



<County: Shropshire>

<Code: L0237>

<MS reference: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Poet. 141>

<Text: Chaucer, Canterbury Tales>

<Tranche 1>

<fol. 58r>This alison . answerd who is there .  
That knokketh so . j warant hit a thefe .  
Why nay q<sup>d</sup> he god wote my swete lefe  
J . am thyn absolon . thy derlyng  
Of gold q<sup>d</sup> he j haue broght the ryng  
My moder 3af hit me so god me save .  
Full fyne hit is and yer-to wele ygraue .  
This wole j 3if the . 3if yow me kysse .  
This Nycholas . was rysen . for to pysse .  
And thought he wolde amenden . all the jape .  
he shuld kysse hys ers or that he scape .  
And vp the wyndow . did he hastily  
And out hys ers he putte pryuely  
Ouer the buttoke to the hanche-bone .  
And ther-with spake . this clerk this absolon .  
Speke swote bryd j . not where thow ert  
This Nycholas lete flye a fert  
As grete as hit as hit hadde . ben a thonder-dent  
That with the stroke he was almost yblent  
And he was redy with the yren . hoot  
And Nycholas in the ers he smote .  
Of goth the skyn an handbrede aboute  
The hoote culter brenned so his toute .  
And for hit smerte he went for to dye .  
As he were wode for woo . he can to crye .  
Help water water helpe for goddes hert  
This carpenter oute of his slomber stert  
And herd one crye water as he were woode

And thoght alas now *commeth* Noe floode  
 And sette hym vp with-oute wordes mo  
 And with an axe . he smote the corde atwo .  
 And done goth all he fonde neither to selle  
 Ne brede ne ale tylle he come to the felle  
 <fol. 58v>Vppon the floure . and ther a-swone he lay  
 Vp sterte hir alison . and Nycholay  
 And cried out harow in the strete  
 The neighbours both smale & grete .  
 Yronnen for to gauren . on this man .  
 That a-swone lay both pale . & wan .  
 For with that falle he brosten hath his arme  
 But stonden he most vnto his owne . harme  
 For whan he spake he was anon borne . done .  
 With hend Nycholas and alison  
 Thei tolde euery man that he was wode  
 he was agast so of Noes floode .  
 Thurgh fantasie that of his vanyte .  
 he hadde . yboght hym knedyng tubbes thre .  
 And had hem hanged in the roof aboue .  
 And that he prayd hem for goddes loue .  
 To setten in the roof *par* company  
 This folk gan laughen . at his fantasy  
 And to the roof thei kiken . and thei gape .  
 And turned hym harme vn-to a Jape  
 For what so this . carpenter ansuerde  
 hit was for noght no man . his reson herde .  
 With othes grete he was so sworne a-done .  
 That he was holden wode in all the toune .  
 For euery clerk a-noone-ry3t held with other  
 Thei seid the man is wood my lefe brother  
 And euery wight gan laghen . at his stryfe .  
 Thus chaped the carpenters wyfe  
 For all his kepyng and his ielousie  
 And absolon hath kyst her nether eye  
 And nycholas is scalded in the toute  
 This tale is done and god saue all the route  
 <fol. 59r>Whan folk hade laughen at this nyce caas  
 Of absolon . and hend Nycholas

Dyuerse folk dyuersly thei seyde .  
 But for the more part lough and pleyde .  
 Ne at this tale . j saugh no man~ hym greue .  
 But hit were onely Oswold the Refe  
 Bycaus he was of the . carpenter crafte  
 A litell jre . in his herte lafte  
 he gan to grutche & blamede hit a lite  
 So theke q<sup>d</sup> he full wele . coude J 3ow quyte .  
 With bleryng of a . proude myller eye .  
 Yf that me lyst to speke of rybaldrye .  
 But ike am olde me lyst not pley for age  
 Grase tyme is done . my fodder is forage .  
 This white toppe . wryteth myn . olde 3eres  
 Myn herte also is movled as my heres  
 But yf J fare . as dothe an opyn-ers  
 That ilke fruyt is euer lenger the wers  
 Till hit be roten . in mullok or in stree  
 We olde men j drede so faire . we .  
 Till we be roten . kan we noght be rype .  
 We hopen . alwey while the worlde will pipe  
 For in oure will ther styketh euere a nayle .  
 To haue an hoore . hede & a grene taile .  
 As haith a leke . for yough oure myght be gone  
 Oure wille desireth euer still an oone  
 For whan we may no3t done than will we speke .  
 3ef in oure asshe . olde is fire yreke .  
 Foure gledes han . we whiche j . shall deuyse  
 Auauntyng lying anger couetyse .  
 This foure sperketh longeth vn-to elde .  
 Oure olde lymes may wele ben~ vnwelde .  
 But wille ne shall not fayle . that is sothe .  
 <fol. 59v>And 3et haue J . all-weys a coltes toth  
 As many a 3eere . as hit is passed henne  
 Syn that my tappe of lyf began to renne  
 For sikerly whan . j was borne a-none .  
 Deth drough the tappe of lyf & lete hit gone  
 And euer sithen . haith so the tappe yronne  
 Till that almost all empty is the tonne  
 The streame of lyf now droppeth on the chynne .

