

## Chaucer

This chapter is divided in five sections: 1. General; 2. Canterbury Tales; 3. Troilus & Criseyde; 4. Other Works; 5. Reception and Reputation. Sections 1, 3, and 5 are by Ben Parsons; sections 2 and 4 are by Natalie Jones.

### 1. General

A key theme in scholarship this year has been the way in which Chaucer can be placed in dialogue with his female contemporaries, rather than relegated to a completely separate literary sphere. These concerns are explicitly pursued in Corinne Saunders' 'Affective Reading: Chaucer, Women, and Romance' (*ChauR* 51:1[2016], 11-30), written as part of a special issue edited by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Dianne Watt. Saunders focuses on the relationship between emotional affect and cognition in Chaucer's work, and finds the two processes tightly fused together: prominent instances include the *Book of the Duchess*, with its interest in reading and feeling as mutually dependent practices, the *Knight's Tale*, in which emotions are given transformative physical power, and the *Legend of Good Women*, which shows a marked preoccupation with affectivity and agency. Saunders discusses the ways in which these factors might address a peculiarly female reading experience, and enable us to reconstruct such an experience in turn. Similar possibilities inform Madeleine L. Saraceni's 'Chaucer's Feminine Pretexts: Gendered Genres in Three Frame Moments', *ChauR* 51:4 (2016): 403-435. Saraceni detects a pronounced interest in genres conventionally associated with female readers, especially vernacular romance, exemplary saint's lives, and conduct books. By examining the *Legend of Good Women*, *Melibee* and *Man of Law's Tale*, she demonstrates that Chaucer aligned himself with these 'female' genres in order to explore the

needs of emerging readerships, both bourgeoisie and female. A comparable approach can also be seen in Christopher Cannon's "'Wyth her owen handys": What Women's Literacy Can Teach Us about Langland and Chaucer' (*EIC* 66:3[2016], 277-300), originally given as the 2016 F.W. Bateson Memorial Lecture. Cannon considers how the type of secretarial textual production described by Margery Kempe, in which texts are dictated verbally to the copyist, might parallel Chaucer's own practices. He notes that the famous *Troilus* frontispiece from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61, showing a bookless recital, suggests a poet who could, like Kempe, give voice to an entire work prepared and stored in his memory; further evidence is found in the variability of the terminal *-e* in copies of the *Book the Duchess*, which might signal where scribes 'were writing down what Chaucer said, not what he wrote, using whatever spelling they were accustomed to use' rather than following Chaucer's more systematic orthography (p. 294).

One of a number of essays on the links between literary and visual culture, Ashby Kinch considers what manuscript illuminations can teach us about Chaucer's policies as a writer ('Intervisual Texts, Intertextual Chaucer and the Luttrell Psalter', in Susanna Fein and David Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 3-22). According to Kinch, Chaucer's testimony in the Scrope-Grovenor trial shows an interest in images as vehicles of meaning not unlike that encountered in contemporary manuscripts: both posit a complex interplay between writing and image, and between different types of frame and their effects. This point explains how Chaucer could operate so readily with various layers of mediation, and expect his readership to 'engage with his navigation of the boundaries between source and retelling, text and voice, and narrative and social agents' so readily (p. 12). Similar thinking informs the work of Robert Boenig, who also looks to the image of Chaucer reading *Troilus* from the Corpus Christi MS ('Chaucer and the Art of Not Eating a Book', in Alexander L. Kaufman, Shaun F.D. Hughes, and Dorsey Armstrong, eds., *Telling Tales and Crafting Books: Essays*

in *Honor of Thomas H. Ohlgren*, pp. 323-44). Boenig sees this particular image, with its complex and multi-layered depiction of the author, as a direct and sensitive response to Chaucer's fluid posture as author across his work. Further connections between Chaucer and manuscript culture are drawn out by Helen Phillips in 'Auchinleck and Chaucer' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives*, pp. 139-55). Phillips approaches this famous manuscript less in terms of its influence over Chaucer, and more as an index of the writing and reading habits that might have informed his work. In bringing together disparate elements, she argues, manuscripts provide an obvious model for Chaucer's wilfully atomised sense of culture, since both assume a 'familiarity with chance, incompleteness, and unlooked-for juxtaposition' (p. 143); his privileging of 'gentry romances', and sense of interplay between spoken performance and written text, also mark out membership of a common culture.

Chaucer's authorial persona is studied elsewhere. It emerges as an important precursor to formal life-writing in Barry Windeatt's survey of medieval representations of the self ('Medieval Writing: Types, Encomia, Exemplars, Pattern', in Adam Smyth, ed., *A History of English Autobiography*, pp. 13-26). Chaucer receives notice here as a crucial model for his younger contemporaries, his 'self-fictionalisations' providing a model for Bokenham, Usk and Charles d'Orlean to project stylised versions of themselves into their work (pp. 16-17). In the same volume, these manoeuvres are given fuller consideration by David Matthews, 'Autobiographical Selves in the Poetry of Chaucer, Gower, Hoccleve and Lydgate' (pp. 27-40). While noting the distance between medieval depictions of the self and modern ideas of autobiography, Matthews examines Chaucer's 'performance of the self' from the *Book of the Duchess* through to the *Canterbury Tales*; he suggests that the playfulness evident in this self-presentation, which sees Chaucer 'ironising himself at every level', is perhaps a reflection of the vexed status of English poetry at this point in its history

(p. 32). Overall, it demonstrates a view of the self as an artistic resource, where truth and invention merge, rather than a repository of facts that need to be laid bare. Matthews' remarks on Hoccleve and Lydgate are discussed in the Middle English section of the present journal.

Moving from the self to forces that jeopardise its wholeness, Marion Turner considers themes of sickness and injury in 'Illness Narratives in the Late Middle Ages: Arderne, Chaucer, and Hoccleve', *JMEMS* 46:1(2016), 61-87. Turner finds multiple traces of wounds and disease across Chaucer's work, from the pilgrimage as restitution for those 'that...were seeke' in the *General Prologue*, to the climactic death of Arcite in the *Knight's Tale*, to the symptoms of lovesickness in the *Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. She finds Chaucer treating these experiences in ways not dissimilar to Scarry's notes on pain, as points at which language and narrative run aground, either dropping into silence or generating dense verbiage that cannot penetrate its object. At other points such allusions confuse the textual and physical body, causing the narrators of *Troilus* and the *Legend of Good Women* to become infected by their own narratives, in a display of vulnerability that might indicate further lack of authority. A different sense of self comes to the fore in Alastair Minnis' 'Other Worlds: Chaucer's Classicism' (in Rita Copeland, ed., *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature 1: 800-1558*, pp. 413-34). Minnis opens with the claim that Chaucer's clearest debt to classical culture is his interest in 'other worlds', 'whether within the present earth or beyond, whether within the prevailing belief system or beyond' (p. 413). He traces the ways in which antiquity steers Chaucer in a broadly relativistic direction, driving him to equate the foreignness of the past and the foreignness of contemporary non-Christian cultures; hence in the *Knight's Tale*, for instance, he sets up equivalences between the noble pagans of Athens and the warriors of 'hethenese' his narrator has encountered.

For undergraduate students, Beatrice Fannon, ed., *Medieval English Literature*, offers an introduction to major approaches in medieval studies, along with new critical essays intended to showcase recent developments in the field. Chaucer is awarded his own section, in five chapters dealing with different aspects of his work. Helen Philips' 'Chaucer and Politics' (pp. 79-94) ranges across his intermittent references to kingship, social mobility and tyranny, noting concerns about the proper limits of royal authority, the 'political order...as an extension of celestial order', and the humiliations inflicted on courtiers (p. 85). Narrower in its focus is Rob Gossedge's 'The Consolations and Conflicts of History' (pp. 95-127) which offers a reading of the *Monk's Tale* in relation to writing and interpreting history. Gossedge detects a tension between providential and secular modes of historiography, one which comes to a head in the sequence on Bernabo Visconti; the Monk's final admission of ignorance here signals the inadequacy of Fortune as a framework for understanding human history.

Literariness and reception draw the attention of Lewis Beer's 'Authors and Readers in Chaucer's *House of Fame*' (pp. 112-27). Beer sees the piece as a meditation on the social forces that prevent texts from speaking in their own terms, a process that culminates with the unknowable 'man of gret auctorite', whose very identity is submerged into his reputation.

Next, in 'Tie Knots and Slip Knots: Sexual Difference and Memory in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*' (pp. 128-43), Ruth Evans draws out the thread of recollection running through the text. Evans detects a peculiar gendering of memory at work in the romance, manifesting itself in Criseyde's inability to remember and Troilus' inability to forget, a contrast that shows suggestive links to the humoral theories of Boncampagno da Signa and Albertus Magnus.

Concluding the section, Valerie Allen's 'Chaucer and the Poetics of Gold' (pp. 144-59) shows that gold and jewellery feature strongly in the bank of images by which medieval poets understood their own compositions. The 'Complaint to his Purse' can thus be read as a

meditation on poetics as well as money, one that is not merely balancing the obligations of metrical and verbal ornament but allowing each to enliven the other.

Beyond formal academic analysis, Richard Strong's *The Penguin Book of English Song* provides an unusual survey of the linkage between written text and song for general readers. It brings together a series of poems by a hundred authors that have inspired musical settings, ranging in date from Chaucer to Auden. Strong's selection opens with texts of 'Merciles Beaute' and the first 42 lines of the *General Prologue*, referring the reader to the settings of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Sir George Dyson in either case. Finally, the *Annotated Chaucer Bibliography for 2014* (SAC 38[2016], 387-450) provides detailed coverage of 234 individual articles and books, and lists 40 book reviews.

## **2. *Canterbury Tales***

This year a number of studies have concentrated on the tales which make up the first fragment of the *Canterbury Tales*. The ordering of Fragment One is of particular concern to Nicole Nolan Sidhu in the second chapter of her monograph, *Indecent Exposure: Gender Politics and Obscene Comedy in Middle English Literature*. Focusing on Chaucer's poetics of obscenity, Sidhu explores how the 'obscene comedy' (p. 78) of the *Reeve's Tale* is shaped by its relation to the stories told by the Knight and the Miller. It is argued that, in spite of their thematic differences, both the *Knight's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale* offer forth a world view which not only prioritizes male authority and power, but suggests that women and their sexuality are a source of social disruption. The *Reeve's Tale* is intentionally designed to challenge this shared perspective, as by violating fabliau convention it demonstrates the chaos which ensues when men ruthlessly seek power and control. In contrast to its analogues, the tale draws attention to the fact that John and Aleyn are motivated not by erotic desire but

a search for power, something which is echoed in Symkyn's concern with social status and ambition. In accordance with this, the women of the tale, Malyne and Symkyn's wife, are characterized 'not as the perpetrators of social disruption', as we commonly find in other fabliaux, but 'as the victims of a destructive culture of male competition and aggression' (p. 92). As a result, the emphasis placed on the brutality of the tale's two rape scenes, subtly hinted at by Chaucer, distinguishes the *Reeve's Tale* from other fabliaux and aligns it more closely with the treatment of women and sexual violence in classical legend.

