

## WAR AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCES AND CHAUCER

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The topic of war is of prime importance in the Middle English romances. One might even say that – together with the theme of courtly and, at times, even uncourtly love – it is the main subject of this genre. The two themes are, more often than not, closely linked with each other and sometimes even mutually dependent.

War is taken for granted as part of life in chivalry, both on the level of single combat and of mass warfare. Only in very rare cases do authors probe into the theoretical basis of the problem. And yet there *is* a kind of theory of war, even in the romances, though it is only seldom dealt with explicitly. Usually it can only be reconstructed from the context. In the case of chivalric single combats it is often difficult to distinguish the good from the bad. There are only very few Dinadans, who ponder on the moral justification and the logic of knightly lance and swordplay and who, as a result, end in harsh condemnation of its underlying principles. As a rule, it is assumed that armed combat is the essence of knighthood – even to the *utterance*, i.e. to the death of one of the combatants.

In mass warfare, however, the question of right or wrong is far more difficult to decide. The aggressor is by no means always the villainous; nor the attacked, innocent. In the romances there are a number of reasons for a "just" war, even if they are hardly ever analyzed. Thus the mere designation of the enemy leader as a sultan (*sowdan*), and his army as Saracens, is justification enough for war. Of course, there are examples of the "Noble Pagan" in the Middle English romances, but only as an exception to the rule. As soon as a Sultan crops up, the audience

is automatically made aware of the contrast between Christian knighthood and its barbaric opponents. The outcome is merely a matter of time. This moral contrast is even more blatant when the enemy is a giant, whose ugly appearance reveals his nasty character.

The opposition between good and evil is particularly evident if the person under attack is a noble lady besieged in her castle by an enemy force, quite often a giant. Such besieged ladies are a favourite motif of Arthurian literature in all European languages, but they also occur in the non-cyclic narratives. To put an end to such a siege is one of the highest tests of knighthood, comparable to the killing of a dragon.

Let me give you an example from *Libeaus Desconus*.<sup>1</sup> Two giants beleaguer the castle of Virgin Violette, one of them red and hideous, the other as black as pitch. Violette's father Antore is too old to defend himself. Libeaus kills the two giants and Antore offers him his daughter as a reward. But the Fair Unknown declines and departs. There is yet another virgin for him to rescue – namely the Lady of the Ile d'Or, who is being attacked by a giant, called Maugis. He, too, is black as pitch (l. 1249 Cotton MS; l. 1299 Lambeth MS). To make things worse, he is 30 feet tall and has the strength of five knights. Libeaus defeats his opponent beneath the city wall, while Lords and Ladies look on from the drawbridge.<sup>2</sup>

The battle is not exactly what you would call chivalric. Maugis kills Libeaus' horse, and our hero in return takes revenge by chopping off the head of the giant's horse with an axe. Naturally the giant is defeated in the end, although he tries to take unfair advantage by attacking his enemy while he takes a drink of water. After Libeaus has done away with the giant, the lovely Lady of the Castle offers him her love and is accepted. But unfortunately she turns out to be a sorceress, and thus he gets "mis-laid" (*verligen*) for twelve months or more. But eventually Dame Elene, a kind of intermediary between the parties, reminds him of his duties as a knight. Libeaus makes good his escape through an unlocked gate in the town wall.

The theory behind the theme of the besieged lady can easily

be reduced to a formula. The Lady is good, but weak, and needs to be rescued by a man. Thus the reason for war is weakness in leadership and lack of authority on the part of the besieged. This view is illustrated in several Middle English romances.

In the romance *Ipomydon*,<sup>3</sup> for instance, the uncle and subjects of the Calabrian Princess demand that she marry, so that the country can be properly ruled by a king. Women, as everybody knows, are by their nature incapable of leadership and thus, through their unmarried state, conjure up siege and war.

... You must take a husband unto you,  
 Who can be of this land king  
 And govern it in every thing;  
 For no woman may take in hand  
 To govern well such a land.

(ll. 604-608)<sup>4</sup>

The Princess had someone in mind as a husband, namely the Squire who had won the three-day tournament. But unfortunately he had vanished after his victory, thus exposing her to the importunities of the male sex. She is pestered, above all, by Duke Geron of Sesseney-Land. He wants either her hand or her land – or if possible both. If she refuses, he threatens to lay waste Calabria.

... For I shall destroy her lands all,  
 Her men slay, both great and small,  
 Break into her castle and her tower,  
 By force then take her in her bower...

(ll. 1611-1614)<sup>5</sup>

Indeed he does succeed in destroying the whole country (l. 2013),<sup>6</sup> but not in winning the Lady. Ypomydon comes to her rescue just in time and defeats the aggressor.

This opposition between Good and Evil is a veritable stereotype in the romances. One further example should suffice. In *Sir Perceval of Galles*<sup>7</sup> Arthur's empire is in bad shape. For five years on end, his hall has been ransacked by the Red Knight,

who rides straight up to the high dais on Yule Day, seizes Arthur's golden wine goblet and rides off. No one dares to stop him. Child Perceval pursues him and kills him with a hunting spear. The Red Knight had not only violated law and order in the Arthurian world, but was also a heathen tyrant and a sorcerer. Thus Perceval, though ignorant of knightly ways, acts by intuition and does exactly the right thing.

Shortly after this meritorious deed, he hears of the Lady Lufamour, whose castle is besieged by a heathen Sultan. Without a moment's thought, Perceval sets out to free the Lady. He wants to do so by himself, and for this reason shakes off those who accompany him. He will and must fulfill his mission single-handedly. Soon he arrives at the castle of Maydene-Land. The Sultan is out hunting, but has left enough knights behind to conduct the siege. Perceval attacks a force of eleven score. The battle lasts from midnight to seven o'clock in the morning. In the end he is so tired that he falls asleep in a nook of the town wall. A watchman discovers him in the morning. He reports to Lufamour, who instantly recognizes him as a powerful ally in her need. Perceval vanquishes the Sultan Gollerothame, and thus restores law and order.

## II

Even today there is no consensus of scholarly opinion as to the definition of the Middle English romance — contrary to what Helaine Newstead has claimed.<sup>8</sup> This is small wonder in view of the great disparity of the literary works in question. For example, the alliterative works of the so-called *Revival* form a group by themselves, in that they are moralizing and highly didactic. Entertaining episodes are made subservient to this purpose, as I shall try to demonstrate with three examples.

