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## ***Allas* and *weilawei*: Interjections in Some of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Fragment III: Wife of Bath, the Friar, the Summoner)**

### **Abstract**

We investigate Chaucer's use of interjections in Fragment III of the *Canterbury Tales*, which comprises "The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale", "The Friar's Prologue and Tale", and "The Summoner's Prologue and Tale". We discuss the problem of how to distinguish interjections from other word classes, and we distinguish primary interjections such as *allas*, *buf*, *ey*, *fy*, *hayt*, *lo*, *weilawei* and secondary interjections, such as *hayl*, *look*, *now*, *peace*, *welcome*, *why*. As a third group we also take corroborative phrases such as *by God* into consideration. We look at the frequency of the various interjections: *Now*, *lo*, *nay* as well as *a*, *by God*, and *pardee* are frequent and occur in all the tales of Fragment III; on the other end of the frequency scale there are *buf*, which is a hapax legomenon, and the rarely attested *hayt*. We describe the interjectional spectrum used in Fragment III based on their functions. Interjections can, for example, serve as indicators of emotions (*allas*, *weilawei*), as corroboratives (*by God*) and expletives (*a devel weye*), as discourse markers (*now thanne*), as response forms (*nay*, *ye*, *yis*), as polite speech act formulae (*grant mercy*, *no fors*), etc. The paper further offers an analysis of the phonology, morphology, verse meter and stress pattern. As can be said of the Middle English vocabulary more generally, the etymology of the interjections is mixed: some go back to Old English, especially *weilawei*, but many were borrowed from French (or ultimately from Latin), e.g., *allas*, *ey*, *fy*, *pardee*. Chaucer's characters often use not just one, but two or three interjections in combination, e.g., *Allas! and weylawey!* or *allas nay, nay*, mainly probably for additional emphasis. We suggest that that the interjectional spectrum in Fragment III (1) expands on Biber *et al*'s. (1999) inserts and Culpeper & Kytö's (2010) pragmatic noise; (2) undergoes change like words; and is indexical (3) of a multi-lingual social context (4) and of oral and literary conventions.

**Keywords:** Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* (Fragment III), interjections, inserts, pragmatic noise, etymology, meter, characterization of figures

## 1. Interjections and their treatment in grammars and linguistic studies

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In traditional grammars from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern English period, interjections are usually regarded as a word-class; often they are discussed as the eighth and last word-class (see e.g., Ælfric's Grammar [Zupitza (ed.) 1880] and the so-called Lily Grammar (Gwosdek (ed.) 2013); for a survey, see: Michael 1970; Vorlat 1975). In 20th century grammars and handbooks, on the contrary, interjections (sometimes also called exclamations) are often not mentioned at all (e.g., not in Fries 1940) or are given rather short shrift. Quirk *et al.* (1985) discuss them very briefly in their bulky grammar and have only negative things to say about them. The first two volumes of the *CHEL* (*Cambridge History of the English Language*), which deal with Old English and Middle English, apparently ignore interjections completely. Traditionally, interjections are defined semantically, phonologically and morphologically, as well as syntactically: It is said that they express emotions; that they are phonologically and morphologically irregular, and that they are not integrated into the sentence (see: Reber 2012: 25–32; Reber & Couper-Kuhlen 2010 for a critical review). Because interjections are not integrated into the sentence, they pose a problem for structuralist approaches. It has even been doubted that interjections are words and some linguists have regarded them as a kind of natural sounds (e.g., Goddard 2014; Wharton 2003). This has been criticized as a 'negative definition' (Ehlich 2007: 425; our translation) and even a 'marginalization of interjections in linguistics' (Nübling 2001: 20; our translation).<sup>1</sup> The marginalization of interjections becomes also visible in *The Riverside Chaucer*: While interjections are acknowledged in the glossary as a relevant category (Benson 2008: 1211), they are not mentioned in the grammatical discussion of word classes in the introduction to *The Riverside Chaucer*.

We argue that the study of interjections in the *Canterbury Tales* furthers our understanding of the interjectional spectrum in the history of English, provides evidence of their word status and offers valuable insights into the multi-lingual social context and oral and literary conventions of Late Middle English. Let us consider the two interjections referenced in the title, *allas* and *weylawey*, as a case in point. They are presented as the knight's direct speech in "The Wife of Bath's Tale" (*This knyght answerde, allas! and weylawey!*, III, 1058) and exemplify frequently used interjections to express negative emotions as well as contribute to the verse meter as any other word. The rather new French borrowed form *allas* is used in the same line with the OE form *weylawey!*, which was perhaps regarded as slightly old-fashioned. This illustrates the multi-lingual practices which are used in the literary character's speech. In this paper, we take stock of the interjectional spectrum deployed in Fragment III (Group D) of the "Canterbury Tales" and present a first analysis of their morphology, phonology, etymology, and functions.

For about a decade or so, there has been a renewed interest in interjections; first and foremost, in connection with the rise of pragmatics (see e.g., Norrick 2009 on interjections as pragmatic markers) and, specifically, an increased interest in the study of spoken language in social interaction. From this perspective, previous work has suggested a wider conceptualization of interjections and related objects typical of spoken discourse. In their study of Early Modern Dialogue, Culpeper & Kytö use "pragmatic noise" as a label for e.g., *ah*, *oh* (interjections), *ha* (laughter), and *um* (fillers) because of the "intimate association of both spokenness and interaction" indicated by these items (Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 200). On present-day English conversation, Reber (2012) describes "sound objects" as a category which

1 "Negativbestimmung" (Ehlich 2007: 425); "Marginalisierung von Interjektionen in der Linguistik" (Nübling 2001: 20).

includes paralinguistic sounds (clicks and whistles) and primary interjections (*oh, ah, ooh*) because these may serve similar interactional functions in everyday interaction. The study shows that such objects have patterned sound structures coupled with context-specific functions (Couper-Kuhlen 2009, Reber 2012, Reber & Couper-Kuhlen 2010, Reber & Couper-Kuhlen 2020). A recent study of interjections in children's language is Stange (2016).

Since the semantics of interjections is non-referential, their meaning remains fuzzy. Reber (2012) has shown that the meaning of interjections is often explained best in terms of their functions (see also: Ameka 1991). In the same vein, Biber *et al.* (1999) introduce the functional category of inserts which are defined as "stand-alone words which are characterized in general by their inability to enter into syntactic relations with other structures" (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1082); they may, however, be prosodically integrated. According to Biber *et al.* (1999: 1083–1095), inserts fall into nine subgroups: interjections, greetings and farewells, discourse markers, attention signals, response elicitors, response forms, hesitators, various polite speech-act formula, and expletives. Since the conceptualization of the interjectional spectrum as inserts has shown itself as powerful in our study, we will use the typology of inserts for our diagnostics of *The Canterbury Tales* (see: Section 4 below).

