rickert 219). Consequently,
on folio 156 there is a selection from *The Squire’s Tale* juxtaposed with lines from
*The Franklin’s Tale* (“Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have” (*Canterbury
Tales* V.1224)) on the facing folio, 157r. This is an unfortunate loss particularly for
Dorigen’s voice as six of her speeches are therefore lost in this manuscript.²⁸

Dorigen’s first speech is:

“Sire, sith of youre gentillesse
Ye profre me to have so large a reyne,
Ne wolde nevere God bitwixe us tweyne,
As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.
Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf—
Have heer my trouthe—til that myn herte breste.” (*The Franklin’s Tale*
V.754-759)

With her first words, the usual scribal variants make their appearance; dialect differences,
abbreviation styles, and *yogh* preferences are immediately observable. But concerning the

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²⁸ See Appendix H for the missing speeches in this manuscript. Note that Marchaunt’s other manuscript,
Cp, contains all the speeches and can be used as a benchmark.
variants that affect Dorigen’s speech, there are six worthy contenders. 29 The first notable variant appears with the presentation of the word “God” (The Franklin’s Tale V.756). All examined manuscripts offer the word as “god” in lower case aside from Ps, where Duxwurth removes “God” from the sentence altogether. 30 The minuscule representation of God might seem unusual at first. It offers an opportunity to inscribe modern connotations that might convolute the interpretation of the word or of the scribe’s intentions. For example, one could argue that scribes who used the lowercase “god” might have been referring to pagan deities rather than the Judeo-Christian God. If so, this alteration would de-Christianize Dorigen beyond refute, and scholars would be able to endorse her lament to Fortune in concrete terms. However, scribes were copying before writing was systematized and before “God” meant something different from “god.” So while it might be an enticing argument, these scribes did not distinguish “God” from “god” in their copying, nor did they intend for the words to yield varying connotations. But Duxwurth’s removal of the word altogether may warrant justification if Dorigen is to be perceived as lacking in Christian spirituality. In removing God from the equation, Duxwurth permits Dorigen to be the one who is in control of whether there is “werre or

29 Additional insight to her character in The Franklin’s Tale is provided by the Franklin’s narration and will not be analyzed as direct speech. These lines include: “Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce / That pryvely she fil of his accord / To take hym for hir housbonde and hir lord” (V.740-742); “And she to hym ful wisely gan to swere / That nevere sholde there be defaute in here” (V.789-90); “For his absence wepeth she and siketh, / As doon thise noble wyves wban hem liketh. / She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth” (V.817-819); “And seyn right thus, with sorweful sikes colde” (V.863); “At after-dyne gonne they to daunce, / And syngye also, save Dorigen alone, / Which made alwey hir complaint and hir moone” (V.918-920); “But after that, in ple seye she” (V.988); “And hoom she goth a sorweful creature; / For verray feere unnethe may she go. / She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two, / And swowneth, that it routhe was to see” (V.1346-1349); “With face pale and with ful sorweful cheere,”(V.1353); “Thus pleyned Dorigene a day or tweye, / Purposynge evere that she wolde deye” (V.1457-1458); “And she gan wepen ever lenger the moore” (V.1462); and “And she answered, half as she were mad” (V.1511); “She thonketh hym upon hir knees al bare” (V.1545)

30 In Ps, the line reads, “Ne wold I neuer that bitwix vs tweyne” (57v).
“As in my gilt, were outher werre or stryf” (The Franklin’s Tale V.757) when he writes “woo or strife” (Gl 81v). “Woo” invokes sentiments of grief or misery while “werre” implies a hostile battle. By opting for “woo,” Spirling softens Dorigen’s character, making her less combative than the other scribes who all write “werre” or a variant spelling of the word. John Marchaunt also makes a slight alteration that could have significant results to her character. Instead of the line “‘Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf’” (The Franklin’s Tale V. 758), in the Corpus manuscript Marchaunt writes: “‘Sire, I wil be ȝour owne humble trewe wyf’” (Cp 159v). Marchaunt’s use of the word “owne” implies ownership or possession. In this manuscript, Dorigen can be perceived to interpret her marital relationship in terms of medieval prescriptions of domestic property. If this is how she perceives herself and her position within the marriage, she is then traditionally aligned with contemporary medieval thought depicted in both real and idealized portrayals regarding the role of the wife. By adding one word, he presents a Dorigen that lives in conflict with all accounts of marriage equality and sovereignty that readers have come to expect from her. Marchaunt presents the opportunity for a psychological change that indeed affects interpretation of Dorigen, who now succumbs to stereotypical prescriptions.

The largest alteration to this speech is found in the Paris manuscript. Duxwurth gives Dorigen substantial lines that are elsewhere given to the Franklin. In all
manuscripts, and in *The Riverside Chaucer*, Dorigen’s speech ends with the line, “‘Have here my trouthe—til that myn herte breste’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.759). But Duxwurth has her speak through line 770 continuously, with what seems to be narrative intrusion in lines 770-774. He then appears to give her lines 775-788 in addition to two newly created lines of verse. This is quite an alteration to Chaucer’s version as represented in *The Riverside Chaucer*. Here is how her speech reads in the Paris manuscript. (Italics are used to distinguish the lines given to the Franklin and bold text is used to indicate additional lines added by this scribe. Parentheticals are used to note substantial differences from *The Riverside Chaucer*.)

“sire, sithen of youre gentilnesse
yee profre me to haue so large a Reyne
ne wold I neuere that bitwix vs tweyne
as in my gilt were outhir werre or stryfe
sire I wil be youre humble and trewe wyfe
haue here my trouthe til that myn hert brest
thus shal we be bothe in quyete (and) in rest (*Riverside*: “Thus been they bothe in quiet and in reste” (indicating this is the narrative shift to the Franklin))
for one thing sires saufly dar I sei
that euerich frend most othir obey
yif thei wil long hold compaignye
loue wil not be constreyndy with maystrye
Whan maystry comyth than god of love anon
betith his wengis and fare wel he is gon (*Riverside*: gon!)
loue is a thing as any spireyte free
wommen of kynde desyren libertee
and not to be constreyndy as a thral
who O so doon men”. *yif I sooth sey shal
loke who is most pacient in loue
he is at his avauntage al aboue
pacience is an hygh vertu certayn
for yt venquyssith as clerkis sayn
things”. that rigour shulde neuyr atteyne
for euary word men may not chid (and) pleyn
**for yif thei do yt is but in veyn** (newly added line)
lernyth to suffre or ellis so mot I gon
yee shul yt lern wheathir yee wil or non
for in this world certeyn no man ther is
t hat he ne dooth or seith sum tyme amys
Ire seekenesse or constellacyoun
Wyne wo or chaungynge of complexioun
causyn ful ofte to doon amys or speke
on euer y wrong not redressid be (Riverside: on every wrong a man may nat be
wreken)
**sum what by pacience and not al by cruelte** (newly added line)
aftir the tyme of most temperaunce
to euer y wight that can gouernaunce
and thertfore hath this wurthi wyse knyght
to lyue in ease”. *suffraunce hire behight*
*and she to hym ful wisely gan swere* (omits “to swere” indicating it has been done
in addition to the concrete narrative shift to the Franklin)*
*that neuere shulde be found default in here* (Ps 57v)

Duxwurth partitions out what he presumably perceives is dialogue based on the narrative
markers, “yif I sooth sey shal,” “as clerkis sayn thingis,” and “suffrance hir bihight.” This
makes sense syntactically, and logically, as well. But in so doin
g, he gave her an extra
eleven lines in speech one, and gave her a new, additional speech of sixteen lines, two of
which are wholly created by Duxwurth. Moreover, Dorigen is now the mouthpiece for
the content previously spoken by the Franklin, which makes her appear as a more active
and opinionated participant in the battle of the sexes. Additionally, in the line of “fare wel
he is gon,” the lack of exclamatory punctuation changes her character into someone
somber rather than emphatic. Thus far, the scribe’s changes seem straightforward, but
Duxwurth complicates the analysis by copying (or miscopying) the word “sires” in the
line, “‘for one thing sires saufly dar I sei’” (Ps 57v). This is the only crux in the speech as
it does not make sense for Dorigen to address her husband in the plural. However, it does
make sense for the Franklin to address the company in the masculine plural.

Consequently, this variant appears to have been a mistake on the part of the scribe who
had no clear indication or markers on where Dorigen’s speech should end. Ultimately,
scholars are left confounded by the manuscript presentation of this particular speech. Regardless, whether intended or by error, Duxwurth has created a new, variant Dorigen who challenges symbolic prescriptions.

Her second speech is a four-line monologue:

“Allas!” seith she, 
“Is ther no ship, of so manye as I se, 
Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn herte 
Al warisshed of his bittre peynes smerte.” (The Franklin’s Tale V.853-856)

Marchaunt, in Cp, deprives her of “Allas!” making her complaint less hysterical, less stereotypically female perhaps. And there seems to be some general confusion about whose pains are bitter. Pinkhurst in El and Hg, and Rychard Wytton in Dd both write “hise,” while Marchaunt uses “(th)is” (Cp 161r), Spirling writes “these” (Gl 82r), and Duxwurth writes “my” (Ps 58r). The confusion is subtle, but complicated as now Dorigen will be cured from any number of possible pains: her own self-inflicted pain, the pain caused by her husband’s absence, the pain brought by the many ships (none of which hold Arveragus), or divinely inflicted pain (as in “his” substituting for “His”). In this instance, word choice is crucial and can affect the psychology of the character, or at least offer a clue as to whom or what she truly blames.

The next speech, her second longest in the narrative, reconfirms the lack of standardized capitalization among the scribes. Once again, we find “god” for “God,” “lord” for “Lord,” and, in six instances, “Rokkis” (or a variant spelling) for “rokkes,” in all manuscripts for this speech. However, these words also remain inconsistent within the text of a single scribes. For example, Spirling writes “Rokkes,” “Rokkes,” and “rokkes” in the three instances of the word in his version of her speech. The trend seems toward
the minuscule.\textsuperscript{31} Again, modern connotations, even if incorrect, suggest that each manuscript’s Dorigen gives heightened or decreased value to God, the Lord, the Rokkes, and/or the Four Directions.

Some of the other variants found in this speech include scribal mistakes of the more general nature. For example, Brode has rubbed-out and rewritten over a mistake on the word “make” (Ma 105v), and he changes the line, “‘Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk’” (\textit{The Franklin’s Tale} V.879) to read “a(pe)rt of (th)i werk” (Ma 105v). Spirling inverts the last two lines so they read, “Thus wolde she sey w(i)t(h) many a petous tere / (Th)ese rokkes slae myne herte right for (th)e fere” (Gl 82r). Duxwurth makes an error by copying “annouyed” in place of “distroyeth” (Ps 58r), but he self-corrects his mistake. He, however makes a significant alteration to the line, “‘In ydel, as men seyn, ye no thyng make’” (\textit{The Franklin’s Tale} V.867). In Ps, he offers, “‘In vayn as men seyth thou no thing did make’” (58r). Though most of the variants are minor, the last alters Dorigen’s perception of what she believes God has chosen to create, transforming the rocks into an example of things that are not made in vain.

Moreover, punctuation, or rather the lack of punctuation, matters particularly for lamenting women like Dorigen (and later Griselda). The lack of exclamatory remarks can be a character-altering construct. For example, in this speech \textit{The Riverside Chaucer} offers, “‘But thilke God that made wynd to blowe / As kepe my lord! This my conclusion’” (\textit{The Franklin’s Tale} V.887-888). The absence of the exclamation point in the manuscripts alters Dorigen’s mannerisms and vocal levels. Consequently, she would

\textsuperscript{31} All but two scribes capitalized the four directions “south, north, ne west, ne eest” (\textit{The Franklin’s Tale} V.873). Marchaunt, only in Cp and not in Ha\textsuperscript{4}, and Duxwurth in Ps present the words in minuscule.
appear calmer and less hysterical in the manuscript versions that do not distinguish her exclamatory remarks. This small but significant variation substantially affects how Dorigen is viewed in terms of the symbolic. One mark can remove her from stereotypical hysteria to a more traditionally masculine expression of sentiments.

Next, there are two significant alterations in Dorigen’s fourth speech. The first is found in the Paris manuscript with Duxwurth offering a variant reading for, “‘In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit; / I wol been his to whom that I am knyt’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.985-986). His line reads, “‘In wurd ne werk as I am synful might / I will been his to whom that I am plight’” (Ps 58v-59r). The word “might” looks as if it could be a correction for “wight,” indicating Duxwurth might have miscopied the “w” from the word “wyfe” in the preceding line and then quickly corrected himself. However, the addition of the word “synful” is only in this manuscript and indicates her awareness of the implications presented by Aurelius’s proposal. Yet again, a scribe has subsequently psychologized Dorigen and given her an added complexity not found in Chaucer’s version. Duxwurth also changed the rhyme in the next line with the word “plight,” although the general meaning remains unaltered.

Similarly, Marchaunt, in Cp, presents Dorigen in a slightly different manner with his inversion of two lines. In all of the other examined manuscripts, “‘Taak this for fynal answere as of me’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.987) is the last line of her fourth speech. The Franklin then tells readers, “But after that, in pley thus seyde she” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.988), which is immediately followed by her request that he remove the rocks. However, Marchaunt writes, “But after (th)at in pleyn (th)us seyde sche / Tak (th)is for fynal answer as for me” (Cp 163r). This inversion runs the fourth and fifth speeches
together. Thus, it could read (with modern punctuation), “‘Take this for final answer. As for me, Aurely’ quod sche, ‘by hihe god aboue....’” Moreover, “pleyn” cannot be confused with “pley.” In the Corpus manuscript, her speech now takes on a more serious tone as she clearly states her position and request. The slight changes that Marchaunt makes characterize Dorigen as more direct with her words, and even slightly admonishing through the repositioning of the “as for me” clause. And finally, she is considerably less playful. These slight variants move Dorigen away from symbolic representations and push her toward the realm of masculine language.

In her next speech, the biggest difficulty for scribes appears to be the line, “‘Looke what day that endelong Britayne’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.992). While the scribes of Hg, Ps, and Dd give variant versions of “endelong,” Brode uses “euer long” (Ma 107r), Spirling left a space for the word which was written in as “endelong” by another hand (Gl 82v), and Marchaunt writes “engelond” (Cp 163r). This brings the controversial concept of geography into her speech. While most versions have her opining over the coastline of Penmarch in Brittany, which has its own inconsistencies as the nearest rocky coast is identified as Concarneau (Rice 897), Marchaunt deduces that Britayne means Briton, rather than Breton. Therefore, his usage of “engelond” would appear logical. However, this line confuses the narrative which should be taking place in France not England. Rather than attempt to apply this error to Dorigen’s character, who could not be so confused as to not remember her own location, this particular scribal variation is an indication of a scribe trying to make sense of his exemplar while using his own knowledge to create a logical sentence. However, this is one case where Marchaunt creates logistical chaos for the narrative. He also, later in the speech, is the only scribe to
alter the line, “‘Whan ye han maad the coost so clene’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.995) to the plural (“(th)ese costes” (Cp 163r)), making her request all the more difficult.

Spirling (Gl) and Duxwurth (Ps) both alter this speech by making it longer, presenting it as combined with her forthcoming speech.32 Both scribes leave out the interruption by Aurelius along with Dorigen’s subsequent response (“Is ther noon oother grace in yow?” quod he / “No, by that Lord,” quod she, “that maked me!” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.998-999)). They opt to add this after her line, “‘That hath hir body whan so that hym liketh’” (*The Franklin's Tale* V.1005). Essentially, this change, which leads one to believe that two variant versions of this speech were in circulation, makes her response to his question more emphatically final (without the use of exclamation marks) than in the other version where she continues speaking in order to answer his question. These men present Dorigen with more authority, or finality at the very least, in this particular instance, and complicate her categorization as symbolically female through the use of masculine language techniques.

Dorigen’s seventh speech is her shocked response once she learns the rocks have disappeared. Marchaunt (Cp) is the only scribe to make any variations to her words.33 First, he writes “muster” (167v) (instead of “monstre” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1344)), which might have meant “sense” (*Middle English Dictionary*). Next, he again transposes lines. Rather than have her finish her speech and then return home, he has her return home and then gives her the last line of her speech. His manuscript reads: “And home

32 There are no notable variants to Dorigen’s sixth speech. However, Hg 157v is damaged and the words [For] and [Lat] are unreadable, and Ma makes one self-corrected error, none of which affect Dorigen.

33 Spirling, in Gl, has an ink change on 84v, but the lines are not significantly altered.
sche go(th) a sorwful creature / ‘It is aȝein (th)e p(ro)cesse of nature’” (Cp 167v). But with the lack of punctuation, the line “It is aȝein (th)e p(ro)cesse of nature” could as easily be spoken by the Franklin, ending her speech less one line. So Marchaunt’s Dorigen is either more contemplative, as she takes the entire journey home before proclaiming that the feat is unnatural, or she does not consider it at all. However, this line seems odd for the Franklin to speak as it recalls Dorigen’s previous sentiments of the “werk unresonable” (The Franklin’s Tale V.872). As presented, it appears that she is more distraught than in other versions of her character.

Next, Dorigen’s lament, her complaint to Fortune, is one hundred and two lines and it sees substantial variation among the manuscripts in which it exists. Adam Pinkhurst, only in Ellesmere, marginally describes the text as, “The compleynt of Dorigene ayeyns Fortune” (El 130r). This speech is of particular importance not only for its substantial length, but also for its content, origin, and presentation. The most important note regarding this speech overall is the regular inclusion of marginal or intertextual Latin glosses. Half of the manuscripts include the gloss, or variant versions of the gloss. Adam Pinkhust includes eighteen Latin glosses in El, but only two in Hg. Wytton includes two glosses in Dd,34 and Duxwurth also includes four intertextual glosses in Ps. In each manuscript, the glosses are copied around the same general portion of the narrative; however, the placement of the glosses is not consistent across all manuscripts.

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34 The Dd manuscript also has three other unreadable lines in another ink and another hand under the marginal Latin gloss on folio 136r. The gloss is tied to the line, “‘No wight ne myghte hir handes of it arace’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1393).
Scholarly controversy surrounds texts with Latin glosses. Consider Carolyn Dinshaw’s position. She believes these glosses should be viewed in terms of gender as female texts with male glosses (*Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 113-131). Her assertion that women are “associated with the body and the text” in opposition “to the gloss, written by men” (113-114) has interesting implications for Dorigen’s speech. Dorigen’s heavily glossed lament is an ideal opportunity for Dinshaw to further support her claims.

However, Dinshaw remains focused on the Wife of Bath in her discussion of gloss. Still, might one see Dorigen’s words at war with the Latin gloss that is presented alongside, or within, her own text? Scholars have suggested that glosses, if given enough importance (through placement, letter scale, or illumination), should not be considered marginalia but a critical part of the text (Graham D. Caie qtd. Dinshaw 121-122). This argument might be valid for the Latin gloss in the Paris manuscript, for example. In this manuscript the gloss is significantly larger than the body text, possibly indicating its increased importance. But what does this do to the primary text? If one is to believe Dinshaw, then “glossing is a gesture of appropriation” (122). She states, “The glossa undertakes to speak the text, to assert authority over it, to provide interpretation, [and] finally to limit or close it to the possibility of heterodox or unlimited significance” (122). Could this have been what the scribes (and Chaucer) were doing to Dorigen? In the manuscripts where the gloss appears, does her lament lack the authority that it has in manuscripts without the gloss? In manuscripts lacking glosses, Dorigen’s knowledge of history presents as wholly her own. But when the gloss appears, it effectually serves as the authoritative text for the narrative, even more so because it is in Latin.  

The crux of this position is the content of

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35 Many of the glosses end with “etc,” lending credibility to the belief that they were Chaucer’s notes, but
the gloss itself. Jerome’s work, though popular, is not the best example of an authoritative treatise on women and marriage. Meg Roland suggests that a gloss can render the female voice as “erroneous” and that it “casts her voice as ‘Other,’ arguing against the combined weight of church authority and tradition” (“Multimodality”). She presupposes that the clerks are responsible for the glosses, and she places the female protagonist in a religious battle. This does not appear to be applicable to Dorigen; however, the possibility that Dorigen’s words, pitted against the gloss and/or the glossator’s, is quite intriguing considering the content of the speech and gloss.

Aside from the complex issue of the Latin gloss, there are also some key variants in this speech that can affect the perception of Dorigen. For example, all but one scribe has Dorigen proclaiming that “thise stories beren witnesse” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1367). Duxwurth is the only scribe to offer the variant, “histories” (Ps 61r). His word choice alters her speech and permits her to showcase her knowledge of history. Or, his choice may very well be a product of the Latin gloss embedding itself into the forefront of the scribe’s mind (“historias” appears in the gloss on 61r).

The list of names is another opportunity to observe multiple versions of Dorigen. Oftentimes the names are listed with considerable spelling differences. Marchaunt’s Cp has the most frequent number of variants for these names. For example, Aristoclides becomes “Anstoclydes” (Cp 168r), Stymphalides is “Symphalides” (Cp 168r), Habradate

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the glosses also imply a level of scholarly ability for readers who were expected not only to know Latin, but also to know the missing portions of Jerome’s Adversus Jovinianum. This use of Latin exemplifies what C. David Benson connects to the publicizing of “elite thought” (Public Piers Plowman 119). See David C. Benson, Public Piers Plowman: Modern Scholarship and Late Medieval English Culture (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).
becomes “habradas” (Cp 168v), and Alceste is called “Alcestem” (Cp 169r). It is most probable that Marchaunt had miscopied the “ri” as “n” in Aristoclidies, but the others might be more egregious errors. Dorigen becomes less knowledgeable as a historian if she is denied the ability to speak their correct names in her speech. She then becomes the stereotype of the woman failing at masculine discourse. But Marchaunt does not stop there. He makes additional copying errors that make her speech ludicrous in some parts.

For example, the line, “‘As greet a pitee was it, or wel moore, / The Theban mayden that for Nichanore / Hirselven slow’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1431-1433) loses its somberness when “pitee” is erroneously converted to “appetyt” (Cp 169r). He also seems to make her exaggerate some tales with variant readings like, “‘Hente (th)e ymage with hir armes tuo’” (Cp 168v) rather than have Stymphalides holding the image “in hir handes two” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1391). He also has an interesting change on the line regarding Brutus and Porcia. The line, “‘To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1450) is altered by Marchaunt. He writes, “‘To whom he hadde al hol his herte ȝiue’” (Cp 169r), which shifts emphasis from the woman’s love to the man’s and further seems out of character for this particular speech. But Marchaunt is not finished. He next omits the following three couplets: “‘To sleen myself than been defouled thus / I wol be trewe unto Arveragus’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1423-1424); “‘Hirselven slow, right for swich manere wo / Another Theban mayden dide right so’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1433-1434); and “‘The same thyng I seye of Bilyea, / Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria’”

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36 The same variant reading is presented by Spirling in Gl on 85r.

37 These alterations are not found in Marchaunt’s Harley manuscript.
He also inverts and alters the couplet, “‘For oon of Macidonye hadde hire oppresed, / She with hire deeth hir maydenhede redressed’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1435-1436) so that it reads, “‘Hire had wedded and ydressed / For on of Macedoigne hadde hire opp(re)ssed’” (Cp 169r). The omission of these lines decreases Dorigen’s speech to ninety-six lines, substantially reducing her vocal impact.

But Marchaunt is not alone in his alterations to the speech and to Dorigen’s voice. Duxwurth also reorders lines likely due to an eyeskip error. For example, he skips the lines, “‘Hath nat Lucrese yslayn hirself, allas, / At Rome, whan that she oppresed was’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1405-1406), and presents the variant version, “‘At Rome for she oppressid was / did sleen sire self for the same caas’” (Ps 61r) after the couplet, “‘Of Tarquyn, for hir thoughte it was a shame / To lyven whan she hadde lost hir name?‘” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1407-1408). And Brode (Ma) has numerous general writing errors. For this speech alone, Brode makes five mistakes that he self corrects compared to Wytton’s one. The result is that the manuscript, and consequently Dorigen’s speech, appear amateurish and unprofessional. Brode seems to have made more than his usual

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38 All scribes omit the last two lines aside from Pinkhurst in El. Hanna comments on how Manly and Rickert believed these two lines so poor that they “hoped they were written by the El scribe” (1129). He goes on to note the speculation about Chaucer’s intention to drop “the whole passage after 1423” (1129). This means that all the women after “Demociones daughter” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1426) would have been eliminated. According to the divisions discussed by Rice, this would leave a partial list of “women who commit suicide after rape” and a nonexistent list of “notably faithful wives” (900). Manly and Rickert’s argument about quality is in direct opposition to Skeat’s assessment of the final Latin gloss which prompts his own argument that “Chaucer had contemplated adding more examples to the list” (qtd. in Rice 901).

39 Brode’s errors in Ma are: (1) Mistake on “hir silf” in line “‘Hath nat Lucrese yslayn hirself, allas’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1405); (2) Mistake on “u” in “thus” in line, “‘Koude I now telle as touchynge this matteere’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1413); (3) Mistake on “he(m) silf in line, “‘Sith that so manye han hemselfen slayn’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1420); (4) writes “this” and then lines it out and rewrites “thus” in line, “‘Pardee of Laodomya is writen thus’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1445); and (5) an error on the “e” of “saide” in line, “And seyde, ‘My body, at the leeste way’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1417). Wytton’s error in Dd is the addition of “the” with carets above “atte” in line, “And seyde, ‘My body, at the leeste way’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1417).
amount of errors (at least from what can be determined in his treatment of her voice up to this point) indicating, possibly, decreased attention. Should this have been the case, it might possibly imply that he did not think her speech worthy of his utmost care and consideration. Or he might have thought it was a popular litany that did not require much care in copying. It would be worthwhile to compare his diligence to the Latin gloss at this point if he had included one.

Still, the honor of the most corrupt version of the speech goes to Spirling (Gl). This scribe presents a smorgasbord of errors. He makes some self-corrected errors in spelling (“rather” (Gl 85r)); he transposes partial lines (“Of Tarquyn, for hir thoughte it was a shame / To lyven whan she hadde lost hir name?” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1407-1408) becomes “Of Tarquyn whanne (th)at she had lost hir name” (Gl 85r)); he leaves lines blank (the partial transposing must have caused enough confusion for him to leave the following line of the couplet, which was then written in as, “My life than of my body to have a shame’’’ by another hand and ink only to be crossed out again and rewritten below the mistake so that it reads, “To live for her in anger – it was a shame’’’); he leaves blank spaces for words and copies others incorrectly (in the line, “And seyde, ‘My body, at the leeste way’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1417), “And” is written in different hand [the same that corrected the above lines] and the “l” of “leste” is corrected over the scribal mistake (Gl 85r); he shows confusion over the names (“Brutus” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1449) is first presented as “bittre” and then crossed out (by Spirling) and changed to “brutous,” but could easily be misread as “britons” (Gl 85r)); and in addition to the final missing couplet, Spirling also fails to include the following six lines:

“I wol conclude that it is bet for me
To sleen myself than been defouled thus.
I wol be trewe unto Arveragus,
Or rather sleen myself in som manere,
As dide Demociones doghter deere
By cause that she wolde nat defouled be.” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1422-1427)

These missing lines appear to be the result of his own lack of attention as he mistook,
“‘Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1421) for the later,
“‘By cause that she wolde nat defouled be’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1427). He picks up
the speech with “‘Cedasus, it is ful greet pitee’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1428), which, for
him, seemed an acceptable end rhyme for “be.”

Spirling creates a confused, uncertain, and impartial Dorigen compared to her
counterparts. Like Marchaunt and Brode, Spirling seems to have given little attention to
this important speech. His mistakes are considerable and the lack of care he exhibits, in
comparison with his more accurate representations of her previous speeches, might be
reflective of his own values regarding this particular speech. Was he discrediting her
authority, in a similar manner to that of a Latin gloss, by presenting her with erroneous,
scrambled, partial, and missing words? Here is a case where the scribe is literally
silencing a woman through the omission of entire passages. In addition, he makes her
seem incompetent (through no fault of her own), which is a direct result of his own
scribal shortcomings.

Spirling also completely changes Dorigen’s second to last speech. Rather than,
“‘Nay, nay,’ quod she, ‘God helpe me so as wys! / This is to muche, and it were Goddes
wille’” (The Franklin’s Tale V.1470-1471), he omits her first line and gives her next line
to Arveragus. His manuscript reads:
“(Th)is husbon w(i)t(h) a glad chier in a frendelly wise
Answered and seid as I shal you deuyse
(Th)is to moche and it were goddes wil
Ye wife q(uo)d he lete slepe (th)at is stille.” (Gl 85r)

This is the result of his skipping the question from Arveragus, “‘Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1769), which deprives her of the opportunity to respond. In accordance with medieval prescriptions on female silencing, Spirling seems ever-eager to continually enact these prescriptions upon this lamenting wife.

Marchaunt likewise omits one of her lines, but he gives her at least one of Arveragus’s lines in the dialogue preceding the above exchange. The result is narrative confusion. One expects Dorigen’s ninth speech to be: “‘Allas,’ quod she, ‘that evere I was born! / Thus have I seyd,’ quod she, ‘thus have I sworn’” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1463-1464). These lines are typically followed by the narrator, who says, “And toold hym al as ye han herd bifore; / It nedeth nat reherce it yow namoore” (*The Franklin’s Tale* V.1465-1466). However, Marchaunt’s manuscript presents the following unclear interpretation:

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\text{Allas q(uo)d sche (th)at euer was I was born}
(Th)us haue I seyd quod he (th)us haue I sworn
\text{I told him all as ȝe han herde bifoare}
\text{It need(th) nouȝt to rehersen it nomore. (Cp 169r)}
\]

When Marchaunt gives Arveragus the line, “‘(Th)us haue I seyd quod he (th)us haue I sworn,’” he makes him complicit in his wife’s desire that she was never born. This seems inconsistent with his overbearing love for her. Next, Marchaunt writes, “‘I told him all as ȝe han herde bifoare / It need(th) nouȝt to rehersen it nomore.’” These lines, likely another mistake, remove Dorigen from the tale and shift her into the present narration or Canterbury tale teller. She becomes the voice who is speaking directly to the audience,
telling the company that she told her husband of the events. The last line, “It need(th)
nouȝt to rehersen it nomore,” could be interpreted as Dorigen’s voice or it might have
shifted back to the Franklin. It is difficult to determine.

In these manuscripts there is indeed ample evidence that scribal alterations do
significantly affect the portrait of Dorigen. Depending on the nature of the variant,
scribes have made Chaucer’s Dorigen more or less compassionate, masculine, vocal, or
competent. Using Dorigen as a case study proves that male scribes truly altered the
medieval female voice. These male scribes created a number of Dorigens that are as
different from one another as Chaucer’s Dorigen is to her sources in Boccaccio’s
narratives.

Case IV: Griselda in The Clerk’s Tale

Sources for The Clerk’s Tale

The history of the Griselda narrative is well-documented. The narrative has its
roots in folklore and has a traceable evolution through the writing of Boccaccio, Petrarch,
and Chaucer. Each retelling of the Griselda story serves different purposes for different
audiences, and each has its own subtleties, agenda, and moral slant. The editors of
Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales saw fit to list only Petrarch’s Historia
Griseldis and the anonymous French lay, Le Livre Griseldis, as sources or analogues for
Chaucer’s The Clerk’s Tale; however, it is an injustice to have omitted Boccaccio’s
Decameron X.10. It is impossible to contextualize Chaucer’s version of Griselda

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40 Le Livre Griseldis (a near verbatim translation of Petrarch’s work) is believed to have been used by
Chaucer as he translated Petrarch’s version. Other analogues of the tale also circulated. For example,
Giovanni Sercambi used a version in Il Novellino. Thomas J. Farrell discusses more of the textual history in
his introduction in Sources and Analogues (101-102) and in “The Griselda Story in Italy” (104).
without understanding Petrarch’s source and the evolution of the narrative. Moreover, as Chaucer was familiar with the *Decameron*,\(^{41}\) even if it was not on his desk during the translation from Petrarch’s version or in his possession during his translation from the anonymously written French lay, the possibility of Boccaccio’s influence cannot be dismissed.

Warren Ginsberg notes that the first appearance of the “patient wife” motif appears in folk stories such as *The Monster Bridegroom, The Patience of a Princess*, and *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* (880). Pamela Allen Brown supports William Edwin Bettridge and Francis Lee Utley, who believe the medieval Smyrna tale, *Patience of a Princess*, is the true origin of the Griselda narrative (183).\(^{42}\) Brown offers a concise summary of *The Patience of the Princess* folktale which was well-known in medieval Western Europe (183). In short, a prince buys a poor woman and locks her in a tower. He then makes a bet with her father that she cannot do all he requests without losing her patience, and he tests her for twenty years. The prince takes away her children and makes her believe that they are to be killed. While lamenting, the woman speaks to a companion doll, which ultimately helps her keep her patience and win the bet.

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\(^{42}\) Brown also notes the similarity to Marie de France’s *Le Fresne*, correctly noting there is no infanticide in *Le Fresne* (183 n14). Also, in Marie’s lay, the woman is not sold as she is in the folktale. For more, see the introduction in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, eds. Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001) 61-67 and *The Lais of Marie de France*, eds. Robert Hanning and Joan Ferrante (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1978) 73-91.
Boccaccio adapts the tale and emphasizes the husband’s testing and wife’s patience to speak to mid-fourteenth-century concerns. The tale, as Dioneo tells it in the final story of *Decameron*, is as follows. A marquis selects a beautiful, poor girl to wed, and he brings the wedding party to her father’s house where she marries him according to his terms. He clothes her in finery and begins to test her through the removal of her children, an exile back to her father’s house, and with the ruse of taking a new bride. In general terms, Boccaccio makes substantial alterations from the folktale to make it relevant for his audience. He also adds narratorial intrusion and judgment against the husband via the story teller. For example, Dioneo condemns Marquisate Gualtieri’s “le rigide e mai più non udite prove” (“strict and never-heard before tests”) (*Decameron* X.10.68), concluding that Griselda should have made him a cuckold with the line, “s’avesse sì a un altro fatto scuotere il pelliccione, che riuscita ne fosse una bella roba” (“if she had had another one shake the fur, it would have resulted in even more beautiful stuff/clothes”) (*Decameron* X.10.69). He also includes an added component to the tale that would have been apropos for his readers: the importance of clothing and outward appearances. This attitude, which is substantiated by the goal of obtaining an even better dress than she had with Gualtieri, contextualizes the narrative for an audience who would have understood the importance of *bella figura* (“a beautiful appearance”) and how it pertained to one’s social status. Boccaccio foregrounds class and outward appearances particularly in the descriptions concerning Griselda’s appearance and her shift from poverty to wealth and back again. Her clothing and public presentation, which are further appropriate considering the wealthy aristocrats are the ones listening to the stories, are always at the fore of his narrative.
But Boccaccio’s tale is not just about social status in general terms; it also addresses the specific role of women and wives in society. Brown notes that in Boccaccio’s version:

The tale leads to controversy, and not about women in general, but among specific women. The political and moral crime of infanticide, and Griselda’s complicity in it, form the ugly and irreducible nub of the story. This crime demands special attention from women listeners whose political role and moral identity were inextricably bound to their sexual and reproductive lives. (189)

Boccaccio has politicized the narrative and placed women at its center. A woman’s patience in conjunction with her outward appearance become more valuable qualities than her admission of criminal activity. Patience becomes the defining character for ideal wives which is in perfect alignment with medieval prescriptions regarding the role of wives, as indicated through the examples contained within idealized world of conduct books and rhetorical manuals. And though Boccaccio credits God for Griselda’s patience, the overall feel of the tale is worldly, not spiritual. And this is precisely the problem for Boccaccio’s contemporary, Petrarch.

In a letter to Boccaccio, Petrarch simultaneously praises and condemns the Griselda story as told in Decameron. In Epistolae Seniles XVII.3, Petrarch praises Boccaccio’s creativity, but he is equally dismissive of the entire work due to the vernacular language, the intended audience, and the fact that Boccaccio was a young, unseasoned writer when it was composed. He states:

Et siquid lascivie liberioris occurreret, [excusabat] etas tunc tua cum id scriberes, stilus, ydioma, ipsa quoque rerum levitas et eorum qui lecturi talia videbantur. Refert enim largiter quibus scribas, morumque variera stili varietas excusatur.