The sely tonge may wele ryng & chymbe .  
 Of wretchednesse . that passyd is full 3ore .  
 With olde folk saue dotage . is the more .  
 Whan that oure ooste had herd this *sermonyng*  
 he gan to speken. as lordely as a kyng  
 he seid what amonteth all this wytte .  
 What shall we speke . all day of holy wrytte .  
 The deuell made a refe for to preche .  
 Or of a souter a shipman . or a leche .  
 Sey forth thi tale . and tarye not the tyme .  
 loo Depford . and hit is half-wey pryme .  
 loo Grenewich that many a shrew is Jn .  
 hit were all tyme . thy tale for to gynne .  
 Now sirs q<sup>d</sup> this oswold Refe .  
 J praye 3ow all that 3e no3t 3o<sup>u</sup> grefe .  
 yogh j . ansuere . and somdele sette his houwe .  
 For leuefull hit is with force . of shouwe .  
 This dronken myller hath ytold vs here .  
 how that begyled was a carpenter  
 perauenture . in scorn . for J . am one .  
 And by youre . lefe . J shall hym quyte anone  
 Right in his cherles termes will . J . speke .  
 J pray to god his nekke mote to-breke .  
 he can . wele in myn eye see a stalke .  
 But <sup>[in]</sup> his owne . he can no3t seen . a balke  
 <fol. 60r>At Trumpyngton~ noght fer fro cambryge .  
 Ther gothe . a broke and ouer that a bryge  
 Vppon . the whiche broke ther stant a mylle  
 And this is verray soth that J . 3ow telle .  
 A myller was ther duellyng many a day  
 As any pecok he was proude & gay  
 Pipen he couth and fisshen and nettys knete  
 And torne coppes and wele wrastell & shete  
 And by his belt he bare a long panade .  
 And of a swerde . full trenchant was the blade .  
 A ioly popper bare he in his pouche .  
 Ther was no man~ for parell durst hym hym touche .  
 A shefeld Twytell bare he in his hose .  
 Rounde was his face and camys was his nose .

As piled as an hape was his sculle  
 he was a market-beter at the fulle  
 Ther was no wight that durst hand on *hym* legge  
 But if he swore . he shuld anoone a-begge .  
 A Thef he was for sothe of corne & myle .  
 And that a sleigh and vsant for to stele  
 his name was hoten . deynous symken .  
 A wyf he had *commen* of a noble kyn  
 The person . of ye towne . her fader was  
 With her he 3af full many a panne of bras  
 For that symkyn shuld in his bloode allye  
 She was yfostered in a Nonnerye .  
 For symkyn wold no wyf as he seide .  
 But she were . wele . ynorysshede & a mayde .  
 To sauen his astate of 3omanry  
 And she was proude . & pert as is a pye .  
 A full fair sight was hit vppon hem two  
 On haly-daies aforne her wold he go .  
 With his typet wonden . about his heede .  
 <fol. 60v>And she come after in a gyte of reede  
 And symken had hosen of the same  
 Ther durst no wight clepen hir but dame  
 Was noon so hardy that went by the wey  
 That with hir durst ones rage or pley  
 But 3if he wolde . ben slayn of Symkyn  
 With panade or with knyf or bodekyn  
 For ielous folk ben *perelous* euermo .  
 Algate thei wolde . ther wyfes wenden so .  
 And ek for she was somdele smoterlich  
 She was as deigne . as water in the dich

## <Tranche 2>

<fol. 222r>The hye god forbarreith sweryng at all  
 Wittenenes of mathev . but in *espesiale* .  
 O sweryng the holy ieromye  
 Thou shalt swere soth yin othes & not lye  
 And swere in dome . & eke in ri3twissenenes

