

Opera as Politics: Women

Chuck Mishan Spring 2021

The Woman Question

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Querelle des Femmes

Married Love

Mozart

Die Zauberflöte The Magic Flute (1791)



Nathan Gunn
Jennifer Aylmer

Julie Taymor



Lion King 1997, Frida 2002, Magic Flute 2005, Spider Man 2010

Jean de Meun

Roman de la Rose (c. 1275)



hortus conclusus, hortus deliciarum

Jean de Meun

Roman de la Rose (c. 1275)



The Romance of the Rose is a notable instance of courtly literature, purporting to provide a "mirror of love" in which the whole art of romantic love is disclosed. Its two authors conceived it as a psychological allegory; throughout the Lover's quest, the word Rose is used both as the name of the titular lady and as an abstract symbol of female sexuality.

Jean de Meun

Roman de la Rose (c. 1275)



Jean de Meun doubtless edited the work of his predecessor, Guillaume de Lorris, before using it as the starting-point of his own vast poem, running to 19,000 lines. The continuation of Jean de Meun is a satire on the monastic orders, on celibacy, on the nobility, the papal see, the excessive pretensions of royalty, and especially on women and marriage. Guillaume had been the servant of love, and the exponent of the laws of "courtoisie"; Jean de Meun added an "art of love," exposing with brutality the vices of women, their arts of deception, and the means by which men may outwit them.

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375)



Giovanni Boccaccio

Concerning Famous Women (1362)



Christine de Pizan

(1364-c. 1430)



Querelle du Roman de la Rose

Christine de Pizan

The Book of the City of Ladies (1405)



Reason, Rectitude and Justice

“The man or the woman in whom resides greater virtue is the higher; neither the loftiness nor the lowliness of a person lies in the body according to the sex but in the perfection of conduct and virtues.”

Christine de Pizan

The Book of the City of Ladies (1405)



Reason, Rectitude and Justice

Christine asks the virtues if women should be taught as men are and why some men think women should not be educated.

**Shakespeare Henry V- Eve of St Crispin's Day
Agincourt
1415**



Kenneth Branagh

Joan of Arc

Siege of Orleans

1429



"Tout est vostre – et y entrez!" ("All is yours, – go in!")

Joan of Arc

Siege of Orleans

1429



Breaking the English Siege was the French royal army's first major military victory to follow the crushing defeat at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, and also the first while Joan of Arc was with the army.