All additional references and quotes from Petrarch’s text are from “Historia Griseldis.” See Francesco Petrarch, “Historia Griseldis: Petrarch’s Epistolae Seniles XVII.3, Cambridge University Peterhouse College, MS 81,” trans. and ed. Thomas J. Farrell, Sources and Analogues of The Canterbury Tales,
(As for the rather frankly uninhibited events that cropped up, your age when you wrote it is enough excuse, as are the style and idiom, for levity is suitable in the stories and in those who would read them. Your audience makes all the difference: the range of their conduct pardons the stylistic diversity.)

Even though Petrarch tells Boccaccio that he did not read the entire *Decameron*, but rather he skimmed it like a “festini viatoris” (“hurried tourist”) (109.7, f185ra), he goes on to praise the content of the final tale. He acknowledges that Boccaccio must have believed the narrative important enough to place last, where, he says, “Rethorum disciplina validiora quelibet collocari iubet” (111.31-32, f185ra) (“the art of rhetoric teaches us to place whatever is more important”). Petrarch proceeds to tell Boccaccio that he re-wrote the story so that it could be shared with a more intellectual and Latin-reading audience. Of his alterations, Petrarch states, “Historiam tuam meis verbis explicui, [imo] alicubi aut paucis in ipsa narracione mutatis verbis aut additis” (111.40-41, f.185ra) (“I have unfolded your story in my own way, freely changing or adding a few words throughout”). Petrarch admits he was guided by the philosophy of Horace, who said, “Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus interpres” (111.39 f189ra) (“Do not force yourself to translate too faithfully, word by word”). He then shares a copy of the Latin translation/interpretation of Boccaccio’s Griselda with its author.

Thomas J. Farrell notes that the most significant changes in Petrarch’s version include the expanded opening, the emphasis on Walter’s power over Griselda, the tale’s soberness, its religious and classical references, and the interpretation of the tale as an *exemplum* (104). The alterations proved successful to a new audience. The reception of

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Petrarch’s revised narrative is documented in a second letter to Boccaccio, in which Petrarch explains that the tale incites men to weep or to view Griselda as a complete “invention” (“Two Letters” 391). The strong reaction is due to particular alterations by Petrarch. From the beginning, the motivation for Walter to marry Griselda is due to the “pie preces” (113.91, f185va) (“pious prayers”) of his people. Petrarch contextualizes Walter by positioning him as a vessel for faith and religion: he is only marrying in the name of the people’s prayers. Walter says, “‘Illi ergo et status et matrimonii mei sortes’” (113.97 f185va) (“‘I will commit the fate of my rank and my marriage to [God]’”).

Further, unlike the treatment of the husband in Boccaccio’s Decameron, Petrarch does not offer a narratorial voice to condemn or chastise Walter. In this version, when Walter commits the same heinous acts toward his wife, there is no rebuke. For example, when Walter banishes Griselda, Petrarch writes, “Habundabant viro lacrime, ut contineri amplius non posset. Itaque faciem avertens, Et camisiam tibi unicam habeto, verbis trementibus vix expressit, et sic abiit lacrimans” (125.325-327, f186va) (“Tears welled up in the man; he could no longer be contained. Turning his face, Walter said in a trembling voice, ‘I grant you a single shift,’ and left weeping”). These words create sympathy for the husband and they also prepare the reader for a moral ending that will find no fault with the husband. Overall, Petrarch’s version of the Griselda narrative can be likened to the representation of wives in the idealized world of medieval conduct books and rhetorical manuals. Though Griselda presents as symbolic, she is such an extreme representation of that symbolic order that it is not hard to see her, as Petrarch said, as an “invention.”
Even though the tale focuses on one particular woman, the tale is not wholly about women. Petrarch sums up his Griselda tale as a general moral lesson for all humanity. He takes Boccaccio’s lesson about women and social status and uses it as a tool to “quam ut legentes ad imitandam saltem femine constanciam exitarum, it quod hec viro suo prestitit, hoc prestare deo nostro audeant” (129.398-399, f187b) (“arouse readers to imitate [Griselda’s] womanly constancy, so that they might dare to undertake for God what she undertook for her husband”). In so doing, Petrarch elevates the control Walter has over Griselda, and Petrarch places him in a God-like role as the tester. If this analogous relationship is true, it is no wonder that Petrarch did not criticize Walter at any point in the tale; this would have been an unacceptable criticism of God and the manner in which He tests man. Here, spirituality rests upon medieval gender prescriptions.

Petrarch’s version was widely circulated and is believed to be the version that Chaucer possessed while he composed *The Clerk’s Tale*. However, the particular Petrarchian manuscript Chaucer actually used remains uncertain. There is speculation about whether he used the 1373 version or 1374 version of Petrarch’s tale (Ginsberg 880). Regardless, Chaucer made substantial changes to Petrarch’s version. He gave Griselda increased agency and pathos, and he re-included Boccaccio’s casting of judgment against Walter. He also added the conclusion and the envoy, and he returned the tale to its position as one of many within a frame narrative as it was in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*.44

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44 Additional changes are discussed by J. Burke Severs. He presents research on alterations to other characters (such as the Sergeant) and the overall “heightening and intensification” in the tale; he argues that these changes provide for a “more effective, more arresting plot” (248). See J. Burke Severs, *The Literary Relationships of Chaucer’s Clerk’s Tale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942) 229-248.
Chaucer’s Alterations to Source Material in *The Clerk’s Tale*

Chaucer permits Griselda more agency than Petrarch afforded her, and it is first evident in the manner in which Walter asks for her hand in marriage. Not only does Chaucer add substantial detail about the wedding preparations, but, most interestingly, in this scene he gives Griselda the power to decline the marriage invitation. Walter still places demands on how Griselda is to behave in marriage. Yet after he receives Janicula’s consent, Walter states, “‘I wol axe if it hire wille be / To be my wyf and reule hire after me’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.326-327). In Petrarch’s version, Walter simply says that he needs to “ut ipsam de quibusdam interogem” (117,149, f185vb) (“ask her certain questions”), none of which have to do with her willingness to marry but with her willingness to accept the terms of the marriage contract as established between Walter and her father. Chaucer shows that Griselda has an opportunity to evaluate the terms of the marriage and then make a decision. This alteration allows Griselda to move beyond medieval prescriptions about her gender, and in particular, how wives can be separated from stereotypes that equate them with property traded at the hands of men.

Next, like Petrarch, Chaucer aligns the people with Griselda:

For though that evere vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellence
Of thewes goode, yset in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne and so digne of reverence,
And koude so the peple s herte embrace,
That ech hire lovede that looked on hir face. (The Clerk’s Tale IV.407-413)

However, Chaucer expands the role of the “peple,” and even includes an “O stormy peple!” speech (The Clerk’s Tale IV.995ff) that is absent in the source and analogue material. The people’s association with Griselda helps align her with the greater society,
which is, at times, in tension with its ruler. This analogy mimics humanity’s own fickle relationship with the divine.\textsuperscript{45} It is in these moments that Griselda traverses the scale from typically female roles to the more public roles associated with the masculine realm. Additionally, the people, though “stormy,” lend support to Griselda at critical moments in the narrative. For example, the people, when aligned with Griselda on account of her meekness and her humility, slowly begin to despise Walter, for they too believe he has killed the children. And, when Walter banishes Griselda, they also show their loyalty to Griselda for the Clerk tells readers, “The folk hire folwe, wepynge in hir weye / And Fortune ay they cursen as they goon” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.897-898). The people play a more significant role in defining Griselda’s character and allow for the return of some of the value judgments against Walter that were absent in Petrarch’s version. Chaucer’s variation transforms Griselda from a victim to a victim with substantial public support.

Chaucer’s conclusion and envoy also alter the reception of the tale. Petrarch’s original purpose of the tale was to help guide men toward virtue in times of adversity. But Chaucer complicates the original intention of the poem when he inserts new material that specifically addresses contemporary wives. Through the mouth of the Clerk, Chaucer acknowledges the rarity of a Griselda-type of woman’s existence. He says, “It were ful hard to fynde now-a-dayes / In al a toun Grisildis thre or two” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.1163-1164). He then submits the Wife of Bath as a foil to Griselda (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.1170ff), and he again reiterates the lack of Griselda-type women in his envoy addressed to “O noble wyves” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.1180-1182, IV.1183). Chaucer’s

\textsuperscript{45} This is further reiterated by Chaucer’s addition of newly composed text that compares Griselda to Job (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.932-938).
skepticism has the effect of recasting the tale as an anti-*exemplum* and returns it to Boccaccio’s more worldly and social context. The changes Chaucer made also depart from the loftiness of Petrarch’s pious intentions. Consequently, Chaucer’s version plays with the previous parameters of the tale: is it about humility and patience when serving God, or is it concerned with the role of wives in society?

Chaucer’s return to the frame narrative also means that the tale now involves more characters than those found in the story itself. For example, the Clerk’s narrative incites responses from two other married men: the Host and the Merchant. The Host proclaims that he wishes his wife had heard the tale (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1213-1215a), presumably so she could learn something from it. And the Merchant, who calls his wife a “shrew” (*The Merchant’s Prologue* IV.1222), says likewise. Chaucer inserts the Griselda narrative into the real, immediate world of those noble and not-so-noble wives as well as the opinionated men they affect. Even if Chaucer’s alterations sometimes present a less symbolically represented wife, the overall effect is that this wife is returned to the prescriptions about her gender through the musings of the men of the frame narrative.

Because there appears to be an emphasis on male and female roles, another way to look at Chaucer’s interpretation of Griselda is in terms of a general discontent with the women of contemporary society. The masculine opinion that there are too few Griseldas nowadays has already been expressed. Similarly, the manner in which the male narrator sympathizes with the protagonist, due to her constant patience in adversity, suggests that he might be making an antifeminist statement that speaks to women unlike Griselda, women like the Wife of Bath. Yet, one can still draw comparisons between these
drastically different women. Arguably, Griselda is the better wife, at least through the eyes of the Clerk. The Clerk, who has also been analyzed in terms of feminized masculinity, might therefore, have more influence over one’s perception of Griselda than previously thought. Holly Crocker states:

The narrative of Griselda’s submission offers the Clerk a way to display her performances of passivity as a marker of his own agency. While his claim that there are no more Griseldas in the world puts such feminine identity outside the boundaries of common masculine experience, he creates for himself the position of privileged masculinity empowered by its access to and control over an ideal of feminine submission, the rarity of which suggests its power. (180)

The Clerk is then using Griselda to increase the perception of his own masculinity while complicating the relationships among some of the male pilgrims.

At the more nuanced level, Chaucer made very specific alterations to Griselda’s voice. First, consider the quantitative differences in the three versions of the tale. In Boccaccio’s version, Griselda has nine speeches that account for 11.45% of the entire tale. Petrarch also gives her nine speeches, but their length in comparison to the overall

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46 Though different, the two wives share a very similar line of text. The verbal echoes force readers to think of one wife while reading the voice of the other. For example, Griselda says, “For noon adversitee” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.858) and the Wife says, “Though noon auctoritee” (The Wife of Bath’s Prologue III.1).

47 Carolyn Dinshaw claims that the “Clerk is to Petrarch as Griselda is to Walter” (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 136). She continues: “Both Griselda and the Clerk are in lowly positions in relation to others: Griselda is elevated by Walter, completely dependent upon him for her noble status; the Clerk comes after Petrarch, derives his narrative material from the Italian, and praises the great poet for his ‘rethorike sweete.’ [And] there is a level of aggression, too, that both Griselda and the Clerk demonstrate against others” (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 136). This comparison has the effect of “feminizing” the unmarried Clerk by placing him on equal ground with Griselda (who, ironically, is at times described as masculine). Further, the Clerk is in a lower position in relation to some of the others on the journey, and he may be seeking to exhibit masculine power through the tale as a way to counter his social feminization. Further still, conflict has already been established between the Clerk and the Host. The Host asks for a particular type of tale and the Clerk gives him something entirely different. The Clerk appears to be confronting the Host in the only manner he is able, which is through his tale.

48 This increases to 11.89% of the tale if Dioneo’s admonishing of Gualtieri is discounted.
tale gives her 42.6% of the total narrative.\textsuperscript{49} Chaucer’s Griselda commands but 14.53% of the overall narrative,\textsuperscript{50} but he gives her two additional speeches and nearly triples the amount of lines she has compared to Petrarch, while increasing the lines she had in \textit{Decameron} seven-fold.\textsuperscript{51}

Chaucer also permits Griselda a speech earlier than in the source or analogue which invites readers into Griselda’s psyche. In Dioneo’s tale, Boccaccio tells readers that “lei trovata che con acqua tornava dalla fonte in gran fretta per andar poi con altre femine a veder venire la sposa di Gualtieri” (“he found her with water returning from the well in great haste so she could go with the other women to see the coming of Gualtieri’s bride”) (\textit{Decameron} X.10.16). In this same scene, Petrarch also states that Griselda, “peractis que peragenda domi erant, aquam e longinquo fonte convectans, paternum limen intrabat, ut, expeditis curis aliis, ad visendam domini sui sponsam cum puellis comitibus properaret” (“having done what was necessary in the house, was bringing water from a distant well, so that, her other work being completed, she could with her friends prepare for a glimpse of her lord’s wife”) (115.137-139, f185vb). Compare the above narratorial retelling of events with Chaucer’s version:

\begin{quote}
She thoghte, “I wole with othere maydens stonde,
That been my felawes, in oure dore and se
The markysesse, and therfore wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as soone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me,
And thanne I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde.” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale IV}.281-287)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{49} The percentage increases to 46.6\% if Petrarch’s summation of the tale is not included.

\textsuperscript{50} The percent becomes 15.48\% if the envoy and the Clerk’s assessment are not considered.

\textsuperscript{51} These increases are not exact due to the inconsistencies in comparing prose Italian and Latin to poetic English lines.
Chaucer gives Griselda seven lines to express her eagerness in beholding Walter’s new wife, and readers are now privy to her thoughts. Consequently, and in similar fashion to Dorigen, Chaucer adds a psychological element to his Griselda that is entirely his own creation. From the beginning of the narrative, one can observe that Griselda is positioned to be a more complex character than her predecessors.

In Griselda’s next speech, comprised of her response to the marriage terms, Chaucer greatly alters the version found in Boccaccio; however, he keeps the speech similar in content and tone to Petrarch’s version. Chaucer’s Griselda replies:

“Lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede,
But as ye wole youreself, right so wol I.
And heere I swere that nevere willyngly,
In werk ne thought, I nyl yow disobeye,
For to be deed, though me were looth to deye.” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.359-364)

Compare the above to Petrarch’s version, where these words comprise Griselda’s first words in the tale:

“Ego, mi domine, inquit, tanto honore me indignam scio; ac si voluntas tua, sique sors mea est, [nil] ego unquam sciens, ne dum faciam, sed [eciam] cogitabo, quod contra animum tuum sit’ nec tu aliquid facies, et si me mori iusseris.”

(117.157-160, f185vb)

(“I know myself unworthy of such an honor, my lord. But if this is your will and my fate, I will never knowingly do – no, I will not even think anything contrary to your will. Nor will you do anything to which I will object, even if you command my death.”)

And, now, compare the above to the same scene in Decameron X.10 where Griselda is deprived of a voice altogether:

E domandolla se ella sempre, togliendola egli per moglie, s’ingegnerrebbe di compiacergli e di niuna cosa che egli dicesse o facesse non turbarsi, e se ella
sarebbe obediente e simili altre cose assai, delle quali ella a tutte rispose di sì. 

(Decameron X.10.18)

(And he asked if she would always, if he took her for wife, engineer herself to gratify and not become angry at anything he said or did, and if she would be obedient, and a lot of other similar things; of which she answered all yes.)

With this speech one can see exactly how liberal Petrarch truly was with Boccaccio’s narrative. Petrarch is then credited with this character-advancing speech that Chaucer maintains.

Petrarch is responsible for a similar change in Griselda’s next speech. Griselda’s fourth speech (“‘Lord, al lyth in youre plesaunce...’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.498ff)) has one significant alteration as it morphs from Boccaccio to Petrarch’s version. Starting with Petrarch, the daughter is included in Griselda’s pact with Walter (“‘Et ego et hec parva filia tue sumus’” (“‘Both I and this little daughter are yours’” (119.204, f186ra)). Chaucer carries forward Griselda’s inclusion of the daughter, which shows the extent and the severity of her interpretation of the pact with her husband. Her filial line is also subject to the terms of the marriage. Moreover, this speech now highlights the division between aristocracy and those humbly born, regardless of their gender, for this stipulation will later apply to the son.

Next, Chaucer creates another speech that allows Griselda to express motherly grief. Once she learns that her daughter will be taken, Griselda says:

“Fareweel my child! I shal thee nevere see.  
But sith I thee have marked with the croys  
Of thilke Fader—blessed moote he be!—  
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree,  
Thy soule, litel child, I hym bitake,  
For this nyght shaltow dyen for my sake.” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.555-560)
Not only is her grief now audible, but the Clerk also states that she repeatedly holds, kisses, and lulls the child “with ful sad face” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.552). Chaucer presents a clear portrait of a distraught mother who is cherishing what she believes to be the last moments with her child. There is no rushing the moment, and she takes time to vocally express her somber goodbye. Boccaccio and Petrarch do not afford her the same amount of time. In *Decameron*, Dioneo says, “Prestamente, presala della culla e basciatala e benedetola” (“She quickly took the child, kissed her, blessed her”) and that she did this “senza mutar viso” (“without changing her face/showing emotion”) (*Decameron* X.10.31). She then gives the baby to the servant and she requests that the child be buried away from beasts and birds. There is no direct speech from the grieving mother to her baby. Petrarch, likewise, states, “Nec lacrimulam tamen ullam nec suspirium dedit” (121.218-219, f186rb) (“She neither sighed nor wept”) and “Sed tranquilla fronte puellulum accipiens, aliquantulum respexit, et simul osculans, benedixit ac signum sancte crucis impressit, porrexitque satelliti” (121.220-221, f 186rb) (“With a tranquil countenance, she gazed at her a while, then, kissing her, blessed her, and marked her with the sign of the holy cross, and gave her to the retainer”). While Petrarch permits her an extended moment with the child, as opposed to Boccaccio’s rushed sequence, neither author permits Griselda the complexity of voice and character that Chaucer creates for her. Chaucer invites readers into the mind of Griselda. He makes known the fact that she has made peace with infanticide because she turned the child’s soul over to God. Moreover, she states that she is aware of her own culpability, and that she takes full blame for what she believes is the child’s imminent death.\(^{52}\) Nowhere else in the source

\(^{52}\) Griselda also references Jesus’s death on the cross. This speech is juxtaposed with the imagery of her
or analogues does she have such an emotional speech, nor does she have any words about her role in the child’s murder. As such, Chaucer grants a pathos to her not previously seen. However, he also creates the crux of the true value of her goodness: her extreme patience results in criminal behavior, and her own words acknowledge her guilt.

Next, in Boccaccio’s version, Griselda becomes pregnant with her son immediately; but four years lapse in Petrarch and Chaucer’s retelling of the narrative. This information precedes Griselda’s next speech in which she professes the extent of her love for her husband, not the children. In this speech, Boccaccio’s Griselda is minimally developed and lacks the details of Petrarch and Chaucer’s Griselda. The slight, but important, difference between the latter two Griseldas is found in what she believes she gave up. In *Historia Griseldis*, she gave up her “voluntates affectusque meos” (121.251, f 186rb) (“preferences and inclinations / wishes and desires”) (*translation mine*). These words are altered in Chaucer’s version to: “‘Lefte I my wyl and al my libertee’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.656). “Will” and “liberty” carry much more weight than “preferences” or “inclinations.” With this speech, Chaucer creates a wife representative of one consistent with prescriptions dictated by the symbolic structure, one who is wholly submissive and who has no freedom. Or, might this be a carefully crafted construct to remove culpability from Griselda for her role in the children’s presumed death? This example shows that

holding her child in lament. In creating this portrait of Griselda, Chaucer further increases pathos by allowing the possibility for her to be read in a Marian light, as a suffering mother.

53 This makes the daughter four years older in Petrarch and Chaucer’s versions when she returns to marry Walter. However, there remains inconsistencies. Boccaccio later informs readers that the daughter is twelve and the boy is six when they return, making them six years apart.

54 This position is reiterated with the lines that Chaucer adds to his version: “Naught greveth me at al, / Though that my doughter and my sone be slayn— / At youre comandement, this is to sayn.” (*CT* IV.647-649)
word choice is always consequential and affects Griselda’s level of empowerment and culpability.

When the servant comes to take the son, only Petrarch gives her a voice. He allows her to repeat the same words that she said to the servant when he took the daughter. Chaucer follows Boccaccio by having this moment told via narration. This is an unusual instance where Chaucer removes, rather than adds to, Griselda’s voice. However, Chaucer’s decision to remove this particular speech does not detract significantly from her voice or characterization. Because the Clerk states that Griselda acts the same way she did when the daughter was taken, readers know that Griselda is equally mournful with her son’s departure and supposed death.\footnote{Chaucer’s decision to turn her words to narration also do not greatly detract from the overall quantitative impact of her vocal input.}

Griselda’s eighth speech, in which she responds to her dismissal, is her lengthiest in all versions of the tale.\footnote{There are two overbearing similarities among all three versions: (1) each emphasizes that she does not want the “peple” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.878) to see her naked, and (2) all versions discuss the smock as an exchange for Griselda’s virginity.} As expected, Boccaccio gives Griselda a concise response that focuses on class and its material relationship to her clothing and her ring. Petrarch, also as expected, presents a longer speech that focuses on God’s divinity and His role in her temporary elevated social status. Petrarch also adds words to indicate Griselda’s intent to remain a widow before she addresses the issue of the clothes, rings, and jewels. Chaucer includes all of the above elements, but with increased detail. For example, Chaucer elaborates on the state of widowhood as well as the stigma attached to it. Chaucer’s Griselda states that widowhood should be “clene in body, herte, and al” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.836). She also casts contemporary moral views upon widowhood when...
she says, "‘God shilde swich a lorde wyf to take / Another man to housbonde or to make!’" (The Clerk’s Tale IV.839-840). He also allows her to acknowledge the new wife, which only occurs in Chaucer’s version. But the biggest alteration to Chaucer’s Griselda is that he gives her ten lines that recast her as a stronger, more opinionated wife than her predecessors. Amidst the discussion of her clothing and her dowry, she says:

“O goode God! How gentil and how kynde
Ye semed by youre speche and youre visage
The day that maked was oure mariaige!
   But sooth is seyd – algate I fynde it trewe,
For in effect it preeved is on me—
Love is nought oold as whan that it is newe.
   But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat bee
That evere in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.851-861)

Never before has Griselda been permitted such an emotional outburst directed toward her husband. She scolds Walter for his behavior, and her words on the deteriorating state of love act as an edifying lecture in the context of her apparent regret at having given Walter her heart. With these words, Griselda is bolder and stronger than she has ever been in any version of the tale. Her voice does not partake in the symbolic structure or the prescriptions associated with it. Her voice challenges all preconceived stereotypes regarding medieval female speech, particularly that of silence. Insofar as she is represented, Chaucer removes the trappings associated with the female voice and Griselda participates in traditionally masculine discourse.

In the final part of the tale, Boccaccio gives Griselda three speeches: (1) he permits her a response to the request that she help receive the new wife, (2) he gives her a voice to welcome the new wife, and (3) he gives her words to conclude that the new wife
is beautiful and fragile. Petrarch gives her the same final three speeches, but he elaborates on her eagerness to do whatever is requested of her during the preparations for the new bride. Chaucer does something entirely different. Though she responds to Walter’s request to prepare for the new bride in a similar manner to Petrarch’s Griselda, and though she remains constant with her response about her opinion of the fragile bride, Chaucer deprives her of the opportunity to speak to the new bride. Chaucer does not give her a “welcome, my lady” type of line that exists in Boccaccio and Petrarch’s versions. This is the second time he has taken away a line of her speech. Instead, Chaucer informs his audience that Griselda is with a group of people when the new wife enters as indicated by the line that physically places her “with oother folk to greete the markysesse” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.1014). This change emphasizes Chaucer’s apparent desire to again align Griselda with the “stormy peple” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.995). Here, she is literally positioned alongside them as she silently greets the new bride.

Interestingly, at the moment where she departs from the isolation of the role of wife and publically joins the people, she is silenced in a manner consistent with medieval prescriptions about the female voice.

Finally, with Griselda’s (and the Clerk’s) last words, Chaucer catapults her to a level significantly more complex than her predecessors. Consider Griselda’s reaction to Walter’s explanation of the entire test in Decameron X.10:

E così detto, l’abbracciò e basciò, e con lei insieme, la qual d’allegrezza piagnea, levatosi, n’andarono là dove la figliuola tutta stupefatta queste cose ascoltando sedea, e abbracciatata teneramente e il fratello altressì, lei e molti altri che quivi erano sgannarono. (Decameron X.10.64)

(And so said they hugged and kissed: and she continued to weep for joy and together [with her husband] went to where the daughter was sitting, amazed at
listening to all these things, and they embraced her tenderly and then the brother, as she and many others were also tricked.)

And in Petrarch’s *Historia Griseldis*, she reacts as follows:

Hec illa audiens, pene quadio exanimis et pietate [amens] iocundissimisque cum lacrimis, suorum pignorum in amplexus ruit, fatigatque osculis, poique gemitu madefacit. (129.385-387, f 187ra)

(His words produced almost unbearable joy and frantic devotion: Griselda rushes with the happiest tears to embrace her children, wearies them with kisses, and bedews them with maternal tears.)

Now, consider the same moment in Chaucer’s tale:

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth
For pitous joy, and after hire swownyng
She both hire yonge children to hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitously wepyng,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissyng
Ful lyk a mooder, with hire salte teeres
She bathed bothe hire visage and hire heeres. (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1079-1085)

All three versions permit Griselda to express her relief and happiness and describe the subsequent embracing of the children. However, Boccaccio presents Griselda first as a wife, and then as a mother. He notes that she remains positioned next to Gualtieri, whom she hugs first. After their embrace, they go together to hug the children. In contrast, Petrarch has Griselda rush to the children first, emphasizing her attachment to children over her attachment to Walter. Likewise, Chaucer follows Petrarch, but heightens her emotional response through fainting. Fainting is typically aligned with femaleness and in particular with female hysteria. Chaucer’s addition of this sequence might indicate that her heightened emotions would only be understood by a medieval audience in such a stereotypical fashion. Female grief, as described by men, may only be equated and understood through stereotypes connected to female frailty. Such is the case with
Griselda as it was for the women in *The Knight’s Tale*. The irony is that in order to increase pathos and further the voice of a female character, Chaucer resorts to using prescriptions about the female voice that essentially prevent its movement outside of those prescriptions.

After the resolution, the Italian authors are content to leave Griselda living happily ever after. Chaucer is not. He continues the scene with the following words spoken by Griselda:

“Grauntmercy, lord, God thanke it yow,” quod she,  
“That ye han saved me my children deere!  
Now rekke I nevere to been deed right heere;  
Sith I stonde in youre love and in your grace,  
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!  
“O tendre, o deere, o yonge children myne!  
Your woful mooder wende stedfastly  
That cruuel houndes, or som foul vermyne  
Hadde eten yow; but God of his mercy  
And youre benyngne fader tendrely  
Hath doon yow kept”—and in that same stounde  
Al sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde.  
And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she  
Hire children two, whan she gan hem t’embrace,  
That with greet sleight and greet difficultee  
The children from hire arm they gonne arace. (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1088-1103)

Her words include an expression of gratitude to Walter for saving the children, a direct address to the children, and then she credits both the mercy of God and Walter for the children’s preservation. Chaucer gives her a voice where she previously had none, and he underscores her passion with additional fainting spells. In no other version of the tale is there such a vivid and haunting portrait of this tear-stained wife on the floor, forcefully grasping her children. Chaucer’s ending can be interpreted as an effort to make her into a caricature of female hysteria. His revision contrasts Griselda’s constant patience, which
previously created an unrealistic and manufactured example of perseverance, with the real portrayal of human suffering. In Chaucer’s works, scholars immediately point to the Wife of Bath as the epitome of an abused female because she was physically abused and suffered subsequent partial deafness. But Griselda must be considered in the same category of abused wives. The final image of Griselda lying on the floor, crying profusely over her children, is the culmination of her husband’s emotional, psychological, and even physical abuse. And it is only Chaucer who permits her a vocal outburst allowing his readers to not only see, but hear how greatly she has suffered.

Overall, Chaucer, who reworked the Griselda story to fit his own agenda, presents a similar but significantly more complex and intriguing version of the tale and its heroine. In its progression from folk tale to Italian vernacular to Latin to French to English, the narrative has evolved to reflect varied contemporary themes. Chaucer elevates the degree of characterization, intensifies value judgments, and gives Griselda a stronger, more opinionated vocal presence. His Griselda has pathos and agency, and she is greatly altered from that poor princess who was so long ago locked in a tower.  

57 Griselda’s additional characterization in The Clerk’s Tale, given via narration rather than her own speech, is observable in the following lines: “And she with reverence, in humble cheer” (IV.298); “She were astoned” (IV.337); “Wondrynge upon this word, quakyng for drede” (IV.358); “But eek, whan that the cas required it, / The commune profit koude she redresse. / Ther nas discord, rancour, ne heynnesse / In al that land that she ne koude apese, / And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese. / Though that hir housbonde absent were anon, / If gentil men or othere of hir contree / Were wrothe, she wolde bryngen hem alle / With ful sad face, and gan the child to blisse, / And lulled it, and after gan it kisse. / And thus she seyde in hire benigne voys” (IV.547-554); “And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,” (IV.566); “And evere in oon so pacient was she / That she no chiere made of heynnesse, / But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse. / Save this, she preyde hym, that if he myghte, / Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave / His tendre lymes, delicaat to sighte, / Fro foweles and fro beestes for to save.” (IV.677-683); “And she agayn answerde in paciencye” (IV.813); “That neither by hir wordes ne hir face, / Biforn the folk ne eek in hir
Scribal Variation in *The Clerk’s Tale*

Scribal variation examples for Griselda are from following manuscripts: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198 (Cp) by John Marchaunt; Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.4.24 (Dd) by Rychard Wytton; San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS El 26 C.9 (El) by Adam Pinkhurst; Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1.) (Gl) by Geoffrey Spirling; London, British Library, MS Harley 7334 (Ha\(^4\)) by John Marchaunt; Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D (Hg) by Adam Pinkhurst; Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 113 (Ma) by John Brode; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fonds Anglais 39 (Ps) by John Duxwurth; and Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale MS XIII.B.29 (Np) by More.

Patterns emerge as one becomes more and more familiar with each of these scribes. For example, Marchaunt at times gives Griselda more agency and power in acknowledging her very need to speak, but most of the time this is the result of an error on his part. Also, he is not consistent with specific pronouns between his two manuscripts leading to the creation of two entirely different Griseldas. Wytton’s abundance of errors creates an unharmonious text, while More generally stays true to the narrative even with his great number of textual inconsistencies. For example, he uses “I” and “y” interchangeably and his spelling is never consistent (nought/nour\(3\), schee/she/sche, etc.).
Inconsistent with Chaucer’s portrayal of his own scriveyn, Adam, Pinkhurst (if indeed Chaucer’s Adam) appears to be the most competent scribe for the Griselda speeches. He presents text with the least amount of variants and even goes so far as to correct Chaucer’s grammar with line notes. However, Brode, Spirling, and Duxwurth create versions of Griselda that might not have been what Chaucer imagined. For example, Brode makes substantial alterations that question traditional portrayals of Griselda. His variants highlight Griselda as a symbolic creation of femaleness. He silences her through the removal of portions of her speech, and he creates a version of Griselda who appears to devalue herself. Duxwurth’s alterations, though they also convolute any clear representation of Griselda, yield quite different effects. His alterations strengthen her, empower her, and present a new psychological glimpse into her mind. Yet, his changes also enact prescriptions of silence or hysteria, add a sexual element to her character, and make Griselda a lover of worldly attachments. Spirling, who might be the least competent scribe, creates the most altered version of Griselda among the manuscripts. His variants affect her values and her piousness and, like Duxwurth, he portrays her as a woman too attached to worldly things. Moreover, Spirling is the sloppiest scribe considered, resulting in a textually unkempt Griselda.

The more nuanced analysis of these scribes’ alterations begins with Griselda’s first speech, which is altered in every manuscript examined. Spirling’s manuscript (Gl) suffered mold damage which affects two lines. Wytton (Dd) and Pinkhurst (in Hg only) made small scribal errors that were self-corrected, and More may have lost track of his line markers as he includes “Y of” (Np 123r) instead of “if” for the line “If she this wey unto the castel holde” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.287). There are also Latin glosses entered by
Pinkhurst (El and Hg), Wytton (Dd), and Brode (Ma) that immediately contextualize Griselda in terms of masculine glossing.58 But the most interesting variants to this speech are made by Brode (Ma) and Duxwurth (Ps). Both men deprive Griselda of the entire seven lines that Chaucer created for her. In Ma and in Ps, the line, “She thought, ‘I wole with othere maydens stonde’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.281) is changed to, respectively, “Sche (th)ought sche wold w(i)t(h) o(th)(re) maydens stonde” (Ma 78v) and “She thought she wold with othre maydeyns stond” (Ps 32v). This seemingly minor change from “I” to “sche/she” robs Griselda of the power to express her own thoughts about what she intends to do. Here, the Clerk expresses Griselda’s inner thoughts, and he controls the way in which she is perceived. The Clerk, as a result of scribal variation in the Manchester and the Paris manuscripts, diminishes Griselda’s voice and agency. Moreover, this change enacts medieval prescriptions of silence upon Griselda’s voice. For whoever read these manuscripts, Griselda conformed to symbolic prescriptions in a manner unlike her representation elsewhere. These two scribes have returned the Griselda narrative to a state similar to those presented by Petrarch and Boccaccio, who also do not include this inner monologue as a separate speech. Might these scribes have been working from emended witnesses that present the speech along those lines? Or is this intentional scribal interference? Had the variant been present in only one manuscript, the argument for scribal interference is stronger than if the variant appears in multiple

58 Latin glosses juxtaposed with female speech is discussed in the above analysis of The Franklin’s Tale, the consequences of which also apply to Griselda.
manuscripts. Regardless, readers of these manuscripts are given an incomplete version of Chaucer’s Griselda, and she remains silenced during a moment that Chaucer specifically altered from the source in order to permit her a vocal expression.

The next two significant variations appear in Griselda’s third speech. Pinkhurst (El 91v and Hg 178v), Wytton (Dd 96r), and Brode (Ma 79r) present the speech with a Latin gloss. Once again, Griselda’s voice is complicated by the masculine gloss that usurps authority over the words she speaks. Her response to Walter’s proposal is not as much her own as it is in manuscripts without the gloss. Every word she speaks is qualified by the more trustworthy Latin. Brode and Pinkhurst (only in Hg) also transpose two words in the line, “‘Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.360). In their manuscripts, the line begins with “I am” (Ma 79r, Hg 178v). This type of transposing is a common scribal mistake, and it appears the likely cause for this particular variant. This type of mistake can potentially turn a doubtful question into a declarative statement, and it can give its speaker a stronger, opinionated voice. However,

59 Looking at the change in only two manuscripts makes it impossible to present a valid argument for either case, yet both possibilities must be acknowledged. One might also consider the possibility of a shared exemplar, but it is unknown if this was the case.

