9122

DIET IN THE GENERAL PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

DIET IN THE GENERAL PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

By

SUSAN WALLACE, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

September 1977

MASTER OF ARTS (1977) McMASTER UNIVERSITY
(English) Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Diet in the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales

AUTHOR: Susan Wallace, B.A. (Lakehead)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Chauncey Wood.

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 123.

ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine Chaucer's use of diet in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Certain of the portraits include references to diet: the Monk is described as loving a "fat swan" above all other "roosts". To discover why such a food is attributed to the Monk is to discover his spiritual state, the primary concern of the Church-dominated Middle Ages.

By investigating medieval literature for dietary allusions, it becomes possible to understand the nature of Chaucer's references. The Monk's swan, it will be demonstrated, is highly significant in its metaphorical interpretation, and contributes to his characterization as representative of the failure of the monastic ideal. The swan, as well, indicates that the Monk has succumbed to the mortal sin of gluttony, which is defined as overindulgence in food and drink of an excessively delicate nature.

Chapter Two, therefore, of the thesis investigates medieval moral literature for its definitions of proper and improper Christian diet. Chapter Three attempts to dis-

cover the use of references to diet in satirical poetry in order to understand the irony behind such references that Chaucer so consistently employed in the Prologue. The fourth chapter then applies the findings of Chapters Two and Three to seven of the portraits in the General Prologue which include dietary references: those of the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar, the Franklin, the Cook, the Doctor, and the Summoner, in order to achieve a better perception of Chaucer's intention in the portrayal of these pilgrims. Having done so, it should be recognized that Chaucer's methods and intentions differed little from his contemporaries, even though his poetic genius allowed his creations to outshine all others of his age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Dr. Chauncey Wood for his invaluable aid in the writing of this thesis. Although not always welcome, his advice and criticism consistently proved to be correct and necessary. As well, Dr. Wood was the first teacher to make me recognize the importance of an outline, constant revision, and proper presentation of material.

In addition, I should like to thank my typist, Marilyn Halverson, who patiently typed the thesis from very bad copy. My office-mates in Room 435 also deserve thanks for their interest, support, and encouragement.

I should like to dedicate this thesis to my family, especially my mother and my father.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales has always aroused critical comment. Because Chaucer achieves extraordinary vividness in the characterization of his lively group of pilgrims on their journey to the shrine of a Christian martyr, none of the appeal of the portraits has faded since their creation nearly six hundred years ago. But many of the traditions and conventions employed in the literature of Chaucer's time have altered substantially, or have even been forgotten.

Fortunately, art historians like Emile Mâle have rediscovered for us the wealth of allegorical detail that pervades medieval art. Medieval literature abounds in similar iconographic detail that must be recognized before the author's full intention can be perceived. Of course, the nature of authorial intent in Chaucer is often ambiguous when contrasted with the more direct, didactic writing of John Gower and Innocent III. But one must consider Chaucer's audience, and assume that it was composed of a sophisticated, learned, courtly circle, who would recognize and enjoy the numerous allusions in Chaucer's work, by means of which his intention is realized. Accordingly, Chaucer, like his

contemporaries, drew upon established literary traditions in order to assemble the portraits of his pilgrims.

Certain descriptive details, then, are included in the portraits because of their traditional association with literary "types". The rowdy Miller carries a "baggepipe", for such instruments symbolized his lascivious nature. Even the horses ridden by the pilgrims possessed metaphorical significance: the Clerk's horse is, like him,"as leene . . . as a rake".[1] But his horse symbolizes more than the Clerk's poverty, for as Rodney Delasanta demonstrates, the humble mount associates the Clerk with those Christians who virtuously imitate the humility displayed by Christ when he chose to enter Jerusalem on the back of a lowly donkey.[2]

Until recently, relatively few critics have demonstrated the relationship between the descriptive detail contained in the Prologue and the spiritual states of the pilgrims, even though it is well known that the primary concern of the Middle Ages was for the soul's health. Even such a valuable work as Muriel Bowden's Commentary, in which an attempt is made "to look at the happy company of Canterbury pilgrims gathered together at the Tabard Inn . . . with the

---

[1] F. N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1957), I, 287. All subsequent references are to this text.

[2] Rodney K. Delasanta, "The Horsemen of the Canterbury Tales", Chaucer Review, 3 (1968), 29-36.

eyes and understanding of that bygone age",[3] fails to establish this connection. Similarly, although Jill Mann has effectively demonstrated the influence on Chaucer of the tradition of medieval estates satire, she does not draw the obvious conclusion that Chaucer's pilgrims were as spiritually defiled as their models. Mann defends her inconclusiveness by stating that Chaucer was at the same time influenced by real-life models:

> But while his vision is conditioned by what is traditional, it will also reflect something of the immediate situation which he is analysing in terms of the old formulae.[4]

It is unfortunate, however, that Mann refuses to allow herself to judge the spiritual state of Chaucer's pilgrims, for the excellent material that she has collected elucidates many of the ambiguities in the Prologue.

One of the most ambiguous aspects of the Prologue is the inclusion of specific details of food and drink in some of the portraits. But these details have aroused scant critical analysis beyond unsubstantiated statements that the jovial good nature of pilgrims like the Franklin is reinforced by their diets. Yet a literal acceptance of Chaucer's words precludes an awareness of his ironic methods and his

---

[3]Muriel Bowden, A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, 2nd ed. (New York, 1948; rev. ed. 1967), p. 1.

[4]Jill Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire (Cambridge, 1973), p. 9.

conformity to accepted literary tradition. A closer investigation, which necessarily includes an examination of other medieval authors, reveals that the references to diet were carefully chosen to support authorial judgment of the spiritual state of a character. Much has been done in this connection with Chaucer's Summoner's "garleek, onyons, and eek lekes" so that the association between the Summoner's diet and his spiritual unworthiness is now readily acknowledged, but dietary references in other portraits have not been similarly perceived.

It is the purpose, therefore, of this thesis first to analyse dietary references in the works that Chaucer probably knew, then to use the findings of the analysis to reinterpret references to food and drink in seven of the portraits of the General Prologue. By doing so, what seems at first reading to be simply additional material used to enhance the "realism" of the portraits will be recognized as an indicator of gluttony (which includes drunkenness), a mortal sin in the Middle Ages, and a vice which enslaves some of Chaucer's pilgrims. Often, it will be discovered, Chaucer passes judgment on certain items of diet later on in the Tales. That he supports the teachings of moral philosophers like John Gower and St. Jerome, who both extol the virtues of a moderate, abstemious menu is indicated by his words in the Nun's Priest's Tale, which praise the "maner deye" for her modest fare:

> Repleccioun ne made hire nevere sik;
> Attempre diete was al hir phisik . . .
> Ne wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
> Hir bord was served moost with whit and blak,
> Milk and broun breed, in which she foond no lak,
> Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye . . .
> (VII, 2834-44)

From these words, we can judge what Chaucer thought about such diets as the Franklin's and the Prioress's, with their emphasis on excess and delicacy. The Prioress's soft "wastel-breed" contrasts lamentably with the dairy-woman's choice.

One of the most significant satirical poems of the Middle Ages, the Land of Cockaygne, emphasizes the dietary delights to be found in this far-off land. Certain foods are enjoyed by all who inhabit the false paradise, thus adding to their spiritual defilement. The sixteenth-century illustration of Cockaygne, made by Peter Brueghel the Elder, gives us a better idea of the medieval attitude towards excessive, overly delicate diets.[5] In the painting, a soldier, a scholar, and a peasant are depicted as they lie stretched out in a state of physical and spiritual torpor, after indulging in mountains of gruel and pies that roof the buildings. For the Middle Ages, intemperance resulted in the torpor which Brueghel so graphically depicts.

---

[5]A copy of the painting is included in the Appendix, p. 116.

Consequently, James Winny's judgment that Chaucer was not interested in "the Shipman's thefts and murders, the Franklin's epicureanism, and the physician's avarice . . . as evidence of a breakdown of moral values"[6] cannot be supported, for it will be demonstrated that Chaucer was concerned about the gluttony of some of his pilgrims, and does judge them according to his moral standards. Similarly, Lumiansky has failed to grasp Chaucer's purpose in including such well-defined characters:

> Usually, whether the individual under discussion is the righteous Parson or the rascally Pardoner, the Narrator seems to say to us: "Here is a person whom I was glad to meet and whom I think you will like to know. We don't have to pass any judgment on this Pilgrim; we can simply enjoy the interesting aspects of his character." This attitude is present even in the section treating the evil Summoner; and there is a good-natured joviality in the Narrator's ridiculing the Sergeant of the Law.[7]

Surely this is not what Chaucer intended.

In order to understand the pilgrims as Chaucer did, it is first necessary to study the use of diet in

---

[6] James Winny, ed., The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 18.

[7] R. M. Lumiansky, Of Sondry Folk (University of Texas Press, 1955), p. 154.

specifically moral literature where attitudes are emphatically and unambiguously stated. This will be the concern of Chapter Two. Chapter Three will entail a look at religious and satiric poetry of the Middle Ages, in an attempt to understand the ironic methods favoured by medieval satirists, of which Chaucer was one. Then it will be possible, in Chapter Four, to interpret correctly dietary detail in seven of the portraits. Chaucer's attitudes towards the proper diet for the true Christian will then be able to be discerned.

CHAPTER TWO

THE USE OF DIET IN MORAL LITERATURE

In order to determine how Chaucer may have implemented in the General Prologue his response to the use of diet in moral literature, it is first necessary to examine theories of diet contained in various selections from medieval writings. Therefore, this chapter will begin by examining the allegorization of dietary restrictions in the Levitical code. Next, sermons and religious tracts will be investigated for their treatment of gluttony and drunkenness. Following this, excerpts from the writings of St. Jerome, Innocent III, Alanus de Insulis, and others, should reveal common attitudes to diet, and examples from the Gesta Romanorum, the writings of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, and the Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine might reflect the same concept of correct Christian diet. To conclude the chapter, dietary content in the Vox Clamantis and the Confessio Amantis, two works by Chaucer's friend and fellow author, John Gower, will be discussed.

The dietary restrictions of the Levitical code have long been reflected in literature. Although the new law of Christianity revoked the old Mosaic prohibitions which determined clean and unclean foods,[1] the metaphorical use of the code to represent spiritually clean and unclean souls remained. In the following excerpt, St. Thomas Aquinas gives an exegesis of the code, and explains the significance of the swan, which the Monk favoured above all roasts:

> The figurative reason for these things is that all these animals signified certain sins, in token of which those animals were prohibited. Hence Augustine says (Contra Faustum vi.7): "If the swine and lamb be called in question, both are clean by nature, because all God's creatures are good: yet the lamb is clean, and the pig is unclean in a certain signification. The animal that chews the cud and has a divided hoof, is clean in signification. Because division of the hoof is a figure of the two Testaments: or of the Father and the Son. . . . In like manner those fish that have scales and fins are clean in signification. Because fins signify the heavenly or contemplative life; while scales signify a life of trials, each of which is required for spiritual cleanness. . . . The swan is bright in colour, and by the aid of its long neck extracts its food from deep places on land or water; it may denote those who seek earthly profit through an external brightness of virtue. 2

In the eighteenth century, the code was used by Jonathan Swift, who attributed to the debased Yahoos a reprehensible diet of forbidden

---

[1]The law about Christian diet is stated in I Tim. 4.4: "Quia omnis creatura Dei bona est, et nihil reiiciendum quod cum gratiarum actione percipitur: sanctificatur enim per verbum Dei, et orationem." (The Vulgate of St. Jerome will be used throughout this paper, for this is the Bible with which Chaucer was familiar: see Grace W. Landrum, "Chaucer's Use of the Vulgate", PMLA 39 [1924], 75-100.)

[2]St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologia, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Part II, First part, Question 102, Article 6.

foods:

> . . . they dig up roots, eat several kinds of herbs, and search about for carrion, or sometimes catch Weasels and Luhimuhs (a sort of wild Rat) which they greedily devour. 3

As well as weasels, rats, and carrion, the Yahoos enjoy the flesh of cats, dogs, and asses. Roland Frye, after discovering that the meats the Yahoos consume are prohibited by Mosaic law, draws an interesting conclusion similar to St. Thomas's interpretation:

> Each one of these delicacies in proscribed as polluting under the Levitical code. Leviticus 11.3 prohibits the eating of asses' flesh, and in the thirty-ninth and fortieth verses of the same chapter the consumption of any meat from a dead carcass, whether that of a clean or an unclean animal, is forbidden. The twenty-seventh verse declares that cats and dogs are unclean. Finally, weasels and rodents are prohibited in the twenty-ninth verse. Thus we see that in diet the Yahoos are guilty of those defilements "whereby either the Guilt or the Disorder of Sin . . . are represented". 4

In his article, Frye relates the unclean diet of the Yahoos to their unclean spiritual state, revealing the traditional use of the Levitical code to represent sinfulness.

Just as Swift used an unclean diet to signify the Yahoos' spiritual degradation, so also was it used by Sir John Mandeville, in Chaucer's own day. In his largely fictitious Travels, written in French about 1360, Mandeville writes that the pagan Tartars ate forbidden foods:

---

[3]Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. Robert A. Greenberg (W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), p. 232.

[4]Roland M. Frye, "Swift's Yahoo and Christian Symbols", JHI, 15 (1954), 201-17.

> They are right foul folk and fell, and full of malice . . . . They eat hounds and lions, mares and foals, mice and ratouns, and all other beasts that were forbid in the old law. 5

Chaucer may also have used the code to signify the unclean spiritual state of some of his pilgrims, for surely it is more than mere coincidence that there are numerous references to the code's forbidden foods in the General Prologue. Assuming that the references were intentional, the Prioress's association with "unclean" dogs and mice then calls into question her spiritual state. Similarly, the appearance of the dog, hare, oyster, and swan[6] in the Monk's portrait reinforces his spiritual defilement. And by comparing the redness of the Miller's beard to the unclean sow and fox, and the Pardoner's eyes to the hare's, the sinfulness of their nature is emphasized. Chaucer, like his contemporaries, seems to have used the Levitical code in its traditional application, to signify spiritual uncleanness.

Not only was an "unclean" diet censured in the Middle Ages. Sermons which Chaucer would have heard vigorously denounced feasts featuring the delicacies the Franklin enjoys, as G. R. Owst notes:

> we [can] catch a glimpse of the banquet table . . . with those that have a share in it, as seen by the critical eyes of faithful churchmen. Then as now the lavish hospitality of friends or rivals, and the jealous regard for a social reputation, such as Chaucer's Frankeleyn enjoyed, often led men on to an extravagance that seemed to brook no limits:

---

[5]Malcolm Letts, trans., Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations. 2 vols. (The Hakluyt Society, vol. CI, second series, 1950), pp. 92, 172.

[6]Lev. 11.27 prohibits dogs in the diet; 11.6, the hare; 11.10, the oyster; and 11.18, the swan.

> ffirst the devel scheweth a man, for to begile him, good wyn and delicious metes, as he dede the appel to Eve. And if that may noght availe, he biddeth and counsailleth a man to ete and drynke as other men doth, so that he may be felawliche and noght singuler, and that men clepe him not "ypocrite" or a "paplard", or "that he is an averous man and a scars of herte so that he may not spend".
>
> Thus it comes about that, under pressure of mere social necessity, ambitious householders, faced with the task of giving a dinner-party, were driven to "spende more peraventure in deyntee in a daye than myghte of comoun mete, as prefitable for the sustenaunce, be i-now for an hondred pore men". 7

According to such sermons, the Franklin's lavish banquets reveal his sinful prodigality, not his jovial good nature. Drunkenness was similarly condemned:

> Inebriety must be shunned, says the Speculum Laicorum, because it befools, enfeebles and impoverishes man, and hastens his death. Likewise, Master Ralph of Acton, in one of his discourses, specifies three evil effects of drunkenness: "First it deranges man's senses: secondly, it alienates the mind: thirdly, it excites to shameful and improper things. 8

Chaucer evokes the lessons taught by these sermons in the Wife of Bath's Prologue:

> And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke,
> For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,
> A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.
> In wommen vinolent is no defence, -
> This knowen lecchours by experience.
> (III, 464-8)

---

[7] G. R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (1st ed. 1933; rev. ed. Oxford, 1966), p. 447.

[8] Ibid., p. 427.

Chaucer's knowledge of correct diet would also have been gained from such works as the Book of Vices and Virtues, and Jacob's Well. The Book of Vices and Virtues, similar in content to the Parson's Tale, contains the following admonition concerning immoderate diet:

> For outrageous etyng and drynkyng doþ moche harme to þe body and to þe soule, as we haue seid er þis; þerfore seiþ oure lord in þe gospel, 'Takeþ hede þat youre hertes ben not greued ne charged wiþ glotonie ne wiþ dronkenesse'; þat is to sei þat ye don non outrageouste in etyng and drynkynge. 9

The Franklin's feasts and the Cook's preparations are examples of "outrageous", or immoderate, diets. Consequently, their bodies, and more importantly, their souls, suffer "moche harme".

The excerpt which follows, from Jacob's Well, is an analysis of the fourth and fifth branches of Gluttony, which describe those who eat too delicately and are excessively concerned with the variety and preparation of their diets:

> þe iiij. fote brede of wose in þis glotony is for to ete ouyrdeynte metys, for þei schal do more costs at a mele þan xi. men myȝte lyve by. swiche synnen in manye manerys, þat is, in gret outrage of expensys, in vsyng of mete in ouyr-gret lust, in veyn-glorye, noȝt only in lyberoushede but for pompe, to make manye messys.
>
> þe v. fote brede wose is coryouste; to seke what mete lyketh him most. þei delyȝte in þe lust of þe flesch. þei synnen in besynes of getyng þe mete, & after in delyȝte of vsyng þat mete, & after in veynglorye in

---

[9] W. Nelson Francis, ed., The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the Somme Le Roi of Lorens d'Orleans, EETS No. 217 (London, 1942; repr. 1968), p. 288.

> rehersyng how þei are fed, how manye dyuerse metys þei etyn, how coryously it were dyȝt, & how iche com after oþer. 10

The sinful "outrage of expensys" recalls the sermon previously noted, and the association of meat with the "lust of þe flesh" is one that recurs continually in medieval literature.

In Jacob's Well, reference is made to one of the most influential treatises of the Middle Ages, Innocent III's twelfth-century work entitled On the Misery of the Human Condition:[11]

> Innocencius, in libello de miseria condicionis humane, he seyth, mesure & temperure is so dyspysed, & excesse & superfluite is so desyred in dyuerse metys & drynkes, & in dyuerse causes, þat delyȝte kan no manere, & gredynes excedyth mesure; wherthrugh þe stomak is troublyd, syke, & agreuyd, þe wytt is dullyd & apeyred, þe vnderstondyng is oppressed. here.of comyth non helthe, but sykenes & deth. þerfore, he seyth, þe sentens of þe wyse man, be þou noȝt to lusty & to gredy in þin etyng, ne falle þou noȝt on iche delycasye out of mesure, for in manye metys & dyuerse drynkes in gret syknes & manye for glotonye haue perysscheḍ & deyid. 12

Chaucer tells us in the Legend of Good Women that he has translated the treatise:

> He hath in prose translated Boece,
> And of the Wreched Engendrynge of Mankynde,
> As man may in pope Innocent yfynde;
> (G 413-5)

---

[10] Arthur Brandeis, ed., Jacob's Well: An Englisht Treatise on the Cleansing of Man's Conscience, Part I (EETS 115, London, 1900), p. 144.

[11] Innocent's work is often called De Contemptu Mundi, but this title is simply a generic term for such works, which were common in the Middle Ages.

[12] Jacob's Well, p. 145.

Although the translation has not survived, echoes of Innocent's words occur frequently in the General Prologue. Concerning excessive diets, Innocent writes:

> . . . the glutton . . . must pick out colours, compare aromas, fatten up plump birds, all of it carefully prepared by gourmet cooks and served in splendour by a staff of butlers and waiters.
>
> One cook mashes and strains, another mixes and churns, and together they turn substance into accident, make nature into art--all this to make satiety become hunger, to awaken an appetite turned squeamish with overeating, to incite gluttony. And their motive is not to sustain nature or supply need, but to bloat up a gluttonous craving to eat. And yet the pleasure of gluttony is so short that its span can scarce be measured in minutes.
>
> The glutton scorns moderation and cultivates extravagance. In the diversity of foods and the variety of tastes he knows no measure; his voracity has no bounds. But the result is a heavy stomach, the senses reeling and the mind oppressed; its end is not health, but sickness and death. 13

Like the glutton Innocent castigates for "fattening up plump birds", the Franklin keeps "fat partrich" in "muwes" (I, 349). And Chaucer's Cook "roostes, and sethes, and broilles, and fryes" (I, 383), like the cooks who serve Innocent's glutton: "One cook mashes and strains, another mixes and churns". The Franklin with his "deyntees" and the Cook with his ability to "make nature into art" (he can "maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye"), compare with those "whose end is not health, but sickness and death". The Cook already has one sign of ill health: his suspicious "mormal". Chaucer is implementing Isidore of Seville's definition: "Irony is condemning while seeming to praise". He seems to be praising

---

[13] Innocent III, On the Misery of the Human Condition (De miseria humane conditionis), Margaret Mary Dietz, trans.; Donald R. Howard, ed. (Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1969), Bk. II, xvii, p. 45.

the Franklin's hospitality and the Cook's ability in the kitchen, but he is in truth describing those very men whom Innocent condemns for their diets.