Joan of Arc

1412-1431



The Risorgimento

Verdi, Milan 1845

Joan of Arc

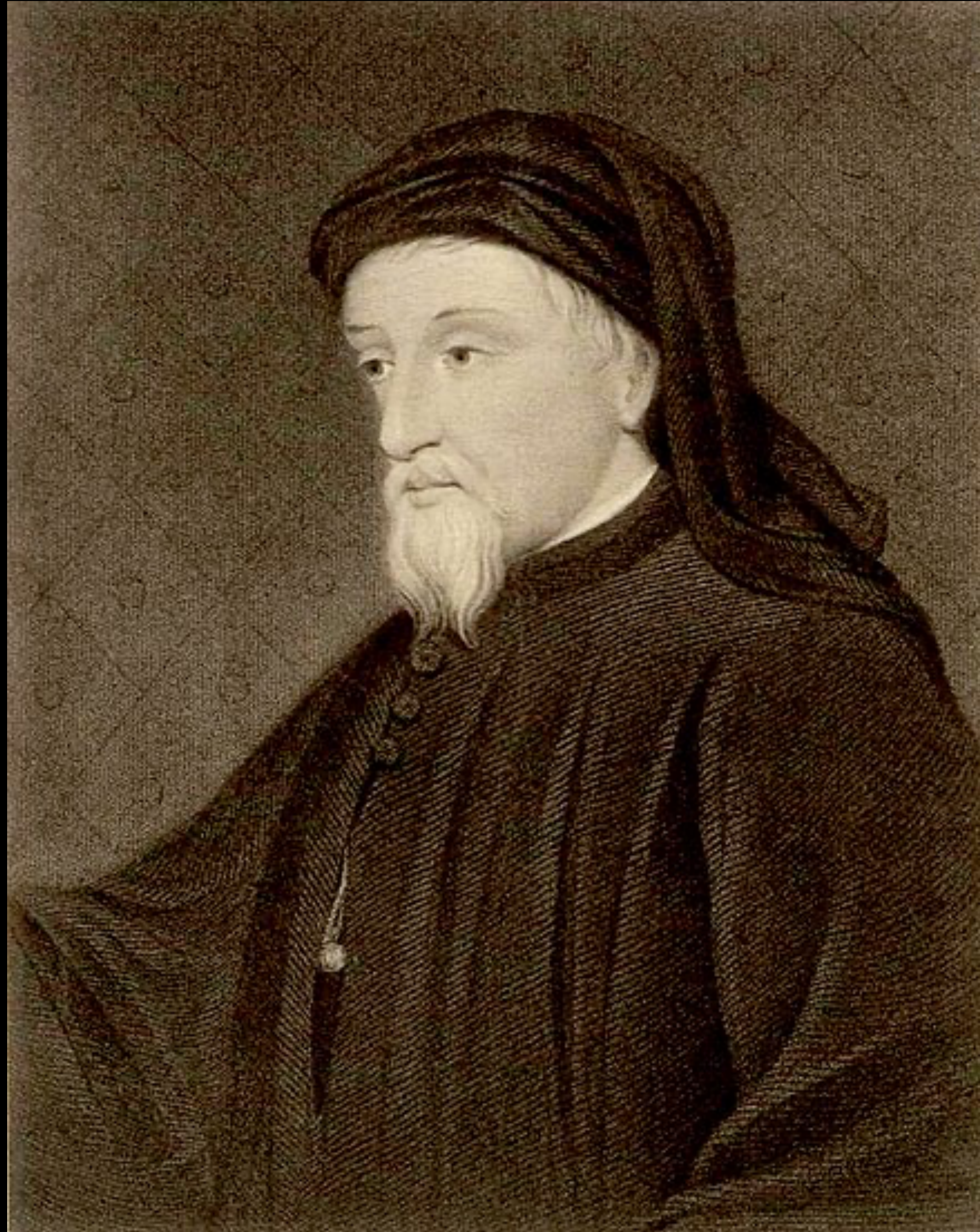
1412-1431

Deut 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.



