ARE CHAUCER'S PILGRIMS KEYED TO THE ZODIAC?

by William Spencer

It has been widely accepted that Chaucer drew on astrological lore in many places in the Canterbury Tales—not least in depicting the character of the Wife of Bath in the prologue to her tale. Equally it is evident that he used other literary sources in this particular character-sketch; and so one must be cautious in proposing, as I shall do in this paper, that an astrological pattern can be discerned in the sequence of pilgrims of the General Prologue.

Let me say very clearly at the outset that nothing which follows should be read as denying the other influences and schemata which previous scholars have pointed out—such as for example the correspondence of the Knight, Parson, Plowman and Clerk to the different classes of society traditionally distinguished in mediaeval social writings. Nor, a fortiori, am I going to claim that every detail of the General Prologue is astrologically determined, or that Chaucer, poring over his astrological tomes, failed to recall other books, or to look out of his study window at the living people of his time.

However, I think we must recognize that Chaucer, in common with many other creative artists, was capable of integrating an immense range of data drawn from many different sources. Hence there is no single simple “explanation” of any character sketch. But evidently he drew widely on his reading, and equally evidently his reading included mediaeval astrological treatises. So I propose to present a hypothesis which suggests that the outlines of an overall plan, based on mediaeval astrology, may be detected in the sequence of the General Prologue. This implies that many more details are astrologically significant than has generally been supposed.

We may consider Chaucer's problems in setting out to create "welynne and twenty" different characters: quite a tall order. Dryden, writing in an age which still retained some traces of mediaeval thinking, was impressed not only by the diversity, but also the inclusive-


2. Curry, pp. 117-18, no doubt thinking of the "real-life models" evidence as presented by J. M. Manly in Some New Light on Chaucer (London, 1926), is at pains not to over-emphasize the importance of astrology in Chaucer's creation of the character of the Wife of Bath.
ness of Chaucer’s vision: “Not a single character has escaped him.”

I believe that this was no accident, but that Chaucer deliberately set himself to create a comprehensive human panorama. If so he would surely turn, as a man of his age, to the mediaeval sciences of human types. They were the authoritative sources of information on possible human variations. To ignore the sciences would be to risk writing nonsense in mediaeval terms; to use them would provide a firm ground-plan, and guard against missing out some sub-species of humanity.

Two sciences offered themselves: physiology, with its four humours; astrology, with twelve signs of the zodiac and seven planets. Astrology was the richer source of material, and Chaucer’s countless references to it show that it was very much in his mind. He would undoubtedly prefer astrology if he wanted to create a multiplicity of characters, and the twelve-fold zodiac appears to offer more scope than the seven planets. But against this, Chaucer’s references to the planets are much richer in psychological detail than his references to the zodiac.

If he opted for the planets, we might expect him to present them in the standard mediaeval order, from the outermost inwards, i.e. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, etc. But testing this hypothesis against the General Prologue, we find no correspondence between the first pilgrim, the Knight, and hoary Saturn, or between the second pilgrim, the Squire, and “Juppiter so wys” (A 2786).

Another, less obvious, order of planets was open to him, based on their rulership of the signs of the zodiac, as follows:

1. Aries ruled by Mars
2. Taurus ” ” Venus
3. Gemini ” ” Mercury
4. Cancer ” ” Moon
5. Leo ” ” Sun
6. Virgo ” ” Mercury
7. Libra ” ” Venus
8. Scorpio ” ” Mars

3. Preface to the Fables (1700). The whole passage is of considerable relevance to the theory I am putting forward.
4. T. O. Wedel, The Mediaeval Attitude toward Astrology (New Haven, 1920), esp. Chapter IX, shows that interest in astrology was generally on the increase in fourteenth century England, and reached a high point in the writings of Chaucer.
5. In this emphasis Chaucer follows the tendency of mediaeval astrologers in general. For them the zodiac is little more than a reference grid in the heavens, but the planets are gods, as Jean Seznec reminds us in La Survivance des Dieux Antiques (London, 1940), esp. pp. 35 ff.
This scheme has the advantage of combining the zodiac with the planets, and so would offer Chaucer more options.

The twelvefold pattern of signs and planets is, I hope to show, the hidden ground plan of the General Prologue. The rest of this paper is devoted to exploring this hypothesis by reference to early astrological works, though there is room here for only the salient details of the evidence (I hope to present a fuller treatment in the future). All the authorities I quote are pre-Chaucerian and could therefore have been consulted by Chaucer, except for William Lilly, whose seventeenth-century writings show wide reading in earlier lore.

THE KNIGHT (Aries/Mars)
Mars means war, and those born under his influence make good soldiers. Ptolemy (second century A.D.) says that Mars in an honourable position makes his subjects “noble, commanding, spirited . . . with the qualities of leadership.”7 The Knight has distinguished himself: “Ful worthy was he in his lorde werre.”8 Firmicus Maternus (third century A.D.) says that Mars faciet asperos invictos9 (“will make fierce, invincible men”). The Knight has slain three enemies in single combat, and seems always to be on the winning side. Firmicus adds that Mars will make fortes: aequales ignotos . . . & principalia semper vendicantes sibi potestatis insignia (“strong men, recognizing no equals . . . and always claiming the foremost emblems of might for themselves”). The Knight is pre-eminent: “Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne.” Albohazen Haly (eleventh century) calls the man born under well-placed Mars amatorem armorum10 (“a lover of arms”); and Chaucer says of the Knight, “he

6. Authority for this standard arrangement may be found in any considerable work of mediaeval astrology. Chaucer was undoubtedly familiar with the “dignities” of the planets, as many references in his writings show.
8. I give no line numbers where the reference is to an easily-located description of a pilgrim in the Prologue.
9. Iulius Firmicus Maternus, De Nativitatibus (Venetiis, 1497), Book III, p. xlviii.
loved chivalrie.” Alchabitius, another mediaeval Arab astrologer, notes that Mars est significator . . . peregrinationum11 (“signifies . . . journeyings in foreign lands”); because, explains Guido Bonatti (thirteenth century Florentine) such journeys involve much hardship.12 Chaucer’s Knight is an inveterate traveller (“therto hadde he riden, no man ferre”); in this too he recognizes no equal (“No Cristen man so ofte of his degree”).