Even among this special group of texts, the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*<sup>9</sup> occupies a unique position. It gives the impression of being an "anti-romance", as I have demonstrated in several publications. Perhaps I should admit from the very beginning that my position on the subject is still a matter of controversy. When I first presented my arguments in 1979 at the

Twelfth International Arthurian Conference in Regensburg, Sir Kenneth Traherne, Knight of the Garter, disagreed emphatically. The *Morte Arthure*, he said, was by no means directed against war, nor did it contain any criticism of war and bloodshed. On the contrary it had been written by a "bellicose clergyman" who even revelled in the macabre side of war. There are other critics who have even described the portrait of Arthur in the poem as "celebratory" and by no means critical, as for instance Elizabeth Porter. And even Derek S. Brewer, who printed my book, has expressed a degree of friendly scepticism. I hope you will not think it stubborn if I insist. It must be admitted though that Arthur is represented as the greatest of the Nine Worthies and the best hero of the world. But this only serves to highlight the *exemplum*. In order that you can judge for yourselves, I have assembled relevant passages from the poem, which has not yet been studied enough in detail. Let me summarize my conclusions, drawn from passages such as those on your handout.

In the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* nearly all the stereotypes and clichés concerning Arthur and his world are destroyed. The *casus* of Arthur is no longer connected with the love affair of Lancelot and Guinevere, but is rather the result of unjust wars of the king. At the beginning of the work, the author describes a kind of council of war. The question is whether Arthur should wage war against the Roman Empire, and whether he has the law on his side. But only the king remains cautious and reserved. He insists that all arguments *pro* and *con* must be carefully balanced. But all his aristocratic councillors clamour for war and offer him contingents of troops. Arthur is carried away by their reckless enthusiasm, and in spite of his reservations, joins the warmongers. The entire remainder of the poem is concerned with the consequences of this decision. Towns and territories are ravaged and laid waste, women and children are massacred.<sup>10</sup> Arthur leaves nothing but scorched earth behind, and is thus hated by the populace from Spain to Prussia: [he] "turmentez þe pople" (l. 3153)<sup>11</sup> "disspite es full hugge" (l. 3163).<sup>12</sup>

Thus Arthur's career is a tragedy in the medieval sense of the word. But his *casus* is not the result of the whims of Fortuna,

but rather of *contrapasso*, which means just punishment for the crimes he has committed. The whole work is an illustration of the biblical maxim: "He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword." Above all, the author is concerned with the spiritual consequences of war: Arthur and his knights are corrupted morally through the misuse of power and are thus instrumental in their own downfall. In this sense, the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* is less a tragedy of fortune than a moral lesson on the consequences of war.

### Golagros and Gawain

The alliterative romance of *Golagros and Gawain*<sup>13</sup> dates from 1470 as far as the extant version is concerned, but is certainly much older. The poem is characterized by a critical, at times even sceptical, attitude towards the knightly code of honour – but also towards chivalric combat and war. As in the *AMA* the position of the author is rather ambivalent. At times he succumbs to the fascination of the play of lance and sword, which, in the taste of the time, occasionally becomes an end in itself and overshadows the moral didactic tenor of the work.

The tendency of the whole is signaled in the first stanza: King Arthur has marched his troops into Tuscany<sup>14</sup> in order to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The undertaking is not called a crusade, as for instance in the *AMA*, where Arthur intends "To reuenge the Renke that on the Rode dyede" (l. 3217).<sup>15</sup> Even in the interpolation of Nennius,<sup>16</sup> the author speaks of Arthur's crusade to Jerusalem. According to this version Arthur erected a cross in the Holy Land, and with its help overcame the pagans. In *Golagros and Gawain* the venture is called a "pilgramage" (l. 235).<sup>17</sup> Arthur wants to "seik ..., that saiklese wes sald" (l. 3).<sup>18</sup> In the Holy Land he makes his sacrifice and returns immediately home by the same route.

Arthur, however, is by no means represented as a pious and ascetic pilgrim. The pilgrimage functions as the impulse, point of departure and background of the plot. As such it is a kind of positive foil against which Arthur's brutal striving for power and mercilessness is contrasted. The author wants to point out the

consequences of a perverted *chevalrie*. In particular he scrutinizes the justification and the mode of the wielding of power over other lords, men and countries. He questions the very foundations of the feudal system. Thus the whole romance can be subsumed under the question: is it justified to attack other lords under the pretext of *chevalrie* and make them subservient; is it possible to establish allegiance by brute power?

Alone the distribution of passages on allegiance throughout the work provides insight into the structure of the poem; problems of the feudal system are dealt with in the first and last part of the poem, but not in the middle passage dealing with Kay and the actual battle.

The question, therefore, is to explain the meaning of the relatively long and central Kay episodes. Obviously Kay is a kind of negative foil to the exemplary figures of the poem. But if the author's only purpose was to show Kay as "crabbit of kynde" (l. 119)<sup>19</sup> (as he is traditionally seen in Arthurian literature), the entire episode would be no more than a digression and structurally irrelevant.

I believe, however, that the two Kay episodes (ll. 40-223 and 836-883)<sup>20</sup> are meant to function as negative counterparts. Kay stands for a perverted chivalry which is not tempered by *courtoisie*, *mesure*, mildness and manners, and is thus very near to brute force. Instead of politely requesting supplies for the half-starved troops from Arthur's *cousin* (relative) in the castle, which was his task as messenger, Kay wrests a roasting spit from the dwarf and starts to feed himself on the spot. The Lord of the castle pays him home in kind, by knocking him flat with a blow of his fist (cf. ll. 53-108).<sup>21</sup>

Kay's unchivalric behaviour would have been even clearer if he had actually done battle against an unarmed knight (ll. 836-883)<sup>22</sup> as Amours maintains in his preface to the poem,<sup>23</sup> and as the text might be read: "Sa come ane knight as he baid,/ Anairmit of weir" (ll. 841-842).<sup>24</sup> But Kay's opponent is by no means unarmed, as the battle description shows (ll. 843-872).<sup>25</sup> The two knights joust against each other with lances, then fight by sword on foot until they are completely exhausted.

Kay's opponent surrenders, to Kay's inner triumph. He, himself, is "byrsit and beft" (l. 870),<sup>26</sup> and he only grants mercy, because he has no more strength left to fight ("Thought he wes myghtles", l. 871).<sup>27</sup>

Kay is evidently a counterpart and parallel to Arthur. In the first episode his behaviour is very similar to the King's, who exclaims at the first sight of Golagros' castle:

... Never shall my heart be happy or at peace,  
 Unless I should lose my life, or be laid low,  
 With pilgrimage ended, I shall pass for prowess  
 Unless death be my destiny,  
 When I come once again,  
 He shall do homage and fealty,  
 Thus do I vow!