A traditional distinction is between primary and secondary interjections (see e.g., Mustanoja 1960: 620ff). Primary interjections were created (or borrowed) as such, e.g. *allas, weilawei, o*. Secondary interjections are words or simple phrases which, in addition to their use as lexical or grammatical words are sometimes also used as interjections, e.g., *now, what, woe*. Here we propose a threefold distinction, namely between primary interjections, secondary interjections, and more complex phrases such as *by God*, which are often used as emphaziers.

There is early evidence for a wide interjectional spectrum in the history of English (see e.g., Hiltunen on *eala*, Lenker 2012 on *now* in Old English). Interjections have been described as "a marker of the fictional mode in Middle English and Early Modern English" (Taavitsainen 1998: 201), showing the highest frequency in Early Modern English drama. By contrast, interjections are deployed less in depositions and trials, for instance (Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 268). Such forms are characteristic of the amount of direct speech represented in a particular genre (Jucker 2002: 213).

The study of discourse markers and interjections represents one of the research foci in the field of Historical Pragmatics. Jucker & Taavitsainen (2013: 56) propose that discourse markers and interjections should be placed on a conceptual continuum including Biber *et al.*'s (2009) class of inserts and Culpeper & Kytö's (2010) pragmatic noise at the two extreme ends. In this continuum, prototypical inserts are lexical and have semantic meaning, e.g., polite speech-act formulae such as *thanks, pardon, and sorry*, whereas laughter particles constitute prototypical pragmatic noise having no homonyms nor a proper semantics. Primary interjections as well as hesitation markers combine features of inserts and pragmatic noise.

We side with the traditional grammars and regard interjections as words, although we assume that some interjections may be "wordier", i.e., more lexical, than others (see the discussion in Reber & Couper-Kuhlen 2020). Four arguments can be adduced for this position. First: Interjections are affected by regular sound-changes: Just as OE *dæg* appears as ME *dai* (ModE *day*) and OE *weg* appears as ME *wei* (Mod E *way*), OE *weglweg* appears as ME *weilawei* (cf. also Gehweiler 2008). Second: Interjections can be borrowed from one language into another, and some of the ME interjections were in fact borrowed from French or Latin, e.g. *allas, benedicite* (see: further Section 6 below). *Sorry* and *wow* are English interjections, but they are now also used as loan-words in spoken and written German. Third: They may

be integrated into and co-constitutive of the rhythm of Chaucer's verse as mono- or polysyllabic units. Fourth: They are listed in dictionaries, e.g., the *MED*.

In Section 2 we discuss the problem of how to distinguish the forms subsumed under the interjectional spectrum from other word-classes, especially from adverbs, and concentrate on the investigation of interjections in Middle English. Next we introduce our corpus, namely Fragment III of the *Canterbury Tales* (Section 3). Section 4 sketches the formal-functional spectrum of interjections represented in Fragment III. In Section 5 we look at aspects of phonology and morphology. In Section 6 we classify the interjections according to their etymology. Section 7 looks at the relatively many instances where two interjections are combined. In Section 8 we ask whether certain literary characters in *The Canterbury Tales* are characterized by their use of interjections; this seems to be the case with the friar, who is the main character in the "Summoner's Tale". Section 9 provides two cases studies, concentrating on the prosodic forms and functions of *o* and *now*. Section 10 summarizes and concludes.

## 2. Interjections and other word-classes and grammatical categories

Interjections (or inserts) in general are not always easy to separate from other word-classes or other grammatical categories. We have tried to exclude adverbs. For example, the *MED* regards *certes* as an adverb, but we list it nevertheless among the interjections because *certes* is used as a confirmatory response to prior talk in *The Canterbury Tales*. We have also excluded verbs in the imperative, with the exception of *look* (e.g., *looke* III, 1452), because *look* as an imperative is apparently synonymous with (and perhaps also etymologically related to) the interjection *lo*. The same applies to exhortations and injunctions; thus we have, for example, excluded phrases such as *God yeve his soule reste* (III, 596) or *As help me God* (III, 605), because they have the structure of complete sentences.

Another part of the problem is that some words have a dual (or even multiple) function: they are sometimes used as interjections, but sometimes serve other functions. *O*, for example, has been described as a vocative particle when used prior to a noun phrase used as a form of address (*O leve brother* III, 762; *O Lord* III, 388; Arnold 1736: 30ff, Gwosdek 2013: 165, Støle 2012, Taavitsainen 1995, 1998), but it functions also as an interjectional "peak marker" (*'O! hastow slayn me, false thief?' I seyde* III, 800; Taavitsainen 1998: 213). Unlike in Latin, there is no inflected vocative in English, and *o* lends emphasis to the form of address. *Now* can be an adverb referring to the time of speaking, but it can also be a pragmatic interjection introducing a new topic. *What* is an interrogative pronoun, but it can also be used as an interjection: *Beowulf* and several other Old English poems begin with *Hwæt* (> *What*) used as an exclamation (for a discussion, see e.g., Stanley 2000). *Wo* 'woe' can be used as a noun and as an interjection. *Now* is listed by the *MED* as an interjection, but also as a conjunction, an adverb, an adjective and a noun (its use as a noun is apparently very rare, however). In view of these problems it is difficult to be quite consistent in the classification. Against this backdrop, we propose a functional approach for the classification of the interjectional spectrum.

To our knowledge there is not much literature on Chaucer's use of interjections. A general survey of interjections in Middle English is Mustanoja (1960: 620-640), a more specific survey of Chaucer's interjections is Kerkhof (1982: 440-455), a study of Chaucer's interjections in his "Reeve's Tale" in the *Canterbury Tales* is Sauer (2012). Taavitsainen (1995) finds that the use of interjections and exclamations

shows genre-specific patterns. They show the greatest frequencies in romances and fabliaux in *The Canterbury Tales* (Taavitsainen 1995; 1998). Only some of the interjections documented in this article have received a mention in the glossary of *The Riverside Chaucer*.

Interjections have also long attracted an interest in the prosodic study of Chaucer's language. *The Canterbury Tales* are mostly written in a iambic pentameter, which has been characterized as "material that is intentionally removed from ordinary speech" (Minkova 2012: 266). For instance, the meter may override the prosody of words. It has been noted that the verse meter may show variation such that it may begin with a headless line, i.e., the weak syllable at the start is missing. This may be due to grammatical reasons or to "give a sense of urgency" (Putter 2019: 77). "Stress subordination" may also be absent: "One will find two equal stresses back to back" at "major syntactic breaks", e.g., "the breaks between an interjection and the following phrase" (Halle and Keyser 1966: 203; see further Section 9 below).

### 3. The corpus: Fragment III (Group D) of the *Canterbury Tales*

In this paper, we analyze "The Wife of Bath's Prologue" and her "Tale", "The Friar's Prologue" and "Tale" and "The Summoner's Prologue" and "Tale". Together they constitute Fragment III (Group D) of *The Canterbury Tales*. We chose Fragment III since it comprises various genres, and it could be expected that these genres have a wide spectrum of interjections (for a more detailed discussion, see e.g., Cooper 1996: 139–183). Our analysis is based on the current edition of *The Riverside Chaucer*, i.e., it is grounded in an edited text rather than a single manuscript alone.