In her article, "'A berd! A berd!': Chaucer's Miller and the Poetics of the Pun' (SAC 38[2016] 1-37), Jennifer Bryan examines the importance of punning in the *Miller's Tale*. Rather than serving merely as a device which intensifies the tale's humour, Bryan argues that puns 'give a particular charge to persistent Chaucerian questions of intentionality and reception' (p. 4). Indeed, Bryan acknowledges that although a successful pun relies on a moment of collusion between reader and author, Chaucer's use of punning inevitably raises questions of intent, as we are made to consider 'whether Chaucer intended the pun, or whether it is all in the mind of the reader' (p. 8). Through a consideration of the relationship between the speakers and recipients of puns in the *Miller's Tale*, Bryan observes that while Nicholas appears to pun intentionally, characters such as Absolon have no control over their use of language; indeed, Absolon 'becomes the victim of his own unintentionally punning utterances' (p. 14). By situating Chaucer's use of puns in the context of English poetics more broadly, Bryan concludes that puns in the *Miller's Tale* not only affirm 'language's surprising flexibility and fullness' (p. 33), but instil the tale with a subtle sense of order: 'under the chaos there is a strange kind of harmony, a system of polyphonic connections and unexpected significance that the characters cannot hear' (p. 35).

The *Miller's Tale* and the *Reeve's Tale* are discussed as a pair by Michael W. Twomey and Scott D. Stull in 'Architectural Satire in the Tales of the Miller and Reeve'

(*ChauR* 51[2016] 310-337). This study combines archaeological and literary approaches in order to highlight how the descriptions of the houses in the two tales contribute to their satire. Drawing on archaeological evidence relating to medieval housing, Twomey and Stull suggest that the lodging of John the Carpenter is a two-part house, made up of a hall and chamber block, and that its shot-window is an intentional economic marker which affirms the capitalist interests and status of its owner. Although the house in the *Reeve's Tale* is also a two-part house, the Reeve seeks to satirize Symkyn the Miller by drawing attention to the fact that it is smaller, and thus of lower-status, than the house in the *Miller's Tale*. As a consequence, the Reeve's depiction of Symkyn's lodging as a single-story, two-part house is 'an important point of satire', which not only demonstrates the 'falseness of Symkyn's public presentation as an elite' (p. 35), but subtly intensifies the rivalry between the Reeve and the Miller.

The subject of space and architecture is also central to Sarah Stanbury's essay, "'*Quyla?*' The Counting-House, the *Shipman's Tale*, and Architectural Interiors' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 39-58). In this study, Stanbury examines the spatial significance of the counting-house in Chaucer's *Shipman's Tale*, particularly in relation to contemporary building practices. It is noted that throughout the late fourteenth century, houses increasingly prioritized private space or rooms with specialized functions. The merchant's counting-house reflects this trend and demonstrates the sorts of activities which might take place in domestic, private spaces. In the context of the tale itself, the counting-house operates as a symbolic realm, reflecting 'marital and bourgeois ideology, and, especially, territorial claims of male mercantile work' (p. 44). Indeed, in the tale the counting-house functions as an exclusively male domain, as is evinced by the attention drawn to its door and the fact that the merchant's wife typically remains outside of the space. Stanbury concludes that the merchant's counting-house highlights the links between the



domestic and the mercantile realm and also draws attention to ‘new possibilities of domestic design and use’ (p. 56).

The *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* have received some attention. Jeanne Provost, in her study ‘Vital Property in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*’ (SAC 38[2016] 39-74), approaches the Wife through the lens of ecomaterialism in order to examine the language and imagery of property. Although, in keeping with her status, the Wife frequently compares ‘the property relation to a spousal and familial one’ (p. 44), she also appropriates the language of medieval property law in order to emphasize the agency of property, highlighting in particular the ‘vital role’ (p.40) of owned things or beings. It is observed that the Wife not only compares herself to various types of property, such as castles, land, pets and work animals, but also evokes legal language in her discussion of the marriage debt and the relation between spouses. In particular, the Wife invokes *caveat emptor*, a legal principle which addresses ‘situations where property frustrates new owner’s expectations’ (p. 56), in order to refer to the relationship between a husband and his unruly wife: ‘The Wife maps *caveat emptor* onto marriage when she accuses her husbands of complaining about the pain men suffer because they cannot test potential wives before marriage’ (p. 57). As a whole, Provost’s investigation of the language of property reveals that, for the Wife, property law depends ‘on myriad emotional and material connections between owners and property – not only dominance and suffering but also affection, attraction, understanding, good use, desire, consent, intimacy, and love’ (p. 74).

An interest in the language of the Wife of Bath is also shared by Joe Stadolnik’s ‘The Stuff of Metaphor: “fyr and tow” in the *Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale*’ (ES 97[2016] 15-21). Stadolnik’s essay sheds new light on the background which informs the proverbial reference to ‘fyr and tow’ on lines 89-90 of the Wife’s *Prologue*. Although these lines have typically been understood as a reference to the sexual desire that may ignite between a man

and woman, Stadolnik asserts that the lines ‘might in fact allude to the spectacular courtly disaster of the *bal des ardents*’ (p. 17). This was an incident in which a group of men, one of whom was Charles VI of France, dressed in costumes of flax for courtly entertainment but were accidentally set alight by a flailing torch. If the Wife’s reference to ‘fyr and tow’ is intended as an allusion to this historical incident, it not only serves to demonstrate her ‘wider social and political awareness’ but, by hinting at her desire to advertise her ‘well-connected cosmopolitanism’, also draws attention to her ‘provincial pretences’ (p. 19).

A number of other studies have approached the *Canterbury Tales* through a detailed examination of language. In her linguistic study, “‘To take a wyf’: Marriage, Status and Moral Conduct in *The Merchant’s Tale*’ (*Historical Reflections* 42[2016] 61-74), Natalie Hanna offers a comparative analysis of the frequency of the terms ‘wyf’ and ‘housbonde’ in the *Merchant’s Tale* and argues that their occurrence reveals the social concerns and marital dynamics which underpin the tale itself. Noting that the term ‘wyf’ occurs 61 times, Hanna observes that it is typically associated with the model of Januarie’s ideal, hypothetical wife and is often situated alongside words which relate to the economic and social value ascribed to wives in the medieval period. The phrase ‘to take a wyf’ is also common, confirming Januarie’s objectification of May and his desire to govern her. In contrast, the term ‘housbonde’ appears only four times, suggesting the lack of partnership between May and Januarie, something which is further underlined by Chaucer’s decision to refer to Januarie as a ‘wedded man’. Hanna argues that Chaucer deploys this term in order to reveal Januarie’s detached status and his ‘belief that his wife should serve him with little concern for his role in the partnership’ (p. 69).

Patterns of language are also examined in Luke Mueller’s article, ‘Contesting Individuality: Pryvetee and Self-Profession in *The Canterbury Tales*’ (*Comitatus* 47[2016] 189-208). Although medieval society was inherently communal, an examination of the use of

the term 'pryvetee' throughout the *Canterbury Tales* suggests that it was typically valued as an expression of individuality and self-assertion. The term 'pryvetee' has a wide range of meanings (such as 'privacy, secrecy', 'intimacy', 'a private place', 'a sex organ', 'a divine secret') and, when encountered in the *Canterbury Tales*, it often seems to evoke a number of these connotations simultaneously. This is particularly evident in Fragment One where each tale 'displays a dominant type of pryvetee that reveals the degeneration of pryvetee's properties: from God's pryvetee in the *Knight's Tale* to the prostitute's pryvetee for sale in the *Cook's Tale*' (p. 197). The prologues of the Wife of Bath and the Pardoner are also discussed, as Mueller considers how acts of confession may operate as an assertion of individuality, due to the speaker's self-exposure of their own 'pryvetee'. Mueller concludes by observing that the treatment of 'pryvetee' throughout the *Canterbury Tales* reveals 'the difficulty of having a private life and an individual voice in a communal, hierarchical society' (p. 208).

The *Monk's Tale* has attracted some critical attention. Firstly, is Emily Houlik-Ritchey's essay, 'Reading the Neighbor in Geoffrey Chaucer and Pero López de Ayala' (*Exemplaria* 28[2016] 118-136). Houlik-Ritchey examines the Monk's positive account of King Pedro I of Castile and León, alongside the depiction of the king as a cruel tyrant in the Castilian chronicle, *Coronica del rey don Pedro* by Pero López de Ayala. According to Houlik-Ritchey, the *Monk's Tale* and the *Coronica* can be viewed as geographic and generic neighbours: they are 'neighbourly' in the sense that they overlap in subject matter and draw attention to the gaps in each others' narratives. In spite of their apparent differences in approach, both works treat Pedro I with ambiguity as they omit certain historical details or recount facts in an intentionally vague manner in order to hint at the wider political tensions which led to Pedro's demise. Thus, by reading Chaucer's positive treatment of Pedro I in light of its textual neighbour – the negative account in Ayala's *Coronica* – we are encouraged

to ‘recognize England’s own dubious, even tyrannical dealings with Castile, Pedro, and Enrique de Trastamara (Pedro’s half-brother, usurper, and successor)’ (p. 121). The *Monk’s Tale* is also discussed in detail by Shawn Normandin in ‘Reading Chaucer’s *Monk’s Tale*’ (*Viator* 47[2016] 183-204). Normandin challenges the common critical reception of the *Monk’s Tale* as dull or flawed, by arguing that in order to appreciate the tale we must view it in the context of monastic reading practices and poetics. It is noted that some of the features of the *Monk’s Tale*, particularly those which have attracted criticism, are found elsewhere in Chaucer’s *An ABC* and in Guillaume de Deguileville’s *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*. Like the *Monk’s Tale*, these two works have a ‘monastic sensibility’ (p. 188) which is evinced through their subject matter and form. Notable features of the *Monk’s Tale*, such as its repetitive structure, reduction of mimesis, and use of ring composition, can be understood as ‘monastic poetics’ (p. 188) which are designed to invoke the reading practice of rumination. According to Normandin, the importance of rumination and its influence on the form of the *Monk’s Tale* is cleverly evinced by its *Nabugodonosor-Balthasar* sequence. Indeed, the account of Nabugodonosor, whose chewing of the cud when transformed into an ox evokes the practice of monastic rumination, is purposefully followed by a lesson in the dangers of misreading through the tragedy of Balthasar: ‘*Balthasar* gives a lesson about reading the *Monk’s Tale*: respect repetition’ (p. 197).

