

According to M-R 2:191–94, these lines are late insertions by Chaucer in WBPro, as are the following:

I bar hym on honde he hadde enchanted me—
My dame taughte me that soutiltee—
And eek I seyde I mette of hym al nyght,
He wolde han slayn me as I lay upright,
And al my bed was ful of verray blood;
'Byt I hope that ye shal do me good,
For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.'
And al was fals; I dremed of it right naught,
But as I folwed al my dames loore,
As wel of this as of othere thynges moore. 575–84

For certes, I am al Venerien
In feelynge, and myn herte is Marcien.
Venus me yave me my lust, my likerousnesse,
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardynesse; 609–12

Yet have I Martes mark upon my face,
And also in another privee place.
For God so wys be my savacioun,
I ne loved nevere by no discrecioun,
But evere folwede myn appetit,
Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit;
I took no kep, so that he liked me,
How poore he was, ne eek of what degree. 619–26

[Of Eve's transgression:]
For which that Jhesu Crist hymself was slayn,
That boghte us with his herte blood agayn.
Lo, heere expres of womman may ye fynde
That womman was the los of al mankynde. 717–20

Note that in each case the insertions are self-contained (i.e., if you remove them the poem may be poorer, but it still makes sense).

4. CIT 4.1212a–g, the so-called Host's Stanza, does not appear in all MSS (though it does appear in El and Hg), either because it was a late addition *or* because Chaucer had cancelled the stanza and decided to reuse the material for the Host's response to the Tale of Melibee (cf. ProMkT 7.1891–94).

5. In some MSS, it is the Host who interrupts the Monk's Tale (ProNPT 7.2767). In others (including El and Hg), however, it is the Knight. Moreover, some MSS (El, for instance, but not Hg) also give the Host and the Knight a pair of speeches on telling happier stories (7.2770–90). What happened? The substitution of Knight for Host, at least, can be explained as follows. You will recall that earlier in the fragment, the Host had interrupted Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas with the words, "Namooore of this, for Goddes dignitee... Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a toord!" (Thop 7.919–30). Presumably what happened was this: originally Chaucer had the Host interrupt the Monk; then he

What Marchant / pardee sire wel thow woost

Three lines later, in line 699, Ellesmere reads:

That knowe I wel sire / quod the Frankeleyn

This time Hengwrt adds a syllable to the Ellesmere pentameter:

That knowe I wel sire / quod the Marchant certeyn

Fifteenth-century versifiers did not always aim at, or achieve, exact pentameters in every line, but it is beyond probability that the original composer would have missed all three times, whereas a later scribe adapting these lines would have hit on a regular pentameter every time. Nor is it clear how he would have happened to hit upon the Franklin, whom this link fits so very well, to replace the Merchant, to whom it has no very clear relation....

There can be no doubt that the Hg versions are adaptations of the versions that appear in El.

The point, though, is not that the Hengwrt scribe was stupid and the Ellesmere scribe was smart—on the contrary, most paleographers agree that both MSS were made by the same man. Rather, the need to fiddle with the identity of the Squire's interrupter probably arose because the Hg scribe did not initially possess the Squire-Franklin link (see the cramping on Hg fol. 137v) and therefore had to guess at which tale should follow the Squire's. He guessed wrong and copied the Merchant's Tale on the next leaf of his booklet. "Unfortunately, when [the] link arrived [it] proved an embarrassment.... The scribe was able to use [it], but only by dint of changing the names of the pilgrims to accommodate the links to the tale order already copied into booklet 4" (Hanna 152). Hence the mismetering.

Selected Bibliography

Unless otherwise noted, *The Canterbury Tales* are quoted from Larry D. Benson (gen. ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). For manuscript abbreviations (e.g., El for Ellesmere, Hg for Hengwrt), see *Riverside Chaucer* 1118–19.

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