Some vicious tendencies in the Mars character are not apparent in Chaucer’s chivalrous Knight. But Chaucer equally gives us two views of Mars. The Knight’s Tale presents a grim pagan deity (A 2041-50), but in the Complaint of Mars, Chaucer refers to Mars as “thys worthy knyght” (44) and as “patroun” of the hardy knights of renown (275), i.e. patron of chivalry.13

Aries, the first sign of the zodiac, has for symbol the ram which leads the flock. In Aries the sun starts his yearly journey, and Gower says the Creator “upon this Signe ferst began / The world.”14 Beginning and coming first are characteristics of the Knight: “And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne”; “Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne.” The lot aptly falls to him to tell the first tale (“. . . I shal bigynne the game” [A 853]).

In Aries, Venus is in detriment.15 Hence the Aries character cares little for the gay and splendid clothes which delight Venus. The Knight’s turnout is poor; he is “nat gay” in attire; his tunic is “bismotered” with his iron mail; and iron is the metal of Mars.

THE SQUIRE (Taurus/Venus)

Venus means love, and the Squire is “a lovyere.” Firmicus tells us that Venus subjects semper venereos coitus crebro cupiditatis ardore desiderent (xlviii), “constantly desire repeated sexual intercourse with burning passion”). The Squire: “So hoote he lovede that by nyghter-tale / He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.”

12. Guido Bonatti, De Astronomia Tractatus X (Basileae, 1550), col. 103.
13. Mars is shown as a knight in full armour in Jean Seznec’s illustrations numbers 64, 74, 75, 76 and 77, and it is evident that mediaeval artists frequently depicted him thus.
15. Since she rules the diametrically opposite sign of Libra. A planet is always in detriment when in opposition to a sign which it rules. Cf. the Scholar, below.
But Venus has other meanings besides love. Ptolemy says that well-placed Venus makes her subjects “cheerful, fond of dancing, eager for beauty, haters of evil, lovers of the arts . . . and, in general, charming” (p. 357). Dancing is mentioned as one of the Squire’s accomplishments. Music-making is another Venus aptitude: Albohazen Haly says eius magisteria & sapientiae, sunt in faciendo cantus, concordando sonos, tangendo instrumenta (p. 12, “her magistery and wisdom are in making songs, blending sweet sounds, playing instruments”). The Squire: “He koude songes make and wel endite”; “Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day.” In the same passage Haly also says that Venus often significat pulchre scribere (“signifies beautiful writing”) if Mercury participates with her; and Venus by herself represents figurare & pingere (“to draw and paint—or embroider”). The Squire could “weel purtreye and write.” Alchabitus says Venus signifies compositiones coronarum (p. b iii, “the weaving of garlands”) and pulchritudinem ac mundicion vestimenta etiam & ornamenta (“beauty and elegance, and clothes and ornaments”). The Squire wears magnificently flowery clothes: “Embrouded was he, as it were a meede / Al ful of fresshe floures.” According to Firmicus, Venus subjects have spissos capillos: aut molliter flexos: aut gradata pulchritudinis venus-state componit: aut crispos crinium facit (p. xlvi, “thick hair; either gently waving; or [Venus] arranges the hair charmingly in beautiful layers; or she makes curly hair”). The Squire: “With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.”

Venus represents sons (Bonatti, col. 108), and the Squire is the son of the Knight. Youth, too, is a Venus quality. Alchabitus: ex etate habet inventutem vel adolescentiam (p. b iii, “among ages [Venus] signifies youth or adolescence”). Bonatti is more precise: a 14 anno usque ad 22 (col. 109, “from 14 to 22”). The Squire: “Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.”16

Chaucer confirms the overall picture in the Complaint of Mars, where he refers to Venus as the source and well

Of beaute, lust, fredom, and gentilnesse,
Of riche aray—how dere men hit selle!—
Of al disport in which men frendly duelle,
Of love and pley, and of benigne humblesse,

16. It may be objected that the Squire, as he grew older, would still remain a subject of Venus (cf. the Reeve, below). But Chaucer presents the Squire in youth, at a time when the Venus influence is most vivid. Similarly the Franklin, subject of Saturn, is presented as an old man with a white beard (see below).
Of soun of instrumentes of al swettenes. . . .

(175-79)

Beauty, lust, rich array, love and the sweet sound of music we have already covered, but two other points are significant (both would receive support from the astrologers). First, “al disport in which men frendly duelle”; Chaucer mentions the Squire’s jousting ability. Second, “gentilnesse” and “benigne humblesse”; the Squire is described as “curteis . . . lowely, and servysable.”

Chaucer elsewhere refers to May as the month when the sun is in Taurus, “whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede, / Right in the white Bole” (Troilus II, 54-55), establishing the link May - Taurus. Hence the special appropriateness of the Squire’s being “as fressh as is the month of May.”17 But May is the month of flowers (as Chaucer several times tells us in his writings), and Taurus is ruled by Venus, who represents beauty, embroidery, and flowery garlands—especially garlands of red and white roses, as Albricus notes.18 Moreover Taurus is an earth sign,19 and “earth” equals meadow (“meede”). All this lends special point to Chaucer’s lines: “Embrouded was he, as it were a meede / Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.”

THE YEOMAN (Gemini/Mercury)

The Yeoman’s presence at this point reflects the need to provide the Knight with some retinue, however modest. Chaucer has not yet hit upon the device of simply listing minor characters without description, as he does with those who follow the Prioress. However, the Yeomen is not inappropriate astrologically, since Alchabitius tells us that Mercury significat servos (p. b iiiiv, “signifies servants”). Chaucer says, “A Yeman hadde he and servantz namo.”

Mercury is also the planet of intelligence and learning. Firmicus applies to Mercury subjects the phrase cuncta discentes (p. xliix, “learning everything”). In his own modest way the Yeoman shows this

17. This not-uncommon Chaucerian image often seems to contain the May - Taurus - Venus association implicitly, e.g. Aurelius, so described (F 927-28), is also “servant to Venus” (F 937).
18. Venus was typically shown wearing a garland of white and red roses. See Albricus, De deorum imaginibus libellus (included in the Fabularum Liber of C. Iulius Hyginus [Basilae, 1570]), p. 165. The exact date of the Libellus is not known, but it is in any case a summary of pre-Chaucerian material.
19. Each sign of the zodiac has of course its appropriate element; the first four signs being fire, earth, air, water, respectively, and this sequence then repeating. Chaucer’s imagery seems sometimes to be influenced by this system. See esp. Monk and Miller, below.
tendency: “Of wodcraft wel koude he al the usage (my italics)—and it is appropriate that his knowledge should be of woodcraft, because Albohazzen Haly says of the Mercury subject: in naturalibus rebus versatur (p. 171, “he is versed in things of nature”). The Yeoman is a skilled forester who carries “ful thritfly” his “bright and kene” arrows which “drouped noght”; “Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly”; his dagger is “harneised wel and sharp as point of spere.” The Yeoman is not a learned man, but he is thoroughly versed in what concerns him.

More telling, perhaps, is Chaucer’s curious reference to “pecock arwes.” Skeat’s note, while showing that peacocks’ feathers were used for arrows, quotes Ascham’s Toxophilus to the effect that they were inferior to goose feathers. Why should the Yeoman, a stickler for efficient equipment, carry showy but inferior peacock arrows? Astrology and mythology explain: the peacock’s tail is decorated with the eyes of Argus (q. v. Lemprière’s Classical Dictionary). And there is a link between Mercury and Argus, since the decapitated head of Argus (who was slain by Mercury) was regularly shown in pictures of Mercury, as Albricus notes (p. 166). So we have the association Mercury - Argus - peacock, which Chaucer can extend to read Yeoman - Gemini - Mercury - Argus - peacock.

THE PRIORESS (Cancer/Moon)
Alchabitius says that the Moon est significatrix matrum (p. b iii, “signifies mothers”). The Prioress is a kind of mother-figure, by virtue of the religious office she holds. Paradoxically, she is also a virgin, and so expresses the Moon’s link with Diana (“O chaste goddesse . . . Goddess of maydens” [A 2297-2300]). This link Prioress - Moon - Diana is made clear by another detail. Elsewhere Chaucer depicts Diana “with smale houndes al aboute hir feet” (A 2076); and of the Prioress, Chaucer uses much the same phrase: “Of smale houndes hadde she.”

Bonatti asks, “Why is Cancer the mansion of the Moon?” and explains: quod concordat cum Luna in foeminittate, mobilitate, frigiditate, atque humiditate (col. 36, “because [Cancer] agrees with the Moon in femininity, mobility, frigidity and humidity”). The Prioress shows all four qualities: (1) femininity—by her coyness, by her mealy-mouthed oaths, by being all conscience and tender heart—perhaps even by her motto Amor vincit omnia; (2) mobility—her emotions are easily roused, she is very impressionable, she suffers if she sees a
tiny mouse caught in a trap; (3) frigidity or coolness—like Diana, she is a virgin; (4) humidity—evident from her copious flow of tears ("soore wepte she"). This is Chaucer's second reference to her weeping: Cancer is a water sign; and the Moon governs the waters.

Lilly stresses emotional susceptibility, saying that the Moon signifies "a soft, tender creature . . . Timorous, Prodigal, and easily Frighted." The Prioress not only suffers over trapped mice, but also weeps if somebody hits one of her little dogs.

Yet this tenderhearted woman is also a great lady. Albohali says the person born with the Moon in Cancer erit magnae autoritatis ("will be of great authority"). Firmicus says the Moon makes men honoratos (p. xlixv, "respected"). The Prioress holds a high position, and takes pains "to been estatlich of manere,/ And to ben holden digne of reverence."

Two physical details are noteworthy. Firmicus says also that the Moon makes her subjects magnos corpore ("large-bodied"); Chaucer says of the Prioress, "For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe." The full moon looms large in the heavens. The Moon, says Lilly, makes "the face round, gray Eyes" (p. 81); the Prioress has "eyen greye as glas." The moon's light is silvery or "grey," like the eyes of her subjects.

MINOR CHARACTERS
The next lines in the Prologue read: "Another Nonne with hire hadde she / That was hir chapeleyne, and preestes thre." Chaucer dismisses these pilgrims without description, so we cannot very well assign planets and zodiacal signs to them. It seems fair to leave them out of the scheme.

THE MONK (Leo/Sun)
The Sun is the source of light and warmth, his round face hot and beaming. So the Monk's face shines, glistening with perspiration: "His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,/ And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt." Firmicus says the Sun makes corpulentos (p. xlixv, "corpulent men"), which suits exactly Chaucer's phrase "ful fat

and in good poynct.”

Alchabitius says that the Sun signifies *regnum maximum & animam vitalem & lumen & splendorem & intellectum & pulchritudinem & mundiciam atque fidem* (p. b ii*, “the greatest rulership, and vitality, and light and spendour, and intelligence, and beauty and elegance, and faith”). Analysing this in terms of Chaucer’s Monk: (1) rulership—“a fair for the maistrie”; (2) vitality—“a manly man”; “nat pale as a forpyned goost”; (3) light and splendidour—see above; (4) intelligence—the Monk argues tendentiously about theology; (5) beauty and elegance—“his sleves purfiled . . . with grys”; “his bootes souple,” etc.; (6) faith—a doubtful quantity. Firmicus cautions: *facit itaque homines plenos fidei; sed inflatos superbiae spiritu sapientes* (p. xlix*, “[the Sun] makes men full of faith, but puffed up with a spirit of pride in their own wisdom”). The Monk is opinionated: “He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen . . .”

Alchabitius goes on to mention (7) *venationem* (“hunting”) and (8) *aurum plurimum* (“much gold”). The Monk “lovede venerie,” and had a curious pin of gold.

The Lion too is a hunter. Marcus Manilius (first century A.D.) stresses this quality in the Leo subject: *hos habet hoc studium, postis ornare superbos / pellibus et captas domibus praefigere praedas*. . .22 (“he is eager to decorate his proud doorposts with skins, and to fasten the spoils of the chase on his house”). The Monk’s eagerness for the chase is evident: “Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare / Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.”

Lilly describes Leo subjects as having “big Eyes starting or staring out, or goggle-eyes, quick-sighted” (p. 95). Chaucer writes of the Monk: “His eyen stepe [i.e.”bulging”], and rollynge in his heed. . . .” He then adds an image appropriate to fiery Sun and fire-sign Leo: “. . . That stemed as a forneys of a leed.”

THE FRIAR (Virgo/Mercury)

Mercury was the messenger of the gods, hence eloquence is characteristic of the Mercury subject. Albohazen Haly says *bene ratiocinatur & loquitur* (p. 171, “he reasons well and speaks eloquently”). So Chaucer’s Friar: “In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan / So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage.” Haly also mentions commercial tendencies: *hic etiam lucra diligit mercimoniorum* (“this man delights in

mercantile gain”). The Friar: “And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,/ Curteis he was. . . .”

This refers to Mercury in a good position; but Haly says that when ill-placed or afflicted, Mercury *prodruit natum fraudulentum, lo-
quacem & vanum: hic etiam nititur alii persuadere quod ipse non credit* (p. 171, “produces a fraudulent man, talkative and vain; for this person endeavours to persuade others what he does not believe himself”). The Friar is just such a loquacious, persuasive fraud. Lilly gives a graphic picture of “bad” Mercury: “A troublesome wit . . . a great lyar, boaster, pratler, busibody, false, a tale-carrier . . . if he prove a Divine, then a meer verball fellow” (pp. 77-78). The Friar is a boaster: “For he hadde power of confessioun,/ As seyde hymself, moore than a curat.” He is probably all the other things Lilly mentions, since he was “ful wel biloved and famulier . . . with worthy wommen of the toun.” Certainly his religion is a mere matter of words—“So plesaunt was his *In principio,* / Yet wolde he have a ferthyng . . .” That he is a busybody is perhaps implied by Chaucer’s line “In love-dayes ther koude he muchel help.” But equally the Friar may have some real skill to offer, for Bonatti says the Mercury subject *sciet disponere negotia multa, & de multis se intromittet, & sciet illa ducere ad effectum* (col. 112, “will know how to arrange many transactions, and will get himself involved in a multitude of these, and will know how to bring them to a successful conclusion”).

Among types of sickness associated with Mercury, Lilly includes “all stammering and imperfection in the Tongue” (pp. 78-79). The Friar speaks with a lisp that he has deliberately cultivated.

THE MERCHANT (Libra/Venus)

Venus signifies beauty and elegance (cf. the Squire, above), and Chaucer makes clear the Merchant’s elegance by references to his “forked berd,” his “Flaundryssh bever hat” and “his bootes clasped faire and fetisy.”

Libra, “the balance,” has for symbol a pair of scales, and also means lb.—one pound in weight. This probably suggested to Chaucer that a merchant would be an appropriate representative of the sign. But Libra has a further meaning of “£”, a pound in money. Moreover Libra’s ruler, Venus, is associated with riches, as indicated elsewhere by Chaucer: “And in a prive corner in disport / Fond I Venus and hire porter Richesse” (PF 260-61). So we have this system of associations:
Libra —— Venus
(the scales)

(weighing)
Libra = lb. ——— Libra = £

buying and selling money —— riches

Hence the Merchant, as a Libra/Venus representative, thinks a great deal about money, "Sownynge alwey th' encrees of his wynnyng"; and he is adept at buying and selling money, probably weighing it in the process to guard against debased coinage—"Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle."

THE CLERK (Scorpio/Mars)
Scorpio is the negative mansion of Mars, as Aries is the positive. The energies which were outward and active in Aries, turn inward in Scorpio. Hence the Martian hardship which the Knight (Aries) goes out to meet in his wanderings and warfare, the Clerk inflicts on himself as asceticism—he "nas nat right fat, I undertake,/ But looked holwe, and thereto sobrely."

Scorpio is opposite Taurus in the zodiac's circle, so Venus (ruler of Taurus), the symbol of joy, beauty and love, is in detriment again: Gower says of Scorpio, "He harmeth Venus and empeireth" (VII 1135). Thus the Clerk is in many ways opposite to the Squire (Taurus/Venus). While the Squire is splendidly dressed, the Clerk is threadbare—"Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy"; and while the Squire is singing or fluting all the day, the Clerk is mostly silent—"Noght o word spak he moore than was neede"; while the Squire is gay, the Clerk looks sober. The Clerk would rather own twenty books "than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie": those very things dedicated to Venus—fine clothes and musical instruments—that the Squire so much enjoys.

Scorpio, being the eighth sign, has affinities with the eighth house, the "house of death." Hence the link with necromancy and other forms of occultism. This may be the point of Chaucer's word-play on "philosophre"—"But al be that he was a philosophre,/ Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre"—with its hint at occult practices.

Scorpio is a "mute" sign (the scorpion has no voice), so Chaucer
stresses the Clerk's habitual silence both here ("Noght o word . . .") and later when the Host returns to the theme: "Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a mayde" (E 2), and "This day ne herde I of youre tonge a word" (E 4). Death, too, is silent, sober and "stille."

THE MAN OF LAW (Sagittarius/Jupiter)
The old astrologers link Jupiter with the law. Alchabitius ascribes to Jupiter ex magisteriis que pertinent ad legem (p. b7, "magistry over matters pertaining to law"). He adds: ut iusta iudicia iudicare: & pacem inter homines mittere ("such as giving just judgements, and making peace between men"). Of the Sergeant of Law, Chaucer says: "Justice he was ful often in assise."

Alchabitius further says that Jupiter substantie significat abundantiam ("signifies abundance of substance"). The Sergeant is a man of substance: "Of fees and robes hadde he many oon./ So greet a purchase was nowhere noon." Alchabitius concludes: & est planeta sapientie & intellectus & usus ("and he is the planet of wisdom and intelligence and custom"). Chaucer twice uses the word "wise" in his description. The Sergeant's intelligence is evident in "his science"—his mastery of law ("Al was fee symple to hym in effect"), itself largely a matter of established custom which the Sergeant follows: "In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle. . . ."

Albohazen Haly says that Jupiter makes a man magnae nobilitatis, laudis & magnae famae (p. 169, "of great nobility, of high praise and great fame"). The Sergeant was "ful riche of excellence" and "of greet reverence" and Chaucer refers to "his heigh renoun."

Thus at a human level the Sergeant reflects some of the wisdom and excellence of the divine Jupiter—"Juppiter so wys" (A 2786)—dispensing justice from Olympus.

THE FRANKLIN (Capricorn/Saturn)
Albricus tells us that Saturn pingebatur, ut homo senex, canus, prolixa barba (p. 164, "used to be painted as an old man, grey-haired, with a long beard"). Chaucer's first detail about the Franklin: "Whit was his berd as is the daysye." He is evidently a man of advanced years. Firmicus refers to Saturn subjects as potatione multa gaudentes (p. xlvii, "enjoying much drinking").23 This is because Saturn is "dry,”

23. Firmicus rather spoils it by adding modicum sumentes cibum ("eating moderately"). But Chaucer is careful not to say that the Franklin eats hugely: the point is simply that food is wonderfully plentiful in his house. Cf. note 25 below.
so his subjects are thirsty. Chaucer: "Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn."

Alchabitius ascribes to Saturn, when well placed, the attributes multe comestionis & vere dilectionis (p. br, "of comestibles in plenty and true delight"). Chaucer says, "It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke" and "To lyven in delit was evere his wone." Alchabitius later repeats the reference to true delight, as though confirming a surprising Saturn attribute, and so does Chaucer—"pleyn delit . . . verray felicitee parfit." Alchabitius goes on to say: & significat cultus agrorum & populationem terrarum & fluminum si fuerit fortunatus ("and he signifies agriculture, and the multiplying of living things in earth and rivers, if fortunately placed"). Chaucer: "fissh and flessh . . . so plenteous"; "Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,/ And many a breem and many a luce in stuw.

In the same passage Alchabitius says fortunately-placed Saturn signifies among possessions res antiquas & durabiles & hereditates & terre cultus ("things old and durable and inheritances and agriculture"). The Franklin gives the impression of being an old-established landowner, a man of wealth and dignity, perhaps having inherited his estate. ("An housholdere, and that a greet, was he"; "lord and sire," etc.)

Slow-moving Saturn is old Father Time, Chronos. Time comes into Chaucer's description: "After the sondry sesons of the yeer,/ So chaunged he his mete and his soper" and "His table dormant in his halle alway/ Stood redy covered al the longe day."

Saturn is the planet of extreme cold, gravitatem frigoris ("the weight of cold") as Alchabitius puts it. Capricorn, too, is the mid-winter sign. Hence the astrological rightness of Chaucer's wintry image, "It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke."

THE GUILDSMEN (Aquarius/Saturn)
The eleventh sign, Aquarius, has affinities with the eleventh house.

24. Dryness is a standard attribute of Saturn (see e.g. Bonatti, col. 97), and a later authority, Baptista Porta, explains of Saturn subjects, satis bibunt, quia sicci ("they drink quite a lot, because they are dry"). See his Coelestis Physiognomoniae, Libri Sex (Neapoli, 1603), p. 24.
25. To astrologers, Saturn is the most malign of planets—"the greater infortune" as he is called. But evidently he has a good side too. And in mythology, Saturn's reign was equated with the age of gold, when all was happiness, and the arts of agriculture were first learned by man. Hence the abundance of food.
Alchabitius says *undecima domus est pars amicorum* (page unmarked, equivalent to c vii, “the eleventh house refers to friends”), and Lilly says of the eleventh house, “It doth naturally represent Friends and Friendship” (p. 56). Such a friendly association is represented by the Guildsmen who, since they follow different trades, must belong to a social and religious fraternity. They are “clothed alle in o lyveree / Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.”

—AND THEIR COOK

Oddly enough the Aquarius group includes a further pilgrim. (It has been suggested, as Robinson notes [p. 660], that the Guildsmen were an interpolation). The symbol of Aquarius, the water carrier (a man carrying a pitcher), may have suggested to Chaucer the trade of cook. Certainly the Cook is to be included under Aquarius, for “on his shyne a mormal hadde he.” Parts of the body are governed by different signs of the zodiac, and the shins, as Bonatti specifies, belong to Aquarius: *crura a genibus usque ad cavillas pedum* (col. 56, “the legs—or shins—from the knees as far as the insteps of the feet”). The Cook’s mormal on his shin is, for good measure, a malady appropriate to the ruler of Aquarius, Saturn. Alchabitius says Saturn signifies *ex infirmitatibus morbos flegmaticos & melancholicos* (p. b, “among infirmities, diseases of phlegmatic and melancholic origin”), and W. C. Curry quotes authorities to show that a mormal is produced by the corruption of natural melancholia or of melancholia mixed with salt phlegm (p. 48). Morover Bonatti says Saturn *ut multum habet significare morbos qui non curantur* (col. 99, “often signifies incurable diseases”), and the Cook’s mormal was presumably incurable.

Later we find the Host jokingly accusing the Cook of selling stale, fly-blown food (“many a Jakke of Dovere hastow soold / That hath been twies hoot and twies coold”—A 4347-48). Bonatti says badly-placed Saturn *significat quod utetur natus aquis putridis & sordidis . . . & comedet pisces putridos & carnes putridas* (col. 99, “signifies that the native\(^{27}\) will use water that is putrid and sordid . . . and he will devour putrid fish and putrid meat”). The Cook evidently extends this courtesy to his customers.

Bonatti also says *erit foetidus & mali odoris, ac si sit de foetore hircino* (col. 98, “he will be foetid and of an evil smell, as from a stinking he-goat”). The Manciple levels similar accusations against

\(^{27}\) “The native” is of course the regular term in astrology for the “one-who-is-born,” whose horoscope or nativity is being studied.
the drunken Cook, saying “thy breeth ful soure stynketh” (H 32) and “Fy, stynkyng swyn!” (H 40).

THE SHIPMAN (Pisces/Jupiter)
Marcus Manilius describes Pisces as follows—I quote from Thomas Creech’s translation published in 1700:

Last *double Pisces*, from their shining scale,
Spread watry influence, and incline to Sail;
To trust their Lives to Seas, to plow the Deep,
To make fit Rigging, or to build a Ship.
In short, what e’re can for a Fleet be fram’d
A thousand *Arts*, too numerous to be nam’d.
Beside to steer, observe the *Stars*, and guide
As they direct, and never lose the Tide;
To know the Coasts, the Winds, the Ports, and Shores;
To turn the Helm, or ply the bending Oars;
To sweep smooth Seas with *Nets*, to drag the Sand,
And draw the leaping *Captives* to the Land,
Lay cheating *Wires*, or with unfaithful bait,
The Hook conceal, and get by the deceit:
To fight at Sea, to stain the Waves with blood,
Whilst *War* lies floating on th’unstable flood.28

Four parallels are noteworthy: (1) Pisces is identified with a sea-going life like the Shipman’s. (2) Manilius stresses the knowledge necessary to navigate a ship. Chaucer says of the Shipman:

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes, and his daungers hym bisides,
His herberwe, and his moone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.

He also “knew alle the havenes” and “every cryke.” (3) Manilius refers to bloody battles at sea. Chaucer writes: “If that he fought, and hadde the hyer hond,/ By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.” (4) Manilius mentions deceit (*fraudem*), in reference to catching fish. The Shipman practises deceit: “Ful many a draughte of wyn
had he ydrawe / Fro Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman sleep.” Fraud and deceit are also typical of a person with badly-placed Jupiter. Bonatti says he will be *versatus circa diabolicas operationes* (col.

28. See Manilius, IV 273-89.
162, "pre-occupied with diabolical activities"). The Shipman is devoid of moral scruples: "Of nyce conscience took he no keep."

THE DOCTOR (Aries/Mars)
A second cycle of the zodiac begins with the Doctor. Chaucer has by now used up the most familiar astrological material, and his use of the remainder has to be rather more selective and arbitrary.

But clearly the surgeon is a representative of Mars, because, like the soldier, his job entails wounds, bleeding and iron cutting instruments. Bonatti says that Mars signifies the whole of medicine, not just surgery: *Et cum fuerit solus significator, significat opus medicinae tam chirurgiae, quam alterius partis medicinae* (col. 104, "And when [Mars] is sole significator, he signifies medical practice, both surgery and other kinds of medicine"). Chaucer covers this in his description of the Doctor: "In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik,/ To speke of phisik and of surgerye. . . ."

Chaucer then goes on to give a vivid contemporary portrait of a doctor "grounded in astronomye" (i.e. astrology), as discussed by W. C. Curry (pages 3-36).

It is worth noting that Chaucer says of the Doctor, "He was a verray, parfit praktisour," and of the Knight (also Aries/Mars), "He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght." "Verray, parfit" is not a common phrase in Chaucer: it occurs in only one other place in his original works (I 106) and once in his translations (Bo III, pr. 9, 149). Was this phrase in some astrological source which Chaucer consulted for Aries/Mars?

THE WIFE OF BATH (Taurus/Venus/Mars)
We know the Wife is Taurus/Venus because Chaucer says so: "Myn ascendent was Taur" (D 613), "Venus me yaf my lust (611). But her horoscope is marred because the ascendant sign has "Mars therinne" (613). Two planets therefore are powerful: Mars, by being in the ascendant; Venus, because she is ruler of the ascendant sign.29

29. Curry conjectures that Venus is also ascendant (see p. 94, diagram page 93, and note 3, p. 329), and therefore in conjunction with Mars, but Chaucer does not say this. I cannot enter into a full discussion here but, briefly, Venus would in any case be powerful since she rules the ascendant sign Taurus; and the Wife’s statement "I hadde the prente of seinte Venus seel" (D 604) may simply mean "my character and person bear the unmistakable stamp of Venus."
The result is a coarser, more frankly animal, more aggressive personality than that of the Squire.

The Wife clearly shows the influence of both planets. She is much concerned with love (Venus), but her marriages have a background of strife and violence (Mars "that god is of bataylle" HF 1447). She feels intense anger (Mars) if other women precede her—"certeyn so wrooth was she, / That she was out of alle charittee."

Like the Squire, she loves fine clothes (Venus)—"Hir coverchiefes ful fyne weren of ground"; and her occupation is cloth-making (Venus). But possibly her taste in dress is not impeccable, as Manly suggests (p. 230), and if so the coarsening influence of Mars is at work. Mars shows his colour in her stockings of "fyn scarlet reed" (cf. "rede Mars" LGW 2589). Both planets show in her florid face: "Boold was hir face" (Mars) "and fair" (Venus) "and reed of hewe" (Mars). And Mars, being ascendant, has left his birth-mark on her face—and elsewhere (619-20).

She is addicted to foreign travel (Mars, cf. the Knight)—"thries hadde she been at Jerusalem," etc. She has sharp spurs (Mars, blood/iron). But Chaucer ends her description with the joyful, playful, amorous influence of Venus: "In felawshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe. . . . For she koude of that art [love] the olde daunce"; with a final image of dancing, a Venus pastime (cf. the Squire).

THE PARSON (Gemini/Mercury)

Bonatti makes clear a link between Mercury and religion: *Et significat Mercurius aestimationem & cogitationem dilectionis Dei* (col. 112, "And Mercury signifies setting value on, and thinking about, pleasing God"), adding *erit bonae fidei & catholicae opinionis* ("he will be of good faith and catholic opinion"). This of course refers to Mercury well-placed: we have already seen the unfortunate results of badly-placed Mercury in the Friar.

The Parson is also "a lerned man, a clerk," reflecting another Mercury quality ("learning everything"—see the Yeoman, above). Bonatti, quoting Alchabitius, then tells us that Mercury *significat ex operibus opera quae generant cognitionem veritatis, et rethoricam* ("signifies,

30. Mars is associated with the animal-instinctive side of sex; Alchabitius says he signifies *feditatem coitus* ("sexual foulness," p. b ii*). Of the two signs Mars rules, Aries governs the reproductive instinct, Scorpio the genitals (see Bonatti, cols. 22 and 55). The Wife makes several rather blatant references to the genitals in her Prologue. Venus, acting alone, produces a more aesthetic approach to love.
among labours, those which produce knowledge of the truth, and also rhetoric”). The Parson’s job is to disseminate the truth by preaching, i.e. rhetoric. Bonatti adds: *Et si fuerit effectus clericus, erit bonus & placabilis praedicator* (“And if he was made a cleric, he will be a good and pleasing preacher”). Chaucer tells us that the Parson “Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;/ His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.”

Bonatti finally quotes Afla as saying that Mercury *significat philosophiam, & auguria, & scripturam, & proverbia: erit bonus moralis* (“signifies philosophy, prophecies, scripture and proverbs; he will be good and ethical”). The Parson is certainly good and ethical, and Chaucer tells us that he first wrought and then taught:

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Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
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—showing his use of scripture and proverbs in his preaching.