(ll. 267-273)<sup>28</sup>

The second episode shows Kay as a knight who does battle for his own greater glory, and shows mercy only because he is too weak.

Gawain and Golagros are the actual protagonists of the Poem. Gawain illustrates, as he so often does, the exemplary knight who combines prowess with perfect *courtoisie*. Golagros is hardly his inferior, but is still too fettered by appearances and the recognition of others. Thus he cannot be called a perfect knight. He is still subject to pride.

Golagros puts Gawain to the hardest test of chivalry there is, by requesting that he declare himself the loser of their single combat. Gawain forces himself to this self-abnegation, thus practising true humility. He shows himself to be Golagros' superior in the spiritual sense. Gawain's generosity has a kind of chain effect insofar as it influences both Golagros and Arthur himself. Golagros subjects himself to Arthur's lordship, and Arthur in turn forgoes his claim.

The King undergoes an evident development in the course of the poem. Through the confrontation with Golagros he recognizes the risk of knightly combat ("*perell*", ll. 1305 and 1307).<sup>29</sup> In the end he sees clearly that the conquest of

territories is less important than loyalty and friendship. Therefore he relieves Golagros from his oath of allegiance and sets him free, as he first found him: "Fre as I the first fand" (l. 1361).<sup>30</sup>

### Awntyrs of Arthure

Like *Golagros and Gawain*, the romance *Awntyrs of Arthure*<sup>31</sup> is divided into two parts. The subject of the first part is Arthur's hunt at the Tarn Wadling. A ghost emerges from the lake moaning pitifully. It turns out to be Guinevere's mother, who has returned to earth in order to moralize. In the second part a knight named Galeroune challenges a knight of the Table Round to single combat for the title to his ancestral lands in Scotland, which have been seized by Arthur. Gawain accepts the challenge and defeats Galeroune. But in the end Arthur reinstates the man as lord of his own lands and makes him a knight of the Table Round.

That the two episodes belong together can no longer be doubted. The appearance of a ghost from Hell, or rather Purgatory, is a means to place earthly values in their proper perspective, i.e. *sub specie aeternitatis*. In the first part the poet uses spectacular events in order to emphasize the vanity of human values, in particular beauty and wealth. The sin of lechery plays an important role. Guinevere's mother is apparently a paradigm of this sin, since the baleful beasts ("baleful bestes", l. 211), gnawing at her blackened body are called a punishment for "luf paramour, listes and delites" (l. 213).<sup>32</sup> Thus even Guinevere's mother is seen in connection with the very sin for which her daughter was to become notorious in medieval literature.

The sin of lechery is, however, not the main concern of the apparition. The ghost's homily centres on the cardinal sin of *superbia*, and calls for its opposites: *meeknesse* and *mercy* and the giving of alms. *In profundo lacu*, in the depths of the lake, Guinevere's mother suffers the torments of Lucifer because of *superbia* and predicts to knights, kings and emperors that they will suffer the same fate, in spite of all their pomp and presumption.

Wealth and pomp are the origin of deadly sin:

Once I was Queen, brighter of brows,  
 Than Berike or Brangwine, those women so bold;  
 Of all the games and glee that thrive on this earth  
 Greater than Dame Guinevere – in treasure and gold,  
 In palaces, parks, in ponds and ploughed fields,  
 In towns and towers, in treasure untold,  
 In castles and countries, in crags and crannies  
 Now I am torn from my estate, to cares so cold...  
 (ll. 144-151)<sup>33</sup>

The message of the ghost does not consist in a mere *sic transit gloria mundi*. Earthly pomp is seen as part of *superbia*, so that there is a causal relationship between pomp and punishment. Above all, the ghost makes it clear how the rich can avoid such a fate: not only through the virtues of meekness and mercy, but most of all through giving alms to the poor. This is the only means of avoiding Hell, as the ghost points out four times in the work.

In line 173 she tells mortals to "Have pity on the poor, while you have the power to do so." In lines 178-180, she states: "The prayer of the poor may purchase you peace, of those who yell at your gate while you are seated on high." In lines 232-233, she demands to "give generously of your possessions to folk who lack food." And finally, in lines 250-253, she states:

Meekness and mercy, these are the most important; and have pity on the poor, it is (god's) bidding. After this, charity is the most important and most cherished, and thereafter the giving of alms, above all other things.<sup>34</sup>

The scene in front of the castle gate is particularly moving and, to my knowledge, unique in Arthurian literature. Poor people crowd, howling and crying for bread, round the gate, while Guinevere thrones at the high dais, her table laden with the choicest delicacies from all parts of the world.

"Have pity upon the poor," this is the message of Guinevere's

mother to her daughter and to mortals. Help those who have not enough to eat (ll. 233, 319),<sup>35</sup> and then they will later save you by their prayers (l. 178).<sup>36</sup>

The fourfold emphasis on the giving of alms is just as noteworthy as Guinevere's evasiveness. She asks the ghost whether the masses and prayers of bishops and monks can free souls from Purgatory. This means that Guinevere is prepared to have others pray for her mother's soul, but she does not react to the demand for pity upon the poor and charity (ll. 251-252). It is well known from other poems of the so-called Alliterative Revival that prayers and masses of abbots and bishops are no help for those in Hell.

The second part of the ghost's sermon is directed to the knights. Gawain takes advantage of the occasion and asks about the character and task of knighthood:

"How should we act," said the knight, "that seek to fight – and destroy the folk in many kings' realms, and reach out for riches, without any right – win worship and well-being through warriorship with our hands?"

(ll. 261-264)<sup>37</sup>

"Withouten eny right", Gawain says, proof of the fact that he knows the answer and doesn't need the words of the oracle from the lake. If the essence of knighthood is wrongdoing, if war is always unjust war, then it is not possible to win worship in this manner (l. 264). Thus Gawain anticipates the answer already in his admission that armed force is unjust and that honour thus won is mere dishonour.