In the same treatise, Innocent denounces drunkenness:

> Or what is more shameful than a drunkard?--whose breath stinks, whose body trembles; who says silly things and gives away secrets; who loses his reason and distorts his face. . . . For them wine is not enough, nor ale, nor beer; but they must make mead, heavy wine and light wine with much labour and care and at no small expense. And from these arise disputes, and quarrels, then fights and brawls. 14

These words are recalled by the Pardoner in his tale, when he, too, denounces drunkenness, although hypocritically:

> A lecherous thyng is wyn, and dronkenesse
> Is ful of stryvyng and of wreccednesse.
> O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
> Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
>
> In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
> He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
> (VI, 549-52, 560-1)

Innocent's description of the results of drunkenness recur throughout the Tales. Thus the Manciple describes the drunken Cook's appearance:

> For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
> Thyne eyen daswen eek, as that me thynketh,
> And, wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stynketh:
> That sheweth wel thou art nat wel disposed.
> (IX, 30-4)

A quarrel arises between the Miller and the Reeve that seems to have been aggravated by the Miller's inebriation:

> Stynt thy clappe!
> Lat be thy lewed and droken harlotrye.
> (I, 3144-5)

---

[14] On the Misery of the Human Condition, Bk. II, xix, pp. 46-7.

Disaster results from drunkenness in the Pardoner's Tale, and the brawl in the Reeve's Tale has its origin in too much ale. While it may appear to us that Chaucer uses drunkenness simply to provide amusement, Chaucer's contemporaries would understand that the surface of jest covered a serious moral lesson taught by Innocent, that the drunkard is in a state of spiritual turmoil, and that drunkenness is always to be condemned.

Six hundred years before Innocent, St. Jerome expounded the theory that was to recur constantly in medieval literature, that indulgence in wine, meat, and delicacies leads to spiritual danger:

> . . . avoid wine as you would avoid poison . . . why do we add fresh fuel to a miserable body which is already ablaze. . . . "it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine." [Rom. 14.21] Noah drank wine and became intoxicated; but living as he did in the rude age after the flood, when the vine was first planted, perhaps he did not know its power of inebriation. And to let you see the hidden meaning of Scripture in all its fullness (for the word of God is a pearl and may be pierced on every side) after his drunkenness came the uncovering of his body; self-indulgence culminated in lust. First the belly is crammed; then the other members are aroused. . . . When Elijah, in his flight from Jezebel, lay weary and desolate beneath the oak, there came an angel who raised him up and said, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold there was a cake and a cruse of water at his head. Had God willed it, might He not have sent His prophet spiced wines and dainty dishes and flesh basted into tenderness? [15]

St. Jerome's words, that "wine is to be avoided like poison", remind us that the Summoner is excessively fond of "strong wyn, reed as blood". The somewhat disturbing simile may evoke the memory of Christ's

---

[15] St. Jerome, Letter XXII, in Letters and Select Works, trans. W. H. Fremantle, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd series (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., n.d.), pp. 25-6.

blood shed for vicious men like the Summoner. A simple diet, without strong wine and dainty dishes, is the one approved by St. Jerome.

In his condemnation of Jovinian, with which work we know Chaucer to be well acquainted,[16] St. Jerome describes the diet of the aspiring Christian:

> If you wish to be perfect, it is good not to drink wine, and eat flesh. If you wish to be perfect, it is better to enrich the mind than to stuff the body. But if you are an infant and fond of the cooks and their preparations, no one will snatch the dainties out of your mouth. Eat and drink, and, if you like, rise up with Israel and play, and sing, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Let him eat and drink, who looks for death when he has feasted, and who says with Epicurus, "There is nothing after death, and death itself is nothing." We believe Paul when he says in tones of thunder: "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats. But God will destroy both them and it." [1 Cor. 6.13] [17]

The reference to the spiritual death for eternity suffered by the followers of Epicurus strikes an ominous note when we learn from Chaucer that the Franklin is "Epicurus owene sone".

In his treatise denouncing Jovinian, St. Jerome emphasizes the minimal dietary needs of the devout Christian, as well as associating meat eaters with carnal desires:

> Our bodies need only something to eat and drink. Where there is bread and water, and the like, nature is satisfied. Whatever more there may be does not go to meet the wants of life, but are ministers to vicious pleasure. Eating and drinking does not quench the longing for

---

[16] The Wife of Bath specifically refers to St. Jerome's Against Jovinian in her Prologue, III, 674-5, and makes numerous allusions to the tract.

[17] St. Jerome, Against Jovinian, p. 393.

> luxuries, but appeases hunger and thirst. Persons who feed on flesh want also gratifications not found in flesh. But they who adopt a simple diet do not look for flesh. Further, we cannot devote ourselves to wisdom if our thoughts are running on a well-laid table, the supply of which requires an excess of work and anxiety. 18

When Chaucer's lines in the Franklin's portrait are read,

> His table dormant in his halle alway
> Stood redy covered al the longe day
> (I, 353-4)

the similarity to the words of St. Jerome should be noted. The Franklin's thoughts concern the furnishing of his table, not the wisdom necessary for salvation.

Also embodying St. Jerome's teachings about diet is a treatise written by John of Salisbury, an archbishop who studied under Abelard and was secretary to Thomas Becket for twenty years. John describes gluttonous banquets like those enjoyed by the Franklin, and he demonstrates the lack of spiritual happiness that results from the pursuit of such folly:

> Course follows course; one kind of food is stuffed with another; this is flavoured with that and violence is done nature by compelling one kind to surrender its native savour and adopt that of another; fish pickles are compounded; nothing is less esteemed than fish sauce that does not offer a mixture of several ingredients along with the receipt for the same . . . The cooks are in a turmoil of worry; elaborate regulations are formulated; night and day the dictator of the establishment ponders on what the administrative problems for the daily banquets are for that particular day. From every quarter he searches for incentives to gluttony and for the means of whetting jaded appetites,

---

[18] St. Jerome, Against Jovinianus, p. 396.

> regarding all his labours useless unless he has satisfied the whims of intemperance. 19

The Franklin worries his cook just as much as the "dictator" does in the above excerpt, for

> Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
> Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.
> (I, 351-2)

According to John, he is guilty of sinful intemperance. Even more emphatically than St. Jerome, John condemns the followers of Epicurus to eternal death, forcing us to reinterpret the apparently innocuous comparison in the Franklin's portrait:

> Broad therefore is the way of the Epicureans, and it leadeth indubitably to death, through perils however, through error, through bitterness, and through all kinds of vanities, so that no one finds on it a joyful and tranquil condition of life or ever reaches such a state by following it; for that beatitude be grasped, its foundation must be planted upon true, not vain blessings. Vain blessings do indeed cast their votary into exterior darkness where there is weeping of eyes and gnashing of teeth, tingling of ears, the various tortures and afflictions of the damned, and where no order but everlasting horror dwelleth. 20

Such was the reaction of the Middle Ages to those who indulged in Epicurean delights.

Another work which enjoyed widespread popularity in Chaucer's time was the De Planctu Naturae of Alanus de Insulis. Alanus is a shadowy figure in history, but the influence that he exerted on Jean de

---

[19] Joseph B. Pike, trans., John of Salisbury's Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers (The University of Minnesota Press, 1938), p. 317.

[20] Ibid., pp. 404-5.

Meun's Roman de la Rose and Chaucer's Parliament of Fowls is enormous. Alanus scathingly indicts the glutton, whose dishes recall those of the Franklin and the Cook. This time, the clergy is chastized, in the first of many examples of anti-clerical literature:

> Now this pestilence, not contented with plebeian humility, extends itself quite deeply among prelates. These, degrading the office of baptism, baptise in the base font of spice salmon, pike, and other fish which are exceptional in equal excellence, and have been crucified in various martyrdoms of cookery, to the end that, by coming from such a baptism, they may acquire a varied agreeable savour. Furthermore, on the same table the beast of the earth is drowned in the flood of spice, the fish swims in it, the bird is limed in its paste . . . . These evils form the bridge over which the brothels of licentiousness are reached. . . . They are the sources of disease. They beget poverty. They are the nurses of discord, the sisters of madness, the mothers of excess, the seekers after impurity. . . . For though my liberality distributes to men so many dishes of food, and rains upon them such flowing cups, yet they, ungrateful for my favours, misusing lawful things in ways beyond all measure of law, and loosening the bridles of the throat, at the same time overstep the limits of eating and extend the lines of drinking indefinitely. 21

The food and drink that snowed upon the Franklin's house would not have pleased Alanus. In this excerpt the connection is again made between foods of the flesh and carnal desires. By applying Alanus's words to the Franklin's portrait, we now know that "felicitee" is not the final result of his feasts.

In words that echo St. Jerome and Innocent, Alanus indicates the proper diet for the true Christian:

---

[21]Alanus de Insulis, De Planctu Naturae, trans. Douglas M. Moffat (Yale Studies in English XXXVI: New York, 1908), Prose vi, pp. 62-3.

> . . . apply the curbs of moderation to thy palate, pay thy belly its due most emperately, let the path of thy throat taste the rain of Lyaeus, the draughts of Bacchus, soberly, drink but little, that the mouth may be thought to give a sort of kiss to the wine-god's cup. . . . Let a common, simple, spare diet wear out the mutinies of the haughty flesh. 22

It is unlikely that Chaucer deviated so much from the recognized moral authorities of the day that he would condone the dietary excesses of the Monk, the Franklin and the Cook, or expect his reader to prefer their extravagance to Christian moderation.

Legends, stories, and books of instruction for the young also preach temperance and moderation. The Legenda Aurea, written by Jacobus de Voragine in the thirteenth century, emphasizes the simple diet of the saints. The story of St. James the Less contains these words:

> So great was his holiness from the very womb of his mother, that he never drank wine nor strong drink, nor ate meat . . . 23

Similarly, St. Peter is noted for his frugal diet:

> What he ate and what he wore upon his body, he himself tells us in the book of Clement: 'I eat naught but bread and olives,' he says, 'and less often a few vegetables.' 24

Those who disobey the Church's teachings about proper food and drink suffer eternal torment, according to the Gesta Romanorum, as the following selection illustrates:

---

[22] De Planctu Naturae, Metre VIII, p. 75.

[23] Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York, 1969), p. 262.

[24] Ibid., p. 331.

> Gluttony has five grades of sin. The first is, to inquire for high-seasoned and delicate food; the second, to dress it curiously; the third, to take it before there is occasion; the fourth, to take it too greedily; and the fifth, in too large a quantity. The first man, Adam, was conquered by gluttony; and for this Esau gave away his birth-right. This excited the people of Sodom to sin, and overthrew the children of Israel in the wilderness. So the Psalmist, 'While the meat was yet in their mouths, the anger of God came upon them.' The iniquity of Sodom arose in its superabundance; and the man of God, who was sent to Bethel, was slain by a lion in consequence of indulging his appetite. Dives, of whom it is said in the Gospel that he feasted sumptuously every day, was buried in hell. Nabusardan, the prince of cooks, destroyed Jerusalem. . . . And our Lord in the Gospel: 'Take heed lest your hearts be hardened with surfeiting and drunkenness.' Oh, how great had been the counsels of wisdom, if the heats of wine and greediness interposed not. Dangerous is it when the father of a family, or the governor of a state, is warm with wine, and inflamed with anger. Discretion is dimmed, Luxury is excited, and lust, mixing itself with all kinds of wickedness, lulls prudence asleep . . . . Oh, odious vice of drunkenness! . . . Let us then pray to the Lord to preserve us in all sobriety, that we may hereafter be invited to a feast in heaven. 25

According to the passage, which epitomizes medieval teachings about diet, immoderate desires for food and drink create misery: all perish after succumbing to the delights of the flesh.

The following selection is of particular interest when it is compared with the Summoner's portrait. It is from the Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, a "manual of deportment for girls of birth in France, England, and such parts of Germany as were relatively civilized, from

---

[25] Gesta Romanorum; or, Entertaining Moral Stories, trans. Charles Swan and Wynnard Hooper (1st ed. 1876; new ed. New York, 1959), 345-7.

the year of its appearance [1371] to well into the Renaissance"[26] and contains the advice of a father to his daughters:

> . . . a full stomach may not be holy and perfectly humble and devout.
>
> And there be other who be wise, that have their heart and hope of God. And for the love and fear that they have in Him, they keep them clean and fighteth against temptations, and the brands of the fires of lechery, and keepeth them surely without delicious meats, for the flesh is tempted by delicious meats and drinks, the which be lighters and kindlers of the brands of lechery.
>
> And weeteth well that sin is not all in much eating, but in the delight of the savour of the meats . . . as the delight of the apple slew Eve our first mother . . .
>
> . . . wine maketh red eyes, and feebleth the sight, and impedeth the ears hearkening, and stoppeth the nostrils; and it maketh the visage salce-fleumed red, and full of white whelks, and maketh the hands to tremble and to quake, and feebleth the sinews and the veins; it changeth the body, and it hasteth the death, whereupon, as saith Solomon, that there may be no good woman nor true of her body and she be drunken, for, all of the ungoodly conditions that may be in a woman, drunkenness is the worst; for when she is drunk, she is disposed to all manner uncleanness and vices. Wherefore, fair daughters, beware of that foul sin and vice of drunkenness, and of over-much eating; for once upon the day to eat and drink, it is angelic; and two times it is the life of man and woman; and for to eat ofttimes after the fleshly appetite, it is wholly the life of a beast. 27

What is noteworthy is the description of the physical effects of drunkenness: "wine . . . maketh the visage salce-fleumed red, and full of

---

[26] G. S. Taylor, ed. The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, with an introduction by D. B. Wyndham Lewis (London, 1930), p. ix.

[27] Ibid., pp. 7, 75, 83, 167-8.

white whelks". Although it is not known whether Chaucer was using the Knight's words as his model for the description of the Summoner, or whether such effects were commonly held to be the results of drunkenness, the similarity of the lines in the Summoner's portrait cannot be overlooked:

> A Somonour was ther with us in that place,
> That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,
> For saucefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
>
> That hym myghte helpen of his whelkes white,
> Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.
> (I, 623-5, 632-3)

Most certainly, the Summoner conforms to the Knight's ugly picture of the drunkard. As well, the Cook, when he falls from his horse because of his drunkenness, suffers from the trembling and enfeeblement mentioned by the Knight. Chaucer's medieval audience would recognize the Summoner and the Cook as spiritually unhealthy men, and would condemn them for their enslavement to "that foul sin and vice of drunkenness".

From the above examples, drawn from the literature that Chaucer likely knew, the attitudes of the Middle Ages to gluttony and drunkenness can be discerned. What now remains to be discussed is the use of diet made by John Gower. Because he is called "moral Gower" by Chaucer, he should not be expected to condone dietary excess in the Confessio Amantis and the Vox Clamantis. Thus the last part of this chapter will analyse Gower's two poems for their attitudes toward improper diet, and the influence they may have exerted upon Chaucer's attitude.

John Fisher, in his enlightening comparison of Gower and Chaucer, has stressed the importance of this influence:

> A more immediate source [rather than Dante] for Chaucer's broadening perspective and deepening moral intensity were the traditions and documents of medieval moralism with which he had been familiar all his life--the sermons, penitentials, treatises, and poems of Robert Mannyng, John Wyclif, John Bromyard, William Langland, and especially John Gower. 28

Fisher compares the Mirour de l'omme and the Vox Clamantis to the General Prologue, and has discovered some interesting similarities. In the Confessio Amantis, a poem modelled on Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, the following passage describes the effects of drunkenness on previously strong men:

> With Dronkeschipe it is forlore,
> And al is changed his astat,
> And wext anon so fieble and mat,
> That he mai nouther go ne come,
> Bot al togedre him is benome
> The pouer bothe of hond and fot,
> So that algate abide he mot.
> And alle hise wittes he foryet,
> The which is to him such a let,
> That he wot nevere what he doth,
> Ne which is fals, ne which is soth, . . .
> Thus ofte he is to bedde brought,
> Bot where he lith yit wot he noght,
> Til he arise upon the morwe;
> And thanne he seith, 'O, which a sorwe
> It is a man be drinkeles!'
> So that halfdrunke in such a res
> With dreie mouth he sterte him uppe,
> And seith, 'Nou baillez ca the cuppe.'
> That made him lese his wit at eve
> Is thanne a morwe al his beleve;
> The cuppe is al that evere him pleseth,
> And also that him most deseseth;
> It is the cuppe whom he serveth,
> Which alle cares fro him kerveth
> And alle bales to him bringeth:
> In joie he wepth, in sorwe he singeth, . . .

---

[28] John H. Fisher, John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer (London, 1965), pp. 205-6.

He drinkth the wyn, bot ate laste
The wyn drynkth him and bint him faste,
And leith him drunke be the wal,
As him which is his bonde thral
And al in his subjeccion. 29

Gower's lengthy description of the debilitating effects of drunkenness coincides with the sufferings of Chaucer's Cook as the Tales progress. But whereas Gower specifically states the consequences of inebriation--the half-dead sleep, the dry mouth in the morning, the regret--and finally observes that wine enslaves the drunkard, Chaucer, apparently humorously, writes of a drunkard who eventually falls from his horse. After briefly describing the effects of the vice, Chaucer defers to his audience's ability to judge such men, by drawing upon their knowledge of the traditional attitude towards drunkenness, an attitude emphatically stated by Gower.

Chaucer's method, unlike Gower's, is that of an extremely subtle ironist. What takes Gower many lines of rhetorical poetry to develop is suggested by Chaucer in a few words. Hence Gower, like John of Salisbury, harangues his readers about the thankless labours of the glutton's cook:

The coc which schal his mete arraie,
Bot he the betre his mouth assaie,
His lordes thonk schal ofte lese,
Er he be served to the chese:
For ther mai lacke noght so lyte,
That he ne fint anon a wyte;
For bot his lust be fully served,
Ther hath no wiht his thonk deserved. 30

---

[29] G. C. Macaulay, ed., The Complete Works of John Gower, vol. 3, Confessio Amantis (Oxford, 1901), Book 6, pp. 167-9.

[30] Confessio, Book 6, p. 184.

Chaucer achieves the same effect by the use of four words in the Franklin's portrait: "Wo was his cook . . ."

In the Vox Clamantis, Gower attacks, in scathing prolixity, the unworthy prelate who lives luxuriously in the desires of the flesh:

> His hall is open to one and all, and viands load his table, and he indulges in entirely too much food and drink . . . These feasts are got up only for the rich . . . And so he wastes his life's empty hours, blissful in his play, lust, wine, and drowsiness. He does not realize that his body, which now feeds and pampers itself in so many ways, may feed an everlasting fire. 31

Recalling Gower's words, Chaucer's Prioress, Monk, and Friar similarly "pamper" their bodies, and the Franklin's hall, with its overburdened table, is likewise open only to the wealthy. The Cook and the Summoner are both momentarily "blissful" in their wine, lust, and drowsiness. Thus, although the methods differ, the same sins are described; ultimately, the same punishment awaits both Chaucer's and Gower's revellers in the flesh.

In the following selection, in which Gower condemns sinful monks, the similarity in Chaucer's and Gower's material should once more be noted:

> . . . the monk cares about nothing except stuffing his worthless body, yet his soul goes hungry every day. In these times snow-white bread, delicate wine, and meats provide monks with daily feasts. 32

The Prioress's "wastel-breed", the Monk's extravagant dish of swan, and

---

[31] John Gower, Vox Clamantis, in The Major Latin Works of John Gower, trans. Eric W. Stockton (Seattle, 1962), Book III, Ch. 2, pp. 119-20.

[32] Ibid., Book IV, Ch. 3, p. 167.

the Friar's love of wine make these members of the regular clergy as culpable as Gower's monk. Gower also evokes Innocent's words condemning the labours of cooks, which are in turn used by Chaucer in his Cook's portrait:

> Just see how the cook bakes and roasts, freezes and melts, grinds and presses, strains and tests his performances. 33

Finally, Chaucer's monk, who sees no reason why he should "swynken with his handes, and laboure", seems to be modelled exactly on Gower's monk:

> If a gluttonous monk can fatten his paunch, he thinks there is nothing in Holy writ to the effect that one should work. 34

Such adherence to the words of his contemporary would also seem to indicate Chaucer's agreement with the condemnations Gower heaps upon the intemperate. The following excerpt describes the doom awaiting his gluttons:

> He used to relish spices and tipple sweet wines; and excrements mixed with clay are now in their place. In his middle, where his fatness used to lie snug, a worm now lurks which devours his fat. His potbelly, which was big with drunken indulgence, is burst, and a toad possesses his cavernous throat. 35

The same eternal punishment awaits most of Chaucer's pilgrims because of their characterization. Chaucer differs from Gower only by being the better artist according to our standards: his "sentence" is more successfully submerged (but still apparent) in his "solaas". However,

---

[33] Ibid., p. 167.

[34] Ibid., p. 167.

[35] Ibid., Book VII, Ch. 14, p. 273.

different methods do not denote different moral attitudes. Because Chaucer is an ironist, not an overt moralizer like Gower, does not indicate that his moral values are dissimilar to Gower's or to any other writer of his century. As the Tales unfold, Chaucer's position becomes less ambiguous (evidenced by his words in the Wife of Bath's Prologue and in the Pardoner's Tale) until he specifically states his attitude towards improper diet in the Parson's Tale:

> Glotonye . . . is expres . . . agayn the comandement of God. Glotonye is unmesurable appetit to ete or to drynke. . . . This sin corrumped al this world. (X, 817-8)

That Chaucer respected Gower enough to dedicate Troilus and Criseyde to him[36] should indicate that he more than likely shared Gower's views on gluttony. His own words prove this. Even though his ironic method may at first pose difficulties in recognizing his position, Chaucer, like Gower, is describing the Christian whose soul starves in a well-nourished body. Regarding diet, his attitude resembles Gower and the other moral writers discussed in this chapter.