The tales represent the following genres: The prologue of the Wife of Bath is a kind of (fictional) autobiography: she has survived five husbands, and she defends her sexuality against – what we would call today – antifeminist criticism. The genre of her tale is difficult to pinpoint: Since the starting point is King Arthur's court and one of the protagonists is a young knight, it has been called a romance, but it has also been called a folktale; moreover, the tale can be regarded as an extended riddle, because the knight has to find the answer to the question „What do women desire most?“. The Friar and the Summoner dislike each other. The Friar tells an exemplum that illustrates how a devil takes a greedy summoner to hell. The Summoner retorts with a fabliau about a greedy friar who is made fun of, and the question here is: How can a fart be divided among a group of greedy friars? Whether different genres entail a different use of interjections is difficult to tell; it is also difficult to tell whether Chaucer characterizes characters through their use of interjections; for details see: Section 10 below. Chaucer uses interjections frequently, but it has to be kept in mind that in his verse narratives he usually integrates them into his iambic pentameter.

Usually, the prologues are short introductions to the following tales, but as an exception the prologue of the Wife of Bath is much longer than her tale (prologue: 856 lines of verse; tale: 406 lines of verse). Therefore, we have listed the interjections in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue" and her tale separately, whereas in the case of the Friar and the Summoner we have listed their prologues and tales together; see the Appendix.

The narrative situation in *The Canterbury Tales* is quite complex. They were written by the historic person Geoffrey Chaucer; but the figure of Chaucer also appears as one of the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* – his fellow pilgrims, however, do not recognize him as the famous poet that he was even in his own day; perhaps this is a piece of Chaucerian irony. In any case the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales* is

the pilgrim Chaucer. The pilgrim Chaucer, however, claims that he just wrote down the stories which the pilgrims told on their way to Canterbury. This is not true. Chaucer certainly used sources. In some cases, his precise sources have been found, in other cases just more or less close analogues have been discovered. Therefore, we do not always specify who uses the interjection; the narrator Chaucer, or the alleged narrator of the specific tale (in our case the Wife of Bath, the Friar, the Summoner), or one of the characters in their tales.

#### 4. The types and distribution of interjections in Fragment III

Fragment III has 2289 lines of verse. The Prologue of the Wife of Bath has 856 lines, the tale of the Wife of Bath has 406 lines, the Friar's Prologue and Tale have 670 lines of verse, the Summoner's Prologue and Tale have 624 lines. In total, we found 62 different interjectional types in Fragment III. Because some are used more than once, in all tales the number of types is smaller than the number of tokens (203). Types refer to each specific interjection being counted just once, whereas tokens refer to each occurrence of a specific interjection being counted. If we take just the primary interjections into account, in Fragment III of his *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer uses 16 different primary interjections (types; see: Section 6 below), with altogether 82 instances, that is tokens. This means that on average there is an interjection every 31 lines – this is, of course, just an average, because sometimes there are pairs or groups of interjections (see also: Section 8 below), and sometimes there is no interjection for more than 31 lines.

In Fragment III, we found evidence for all types of Biber *et al.*'s (1999) inserts but for the response elicitors, and hesitators: that is, examples of interjections expressing emotions, expletives, greetings and farewells, discourse markers, response forms, various polite speech-act formulae, and attention signals. Additionally, we found commands to animals and an instance of a human noise.

We present our analysis of the types and distribution of the items found and begin with the interjections not included in Biber *et al.*'s (1999) classification of inserts in what follows.

##### (1) *Commands to animals*

A rarely used interjection is *hayt* or *heynt* with three instances (III, 1543:2x; III, 1560; Table I). It is a command to horses to get up and to move on, and obviously only used in scenes where horse-drawn carriages occur. In this case it seems that Chaucer rendered a commonly used command to horses, even though it is rarely attested in written Middle English (see: *MED* s.v. *hait*).

##### (2) *Human noise*

*Buf* constitutes a paralinguistic signal which imitates the sound which people make when they belch (see also: Section 6). In the "Summoner's Tale", *buf* is used for character typification and to ridicule the religious authorities embodied by the friars.

##### (1) The Summoner's Tale

1929 "Me thynketh they been lyk Jovinyan,  
1930 Fat as a whale, and walkynge as a swan,

- 1931 Al vinolent as botel in the spence.  
 1932 Hir preyere is of ful greet reverence,  
 1933 Whan they for soules seye the psalm of Davit:  
 1934 Lo, 'buf!' they seye, 'cor meum eructavit!'

The summoner compares the friars to Jovinanus, a 4<sup>th</sup> century monk who opposed Christian asceticism, and describes them as fat and wine loving. This description is staged in animated dialogue in which the friars are presented as belching (*buf*) and commenting "my heart belches" in Latin when saying the psalm of David (Psalm 44 (45)). *Eructavit* is used figuratively in the Psalm, but Chaucer translates it literally.

### (3) *Interjections expressing emotions*

Interjections are regarded by Biber *et al.* (1999) as a subgroup of inserts which primarily serve for expressions of emotion (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1083; see also: Nübling 2004). We have classified the following eight types as interjections expressing emotions according to their (presumable) status in Middle English.: *a, a ha, allas, ey, fy, o, pardee, weilaway / weylaway* (cf. Table 3 in the Appendix). Noticeably, interjections expressing negative emotions (e.g., *allas, weilaway / weylaway*; sorrow, regret) are apparently much more frequent than interjections expressing positive emotions (*ey*).

As mentioned above, *o* represents a borderline case; it has been described as a signal for the vocative in nominal forms of address (e.g., Arnold 1736, 30ff; Gwosdek 2013: 165) and as an affect-laden interjection (see: further Section 9 below).

### (4) *Expletives*

The group of expletives is divided into

**taboo** expletives, which make reference to one of the taboo domains of religion, sex, or bodily excretion, and **moderated** (or euphemistic) expletives, which camouflage their taboo origin through various phonetic modifications (e.g. *gosh* for *God*) or by substitution of different but related words (e.g. *goodness* for *God*). (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1094, emphasis in the original)

The expletives in Fragment III show the greatest formal variation and frequency among the inserts found, i.e., this group is characterized by the highest number of types (34) and tokens (67) (cf. Table 4 in the Appendix). Noticeably, the majority of such expletives is shaped in terms of prepositional phrases.

One can say that there is just one structural pattern, namely *by* + NP, but there are many ways to fill this pattern. In Fragment III, there are eighteen different types beginning with *by*, ranging from a disyllabic *by God* to much longer phrases such as *by that lord that clepid is Seinte Yve*. Five types occur with the preposition *for* (e.g., *for Goddes love*).

### (5) *Discourse markers*

Discourse markers are defined by Biber *et al.* (1999) as inserts which

combine two roles: (a) to signal a transition in the evolving progress of the conversation, and (b) to signal an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer, and message. (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1086)

Such discourse markers are typically deployed in turn- or utterance-initial position as well as are “ambiguous” in terms of the forms they come with (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1086). Structures which can function as discourse markers can also serve adverbial functions.