But ydell sweryng is a cursidnes  
 Behold & see y<sup>t</sup> . in ye first table  
 Of hye goddis hestes honorable .  
 how y<sup>t</sup> two hestes of hym is yis  
 Take no3t my tale in idelnes amys  
 loo rather he forbedith such sweryng  
 Than homicide . or any other thyng  
 J say as thris by ordre . it stondith  
 This knoweth yat his hestes vnderstondeth  
 how . y<sup>t</sup> ye secound heste . of god is that  
 And forther ouer j will the telle . alle platte .  
 That vengeaunce shall not parte from his hous  
 That of his othes is so outrageous  
 By goddis precious hert & his nayles  
 And by his bloode yat is in hailes  
 Seuen is my chaunce & his fyfe & three  
 By goddis armes 3if y<sup>u</sup> falsely pley me  
 This dagger shall yorgh thyn hert goo .  
 This fruyte cometh or yilke bones twoo  
 For-sweryng jre falsenes homicide .  
 Now for ye loue of criste y<sup>t</sup> for hus deyde .  
 leuyth 3our~ othes both grete & smale .  
 For j shall telle 3o<sup>u</sup> a marvelous tale .  
 These ryotours of which . j . 3o<sup>u</sup> telle  
 long erst or pryme rong any belle .  
 Wer~ sette in a tauerne to drynke .  
 And as yei . satte yei seid yei herd a belle clynke .  
 Byfore . a corps was caried to his grave  
 That one of hem . gane calle to his knave .  
 <fol. 222v>Go bet quod he . and aske redyly  
 What corps is yat passith forth by  
 And loke yow reporte his name wele  
 Sir q<sup>d</sup> yis knave it nedith neuer a+dele .  
 hit was me told er 3e come here two owres  
 he was parde an olde . felawe of youres  
 Al sodenly was he slayn .to-ny3t  
 For-dronken as he sat vppon~ his bench vp-right  
 Ther come a prevy thefe . men~ clepith deith  
 That in yis contrey all ye peple sleigh

And with his spere he smote his hert atwo  
 And wente his wey w<sup>t</sup>-outen wordes mo  
 he hath a yosand slayn yis pestilence .  
 And maister er 3e come in his presence .  
 Me thinketh yat it were necessarie .  
 For to be ware . of such an aduersarie .  
 Beth redy for to mete hym euermore  
 Thus taught me my dame j. say nomore  
 By seint Marie said yis tauerner~  
 The child seith soth for he haith slayn to 3er~  
 hens but a myle . w<sup>t</sup>in a grete village .  
 Both man & womman childe & page .  
 J . trowe his habitacion~ be there .  
 To ben avised grete wisdom . it were .  
 Or yat he did a man~ dishonour~  
 3e goddes armes q<sup>d</sup> this ryotour~  
 Js it such peril . w<sup>t</sup> hym for to mete  
 J shal hym sech by stye & by strete  
 J make avow . by goddes digne bones  
 herkeneth felawes we three . bene al ones  
 lete ych of hus hold vp hond to other  
 And eche of hus bycome other brother  
 And we wil sle yis fals traytour deth .  
 <fol. 223r>he sall be slayne he yat so many sleth  
 By goddis dignite er it be nyght  
 To-gedre han yes three her hertes plight  
 To lyfe & dye . ilke of hem w<sup>t</sup> other  
 As yough he were . his owne borne brother  
 And vp yei sterten . and dronken~ in this rage .  
 And forth thei gone towar<sup>d</sup> that village .  
 Of which ye tauerner hath spoken~ byforne  
 And mony a grisely othe yen . han yei sworne  
 And cristes blissed body yei to-rent  
 That deith shall be ded 3if y<sup>t</sup> we may hym hente  
 Whan yei han gone not fully a myle .  
 Right as yei wole haue troden . on a stile .  
 And olde & a pour~ man~ with hem mette  
 This olde man~ ful mekely hem grette  
 And seid yus now lordes god yo<sup>u</sup> see .

