

Thesis abstract

The thesis is concerned with the reflection of chivalry and chivalric culture in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and with the relation of his testimony to the social reality of the late Middle Ages. Chapter 1 introduces the chosen topic in relation to the specific character of the *Tales*, of the context of the period, and of Chaucer's life. It specifies the aim of the thesis, deals with its limitations, and outlines the criteria and the structure of the analysis. Chapter 2 presents the origin and the development of the knight along with the formation of the code of chivalric virtues and the literary constituent of the phenomenon of chivalry until the end of the fourteenth century and identifies two fundamental chivalric archetypes in the characters of the Knight and the Squire from "The Prologue". Chapter 3 pursues manifestations of chivalry throughout the *Tales* across genres except romances and analyses their reflection with respect to the narrators of the tales. The analysis first focuses on the chivalrousness of the knightly characters (The Franklin's Tale, The Physician's Tale, The Manciple's Tale, The Monk's Tale, The Clerk's Tale, The Man of Law's Tale, The Merchant's Tale) and then on the signs of the influence of chivalric virtues and culture on the non-knightly characters (The Miller's Tale, The Nun's Priest's Tale, The Shipman's Tale, The Canon's Yeoman's Tale). Chapter 4 crowns the analysis with the reflection of chivalry in the tales representing the peak genre of chivalric literature, the genre of romance. It successively focuses on four tales (The Knight's Tale, The Squire's Tale, The Tale of Sir Thopas, The Wife of Bath's Tale) and analyses them with respect to the narrators of

the tales and to the genre of romance as such. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis. It reiterates the significance of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and summarizes the results of the thesis.