

A PSEUDO-“CANTERBURY TALE”:
CHAUCER IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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A slim quarto pamphlet printed in 1641 bears an intriguing title: *A Canterbury Tale, Translated out of Chaucer's Old English into Our Now usual Language whereunto Is Added the Scots Pedlar*.¹ The title page names no author but credits one “A.B.” for “newly enlarg[ing]” the text. Readers who expect to find one of Chaucer’s familiar tales, however, will be disappointed, for this tale about a “potent peere” of Calidon and his “three princely sonnes” appears nowhere in Chaucer. Moreover, though the piece which follows it, “The Scots Pedlar,” is a monolog vaguely reminiscent of the confession made by Chaucer’s Pardoner, it too is alien to Chaucer’s canon. Nor is there any evidence that the pamphlet contains an old tale newly translated. Instead, the pamphlet provides an excellent example of the use of Chauceriana to legitimize a seventeenth-century anti-Catholic religious-political position that has little to do with Chaucer.

The historical record is rife with people whose interpretations reveal as much about the historian as they do about the past. The *Canterbury Tale* pamphlet invites several intriguing questions. What did the anonymous author intend by titling the pamphlet “A Canterbury Tale”? How did the author imagine the historical Chaucer? And, how does the pamphlet participate in a reinvention of Chaucer in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? If, as Voltaire is credited with saying, history is a pack of tricks played on the dead, Chaucer is indeed the butt of a joke in the way his reputation has been appropriated for someone else’s agenda.

Applying the label “Canterbury Tale” to a text does not automatically signal that an author intended to join in a long-standing tradition of attempting to fill in gaps from Chaucer’s incomplete text. The generic phrase “Canterbury Tale” is attested as early as 1575 in a

context that suggests that any “long tedious story” could receive the label.² Yet loose similarities between some structural features of the text and Chaucer’s work suggest that the author was familiar with Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. Furthermore, the reference to Chaucer in the pamphlet’s subtitle establishes an explicit connection to Chaucer as a poet with a known reputation.

That an author would continue the *Canterbury Tales* is itself not surprising, for writers have been doing that from practically the time of Chaucer’s death in 1400. For instance, early in the fifteenth century, John Lydgate cast himself as a pilgrim, entertaining and edifying Chaucer’s pilgrims with his tale of the *Siege of Thebes*; and around the same time, the anonymous author of the *Tale of Beryn* told readers how the pilgrims behaved once they arrived in Canterbury.³ What is more surprising in this case is the view of Chaucer obviously held by the writer of the “Canterbury Tale” pamphlet. The Protestant narrator of the tale foregoes storytelling in favor of directing bitter barbs at Roman Catholicism and at England’s political enemies, countries such as Spain and Scotland. Reading the pamphlet in the context of other apocryphal *Canterbury Tales* shows how easily an understanding of Chaucer in particular and the Middle Ages in general could be twisted to fit the politics of any age.

Of the two works that make up the pamphlet, only “The Scots Pedler” has been reproduced, and that is in a 1905 dissertation with limited circulation.⁴ Thus, a brief review will be useful. The first piece, the “Canterbury Tale” proper, tells in 132 lines the story of a “Potent Peer of Calidon” and his three sons. For reasons never specified, the father becomes enraged with one of the younger sons and casts him in prison. The son escapes and explains that he has been the victim of a cruel plot perpetrated by the father’s false advisors:

Each damn’d designe he plainly then relates,
Which had beene hatcht by hell, at Rome or Spaine,
For bringing in the Babylonish rites
To brand them and their fathers house with shame (54-57).

The younger son explains that the slanderous plot was intended for “my elder brother, / By that curst conclave of impiety, / The Cardinalls and painted whore their mother.” The father moves to immediate action, ordering the sons to “rid me of these fire brands of debate, / Root them all out, be sure you leave one / That sought the ruine of you, or my state” (106-08). The tale ends on what is intended as a happy note: “The hand is up (oh speake the word agen) / To give the blow let all hearts say Amen / Thrice blessed be that peerlesse Paragon, / The potent Princely Peer of Calidon” (129-32).