Geoffrey Chaucer

(1340-c. 1400)



Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales (1387-1400)



Geoffrey Chaucer

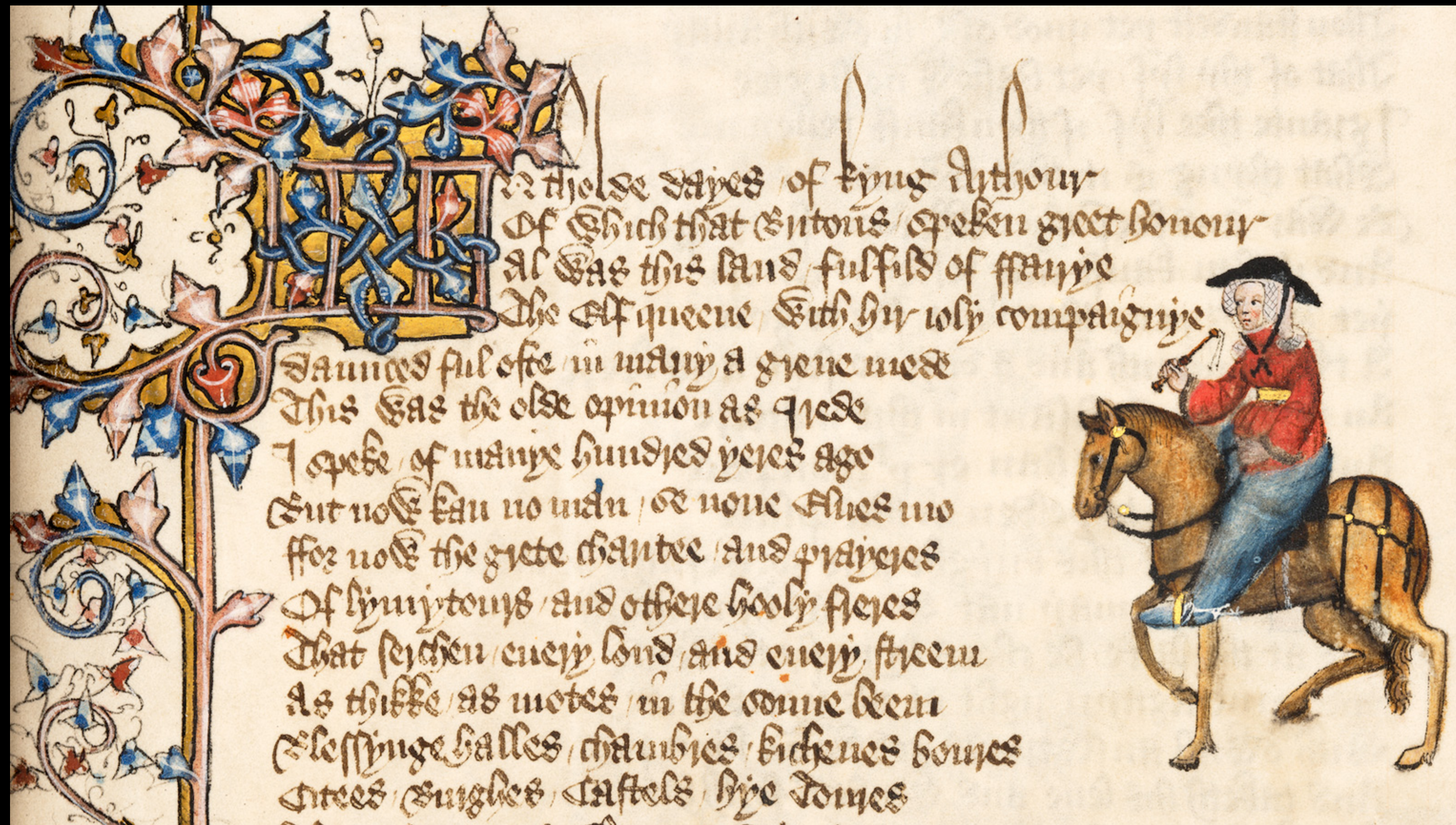
The Wife of Bath's Tale (1387-1400)