**THE PLOWMAN** (Cancer/Moon)
Firmicus says the Moon makes *homines stabiles: honoratos: ordinatos: honestos: magnos corpore* (p. xlix, “men who are stable, respected, orderly, honest, large-bodied”). The Plowman is just such a steady, honest countryman: “A trewe swynkere and a good was he,/Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.” Bonatti quotes Alchabitius to the effect that, among labours, the Moon governs *opera aquarum atque terrarum, & terrae cultum* (col. 115, “works of water and earth, and agriculture”). The Plowman is willing to “dyke” (dig water ditches) as well as “delve” (till the earth), and agriculture is his occupation.

**THE MILLER** (Leo/Sun)
In some ways the Miller is a cruder, plebeian version of the Monk, who represented Leo/Sun earlier. The Host describes the Monk as “therwithal of brawnes and of bones,/ A wel farynge persone for the nones” (B2 3131-32). Compare: “The Millere was a stout carl for the nones;/ Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.” The verbal parallel is striking. Chaucer has in mind the great size and muscular strength of Leo/Sun subjects, reflecting the strength of the Lion, and the power, size and vitality of the Sun compared to other planets. Albohali describes a man born with Sun in Leo and angular and diurnal, as *magnus, & fortis* (caput xlii, “big and strong”). Lilly de-
scribes Sun-subjects as usually "of a good, large and strong Corporature" (p. 70), and the Leo-subject as "strong, valiant and active" (p. 96). The Miller, at wrestling, "wolde have alwey the ram./ He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre."

Lilly ascribes to Leo a "great round Head" (p. 95), and to the Sun-subject "a round, large Forehead" (p. 70). Bonatti says of the Sun-subject, *virtus eius & potestas maxime est in capite* (col. 107, "his strength and power lie chiefly in his head"). Hence the Miller, if he cannot heave a door off its hinges, can always "breke it at a rennyng with his heed."

Alchabitius says the Sun signifies *imperium vocis* (p. b ii\(^v\), "a commanding voice") and we later find the Miller roaring out in his "Pilates voys" (A 3124), and insisting on having his way. Lilly says the Sun-subject has "a kind of itching desire to Rule and Sway where he comes" (p. 70), and the drunken Miller even overrules the Host (A 3132-35).

There is no direct evidence that the Miller possesses *ex substantia aurum plurimum* (Alchabitius, p. b ii\(^v\), "among possessions, much gold")—"And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee." Gold is the metal of the Sun.

Since Leo is a fire sign, Chaucer gives us another furnace-image, like the one used earlier about the Monk. The Miller's mouth "as greet was as a greet forneys." Here we see the Lion opening his huge jaws and roaring like the hot blast from a furnace.

THE MANCIPLE (Virgo/Mercury)

Mercury, as we have noted, signifies servants (see the Yeoman, above). The Manciple is a servant of many masters—"of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten." Another Mercury characteristic which he shows is intelligence. Albohazen Haly says Mercury *fovet natum subtilis intellectus & cogitationis* (p. 171, "fosters a native of subtle intellect and thought"). The Manciple is no learned man, but his native wit enables him to outpace less mercurial minds:

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Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
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The Manciple shows his intelligence in commercial matters, which we saw to be typical of Mercury (compare the Friar, above). He is "wise in byynge of vitaille."

But there is special interest in the fact that those he outwits are
lawyers. We have seen that Jupiter is associated with lawyers (Man of Law, above); and in the sign Virgo, the planet Jupiter is in detriment, since it rules opposing Pisces. That is, Jupiter is at a disadvantage in Virgo. Chaucer dramatises this astrological situation by showing that the great men of the Law (Jupiter) are made fools of by the insignificant Manciple (little Mercury) on his own ground (in Virgo)—“this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.” And the lawyers seem hardly aware that it is happening. Chaucer elsewhere calls Mercury “the slye” god (F 672), and Lilly says “he is the author of subtilty, tricks, devices, perjury, &c.” (p. 77).

THE REEVE (Libra/Venus)
As manager of an estate, the Reeve probably supervises the weighing and pricing of produce (Libra = the scales, lb., £). We have noted the association of Venus with riches in discussing the Merchant above (also Libra/Venus). The Merchant is “sownynge alwey th’encrees of his wynnyng”; the Reeve is very wealthy—“ful riche he was astored pryvely.”

Libra, as a pair of scales, aims to keep the balance level, including evidently the financial balance—for Chaucer writes of the Merchant, “ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,” and of the Reeve, “ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.”

Venus is a beguiling charmer, and the Reeve manages to please his lord while actually cheating him—

His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene hym of his owene good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood

—receiving in return fine clothing appropriate to Venus.

But there is a sinister side to the Reeve’s nature, due I think to Saturn’s influence. Chaucer is trying again the experiment of blending a malign planet with Venus, as he did with the Wife of Bath. This comes out clearly in the Reeve’s tendency to lag (“evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route”), since Saturn signifies tarditatem (“tardiness,” Bonatti, col. 99). The choice of Saturn is apt, for the Reeve is an old man (“This white top writeth myne olde yeris,” A 3869) and concerned with agriculture (“Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn / The yeeldynge of his seed and of his greyn”)—both appropriate to Saturn (cf. the Franklin above). Moreover Bonatti tells us that Saturn signifies eos qui praesunt operibus (col. 100, “those in
charge of work”) and the Reeve is a much-feared overseer whose subordinates are “adrad of hym as of the deeth” (death too is linked with cold Saturn31). Saturn-subjects rarely laugh, says Bonatti; it is their way semper esse tristes & malam voluntatem habere (col. 100, “to be always gloomy and full of ill-will”). When general laughter follows the Miller’s bawdy tale, the Reeve begins to “grucche” A 3863-98),32 launching into a gloomy meditation on old age (= Saturn), which includes such saturnine imagery as rotten fruit and old ashes. If we detect a streak of wry humour here, it shows the influence of playful Venus, all but overpowered by the cold weight of Saturn. The Reeve implies that he is like a leek, with “an hoor heed and a grene tayl” (A 3878): the hoar head is hoary Saturn, but the green tail, like his “coltes tooth,” represents the promptings of Venus.33 The gay music and dancing of Venus have become a macabre sprightliness: “We hoppen alwey whil the world wol pype” (3876).