A significant number of studies this year have engaged with the treatment of religion in the *Canterbury Tales*, or have considered the ways in which particular tales are shaped by a religious context or attitude. Takami Matsuda’s article, ‘Performance, Memory and Oblivion in the *Parson’s Tale*’ (*ChauR* 51[2016] 436-52), argues that the *Parson’s Tale* functions as a penitential manual which allows the reader to achieve contrition and confession by prompting them to undertake a process of self-examination while reading. This act of self-examination is achieved through a repeated emphasis on memory, something

which is particularly evident in the tale's discussion of the six causes for contrition, where attention is drawn to the 'remembrance' of one's sins and of Christ's Passion. Although the *Parson's Tale* provides a guide for the reader, in the Retraction we also see Chaucer the author, through the tool of his memory, enact the process of contrition and confession as set out by the Parson. The spiritual and didactic potentiality of the *Parson's Tale* also informs Kathryn Vulić's 'The Vernon Paternoster Diagram, Medieval Graphic Design, and the *Parson's Tale*' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 59-85). In this essay, Vulić seeks to contextualize the Parson's reference to the *Pater noster* prayer (ll. 1039-44) by analysing its relation to the Paternoster diagram preserved in the Vernon manuscript. Noting that the Parson does not explain the significance of the *Pater noster* but instead encourages his reader to consult other works on the subject, Vulić argues that the Vernon diagram might serve as a good example of the type of material that the Parson has in mind at this point. Vulić offers a full and detailed account of the features of the diagram, noting its arrangement, layout, and use of colour, concluding that 'it renders graphically the ongoing intellectual and spiritual journey that the Parson suggests in his text' (p. 79).

Jennifer L. Sisk's essay, 'Chaucer and Hagiographic Authority' (in Von Contzen and Bernau, eds., *Sanctity as Literature in Late Medieval Britain*, pp. 116-33), reflects on the ways in which Chaucer responds to some of the conventions of hagiography. According to Sisk, although Chaucer might have been drawn to the genre due to the fact that it does 'not find its authorisation in the figure of the author' (p. 118), his engagement with the hagiographic mode is not at all straightforward. Chaucer's complex relationship with the genre is particularly evident in the 'pseudo-hagiographies' of the *Canterbury Tales*, specifically the *Man of Law's Tale*, the *Clerk's Tale*, and the *Physician's Tale*. In contrast to conventional hagiographies, these three tales question the distinction between secular and hagiographic virtue and also deploy a range of authorizing techniques not commonly found in

the genre, such as referencing other writers or secular authorities. While these features signify the tales' failure to appropriate conventional hagiographic authority, it is argued that 'this failing of authorisation seems to be generated in part by design, in order to raise the spectre of competing value systems and interests' (p. 124). Thus, according to Sisk, although Chaucer was attracted to hagiography due to its eschewal of conventional voices of authority, he also sought to challenge the genre's single, univocal style of authorship by presenting conflicting values and voices in his texts.

In his study, *The Fellowship of the Beatific Vision: Chaucer on Overcoming Tyranny and Becoming Ourselves*, Norm Klassen argues that Chaucer should be understood as a theological poet and that the *Canterbury Tales* is underpinned by a strong Christian message. Specifically, Klassen asserts that the poem embodies the idea of participatory theology, that is, the belief 'that all of reality participates in the greater reality of God, with which it is suffused' (p. 5). In order to demonstrate this idea, the first part of Klassen's study, 'Pilgrimage and the Beatific Vision', offers an examination of the symbolism of pilgrimage and considers, through a close reading of the opening lines of the *General Prologue*, how the poem establishes the importance of the beatific vision. According to Klassen, the pilgrimage motif 'applies to the fellowship conceived as the church, the people of God, or redeemed humanity' (p. 22) and thus invokes ideas of community, as well as the conception of man's life on earth as a pilgrimage from birth to death. Part Two, 'Past and Present', is divided into two sections, both of which engage with issues of tyranny. Firstly, it is argued that the problems of tyranny played out in the ancient world of the *Knight's Tale* find their solution in the *Miller's Prologue*: the Miller's words, which contain several references to Christ's life and Passion, remind us that the solution to tyranny is firstly found in God, but is also aided by the bonds between men, as signified by the fellowship of pilgrims 'that somehow stays intact, moving together towards the beatific vision' (p. 63). This idea is complemented by the

second section of Part Two, which focuses on tyranny in the *Second Nun's Tale*, the *Physician's Tale*, and the *Clerk's Tale*. Klassen observes that in each tale the threat of tyranny is opposed by a female character who, due to such virtues as obedience and submissiveness, is purposefully aligned with the Virgin Mary. The final part of Klassen's study, 'Becoming Ourselves as Artists', considers Chaucer's role as author in relation to his pilgrim persona. Klassen suggests that, by situating himself alongside his pilgrim creations, Chaucer implies that in order to achieve the beatific vision we must adopt the role of artist and 'exercise interpretative skill and good judgment in the act of living' (p. 144).

Religious iconography is discussed by Susanna Fein in her essay, 'Standing under the Cross in the *Pardoner's* and *Shipman's Tale*' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 89-114). Through a study of language and imagery, Fein argues that both the *Pardoner's Tale* and the *Shipman's Tale* work subtly to recall the image of the crucified Christ, as they position 'the general human incapacity to "see" spiritually against glimmering signs of God's real presence' (p. 90). The focus on oath swearing in the *Pardoner's Tale*, as well as its allusion to the Eucharist in the final meal of bread and wine, serves to align the three rioters with Christ's tormentors. The rioters' inability to see spiritual truths is evinced through their reaction to the oak tree and its treasure, as they respond 'in only a materialistic manner' and fail to see 'the sacred truth wherein the tree is the Cross on which the bleeding Lord hangs' (p. 99). The image of the crucified Christ is also evoked in the *Shipman's Tale* when, seeking to win the wife's favour, the monk denies his ties to the merchant (ll. 148-56). His reference to a 'leef that hangeth on the tree' (l. 150) not only recalls the icon of Christ on the Cross but, in so doing, subtly points to the spiritual blindness of the monk and wife, who now become perversions of Mary and John standing at the foot of the cross.

Other small-scale studies have examined the *Pardoner's Tale*. Daniel F. Pigg's essay, 'Imagining the Mass of Death in Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*: A Critique of Medieval

Eucharistic Practices' (in Classen, ed., *Death in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times: The Material and Spiritual Conditions of the Culture of Death*, pp. 263-76), examines the tale's parody of the mass in light of contemporary superstitions surrounding the Eucharist and the popular tradition of masses for the dead, particularly following the Black Death. Pigg argues that the tale's focus on gluttony feeds directly into its treatment of the Eucharist, as is evinced by the reference to cooks who turn 'substance into accident / To fulfill al thy likerous intent' (ll. 539-40). These lines, with their reference to 'substance' and 'accident', not only recall the language of the Eucharist and transubstantiation, but also foreshadow the poisoned wine which is drunk by the two rioters at the end of the tale. As a result, this mock Eucharistic episode comes to function as a literal mass of death so that, by the tale's end, death 'reigns supreme in the literal form of plague and the literal form of bread and wine' (p. 273). Lisa Lampert-Weissig, in 'Chaucer's Pardoner and the Jews' (*Exemplaria* 28[2016] 337-60), examines references to the Jews in the *Pardoner's Prologue* and *Tale*, focusing particularly on the figure of the Old Man as a type of the Wandering Jew. According to Lampert-Weissig, the motif of the Wandering Jew serves to cement a pattern of references and allusions to the Jews throughout the *Pardoner's Prologue* and *Tale*, 'forming a constellation of meaning in which the Jew represents both spiritual blindness and a sinfulness tied to a debased corporeality' (p. 338). It is argued that the Wandering Jew can be understood as a type of relic because of his direct contact with Christ: the Jew, blighted by spiritual blindness, failed to recognize the true saviour and was thus condemned to wander the earth until Christ's return. This inability to see spiritual truth is an idea that is central to the *Pardoner's Tale*, for the rioters also exhibit the spiritual blindness and literal mindedness that is typically ascribed to the Jews in the Christian tradition. The spiritual failings of the rioters also inform the depiction of the Pardoner and his false relics, as 'Chaucer explores



how Christian materiality can be exploited if Christians lack the ability to judge what is false and what is true' (p. 347).

Kathy Lavezzo's discussion of the *Prioress's Tale* in Chapter Three of her monograph, *The Accommodated Jew: English Anti-Semitism from Bede to Milton*, considers the way in which the tale is informed by ideas of medieval commerce and urban spaces. Reflecting on the careful use of space in the *Prioress's Tale*, Lavezzo notes that a distinction is drawn between the church as a place of sanctity and the depiction of the Jewish ghetto, which is marked by the site of the privy in which the body of the 'litel clergeon' is cast. It is observed that this link to the privy is fundamental to the tale's anti-Semitic depiction of the Jews and their practice of usury, as it aligns both with filth and defecation. It also highlights, through the fate of the 'litel clergeon', the Jews' wish to 'reject Christians as waste' (p. 116). In spite of this, however, Lavezzo notes that the distinction between the church and the Jewish ghetto is not absolute throughout the tale, as the two locations come to be seen as 'contingent, fluid spaces joined through the usurious infrastructures of the tale' (p. 108). Indeed, the fact that the clergeon's body moves from the privy to the church at the tale's end may serve to hint at a connection between churches and Jewish lenders who, contemporary evidence suggests, often lent money to Christian churches throughout the period.

A political approach to reading Chaucer is adopted by William McClellan, in his monograph *Reading Chaucer After Auschwitz: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. This study asserts that in the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer draws attention to the negative consequences of sovereign power. The opening chapter reviews existing political approaches to Chaucer's poetry and notes the general failure of critics to engage with modern political theory. Influenced by the work of the Holocaust writer, Primo Levi, and the political philosopher, Giorgio Agamban, McClellan adapts the interpretative paradigms of Walter Benjamin in order to argue that our engagement with literature of the past, particularly those which

comment on sovereign power, is inescapably shaped by our knowledge of the Holocaust. Although the opening discussion touches on both the *Prioress's Tale* and the *Clerk's Tale*, the study's main five chapters offer a detailed close-reading of the *Man of Law's Tale*. It is argued that the *Man of Law's Tale* highlights the negative effects of power by focusing on the sovereign's abandonment of his subject. McClellan examines Custance's abandonment by her father, who forces her to marry the Sultan, and also reflects on the trials and emotional distress which Custance suffers as a result of her desertion. The final chapter explores the reconciliation scene at the tale's close and argues that Chaucer purposefully draws attention to Custance's obligatory submission to sovereign power at this point. McClellan concludes that in the *Man of Law's Tale* Chaucer offers a despondent critique of sovereign power: through Custance's ordeal we not only see the negative effects sovereign power has on the subject, but also realize that the subject's suffering and obedience is integral to the dynamics of this power relationship.