'The Prologue of the Wife of Bath's Tale'- Women were not identified by their social status, but solely by their relations with men rather than being identified by their occupations; a woman was either a maiden, spouse or widow who was only capable of bearing children, cooking and other "women's work".

Geoffrey Chaucer

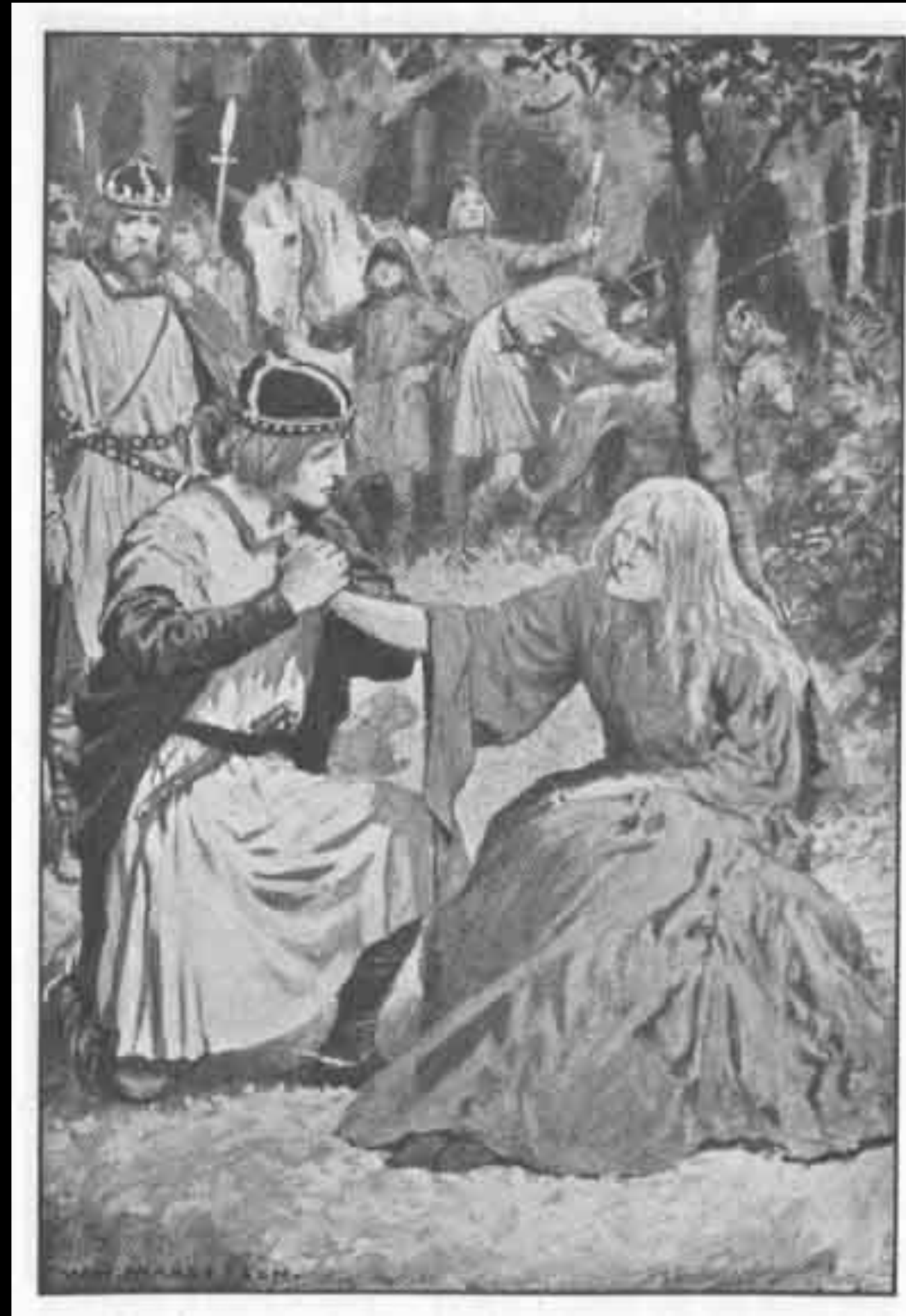
The Wife of Bath's Tale (1387-1400)



