

A Basic Chaucer Glossary

A

adoun: down
agast(e): afraid; frighten
agayn(s): against, toward
ago, ago(o)n: gone; ago
al: all
*al, al be that: although
alderbest: best of all
*als, also: as, also
* an: an; on
*anon: at once
*artow: art thou, thou art
arwe: arrow
*as: as, as if, like
*atte: at, at the
*aventure: chance
*axe: ask
*ay: always

B

*been: are
benedicite: bless us!
*bet: better
*beth: are; (imperative) be
bitwixen: between
blake: black
blyve: quickly, soon
*brenne: burn
breste, brast: burst
bresting: bursting
*but, but if: unless

C

*can, kan: know, be able
*canstow: can you, you can
*cas: happening, chance
*certes: surely, certainly
certeyn: certainly, sure(ly)
chees, chese(n): choose, chose chosen
cheere, chiere ial expression
*clepe(n): call
*clerk: scholar
conne: learn, can
conseil: secret, advice
coude: could
*coy: quiet

D

deel: bit
delit: delight, pleasure *
deme: judge, suppose

devyse: tell (of), describe
deye: die
dorste: dare, dared
dout: doubt
dout, out of: beyond doubt
drede: doubt; dread, fear

E

*ech: each
echo(o)n: each one
*eek, eke: also
elles, ellis: else
entente: intent, attention
*er, or: before; formerly
ese: pleasure
*everich: every; every one

F

*fay, fey: faith
fere, feere: companion
fele, feele: many
ferre: farther
fil: fell, happened
flour: flower; flour
for: for; because
*forthy: therefore
foryeve: forgive
free: generous, gracious, liberal
*fro: from

G

game: fun
*gan, gonne: began
go(on): go
goost: soul, spirit
gyse: guise, manner, way; plan

H

*han: have
*hastow: have you, you have
heigh: high
*hem: them
hem lost (or liste): they wanted
hende: ready at hand, convenient, handy;
pleasant, courteous
hente: take, seize, get
here: her
hewe: hue, color
*hight: named, called

*him lest (list): he wants

*hir(e): her, their

I

*ich: I

*ilke: same

J

jape(s): trick(s); joke(s)

K

*kan: know; know how to; can

keep(e), kepe: heed

*konne: learn; know how to; can

konnyng: skill, knowledge

*koude: knew; knew how to; could

*kynde: nature

L

*lasse: less

lese: lose

lest(e): please, pleases, pleased

hem (him) leste, liste (impersonal): it is pleasing

they (he) wanted

lete: leave, forsake, abandon

lette: forbear, desist, hinder

*le(e)ve: dear

liggen: to lie

like, liketh: it please(s)

list(e): it pleased, it pleases

*lite: little

lith: lies

lust: pleasure, desire

lusty: lusty; joyous; pleasant; vigorous

M

maad: made

*maistow, maystow: may you, you may

*make: mate, husband, make

maner(e): kind of, manner

maugre: in spite of

mede: reward

met(te): dream

*mo: more

mooste: most; greatest

*moot(e) (n): may, must, ought to; so (also, ever)

moot I: as I hope to

*morewe: morrow, morning

*mowe: may

*muche(l): much, many (a)

N

*nam: am not

namely: especially, specifically

*namo, namoore: no more

*nas: was not

*nat: not

*nathelees: nevertheless

*ne: not, nor

*nere: were not

niste: did not know

noght: nought, nothing; not

*nolde: would not

*nones, nonys: occasion

*noon: none, no

*noot: know not

*nyce: foolish

*nys: is not

nyste: knew not

O

*o, oo, on, oon, that oon: one

*of: of; off

ones, onis: once

outruly: utterly, entirely

P

pace: go, proceed

*pardee: (lit. "by God"), a common oath; certainly

parfit: perfect

pleyne: complain, lament; full

povre: poor

*prime, pryme: 9 A.M.

pryvely, prively: secretly

Q

quit(te), quyte: requite, repay

*quod: said

R

*rathe: early, soon

*rede: advise; interpret; read

reed: counsel; (verb) advise

rekke(th): heed(s), ca

right: (adverb): just, quite

routhe: pity

S

saugh, say

seigh: saw

*seistow: you say

seith: says
seke: seek
*sely: innocent, simple
sentence: meaning, opinion, sentiments,
subject matter
*seyde: said
*seye: say
*shaltow: you shall
shape (reflexive): plan, planned
shrewe: scoundrel, wretch
*sikerly: certainly, surely, truly
*sith: since, then
slawe, yslawe: slain
sola(a)s: pleasure, entertainment
*somdel: somewhat
somyte: once, sometimes
so(o)re: bitterly, sorely
*sooth, soothfastnes
sothe: truth
so(o)the, soothly: true, truly
spedde him: hastened
squier: squire
stente, stynte: cease, stop, restrain
sperte: started
steven: voice
suffre: permit, endure
sweven, e, -es, -ys: dream(s)
*swich: such
swynk, swynken: work syke: sick
*syn: since

T

task: taketh: take
*than(ne): then; than
thee(n): prosper; so moot I thee: as I hope to
prosper
ther, ther as: where
*thilke: this, that, at that
*tho: those;
thought: thought; anxiety
thoughte (impersonal): it seemed
thurgh: through
thynketh (impersonal): it seems
til: until, to
to: to
trewe: true
trowe: believe
*tweye: two

U

*unnethe(s): scarcely

V

*verray: true, veritable
vileynye: rudeness, shameful speech or deed

W

war: aware; be (beth) war(e),
a ware yow: beware, take heed
wende, -en, -eth: go, pass
*wene, -eth: think, suppose
werre: war
what: what; why
wher: where; whether
wher as: where
which that: which, who
*whylom: o once upon a time, formerly
*wight: person, thing
wist, wiste: known, knew
wol: will, would, would like
wood: crazy, demented, wild
woodnesse: madness
woot, woost: know, understand
wostow: you know, do you know
worthy: distinguished, well to do; in good
social standing
wroghte: made, did, w
wydwe: widow

Y

*yaf: gave
*ycleped: named
ydo: done
*ye(n): e
*yeve, -en, -est, -eth: give, given
yifte: gift
*ynogh: e
ysene: seen
yvel(e): evil, evilly
*ywis: y, certainly

Adapted from:

<http://www.towson.edu/~duncan/glossary.html> (Baragona's Chaucer Page, which was adapted from Shoaf and Baugh)