Issues of political power inform Shannon Godlove's discussion of the *Franklin's Tale*, "'Engelond' and 'Armorik Briteyne': Reading Brittany in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*' (*ChauR* 51[2016] 269-94). Godlove argues that Chaucer's decision to set the *Franklin's Tale* in Brittany, a notable deviation from the tale's source, can be read as part of an attempt to comment on Brittany's complex relationship with England and France during the Hundred Years' War. Indeed, the tale's narrative is directly shaped by this political context, as its treatment of the 'love triangle' (p. 288) and engagement with the issues of *maistrie* and sovereignty serve to evoke the conflict between England and France, while Dorigen's desire to attain and defend her autonomy recalls the political situation of Brittany. According to Godlove, Chaucer links each of the main characters to one of the three polities: Arveragus is aligned with England and 'Anglo-Breton interests' (p. 288), Aurelius is linked with France, and Dorigen is aligned with Brittany, something which is reinforced by her Bretonic

sounding name and its links to the Breton place-name *Droguen*. Although Chaucer is undoubtedly sympathetic to Dorigen's plight, her obedience to Arveragus' assertion of sovereignty at the end of the tale can be read as evidence of Chaucer's 'sympathetic but ultimately imperialist view of Brittany's perilous position vis-à-vis England and France' (p. 271). The *Franklin's Tale* is also discussed by Jessica Brantley in her essay, 'The *Franklin's Tale* and the Sister Arts' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 139-53). Reflecting on interartistic theories and the medieval sister arts, Brantley argues that the *Franklin's Tale* repeatedly examines the relation of words and images, particularly created artefacts, in order to 'heighten a sense of the artificial, the conventional, and the arbitrary in each system of representation' (p. 144). This questioning of the links between art and reality is not only evident in the Franklin's distinction between painted colour and the 'colours of rethoryk' (l. 726), but also in the tale's well-known description of the 'grisly rokkes blake' (l. 859). In spite of their natural form, these rocks 'have the status of artifacts in Chaucer's fiction, for they are ubiquitously conceived within the tale as God's creation' (p. 146). Yet the rocks, as artefacts, are also linked to human actions, as is evinced not only by Dorigen's rash promise, but also the workings of the clerk who seemingly makes the rocks disappear. The tale's juxtaposition of Dorigen's words and the clerk's illusion encourages us to question the extent to which reality or truth may be found in art, and suggests that image and words can only ever be 'artificially and conventionally connected to their subjects' (p. 151).

Laura Kindrick explores the treatment of drunkenness in her essay, 'Disfigured Drunkenness in Chaucer, Deschamps, and Medieval Visual Culture' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 115-38). Kindrick examines the ways in which Chaucer and Deschamps comically depict drunkenness as a form of physical disfigurement, observing that while Chaucer ridicules his fictional pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*, Deschamps satirizes the drunkenness of noble knights and squires known to him. In her

discussion of the *Canterbury Tales*, Kindrick observes that excessive drinking is treated as an object of ridicule in the *Man of Law's Tale*, as well as in the portraits of the Miller and the Summoner in the *General Prologue*. Particular attention is also paid to the depiction of the Cook in the *Manciple's Prologue*, where he is described as having drunk 'wyn ape' (l. 44). According to Kindrick, this reference to 'wyn ape' functions as a comic swipe against the Cook and reveals that, in his drunken state, he is humorously disfigured. Specifically, the associated connotation of being 'ape drunk' evokes the tradition, found in many manuscript illustrations, of apes with wine, affirming the suggestion that too much alcohol leads to man's comic degeneration: 'apes continued throughout the Middle Ages to serve as comically distorted mirrors of and burlesque commentaries on men's behaviors and pursuits, such as drinking wine' (p. 122).

Drunkeness, in a more metaphorical sense, is also considered by Wesley Chihyung Yu's 'Arcite's Consolation: Boethian Argumentation and the Phenomenology of Drunkenness' (*Exemplaria* 28[2016] 1-20). This study examines Arcite's metaphor of the 'dronke man' at lines 1260-67 of the *Knight's Tale*, considering in particular how the motif is shaped by the history of medieval argumentation and the concept of validity. It is noted that Arcite's metaphor finds its origin in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, where Lady Philosophy compares the darkened mind to the *ebrius* ('inebriated one') who cannot find his way home. Yu reflects on Boethius' use of the *ebrius* motif in relation to early approaches to argumentation, observing that 'the *ebrius* blurs the lines between universal and particular, represented by the tools of dialectical and rhetorical argumentation, and entwines these dual perspectives within itself' (p. 9). Acknowledging the inherent slipperiness of the term *ebrius*, Yu goes on to engage with later developments in scholasticism in order to consider how Arcite's lament demonstrates the tensions that exist between rational modes of argument and experiential experiences and perspectives. Yu suggests that, in the context of the *Knight's*

*Tale*, Arcite's metaphor 'insightfully asks whether patterns of validity agree with reason itself' (p. 13). Indeed, the complexity of meaning embedded within Arcite's reference to the 'dronke man' comes to inform our response to Theseus' speech at the tale's end, as it highlights that 'the form of a thought does not always equate to the validity of the conclusion' (p. 15).

Shawn Normandin, in "'Non Intellegant": The Enigmas of the *Clerk's Tale*' (*TSL* 58[2016] 189-223), argues that the enigmatic quality of the *Clerk's Tale* is a deliberate move on Chaucer's part and is designed to comment on issues of textual authority. Specifically, the construction of the tale is intended to test the Wife of Bath's assertion that experience triumphs over authority, as through its intentionally cryptic nature the Clerk subtly draws attention to the value of glossing: 'the Clerk tells a tale whose difficulties demand a clerk's gloss, an authoritative commentary that he delays, creating puzzlement' (p. 192). In his telling of the story of Griselda the Clerk repeatedly avoids glossing, choosing instead to intensify the complexity of his tale through amplification, abbreviation, and the absence of metaphor. Although Griselda, the people of Saluzzo, and even the narrator act as interpreters at various points throughout the tale, it is observed that the glosses they offer 'are often ineffectual, either failing to explain what they purport to explain or increasing the difficulties of the text rather than resolving them' (p. 198). As a result, the tale's intentionally enigmatic features serve to affirm the authority of the Clerk's position by suggesting 'that interpretative balance is lost where interpretation is in the hands of amateurs rather than clerical authorities' (p. 206).

Also touching on issues surrounding authority and the relationship between teller and tale is Elizabeth Dearnley's brief comments on the Second Nun, in her monograph *Translators and their Prologues in Medieval England*. Forming part of a discussion of women translators, Dearnley argues that the Nun's decision to describe her account of the life

of St Cecilia as a ‘translacioun’ raises interesting questions regarding not only the source text, but also the extent to which we should view her as a possible translator. Indeed, while careful to avoid asserting that Chaucer intended to present her as a realistic depiction of a female translator, Dearnley acknowledges that the Nun – as a member of a religious order and also probably educated to some degree – serves as an accurate reflection of what we know about possible women translators in the twelfth century.

Fragment Seven of the *Canterbury Tales* is explored in detail by Steele Nowlin in the fifth chapter of his monograph, *Chaucer, Gower, and the Affect of Invention*. Focusing in particular on the *Prioress’s Tale*, the *Monk’s Tale*, and the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, Nowlin argues that this fragment is the most self-reflexive section of the *Canterbury Tales*, as Chaucer puts forward a ‘satire and self-critique’ of his own ‘explorations of the relationship between affect and invention’ (p. 151). It is observed that while the *Prioress’s Tale* and the *Monk’s Tale* introduce narrative moments which have the potential to be sources of invention or productivity, such moments ultimately fail to meet this expectation; indeed, both poems work to ‘flatten and cancel the potential productivity of those moments’ (p. 155). *The Prioress’s Tale* disrupts possible moments of invention, such as its treatment of the clergeon’s miraculous singing after death, through its frequent return to the language of its prologue and the use of exaggeration. *The Monk’s Tale*, on the other hand, achieves this disruption through a narrative approach which is categorized by terseness and repetition; the Monk’s successive accounts of the falls of great men is situated firmly in a historical and, more particularly, chronicle framework, which is ‘defined by an unceasing progression of fall after fall’ (p. 173). It is argued that, by ending Fragment Seven with the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, the hindering of invention seen in both the *Prioress’s Tale* and the *Monk’s Tale* is redirected ‘toward a renewed and productive exploration of affect and invention’ (p. 183). This is evinced most particularly in the scene where Chauntecleer reacts to seeing the fox. Blurring

the lines between the animal and the human, this narrative episode highlights the tale's artificiality as it is based on a moment 'in which a human imagines what a pre-conscious affective experience might look like' (p. 186). As a result, this comic scene calls to mind, through its use of satire, the productive, poetic process of the author: 'poets invent, in the same way that chickens feel' (p. 190).

A number of small-scale studies have commented on issues relating to the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*. Timothy Stinson, in his article '(In)Completeness in Middle English Literature: The Case of the *Cook's Tale* and the *Tale of Gamelyn*' (*Manuscript Studies* 1[2016] 115-34), examines the manuscript context of the *Cook's Tale* in order to reflect on the often fragmentary states in which Middle English texts survive. Stinson offers a survey of the different ways in which scribes have responded to the unfinished *Cook's Tale*, noting that while some manuscripts omit the tale entirely, others, such as the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts, leave blank spaces in the hope that the tale might be completed. Particular attention is devoted to those manuscripts which follow the *Cook's Tale* with the *Tale of Gamelyn*, as is the case in twenty-five manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*. Although the problem of how to deal with the unfinished *Cook's Tale* is still one which confronts modern editors, Stinson suggests that the rise of digitization, and the digitized text in particular, may help to address the textual problems posed by the tale, allowing us to examine competing textual versions of the work simultaneously. Also interested in manuscripts, albeit from a different perspective, is Maidie Hilmo's essay, 'The Visual Semantics of Ellesmere: Gold, Artifice and Audience' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 218-43). Offering a detailed examination of the visual format of the Ellesmere manuscript, Hilmo considers its layout, decoration, and use of illustration in order to reflect on how such features interact with the text and lead to a meaningful reading experience for the manuscript's high-status audience. It is observed that the manuscript's use

of gold leaf not only demonstrates its expense, but often works in synergy with the text, as is evident in the portrait of the Miller whose thumb is tipped with gold in order to echo line 563 of the *General Prologue*. The manuscript's *demi-vinet* border decoration also shapes the reader's experience, as it creates cohesion between the tales by investing the text with a 'dynamic rhythmic flow which moves an audience along in orderly fashion' (p. 226). In her consideration of the manuscript's illustrations of the pilgrim-narrators, Hilmo notes that they often closely adhere to the descriptions of the pilgrims in the *General Prologue*. It is also suggested that, by serving to intensify the link between teller and tale, these illustrations further deflect authorial responsibility away from Chaucer.

Finally, in 'Miracle Windows and the Pilgrimage to Canterbury' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 154-74), David Raybin considers why Chaucer may have chosen Canterbury as the final destination for his pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*. In order to situate Chaucer's decision in context, Raybin not only reflects on Canterbury Cathedral's prominence as an important religious shrine in the later Middle Ages, but also examines Chaucer's own connections to Kent, as well as references to Thomas Becket or Canterbury found in Chaucer's works. Raybin's most important assertion is the suggestion that the impressive stained-glass windows in Canterbury Cathedral, which depict the miracles of Thomas Becket, might have served as a source of inspiration for the *Canterbury Tales* and encouraged Chaucer to align Canterbury with the art of storytelling. Indeed, in his detailed discussion of the iconography of each of the miracle windows, Raybin notes that they not only 'relate picture stories of a strikingly diverse group of people, both religious and secular, from various social ranks' (p. 162), but also frequently include the motif of pilgrimage. Thus, as the windows present 'a collection of stories exquisitely told, all of them linked by pilgrimage and by the miracles of Becket's healing' (p. 172), Raybin argues that they provide a previously unknown visual source for the frame narrative of the *Canterbury Tales*.



### 3. *Troilus & Criseyde*

Heading up the highly varied work on *Troilus* is Jeff Espie and Sarah Star's 'Reading Chaucer's Calkas: Prophecy and Authority in *Troilus and Criseyde*', *ChauR* 51:3(2016), 382-401. Espie and Star examine the neglected figure of Calkas, whose entry into the narrative, they find, draws together two contradictory ways of thinking about history, presenting it as both deterministic and the product of human agencies. This duality is made especially visible by Chaucer's departures from Benoit and Boccaccio: on the one hand, by addressing Laomedon's treachery as the counterpart of Oedipus' curse, Calkas heightens the sense that Chaucer's characters occupy a fatalistic universe, in which the future is fixed incontrovertibly by the past; on the other, by demanding prisoners alongside Criseyde, he represents opportunism and self-interest, actively trying to engineer the events he predicts. These concerns have wider repercussions in the text, since Calkas seems to be the double of Chaucer's narrator, assuming the same emotive, mournful posture.

History in its more immediate sense guides Sarah Rees Jones' discussion of urban spaces, 'The Word on the Street: Chaucer and the Regulation of Nuisance in Post-Plague London' (in Valerie Allen and Ruth Evans, eds., *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, pp. 97-126). Rees Jones reads *Troilus and Criseyde* in terms of what it can reveal about the regulation of medieval streets. She notes that both Boccaccio's text, and the Troy in which its action takes place, are reconfigured to reflect the 'contemporary London landscape' (p. 102); particularly revealing is the poem's treatment of the window, as an interstitial structure that brings the private and public spheres into contact. Rees Jones looks at the scene in Book 2 in which Pandarus lures Criseyde to the window, causing her to betray her love for Troilus when he rides past, a moment which combines the same intimate and public energies

as marriage itself: as she writes, in the poem, ‘the street is the critical imagined space in which individuals are forged into socially reproductive beings through the frame of the window’ (p. 105). Prosecutions for public nuisance offences show that Chaucer’s sensitivities were shared by others at his social level, as aldermen sought to police the street against sexual misconduct that could infiltrate the secure space of the home.

The history of the text itself concerns Sarah Baechele, in ‘Multi-Dimensional Reading in Two Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*’, *ChauR* 51:2 (2016), 248-68. Baechele examines the marginal quotations from Latin sources that appear in several copies of *Troilus*. Unlike the similar apparatus found in around thirty *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts, and the more expansive counterpart in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, only a relatively small number of the *Troilus* marginalia seem to be authorial in origin; however, like the *Canterbury Tales* citations, which evoke multiple authorities and competing polemic positions, the *Troilus* references often complicate the base-text, opening up ‘a hermeneutic of indeterminacy that offers readers multiple contexts within which to understand Chaucer’s poetry’ (p. 249). Baechele pays particular attention to the glosses in Cambridge, St. John’s College MS L.i and Cambridge, University Library MS Gg. 4. 27, not only in terms of their contents, and the ‘darkly moralizing’ effects of their citations, but in terms of what they can say about Chaucer’s developing interest in these intertextualising frameworks (p. 258).

While most of the essays in Andrew James Johnston, Russell West Pavlov, and Elisabeth Kempf, eds., *Love, History and Emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare* concern Chaucer's relationship with Shakespeare (see below, Section 5), a number deal with *Troilus* in its own terms. The editors' introduction, for instance, explicitly calls for a more diachronic approach in reading the poem, one that moves beyond New Historicism to acknowledge the ways in which 'texts themselves interrogate their own moment in history', taking part in dialogues across conventional period boundaries (pp. 1-16). Andrew James Johnston's essay, 'Gendered Books: Reading, Space and Intimacy' (pp. 172-88), puts these principles into practice, examining *Troilus*' treatment of its sources, especially Statius. Johnston notes that allusions to produce a dark undertow in the poem, gesturing back to the violent substratum of Troy's history. These meanings surface most clearly when Pandarus interrupts Criseyde and her companions during their reading from Theban history. Johnston takes issue with interpretations that see a rigid binarism here between male literary classicism and emotive, female vernacularity; instead, he proposes that Pandarus has intruded on 'a literary salon, where the frivolous matchmaker can offer the sophisticated literary ladies no more than a superficial knowledge' (p. 176). Comparing this tense, destabilising moment to Pandarus' own feigned reading of an 'unread as well as unnamed' volume while his niece and *Troilus* consummate their love, Johnston identifies a tension between a form of reading that closes down language, and a 'female way of reading that emphasizes a text's openness and complexity' (pp. 182-83).

Finally, a conscious movement away from history, at least as an established critical practice, is found in Andrew James Johnston, Russell West Pavlov and Elisabeth Kempf, eds., *Love, History and Emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare*. While most of the essays collected here, and will be summarised in the 'Reception and Reputation' section, a number deal with *Troilus* in its own terms. The editors' introduction, for instance, explicitly frames the collection as a contribution to the loosening grip of New Historicism over medieval studies (pp. 1-16). It calls for a more diachronic approach, one that acknowledges the ways in which 'texts themselves interrogate their own moment in history', either by alluding to or reimagining older cultural materials, or taking part in dialogues across conventional period boundaries. Andrew James Johnston's essay puts these principles into practice, looking closely at *Troilus*' treatment of its sources ('Gendered Books: Reading, Space and Intimacy', pp. 172-88). According to Johnston, Chaucer's references to Statius produce a dark undertow in the poem, gesturing back to the violent substratum of Troy's history. These meanings surface most clearly when Pandarus interrupts Criseyde and her companions during their reading from Theban history. Johnston takes issue with interpretations that see a rigid

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#### **4. Other Works**

Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls* has attracted significant scholarly attention this year, forming the subject of a number of small-scale studies. Sarah Powrie, in her article ‘A Moral Garden “Out of Olde Feldes”’: Deallegorized Virtue in Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*’ (*MP* 114[2016] 170-94), examines the significance of landscape, particularly the garden setting, in the *Parliament of Fowls*. She argues that in contrast to the conventional *locus amoenus*, the garden in Chaucer’s poem is an ‘ethically charged terrain’ (pp. 170-1) where virtue and vice come into conflict. The binary opposition of virtue and vice is explored most fully through the characterization of the dreamer-narrator whose ‘attempts to be virtuous lapse and deviate’ (p. 172); over the course of the poem, he shifts from temperance to intemperance, and from fortitude to cowardice. Although the *Parliament of Fowls* owes a debt to the didactic garden allegories composed by the twelfth-century writer, Alan of Lille, it is observed that Chaucer ‘does not idealize the harmony of humanity and natural law’ (p. 179) as Alan does, but instead portrays his dreamer-narrator and the Goddess Nature as autonomous agents. As a result of this, Chaucer not only questions the relationship between humanity and Nature, but

interrogates the natural order by drawing attention to the mutability of human nature due to the difficulty of maintaining virtue.

Michael J. Warren's article, "'Kek kek': Translating Birds in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*" (SAC 38[2016] 109-32), explores the importance of 'birdspeak' (p. 115) in the poem, focusing particularly on line 499 which articulates the call of the birds: "'Kek kek! kokkow! quek quek!'". According to Warren, in depicting 'real birds' voices' (p. 111) this line reveals Chaucer's interest in issues of translation and interpretation. Indeed, by presenting a moment where the translation of the birds' voices into human speech is disrupted, Chaucer encourages us to question the categories and status of voice and to reflect on the possible meanings of this 'birdspeak' in context. Although the 'birds signify people', by giving space to their real voices on line 499 the poem reminds us of the 'force and capabilities of nonhuman creatures who debate some quite specifically avian agendas' (p. 132). Also interested in the poem's complexity of language is Charles Wuest's 'Chaucer's Enigmatic Thing in *The Parliament of Fowls*' (SIP 113[2016] 485-500). Wuest examines the use of the word 'thing' in the poem, which is first deployed in the narrator's wish to learn a 'certeyn thing' on line 20, and is then repeated as the narrator falls asleep (ll. 90-1) and again at the poem's conclusion (l. 698). It is argued that these three occurrences of the word 'thing' serve a structuring purpose, as each appears at what Wuest describes as a 'threshold of the poem' (p. 486). Noting that the second instance of the word (on lines 90-1) parallels a description of the frustration that arises from desire in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Wuest observes that these thresholds, or moments of transition, are linked closely to the narrator's desires. Although the exact desire of the narrator remains elusive, the word 'thing' is linked to the act of writing and poetic craft throughout the poem and thus comes to reflect 'Chaucer's strategy for marking the interstices where new poems form' (p. 486).

Martha Rust's essay, "'Qui bien aime a tarde oblie": Lemmata and Lists in the *Parliament of Fowls*' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 195-217) analyzes the use of underline in the versions of the *Parliament of Fowls* preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 683 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 16, respectively. In these manuscripts underline is always drawn in red ink and occurs specifically in those parts of the poem which include a list of names, such as the catalogue of tragic lovers on lines 286-92, and the list of birds which runs from lines 330-64. Rust seeks to contextualize this distinctive feature by reflecting on the history of underlining, as well as considering the provenance and ownership of the two manuscripts, pointing in particular to their educated, gentry owners. It is thus asserted that the use of underline would appeal to the scholarly aspirations of the texts' original readers who, due to their likely grammar school education, would have understood not only that the use of underline signalled 'a word or phrase with an excess of significance waiting to be explored' (p. 213), but that underlined words should also call to mind a catalogue of existing textual references to aid understanding.

Scholars have not entirely overlooked Chaucer's other dream vision poems. For instance, the *Book of the Duchess* forms the subject of Jamie C. Fumo's study, 'The "alderbeste yifte": Objects and the Poetics of Munificence in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*' (*Exemplaria* 28[2016] 277-96). Through a consideration of the poem's depiction of Lady White and her role as gift-giver to the Man in Black, Fumo examines how the theory of gift-giving shapes our understanding of the poem. Approaching the *Book of the Duchess* through its historical and social contexts, Fumo reflects on the strategic marriage between John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster and considers Blanche's own role as a gift in marriage designed to affirm relationships between men. It is observed that in the poem Chaucer seeks to transcend Blanche's own situation in marriage by investing Lady White with the freedom and power of gift-giving. Yet, while Chaucer might subtly be alluding to

Blanche's role as gift through his depiction of Lady White, Chaucer also affirms 'a potential sphere of reciprocal obligation' (p. 284) by constructing his poem as a gift to John of Gaunt. As a result of these twin emphases, the language of gift-giving in the poem comes to signify not only the marital relationship and the role of wife, but also the composition of poetry itself.

The *House of Fame* is discussed by Alexandra Cook in her essay 'Creative Memory and Visual Image in Chaucer's *House of Fame*' (in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 23-39). Cook argues that in the *House of Fame* Chaucer offers an examination of medieval mnemonic theory in order to comment more fully on poetic invention. It is argued that the poem's emphasis on artificial memory – a system in which memories are formed by associating material with vivid, mental images – is evident through Chaucer's detailed depictions of the Temple of Venus, the House of Fame, and the House of Rumour. As each of these locations provides the dreamer-narrator with a highly sensory experience in which he 'sees, hears, and senses living moments from classical texts' (p. 24), we are encouraged to align the narrator's visual experience with the vivid images that are crucial to deliberate memory making. For Chaucer, this process of memory making is one that is inherently productive, as is evinced when the concrete images in the Temple of Venus become, through the dreamer-narrator's own account of what he sees, 'artefacts of artificial memory' that serve as a 'form of art' (p. 31). As a result, in the *House of Fame* Chaucer demonstrates how artificial memory is an inherently creative source which 'can serve as a tool for narrative genesis' (p. 34).

Chaucer's *House of Fame* is also discussed in the first chapter of Steele Nowlin's monograph, *Chaucer, Gower, and the Affect of Invention* (also reviewed in Section 2 above). In keeping with the study's wider discussion of poetic invention as 'a process characterized by emergence and potentiality' (p. 1), Nowlin argues that the *House of Fame* explores the theme of invention through an emphasis on movement. Although the poem is underpinned by

a sense of movement due to the narrator's journey in his dream, it is Chaucer's treatment of 'tydynges' which most fully represents the process of poetic invention. Indeed, in the House of Rumour Chaucer depicts the origin and emergence of these 'tydynges', detailing their moment of becoming in concrete, visual terms; according to Nowlin, it is this which 'casts the *tydynges* as emergent phenomena, as things that are about to happen, rather than merely as the personifications of discourse' (p. 52). This treatment of poetic invention is further affirmed by Chaucer's depiction of Dido in Book One, as we come to see how the movement which underpins these 'tydynges' culminates in poetry and emotional experience. Thus, for Nowlin, the narrator's account of Dido's grief is designed to remind us that 'the alignment of affect with invention reveals the two concepts not simply to be analogous processes of emergence, but essentially linked processes by which inventional action is made real' (pp. 58-9).

Chapter Two of Nowlin's study discusses the affect of invention in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. According to Nowlin, while the *House of Fame* explores the process of poetic invention, it is the *Legend* which 'takes up affect and invention together as components of a single poetic project' (p. 70). Rather than viewing the *Prologue* and the legends as distinct entities, Nowlin argues that these two parts work together through their shared emphasis on the relationship between emotional experience and poetic art. Indeed, emotion, and its role as a creative, poetic force, forms a central component of the *Legend*, as is evinced not only in the *Prologue*'s account of how the text came into being, but also through the individual expressions of grief contained within the legends themselves. By examining the ways in which the legend's emotional language might 'rupture gendered patterns of narrative' (p. 90), as seen in the *Legend of Cleopatra*, Nowlin concludes that 'Chaucer's legends elicit an affective response that forces a resistance to participation in those narratives' (p. 90).



This year several scholars have commented on Chaucer's short poems. Chaucer's *Complaint of Mars* forms the subject of study in Megan Murton's article 'Secular Consolation in Chaucer's *Complaint of Mars*' (*SAC* 38[2016] 75-107). Murton argues that the exploration of secularity and temporality found in the *Complaint of Mars* reveals Chaucer's ambivalence to the secular, and thus challenges the popular conception of him as a 'secular poet'. Murton observes that, in order to highlight temporality and the secular world, the linearity of time which underpins the poem's narrative is intentionally disrupted through the use of asides, in which the narrator questions the story and its action. The contingency of linear time is further questioned through the use of the complaint form itself, as it functions as a vehicle through which the speaker – in this case, Mars – can immerse himself in a single moment and express a 'longing to escape the secular world of time and change together' (p. 90). As a result of this desire for stasis, by the end of the poem 'the secular is shown to be an unstable and contingent category that ultimately cannot provide consolation' (p. 97). Also interested in Chaucer's complaint poems is Cynthia A. Rogers, who examines Chaucer's *Complaint unto Pity* in her essay "'Buried in an Herte": French Poetics and the Ends of Genre in Chaucer's *Complaint unto Pity*' (*ChauR* 51[2016] 187-208). Rogers approaches the poem through a consideration of Chaucer's use of the complaint form, particularly with regards to its relation to the conventions of French poetry and the tradition of *fin'amors*. It is asserted that, through its repeated emphasis on death, the poem fails to adhere fully to conventional generic expectations and thus becomes 'both a clever critique and a loving homage to complaint' (p. 190). Indeed, by linking death so closely to the tropes of *fin'amors*, Chaucer humorously overturns the conventions of the French tradition and suggests, 'with a bit of wry humor, that love complaint at its core seeks both an emotionally dead recipient and also the death of the narrator' (p. 199). Finally, the poems *Fortune* and *Truth* are examined by Katarzyna Stadnik in 'Sharing Minds in Panchrony: Chaucer's *Fortune* and *Truth*' (in

Łozowski and Stadnik, eds., *Visions and Revisions: Studies in Theoretical and Applied Linguistic*, pp. 179-86). Stadnik argues that imagery communicated through language serves as a means of cultural transmission, as the images function as ‘memory carriers which enable accumulation of knowledge and thus facilitate the continuity of symbolic tradition’ (p. 181). The imagery deployed in *Fortune* and *Truth* relies on this tradition of symbolism, as the two poems engage explicitly with the Boethian images of mutability and Fortune. However, the poems also demonstrate the role of imagery in cultural transmission by demonstrating how images of the pagan past become formative for the audience’s future; as Stadnik observes, ‘Chaucer’s medieval reading of originally pagan imagery in the two lyrics provide an allegorical vehicle for the contemporary system of values shared within the particular community’ (p. 184).

A study of Chaucer’s *Boece* forms an important part of Melinda E. Nielsen’s article, ‘Translating Lady Philosophy: Chaucer and the Boethian Corpus of Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.3.21’ (*ChauR* 51[2016] 209-26). Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.3.21 is a Boethian compilation which contains copies of the Latin *De consolacione Philosophiae* and Chaucer’s *Boece*, as well as marginal glosses taken from the Latin commentary written by Nicholas Trevet. Nielsen argues that the texts and glosses preserved in this manuscript can aid our understanding of Lady Philosophy, as they demonstrate how her depiction was shaped for a tiered audience and, more particularly, enable us to understand more fully Chaucer’s depiction of Lady Philosophy in the *Boece*. In contrast to the language used in the Latin *Consolatio*, it is noted that Chaucer’s Lady Philosophy is repeatedly described as ‘norisschyng’ Boethius with her wisdom and authority. According to Nielsen, this description is clearly indebted to the later commentary tradition which, as the glosses in the manuscript show, drew careful attention to Lady Philosophy’s three main roles as teacher, healer, and nurse.

Finally, Joe Stadolnik's essay, 'Naming the Unnamed "Philosofre" in Chaucer's Prologue to the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*' (*MÆ* 85[2016] 314-18), sheds new light on the possible identity of the unnamed 'philosofre' referred to at the opening of the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. Stadolnik argues that lines 5-10 of the *Treatise*, which take the form of a maxim on friendship spoken by this 'philosofre', find their source in the opening line of the prologue to the *Practica brevis*, a medical treatise attributed to Johannes Platearius and which circulated in England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although some critics have suggested that the unnamed philosopher is Aristotle, Stadolnik argues that Chaucer's usage of the term is more appropriately understood in an alchemical context. Indeed, not only does Chaucer use the word 'philosofre' to describe an alchemist in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, but Platearius' maxim on friendship was commonly appended to the introduction of alchemical texts. Thus, 'it is possible that Chaucer came across the maxim appended to a fourteenth-century copy of one of these texts, and knew the maxim as the opening to an alchemical text instead of, or in addition to, a medical one' (p. 316).

## **5. Reception and Reputation**

The large volume of material on Chaucer's various readerships begins with tributes paid in his own lifetime, with Elizaveta Strakhov's 'Tending to One's Garden: Deschamps' "Ballade to Chaucer" Reconsidered', *MÆ* 85 (2016), 236-358. Strakhov reads Deschamps' famous ballade not as the unequivocal praise it is often taken to be, nor as a straightforward profession of anti-Englishness, like much of Deschamps' other output. For her, a key detail is the emphasis on Chaucer as 'grant translateur', a feature which exposes Deschamps' interest in the politics of cultural exchange. She finds that the ballade looks back to the cross-Channel spat between Philippe de Vitry and Jean de le Mote in the reign of Edward III, especially

through its selection of classical allusions. As a result, the ballade not only explores what it means to write francophone poetry outside France, but the legitimacy of using classical material and traditions. The 'Ballad' and the verse-exchange between Vitry and Le Mote are both quoted in full, in their original form and in a fresh English translation.

Work on Chaucer's fifteenth-century followers includes Sebastian Langdell, "What Shal I Calle Thee? What is Thy Name?": Thomas Hoccleve and the making of "Chaucer", *NML* 16 (2016), 250-276. Langdell examines the ways in which Hoccleve does not merely emulate Chaucer's poetic persona, but actively reconstructs the earlier poet. He sees Hoccleve bringing about a shift in the valuation of Chaucer's authorship, one that departs from the earlier comments of Walton, Gower and Usk, and that abides well into the modern period, creating a Chaucer who is 'not only a historical figure, but a figure of learning' (p. 275). Later in the same century, Patrick Timmis reads Henryson's engagement with his predecessor in 'Saturn and Soliloquy: Henryson's Conversation with Chaucerian Free Will', *ChauR* 51:4(2016), 453-68. According to Timmis, Henryson followed Chaucer's lead in portraying a protagonist struggling against, and eventually coming to terms with, the place of individual agency in a providential universe. Whereas Chaucer shows Troilus passing through such a process of gradual revelation, Henryson repeats the pattern with Criseyde, showing her moving from fatalism, and from impugning the powers of fate and the gods, to acceptance of her own volition and responsibility as part of an 'inner maturation' (p. 457).

However, most scholarship on Chaucer's earliest readers is concentrated on the physical traces they left behind in manuscripts. In this vein is Kara Doyle, "'Je mavisera y': Chaucer's Anelida, Shirley's Chaucer, Shirley's Readers", *SAC* 38 (2016), 275-85. Doyle examines Shirley's annotations in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.20, especially his contrasting treatment of *Anelida and Arcite* and Lydgate's *Mumming at Wyndsore*. The former is given a relatively lengthy heading that encourages the reader to pity Anelida and

see her voice as one of 'trouthe and stedfastnesse'; it is also preceded by a sequence of French lyrics, one of which similarly ventriloquises a woman bemoaning the deceptiveness of *fin' amor* patter. Lydgate's text, on the other hand, simply has one of its passages of ironic misogyny flagged up. Doyle suggests that these interventions show a nuanced understanding of Chaucer's treatment of women in the first decades of the fifteenth century; they also show the continued importance of French poetry in making sense of his verse. Shirley's heading and relevant lyric are transcribed, and the lyric is translated in full. Gender and manuscript studies also combine in Nancy Bradley Warren, 'Chaucer, the Chaucer Tradition, and Female Monastic Readers', *ChauR* 51:1(2016), 88-106. Warren looks at the traces left by nuns at Syon and Amesbury in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 416 and British Library MS Add. 18632, revealing marked interest in Chaucer and the Chaucerian tradition. She uncovers a surprising emphasis on texts without obvious utility for female monasticism, such as the worldly *Parliament of Fowls* and political *Siege of Thebes*. Warren discusses the histories of the two manuscripts, and seeks to reconstruct the potential uses such works might have had in a monastic context; looking to the general contents of the nuns' libraries, and to the ties between their foundations and political dynasties, she finds the Syon and Amesbury sisters cultivating an aura of self-consciousness learnedness, setting themselves up 'as apt and able to learn, and perhaps able to impart to others in positions of political power' (p. 106).

Work of this kind continues with William A. Quinn, 'Odd Bits of *Troilus and Criseyde* and the Rights of Chaucer's Early Readers', *ChauR* 51:3(2016), 338-81. Quinn discusses sixteen fragments of *Troilus and Criseyde*, ranging from repurposed folia to samplings of a few stanzas or lines. He cautions against dismissing these texts as mere scraps or remnants: not only do they range across several different categories of usage, but most constitute 'completed acts of transcription' for their copyists, rather than partial efforts to record the poem (p. 340). As a whole, they show readers freely adapting the poem to suit

their own needs, from the various decontextualised copies of the ‘Canticus Troili’, to the lines from Pandarus reproduced by Shirley in a Huntingdon Library MS, to the collection of refabricated quotations known as ‘The Tongue’; even vandalised pieces, such as the Cecil Fragment, sewn into the cover of a sixteenth-century accounts book, highlight the general disposability of vernacular manuscripts, and their lack of prestige as objects. Considerably greater worth is accorded to manuscripts in Christopher de Hamel’s *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*. As part of this highly personal and anecdotal study, which won the 2017 Wolfson History Prize, De Hamel addresses the Hengwrt Chaucer as one of the ‘most celebrated illuminated manuscripts in the world’ (p. 1). He gives a detailed account of the construction and appearance of the manuscript, with its rat-worried pages, and provides an overview of the Pinkhurst controversy in the wake of Linne Mooney’s work; while he treats Mooney’s findings with respect, he finds that he cannot ultimately support her conclusions. Perhaps of greatest interest for Chaucerians are the volume’s full-page, full-colour reproductions, which include the *General Prologue*, the *Cook’s Tale*, the inscriptions of the Brereton family, and Pinkhurst’s oath from the ordinances of the Scrivener’s Company.

Advancing into the era of print, Devani Singh evaluates Speght as a mediator of Chaucer for early modern readers (“‘In his old dress’: Packaging Thomas Speght’s Chaucer for Renaissance Readers’, *Chaucer Review* 51:4[2016], 478-502). Singh pays particular attention to the paratexts that accompany Speght’s edition of the *Workes*, especially Beaumont’s epistle to Speght, and Speght’s own address ‘To the Reader’. Taking these elements together, Singh analyses the ways in which they bring their late Elizabethan interpretive community into focus: he finds that they anticipate and mould the reader’s response by ‘preemptively shielding both the poet and the editor from detractors who may deem Chaucer’s language coarse or unpolished’; they also stress the necessity of a translator

to make Chaucer accessible, and frame Speght's efforts as part of a nationalistic project (p. 499).

In the first of two essays on Chaucer's early modern reception, Megan Cook considers the strangely chequered history of the Retraction of the *Canterbury Tales* ("Here taketh the makere of this book his leve": The Retraction and Chaucer's Works in Tudor England', *SIP* 113:1[2016], 32-54). As she points out, the Retraction was either ignored or treated with mistrust by a string of early editors, despite its strong manuscript authority; as late as Urry in the eighteenth century, it was seen as a scribal forgery, produced to cover up alleged suppression of the Wycliffite *Plowman's Tale*. Cook notes that 'Adam Scriveyn' often provides a coda in place of the Retraction, and reflects on the implications of this choice: she suggests that it effectively modernises Chaucer, steering him away from medieval forms of penitence, and presenting him as a proto-Renaissance poet concerned with self-fashioning. In her second contribution to this area, Cook considers the activities of a particular sixteenth-century reader ('Joseph Holland and the Idea of the Chaucerian Book', *Manuscript Studies* 1:2[2016], 165-188). Holland, a lawyer and member of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries who died in c.1605, owned Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4 27, containing copies of the *Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus*, and the *Legend of Good Women*. Cook finds that Holland's revisions and annotations, which amend Chaucer's spellings as well as explain his references, are in line with Speght's printed editions; she argues that Holland shows a general tendency towards 'inverted transmission', awarding the modern printed copies greater weight and authority than the medieval manuscripts on which they were based (p. 166).

Several essays consider Spenser's usage of Chaucer. Jeff Espie looks at one of the places where this debt lies heaviest, the opening of the fourth book of the *Faerie Queene* ('Literary Paternity and Narrative Revival: Chaucer's Soul(s) from Spenser to Dryden', *MP*

114:1[2016], 39-58). Espie contends that Spenser brings *Anelida and Arcite* into play here as well as the *Knight's* and *Squire's Tales*; as a consequence, Spenser's relationship to Chaucer becomes not merely filial but restorative. This approach governs Spenser's engagement with Chaucer across the board, as Spenser is found to operate in the omissions and absences that litter the *Knight's Tale*; these concerns stretch beyond Spenser into the work of Dryden, especially in his characterisation of Chaucer's influence as a form of transmigration, a conceit which plays with the same themes of inheritance and renovation. A literary lineage with a similar reach is mapped out by Alexandra Gillespie, 'Unknowe, unknow, Vncovthe, uncouth: From Chaucer and Gower to Spenser and Milton', in Andrew King and Matthew Woodcock, eds., *Medieval into Renaissance: Essays for Helen Cooper*, pp. 15-34. Gillespie's central claim is that Chaucer provided a 'complex, self-reflexive, relentlessly ironizing' persona for his early modern followers, one that upends the authority of the author even as it seems to enshrine it (p. 20). This point comes to light particularly clearly in the term 'uncouth' in E.K.'s commentary on Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*; since this masquerades as a quotation from *Troilus*, while bringing together connotations of knowledge and possibility, it encapsulates the instability of Chaucer in the period. Links between the two poets continue to provoke commentary in Katherine C. Little, 'What Spenser Took from Chaucer: Worldly Vanity in *The Ruines of Time* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, *ELH* 83:2(2016), 431-55. Little asks exactly why Spenser should describe Chaucer with the Virgilian pseudonym 'Tityrus' in the *Shepherd's Calender*. She argues that this merging of Chaucer and Virgil serves to present Chaucer's work as more than a simple vehicle for 'moralitee'; it turns him into the equivalent of a classical writer, 'capable of teaching the same sorts of lessons as classical texts', and even promoting him as an influence to rival the poets of Greek and Rome (p. 435). As a result, the presence of Chaucer in the *Calender* and *Ruines of Time* proves to be an important site around which questions of humanist morality crystallise.



Shakespeare's debt to Chaucer receives equally extensive treatment in Andrew James Johnson, Russell West-Pavlov, and Elisabeth Kempf, eds., *Love, History and Emotion in Chaucer and Shakespeare*, a discussion of the two versions of *Troilus*. Many contributions find Shakespeare extending or reiterating tendencies in Chaucer's text. Andreas Mahler's contribution ('Potent Raisings: Performing Passion in Chaucer and Shakespeare', pp. 32-45), finds that Chaucer and Shakespeare both refuse to allow any single conception of love to predominate. Chaucer activates Petrarchan and Platonist discourses simultaneously, while Shakespeare, writing at a point in which love as a literary resource seemed to be reaching a point of exhaustion, runs further with Chaucer's 'pluralising' of love, adding a hedonistic element to the general debate. Paul Strohm finds similar parallels in 'The Space of Desire in Chaucer's and Shakespeare's Troy' (pp. 46-60). Strohm notes that Troy is a virtual code-word for London for both poets, owing to the well-worn conception of London as 'Troynovaunt'. Both writers approach Troy/London as a markedly claustrophobic place, in which any distinction between private and public is difficult to assert, and in which every 'private' transaction immediately becomes public knowledge.

However, departures between the two authors come to light in other chapters. Hence Wolfram R. Keller ('Arrogant Authorial Performances', pp. 141-56) finds Chaucer and Shakespeare dealing with different models of authorship, one 'self-effacing', the other 'self-crowning'. These positions drive their characterisation of Criseyde or Cressida: while both treat her as a sort of 'counter-author', attempting to script her own narrative, her scandalous arrogance in Chaucer becomes a marked *humilitas* in Shakespeare. Differences are also analysed by Stephanie Trigg in 'Language in her Eye: the Expressive Face of Criseyde/Cressida' (pp. 94-108). While Chaucer's blazoning of Criseyde is comparatively restrained, her face remains a potent source of meaning; for the narrator, it is a beautiful, changeless surface that belies the shifting self beneath, for Troilus a code to be cracked, and for Pandarus

‘an asset to be organised and directed’ (p. 98). Shakespeare seems to take a more reductive approach, however, as the same meanings become themselves instantly and immediately interpretable as signs of promiscuity. For his part, David Wallace finds not just discontinuity between the two versions but outright aggression (‘Changing Emotions in *Troilus*: the Crucial Year’, pp. 157-71). While Chaucer set up an emotional core in his text by means of a running commentary on its narrator’s feelings, Shakespeare installs hostility at the heart of his own adaptation; this receives its strongest expression in the recurrent references to disease and infection, violently contaminating the bodies and narrative of Chaucer’s text, perhaps in imitation of Henryson’s punishment of Criseyde.