The proudest of this ryotours thre  
 Answerde a3en . what cherle w<sup>t</sup> harde *grace*  
 Why art you . all for-wrapped save yi face .  
 Why lyvest you so long in so gret age .  
 This old man~ gan loke in his visage  
 And seid thus for j can~ not fynde .  
 A man~ yough j wolde . in-to jnde .  
 Neither in cite ne in no village .  
 That will chaungen his 3outhe for myn age .  
 And therfore mote j . haue myn . age stille .  
 As long tyme as it is goddis wille .  
 Ne deth alas nyl not haue my lyfe .  
 Thus walke j . lyke a restles caytyfe  
 And on~ ye grounde which is my moder gate .  
 J knocke w<sup>t</sup> my staf erly and late .  
 And say leve moder latte me jn .  
 low how j vanessh flessch blode & skynne  
 Alas whal j my bones bene at reste .  
 <fol. 223v>Moder with 3ow wole j change my chest  
 That in my chambre . long tyme hath be  
 3e for an hyer clote . to wrappe me  
 But 3it to me . she wole not do y<sup>t</sup> *grace*  
 For which full welkyd is my face  
 But sirs to 3o<sup>u</sup> it is no curtesie .  
 To speke to an olde . man~ vilanye .  
 But he trespas in worde or ellis in dede .  
 Jn holy writte . 3e may 3our~ self wele rede .  
 A3ens an old man~ hoore vppon his heed  
 3e shuld aryse . therfore j 3if 3o<sup>u</sup> rede .  
 Ne doth vn-to an olde man~ harme as now .  
 Nomore . yan 3e wold a man did 3o<sup>u</sup> .  
 Jn age . 3if yat 3e so long abyde .  
 And god be with 3o<sup>u</sup> whethir 3e go or ryde .  
 J mote go thider as . j haue to go .  
 Nay old churle . by god you shalt not soo .  
 Saide yis other hasardours anone .  
 Thou partest not so lightly by seint John  
 Thou spake ri3t now of thilk traytour deth  
 That in this contrey all our~ frendeth sleeth



haue+here my trouth as you ert his aspye .  
 Telle wher~ he is . or ellis y<sup>u</sup> shalt dye .  
 By god & by ye holy sacrament  
 For sothely you . arte of his assent  
 To sleen hus 3ong folke . you fals theefe .  
 Now . sirs 3if it be . to 3ow so leefe .  
 To fynde . deth turne vp yis croked way  
 For in yat grove . j . lefte hym by my fay  
 Vndyr a tree . and ther he wole abyde .  
 Ne for your~ boste . he nyl hym no thyng hyde .  
 See 3e y<sup>t</sup> oke . ri3t there . 3e shuld hym fynde .  
 God save 3o<sup>u</sup> yat boght a3ayn mankynde .  
 And 3ow . amend yus sayd this old man~  
 <fol. 224r>And euery of these ryotours ran  
 Til yei come to ye tree . & yere yei fonde .  
 Floreyns of gold fyne ycoyned ronde  
 Wele nygh a seven . bussshels as hem yought  
 No lenger yan after deth yei soght  
 But yche of hem . so glad was of y<sup>t</sup> syght  
 For yat ye florens so fair~ be & bright  
 That doun~ yei sette . hem by ye *precious* horde .  
 The worst of hem he spake . ye first worde  
 Bretheren q<sup>d</sup> he . take heede what j . say  
 My wytte . is grette . yough j . borde . & play  
 This tresour~ hath fortune . to vs 3even  
 In myrth & iolyte . our~ lyfe . to lyven .  
 And lightly so as it *commeth* so will we spend  
 Eie *precious* goddes hert who wende .  
 Today y<sup>t</sup> we . shuld haue so fair~ a *grace*  
 But myght this gold be caried fro this place .  
 home to myn hous or ellis to 3oures .  
 For wele j . wote . y<sup>t</sup> all this gold is oures  
 Than wer~ we in hye felicite .  
 But truly by day it may not be .  
 Men wold sayn . y<sup>t</sup> we weren . theefes strong  
 And for our~ owne tresour~ done vs honge .  
 As wysely and as so sleighly as it myght  
 This tresour~ most ycaried be by nyght  
 Wherfore . j rede . lete loke among vs alle .



To drawe . and lete . see . where . ye cut will falle .  
he yat hath ye cutte . with hert blith  
Shall renne . to town~ and yat full swyth  
To bryng vs brede . & drynk full priuely  
And two of vs shall kepen full subtilly  
This tresoure . wele . and 3if he will not tarye .  
Whan it is nyght we will yis tressour~ carie .  
By oone assent where as hus lyketh best  
<fol. 224v>That oone of hem . brought gresse in his fyste  
And badde hem drawe & loke on whome it will falle .  
And it fell on ye 3ongest of hem alle  
And forth toward ye toun~ he went anone .  
And also sone as he was gone  
That on of hem spake vn-to yat other  
Thou woste wele you art myn~ owne sworne brother  
Thyn . profite will . j . profite . telle ye anone  
Thou woste wele yat our~ felaw is gone .