But the ghost does give an answer, one entirely in keeping with its preceding admonition. Where mercy, pity and charity were recommended to Guinevere, knights are warned against the sin of greed, *covetise* embodied in Arthur, the conqueror. Covetousness is thus associated with pomp and power and therefore goes hand in hand with *superbia*. King Arthur's seat on the Wheel of Fortune is a symbolical expression of this cardinal sin. The King has attacked France, defeated Brittany and Burgundy, killed Frolo and his followers, conquered the

French *dussiperes* (l. 277)<sup>38</sup> and slaughtered all the people of Guienne. He has not yet reached the apex of his career, because he has yet to subject Rome and have it plundered by the Table Round. But the Wheel of Fortune never rests for long. As yet the boy still plays ball in Arthur's court who will betray the King, usurp the crown and completely destroy the Arthurian army at the coast of Cornwall.

Thus the admonition of the first part is aimed at proper social behaviour in the private and public sector. The ghost refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: Awe, Piety, Learning, High Mindedness, Good Council, Judgement, and Wisdom. These alone enable man to achieve perfection and salvation. Pity with the poor on the private scale thus corresponds to peaceful acknowledgement of the rights of neighbouring peoples and nations on the public scale.

In the second part, the abstract moral lessons of the preceding portion are exemplified by means of a *bispiel*. A knight, Galleroune of Galloway, appears before the table of the King. He accuses Arthur of having seized his lands and given them to Gawain. In order not to lose his honour, he challenges Arthur's champion to fight for his inheritance.

Galleroune stresses explicitly that Arthur has taken his lands by means of war (*in werre*) and with malicious tricks (... *wrange wile*, l. 421).<sup>39</sup> This accusation corresponds with Gawain's dictum concerning chivalry: knights conquer foreign territories "withouten eny right". And yet Gawain takes up the challenge to fight Galleroune "in defence of my rizt" (l. 467).<sup>40</sup> Arthur's fear that something might happen to him in the battle is countered by Gawain with the blasphemous claim, "God stond with þe rizt" (l. 471).<sup>41</sup> From the context it is evident that Gawain cannot believe in his own right, and that he is on the side of brute force.

Guinevere, on the other hand, is apparently under the spell of the ghost. She has understood the moral lesson involved and is thus a pace or two ahead of Gawain. This is typical of women in Middle English romances, who very often act as mediators between warring parties.

But before Arthur can intervene, Galleroune has already surrendered. Even the King has learned his political lesson. He requests Gawain to give up his falsely acquired title to the country of Galloway. Instead King Arthur gives him Wales and makes him Duke. Gawain for his part returns Galleroune's lands, with a kind of feudal flourish which is out of place here. He "fiefs" Galleroune with the man's own lands: "I shal refff þe in felde in forestes so fair." (l. 685).<sup>42</sup> Moreover Gawain demands that Galleroune become a member of the Table Round, a kind of symbol of the reconciliation of Scotland and England.

Like *Golagros and Gawain* the poem is a moral lesson to lords and knights on political justice and the true ideals of chivalry.

#### **Authors of the Fourteenth Century on War and Peace**

It is small wonder that authors of the fourteenth century have thought long and deep on the problem of war and peace. After all, their whole lifespan was overshadowed by the Hundred Years' War. Every author living in this period must have suffered in one way or another under the terrible consequences of war. We should therefore expect them to condemn war adamantly. But surprisingly many of them have reservations about a long-lasting peace. "It leads to softening of the sinews of the country", as the Earl of Essex later said.<sup>43</sup> This is a fear that was expressed often enough in literary texts. Thus Cadour in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* uses nearly the same words in his warning against effeminacy, the decay of *proweess*, and the subsequent danger for the country.<sup>44</sup>

But of course condemnation of war is a major tendency of the time. Nearly all Lollards were against war and armed force.<sup>45</sup> Often they followed Wycliffe's precepts in this regard, but just as often they went further. Wycliffe himself often dealt with the question of the origin of war. He stresses the importance of councillors, who are often more responsible for the outbreak of war than the king himself. Wycliffe asks himself how councillors could urge the king to invade France with a good conscience.<sup>46</sup>

He thus describes a scene which was to become a topos between the contemporary *Alliterative Morte Arthure* and Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

Gower's position on war and the cruelty necessarily connected with it was even more unequivocal than that of Wycliffe and his followers. Particularly the problem of the Just War, as for instance the liberation of the Holy Land, was one of his main concerns. Thus the Amans in the *Confessio Amantis* asks whether man should cross the Great Sea in order to fight the Saracens. The Confessor answers: "My son, I have heard that the Gospel tells us to spread the Faith and suffer for it, but I have never heard that we should kill for the Faith... Only since the Church has given up preaching and instead turned to the sword, have wars begun. And much that was won before for the faith of Christ, has since been lost through the sword".<sup>47</sup>

An explicit rejection of war is to be found in Gower's *Poem on Peace*, which was addressed to King Henry IV. The background of the poem is naturally the war against France, which had already cost so many lives. Gower's comments sound almost pacifist: "War is the Mother of all Evil. It kills the priest during mass in Holy Church, belies the Virgin and robs her innocence. War makes the large cities small and does away with law and justice. There is scarcely any disastrous situation in this world which has not been caused by war, so I believe."<sup>48</sup> On the basis of this and similar statements, John Gower has been called an "openly avowed pacifist",<sup>49</sup> in spite of the fact that his opinions on war are sometimes ambivalent. Indeed, some wars he even considers just and necessary.

Geoffrey Chaucer, however, is at least as ambivalent as Gower. With Muriel Bowden and her predecessors, the knight of the *Canterbury Tales* had been regarded as a paragon of chivalry, and *The Knight's Tale* as "a prototypical romance of chivalry." But what Terry Jones has said about Chaucer's knight may have raised doubts as to the validity of this view.<sup>50</sup> Critics began to ask themselves whether the narrative of the knight was spiritually akin to the *Tale of Melibeus*; whether the knight was really an instrument of tyranny and destruction who, as a

mercenary, had betrayed the ideals of chivalry for money: whether his tale was not rather the exemplification of a dark and evil world, characterized by fear, suppression and death.

Terry Jones is still on the rostrum, but scepticism as to his views is growing. The orthodox concept of Chaucer's knight is regaining lost ground. But the discussion has given the problem of Chaucer's attitude toward war and peace new momentum. The main trouble is, of course, that the words and actions of Chaucer's protagonists cannot simply be attributed to the poet or his views. But in this respect we should not be *too* timorous as critics.<sup>51</sup> There are subjects in the *Canterbury Tales* which are viewed in a complex manner through the eyes of the various persons involved. This is true of love and marriage, but it does not apply to the subject of war and peace, revenge and punishment. In this respect Chaucer's works are relatively homogeneous. I therefore suggest that we have a closer look at his works dealing with this subject, in order to find out the poet's views. The result and position on the question of war and peace is in all probability that of Chaucer himself.