The types of discourse markers in Fragment III are very limited: We exclusively found the types *now*, *now thanne*, *now wel*, with *now* showing the overall highest token frequency in the entire interjectional sample (32; Table 5). We have analyzed such instances of *now* (and its variants) as discourse markers when they occur at the beginning of a verse or utterance, are syntactically (and potentially prosodically) disintegrated and / or *signal* a change of topic/ sequence.

### (6) Response forms

Response forms are described as “inserts used as brief and routinized responses to a previous remark by a different speaker” (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1089). Such interjections can serve as “responses to questions (typically *yes*, *no*, and their variants), responses to directives (e.g., Modern English *okay*), and responses to assertions (e.g., backchannels such as Modern English *uh huh*, *mhm*)” (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1089).

Fragment III contains the former type (responses to questions), i.e., *nay*, *nay thane*, *ye*, *yis*, and what we call a confirmatory response to prior talk; *certes* (cf. Table 6). However, we have excluded *ywis* and *no*, *not*, *nat* because of their clausal integration and functions.

### (7) Attested greetings and farewells

According to Biber *et al.* (1999: 1085-1086), greetings and farewells are commonly produced in pairs and can be more or less formal as well as constrained by dialectal variation. In Fragment III, we *have* found five types (including the variants *farwell* / *farewell*) and six tokens. (Table 7 in the Appendix).

### (8) Attested polite speech act formulae

The category of polite speech-act formulae includes “inserts or formulae used in conventional speech acts, such as thanking, apologizing, requesting, and congratulating” (Biber *et al.* 1999: 1093). Such inserts are very limited in number in Fragment III: We have identified three tokens of the following types of thanking formulae: *grant*/ *graunt mercy*, *mercy*; and one token of *no fors* (Table 9).

### (9) Attention signals

Attention signals are inserts which, according to Biber *et al.* (1999: 1088), serve to “[attract] the attention of the addressees.” The attention signals in Fragment III include two types: the secondary interjection *pees*, which only occurs once and *lo*, which represents the second highest token frequency (19; Table 9).

*Lo* represents a borderline case. Apparently, it has the same or a similar function as *look*, i.e. *lo* and *look* are synonymous, at least in some of their functions, but whereas *lo* is an interjectional attention signal, *look* is a verb in the imperative. The fact that some interjections are more or less synonymous with lexical words is another argument to regard interjections also as words, and to list their synonyms among the lexical words, too. The analysis further suggests that *lo* for instance seems to be sometimes inserted by the editors to maintain the verse meter. Consider line 14 in the “Wife of Bath’s Prologue”, as represented

in *The Riverside Chaucer*, for a case in point: *Herkne eek, lo, which a sharp word for the nones*, A comparison with the Ellesmere manuscript reveals that the interjection *lo* is not included there (*Herkne eek / which a sharp word for the nones*).<sup>2</sup> Instead of *lo*, the Ellesmere manuscript shows a virgula. By contrast, the Hengwrt manuscript reads *lo* in this line so this is the likely source of this reading (We owe the latter point to one of the anonymous reviewers).<sup>3</sup> We suggest that this variation of *lo* between the manuscripts and its consequences for the verse meter should be explored more systematically in future research.

We have shown that Fragment III contains a wide-ranging spectrum of interjections which also includes paralinguistic human noise and commands to animals. The frequency of the single interjections varies considerably. Some of them are used in all of the tales, especially *lo*, *nay* and *pardee*; from the secondary interjections, *Benedicite* occurs in all of the tales. Some interjections are frequent, whereas others are rare. Those interjections that occur in all of the tales of Fragment III are also among the most frequent ones: the most frequently used interjection is *now* with 32 instances; *lo* with 19 instances; this is followed by *nay* (16), *a, by God* and *pardee* (9), *allas, o, ye* (8), and *Benedicite* (6).

Importantly, these results corroborate the strength of a bottom-up approach for the study of interjections and paralinguistic sounds (see also: Reber 2012) providing evidence for a wider spectrum of types then represented by Biber *et al.*'s (1999) typology of inserts and Culpeper & Kytö's (2010) pragmatic noise.

## 5. Phonology and morphology

Primary interjections are usually short. Most consist just of one syllable, e.g. *a, buf, ey, fy, hayt, lo* etc. (see: the Appendix). A few have two syllables, namely *a ha* (if it is regarded as one interjection and not as a sequence of two interjections), *allas* and *pardee*. The only primary interjection consisting of three syllables is *weilawei*. This entails that the large majority of the primary interjections is monomorphemic. *Weilawei* shows reduplication, and *a ha* can be regarded as a combination of two interjections; those are the only ones among the primary interjections that show some sort of word-formation.

The length of the secondary interjections varies. There are a few monosyllabic interjections (*help, now*) but some of the borrowed interjections are relatively long: *Benedicite* and *paraventure* consist of five syllables each, *depardieux* consists of four syllables.

The length of prepositional phrases introduced with *by* varies considerably, and apparently there is no theoretical limit to the length of prepositional phrases. *By God* has just two syllables; but *By that lord that called is Seint Jame* has ten syllables. It seems certain that people also used short corroborations such as *by God* orally. Whether they actually used such long phrases as the one just mentioned in their speech, or whether Chaucer coined them for his poetry is difficult to say.

In terms of the verse meter, the interjections in the corpus can be integrated or disintegrated into the iambic pentameter. This has important implications for our understanding of the stress patterns in

2 Cf. the digitized manuscript at the Digital Library made available by The Huntington: <https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/2491>

3 Cf. the digitized copy The Nationaly Library of Wales: <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/the-hengwrt-chaucer#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-1536%2C311%2C6969%2C5926>

Chaucer's English and the functions of interjections in the analyzed texts. We can assume that prosodic disintegration may construct additional emphasis and greater audience involvement (see also: Section 9).

The sound shape of polysyllabic interjections tends to be fixed: For example, *pardee* and *allas* are always stressed on the last syllable, i.e., they retain the French stress pattern. By contrast, monosyllabic interjections can be stressed and unstressed, and their production can show patterns which may be related to their context-specific functions (see: Section 9).

## 6. Etymology

Middle English saw a massive change in the vocabulary. There was a huge influx of French words, whereas many Old English words died out. The same happened with the inventory of interjections. Many of the interjections attested in Old English disappeared, and many new interjections were borrowed from French or from Latin (For an inventory of Old English interjections see e.g., Mitchell 1985, I: 526–528 = §§ 1234 – 1239; for an inventory of Middle English interjections see e.g., Mustanoja 1960, 620–640). It may seem strange, but an interjection such as *o*, *oh* is not attested in the Old English corpus; it was apparently borrowed from French in the Middle English period. When Anglo-Saxon authors or scribes had to render an *o* from a Latin text, they always used *ea* or *eala*, and never *o* (*oh*). Of course, we can only describe what was written down; if an interjection was only used orally and never written down, it is lost to us. But certainly, in the written documents of Old English that have come down to us, *o* is never used, whereas *ea* or *eala* were used quite commonly.