By God! If wommen hadde writen stories,
As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
Than al the mark of Adam may redresse.

Geoffrey Chaucer

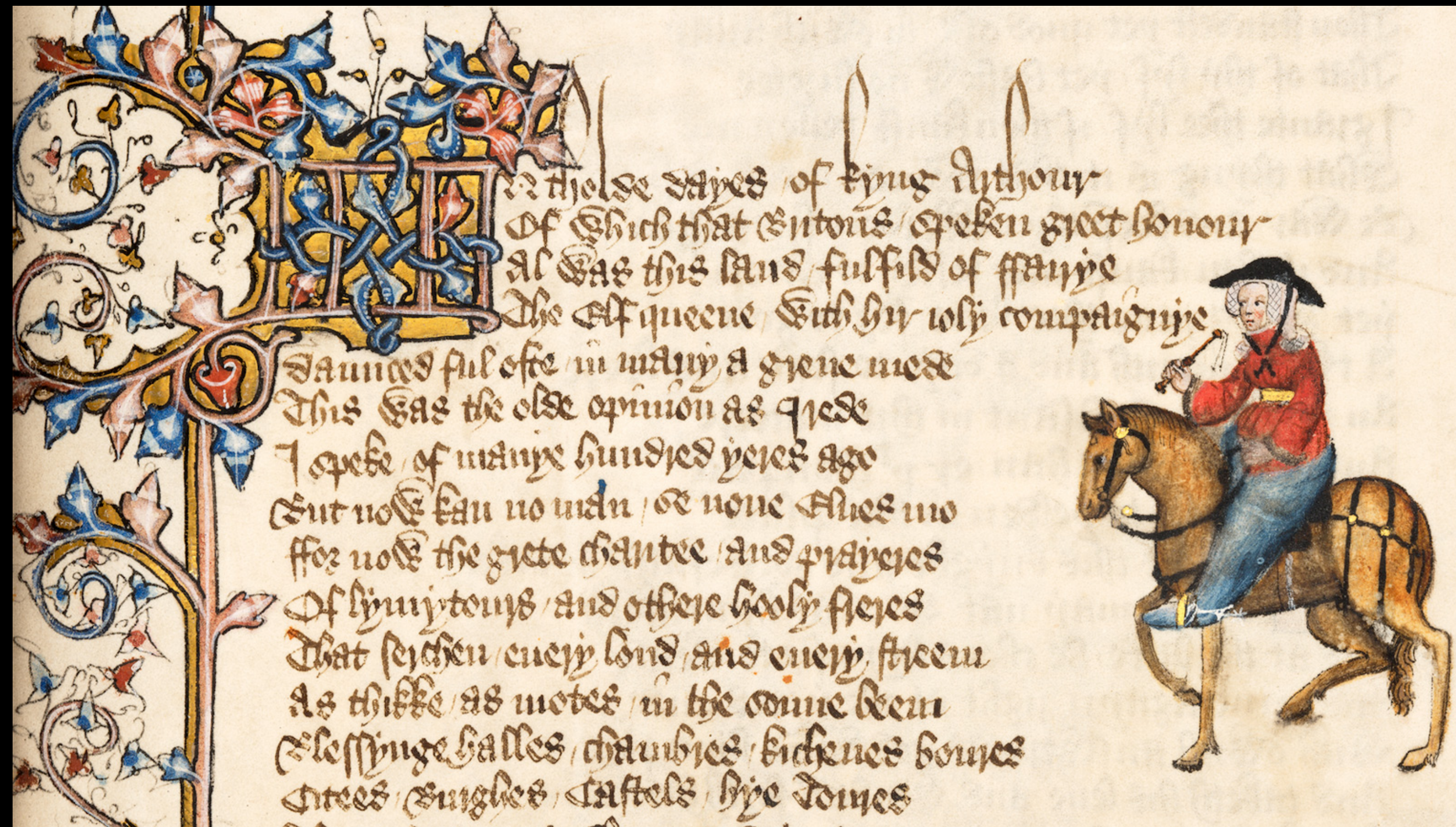
The Wife of Bath's Tale (1387-1400)



