



Manciples Tale (Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Vol. 2: The Canterbury Tales)

Geoffrey Chaucer

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Part Ten

This volume in the Variorum Edition of Chaucer's works follows upon the tradition established with the earlier publication of the facsimile of the Hengwrt manuscript of The Canterbury Tales. An important aspect of the Variorum is the emphasis on the text presented, a new text based on a reassessment of the relative status of the various manuscripts and a thorough review of the textual tradition.

This volume demonstrates the great advantages of a variorum edition in laying out the problems of a tale that has baffled generations of scholars. The Manciple's Tale, unlike most of Chaucer's other tales, has also undergone a number of remarkable shifts in critical acceptance. The Manciple's Prologue, with its style of low realistic comedy and coarse humor, and the Tale, with its slim plot of infidelity and discovery and coda of moral admonitions, offer scholars a stiff challenge in interpretation. The work has produced much scholarly debate over genre, style, narrator, and focus.

Donald C. Baker gives scrupulous attention to the traditions handed down to us by the manuscripts and the printed editions, and the critical and textual discussions range widely through the many debates the tale has instigated, including a close examination of the theories of John M. Manly and Edith Rickert. This book offers, in its survey of six hundred years of scholarship, an indispensable tool for present and future Chaucerians.

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