Of the 16 different primary interjections which we have counted in Fragment III, nine are certainly or probably native (*buf*, *hayt*, *lo*, *nat*, *nay*, *no*, *weilawei*, *ye*, *yis*), and seven are borrowed from French or ultimately from Latin (*a*, *a ha*, *allas*, *ey*, *fy*, *o*, *pardee*). Finer distinctions can be made: Some of the native interjections are attested in Old English or can be seen as the more or less regular developments from words attested in Old English (*nat*, *no*, *weilawei*, *ye*, *yis*). Some native interjections are first attested in Middle English (*buf*, *hayt*) and we do not know whether they were used orally in Old English but never written down. For *hayt* an oral use in the Old English period seems likely. On the origin of *lo* see below. *Nay* is apparently a loan-word from Old Norse, but we have listed it among the (near-) native interjections, because it comes from a Germanic language. The seven primary interjections that were borrowed from French (some ultimately from Latin) were probably all monomorphemic in Middle English, although *allas* ultimately originated as a phrase, and *pardee* may still have been understood as 'by God' by English speakers who had a knowledge of French (Chaucer was one of them). According to the *ODEE* s.v. *alas*, it comes from Old French *a las(se)* 'ah! weary (that I am)' (Modern French *hélas*), but as a loan-word in Middle English it functioned probably as a primary interjection. The status of *pardee* 'by God', also a loan-word from French, is even trickier: Since many people in the 14th century still understood French, they will also have understood *pardee* as an expletive phrase (including Chaucer himself) but because Chaucer's characters also use the English equivalent, namely the phrase *by God*, we classify *pardee* also as an interjection (and *by God* as a phrase that is synonymous to *pardee*).

The secondary interjections show a striking amount of words borrowed from French or Latin, too. Borrowings from Latin are: *Benedicite*, *Deus hic*; borrowings from French are: *depardieux*, *grantmercy*,

*paraventure*. *Algate* and its variant *algates* was borrowed from Old Norse, the MED s.v. *al-gāte(s)* refers to Old Icelandic *alle götu*.

The phrases also often show a mixture of etymological elements. *By* is of Old English origin, but it is combined with native words as well as with loan-word. A combination of purely native elements is *by God*, whereas *by my feith*, *by my fey*, *by my savacioun* show a combination of native words with loan-words.

In the following we give an alphabetical list of the 16 primary interjections, indicating their certain or probable etymology:

- **a** was borrowed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century from Old French *a*, which in its turn goes back to Latin *a*; see: the ODEE s.v. *a*. The MED does not give an etymology, but a borrowing from French seems probable in view of the fact that *a* as an interjection is not attested in the Old English corpus; see also: Mitchell (1985, I: 528); Mustanoja (1960: 623).
- **a ha** is a combination of the interjections *a* and *ha* (the latter not attested independently in Fragment III); see: Mustanoja (1960: 624); but it is not listed separately as a combination in the MED; the MED has *a* and *ha* (here: *pleasant surprise*). As just stated, *a* is a borrowed interjection; *ha* is attested in Old English, but only in the reduplicated form *haha* (symbolizing laughter), but in any case *a ha* is a native and Middle English formation.
- **allas** (*alas*) was borrowed from French in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (ModFr *hélas*). It originated as a phrase, but was probably regarded as a monomorphemic interjection in Middle English. See: Mustanoja (1960: 629); MED s.v. *alas*.
- **buf** apparently imitates the sound which someone makes when he is belching; this interpretation is supported by the Latin quotation that follows it (*cor meum eructavit*). *Buf* is a hapax legomenon attested only in III, 1934. We do not know whether Chaucer invented it or whether he was the only author to write down an interjection that was more common in oral use. In any case it seems to be a native creation (MED s.v. *buf* does not give an etymology). Cooper (1996: 179) says that “the onomatopoeic ‘buf’... seems to have been the conventional litteralization for a belch”, but because it is a hapax legomenon, we do not really know whether it was conventional.
- **ey** (*ei*) was borrowed from Latin, perhaps through French; cf. Mustanoja (1960, 624); MED s.v. *ei*.
- **fy** (*fie*) was borrowed from French (ultimately from L *phy*) in the 13<sup>th</sup> century; it expresses disapproval or contempt; see: Mustanoja (1960: 625); MED s.v. *fī*; the corresponding German form is *pfui*.
- **hayt** is a command to horses, to get up and to get on: It seems to be a native word. The MED s.v. *hait* shows that it is rare and refers to the noun and to the adjective *hait*, but those are also rare and have a different meaning; thus it seems better to regard *hayt* (*hait*) as an independently created native (i.e. originally English) interjection.
- **lo**: its etymology is not quite clear; it can be the continuation of the Old English interjection *lā*, but it has also been suggested that it is a shortened form of the imperative *look*. Perhaps it arose as a mixture of both, the form coming from OE *lā*, but the meaning from *look*. In any case it is a native interjection. Cf. Mustanoja (1960: 627); MED s.v. *lo*.
- **nat** has apparently been shortened from *nought*, see: MED s.v. *not*, which in its turn has been shortened from OE *nawiht*, *nowiht*. It is a native interjection.

- **nay**: according to the *MED* s.v. *nai* it was borrowed from Old Norse (cf. Old Icelandic *nei*).
- **no** is a native interjection; according to the *MED* (s.v. *no*) in its use as an interjection it is derived from the adverb *no*, which in its turn goes back to OE *nā, nō*.
- **o**: As mentioned above, *o* was apparently borrowed from French (and ultimately Latin) *o*; see Mustanoja (1960: 627); *MED* s.v. *o*. Both point out that functionally it is close to *a*, and that it expresses a wide range of emotions and mental states, including surprise, anger, emphasis.
- **pardee**, literally ‘by God’ was borrowed from French (*par Deu, par Dieu*) around 1300; cf. *MED* s.v. *parde*. It appears in a variety of spellings.
- **weilawei, weylawey** goes back to OE *weg-la-weg*; cf. Mustanoja (1960: 629), Mitchell (1985, I: 528); *MED* s.v. *wei-la-wei*. It also appears in a variety of forms and spellings.
- **ye** ‘yes, yea’ goes back to OE *gēa* etc.; see: *MED* s.v. *yē*.
- **yis** ‘yes’ goes back to the OE adv. *gise gyse, gese*; see: *MED* s.v. *yis*.