---

[36] "O moral Gower, this book I direct/ To the . . ." (Troilus and Criseyde, V, 1856-7)

CHAPTER THREE

THE USE OF DIET IN RELIGIOUS AND SATIRIC POETRY

The common element in the poems to be discussed in this chapter, besides their references to diet, is their condemnation of the excesses of the regular clergy, a group that includes Chaucer's Prioress, Monk, and Friar. Beginning with Piers Plowman, and including selections from specifically satiric poetry, such as the Speculum Stultorum, Ship of Fools, Romance of the Rose, and three Goliard poems, references to diet will be examined for their adherence to the traditional attitudes to intemperance established in Chapter Two. Next, The Land of Cockaygne, described by Frederick Furnivall as "the airiest and cleverest piece of satire in the whole range of Early English, if not of English, poetry"[1] deserves particular attention. Then poems celebrating the Golden Age, beginning with Ovid's lines in the Metamorphoses and concluding with Chaucer's own version, the "Former Age", will be discussed. The objective of the chapter is to determine the influence on Chaucer of the attitudes to diet expressed in these examples of religious and satiric poetry.

---

[1] Frederick Furnivall, ed., Early English Poems and Lives of the Saints (Berlin, 1862; repr. AMS, 1974), p. iv.

Piers Plowman, written by one of Chaucer's contemporaries, reflects the traditional teachings of the medieval church. The poem opens with an admonition, administered to Piers by a "loueli ladi of lere", to follow a moderate diet:

> And mete atte mele for myseise of þiselue,
> And drynke whan þow dryest; ac do nouȝt out of resoun,
> That þow worth þe werse whan þow worche shuldest. 2

He is then told an exemplum about a glutton who succumbs to the temptations of spices and ale:

> Now bigynneth Glotoun for to go to schrifte,
> And kaires him to kirke-ward his coupe to schewe.
> Ac Beton þe brewestere bad hym good morwe
> And axed of hym with þat whiderward he wolde.
> 'To holi cherche,' quod he, 'for to here masse,
> And sithen I wil be shryuen and synne namore.'
> 'I haue gode ale, gossib,' quod she, 'and a pounde of garlike,
> A ferthyngworth of fenel-seed for fastyngdayes.'
> Þanne goth Glotoun in 3

Particularly noteworthy here is the association of seasonings with gluttony, for spices and garlic are featured in the Cook's, the Franklin's, and the Summoner's portraits.

"Glotoun", after spending a day in riotous feasting at the tavern, such as the Friar might enjoy, awakes sick and remorseful, vowing to free himself from his vice:

> And þanne gan Glotoun grete and gret doel to make
> For his lither lyf þat he lyued hadde,
> And avowed to fast . . . 4

---

[2] Langland, Piers Plowman, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford, 1972), Passus I, p. 8.

[3] Piers Plowman, Passus V, p. 46.

[4] Ibid., p. 48.

His penitence is commendable: after reading the Canterbury Tales, one notes that similar remorse is not expressed by any of the pilgrims. Perhaps, it may be conjectured, this will be effected by the Parson's Tale.

Most of the poems that follow attack the regular clergy, for by Chaucer's time, a strong tradition of anti-clerical literature had developed. Such literature appeared as the piety of the regular clergy degenerated, and as the rigorous self-denial practised in the early days of the cloister disappeared. Consequently, monks, friars and nuns became the subjects of poems and stories that bitterly satirized their concupiscence. This attack may have been prompted or fanned by the reputed wealth of the cloister, estimated at one-third of the national revenue.[5] Certainly, resentment of this enormous wealth fostered some of the attacks, but circumvention of the rule of diet also contributed to the animosity.[6] For example, the rule of the Benedictines forbade butcher's meat except

---

[5]G. G. Coulton, The Medieval Scene (Cambridge, 1930; repr. 1960), p. 48.

[6]Thomas Wright documents a case of monastic dietary excess in his book, A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England During the Middle Ages (London, 1862), p. 348: "Giraldus Cambrensis, an ecclesiastic himself, complains in very indignant terms of the luxurious table kept by the monks of Canterbury in the latter half of the twelfth century; and he relates an anecdote which shows how far at that time the clergy were in this respect in advance of the laity. One day, when Henry II paid a visit to Winchester, the prior and the monks of St. Swithin met him, and fell on their knees to complain of the tyranny of their bishop. When the king asked what was their grievance, they said that their table had been curtailed of three dishes. The king, somewhat surprised at this complaint, and imagining, no doubt, that the bishop had not left them enough to eat, inquired how many dishes he had left them. They replied, ten; at which the king, in a fit of indignation, told them that he himself had no more than three dishes to his table, and uttered an imprecation against the bishop, unless he reduced them to the same number."

in cases of sickness: monks hypocritically went to the infirmary and ate meat there.[7] Chaucer's Monk, who eats the rarest and most expensive type of poultry, the swan, has perverted the original intention of self-denial in a diet prohibiting flesh-meats, but allowing poultry.

Walter Map (fl. 12th C.) relates an anecdote about the Cistercians which illustrates their decline in the rule of diet:

> . . . swine . . . they raise in many thousands, from which they sell the hams, perchance not all; the heads, the shins, the feet they neither give away, nor sell, nor cast out; what becometh of them, God alone knoweth. In regard to their fowls, also, in which they are passing rich, it is likewise a question between God and them. 8

Map maintains a strident anti-clerical tone throughout his writings, and laments the degeneracy of his time.

John Gower continues the complaint of clerical excesses by describing the "altered rule" of the monks:

> Men's thinking frequently turns toward new fashions, and the altered rule for monks will be a witness for me on this point. The original rule for monks has now become curtailed, for re has been subtracted from regula so that only gula is left. And to drink wines freely by the tun is called moderation on the part of a monk, who gorges immoderately. The monastic order commands silence during breakfast--so that no talkative tongue may disturb the ravenous jaws. 9

Gower's statement, that monks are now slaves to gula rather than to their regula, recalls the suggested etymology of the adjective "goliard", to

---

[7] Coulton, p. 79.

[8] Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium, trans. Frederick Tupper and M. B. Ogle (London, 1924), pp. 46-7.

[9] Gower, Vox Clamantis, Bk. IV, Ch. 3, p. 168.

describe those poets who were the clergy's most savage critics. Their name is supposed to derive from gula, because they themselves were often gluttonous.[10] But the Goliards differ from Gower in their condemnation of monastic excesses, for they take delight in stating their case by means of puns and parodies, just as Chaucer employs irony.

James McPeek has compared Chaucer's clerics to those satirized by the Goliards. The following selection demonstrates the relationship between the abbot in the prose satire, Magister Golias de quodam abbate, and Chaucer's Pardoner, Franklin, and Friar:

> The abbot's food must be well flavored: His indignation would be wonderful to behold if any food lacked its proper spice. The Pardoner is likewise concerned with the attempt of the cooks to spice the glutton's dishes to entice his hunger; and one recalls yet another pilgrim whose cook was 'wo' unless his sauce were pungent and sharp. The abbot himself, incidentally, has eyes that wander hither and thither like roaming planets when he conducts worship; and one has a fleeting image of another pilgrim whose eyes, when he had sung, twinkled in his head like stars on a frosty night. [11]

Another Goliard poem, the "Apocalypsis Goliae", a parody of the book of Revelations, attacks the monastic diet:

> A dining Abbot's something to behold:
> The eager teeth, the swiftly moving jaws,
> The yawning throat, the gut a foaming sink,
> The trembling fingers raking food like claws.
>
> When Abbot and his brethren sit to feast,
> They quickly pass the cups of wine along.
> The Abbot lifts the cup above his head,
> And makes the rafters echo with his song:

---

[10] See Paull F. Baum, "Chaucer's Puns: A Supplementary List", PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 168, who connects the term to Chaucer's Miller: "He was a janglere and a goliardeys" (I, 560).

[11] James A. S. McPeek, "Chaucer and the Goliards", Speculum, 26 (1951), 334.

"How lovely is the vessel of the Lord!
Behold the chalice of inebriation!
O Bacchus, be the master of our board!
O Son of the Vine, be always our salvation!"
. . . . . .
The Monk is silent while he chews his meat;
He concentrates when he sits down to eat.
He never stands if he can find a seat;
His gut might be too heavy for his feet. 12

By comparing this poem with the last selection from Gower, we note that Gower also speaks of the spurious "silence" at monastic meal-times.

Finally, "Alta Clamat Epicurus", describes Epicureans (like the Franklin) as gluttons:

Alte Clamat Epicurus	Belly-Worship
Alte clamat Epicurus:	Epicurus loudly cries:
venter satur est securus;	"A well-stuffed belly satisfies."
venter deus meus erit	Belly's my god, and I his slave,
talem deum gula querit	Such a god our palates crave
Cutis eius semper plena	Lust for guzzling he indulges
velut uter et lagena;	Like a leathern flask he bulges;
iungit prandium cum cena,	Lunch prolongs itself to dinner,
unde pinguis rubet gena,	Hence his cheeks are never thinner
et si quando surgit vena,	But are laced with many a vein.
fortior est quam catena.	Appetite is still his chain. 13

The use of the word gula identifies this poem as one describing a mortal sin, which binds the vicious in catena or chains to earth. The same image was used by Gower in the first selection from Confessio Amantis.

Continuing in the satirical manner of Goliard poetry is the Speculum Stultorum, or, A Mirror for Fools (The Book of Burnel the Ass),

---

[12] "The Apocalypse of Golias", trans. Prof. F. X. Newman, in Literature of Medieval England, D. W. Robertson, ed., p. 260.

[13] "Alta Clamat Epicurus", in The Goliard Poets, George F. Whicher, trans. and ed. (U.S.A., 1949), p. 248-9.

written about 1180 by Nigel Longchamp, a Benedictine monk.[14] This tale, similar in tone and content to Lucius Apuleius' Golden Ass, describes the adventures of Burnel, the ass, in his quest for a shorter tail. However, even he is aware of proper diet for donkeys, in accordance with Christian moderation:

> From my mother's womb
> Life has been hard for me; there's been no room
> For dainty courses or for drunkenness.
> Thistles and burs provide the tastiest mess
> And rain's my drink; that is the healthiest way;
> Plain living and high thinking, so they say.
> I'm slow and lazy, but I'd lazier be
> If I were used to live luxuriously.
> Nay, even your rich man is no better for't
> If he puts down too much champagne and port.
> Wine's not for me--makes wise men lose their wit,
> And does a mort of harm: I'll none of it. 15

But, forsaking his correct attitude to diet, Burnel eventually decides to found his own monastery, in which the infractions of the regula of all the orders he has visited are combined to create a rule that emphasizes gula.

The Ship of Fools, although a fifteenth century poem, is the epitome of works satirizing the benighted, who resemble in many respects Chaucer's pilgrims. These "riotous revellers" merit none of their author's sympathy. Epicureans like the Franklin are exposed:

> The whole world's base licentiousness
> Turns finally to bitterness,

---

[14]The author has frequently been attributed with the surname Wireker; this is the mistake of the editor John Bale in the sixteenth century.

[15]Nigel Longchamp, A Mirror for Fools, trans. J. H. Mozley (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1963), p. 23.

Though Epicurus placed his trust
In worldly joys and wanton lust. 16

According to Brant, extravagant feasts like the Franklin's reveal a lack of charity:

To rich men dinners we will proffer,
And game, fowl, fish to them we offer,
The scraping host cajoles and flatters
The while the beggar waits in tatters
And from the cold his jawbone chatters. 17

Cooks are attacked for their thefts and deceptions, in words that remind us not only of Chaucer's Cook, but also of the Shipman:

We've no regrets at any turn
For we expend what others earn.
Above all when our master's gone
And sees not what is going on
We visit inns and there carouse,
And then bring guests into the house
And give and take full many a swig
From cans and jugs and bottles big,

We drink the wines with comrades boon
And tap the largest barrel soon
Which will not show that it's been bled. 18

It is possible that the Cook defrauds the Guildsmen in the same way. For he is certainly accused by Harry Bailly of cheating his customers by selling unwholesome food, a common charge laid against cooks in estates literature:

For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a Jakke of Dovere hastow soold
That hath been twies hoot and twies coold.

---

[16] Sebastian Brant, The Ship of Fools, trans. Edwin H. Zeydal (New York, 1944; repr. 1962), p. 179.

[17] Ibid., p. 101.

[18] Ibid., p. 266.

> Of many a pilgrym hastow Cristes curs,
> For of thy percely yet they fare the wors,
> That they han eten with thy stubbel goos;
> For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
> (I, 4346-52)

The portrait of the cooks in the Ship of Fools describes their abilities in words that echo Chaucer's:

> And we can skilfully prepare
> A wealth of dishes served with care,
> Thereby the palate always wooing
> With cooking, boiling, frying, stewing, . . .
> The cook, he is the devil's friar. 19

Brant gives us the ultimate destination for such cooks: Chaucer probably did not think that his Cook deserved a better fate. E. Talbot Donaldson's comment, that the Cook's portrait is nothing more than a "concoction of culinary superlatives",[20] displays a lack of awareness of the literary tradition of his portrayal.

Mendicant friars, like Chaucer's "Huberd", are bitterly attacked in the Romance of the Rose, one of the most influential poems of the Middle Ages, and perhaps translated by Chaucer. Indeed, the most vicious, of the many disreputable characters in the poem is the friar, False-Seeming, who says about his calling, "Pious lambs we seem outside, but we,/ Inside, are ravening wolves".[21] False-Seeming's gluttony is so great that he allows the sinful to purchase absolution from him with food:

---

[19] Ship of Fools, p. 267.

[20] E. Talbot Donaldson, ed., Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader (New York, 1958), p. 891.

[21] Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose, trans. Harry W. Robbins (New York, 1962), Ch. 55, p. 241.

> . . . with feasts he make[s] a good defence,
> With lampreys, luces, salmons, and with eels,
> (If they are to be purchased in his town),
> With tarts and custards, basketfuls of cheese
> (Which is the finest jewel of them all),
> With Cailloux pears, capons, and fatted geese
> (Which tickle gullets well); unless he serve
> Us promptly with a roebuck or a hare
> Larded on a spit, or at the least
> A loin of pork . . . 22

Most of the meats requested by False-Seeming, such as the lamprey, eel, hare, and roast of pork, are prohibited by the Levitical code. They are also foods which appear regularly in satirical literature, and in the General Prologue, for luce graces the Franklin's table, tarts are among the Cook's wares, and hares are hunted by the Monk. Jean de Meun seems to be implementing the allegorical interpretation of the code, by associating unclean foods with the evil man, to emphasize the unclean state of his soul. Other biblical references are used metaphorically as well. By calling a cheese the "finest jewel of all", False-Seeming reveals his unwholesome spiritual state, for the "finest jewel" in all medieval poetry was salvation. False-Seeming has also turned "up-so-doun" the true meaning of the benefit of Absolution, which was purchased with Christ's blood, and not "with lampreys, luces, salmons, and with eels". Because the foods that appear in the selection are associated with a man of unmitigated wickedness, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that Chaucer would think approvingly of those to whom he attributes them.

Of particular interest in a discussion demonstrating the role of diet in anti-clerical literature is The Land of Cockaygne. This verse-

---

[22] Ibid., pp. 241-2.

satire was written, according to Rossell Hope Robbins, by an anonymous Franciscan friar before 1350,[23] to support the Franciscans' attacks upon the Cistercians' lack of virtue; or else by a "Goliardic clerk of specially lively imagination".[24] An excerpt of the poem is given here, but the complete text is included in the Appendix, along with a translation that has been made by A. L. Morton.

The Land of Cockaygne

Fur in see bi west spaynge
Is a lond ihote cockaygne . . .
Though paradis be miri and bright,
Cockaygn is of fairir sight.
What is ther in paradis
Bot grasse and flure and grene-ris?
Though ther be joy and grete dute,
Ther n'is mete bote frute.
Ther n'is halle, bure, no benche.
Bot watir mannes thursto quenche. . . .
In cokaygne is met and drink.
Withute care, how and swink;
The met is trie, the drink is clere
To none, russin, and sopper. . . .
Ther beeth riuers gret and fine
Of oile, melk, honi and wine . . .
Al is solas and dedute.
Ther is a wel fair abbei
Of white monkes and of grei.
Ther beeth bowris and halles.
Al of pasteiis beeth the walles,
Of fleis, of fisse and rich met.
The likfullist that man mai et.
Fluren cakes beeth the scingles alle.
Of cherche, cloister, boure, and halle.
The pinnes beeth fat podinges,
Rich met to princes and kinges. . . .
In the praer is a tre
Swithe likful for to se.
The rote is gingeuir and galingale,

---

[23]Rossell Hope Robbins, "Authors of Middle English Religious Lyrics", JEGP, 39 (1940), 230-8.

[24]Robbins, in A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500, Albert E. Hartung, ed. (New Haven, Connecticut, 1975), Vol. 5, p. 1409.

The siouns beeth al sedewale
Trie maces beeth the flure,
The rind, canel of swet odur,
The frute gilofre of gode smakke;
Of cucubes ther n'is no lakke . . .
Ther beeth four willis in the abbei,
Of triacle and halewei,
Of baum and ek piement,
Eur ernend to right rent . . .
Yite I do you mo to witte:
The gees irostid on the spitte
Fleeth to that abbai, god hit wot,
And gredeth: "Gees! al hote, al hot!"
Hi bringeth garlek gret plente,
The best idight that man mai see.
The leuerokes, that beeth couth,
Lightith adun to mannes mouth,
Idight in stu ful swithe wel,
Ridrid with gilofre and canel. 25

The folk origins of this "poor man's utopia" have been described by A. L. Morton,[26] but the satirical nature of the poem remains to be discussed. The satirical method is one of parody and irony; again what seems to be praised is, in reality, condemned. Thus, the paradise of the cloister becomes the paradise of earthly delights, according to Thomas Hill:

> That monks enter upon their vocation in order to obtain paradise is obvious; but one of the characteristic associations of monastic writers is that the well ordered cloister is itself a paradise.
>
> Monks and nuns should live an ordered life which is the earthly type of the "order" of heaven. In the Land of Cokaygne the monks and nuns live a radically disordered

---

[25] The Land of Cockaygne, in Early English Poems and Lives of the Saints, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (Berlin, 1862; repr. AMS, 1974), pp. 156-61.

[26] See A. L. Morton, The English Utopia (London, 1952). Morton relates the poem to the desire of the masses for a land of idleness. A similar article has been written by Irene Howard, "The Folk Origins of 'The Land of Cockaygne'", Humanities Association Bulletin (Canada), 18, pt. 2 (1967), 72-9.

life in a paradise of sensual delight. 27

The river of milk (1.16) in which the erring nuns swim after their frolics with the monks parodies the river of milk found in the iconography of heaven. The purpose of the heavenly river is to purify the impious; according to Hill, the poet who created the Land of Cockaygnehas parodied this purpose in order to emphasize the impurity of the nunnery.

Clifford Davidson sees the poem not only as an attack on monasticism, but also as an exemplification of the sins of the flesh. The setting, in the west, is opposite that of the Edenic paradise, thereby representing the rejection of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The four rivers are analagous to those in Eden, and the tree of spice in the cental court of the abbey parodies the tree in the centre of Eden. Davidson discusses the traditional association of lechery with gluttony, and concludes by stating the purpose of the poem:

> The poem does not state openly what it implies: each man's life ought to imitate Christ, for only then can he at Judgment Day hope to win the trueParadise. The ultimate aim of the poem is to point the way beyond the Flesh toward the Spirit and toward reconciliation with a loving Father, because only thus can men's troubles come to an end and only thus can they live happily forever. 28

According to Davidson, Cockaygne is a false paradise, ready to entice Christians away from their true goal.

The connection between delights of the flesh and false paradises has long been made in literature. Mandeville conforms to this tradition

---

[27]Thomas D. Hill, "Parody and Theme in the Middle English 'Land of Cockaygne'", Notes and Queries, n. s. 22 (1975), 55-9.

[28]Clifford Davidson, "The Sins of the Flesh in the Fourteenth-Century Middle English 'Land of Cockaygne', Ball State University Forum, II, pt. 4, 21-6.

in his description of the pagan paradises of the East:

> . . . it is a place of delights, where a man shall find all manner of fruits all times of the year, and rivers running with wine, milk, honey, and fresh water; and they shall have fair palaces and great and fair houses and good, after they have deserved, and those palaces are made of precious stones, gold and silver, and ilk a man shall have fourscore wives of fair damsels, and he shall have at do them aye when he list, and he shall evermore find them maidens. This trow they all that they shall have in Paradise, and this is against our law. 29

The fabulous kingdom of Prester John, which Mandeville also claims to have visited, contains similar features.

Mandeville's portrayal of a Saracen paradise conforms to those which Howard Patch describes in his book, The Other World. The availability of delicious foods is always a feature. The following selection shows us that The Land of Cockaygne incorporates most of the attributes of an earthly paradise:

> Its . . . constant features . . . are the following; Paradise is in the East (India or Asia, or perhaps so far as to be at the other side of the world); it is cut off from man because it is located on a high mountain or in the ocean or by a fiery wall, or by more than one of these, making it an island; it contains a garden with an abundance of trees and fruits and flowers which, in some accounts, are unfading, in some have a medicinal value; the fragrance of the fruit or the flowers is sometimes emphasized: the Tree of Life, the fountain, and the four streams with their names, and the jewels, all as in Genesis, are mentioned almost everywhere; and sometimes there is reference to the birds and even the animals of the Garden. In literary expression, the negative formula (no winter, no summer, but only a temperate climate) is commonly adopted and sometimes much elaborated. 30

---

[29] Mandeville's Travels, pp. 93-4.

[30] Howard Rollin Patch, The Other World (1950; repr. Octagon Books, 1970), pp. 153-4.