The loathly lady

Geoffrey Chaucer

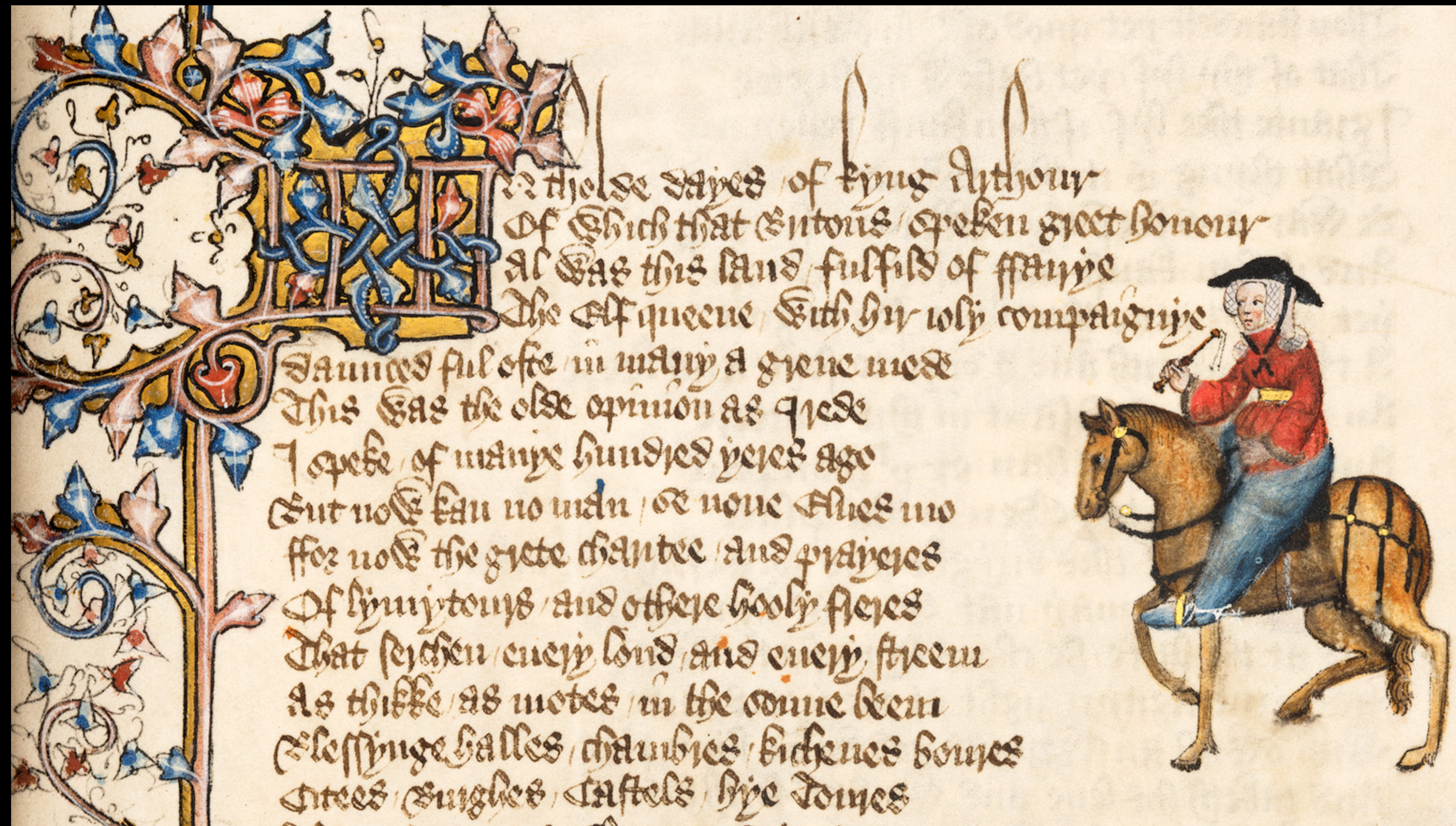
The Wife of Bath's Tale (1387-1400)