THE SUMMONER (Scorpio/Mars)
Alchabitus ascribes to Mars, among infirmities, febres calidas & sanguineas & pustulas sanguineas alabraha que est rubedo corporis cum asperitate & feditate (p. b ii*, “hot and sanguine fevers, and the sanguine pustules of ‘alabraha’ which is a reddening of the body, with roughness and filthiness”). The Summoner has a “fyr-reed cherubynnes face” appropriate to red Mars, complete with pustules (“the knobbes sittyng on his chekes”). Bonatti also ascribes to Mars such skin diseases as sanguine pustules and impetigo, and rubidines adventicias, quae funt in corpore praeter naturam cum asperitate atque foeditate (col. 104, “adventitious rednesses which occur unnaturally in the body with roughness and filthiness”). The Summoner probably acquired his disease, or made it worse, by being filthy in his habits. Curry considers that the Summoner is suffering from alopecia, termed a form of leprosy, but confused in the mediaeval mind with venereal disease acquired by consorting with filthy and infected women (pp. 37-47). Since Scorpio rules the genitals, an association with venereal disease makes sense.

31. Saturn is slow Time who scythes men down. Bonatti says Saturn signifies causas mortis (col. 100, “causes of death”).
32. Chaucer explains this, of course, by saying that the Reeve had been a carpenter (A 3861), but it remains very much “in character.”
33. Note that the same phrase “coltes tooth” is also applied to herself by the Wife of Bath—another Venus character (D 602).
disease would be appropriate. The Summoner is certainly lecherous ("As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe") and Mars, as we have seen, is associated with the animal, lustful side of sex (Wife of Bath, above, and note 30).

The Summoner also aggravates his condition by eating garlic, onions and leeks, and drinking strong red wine. Alchabitius ascribes to Mars ex saporibus anarmum (p. b ii, "among flavours, the pungent or bitter"); and among herbs associated with Mars, Lilly specifically mentions onions, garlic and leeks (p. 68). The fact that the Summoner prefers his wine "reed as blood" is also clearly appropriate to Mars.

THE PARDONER (Sagittarius/Jupiter)
The Shipman's lack of conscience showed something of the bad side of Jupiter. The Pardoner is another bad Jupiter character. Albohazen Haly says that the man with Jupiter ill-placed in his birth-chart will be loco casti & religiosi credens in aliqua mala credulitate, & loco mansueti timidus, & loco nobilitatis vilipendet homines, & loco faciendi bonum collocabit illud in malis loco (p. 169, "instead of pure and religious, believing in all kinds of evil credulity; and instead of gentle, timid; and instead of being noble, he will regard men cynically; and instead of doing good, he will put what is good into an evil setting"). The Pardoner conforms to the general drift of this. With his "pigges bones" passed off as holy relics, and other frauds, he is bringing what is good into disrepute. He is also a thoroughgoing cynic, and though not credulous himself he certainly encourages credulity in others. Bonatti tells a similar story: he will be versatus circa diabolicas operationes, studebit sub spem hypocrisis (col. 101, "pre-occupied with diabolical activities, he will be concerned with hypocritical hopes"). The Pardoner is diabolical enough, and he raises hypocritical hopes in his customers.

Bonatti adds that he will be malus, debilis, insipiens laboriosus, electionis pravae ("evil, weak, foolish, causing trouble, of depraved inclinations"). The word debilis ("weak") and Haly's word timidus ("timid") are of special interest. Chaucer tells us that the Pardoner has a voice "as smal as hath a goot." He has no beard, nor ever will have: he is in fact "a geldyng or a mare." Firmicus says that when Jupiter is badly placed, the native will be deficiens viribus: & omni privatus licentia potestatis (p. xlviii). Literally translated, this means
“lacking in strength, and deprived of all the freedom which strength
gives” (i.e. weak and powerless, one might say, as a woman—“a
mare”); but there is also probably some hint of “lacking in virility,
deprived of all power of licentiousness” (i.e. emasculate—“a geld-
yng”). Chaucer has covered both possibilities in his graphic phrase,
using an appropriate horse-imagery, since the symbol of Sagittarius is
a centaur—a man with the lower parts of a horse.

Weighing the evidence the reader will see, I believe, that though
mediaeval astrology is not completely clear-cut and free from over-
lapping between planets, too many successful “hits” are achieved by
the theory to be explained by chance alone. The sceptical reader may
like to try a negative test, such as matching the Squire to Saturn,
the Knight to Venus, and the Prioress to Mars; I do not think he will
succeed. Despite marginal overlapping, each planet retains its own
distinct identity.

The theory gains strength from a number of unusually definite check-
points. The Wife of Bath is such a fixed point, since we know her to
be Taurus, i.e. the second sign in the second cycle. Counting back-
wards two pilgrims and two signs, we come to 12. the Shipman, who
clearly locks on to sea-going Pisces. Just before him comes 11. the
Cook with a mormal on his shin (Aquarius). The start of the first
cycle is equally clear: 1. the Knight = Aries/Mars/war; 2. the Squire
= Taurus/Venus/love. Next is the Yeoman, rather indistinct. But 4.
the Prioress = Cancer/Moon/Diana/small hounds, and 5. the Monk
= Leo/Sun/shining face are firm. Thus the two ends of the first cycle
are established, with adequate intermediate locking points such as 9.
the Man of Law = Sagittarius/Jupiter/law and 10. the Franklin =
Capricorn/Saturn/much food. The second cycle is incomplete, and
therefore beyond the Wife of Bath is rather more conjectural in my
mind, though 5. the Miller = Leo/Sun/strong head looks well-establish-
ished, and the red-faced Summoner and effeminate Pardoner bring
up the rear.

Finally one must stand well back from the material and consider the
likelihood of Chaucer’s using such a hidden astrological plan. It makes
sense in terms of what we know about the man and his age. His in-
tention was to shape his General Prologue into a microcosm of the
universe, to create a human pageant matching the pageant in the
heavens. This at any rate is my conviction. But if I have failed to
carry the reader with me, and not convinced him of the validity of the
overall scheme, I hope he will have been rewarded by occasional in-
sights along the way—insights which suggest that the mediaeval astrologers may still yield valuable material to the student of Chaucer.34

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