## 7. Two or more interjections in sequence

As mentioned above, some interjections are used as pairs or in the same line of verse, or in consecutive lines. We list those instances first; the quotations from III, 280 to III, 857 are spoken by the Wife of Bath in her prologue:

- a! benedicitee III, 280 (the Wife of Bath in her prologue)  
 Wy, taak it al! lo, have it every deel III, 445 (the Wife of Bath in her prologue; parallel sentence structure)  
 by God and by Seint Joce! III, 482 (the Wife of Bath in her prologue)  
 Allas! allas! III, 614 (the Wife of Bath in her prologue; emphasis)  
 Now, by my faith III,841 (the Friar at the end of the Prologue of the Wife of Bath)  
 If I seye fals, sey nay, upon thy fey! III, 1057 (the old hag in the WBT)  
 Allas! and weylawey! III, 1058 (the young knight in the WBT; see: the title of this paper)  
 allas! nay, nay! III 1098 (the young knight in the WBT)  
 “Grantmercy,” quod this somonour, “by my feith!” III, 1403 (the summoner in the Friar’s Tale)  
 by God and by Seint Jame III,1443 (the Summoner in the Friar’s Tale)  
 “Now certes, “quod this Somonour ... III,1434 (the Summoner in the Friar’s Tale)  
 by God ands by Seint Jame! III, 1444 (the Summoner in “The Friar’s Tale)  
 “A!” quod this somonur, “benedicite” what sey ye? III 1456 (the Summoner in the Friar’s Tale)  
 “Hayt, Brok” hayt, Scot! ... II, 1543 (the carter in the Friar’s Tale; he addresses each horse separately)  
 “Nay,” quod the devel, “God woot, never a deel!” III 1555 (the devil in the Friar’s tale)  
 “Deus hic!”, quod he, “o Thomas, freend, good day!” III, 1770 (the friar in the Summoner’s Tale)  
 “Ey, maister, welcome be ye, by Seint John!” III, 1800 (the wife of the sick man in “The Summoner’s Tale”)  
 “Algates, welcome be ye, by my fey” III, 1811 (the wife of the sick man in “The Summoner’s Tale”)

A! yif that covent ... / A! yif that covent ... /A! yif that frere ... III, 1963–1965 ('A! give that convent ...':the friar in "The Summoner's Tale")

"Nay, nay, Thomas ... III,1966 (the friar in "The Summoner's Tale")

"Nay," quod the sike man, "by Seint Symoun! ... III, 2094 (the sick man in "The Summoner's Tale")

Now help, Thomas, for hym that harwed helle" III, 2107 (the Friar in "The Summoner's Tale")

Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee III, 2119 (the Friar in "The Summoner's Tale") (III, 2107 & 2119 to achieve variation)

"A! false cherl," quod he,"for Goddes bones! III, 2153 (the friar in "The Summoner's Tale")

A gowne-clooth, by God and by Seint John" III, 2252 (the lord in "The Summoner's Tale")

The function of many of these doublings apparently is to achieve emphasis. There are at least three ways of creating emphasis: The interjection can be doubled, as in *Allas! allas!* III, 614; *allas! nay, nay!* III 1098. There can be an interjection at the beginning and an emphatic phrase with *by* at the end of the line, as in: "Ey, maister, welcome be ye, by Seint John!" III, 1800; there can be an invocation of God and a saint as in *by God and by Seint Jame!* (III, 1444) -perhaps it was better to invoke God and a saint than to invoke just a saint, although often just one saint is invoked.

Much rarer is the use of an interjection in an anaphora to display the use of rhetoric; but there is a striking example of three lines in sequence beginning with an anaphora in III, 1963–1965, where the friar in "The Summoner's Tale" apparently wants to show his command of rhetoric: "A! yif that covent ... / A! yif that covent ... /A! yif that frere ...". In rare cases the speaker (the friar in "The Summoner's Tale", ultimately of course Chaucer) perhaps wants to achieve stylistic variation, as in: "Now help, Thomas, for hym that harwed helle" III, 2107, and a few lines later "Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee" III, 2119. At the same time, this variation may be reflective of the realities of a multi-lingual society at the time.

## 8. Use of interjections in specific genres and by specific characters

It is tempting to try to associate the use of certain interjections with specific genres or with specific characters, or to distinguish between interjections used by men and those used by women. But the numbers of occurrences are, however, too low for firm conclusions to be drawn in this regard, and many interjections are used in various tales and by various people, so that a connection of specific interjections with specific genres or specific characters or specific genders can only rarely be established. *By my fey*, for example, is used in the "Wife of Bath's prologue" as well as in the Friar's and in the Summoner's Tale. The Latin secondary interjection *Deus hic* is only used by the Friar in the "Summoner's Tale" (III, 1770) as a greeting (the *MED* classifies it as a "salutation"); probably he wants to show his Latin learning and his authority as a friar. *Benedicite*, on the other hand, is used in several tales and by several characters; it occurs in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue", "The Wife of Bath's Tale", the "Friar's Tale" and the "Summoner's Tale". Apparently *Benedicite* was used much more widely as an interjection and by people belonging to different social classes than *Deus hic!* A command to horses (*hayt*) is only used by the carter, a minor character in the "Friar's Tale", but of course it fits the character, and the carter addresses each horse separately, that is he treats them as individuals.

Sometimes there are ironic reversals: In the “Friar’s Tale”, the devil who is disguised as a yeoman, invokes God (and exhibits his knowledge of interjections derived from French): “Depardieux,” quod this yeman, “deere broother ... (III, 1395); “Nay,” quod the devel, “God woot ...” III, 1555).

Chaucer gives a kind of individual personality to the friar in “The Summoner’s Tale”; the friar is very skilled in using his language in order to beg and to get presents out of people: As just stated he is the only one to use the interjection *Deus hic* as a greeting, probably to show his command of Latin, but for those whose Latin is not so good he adds the greeting *good day* (III, 1770). He shows his command of rhetoric by using a triple anaphora (III, 1963–1965: A! yif that covent ... / A! yif that covent ... / A! yif that frere ...); in other places he introduces a bit of variation (cf. III, 2117 & 2119, discussed in Section 8 above). But since “The Summoner’s Tale” is a fabliau, the friar’s good and smooth command of language in general and of Latin and of rhetoric in particular are to no avail: He cheats people, but he is cheated in the end, and people laugh at him, which makes him very angry.

## 9. Two case studies on *O* and *Now*

Our analysis suggests that the study of the prosodic forms and context-specific functions of inserts represents a desideratum which is worth further exploration. We demonstrate what can be gained from this in two case studies on *o* and *now*.

### 9.1. *O*

As discussed above, *o* is used as a vocative marker and a peak marker in Fragment III. When functioning as a vocative marker (seven instances), it is always unstressed (Ex. 2–4).

#### (2) The Wife of Bath’s Prologue

384 O Lórd! The péyne I díde hem ánd the wó,

#### (3) The Summoner’s Tale

1781 “O déere máister,” quód this síke mán,

#### (4) The Summoner’s Tale

1832 “O Thómas, jé vous dý, Thomás! Thomás!

In the only instance where it serves as a peak marker, it is placed at the beginning of a headless line followed by another stressed syllable.