The second piece, “The Scots Pedler,” bears some similarity to the Pardoner’s Confession in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* but is much inferior. Without establishing any context, a speaker launches a monolog describing various wares for sale. Unlike Chaucer’s Pardoner, whose trade is based on actual practice of the Middle Ages, the Scots Pedler sells goods that are symbolic, providing further evidence of the author’s contempt for Roman Catholicism and foreigners.⁵ Reviewing a representative passage shows the pedlar’s inventory and shrill tone. Among the items for sale are

... the Scull of a damn’d Iesuite,
Conspiring heads, and hearts and tongues, and feete,
of Popes, of Prelates, Cardinalls, and Priests,
Who living were in their blood thirsty feasts,
Drunke with the gore of Potentates and Kings,
Such ware my packe affords, and finer things,
... here’s a Corosive that sharply bites,
And will eat out the Babylonish Rites
And macerate the bulke of that base slut,
With all the crew of th’ Antichristian cut,
A whip, a whip to mortifie her skin,
And lash her soundly like an arrant queane,
From place to place, and so signe her a passe
To Rome from when she came, with all her trash.

After continuing in this ranting vein for sixty-eight lines, the piece ends abruptly.

In her study of Chaucer's reception in the eighteenth century, Betsy Bowden refers to "The Scot's Pedler" as a deliberate transformation of the Pardoner's confession (88-89 and 92-93). In the prologue to his tale, Chaucer's Pardoner delivers a spirited confession of the ways he dupes gullible Christians with a variety of fake relics. Any connection between the Pardoner and the Scot's Pedler, however, is, at best, only implied. In the seventeenth-century pamphlet, there is no attempt to describe the speaker or to locate the piece in the context of a Canterbury pilgrimage.

Rather, the pieces are clearly examples of anti-papal rhetoric that flourished in pamphlets from the early half of the seventeenth century.⁶ Such literature served both religious and political functions. At one level, these tracts allowed authors to demonstrate their own religious devotion to the true, protestant religion. As John Prideaux, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, wrote in 1614: "to hate the abominations of Popery . . . is an evidence of a soule prepared, for the entertaining and relishing of this first love [of God's word]."⁷ At the same time, the works served the public good by warning people about the dangerous "errors" of Catholicism, for, as a writer in 1611 observed, "to discover them, is sufficient to confute them" (Milton 39). One anonymous pamphleteer expressed this idea more dramatically in declaring that anti-papal tracts helped "to shew unto the people aforehand the filthy, black, infernal stuff which lies at the bottom of the whore's cup, which they must one day drink off assuredly if they will become her disciples and followers" (Milton 38). Compared to such vehement texts, the Canterbury Tale pamphlet is relatively moderate.

In addition to its theological function, the anti-papal polemic served a political function because of the Puritan perception that the Royalist party was unduly comprised of Catholics and influenced by international Catholicism. These fears peaked between 1641 and 1643, exactly the time this pamphlet was published. On one hand, people feared a religious threat from abroad. After Charles married a Catholic

princess from France, many noted an alarming increase in open Catholicism in Charles's court. On the other hand, some suspected that the Catholic threat was domestic. These citizens especially distrusted the Anglican reforms initiated by Archbishop Laud, condemning them as too Catholic. In fact, extreme critics even charged Laud himself with closet Catholicism, claiming, for example, that he venerated a crucifix in his private study.⁸

Robin Clifton notes that England's strong anti-Catholic mythology had emerged during England's sixteenth-century war with Spain. At that time it helped unify a nation against its external enemies. In the seventeenth-century, however, the same mythology contributed to the nation's internal political instability. When people saw first James and then Charles tolerating domestic papists and making alliances with continental Catholics, they could be more easily convinced that the Royalist party no longer acted in the nation's best interest (Clifton 144-67).

This political element may have inspired the identification of the speaker of the second piece as Scottish. Little in the piece suggests Scotland, but the Scottish label may underscore the author's political agenda. Critics identified Scotland as a source for turmoil on both sides of the religious spectrum. Scotland was home to the radical protestant "Covenanters" whose riots against Laud's Anglican prayer book and other reforms would torment Charles in the late 1640s. In England, others associated Scotland with resurgent English Catholicism, largely due to Scotsman George Con, the papal legate to Charles's court who was involved with many Anglicans of social prominence converting to Catholicism.