In this connection we must attribute particular importance to Chaucer's prose translation of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a work which accompanied the poet throughout his life and greatly influenced his works, especially *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer's changes and additions to the original reveal the poet's own beliefs. Thus in Metre 5 of Book II of the *Consolatio* his version reads:

Then the cruel clarions were completely still and hushed. No blood shed by eager hate had yet dyed the armour. To what end or what (blind) rage of enemy should move to arms, when they see cruel wounds and nothing of reward (to be won) by shedding blood. If only our times would turn back again to the old ways!<sup>52</sup>

In the poem *The Former Age*, Chaucer paraphrases the same passage. But in this case he is even more explicit:

Unforged was the hauberk and the plate;  
The lambish people, devoid of all vice,

Had no mind for conflict,  
But each of them used to cherish the other:  
No pride, nor envy, nor avarice,  
No lord nor tax by no tyranny;  
Humility and peace, good faith, the empress...<sup>53</sup>

Both Boethius and Chaucer place great importance on the motives of human behaviour and the right attitude towards the problem of Good and Evil. Evildoers and criminals should not be eliminated; on the contrary they deserve our pity. Every misdeed contains its own punishment, or is even its own retribution. That is why society should not treat criminals too harshly; they are worse off than their victims. We should not call for the sword of justice, but rather for pity with the miscreant. The more evil he does, the longer his punishment lasts. The ultimate punishment for him would be to go completely unpunished. Malice and sinfulness are for Boethius a kind of disease, but the ill should be pitied, not hated.

The final culmination of this train of thought and, at the same time, the nucleus of medieval pacifism, is to be found in *Metre 4* of *Book IV*: "Why do you delight in exciting such great movings of hatred, and in hastening and bringing about the fatal arrangement of your death with your own hands." Here Chaucer adds a comment of his own, in order to make it clear what he thinks: "that is to seyn, by batayles or contek." Thus the passage refers to battle and war, at least that is the way Chaucer read his source. Boethius continues:

...or if you seek death, he will make haste of his own accord, nor will death tarry his swift horse one bit. And those men, whom the serpent, lion, tiger, bear and boar seek to slay with their teeth, seek to slay each other by the sword. Behold, their manner of behaviour is diverse and discordant, they raise unjust armies and wage cruel battles, and they intend destruction by the interchange of arrows. But the reason for cruelty is not rightful enough. Do you desire to have acquitted the merits of men with a suitable reward? Love good folk rightfully and have pity on the wicked.<sup>54</sup>

Chaucer's *Tale of Melibeus* is even more revealing than his translation of Boethius. This tale is his own contribution to the *Canterbury Tales*, after his tail-rhyme recitation of *Sir Thopas* had been so rudely interrupted by Harry Bailey. Similar to the main work of Boethius, the source of *Melibeus* is called *Liber consolationis et consilii*. But Chaucer does not use the Latin original of Albertano de Brescia (1246), but rather a French translation by Renaud de Louens written in 1336.<sup>55</sup> In addition to similarities in the title, there are also parallels in content to Boethius.

The main crux of *Melibeus*, as I see it, is that two completely different types of enemies are juxtaposed: The world, the flesh and the devil on the one hand, and external aggressors and enemies on the other. Man must fight against the Devil and his followers, but not necessarily against worldly enemies. In this case, Dame Prudence insists on *temperantia*. As the wife of Melibeus, she embodies the medieval figure of woman as mediator. In the case of conflicts, she allows only two alternatives: submittal to the judgment of a court of law, or reconciliation with one's enemy (arbitration or reconciliation).

As in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* and works like *Mum & Sothsegger*, the importance of councillors is emphasized. The first part of *Melibeus* consists of a kind of council of war but in contrast to the former, there is a clash of antithetical opinions. These are attributed to a certain age group or profession. The young people immediately vote for war. But a wise and elderly councillor argues with deep conviction and feeling against war:

"Lords", he said, "there is many a man who cries 'War! War!' who knows very little what war amounts to. War at its beginning has so great an entrance and so large that every one, if he so desire, may enter and easily find war; but for sure, what outcome shall ensue is not so easily known. For truly when war is once begun, many a child not yet born of his mother shall die young in wretchedness. And therefore, before any war is begun, men must take great counsel and deliberation."<sup>56</sup>

In contrast to the *AMA*, the pros and cons are thoroughly

discussed here. In particular the poet analyzes the weight to be attributed to the voice of the individual councillor. He lists the relevant criteria for judging the worth of a council: openness, reversability, and adaptability to new developments:

And take this for a general rule, that every council that is so strongly fixed (in its opinion) that it may not be altered by any circumstance which may occur, I say that such council is evil.<sup>57</sup>

Above all Prudence emphasizes that all human conflict must be resolved through open discussion, and not through revenge or stubborn insistence on one's own right. Prudence does not negate the right of self-defence. It is justified if such defence ... "follows the transgression without thought and on the spur of the moment." Above all the underlying motive must be self-defence and not revenge.<sup>58</sup>

In the context of the *Tale of Melibeus* this sounds like a concession to the animal weakness of man reacting in an extreme situation. The general rule, however, is that man must avoid war and conflict, even if only for pragmatic reasons. In *The Tale of Melibeus* as in many romances, it is pointed out that the result of every war is uncertain and therefore unpredictable. In the romances, the authors symbolize the risk of war by means of the goddess Fortuna, who always proves fickle in regard to victory and defeat. Prudence does not mention Fortuna and her wheel, but her arguments have a very similar tenor:

Victory in battle comes from our Lord God of Heaven ... in so far as there is no man who can be certain whether he is worthy that God give him victory, ... therefore every man should greatly dread beginning a war.<sup>59</sup>

This is also true of wars of defence. Prudence demands categorically that the attacked should negotiate, and if possible come to an agreement with the foe. He who takes his fate into his own hands, he who relies solely on his own judgement and power, is guilty of *hybris* and vanity. The most important task

for man is to learn to submit to the will of God, and to find peace.<sup>60</sup>

In the end we are left with an *aporia* that is to say, the impossibility of having it both ways. Melibeus on the one hand should defend himself, but on the other, he must not. Prudence accuses him of not having defended himself boldly enough against his main enemies: the World, the Flesh and the Devil. "You have allowed them to invade your heart through the windows of your eyes, and you have not defended yourself properly against their inroads and allurements."<sup>61</sup> This is admittedly only spiritual warfare, and is thus fought on a different ontological level. But vocabulary, metaphors and the message are the same as in actual warfare, which is represented as illegitimate. In the latter case, namely, Prudence imperiously demands that Melibeus reconcile himself with his enemies and seek peace.<sup>62</sup>

But the very same *aporia*, incapability of decision, is at work at the level of actual warfare. Here Prudence says *expressis verbis*, even in the form of a quotation from the Bible, that it is against reason to deliver oneself into the hands of one's enemy: "for a stronger reason he (Salomon) prohibits and forbids a man to yield himself to his enemy".<sup>63</sup>

The warning against a war of aggression is clear and unequivocal, but the position of Prudence concerning just and legitimate defence of oneself is wavering and uncertain. In the end, the basic question of the tale remains unanswered: should one take a stand of radical pacifism and leave the consequences to God, or should we, as rational human beings, take on the responsibility for our own fate and our own deeds?