‘Wommen desiren to have sovereintee,
As wel over hir hosbound as over hir love,
And for to been in maistrye him above.’

Geoffrey Chaucer

The Wife of Bath's Tale (1387-1400)



"For hadde God commanded maydenhede,
Thanne hadde he dampned weddyng wth the dede."

Married Love

Marriage became one of the central institutions of bourgeois society, capable of mediating the whole network potentially conflicting demands of society: individual desire, family and property, religion and the state. Above all, marriage assumed the magical prowess of being able to unite 'virtue and happiness, innocence and pleasure.'

Married Love

Mozart

Die Zauberflöte The Magic Flute (1791)



Nathan Gunn
Jennifer Aylmer

Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754-1838)



Men are destined to live on the stage of the world. A public education suits them: it early places before their eyes all the scenes of life: only the proportions are different. The paternal home is better for the education of women; they have less need to learn to deal with the interests of others, than to accustom themselves to a calm and secluded life.

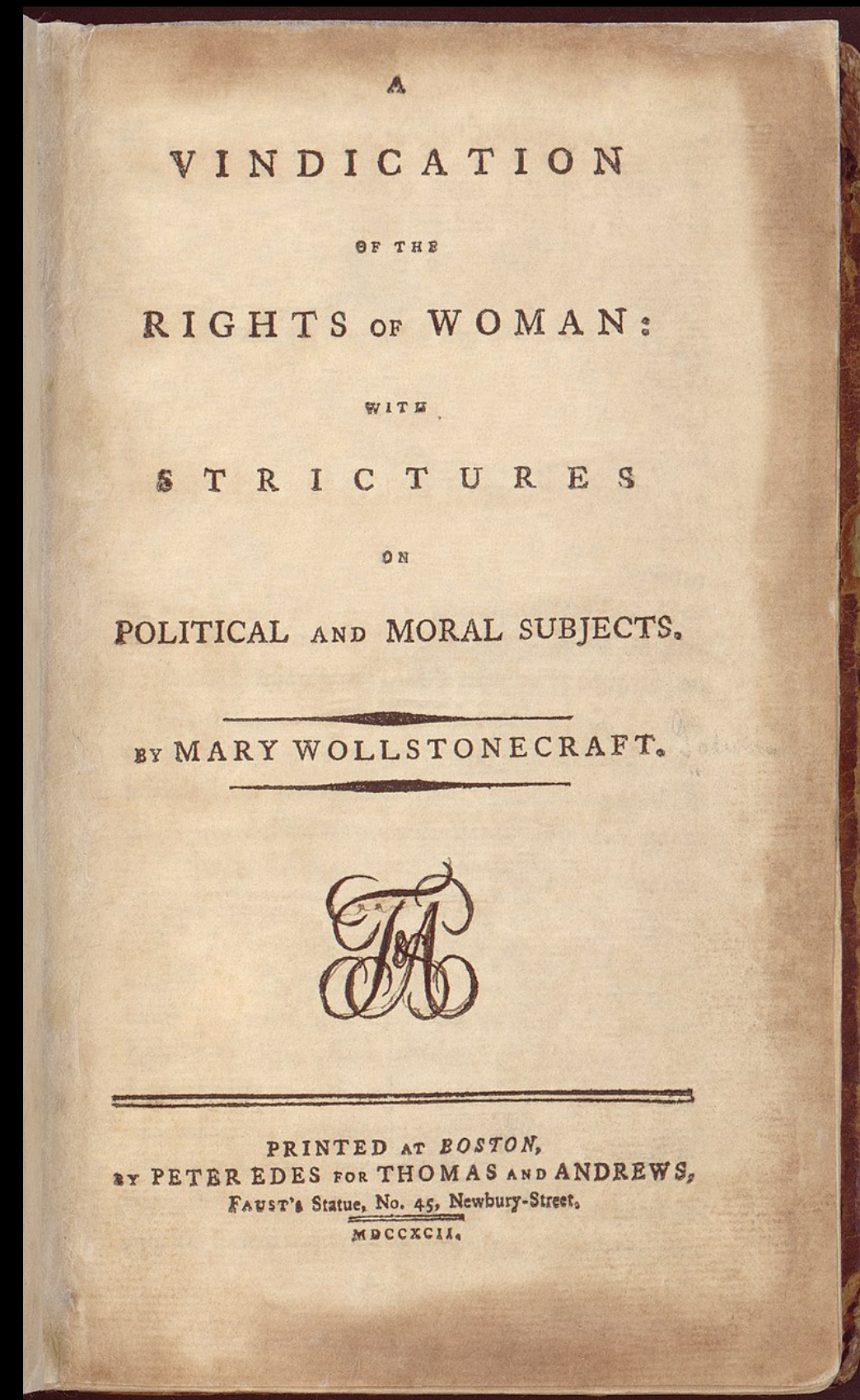
Talleyrand, Rapport sur l'instruction publique (1791)

Mary Wollstonecraft

(1759-1797)



Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, 1792



Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers – in a word, better citizens.

The French Revolution (1789-1799)



The Reign of Terror (1792-1794)

Louis XVI was guillotined
on Jan 21, 1793



Viva la Liberta ?

The French had shewn themselves the ablest architects of ruin that had hitherto existed in the world. In that very short space of time they had completely pulled down to the ground, their monarchy; their church; their nobility; their law

Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France 1790



Napoleon (1769-1821)



18th Brumaire (1799) Napoleon becomes First Consul



Napoleon becomes Emperor of the French (1804)



Beethoven- (1770-1827)



Beethoven Symphony # 3, "Eroica" (Vienna, 1804)



Beethoven Symphony # 3, "Eroica" (Vienna, 1804)



The Woman Question

The Industrial Revolution brought hundreds of thousands of lower-class women into factory jobs, presenting a challenge to traditional ideas of a woman's place.

A prime issue of contention was whether what was referred to as women's "private virtue" could be transported into the public arena; opponents of women's suffrage claimed that bringing women into the public arena would dethrone them, and sully their feminine virtue.

Women's Agency

Agency is the ability to identify goals or make choices and then act upon them.

Agency can take a number of forms; “bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance as well as more intangible, cognitive processes of reflection and analysis”

Beethoven Fidelio

(1805 / 1814)

**Originally named Leonore,
oder Der Triumph der ehelichen Liebe**

**Leonore,
or The Triumph of Married Love**

Beethoven Fidelio (Vienna, 1814)

Hat man nicht auch Gold beineben



Beethoven Fidelio
(Vienna, 1814)

Rescue Opera

-

Liberation Opera

-

Hoffnung [Hope]

Beethoven Fidelio (Vienna, 1814)



Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?

. . . Komm Hoffnung

Karita Mattila

Beethoven Fidelio (Vienna, 1814)

Heroism
Wifely Devotion & Courage
Justice

32. ACT II: Des besten Königs Wink und Wille
Karita Mattila, Ben Heppner, Falk Struckmann,
René Pape

Women's Agency

Agency is the ability to identify goals or make choices and then act upon them.