## (5) The Wife of Bath's Prologue

795 And with his fest he smoot me on the heed  
 796 That in the floor I lay as I were deed.  
 797 And whan he saugh how stille that I lay,  
 798 He was agast and wolde han fled his way,  
 799 Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde.  
 800 Ó! hástow sláyn me, fálse théef? I séyde,

In Ex. (5), the wife of Bath tells the scene where her husband hit her on the head such that she lay on the floor as if she was dead. The dramatic narrative culminates in animated speech when she wakes up from her unconsciousness: 'Oh, have you killed me, false thief, I said.' In this affect-laden context, we can infer that *O* is stressed for reasons of coherence. Note that such syntactic breaks have been made visible through punctuation marks in editions like *The Riverside Chaucer* but that this modern punctuation does not reflect the practices used in the manuscripts. While this represents the only instance of *O* with this function in Fragment III, *oh* as a "reaction to death" (Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 239) is documented as a common pattern in Early Modern English dialogues. This shows such beat clashes may have an interactional function: They serve to contextualize the speech in an affect-laden way and create audience involvement.

Line 800 also shows nicely the problems of metrical analysis: If *O* is regarded as unstressed we get a regular iambic pentameter; but if it is regarded as stressed, we get six stresses. The stressed *O* could then be regarded as being outside the iambic pentameter, but then we get a iambic pentameter which lacks the first unstressed syllable. Perhaps Chaucer used such irregular lines very occasionally for additional emphasis and audience involvement.

9.2. *Now*

The text-deictic functions of *now* have been attested since Old English (Lenker 2012). For Middle English it has been noted that *now* may have a conclusive function (Einmahl 2019: 222–223), and "mark turn-taking in direct speech quotations" for the listening audience at live performances (Taavitsainen 1998: 204). The latter might explain the high frequency of *now* in Fragment III.

In our sample, *now* as a discourse marker tends to be unstressed but to occupy a fixed position in the beginning of utterances. Our findings confirm that *now* functions as a direct speech marker (Ex. 6).

## (6) The Wife of Bath's Prologue

163 Up stirte the Pardoner, and that anon;  
 164 "Now, dame," quod he, "by God and by Seint John!  
 165 Ye been a noble prechour in this cas.

Placed in initial position of the animated speech (line 164), *now* indicates a change in footing, i.e., “a shift from saying something ourselves to reporting what someone else said” (Goffman 1979: 22), which is oriented to the listening audience. While this is a frequent use of *now* in Fragment III, we do not wish to suggest that this use should be specific to *The Canterbury Tales*.

However, *now* also serves functions known from Present-day English discourse. Ex. 7 exemplifies the use of an “opinion” marker (Schiffrin 1987: 236)

(7) *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*

829 The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd al this;  
830 “Now dame,” quod he, “so have I joye or blis,  
831 This is a long preamble of a tale!”

In lines 830-831, the friar makes an assessment of the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue* in animated speech. It is prefaced by *now*, which serves both to mark the direct speech and the friar’s opinion.

In Ex. 8, *now* again prefaced direct speech, while also marking a topic change.

(8) *The Friar’s Tale*

1413 “Brother,” quod he, “fer in the north contree,  
1414 Whereas I hope som tyme I shal thee see.  
1415 Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse  
1416 That of myn hous ne shaltow nevere mysse.”  
1417 “Now, brother,” quod this somonour, “I yow preye,  
1418 Teche me, whil that we ryden by the weye,  
1419 Syn that ye been a baillif as am I,  
1420 Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully  
1421 In myn office how that I may moost wyne;  
1422 And spareth nat for conscience ne synne,  
1423 But as my brother tel me, how do ye.”

In line 1413-1416, the devil, disguised as a bailiff, talks about the summoner’s imminent departure. When then summoner begins to speak, this is marked by *now* (line 1417). At the same time, *now* is used in a position where a topic shift occurs: The summoner now speaks about the bailiff’s skills. In Ex. 9 *now* is used as direct speech marker as well as indexes a change of addressee.

(9) *The Friar’s Tale*

1334 “Pees! with myschance and with mysaventure!”  
1335 Thus seydeoure Hoost, “and lat hym telle his tale.  
1336 Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somonour gale;  
1337 Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister deere.”

In line 1335, the host’s animated speech is directed at the summoner. The speech is then directed at the friar (line 1336), it is prefaced by *now*.

Ex. 6-9 have shown that when prefacing animated speech in Fragment III, *now* is not only used as a direct speech marker but has also functions still observed in Present-day English naturally occurring discourse. This demonstrates that not only is *now* an old form but also its functions stem back long in the history of English and do not represent recent developments.

Finally, Ex. 10 illustrates a borderline case between adverb and discourse marker.

(10) The Wife of Bath's Prologue

450 Ye be to blame, by God! I sey yow sooth.  
 451 Swiche manere wordes hadde we on honde.  
 452 Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.  
 453 My fourthe housbonde was a revelour --

In line 452, *now* is used in a structure involving operator-subject inversion (*now wol I*) which shows the syntactic integration of *now* as an adverb. At the same time, *now* serves as a discourse marker prefacing "metatextual comments" on how the discourse progresses (Jucker & Taavitsainen 2013: 54; cf. also Schiffrin 1987). This is further evidenced by the parallel, formulaic structures with which such metatextual comments are deployed in The Wife of Bath's Prologue. Except of line 503, they all show the same format [Now wol I V] (Ex. 11).

(11) The Wife of Bath's Prologue

452 Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.  
 (...)  
 480 Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde.  
 (...)  
 503 Now of my fifthe housbonde wol I telle.  
 (...)  
 563 Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.  
 (...)  
 666 Now wol I seye yow sooth, by Seint Thomas,  
 667 Why that I rente out of his book a leef,  
 (...)  
 828 Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol heere."

The analysis of *now* has shown that it occurs in a fixed, verse-initial position. As a discourse marker it may serve as a direct speech marker, a use functional for *The Canterbury Tales* as a written text to be spoken and performed for co-present audiences. In addition, the discourse maker (and borderline cases) shows functions which are still known from Present-day English discourse.

## 10 Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, we have provided a first exploratory multi-dimensional analysis of the interjectional inventory of *The Canterbury Tales*, Fragment III, which addressed aspects of the phonology and morphology, the verse meter and stress pattern, the etymology, multiple uses, and the genre.

We have illustrated that Fragment III contains a rich interjectional spectrum, including all inserts identified by Biber *et al.* (1999) for Present-day English except of response elicitors and hesitators. The lack of hesitators corroborates Støle (2012) on Middle English play texts. However, they have been documented in Early Modern English dialogues (Culpeper & Kytö 2010), which suggests a change in literary conventions. Fragment III additionally contains commands to animals and human noise, which warrants a broader perspective on the functions that such interjectional formats serve (cf. Culpeper & Kytö 2010; Reber 2012; Reber & Couper-Kuhlen 2020).

The study has shown that interjectional items are words which undergo processes of change similar to other linguistic structures. For example, they can be borrowed (*o*), newly created (*buf*), and grammaticalized (*now*). While some have ceased to be deployed (e.g., *weilaway / weylawey*), some still are widely used in Present-day English discourse (e.g., *o*, *now*). The prevalence of some items until today may be explained by the high frequency of such items (Bybee 2003) and might allow us a glimpse into the pragmatic practices of Middle English as were known to Chaucer. At the same time, the Latin, French and English origins of the interjectional items are indicative of the multi-lingual social context in which *The Canterbury Tales* were written.

