

Extract from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

The Prologue – about the knight (lines 45 to 79)

A Knight ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.



Modern Translation of The Prologue about the knight (lines 45 to 79)

There was a knight who was an admirable man
 Who from the first time he started
 To ride out and about, loved chivalry,
 Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy.
 He was very worthy in his lord's eyes
 And no-one had ridden further
 Into Christian lands as well as heathen,
 And always praised for his worthiness.
 He was at the victory of Alexandria;
 And often sat at the head of the table
 With knights from all nations in Prussia.
 In Lithuania and Russia he was raised
 So high no other Christian could match him.
 He was in Algaciras in Granada at the siege
 And rode into Benmarin.
 He was also at the victories of Ayas and Attalia
 And near the Great Sea
 He fought with many nobles.
 He was at 15 life-threatening battles
 And fought for our faith at Tramissene
 In three tournaments and always killed his enemy.
 This very worth knight had also
 Fought next to the Lord of Palathia
 Against another heathen in Turkey:
 And forevermore he will have favour from his sovereign.
 And as well as being a brave and noble warrior, he was wise,
 And his bearing was meek like a woman.
 He never spoke badly of anyone
 In all his life
 He was a perfect, gentle knight.
 But now to tell you about his appearance,
 His horses were good, but he wasn't wearing fancy clothes.
 His tunic was of rough, dark material;
 There was a mark where his armour had been
 For he had only recently come home from his expedition
 And straight away went to do his pilgrimage.