Philip Knox, William Poole, and Mark Griffith reach further into the seventeenth century with ‘Reading Chaucer in New College, Oxford, in the 1630s: The Commendatory Verses to Francis Kynaston’s *Amorum Troili et Criseidæ*’, *MÆ* 85:1 (2016), 33-58. The authors concentrate on the paratexts that accompany Kynaston’s Latin translation of *Troilus*, printed in part in 1635. The particular framework that draws their attention is the sequence of fifteen English poems in that precedes the translation, composed by figures such as Samuel Evans and William Barker; they find the verses grappling with wider questions about the merit of Chaucer and his culture, and striking a variety of tones from respectful to irreverent. The texts also reveal a particular interest in Chaucer at New College, Oxford, since a greater degree of enthusiasm is perceptible in authors with ties to the college. Rather less eagerness is found in Misha Teramura, ‘Chaucer Folios in Colonial America: A Correction’, *ChauR* 51:4 (2016), 503-14. Teramura revisits Candace Barrington’s claim that the 1679 will of Daniel Russell, a resident of Charlestown, offers the first evidence of Chaucer ownership in the New World. The source of this claim, Samuel Eliot Morison’s 1936 catalogue of early American libraries, is problematic: not only does it confuse Russell’s will with that of his contemporary John Brock, but Brock’s entry for ‘Chaucer’ can be more plausibly read as a reference to the

Huguenot theologian Danial Chaumier, a point demonstrated by the other volumes in Brock's possession, and by Teramura's reproduction of the relevant documentary evidence.

In the Victorian period, Peter Beidler finds a previously unnoticed reference to Chaucer in the staunchly masculine context of H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* ("An Old-Fashioned Form of the Zulu Tongue": A Nineteenth-Century Chaucer Allusion', *ChauR* 51:4 (2016), 518-19). The citation appears when Alan Quartermain claims that the language spoken by an uncontacted tribe has the same relationship to Zulu as 'the English of Chaucer does to the English of the nineteenth century' (p. 519). In the twentieth century, Carolyn Collette examines the work of the British sculptor Elisabeth Frink, who produced two series of prints based on episodes from the *Canterbury Tales* in 1970-72 ('Drawing Out a Tale: Elisabeth Frink's *Etchings Illustrating Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"*', in Fein and Raybin, eds., *Chaucer: Visual Approaches*, pp. 245-66). While Collette judges Frink's work to be avowedly idiosyncratic, she also finds it anticipating many of the critical occupations of Chaucerians in the last decades of the twentieth century; in particular, it places clear emphasis on the power dynamics of the *Tales*, and the ways in which these tensions organise themselves along gender lines.

However, the most sustained discussion of Chaucer in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries concerns a different visual medium altogether. Kathleen Kelly Coyne and Tison Pugh, eds., *Chaucer on Screen: Absence, Presence, and Adapting the Canterbury Tales*, brings together seventeen essays that weigh up Chaucer's varying fortunes on television and at the movies. After a brief foreword by Terry Jones, whose own engagement with the Middle Ages has shuttled between the scholarly and cinematic, Coyne Kelly and Pugh's introduction (pp. 1-16) spells out the ruling concerns of the collection. It takes as its starting point the strange neglect that Chaucer has received from screenwriters, especially when compared to Shakespeare or Austen; it also stresses the problematic nature of source and

adaptation, and how these issues can refer us back to Chaucer's own engagement with inherited narratives. Indeed, these difficulties explicitly inform a number of the contributions: rounding out the collection, for instance, is Laurie Finke and Martin B. Scichtman's 'Marketing Chaucer: *Mad Men* and the Wife of Bath' (pp. 251-65), which sees analogies between Don Draper and Alisoun not as 'direct quotation or traditional intertextual reference' but 'as a ghostly presence that haunts... a kind of spectral remediation' (p. 254).

The first set of essays tackles Chaucer's absence from the screen head-on. Elizabeth Scala's 'Naked Yet Invisible: Filming Chaucer's Narrator' (pp. 19-32) compares one of Chaucer's rare entries on the screen in Brian Helgeland's *A Knight's Tale* to the comparably playful treatment Shakespeare receives in John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love*. She finds that Chaucer's evasiveness as an author, his lack of direct and unequivocal 'presence' in his work, has conspired to keep him at arm's length for audiences and filmmakers; she also finds Helgeland acknowledging and defying this circumstance in equal measure. Shakespeare continues to provide a touchstone in Susan Aronstein and Peter Parolin's 'The Play's the Thing: the Cinematic Fortunes of Chaucer and Shakespeare' (pp. 33-44). Taking a wider, more theoretical view, Aronstein and Parolin argue that Chaucer has come to epitomise the 'expert paradigm' in the arts, being confined to the schoolroom and to specialist study; Shakespeare on the other hand embodies the collaborative potentialities of 'convergence culture'. More theoretical in another sense is Larry D. Scanlon's 'Chaucer, Film and the Desert of the Real; or, Why Geoffrey Chaucer will Never be Jane Austen' (pp. 45-55). Benson looks to Baudrillard and Žižek to understand why Chaucer's chosen mode of irony, with its continual forestalling of the Real, might not lend itself readily to cinematic language; his counterpoint is Austen's more marketable mode of irony, free indirect discourse, with its reassuring gestures towards objecthood and 'the look of truth'. The section is concluded with a return to raw economics, as Kathleen Forni discusses 'Profit, Politics, and Prurience; or,

Why Chaucer is Bad Box Office' (pp. 56-66). Forni emphasises that the dearth of Chaucer adaptations must rest on his lack of commercial viability, a result of his lack of cultural capital in the United States, and his deliberate mangling of genres, which confounds the implicit demands of modern-day consumers of heroic fantasy.

Elsewhere, Chaucer's absence continues to guide case-studies of particular films or periods of filmmaking. As Lynn Arner observes in 'Chaucer and the Moving Image in Pre-World War II America' (pp. 69-87), Chaucer is already notable by his absence in the first decades of Hollywood: despite finding room for Dante, Boccaccio and Villon, the silent era had as little interest in Chaucer as later periods of American cinema. Arner proposes several reasons for this, including the cultural and political distance between the Middle Ages and early twentieth-century US, a drive for the self-conscious Americanisation of culture at all levels, and the desire (born out of eugenic theory) for an element of 'futuraity' in representations of 'heterosexual romantic couplings', an agenda which the *Tales* cannot be made to serve (p. 76). Absence of a different kind is encountered by Candace Barrington in 'Natalie Wood's "The Deadly Riddle" and the Golden Age of American Television' (88-107). This essay details its author's attempts to locate a loose adaptation of *The Wife of Bath's Tale* produced by Warner Bros for television in 1956. The movie itself remains stubbornly irrecoverable, perhaps a victim of the indifference towards television as a medium in the 1950s, and can only be reconstructed in part from such paratexts as publicity shots and reviews; it raises questions about the value of such sources to the medievalist, and what they can reveal about the cultures in which they were produced.

Another sequence of essays concerns the few times when celluloid has been expended on Chaucer. Tison Pugh considers 'Chaucerian History and Cinematic Perversions in Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *A Canterbury Tale*' (pp. 111-29). Pugh finds the film libelling its own medium in its assertion of a transcendent, timeless Englishness: it sets up

equivalences between the assaults of the Glue Man and cinema itself, but ultimately ‘sanctify[ies] perversion...as a necessary antidote to modern ills’ (p. 129). Many of the essays in this strand are frankly polemic, defending the merit and value of their objects. In this vein is Siân Echard’s ‘The Naked Truth: Chaucerian Spectacle in Brian Helgeland’s *A Knight’s Tale*’ (pp. 167-83), which argues that the film, with its wilful anachronism and knowing reference to Chaucer’s canon, and above all its involvement of the reader in sustained ironic play, exhibits ‘unexpected points of contact’ with its source (p. 168). Along similar lines, Kathryn L. Lynch’s ‘Idols of the Marketplace: Chaucer/Pasolini’ (pp. 130-48) attempts to rehabilitate the oft-maligned second instalment of Pasolini’s *Trilogia della vita, I racconti di Canterbury* (1974), especially against the charge of neglecting Chaucer’s text. Much like Echard, Lynch finds a sensitive engagement at work in the film: for example, opening with the Merchant highlights Chaucer’s uncomfortable position between courtly and bourgeoisie cultures, and incorporating a visual quote from Brueghel draws out the homoerotic aggressivity of the *Reeve’s Tale*. Continuing this project, while dipping into a different cinematic stratum, George Shuffleton (‘Sorry Chaucer: Mixed Feelings and Hypatia Lee’s *Ribald Tales of Canterbury*’ (pp. 149-66)) examines one of the most notable fruits of Pasolini’s legacy, a hardcore pornographic adaptation produced in 1985 by the husband-wife team of Bud and Hypatia Lee. As Shuffleton notes, this follows a long line of ‘quasi-medieval erotica’ that used Chaucer or Canterbury as ‘code words hinting at pornographic spectacle’ in the wake of Pasolini’s *Racconti* (p. 153); although Hypatia Lee’s stated policy was to revise rather than reprise Chaucer, especially by injecting a greater degree of female agency into the narratives, the ritualised structures of pornography prove far less resistible than Chaucer’s precedent, undercutting her faltering attempts to authorise her female characters.

The final collection of essays looks to the series of adaptations produced by the BBC in 2003, following the order in which the episodes were first aired. Steve Ellis begins with ‘Putting the Second First: the BBC “Miller’s Tale”’ (pp. 187-95); he finds that the removal of any connection to a dialogic frame, and of a cathartic, carnivalesque ending, masks more of Chaucer’s artistry than it allows to register. Sarah Stanbury takes on ‘Midlife Sex in the BBC “Wife of Bath”’ (pp. 196-207), and finds that its ‘transformation of its Chaucerian source into a fable about female midlife sexuality’ sets up a confluence between the indecorous, ‘uncouth’ medieval and the aging female body (p. 200). According to Louise D’Arcens (‘Serving Time: the BBC “Knight’s Tale” in the Prison-House of Free Adaptation’, pp. 206-17), the decision to reimagine Emelya as tutor to two prisoners exposes a confusion at work across the series, simultaneously gesturing towards its pedagogic and revisionary aspirations. In their contributions, Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Arthur Bahr find their chosen episodes exposing rather than suppressing features of their source-texts. In ‘The Color of Money: the BBC’s “Sea Captain’s Tale”’ (pp. 218-29), Kelly points out that relocating the narrative to an émigré Indian community at Gravesend reconnects the story with its eastern origins; likewise, Bahr’s ‘Sex, Plague, and Resonance: Reflections on the BBC’s “Pardoner’s Tale”’ (pp. 230-38) finds a pattern of de-queering in the televisual version that nonetheless lends a new and unsettling charge to its handling of death. In like manner, Kathleen Davis’ ‘Time, Memory, and Desire in the BBC “Man of Law’s Tale”’ meditates on the ways in which Chaucer’s vexed sense of temporality comes to the fore in the episode’s handling of trauma and amnesia (pp. 239-48).