Patch goes on to place the Land of Cockaygne in the tradition of parodies of Paradise:

> It was inevitable that in time the Earthly Paradise should be used for satiric purposes. The most famous example is the thirteenth-century Land of Cockaygne, where a corresponding but superior region is described as the background for an attack on the corruption of monasticism. 31

Not surprisingly, the land of Cockaygne contains the foods favoured by most of Chaucer's pilgrims, for this is the land of "solaas" (I. 17) which they seek. It is a land where wine flows freely, which would delight the Miller, Cook, Franklin, and Summoner. The flesh, fish, and rich meats (I. 22) also appear on the Franklin's table. The "pasteiis" (I. 21), "fluren cakes" (I. 24), and "fat podinges" (I. 26) remind us of the Cook's "mortreux", "pye", and "blankmanger". "Galingale" (I. 30) is also used by the Cook. "Triacle" (I. 37) is a medicinal compound craved by Harry Bailly: "By corpus bones! but I have triacle/ Or elles a draughte of moyste and corny ale" (VI, 314-5). The "piment" (I. 38) contained in another of the four springs compares to the spiced wine sent by Absolon in his attempted seduction of Alisoun: "He sent hire pyment, meeth, and spiced ale" (I, 3378), and "garlek" (I. 44) appear in the Summoner's diet. Because these foods are the conventional foods of the spiritually debased, Chaucer, by including them in his pilgrims' diets, is evoking descriptive detail that was reserved for those suffering from the spiritual torpor induced by over-indulgence in unclean, delicate, foods. The parallels between the diets of the degenerate monks and nuns in Cockaygne and certain

---

[31] Ibid., p. 170.

pilgrims on their way to Canterbury imply that the one group is no better than the other. Even though both should benefit spiritually from the cloister and the pilgrimage, neither do, for their diet indicates their unworthiness as Christians.

In the Land of Cockaygne, and in the General Prologue, the foods mentioned have all been cooked or processed in some way. Again, the emphasis on "changing substance into art" (recalling Innocent's words) results in food becoming that of the spiritually defiled. The true Christian, according to St. Jerome and his followers, despises cooked or processed foods because of the time and energy wasted on the production of such earthly delights, time better devoted to Christ. Before their fall from grace, God allowed Adam and Eve only the nuts and seeds of the plant-life in Eden, thus indicating the correct diet for perfect man:

> Dixitque Deus: Ecce dedi vobis omnem herbam afferentem semen super terram, et universa ligna quae habent in semetipsis sementem generis sui, ut sint vobis in escam. 32

Even after they were cast out from this true paradise, their diet remained a meatless, simple one, according to St. Jerome:

> And yet though cast out Adam did not immediately receive permission to eat flesh; but only the fruits of trees and the produce of the crops, and herbs and vegetables were given him for food, that even when an exile from paradise he might feed not upon flesh which was not to be found in paradise, but upon grain and fruit like that of paradise. 33

Because some of Chaucer's pilgrims eat flesh and grains that have been

---

[32]Gen. 1.29.

[33]St. Jerome, Against Jovinian, p. 398.

changed into fine white bread and pies, foods not found in Eden, nor after the fall, they are, therefore, not in the correct spiritual state necessary to achieve the salvation found in paradise.

An abstemious, uncooked diet also characterized those fortunate men who lived in the time of Earth's greatest felicity, the Golden Age. This age has been immortalized by Ovid, and the numerous imitations of his idyllic state continue the emphasis on simple foods. Ovid's words equate temperance and moderation with happiness:

> Golden was that first age, which, with no one to compel, without a law, of its own will, kept faith and did the right. There was no fear of punishment, no threatening words were to be read on brazen tablets; no suppliant throng gazed fearfully upon its judge's face; but without judges lived secure. . . . And men, content with food which came with no one's seeking, gathered the arbute fruit, strawberries from the mountain-sides, cornel-cherries, berries hanging thick upon the prickly bramble, and acorns fallen from the spreading tree of Jove. Then spring was everlasting, and gentle zephyrs with warm breath played with the flowers that sprang unplanted. Anon the earth, untilled, brought forth her stores of grain, and the fields, though unfallowed, grew white with the heavy, bearded wheat. Streams of milk and streams of sweet nectar flowed, and yellow honey was distilled from the verdant oak. 34

Modelled on Ovid is Boethius' poem which celebrates the Golden Age:

> Men were most happy in former ages, content with the yield of fertile fields, and not yet ruined by indolent luxury. Their hunger was easily satisfied by acorns. They did not know the potent mixture of wine and honey . . . 35

---

[34]Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book I, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Loeb Classical Library, 1929), pp. 9-11.

[35]Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. Richard Green (Indianapolis, 1962), p. 33.

The Romance of the Rose contains the same type of wistful praise in an expanded form:

> Most precious was that glorious Golden Age!
> Men were not greedy for fine clothes or food.
> They gathered acorns in the woods for bread;
> In place of fish and flesh, they searched the glades,
> Thickets, hills and plains for fruit and nuts:
> Apples and pears, chestnuts and mulberries,
> Sloes and the seed pods of the eglantine,
> Red strawberries, and blackberries and haws.
> As vegetables, peas, beans, and herbs
> And roots they had. They gathered heads of grain.
> The grapes that grew upon the fields they picked,
> Not put them in the wine press or the vat.
> Abundantly on honey they could feast;
> It fairly dripped from stores within the oaks.
> No claret or spiced honey wine they drank
> Nor any mixture--only water pure.
> . . . They ate no pike or salmon. 36

Once again, certain foods are specifically associated with man's degeneracy. Unknown in the Golden Age was the Franklin's diet of flesh, pike (luce) and salmon. Nor was wine, enjoyed by many of the pilgrims, a part of diet then. They are the food and drink of the fallen.

John Gower adapts the genre to illustrate the Golden Age of monasticism:

> They gathered the fruits of the arbutus and mountain (strawberries), which were seasoned neither with salt nor with spices. And although they partook of acorns from Jove's spreading tree, they grew strong from these foods. Contented with the modest things produced by Nature of her own accord, they sent forth their humble prayers to God on high. Admirable sowers of the seeds of justice then, now they reap their fruits eternally a hundredfold. But that ancient salvation of souls, which religious orders once possessed, has perished, undermined by the weakness of the flesh. 37

---

[36] The Romance of the Rose, Ch. 40, p. 169.

[37] Gower, Vox Clamantis, Book IV, Ch. 2, p. 168.

Gower's selection clearly relates the monks' increase in consumption of delicate, cooked foods to their decrease in piety and adherence to the regula.

Chaucer's poem conforms more closely than Gower's to Ovidian tradition by praising the virtue of all people in the Golden Age. Diet has a key role in "The Former Age". Chaucer clearly indicates his belief that immoderate, processed diets indicate man's spiritual deterioration:

> A blisful lyf, a paisable and a swete,
> Ledden the peples in the former age.
> They helde hem payed of the fruits that they ete,
> Which that the feldes yave hem by usage;
> Unknowen was the quern and eke the melle;
> They eten mast, hawes, and swich pounage,
> And dronken water of the colde welle.
>
> Yet nas the ground nat wounded with the plough,
> But corn up-sprong, unsowe of mannes hond
> The which they gnodded, and eete nat half ynough,
> No man yit knew the forwes of his lond;
> No man the fyr out of the flint yit fond;
> Unkorven and ungrobbed lay the vyne;
> No man yit in the morter spyces grond
> To clarre, ne to sauce of galantyne.
> (p. 534)

Like its counterpart in The Romance of the Rose, Chaucer's poem associates a diet of nuts, fruit, and water in their natural states with virtuous and peaceful men. What then becomes particularly interesting is the examination of the foods that he selects to symbolize the decline of man.

Jean de Meun associated specific kinds of fish, meat, and wine with man's decline, but Chaucer singles out milled grains, sauce of galantyne, spices, and wine. Hence the Miller is only necessary in fallen times: certainly the vices of theft and drunkenness which are attributed to him were not to be found in the Golden Age. Wine of course

has been reviled in every work cited so far, with obvious implications for those pilgrims who enjoy it. But "sauce" is Chaucer's own addition to the foods associated with man's decline. Interestingly, two of his pilgrims enjoy a diet that contains it: the Franklin ("Wo was his cook but if his sauce wer /Poynaunt and sharp"), and the Prioress ("Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe"). Because sauce is found on the gluttonous Franklin's table as well as in the Prioress's diet, we should conclude that Chaucer regarded Madame Eglentyne with no greater favour than he did the Franklin.

Because the Prioress is a nun, her use of sauce is even more lamentable. Certainly St. Jerome would not have approved, as he demonstrates in a letter describing the diet of the ideal Christian, Paula:

> Except on feast days she would scarcely ever take oil with her food; a fact from which may be judged what she thought of wine, sauce, fish, honey, milk, eggs, and other things agreeable to the palate. 38

That Chaucer agrees with St. Jerome in this matter is not only proven by "The Former Age". The Pardoner, in his hypocritical condemnation of drunkenness and gluttony, denounces sauce, as well as spices, for being the food of the vicious:

> Of spicerie of leef, and bark, and roote
> Shal been his sauce ymaked by delit,
> To make hym yet a newer appetit.
> But, certes, he that haunteth swich delices,
> Is deed, while that he lyveth in tho vices.
> (VI, 544-8)

Because Chaucer describes the users of sauce and spice as spiritually dead, it seems reasonable to assume that the diets of the Prioress and

---

[38] St. Jerome, Letter CVIII, p. 204.

the Franklin are not ones he would condone. His version of a commendable diet is that of the poor dairy-woman in the Nun's Priest's Tale. She shuns sauce and similar "deyntes":

> Of poynant sauce hir neded never a deel.
> No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
> Hir diete was accordant to hir cote.
> (VII, 2834-6)

Chaucer has again stated in the Tales a moral judgment that is merely suggested in the Prologue.

It might be noted that the disapproval of spices in "The Former Age" and in the Pardoner's Tale reminds us that there is a tree of spice in that paradise of the spiritually dead, The Land of Cockaygne. Therefore, the spiced wine that the Franklin drinks in the morning, the spices employed by the Cook in his preparations, and even the Summoner's garlic possess pejorative connotations. Even as an adjective, "spiced" conveys an impression of spiritual laxity. The virtuous "povre Persoun" does not possess a "spiced conscience". On the other hand, the evil Pardoner, in order to extract more money from his gullible congregation, feels the need to "spice" his sermons with Latin:

> And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
> To saffron with my predicacioun,
> And for to stir hem to devocioun.
> (VI, 344-6)

Obviously, Chaucer implements a convention in medieval literature which associated spices with moral decline.

Once it has been discovered just what the attitude of the Middle Ages was towards an extravagant, delicate diet, and how this attitude was conveyed through direct moralizing, irony, or satire, it becomes possible to properly interpret dietary detail in seven of the portraits

in the General Prologue that include similar reference. This interpretation, however, depends upon the awareness that certain foods were indications of spiritual unworthiness. With such knowledge, the meaning behind Chaucer's references to diet can be perceived. His own words later in the Tales and in the "Former Age" clarify his true attitude towards diets like the Prioress's and the Franklin's. Hence, it will be discovered that Chaucer's methods and attitudes do not differ from those of the Goliards, Jean de Meun, and other medieval satirists, and that seven of Chaucer's pilgrims do not differ from the spiritually deadened inhabitants of Cockaygne, who delight in an unwholesome diet of cooked and luxurious foods. Unfortunately, however, several critics have either omitted to examine or failed to appreciate the tradition behind each of these portraits, and their analysis has consequently suffered, as the next chapter will indicate.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEVEN OF THE PORTRAITS

The seven portraits to be discussed in this chapter vary in length of dietary description. The diet of certain pilgrims, such as the Franklin, is described in detail, but others, such as the Doctor, contain little specific reference. However, Chaucer's method is not the prolix analysis of Gower. The details he includes in his portraits possess many levels of meaning and metaphor. Thus, the Monk's dish of swan conveys certain messages that would have been readily apparent to Chaucer's medieval audience, but require more explanation for us. Similarly, the Friar's preference for taverns indicates his sinfulness, and the Prioress's dainty diet and manners are a guide to the true state of her soul. The portraits of the Cook and the Summoner, by no means flattering, become even blacker when their dietary content is investigated. Yet in spite of Chaucer's own words, critics have had mixed reactions to these seven pilgrims. It is the purpose, then, of the chapter to present various critical interpretations of their portraits, and to adduce further evidence proving that diet must be a factor in our assessment of the spiritual state of at least seven of Chaucer's pilgrims.

THE PRIORESSE

> At mete wel ytaught was she with alle:
> She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
> Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe; . . .
> Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
> With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel-breed.
> (I, 127-9, 146-7)

The portrait of the Prioress has evoked many a critical comment. Reactions vary from R. K. Root's suggestion that her scrupulous attention to dress and table manners resembles that of the typical head of a young ladies' school,[1] to Jill Mann's theory that she is the feminine counterpart of the Squire, hence revealing the inapplicability of his type of "curteisie" in a religious sphere.[2] Muriel Bowden sees "Madame Eglentyne" as a "gracious gentlewoman", and reminds us of J. L. Lowes' famous definition of her character as "the engagingly imperfect submergence of the woman in the nun."[3] She disagrees with Kemp Malone's proposition that the Prioress is the feminine counterpart of the Monk, which in turn seems to contradict Mann's theory. In many respects, the Prioress resembles a heroine of medieval romance, but there are some jarring notes, and this resemblance increases the satire that Chaucer employs in her portrait.

However, F. N. Robinson sees the Prioress as a lady deserving of the respect tendered her throughout the Tales:

---

[1]Robert Kilburn Root, The Poetry of Chaucer (1934; repr. Peter Smith, 1957), p. 190.

[2]Mann, p. 137.

[3]Bowden, p. 93.

> Chaucer's characterization of the Prioress is extremely subtle, and his satire--if it can be called satire at all--is of the gentlest and most sympathetic sort. [4]

In contrast, James Winny has perceptively noted that the portrait is indeed ironic, for the Prioress "defers to the same instinctive principle as the morally outrageous Wife of Bath":[5] Chaucer's irony exploits the kind of disparity that Madame Eglentyne displays by putting forward disrespectful comments in the guise of approving observations.[6] But E. Talbot Donaldson sees such disparity as a "very human mixture of benevolence and weakness".[7] In another article, Donaldson states his belief that "Chaucer the man would, like his fictional representative, have found her charming and looked on her with affection".[8] Given such differing critical opinion, this assessment of the Prioress's character is not superfluous, for certain aspects should not be overlooked.

To begin with, the Prioress seems to enjoy good food, in the tradition of anti-clerical satire. She has so much to eat, in fact, that she can spare left-overs for her cherished dogs: morsels that include the finest quality of bread (second only to that distributed

---

[4] Robinson, p. 653.

[5] Winny, p. 35.

[6] Ibid., p. 87.

[7] Donaldson, p. 883.

[8] Donaldson, "Chaucer the Pilgrim", in Chaucer Criticism, Vol. I, ed. Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame, 1960) p. 12.

at Mass), roasted meat, and milk. It is hardly necessary to observe that her dogs are better fed than most of her contemporaries. With such an abundant diet, the observation that she is "not undergrowe" (not thin) seems appropriate. It might be noted that Bowden takes this line to mean "well-proportioned,"[9] but here Lumiansky offers the more correct interpretation:

> . . . the N.E.D. labels "undergrowe" an "obsolete variant of undergrown," which it defines as "imperfectly grown or developed," citing the line here in question; and Skeat . . . explains "undergrowe" as "of short stinted growth." Chaucer's "nat undergrowe" would therefore seem to mean, with reference to the Prioresse, "markedly large". 10

The Prioress, then, is modelled on the traditionally fat, overfed monks and nuns of anti-clerical satire. She consumes a diet vigorously denounced by St. Jerome, Innocent III, and Gower, as well as others that have been cited. Her ambiguous brooch, celebrating perhaps Ovidian rather than divine love, seems a correct adornment for one whose diet of meat connects her, as medieval literature demonstrates, with lechery. The sauce in which she fears to dip her fingers is the sauce consumed by men who have degenerated from the Golden Age. Similarly the wine that Chaucer implies she drinks is associated with man's sinful state of concupiscence.

---

[9] Bowden, p. 95.

[10] Lumiansky, p. 80. See also Gordon H. Harper, "Chaucer's Big Prioress", PQ, XII (1933), 308-10. Harper recalls a previous suggestion that the Prioress's broad forehead indicated, according to medieval physiognomists, a foolish and irresponsible young lady. But her forehead is not out of proportion to her body because she is uniformly broad, not well-proportioned. Harper describes her figure as "bulbous".

Broadening the satire is the description of the Prioress's table manners. It is well known that they derive from The Romance of the Rose, where Fair Welcome is informed by the immoral Duenna of ways used by women to gain men's love.[11] Skeat notes this source, but prefers not to see any connection between the Prioress and the Duenna: "Such were the manners of the age".[12] Ultimately, Ovid devised these strategies in Ars Amatoria:

> Let us discuss how you are to conduct yourselves at public banquets, dinners, and festivals . . . . Eat the food delicately, with the tips of your fingers, and don't leave markings of grease all over your face. Wipe your hands frequently . . . . You may drink with a little more freedom, for Love and wine are natural playmates. 13

D. W. Robertson describes such manners as those "of the social climber who wishes to form a reputation for being ladylike",[14] and this may certainly be true. But two more selections concerning table-manners convey a clearer indication of the Prioress's spiritual state. For in Chaucer's time, there were many little books which attempted to teach manners to the young, in imitation of French models. From such a book comes the following:

> Advise you against taking so muckle meat into your mouth but that you may right well answer when men

---

[11] The Romance of the Rose, Ch. 62, pp. 280-1.

[12] W. W. Skeat, ed., The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (Oxford, 1890; repr. 1960), p.57.

[13] Ovid, The Art of Love, trans. Charles D. Young (New York, 1931; repr. 1943), pp. 92-3.

[14] D. W. Robertson, Jr., A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962), P. 245.

> speak to you.
>
> When you shall drink, wipe your mouth clean with a cloth, and your hands also, so that you shall not in any way soil the cup, for then shall none of your companions be loth to drink with you.
>
> Likewise, do not touch the salt in the salt-cellar with any meat; but lay salt honestly on your trencher, for that is courtesy. 15

Thomas Wright gives us another example:

> A trouvère of the thirteenth century, named Robert de Blois, compiled a code of instructions in good manners for young ladies in French verse, under the title of the "Chastisement des Dames", . . . [It] forms a curious illustration of feudal domestic manners . . . 'In eating, you must avoid much laughing or talking. If you eat with another . . . , turn the nicest bits to him . . . Each time you drink, wipe your mouth well, that no grease may go into the wine, which is very unpleasant to the person who drinks after you. But when you wipe your mouth for drinking, do not wipe your eyes or nose with the table-cloth, and avoid spilling from your mouth, or greasing your hands too much.' 16

Using the selections cited as sources for the Prioress's table manners, two interpretations are possible. One has been proposed by Richard Hoffman:

> Jean [de Meun] would probably have interpreted the line "In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest" to mean that the Prioress' table courtesy, like certain of her other vain and worldly practices, was scarcely a necessary or even appropriate adjunct of the

---

[15] Edith Rickert, trans., The Babees' Books: Medieval Manners for the Young (London, 1923), pp. 6-7. Rickert notes the comparison with the Prioress's table manners in her introduction, but draws no conclusions.

[16] Thomas Wright, A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages (London, 1862), pp. 275-7.

> cloistered life. In short, it would have been difficult for Jean de Meun to escape the conclusion that the coquettish Prioress, like all who lend an attentive ear to the insinuating counsels of the Old Whore, was more concerned with the cupidinous brand of _amor_ than with true Christian _caritas_--and her coy table manners are but one instance of this concern. 17

Hoffman's explanation is plausible, given the details in the Portrait, but another theory also merits consideration. For the Prioress has obviously received instruction given to the very young (with its intention of winning a mate). Thus her immaturity, particularly her spiritual immaturity, is emphasized. Her table manners reflect her memorization of a child's textbook. However, study of such books will not benefit her soul, and the Prioress is, accordingly, one of those whom St. Jerome condemns as "infants".[18] Donaldson's comment supports this idea, for he notes Chaucer's use of a "kind of basic English" in her portrait, making the rhetoric "not unlike that of a very bright kindergarten child's descriptive theme".[19]

Paralleling her obsession with juvenile courtesy books is the Prioress's childishly misguided compassion for her lapdogs and dead mice. It is even questionable whether dogs were allowed in her abbey: the _Ancrene Riwle_ forbids them:

---

[17]Richard L. Hoffman, _Ovid and the Canterbury Tales_ (University of Pennsylvania, 1966), p. 28.

[18]For the specific reference, see Ch. II, p.18, of this paper.

[19]Donaldson, "Chaucer the Pilgrim", 4.

> ȝe mine leoue sustren ne schulen habben no best
> bute kat one. 20

The meat that she feeds them is similarly prohibited by the Riwle:

> ȝe ne schulen eten vleschs ne seim buten ine
> muchele secnesse: oþer hwo so is euer feble. 21

John Steadman notes that Chaucer ironically cites tears lavished on animals as proof of the Prioress's compassion, pointedly omitting examples of true charity required by Benedictine regula. Her tale confirms her lack of real compassion: Richard Schoeck says that it reflects the "warped" quality of her charity.[22] Because she feeds and shelters dogs, not men, and shows compassion only for the physical suffering and captivity of mice, Steadman states that Chaucer has made her charitable activities into a virtual parody of the actual works of misericordia, thus waging an indirect attack on the contemporary neglect of monastic rule.[23]

In addition, Mann and Bowden cite Chaucer's contemporaries who tell of dire spiritual consequences awaiting ladies who keep and feed

---

[20]Mabel Day, ed., The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle, EETS 225 (London, 1952; repr. 1957), p. 190.