The "Scot's Pedlar" stirs up both associations. First, the narrator shows a preference for Scotland, claiming of Scottish cloth that, "though it be slight and thin, / Yet safely you may weare it next your skin." In the context of religious practice, the lines suggest the superiority of the Scot's austere protestant worship. Next, the Pedlar's relics include the "the hand of Signior *Con*," the title "Signior" emphasizing the Scotsman's role in foreign Catholic hierarchy.

The anti-Catholic tone of the pamphlet is unmistakable, but its most curious element is its connection with Geoffrey Chaucer. Even if readers accepted the content of the pieces as Chaucer's, the rhyme and meter are definitely non-Chaucerian. The verse is artless. Rhymes are forced and the syntax twists to preserve a relentless meter. Unfortunately, a seventeenth-century reader might overlook these clues because the general attitude of the time was to consider Chaucer's poetic technique crude. For example, at the century's end, in an oft-repeated observation, John Dryden apologized for Chaucer's imperfect versification: "We can only say, that he liv'd in the Infancy of our Poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be Children before we can grow Men" (529).

But even if they found the doggerel verse plausibly Chaucerian, wouldn't seventeenth-century readers have rejected the poem's religious and political positions as non-Chaucerian? Not necessarily. To analyze this pamphlet and what it suggests its author thought of the Middle Ages, one must consider both the person who wrote the pamphlet and the nature of the content. Unfortunately, information on the author is spotty at best. The title page denotes the author (or at least editor) of the piece as only "A.B.," a designation that conveniently follows the first two letters of the alphabet. The Short Title Catalog confidently identifies this A.B. as Alexander Brome, a poet and lawyer who lived from 1620 to 1666. Nothing in Brome's sketchy biography suggests, however, that he was either an enthusiast of Chaucer or a strident anti-Catholic. The STC's attribution may be based on two items. The first is a loose similarity of the "Scots Pedlar" to a monolog in Brome's canon—the "Holy Pedlar"—in which the narrator brags of having made religion "but a matter of trade" (Dubinski 1.216-218, line 35). Brome's piece, however, does not focus on Catholicism but rather attacks every religious trend that threatens the Anglican *status quo*, especially puritan reformers. The second piece of evidence is Brome's "The Scots Curanto," an ironic poem in which a Scottish narrator anticipates a Scottish-British union with "the people . . . made beggars like we" (Dubinski 1.211-213, line 58).

Brome's political credentials are another strong strike against his authorship. The *Dictionary of National Biography* identifies Brome as a royalist who wrote "many songs and epigrams in ridicule of the Rump [parliament]," a position consistently apparent in his poetry. If Brome were the author of the pamphlet and if he intended it to convey Royalist sympathies, its portrayal of a king led astray by Catholic advisors would suggest, at best, lukewarm support for Charles on the eve of the revolution.⁹

Since authorship clues shed little light on the text, one must turn to the pamphlet's content. While the poem's positions are all consistent with seventeenth-century political and religious stances, they are certainly removed from the Chaucer of the fourteenth century. The most curious feature for a modern reader would be both texts' shrill anti-Catholicism, and thus we may consider some reasons why readers in the seventeenth century might have considered such a vitriolic position Chaucerian.

In the twentieth century, modern critical opinion considers Chaucer a man who supported the church as an institution even though he was critical of individual clergy who had corrupted church ideals. We easily forget that Chaucer was once widely considered a prophet of the Reformation, an opponent of Catholicism. Indeed, from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, Chaucer's works and life were seen as evidence of his stridently anti-Catholic inclination. Felix Swart has argued that this interpretation of Chaucer was cultivated deliberately by a government eager to show that the English Reformation "could in fact boast a hoary tradition" through its literature.¹⁰ If Chaucer, the grandsire of English literature, were a foe of Catholicism, then surely the English people had supported the Reformation far before Luther.

One of the first to link Chaucer to the radical reformers was John Foxe in the second edition of his *Ecclesiasticall history* (1570). Foxe particularly associates Chaucer with John Wyclif, the most infamous of the early reformers, wondering why the government suppressed so many books sympathetic to Wyclif, but "did yet authorise the workes of Chaucer to remayne still & to be occupied: Who (no doubt) saw in

Religion as much almost, as even we do now, and utterth in hys works no lesse, and semeth to be a right Wiclevian, or else was never any . . .” (2. 965; rpt. Spurgeon 1. 106). Not only does Foxe find Chaucer sympathetic to Wyclif, but he also credits Chaucer with some people’s turning away from Catholicism: “. . . Also I am partlye informed of certeine, whiche knews the parties, which to them reported, that by readyng of Chausers workes, there were brought to the true knowledge of Religion. And not unlike to be true” (2. 965; rpt. Spurgeon 1. 106).

Even writers opposed to the reformation saw Chaucer as a reformer, a traitor against the church. For instance, in his *Church History of England from the year 1500 to the year 1688* (1737), Charles Dodds links “a flattering divine called *John Wickliff*, and the witty satires of sir *Geoffrey Chaucer*, who took all occasions to lessen the power of churchmen, and ridicule their character” (369; rpt. Spurgeon 1. 380). To Dodd, at least, there was no difference between Wyclif’s outright condemnation of the church as an institution and Chaucer’s critique of lapses in individual church officials.

Views such as these result from three elements: an imperfect Chaucer biography, a creative reading of Chaucer’s General Prologue, and a specious canon of Chaucer’s work.

Chaucer is connected to Wyclif through two biographical traditions. The first concerns John of Gaunt, who was patron both to Chaucer and to Ralph Strode, the “philosophical Strode” whom Chaucer addresses at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*. At Oxford, Strode engaged in public debates with Wyclif, and some early biographers decided that if Strode knew Wyclif and if Strode and Chaucer were connected through John of Gaunt, then surely Chaucer knew Wyclif as well.¹¹ In addition, some believed that Chaucer had attended Oxford as a student and thus might have known or perhaps even studied with Wyclif there. This conjecture appears in the “Life of Chaucer” incorporated into Speght’s 1598 edition of Chaucer’s works. Speght suggests that Chaucer might have attended “Merton College, with *John Wickelife*, whose opinions in religion he much affected.”¹² Modern biographers, of course, find no evidence of such a connection

Chaucer's reformist biography continued unabated into the eighteenth century, no doubt perpetuated in part by works like the *Canterbury Tale* pamphlet. In 1720 John Lewis lists Chaucer as one of the "principal Persons who favoured Dr. *Wicliffe* and his Doctrines" and repeats the claim of Chaucer the collegian: "He [Chaucer] is said to have been educated in *Canterbury* or *Merton* College with *John Wicliffe*." (175; rpt. Spurgeon 1. 350). The "Life" in John Urry's 1721 edition of Chaucer's works amplifies this suggestion: "There can be no doubt of Chaucer's intimacy with Wickliffe; being probably of the same college with him, a Follower of his Opinions, and both Retainers to the Duke of Lancaster" (Urry d4). Other biographers extended sympathy into action. Speght's *Life* reports that Chaucer was once "fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan Fryer in Fleetstreete," an unverified story which was repeated as fact as late as Tyrwhitt's 1775 edition of the *Canterbury Tales* (biii.v). All these examples show how thoroughly ingrained was the notion of an anti-Catholic Chaucer.

In addition to the biographical tradition, many readers found in Chaucer's portraits of corrupt clerics ample evidence of Chaucer's Wyclifian sympathies. While the worldliness and general corruption of the Friar, Monk, Prioress, Summoner, and Pardoner pointed out how imperfectly ecclesiastical ideals were carried out, the portrait of the country parson attracted the greatest attention, both for what Chaucer describes and for what he does not.¹³

The Parson's most endearing qualities—the value he places on his own example, the priority he places on local ministry, his willingness to rebuke sinners of any social class—all emphasize virtues favored by Wyclif and his followers. Further, Chaucer does not describe the Parson conducting communion or hearing confession, two traditions particularly disdained by Lollards. It is important to note, however, that these mild Wyclifian hints are more than balanced by the Parson's long prose tale, a sober sermon that convinces modern theologians of the Parson's doctrinal compatibility with late fourteenth-century Catholicism.

In addition, the other pilgrims' reactions to the Parson contain Wyclifian suggestions. The Host jokingly calls the Parson "a Lollere"

[Lollard] because he objects to swearing. The Shipman hopes that the Parson will not be glossing gospel, an activity especially associated with Wyclif's followers.¹⁴ In her study of Wyclif and the reform movement in Britain, Anne Hudson considers the Parson and the reactions of other pilgrims to him, concluding that "it is surely likely that Chaucer, with his acute ear for linguistic idiosyncrasies . . . has deliberately chosen to surround his Parson with a suggestion of Wyclifism, a suggestion that no contemporary reader or listener could have missed" (392).

Finally, construction of Chaucer the reformer was also abetted by texts Chaucerian but not by Chaucer, which accrued to the printed editions of Chaucer from the sixteenth century onward. Alice Miskimin estimates that during the Renaissance, the Chaucer canon grew by almost 21,000 lines as authors wrote new tales, completed old ones, and attributed to Chaucer the work of other poets (230). One consequence of this expanded canon is an ironic rise in Chaucer's reputation as anticlerical, seen not only in the portrayal of corrupt or indifferent religion in the canonical *Canterbury Tales* but also in such spurious *Canterbury Tales* as "Gamelyn," "The Pilgrim's Tale," and "The Plowman's Tale."

The latter piece is particularly strident in its anti-Catholic polemic. Foxe singles it out as Chaucer's excellent method for pointing out that the Pope and his prelates "be Antichrist."¹⁵ Indeed, the apocryphal *Plowman's Tale* seems to have struck other readers as Chaucer's strongest statement against Catholicism. Edward Leigh, writing in the mid-seventeenth century, makes such a connection on the basis of the *Plowman's Tale*: "He seems in his Works to be a right *Wiclevian*, as that of the Pellican and Griffin shews."¹⁶ In 1700, Dryden refers specifically to "The Plowman's Tale" when he sympathizes with Chaucer, unable to "blame him for inveighing so sharply against the Vices of the Clergy in his Age: Their Pride, their Ambition, their Pomp, their Avarice, their Worldly Interest, deserv'd the Lashes which he gave them, both in that ["Plowman's Tale"], and in most of his *Canterbury Tales* (530).

In this vein, Hudson also reads the "Plowman's Tale" as an imitation of Chaucer's outlook: "It certainly is far more frank, indeed crude, in its expression of loyalties than the reticent poet [Chaucer], disappearing behind numerous disguises, mouthpieces, and literary strategies, would have offered; but those who provided the false paternity for the "Plowman's Tale" were developing ideas, making explicit certain suggestions, that are not entirely foreign to Chaucer's own work. It was a clever move, but not an entirely unwarranted one" (Hudson, 392). These same sentiments could be attached to our anonymous pamphlet.

The connections between apocryphal tales and the Chaucer canon receives special attention in Francis Thynne's "Animadversions upon Speght's First Edition of Chaucer's Works," a pointed critique of Speght's 1598 edition of Chaucer. Thynne has more than Chaucer scholarship on his mind, for in 1532 his father, William Thynne, had edited Chaucer some sixty years before Speght, and Francis wants to preserve his father's reputation. He reports that his father's original edition of Chaucer had contained "The Pilgrim's Tale," "a thinge moore odious to the Clergye, then the speche of the plowmanne" (7-8). When Henry VIII read it, he warned Thynne that the Bishops would oppose it, and indeed, as his son writes, "my father was called in questione by the Byshoppes, and heaved at by cardinall Wolseye, his old enmye" (10). As a result, "The Pilgrim's Tale" was deleted from the edition, and "The Plowman's Tale" was only "with muche ado permitted to passe with the reste" (10). It was the last of the inflammatory texts to be added to Chaucer's canon, but as we see with the Canterbury Tale pamphlet, it was not the last time that people projected upon Chaucer the prevailing attitudes of contemporary culture.

So merited or not, Chaucer's reputation in the seventeenth century clearly established him as a foe of corrupt Catholicism. Thus, an author could present the ranting 1641 Canterbury Tale, and readers might believe it captured accurately Chaucer's sentiment. By claiming the pamphlet as a translation of an older text, the author is able to suggest that his radical anti-Catholic views merely reflect solid, long-standing

positions held over two hundred years earlier by the venerated father of English poetry.

While the poor quality verse, the insipid tale, and the virulent anti-Catholicism set the "Canterbury Tale" and "Scots Pedler" apart from the least of Chaucer's work, the pamphlet should still interest literary historians. Besides providing a glimpse of politics and theology on the eve of the Civil War, the "Canterbury Tale" and the "Scots Pedler" show one author's seventeenth-century opinion of Chaucer as a man who not only disapproved of Catholicism but was ready to attack it with crude, blatant bombast. In packaging his work in a Chaucerian wrapper, however, the author ends up revealing more about his own era than about the Middle Ages he claims to portray.

Concordia College

A Canterbvry TALE,
TRANSLATED
out of
CHAUCER'S old English
Into our
NOW VSVALL LANGVAGE
Whereunto is added the
SCOTS PEDLAR.
Newly enlarged by A. B.
Printed in the yeare 1641¹⁷

In Calidon did live a Potent Peere,
Who had three Princely Sonnes of courage bold,
For brave Achievements beyond all compare,
Nere fairer Creatures ere were fram'd on Mould,
5 Whose fame, whose honour and terrene renowne,
Unto hopes highest station did aspire,
Till fate and falshood sought to pull them downe,
By breeding discord 'twene them and their sire:
Hell to their ruine being soly bent
10 Had not blest heaven crost their damn'd intent.
For some malignant sprights had so inflam'd
Their fathers wrath 'gainst one of his said sonnes,
That he his death and downefall onely aim'd,
So hot the rancor of his fury burnes,
15 The sacklesse sonne on bended knee is falls downe,
Begging the favor of his frowning sire,
The more he seekes the farther from his boone,
For kindled was the fury of his ire,
By powerfull Prelates, who so fed the flame,
20 That nought but his heart blood could quench the
same.
First he debars his guiltlesse son of bread,

Sprunger

Aiming by famine for to worke his fall,
Next him imprisons, oh most dolefull deed!
When as the father shall the sonne enthrall,
25 [A2] But life is sweet, and liberty so deare,
To free and noble mindes, that he breakes ward,
And to his fathers presence doth repaire,
With resolution not to be debard:
His Princely reconcilement for to gaine,
30 And punishment of those had bred his baine.
His father meets him with an angry brow,
And all his force in fury 'gainst him bends,
He draws his sword to give the fatall blow,
But God who alwaies Innoncents defends,
35 Protects the sonne, who then himselfe to free
From stripes, imprisonment, and cruell bands,
From direfull death, and Romish slavery
Boldly steps in, and gently holds his hands,
Begging still humbly on his bended knee,
40 His grievances to heare, and him to free.
The inrag'd father calls his other sonnes,
Him to assist 'gainst this their loving brother,
Command them bring their Pistolls, Pikes, and Guns,
They stand amaz'd, looking each at other,
45 Yet forth the elder steps, and with like zeale,
On bended knees implores their wrathfull sire,
His brothers suite to heare, perchance our weale,
It may concerne (good Sir) grant his desire.
The younger seconds him, they both prevaile,
50 The father is content to heare his tale.
In presence then of his kinde loving brothers,
His grievances he gently gins relate,
All plots and stratagemes he then discovers
Which were contriv'ed against their fathers state,
55 Each damn'd designe he plainely then relates,
Which had beene hatcht by hell, at Rome or Spaine,

- [A2v] For bringing in the Babylonish rites
To brand them and their fathers house with shame,
Making them hatefull to the great Commander
60 That he might list them in black *Pluto's* Callender.
Deare Sir, quoth he, will you gaine heavens frowne,
Through the bad counsell of accurst misleeders?
Or will you lose the comfort of a son,
For pleasing Parasites or mischief breeders?
65 Nay will you hazard all? For all their ends
Aime at my brothers ruine as well as mine
The Sychophants which now doe seem their friends
Will prove tart foes if they finde place and time.
Consider then it is not I alone
70 Must smart and suffer, though I soly grone.
This mischief which hath now befallne to me,
At first was fram'd against my elder brother,
By that curst conclave of impiety,
The Cardinalls and painted whore their mother.
75 But great Ichova who did then foresee
How that their damn'd designes were to oppose
The glory of the eternall Deity,
Was pleased that I their plots should counterpose,
And gave me courage with a filiall awe,
80 'Gainst foes in your defence my sword to draw.
Thinke what pernicious plots have been contriv'd
By fire and water for to worke your baine,
Consider what Armados have ariv'd
Upon your costs your Countries for to gaine,
85 Yet all in vaine, prais'd be the power divine,
The ruine they have sought of you and yours,
And ever shall while you and they combine
In perfect love, in spight of all their powers,
[A3] Crush then that cursed and most viperous brood,
90 That moves you thus to spill your childrens blood.
See then the sufferings of your sakelesse sonne,