60 “Nil ego vnqu(am) sciens ne du(m) faci[-] / am set ecia(m) cogitabo quod contra / animu(m) tuu(m) sit nec tu a(iq)uid / facies et si me mori iusseris quod / moleste feram (et cetera)” (El 91v); “Nil ego vnqu(am) sciens ne du(m) facia(m) / set ecia(m) cogitabo quod cont(ra) animu(m) / tuu(m) sit nec tu a(iq)uid facies et si / me mori iusseris quod moleste feram)” (Dd 96r); and “Nil ego vnqu(am) nesciens ne / du(m) faciam s(et) / eciam cogitabo quod(ua) / (et) si me mori iusseris quod / moleste feram” (Ma 79r). Brode’s gloss in Ma begins three lines later at “‘But as ye wole youreself, right so wol I’” (CT IV.361).

61 Pinkhurst makes this error in only one of his two manuscripts. He copies “Am I” (91v) in Ellesmere.
in this case, it does not have that effect, but this example illustrates how a simple mistake can alter a character.\textsuperscript{62}

There are two other noteworthy alterations in this speech. The first is Marchaunt’s substitution of the word “wityngly” (Ha\textsuperscript{4} 121r) for “willyngly” in the line, “‘And heere I swere that nevere willyngly....’” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.362). The choice to use the word “wityngly” might imply that there is less fault or premeditated intent to disobey; yet, it is not significant enough of an alteration to be consequential to Griselda’s character.

Second, Spirling writes, “‘In Word ne in thought shal neu(re) you disobeye’” (Gl 105r) rather than “‘In werk ne thought, I nyl yow disobeye’” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.364). In his version, speech (“word”) is emphasized over deeds/actions (“werk”). More, in the Naples manuscript makes the same alteration (Np 125r). Spirling’s and More’s Griselda now appears to value the importance of what is said over what is done. She vows that she will never speak against Walter, and this increased attention to her words presents her as a more pensive and intellectual wife who understands the important value of words. More also changes “though” to “thought” (Np, 125r) in the line “‘For to be deed, though me were looth to deye’” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.364). The effect is that, though the speech would still be acknowledged as an internal monologue according to the established methodology, the addition of the “t” removes the certainty that she is speaking directly to Walter, or, at the very least, when she stops speaking to Walter. The confusion robs her of at least one line of text.

\textsuperscript{62} The entire line reads, “‘Lord, undigne and unworthy / Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede’” (\textit{The Clerk’s Tale} IV.359-260).
In speech four, Duxwurth and Brode make self-corrected mistakes, neither of which significantly alters Griselda. However, More alters the line “‘Ne chaunge my corage to another place’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.511) so that it reads “to none othir place” (Np 129r). This small change converts Griselda from a woman who claims her “corage” cannot be relocated, to a woman who believes there exists no other place for it to be relocated to. More essentially makes Griselda increasingly loyal and more in line with medieval prescriptions regarding appropriate wifely behavior.

Next, Pinkhurst attempts to have Griselda speak in grammatically correct sentences. Not only does this change the perceived quality of her speech, but it also alters perceptions of what she declares is valuable. Pinkhurst offers an alternative reading to Chaucer’s line. He writes, “‘Ne drede for to leese, saue oonly thee’” (El 93) and “‘Ne drede for to leese, saue oonly thee’” (Hg 180v) rather than “‘Ne drede for to leese, save oonly yee’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.508). But in both of Pinkhurst’s manuscripts he adds the following note to the end of the line: “/ .vel yee” (El 93v) and “/ vel ye” (Hg 180v).

“Vel” is the Latin word for “or” or “or rather.” Pinkhurst is proposing that the line should read, “‘Ne drede for to leese, save oonly ye/yee.’” He copies the singular “thee” (in both manuscripts) and then he offers the emendation to the formal version of the pronoun, “ye/yee.” But this is an odd and rare notation. Might he have been correcting himself? This is a possibility, but it does not seem likely as Pinkhurst tends to self-correct by adding words above the line. Moreover, he copied it the same way in two separate manuscripts.

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63 Other mistakes include the following. Duxwurth first makes a mistake on the “o” of “yow” (Ps 33v) in the line, “‘Liken to yow that may displese me’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.506). He next makes a changes to the line, “‘Ne chaunge my corage to another place’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.511), where, in his manuscript, “Ne” is crossed out and “May” is written above it (Ps 34r). Brode makes two mistakes in the line, “‘This wyl is in myn herte, and ay shal be’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.509). He makes a mistake on “will” (Ma 80v), and he adds the word “in” above the line between “is” and “myn” (Ma 80v).
manuscripts. It would then appear that he copied his witness faithfully by writing “thee.”

This means that he offered his own alternative to the line in order to keep the formal language consistent with his use of “yow” in line 506, and this is the reading that has subsequently been taken up by editions such as *The Riverside Chaucer*. Pinkhurst’s alternative can only be seen as an example of the scribe inserting his own intellectual authority into the manuscript. This is an ideal representation of scribes “substitut[ing] what they regarded as a more appropriate reading in a particular context” (Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes* 68). But whether modern scholars view this as an error is entirely dependent upon modern notions of authority, as discussed in chapter three. Nonetheless, Griselda, if she accepts Pinkhurst’s emendation in this speech, now presents herself as a women using consistent grammar. It is interesting to note that the modern interpretation of her linguistic abilities might have partial origins in scribal interference, or at the very least, the manner in which the scribe represented his uncertainty about how the line should read.

Pronouns are also affected in Griselda’s fifth speech. When she says, “‘Of thilke Fader—blessed moote he be!—’”(*The Clerk’s Tale* IV. 557), only Pinkhurst and Duxwurth present the reading as “he.” All other scribes opt for variants of “mote thowe be” (Ma 181) or “mot yow be” (Gl 106r). This shift in where the speech is directed alters the interpretation of the scene. The speech in which Griselda bids farewell to her daughter is harrowing enough, but the shift in pronouns permits readers to visualize a break in the words she speaks to her daughter as she, possibly, looks up in reverence and says, “blessed might thou be.” She shifts her speech and directs it to God, so that speech,

64 “thow” (Dd 98v); “(th)ou” (Cp 163r, Ha⁴ 123v).
now with two recipients, is part farewell and part prayer. This changes the dynamics of a speech previously directed solely to her small child. The prayer to God serves to increase the perception of her desperation as she is directly praising him in her plea to take her child’s soul.

Another alteration made only by Spirling is found in the description of the cross. He describes the “croys” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.558) as “the rode tree” (Gl 106r). The rode-tre is, in fact, “The cross on which Christ died” (Middle English Dictionary), but only Spirling carries forward (or changes) this description. And while such a description is not entirely uncommon for the period (it appears in Gower for example), it is generally found in religious works and prayers, such as the Pater noster. Even though both descriptions discuss the cross where Christ died, the use of “rode tree” may represent a deeper association with religion and an overall tone of spirituality. In this sense, Spirling makes Griselda more pious than she is elsewhere represented.65

Spirling also makes Griselda more possessive of her daughter. As Griselda hands over her daughter to the servant, she says, “‘Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.567). But Spirling, as well Duxwurth, change the line to “my litel younge mayde” (Gl 106r; “my litel yong maide” Ps 34r). This variant reading presents Griselda as a woman who is hesitant to relinquish what is hers. In all other versions, Griselda has already given up her claim to her daughter, as she had previously expressed in her speech to Walter. But Spirling and Duxwurth complicate this straightforward reading by allowing her to express her attachment to the child. This slip either

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65 Spirling also writes “foules” (Gl 106v) instead of “briddes” in the line, “‘That beestes ne no briddes it torace’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.572). His very particular word alterations suggest that the Gl scribe was working from a variant witness or that he was using a vocabulary particular to his region.
strengthens her maternal relationship with her offspring, or it calls into question her previous words to Walter, that the child “been youres al” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.503).

There are also additional mistakes in this speech. First, Wytton copies “my” (Dd 98v) twice in the line, “‘Gooth now,’ quod she, ‘and dooth my lorde(s) heeste’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.568). And More seems to have fallen victim to eyeskip as he inserts an extra “I” which confuses the reader. For the line, “‘Of thilke Fader—blessed moote he be!—’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.557) More presents, “Of thilke fadir I blessid mote he bee” (Np 130v). But the more egregious error comes from Brode. He changes the ending of the line to read, “(and) doth my lorde(s) will” (Ma 81r). This might not seem to be that significant, but now the speech cannot rhyme. In all versions “heeste” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.568) is coupled with “leeste” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.570). Brode’s variant now has “will” as the corresponding ending word of the couplet with “leste,” consequently making her speech less poetic.

There are numerous errors in her seventh speech as well.66 Spirling skips multiple lines and then corrects his errors,67 he transposes lines,68 and he gives variant readings of two lines.69 Spirling’s sloppiness, though it makes for a messy speech and presentation,

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66 There are no significant variants among the manuscripts for Griselda’s sixth speech.

67 For the line, “‘I have,’ quod she, ‘seyd thus, and evere shal’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.645), he crosses out two incorrectly written lines in red (“‘Right as yow list, axeth no reed at me’” and “‘Though that my daughter and my sone be slayn’”) and then at the end of the next line, he picks up at the correct spot after correcting his mistake (Gl 106v).

68 For the lines, “‘I have noght had no part of children tweyne, / But first siknesse, and after wo and peyne’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.650-651), Spirling transposes the line but notes the mistake in red marginalia (Gl 106v).

69 The line, “‘Right as yow list, axeth no reed at me’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.653) is written as “‘Right as yow lestede and ask no thyng of me’” (Gl 106v). The line, “‘Right gladly wolde I dyen yow to plese’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.665) is presented as, “‘Gladly wolde I suffre it yow for to please’” (Gl 107r). Note also that it appears as “‘gladly I wold yt suffre yow to ease’” in Ps (34v).
does not greatly alter Griselda, but Duxwurth presents two variant readings that could change the way Griselda is characterized. First, he changes the line, “‘I wol no thyng, ne nyl no thyng, certayn’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.646) to “‘I wil no thing do ne no thing clayme’” (Ps 34v). Duxwurth’s version alters the line to focus on the action of doing nothing and claiming nothing rather than just having or not having something. Her awareness of her own agency and what she realizes she does not have control over is heightened in Duxwurth’s manuscript. He also makes a more significant alteration to how she perceives her relationship with Walter. In the final line of the speech, she claims, “‘Deth may noght make no comparisoun / Unto youre love’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.666-667); but in the Paris manuscript, it is not “youre love” but “oure loue” (34v). The use of “our” implies a shared experience and something that she takes partial responsibility for. In this version, it is not about what Walter bestows upon her, but about her active participation in the love they share. Is his bestowed love a greater loss (compared to “deth”) than reciprocated love? Are these scribes raising Griselda to the status of a wife similar to Dorigen of the Wife of Bath who share equally in the love with Arveragus and Jankyn? While equating Griselda with Dorigen or the Wife of Bath can be controversial, what is not controversial is that Griselda, in the Paris and Corpus manuscripts, sees the value of her role in their relationship. Moreover, she fears the loss of something jointly created rather than something that was bestowed upon her by her husband.  

70 The only other manuscript to offer the same variant reading is Cp, which has “Vnto oure loue” (137v).

71 Other variants in this speech include the following. In the line, “‘But as you list, naught greveth me at al’” (IV.647) Ma omits naught (81v). For the line, “‘At youre comandement, this is to sayn- ’” (IV.649), Dd has “slayn” (99v) and rhymes “slayn” with “slayn” in the preceding line (rather than “sayn”). More’s variants are not extensive or significant for this speech. Finally, there is the addition of marginal Latin glosses by Wytton and Pinkhurst (in both El and Hg). At line, “‘And certes, if I hadde prescience’” (IV.659), Wytton writes, “Fac senciam tibi placere / quod moriar volens moriar” (Dd 99v). Hg’s gloss
Griselda’s eighth speech is her longest and contains significant alterations and mistakes among the manuscripts. First, there are notable word choices that are adopted in multiple manuscripts. For example, in the line, “So graunte yow wele and prosperitee!” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.842), Brode, Spirling, Duxwurth, and Wyton all opt for “welth/welthe” (Ma 83v, Gl 108r, Ps 35v, Dd 101v) rather than “wele.” While both words share a generally similar meaning, “welth” does not mean just happiness, joy, or prosperity, but it also insinuates physical, measurable, and worldly prosperity (Middle English Dictionary). Another example is found in the Harley manuscript. The line, “Al... (“Fac senciam tibi placere / q(uo)d moriar volens moriar” (183r)) begins one line later at IV.660. And “Fac senciam tibi placere q(uo)d / moriar volens moriar” (El 95v) appears at line, “Al your plesance ferme and stable I holde” (IV.663) in Ellesmere.

The most relevant variants are included in the text, but general errors in Griselda’s speeches in The Clerk’s Tale are listed below and can be further examined in the Appendix G. For the line, “That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye” (IV.830), “I” is added in with a caret between “thank” and “god” in Gl (107v). The line, “But ther as ye me profre swich dowaire” (IV.848), “As” is lined out with red and changed to “but” in Gl (108r), and “ther” is added in between “but” and “as” in Ps (35v). For the line, “My lord, ye woot that in my fadres place” (IV.862), “lede” is written after “that” but it is lined out in Gl (108r). In the line, “Ye koude nat doon so dishonest a thyng” (IV.875), Ma makes a mistake on “h” of “dishonest” (84r) and Gl has “thyl” lined out and changed to “thyngh” (108r). In, “As I first broghte, it is wel in my mynde” (IV.849), “is” is inserted above line between “yt” and “wel” in Ps (35v). In, “That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente” (IV.861), “(Th)ough” is crossed out and above it is written “that” in Ps (35v). For the line, “Ye dide me streepe out of my povre weede” (IV.863), “yee” is added in with carets above “did” and “me” in Ps (35v). The line, “Sholde biforn the peple, in my walkyng” (IV.877) is altered in Ps where “Lay” is the first word which is then crossed out and changed to “shuld” (36r). For the lines, “That was your wyf. And heer take I my leeve” (IV.888-889), Ps adds “wife” above line after “youre” and “that” is crossed out after “lest” (36r). In, “Al your plesance wol I folwen fayn” (IV.873), “I” is added in between “wil” and “folwe” in Ps (35v). In the line, “That thilke wombe in which your children leye” (IV.876), Ma makes a mistake on first “h” of “which” (84r). For the line, “And evere shal, whil that my lyf may dure” (IV.825), Ma makes a mistake on “c” of “schall” (83v). In, “Ye dide me streepe out of my povre weede” (IV.863), Ma has “power” rather than “povre” (83v). There is also mold damage for the lines, “Tha thilke wombe in which your children leye” (IV.876), More’s mistakes include eyeskip as witnessed by the lines, “God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take” (IV.839) where he takes “make” from the following line “Another man to housbonde or to make!” (IV.840) and inserts it for “take” (Np 137r). Interestingly, he also writes “and othir man to husbond or to make” rather than “another man....” He also exhibits a form of transposition with the line “In which that I was blisful wont to bee” (IV.844), which he presents as “in whiche y wonte blissfully for to be” (Np 137r). He also shows how the spacing of a witness can alter meaning. For the line “Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve” (IV.889), More offers, “of yowe my nowne lord lest y yow greue” (Np 138v). The “n” might have as easily been placed with “my” as it could have been with “owne,” leaving the scribe to make an editorial choice. More’s most relevant variants are discussed within the chapter.
your plesance wol I folwen fayn,”’ The Clerk’s Tale IV.873) is altered by Marchaunt, who writes “fulfulle” (Ha₄ 128r) rather than “folwen.” Though Marchaunt has her accomplish the same task, “fulfulle” presents her as a woman with more agency, and as someone eager to carry out her lord’s wishes instead of a wife following an order.⁷³

Spirling also makes two additional alterations that are only seen in his manuscript. First, he writes, “‘If I shall goo I wole goo whanne yow lest’” (Gl 108r). All other versions do not include “if.” The word implies that Spirling’s Griselda might have a choice. In this manuscript, if she chooses to go, it is because she decided that she would go, not because she was following a banishment order. Spirling next makes a change regarding her relationship with the children. In the Glasgow manuscript, “‘That thilke wombe in which your children leye’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV. 876) becomes that womb in which “our childre lay” (Gl 108r). Once again, Spirling presents a version of Griselda who is able to express the extent of her attachment to her children and an awareness of something shared equally with her husband.

Duxwurth also creates a Griselda who shows more emotion than her counterparts. He presents a wife that can be considered not just dutiful, but sensual. Where all scribes offer a version of, ““Love is noght oold, as whan that it is newe”’ (The Clerk’s Tale IV.857), the Paris manuscript scribe gives her the line, “‘Loue ys not so hoot old as whenyt is newe’” (Ps 35v). This changes Griselda’s speech from a statement about the decline of love to one about the decline of love’s heat, of its passion. Intentional or not,

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⁷³ One other line that sees similar word variations is, “‘That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV. 887). Spirling and Duxwurth write “hille” and “heele” instead of “wrye.” Both words mean “to conceal or hide,” (Middle English Dictionary) but it remains an interesting observation that may be indicative of regional vocabularies or dialects.
Duxwurth adds an element that appears in contrast with her pious and nonsexual portrayal elsewhere.

Another line that sees great variation is, “But feith, and nakednesse, and maydenhede” (The Clerk’s Tale IV. 866). Brode and Wytton offer “filth” (Ma 83v) and “filthe” (Dd 101v) for “feith,” and Marchaunt and More write “mekenesc” (Ha^4 128r, Np 137r) in lieu of “nakednesse.” For Brode and Wytton, Griselda’s association with her poverty and her unworthy state is now linked to filth. Moreover, she is the one holding this view. In this particular case, Griselda now has a lower self-worth as she appears to perceive her only attributes to be those that are dirty, naked, and virginal. On the other hand, Marchaunt and More have her describe one of her qualities as meekness rather than nakedness. In these two manuscripts, Griselda is aware of her own humility and overtly says as much. Marchaunt is also the only scribe to allow Griselda to acknowledge her need to speak. Only in the Harley manuscript do we find the line, “Foryelde it yow; ther is namoore to seye” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.831) changed to, “Forȝeld it ȝow (th)er is more to seye)” (Ha^4 127v). Marchaunt shows her awareness that she is about to give her longest speech in the narrative. One last alteration, that is only seen in the Harley manuscript, is Marchaunt’s substitution of the word “chambre” (Ha^4 128r) for “paleys ” in the line, “That I smoklees out of your paleys wenet” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.875). This word substitution presents two possibilities. First, it creates a more intimate experience of her leaving the bedroom as opposed to the palace. And second, it complicates the location of the people who would see her naked should she be deprived of a smock. Are the people waiting outside the chamber and within the palace walls? Or are the people
outside, which is their presumed location by other versions that use “palace”? The choice of word creates two entirely different scenes for Griselda’s banishment.

The last significant variation for this speech has to do with perceived ownership of worldly goods, particularly Griselda’s clothing and wedding ring. The line, “‘And heere agayn your clothyng I restoore’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.867) is maintained by Spirling (Gl), Marchaunt (Cp), and Duxwurth (Ps). But Brode (Ma 83v), Pinkhurst (El 98r, Hg 186r), Wytton (Dd 101v), Marchaunt (Ha^4 128r), and More (Np 137r) change it to “my” clothing. Likewise, all scribes, aside from Marchaunt in the Corpus manuscript, change “your weddying ryng” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.868) to “my” wedding ring (Ma 83v, Gl 108r, El 98r, Hg 186r, Ps 35v, Dd 101v, Ha^4 128r, Np 137r). These variants serve to represent Griselda in opposition to the portrait that has been created for her. Readers have perceived Griselda as the patient wife who gave up her will and liberty, who only lives to serve and obey Walter’s commands, and who has no attachments to worldly possessions whether they be clothing, rings, love, or children. Now, one sees that assumption confronted by Griselda’s own declaration that the stately garb and the marriage ring are (or were) hers. By her own words, Griselda is less pious possibly, in her attachment to things.

Similarly, More compounds her attachment to things by not only indicating that the clothing and ring are hers, but also, in addition to her request for a smock, he also appears to have her ask for her ring as well. As she makes her request that she not return home naked, More makes a significant alteration. In all versions Griselda says:

“As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my meede,  
But swich a smok as I was wont to were  
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was youre wyf.” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.885-888)

However, More amends her compensation request with the variant “‘suche a rynge as was wont to were’” (*Np* 138v). It is hard to imagine this alteration as the result of eyeskip as the word does not appear in any similar word grouping or in any nearby text. The result is that More has now made Griselda a more superficial ex-wife who does not want to part with her ring.74

Next, pronoun confusion is again evident in Griselda’s tenth speech.75 The line, “‘I prey to God yeve hir prosperitee’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1034) is changed by Brode, Marchaunt, and Duxwurth to indicate that Griselda is not praying for the new bride but for Walter. These three scribes substitute “her” for “you” (“yow” (*Gl* 109r, *Ps* 36v); “ȝou” (*Cp* 142v)). This change has the effect of shifting focus from the new bride to

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74 However, Walter’s later statement does not reference the ring in this manuscript but keeps the text consistent with his suggestion that Griselda only take the smock with her when she leaves.

75 There are no significant variants for Griselda’s ninth speech. Minor variations to her ninth and tenth speech in *The Clerk’s Tale* are as follows. The line, “‘Nat oonly, lord, that I am glad,’ quod she” (IV.967) suffers mold damage in *Gl* (108v). For the line, “‘Withouten feyntynge, andshal everemo’” (IV.970), *Cp*, *Ps*, and *Ha* have “feyntynge” (141v, 36v, 129r). The words are have similar meanings: “deceit, hypocrisy or treachery and “pretense, falsely or hypocritically” (*Middle English Dictionary*). In the line, “‘Ne nevere, for no wele ne no wo’” (IV.971), *Ma* has “ne” for “no” which is then corrected (84v), *Cp* has a correction on “w” of “woo” that appears to be from another hand (141v), and *Ps* has a marginal note to indicate that “ne for” should be inserted between “wel” and “no” (36v). In the line, “‘A fairer saugh I nevere noon than she’” (IV.1033), *Ps* has “fayrer” added above “saugh” and “non” is crossed out and replaced with “neuer” (36v). For the lines, “‘And so hope I that he wol to yow sende / Plesance ynogh unto youre lyves ende’” (IV.1035-36), *Ma* changes “hoped” to “hope I” and “P” of “Pleaunce” held the abbreviated form of “P(ro)” then altered to plain “P” (85r). In the line, “‘Moore tendrely, and, to my supposynge’” (IV.1041), *Gl* has “‘Weel tenderly in hir yong playing’” (109r). At line, “‘O thynge biseke I yow, and warne also’” (IV.1037) is the Latin gloss “Vnu(m) bo(na) fide p(re)cor ac / moneo ne hanc illis / aculeis agites quibus / alt(er)am agitasti nami(que) (et) / junior (et) delicacy(us) nutr(ita) / est pati qu(an)tu(m) ego vt / reor non valeret” (Ma 85v). El has “Vnu(m) bona fide p(re)cor ac / moneo ne hanc illis / aculeis agites q(ui)bus / alt(er)am agitasti nami(que) (et) / junior (et) / delicaci(/us) nutrita est pati quantu(m) / ego vt reor non valeret” (100r). Hg has “Vnu(m) bona fide p(re)cor ac moneo ne hanc / illis aculeis agites quib(us) alt(er)am agitasti / nami(que) (et) junior (et) / delicaci(/us) nutrita est / pati quantu(m) ego vt reor non valeret” (188v). And *Dd* has “Vnu(m) bona fide precor ac moneo / ne hanc illis aculeis agites q(u)i(b)us / alt(er)am agitasti / nami(que) (et) junior (et) / delicaci(/us) nutrita est / pati quantu(m) ego vt reor non valeret” (103v). Ha4 also transpose “biseke” and “warn” so that the line reads, “‘On (th)ing warn I jow and biseke also’” (130r).
Walter, and it reiterates her concern for her husband above everyone else, even with the admonishing tone. The change also acts as a specific plea that he be more generous to his new bride than he had been with her, which is later reiterated by her requests that he not torment the new bride as he is known to do.

Next, in all versions, Griselda similarly states, “O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also, / That ye ne prikke with no tormentynge / This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo’” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.1037-1039). She begs Walter to be kind to the fragile girl and not to treat her in the same fashion that has previously employed. But in Spirling’s manuscript, she tells him not to treat the new bride, “as ye me haue doo” (Gl 109r). This is a substantial alteration. Consider that Griselda is otherwise portrayed as the help. She is dressed poorly, receives the guests with the other servants, and busies herself in the hall. When Walter asks her what she thinks of the new bride, she could be answering him as any other handmaid would. In all versions of this speech, there is no indication that she has any sort of previous relationship with Walter. Even the rest of her speech remains vague as to her true identity. She continues:

“For she is fostred in hir norissynge
Moore tendrely, and, to my supposynge,
She koude nat adversitee endure,
As koude a povre fostred creature.” (The Clerk’s Tale IV.1040-1043)

Although readers know that the poorly fostered creature is Griselda, there is never an overt connection made in her speech. But in the Glasgow manuscript, she reveals her status as his tormented ex-wife. Not only does this present her as a scorned woman who has a past history with Walter, but depending on the interpretation, she is also revealing herself as his shabbily-clad ex-wife to the wedding party. The narrative states that she
speaks while Walter’s guests “sitten doun to mete” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1028). But somewhere between the lines of Walter’s explanation and her swooning, the people are once again by her side, this time crying (“O many a teere on many a pitous face / Doun ran of hem that stoodeen hire biseyde; / Unnethe abouten hire myghte they abyde” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1104-1106)). It does indeed make a difference whether this is a public or a private admonishing of Walter and his treatment of wives. However difficult it is to determine, it remains worthy to consider.\(^\text{76}\) This scene, which normally presents a timid, broken Griselda, now carries the weight of public admonishment from a woman in rags to her wicked husband.

The examination of scribal variants for Griselda’s speech has shown that scribes did affect her voice. In some manuscripts, she is deprived of speeches. In others, her voice and her authority are challenged by the competing Latin glosses. And in altering words, scribes created versions of Griselda that are more opinionated, more passionate, more attached to this world, and more admonishing than she is elsewhere. This case study has shown that the voice Chaucer gave to Griselda was indeed altered, and the consequence of those alterations create multiple versions of the patient wife. As such, can one really claim that there is a single representation of her character? Overall, though Griselda may be synonymous with patience, the intricacies of her character as established

\(^{76}\) There is also confusion about who Griselda is thanking for her children’s salvation in her eleventh and last speech. In most manuscripts she is either thanking God or Walter. But Spirling clears up the confusion when he has her say, “‘Grant m(er)cy my lord so god I thank and yow’” (Gl 109r). Other versions use a variant of “‘Grauntmercy, lord, God thanke it yow’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1088) and there is no clear indication to whom she is directing her thanks with the use of the plural “ye” (“‘That ye han saved me my children deere!’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1089)) as God is generally addressed in the singular. Lastly, for the line, “‘That cruel houndes, or som foul vermyne’” (*The Clerk’s Tale* IV.1095), Ma and Dd have “‘venym’” (85v) and “‘venyme’” (104r) rather then “‘vermyne,’” and More, in Np, substitutes “‘wounids’” for “‘houndes’” (143r).
by her words in all variant versions prove that Griselda is more complicated than any one
general portrait of patience than medieval symbolic prescriptions could have imagined.
CONCLUSION

Never before has an extensive study on the medieval female voice been conducted at the axes of masculinity, textual studies, and paleography. This project addresses the lacuna that exists within academia, primarily that the medieval female voice is repeatedly evaluated as a marginal topic to another perceived greater one. This study accepts the call to action from Matilda Bruckner and Kim Phillips by furthering the dialogue amid new disciplines. This study offers new textual support and analysis that contextualizes the medieval female voice apart from the constraints of its normally associated field of women’s studies. The term “represented medieval female voice” is definitively defined, the consequences of which allow for quantitative analysis of female speeches in a number of Chaucer’s narratives. The study of variants among Italian sources, Chaucer’s texts, and manuscripts is undertaken for five literary women in order to present a new means for understanding the represented medieval female voice in connection with beliefs espoused by masculine traditions. Whether the voice is subject to masculine dominance at the hand of its creators or by those partaking in transmission processes, or whether social influences by way of the symbolic bleed into representations of female language, these female voices are altered in ways that either confirm or confront medieval prescriptions about them. This allows for new interpretations that permit the female voice to be the resolution to a problem rather than the problem itself.
The goal of this project is to re-examine the medieval female voice through new lenses, and to remove it from the trappings that consistently marginalize it to otherness or treat it as a minor subject. Rather, by defining it in terms of its literary representation, the medieval female voice is evaluated in terms of masculine cause and effect. Accordingly, statements such as, “Whoever exerts control of signification of language and the literary act, is associated with the masculine,” (Dinshaw *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 1) are removed from discussions about feminization and are explored in terms of concrete examples within representational worlds. Situating the female voice within the actual and literary worlds in which it was created authenticates the extent of claims noting the “complexity with which language and literary acts, gender, and power are interrelated” (Dinshaw *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* 9), and it removes the female voice from the trappings of misogynistic attitudes categorized by viewpoints expressed by Albrecht Classen. This study of the represented female voice shows that there are more than, as Classen suggests, two limiting choices regarding female speech. Represented female voices do not consistently embody the “spewing lies” category of female speech; however they do often fall victim to male malignment (Classen 69-70). Moreover, this study does what Classen promised to do but failed to deliver, in that it truly evaluates female voices and not just the men that created them. It shows the complex relationship that exists between the two genders but it remains focused on voice. The female voice, though not quantifiably elusive, remains in the elusive category that Kim Phillips suggests simply due to its male authorship and male influence throughout transmission processes (177). This study builds upon Karras’s identification of masculinities (3) by
similarly acknowledging the many forms of the female voice; it is silence, power, manipulation, strength, cunning, wisdom, and most importantly, never unnecessary. This evaluation of represented female voices furthers current theoretical scholarship and includes the first manuscript collation specific to the female voice to prove said theoretical assumptions.

Elaine Treharne once wrote, “The ultimate powerlessness of the female voice is that, in reality, it does not exist, for this is not a woman speaking here giving voice to the concerns of female experience, it is a male author enacting the role of woman, silencing her” (114). While this cannot be disputed, as most scholars, including Wallace, note that it is impossible to remove the male from the transmission process, the relationship between men and the female voice is explored at a critically nuanced level in order to understand how this relationship affects voice. And largely it is not characterized by the silence Laskaya believes it to be. Though Chaucer indeed removes substantial portions of female speech, as with Ypolita, he contrarily increases the female speeches of Dorigen and Griselda, to character-altering results. It is then impossible to suggest that female silence is the dominant representative quality of Chaucer’s women. And while the man is always present in these representations of female speech, this study suggests that masculine knowledge is impartial and therefore cannot represent the true female voice, only what he believes it to be. As such, men are forced to fill in the gaps of female speech that are exclusive to women. The limits of man’s understanding of the female voice suggests that the female voice, as created by man, can only be a representation of what man believed it should be according to medieval misogynistic tropes and or influences of
the inescapable symbolic structure. Mary Bowman’s claims are in alignment with these beliefs, and she notes the limitations specific to the gender of male authors (241). Though it is a speculative argument, one can only see the female voice as independent from men simply because men could never fully comprehend it. Accordingly, the represented female voice is just that, represented. It cannot be the authentic female voice that Treharne imagines will address “concerns of the female experience.” In this sense, the female voice is indeed elusive.

Though elusive, the represented medieval female voice is identified in select narratives. The female voice is evaluated in terms of household rhetoric and where it intersects with claims of authority and power. In so doing, this study identifies instances where it becomes, as Laskaya points out, mannish and subject to chastisement (40). For instance, Wallace notes that when “the artes have been misapplied” (Chaucerian Polity 5), female speech becomes troublesome. Or to use Alcuin Blamires’s words, it becomes “reckless” (39) by demonstrating what Lee Patterson suggests is indeterminate tongue-wagging (660-661). The female voice then falls into misogynistic pitfalls like those expressed by Classen. Dorigen serves as the ideal example of masculine chastisement upon seeming learned female speech, supporting Lynn Staley’s claims that rationality and logic are specifically associated with male language (Powers of the Holy 253). Yet, female speech often serves to represent the values of male discourse and supports N. S. Thompson’s notion that women can “successfully be included” in masculine and worldly matters (Chaucer, Boccaccio and the Debate of Love 123-124). Staley wisely notes the controversy surrounding such statements in light of how frequently Chaucer toys with
such structures (253). The power of female speech, as examined in this study, also supports claims that suggest that women, Griselda, in particular, can be a masculine and a threatening force in the narrative (Staley “Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity” 254). Such threatening female voices, in turn, prove Serenity Young’s supposition that masculine fears are rooted in beliefs that “women can weaken masculinity and cause it to drift toward femininity” (32). Instead of the female voice being solely considered as a product of male dominance, this study shows that it could at times challenge male dominance and exhibit a power all its own.

This study also seeks to develop concepts first expressed by Lee Patterson, who has famously attempted to view the Wife as a resolution rather than the problem that Susanne Sara Thomas believes her to be. Patterson’s theories are extrapolated in an attempt to suggest that the female voice itself is a solution rather than a problem. This forces scholars to evaluate the female voice in new terms. This study offers these new terms based upon Ferdinand de Saussure’s notions of difference (974), which are then applied to female speech, even female speech created by men. Surprisingly, though this study often challenges Dinshaw’s perspectives, it here aligns with them in her reminder that all speech is only fragmentary (Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics 171-172). This supports the belief that man cannot truly represent the female voice in Treharne’s terms.

In addition to the theoretical aspects, the significance of this study also lies in its inclusion of a textual component. The female voice is tracked through all of its alterations at the hands of men. In agreement with the scholarship of Peter Beidler and David Wallace, among others, this study contends that Chaucer did know the Decameron.
Wallace’s discussions about household rhetoric and the social circumstances of Chaucer, both in England and in Italy (Chaucerian Polity 21), also apply to female speech and help reconcile problems of importance and value as the narrative shifts from Italian to English audiences. Robert R. Edwards also acknowledges this shift in intention (“Rewriting” 231), which is further demonstrated through the changes that Chaucer, and subsequent scribes, made to the female voices in four Italian-sourced narratives. The alterations made to female voices mostly conform to expectations, but at times, the alterations add a new and surprising element to the literary women that scholars have come to know. This is expected as a natural product of altered voices in the transmission process. Peter Shillingsburg discusses this event in terms of the “decoding and re-encoding of symbols in a sign system” (15), while Derek Pearsall views it in terms of “recomposition” (111). And the works of Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, Raymond Clemens, and Timothy Graham show some of the more specific problems of scribal copying, which are also observable in this study.

Moreover, this study presents the first collation of passages specific to female speeches in Chaucer’s works. Though Chaucer manuscripts have been collated, never before has this task been carried out specific to the topic of female voice. The variations from source text to Chaucer’s version to subsequent scribal manuscripts offer irrefutable evidence of the profundity of interconnectivity between masculine forces and female voices. Critical examination also shows that William Coleman’s translations, for one, present yet another means for variation. For example, he translates “pietosa” as “compassionate” rather than “pitiful,” wholly altering perceptions of a female character.
Though editions are not considered in this analysis, variation among editions, as illustrated by the above Coleman translation, proves that represented female voices are still being transformed.

This research topic fills the gap that exists in studies of medieval women, particularly medieval female voices. This study, though it moves the dialogue forward and unveils a new means for understanding the represented female voice, remains partial. The demand for a reevaluation of the represented female voice is long overdue and this study takes up that challenge. However, in order to more fully understand the relationship between men and the female voice, a more thorough examination of Chaucer’s female voices needs to be undertaken. More narratives must be explored, not only narratives of *The Canterbury Tales* with Italian sources. Moreover, one would need to examine each scribe’s manuscript in its entirety to make more significant claims about the scribe’s abilities, though select excerpts can provide useful insight. This may further identify scribal intrusion and can help one better understand instances of variation. And as more scribes are identified, the project could incorporate additional examples of male influence upon a female voice, including, possibly, an evaluation of the scribes themselves. Scribal biographies might lend added information to the nature of their changes. For example, Susan Crane points out that Duxwurth may have created specious text in attempts to correct rhyming mistakes and that he added content for content’s sake (21). Coincidentally, as more scribes are identified, it is possible that a female scribe might also be located. A future project might address the differences female scribes might have upon female voices. One could also examine the gender of the audience and how this
might influence an author to alter the female voice. And finally, a linguistic element would prove incredibly useful in determining qualities of medieval female speech in contrast to medieval male speech. Might there be significant medieval linguistic attributes that shaped female speech created by men?