The significance of the fact that Chaucer chose the *Tale of Melibeus* for his *alter ego* deserves further consideration. Of course, we should not take it for granted that because the story is told by Chaucer the pilgrim, that it is necessarily the view of Chaucer the poet. We must not forget that only a short while before, Chaucer called his *Tale of Sir Thopas*, "the best rym I kan". Chaucer never focuses upon himself, nor does he claim a special prerogative for his own position. But perhaps it was his

intention to round off the *Canterbury Tales* with the contribution of the Parson. It is definitely the longest tale, and it deals with the weightiest matters of all.

In regard to war and peace, the Parson takes a very definite stand. There is no oscillating between two poles for him. On the contrary he insists that opponents of any kind can only be overcome by *patientia*.<sup>64</sup>

We have to suffer all wrongs done to us, all the way from insult to murder. Christ should be our model, for he suffered all trespasses, even unto death on the cross, with patience and forgiveness.

The Parson's pure ethics of peace has the last word in the *Canterbury Tales*. This means one last relativisation of the doctrine of Melibeus, which in modern terminology would be called teleological, as it contains in itself the goal of peace and at the same time the justification of self-defence. Only the position of the Parson is indubitably that of the Sermon on the Mount. It does not admit of any kind of counter-violence.

But it might be objected that the *Tale of the Parson* is, as in the case of all the other tales, merely the voice of a single pilgrim, whose meaning is dependent upon the context of the other tales.

Let us give Chaucer, himself, the last word on the subject. He ends the *Canterbury Tales* with a kind of retraction (*retractatio*). He distances himself from all earlier works that "sownen into synne". But at the same time, he thanks God for the translation of Boethius' *Consolatio*, for the "bokes of moralite" – one of them is almost certainly *Melibeus* – and the "bokes of devocioun" – with which he no doubt meant the *Parson's Tale*. If anything in Chaucer's work sounds genuine, it is this retraction. We should therefore take it seriously.

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## Notes

1. Maldwyn Mills, ed. *Lybeaus Desconus* Early English Text Society, O.S. 261 (London 1969).
2. "Boþe lardes and ladyes/ Leyn out yn pomet tours/ To se þat sely syzt" (V. 1294-1296 Cotton MS; *ibid.* p. 156). "Bothe lordis and ladyes/ Laynen in her toures/ For to se that syght" (V. 1356-1358 Lambeth MS; *ibid.* p. 157).
3. Tadahiro Ikegami, ed. *The Lyfe of Ipomydon* Seijo English Monographs, 21 (Tokyo 1983).
4. *Ibid.* p. 22:  
     ... An husband must ye take you tulle,  
     The whiche may of þis land by kynge  
     And gouerne it in all thynges;  
     For no woman may take on hand,  
     Wele to gouerne suche a land. (ll. 604-608)
5. *Ibid.* p. 59:  
     ... For I shall distroye hyr landis alle,  
     Hyr men sle, bothe grete and smalle,  
     Hyr castelle breke and hyr toure,  
     With strenghe take hyr in hyr boure...(ll. 1611-1614)
6. "þat had distroyed þe land aboute." (l. 2013; *ibid.* p. 73).
7. James Orchard Halliwell, ed. "The Romance of Sir Perceval of Galles" James Orchard Halliwell, ed. *The Thornton Romances: The Early English Metrical Romances of Perceval, Isumbras, Eglamour, and Degrevant. Selected from Manuscripts at Lincoln and Cambridge* The Camden Society, Old Series 30 (London 1846) pp. 1-87.
8. Helaine Newstead "Romances: General" J. Burke Severs *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500* (New Haven/Connecticut 1968) Fascicule I, 11-12.
9. Valerie Krishna, ed. *The Alliterative Morte Arthure: A Critical Edition* (New York 1976).
10. Herbert Huscher, ed. *John Page's Siege of Rouen* Kölner Anglistische Arbeiten, 1 (Leipzig 1927; rpt. New York 1966).
11. *Ibid.* p. 125.
12. *Ibid.* p. 126.
13. François Joseph Amours, ed. "The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane", in: *Scottish Alliterative Poems. in Riming Stanzas* The Scottish Text Society, 27/38 (1892/1897; rpt. London 1966) pp. 1-46.

14. In the tradition of Geoffrey of Monmouth the final conflict with Lucius takes place north of the Alps. Arthur does not reach Italy. In the *AMA*, however, Arthur crosses the St. Gotthard Pass into Tuscany. In the *Awntyrs* there is a reference to Tuscany in lines 284 and 291.
15. *AMA* p. 127.
16. Vatican MS Add. 25434, fol. 150-152 a; Ferdinand Lot *Nennius et l'istoria Brittonum: Etude critique suivie d'une édition des diverses versions de ce texte* Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, 263 (Paris 1934) p. 195 n. 8; cf. Rosemary Morris *The Character of King Arthur in Medieval Literature* *Arthurian Studies*, 4 (Cambridge 1982) p. 62.
17. "The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane" p. 9.
18. *Ibid.* p. 1.
19. *Ibid.* p. 5.
20. *Ibid.* pp. 2-8 and pp. 29-30.
21. *Ibid.* pp. 3-4.
22. *Ibid.* pp. 29-30.
23. François Joseph Amours "Introduction" *Ibid.* pp. xvi-xvii.
24. *Ibid.* p. 29.
25. *Ibid.* pp. 29-30.
26. *Ibid.* p. 30.
27. *Ibid.* p. 30.
28. *Ibid.* p. 10:  
     ... Sal neuer myne hart be in saill na in liking,  
     Bot gif I loissing my life, or be laid law,  
     Be the pilgramage compleit I pas for saull prow,  
     Bot dede be my destenyng,  
     He sall at my agane cumyng  
     Mak homage and oblissing,  
     I mak myne avow! (ll. 267-273)
29. *Ibid.* p. 44.
30. *Ibid.* p. 46.
31. Ralph Hanna III, ed. *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn: An Edition Based on Bodleian Library Ms. Douce 324* Old and Middle English Texts (Manchester 1974). [Further editions: Robert J. Gates, ed. *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne: A Critical Edition* (Philadelphia 1969); François Joseph Amours, ed. "The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne" in: *Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas* The Scottish Text Society 27/38 (1892/1897; rpt. London 1966) pp. 115-171].