- And his intentions with a gracious eye,
View their endeavours who would have undone
Your selfe, your state, and Princely Progeny,
95 Ponder their plots who plundered have the streame,
And current of your hoped happinesse,
Weigh all their actions with an upright beame,
That justice may imbrace faire Righteousnesse;
So none shall dare t'eclipse, or once pull downe
100 The glorious splendor of your high renowne.
This said, his brothers shed some brinish teares,
Which molified their furious fathers heart,
Who then replied (deare sonnes) it now appears,
You are resolved all to take one part,
105 And so am I, Ile second you, goe on,
And rid me of these fire brands of debate,
Root them all out, be sure you leave not one
That sought the ruine of you, or my state;
And thou my sonne, whose bane I late did wish,
110 Receive thy reconciled fathers blesse.
For henceforth my deare children I shall know
Our friends from foes, since truely now I finde,
Who aim'd our blesse, our bane, our weale, our woe,
Which I have printed in my heart and minde,
115 No damn'd designe hereafter shall take place,
Or once be harbor'd in your fathers brest,
Which him, or his may in the least disgrace,
And you oppresse, or rob of quiet rest;
Sweet peace and plenty each where shall abound,
120 While all our actions with love shall be crown'd.
[A3v] Downe at their fathers feet these joyfull wights,
Prostrate themselves and lye as men amaz'd
At length couragiously they rouse their sprights,
Which long with care and grieffe had beene surpriz'd,
125 And all resolve unfainedly to see
Their fathers foes cut off by fatall stroke,

That sought the downfall of his dignity,
And 'gainst them his displeasure did provoke,
130 The hand is up (oh speake the word agen)
 To give the blow let all hearts say Amen
 Thrice blessed be that peerlesse Paragon,
 The potent Princely Peer of Calidon.

THE SCOTS PEDLER

*The Pedler now hath ope his packe,
Come Gentleman see what you lacke.*
Here's Spanish Needles, that will shrewdly pricke
Fair Englands foes and lance them to the quicke,
Here's Romish gloves perfum'd, whose very sent
Will cause the Babylonians to be shent.
5 Here's French toyes too, whose fashions came from / Rome,
Priz'd at no lesse then at a Kingdomes Crowne,
Here's Flanders Lace, which is most closely woven,
Peeces of knavery made up by'th dozen,
But here is Holland I dare say tis right,
10 Teare it you cannot, tis so good and tight,
And for Scots cloath though it be slight and thin,
Yet safely you may weare it next your skin.
[A4]¹⁸ If these shall not you please, here's ware divine,
Late consecrated at Saint *Thomas* Shrine,
15 In Canterbury by a holy Fryer,
As some men say, or else the D:el's a lyer.
For Reliques, here's the hand of Signior *Con*,
The fingers of a Spanolized *Don*,
Who pointed out three Kingdomes overthrow,
20 Good *Pan* be praised who did divert the blow,
See here's the brains of that Capuchian Fryer,

Who whilome set all Germany on fire,
And blow'd the cole great Brittain to have brent,
But that Iejova did his plots prevent.
25 And here's the Scull of a dman'd Iesuite,
Conspiring heads, and hearts and tongues, and feete,
Of Popes, of Prelates, Cardinalls, and Priests,
Who living were in their blood thirsty feasts,
30 Drunke with the gore of Potentates and Kings,
Such ware my packe affords, and finer things,
for here's a Miter which from Rome was sent,
Not for Pope Jonne, but for the man of Kent,
Gay Copes, Hare Sarkes, Holy Bread, and Crosses,
35 For Altars, pennance, Martens and for Masses,
Here's Bulls, Indulgences, and Absolutions,
For Murders, Massacres, and bloody treasons,
From Babylon by *Toby* late brought ore,
As a Propine from that enchanting whore:
40 Yet here's a spell will keepe you from all harmes,
And eke prevent and frustrate all her charmes,
A precious Balsome that will cleere your sight,
And bring you out of darkness into light,
Take from before your eyes that misty fog
That plainely you may see *Gog* and *Magog*.
45 Loe here's an Antidote which will you free
From that vilde strumpet of impiety
And crush her curst designes, whose damn'd intent,
Three kingdomes to confound, was soly bent:
And here's a Corosive that sharply bites,
50 And will eat out the Babylonish Rites
And macerate the bulke of that base slut,
With all the crew of th' Antichristian cut,
A whip, a whip to mortifie her skin,
And lash her soundly like an arrant queane,
55 From place to place, and so signe her a passe
To Rome from whence she came, with all her trash.