And though one cannot escape the crux of a study on the medieval female voice (in that it is created by male authors), this study shows that it can be examined in new terms. It engages current scholarship and participates in ongoing discourses related to medieval women, yet it recognizes its limitations. The represented female voice remains complex, often elusive, but it is nonetheless available to scholars for a number of reexaminations. This study tracks the changes made to select female voices, and it evaluates their relationships with masculine influences. Hopefully this study has presented more insight into the complexities of the represented medieval voice than has heretofore existed, highlighting its worthiness as a main rather than marginal topic of interest. Let one hope that this is just the beginning of more extensive research on the subject.
APPENDIX A

MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING

THE CANTERBURY TALES

(BY SCRIBAL IDENTIFICATION)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANUSCRIPT</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
<th>CONTENTS, DATE, MISC.</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Cp, Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198 | John Marchaunt (Scribe D)            | Canterbury Tales 1390-1415  
Dialect: Scribe D, S.W.Mids/Chaucerian |
| Dd, Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.4.24 | Rychard Wytton (Wytton Scribe)       | Canterbury Tales 1390-1420  
Dialect: Chaucerian/Cambs |
| El, San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS El 26 C.9 | Adam Pinkhurst                      | Canterbury Tales 1397-1410  
Dialect: Pinkhurst; Chaucerian |
| Gl, Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1) | Geoffrey Spirling                   | Canterbury Tales (ff1-115); Purgatory of Saint Patrick (ff116-120)  
1476-1477  
Dialect: Norwich |
| Ha\(^{*}\), London, British Library, MS Harley 7334 | John Marchaunt (Scribe D)            | Canterbury Tales 1400-1425  
Dialect: Scribe D;  
Chaucerian/S.W.Mids/Northern |
| Hg, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D | Adam Pinkhurst                      | Canterbury Tales 1395-1415  
Dialect: Pinkhurst; Chaucerian  
Hands: Pinkhurst 2-250; Hoccleve (Hand C) copied additions on 83v, 138v, 150 |
| Ma, Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Eng. 113 | Johannes Brode (John Brode)         | Poem on the death of King Edward IV;  
poem beginning Musyng alone; Latin articles on the Passion; Canterbury Tales (ff6-194); Periculum animarum; a list of the deaths of English Kings from Edward I to the accession of Richard III.  
1483-1485  
Dialect: Warwicks |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
<th>Contents, Date, Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Np, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29</td>
<td>More (no first name known)</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales (The Clerk’s Tale); Medicinal Recipes; Sir Beuys of Hampton; Of Seint Alex of Rome; Libeus Disconyus; Sir Isombrase; Griselde; Envoy to Beware of Doublenesse (Lydgate) Dated 1457 by scribe named More.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fonds Anglais 39</td>
<td>John Duxwurth</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales Before 1440 Dialect: No LP; Lincs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 MSS OF UNCERTAIN HANDS (SUGGESTED NAMES OFFERED WITHOUT CONCLUSIVE PROOF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
<th>Contents, Date, Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ha’, London, British Library, MS Harley 7335</td>
<td>Harley 7335 Scribe (This scribe may be Robert Blake)</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1450-1475 Dialect: Chaucerian/W.Essex/W.Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Py, London, Royal College of Physicians, MS 388</td>
<td>Hammond Scribe (This scribe may be John Multon)</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1460-1480 Dialect: Hammond scribe; Standardized/Western/Kentish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra’, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet. 149</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2, Hand 4 may be William Stevens</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1450-1475 Dialect: N.Norfolk Hand 4: 45r-136v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ry’, London, British Library, MS Royal 17 D.XV part 1</td>
<td>Hammond Scribe (aka Hand B Scribe; This scribe may be John Multon)</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales Dialect: Scribe 1: W.Midlands; Scribe 2: Hammond scribe Hand A ff1-166v; Hand B is the Hammond Scribe ff167-301v. Another hand of the 15th century f241-242, plus misc. headings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>Identified by Hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>To, Oxford, Trinity College, MS Arch. 49</td>
<td>Scribe or owner may be John Leche. Mooney suggests unknown.</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1461-1483 Dialect: Surrey On f113 ‘Ryc Leche’ in lower margin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MANUSCRIPT</strong></td>
<td><strong>SCRIBE</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTENTS, DATE, MISC.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad’, London, British Library, MS Additional 5140</td>
<td>Egerton 2864 Scribe, Hand 2 Egerton:</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales; Siege of Thebes 1475-1500 Dialect: LP, 8301; Suffolk Hand 1 (Egerton) copied 2r-229r (line 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D’, Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 32</td>
<td>Delamere Scribe</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales ff20ra-157v 1450-1475 Dialect: LP, 5970; Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ds, Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 24</td>
<td>Devonshire scribe, TCC R.3.3 scribe or slanted hooked g scribe</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales, ff1-274; Lydgate's Life of St Margaret, ff275-282 1450-1475 Dialect: Hooked g scribe, Standardized/Kent This scribe: (1-282)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En’, London, British Library, MS Egerton 2864</td>
<td>Egerton 2864 Scribe, Hand 2 Scribe (may be the same scribe)</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales; Siege of Thebes 1475-1500 Dialect: LP, 8301; Suffolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fi, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 181</td>
<td>Fitzwilliam 181 Scribe</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales, closest textually to Alnwick, Duke of Northumberland MS 455. Before the date of death of Thomas Kent, probable first owner, in 1468-9. “This scribe has a special mark that follows many of his headings in rubric” Dialect: Standardized/Herefords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha², London, British Library MS Harley 1758</td>
<td>Antiquaries 134 Scribe</td>
<td>* The hand is very variable; Manly and Rickert suggest there are three hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He, Princeton, University Library, MS 100</td>
<td>Beryn Scribe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le, Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 29</td>
<td>Petworth Scribe (high g scribe); Lichfield Scribe</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales including Retraction treated as end of Parson’s Tale. 1425-1450 (2 hands in the manuscript; Hand A ff2-196r; Hand B is the Petworth Scribe ff196v-293v; ff1, 93, 125, 206 added by late 16th century hand to make up for lost leaves.) Dialect: Scribe 1, Chaucerian/Standardized; Scribe 2, Petworth scribe, S.W.Worcs/Gloucs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne, Oxford, New College, MS 314</td>
<td>Double-v Scribe (uncertain)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1, Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, MS 455</td>
<td>Beryn scribe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ox², Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation, Oxford MS f. 1084/2</td>
<td>Rylands English 63 Scribe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pw, Petworth, Petworth House, The National Trust MS 7</td>
<td>Hand 1, Petworth Scribe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra³, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet. 223</td>
<td>Devonshire scribe, TCC R.3.3 scribe or slanted hooked g scribe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANUSCRIPT</th>
<th>SCRIBE</th>
<th>CONTENTS, DATE, MISC.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gg, Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg.4.27</td>
<td>CUL Gg. 4.27 scribe, and Hand 2</td>
<td>Chaucer's ABC; Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan; Truth; Praise of Love; De amico ad amicam, Responsio; Troilus and Criseyde (defective); Canterbury Tales (mutilated), with unique version of Prologue; Legend of Good Women; Parlement of Foules; Lydgate's Temple of Glas 1410-1430 Dialect: No LP, Cambs Cul Gg scribe copied all except ff508-510 and 514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha¹, London, British Library, MS Harley 1239</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2, Hand 3, Hand 4 May be the “Hermit Scribe of Greenwich”</td>
<td>Troilus; Canterbury Tales 1450-1475? Dialect: LP 626, Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H², London, British Library, MS Harley 1239</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2, Hand 3, Hand 4 May be “Hermit Scribe of Greenwich”</td>
<td>Troilus and Canterbury Tales 1450-1475? Dialect: LP 626, Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 MSS OF UNKNOWN HANDS</td>
<td>36 MSS OF UNKNOWN HANDS</td>
<td>36 MSS OF UNKNOWN HANDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad², London, British Library, MS Additional 25718</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
<td>Parts of about ten of the Canterbury Tales survive. 1400-1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad³, London, British Library, MS Additional 35286</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1425-1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo¹, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 414</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1450-1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo², Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 686</td>
<td>Hand 1</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales, lacking the prose tales of Melibeus, and Parson and also the tales of Monk, Nun's Priest and Canon's Yeoman. Eleven poems, all by Lydgate. 1425-1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bw, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 20</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1450-1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Manuscript</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch, Oxford, Christ Church</td>
<td>MS 152</td>
<td>Hand 1 is hand for Canterbury Tales; Hand 2 may be Morganus Scribe for Plowman and following parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cn, Austin, University of Texas at Austin</td>
<td>MS 143 (Cardigan)</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En¹, London, British Library</td>
<td>MS Egerton 2726</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha⁰, London, British Library</td>
<td>MS Harley 7333</td>
<td>Hand D, Hand B, Hand C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi⁰, London, British Library</td>
<td>MS Harley 5908</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hk, Holkham, Norfolk Holkham Hall, Collection of the Earl of Leicester</td>
<td>MS 667</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ht, Oxford, Bodleian Library</td>
<td>MS Hatton Donat. 1</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti, Cambridge, University Library</td>
<td>MS Ti.3.26</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La, London, British Library</td>
<td>MS Lansdowne 851</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ld⁰, Oxford, Bodleian Library</td>
<td>MS Laud misc. 600</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ld², Oxford, Bodleian Library</td>
<td>MS Laud misc. 739</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>MS Code</td>
<td>Manuscript Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ll, England, Longleat House</td>
<td>MS 257</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln, Lincoln, Cathedral Library</td>
<td>MS A.4.18 (110)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc, Chicago, University of Chicago Regenstein Library</td>
<td>MS 564</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 21972D</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales: fragment of Nun's Priest's Link and Tale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mg, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library &amp; Museum</td>
<td>MS M 249</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mm, Cambridge, University Library, MS Mm.2.5</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1425-1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph', Austin, University of Texas at Austin The Harry Ransom Center, pre-1700, MS 46</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Two fragments of the Canterbury Tales, twelve folios (part of Pardoner's Tale and Melibeus, with Shipman, Prioress and Thopas; the end of the Parson's Tale with Retraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph', Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer</td>
<td>MS 48</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph', Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum &amp; Library</td>
<td>MS 1084/1</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph', San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS HM 140</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
<td>Clerk's Tale, Anelida and Arcite and Truth. 1450-1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl, New York, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library</td>
<td>MS Plimpton 253</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra', Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet. 141</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1425-1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuscript Code</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra², Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.86</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
<td>Legend of Good Women (fragment in part 3, f113r-119r); Canterbury Tales in part 4 is Clerk's Tale (f156v) and Prioress's Tale (f174v).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ry², London, British Library, MS Royal 18 C.II</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2</td>
<td>Wife of Bath's Prologue is called her Tale; previous link is called her Prologue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden B.14</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si, Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 22</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales 1450-1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si¹, London, British Library, MS Sloane 1685</td>
<td>Hand 1, Hand 2, Hand 3</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales Four tales only, Clerk, Wife of Bath, Friar and Summoner. 1450-1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si², London, British Library, MS Sloane 1686</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Melibee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tc¹, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 3. 3 (532)</td>
<td>Hatton 2 Scribe (Uncertain)</td>
<td>Canterbury Tales (ends incomplete in Parson's Tale). 1450’s by Manly and Rickert; James dates ‘Cent. xv (after 1450), in a good rather current hand’ (2.50).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tc², Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.15 (595)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>ff1-3 16th century tracts; ff3v-4v Prologue to Canterbury Tales (from Thynne's edition); ff5-315 Canterbury Tales; f 316 Piers Plowman's Crede 1485-1550; after 1485 (Seymour and Manly and Rickert). Additions are 16th century.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart compiles information contained in the extant list of manuscripts in the Textual Notes of *The Riverside Chaucer* as well as the online catalog of scribal hands, *Late Medieval English Scribes*. 

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APPENDIX B

MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING

THE CANTERBURY TALES

(ALPHABETICAL)
Ad¹, London, British Library, MS Additional 5140
Ad², London, British Library, MS Additional 25718
Ad³, London, British Library, MS Additional 35286
Bo¹, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 414
Bo², Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 686
Bw, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 20
Ch, Oxford, Christ Church, MS 152
Cn, Austin, University of Texas at Austin, MS 143 (Cardigan)
Cp, Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198
Ct, Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 6709 (Mun. A.4.104)
Dd, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.4.24
D1, Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 32
Ds¹, Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 24
El, San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS El 26 C.9
En¹, London, British Library, MS Egerton 2726
En², London, British Library, MS Egerton 2863
En³, London, British Library, MS Egerton 2864
Fi, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 181
Gg, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Gg.4.27 (l)
Gl, Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1)
Ha¹, London, British Library, MS Harley 1239
Ha², London, British Library, MS Harley 1758
Ha³, London, British Library, MS Harley 7333
Ha⁴, London, British Library, MS Harley 7334
Ha⁵, London, British Library, MS Harley 7335
Hl¹, London, British Library, MS Harley 1704
Hl², London, British Library, MS Harley 2251
Hl³, London, British Library, MS Harley 2382
Hl⁴, London, British Library, MS Harley 5908
He, Princeton, Princeton University Library, MS 100
Hg, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D
Hk, Holkham, Holkham Hall, Collection of the Earl of Leicester, MS 667
Ht, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton Donat. 1
Ii, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Ii.3.26
Kk, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Kk. 1.3, pt.20 (XX)
La, London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 851
Lc, Lichfield, Lichfield Cathedral Library, MS 29
Ld¹, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 600
Ld², Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 739
Ll¹, Longleat House, Marquess of Bath, MS 257
Ln, Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS A.4.18 (110)
Ma, Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Eng. 113
Mc, Chicago, University of Chicago Regenstein Library, MS 564
Me, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 21972D
Mg, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library & Museum, MS M 249
Mm, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.2.5
Ne, Oxford, New College, MS 314
N1, Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, Property of the Duke of Northumberland, MS 455
Np, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29
Ox², Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation, Oxford MS f. 1084/2
Ph¹, Austin, University of Texas at Austin The Harry Ransom Center, MS 46
Ph², Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, MS 48
Ph³, Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum & Library, MS 1084/1
Ph⁴, San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS HM 140
Pl, New York, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS Plimpton 253
Ps, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fonds Anglais 39
Pw, England, Petworth, Petworth House, MS 7
Py, London, Royal College of Physicians, MS 388
Ra¹, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet. 141
Ra², Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet. 149
Ra³, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet. 223
Ra⁴, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.86
Ry¹, London, British Library, MS Royal 17 D.XV part 1
Ry², London, British Library, MS Royal 18 C.II
Se, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden B.14
Si, Tokyo, Takamiya Collection, MS 22
Sl¹, London, British Library, MS Sloane 1685
Sl², London, British Library, MS Sloane 1686
Tc¹, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 3. 3 (532)
Tc², Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.15 (595)
To, Oxford, Trinity College, MS Arch. 49
APPENDIX C

CHART COMPARISON OF

EMILIA’S SPEECH IN TESEIDA WITH

EMELYE’S SPEECH IN THE KNIGHT’S TALE
77. – O dea a cui la terra, il cielo e ’l mare
e’ regni di Pluton son manifesti
qualor ti piace di que’ visitare,
prendi li miei olocausti modesti
in quella forma che io gli so fare;
ben so se’ degna di maggior che questi,
ma qui al più innanzi non sapere
supplisca, dea, lo mio buen volere. –
[...]"

79. e cominciò con rotta voce a dire:
– O casta dea, de’ boschi lustratrice,
la qual ti fai a vergini seguire,
e se’ delle tua ire vengiatrice,
si come Atteon poté sentire,
allora ch’el più giovin che felice,
dalla tua ira ma non dal tuo nervo
percosso, lasso!, si mutò in cervo,

80. odi le voci mie, s’io ne son degna,
e quelle per la tua gran deitate
triforme priego che tu le sostegna;
e se e’ non ti fia difficoltate,
a lor donar perfezion t’ingegna,
se mai ti punse il casto cor pietate
per vergine nessuna che pregasse
o ver che grazia a te adomandasse.

“O chaste godesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,
Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Godesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte cruelly.
Chaste godesse, wel wostow that I
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,
Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thou woost, yet of thy compaignye,
A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe.
Noght wol I knowe compaignye of man.
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and kan,
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so soore,
This grace I preye thee, withoute moore,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two,
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so
That al hir hoote love and hir desir,
And al hir bisy torment, and hir fir
81. Io sono ancora delle tue schiere vergine, assai più atta a la faretra e a' boschi cercar che a piacere per amore a marito; e se s'aretra la tua memoria, bene ancor sapere dei quanto fosse più duro che petra nostro voler contra Venere sciolta, cui più che ragion segue voglia stolta.

82. Per che se 'l mio migliore è che' tuoi cori seguiti ancora vergin giovinetta, attuta gli asprì e focosi vapori, ch'accendono il disio, che si m'affetta, de' giovinetti di me amadori, di cui gioia d'amor ciascuno aspetta; e di lor guerra tra lor metti pace, ché certo molto, e tu il sai, mi dispiace.

83. E se' fatti pur m'hanno riservata a giunonica legge sottostare, tu mi dei certo aver per iscusata, né dei però li miei prieghi schifare; e vedi ch'ad altrui son suggiugata, e quel che i piace, a me convien di fare; dunque m'aiuta e li miei prieghi ascolta, s'io ne son degna, dea, questa volta.

81. I am still of your virginal ranks, much more apt to quiver and through the woods seeking the pleasure of a husband's love, and if your memory goes back, still good to know of how much harder it would be than stone, our desire against Venus dissolved, to whom more than reason follows foolish desire.

82. Because if my best is that your hearts/chorus are still followed by a young virgin, eased the fierce and fiery vapors, that light the desire, that, like this, slices me, from the young lovers of me of which joy of love each of them awaits; and of their war, among them, you put peace, because, certainly a lot, and you know it, I am sorry.

83. And if fates also have reserved me a Junoesque law to abide by, you have to certainly have me excused but you do not have to avoid my prayers with disgust and you can see that I am subjugated to someone else and what I like, it is worth for me to do; therefore it helps me and my prayers are heard, if I am worthy of it, goddess, this time.

Be queynt, or turned in another place. And if so be thou wolt nat do me grace, Or if my destynee be shapen so That I shal nedes have oon of hem two, As sende me hym that moost desireth me. Bihoold, goddesse, of clene chastitee, The bittre teeris that on my chekes falle. Syn thou art mayde and kepere of us alle, My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve, And whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve.” (I.2297-2330)

[Chaucer then creates these new lines:] “What amounteth this, allas? I putte me in thy proteccioun, Dyane, and in thy disposicioun.” (I.2362-2364)
84. Coloro i qua’ per me ne’ ferri aguti
doman non savi s’avilupperanno,
caramente ti priego che gli aiuti;
e’ pianti miei, li quai d’ogni lor danno
per merito d’amor sarien renduti,
ti priego cessi, e fac il loro affanno
volvere in dolce pace o in altra cosa
ch’alla lor fama sia più gloria.

85. E se l’iddii forse hanno già disposto
con eterna parola che e’ sia
da lor seguito ciò c’hanno proposto,
fa che e’ venga nelle braccia mia
colui a cui più col voler m’acosto
e che con più fermezza mi disia,
ché io non so in me stessa nomare,
tanto ciascun piacevole mi pare.

86. E basti a l’altro la vergogna sola,
senza altro danno, d’avermi perduta;
e, se lícita m’è questa parola,
fa che da me, o dea, sia conosciuta
in queste fiamme il cui incenso vola
ta la tua deità, da cui tenuta
sarò; che per Arcita ci si pone
l’una, e l’altra poi per Palemone.

84. Those of which for me are sharp
irons, tomorrow you do not know will
entangle me; dearly, I pray that you help
them; and my tears, they each give
merits of love, will be given back.
I beg you to end and make their
struggles turn into sweet peace or in
another thing that their fame will be
more glorious.

85. And if the gods may already have
decided with eternal words that will be
by them followed what they have
proposed, make it so that he will come
in my arms to whom I more with will
want to get close, and the one that
desires me the most, because I cannot
name it in me, such each enjoyable
looks to me.

86. And enough to the other, only
shame, without a damage to have lost
me. And if this word is allowed to me,
make it so from me, o goddess, be
known in these flames of which incense
flies to your deity, from which I will be
held; that for Arcita we put the one, and
for Palemone the other.
| 87. Almen s’adatterà l’anima trista a men sospir per la parte perdente, e più leggera sosterrà la vista quando il vedrò del teatro fuggente, e la mia volontà, ch’è ora mista, dell’una parte si farà parente; l’altra con più forte animo fuggire vedrà sappiando ciò che dee venire. – | 87. At least it will adapt the sad soul to lessen the sighs for the loser’s side; and lighter will hold the sight when I see of the theater fleeting, and my will, that is now mixed, of the one side it will be joined/related; the other one with stronger state of mind/courage you will see flee, knowing what must come. |
APPENDIX D
MANUSCRIPT COLLATION
FOR THE KNIGHT’S TALE
Ypolita Speech 1 (I.1757) (shared)
MSS: El 19v, Gl 7v, Hg 24r, Ps 10va, Ha⁴ 24r, Cp 25r, Ma 22r, Dd (missing folio)

“Have mercy, Lord, upon us wommen alle!” (I.1757)

I.1757 Have] haue El, Gl, Hg, Ps, Ha⁴; mercy] m(er)c El, Ma, Gl; Lord] lorde Ma, om. Gl; lord Ha⁴; upon] vpon Gl; (mistake on “v” corrected from a “b”) Ha⁴; vp on El, Hg; vppon Ps; us] vs El, Gl, Hg, Ps, Ha⁴; wommen] wom(m)en El, Cp, Ha⁴; (th)is women Ma; women Hg; alle] all Ma, Cp.

Emelye Speech 1 (I.2297-2330)
MSS: Ma 27r-27v, Cp 32v-33r, Gl 11r, Hg 31r, Dd 30r-30v, Ps 13v, El 25r-25v, Ha⁴ 31r-31v

“O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene, (I.2297)
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene, (I.2298)
Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe, (I.2299)
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe (I.2300)
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire, (I.2301)
As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire, (I.2302)
That Attheon aboughte cruelly. (I.2303)
Chaste goddesse, wel wostow th (I.2304)
Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf, (I.2305)
Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf. (I.2306)
I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye, (I.2307)
A mayde, and love huntyng and venerye, (I.2308)
And for to walken in the wodes wilde, (I.2309)
And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe. (I.2310)
Noght wol I knowe compaignye of man. (I.2311)
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and kan, (I.2312)
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee. (I.2313)
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me, (I.2314)
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so soore, (I.2315)
This grace I preye thee, withoute moore, (I.2316)
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two, (I.2317)
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so (I.2318)
That al hir hoote love and hir desir, (I.2319)
And al hir bisy torment, and hir fir (I.2320)
Be queynt, or turned in another place. (I.2321)
And if so be thou wolt nat do me grace, (I.2322)
Or if my destynee be shapen so (I.2323)
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two, (I.2324)
As sende me hym that moost desireth me. (I.2325)
Bihoold, goddesse, of clene chastitie, (I.2326)
The bittre teeris that on my chekes falle. (I.2327)
Syn thou art mayde and kepere of us alle. (I.2328)
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve, (I.2329)
And whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve.” (I.2330)

I.2297 chaste[ chaaast Ps; goddess[ goddess Ma, Gl; goddess Ha4; the] (th)e Ma, Ha4 Cp; wodes[ wodes Cp, Ha4; woodys Ps; grene] greene Cp, Ha4.
I.2298 bothe[ bo(th)e Cp, Ha4; heaven] heuene El, Hg; heuen Cp, Gl; heuyn Ps; heuen Dd, Ha4; and] (and) El, Ma; erthe] er(th)e Cp, Ha4; and] (and) El, Ma; see] marginal note above “see” i.mar(e) Hg; is] it (marginal note “is”); ys Dd; sene] seene Cp, Gl, Hg, Ha4; scene Ps.
I.2299 Queene[ queene Gl; queen Ha4; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Ha4; om. Gl; regne] reigne Ps; derk] derke Ma, dirk Cp; Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe] Queene of Pluto the regne derk and lowe Ps.
I.2300 Goddess[ Goddess Ha4; maydens] maydenes Cp, Gl, Dd, Ha4; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Hg, error on “at” Gl, Ha4; myn] mynd Gl; my Ps; herte] hert Ps, Dd, om. (marginal note “hert” in another hand ) Gl, Ha4; hast] has Ha4; knowe] y knowe Gl.
I.2301 Full] Full Gl; many] of many Ma; mony Ps; yeer] zere Dd; zeer Ha4; and] om. Ha4; woost] wost Cp, Ps, Dd; wostot Gl; Ha4; what] (th)at Ma, Gl; (corrupted “w”) Dd.
I.2302 As] So Ps; keepe] keep(e) El, Hg; kep(e) Gl, Dd; keep Ps, Ha4; fro] from Gl; thy] (th)y Ma; (th)i Cp; thi Ps; (th)e Ha4; vengeau[n]ce] vengeau(n)ce El, Gl, Ps; vengeance Cp; vengans Ha4; and] (and) Dd; and fro Ps; om. Ha4; thyn] (th)yne Ma; (th)in Cp; thyne Gl; (th)e Ps; of (th)ilk Ha4; ire] yre Gl, Ha4; Ire Hg.
I.2303 Attheou] Attheou(n) Hg; Antheo[n] Ps; atheon Ha4; aboughte] aboght Hg; bought Ps, Dd; cruelly] cruelly Hg; full cruelly Gl; trewely Ha4.
I.2304 Chaste[ Chaast Ps; wel] weel Gl; wostow] wost (th)ou Cp. Ha4; woste thou Gl; wost thou Ps; wost thou Dd; that] (th)at El, Ma, Cp, Ha4; (th)i Hg; I] y Ma (adds “love” to read “love (th)at y”).
I.2305 Desire[ desiren Ma; Desyre Cp; ben] been Ma, Hg, Ps; be Gl, Dd; mayden] mayde Cp, Gl; all] all Ma, Cp, Gl; lyf] l(f) Cp, Dd; lyfe Gl (mistake on “f”), Ps; life Ma.
I.2306 nevere] neu(er)e El, Dd; neuer Gl; neu(e)r Hg, Ha4; neuyr Ps; non Ma; wol] wold Ma, Ps; wole Gl; wyld Dd; I] om. Ma; no] om. Ma, Gl, Ps; love] loue El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4; ne] neyther Ma; Ne Ps; wyf] wife Ma; wyf Cp.
I.2307 thow] (th)ou Ma, Cp; (th)ou Dd; thou; zit (th)ou Ha4; Ps; wost] wost well Ma; wost Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha4; wotost Gl; yet] yet yit Ps; zet Dd; thy] (th)i Ma, Ha4; (th)y Cp; thi Ps; compaignye] compaigne Cp; companye Gl, Dd; company Ps, Ha4.
I.2308 mayde] maiden Cp; maide Gl, Dd; mayden Ha4; love] loue El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4; huntynge] hunting Hg; venerye] venerie Cp; ven(e)r(y) Ps; venere Dd; venery Ha4.
I.2309 walken] walk Ma, Gl; walkyn Ps; the] (th)e Ma, Ha4; wodes] woodes Cp, Ha4; woodis Ps; wilde] wild Ps; wyld Dd, wyld H Gl.
I.2310 noght] nat Gl, Dd; nought Cp; not Ps; ben] be Ma, Gl, Ps; been Hg; wyf] wife Ma, Ps; wyfe Gl; and] (and) Dd; with] wi(th) Ma, Cp; w(i)n(h) El; childe] child Ps, Dd; chylde Ha4.
I.2311  Nought] Nought Ps, Dd; nought Cp; Nout Gl; Noweth Ma; Nought Ha4; wol] wolle Ma; wole Gl; wil Ps; I] Y Ma; knowe] know Ma; compagnye] company Ma, Ps, Ha4; compaigne Cp; campanye Dd; of companye Gl.

I.2312  help] helpe Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha4; help(e) El; me] om. Dd; sith] sithe Gl; siththe Cp; sithen Ps; sy(th)nes Ha4; ye] yee Ps; ze Dd, Ha4; may] wol may Ma; and] (and) Ma; or Ps; kan] can Cp, Ps.

I.2313  tho] thou Gl; om. Ha4; thre] (th)ere (th)ere Cp; three Gl; the ire Ps; om. Ha4; formes] fo(r)mes Ps; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Ha4; (tha)t Hg; thou] (th)ou Cp, Ha4; (th)ou Dd; thow Hg; thee] the Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; (th)e Cp, Ha4.

I.2314  Palamon] Palamou Gl; palamon Ps; Palamou(n) Dd; palomon Ha4; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha4; (tha)t Hg; hath] hath(e) Cp, Ha4; swich] suche Gl; soche Ma; such Ps, Ha4; love] loue El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4.

I.2315  eek] eke Ma, Ps, Dd; ek Gl; Arcite] arcyte Ps; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha4; (tha)t Hg; loveth] loueth El, Hg, Dd; loue(h) Ha4; loveth Ma; love(th) Cp; louy)th soore] Ps; sore Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha4.

I.2316  This] thi Ps; grace] gr(ace) Gl; I] y Ma; preye] pray Gl; prey Ps; thee] (th)e Ma, Ha4; the Gl, Ps, Dd; 30w Cp; withoute] with(oute) Ma; with outen Gl; with oute Hg, Dd; without Cp, Ps; with(oute) Ha4; more] more Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd.

I.2317  As] And El, Gl, Ha4; om. Ps; sende] send Ps, Dd; graunt Ma; love] loue El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4; pees] pes Gl, Dd; bitwixe] bytwix Gl; betwix Ps, Ha4; bitwix Dd; two] twoo Gl.

I.2318  turne] torne Cp, Gl, Ha4; turn(e) Hg; awey] a wey Dd, Ha4; hir] here Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha4; her Gl; hertes] hertis Ps; so] soo Ma, Gl.

I.2319  That] (th)at Ma; al] all Cp, Gl; hir] hir(e) El; here Ma, Cp, Dd, Ha4; herte her Gl; there Ps; hooe] hote Ma, Gl, Hg; hoot Ps; hor Dd; love] loue El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4; hir] here Ma, Cp, Dd, Ha4; her Gl; desir] desire Cp, Gl; hoot desire Ps.

I.2320  And] om. Ha4; al] all Ma, Cp, Gl; alle Dd; hir] here Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha4; her Gl; bisy] besy Ma, Cp, Gl, Dd, Ha4; bysy Ps; torment] turment Gl, Ps; (or)mentez Dd; hir] here Ma, Cp, Dd; her Gl, Ps; al here Ha4; fir] fire Ma, Cp, Dd; fyre Gl, Ps, Ha4; fyre Hg.

I.2321  Be] By Gl; queynt] queynte Gl; queynyt Ps; quenched Dd; or] and Hg, Dd; turned] torned Ma, Cp; (or)ned Dd; turnyl Ps; turn onto Gl (marginal note “turnde” in another hand); in] into Ma; to Ps; another] anoder Ma; anoth(e)r Cp, Ha4; an other Gl; an othir Ps; a nother Dd.

I.2322  if] yif Ps; thou] (th)ou Cp, Ha4; (th)ou Dd; thow Gl, Hg; ye Ma; wolt] wol Ma, Ha4; wile Gl, Ps; wyl Dd; nat] not Ma, Cp, Ps; nought Hg; om. Ha4; grace] g(r)ace Cp; no grace El, Ha4.

I.2323  Or] And El; if] yif Ps; my] so be my Gl; destyne] desteny Gl, Dd; destyne Cp, Ha4; destany Ps; shapen] shape Cp; schapid Ha4; I shape Dd; so] soo Ma, Gl.

I.2324  That] (th)at Ma; I] y Ma; shall] shall Gl; schal Ha4; nedes] nedis Ma, Ps; needes Ha4; have] haue El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4; oon] one Gl, Ps; on Dd, Ha4; hem] them Gl; two] twoo Gl.

I.2325  As] And Gl; So Ha4; sende] send Hg; send Dd, Ha4; hym] him Cp, Ha4; hi(m) Dd; that] (tha)t El, Hg; (th)at Ma, Ha4; most] most Cp, Ps, Ha4; desireth] desirith Ps; desire(th) Ha4.
Emelye Speech 2 (I.2362-2364)
MSS: Ma 27v, Cp 33v, Gl 11r, Hg 31v, Dd 30v, Ps 13vb, El 25v, Ha$^4$ 32r

“What amounteeth this, allas? (I.2362)
I putte me in thy proteccioun, (I.2363)
Dyane, and in thy disposicioun.” (I.2364)
APPENDIX E

MANUSCRIPT COLLATION

FOR THE MERCHANT’S TALE
May Speech 1 (IV.1982-1986)
MSS: El 110v, Ma 94r, Hg 147r, Gl 43v, Cp 154, Ps 54v, Dd 114r, Ha4 142v

“Certyne,” thoghte she, “whom that this thyng displease (IV.1982)
I rekke noght, for heere I hym assure (IV.1983)
To love hym best of any creature, (IV.1984)
Though he namoore hadde than his sherte.” (IV.1985)

May Speech 2 (IV.2188-2206)
MSS: El 112v, Ma 96r, Gl 44vb, Hg 149v-150r, Cp 157r, Ps 55v, Dd 116v, Ha4 145v

I have, quod she, a soule for to kepe (IV.2188)
As wel as ye, and also myn honour, (IV.2189)
And of my wythed thilke tendre flour, (IV.2190)
Which that I have assured in youre hond, (IV.2191)
Whan that the preest to yow my body bond; (IV.2192)
Wherfore I wole answere in this manere, (IV.2193)
By the leve of yow, my lord so deere: (IV.2194)
I prey to God that neere dawe the day (IV.2195)
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may, (IV.2196)
If evere I do unto my kyn that shame, (IV.2197)
Or elles I empeyre so my name, (IV.2198)
That I be fals; and if I do that lak, (IV.2199)
Do strepe me and put me in a sak, (IV.2200)
And in the nexte ryver do me drenche. (IV.2201)
I am a gentil womman and no wenche. (IV.2201)
Why speke ye thus? but men been evere untrewen, (IV.2203)
And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe. (IV.2204)
Ye han noon oother contenance, I leeve, (IV.2205)
But speke to us of untrust and reprevee. (IV.2206)
May Speech 3 (IV.2329-2337)

MSS: El 114r, Ma 97r, Gl 45r-45v, Hg 151v, Ps 56r, Dd 118r, Ha 147r, Cp Not Available (NA)

Gan for to syke, and seye, “Allas, my syde! (IV.2329)
Now sire,” quod she, “for aught that may betide, (IV.2330)
I moste han of the peres that I see, (IV.2331)
Or I moot dye, so soore longeth me (IV.2332)
To eten of the smale peres grene. (IV.2333)
Help, for hire love that is of hevene queene! (IV.2334)
I telle you wel, a womman in my plight (IV.2335)
May han to fruyt so greet an appetit (IV.2336)
That she may dyen, but she of it have. (IV.2337)
May Speech 4 (IV.2340-2345)
MSS: El 114r, Ma 97r, Gl 45v, Hg 151v, Ps 56v, Dd 118r, Ha 147v, Cp NA

“Ye, sire, no fors,” quod she; (IV.2340)
“But wolde ye vouche sauf, for Goddes sake, (IV.2341)
The pyrie inwith youre armes for to take, (IV.2342)
For wel I woot that ye mystruste me, (IV.2343)
Thanne sholde I clymbe wel ynogh,” quod she, (IV.2344)
“So I my foot myghte sette upon youre bak.” (IV.2345)

May Speech 5 (IV.2368-2375)
MSS: El 114v, Ma 97v, Gl 45v, Hg 152r, Ps 56va, Dd 118v, Ha 147v, Cp NA

And she anserwe, “Sire, what eyleth yow? (IV.2368)
Have paciencye and reson in youre mynde. (IV.2369)
I have yow holpe on bothe youre eyen blynde. (IV.2370)
Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen, (IV.2371)
As me was taught, to heele with youre eyen, (IV.2372)
Was no thyng bet, to make yow to see. (IV.2383)
Then strugle with a man upon a tree. (IV.2384)
God woot, I dide it in ful good entent." (IV.2385)

IV.2368 she| sche Ha; answere| answerd Ps; answerith Ha; Sire| sir(e) El; Sere Ma;
ser Gl; s(ir) Ps; eyleth| eyleith Ma, Ha; eyleth Ps; yow| yowe Ma; 3ow Dd, Ha.
IV.2369 Have| Haue El, Hg; haue Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha; pacience| paciens Ha; resoun|
resoun(n) El, Dd, Ha; reson Ma, Gl, Hg, Ps; youre| your(e) Gl; your Ps; youre Dd; your
Ha.
IV.2370| have| haue El, Ma, Gl, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha; yow| 3ow Dd, Ha; holpe| holpen Ma, Gl, Ha;
helpid Ps; on| of Ps, Ma; bothe| om. Ma; youre| your(e) Gl, Hg; yo(ur) Ps;
youre Dd; your Ha;
IV.2371 Up| vp El; Vp Ma, Gl, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha; Vppon Ps; peril| p(er)il Hg, (or possibly “p(ar)il” El; perile Dd; parol Ma; perel Gl;
shall| schal Ha; nat| not Ps, Ha;
IV.2372| Thus| Ps; me| was me PS; heele| Helen Ma; helen Dd; hele Gl, Ps, Ha;
with| w(i)t(h) Ma, Gl, Dd; youre| your(e) Hg; yo(ur) Ps; youre Dd; your Ha; eyen| yen
Ha.
IV.2373| Was| Was ther Ps; no thing| no(th)ing Ha; thyng| thing Ps; bet| better Ma, Gl;
bettir Ps; betir Dd; to| for to Dd; Ha; yow| you Ma, Gl; 3ow Dd, Ha; see| se Hg, Dd.
IV.2374| Than| Thanne Gl; (th)en Ma; strugle| struggle Ma; strogle Gl, Dd; stroglyng
Ps; strogle Ha; with| w(i)t(h) El, Ma, Gl; wi(th) Ha; upon| vp on El, Dd, Gl; vpon Ma, Ha;
V.2375 God| god Ps; woot| wote Gl; wot Ps, Dd; di| dede Ma, Gl, Ha; did Ps; it| yt Ps;
ful| full Gl; entent| entente El, Gl, Hg.