Finally, the findings suggest that the use of interjections in Fragment III is indexical of orality in diverse ways. Nevertheless, “pragmatic markers cannot in any simple way be assumed to indicate the speech-like nature of the text” (Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 395). They form part of the resources deployed by Chaucer to stage spoken dialogues as required by the conventions of the genre and were known by him and recognizable as such by his audience at the court (see: Baugh & Cable 2002: 188). At the same time, the *Canterbury Tales* were performed orally to entertain a co-present audience with a linguistically rich background which is also visible in the interjectional spectrum used in *The Canterbury Tales*. This positions the study of interjections in the *Canterbury Tales* at the interface of orality and literacy.

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### Appendix: Interjections in Fragment III of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales".

Table 1: Attested commands to animals

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665–2294: 624)</b>
hayt			III, 1543 (2x)	
heyte			III, 1561	

Table 2: Attested human noise

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665–2294: 624)</b>
buf				III, 1934 <sup>4</sup>

Table 3: Attested 'primary' interjections.

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665–2294: 624)</b>
a	III, 280		III, 1286; 1456	III, 1797; 1963; 1964; 1965; 2144; 2153
a ha	III, 586			
allas	III, 166; 474; 614 (2x)	III, 1058; 1068; 1098	III, 1612	

4 hapax legomena

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665–2294: 624)</b>
ey	--			III 1800; 2202; 2232
fy	III, 735			III 1925
o	III, 800	III, 1087		III, 1770; 1781; 1823; 1832; 1954: 2227
pardee	III, 200; 310; 335; 712	III, 950	III, 1280; 1468; 1565	III, 1675
weilaway / weylawey	III, 216	III, 1058		

Table 4: Attested expletives.

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665–2294: 624)</b>
a devel weye				III, 2242
a Goddes half	III, 52			
as help me God	III, 201; 805			
as helpe me verray God omnipotent	III, 423			
benedicite, benedicitee	III, 241; 280	III, 1087	III, 1456; 1584	III, 2170
by God	III, 450; 489; 586; 634; 693		III, 1292	III, 1850; 2106; 2210
by God above	III, 207			
by God and by Seint Jame			III, 1443	
by God and Seint Joce	III, 483			
by God and by Seint John	III, 164			III, 2252
by Goddes sweete pyne	III, 385			

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665–2294: 624)</b>
by my fey	III, 203; 215		III, 1535	III, 1811; 2236
by my feith	841		III, 1403	III, 2137
by my savacioun			III, 1618	
by my trouthe	III, 422	III, 1240	III, 1424	
by Saint John				III, 1800
by Seint Symoun				III, 2094
by Seint Thomas	III, 666			
by that lord that called is Seint Jame	III, 212			III, 1943
by the sweete Seinte Anne			III, 1613	
by thy feith			III, 1551	III, 1937
by your fey		III, 1002		
by your leve	III, 112			
depardieux			III, 1395	
God woot	III, 42			III, 1578; 1612
in feith	III, 320			
for Cristes moder deere				III, 1762
for Cristes sake				III, 1732
for Goddes bones				III, 2153
for Goddes love		III, 1060; 1096		III, 2053; 2197
for seinte charitee				III, 2119
for seinte Trinitee				III, 1824
God it woot	III, 491			
Lord	384,			
Lord Crist	III, 469			
upon thy fey		III, 1057		

Table 5: Attested discourse markers.

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1-856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857-1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265-1334: 670)=</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665- 2294: 624)</b>
now	III, 164; 193; 312; 585; 711; 830; 841; 844	III, 1106; 1207; 1213; 1227	III, 1417; 1424; 1434; 1561; 1590; 1604; 1626	III 1683; 1823; 1836; 1838; 1851; 2069; 2089; 2107; 2119; 2184; 2241
now thanne				III, 2140
now wel				III, 2129

Table 6: Attested response forms.

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1-856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857-1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265-1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665- 2294: 624)</b>
certes		III, 1238	III, 2127	III, 1434
nay	II, 170	III, 961, 1067; 1098 (2x)	III, 1290, 1388, 1461, 1523, 1555, 1610, 1630	III 1761; 1966 (2x); 2094
nay, thanne		III, 1062		
ye	III, 840	III, 1105; 1238; 1241	III, 1392	III, 1726; 1810; 2127,
yis	III, 856	III, 856	III, 1598	III, 1685

Table 7: Attested greetings and farewells.

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1-856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857-1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265-1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665- 2294: 624)</b>
deus hic				III, 1770
farewel	III, 476			--
farwel				III, 1953
good day				III, 1770
hayl			III, 1384 <sup>5</sup>	

5 A northern word.

welcome			III, 1385	
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Table 8: Attested polite speech act formulae.

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665- 2294: 624)</b>
grant mercy			III, 1403	
graunt mercy				III, 1812
mercy		III, 1048		
no fors				III, 2189

Table 9: Attested attention signals

	<b>The Wife of Bath's Prologue (III, 1–856: 856 lines)</b>	<b>The Wife of Bath's Tale (III, 857–1263: 406 lines)</b>	<b>The Friar's prologue and tale (III, 1265–1334: 670)</b>	<b>The Summoner's Prologue and Tale (III, 1665- 2294: 624)</b>
lo	III, 14; 35; 445; 719; 833; 835	III, 1127; 1149	III, 1566	III, 1752; 1885; 1934; 1968; 2079; 2085; 2139; 2228; 2238 (2x)
pees	III, 838			

**Conspectus: Interjections used by Chaucer in Fragment III of “The Canterbury Tales”**

Abbreviations: WBPr = Wife of Bath's Prologue; WB Tale = Wife of Bath's Tale; Fr = Friar's Prologue and Tale; Sum = Summoner's Prologue and Tale

- 1) primary
  - a WBPr, Fr, Sum
  - a ha WBPr
  - allas WBPr, WB Tale
  - buf Sum
  - ey Sum
  - fy WBPr, Sum
  - hayt, heyt Fr
  - lo WBPr, WB Tale, Fr, Sum

nat WB Tale  
 nay WBPr, WB Tale  
 no WBPr  
 o (also. vocative) WBPr  
 pardee WBPr, WB Tale  
 weilawei, Weylawey WBPr, WB Tale  
 ye WBPr, WB Tale, Fr, Sum  
 yis WBPr, WB Tale, Fr, Sum

2) secondary

Benedicite WBPr, WB Tale  
 certes WBPr, WB Tale, Fr, Sum  
 Deus hic Sum  
 farewell. farwel WBPr, Sum  
 good day Sum  
 grant mercy, graunt mercy Fr, Sum  
 hayl Fr  
 mercy WB Tale  
 nay WB Tale  
 no fors Sum  
 now WBPr, WB Tale, Fr, Sum  
 now thanne Sum  
 now wel Sum  
 Pees ,peace' WBPr  
 welcome Fr  
 what (also interrogative pronoun) WBPr, WB Tale  
 wo ,woe, woeful' WB Tale  
 wy ,why' WBPr

3) phrases: see: Table 4 above

**Combination of interjections:** see: Section 7 above