Sprunger

Here's Hoods, faire Rochets, and fine Tiburn Tippetts,
For Priests, for Jesuits, and Popish Bishops;
Nay here's a halter otherwise a rope,
60 Sauce for the Dee's good servants, and the Pope,
And here are Towerhill knives, or Scottish Tweasers
To cut off Trayters, and all mischiefe breeders,
Fine Pins and Points, Box Combes, & Looking glasses,
Your friends from foes to try, and know their faces,
65 So prict and pointed out that future Ages,
The Pedlers ware shall praise upon their Stages.
*Come then and welcome to the Pedlers packe,
Here's that will do't, will do't, see what you lacke.*

FINIS.

Notes

¹ Title is modernized. Quotations from the pamphlet are all from my edition, which appears at the end of the essay. References are to line numbers in my edition.

² *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition. Accessed 22 May 2010.

³ See, for instance, John Bowers, *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions*, rev. ed.

⁴ This dissertation, by Albert Tobler, is entitled *Geoffrey Chaucer's Influence on English Literature* (1905; New York, AMS Press, 1973).

⁵ For discussion of the tradition of selling fake or worthless items, see Friedman 289-319.

⁶ See, for example, G.E. Aylmer's chronological table of events in *Rebellion or Revolution? England 1640-1660*, 212-247. For the anti-papal religious climate of the revolution, see especially Paul Hardacre, *The Royalists during the Puritan Revolution*. The Folger Shakespeare Library card catalog annotates the pamphlet as containing "satirical verses against Archbishop Laud and other Prelates" (observed in July 1999). When it comes to the Canterbury Tale pamphlet, however, the text's tirade against ritual and foreign influence in the church seems aimed at Catholicism in general rather than Laud's reforms, regardless of how "Catholic" critics perceived those reforms to be.

⁷ Quoted in Milton 35-36. The quotations that follow are from Robert Abbot, *A Defence of the Reformed Catholicke* (1611) and T.B., *A Preservative to Keep a Protestant from Becoming a Papist* (Oxford, 1629).

⁸ For details on the history of this movement, see Charles Carlton, *Archbishop William Laud*; H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud 1573-1645*; and Martin J. Havran, *The Catholics in Caroline England*.

⁹ Roman Dubinski, editor of Brome's poetry, declines to list the pamphlet among Brome's work. In private correspondence, he explained that he "could find no evidence that it was written by Brome. Though I spent some time trying to determine who may have been the author, my research proved futile" (undated but postmarked 4 March 1998).

¹⁰ Swart 616-19. On the larger context, see the introduction to Penn Szitty's *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*.

¹¹ See Hudson 392.

¹² Speght biii. Speght claims as his source John Leland's *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis* (c. 1545), but that text does not associate Chaucer with Wyclif.

¹³ See, for example, H. Simon, "Chaucer a Wicliffite: An Essay on Chaucer's Parson and *Parson's Tale*," 227-92.

¹⁴ Chaucer's portrait of the Parson is found in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tale*. Reactions of the Host and Shipman occur at the end of the Man of Law's tale. For further discussion, see Hudson 392.

¹⁵ Reprinted in Spurgeon 1. 106. For discussion of Foxe's perceptions of Chaucer, see Joseph Dane, *Who is Buried in Chaucer's Tomb: Studies in the Reception of Chaucer's Book*.

¹⁶ Leigh 160. Reprinted in Spurgeon 1. 233. The *Plowman's Tale* features a debate between a Pelican and a Griffin.

¹⁷ This edition follows a copy in the Rare Book Collection at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. That transcription has been compared to a copy at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC. I have retained spelling, punctuation, and capitalization but replaced long S with s. For reference, I've added line numbers and indicated original signature designations in square brackets.

¹⁸ This leaf is not identified in the edition.

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