32. *The Awntyrs* p. 73.

33. *Ibid.* pp. 70-71:

Quene was I somwile, brighter of browes  
 Then Beryke or Brangwayn, þes burdes so bolde;  
 Of al gamen or gle þat on grounde growes  
 Gretter þen Dame Gaynour – of garson and golde,  
 Of palaies, of parkes, of pondes, of plowes,  
 Of townes, of toures, of tresour vntolde,  
 Of castelles, of contreyes, of cragges, of clowes.  
 Now am I cauzt oute of kide to cares so colde ... (ll. 144-151)

34. *Ibid.* pp. 72, 74-75:

Haue pité on þe poer while þou art of power (l. 173)  
 Ðe praier of þe poer may purchas þe pes,  
 Of þase þat zellis at thi zete,  
 Whan þou art set in þi sete... (ll. 178-180)  
 Gyf fast of þi goode  
 To folke þat failen þe fode... (ll. 232-233)  
 Mekenesse and mercy, þes arn þe moost,  
 And haue pité on þe poer, þat pleses Heuenking.  
 Siþen charité is chef, and þew of þe chaste,  
 And þen almesdede ouer al oþer þing. (ll. 250-253)

35. *Ibid.* p. 74 and p. 79.

36. *Ibid.* p. 72

37. *Ibid.* p. 71.

'How shal we fare,' quod þe freke, 'þat fonden to fight,  
 And þus defoulen þe folke on fele kinges londes,  
 And riches ouer reymes withouten eny right,  
 Wynnen, worshipp and wele þorgh wightnesse of hondes?'  
 (ll. 261-264)

38. *Ibid.* p. 77.

39. *Ibid.* p. 84.

40. *Ibid.* p. 86.

41. *Ibid.* p. 86.

42. Hanna *The Awntyrs* p. 96.

43. Paul A. Jorgensen "Theoretical Views of War in Elizabethan England"  
*Journal of the History of Ideas* 13 (1952) p. 469-481.

44. Cf. *AMA* ll. 249-258:

I thanke Gode of þat thraa þat vs þus thretys!  
 zow moste be traylede, I trowe, bot zife ze trett bettyre.

þe lettres of Sir Lucius lyghttys myn herte!  
 We hafe as losels liffyde many longe daye,  
 Wyth delytttes in this land with lordchipez many,  
 And forelytenede the loos þat we are layttede;  
 I was abaischite, be oure Lorde, of oure beste bernes,  
 Fore gret dule of deffuse of dedez of armes.  
 Now wakkenyse þe were! Wyrchipide be Cryste!  
 And we sall wygn it agayne be wyghtnesse and strenghe!

45. Cf. Anne Hudson, ed. *Selections from English Wyclifite Writings* (Cambridge 1978) p. 23: Sixteen Points on which the Bishops accuse Lollards (composed in the late fourteenth century).

Also we graunten þat it is leueful to sle men in dome and in batellis, if þo þat doun it han autorite and leue of God. And if þei sleen any man, cristen or heþen, azens þe autorite of God, þeiben acursed and breken þe comaendement of God. And so it is lke þat fewe or none ben nowe slayne be þe autorite of God.

(Thus we grant that it is lawful to slay men through judgement and in battles, if those that do it have the authority and permission of God. And if they slay any man, Christian or heathen, against the authority of God, they are accursed and have broken the commandment of God. And thus it is likely that few or none are now slain by the authority of God).

The tenth of the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards* (nailed to the doors of Westminster Hall during the Parliamentary sessions of 1395) p. 28:

þat manslaute be batayle or pretense lawe of rhythwysnesse for temperal cause or spirituel withouten special reuelaciun is expres contrarious to þe new testament. þe qwiche is a lawe of grace and ful of mercy. þis conclusiun is opynly prouid be exsample of Cristis preching here in erthe. þe qwiche most taute for to loue and to haue mercy on his enemys, and nout for to slen hem. ... And knythtis þat rennen to hethnesse to geten hem a name in sleinge of men geten miche maugre of þe King of Pes; for be mekenesse and suffraunce ower beleue was multiplied, and fythteres and mansleeris Iesu Chyst hatith and manasit. Qui gladio percutit, gladio peribit.

(That manslaughter by battle or by a pretense of lawful justification for temporal or spiritual reason without special revelation is expressly contrary to the New Testament, which is a law of grace and full of

mercy. This conclusion has been openly proven by the example of Christ's preaching here on earth, which taught most of all to love and to have mercy on one's enemies and not to slay them. ... And knights that rush off to heathen countries to gain themselves a name through the slaying of men win much in despite of the King of Peace: for by meekness and by patience our faith was propagated, and Jesus Christ hates and threatens fighters and slayers of men).

46. L. J. Daly *The Political Theory of John Wiclif* (Chicago 1962) p. 140.

47. G. C. Macaulay, ed. *The English Works of John Gower* (Oxford 1969) Vol. I "Confessio Amantis" III, vss. 2490-2513:

Sone myn,

To preche and soffre for the feith.

That have I herd the gospell seith;

Bot forto slee, that hier e I nocht.

...

Fro ferst that holi cherche hath weyved

To preche, and hath the swerd received.

Wherof the werres ben begonne.

A gret partie of that was wonne

To Cristes feith stont now miswent:.

48. J. A. W. Bennett, ed. *Selections from John Gower* (Oxford 1968) p. 124, vss. 106-112:

The werre is modir of the wronges alle;

It sleth the prest in holi chirche at masse.

Forlith the maide and doth hire flour to falle.

The werre makth the grete citee lasse.

And doth the lawe his reules overpasse.

There is no thing wherof meschif mai growe

Which is nocht caused of the werre, y trowe.