May Speech 6 (IV.2380-2383)
MSS: El 114v, Ma 97v, Gl 45v, Hg 152r, Ps 56v, Dd 118v, Ha 148r, Cp NA

“Thanne is,” quod she, “my medicyne fals;” (IV.2380)
For certeynly, if that ye myghte se. (IV.2381)
Ye wolde nat seyn thise wordes unto me. (IV.2382)
Ye han som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte.” (IV.2383)
Ye maze, maze, goode sire,” quod she; (IV.2387)
“This thank have I for I have maad yow see. (IV.2388)
Allas,” quod she, “that evere I was so kynde!” (IV.2389)

May Speech 8 (IV.2396-2410)
MSS: El 114v, Ma 97v-98r, Gl 45v, Hg 152r-152v, Ps 56v, Dd 119r, Ha4 148r, Cp NA

“Ye sire,” quod she, “ye may wene as yow lest. (IV.2396)
But, sire, a man that waketh out of his sleep, (IV.2397)
He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep (IV.2398)
Upon a thyng, ne seen it parfitly, (IV.2399)
Til that he be adawed verrailly. (IV.2400)
Right so a man that longe hath blynd ybe, (IV.2401)
Ne may nat sodeynly so wel yse, (IV.2402)
First whan his sighte is newe come ageyn, (IV.2403)
As he that hath a day or two yseyn. (IV.2404)
Til that youre sighte ysatled be a while, (IV.2405)
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigile. (IV.2406)
Beth war, I prey yow; for by hevene kyng, (IV.2407)
Ful many a man weneth to seen a thyng, (IV.2408)
And it is al another than it semeth. (IV.2409)
He that mysconceyveth, he mysdemeth.” (IV.2410)
IV.2397  sire] ser Ma; s(er) Gl; sir(e) Ps; that] (tha)t El; (th)at Ma, Gl, Ha4; waketh] waketh Ma, Ps, Ha4; sleep] slepe Ma, Gl, Dd; sleep(e) Hg; slee Ha4.

IV.2398  nat] not Ma, Ha4; sodeynly] so sodeynly Ma; sothenly Gl; subitanly Ps; wel] weel Gl; om. Ma, Dd; taken] take Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha4; keep] kepe Ma, Gl, Dd; keep(e) Hg; keepe Ps.

IV.2399  Upon] Vpon El, Ma, Gl, Ha4; Vp on Hg, Dd; Vppon Ps; thyng] thing Ps; (th)ing Ha4; seen] se Ma; see Ps; seyn Dd it] yt Ps; parfitly] so parfitely Ma; so perfectely Ps; so p(er)fitly Dd; p(ar)fitly Hg; parfitly Ha4.

IV.2400  Til] Till Ma; Tyll Gl; that] (tha)t El; (th)at Ma, Gl, Ha4; om. Ps; adawed] awaked Ma, Dd; a dawed Gl; verraily] verrely Gl; verrayly Ps; verrayly Dd, Ha4.

IV.2401  Right] [Righ]t (ms damage) Hg; that] (tha)t El, Ma, Dd; (th)at Gl, Ps, Ha4; longe] long Ma, Gl, Ps, Ha4; hath] ha(th) Ha4; blynde] blynde Gl; ybe] be Ma, Ps; y be Gl; I be Dd, Ha4.

IV.2402  Ne] [N]e (ms damage) Hg; nat] not Ma, Ps, Ha4; nought Dd; sodeynly] sothenly Gl; subitanly Ps; wel] well Ma; weel Gl; yse] see Ma, Gl, Ps; se Dd, Ha4.

IV.2403  First] furst Ps; his] (th)e Gl, Ha4; sighte] sight Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha4; newe come] come new Ma; comyn newe Ps; come] comen Ha4; comyn Dd; ageyn] ageyn Ma, Ha4; a geyn Dd; (“ageyn” added to line in different ink, same hand) Ps.

IV.2404  that] (tha)t El, Hg; (th)at Ma, Gl, Ha4; hath] ha(th) Ha4; or two] om. Ma; two] twyne Dd; yseyn] y seyn Gl; seyn Ps, Dd; I sayn Ha4; seen I sayn Ma.

IV.2405  Til] Till Gl; that] (tha)t Gl, Hg; (th)at Ha4; youre] you(e) Gl; your(e) Hg; youre Dd; your Ha4; sighte] sight Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha4; ysatled] sattld Ps; be satled Dd; be] om. Dd; y stablid Ha4; y stabley shall Gl. Til...while] om. Ma.

IV.2406  Ther] There Dd; (th)er Ha4; sighte] sight Gl, Ps, Dd; yow] you Gl; zow Dd, Ha4; bigile] beguyle Gl; begyylle Ps, Dd; Ther...bigile] om. Ma.

IV.2407  Beth] Be(th) Ha4; Be Ps; Beth war] Bewar Gl; (The)for beth ware Ma; I] om. Ma; prey] prer Gl; pray Hg, Ps, Ha4; prey Dd; om. Ma; yow] you Gl; zow Dd, Ha4; om. Ma; heune] heuene El, Hg, Dd; heuene Ma, Ha4; heuyn Ps; (th)e heuene Gl; kyng] king Ha4.

IV.2408  Full] Full Ma; a] om. Gl, Ha4; weneth] wenyth Ma, Gl, Ps; wenith Ha4; to] for to Gl, Ha4; seen] se Ma, Hg, Ps, Ha4; see Gl; seyn Dd; thyng] thing Gl, Ps; (th)ing Ha4.

IV.2409  And it] That Ps; it] hit Ma; al] all Ma, Gl; another] a no(ther) (th)ing Ma; an other Gl; an othre Ps; ano(ther) Ha4; than] (th)en Ma; (th)anne Gl; (th)an Ha4; it] yt Ps; semeth] semyth Ps.

IV.2410  that] (tha)t El, Gl, Hg; (th)at Ma, Ha4; mysconeyveth] mysconeyueth El, Hg, Ps; mys coneyueth Gl, Dd, Ha4; mysconeyueth Ma; he] om. Ma, Ps, Dd; mysdemeth] mysdemyth Ps; mys demeth Dd, Ha4; he mysdemeth] ofts tyme myt he demeth Gl.
APPENDIX F
MANUSCRIPT COLLATION
FOR THE FRANKLIN'S TALE
She seyde, “Sire, sith of youre gentillesse (V.754)
Ye profre me to have so large a reyne, (V.755)
Ne wolde nevère God bitwixe us twayne, (V.756)
As in my gilt, were outher werre or stryf. (V.757)
Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf —
Have heer my trouthe — til that myn herte breste. (V.759)
loue is a thing as any spireyte free
Wommen, of kynde, desiren libertee, (V.768)
        wommen of kynde desyren libertee
And nat to been constreyn as a thral; (V.769)
        and not to be constreynyd as a thral
And so doon men, if I sooth seyen shal. (V.770)
        Who` O` so doon men.~ yf I sooth sey shal
Looke who that is moost pacient in love, (V.771)
        loke who is most pacient in loue
He is at his avantage al above. (V.772)
        he is at his avauntage al aboue
Pacience is an heigh vertu, certeyn, (V.773)
        pacience is an hygh vertu certayn
For it venquysseth, as thise clerkes seyn, (V.774)
        for yt venquyssith as clerkis sayn
Thynges that rigour sholde nevere atteyne. (V.775)
        things.~ that rigour shuld neuyre atteyn`
For every word men may nat chide or pleyne, (V.776)
        for every word men may not chid (and) pleyн`
Spurious line: for yif thei do yt is but in veyn`
Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I goon, (V.777)
        lernyth to suffre or ellis so mot I gon
Ye shul it lerne, wher so ye wole or noon; (V.778)
        yee shul yt lern whethir yee wil or non
For in this world, certein, ther no wight is (V.779)
        for in this world certeyn no man ther is
That he ne dooth or seith somtyme amys. (V.780)
        that he ne dooth or seith sum tyme amys
Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun, (V.781)
        Ire, seekenesse, or constellacyoun
Wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexiou (V.782)
        Wyne` wo` or chaungyng of complexiou
Causeth ful ofte to doon amys or spaken. (V.783)
        causyn ful ofte to doon amys or speke
On every wrong a man may nat be wreken. (V.784)
        on euery wrong a man may not be wreke
Spurious line: but euery wrong not redressid be
Spurious line: sum what by pacience and not al by cruelte
After the tyme moste be temperaunce (V.785)
        aftir the tyme of most temperaunce
To every wight that kan on governaunce. (V.786)
        to euery wight that can goueraunce
And therfore hath this wise, worthy knyght, (V.787)
        and therfore hath this wurthi wyse knyght
To lyve in ese, suffrance hire bihight, (V.788)
to lyue in ease.~ suffraunce hir behight
And she to hym ful wisly gan to swere (V.790)
and she to hym ful wysely gan swere
That neveere sholde ther be defaute in here. (V.791)
that neuer shulde be found default in here.

Dorigen Speech 2 (V.853-856)
MSS: El 125r, Ma 105v, Hg 155v, Cp 161r, Gl 82r, Ps 58r, Dd 130r, Ha^4 NA

“Allas!” seith she, (V.853)
“Is ther no ship, of so manye as I se, (V.854)
Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn herte (V.855)
Al warisshed of hi his bittre peynes smerte.” (V.856)

V.854  Is]  Ys ther] (th)er Ma, Cp; there Dd; no] noo Gl; ship] ship(e) El, Ma, Hg; schip Cp; shippe Ps; manye] many Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps; se] see Ma.
V.855  Wol] Woll Ma; Wole Cp, Gl; Wil Dd; That wil Ps; bryngen] bryng Ma, Gl; brynge Cp; bring Ps; hom] hoom Ma; home Cp; home my lord] my lord home Gl; Thanne] (th)en Ma, Cp; (th)an Gl, Ps; than(n)e Dd; were] wolde Cp; myn] my Ps; myne Gl; herte] hert Ma, Ps.
V.856  Al] All Ma, Gl; warisshed] warissht Ma; waryssche Cp; werrisshid Ps; his] hise El, Hg, Dd; (th)is Cp; these Gl; my Ps; bittre] bitter Cp; bittyr Ps; smerte] smerr Ps.

Dorigen Speech 3 V(864-894)
MSS: El 125r-125v, Ma 105v-106r, Hg 155v-156r, Cp 161r-161v, Gl 82r, Ps 58r, Dd 130r-130v, Ha^4 NA

“Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce (V.865)
Ledest the world by certein governaunce, (V.866)
In ydel, as men seyn, ye no thyng make. (V.867)
But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake, (V.868)
That semen rather a foul confusion (V.869)
Of werk than any fair creacion (V.870)
Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable, (V.871)
Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable? (V.872)
For by this werk, south, north, ne west ne eest, (V.873)
Ther nys yfostred man, ne bryd, ne beest; (V.874)
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth. (V.875)
Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth? (V.876)
An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde (V.877)
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde, (V.878)
Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk (V.879)
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk. (V.880)
Thanne semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee (V.881)
Toward mankynde; but how thane may it bee (V.882)
That ye swiche meenes make it to destroyen, (V.883)
Whiche meenes do no good, but evere anoyen? (V.884)
I woot wel clerkes wol seyn as hem leste, (V.885)
By argumentz, that al is for the beste, (V.886)
Though I ne kan the causes nat yknowe. (V.887)
But thilke God that made wynd to blowe (V.888)
As kepe my lord! This my conclusion. (V.889)
To clerkes lete I al disputison. (V.890)
But wolde God that alle thise rokkes blake (V.891)
Were sonken into helle for his sake! (V.892)
Thise rokkes sleen myn herte for the feere.” (V.893)

V.865  Eterne] Et(er)ne El; God] god El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Ps; that] (tha)t Ma; (th)at Cp, Gl; thurgh] (th)urgh Ma, Cp, Gl; thy] (th)y Cp; thyne Gl; th] Ps; purueiunce] p(urrueiunce) El; purueiunce Ma, Ps; purueiance Hg; purueiunce Dd; purueyance Gl; puruyance Cp.
V.866  Ledest] ledist Ma; Ledist Ps; (th)e Ma, Cp, Gl; world] worlde Ma; by] bi Ma; certain] ceretyn Hg, Gl, Ps; ertene Ma; governaunce] gou(er)nau(n)ce El; gov(ern)aunce Ma; gou(er)nance Gl; governaunce Ps.
V.867  ydel] idell Ma; ydelnesse Cp; vayn Ps; seyn] seie Ma; seyth Ps; ye]ȝe Cp, Dd; thou Ps; (th)e Gl; no thyng] no(th)yng Ma; thyng] (th)ing Ps; make] did make Ps; make (mistake on “k”) Ma;
V.868  Lord] lord El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps; this] (th)iise Ma; (th)ese Cp, Gl; theise Dd; grisly] grisely Cp, Ps; feendly] fendly Ma, Dd; fendely Gl; and feendly Ps; rokkes] rookis Ma; Rokkes Hg, Gl; rokkis Ps.
V.869  That] (Th)at Gl; semen] semeth Ma; semyn Ps; rather] ra(th)er Cp; foule] Ma, Gl; om. Ps; confusion] confusiou(n) El, Ma, Hg, Gl, Dd; confusio(u)n Cp; a confusioun Ps.
V.870  werk] worke Gl; than] (th)en Cp; (th)anne Gl; fair] fare Gl; faire Gl; creacion] creaciou(n) El, Ma, Hg, Gl; creacio(u)n Ps; creacyoun Ps; creacio(u)n Dd.
V.871  swich] whiche Cp; suche Gl; which Ps; parfit] p(ar)fit El, Hg; p(er)fite Ma; parfyt Cp; p(ar)fite Gl; p(er)fyt Dd; wys] wis Ma; wise Gl; God] god El, Hg, Cp, Gl, Dd; a] om. Ma; a parfit wys God and a stable] O perfecte god and stable Ps.
V.872  Why] Whi Ps; han] haue Ma; has Ps; ye]ȝe Cp, Dd; (th)e Gl; thou Ps; wroght] wrought Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; wrouȝt Cp; this] (th)is Ma, Cp; werk] werke Gl; unresonable] vnresonable El, Hg, Cp; vnresinable Ma; vn resonable Ps, Dd; on resonable Gl.
V.873  by] bi Ma; this] (th)is Ma, Cp, Gl; werk] werke Ma, Cp, Gl; south] South El, Ma, Hg, Gl; north] North El, Ma, Hg, Gl; ne] om. Gl, Dd west] West El, Hg, Gl, Dd; Weste Ma; ne] and Gl; (and) Ma; eest] Eest El; Este Ma, Gl; Est Hg, Dd; ne west ne eest] est and west Cp; est ne weste Ps;
V.874 Ther] There Dd; Ne is ther PS; nys] is Ma; yfostred] foustred Ma; y fostered Gl; fosstrid Ps; I fostered Dd; man] no man Ma; noman Dd; ne] om. Ma, Ps; bryd] brid Ma; birde Gl; briddle Ps; beest] beste Ma, Ps, Gl; best Cp.

V.875 It] Yr Ps; hit Cp; dooth] doth Ma, Hg; do(th) Cp; It dooth] om. Gl; no] Noo Gl; to] as to Ps; wit] witte Ma, Ps, Gl; wit Cp; wytte Dd; annoyeth] annoyeth Cp, Dd.

V.876 See Ps; ye] 3e Cp, Dd; yee Ps; nat] not Ma, Ps; noust Cp; Lord] lord El, Ma, Hg, Gl; lorde Cp; om. Ps; mankynde] mankynd Ps; it] yt Ps; destroyeth] distroieth Ma, Gl; destroye(th) Cp; anoyed (“anoyed” crossed out and corrected to “distroyeth”) Ps.

V.877 An] A Ma; hundred] (hundred) Gl; hundrith Ps; thousand] (thousand) Cp; (thousand) Gl; thousands Dd; bodyes] bodies Ma, Hg, Gl, Ps; mankynde] man kynde Dd.

V.878 Han] haue Ma; Have Gl; Has Ps; rokkes] Rokkes El, Hg; rookis Ma; rokxis Ps; (th)ese rokkes Gl; al] all Ma, Gl; alle Ps; they] (th)et Ma, Gl; (th)ey Cp; thei Ps; nat] not Ma, Ps; naught Cp; nought Dd.

V.879 Which] Whiche Gl; whiche Ps; so] a Cp; fair] faire Ma, Gl, Dd; fayre Ps; om. Cp; part] parte Gl; thy] (th)i Ma; (th)y Cp; (th)is Gl; thi Ps; werk] werke Gl, Ps, Dd.

V.880 That] (th)at Ma; Th(at) Gl; thou] thouw Hg, Dd; (th)ouw Ma, Cp, Gl; it] yt Ps; madest] madist Ps; lyk] y lik Cp; like Gl, Ps, Dd; thyn] (th)yn Ma, Cp; thyne Gl; owene] own Ma; own Hg, Gl, Ps, Dd; hond Cp; merk] merke Gl, Ps, Dd; werk Cp.

V.881 Thanne] Then Ma; Thenne Cp; than Ps; semed] semyd Ps; it] yt Ps; ye] 3e Cp, Dd; thou Ps; hadde] haddis Ps; had Dd; a] om. Ps; greet] grete Ma, Gl; gret Cp, Ps, Dd; chiertee] chiere Cp, Ps; cherye Gl; cherishte Ma; charite Gl.

V.882 mankynde] mankynd Ps; thane] thanne El, Hg; than Ma, Ps; (th)an Cp; (th)anne Gl; than(n)e Dd; may] myght Ps; it] yt Ps; bee] be Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps.

V.883 That] (Th)at Gl; ye] 3e Cp, Dd; om. Ps; swiche] suche Cp; such Ps; swich Dd; (th)anne by suche Gl; meenes] menes Ma, Hg, Dd; menys Cp; meanes Gl; thynges Ps; make] makist Ps; it] yt Ps; destroyen] distroyn Ma, Cp; distroye Gl.

V.884 Whiche] Which Ps, Dd; meenes] menes Hg, Dd; myenes Cp; meanes Gl; do] doo Ma; do(th) Cp; neuer do Ps; evere] eu(ere) Wl, Hg, Dd; ever Ma; euer Cp, Gl; eyer P; annoyen] noyen Ma, annoyn Cp, Dd; anoye Gl.

V.885] woot] wore Ma, Gl; wot Cp, Ps, Dd; wel] well Ma; weel Gl; clerkes] clere Ma; clerakis Ps; wol] woll Ma; woln Cp; wole Gl; wil Ps; wiln Dd; seyn] sey Ma; sayn Cp; lest] list Ma; lyst Ps; lest Dd.

V.886 argumentz] Argumentz El; argument Ma; argumentis Gl; argumentes Ps; argumentz Dd; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps; al] all Gl; al (th)ing Cp; the] (th)e Cp, Gl; beste] best Ma, Ps, Dd.

V.887 Though] (th)ough Ma; (Th)ough Gl, Ps; ne] om. El; kan] can Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; the] (th)e Cp, Gl; causes] causis Ps; nat] nought Dd; om. Ma, Cp, Ps; yknoewe] I knowe Dd; sothly knowe Ma; for so(th)e knowe Cp; therof knowe Ps.

V.888 thilke] (th)ilke Cp, Gl; that Cp; wold Ma; God] god El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; (th)at Hg; wynde] wynde Gl.

V.889 This] (th)is Ma, Cp, Gl; this Hg, Ps; my] is my Ma, Cp, Gl; myn Dd; om. Ps; conclusion] conclusiou(n) El, Ma, Hg, Gl, Dd; conclusio(u)n Cp; is conclusyoun Ps;
Dorigen Speech 4 (V.980-987)
MSS: El 126r, Ma 106v, Hg 157r, Cp 162v-163r, Gl 82v, Ps 58v-59r, Dd 131v, Ha\textsuperscript{4} NA

“Is this youre wyl,” quod she, “and sey ye thus? (V.980)
Nevere erst,” quod she, “ne wiste I what ye mente. (V.981)
But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente, (V.982)
By thilke God that yaf me soule and lyf, (V.983)
Ne shal I nevere been untrewe wyf (V.984)
In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit; (V.985)
I wol been his to whom that I am knyt. (V.986)
Taak this for fynal answere as of me.” (V.987)

V.980 \textit{this}] (th)is Ma, Cp, Gl; \textit{youre} your(e) El, Ps; yo(ure) Ma; 3oure Cp, Dd; \textit{wyl} will Ma; wille Cp; wil Ps; \textit{quod} q(uo)d Ma, Co, Gl, Ps, Dd; \textit{sche} sche Cp; \textit{sey} seye Gl, Dd; \textit{ye} 3e Cp, Dd; yee Ps; \textit{thus} (th)us Ma, Cp.

V.981 \textit{Nevere} neu(er)e El; Neu(er)e Ma, Gl; Neu(ere) Hg, Dd; Neuer Cp; neu(e) Ps; \textit{erst] yerst Ma; \textit{quod} q(uo)d Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; q(uo)d Cp; \textit{sche} sche Cp; ne] om. Ps, Ma; \textit{wiste} wist Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd; \textit{ye} 3e Cp, Dd; yee Ps; \textit{mente} ment Ma, Ps.

V.982 \textit{now] nowe Ma; \textit{Aurelie} Aurely Cp; aurely Ps; \textit{knowe} know Ma, Ps; \textit{youre} 3oure Cp, Dd; your Ps; \textit{entente} entent Ps.

V.983 \textit{thilke} (th)ilke Ma, Cp; \textit{thilk} Gl, Ps; \textit{God} god El, Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; \textit{that} (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; \textit{yaf} yafe Ma; \textit{yaf} Cp,Dd; gaf Gl, Ps; \textit{lyf} lif Ma; lyfe Gl, Ps.

V.984 \textit{shall} shall Ma; schal Cp; \textit{nevere} neu(er)e El, Hg, Dd; neu(ere) Ma; neuer Cp, Gl; neuere Ps; \textit{been} be Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps; \textit{ben} be Ma, Cp, Dd; \textit{unte CWE} vntrewe El, Hg, Cp; \textit{an vntrewe} Ma, Dd; \textit{unte} vntrewe Ps; ontrue Gl; \textit{wyf} wif Ma; \textit{wyfe} Gl; \textit{wyfe} Ps; a \textit{wyf} Hg.

V.985 \textit{word} woord Gl; wurd Ps; \textit{werk} werke Gl; in werk Cp; \textit{have} haue El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Dd; \textit{wit} witt Ma, wyt Hg; witte Gl; \textit{as fer as I have wit} as I am synful wight Ps.

V.986 \textit{wol} woll Ma; wole Cp, Gl; will Ps; \textit{been} be Ma; \textit{ben} be Ma, Dd; \textit{his} hise Gl; \textit{that} (th)at El, Hg; (th)at Ma, Cp; om. Gl, Ps; \textit{knyt} knytt Ma; knytte Gl; plight Ps.

V.987 \textit{Taak} Take Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; \textit{tak} Cp; \textit{this} (th)is Ma, Gl, Cp; \textit{fynal} a finall Ma; \textit{a fynal} Gl; \textit{answere} answer(e) El; answere Ma; answer Gl, Cp; om. Hg; \textit{of} for Gl, Cp;
“Aurelie,” quod she, “by heighe God above, (V.989)
Yet wolde I graunte yow to been youre love, (V.990)
Syn I yow se so pitously complayne. (V.991)
Looke what day that endelong Britayne (V.992)
Ye remoove alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon, (V.993)
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon— (V.994)
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene (V.995)
Of rokkes that ther nys no stoon ysene, (V.996)
Thanne wol I love yow best of any man; (V.997)
Have heer my trouthe, in al that evere I kan.” (V.998)

V.989 Aurelie| Aurely Cp, Ps; quod| q(uo)d Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; she| sche Cp; heighe hei Ma; hihe Cp; high Gl; hygh Ps; heigh Dd; God| god El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; above| aboue El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps; a boue Dd.
V.990 Yet| ȝhit Ma; ȝit Ps; ȝet Dd; wolde| wold Ma; wol Cp; wil Ps; graunte| graunt Ps; grnt (“a” added above) Ma; yow| ȝou Cp; ȝow Dd; youre| your(e) El, Hg, Gl; yowre Cp, Dd; your Ps; love| loue El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd.
V.991 Syn| Sith Ma; Se(th)yns Cp; sithen Ps; Sith (th)at Gl; I yow se| I see you Ma; I se you Gl; I se yow Ps; yow| ȝou Cp; ȝow Dd; so| soo Gl; pitously| petously Gl; complayne| compleyne Ma, Cp, Ps; compleigne Dd.
V.992 Looke| loke Cp; Loke Gl, Dd; that| (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; (th)at Hg; om. Dd; endelong| euer long Ma; endlong Ps; engelond Cp; endelong (added in another hand in the space left blank for the word); Britayne| Breteyne Ma; breteyne Gl, Ps; Britaigne Dd; is Bryteyne Cp.
V.993 Ye| ȝe Cp; ȝe Dd; that yee Ps; that yee Ps; remoeve| remoue El, Hg, Dd; remove Ma, Gl; remoeue Ps; renewe Cp; alle| all Ma, Cp; the| (th)e Cp, Gl; rokkes| Rokkes El, Hg, Dd; rookis Ma; rokis Ps; stoon| ston Cp, Ps, Dd; stone Gl; by| bi Ma; stoon| stone Cp, Ps; ston Dd, PS.
V.994 That| (Th)at Gl; (th)at Cp; they| (th)ei Ma, Gl; thei Ps; (th)ay Cp; ship| ship(e) El, Hg; shipe Ma, Dd; shippe Ps; schip Cp; boot| Boot Hg; boote Gl; bote Ps; bot Dd; goon| goone Gl, gon Ps, Dd.
V.995 seye| seie Ma; say Ps; when| when Ma; ye| ȝe Cp, Dd; yee Ps; han| haue Ma, Gl, Ps; maad| made Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps; mad Dd; the| (th)e Ma; (th)ese Cp; coost| cost Cp, cooste Gl.
V.996 rokkes| Rokkes El, Hg, Dd; rookis Ma; rokis.~ Ps; that| (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; ther| (th)er Cp, Gl; nys| is Ma, Ps; stoon| ston Cp, Ps; ysene| sene Ma; y sene Gl, scene Ps; I sene Dd.
V.997 Thanne [Th]anne Gl; (th)en Ma; (th)an Cp; Than Ps; Than(ne) Dd; woll Ma; wole Gl; wil Ps; love loue El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Ps, Dd; yow you Ma, Gl; ȝou Cp; ȝow Dd.

V.998 Have Haue El, Ma, Hg, Dd, Gl, Ps; haue Cp; heer] here Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps; heere Dd; trouthe] trouth Ma, Gl; (th)rethe Cp; al] all Gl; that] (tha)t El; (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; evere] euere) El; euere Hg; euere Cp; euere Ma, Gl, Ps; kan] can Ma, Cp, Dd, Gl, Ps; Gl and Ps both continue her speech with lines V.1001-1005, then the text is rearranged as follows: lines 1006, 999, 1000, 1007. In these manuscripts, “No, by that Lord,” quod she, “that maked me!” (V.1000) follows these lines in Gl: For weel I wote (th)at neuer it shall by tyde / Let suche foly out of your(e) herte slide / What deynte shuld a man (mistake on the A of man) haue in his lyfe / For to love an other mannes wife / (Th)at hath hir body whan soo (th)at it hym liketh); and in Ps: For wel I wot that yt shal neuer betide / lat such foly out of your(e) hert slide / What dayneth shuld a man haue in his lyfe / For to loue an othir mannes wyfe / That hath hir body whan so euer hym liketh). The above lines are collated with Speech 6.

Dorigen Speech 6 (V.1000-1005)
MSS: El 126v, Ma 107r, Hg 157r-157v, Cp 163r, Gl 83r, Dd 131v, Ps 59r, Ha4 NA

“No, by that Lord,” quod she, “that maked me! (V.1000) For wel I woot that it shal nevere bityd. (V.1001) Lat swiche folies out of youre herte slyde. (V.1002) What deynte sholde a man han in his lyf (V.1003) For to go love another mannes wyf, (V.1004) That hath hir body whan so that hym liketh?” (V.1005)

V.1000 by] bi Ma; that] (th)at Ma, Cp; Lord] lord El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Dd; lorde Gl; quod] q(uod) Ma, Gl; she] sche Cp; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; maked] made Ma, Cp; No...me] no by the lord that made me q(uod) she. In Gl and Ps this line comes after the below speech (V.1001-1005) and is followed by line 1007, “Wo was Aurelie....”

V.1001 For] [For] (ms damage) Hg; well wele Ma; weel Gl; wel Ps; woot] wot Cp, Dd, Ps; wote Gl; that] (th)at El; (th)at Gl; (th)at (th)at Cp; om. Ma; it] yt Ps; shall] schal Cp; shall Gl; never] neuer) e El, Hg, Dd; neuer Cp, Ps; bityde] betide Ma, Ps, Dd; betyde Cp; it shall never bityde] neuer it shall by tyde Gl. Gl and Ps place this line, and the rest of the speech through line 1005, as a part of Speech 5, as noted above.

V.1002 Lat] lete Ma; let Cp; Late Dd; Let Gl; [Lat] (ms damage) Hg; swiche] such Ma, Cp, Ps; swich Dd; suche Gl; folies] folye Cp; foly Gl, Ps; out] om. Ma, Dd; of] fro Ma; from Dd; youre] your(e) El, Gl, Ps; your Cp; ȝoure Dd; herte] hert Ma, Ps; slyde] slide Ma, Dd, Gl, Ps; glyde Cp.

V.1003 deyntee] deynte Ma, Cp, Dd, Gl; dayneth Ps; sholde] shold Ma; schulde Cp; shulde Dd; shuld Gl, Ps; a] a (error, overwritten “a”) Ma; om. Cp; man] man (error on “a”) Gl; have] haue Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps; in] by Cp; om. Hg; lyf] lyfe Gl, Ps.
Dorigen Speech 7 (V.1342-1345)
MSS: El 130r, Ma 109v-110r, Hg 161v, Cp 167v, Gl 84v, Ps 60v, Dd 135v, Ha 4

―Allas,‖ quod she, ―that evere this sholde happe! (V.1342)
For wende I nevere, by possibilitee (V.1343)
That swich a monstre or merveille myghte be! (V.1344)
It is agayns the proces of nature.” (V.1345)

Speech 8 (V.1355-1456)
MSS: El 130r-131v, Ma 110r, Hg 161v-162v-163r, Cp 168r-169v-169r, Gl 84v-85r, Ps 61v-62v, Dd 135v-136v-136v, Ha 4 158v-159r-159v-160r

―Allas,” quod she, “on thee, Fortune, I pleyne, (V.1355)
That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne, (V.1356)
Fro which t’escape woot I no socour, (V.1357)
Save oonly deeth or elles dishonour; (V.1358)
Oon of thise two bihoweth me to chese, (V.1359)
But nathelees, yet have I levere to lese (V.1360)
My lif than of my body to have a shame, (V.1361)
Or knowe myselfen fals, or lese my name; (V.1362)
And with my deth I may be quyt, ywis. (V.1363)
Hath ther nat many a noble wyf er this, (V.1364)
And many a mayde, yslyn his self, alas, (V.1365)
Rather than with hir body doon trespas? (V.1366)
"Yis, certes, lo, thise stories beren witnesse: (V.1367)
Whan thrrity tirauntz, ful of cursednesse, (V.1368)
Hadde slayn Phidon in Athenes atte feste, (V.1369)
They comanded his doghtres for t'areste (V.1370)
And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit, (V.1371)
Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delit, (V.1372)
And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce (V.1373)
Upon the pavement, God yeve hem meschaunce! (V.1374)
For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede, (V.1375)
Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhe, (V.1376)
They privily been stirt into a welle (V.1377)
And dreynyte hemselven, as the bookes telle. (V.1378)
"They of Mecene leete enquere and seke (V.1379)
Of Lacedomye fifty maydens eke, (V.1380)
On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye. (V.1381)
But was ther noon of al that compaignye (V.1382)
That she nas slayn, and with a good entente (V.1383)
Chees rather for to dye than assente (V.1384)
To been oppressed of hir maydenhede. (V.1385)
Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede? (V.1386)
Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristoclides, (V.1387)
That loved a mayden, heet Stymphalides, (V.1388)
Whan that hir fader slayn was on a nyght, (V.1389)
Unto Dianes temple goth she right, (V.1390)
And hente the ymage in hir handes two, (V.1391)
Fro which ymage wolde she nevere go. (V.1392)
No wight ne myghte hir handes of it arace (V.1393)
Til she was slayn, right in the selve place. (V.1394)
"Now sith that maydens hadden swich despit (V.1395)
To been defouled with mannes foul delit, (V.1396)
Wel oghte a wyf rather hirselven slee (V.1397)
Than be defouled, as it thynketh me. (V.1398)
What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf, (V.1399)
That at Cartage biraft heislf hir lyf? (V.1400)
For whan she saugh that Romayne wan the toun, (V.1401)
She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun (V.1402)
Into the fyr and chees rather to dye (V.1403)
Than any Romayn dide hir vileynye. (V.1404)
Hath nat Lucrese yslyn hiself, alas, (V.1405)
At Rome, whan that she oppressed was (V.1406)
Of Tarquyn, for hir thoughte it was a shame (V.1407)
To lyven whan she hadde lost hir name? (V.1408)
The sevene maydens of Milesie also (V.1409) 
Han slayn hemself, for verray drede and wo, (V.1410) 
Rather than folk of Gawle hem sholde oppresse. (V.1411) 
Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse, (V.1412) 
Koude I now telle as touchynge this mateere. (V.1413) 
Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so deere (V.1414) 
Hirsselven slow, and leet hir blood to glyde (V.1415) 
In Habradates woundes depe and wyde, (V.1416) 
And seyde, ‘My body, at the leeste way, (V.1417) 
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.’ (V.1418) 
‘What sholde I mo ensamples heerof sayn, (V.1419) 
Sith that so manye han hemselven slayn (V.1420) 
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be? (V.1421) 
I wol conclude that it is bet for me (V.1422) 
To sleen myself than been defouled thus. (V.1423) 
I wol be trewe unto Arveragus, (V. 1424) 
Or rather sleen myself in som manere, (V.1425) 
As dide Demociones doghter deere (V.1426) 
By cause that she wolde nat defouled be. (V.1427) 
O Cedasus, it is ful greet pitee (V.1428) 
To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas, (V.1429) 
That slowe hemself for swich manere cas.(V.1430) 
As greet a pitee was it, or wel moore, (V.1431) 
The Theban mayden that for Nichanore (V.1432) 
Hirselven slow, right for swich manere wo. (V.1433) 
Another Theban mayden dide right so; (V.1434) 
For oon of Macidonye hadde hire oppressed, (V.1435) 
She with hire deeth hir maydenhede redressed. (V.1436) 
What shal I seye of Nicerates wyster, (V.1437) 
That for swich cas birafte hirsself hir lyf? (V.1438) 
How trewe eek was to Alcebiades (V.1439) 
His love that rather for to dyen chees (V.1440) 
Than for to suffre his body unburryed be. (V.1441) 
Lo, which a wyf was Alceste,” quod she. (V.1442) 
“What seith Omer of goode Penalopee? (V.1443) 
Al Grece knoweth of hire chastitie. (V.1444) 
Pardee of Laodomya is writen thus, (V.1445) 
That whan at Troie was slayn Protheselaus, (V.1446) 
No lenger wolde she lyve after his day. (V.1447) 
The same of noble Porcia telle I may; (V.1448) 
Withoute Brutus koude she nat lyve, (V.1449) 
To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive. (V.1450) 
The parfit wyfhood of Arthemesie (V.1451) 
Honured is thrugh al the Barbarie. (V.1452)
O Teuta, queene, thy wyfly chastitee (V.1453)
To alle wyves may a mirour bee. (V.1454)
The same thyng I seye of Bilyea, (V.1455)
Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.” (V.1456)
V.1368 Whan[ Whenne Gl; thretty] XXX El; XXXti Ma; XXX(ti) Gl; xxx Cp; xxx(ti)
(“ti” superscript) Ps; .xxx. Hg; thretty Dd; (th)retty Ha; tirauntz tiraunts Ma; tyrauntz
Cp; tirauntz Gl; tyrannys Ps; Tyraunte3 Dd; Ha; ful full Gl; cursednesse cursednes Ma;
cursidnesse Ps; cursednes Ha.

V.1369 Hadde] had Ps; Had Dd; Phidon] phydon Cp; phidon Ps; Atthenes] atthenes
Ma, Cp, Ps; Athenes Gl, Dd, Ha; atte] at El, Ma, Gl, Ps; feste] (th)e feste Ma; (th)e fest
Ps; fest Ha; leste Cp. El, Hg, and Dd (with a line linking the gloss to line 1369) include
marginal glosses at this line as follows: El: 30.a Atheniensiu(m) tira(n)ni cu(m)
Phidonem / necassent in co(n)juuiui filias ei(us) virgi(n)es / ad se ve(n)ire iusseru(n)t (et)
scorto(rum) more nu[-] / dari ac sup(er) pauimenta pat(r)i}s sang(u)ne[-] / ne cruentatas
inipudicis gestibus / ludere que paulisp(er) dissimulato do[-] / lore cu(m) timulentes
co(n)juuius c(er)nerent / quasi ad requisita natura egredien[-] / tes inuiucem se
complex(er)e p(re)cipitae[-] / runt in puteu(m) vt virginitatem / morte seruarent. Hg:
30.a Atheniensiu(m) tira(n)ni [cum Phidonem] / necassent in co(n)juuiui filias eius virgi-
/ nes ad se ve(n)ire iusseru(n)t (et) s(cortorum mo-) / re nudari ac sup(er) pauimenta
[patris] / sang(u)ne cruentatas inipudicis ge(stibus) / ludere que paulisp(er) dissimulato
[do-lo-] / re cu(m) timulentes co(n)juuius c(er)nerent / quasi ad requisita natura
egredien[-] / tes inuiucem se co(m)pexe p(re)cipitauer[unt] / in puteu(m) vt
v(i)ginitatem(m) / morte su(e)are[n](t)]t. Dd: 30.a Atheniensiu(m) tira(n)ni cu(m) Phi[-]
donem necassent in conuiuo / filias eius virgines ad se veni[-] / re iusseru(n)t (et)
scorto(rum) more / nudari ac sup(er) pauimenta / patris sang(u)ne cruentatas in[-]
puducis gestibus ludere que / paulisp(er) dissimulato dolore cum / temulentes conuius-
cernerent / quasi ad requisita nat(ur)e egredien[-] / entes inuiucem se complexere /
precipitaueru(n)t in puteu(m) vt / virginitatem(m) morte seruarent)

V.1370 They] (th)ei Ma; (th)e Cp; thei Ps; Thay Ha; comanded] commanded co(n)maund Ha, Cp,
Gl, Dd, Ha; comanded Ma; comandid Ps; doghtres] doubtres Ma; doghtren Hg;
dou(t)res Cp; doughtren Gl, Dd; doughtris Ps; dougtres H; t’areste] tarest El; to
arest Ma, Cp; to arreste Gl; to arre(st) Ps, Ha; for t’areste] fort arreste Dd.

V.1371 bryngen] bryng Ma, Ps; bifonn] bifor Ma; byfon Cp; to forne Gl; before Ps;
hem] hym Ps; hi(m) Dd; despit Ma, Gl; disyp Ct.

V.1372 Al] All Ma, Gl; And Ha; naked] nakid Ps; fulfile] fulfill Ma; hir] here Ma, Cp,
Ps, Dd; her Gl, Ha; foul] fowl Ma; foule Cp, Gl; delit] delite Ma, Gl; deylt Cp, Ha;
delye Ps.

V.1373 And] om. Ha; in] In Ha; hir] here Ma, Cp, Dd; her Gl, Ha; hire Ps; fadres]
fa(th)er(s) Ma; fadris Ps; blood] blode Ma; blod Cp, Dd; they] (th)ei Ma, Ps; (th)ey Cp,
Ha; made] mad Dd; hem] he(m) Dd; da(u)nce Ps.

V.1374 Upon] Vpon El, Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha; Vp on Hg, Dd; vpon Ps; the] (th)e Ma, Cp,
Ha, Gl; om. Dd; pavement] pauement El, Ma, Hg, Dd; paument Gl Ps, Ha; pament
Cp; God] god El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha; yeve] yeve El, Hg; yewe Cp, Dd; Ha;
yef Gl; gys Ps; hem] he(m) Ma; Dd; meschaunce] mysch(s)au(n)ce Ma; myschau(n)ce Gl, Dd;
myschaunce Ps.

V.1375 which] whiche Cp, Gl, Ps; thise] (th)ise Ma; (th)ese Cp, Gl, Ha; theise Dd;
wofull] wofull Gl; woofull Dd; maydens] maydenes Ma, Dd; maidens Gl; ful] full Gl; ful
of] out of Ps.
V.1376 Rather] Ra(th)er Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; Rathere Dd; rathir Ps; than] (th)en Cp; (th)anne Gl; (th)an Ha⁴; they] (th)e(i) Ma, Gl; (th)ey Cp, Ha⁴; thei Ps; wolde] wold Ma, Dd; shuld Ps; hir] here Ma, Cp, Dd; her Ps; Ha³; (th)er Gl.

V.1377 They] (Th)ay Cp; thei Ps; prively] p(ri)uely El; pryuely Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; previly Ma; priuely Ha⁴; been] ben Cp, Dd, Ha⁴; stert] steri Ma, Ps, Ha⁴; sterte Gl; into] in to El, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴.

V.1378 dreyn[te] dreyn[te] Ma, Dd; drowned Gl; drenchid Ps; drenched Ha⁴; hemselven] hem seluen El, Hg, Dd; hem selue Cp; hem sile Ma; hem self Ma; hem self Ps; hemselfen Ha⁴; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; om. Ps; bookes] book Ma; bokes Hg, Gl; bookis Ps; telle] doth vs tell Ma. Ps includes an intertextual gloss at this line as follows:

V.1379 They] thei Ps; Mecene] Messene Ma; mesue Cp; messen Ps; leete] lete Ma, Cp, Gl, Dd; leet Ps, Ha⁴; Ha⁴; enquire] enquire Ma, Gl; seke] seeke Ha⁴. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Cu(m) .50. virg(n)i lacedomoni(um) / Messeni violare temptassent.

V.1380 Lacedomye] lacedemye Cp; lecedomye Gl, Ps; Lacidomye Ha⁴; fifty] L. Cp; fifti Ps; maydens] maidenes Gl; maydens Ps; maydenes Dd; Ha⁴; eke] eke Cp, Ha⁴.

V.1381 whiche] which Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd; they] (th)e(i) Ma, Gl; thei Ps; (th)ey Cp; (th)ay Ha⁴; wolden] wolde Gl, wold Ps; wold haue Ma; don] don Ma, Cp; done Gl; do Ps; hir] here Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd; her Gl, Ha⁴; lecherye] lechery Ma; lecchere Cp; lecherue Gl; lecchere Ps; lecher Dd; lecherie Ha⁴.

V.1382 was ther] ther was Ps; ther] (th)er Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; noon] non Cp, Ps; none Gl; al] all Gl; that] (th)at Gl, Ha⁴; the Ma; compaignye] company Ma, Ps; companye Cp, Gl, Dd, Ha⁴.

V.1383 That] (Th)at Cp, Gl; om. Ha⁴; But Ma; she] sche Cp; om. Ha⁴; nas] was Ma; Was Ha⁴; ne was Gl, Ps; with] wi(t)(h) El, Ma, Gl; wi(th) Cp; wi(th) Ha⁴; a] om. Gl, Ps; good] glad Cp, Gl, Ps; entente] entent Ma, Cp, Ps.

V.1384 Chees] Chese Ma, Ps; Ches Dd; Ha⁴; And chese Gl; rather] ra(th)ir Cp; rathir Ps; ra(th)er Ha⁴; for] om. Ma; dye] die Ma, danye Gl, Dd, Ha⁴; than] then Ma; (th)an Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; assente] to assent Ma, Ps; for to assent Cp; for to assente Gl; to assente Ha⁴.

V.1385 been] ben Cp, Dd, Ha⁴; be Gl; oppressed] opp(re)ssed El, Hg; oppressid Ps; hir] here Ma, Cp, Dd; her Gl; theire Ps.

V.1386 sholde] should Ma; schulde Cp, Ha⁴; shulde Dd; thanne] (th)en Ma; (th)anne Cp; (th)an Ha⁴; than(n)e Dd; than Ps; dye] die Ma, danye Cp; deyen Ha⁴; been] be Ma; ben Cp, Dd, Ha⁴. Why...drede] To deye (th)anne why shuld I drede Gl. Ps includes an intertextual gloss at this line as follows: Cum quinquaginta? virgines lacedo [-] / mor(um) messeni violare temptassent (etc).
V.1387 | Lo] Loo Ma, Hg, Gl; lo Ps; eek] eke Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; the] (th)e Cp, Ha4;  
| tiraunt] Tiraunt Ma, Dd; tyraunt Cp, Ps; Tyranta Ha4; Aristoclydes] Anstoclydes Cp;  
| aristoclydes Ps. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Aristoclydes Orcomeni tirann(us) / adamauit virgine(m) stympalide(m) / que cu(m) p(at)re occiso ad te(m)plu(m) diane (et cetera).

V.1388 | That] (th)at Ma; loved] loued El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Dd; loued Ps; looued Ha4;  
| mayden] mayde Cp, Ps; maide Gl; heet] hight Ma, Hg, Dd; that hight Ps; (th)at hight Cp, Gl; Stymphalides] Symphalides Cp; symphalides Ps; Symphalides Ha4.

V.1389 | that] (th)at Ma, Gl, Ha4; (th)at Hg; hir] here Ma; hir(e) Ps; hire Dd; fader]  
| fa(th)re Ma; fadir Ps; nyght] night Cp, Ha4.

V.1390 | Unto] Vnto El, Hg, Gl, Dd; Vnto Ma, Cp, Ps, Ha4; Dianes] Dyanes Ma, Ha4;  
| dyany Ps; (th)e Dyanes Cp; goth] gooth Hg, Dd; go(th) Ha4; she] sche Ha4, Cp; right]  
| anon right Cp. Dd includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Iouinianum.

V.1391 | And] om. Cp; hente] henti Ma, Ps, Ha4; Hente Cp; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha4;  
| ymage] image Ma; Image Gl; in] with Cp; hir] here Ma; hir(e) Ps; hire Dd; handes]  
| honde Ma, Ha4; handis Ps; armes Cp, Gl; two] twoo Ma, Gl, Dd; tuo Cp, Ha4.

V.1392 | Fro] From Ma; which] whiche Gl; the which Ps; ymage] image Ma; Image Gl;  
| wold] wold Ma, Ps, Dd, Ha4; she] sche Cp, Ha4; nevere] neu(eri) Cp, El, Hg, Dd; neu(re) Ma; neuere Cp, Gl; neuer Ps, Ha4; go] goo Ma, Gl, Dd.

V.1393 | ne] om. Cp, Ps; myghte] might Cp, Ha4; myght Ps, Gl, Dd; hir] hire Dd;  
| handes] handis Ps; honde Ma; it] yt Ps; arace] arase Ma; a race Gl; race Ps; arrace Dd;  
| hir handes of it arace] of hit armes Cp; of hit hir hondes race Ha4. Dd includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Singulas has historias (et) plures / hanc materiam concernentes reci[i] / tat Beatus Ieronimus cont(ram) Iou[-] / inian(um) in p(ri)mo suo libro ca(pitulo) 39. There are three other unreadable lines in another ink and another hand under this marginal latin gloss.

V.1394 | Til] Till Ma, Gl; she] sche Cp, Ha4; right] om. Cp; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Ha4;  
| selve] selue El, Hg, Cp, Dd, Ha4; self Gl, Ps; same Ma. Ps includes an intertextual gloss at this line as follows: Aristoclydes Orcomeni tyrannus adamas[ - ] / uit virginem stympalidem que cum / patre occiso ad templum dyane (et cetera).

V.1395 | sit] sethys Cp; sithe Gl, Dd; sithen Ps; sit(th) Ha4; that] (th)at El, Hg; (th)at Cp, Ha4;  
| (th)e Gl; maydens] maidenes Gl; hadden] had Ma; hadde Cp, Gl, Ha4; hau Ps;  
| swich] such Cp, Ps, Ha4; suche Gl; despit] despite El, Gl; despyte Ps. Hg includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Singulas has historias (et) plures / hanc mat(er)iam concer(nantes reci[tat] / beat(us) leromin(us) cont(ram) Iouin[um]) in p(ri)mo suo libro ca(pitulo). 39. (Note: in El this gloss is added at line 1462, after her speech ends.)

V.1396 | been] ben Cp, Dd, Ha4; be Gl, Ps; defouled] diffould Ps; with] w(i)t(h) Ha4;  
| wit(th) Cp; manes] manes Ma; mannes Ps; ma(n)nes Dd; foun] foule Ma, Gl; delit] deltie Ma, Gl; deylt Cp; deylte Ps.

V.1397 | Wel] Weel Gl; oghte] ought Ma, Dd; aught Cp, Ps, Ha4; out Gl; a] om. Dd; wyf]  
| wife Gl; wyfe Ps; wif Ha4; I wyf Dd; I a wif Ma; rather] ra(th)er Cp; ra(th)er Ps; rather (error on “r” and then lines it out and begins again) Gl; (th)en ra(th)er Ma; hirselven]
hir seluen El, Hg; hiself Cp, Ha⁴; hir self Gl; her self Ps; my seluen Ma, Dd; slee] sle Ma, Hg, Ha⁴; to sle Cp.

V.1398 Than] (th)en Ma; (Th)an Cp; (Th)anne Gl; be] to be Ma, Gl, Ps; ben Cp; defouled] diffoulid Ps; it] om. Cp, Ps; thynketh] thynkith Ma, Ps; (th)enke(th) Cp, Ha⁴.

V.1399 What] (Th)at Cp, Gl; shal] schal Cp, Ha⁴; seyn] sayn Cp; seye Gl; sey Ps; Hasdrubales] hastrubaldes Ma; hasrubales Hg; Hasdrubaldes Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; hasruballys Ps; hasterubales Dd; wyf] wif Ma; wife Gl; wyfe Ps. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Nam hasdrubal vxou capta (et) / incensa vrbe cu(m) se c(er)neret a / Romanis capienda (et cetera).

V.1400 That] (Th)at Gl; Cartage] Kartage Cp; cartage Ps; biraft] biraft Ma; byrafte Cp, Dd; by rafte Gl; bereft Ps; byraft Ha⁴; hiself] hir self El, Hg, Gl, Ha⁴; here self Ma; hire self Ps; hire selue Dd; hir] here Ma; hire Ps, Dd; (th)e Ha⁴; lyf] lif Ma, Dd; life Gl; lyfe Ps; lyf Ha⁴.

V.1401 For] [For] (ms damaged) Hg; om. Ps; what] When (th)at Ps; she] sche Ha⁴; saugh] saw Ma, Dd, Ps; sawh Cp; say Gl; that] (tha)at Ma; (th)at Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; the Ps; Romayns] romayns Gl; Romeyns Dd; wan] wanne Gl; wyne Ps; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Ha⁴; town] town Hg; Toun Dd.

V.1402 She] Sche Cp, Ha⁴; [S]he (ms damage) Hg; took] toke Ma, Gl; hir] here Ma; hire Ps, Dd; alle] all Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; and] (and) Ma; skipte] skipped Gl; skippid Ps; and swept Cp; adoun] adown Hg; a doun Cp, Gl, Ps, Ha⁴.

V.1403 Into] In to El, Hg, Cp, Gl, Dd, Ha⁴; the] (th)e Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; fyr] fire Ma, Gl, Dd; fyr Cp, Ha⁴; fyrre Ps; chees] ches Cp, Dd, Ha⁴; chese Gl, Ps; rather] rathir Ps; rath(e)r Cp, Ha⁴; rathere Dd; dye] die Ma; dye Gl, Dd, Ha⁴; dye Ps.

V.1404 Than] (Th)an Cp; Thenne Gl; (th)en Ma; any] eny Cp, Ha⁴; Romayn] Romeyn Cp; romayn Ha⁴; die] dede Ma; did Cp, Gl; shuld do Ps; hir] hir(e) El, Hg; here Ma; hire Dd, Ps; vileynye] velaye Ma, Dd; vilanye Cp, Gl, Ps; vilanye Ha⁴. Ps includes an intertextual gloss at this line as follows: Nam vxor hasruballis capta (et) accen[-] / sa urbe cartaginis cum se cerneter / a romanis esse capienda (et cetera).

V.1405 Hath] Ha(th) Cp, Ha⁴; nat] nouzt Cp; nought Ha⁴; Lucresse] Lucres Cp; yslayn] slayn Ma, Ha⁴; y slayn Gl, Cp; I slayn Dd; hiself] hir self El, Hg, Cp; hire self Gl; hire self Dd; els hire self (error on “h”) Ma; Hath...allas] did slean hir self for the same caas Ps. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: p(r)mo ponam lucreciam que / violate pudieche noles sup(er)sui[-] / uere macula(m) cop(or)is cruere dele[-] / uit. Ps presents the variant order of lines 1405-1408 as 1407, 1408, 1406, 1405 with the text as follows: Of tarquyne for hir thought yt was a shame / to lyuyn when she had lost hir name / at Rome for she oppressid was / did slean hir self for the same caas.

V.1406 At] Att Ma; at Ps; what] whanne Ha⁴; (th)e Cp; (th)er Gl; om. Ps; that] om. Ma, Dd, Ps; she] sche Cp, Ha⁴; for she Ps; oppres] opp(re)ssed El, Hg; oppressid Ps, Ha⁴.

V.1407 Tarquyn] tarquyne Ps; tarquyn Ha⁴; hir] hir(e) El; here Ma; hire Dd; thoughte] (th)ought Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; thought Ps; it] yt Ps; shame] scheame Cp, Ha⁴. Of...shame] Of Tarquyn whanne (th)at she had lost hir name Gl.

V.1408 lyven] lyven El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴; leven Ma; lyue Cp; what] what Cp; she] sche Ma, Ha⁴; (th)at sche Cp; hadde] had El, Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd; hir] here Ma; hire Cp, Ps, Dd;
To...name] To live for her in anger – it was a shame (scribe left line blank and then “My life than of my body to have a shame” is written in another hand and ink which is then lined out and corrected to “To live for her in anger – it was a shame” by the second hand)

Gl.

V.1409 sev]e sev]e El; dey]n Ps; e] Ha⁴; vi] Ma; Gi; vii] Cp; vij. Hg;

mayden]s Ma; maidens Gl; maydens Ps; maydenes Dd; Miles]ie] melesie Ma;

Milesye Cp; meliste Ps; Melesie Dd; milisie Ha⁴. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Quis valet silencio p(re)terire / vij. Milesias virgines que / Gallor(um) (et cetera).

V.1410 Han] Haue Gl; haue Ps; hem]self] hem self El, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; h(em) silf 

Ma; for] for (scribe begins to write “fi” then corrects himself to “for”) Gl; verr]ay] verrey 

Ma, Dd; om. El, Cp, Gl; and] (and) Ma, Ps; wo] wooma, Gl, Dd; for wo Cp;

V.1411 Rather] Ra(th)er Ma, Ha⁴; Ra(th)ir Cp; than] (th)en Ma; (th)an Ha⁴; (th)anne Gl; folk] folke Cp, Gl; Gaw]le] galewey Ps; gaule Cp; hem] he(m) Ma; hem sholde] schold hem Cp; shuld hem Gl; shuld (th)em Ps; sholde] shulde Dd; schulde Ha⁴;

oppress] opp(ress)se El, Hg, Cp, Ps;

V.1412 Mo] Moo Gl, Dd; then Ma; (th)en Cp; (th)anne Gl; thanne Dd; (th)an Ha⁴;

thousand] thowsand Ma; (th)ousend Cp; (thousand) Ps; (th)ousand Ha⁴; stories]

histories Ps; I y Ma; gesse] ges Ma; guese Gl.

V.1413 Koude] Couth Ma; couth Ps; Cou(th)e Cp, Ha⁴; Cowde Gl; Coude Dd; I] y Ma;

now tell] telle now Gl; tell] tell Ma; touchynge] touchinge Cp; touching Ha⁴; this] thus 

(error on “u”) Ma; (th)is Cp, Ha⁴; mateere] matere Ma, Hg, Cp, Dd; matier Gl; matiere 

Ha⁴.

V.1414 Whan] Whanne Gl; Habradate] habradate El; habradace Hg, Ps, Ha⁴;

habradas Cp; habradade Gl; slay]n slayn Ma; slayn. ~ Ps; wyf] wife Gl; wyfe Ps; wif Ha⁴;

deer] dere Ma, Cp, Gl; deer(e) Hg. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Senapho in Ciri maioris scribit / infancia occiso habradate (et cetera).

V.1415 Hir] seluen El, Ha⁴; hir seluen Hg; hir selfe Ma; Hire self Cp; Hir silf 

Gl; hir(e) self Ps; Hire seluen Dd; slow] slowe Ma; slough Cp, Ha⁴; she slough Ps; and] 

(and) Ma; leet] lete Ma, Gl; let Cp; hir] here Ma; hire Dd; (th)e Ps; blood] blode Ma; to] 

om. Ps; glyde] glide Ma, Ps, Gl, Dd; blood to glyde] blood to blode glide Gl.

V.1416 In] om. Gl; Habradat] es habradates El, Ma; habradases Cp, Ha⁴; Habadraces 

Gl; habradasis Dd; woundes] wounde Ma; woundis Ps; de] dage] dage Ps, Ha⁴; brode Cp;

V.1417 And] and (space left blank and “and” is written in the second hand that corrected the above lines) Gl; seye] saide (error on “e”) Ma; sai]d Ps; seide Dd; sende Gl; at] att 

Ma; atte Dd, Ha⁴; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Gl, (added with carets after “atte”) Dd; leeste] leest 

Ma, Ps; leste Cp, Dd, Ha⁴, (“l” is written in the second hand over another erroneous letter) Gl; way] waye Gl; weye Dd.

V.1418 Ther] (Th)er Cp; om. Ma, Ps; shal] Shal Ma, Ps; schal Cp, Ha⁴; shall Gl; wight] wight Dd; man Ps; defou]len] diffoule Ps; defoule it Cp; defoule me Gl; if] if (th)at Ma, 

Cp; yif (th)at Ps; I] y Ma; may] maye Dd.
V.1419 sholde] shold Ma; schulde Cp; schuld Dd; schold Ha⁴; shuld Gl, Ps; mo] moo Ma, Dd; more Gl; ensamples] examamples Gl; heerof] her of Ma, Hg, Ha⁴; here of Gl, Dd; sayn] seyn Ma, Ps.

V.1420 Sith] Si(th)en Cp, Ha⁴; sithen Ps; Sith Dd; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl; om. Ha⁴; so] soo Gl; manye] many Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Ha⁴; han] haue Ma, Gl, Ps; hemselven] hem seluen El, Hg, Dd; hemselue Cp; hemseluen Ha⁴; hem self Ps, (writes “s” in error and then writes “hem self”) Gl; he(m) silf (“m” added above due to error) Ma.

V.1421 Wel] Well Ma; rather] ra(th)er Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; rathire Ps; rathere Dd; than] then Ma; (th)an Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; they] (th)ei Ma; thei Ps; (th)ey Cp, Ha⁴; wolde] wold Ma; wolde defouled] diffouled wold Ps.

V.1422 wol] wold Ma; that] (tha)t Ma, Ha⁴; what Cp; it] yt Ps; om. Cp; bet] beste Ma; best Cp; Ps, Ha⁴; l...me] om. Gl. Gl omits lines 1422-1427 due to likely eyeskip caused by “defouled” which appears in line 1421 and 1427.

V.1423 sleen] sleek Ma; sle Ps; slen Ha⁴; myself] my self El, Hg, Ps, Dd; my self Ma; than] (th)en Ma; (than) Ha⁴; been] be Ma, Ha⁴; defouled] diffouled Ps; thus] (th)us Ma.

To... thus] om. Cp, Gl.

V.1424 wol] wold Ma; wil Ps; unto] vn to El, Hg, Dd; vnto Ma, Ps, Ha⁴; Arveragus] Arureragus El, Ma, Hg, Dd; arureragus Ps; Aruegarus Ha⁴. l... Arveragus] om. Cp, Gl.

V.1425 Or] O(th)ir Cp; rather] ra(th)er Ma, Cp; rathire(e) Ps; sleen] sle Ma, Hg, Cp, Ps, Ha⁴; sle Cp, Ps, Dd; myself] my self El, Hg, Ps, Dd; my self Ma; som] sum Ps; manere] mane(r) Ma. Or...manere] om. Gl.

V.1426 dide] dede Ma; did Ps; ded Ha⁴; om. Cp; Demociones] Democys Ma; Deomcienis Hg; Demonicious Cp; demoscenes Ps; Demoncins Dd; doghter] daughter Ma, Cp, Dd; doughtir Ps; dougter Ha⁴; deere] dere Cp, Dd. As...deere] om. Gl. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Democionis Ariopagitar(um) p(r)nci[-] / pis virgo filia (et cetera).

V.1427 By] be Ps; Bi Ma; that] (tha)t El, Hg; (th)at Ma, Cp; om. Ps; she] sche Cp, Ha⁴; wolde] woulde Ma; shuld Ps; nolde Cp; nat] not Ps, Ps; nought Dd, Ha⁴; om. Ma; defouled] diffouled Ps; By...be] om. Gl.

V.1428 Oj] Of Gl; Cedasus] Sedasus Ps; it] yt Ps; ful] full Ma, Gl; greet] grete Ma, Gl; greet Hg, Cp, Ps, Ha⁴; pitee] pite Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Ha⁴. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Quo ore laudande sunt Cedas[-] / sij filie (et cetera).

V.1429 reden] rede Ma, Gl, Ps; thy] (th)i Ma; (th)i Cp; thi Ps; thyn Dd; (th)y Ha⁴; doghtren] doughtres Ma; doughten Cp, Gl, Dd; doughter Ps; doughteran Ha⁴; deyde] deide Ma; deyde Cp; dide Gl; dyed Ps, Ha⁴; deyeden Dd.

V.1430 That] (Th)at Cp; (th)at Ma; slowe] slough Ma, Ps; slowgh Gl; slown Dd; hemself] hem self El, Hg; he(m) self Ha⁴; hem silf Ma; hem seluen Gl; hir(e) self Ps; swich] such Ma, Ps; suche Gl, Dd, Ha⁴; manere] mane(r) Ma; maner Hg, Cp, Ps, Ha⁴; a maner Gl; caas] caas Cp, Ps, Ha⁴.

V.1431 As] A Gl; Als Ps; greet] grete Ma, Gl; gret Ps, Cp, Ha⁴; a] om. Ps; a pitee] appetyt Cp; pitee] pite Ma, Gl, Ps; it] itt Ma; yt Ps; wel] weel Gl; om. Cp; els Ma; moore] more Ma, Ps, Dd Ha⁴.

V.1432 The] (th) Ma; Theban] Thebens Gl; mayden] maiden Ma; maide Gl; mayde Ps; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; Nichanore] Nichanoore Ma; Nychanore Hg, Ps;
Nichamore Dd; nichonore Ha⁴; Nichasore Cp; myghty amore Gl. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Nichanor victis Thebis vnuis capti(u)e virginis amore sup(er)at(us) (est).

V.1433 Hirselen] Hir selue El, Hg, Ha⁴; hir selfe Ma; Hir self Gl; hir self Ps; Hire selue Dd; slow slough Ma, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴; right om. Ps; swich such Ma, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴; suche Gl; manere mane(r) Ma; maner Gl, Ps, Ha⁴; wo woo Ma, Dd; of wo Ps. Hirselen...wo] om. Cp.

V.1434 Another] A no(th)er Ma; An other Gl, Dd; Ano(th)er Ha⁴; And an othre Ps; Theban] theban Ps; mayden] maiden Ma; maide Gl; maybe Ps; dide] did Ps, Dd; dede Ha⁴; so] soo Ma, Gl; Another...so] om. Cp. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Narrant scriptores Grecie (et) alia(m) / Thebanam virginem (et cetera).

V.1435 oon] on Cp; one Gl, Ps; Macidonye] Macedonie (“~” above “n”) Ma; Macedoigne Hg; Macedoine Cp, Dd; Macedony Gl; macedony Ps; macidone Ha⁴; hadde] had Ma, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴; hire] hir(e) El, Hg, Ps; hir Gl, Ha⁴; here Ma; oppressed] opp(re)ssed El, Ma, Hg, Cp; oppressid Ps. Cp transposes this line with a variant of line 1436 so that 1435 comes after “Hire had wedded and ydressed.”

V.1436 She] Sche Ha⁴; with] w(i)th(h) Ma, Hg; hire] hir(e) El, Ps; here Ma; hir Gl, Gl; death] deth Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; de(th) Ha⁴; owene deeth Hg; hir] hir(e) Ps; hir Dd; maydenhede] maydenhood Ma; maydenhod Gl; maydenhod Dd; redressed] redressid Ps; She...redressed] Hire had wedded and ydressed Cp.

V.1437 What] (Th)at Cp; shal] shold Ma; schal Cp, Ha⁴; seye] syen Ma, Ps; sayn Cp, Ha⁴; seyn Dd; Nicerates] Niceratis Ma, Ha⁴; Nyceratis Hg; Nicarates Gl; Nychoratis Ps; Nycerates Dd; Nicharatiffs Cp; wyf] wif Ma, Ha⁴; wife Gl; wyfe Ps. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Quid loquar Nicerat co(n)ju(n) / pie i(m) pacie(n)s i(n)iume viri morte(m) (et cetera).

V.1438 That] (Th)at Cp, Gl; (Th)at Ma; swich] such Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴; suche Gl; cas] caas Ma, Ps, Ha⁴; caas Gl; birafte] berefte Ma; byrafte Cp; byrafte Gl; bereft Ps; byrafte Dd; birafte Ha⁴; hirsle] hir self El, Hg, Cp, Gl, Dd; here silf Ma; hir(e) self Ps; hir] here Ma; hir(e) Ps; lyf] lif Ma; lyfe Gl, Ps.

V.1439 How] Howe Ma; trewe] true Gl; eek] eke Ma, Gl, Dd; eek was] was eek Cp; was eke Ps; to] nto (uncertain reading, could also be “rite” or “cite”) Ha⁴; Alcebiades] alcebiades Ps, Ha⁴. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Alcebiades ille soc(ra)tic(us) vict(us) (et cetera).

V.1440 His] Hise Gl; his Ps; love] loue El, Ma, Hg, Co, Dd, Ha⁴; loue.~ Ps; that] (Th)at Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha⁴; om. El; rather] rathere Dd; om. Cp, Gl, Ps; for] om. Ha⁴; dyen] dien Ma; deyen Cp, Gl; chees] ches Ma, Gl, Ha⁴; cheese Cp; rathir ches Ps.

V.1441 Than] (Th)en Ma; (Th)an Cp; (Th)anne Gl; suffre] suffren Cp; unburied] vnburried El, Hg, Ps; vnburried Ma, Ha⁴; vmbreyde Cp; on beried Gl; vnberied Dd.

V.1442 Lo] loo Ma; Loo Gl, Dd; loke Ps; which] whiche Gl; such Ps; a] a (added in with caret) Gl; wyf] wif Ma; wif Gl, Ha⁴; wyfe Ps; Alceste] Alcestem Cp; Alcesten Gl; alcesten Ps; quod] q(ui)l Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; she] sche Cp, Ha⁴. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Alcesten fabule feru(n)t p(ro) marito / Adameto sponte defuncta(m) et / Penolpes pudicia Om(er)i carme(n) (est).
V.1443 seith] saith( th) Ha; om. Hg, Cp; Omer] Omere Ma, Ps, Dd; Omer Hg; Omore Cp; good] good Cp, Ps, Ha; Penaloopee] Penoloope Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha; penoloepe Ps; Penelopee Dd.

V.1444 All] All Ma, Gl; Grece] grece Ps; knoweth] knowith Ma; knowe(th) Cp, Ha; knewe Ps; hire] hir(e) El, Ps; here] Ma; hir Hg, Cp, Gl, Ha; chastitee] chastitee Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha.

V.1445 Pardee] P(er)de Ma, Dd; P(ar)deee Hg, Cp; Parde Gl, Ps; Par di Ha; Laedomya] Lacedomya El; lacedomia Ps; Laedomia Ma, Dd; Leodomia Cp; Leodomea Gl; is] thei Ps; written] wirotyn Ma; write Cp; wriyet Ps, Dd; thus] (th)us Cp, Gl, Ha, (corrected from “this” by scribe) Ma. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Lacedomia quoq(ue) poeta(rum) ore / cantat(ur) occiso apud Troiam / Protheselao (et cetera).

V.1446 That] (th)at Ma; (Th)at Gl; whan] whanne Gl; at] out of Ha; Troy] Troy Ma; troy Ps; Troye Hg, Cp, Ha; slayn] om. Ha; Protheselaus] Protheselauus El, Hg; P(ro)thesolauus Ma; Protheselayus Cp; P(ro)thesolauus Gl; p(ro)theslaus Ps; P(ro)theslauus Ha.

V.1447 lenger] lengger Gl; wolde] nolde Cp; wold Gl, Ps, Dd; wolt Ha; she] sche Cp, Ha; lyve] lyue El, Hg, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha; lev Ma; after] aftir Ma; day] daye Gl.

V.1448 The] (Th)e Gl; Porcia] Porcea Gl; porcia Ps; tell] tellen Gl; telle I] I telle Cp; may] maye Gl. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Porcia sine Bruto viu(ere) non / potuit.

V.1449 Withoute] With oute El, Hg, Dd; with out Ma; without Ps; With(th)oute Cp, Ha; W(i)th(oute) Gl; Brutus] brutus Ps; brutes H; brutous (or possibly “britons” corrected from “bittre” which was lined out by scribe); koude] couth Ma, Ps; couth(e) Cp; coude Gl, Dd; kynde Ha; she] sche Cp, Ha; nat] not Ma, Cp, Ps; myȝt not Ha; lyve] lyue El, Hg, Cp, Dd, Ha; leue Ma; lyf Ps.

V.1450 she] sche Ha; he Cp; hadde] had Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; Ha; hool] holl Ma; hol Cp; holy Ps; hir] here Ma; hir(e) Ps; his Cp; herte] hert Ma, Ps; yive] yeue El, Hg; yeve Ma; jyue Cp; jyue Dd, Ha; gyf Ps; al hool hir herte yive] hir herte all hool y yeve Gl.

V.1451 The] (Th)e Ma; parfit] p(ar)fit El, Hg; p(er)fit Ma; parfyt Cp, Ha; p(er)fecte Gl; p(er)fyte Ps; p(er)fyte Dd; wyfhod] wyfhodd Ma; wyfhood Hg; wyfehode Gl; wyfehod Ps; Arthemesie] Arthenesye Ma, Hg, Dd; Arthemasie Gl; arthemesy Ha; Archemesy Cp. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Arthemiesia quoq(ue) vxor Mauseoli in[-] / sighis pubcijes p(er)hibet(ur) (et cetera).

V.1452 Honoured] honoured Hg, Ha; Honoured Cp, Dd; honourid Ps; is] is out (“out” has periods under the word) Gl; thurgh] (th)urgh Ma; (th)urgh Cp, Gl, Ha; through Ps; thorough Dd; all] all Ma, Gl; alle Ps; the] (Th)e Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha; Barbarie] barbarie Gl; Barbarye Hg, Dd; Barbary Cp; barbay Ps.

V.1453 O] om. Ps; O Teuta] Oteuta (vertical line drawn between “O” and “e”) Cp; Teuta] Theuta Ma, Dd; teuta Gl, Ps; thena (possibly “theua” but not likely as scribe’s u’s tend to take more space than his n’s) Ha; queen] Quene Ma, Dd; queen Cp, Ha; quene Gl; thou queene Ps; thy] (th)i Ma, Cp; thi Ps; (th)y Ha; wyfly] wifly Hg, Ma, Ha; wifely Gl; chastitee] chastitee Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Teuta Illirico(rum) Regina (et cetera).
V.1454 alle [all Ma; wyves] wyues El, Hg, Dd, Ha; wifes Ma; wyfes Cp, Ps; mirour [Mirour El, Hg; myrrour Ma; myrour Cp, Ps, Dd, (error on first “r”) Gl; bee] be Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha.

V.1455 The...Bilyea om. Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl; mirour El, Hg; myrour Ma, Hg, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: M(emorandum) Strato regulus).

V.1456 Of...Valeria om. Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vidi (et) om(n)es pene Barbares ca(pitulo) xxvj° p(ri)mi).

Dorigen Speech 9 (V.1463-1464)
MSS: El 131r, Ma 110v-111r, Hg 163r, Cp 169r, Gl 85r, Ps 61v, Dd 136v, Ha 160r

“Allas,” quod she, “that evere I was born! (V.1463)
Thus have I seyd,” quod she, “thus have I sworn”— (V.1464)

V.1463 quod] q(uo)d Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd; she] sche Ma, Cp, Ha; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha; (tha)r Hg; evere eu(er) El, Hg, Dd; eu(er) Ma; euer Cp, Gl, Ps, Ha; I was] was f Ma, Hg, Cp.

V.1464 Thus] (Th)us Gl; (th)us Cp; have] haue El, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha; seyd] seide Ma, Dd; seid Gl, Ps; sayd Hg; quod] q(uo)d Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; q(uod) Cp; she] sche Hg, Dd; he (gives line to Arveragus) Cp; thus] (th)us Ma, Cp, Gl, Ha; have] haue El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha; sworn] sworne Gl. Cp appears to give the following two lines (1465-1466) to Dorigen. He writes: I told him all as ye han herde bifore / It need(th) nouȝt to rehersen it nomore.

Dorigen Speech 10 (V.1470-1471)
MSS: El 131v, Ma 111r, Hg 163r, Cp 169v, Gl 85r, Ps 61v, Dd 136v, Ha 160r

“Nay, nay,” quod she, “God helpe me so as wys! (V.1470)
This is to muche, and it were Goddes wille.” (V.1471)

V.1470 quod] q(uo)d Ma, Ps, Dd; q(uod) Cp; she] sche Cp, Ha; God] god El, Ma, Hg, Cp, Dd; helpe] help(e) El; help Ma, Hg, Cp, Dd; God helpe me so] so help me god Ps; God helpe me so as wys] god me so rede (and) wis Hg; Nay...wys] om. Gl.

V.1471 This] (th)is Ma; muche] much Ma; meche Cp; mych Ps; moche Hg; it] yt Ps; Goddes] goddes El, Hg, Cp, Ha; goddis Ma, Ps, Dd; wille] will Ma; wylle Dd. Gl gives this line to Arveragus by placing it after lines 1467 and 1468.

Dorigen Speech 11 (V.1512-1513)
MSS: El 131v, Ma 111r, Hg 163v, Cp 170r, Gl 85v, Ps 61v, Ha 160v, Dd NA

“Unto the gardyn, as myn housbonde bad, (V.1512)
My trouthe for to holde—allas, allas!” (V.1513)
V.1512 Unto] Vn to El, Hg, Gl; Vnto Ma, Cp, Ps, Ha⁴; the] (th)e Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; gardyn] gardeyn Gl; myn] my Cp; myne Gl; housbonde] husbond Ma, Gl; housbond Hg, Ha⁴; bad] badde Gl, Ps.
V.1513 My] mi Ma; trouthe] trouth Ma; trou(th)e Cp; trou(th) Ha⁴; holde] hold Ps.
APPENDIX G

MANUSCRIPT COLLATION

FOR THE CLERK’S TALE
Griselda Speech 1 (IV.281-287)

MSS: Ma 78v, Gl, 104v, Cp 132r, El 91r, Hg 177v, Ps 32v, Dd 95v, Ha^4 120r, Np, 123r

She thoghte, “I wole with other maydens stonde, (IV.281)
That been my felawes, in oure dore and se (IV.282)
The markysesse, and therefor wol I fonde (IV.283)
To doon at hoom, as soone as it may be, (IV.284)
The labour which that longeth unto me, (IV.285)
And thanne I may at leyser hir biholde, (IV.286)
If she this wyu unto the castel holde.” (IV.281-287)

IV.281  She] Sche Ma, Cp, Ha^4; thoght[e] (th)ought Cp; sayd Ha^4; thoght[e I wole] thought she wold Ps; (th)ought sche wold Ma; I] y Np; wole wille Cp; wyl Dd; wolle Np; wol Ha^3; with w(e)th Ma, Hg; wi(th) Cp; other[e] o(th)ere Ma; o(th)ere Cp; other Ps; o(th)ere Ha^3; oth[e]r Np; maydens] maydenes Ma, Ha^2, Dd; maydeyns Ps; maidens Np; stonde] stond Ps; stond (error on “st”) Dd. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vt expeditis curis alijs ad vid[endu(m)] / d(omi)ni sui sponsam cum / puellis comitib(us) p(ro)pararet. Dd includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vt expedit(is) curis alijs ad vid[endu(m)] / d(omi)ni sui sponsam cum puellis [coni-] tibus parpararet.

IV.282  That] (that) Cp; been] be Gl; ben Cp, Dd, Ha^4; bene Np; my] mi Np; myne Dd; felawes] felowes Ma; felowis Np; in] and in Ps; our] our Ps; ou(re) Gl; and] om. Ps; se] see Ma, Ha^3; and se] (and se) (ms mold damage) Gl. Ma includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vt ex(tp)es cure alijs ad / videndu(m) d(o)m(ini) sui / sponsam cu(m) puellis comitib(us) p(ro)pararet. v.et.cetera. Hg includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vt expedit(is) curis alijs ad / visendu(m) d(omi)ni sui sponsam / cu(m) puellis comitib(us) p(ro)pararet.

IV.283  markysesse] marquis Ma; markys Gl; marquisesse Cp; Markisse Hg; marquys Ha^4; markisesse Np; markis wyfe Ps; therfore] (th)(er)for Ma; th(er)fore Cp; (th)erfore Ps; (th)(er)fore Ha^4; ther fore Np; wol] wolle Ma; wil Ps; wolle Np; I] y Np; fonde] fond Ps, Np; I fonde] (I fonde) (ms mold damage) Gl.

IV.284  To] to Np; doon] do Dd, Cp; don Ps, Ha^4; done Gl; be Ma; haue done Np; hoom] home Ps, Gl, Np; hom Dd, Ha^4; as] als Gl, Ps; soone] some Ma, Cp, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np; it] yt Ps; hit Np; be] bee Ps.

IV.285  The] (th)e Ma, Cp; labour] laboure Ps, Np; which] the whiche Gl, Np; the which Ps; that] (th)at Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Ha^4; (tha) Gl; longeth] longith Ma, Np; longe(th) Cp; unto] vnto Ma, Cp, Ha^4; vn to El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Np; to Gl.

IV.286  thanne] (th)anne Cp, Ha^4; (th)en Ma; than Ps; I] y Np; I may] may I Gl; leyser] leysyr Cp; leysir Ha^4; leisr Np; hir] here Ma; hire Cp, Ps, Dd; it Gl; biholde] beholde Gl, Ps; byholde Dd, Ha^4; bi holde Np.

IV.287  If] Yf Gl, Hg; Yf Ps; Y of Np; And Ha^4; she] sche Cp, Ha^4; he Ma; this] (th)is Ma, Cp; this (“is” added to correct from “the”) Ps; (th)e Ha^4; om. Np; wey] way Ma, Ps, Ha^4, Np; waye Gl; weye Dd; unto] vnto Ma, Ps, Cp; vn to El, Hg, Dd, Np; in to Ha^4; to Gl; the] (th)e Cp, Ha^4; om. Np; castel] castell Ma; castle Gl; Castel Hg; castelle Np; holde] hold Gl, Ps.
Griselda Speech 2 (IV.299)
MSS: Ma 78v, Gl 104v, Cp 132v, El 91r, Hg 177v, Ps 32v, Dd 95v, Ha4 120v, Np 123r

Answerde, “Lord, he is al reyde heere.” (IV.299)

**IV.299 Answerde** Answered Gl; *answerd* Ps; Seyde Ma; Sayde Ha4; **Lord** lorde Ma; lord Hg, Ps; **all** all Gl; **alle** Np, Ma; heere] here Ma, Gl, Np;

Griselda Speech 3 (IV.359-364)
MSS: Ma 79r, Gl 105r, Cp 133r-133v, El 91v, Hg 178v, Ps 33r, Dd 96r, Ha4 121r, Np 125r

She seyd e, “Lord, undigne and unworthy (IV.359) Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede, (IV.360) But as ye wole youreself, right so wol I. (IV.361) And heere I swere that nevere willyngly, (IV.362) In werk ne thought, I nyl yow disobeye, (IV.363) For to be deed, though me were looth to deye.” (IV.364)

**IV.359 She** Sche Ma; sche Cp; *seyde* saide Ma, Gl; *said* Ps, Np; *sayde* Ha4; **Lord** lorde Ma; lord Hg, Ps; *undigne* vn dine Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Ha4, Np; vn dine Dd; **and** or Ma, Cp, Hg; *unworthy* vn wor(th)I Ma; unworthy Gl; vn wor(th)y Cp; vn wor(th)y El, Hg, Dd, Ha4; on worthy Gl; vn wor(th)ty Ps; vn wor(th)ty Np. El includes a marginal gloss at line 358 as follows: Nil ego vnqu(am) sciens ne du(m) faciam / set eciam cogitabo quod contra / animu(m) tuu(m) sit nec tu aliquid / facies et si me mori iusseris quod / moleste feram (et cetera). Hg includes a marginal gloss at line 358 as follows: Nil ego vnqu(am) sciens ne du(m) faciam / set eciam cogitabo quod cont(ra) animu(m) / tuu(m) sit nec tu aliquid facies et si / me mori iusseris quod moleste fera(m). Dd includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Nil ego vnqu(ta)m sciens ne du(m) faciam / set eciam cogitabo quod cont(ra) animu(m) / tuu(m) sit nec tu aliquid facies (et) si / me mori iusseris quod moleste feram.

**IV.360 Am** am Np; **Am I** I am Ma, Hg; I om. Np; to] (th)at Cp; *thilke* thilk Ma, Ha4, Np, Ps; ilke Cp; *om. Gl; honour* hono(ur) Cp; om. Gl; *that* (tha)r El, Hg; (th)at Ma, Cp, Ha4; *that that Gl; ye* ye Cp, Dd, Ha4; yee Ps; *beede* bede Ma, Gl, Cp, Hg, Dd, Ha4, Np.

**IV.361 But** But right Gl, Np; ye] ye Cp, Dd, Ha4; yee Ps; *wole* wolle Ma; wille Cp; wil Ps, Ha4, Np; wol Dd; *right* om. Np, Ps; youreself] yo(ure) s(if) Ma; your(e) self El, Gl, Ps; youreself Cp, Dd; your self Ha4; your self Hg; your silue Np; *wol* wole Gl; wil Np, Ps; I] y Ma. Ma includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Nil ego vnqu(am) nesciens ne / du(m) faciam s(et) (eciam) cogitabo q(uo)d / c(ontra) a(n)im(um) tuu(m) sit n(ec) tu a(liquid) facies / (et) si me mori iusseris quod / moleste feram.

**IV.362 heere** here Ma, Cp, Ha4, Np, Ps; *om. Gl; that* (th)at Ma, Cp, Ha4; *nevere* neu(re) Ma; neuer Gl, Cp, Ps, Ha4, Np; *nevere* El; neu(ere) Hg, Dd; *willyngly* willingly Ps, Np; willyngly Dd; willyngly Ha4.
Griselida Speech 4 (IV.501-511)
MSS: Ma 80v, Gl 106r, Cp 135r-135v, El 93v, Hg 180v, Ps 33v-34r, Dd 97v-98r, Ha 4
123r, Np 128v-129r

She seyde, “Lord, al lyth in youre plesau[n]ce. (IV.501)

My child and I, with hertely obeisaunce, (IV.502)

Been youres al, and ye mowe save or spille (IV.503)

Youre owene thing; werketh after youre wille. (IV.504)

“Ther may no thyng, God so my soule save, (IV.505)

Liken to yow that may displese me; (IV.506)

Ne I desire no thyng for to have, (IV.507)

Ne drede for to leese, save oonly yee. (IV.508)

This wyl is in myn herte, and ay shal be; (IV.509)

No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface, (IV.510)

Ne chaunge my corage to another place.” (IV.511)
Griselda Speech 5 (IV.555-560)
MSS: Ma 81r, Gl 106r, Cp 136r, El 94r, Hg 181v, Ps 34r, Dd 98v, Ha 123v-124r, Np 130v

“Fareweel my child! I shal thee nevere see. (IV.555)
But sith I thee have marked with the croys (IV.556)
Of thilke Fader—blessed moote he be!— (IV.557)
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree, (IV.558)
Thy soule, litel child, I hym bitake, (IV.559)
For this nyght shaltow dyen for my sake.” (IV.560)
“Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde. (IV.567)
“Gooth now,” quod she, “and dooth my lorde heeste; (IV.568)
But o thyng wol I prey yow of youre grace, (IV.569)
That, but my lord forbad yow atte leeste (IV.570)
Burieth this litel body in som place (IV.571)
That beestes ne no briddes it torace.” (IV.572)
“I have,” quod she, “seyd thus, and evere shal, (IV.645)
I wol no thyng, ne nyl no thyng, certayn, (IV.646)
But as yow list, naught greveth me at al (IV.647)
Though that my doughter and my sone be slayn—(IV.648)
At youre comandement, this is to sayn (IV.649)
I have noght had no part of children teweyn (IV.650)
But first siknesse, and after wo and peyne. (IV.651)
“Ye been oure lord; dooth with your owene thyng (IV.652)
Right as yow list, axeth no reed at me; (IV.653)
For as I lefte at hoom al my clothynng, (IV.654)
When I first cam to yow, right so, quod she, (IV.655)
Lefte I my wyl and al my libertee, (IV.656)
And took youre clothynng; wherfore I yow preye, (IV.657)
Dooth youre plesaunce; I wol youre lust obeye. (IV.658)
“And certes, if I hadde prescience (IV.659)
Youre wyl to knowe, er ye youre lust me tolde, (IV.660)
I wolde it doon withouten necligence. (IV.661)
But now I woot your lust, and what ye wolde, (IV.662)
Al your plesance ferme and stable I holde; (IV.663)
For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese, (IV.664)
Right gladly wolde I dyen yow to plese. (IV.665)
“Deth may noght make no comparisoun (IV.666)
Unto youre love.” (IV.667)
Hg, Dd, Np; I wol no thyng, ne nyl no thyng, certayn] I wole desire no thyng certain Gl; I wil no thing do ne no thing clayme Ps.

IV.647 yow] 3ou Cp; 30w Dd, Ha; ye Np; list] liste Ma, Cp; luste Gl; lust Ps; naught] nouȝt Cp; noȝht Hg; not Ps; nought Ha; om. Ma; greveth] greve Ma; greue(th) Cp; greueth El, Hg, Dd, Ha, Np; greuith yt Ps; at] att Ma; om. Cp; al] all Ma; alle Np; naught greveth me at all] it greveth me nat all Gl.

IV.648 Though] (th)ough Ma, Cp; Thogh Hg; (Th)ough Ps; Thoȝ Np; that] (that) Ma, Gl, Eli; (th)at Cp, Ps, Ha; daughter] douter Gl; doghter Hg; doghtre Ps; douzer Np; and] (and) Ma, Dd; slayn] sleyn Ma, Hg; slayne Gl, Cp, Np.

IV.649 At] Atte Ma; youre] yo(ure) Gl; 3oure Cp, Ha; 3oure Dd; comandement] commandement Ma, Gl; commaundement Dd, Np; comaundeme(n)t Cp, Ha; this] (th)is Ma, Cp, Ha; that Dd; sayn] seyn Ma, Hg; seyne Gl; sayne Cp, Ha, Np; slayn Dd.

IV.650 have] haue Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np; noȝht] nouȝt Cp; nat Hg; nought Dd; nought Np; no Ha; nowght (the “t” is much smaller, added in between “nowght” and “had”) Ma; om. Gl, Ps; had] om. Ps; part] parte Gl; (p)ar(t) Ma; children] childes Gl; tho children Ps; tweyne] twayne Ha, Np. Gl writes 651 before 650, which is corrected by the scribe with a red marginal “b” and “a” placed before the lines to indicate sequence.

IV.651 siknesse] sekenes Ma; sikenes Gl; seckness Ps; sykenes Dd; syknes Ha; sikenesse Np; and] (and) Ma; after] afire Ps; aſt(err)er Ha; aſtir Np; wo] woo Ma, Gl, Dd; and] (and) Ma; peyne] peyn Ma; payne Gl, Np. Gl transposes this line with 650. Here noted with the red marginal “b” before the line.

IV.652 Ye] 3e Cp, Dd, Ha; ye Ps; been] be Ma, Ps, Dd; beth Gl; ben Cp, Hg, Ha;oure] ou(ere) Gl; our Mp; my Ma, Dd; lord] lorde Ma; dooth] doth Ma, Ha, Dd; do(th)do with Gl, Ps; with] wi(t)(h) Ma, Hg; wi(th) Cp; your] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ur) Gl; your(e)El, Hg; 3oure Cp, Ha; 3oure Dd; om. Np; owene] owen Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Ha; owen Np; owyn Dd; thyng] thing Ps, Np; (th)ing Cp, Ha.

IV.653 Right] Rigt Cp; yow] you Ma; 3ou Cp; 30w Dd, Ha; list] liste Gl; liste Cp; lust Ma; axeth] askith Ma; asketh(th) Cp; asketh Dd; axith Ha, Np; and ask Gl; and askith Ps; no reed] no thyng Gl; reed] red Ps, Ha; rede Cp; at] of Gl, Hg, Dd, Ha, Np.

IV.654 as] om. Ps; I] om. Np; lefte] lifyte Cp; left Ps, Dd, Ha; hoom] home Gl, Cp, Dd, Np; hom Hg, Ps, Ha; all] all Ma, Gl; clothyngh] clothyng Ma; clo(th)inge Cp; clo(th)ing Ha; clothing Ps; clothynge Dd; clothynge Np.

IV.655 Whan] When Ma, Gl; Whanne Np; I] y Np; first cam] came first Gl; cam] came Ma; come Cp, Ps; com Ha; yow] you Ma, Gl; 3ou Cp; 30w Dd, Ha; quod] q(u)od Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np; quod] quod Cp; she] sche Cp, Ha; shee Np.

IV.656 Left] left Ps; Left Ha; Left I] 1 lefte Gl; I] y Np; wy] will Ma; wil Gl, Ps; wille Cp, Ha Np; wytte Dd; al] all Ma, Gl; om. Dd, Ha; libertee] liberte Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha.

IV.657 took] toke Gl, Dd, Np; tok Cp; youre] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El, Ps; 30ur Cp, Ha; 30ur Dd; clothyngh] clothyng Ma; clo(th)ing Cp, Ha; clothing Ps, Np; clothynge Dd; wherfore] wher for Ha; I] y Np; yow] yowe Ma; 3ou Cp; 30w Dd, Ha; preye] p(re)y Ma; p(ra)ye Cp; p(ra)y Ps; prey Np. Gl ms has mold damage through line 664.
Dooth | Doth Ma, Dd; Do(th) Cp, Ha; D (mold damage) Gl, Np; your Cp; your(e) Hg, Ps; 3oure Dd, Ha; your Gl, Np; plesaunce plesau(n)ce Cp, El; plesance Hg; wil Gl; I y Np; for I Ps; wol woll Ma; wil Ps, Cp; wole Gl; youre 3our Cp; 3oure Dd, Ha; your Np; youre lust yt Ps; it Ma; to it Gl; obeye] obeye Ma, Np.

certes] certis Ps; c(er)tes Hg; if] yef Np, yif Ps; I y Ma, Np; hadde] had Gl, Ps; had had Dd; prescience p(re)science Ma, Gl, Cp, Np. Dd includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Fac sencion tibi placere / quod moriar volens moriar.

Youre] yo(ure) Ma; your(e) El; Yo(ur) Gl; 3oure Cp, Dd; 3our Ha; your Np; ȝuer (corrected above from “to” which is lined out) Ps; wyl] will Ma; wil Gl, Ha, Ps, Np; wille Cp; er] or Ma, Cp, Dd, Ps, Np; ye] 3e Cp, Dd, Ha; or yee Ps; youre] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ure) Gl, Ps; 3oure Dd, Ha; your Np; lust] luste Gl; me] to me Np; tolde] told Ps. Hg includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Fac sencion tibi placere / q(uo)d moriar volens moriar.

Il] Y Np; wolde] woll Ma; wold Ps, Dd, Ha; it] yr Ps; hit Np; doon] done Gl; doon Ps; don Dd; do Cp; withouten] with out Ma, Np; with oute Gl; with(outen) Cp; with outen El, Hg; without Ps; with outen Dd; wi(th)oute Ha; negligence] negligence Dd, Ha.

nowe Ma, Np; I y Np; woote] wote Gl, Np; wot Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha; your] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ur) Gl, Ps; your Cp, Ha; your Dd; your(e) El, Hg; luste Gl; and] (and) Ma; what] whate Np; ye] 3e Cp, Dd, Ha; wolde] wold Gl, Ps.

Al] All Ma, Gl; your] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ur) Gl, Ps; your Np; your(e) El, Hg; your Cp, Ha; your Dd; plesance] plesaunce Ma, Cp, Ps, Ha, Np; luste and plesance ("luste" added above “and” with a caret) Gl; ferme] ferm Hg, Ha; firm Ps; and] (and) Ma; I y Np; holde] hold Ps. El includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Fac sencion tibi placere q(uo)d / moriar volens moriar.

wiste] wist Dd; wist Ps, Ha; I y Np; that] (tha) Ma, Gl, Hg; (th)at Cp, Ha; deeth] deth Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha; de(th) Cp; dethe Np; wolde] wold Ma, Ps, Ha; doon Hg; don Ha; myght do Dd; om. Ps; yow] you Cp; 3ow Dd, Ha; ese] ease Ma, Ha, Np; eese Dd; please Ps.

Right] om. Ps, Gl; gladly] Gladly Gl; wolde] wold Dd, Ha; wolde] I wold Ps; I y Np; dyen] die Ma; deye Cp, Dd, Ha; deien Np; wolde I dyen] wolde I suffre it Gl; wold yt suffre Ps; yow] 3ow Dd, Ha; you Cp; to] for to Ma, Gl; plese] please Ma, Gl, Dd, Ha, Np; ease Ps.

Deth] Deeth Hg, Np; noght] not Ma, Cp, Ps; nat Hg, Dd; nought Np; om. Gl, Ha; make] om. Np; noo Ma; om. Ps; comparisoun] comparison Ma; comp(ar)isou(n) Cp; comparisou(n) El, Hg Ha; comparyson Ps; comparisone Dd; comparisoun Np; comparisou(n) Gl.

Unto] Vnto Ma, Gl, Cp, Ha; Vn to El, Hg, Dd, Np, vnto Ps; youre] yo(ur) Gl; 3oure Dd, Np; 3our Ha; oure Cp, Ps; love] loue Cp, El, Hg, Dd, Ha, Np; loue ~ Ps.

Griselda Speech 8 (IV.814-889)

Mss: Ma 83r-83v-84r, Gl 107v-108r, Cp 139v-140r-140v, El 97v-98r, Hg 185r-185v-186r, Ps 35v-36r, Dd 101r-101v, Ha 127r-127v-1278r, Nr 136v-137r-138v

“My lord,” quod she, “I woot, and wiste alway, (IV.814)
How that bitwixen youre magnificence (IV.815)
And my poverté no wight kan ne may (V.816)
Maken comparison; it is no nay. (V.817)
I ne heeld me nevere digne in no manere (IV.818)
To be youre wyf, no, ne youre chamberere. (IV.819)
“And in this hous, ther ye me lady maade— (IV.820)
The heighe God take I for my witnesse, (IV.821)
And also wysly he my soule glade— (IV.822)
I ne heeld me lady ne mistresse, (IV.823)
But humble servant to youre worthynesse, (IV.824)
And evere shal, whil that my lyf may dure, (IV.825)
Aboven every worldly creature. (IV.826)
“That ye so longe of youre benignitee (IV.827)
Han holde me in honour and nobleye, (IV.828)
Where as I was noght worthy for to bee, (IV.828)
That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye (IV.830)
Foryelde it yow; ther is namoore to seye. (IV.831)
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende, (IV.832)
And with hym dwelle unto my lyves ende. (IV.833)
“Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal, (IV.834)
Til I be deed my lyf ther wol I lede, (IV.835)
A wydwe clene in body, herte, and al. (IV.836)
And am youre trewe wyf, it is no drede, (IV.838)
God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take! (IV.839)
Another man to housbonde or to make! (IV.840)
“And of youre newe wyf God of his grace (IV.841)
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee! (IV.842)
For I wol gladly yelden hire my place, (IV.843)
In which that I was blisful wont to bee. (IV.844)
For sith it liketh yow, my lord,” quod shee, (IV.845)
“That whilom weren al myn hertes reste, (IV.846)
That I shal goon, I wol goon whan yow leste. (IV.847)
“But ther as ye me proffe swich dowaire (IV.848)
As I first broghte, it is wel in my mynde (IV.849)
It were my wrecched clothes, nothyng faire, (IV.850)
The whiche to me were hard now for to fynde. (IV.851)
O goode God! How gentil and how kynde (IV.852)
Ye semed by youre speche and youre visage (IV.853)
The day that maked was oure mariage! (IV.854)
“But sooth is seyd— algate I fynde it trewe, (IV.855)
For in effect it preeved is on me— (IV.856)
Love is noght oold, as whan that it is newe. (IV.857)
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee, (IV.858)
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat bee (IV.859)
That evere in word or werk I shal repente (IV.860)
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente. (IV.861)
“My lord, ye woot that in my fadres place (IV.862)
Ye dide me streepe out of my povre weede, (IV.863)
And richely me cladden, of youre grace. (IV.864)
To yow broghte I noght elles, out of drede, (IV.865)
But feith, and nakednesse, and maydenhede; (IV.866)
And heere agayn your clothying I restoore, (IV.867)
And eek your weddyng ryng, for everemore. (IV.868)
“The remenant of youre juelis redy be (IV.869)
Inwith youre chambre, dar I saufly sayn. (IV.870)
Naked out of my fadres hous,” quod she, (IV.871)
Be seyn al bare; wherfore I yow preye, (IV.872)
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye. (IV.880)
Remembre yow, myn owene lord so deere, (IV.881)
I was your wyf, though I unworthy weere. (IV.882)
“Wherfore, in gerdon of my maydenhede, (IV.883)
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere, (IV.884)
As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my meede, (IV.885)
But swich a smok as I was wont to were, (IV.886)
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here (IV.887)
That was your wyf. And heer take I my leeve (IV.888)
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve.” (IV.889)
IV.818 ne] om. Gl, Cp, Ps; heeld] helde Ma, Cp, Np; holde Gl; held Ps, Dd, Ha;
nevere] neu(er) Ma; neu(ere) Gl; neu(er)e El, Hg, Dd; neuer Cp, Ps, Ha, Np; no] noo
Gl; manere] man(e)re Gl.
IV.819 be] ben Ha; youre] yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El, Hg; zoure Cp, Ha; zoure Dd; your
Np; wyf] wyfe Ma, Ps; wife Gl, Np; no] noo Np; no . El, Hg; ne] yet Gl; om. Dd; no ne
ne no Ma; youre] yo(ure) Ma, Gl; your(e) El, Ps; zoure Dd; yowre Np; ne youre] ne zit
zour Cp, Ha; chamberer] chamber Ma; chamberere El, Hg, Dd.
IV.820 And] [A]nd (ms damage) Hg; in] om. Ps; (th)is Ma, Cp, Ha; hous] house Ps;
hows Gl; ther] (th)er Ma, Gl, Ha; there Dd; ye] ye Cp, Dd; Ha; yee Ps; maade] made
Ha, Np.
IV.821 The] (th)e Cp; heighhe] hic Ma; high Gl, Np; hihe Cp; hye Ps; heyde Dd; highe
Ha; God] god Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np; take I] I take Gl; I] y Np; for] to
Ma; my] om. Ma; witnesse] witnes Ma; witennesse Ps; wytnesse Dd.
IV.822 also] al so Ha; as Ps; wysly] wisly Ma, Hg, Ha; wisely Np; witly Ps; And also
wysly] So wisely as Gl; soule] solew Np; glade] glaad El.
IV.823 nevere] neu(er) Ma; neuer Cp, Ps, Ha; neure Np; neu(ere) El, Hg, Dd; heeld
helde Ma; heelde Cp; held Dd; huld Ha; hilde Np; I nevere heeld me lady] I holde me
nouther lady Gl; mistresse] mastres Ma; maystersse Cp, Ps; maistresse El, Hg, Dd, Ha
Np; myastresse Gl.
IV.824 servant] s(er)uant Ma; s(er)uant Gl, Cp; seruant El, Hg; s(er)uanted Dd; servaun
Ha, Ps, Np; youre] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ure) Gl, Ps; zour Cp, Ha; your(e) El; zoure Dd;
worthesse] wort(h)ines Ma; wort(h)inesse Cp; wort(h)ynesse Ps; wort(thes)ynesse Ha
IV.825 euer] eu(ere) Ma; eu(ere) Gl; eu(e)re El, Hg, Dd; euere Cp; euyr Ps; euer Ha
Np; schall] s(c)hall (error on “c”) Ma; shall Gl; schal Cp, Ha; schalle Np; whil] whiles Gl;
while Ma, Np; whils Ps; that] (th)at Cp, Ha; (th)at El, Hg, Ps, Dd; lyf] life Ma, Gl, Np;
lyfe Ps; lyff Cp; dure] endure Gl, Ps.
IV.826 Above] Above Ma; Abouen Cp, El, Hg, Dd, Ha; Abouyn Np; every] eury Ma,
Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Ha, Np; euer(y) Gl, Dd; worldly] worldely Np; other Gl.
IV.827 ye] yee Ps; ye Cp, Dd, Ha; longe] long Ma, Ps; youre] yo(ure) Gl; yo(ure) Ps;
zoure Cp, Dd; zour Ha; benigne] benigne Ma; benigne Gl, Cp, Dd, Ha;
bengnyetee Hg; benigne Ps.
IV.828 Han] Hoaue Ma; hauue Gl; Haue Ps; holden] holde Ma, Gl; hold Ps; honour]
hono(ue) Gl; and] (and) Ma; nobleye] nobley Ma, Dd, Np; in nobleye Ps.
IV.829 Where] Wher Ma, Ha, Np; Wher(e) El; as] om. Gl, Ps; noght] not Ma, Ps, Ha;
nat Gl; nought Cp; nought Np; worthty] wor(th)i Ma; wor(th)y Cp, Ha; wirthy Ps; worthi
Np; for] om. El, Ps; to] om. El; bee] bee Ma, Gl, Cp, Hg, Ha
IV.830 That] (th)at Ma; (Th)at Cp; thonke] (th)anke Ma; (th)ank Cp; thank Gl, Dd;
thanke Ps; (th)ank Ha; thank Np; I] I (added in above with caret after “thank”) Gl; God]
god Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np; and] (and) Ma; yow] yowe Ma; zow Cp, Dd,
IV.831 Foryelde] for yele Ma, Gl; Forzelde Cp, Ha; Forzeld Cp; For yeld Dd; For yile Dp; it] yt
Ps; hit Np; yow] yowe Ma; zou Cp; zow Dd, Ha; to yow Np; ther] (th)er Ma; (th)ere
Cp; there Dd; (th)er Ha; is] nys Cp; namore] no more Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Np; nomore Dd;
more Ha; seye] sey Ma, Dd, Np.
Unto Vnto Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Ha⁺; Vn to El, Hg, Dd, Np; fader] fadre Gl, Ps; fadir Np; woll woll Ma; wole Gl; wil Ps, Ha⁺, Np; wende weende Ps; wynde Np.

with w(i)t(h) Ma; wi(th) Cp; hym] him Cp, Ha⁺; hi(m) Dd; dwelle] duelle Ha⁺; unto] vnto Ma, Cp, Ha⁺; vn to El, Hg, Dd, Np; to Gl, Ps; lyves] lifes Ma; luyes Cp, El, Hg, Dd, Ha⁺; lyvis Np; lyfis Ps; ende] eende Ps; ynde Np.

If] y Np; as I Gl; was] om. Np; fostred] fostered Dd; fristord Np; of] as Ha⁺; om. Gl; a] om. Ps; child] childe Ma, Gl, Np; full] full Gl; fulle Np; om. Ps; smal] small Ma; smalle Np. Gl ms has mold damage through line 839.

Till] Tyl Ma; Tyl Np; I] y Np; deed] dede Gl, Cp, Dd, Np; ded Ps; lyf] life Ma; lyfe] (th)(a)er Ma; there Dd; (th)er Ha⁺; my lyf ther] there my life Gl; ther my lyf Ps; woll woll Ma; wole Gl; wil Ps, Ha⁺; wille Np; I] y Np

wydwe] wedowe Ma; wydewe Cp, Hg, Dd; widowe Ps; widow Ha⁺; w[y]dwe (corruption from mold damage) Gl; herte] hert Dd; Ha⁺; Np; al] all Ma; alle Np; body, herte, and al] herte body and all Gl; hert body and al Ps.

For] And Dd; sith] sith] sith] sith the Cp; sithe Dd; sithen Ps; I] (th)at I Ma; yaf] gaf Ps; yafe Ma; yawe Np; ȝaf Cp; Dd; Ha⁺; yow] ȝowe Ps; yow] ȝowe Np; maydenhede] maidenhede Gl, Np

And] I Ps; youre] you(e) Gl, Ps; your Cp, Ha⁺; your(e) Dd; your(e) El; trewe] trew Ma; true Gl; wyf] wife Gl, Np; wyfe Ps; it] yt Ps.

God] god Ps, Np; shilde] schilde Ma, Cp, Ha⁺, Np; shelden Gl; sheeld Ps; swich] such Ma, Cp, Ps, Ha⁺; suche Gl; lordes] lordys Gl; lordis Ps, Np; wyf] wyfe Ma, Ps; wife Gl, Np; to] shuld Ps; take] make Np.

Another] A no(th)er Ma; An other Gl; A no(th)er Cp, Ha⁺; An othre Ps; A nother Dd; And othir Np; houste] husbond Ma, Gl, Np; houste Hg, Ha⁺; husband Ps; houste Dd; make] mak Gl.

youre] you(e) Ma, Gl; ȝoure Cp, Dd; your(e) Ps; ȝoure Ha⁺; newe] nywe Np; new Ps; wyf] wyfe Ma, Ps; wif Ha⁺, Np; wife Gl; God] god Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha⁺, Np; grace] (gra)ce Hg.

grauente] (gra)unte Ma; graunt Ps, Np; yow] you Gl; ȝou Cp; ȝow Dd, Ha⁺; yowe Np; welthe] welthe Ma, Ps, Dd; welth Gl; and] (and) Ma; prosperite] p(ro)spere Ma, Gl; prosp(eri)te El; p(ro)sp(er)itee Hg; prosperite Ps, Ha⁺; p(ro)sp(eri)te Dd, Np; heigh p(ro)sp(eri)te Cp.

I] y Np; woll] woll Ma; wole Gl; wille Cp, Np; wil Ps; yelden] yelde Gl; zelden Cp, Dd, Ha⁺; yelde Ps; hire] hir Gl, Ps, Ha⁺; hir(e) El, Hg; her Np.

In] in Gl; I Ha⁺; which] which Ps, Np; that] (th)at Ma, Ha⁺; (tha) Hg; om. Gl, Cp, Ps, Np; blisful] blissful Ma, Ha⁺; blissfull Gl; blissful Cp; blissful Ps; wone] won Ma, Gl; be] be Ma, Gl, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha⁺; I was blisful wone to bee] y wonte blissfully for to be Np.

For] And Ma; sith] si(th)(th)e Cp; si(then) Ps; it] yt Ps; hit Np; liketh] like Gl; like(th) Cp; likes Ps; likith Np; yow] you Ma, Gl; ȝow Cp, Dd, Ha⁺; quod] q(u)o)d Ma, Gl, Cp, Dd, Np; shee] sche Ma, Cp, Ha⁺; she Gl, Np; quod shee] so free Ps.

That] (th)at Ma; weren] were Ma, Gl, Ps, Ha⁺; all] all Ma, Gl; alle Np; my] my Gl, Ps; hertes] hertis Ma, Ps, Dd, Np; reste] rest Ps, Dd, Np.
IV.847 That] (th)at Ma; (Th)at Cp; If Gl; om. Ps; I] y Np; shal[sch]al Ma, Cp, Ha^4; schalle Np; shall Gl; goon] go Ma, Cp; gooo Gl, Ps; gon Dd, Ha^4; I] y Np; wol[wole Gl; wyl Dd; wil Np; goon] go Ma, Cp, Dd, Ha^4; gooo Gl, Np; I wol goon] om. Ps; whan[when Ma; whanne Gl; whan that Np; yow[30w Cp; 30w Ha^4; yowe Np; lest[leste] list Dd; lest Np; whan you yowe lest[her whan that euer yee lyst (“her” is possible reading, word inserted above “w” of “whan”) Ps.

IV.848 But] But (corrected from “As” which has been lined out with “But” next to it) Gl; ther] (th)er Ma, Cp, Ha^4; there Dd; ther (added above “but” and “as” with caret) Ps; wher Gl; ye] 3e Cp, Dd, Ha^4; profre] p(ro)fre Gl, Hg, Dd; me profre] profre me Ha^4; p(ro)feird me Np; swich[such]e Ma, Cp, Np; such Ps, Ha^4; dowaire] dowere Ma; dowayre Cp, Ps, Ha^4; doware Dd.

IV.849 As] Ay Cp; I] y Np; first] ferst Ha^4; broghte] brought Gl, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha^4; brouth Ma; broght Np; it] yr Ps; hit Np; is] is (added above line between “yt” and “wel”) Ps; wel] weel Gl; om. Ma; mynde] mynd Np.

IV.850 It] yt Ps; wrecched] wretched Gl; wrecchid Ps, Ha^4, Np; clothes] clo(th)es Ma, Cp, Ha^4; clothis Ps, Np; nothynge] no (th)ynge Ma; no (th)ing Cp, Ha^4; no thynge El, Hg, Dd; no thing Ps; no thinge Np; faire] feire Ma; fayre Cp.

IV.851 The] (th)e Ma, Ha^4; which[ which] Ma, Gl, Dd; hard] harde Np; to me were hard now] were hard to me now Ma; to me now were ful harde Gl; to me were now ful hard Cp, Ps;

IV.852 O] a Ps; goed[good]e Ma, Ps, Np; om. Gl, Ps; God] god Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Np; How] howe Ma, Np; how Gl, El, Hg; gentill] gentill Ma; gentle Gl; gentyl Dd; and] (and) Ma; how] howe Np; kynde] kynd Np.

IV.853 Ye] 3e Cp, Dd, Ha^4; yee Ps; semed] semede Cp; semyd Ps, Np; by] bi Ma, Np; youre] yo(ure) Gl; you(r)e Hg, Ps; your Cp, Ha^4; 3oure Dd; yowre Np; speche] spech Ps; youre] yo(ure) Gl; you(r)e Hg; your Cp, Ha^4; 3oure Dd; yowre Np; by yo( ur) Ps; visage] vysage Dd.

IV.854 The] (Th)e Cp; That Ha^4, Np; that] (th)at Ma, Gl, Ha^4; maked] made (ms damage on “m”) Ps; make Np; oure] o(ure) Gl; our Cp, Ha^4.

IV.855 But sooth] yt Ps; sooth] soth Ma, Gl, Dd; so(th) Cp, Ha^4; seyd] seid Ma, Ps, Dd; saide Gl; seyde Cp; sayd Ha^4; seide Np; algate] al gate Gl; al gate Np; I] y Np; fynde] fynd Ps, Ha^4; it] hit Np; trew] trew Ps; true Gl.

IV.856 effect] effecte Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Np; it] yt Ps; hit Np; om. Gl; preeved] preeuede Cp; preeued El; proued Hg, Ha^4; prouyd Ps; preevd Np; it preeved] p(ro)ued it Ma; preeved is] is proved now Gl; on] in Ps.

IV.857 Love] Loue Cp, El, Hg, Np; loue Ps, Ha^4, Dd; love Ma, Gl; is] ys Ps; noght] nat Gl, Cp; nought Dd, Ha^4, Np; not so hoot Ps; oold] olde Ma, Gl, Cp, Np; old Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha^4; whan] when Ma, Ps; whenne Gl; whanne Np; that] (tha)t Ma, El, Hg; (th)at Cp, Ha^4; om. Gl, Ps; it] yt Ps, hit Np; newe] nywe Np.

IV.858 But] For Gl; certes] cer(ter)es Hg; certis Ps, Np; lord] lorde Ma; noon] none Gl, Np; non Cp, Ps; adversitee] aду(ер)sitee Ma, Gl; aduersite Cp, Ps, Ha^4, Np; adu(ер)sitee El, Hg, Dd.
IV.859 dyen] die Ma; deye Gl, Dd; deyen Cp, Ha; deyn Np; the] (th)e Cp, Ha;
(th)is Ma; this Gl, Hg, Dd; cas] caas Ma, Gl, Ps, Ha; it] yt Ps; hit Np; shal] shall Ma;
schal Cp, Hg; schalle Np; naat] not Ma, Cp, Ps; nought Np; bee] be Ma, Gl, Cp, Hg, Dd, Np.

IV.860 That] (Th)at Cp; (th)at Ma, Ha; evere] eu(er) Ma; euer Cp, Ps, Np, Ha; eu(er)e El, Hg, Dd; That evere in] That in any Gl; word] wurd Ps; werk] werke Gl; I] y Np;
shal] shall Gl; schal Cp, Ha, Np; repente] repent Dd.

IV.861 That] (Th)at Cp; (th)at Ma; that (written above the lined out “(Th)ough”) Ps;
yow] you Cp; yow Dd, Ha; yowe Np; yaf] yafe Ma; yaf Cp, Dd, Ha; gayf Ps; myne Gl;
herte] hert Ma, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np; in] with Ps; hool] hol Cp, Ha; hole Dd, Np; good Gl;
etente] entent Ma, Ps, Dd.

IV.862 ye] ye Cp, Dd, Ha; yee Ps; woot] wote Gl, Np; wot Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Ha; (tha) Gl, Gs; fadres] faders Ma; fadres Ps; fadres Np, (written after “lde” which has been lined out in red ink) Gl.

IV.863 Ye] ye Cp; ye Ha; dide] dide Ma, Cp, Ha; Ye dide] did yee (“yee” added in above line between “did” and “me”) Ps; streepe] stripe Ma; Dd; stripen Ps, Gl; strepe Cp, Hg; strip Ha; strip Np; povre] pore Gl, Cp, Ha; poure El, Hg, Np; poore Ps; poore Dd; power Ma; weede] weede Ma, Gl, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np.

IV.864 cladden] clad Ma, Dd; clothid Np; me cladden] ye clad me Gl; yee clothid me Ps; youre] you(ure) Gl; your(e) Ps; your Cp, Ha; youre Dd; yowre Np.

IV.865 yow] you Cp; yow Dd, Ha; yowe Np; brought] broght Ma; brought Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha; I] y Np; noght] nat Gl, Dd; nought Ps, Ha; nougt Cp, Np; elles] ellis Hg, Ps, Dd; els Np; all Gl; I noght elles out of drede] I right nowght w(i)t(h)out drede Ma.

IV.866 feith] faith Gl, Ha; fe(ith) Cp; fayth Ps; filth Ma; filthe Dd; and] om. Ma, Gl, Ps; nakednesse] nakednes Ma, Gl; nakydnesse Ps; meknes Ha, Np; maydenhede]
maidenhede Gl; Np.

IV.867 And] And eke Ps; But Gl; heere] here Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Hg, Np; her Ha; agayn] a gayn Ma; a yen Gl; a3ein Cp; agayn Ps; a gayn Dd; a gayne Np; your] you(ure) Gl; your Cp; my Ma, El, Hg, Dd, Ha, Np; clothyn] clodying Ma; clot(th)ing Cp; clothyn El, Hg, Dd; clothing Ps; clot(th)yn Ha; clothis Np; I] y Np; restoore] restore Ma, Gl, Cp, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np.

IV.868 eek] eke Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np; you] you Cp; my Ma, Gl, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha, Np; ryng] ryng Np; rong Ma; evermore] eu(er)more Ma; eu(e)remore El, Dd; eu(er) more Gl; eure moore Hg; euermore Cp, Ps, Ha, Np.

IV.869 remen] remen(a)nt Ma; remenaut Gl, Cp, Np; remenant Ps; remen(a)nt Dd; youre] you(ure) Gl; youre(El) Hg, youre Cp, Dd; your Ps; your Ha; yowre Np; juel] juel Ma; iowell Gl; iowells Cp; iowels Hg; iowels Dd; iowels Hg, Np; be] bee Ps.

IV.870 Inwith] In with El, Np; Wi(j)h(h) in Ma; with in Gl; Wi(th)inne Cp; Within Ps;
With inne Dd; Wi(th)in Ha; youre] you(are) Ma; you(are) El, Hg; youre Cp, Ha; your Ps; yowre Np; chambre] chaunbre Dd; chambur dore Ha; chambr Np; dar] dare Ps; safly] sauely Cp; dar I safly] I dare it safly Ma; I dar it safly Dd; safly dar I Gl; sayn] seyn Ma, Dd; saye Gl, sayne Np.
IV.871 Naked] Nakid Ps; Nakd Np; fadres] faders Ma; fadir is Np; hous] hows Gl; quod] q(uod) Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np; q(uod) Cp; she] shee Cp, Ha4.

IV.872 I] y Np; cam] come Ma, Gl; com Ha4; cam. Ps; and] (and) Ma; naked] nakid Ps; nakd Np; moot] mote Ma; mot Ps, Dd; wille Np; I] y Np; moot I] I mote Gl; I mot Cp; turne] torne Ha4; om. Cp, agayn] agayne Gl; ageyn Dd; a gayn Np.

IV.873 Al] All Ma, Gl; your] yo(ure) Ma; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El; youre Ps, Np; zoure Cp, Dd; your Ha4; pleasaunce] pleasaunce Gl, Cp, Dd, Np; plea sau(n)ce Ps; plea sau(n)js Ha4; wol] wole Gl; wolle Cp; wolle Dd, Ha4; wille Np; wil Ps; I] y Np; I (added above between “wil” and “folwe”); folwen] follow Ma; folwe Gl, Cp, Ps; folwe(n) Dd; fulfille Ha4; fayn] feyn Dd.

IV.874 yet] yit Ma; zit Cp, Ha4, Np; yit Ps; yit Dd; I] om. Np; it] yr Ps; nat] not Ps, Ha4; nouȝt Np; your] youre Ma, Ps, Np; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El; zoure Cp, Dd; your Ha4; entente] entent Ps, Dd, Ha4, Np.

IV.875 That] (that Ma, Gl; I] y Np; om. Cp; smokles Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Dd, Np; smocles Ha4; out] oule Gl; your] youre Ma, Ps, Np; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El, Hg; zoure Cp, Dd; your Ha4; paleys] paleis Ma; palayes Hg; paleis Cp; palayes Ps; paleis Gl; paleis Cp; paleis Np; place Ps; chamber Ha4; wente] went Ps, Ha4, Np.

IV.876 Ye] Je Cp, Dd, Ha4; yee Ps; koude] cowde Ma; coude Gl, Cp; couthe Ps; cou(th)e Ha4; couthe Np; nat] not Ma, Ps, Ha4; nouȝt Cp; naught Np; doon] do Ma, Cp, Dd; doo Ps; doon so] do so Gl; dishonest] dishonest Dd, Ha4, Np, (error on “h”) Ma; a dishonest Gl; vnhonst Ps; thyn] (th)ynge Cp, Ha4, (corrected from “thyl” which is lined out in red) Gl; thing Ps, Np.

IV.877 That] (that Ma, Ha4; thilke] thilke Ma, Cp, Ha4; ilke Gl; the Ps; which] whiche Gl, Np; which (error on first “h”) Ma; your] yo(ure) Ma; your(e) El; youre Ps; youre Cp, Ha4; zoure Dd; our Gl; children] childre Gl, Np; childre Dd Np; children (error on “h”) Ma; leye] lay Gl, Ps, Np.

IV.878 Sholde] Scholde Ma; Schulde Cp, Ha4; Shuld Gl, (written after “lay” which is lined out) Ps; shulde Dd, Np; biform] biform Ma; biforme Cp; before Ps; be for Np; byform Ha4; be a forre Gl; the] the) Cp, Ha4; peple] poople Cp, Ps, Ha4, Np.

IV.879 Be] Been Ps; seyn] seen Gl, Ps; seye Ha4; seye Np; al] all Gl; bare] bare. ~ Ps; wherfore] wherfor Ma, Gl; wherfore Cp, Hg, Ha4; I] y Np; yow] yowe Ma; zou Cp; zow Dd, Ha4; preye] praye Ma, Dd, Np; praye Gl; praye Ps, Ha4.

IV.880 Lat] Lete Ma, Gl; Late Dd; Let H4; nat] not Ma, Cp, Ps, Ha4; nouȝt Np; lyk] like Ma, Gl; lik Cp, Ha4; lyke Dd; as Np; worm] worme Gl, Cp, Ps, Dd, Np; go] goon Gl; by] by Ma, Np; the] (th)e Cp, Ha4; weye] wey Ma, Dd, Np; wavey Gl; waye Ps, Ha4.

IV.881 Rememb[e] Remembe(r) Ma; you] you Ma; zou Cp; zow Dd, Ha4; yowe Np; my] my Gl; owene] own Ma; owen Gl, Dd; owen Cp, Ps, Np; oughne Ha4; dere] dere Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np.

IV.882 I] y Np; your] youre Ma, Hg; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El, Ps; zoure Cp, Dd; zoure Ha4; youre Np; wyf] wye Ma, Ps; wife Gl; wif Np; though] (th)ough Ma, Cp, Ps, Ha4; thogh Hg; I] y Np; unworthy] vnworthe Gl, El, Hg, Dd; vnworthe Gl, Cp, Ps; vnworthe Ps, Np; weere] were Ma, Gl, Cp, Ha4, Np.

IV.883 Wherfore] Wherfor Ma, Ha4; guerdon] guerdon Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; guerdon(n) Cp, Ha4; guerdon Hg; my] om. Np; maydenhede] maidenhede Gl.
IV.884 Which[...] whiche Ps; that] (th)at Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; (th)at Gl, El, Hg; I y Np; broghte] brouth Ma, brought Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴, Np; and] (and) Ps; noght] nat Gl; not Cp, Ps; nought Dd, Ha⁴; naught Np; agayn] ageyn Ma; a geyn Dd; a yen Gl; a geyn Np; awey Cp; I y Np; shal Ps.

IV.885 vouche] vouche safe Ma; vouchesauf Gl, Ps; vouchesauf Dd; vouche(th) sauf Cp; safe] om. Np; to as Ha⁴; yeve] yeve El, Hg, Np; ȝeue Dd, Ha⁴; ȝif Cp; gyf Ps; to] om. Ma; meede] mede Ma, Gl, Cp, Hg, Ps, DD, Np.

IV.886 But[...] such Ma, Cp; Such Ha⁴; suche Gl, Np; suych Ps; smok] smokke Gl; rynge Np; I om. Np; wont] won[te] Gl.

IV.887 That] (th)at Ma; (Th)at Cp; therwith] (th)er(w)ith(h) Ma; (th)er wi(th) Cp; ther w(i)t(h) El; ther with Hg, Np; ther with Dd; (th)er with Ha⁴; wrye] wrie Ma; hee[le] Ps; hille Gl; wrye (“.i. cou(er)e” is written above “wrye”) El; the] (th)e Gl, Cp, Ps, Ha⁴; here] heere Dd.

IV.888 That] (th)at Ma, Ha⁴; (Th)at Cp; your] youre Ma, Hg, Ps; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El; your Cp, Ha⁴; ȝoure Dd; yowre Np; wyf] wife Ma, Gl, Np, (added above between “youre” and “and”) Ps; wif Ha⁴; And] (and) Ma; heer] here Ma, Gl, Cp, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴, Np; I] y Np; take I] I take Hg, Dd; leev[el] leve Ma, Gl; leue Cp, Ps, DD, Ha⁴, Np; leeue El, Hg.

IV.889 yow] you Gl; you Cp; ȝow Dd, Ha⁴, yowe Np; myn] myne Gl; my Np; own] owen Gl, Dd; owne Cp, Ps; oughne Ha⁴; nowne Np; lest] leste Dd; I] y Np; (th)a]t I Gl; I (“(th)at” is lined out before “I”) Ps; yow] yowe Ma; you Cp; ȝow Dd, Ha⁴; greve] greue Cp, El, Ps, DD, Ha⁴, Np; greuee Hg;

Griseldas Speech 9 (IV.967-973)
MSS: Ma 84v, Gl 108v, Cp 141v, El 99r, Hg 187v, Ps 36v, Dd 103r, Ha⁴ 129r, Np 140v

“Nat oonly, lord, that I am glad,” quod she, (IV.967)
“To doon your lust, but I desire also (IV.968)
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree (IV.969)
Withouten feynyng, and shal everemo; (IV.970)
Ne nevere, for no wele ne no wo, (IV.971)
Ne shal the goost withinne myn herte stente (IV.972)
To love yow best with al my trewe entente.” (IV.973)

IV.967 Not] Not Ma; Nought Ha⁴; only] only Ma, Ps, Np; onely Gl; th[a]t] (th)at Ma, Gl; (th)at Cp, Ha⁴; I] y Np; quod] q(uo)d Ma, Dd, Np; q(ued) Cp; quoth Ps; [quod] (ms mold damage through 969) Gl; she] sche Cp, Ha⁴; [she] (ms mold damage through 969) Gl.

IV.968 doon] do Ma, Gl, Cp, Ps, Dd; don Ha⁴; your] youre Ma, Hg; yo(ure) Gl; your(e) El; youre Cp, Dd; your Ha⁴; lust] luste Gl; I y Np.

IV.969 Yow] you Cp; ȝow Ha⁴; yowe Np; for] om. Ps; serve] s(er)ue Ma, Cp, El, Hg, Dd, Ha⁴, Np; plese] plesse Dd; please Np; serve and plese] please and s(er)ue Gl; please and serue Ps; degree] degre Ma, Cp, Ha⁴, (possibly “degre[e],” ms mold damage) Gl.

IV.970 Withouten] W(i)t(h)outen Ma; W(i)t(h)outen Gl; W(i)t(h)outen Cp; With outen El, Hg, Dd; With out Ps, Np; W(i)t(h)ou[te] Ha⁴; feynytyn] feynynge Cp, Ps, Ha⁴; feynytise Gl;
and] (and) Ma; shal] I schal Ma; y schalle Np; schal Cp, Ha⁴; everemo] eu(ere) moo Ma, Gl; eu(ere) moo Dd; eu(ere)moo Cpl, El; euere mo Hg; eueremo Ps; eueremo Ha⁴; euer moo Np.

IV.971 Ne] om.Ps; nevere] Neuer Ps; neu(ere) Ma, Gl; neuer Cp, Ha⁴, Np; neuere El. Hg; neu(ere) Dd; wele] weel Gl; welle Np; ne no] ne for no Gl, Ha⁴, Np, (error on “o,” appears to have been corrected from “e”) Ma, (mark to indicate that “ne for,” which is at the end of the line with the corresponding mark, should be added between “wel” and “no”) Ps; wo] woo Ma, Gl, Dd, Np, (“w” may be a second hand) Cp;

IV.972 shal] schall Ma; schal Cp, Ha⁴; schalle Np; shall Gl; the] (th)e Ma, Cp; goost] gost Ma, Ps, Ha⁴; withinne] wi(th)inne Cpl, Ha⁴; wi(i)t(h) Inne El; with Inne Hg, Dd, Np; yn Ma; in Gl, Ps; my] myne Gl; my(n) Cp; my Ps; herte] hert Ma, Ps, Dd; stente] stynt Ma, Ps, Dd.

IV.973 love] loue Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴, Np; yow] you Gl; ȝou Cp; ȝow Dd, Ha⁴, Np; yow Np; with] wi(i)t(h) Cp, Ha⁴; wi(i)t(h) El; al] alle Np; with al] wi(i)t(h)al Ma; wi(i)t(h)all Gl; trewe] true Gl; entente] entent Ma, Ps, Ha⁴.

Griseldsa Speech 10 (IV.1032-1043)
MSS: Ma 85r, Gl 109r, Cp 142v, El 100r, Hg 188v, Ps 36v, Dd 103v, Ha⁴ 130r, Np 141v-142v

“Right wel,” quod she, “my lord; for, in good fey, (IV.1032)
A fairer saugh I nevere noon than she. (IV.1033)
I prey to God yeve hir prosperitee, (IV.1034)
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende (IV.1035)
Plesance ynogh unto youre lyves ende. (IV.1036)
“O thynge biseke I yow, and warne also, (IV.1037)
That ye ne prikke with no tormentynge (IV.1038)
This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo; (IV.1039)
For she is fostred in hir norissynge (IV.1040)
Moore tendrely, and, to my supposynge, (IV.1041)
She koude nat adversitee endure, (IV.1042)
As koude a povre fostred creature.” (IV.1043)
IV.1035 | y Np; **that** (th)at Cp, Ha⁴; (th)at Hg; **wol** woll Ma; wil Cp, Ps, Np; wyl Dd; yow] yowe Ma, Np; 30u Cp; 30w Dd, Ha⁴; **sende** send Dd.

IV.1036 | **Plesance** Plesaunce Gl, Cp, Dd, Np, Ma; Plesaunce Ps, Ha⁴; **ynogh** y nowgh Gl; ynowgh Ha⁴; y nough Np; ynow Cp; I now Dd; **unto** vnto Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; vn to El, Hg, Dd, Hp; to Ps; eu(er) to Gl; **youre** yo(ure) Ma, Gl; your Ps; 3oure Dd; 3our Cp, Ha⁴; **lyves** lyfes Ma; lyues Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha⁴; **ende** end Dd.

IV.1037 | On Ha⁴; **But one Gl; But of one Ps; thynge** (th)ing Ma, Cp, Ha⁴; thing Ps, Np; **biseke** beseek Ma; beseke Cp; biseke Dd; biseke Np; **warn** Ha³; I y Np; **biseke I** I beseke Ps; I beseche Gl; **yow** you Ma; 3ou Cp; 3ow Dd, Ha⁴; yowe Np; om. Gl; **warne** warn Ps; warne you Gl; biseke Ha⁴; Ma includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vnu(m) bo(na) fide p(re)cor ac / moneo ne hanc illis / aculeis agites quibus / alt(er)am agitasti nam(que) (et) / iunior (et) delicacy(us) nut(r)ita / est pati qu(an)tu(m) ego vt / reor non valeret. Gl includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vnu(m) bona fide p(re)cor ac moneo / ne hanc illis / aculeis agites q(ui)b(us) / alt(er)am agitasti nam(que) (et) / iunior (et) delicacy(us) nut(r)ita / est pati qu(an)tu(m) / ego vt / reor non valeret. Hg includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vnu(m) bona fide p(re)cor ac moneo ne hanc / illis aculeis agites quibus / alt(er)am agitasti / namiq(ue) (et) / iunior (et) / delicacy(us) nutrītia est / pati qu(an)tu(m) / ego vt / reor non valeret. Dd includes a marginal gloss at this line as follows: Vnu(m) bona fide precor ac moneo / ne hanc illis aculeis agites q(ui)b(us) / alt(er)am agitasti na(m)q(u) (et) iunior (et) / delicacy(us) nutrītia est / pati qu(an)tu(m) / ego vt / reor non valeret.

IV.1038 | **That** (th)at Ma; (Th)at Cp; **ye** ye 3e Cp, Dd, Ha⁴; yee Ps; ne] not Ma; om. Cp; **pryke** prike Ma, Cp, Hg, Ha⁴; priken Np; pryke Ps; pryke Dd; **with** wi(th) Cp, Ha⁴; w(i)th(h) Dd; noo noon Ma; om. Ps; **tormentynge** tormentynge Ma; Ps; tormentynge Dd; tormenteng Gl; tormentiel Np;

IV.1039 | **This** (th)is Ma, Ha³; (Th)is Cp; this (written after “th” with dotes under the word) Gl; **tendre** tender Ma; tendir Np; **mayden** mayde Ma, Dd; mayde.~ Ps; maide Gl, Np; ye] ye 3e Cp, Dd, Ha⁴; yee Ps; han] haue Ma, Ha³, Ps; doon] do Cp, Ha⁴, Hg; don Dd, Np; mo] moo Ma, Dd; han doon mo] me haue doo Gl;

IV.1040 | *she* sche Ma, Cp, Ha⁴, Np; **fostred** fostred Ha⁴, Np; **hir** hire Ma, Dd; **h(e) El** her Np; **norissynge** norisshyng Ma, Gl, Dd; norischinge Cp, Ha⁴; norisching Np; norishing Ps.

IV.1041 | **Moore** More Ma, Cp, Dd, Ha⁴, Np; **tendrely** tendirly Ma; tenderly Cp, Dd; tendir Np; **supposyne** supposing Np; Moore...supposyne] Weel tenderly in hir yong playing Gl; ful tendrely in hir yong pleyng Ps.

IV.1042 | *Sche* Sche Ma, Cp, Ha⁴, Np; **koude** coude Gl, Cp; could Dd; can Ma; couth Ps; cou(th)e Ha⁴; couthe Np; nat] not Ma, Ps, Ha⁴; nought Cp, Np; none Gl; **aduersite** aduersite Ma, Cp, Ps, Np; adu(er)site Gl, Dd, Ha⁴; aduersite El; adu(er)sitee Hg.

IV.1043 | **koude** coude Gl, Cp; could Dd; can Ma; couth Ps; cou(th)e Ha⁴; couthe Np; povre] pouver Ma, Ps; povere Gl, Cp, Ha⁴; povere El, Hg, Np; povre Dd; **fostred** fostred Ha⁴; firstird Np.
Griselda Speech 11 (IV.1088-1098)
MSS: Ma 85v-86r, Gl 109r, Cp 143v, El 100v, Hg 189r, Ps 37r, Dd 104r-104v, Ha 4 131r, Np 143r

“Grauntmercy, lord, God thanke it yow,” quod she, (IV.1088)
“That ye han saved me my children deere! (IV.1089)
Now rekke I nevere to been deed right heere; (IV.1090)
Sith I stonde in youre love and in your grace, (IV.1091)
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace! (IV.1092)
“O tendre, o deere, o yonge children myne! (IV.1093)
Your woful mooder wende stedfastly (IV.1094)
That cruuel houndes, or som foul vermyne (IV.1095)
Hadde eten yow; but God of his mercy (IV.1096)
And youre benyngne fader tendrely (IV.1097)
Hath doon yow kep’t”— (IV.1098)

IV.1088 Grauntmercy | Graunt m(er)cycy Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Dd; G(ra)unt mercy Ha 4; graunt mercy Ps; Graunt merci Np; lord my lord Gl; God god Ma, Cp, Hg, Dd, Ha 4, Np; so god Gl; om. El, Ps; thanke (th)anke Ma; thank Np; I thanke Cp, Ps; I thank Gl; that thanke I El; it yr Ps; om. El, Gl; you] zou Cp; zow Dd; Ha 4; you Np; and you Gl; quod/ q(uod) Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np; q(uod) Cp; she sche Ma, Cp, Ha 4.
IV.1089 That (th)at Ma; (Th)at Cp; ye] yee Ps; 3e Cp, Ha 4; han] haue Ma, Gl, Ps; saved] saued Ma, Cp, El, Hg, Dd; saued Ps; kept Ha 4; me] om. Ha 4, Ps, Np; my] myne Dd; children] childre Gl; deere] dere Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd, Np; so deere Ha 4.
IV.1090 Nowe] Nowe Np; rekke] rekee Ma; rek Ha 4; reke Np; I] y Np; nevere] neu(er)e Ma, Gl; neu(er)e El, Hg, Dd; neuer Cp, Ha 4, Np; not Ps; to] for to Np; been] be Ma, Cp, Dd, Ha 4, Ps, Np; deed] ded Gl, Cp, Hg, Dd, Ps, Np; right] ript Np; heere] here Ma, Gl, Np.
IV.1091 Sith] Si(th)(th)e Cp; Sithen Ps; SiThe Dd; stonde] stond Ma, Ps, Ha 4; youre] you(re) Ma, Gl; you(e) El, Hg, Ps, you Cp, Ha 4; youre Dd; you Np; love] loue Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha 4, Np; and] (and) Ma; your] youre Ma; yo(ure) Gl; you(e) El; youre Cp, Ha 4; youre Dd; yo(ur) Ps; youre Np; grace] gr(ace) Ma, Cp. Hg.
IV.1092 fors] force Ma, Gl, Ps, Dd; death] deth Gl, Ps, Dd, Ha 4; de(th) Cp; dethe Np; death ne] om. Ma; whan] whenne Ma, Gl; my] (th)at my Ma; spirit] spirite Gl, Ps; pace] passe Gl; passe Ps.
IV.1094 Your] Youre Ma; Yo(ure) Gl; You(e) El, Ps; youre Cp; youre Dd; youre Ha 4; wofull] wofull Gl; woorful Dd; mooder] moder Gl, Cp, Hg, Dd, Ha 4; mo(th)er Ma; moder Ps, Np; wende] wend Ps, Dd; wened Gl; stedefastly] stedefastly Cp, Hg; stidfastly Ps; ful stedefastly Np.
IV.1095 That (th)at Ma; cruel Ma, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha4; cruell Gl; crewel Np; hounds] hounds Ma; houndis Ps; wormes Np; or] and Ha4; som] sum Ps; foul] fowle Ma; foule Dd, Np; om. Gl, Ps; vermyne] vermyn Gl, Ps; v(er)myne El, Hg; vermyne Np; venym Ma; venyme Dd.

IV.1096 Hadde] Had Gl, Ha4; had Dd, Np; eten] etyn Ma, Ps; yow] yowe Ma, Np; ȝowe Ma, Np; ȝow Dd; Ha4; God] god Ma, Gl, Cp, El, Hg, Ps, Dd, Ha4, Np; mercy] m(er)cy Ma, Gl, Dd.

IV.1097 youre] yo(ure) Gl; ȝoure Cp, Dd; your Ps, Np; ȝour Ha4; benyngne] benygne Ma; benigne Gl, Cp, Ps, Dd, Ha4; benynge Np; fader] fadre Gl; fadir Ps, Np; tendrely] tendirly Ma; tenderly Dd, Ha4;

IV.1098 Hath] Ha(th) doon] do Ma; don Cp, Dd; done Gl; yow] ȝou Cp; ȝow Dd, Ha4; kept] kepe Dd, Ma; kepte Cp, Gl.
APPENDIX H

LINE VARIANTS AMONG SPEECHES

IN ANALYZED MANUSCRIPTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tale</th>
<th>Riverside</th>
<th>Franklin's Tale</th>
<th>Merchant's Tale</th>
<th>Knight's Tale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE KNIGHT’S TALE</strong></td>
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<td>Ha4</td>
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<td><strong>THE FRANKLIN’S TALE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sire, sih of youre gentillesse (6 lines)</td>
<td>Yes sir quod she ye may wen (15 lines)</td>
<td>Allas, quod she, that ever (4 lines)</td>
<td>O chase Goddess (34 lines)</td>
<td>Have mercy lord (1 line)</td>
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<td>Allas, quod she on thee, Fortune (102 lines)</td>
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<td><strong>THE MERCHANT’S TALE</strong></td>
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<td>Certain she thought (4 lines)</td>
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<td>I have quode she a soul (19 lines)</td>
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<td>Yea sir quod she ye may wen (15 lines)</td>
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<td>Allas! seith she (4 lines)</td>
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<td>Allas! no force (6 lines)</td>
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<td>Thame is quod she (4 lines)</td>
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<td>Yea sir no force (8 lines)</td>
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<td>Allas my side (9 lines)</td>
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<td><strong>THE KNIGHT’S TALE</strong></td>
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<td>O chase Goddess (34 lines)</td>
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<td>Have mercy lord (1 line)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allas, quod she, that evere I was born (2 lines)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x (1+2/3)</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nay, nay, quod she (2 lines)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unto the gardyn, (2 lines)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“x” indicates the speech is present in the ms. The numbers indicate variation of quantity of lines.
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VITA

Stacee M. Bucciarelli was born and raised in Southern California. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, she attended the University of Hawaii, Manoa where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in English in 1996. She then earned a Multimedia Studies Certificate in Digital Production for Web Design and Graphic User Interfaces. She also attended California State University, Northridge, where she received her Master of Arts in English in 2006.

Bucciarelli has received funding for coursework and presentations including research she presented at conferences for The European Society for Textual Scholarship, The Medieval Association of the Pacific, and The Renaissance Society of America. She was the recipient of The Harry Finestone Award, and she served on the McElroy committee for Loyola University Chicago. She also acted as the Medieval Studies Center and Medieval Lecture Series liaison.

Currently, Bucciarelli is researching her next project that endeavors to address the difficulties in digital representations of medieval works. She is conducting her textual studies research in Italy, where she lives with her family.