[21]Ibid., p. 188.

[22]Richard Schoeck, "Chaucer's Prioress: Mercy and Tender Heart", Chaucer Criticism, 249.

[23]John M. Steadman, "The Prioress's Dogs and Benedictine Discipline", MP, 54 (1956-7), 1-6.

dogs,[24] and Beryl Rowland has shown that dogs as well as mice were generally despised in the Middle Ages.[25] Hence the Prioress, in what may be flagrant disregard for her regula, associates herself with despised, forbidden animals that have been demonstrated to be symbolically unclean according to the Levitical code. Her offerings to them of fine bread, milk and meat indicate that she herself partakes of these carnal foods with their traditional implications of worldliness. The sauce and wine in which she indulges further betray her carnality. It might even be suggested that the milk given her puppies is a parody of the purifying milk of Paradise, for the Prioress herself inhabits that land of the spiritually dead, Cockaygne.

Thus we have Chaucer's ironic portrait of a fat, spiritually immature Prioress, in which, in the most delicate manner, he has adhered to her traditional portrayal in anti-clerical literature. It is hardly likely that he condones her immoderate diet and misguided compassion. We are to judge her spiritual state as Chaucer would have: her soul is in grave danger.

---

[24]See Mann, pp. 132, 132n, and Bowden, pp. 98, 99. The references are to The Knight of La Tour-Landry, pp. 38-9, wherein the corpse of a lady who feeds dogs rather than the poor is accompanied by two little black dogs who lick her mouth, turning it "black as coal"; and to Owst, Literature and Pulpit, pp. 327-8, who quotes Bromyard as condemning such ladies; and Gower's Vox Clamantis, pp. 148-50, which concerns monks who keep dogs.

[25]Beryl Rowland, Blind Beasts (Kent State University Press, 1971), pp. 65-7; 153-65.

THE MONK

A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
(I, 206)

Like the Prioress, the Monk has received his fair share of critical comment. Lumiansky condones his behaviour, appearance, and diet:

> . . . we should not censure Chaucer's Monk too severely, for he is an "outridere"; that is, he has been appointed by his abbot to manage the estates and to conduct the outside business of the monastery. Some of the blame, at least, for the Monk's likes and dislikes must rest upon the institution, the Church . . . . the great number of contemporary worldly monks, in perfectly good professional standing, indicates that the Narrator's remarks about the Monk should not be read as direct satire and suggests that his statement "And I seyde his opinion was good" probably refers to his approval of the Monk's making his way in the world. In fact, the Monk seems well on his way to high place in monastic circles . . . 26

Lumiansky's lenient interpretation of the Monk's character concurs with that of Paul Beichner, who believes that the Monk simply wishes to uphold the prestige of his position by wearing luxurious clothing and by eating the most expensive of meats. Beichner sees the portrait as one of an "esteemed administrator", not a "caustic caricature".[27] Muriel Bowden, however, places the Monk in his satiric tradition by stating that Chaucer's treatment of "Daun Piers" is ironic, that the Monk has no redeeming features, and that hunters were always condemned in the Scriptures

---

[26]Lumiansky, p. 98.

[27]Paul E. Beichner, "Daun Piers, Monk and Business Administrator", Speculum, XXXIV (1959), 611-9.

as sinful men.[28] Yet Jill Mann, after giving us numerous examples of the typical portrayal of monks in anti-clerical satire, refuses to view the Monk as conforming to tradition. She feels that because Chaucer has deliberately created a contradictory portrait of "Daun Piers", we cannot judge him, because we do not know him fully,[29] even though his is one of the most complete in descriptive detail of all the portraits. Winny too, continuing in the same non-committal approach, believes that Chaucer's moral disapproval is tempered by the Monk's "sparkling vitality" and joie de vivre.[30] But Robert White's conclusive study sets these differing reactions into proper focus by demonstrating the Monk's total failure as a Benedictine:

> The monastic ideal can be defined specifically, and in the totality of Daun Piers's conscious and deliberate compromise of every provision of his monastic vows, he becomes not a representative monk of his time, but instead the satiric consummation of all possible monastic faults. . . . He has comprised all of his vows deliberately, and he has not only neglected his own soul, but also has led the souls of others into spiritual danger. 31

Edmund Reiss, in a brilliant two-part analysis of the Monk's portrait, anticipated White's denunciation by arguing that the Monk is

---

[28]Bowden, pp. 107-16.

[29]Mann, p. 37.

[30]Winny, p. 91.

[31]Robert B. White, Jr. "Chaucer's Daun Piers and the Rule of St. Benedict: The Failure of an Ideal", JEGP, 70 (1971), 15, 30.

most emphatically not simply "a gentleman with the forgiveable flaw of having some expensive tastes".[32] The numerous sexual innuendoes in his portrait, such as the lines "Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare /Was al his lust" (I, 191-2), convey a sense that the Monk has often violated his vow of chastity.[33] The Monk's goal is the world, not salvation, and every image in his portrait, according to Reiss, affirms the poor state of his spiritual health. Some lines give the impression of oiliness and heat:

> And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt (I, 199)
>
> His eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed,
> That stemed as a forneys of a leed (I, 201-2)

The use of the word "enoynt" implies that, rather than being annointed for the priesthood, the Monk has consecrated himself to the pursuit of earthly things. The heat of his body, says Reiss, reminds us of St. Augustine's words concerning those who "glow with the most filthy flame of Gluttony."[34]

The Monk, then, "glowing" with gluttony, conforms to his traditional representation in anti-clerical satire. Just as monks were always portrayed as being fat because of their over-indulgence, so (like the Prioress) is the Monk: "He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt"

---

[32]Edmund Reiss, "The Symbolic Surface of the Canterbury Tales: The Monk's Portrait", Part I, CR, 2 (1968), 255.

[33]For the sexual puns contained in these lines, see Paul F. Baum, "Chaucer's Puns", PMLA, LXXI (1956), 225-46. See also Thomas Ross, Chaucer's Bawdy (New York, 1972).

[34]Reiss, p. 269.

(I, 200). Although roasted swan is the only item of his diet specifically mentioned, he probably enjoys the same menu as the Monk of the Shipman's Tale, who is a little too similar to Daun Piers not to be modelled on him. Thus, by implication he too would find it necessary to travel on his outriding expeditions with "a jubbe of malvesye, /And eke another, ful of fyn vernage, And volatyl" (VII, 1220-2). And like the Prioress, although not part of his diet, the Monk loves hunting dogs, deemed unclean by the Code, and makes them, not the poor, the recipients of his "charitable" donations: perhaps in this case, leftover roasted swan. When we look at the details of diet given in his portrait, we see that Reiss's charge of gluttony is well-founded.

The Monk's portrait abounds with allusions to food and to the kitchen. He begins by dismissing as worthless the "pulled hen"[35] thereby letting us know what he thinks of the one kind of poultry that was permitted in the gradual relaxation of the Benedictine rule. Then he recalls an image used by the Church Fathers, that a monk out of his cloister is like a fish out of the water. This text reminds him of the worthlessness of the oysters that sometimes appear on his table. Although some may deny that the oyster is in this case an item of diet, thereby disagreeing with Reiss and Mann who both state the comparisons are to foods,[36]

---

[35]Opinion is divided concerning the meaning of the phrase, "pulled hen". Most agree with Skeat, who says that it refers to a plucked chicken, citing a similar usage in the Manciple's Tale. Mann, however, cites the O.E.D. and says that "pulled hen" refers to chicken in a rich white sauce. In either case, the comparison is unusual, hence deserving of our attention, and the Monk's gluttony is emphasized, because he deems a perfectly adequate and permitted food worthless.

[36]Reiss, p. 263; Mann, p. 20.

it may be argued that since Daun Piers begins by dismissing the "pulled hen", so it seems likely that he would use another permitted food, the oyster, to compare with something else he deems worthless. Chaucer later includes the oyster in a monastic menu held in low esteem by unworthy religious. The greedy Friar of the Summoner's Tale speaks feelingly of his "poor" diet:

> 'Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make oure cloystre,'
> Quod he, 'for many a muscle and many an oystre,
> Whan othere men han ben ful wel at eyse,
> Hath been oure foode, oure cloystre for to reyse.'
> (III, 2098-102)

Assuming then, that the oyster and the hen represent despised parts of the Monk's menu, several important interpretations of these items of diet appear. Reiss points out their sexual connotations, for "pulled" may be an oblique reference to emasculation, and the oyster was traditionally regarded as neuter. Thus both are denounced by the aggressively masculine Monk.[37] Reiss also cites exegetical sources that describe the hen as signifying wisdom, or Holy Church, and the oyster's pearl as salvation,[38] both of which are rejected by the Monk. Mortimer Donovan and Reiss also note that Alexander Neckam in his encyclopaedia, De naturis rerum, equated the monk out of his cloister with the unprotected oyster out of his shell: the one is prey to the Devil, the other

---

[37] Reiss, p. 264.

[38] Ibid., p. 265.

to the crab.[39] The importance of these two gastonomical images, with their layers of metaphorical meaning, is reinforced by their uniqueness. Although "nat worth a hen" often occurs in medieval parlance, "nat worth a pulled hen" is as unusual an expression as "nat worth an oystre". It seems likely that both were selected for their symbolism, as well as for the emphasis they add to the Monk's gluttony.

By saying that the Monk hunts hares, Chaucer has indirectly included them in the Monk's diet, and his readers must disapprove of such meat in monastic menus. The hare also has symbolic meaning, for hunting the hare has always represented the pursuit of women.[40] As a lover of hares, or flesh, the Monk recalls St. Jerome's words, that meat-eaters are invariably consumed by flames of lechery.

Upon reading next that the Monk's head "stemed as a forneys of a leed"--hardly a flattering comparison--it becomes apparent that Chaucer's use of cooking apparatus to describe the Monk continues the imagery of food which is associated with him. Mann notes that "kitchen terms spontaneously came to mind when Chaucer thought of him", but she fails to see the ugliness of such comparisons:

---

[39]Neckam, De naturis rerum, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1863), II. xxxvi, pp. 149-50, cited by Reiss, p. 264n. and Mortimer Donovan, "Three Notes on Chaucerian Marine Life", PQ, XXXI (1952), 440-1.

[40]See Hoffman, pp. 28-30, for a discussion of the Ovidian metaphor; Robertson, pp. 255-6 for medieval interpretations of hare-hunting; and Beryl Rowland, p. 89, who suggests that hares make the Monk a keen lover of the flesh.

> For the passage cannot be read as entirely ironic; the Monk's undoubted attractiveness, and the innocuous imagery which reinforces our impression of it--"That shoon as any glas"--establish one sort of reality for the author's claim that this is a "fair prelaat".[41]

However, Reiss has demonstrated that the imagery is not "innocuous", and that the Monk's rolling eyes and steaming head always signified drunkenness in the Middle Ages.[42] Although the Monk is not specifically charged with drunkenness, descriptive detail conveys the impression, making him vicious, and, as Reiss concludes, monstrous.

Finally the extravagance of roasted swan, unavailable to most of the Monk's contemporaries,[43] establishes it as one of those luxurious foods which grace the tables of the regular clergy in such anti-clerical satire as the Land of Cockaygne:

> Pe Gees irostid on pe spitte
> Flee to pat abbai, god hit wot.
> And gredip 'gees al hote, al hot'.

One must not, as Root does, smile indulgently at the Monk's diet:

> In his own cell, surrounded by his fellow monks, with a plump swan and a good bottle before him, his fat sides may have shaken often enough with laughter at a merry jest . . . [44]

---

[41] Mann, p. 20.

[42] Reiss, Part II, CR, 3 (1968), p. 15.

[43] See D. W. Robertson, Chaucer's London (New York, 1968), p. 116, where he notes that the swan would have cost 40d., enough to hire a mason or a carpenter for more than a week.

[44] Root, p. 204.

Rather, Chaucer has created a monk similar to Jovinianus, whom St. Jerome condemns:

> Chastity and fasting are alike distasteful to him. What he likes is a savory breakfast--say of a plump young crane such as is commonly called a cheeper. 45

Chaucer's substitution of swan for crane enables him to employ much connotative detail. Rowland points out that swans were traditionally associated with wine, being the emblems of the vintners and also the insignia of early London stews.[46] She then notes that the Friar in the Summoner's Tale contemptuously compares Jerome's drunken Jovinianus to a swan: "Fat as a whale, and walkynge as a swan"(III, 1930), an apt comparison because a swan's gait on land resembles that of a fat or drunken man. Rowland suggests that Chaucer "may be implying that the Monk is fond of the bottle and the brothel".[47]

Reiss further demonstrates the appropriateness of the Monk's diet of swan. It was well-known in the Middle Ages that the swan sang a song of great sweetness upon its death. After noting several medieval sources for this statement, Reiss concludes that Chaucer wished to contrast the swan's sweet song at death with the Monk's heavy tales of tragedy. In addition, Walter Map equated the song and the swans themselves with death:

---

[45] St. Jerome, Letter XXII, p. 34.

[46] Rowland, p. 61, 89.

[47] Ibid., p. 89.

> Swans are trained only to give pleasure . . .
> they chant death to you . . . 48

Thus the spiritually deadened Monk chants a song of death, (both literally and figuratively), to his fellow pilgrims. Reiss notes too that the Monk and swan are similar because both have deceptive appearances: white feathers cover the swan's black flesh; fair features hide the Monk's foul soul.[49] A final interpretation of the Monk's roasted swan comes from Peter Riga, who reminds us that the swan is one of the foods forbidden by Moses. In Aurora, an exegetical versification of the Bible, Riga explains that the swan uses his long neck to reach indiscriminately for food from land and water, because it is an "unclean" feeder:

> White is the swan; he stretches out his neck to food,
> From lands or waters he draws thence food:
> Those who gleam in white garments and incline their gullets
> To any and every food imitate this bird. 50

The swan's unclean eating habits conflict with its clean body, like the monk, whose clean, indeed gleaming, body, cloaks his unclean, sinful soul. Again Jerome's denunciation of Jovinianus is recalled:

---

[48]Walter Map, "The Advice of Valerius to Rufinus the Philosopher not to Marry", in De Nugis Curialium, p. 185.

[49]Reiss, Part II, p. 20.

[50]Petrus Riga, Aurora, Part I, ed. Paul E. Beichner (University of Notre Dame, 1965), p. 174. The Latin text is: "Candor inest cygno; collum protendit ad escam, /De terris uel aquis ut trahat inde cibum: Qui uestis candore nitent et gluttur ad escas /Quasilibet extendunt hanc imitantur auem."

> For although he boasts of being a monk, he has exchanged his dirty tunic, bare feet, common bread, and drink of water, for a snowy dress, sleek skin, honey-wine and dainty dishes, for the sauces of Apicius and Paxamus, for baths and rubbings, and for the cook-shops. 51

In the Middle Ages, excessive concern for external cleanliness signified a corresponding state of internal filthiness, consequently, spiritually clean Christians such as the Plowman and the Knight wear dirty clothing. The swan, then, becomes a symbol of the Monk himself.[52]

To conclude our examination of the Monk's diet, it should be recalled that three of the four foods mentioned in his portrait are forbidden in the Levitical Code: the oyster, the hare, and the swan. Thus the Monk, like the Prioress, is associated with unclean animals. Chaucer may even have intended a fourth unclean food to be included in the Monk's portrait, for Reiss points out that in eight manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales an additional line appears in the Monk's portrait: "He was a pork hoge for the maystry".[53] Although the line is probably

---

[51]St. Jerome, Against Jovinianus, p. 378.

[52]A superficially light-hearted Goliard poem embodies the swan's dual nature and describes its fate. The poem is "Roast Swan Song", translated by George Whicher, pp. 250-1:

Eram nive candidior, quavis ave formosier, modo sum corvo nigrior.	Once I was whiter than the snow, The fairest bird that earth could show, Now I am blacker than the crow.
Miser, miser, modo niger et ustus fortiter.	Ah me! Ah me! now browned [black] and basted thoroughly.

[53]Reiss, p. 264.

spurious, it continues the association of the Monk with food, thus emphasizing his gluttony. Because these foods are unclean, they reinforce the Monk's spiritual defilement.

The Monk, like the Prioress, is in serious spiritual danger. Chaucer has included in his portrait the traditional elements of anti-clerical satire, but has blackened the picture by making Daun Piers very similar to Jovinianus, Jerome's hated adversary. Undoubtedly, John Speirs is correct when he concludes his analysis of the Monk's portrait by saying:

> To read the passage as expressing Chaucer's moral approval of the Monk is complacently to identify Chaucer and oneself with the sensual man. Chaucer no doubt delightedly appreciates the Monk as a fine speciman, a rich ensemple, but that he does not approve of him the irony most clearly indicates. 54

The Monk shares with the Prioress that parody of paradise, Cockaygne.

---

[54] John Speirs, Chaucer the Maker, (London, 1951; repr. 1967), p. 109.

THE FRIAR

He knew the tavernes wel in every toun. (I, 240)

The third portrait to be discussed is the Friar's, who like the Prioress and the Monk is of the regular clergy and has sworn to uphold the vows and principles of his order. But as Bowden points out, "Huberd" has more in common with that evil hypocrite in the Romance of the Rose, False-Seeming, than with St. Francis.[55] Reiss demonstrates that Hubert's name is the same as another vicious character, the Man in the Moon: he suggests that Chaucer may have been relating the Friar to "the thieving, Sabbath-breaking, Judas- and Cain-like Man".[56] Arnold Williams, in his study of Chaucer's awareness of the disputes caused by the mendicant orders, says that the Friar possesses no mitigating virtues: his portrait is one of unextenuated hypocritical villainy.[57] But there are opposing views. Lumiansky has discovered that etymologically the Friar's name means "bright, lively, gay", and he believes that it was chosen for its appropriateness, for the Friar is "attractive and pleasant, and much given to sprightly and agreeable conversation". Lumiansky acknowledges that the Friar does not conform to the ideals of his order, but denies that Chaucer was expressing moral disapproval:

> . . . granted that Friar Hubert in his professional activities is no better than his colleagues, Chaucer, as usual widely tolerant, still seems

---

[55]Bowden, pp. 137-9.

[56]Edmund Reiss, "Chaucer's Friar and the Man in the Moon", JEGP, 62 (1963), 481-5.

[57]Arnold Williams, "Chaucer and the Friars", in Chaucer Criticism, 63.

> to feel that this businessman of religion is not completely reprehensible, for Hubert's saving grace is that he is a likeable fellow . . . . he has numerous pleasing accomplishments and he works hard at making people like him. There is little that is mean, harsh, or bitter about Friar Hubert . . . 58

This is a difficult point of view to defend, after reading that the Friar is "wantowne" (in our sense of the word, says Robinson), an "esy man to yeve penaunce" after being bribed, a frequenter of taverns, an uncharitable scorner of those beggars and lepers he was supposed to comfort, and a lover of luxurious clothing. In fact, Hubert conforms almost exactly to his traditional portrayal in anti-fraternal literature, as Jill Mann points out, although she refuses to pass judgment on the Friar because his portrait has the same "ambivalence" as the Monk's.

One well-documented tradition in anti-fraternal literature is that all friars are gluttons. Although they vowed to be satisfied with whatever was offered them, and to beg only enough to support life, often they flagrantly violated this principle. For Hubert is said to consort with franklins:

> Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
> With frankeleyns over al in his contree,
> (I, 215-6)

and Chaucer soon tells us why. If all their tables are like that of the Franklin in the General Prologue, even Hubert's gluttony will be satisfied. But franklins are not his only means of support, for he also seeks out "selleres of vitaille" rather than the "lazars" whom he

---

[58] Lumiansky, p. 134.

had sworn to aid. Given such companions, it is little wonder that Hubert's expensive "semycope' rounds out like a bell, for he is as fat as the Prioress and the Monk. It is highly likely that his diet is similar to the menu of the greedy friar in the Summoner's Tale, who matter-of-factly requests

> nat of a capon but the lyvere,
> And of youre softe breed nat but a shyvere,
> And after that a rosted pigges heed.
> (III, 1839-41)

That such a diet would not have been recommended by St. Jerome hardly needs to be pointed out.

It was also traditional to associate friars with taverns, and Hubert is no exception. Medieval sermons constantly warned of the dangers lurking in such places:

> Waldeby and Bromyard tell again how the tavern hinders God's service and cuts short the very sermon; while, earlier still, Archbishop Fitzralph reminds us in one of his pulpit discourses that even when once safely inside the holy place, our toper, like brother Sleuthe, may yet "have his tongue in the church, and his soul in the tavern". Here Sloth and Gluttony, indeed, go hand in hand to the same spot, even if they happen that day to have been to church in the morning--"soone aftir mete, at the ale, bollyng and synginge, with many idil wordis, as lesinggis, bacbitingis and scornyngis, sclaundris, yvel castingis with al the countenaunce of leccherie, chidingis and fiȝtingis, with many other synnes, makinge the holi daye a synful daye". 59

Similarly, penitential tracts saw taverns as the devil's training camp:

> Þe tauerne is þe deueles scole hous, for þere studieþ his disciples, and þere lerneþ his scolers. 60

---

[59] Owst, p. 436.

[60] The Book of Vices and Virtues, p. 53.

> For þe tauerne is welle of glotonye, for it may be clepyd þe develys scolehous & þe deuelys chapel, for þere his dyscyples stodyen & syngyn, bothe day & nyȝt, & þere þe deuyl doth meraclys to his seruauntys. 61

It might be recalled that Glotoun in Piers Plowman did not complete his journey to church because he was lured by the tavern, much to his chagrin the next day. And in that tale of consummate evil fittingly told by the Pardoner, the setting is the tavern where sinful pastimes abound. Reiss points out that the Friar's eyes emphasize his drunkenness, for they are the twinkling eyes medieval physiognomists noted as signifying this vice.[62]

Thus even though dietary references are fleeting in the portrait, Chaucer has supplied enough material to enable us to recognize Hubert as one who has made his cup his god, in the manner of the monks of "Apocalypsis Goliae". As well, the Friar's portrait completes the attack on the evils of the regular clergy. For the Prioress, the Monk, and the Friar all extend their charity to unworthy recipients, contrary to the teachings of their order, all three are fat, as a result of their overindulgence in forbidden food and drink, all three are associated more or less with lechery, and all three set a poor example for their fellow members of the regular clergy. They can only be judged as sinful, and traditional in their representation.

---

[61] Jacob's Well, p. 147.

[62] Reiss, "The Monk's Portrait, Part II", 16.

THE FRANKLIN

Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous
Of fissh and flessh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,

Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.
Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.
(I, 343-6; 349-52)

The Franklin's extravagant diet has been described in Chapter Two as that of a gluttonous man. Chaucer almost off-handedly calls him "Epicurus owene sone", an epithet that the Middle Ages neither respected nor condoned. But because of his pleasing appearance, many critics do not observe that the Franklin's diet indicates his viciousness. Hence Phyllis Hodgson believes that this "worthy" pilgrim consumes no more than do those others of his estate who have earned similar worldly success.[63] Hodgson, however, argues from a modern point of view, for in the Middle Ages, as has been demonstrated, such concern for carnal food and drink signified a corresponding state of spiritual bestiality. But Hodgson is not alone in her approval of the Franklin and his diet. J. A. Bryant applauds the Franklin for his good health which, he states, is the result of a carefully selected menu.[64] Curiously, Bryant labels the Franklin "temperate" even though immoderate excess is noted in almost every line of his portrait. He believes that the Franklin eats partridge, bream, and luce only because their dry firm flesh counteracts

---

[63]Phyllis Hodgson, ed., The Franklin's Tale (London, 1960), p. 11.

[64]J. A. Bryant, Jr., "The Diet of Chaucer's Franklin", MLN, 63 (1948), 319.

the moist humours of old age. The well-loved "sop in wyn" is also an agreeable food for the elderly because of its "heating, nourishing, and purgative properties".[65] Bryant concludes that the Franklin's healthy diet furnishes us "with a reasonable explanation of the old man's unusual vigour".[66]

However, Bryant's statement accounts for no more than a literal explanation of the Franklin's diet. D. W. Robertson provides a more satisfactory interpretation of the dietary detail in the Franklin's portrait, when he notes the irony of the comparison to St. Julian:

> If we remember . . . St. Julian gave up his wealth and social position to feed and shelter the poor, the statement that the Franklin was "St. Julian . . . in his contree" is not without a certain irony, which is hardly alleviated by the subsequent account of an abundance of fine wine, flesh, fowl, fish, and carefully prepared sharp sauces. There is no reason to suppose that these delicacies, resting on a "table dormant" in the Franklin's hall (an ostentatious luxury that few could afford), were provided for the poor of the country. Rather, we suspect that they were available to influential men like the Sergeant [with whom the Franklin travels on the pilgrimage]. . . .[67]

Such a negative elucidation of what at first reading seems to be an innocuous analogy is doubtless correct, for Chaucer, as we have learned, is similarly ironic in his apparently casual use of the phrase "Epicurus owene sone". Once again it can be surmised that he is implementing

---

[65] Bryant, p. 324.

[66] Ibid., p. 325.

[67] D. W. Robertson, Jr., "Chaucer's Franklin and his Tale", Costerus, n.s. 1 (1974), 7-8.

Isidore's definition of irony: he is "condemning while seeming to praise".

Both Robertson and Earle Birney have noted that the Franklin's "sop in wyn", said by Bryant to be merely a healthy breakfast for the elderly, is also gladly eaten by the lecherous, hardly admirable January in the Merchant's Tale (IV, 1843), after a night of libidinous revelry. Chaucer's consistency in the presentation of his attitude towards certain foods should be recognized, for although in the Prologue he may appear non-judgmental, his position becomes unequivocal as the tales unfold. The same method was used in attributing to the Prioress and the Franklin the use of sauces--the Nun's Priest's Tale contains his judgment. It seems possible that the Franklin indulged in his "sop" after engaging in a night of licentiousness, denounced of course by the Church, like the similarly old and hedonistic January. Birney points out that the "sop in wyn", which recipe is the subject of much debate,[68] was actually a well-known remedy for "morning-after" discomfort. He refutes Bryant's statement that the Franklin is temperate:

> Is it not more natural to suppose that one whose days and nights were often devoted to giving and sharing in rich feasts, and whose philosophy was ever "to lyven in delit", might begin his mornings dunking dry toast in peppery wine . . . chiefly because he had "by the morwe", a stomach

---

[68]Muriel Bowden (p. 175) says that the sop was made "by pouring a sauce of wine, almond milk, saffron, ginger, sugar, cinnamon, cloves, and mace, over the best white bread". Skeat, in his notes to R. Morris's edition of The Prologue, The Knight's Tale, The Nonne Preestes Tale, (Oxford, 1st ed. 1867; repr. 1951), quotes a medieval recipe in which sops are made from the same expensive, fine white bread enjoyed by the Prioress's dogs (p. 139). Birney describes the sop as "toast in spiced wine"--"similar to the Last Supper of the New Testament." (p. 345).

> for little more, and a head that demanded the sort of "comfort" which modern St. Julians and their guests hope to obtain from tomato juice and seltzers?69

The physically restorative powers of the "sop in wyn" recall, as Birney indirectly notes, the metaphysically refreshing nature of the Mass. Thus Chaucer not only indicates that the Franklin is in a lamentable physical state most mornings, but also that he has substituted the "food of the fallen" for the sacramental bread and wine he should receive upon waking, if he is a practising Christian. Birney does not develop this idea, for he hesitates to assume that the sop is the Franklin's breakfast (even though Chaucer later says that this is how January began at least one of his days). He quotes, but does not enlarge upon, G. G. Coulton's comment, that there is a satiric contrast in this line to "the stricter view, which held that gentlefolk ought to begin their day with a Mass, and to hear it fasting".[70] Chaucer takes great pains in the Franklin's Prologue to describe the Franklin's aspirations to "gentillesse", but by the inclusion of this item in his diet, he reveals his failure as a Christian "gentleman".[71]

Included in the Franklin's diet are birds and fish, which Jill

---

[69]Earle Birney, "The Franklin's 'Sop in Wyn'", Notes and Queries, CCIV (1959), 347.

[70]G. G. Coulton, Chaucer and His England, 4th ed. (1927), p. 77; quoted by Birney, p. 346n.

[71]The Franklin's lack of "gentillesse" is emphasized by his connection to the lecherous Alisoun in the Miller's Tale (I, 3236). Both wear clothing "whit as morne milk". Like the plumage of the Monk's swan, their outer whiteness hides their inner spiritual blackness.

Mann points out as being "especially prized by the bons viveurs in satire on gluttony".[72] In the examples which she quotes, specific reference is often made to luce, partridge, "baken metes", and sauces, and these foods have been present in many of the passages quoted in the previous two chapters. Yet Mann again fails to pass judgment on the Franklin because of what she deems to be insufficient evidence. Because Chaucer does not indicate exactly his own attitude towards the Franklin, and in spite of all the evidence which she has collected to the contrary, Mann concludes that:

> If the Franklin's love of food is a vice, it is above all a pleasant one. To secure this reaction to his portrait, Chaucer transforms what for other writers are the burdensome preparations, the loading of the stomach, the selfish guzzling, the restless search for titillating variety, into a hymn to 'pleyn delit'. 73

Mann therefore concludes that Chaucer, in spite of accepted tradition, approves of the Franklin's gluttony. This of course contradicts his words in the Pardoner's Tale, all of which quite clearly indicate his disapproval of luxurious diets. As well, Mann recognizes that the reference to Epicurus is hardly complimentary, but believes that the condemnation is negated by the comparison to St. Julian, even though, as D. W. Robertson has observed, the same type of irony is employed. It is difficult therefore to understand Mann's attitude, for evidence from medieval sources clearly indicates Chaucer's conformity to accepted

---

[72] Mann, p. 153.

[73] Ibid., p. 159.

literary traditions of her day.

We might also observe that some of the items in the Franklin's diet were not highly regarded in their natural state. Luce (or pike), for example, is described as the "aquatic wolf" by Alexander Neckam,[74] and as acting only from "tyrannical compulsion" by Alanus de Insulis.[75] The partridge, traditionally associated with the devil, as in the Old English Physiologus, is called a "cunning, disgusting bird", tormented by lust, in the Book of Beasts. The female is accused of stealing the eggs of other birds, only to have the young return to their true mother after hearing her voice. The Book of Beasts moralizes:

> The Devil is an example of this sort of thing. He tries to steal the children of the Eternal Creator, and, if they are foolish or lacking in a sense of their own strength, Satan is able to collect some of them somehow, and he cherishes them with the allurements of the body. But when the call of Christ is heard, the wise ones, growing their spiritual plumage, fly away and put their trust in Jesus. 76

The Franklin is indisputably cherished by the allurements of the body. But it is doubtful whether he will ever grow the necessary "spiritual plumage" to escape his chains of the flesh. Chaucer's method in the Franklin's portrait is therefore the same as that which he used with such skill in the Monk's: he uses dietary detail to

---

[74]Neckam, De naturis rerum, p. 147: "Lucius, qui et lupus aquaticus dicitur . . ."

[75]Alanus de Insulis, De planctu naturae, p. 14.

[76]T. H. White, trans. and ed., The Book of Beasts: A Twelfth Century Latin Bestiary (London, 1954), p. 136.

convey a host of metaphorical associations, all of which accumulate to determine our correct response to the portrait. Once this response has been decided, it becomes impossible to agree with Root's assessment of the Franklin:

> We like the good man, and should be glad enough to receive an invitation to spend a weekend in a house where it "snows meat and drink". 77

Surely this is not what Chaucer intended his audience to think.

---

[77]Root, p. 271.

THE COOK

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones
To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
And poudre-marchant tart and galyngale.
Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale.
He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye. . . .
For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.
(I, 379-84, 387)

Little has been written about the Cook, because he is one of the few relatively lifeless characters in the Prologue. Jill Mann observes that the Cook is a new addition to the genre of estates satire: having little traditional material to draw upon, Chaucer, says Mann, was forced to rely upon a description of the Cook's skill. The result is a less vivid characterization, but the Cook's "personality" becomes more well-developed during the links between the tales. Our initial impression of the rascally churl is verified by the description of the results of his drunkenness in the Manciple's Prologue.

The Cook's portrait, then, has merited little attention beyond listing recipes for his concoctions, as Bowden does, or commenting on the indelicacy of ascribing to him a "mormal" in the line before one which applauds his ability to make "blankmanger". But there can be no doubt that the Cook is a necessary inhabitant of the land of Cockaygne. As noted earlier, literature condemning gluttony emphasizes the cooked and processed foods which the glutton devours. The Cook, like the Franklin who finds the services of his vocation indispensible, has committed his life to an unworthy cause. Innocent III's treatise, De contemptu mundi, as we have observed, condemns the activities of cooks and their masters in words which Chaucer imitates not only here, but also in the

Pardoner's Tale. The Cook is hardly a worthy Christian, and his unwholesomeness is emphasized by the mention of his diseased "shyne". Partly the cause of the "mormal", explains Walter Curry, is the Cook's habit of eating "melancholic foods and drinking strong wines". "A cook with a mormal" observes Curry waspishly, "is precisely the sort of person who might be expected to devour all tainted meats and spoiled victuals which he cannot palm off on long-suffering patrons of his art."[78] The Cook's association with disease and decay reinforce the corruption of his soul. By the seemingly innocuous connection of "mormal" and "blankmanger", Chaucer emphasizes the traditional association of delicate foods with the deterioration of the soul.

Like the cooks in satirical literature, such as the Ship of Fools, and in earnestly moral works, such as Gower's Vox Clamantis, Chaucer's Cook follows the fallen, a necessary workman who labours to serve carnal appetites. He should be regarded with the same horror that Langland displays when he observes the raucous crowd-pleasers of his vision:

> Cokes and here knaues crieden, 'hote pies, hote!
> Gode gris and gess! go we dyne, go we! 79

The diet that such cooks offer is not the one recommended to medieval Christians. Neither it nor its creator should be accepted approvingly.

---

[78]Walter Clyde Curry, Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences, 2nd ed., (London, 1960), p. 51.

[79]Piers Plowman, Prologue, p. 7.

THE DOCTOUR OF PHISIK

> Of his diete mesurable was he,
> For it was of no superfluitee,
> But of greet norissyng and digestible.
> His studie was but litel on the Bible. . . .
> For gold in phisik is a cordial,
> Therefore he lovede gold in special.
> (I, 435-8, 443-4)

Chaucer's portrait of the Doctor has often been described as ambiguous in tone. Muriel Bowden believes that Chaucer is being ironic in his use of the same words, "verray, parfit", to describe the avaricious Doctor as the gentle Knight.[80] But Jill Mann refuses to judge the portrait as totally condemnatory, in spite of the solid evidence she has unearthed from medieval satires which unanimously excoriate the medical profession for its greed and deceitful practices:

> For we have no evidence that the Doctor is a grasping charlatan, despite our suspicions. . . . It is we who have mental frameworks which will admit admiration both for the "verray parfit gentil knight", and for this "verray parfit praktisour". 81

Mann's vacillation recalls that of Curry, who again after collecting impressive documentation indicting medieval doctors, makes the following statement:

> . . . he may be a pious man who has no time for reading the Bible or a rank materialist who condemns religion--we are not sure. In fact, we cannot be absolutely sure about anything in the Doctor's character. 82

---

[80] Bowden, p. 199.

[81] Mann, pp. 98-9.

[82] Curry, p. 36.

Chaucer, it will be seen, gives some very definite clues to aid our interpretation of the portrait, allowing a surer assessment of the Doctor's character than both Mann and Curry feel qualified to make.

The Doctor is described as being "mesurable" in his diet, a commendable characteristic, according to medieval moral literature. Temperance in diet is recommended to physicians by John Arderne, who may even have been the real-life model for the Doctor's portrait:

> Be he content in strange places of metes and drinkes þer y-founden, vsyng mesure in al thingis. 83

But it should be noted that Arderne devotes much more time to discussing the fees that he demands from his patients: is his spare diet the result of Christian temperance, or does he begrudge the money spent on food because it lessens the horde of gold in his coffers? Innocent censures the man who is so avaricious that he is excessively "mesurable" in what he eats:

> He keeps his belly empty to fill his coffer
> and starves his body to fatten his purse. 84

Certainly the Doctor is greedy enough for gold that he will even profit from the ravages of the Black Death by entering in sinister collusion with the apothecary.

As with the other portraits, Chaucer expands in the Tales on ideas merely suggested in the Prologue. Thus, the Friar of the Summoner's

---

[83] John Arderne, Treatises of Fistula in Ano, ed. D'Arcy Power (EETS 139; London, 1910; repr. 1968), p. 4.

[84] Innocent, p. 44.

Tale, without question an avaricious, greedy man, hypocritically describes himself, like the Doctor, as scorning excess but contrarily because he studies too much on the Bible:

> My spirit hath his fostryng in the Bible.
> The body is ay so redy and penyble
> To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.
> (III, 1845-7)

If he were truthful, the unworthy religious might be admired for imitating the lives of Job and Christ:

> Et in sinu meo abscondi verba oris eius.[85]

> Dicit eis Iesus: Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem eius qui misit me, ut perficiam opus eius. 86

Chaucer, however, pointedly notes that the Doctor is not "mesurable" because of his belief in the Bible, for he does not judge the word and will of God to be of more worth than earthly food. In fact, says Chaucer, his study is "but litel on the Bible", in common with the charges of atheism levelled at most medieval physicians. Therefore, we cannot admire the Doctor for his temperance, because he is not motivated by the right reasons. Avarice seems to prompt the lack of "superfluitee" in his diet, just as greed motivates the avaricious Friar's hypocritical statement.

Further emphasizing the Doctor's sin of avarice is his favourite remedy, "gold in phisik", or aurum potabile. Most critics have interpreted this as indicating his love of gold in general, according to the

---

[85] Job 23.12.

[86] John 4.34.

traditional view that physicians ordered unnecessarily expensive medicines for their patients, thereby increasing their profits. Quoting Lanfranc, Owst comments on the tradition of chastizing the doctor for his rapacity:

> Alike to the preacher's and the poet's eye, the physician's chief ambition in life, and therein his chief vice in an age of general cupidity, was "the silver for to winne". 87

Chaucer's Doctor, with his expensive clothing and pronounced love of gold, is no exception to his traditional depiction. However, Chaucer as usual is much subtler than his contemporaries in his indictment.

We know that powdered and dissolved gold was actually used as the sovereign remedy of the Middle Ages. Lynn Thorndike notes that "one of the cures for the pest is drinking potable gold",[88] but such a literal explanation does not capture Chaucer's full intention. For molten gold had since early Biblical and classical times been the drink to punish the concupiscent. When the wandering Israelites melted down their gold to make a golden calf, Moses, enraged at what had been done in his absence, ground the calf to a powder, mixed it with water, and made the Israelites drink their "medicine":

> Cumque appropinquasset ad castra, vidit vitulum, et choros: iratusque valde, proiecit de manu tabulas, et confregit eas ad radicum montis:

---

[87] Owst, p. 351.

[88] Lynn Thorndike, A History of Magic and Experimental Science, Vol. III (London, 1923), p. 245.

> arripiensque vitulum quem fecerant, combussit,
> et contrivit usque ad pulverem, quem sparsit in
> aquam, et dedit ex eo potum filiis Israel. 89

Moses' drink is truly a "cordial", meant to cure the Israelites of their sins of the flesh. Peter Riga extends the Biblical verses to emphasize their connection to the sin of avarice, the Doctor's vice:

> This drink of gold signifies the heart of the
> Hebrews, who, thirsty for gold, behold for the
> first time drank it. It accords with this renown
> of the dull-witted: "Because you have thirsted
> in your heart while living, you shall drink
> this gold by mouth at your death." The Hebrews
> surrendered to Moses what they had made, and
> one may know the lonely culprits by this means,
> for the beard, red-glowing because of the gold,
> identified the guilty, when they drank with
> open mouths from the water of the river. The
> gold which Aaron melted down ran into the
> beards of those who had worshipped the
> cow. Their leaden wrongdoing is indicated
> by their golden beards, and their golden beards
> teach the weight of their sin. 90

As a classical punishment for avarice, molten gold was a well-known remedy evoked in medieval literature. John of Salisbury refers to

---

[89] Ex. 32.19,20.

[90] Petrus Riga, Aurora, p. 137:

> Denotat hic auri cor Hebrei potus auari,
> Qui sitiens aurum, primitus ecce bibit.
> Consonat hoc crassi titulo: "Quod corde sitisti
> Viuens, hoc aurum mortuus ore bibis."
> Hebrei tradunt Moysen fecisse quod audis
> Vt sciret solos hac ratione reos,
> Nam rutilans auro monstrabat barba nocentes,
> Dum patulo latices fluminis ore bibunt.
> Aurum quod fudit Aaron descendit eorum
> In barbas tantum qui coluere bouem.
> Nequitie plumbum barbe monstratur in auro,
> Et culpe pondus aurea barba docet.

(Possibly such Biblical allegorizations prompted the attribution of red beards to medieval stage Jews, traditionally avaricious, like Shylock.)

Crassus:

> Crassus should be a warning against greed. It is said that he, under pretext of a military campaign, coveted beyond all others the gold of Parthia and as a consequence had to drink down molten gold. 91

In the fifteenth century, the same reference is made by Sebastian Brant:

> Crassus did drink the gold, they say,
> For which he craved and thirsted ay; . . .
> Who piles up goods that evanesce
> Inters his soul in filthiness. 92

As well as describing the physical punishment for avarice, Brant reminds his readers of the eternal retribution awaiting the greedy, and emphasizes the thirst for gold which afflicts those guilty of avarice. Alanus de Insulis also employs this image of thirst, in his condemnation of avaricious:

> Now the rich man, shipwrecked in the deep of wealth, thinks after money with the fires of dropsical thirst, and is set like Tantalus in its midst. 93

Once more the reader is reminded of the folly of setting inordinately high value on earthly goods. A final reference should be made to Alexander Neckam who uses Ovid's myth of Midas in the Metamorphoses to illustrate the connection between the love of gold and its punishment

---

[91]John of Salisbury, Footprints of Philosophers, pp. 186-7.

[92]Sebastian Brant, Ship of Fools, p. 67.

[93]Alanus de Insulis, De planctu naturae, p. 64.

by means of a golden drink: Midas' every beverage turns to molten gold, as his foolish wish is literally applied.[94] Chaucer alludes indirectly to all these traditional stories of the doom awaiting the avaricious, for he specifically describes the Doctor as loving gold above all other things, and as prizing a drink of gold above all other medicines.

But the Doctor has not yet benefitted spiritually from his drink of gold, as did Crassus, Midas, and the Israelites. His lack of study on the Bible has occasioned his forgetting that it is God who provides all such medicines, and to whom all must turn for the ultimate "phisik". W. W. Skeat reminds us of the origin of the last two lines of the Doctor's portrait; the source makes clear the connection between divine and earthly medicines:

> The actual reference is, probably, to Les Remonstrances de Nature, by Jean de Meun, ll.979, 980, etc.; 'C'est le fin et bon or potable, L'humide radical notable; C'est souveraine medicine;' and the author goes on to refer us to Ecclus. xxxviii.4--'The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them.' 95

Skeat, however, merely observes "Hence the Doctor would not abhor gold". But the Biblical quotation reminds the reader that there is a spiritual power behind the creation of all "cordials", and a further verse in the same chapter observes that the Doctor himself is God's creation:

---

[94]Alexander Neckam, De naturis rerum, p. 321-2. Neckam quotes Metamorphoses, xi. 104ff, almost verbatim.

[95]Skeat, ed. Chaucer's General Prologue, p. 75.

> Honora medicum propter necessitatem; Etenim illum creavit Altissimus. 96

Not only has the Doctor neglected to honour the source of his medicinal power, but he has also neglected to honour the Creator of his very self, having so distorted his thought by making gold his god.

It might be noted in conclusion that even the somewhat grasping Arderne recognized Christ as the ultimate medicine:

> . . . than shal the leche sey to the pacient thus; "It is redde in the last lesson of matyns of the natiuite of oure lord that oure lorde Ihesus criste come into this world for the helthe of mannes kynd to the maner of a gode leche and wise. 97

The Doctor's failure to do the same makes his skill ineffective. Perhaps this is why Chaucer has ironically emphasized his excessive reliance on astrology to indicate his lack of ability. As St. Augustine writes:

> Medicines for the body which are administered to men by men do not help them unless health is conferred by God, who can cure without them; yet they are nevertheless applied even though they are useless without His aid. 98

By stating that the Doctor studies little on the Bible, Chaucer says that his moderate diet is not prompted by obedience of divine command concerning Christian diet, nor are his medicines administered in the recognition of their source. The Doctor's substitution of gold for God,

---

[96] Ecclus. 38.1.

[97] Arderne, Fistula in Ano, p. 7.

[98] St. Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, p. 142.

thus succumbing to the deadly sin of avarice, makes the words "verray, parfit" that describe him ironic indeed. There can be no reason to vacillate in our disapproval of this sinful man.

THE SOMONOUR

> Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
> And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood; . . .
> A gerland hadde he set upon his heed
> As greet as it were for an ale-stake.
> A bokeleer hadde he maad hym of a cake.
> (I, 634-5, 666-8)

Much has been written about the Summoner's diet of garlic, onions, leeks, and red wine. That the foods were often connected with disease, drunkenness, and lechery, is well-known: even in classical literature, this was so, as the following selection from Ovid's Remedia Amoris affirms:

> Avoid all eating of things that have a bulbous appearance and such foods as might act upon you as aphrodisiacs. Eat rather such things that have a sedative quality about them, and avoid wine, which has a tendency to increase sexual desire . . . 99

D. Biggins notes the same interpretation, that onions, garlic, and leeks increase sexual desire, in a post-Chaucerian work written by Reginald Pecock.[100] And Walter Curry states that the Summoner's frightening skin condition is, according to medieval medical theory, the direct result of his diet:

> The rascal is either criminally ignorant or foolishly indifferent. He might have learned from any physician of his time, or before, . . . that garlic, onions, and leeks produce evil humours in the blood, and that red wine of

---

[99] Charles D. Young, trans., Ovid's Art of Love, p. 120.

[100] D. Biggins, "Chaucer's Summoner: 'Wel loved he Garleek, Oynons, and eek Lekes', C.T. I, 634", Notes and Queries, n.s. 11 (1964), 48.

> all others is the most powerful and heating of drinks. 101

Leeks, however, were also recognized as a cure for drunkenness, of which the Summoner is certainly guilty:

> It is gud for dronkyn men
> A raw lek to ete, & comfortyth the brayn. 102

But of more importance in a discussion of the Summoner's unhealthy diet is the recognition that his favorite foods were traditionally associated with moral backsliding, because these were the Egyptian foods craved by the Israelites during their exodus. When the savour of manna, their divine food, palled, the Israelites complained to Moses:

> Recordamur piscium quos comedebamus in Aegypto gratis: in mentem nobis veniunt cucumeres, et pepones, porrique, et caepe, et allia. Anima nostra arida est, nihil aliud respiciunt oculi nostri nisi man. 103

R. E. Kaske was the first to suggest the metaphorical implications of the Biblical allusion contained in the Summoner's portrait: "Chaucer is using this detail to deepen an already ugly picture of spiritual as well as physical deformity".[104] Kaske traces the use of such foods as a metaphor for the lapsed Christian through several medieval works. In addition, Chauncey Wood adduces another possible source for Chaucer's

---

[101] Curry, p. 45.

[102] Rossell Hope Robbins, ed., Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries (Oxford, 1952), p. 77.

[103] Numbers 11.5,6.

[104] R. E. Kaske, "The Summoner's Garleek, Oynons, and eek Lekes," Modern Language Notes, LXXIV (June, 1959), 481-4.

metaphor of "garleek, onyons and eke lekes", John Gower's Vox Clamantis:[105]

> Ollarum carnes preponit fercula, porros,
> Gebas pro manna presul habere petit.
> Prodolor! en tales sinus ecclesie modo nutrit,
> Qui pro diuinis terrea vana petunt.
> Ollarum carnes carnalia facta figurant,
> Que velut in cleri carne libido coquit. 106

Wood notes Gower's debt to Peter Riga's Aurora for the diet of the carnal priest:

> Ollarum carnes, peponum fercula, porros,
> Cepas pro manna turba gulosa petit:
> Quosdam consimiles sinus ecclesie modo nutrit,
> Qui pro diuinis terrea uana petunt.
> Internum mentis designat manna saporem;
> Actus Egypti denotat esca malos;
> Carnes ollarum carnalia facta figurant,
> Que uelut in nostra carne libido coquit. 107

In Aurora, the metaphorical significance of leeks and onions is explained:

---

[105] Chauncey Wood, "The Sources of Chaucer's Summoner's 'Garleek, Oynons, and eke Lekes'", Chaucer Review, 5 (1970), 240-2.

[106] Eric W. Stockton translates these lines in The Major Latin Works of John Gower: "He now serves potted meats for his courses, and he prefers onions and leeks to manna. Alas! Such are the people the bosom of the Church now nourishes--people who seek after earthly vanities instead of things divine. The potted meats represent their carnal actions, which sensual desire unkindles in the flesh of the clergy, so to speak." (p. 119).

[107] Petrus Riga, Aurora, Vol. I, ed. Beichner, p. 188:
"The gluttonous mob asks for potted meats, trays of melons, onions, leeks instead of manna: the same as those whom the bosom of the Church now nourishes, who seek after earthly vanities instead of divine things. Manna signifies civil wisdom of the mind. The food denotes the evil acts of the Egyptians; The potted meats represent the carnal deeds, even those which cook in the carnal libido of the cleric."

> Pepones signant quedam mala dulcia, tanquam
> Otia sunt, sompnus, gaudia, blanda quies.
> Porri uel cepe mala signant aspera, tanquam
> sunt rixe, sanguis, furta, rapina, dolus:
> Illa creant oculis lacrimas, ita nec sine fletu
> Possunt ista geri uel sine pesti gravi. 108

Because garlic is omitted by both Gower and Riga, Wood then concludes that Chaucer, although probably familiar with both authors, sought his source for the Summoner's diet in Scripture.

As well as the allegorization of leeks and onions furnished by Aurora, Walter Map's interpretation of garlic in the diet should be observed, in order to recognize the significance attached to such foods beyond their Biblical meaning:

> The prime reason, however, for the continual joy of the good is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the main reason for the sadness of the evil is their inflation by the filthy spirit, who, in his wanderings over the breast of the evil thinker, plucketh the garlic harmful to him, and this, though delightful in the eating, maketh when eaten a foul stench. That garlic is offered to us in court chiefly by him who hath envied us from the beginning of things--the devil. 109

Like the swan, garlic, according to Map, represents conflict because of its duality: although outwardly agreeable, inwardly it creates a "foul stench". Tom Tashiro has more recently attempted to record the symbolism of the onion, connecting it first to Egypt and cannibalism, then to

---

[108] Aurora, p. 188: "The melons signify those evil delights just as they are hated, luxury, sensual pleasure, flattering sleep of death. The leeks or evil onions mean strong-smelling things, just as there are brawls, murder, theft, rape, sorrow: They make tears in the eyes, thus not without tears can such things be handled, nor without unwholesome plague."

[109] Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium, pp. 2-3.

Roman Catholicism, then to High Church Anglicanism. Although he agrees that Chaucer's source was probably the Bible, he entertains the possibility that the poet may have been alluding to Juvenal.[110]

Two more uses of Numbers 11.5 in medieval literature should also be mentioned, for one of them is perhaps Chaucer's true source for the lines. First, in the fifteenth century, Sebastian Brant wrote:

> Alas, they often look behind
> And yearn for that Egyptian land
> Where all their dreamed-of flesh pots stand,
> Reverting e'er to sins so great,
> Like dogs to food that once they ate,
> That several times they do devour.
> Their intent's bad at every hour. [111]

Brant evokes the connection between Egyptian delights and moral regression, but it is St. Jerome who probably furnished Chaucer with his material. He specifically alludes to Numbers 11, although he omits leeks rather than garlic, in his treatise denouncing Jovinian:

> Why do we at whose baptism Pharaoh died and all his host was drowned, again turn back in our hearts to Egypt, and after the manna, angels' food, sigh for the garlic and the onions and the cucumbers, and Pharaoh's meat? [112]

Later in the same treatise, Jerome quotes the verses in their entirety to support his argument:

> The people of Israel cast out from Egypt
> and on their way to the land of promise,
> the land flowing with milk and honey, longed

---

[110] Tom T. Tashiro, "English Poets, Egyptian Onions, and the Protestant View of the Eucharist", JHI, 30 (1969), 563-578.

[111] Brant, Ship of Fools, p. 276.

[112] St. Jerome, Against Jovinian, p. 354.

> for the flesh of Egypt, and the melons and garlic, saying: "Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots." And again, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away: we have nought save this manna to look to." They despised angels' food, and sighed for the flesh of Egypt. [113]

It seems likely that Chaucer, whose familiarity with this work of St. Jerome's cannot be disputed, read the above lines and recalled them for his portrait of the Summoner, a man unquestionably more interested in fleshpots than in angels' food. His love of strong red wine also identifies him with the backsliding Israelites, for St. Jerome writes only a few lines after the passage quoted above: "Moses boldly broke the tables: for he knew that drunkards cannot hear the word of God". That the Summoner is a drunkard cannot be denied; he will even allow concubines for a "quart of wyn".

The concluding lines of the Summoner's portrait reinforce his depiction as one wholly interested in carnal food and drink. He wears a "gerland" on his head, reminding us of the traditional sign of medieval taverns, and of his similarity to "a debased and loud-mouthed Bacchus".[114] The "cake" that he bears like a shield (termed by Bowden "a round, flattened loaf of bread") contradicts Christ's command to his disciples:

---

[113] Against Jovinian, p. 399.

[114] Bowden, p. 265.

> Et ait ad illos: Nihil tuleritis in via,
> neque virgam, neque peram, neque panem,
> neque pecuniam, neque duas tunicas habeatis. [115]

But the Summoner is deaf to the new song of Christ. What he hears is the depraved warble of his grossly hypocritical companion and fellow servant in the Church, the Pardoner. It is difficult to find in his portrait the "extroverted gaiety" that Mann observes in his character, in spite of the evil of his diet and drunkenness.[116] A more debased Christian could scarcely be found.

---

[115] Luke 9.3. See also Mark 6.8.

[116] Mann, p. 144.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

It has been the intent of the preceding chapters to demonstrate Chaucer's implementation of the traditional uses of diet in seven of the portraits of his pilgrims. By first examining moral literature for its attitude towards an immoderate, intemperate diet, it was learned that medieval moral writers always associated overingulgence in food and drink with the mortal sin of Gluttony, of which a branch was drunkenness. Such gluttons were unanimously excoriated in the Middle Ages. Chaucer has included enough allusions to traditional moral literature so that his medieval audience would recognize certain of the pilgrims to be enslaved by this vice, with its accompanying condemnation.

However, for us, Chaucer's purpose has become obscured because of his ironical method of writing. Hence, by analysing selected pieces of satirical literature, it has been revealed that Chaucer's methods were very much like those employed by the creator of the Land of Cockaygne. For both poets, humour, which in this case takes the form of satire, does not imply approval, any more than it did for Jonathan Swift. Just as the anonymous author of the

Land of Cockaygne, or the fifteenth-century poet, Sebastian Brant, sought to expose the follies of their ages, so also did Chaucer. His seemingly innocuous references to the Monk's "roasted swan" and the Prioress's "wastel-breed" are, in fact, an attack on the regular clergy for its lack of obedience to their rule of diet.

Chaucer states his conception of proper Christian diet as the Tales unfold. The Nun's Priest's Tale, the Pardoner's Tale, and especially the Parson's Tale embody his attitude. Moreover, the "Former Age" associates certain foods, such as the Prioress's and the Franklin's sauces, and the Cook's and the Summoner's wine, with man's fall from an idyllic state. Often, what is merely suggested in the Prologue is explicated in the Tales and other poems.

The Parson's Tale, which concludes the pilgrimage, is a traditional sermon about penitence, like the previously discussed Jacob's Well and The Book of Vices and Virtues. In this sermon, the Parson distinguishes between mortal and venial sin:

> . . . whan man loveth any creature moore
> than Jhesu Crist oure Creatour, thanne is
> it deedly synne. And venial synne is it,
> if man love Jhesu Crist lasse than hym oghte.
> (X, 357)

The Doctor is undoubtedly guilty of "deedly synne", according to Chaucer's own words, for he is specifically

described as loving gold above all else. The Monk, the Franklin, and the Summoner are also indicted (to a lesser extent) for their love of swan, sops "in wyn", and "onyons, garleek, and leeks": the use of the verb "love" in each case, indicates that the object of the love is incorrect, for love should be reserved for Christ. Even the Prioress is culpable, because of her immoderate affection for her well-fed dogs, the Friar, for his taverns, and the Cook, for his ale.

In his description of the sin of Pride, the Parson includes lapsed Christians exactly like the Franklin:

> Pride of the table appeereth eek ful ofte;
> for certes, riche men been cleped to festes,
> and povre folk been put awey and rebuked./ Also
> in excesse of diverse metes and drynkes, and
> namely swich manere bake-metes and dissh-metes,
> brennynge of wilde fir . . . God woot, desir
> to have commendacioun eek of the peple hath
> caused deeth to many a bisy man.
> (X, 443, 473)

The Franklin's eventual doom is the same as the Cook's, whose gift of reason is lost because of his drunkenness:

> . . . whan a man is dronken, he hath lost
> his resoun; and this is deedly synne.
> (X, 821)

And the Cook, Franklin, Monk, Prioress, and Summoner all sin according to the distinction made by St. Gregory, whom the Parson quotes, in the "speces of Glotonye":

> The seconde is whan a man get hym to
> delicaat mete or drynke./ The thridde
> is whan men taken to muche over mesure.
> The fourthe is curiositee, with greet entente
> to maken and apparaillen his mete.
> (X, 829-30)

Even the Doctor's apparently commendable moderation is revealed to be for the wrong reason, practised for his bodily health:

> Agayns Glotonye is the remedie abstinence,
> as seith Galien; but that holde I nat
> meritorie, if he do it oonly for the heele
> of his body.
> (X, 831)

The apparently light-hearted references in the Prologue are revealed, in the Parson's Tale, to be characteristics of the vicious.

Two conclusions to the Tales were written after Chaucer's death. One was the work of John Lydgate, who set his Prologue to the tale of the Siege of Thebes appropriately enough in Harry Bailly's tavern, where delicate food and drink is the order of the day:

> And ȝe shal haue mad a ȝoure devis,
> A grēt puddyng or a rounde hagys,
> A Franchemole a tansy or a froyse.[1]

---

[1] Axel Erdmann, ed., "Lydgate's Siege of Thebes", EETS, e.s. 108 (London, 1911; repr. 1960), 5-6.

The other conclusion, the Tale of Beryn, is similarly set in a tavern, and meat pies, ale, and wine are featured:

> She start into the town, and fet a py al hote . . .
> As they wer wont to doon at soper and at mete;
> And wer in silence for a tyme, tyl good ale
> gan arise.2

The silence at mealtimes recalls that of erring religious in the Goliard poems. Although the proposed conclusions lack Chaucer's genius, the emphasis on incorrect diet is continued, with its implications of sinfulness.

Diet, therefore, contributes to the characterization of Chaucer's pilgrims in that it explicates their spiritual states. In this respect, Chaucer uses diet according to established practices. Their overly abundant and delicate diets indicate that at least seven of the pilgrims are in an unhealthy spiritual state. Each exemplifies the medieval description of a starving soul in a well-nourished body. Each of the seven will, therefore, suffer the punishment reserved for such gluttons, unless the Parson's Tale prompts a necessary remorse and penitence.

---

[2]The Tale of Beryn, quoted by Thomas Wright in a History of Domestic Manners, p. 396.

APPENDIX

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

Fur in see bi west spayngne.
Is a lond ihote cokaygne.
Þer nis lond under heuen-riche.
Of wel of godnis hit iliche.
Þoȝ paradis be miri and briȝt.
Cokaygn is of fairir siȝt.
What is þer in paradis.
Bot grasse and flure and grene-ris.
Þoȝ þer be ioi and grete dute.
Þer nis mete bote frute.
Þer n'is halle, bure, no benche.
Bot watir, man-is þursto quenche.
Beþ þer no man but two.
Hely and enok also.
Clinglich may hi go.
Whar þer woniþ men no mo.
In cokaygne is met and drink.
Wiþ vte care. how and swink.
Þe met is trie. þe drink is clere.
To none. russin, and sopper.
I sigge for soþ, boute were.
Þer n'is lond on erthe is þere.
Vnder heuen n'is lond iwisse.
Of so mochil ioi and blisse.
Þer is mani swete siȝte.
Al is dai, n'is þer no niȝte.
Þer n'is baret noper strif.
N'is þer no dep, ac euer lif.
Þer n'is lac of met no cloþ.
Þer n'is man no womman wroþ.
Þer n'is serpent, wolf no fox.
Hors, no capil, kowe. no ox.
Þer n'is schepe. no swine no gote.
No non horwȝ-la, god it wot.
Nother harate, nother stode.
Þe lond is ful of oþer gode.
N'is þer flei. fle, no lowse.
In cloþ, in toune. bed, no house.
Þer n'is dunnir, slete, no hawle.
No non vile worme no snawile.
No non storme, rein, no winde.
Þer n'is man no womman blinde.
Ok al is game, Ioi, and gle.
Wel is him þat þer mai be.

Þer beþ riuers gret and fine.
Of oile, melk, honi and wine.
Watir seruiþ þer to no þing.
Bot to siȝt and to waiissing.
Þer is maner frute.
Al is solas and dedute.
Þer is a wel fair abbei.
Of white monkes and of grei.
Þer beþ bowris and halles.
Al of pasteiis beþ þe walles.
Of fleis, of fisse, and rich met.
Þe likfullist þat man mai et.
Fluren cakes beþ þe scingles alle.
Of cherche. cloister. boure. and halle.
Þe pinnes beþ fat pudinges.
Rich met to princeȝ and kinges.
Man mai þer-of et inoȝ.
Al wiþ riȝt, and noȝt wiþ woȝ.
Al is commune to ȝung and old.
To stoute and sterne, mek and bold.
Þer is a cloister fair and liȝt.
Brod and lang, of sembli siȝt.
Þe pilers of þat cloistre alle
Beþ i-turned of cristale.
Wiþ har-las and capitale.
Of grene Jaspe and rede corale.
In þe praer is a tre.
Swiþe likful for to se.
Þe rote is gingeuir and galingale.
Þe siouns beþ al sedwale.
Trie maces beþ þe flure.
Þe rind, canel of swet odur.
Þe frute gilofre of gode smakke.
Of cucubes þer n'is no lakke.
Þer beþ rosis of rede ble.
And lilie likful for to se.
Þai faloweþ neuer day no niȝt.
Þis aȝt be a swet[e] siȝt.
Per beþ .iiij. willis in þe abbei.
Of triacle and halwei.
Of baum and ek piement.
Euer ernend to riȝt rent.
Of þai stremis al þe molde.
Stonis preciuse and golde.
Per is saphir and vniune.
Carbuncle and astiune.
Smaragde. lugre. and prassiune.
Beril. onix. topasiune.
Ametist and crisolite.
Calcedun and epetite.

Þer bep briddes mani and fale.
Þrostil, þruisse, and niȝtingale.
Chalandre and wodwale.
And oþer briddes wiþout tale.
Þat stinteþ neuer by har miȝt.
Miri to sing dai and niȝt.
[Here a few lines seem to be lost.]
Ȝite I do ȝow mo to witte.
Þe Gees irostid on þe spitte.
Fleeȝ to þat abbai, god hit wot.
And grediþ 'gees al hote, al hot.'
Hi bringeþ garlek gret plente.
Þe best idiȝt þat man mai se.
Þe leuerokes þat beþ cuþ.
Liȝtip adun to man-is muþ.
Idiȝt in stu ful swiþe wel.
Pudrid wiþ gilofre and canel.
N'is no spech of no drink.
Ak take inoȝwiþ-vte swink.
Whan þe monkes geeþ to mässe.
All þe fenestres þat beþ of glasse.
Turneþ in to cristal briȝt.
To ȝiue monkes more liȝt.
When þe masses beþ iseiid.
And þe bokes up ileiid.
Þe cristal turniþ in to glasse.
In state þat hit raþer wasse.
Þe ȝung monkes euch dai.
Aftir met goþ to plai.
N'is þer hauk no fule so swifte.
Bettir fleing bi þe lifte.
Þan þe monkes heiȝ of mode.
Wiþ har sleuis and har hode.
Whan þe abbot seeþ ham flee.
Þat he holt for moch glee.
Ak naþeles al þar amang.
He biddiþ ham liȝt to eue-sang.
Þe monkes liȝtip noȝt adun.
Ac furre fleeþ in o randun.
Whan þe abbot him iseeþ.
Þat is monkis fram him fleeþ.
He takeþ maidin of þe route.
And turniþ vp her white toute.
And betiþ þe taburs wiþ is hond.
To make is monkes liȝt to lond.
Whan is monkes þat iseeþ.
To þe maid dun hi fleeþ.
And geþ þe wench al abute.
And pakkeþ al hir white toute.
And siþ aftir her swinke.
Wendith meklich hom to drinke.

And geth to har collacione.
A wel fair processione.
  Anoþer abbei is þerbi.
For soth a gret fair nunnerie.
Up a riuer of swet milke.
Whar is plente grete of silk.
Whan þe somer-is dai is hote.
Þe ȝung nunnes takith a bote.
And doth ham forth in that riuer.
Bothe with oris and with stere.
When hi beth fur from the abbei.
Hi makith ham nakid for to plei.
And lepith dune in-to the brimme.
And doth ham sleilich for to swimme.
Þe ȝung monkes þat hi seeth.
Hi doth ham up, and forþ hi fleeþ.
And commiþ to þe nunnes anon.
And euch monke him taketh on.
And snellich berith forth har prei.
To the mochil grei abbei.
And techith the nunnes an oreisun.
With iambleue vp and dun.
Þe monke þat wol be stalun gode.
And kan set a-riȝt is hode.
He schal hab wiþute danger.
.xii. wiues euche ȝere.
Al proȝ riȝt and noȝt proȝ grace.
For to do him silf solace.
And þilk monk þat clepiþ best.
And doþ his likam al to rest.
Of him is hoppe, god hit wote.
To be sone uadir abbot.
  Whose wl com þat lond to.
Ful grete penance he mot do.
Seue ȝere in swine-is dritte.
He mot wade, wol ȝe i-witte.
Al anon up to þe chynne.
So he schal þe lond[e] winne.
  Lordinges gode and hend.
Mot ȝe neuer of world wend.
For ȝe stond to ȝure cheance.
And fulfille that penance.
Þat ȝe mote þat lond ise.
And neuer more turne a-ȝe.
Prey we god so mote hit be.
Amen, per seinte charite.

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

[translated by A. L. Morton, in The English Utopia (London: 1952), pp. 217-22.]

Out to sea, far west of Spain,
Lies the land men call Cokaygne.
No land that under heaven is,
For wealth and goodness comes near this;
Though Paradise is merry and bright
Cokaygne is a fairer sight.
For what is there in Paradise
But grass and flowers and greeneries?
Though there is joy and great delight,
There's nothing good but fruit to bite,
There's neither hall, bower, nor bench,
And only water thirst to quench.
And of men there are but two,
Elijah and Enoch also;
Sadly thither would I come
Where but two men have their home.

In Cokaygne we drink and eat
Freely without care and sweat,
The food is choice and clear the wine,
At fourses and at supper time,
I say again, and I dare swear,
No land is like it anywhere,
Under heaven no land like this
Of such joy and endless bliss.

There is many a sweet sight,
All is day, there is no night,
There no quarreling nor strife,
There no death, but endless life;
There no lack of food or cloth,
There no man or woman wroth.
There no serpent, wolf or fox,
Horse or nag or cow or ox,
Neither sheep nor swine nor goat,
Nor creeping groom, I'd have you note,
Neither stallion there nor stud.
Other things you'll find are good.
In bed or garment or in house,
There's neither flea nor fly nor louse.
Neither thunder, sleet nor hail,
No vile worm nor any snail,
Never a storm, nor rain nor wind
There's no man or woman blind.

All is sporting, joy and glee,
Lucky the man that there may be.

There are rivers broad and fine
Of oil, milk, honey and of wine;
Water serveth there no thing
But for sight and for washing.
Many fruits grow in that place
For all delight and sweet solace.

There is a mighty fine Abbey,
Thronged with monks both white and grey,
Ah, those chambers and those halls!
All of pasties stand the walls,
Of fish and flesh and all rich meat,
The tastiest that men can eat.
Wheaten cakes the shingles all,
Of church, of cloister, bower and hall.
The pinnacles are fat puddings,
Good food for princes or for kings.
Every man takes what he will,
As of right, to eat his fill.
All is common to young and old,
To stout and strong, to meek and bold.

There is a cloister, fair and light,
Broad and long, a goodly sight.
The pillars of that place are all
Fashioned out of clear crystal,
And every base and capital
Of jasper green and red coral.
In the garth there stands a tree
Pleasant truly for to see.
Ginger and cyperus the roots,
And valerian all the shoots,
Choicest nutmegs flower thereon,
The bark it is of cinnamon.
The fruit is scented gillyflower,
Of every spice is ample store.
There the roses, red of hue,
And the lovely lily, too,
Never fade through day and night,
But endure to please men's sight.
In that Abbey are four springs,
Healing and health their water brings,
Balm they are, and wine indeed,
Running freely for men's need,
And the bank about those streams
With gold and with rich jewels gleams.
There is sapphire and uniune,

Garnet red and astiune,
Emerald, ligure and prassiune,
Beryl, onyx, topasiune,
Amethyst and chrystolite,
Chalcedony and epetite [1]

There are birds in every bush,
Throstle, nightingale and thrush,
Woodpecker and the soaring lark,
More there are than man may mark,
Singing with all their merry might,
Never ceasing day or night.
Yet this wonder add to it--
That geese fly roasted on the spit,
As God's my witness, to that spot,
Crying out, 'Geese, all hot, all hot!'
Every goose in garlic drest,
Of all food the seemliest.
And the larks that are so couth
Fly right down into man's mouth,
Smothered in stew, and thereupon
Piles of powdered cinnamon.
Every man may drink his fill
And needn't sweat to pay the bill.

When the monks go in to mass,
All the windows that were glass,
Turn them into crystal bright
To give the monks a clearer light;
And when the mass has all been said,
And the mass-books up are laid,
The crystal pane turns back to glass,
The very way it always was.

Now the young monks every day
After dinner go to play,
No hawk nor any bird can fly
Half so fast across the sky
As the monk in joyous mood
In his wide sleeves and his hood.
The Abbot counts it goodly sport

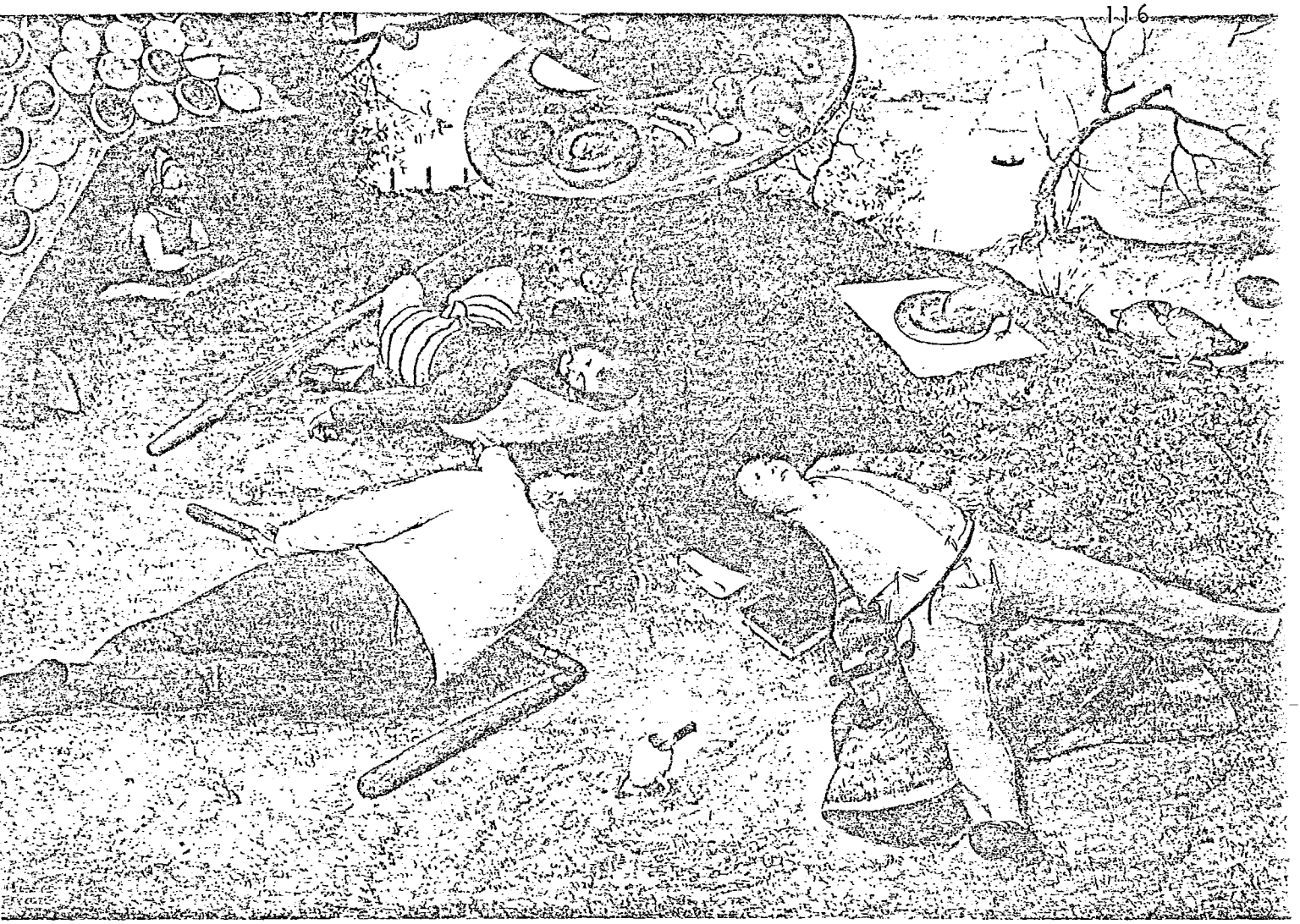
---

[1] It proved impossible to give all these stones their modern names without wrecking the ryhme scheme. Uniune is pearl, Astiune, sapphire, Prassiune, chrystophrase, Topasiune, topaz and Epetite, blood-stone. [Morton's note]

To see his monks in haste depart,
But presently he comes along
To summon them to evensong.
The monks refrain not from their play,
But fast and far they flee away,
And when the Abbot plain can see
How all his monks inconstant flee,
A wench upon the road he'll find,
And turning up her white behind,
He beats upon it as a drum
To call his monks to vespers home.
When the monks behold that sport
Unto the maiden all resort,
And going all the wench about,
Every one stroketh her white toute.
So they end their busy day
With drinking half the night away,
And so to the long tables spread
In sumptuous procession tread.

Another Abbey is near by,
In sooth, a splendid nunnery,
Upon a river of sweet milk,
Where is plenteous store of silk.
When the summer day is hot
The younger nuns take out a boat,
And forth upon the river clear,
Some do row and some do steer.
When they are far from their Abbey,
They strip them naked for their play,
And, plunging in the river's brim,
Slyly address themselves to swim.
When the young monks see that sport,
Straightway thither they resort,
And coming to the nuns anon,
Each monk taketh to him one,
And, swiftly bearing forth his prey,
Carries her to the Abbey grey,
And teaches her an orison,
Jigging up and jigging down.
The monk that is a stallion good,
And can manage well his hood,
He shall have, without a doubt,
Twelve wives before the year is out,
All of right and nought through grace,
So he may himself solace.
And the monk that sleepeth best,
And gives his body ample rest,
He, God knows, may presently
Hope an Abbot for to be.

Whoso will come that land unto
Full great penance he must do,
He must wade for seven years
In the dirt a swine-pen bears,
Seven years right to the chin,
Ere he may hope that land to win.
Listen Lords, both good and kind,
Never will you that country find
Till through the ordeal you've gone
And that penance has been done.
So you may that land attain
And never more return again,
Pray to God that so it be,
Amen, by holy charity.



"The Land of Cockaigne", dated 1567, by Peter Bruegel the Elder.

Illustrated here is an attack on gluttony. A massive tree trunk supports a table loaded with food. The house on the left, roofed with pies, is balanced by the mountain of gruel or dumpling on the right. The spherical shapes and curves suggest plumpness, the result of over-indulgence, as do the figures of the three corpulent men. The pig with the knife in his back and the animated egg almost beg to be eaten. The picture appears to be humorous in its treatment of gula, but it is not. The three men, a scholar, a soldier, and a peasant, are in a state of spiritual torpor resulting from their gluttony.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions of Chaucer

Donaldson, E. Talbot, ed. Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1958.

Hodgson, Phyllis, ed. The Franklin's Tale. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Robinson, F. N., ed. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957.

Skeat, W. W., ed. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890; repr. 1960.

Winny, James, ed. The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Cambridge University Press, 1965.

Primary Sources

Alanus de Insulis. De planctu naturae. Douglas M. Moffat, trans. Yale Studies in English XXXVI. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1908.

Arderne, John. Treatises of Fistula in Ano. D'Arcy Power, ed. EETS No. 139. London: Oxford University Press, 1910; repr. 1968.

St. Augustine. On Christian Doctrine. D. W. Robertson, Jr., trans. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1958.

Beichner, Paul E., ed. Aurora: Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata. 2 vols. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965.

Bennett, J. A. W., ed. Piers Plowman. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy. Richard Green, trans. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1962.

Brandeis, Arthur, ed. Jacob's Well: An Englisht Treatise on the Cleansing of Man's Conscience, Part I. EETS No. 115. London: Oxford University Press, 1900.

Brant, Sebastian. The Ship of Fools. Edwin H. Zeydal, trans. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1944.

Crane, Thomas Frederick, ed. The Exemplae, or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry. 1890; repr. by the Folk-lore Society, vol. 26, 1967.

Day, Mabel, ed. The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle. EETS No. 225. London: Oxford University Press, 1952; repr. 1957.

Francis, W. Nelson, ed. The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the Somme Le Roi of Lorens d'Orléans. EETS No. 217. London: Oxford University Press, 1942; repr. 1968.

Furnivall, Frederick, ed. Early English Poems and Lives of the Saints. Berlin: 1862; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1974.

Innocent III. On the Misery of the Human Condition (De miseria humane conditionis). Margaret Mary Dietz, trans.; Donald R. Howard, ed. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1969.

Jacobus de Voragine. Legenda Aurea. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, trans. New York: Arno Press, 1969.

St. Jerome. Biblia Vulgata. Madrid: 1959.

_____. Letters and Select Works. W. H. Fremantle, trans. Vol. VI in A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. 2nd series. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.

Letts, Malcolm, trans. and ed. Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations. 2 vols. The Hakluyt Society, vol. CI, second series. London: 1950.

Longchamp, Nigel. A Mirror for Fools (Speculum Stultorum). J. H. Mozley, trans. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963.

Lorris, Guillaume de, and Jean de Meun. The Romance of the Rose. Harry W. Robbins, trans. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962.

Lydgate, John. The Siege of Thebes. Axel Erdman, ed. EETS e. s. No. 108. London: Oxford University Press, 1911; repr. 1960.

Macauley, G. C., ed. The Complete Works of John Gower. Vol. III: Confessio Amantis. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.

Map, Walter. De nugis curialium. Frederick Tupper and M. B. Ogle, trans. London: Chatto & Windus, 1924.

Neckam, Alexander. De naturis rerum. Thomas Wright, ed. No. 34 in Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages. London: Longman, Green, 1863.

Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso). The Art of Love. Charles D. Young, trans. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1931; repr. 1943.

_____. Metamorphoses, Book I. Frank Justus Miller, trans. Loeb Classical Library, London: W. Heinemann, 1921.

Pike, Joseph B., trans. John of Salisbury's Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938.

Rickert, Edith, trans. The Babees' Books: Medieval Manners for the Young. London: Chatto and Windus, 1923.

Robbins, Rossell Hope, ed. Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.

Stockton, Eric W., trans. The Major Latin Works of John Gower. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962.

Swan, Charles, and Wynnard Hooper, trans. Gesta Romanorum, or, Entertaining Moral Stories. 1st ed. 1876; repr. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1959.

Swift, Jonathan. Gulliver's Travels. Robert A. Greenberg, ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970.

Taylor, G. S., ed. The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry. Introduction by D. B. Wyndham Lewis. London: John Hamilton Ltd., 1930.

St. Thomas Aquinas. Summa Theologia. Part II, First Part. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Whicher, George F., trans. The Goliard Poets: Medieval Latin Songs and Satires. Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1949.

White, T. H., trans. and ed. The Book of Beasts: A Twelfth-Century Latin Bestiary. London: Jonathan Cape, 1954.

Secondary Materials

Books:

Bowden, Muriel. A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. 2nd ed. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967.

Coulton, G. G. The Medieval Scene. Cambridge University Press, 1930; repr. 1960.

Curry, Walter Clyde. Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences. 1st ed. 1926; rev. ed. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960.

Fisher, John H. John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1965.

Hartung, Albert, ed. A Manual of Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500. New Haven, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1975.

Hoffman, Richard L. Ovid and the Canterbury Tales. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966.

Lumiansky, R. M. Of Sondry Folk. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1955.

Mann, Jill. Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire. Cambridge: University Press, 1973.

Morton, A. L. The English Utopia. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952.

Owst, G. R. Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England. 1st ed. 1933; rev. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

Patch, Howard Rollin. The Other World, According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature. 1st ed. 1950; repr. New York: Octagon Books, 1970.

Robertson, D. W., Jr. Chaucer's London. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968.

_____, ed. The Literature of Medieval England. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1970.

_____. A Preface to Chaucer. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962.

Root, Robert Kilburn. The Poetry of Chaucer. 1st ed. 1934; repr. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1957.

Ross, Thomas. Chaucer's Bawdy. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972.

Rowland, Beryl. Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1971.

_____, ed. Companion to Chaucer Studies. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Speirs, John. Chaucer the Maker. London: Faber and Faber, 1951; repr. 1967.

Thorndike, Lynn. A History of Magic and Experimental Science. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan Co., 1929-58.

Wright, Thomas. A History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England During the Middle Ages. London: Chapman and Hall, 1862.

Articles:

Baum, Paull F. "Chaucer's Puns", PMLA, LXXI (1956), 225-46.

_____. "Chaucer's Puns: A Supplementary List", PMLA, LXXIII (1958), 167-70.

Beichner, Paul E. "Daun Piers, Monk and Business Administator", Speculum, XXXIV (1959), 611-9.

Biggins, D. "Chaucer's Summoner: 'Wel loved he garlek, oynons, and eek lekes', C. T. I, 634", Notes and Queries, n.s. XI (February, 1964), 48.

Birney, Earle. "The Franklin's 'Sop in Wyn'", Notes and Queries, CCIV (1959), 345-7.

Bryant, J. A., Jr. "The Diet of Chaucer's Franklin", MLN, 63 (1948), 318-25.

Davidson, Clifford. "The Sins of the Flesh in the Fourteenth-Century Middle English 'Land of Cockaygne'", Ball State University Forum, II, pt. 4, 21-6.

Delasanta, Rodney. "The Horsemen of the Canterbury Tales", Chaucer Review, 3 (1968), 29-36.

Donaldson, E. T. "Chaucer the Pilgrim", Chaucer Criticism, Vol. I. Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor, eds. Notre Dame, Indiana: 1960.

Donovan, Mortimer. "Three Notes on Chaucerian Marine Life", PQ, XXXI (1952), 440-1.

Frye, Roland M. "Swift's Yahoo and Christian Symbols", JHI, 15 (1954), 201-17.

Harper, Gordon H. "Chaucer's Big Prioress", PQ, XII (1933), 308-10.

Hill, Thomas D. "Parody and Theme in the Middle English 'Land of Cockaygne'", Notes and Queries, n. s. 22 (1975), 55-9.

Howard, Irene. "The Folk Origins of the 'Land of Cockaygne", Humanities Association Bulletin (Canada), 18, pt. 2 (1967), 72-9.

Kaske, R. E. "The Summoner's 'Garleek, Onyons and eek Lekes'", MLN, LXXIV (June, 1959), 481-4.

Landrum, Grace W. "Chaucer's Use of the Vulgate", PMLA, 39 (1924), 75-100.

McPeek, James A. S. "Chaucer and the Goliards", Speculum, XXVI (1951), 332-6.

Reiss, Edmund. "Chaucer's Friar and the Man in the Moon", JEGP, 62 (1963), 481-5.

_____. "The Symbolic Surface of the Canterbury Tales: The Monk's Portrait, Part I", Chaucer Review, 2 (1968), 254-72.

_____. "The Symbolic Surface of the Canterbury Tales: The Monk's Portrait, Part II", Chaucer Review, 3 (1968), 12-28.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "Authors of Middle English Religious Lyrics", JEGP, 39 (1940), 230-8.

Robertson, D. W., Jr. "Chaucer's Franklin and His Tale", Costerus, n. s. 1 (1974), 1-26.

Schoeck, Richard. "Chaucer's Prioress: Mercy and Tender Heart", Chaucer Criticism, Vol. I. Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor, eds. Notre Dame, Indiana, 1960.

Steadman, John M. "The Prioress's Dogs and Benedictine Discipline", MP, 54 (1956-7), 1-6.

Tashiro, Tom T. "English Poets, Egyptian Onions, and the Protestant View of the Eucharist", JHI, 30 (1969), 563-78.

White, Robert B., Jr. Chaucer's Daun Piers and the Rule of St. Benedict: The Failure of an Ideal", JEGP, 70 (1971), 13-30.

Williams, Arnold. "Chaucer and the Friars", Chaucer Criticism, Vol. I, Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor, eds. Notre Dame, Indiana, 1960.

Wood, Chauncey. "The Sources of Chaucer's Summoner's 'Garleek, Onyons, and eke Lekes'", Chaucer Review, 5 (1970), 240-44.