49. Muriel Bowden *A Commentary on the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (New York 1949) p. 69.

50. Terry Jones *Chaucer's Knight: The Portrait of a Medieval Mercenary* (London 1980) p. 216.

51. Cf. Dieter Mehl *Geoffrey Chaucer: Eine Einführung in seine erzählenden Dichtungen* (Berlin 1973) pp. 155-156.

52. F. N. Robinson, ed. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 2nd ed. 1957) "Boece", Book II, Metre 5, p. 336, ll. 22-30.

Tho weren the cruele clariouns ful hust and ful stille. Ne blood ischad by egre hate ne hadde nat deyed yit armures. For wherto or which woodnesse of enemys wolde first moeven armes,

whan thei seyen cruele wowndes, ne none medes be of blood  
ishad? I wolde that our tymes shold torne ayen to the oolde  
maneris!

53. "The Former Age" *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* p. 534, ll. 49-55:  
Unforged was the hauberk and the plate:  
The lambish peple, voyd of alle vyce,  
Hadden no fantasye to debate.  
But ech of hem wolde other wel cheryce;  
No pryde, non envye, non avaryce,  
No lord, no taylage by no tyrannye;  
Humblesse and pees, good feith, the empirice...
54. This and the following texts are taken from "Boece" *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* Book IV. Metre 4, p. 366, ll. 1-18:  
What deliteth yow to exciten so grete moevynges of hatredes, and  
to hasten and bysien the fatal disposicioun of your deth with  
your propre handes (that is to seyn, by batayles or contek)? For  
yif ye axen the deth, it hasteth hym of his owene wil, ne deth ne  
taryeth nat his swifte hors. And the men that the serpentz, and  
the lyoun, and the tigre, and the bere, and the boor, seken to  
sleen with hir teeth, yit thilke same men seken to sleen everich  
of hem oothir with swerd. ... thei moeven unryghtful oostes and  
cruel batayles, and wilnen to perise by entrechaungynge of dar-  
tes! But the resoun of cruelte nis nat inowh ryghtful. Wiltow  
hanne yelden a covenable gerdoun to the dissertes of men? Love  
ryghtfully goode folk, and have pite on schrewes.
55. For the relationship of Chaucer's *Melibeus* to its sources cf. J. Burke  
Severs "The Source of Chaucer's *Melibeus*" *PMLA* 50 (1935) pp. 92-  
99; W. F. Bryan and G. Dempster, eds. *Sources and Analogues of  
Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Chicago/Illinois 1941) pp. 560-614.  
Major secondary works on Chaucer's *Melibeus*: J. Leslie Hotson "*The  
tale of Melibeus and John of Gaunt*" *SP* 18 (1921) pp. 429-452; V.  
Langhans "Die Datierung der Prosastücke Chaucers" *Anglia* 53 (1929)  
pp. 236-243; W. W. Lawrence "*The Tale of Melibeus*" in *Essays and  
Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown* (New York 1940) pp. 100-110;  
Gardiner Stillwell "The Political Meaning of Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee*"  
*Speculum* 19 (1944) pp. 433-444; Paull F. Baum "Chaucer's Metrical  
Prose" *JEGP* 45 (1950) pp. 38-42; Margaret Schlauch "Chaucer's Prose  
Rhythms" *PMLA* 65 (1950) pp. 568-589; idem "The Art of Chaucer's  
Prose" in *Chaucer and Chaucerians*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London 1966)  
pp. 163-166; D. W. Robertson, Jr. *A Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton

- 1962); Bernard Huppé *A Reading of the Canterbury Tales* (Albany/ New York 1964); Paul Strohm "The Allegory of the *Tale of Melibee*" *ChauR* 2 (1967) pp. 32-42; Robert A. Christmas "Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee*: Its Tradition and its Function in Fragment VII of the *Canterbury Tales*" (Diss: Univ. of Southern Calif. 1968); Charles A. Owen "The Tale of Melibee" *ChauR* 7 (1973) pp. 268-280; Glending Olson "A Reading of the *Thopas-Melibee* Link" *ChauR* 10 (1975) pp. 147-153; Diane Bornstein "Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* as an example of the *Style Clergial*" *ChauR* 12 (1978) pp. 236-254.
56. "Tale of Melibeus" *Works* p. 169, ll. 2227-2231:  
 "Lordynges," quod he, "ther is ful many a man that crieth  
 'Werre! werre!' that woot ful litel what werre amounteth / Werre  
 at his bigynnyng hath so greet an entryng and so large, that every  
 wight may entre whan hym liketh, and lightly fynde werre; / but  
 certes what ende that shal therof bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. /  
 For soothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne, ther is ful many a  
 child unborn of his mooder that shal sterve yong by cause of  
 thilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. /  
 And therefore, er that any werre bigynne, men moste have greet  
 conseil and greet deliberacion."
57. *Tale of Melibeus* l. 2421:  
 And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is af-  
 fermed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged for no condicioun  
 that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked.
58. *Tale of Melibeus* ll. 1532-1533:  
 ... whan the defense is doon anon withouten intervalle or with-  
 outen tariying or delay, / for to deffenden hym and nat for to  
 vengen hym.
59. *Tale of Melibeus* ll. 1655-1664:  
 For the victorie of batailles that been in this world lyth nat in  
 greet nombre or multitude of the peple, ne in the vertu of man, /  
 but it lith in the wyl and in the hand of oure Lord God Al-  
 myghty. / ... And, deere sire, for as muchel as ther is no man  
 certein if he be worthy that God yeve hym victorie, [ne plus que  
 il est certain se il est digne de l'amour de Dieu], or naught, after  
 that Salomon seith, / therefore every man sholde greetly drede  
 werres to bigynne.
60. *Tale of Melibeus* l. 2904:  
 "Il conseilte yow," quod she, "aboven alle thynges, that ye make  
 peyas bitwene God and yow".

61. *Tale of Melibeus* ll. 2611-2612:  
thou hast suffred hem entre in to thyn herte wilfully by the  
wyndowes of the body, / and hast nat defended thyself suf-  
fisantly agayns hire assautes and hire temptaciouns...
62. *Tale of Melibeus* l. 1674:  
I ... conseilte yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries and that  
ye have pees with hem.
63. *Tale of Melibeus* l. 1757:  
by a strenger resoun he (Salomon) deffendeth and forbedeth a  
man to yeven hymself to his enemy.
64. *The Parson's Tale* p. 249, l. 660:  
... If thow wolt venquyse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre.