



THE CHAUCER NEWSLETTER

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Pilgrim Signs and the Ellesmere Chaucer

Visitors to Canterbury in 1990 must be sure to visit the Pilgrim's Way Centre, located across the street from the downtown Mother-care (chainstore baby clothes). Here (at the PWC) they will be able to choose from a wide range of mementoes: Chaucer baseball caps, Pardoner fridge magnets, Wife of Bath oven gloves. In parting with their money, modern pilgrims relive the experience of their medieval forebears in the purchase of pilgrim badges, or "signes":

Then, as manere & custom is, signes there
they bougte,—
ffor men of contre shuld[e] know whom they
had[de] ougte,—
Ech man set his sylvir in such thing as they
likid. . .

(*Tale of Beryn*, 171-73)

The Tale of Beryn (first edited from the Duke of Northumberland's MS. 55 by Urry and thence a standard feature of Chaucer editions until 1810) tells of the adventures of Chaucer's pilgrims once they have arrived in Canterbury. The purchase of signs is squeezed in between a quick visit to Beckett's shrine, lunch, and dinner.

They set hir signes oppon hir hedis, & som
oppon hir cappe,
And sith[then] to the dynerward, they
gan[ne] for to stappe.

(191-92)

Such signs were of little material value (most were made of lead or low-grade pewter) but were treasured precisely as signs: as signs of sanctity guaranteeing safe passage (important to English visitors to continental shrines during the Hundred Years' War); as proof that a pilgrim had indeed completed a pilgrimage (and hence justified the confidence and expense that a parish gild may have invested in him or her); as talismans to be fixed to the wall of the house, or cattle-shed, and then taken to the grave or bequeathed to the local church. It is not surprising, then, that the Miller in *Beryn* should leave the souvenir shop with his coat stuffed "ful of signys of Cauntirbury brochis" which he and the Pardoner then put "pryuely in his pouchis" (175-76). Canterbury signs were much sought after: even the King of France (Louis XI) was keen to procure a Canterbury badge to wear on his hat.

The demand for pilgrim signs inevitably caused conflicts between church authorities and townspeople over monopolistic rights of manufacture and sale. Hundreds of thousands were produced; some 1300 have been found in Britain, mostly in the South-east and Midlands. About half were recovered in London. Recent excavations at London waterfront sites continue to unearth dozens of examples. Sign production reached its peak in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Most of those recently excavated from Trig Lane, London (1974-76), date from Chaucer's lifetime. Here, then, is a genuinely contemporary source of iconography from the age of Chaucer which formed part of the visual experiences of everyday life.

The most popular subject for signs in Chaucer's time was, of course, St Thomas of Canterbury. Many survive, but huge numbers were lost, abandoned, or melted down. The loss of images of St Thomas was particularly severe because Henry VIII mounted a personal crusade against Beckett, denounced (in a Proclamation of 16 November 1538) as "a rebel and a traitour to his prince." Beckett's "images and pictures, through the hole realm" (the Proclamation continues) "shall be put down and avoided out of all churches, chappelles, and other places." Many churches and gilds dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury found it prudent, after this, quietly to transfer their allegiance to St Thomas the Apostle. But the very vehemence with which Henry and Cranmer worked to erase the image and legend of Beckett testifies the deep-rooted devotion to Beckett in the national psyche. This was especially strong in London: Beckett was born into a merchant family at Cheapside and styled himself "Thomas of London" throughout his life. Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrimage, by the time it reached Southwark, had already passed one site devoted to Beckett (the chapel on London Bridge).

As *Beryn* suggests (line 173, above), the life and legend of Beckett generated a wide range of iconographic designs and motifs. Three of the most popular subjects for English pilgrim signs are featured in the middle tier of a tympanum at Bayeux cathedral. The first of these bas-reliefs shows Beckett in a ship, returning to England from France; the third shows his murder in the cathedral. The second, which forms the central figure of the entire tympanum, represents Beckett riding

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Chaucer, Music, and Song

To see the daisies spread against the sun.¹

Chaucer's poetry is both contemporary and profoundly musical. When John Fisher asked me how I came to translate passages from Chaucer for choral singing, that sentence came to mind. And if that explanation is accepted, then the accidents of my experience are more natural. And if so, why don't poets recognize this, and why haven't more of his works been set to music in our century?²

I am an English professor turned librettist, and of the generation that assumed the importance of the classics. Memorizing Chaucer was part of my experience in school and college. B.J. Whiting's exam at Harvard required close reading of the text and memorizing. I kept up with Chaucer through teaching, but the student strike of 1970 worried me when it led to the dropping of some requirements in favor of electives. I encouraged students to elect a classic. When they elected Chaucer, as they often did, they quickly found his relevance for their lives. They recognized him as a contemporary, and his mind as comprehensive. Reality did not match his ideals either.

Of his modernity, the fine little book *The Imagist Poem*³ gives as a credo for 20th-century poetry: "the natural object as the adequate symbol, the natural rhythms of experience, a poetry that is hard and clear, not blurred, with images presenting an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." Could the best exponent of this creed be Geoffrey Chaucer? His pilgrims jogging along to Canterbury sharing their experiences, his lawyer seeming busier than he really was, the glass mountain, the wheel of fortune. How human, to name as our own discovery what was seen so long before, and how humbling to admit it.

Nonetheless, he has not always been recognized. In light of the above, why haven't our contemporaries recognized Chaucer as a modern? And why haven't more of his lines been set to music? It may be because poets are not aware of his musicianship, or that poets and composers don't often talk to each other, and when they do they don't listen. Composers don't generally read much poetry. These are some conjectures; does the reader have others? I would be interested in hearing them.

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Pilgrim Signs

to Canterbury. This motif became especially popular in England in 1370, the fourth jubilee of Beckett's return from exile and triumphal progress from Sandwich to Canterbury on 2 December 1170. The pilgrim sign represented here, now on view at the Museum of London, measures 70mm from the horse's nose to its rump and 102mm from the tip of the mitre to the level of the horse's forefoot. Like most examples of this sign (many of them fragmentary) it faces left, although some face right (e.g., Trig Lane 736). The original design, recorded in its entirety by a stone mould (c 1340-50), includes a groom holding the horse's head and an elegant greyhound running at its side. In all examples, Beckett rides a dappled, richly-caparisoned horse, wears the vestments of an archbishop, holds a crozier or cross-staff in his left hand and raises his right hand in benediction or intercession.

The most salient feature of this pilgrim sign is the disproportionate relationship of rider to horse. This reminds us of the Chaucer portrait (but only this portrait) in the Ellesmere Manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*. Beckett and Chaucer not only exceed their horses, but are out of proportion with themselves: each has an outsize head, a middling chest, and a short, stiffly-extended leg. How might this resemblance influence our reading of these two iconic representations? We would not want to argue for the pilgrim sign as a *model* for the Ellesmere portrait (as Derek Pearsall has argued for the preacher-in-his-

pulpit motif as a model for the representation of Chaucer in the *Troilus* frontispiece): readers cannot help marking the difference between a wasp-waisted ecclesiastical martyr and a tire-waisted secular story-teller. It is rather the play of resemblance *and* difference that brings us closer to a medieval reading: a reading of the Ellesmere portrait in association with, but in contradistinction to, a familiar, mass-produced image of Beckett.

Such a reading might usefully begin by considering what this association of signs has to tell us about representation of *auctoritee* since (as Pearsall notes) medieval images of the author were in short supply. Beckett and Chaucer are both authors of the Canterbury pilgrimage, Beckett in the flesh, historically, and Chaucer through the letter, fictionally. Together they form an odd, secularized variant of the *duplex causa efficiens*; without them there could be no text. Their visual icons recognize that the authority each commands is different in kind. Beckett assumes a direct, face-to-face relationship to the world, blessing or interceding for his onlookers from the unmediated power of his own invested authority. Chaucer, however, avoids our gaze: his attention is entirely absorbed by (he is absorbed into) that which he points at, namely, the lines of his own text. The Ellesmere Manuscript portrays Chaucer not as the source of authority, but as one who directs attention away from himself as a historical figure towards himself as the written word.

What, then, is the significance of *auctoritee* on horseback? Beckett was a great traveller and horseman; he fought for Henry II in Normandy and France and (according to Herbert of Bosham) continued to ride frequently even after becoming Archbishop. But his image on horseback was primarily associated with the events of 1170. Beckett's return to Canterbury was soon likened to Christ's last entry into Jerusalem: according to the *South English Legendary*, "oure Louerd [wolde] that is (his, Thomas's) deth semlable to is (His) were" (II, 1900). The return of Thomas was celebrated as the *Regressio Sancti Thomae*, a church feast recorded by a burnt fragment from a fourteenth-century breviary. In riding to Canterbury, then, Chaucer and his fellow pilgrims imitate the saint they seek; the road to Canterbury becomes the way to Jerusalem.

Does this suggest that all the Ellesmere pilgrim portraits might be associated with (read as) pilgrim signs? It is worth noting that pilgrims returning from Canterbury and other shrines were often moved to unstitch their signs from their caps and sew them into books: the Lee of Fareham Book of Hours (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS. 3-1954), c 1370, once contained 24 badges; some still remain in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 51. One South Netherlandish Book of Hours once had no fewer than 29 badges sewn onto a single leaf (f. 7v.: Sotheby's Catalogue, 26 Nov. 1985, lot 134).



The practice was so common in Flemish manuscripts that Flemish illuminators often painted *trompe l'oeil* pilgrim signs in the borders of Books of Hours. One such example, London, Sir John Soane's Museum, MS. 4, f. 122v., has 23 false signs. The fact that these are all solid and medallion in shape (as were many or most in the Low Countries, France, Italy, and Spain) highlights a peculiarity of English pilgrim signs: they were almost all (like the Ellesmere portraits) irregular silhouettes.

Since silhouette-shaped designs were easily bent out of shape (witness the horse's legs in our Beckett example) they were often set in a regular-shaped openwork frame. Another solution for animal signs (lambs and horses) was to set the legs on a solid base (a motto or a patch of grass). One badge excavated from Bull Wharf in 1979 features a huntsman (a hawk sits on his gloved left hand) with his horse set on a flat-bottomed lozenge of tufted grass (Museum of London, 82. 8/15). This expedient decorative motif might account for the patches of grass (of comparable shape, size, and style) found under the feet of six Ellesmere horses, those of the Canon's Yeoman, Manciple, Monk, Nun's Priest, Second Nun, and Chaucer.

Such an association of pilgrim portraits with pilgrim signs might seem indecorous, an unwarranted confusion of sacred with secular. But such was the state of signs in fourteenth-century England. It must often have been difficult to tell, at first or second glance, whether a badge was of religious or worldly import; whether it endorses a local political hero (outlaw) or a local (unofficial) candidate for sainthood; whether a large initial (E or H) celebrates a saint's or the wearer's own name; whether we are looking at a livery badge or an image of a relic; pious memento or costume jewelry. To associate the Ellesmere portraits with pilgrim badges, then, is not to limit their meaning but rather to read them in a complex, open-ended field of fourteenth-century signs.

David Wallace
National Humanities Center

The Sign of Beckett is reproduced by kind permission of the Museum of London. I would like to thank Peter E.F. Stott (Museum of London) and John P. Chalmers (Humanities Research Center, UT Austin) for their timely assistance. I am most indebted to the work of Brian Spencer: for bibliographical details, see *Age of Chivalry. Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, ed. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987, p. 323.

The Miller's Tale in China

It will come as no surprise to readers of the *Chaucer Newsletter* that the People's Republic of China is not a hotbed of Chaucer studies. Still, Chaucer is read and appreciated in China, thanks almost entirely to the work of a Chinese scholar named Fang Zhong (sometimes written Fang Chong). Fang Zhong, who also styles himself Lu Lang, has translated most of Chaucer's poetry into Chinese. The purpose of this little article is to give some notion of the state of Chaucer studies in China by reporting briefly on the reliability of Fang Zhong's translation into Chinese of one of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. We have selected the Miller's Tale because it is short, accessible, and bawdy.

Fang Zhong, sometime president of the Shanghai Foreign Literature Association and professor of English at Shanghai Institute of Foreign Languages, studied at Stanford University and the University of California from 1923 to 1927 and was for a time a student of J.S.P. Tatlock. He then returned to take up his academic career in his native China.

Fang Zhong began publishing individual translations of *Troilus and Criseyde* and of some of the *Canterbury* stories in the 1930s. The first translation of the tales (including all but the *Parson's Tale*) in book form came in 1955. He published *An Anthology of Chaucer* in 1960, and this was reprinted in 1980. A two-volume revised edition, comprising the complete works except the *Parson's Tale*, for which Fang Zhong provides a detailed summary, was brought out in 1983 by the Shanghai Translation Publishing House.

Fang Zhong's translations are based on Robinson's second (1957) edition, but in the preface to the 1983 edition he mentions John H. Fisher's new edition of Chaucer (1977) and says that he had "originally intended to revise my translation according to this new edition, but it is hard to have my wish fulfilled because I am old and infirm, and suffer from eye disease." At this writing Fang Zhong is 86 years old. We have used Fang Zhong's 1983 edition and the 1957 Robinson as the basis for our comparisons.

Fang Zhong's translation is prose. In making our comparisons, then, we were not interested in the translation as "poetry," but in the translation as "meaning." All we wanted to know was whether Chinese readers were likely to be getting, through Fang Zhong's translation, a reasonably accurate understand-

ing of the basic plots, characters, and themes of Chaucer. The answer is that they are. The translation is essentially faithful to the Chaucerian Middle English. That it is so accurate is surprising enough, given the special problems of translating Chaucer into Chinese (see M. Chan, "On Translating Chaucer into Chinese," *Renditions* 8 [1977]: 39-51). There are, however, some discrepancies.

Our method for analyzing those discrepancies was simple enough. Xiao Anpu, a professor in the Foreign Languages Department of Sichuan University in Chengdu, had read Chaucer only in Fang Zhong's translation, but never in Middle English. Peter G. Beidler, a Fulbright professor at Sichuan University in 1987-88, knew Chaucerian Middle English, but did not read Chinese. Xiao "back-translated" into modern English Fang Zhong's Chinese translation of the Miller's Tale, and Beidler then listed the more significant discrepancies between the back-translated modern English and the Middle English. We then analyzed the list and concluded that the discrepancies fell into two general categories: 1) elements changed by Fang Zhong to make the Chinese translation more vivid to a Chinese audience; and 2) elements omitted because they were deemed to be too bawdy for publication in a China which, even today, does not permit translations of *Lady Chanticleer's Lover* and *Cat-in-the-Hat*.

Occasions on which Chaucerian ideas or words are changed to make the text more vivid to a Chinese audience are as follows:

Nicholas's songs Fang Zhong apparently thought Chinese people would be unnecessarily puzzled by reference to two songs that Nicholas sings on a typical evening: "And *Angelus ad virginem* he song; / And after that he song the the Kynges Noote" (3216-17). Quite aware that a Chinese audience would not know what the *Angelus* was, and that modern scholars are puzzled about what the "King's Note" was, Fang Zhong renders these lines in more general terms, but in such a way as to emphasize Nicholas's penchant for the obscene: "After singing a hymn for prayer, he always sang some obscene songs."

Bath tub Nicholas sends John to get himself, Alisoun, and Nicholas each "a knedyng trough, or ellis a kymelyn" (3548). A kymelyn is a tub used for salting meat or brewing liquor. Such tubs are not often used in China. Fang Zhong came near enough to the mark by translating the term "bath tub."

First wife Pretending to be worried about the terrible flood that Nicholas has predicted,

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**Preliminary Program of the
1990 NCS Congress
University of Kent
Canterbury, 6-11 August 1990**

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Derek Pearsall (Harvard U): "The Problem of Writing a Life of Chaucer"

BIENNIAL CHAUCER LECTURE

John Burrow (Bristol U): "Poems Without Endings"

ROUND TABLE: THE POLITICS OF CHIVALRY

Org. Stanley Kahrl (Ohio State U), Maurice Keen (Baliol College, Oxford U); Juliet Barker

PLANS FOR THE NEW ELLESMERE

FACSIMILE

Martin Stevens (Graduate Center, CUNY) and Daniel Woodward (Librarian, Huntington Library and Art Gallery)

PAPER SESSIONS

- 1) *Historicisms Old and New* (org. Sheila Delany, Simon Fraser U)
David Aers (U of East Anglia): "New and Old in Current Chaucer Criticism"
Peggy Knapp (Carnegie Mellon U): "Some Observations on Historicist Interpretation"
Stephen Knight (U of Melbourne): "Chaucer and Kent: History, Topography, Ideology"
- 2) *Imagining the City* (org. David Wallace, U of Texas, Austin)
Arlyn Diamond (U of Massachusetts, Amherst): "Knights in Castles, Citizens in Cities: Social Reality in the Romance"
Sheila Lindenbaum (Indiana U): "The Politics of Space in Medieval London"
David Wallace (U of Texas, Austin): "Chaucer in Southwark"
- 3) *Legal Themes in Chaucer* (org. Richard Firth Green, U of Western Ontario)
George D. Gopan (Duke U): "The Influence of the Development of Contract Law on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*"
Theodore I. Silar (Lehigh U): "Symkin's Freehold in Chaucer's Reeve's Tale"
Joseph A. Hornsby (U of Alabama): "The Contractual Structure of the *Canterbury Tales*"

- 4) *Chaucer and Fourteenth-Century Religious Dissent* (org. Alcuin Blamires, St. David's University College, U of Wales)
Anne Hudson (Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford U): "'Glosing is a glorious thyng, certeyn': Some Aspects of Chaucer's Vocabulary"
Lawrence Besserman (Hebrew U): "Chaucer and Wyclif on 'Truth'"
Alcuin Blamires (St. David's U C, U of Wales): "Chaucer and the Question of Image-Worship"
- 5) *Chaucer and Authorship* (org. Paul Strohm, Indiana U)
Rita Copeland (U of Texas, Austin): "Authorship as Exegesis: The Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*"
Mary Carruthers (U of Illinois, Chicago): "Finding Authors: Memory and Authority in Chaucer"
John F. Plummer (Vanderbilt U): "Is Chaucer Dead?"
- 6) *Psyche, Culture, Difference* (org. John M. Ganim, U of California, Riverside)
Hope Weissman (Wesleyan U): "The Reeve's Head and the Reeve's Tail: Nietzschean Ressentiment and Chaucer"
Daniel Rubey (Herbert Lehman, CUNY): "Dreaming History: Disintegration, Myth, and Primal Scenes in *Troilus and Criseyde*"
Yasunari Takada (U of Tokyo): "Libidinous Dissemination in Chaucer"
- 7) *Pilgrimage* (org. Peter Brown, U of Kent; presiding, Andrew Butcher, U of Kent)
Sarah Beckwith (Duke U): "Pilgrimage and Mobility of Context"
Thomas J. Elliott (California SU, Pomona): "The Jerusalem Pilgrimage of Felix Fabri"
Stephen Medcalf (U of Sussex): "Motives for Pilgrimage"
- 8) *Literary Patronage and Service* (org. John Scattergood, Trinity College, Dublin)
Beverly Boyd (U of Kansas): "Chaucer, Man of Business"
Michael G. Hanly (U of California, Irvine): "The 'Scholar-Poets' and the Courts: the Literary Milieu of Late Medieval France, England, and Italy"

- Diane R. Marks (Brooklyn C): "The Sidekick: Poet and Patron in Chaucer's Poetic Career"
- 9) *Fabricating the Book* (org. Seth Lerer, Princeton U)
Daniel W. Mosser (Virginia Polytechnic U): "Commercialism and the *Ordinatio* of the Alpha Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*"
Tim William Machan (Marquette U): "'as bokes specifice': Textual Authority and the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson"
John Block Friedman (U of Illinois): "Thomas Langley and John Newton: Fifteenth-Century Northern Book Patrons and Their Manuscripts"
 - 10) *Chaucer's Sense of an Ending* (org. Barbara Nolan, U of Virginia)
Penelope Reed Doob (York U, Ontario): "Ends and Endlessness in Chaucerian Labyrinths: the *House of Fame* and the Knight's Tale"
Linda Tarte Holley (North Carolina SU): "Chaucer's Sense of an Ending and the Borders of Narrative"
David Raybin (Eastern Illinois U): "'Every Man Semeth a Salomon': Open-Ended Structure and Human Vision in the *Canterbury Tales*"
 - 11) *Gower and Chaucer: Evidences of Interaction* (org. R. F. Yeager, U of North Carolina, Asheville)
Chauncey Wood (McMaster U): "Chaucer's Most 'Gowerian' Tale"
A. J. Minnis (U of York): "*De Vulgari Auctoritate*: Chaucer, Gower, and the Men of Gret Auctorite"
Carolyn Dinshaw (U of California, Berkeley): "Chaucer, Gower, and the Uses of Rape"
 - 12) "*Chaucer the Poet*" and "*Chaucer the Man*" (org. Lisa Kiser, Ohio State U)
James M. Dean (U of Delaware): "In Our Own Images: The Recent Chaucer Biographies"
Paul M. Clogan (U of North Texas): "Chaucer the Clerk"
Gregory B. Stone (Louisiana State U): "Chaucer the Poet and Chaucer the Man-in-Black"
 - 13) *Intellectual, Social, and Literary Contexts of Troilus and Criseyde* (org. C.

- David Benson, U of Connecticut)
Gabrielle Müller-Oberhäuser (U of Münster): "Motivational Dialogue in *Troilus and Criseyde*"
Warren Ginsberg (SUNY, Albany): " 'Medium autem, et extrema sunt eiusdem generis': Pandarus and the Shape of *Troilus and Criseyde*"
Gretchen Mieszkowski (U of Houston): "Medieval Go-betweens and *Troilus and Criseyde*"
- 14) *Romantic Response to Chaucer* (org. Betsy Bowden, Rutgers U, Camden; presiding, Stephen Russell, Hofstra U)
Julian Wasserman (Loyola U, New Orleans): "From Prince Pleaser to People's Poet: Chaucer and the Search for an American Aesthetic in Washington Irving"
Julia Bolton Holloway (U of Colorado): "Black Letter Chaucer"
Betsy Bowden (Rutgers U): "Found! The Lost Pilgrim Portraits by James Jefferys (1751-1784)"
- 15) "Lerned" Responses to Chaucer from Furnivall to the Founding of the New Chaucer Society" (org. Mark Allen, U of Texas, San Antonio)
Juliette Dor (U of Liège): "Emile Legouis's Contribution"
Brenda Sluder (U of Texas, Austin): "Attitudes toward Scribal Practice from Furnivall to Ruggiers"
Stephan Kohl (U of Bayreuth): "Chaucer in *Scrutiny*"
- 16) *Chaucer's Imagery in Illustration and Other Arts in the Post-Medieval World* (org. Donald C. Woods, California SU, Bakersfield)
Dolores Warwick Frese (U of Notre Dame): "Chaucer's 'Thynne' Pilgrims: Visual *Mouvance* and the order of the *Tales* in the First Collected Edition of 1532"
Judith L. Fisher (Trinity U): "Chaucer as History: The *Canterbury Tales* in Charles Knight's *Old England*"
Miriam Youngerman Miller (U of New Orleans): "Illustrations of the *Canterbury Tales* for Children: A Mirror of Chaucer's World?"
Helen Cooper (University College, Oxford): "A Late Victorian View of Chaucer's Pilgrims in a Painting by Harry Mileham, R.A."
- 17) *The History of Expression of Emotion* (org. Jill Mann, Girton College, Cambridge U)
Stephen Barney (U of California, Irvine): "Chaucerian Shame"
Monica McAlpine (U of Massachusetts, Boston): "Scenes of Pity: Froissart, Benjamin West, Chaucer"
Nina Dorrance (U of Virginia): "Wordsworth's Mute Lucy and Chaucer's Singing Clergeon: An Approach to Sentimentality in Literature"
- 18 & 19) *Formalism, Hermeneutics, and Ideology in Chaucer Criticism* (org. Robert M. Jordan, U of British Columbia)
- I
- Joseph A. Dane (U of Southern California): "Some Recent Genealogies in Chaucer Criticism"
Laura Kendrick (Rutgers U): "Deconstructing Decoration: Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* and the Embellishment of Medieval Letters"
James R. Andreas (Drury C): "Medieval and Postmodern Views of the *Canterbury* 'Links' "
- II
- Peter W. Travis (Dartmouth C): "The Poetics of Chaucerian Parody"
Susan K. Hagen (Birmingham-Southern C): "The Wife of Bath: Chaucer's Inchoate Experiment in Feminist Hermeneutics"
John Michael Crafton (West Georgia C): "Bakhtin, Chaucer, and Dialogic Poetics"

Seminar Sessions

The seminar sessions are meant to encourage participation; prospective participants may want to read up on the topic before the meeting and receive bibliographical information and copies of abstracts or papers in advance (a small fee will be charged to cover duplication and postage). If you wish to be put on mailing lists for particular seminars, please send a postcard *immediately* (copy for the printed program goes to the printer in December) specifying the ones in which you are especially interested to Alfred David, Department of English, Indiana U, Bloomington, IN, 47405, USA. This will help us in scheduling the seminars and avoiding

conflicts. All of the seminars will be scheduled in two two-hour periods, so one can sit through only two complete seminars, though of course one is welcome to look in on different sessions in progress. The seminars are not intended to be paper-reading sessions, but in several instances, panelists have listed particular topics they wish to discuss.

S1) *The Chaucerian Simile and its Antecedents.*

Org. David Anderson (American Academy in Rome) and John McGavin (U of Southampton). The simile appears to invoke ideas of cooperation through language; literary similes often make propositions that invite us to use meanings formed outside the text; similes thus set terms for a method of studying Chaucerian comparison.

S2) *Development in the Plan of the Canterbury Tales.*

Org. Charles A. Owen (U of Connecticut), Larry Benson (Harvard U), Traugott Lawler (Yale U), David Lawton (U of Sidney), Dieter Mehl (U of Bonn). Reconsideration of evidence for dating the tales and fragments.

S3) *Dante, Chaucer, and the Labyrinth of History.*

Org. Richard Neuse (U of Rhode Island), Renate Haas (U of Duisburg), Linda Lomperis (U of California, Santa Cruz), Jeremy Tambling (U of Hong-kong), Winthrop Wetherbee (Cornell U).

S4) *Chaucer's Sources: New Discoveries, New Approaches.*

Org. Robert Corrales (Wright State U); James Wimsatt (U of Texas, Austin), "Theories of Intertextuality and Sources and Analogues"; Carl Lindahl (U of Houston), "The Soft Sources of the *Canterbury Tales*"; Peter Beidler (Lehigh U), "A Flemish Source for the Reeve's Tale?"; William Askins (Philadelphia Community C), "A New Look at Chaucer and the Latin Works of Albertano of Brescia."

S5) *Grosseteste to Wyclif: The Problematics of Chaucer's Native Theological Heritage.*

Org. James Rhodes (Southern Connecticut SU), Janet Coleman (U of London), David Jeffrey (U of Ottawa). Chaucer's theological ideas are rooted in the English response to doctrine and offer an alternative to Augustinian perspectives, away from providential design, in favor of human responsibility for history.

S6) *Modern Punctuation as an Impediment to Understanding Chaucer.*

Org. Emerson Brown (Vanderbilt U), Howell Chickering (Amherst C), Richard Firth Green (U

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Preliminary Program

- of Western Ontario), D. Thomas Hanks, Jr. (Baylor U). Can we document the damage that mis-punctuation (or any punctuation at all) does to Chaucer, and how can we eliminate or reduce the mischief it causes?
- S7) *Chaucer Performed: Newspeak versus (Faux?) Semblant*. Org. T. L. Burton (U of Adelaide) and Michael Murphy (Brooklyn C). A debate on methods of reading aloud, featuring readings of the same passages in modified modern English and Middle English as traditionally reconstructed. Prospective Newspeakers should write to Murphy, Dept. of English, Brooklyn C. Brooklyn, NY 11210; Semblants, to Burton, Dept. of English, U of Adelaide, Box 498 G.P.O., Adelaide, South Australia 5001.
- S8) *Gender Games*. Org. John M. Fyler (Tufts U) and Susan Crane (Rutgers U), Louise Fradenburg (Dartmouth C), Robert Hanning (Columbia U).
- S9) *Chaucer and Flanders*. Org. Erik Hertog (U of Leuven), Karla Taylor (U of Michigan), E. S. Kooper (U of Utrecht), N. F. Blake (U of Sheffield), Marc Haegeman (U of Ghent). Possible Flemish connections in Chaucer's life and works. Erik Hertog is organizing an excursion to Bruges following the Congress.
- S10) *Obedience in Chaucer's Religious Tales*. Org. Linda Georgianna (U of California, Irvine), "Griselda: The Stillness at the Center"; Elizabethan Robertson (U of Colorado), "Gender, Genre, and Power in the Man of Law's Tale"; A. S. G. Edwards (U of Victoria), "Gender, Hierarchy, and Submission in the Man of Law's Tale." Notions of obedience to family, state, and religion in the religious tales.
- S11) *Chaucer's Authorship of the Equatorie of the Planetis*. Org. Linne R. Mooney (U of Maine), Pamela Robinson (Queens U, Belfast), Stephen Partridge (Harvard U), Michael Masi (Loyola U, Chicago), A. S. G. Edwards (Victoria U). How does the addition of the *Equatorie* to the canon change our view of Chaucer's interests, sources, or perception of himself as writer-educator; does its addition lead us to speculate about the existence of other Chaucerian scientific works?
- S12) *The Language and Imagery of Chaucer's Fabliaux*. Org. Roger Ellis (U of Wales, Cardiff), David Burnley (U of

Sheffield), John Erskine (U of Wales, Cardiff). Implications of Chaucer's language in the fabliaux with reference to the Canon's Yeoman's Tale; how imagery in fabliaux works in opposite direction to that in the religious works; symbolic language in the Miller's Tale.

S13 and 14) *Workshop on "The Chaucer Theatre"*. Two sessions (on successive days) with Dick McCaw, a founder-director of the Medieval Players. An exploration, with a practical emphasis on theater, of how Chaucer's writings have stimulated this world-renowned group to consider the nature of medieval acting styles and modes of representation.

Special Events

Tuesday, August 7

University welcome and reception. Opening of Exhibitions on the Pilgrims' Way and on Illustrations of Chaucer.

Wednesday, August 8

Evensong at the Cathedral with a program of medieval music, followed by a reception in the Chapter House. Opening of a manuscript exhibition in the Cathedral library. Lecture on "Chaucer's Canterbury" by Tim Tatton-Brown, former director of the Canterbury Archeological Trust.

Thursday, August 9

Early evening tours of the Cathedral followed by Compline.

Friday, August 10

Banquet.

Saturday, August 11

Excursion to Cobham, Cooling, and Rochester with a short walk along a section of the Pilgrims' Way.

Chaucer and Music

*As day the dark night's heaviness may follow
this blissful sight softens all my sorrow.*

In 1978 I found myself reading Chaucer for consolation during the trauma of divorce. He taught me to laugh again, but not deny. His writing became my breviary and led to my conversion to Catholicism. I heard the music in his poems, and began listening to more music and writing words for music. When, at a concert in 1982, I asked Louis Botto, founder of the men's a cappella singing group CHANTICLEER, why, with a name so familiar to Chaucerians, they didn't have a song from Chaucer, he encouraged me to write one. At about the same time I met the well-known American composer Roger Nixon, who offered to set the song.

Two more encouragements followed: one was a composer/librettist grant from The National Endowment for the Arts, and the second was the discovery of Linda Ferguson's splendid dissertation, "Music in Chaucer: *Troilus* and the Dream Poems." From *The Canterbury Tales* I drew five songs: "The Prologue," "The Lawyer," "The Wife of Bath," "The Clerk," and "Chanticleer and Pertelote." Set to music by Roger Nixon, they premiered in the Bay Area of California in 1986 and were included on a national tour.

Roger Nixon and I continued with another set for the San Francisco Choral Artists, directed by Ralph Hooper. Passages from the *House of Fame*, the *Legend of Good Women*, and *Troilus and Criseyde* gave me "The Eagle," "The Temple Made of Glass," "The Daisy," and "Do Not Scorn Love." The ballad "Flee From the Crowd" completed the set. Both sets, four concerts in all, were sung in the San Francisco Area in March 1989.

The musicologist John Blacking has said that tune and text are brother and sister. Roger Nixon achieved many matchings of tune to text in beautiful harmonies. Eloquent interpretation by the singers added another dimension. "The Lawyer" has a litigating, confident rhythm, and "Chanticleer and Pertelote" tenderness, bravado, and cackling. Audiences particularly appreciated "The Daisy" (lines from "The Daisy" head these paragraphs) and "The Eagle" in which the voices soar with the words. The pacing of "The Wife of Bath" along with a few winks from the singers brought laughter as they sang of how "at a glance" she practiced "love's old dance." There was hearty agreement among singers and audience that "she was a worthy woman all her life."

When the evening draws near I quickly run
to see this flower go to rest;
this her white crown bears witness of,
Mars gave to her his own crown of red,
instead of rubies to set among the white.

If I am a mediator between Chaucer and musicians, then Linda Ferguson has been the mediator between myself and Chaucerians, for she has succeeded in telling the story of music's integral place in the poetry of Chaucer. Chaucer's purpose was not musical technology, but to show how music relates to being human.⁴ Music was part of every activity, be it play, worship, war, or the hunt; bells regulated each hour of the day. Instruments such as the harp, bell, pipe, horn, tabor, and trumpet were metaphors to awaken body and soul.⁵ It is music that "rouses his characters from lethargy, summons them to physical action, and exhorts them to moral virtue."⁶ Music helps characters to understand consonance and discord in their lives; it resolve the disparate qualities in art and nature, mind and senses. Music tunes the heart.

How do my songs from Chaucer illustrate their perceptions? In "The Prologue" the creator of the Pilgrims summons our senses to make the connections between nature and art and both of these and faith. The natural music of these lines has sustained hearts for generations. In all the songs we are helped with humor and the onomatopoeia of words to accept the discord in individual lives. Music is the perfect vehicle for Chaucer's wisdom. In the intercalated lyric "Do Not Scorn Love," Chaucer petitions us to pay attention to the heart. And finally, the beauty of "The Eagle," shining "as if heaven had won, all newly gold, another sun," in one image combines earth and heaven, art and nature, mind and the senses.

In *Images of Grace*,⁷ the authors say that Chaucer's Christian faith gave him a pattern for experience and the light by which to understand it. We may lack patterns today, but if we can hear the music in Chaucer we are on our way to receiving his gift of reconciliation with each other and with God.

May the good God give us daisies
before we see the night.

Anne Worthington Prescott
@ August, 1989

Note: I have done a number of other translations from Chaucer for song, as well as a short music theatre work, and

NCS Trustees Election

The NCS Trustees elected by the membership for the 1990-94 term to succeed Anne Middleton, A.C. Spearing, and Paul Strohm are Mary Carruthers, Helen Cooper, and Winthrop Wetherbee. Derek Pearsall will be succeeded as NCS President for the 1990-92 term by Alfred David, elected by the Trustees.

Six hundred and fifty-four ballots were distributed for the election of the Trustees; 287 returned, signed ballots were counted; eight unsigned ballots were not counted. Several ballots queried why signatures are required. This question was discussed at some length by the Trustees in 1982-86, while the bylaws were being written. The NCS ballots are distributed to several continents. The only possible check that the returned ballots are from NCS members is by having them signed. It was felt that the election process was sufficiently wide spread that signed ballots would have no political repercussions and that distributing envelopes to be signed and returned in other envelopes was too cumbersome.

John H. Fisher

would be interested in hearing from Chaucerians who share these interests. My address is: 240 Wildrose Circle, Pinole, CA 94564.

¹The paragraph headings are from "The Daisy," in *Arises the New Flower*, a setting of ten songs from Chaucer, as translated by Anne Worthington Prescott. The music is by Roger Nixon.

²Although it is understood that there were settings of Chaucer's poetry in his time, the music has been lost. Ann Basart, Research Librarian for the Department of Music, University of California, Berkeley, has provided a list of a dozen settings in this century. She writes that the energy of a Chaucer scholar is needed to complete the catalogue.

³Introduction to *The Imagist Poem: Modern Poetry in Miniature*, ed. William Pratt, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1963.

⁴Linda Ferguson, "Music in Chaucer: *Troilus* and *The Dream Poems*," Dissertation, University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1977, pp. 302-304.

⁵Ferguson, p. 302

NEH Support for Chaucer Bibliographies Series

The National Endowment for the Humanities, through its program on Reference Materials, has awarded the University of Rochester Chaucer Bibliographies project a \$75,000, two-year grant. The award will help meet expenses for editorial and research assistance. It will also help to purchase computer hardware and software that will provide more efficient preparation of camera-ready copy for the publisher, the University of Toronto Press.

The Chaucer Bibliographies will encompass, in a series of approximately sixteen volumes, a complete listing and assessment of scholarship and criticism on the writings of Chaucer, and on his life, times, historical context, and literary relations. Two volumes, on Chaucer's lyrics and *Anelida and Arcite*, and on the translations, scientific works, and apocrypha, both by Russell A. Peck, have already appeared. The volume on the General Prologue, by Caroline D. Eckhardt, will appear later this year, and will be followed by the volume on the Knight's Tale, by Monica E. McAlpine. The series aims at publication of about two volumes a year during the nineties. Though its schedule for publication during the next few years will concentrate of the *Tales*, volumes on Chaucer's other poetry will appear also.

The individual volumes of the Chaucer Bibliographies attempt to go beyond the usual guides to research. They will, of course, strive for accuracy and broad comprehensiveness, especially in coverage of twentieth-century publications. But their distinctive feature is the fullness and particularity of annotation provided for each entry. As the product of the intellectual engagement, learning, and discretion of individual scholars actively at work on Chaucer, these volumes should make accessible to a wide audience both specific details and expansive interdisciplinary perspective.

The first three volumes in the series have analyzed more than nine hundred items each,

continued on p. 10

⁶Ferguson, pp. 257-259

⁷Douglas Gilbert and Harold Pickett, *Flannery O'Connor: Images of Grace*, New York; Erdmans Publishing, 1986.

Alisoun tells John that she is "thy trewe, veray wedded wyf" (3609). Fang Zhong, apparently wanting to make her case more convincing for a Chinese audience, has her tell John that she is "your faithful wife by the first marriage." First wives in China are considered more likely to be faithful than second wives. Second wives were sometimes called concubines in the days when men were permitted more than one wife.

Big mouth When Absolon first comes to Alisoun's window on the night of his undoing, she rejects him outright: "Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston, / And let me slepe, a twenty devel wey!" (3712-13). Fang Zhong, apparently knowing as little as most modern editors do about how to render a way of twenty devils, simply changes the meaning to emphasize Absolon's wordiness: "Shut your big mouth, or I will throw stones at you. Let me sleep. Get out of here!"

More interesting, perhaps, are the changes Fang Zhong made to eliminate or soften the sexual and scatological aspects of the tale. These are the parts that most modern readers find so delightful and so central to any informed understanding of Chaucer's purpose in the Miller's Tale. Below, are a number of such changes Fang Zhong made in his translation:

Cuckold Chaucer tells us early in the tale that John was jealous and kept his young wife in a cage because he "demed hymself been lik a cokewold" (3226). For Chinese readers reading Fang Zhong's translation, John was afraid that "he would be a tortoise."

Queynte Just after he proclaims his love for Alisoun, Nicholas "caughte hire by the queynte" (3276). Fang Zhong, he "held her tightly by the waist."

Fart Chaucer tells us that Absolon was "somdeel squaymous / Of fartynge, and of speche daungerous" (3337-38). Fang Zhong allows the fart to disappear into thin air by telling us merely that Absolon "was rather reserved in conversation."

Hole In the famous window scene, Alisoun is eager to get rid of her second suitor and at the same time to have a little fun:

And at the wyndow out she putte hir hole,
And Absolon, hym fil no bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers
Ful savourly. (3732-35)

Fang Zhong skips the direct reference to "hole" and "ers" and refrains from mentioning the savouriness of Absolon's attack:

"She projected her private parts out of the window. Absolon, keeping his mind on her, pressed his mouth near to her and kissed her naked hip without any hesitation." The Chinese have words for "queynte," "fart," and "hole," but those words rarely find their way into print, and certainly not from the pen of a fine scholar like Fang Zhong.

Burn In the second window scene, Absolon gets a second reward in the shape of a hot coulter: "And he was redy with his iren hoot, / And Nicholas amydde the ers he smoot" (3809-10). Fang Zhong translates the coulter into a less phallic "ploughshare" and has Absolon aim it less directly: "He had prepared a red hot ploughshare. With it he poked the place between Nicholas's hips."

Alisoun's nether eye Chaucer closes the Miller's Tale with a little summary of the punishments meted out to the three lecherous men:

Thus swyved was this carpenteris wyf,
For all his kepyng and his jalouseye;
And Absolon hath kist hir nether ye.
And Nicholas is scalded in the towte.

(3850-53)

Fang Zhong politely renders the verb "swyved" as "cheated out of," quietly drops the "toute," and alters the moral balance of the closing by totally neglecting poor Absolon's punishment: "Thus, the carpenter was cheated out of his wife, no matter how closely he watched her. And Nicholas's burn was by no means a light wound."

Given the censorship laws in China, it is not surprising that certain passages in Chaucer were altered in the only Chinese translation of the Miller's Tale. After all, certain of the so-called modern English "translations" of the tale do only slightly less violence to Chaucer's story (see *ChauR* 19 [1985], 290-301). Indeed, it is surprising, and fortunate, that the Miller's Tale has been published at all in China, and we are delighted that Fang Zhong has made it so readily available, even in slightly altered form, for the enjoyment and edification of the Chinese people.

Peter G. Beidler, Lehigh University
Xiao Anpu, Sichuan University

Correction

Gremlins put A.C. Spearing at Cambridge University instead of at the University of Virginia in the list of NSC officers at the front of SAC 11. Our apologies.

Howard Bequest

\$50,652 of the bequest to the New Chaucer Society from the estate of Donald Howard has been received. Added to the \$6,835 contributed by the members, this brings the NCS endowment to \$57,487—a munificent sum for an organization as young and as small as ours. It has been banked in CDs awaiting decisions by the Trustees at their 1990 meeting as to how to invest it and how to spend the income. Donald Howard's will be a celebrated name in the NCS for generations to come.

John H. Fisher

Contributors to the NCS Endowment Fund, 1989

William Askins, Larry Benson, Esther Birdsall, Charles Blyth, Beverly Boyd, Emerson Brown, Carolyn Collette, Marjorie Collins, Helen Cooper, Helen Corsa, Charles Dahlberg, James Dean, Stuart Degginger, Caroline Eckhardt, Sumner Ferris, John Fisher, Bradford Fletcher, Robert W. Frank, Jr., Allen Frantzen, Thomas Garbaty, Allen Gaylord, Jennifer Goodman, Richard F. Green, Allen Greer, John Hagen, John Hill, Tadahiro Ikegami, Lynn Johnson, Terry Jones, Masahiko Kanno, Ellin Kelly, Lisa Kiser, Ione Knight, Sherman Kuhn, Virginia Leland, Bernard Levy, John Leyerly, Monica McAlpine, Viola Ynez O'Neill, Charles Owen, Daniel Ransom, James Rhodes, Velma Richmond, Beryl Rowland, Howard Schless, Catherine Tkacz, Anna Torti, Winthrop Wetherbee, James Wimsatt, Chauncey Wood, Thomas Wright, Christian Zacher.

New College Medieval-Renaissance Conference Call for papers

The seventh biennial New College Conference on Medieval-Renaissance studies will be held 8-10 March 1990 in Sarasota, Florida. It will be concerned with all aspects of European culture before 1600. Of particular interest are Italian studies, Spanish studies, Humanism, Courtly culture, Ritual and drama, Urban history, the 12th-century Renaissance.

One-page proposals should be sent before 1 December 1989 to Lee D. Snyder, New College, Sarasota, FL 34243.

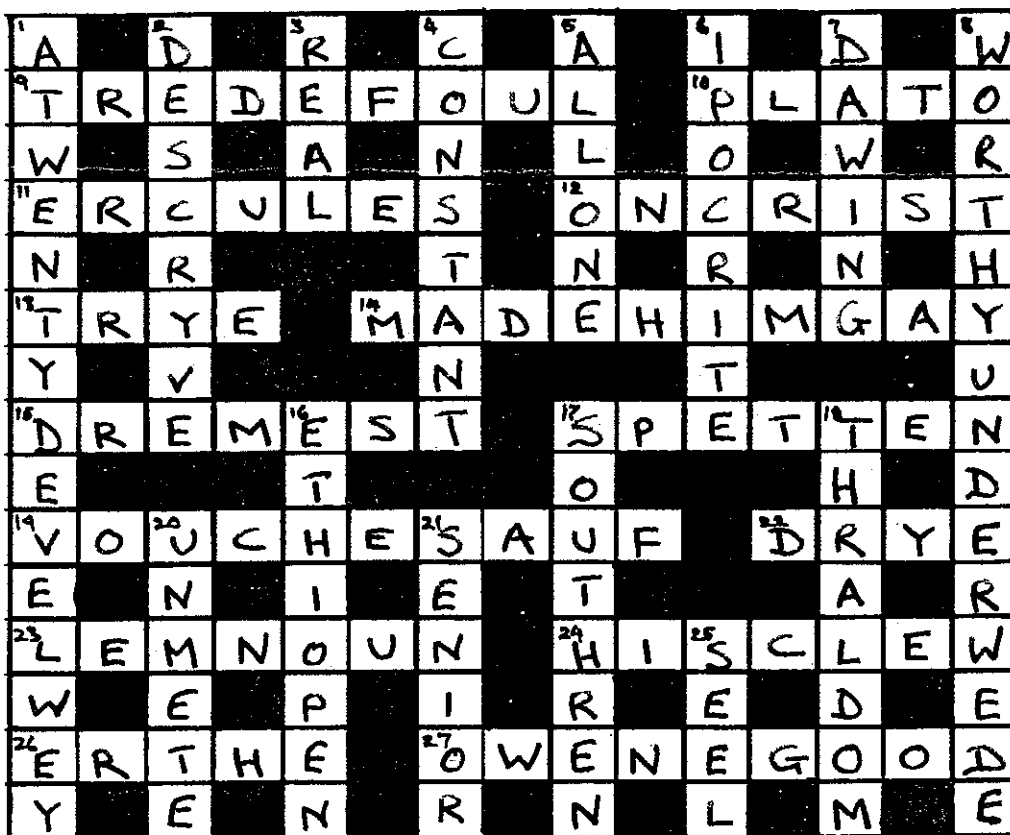
Chaucer Crossword

CHAUCER CROSSWORD

WINNERS in the Chaucer crossword published in the Spring *Newsletter*: Brian S. Lee, University of Cape Town; Piet Verhoeff and Erik Kooper, Utrecht University.

HONORABLE MENTION: Joseph E. Grennen, Fordham University.

Our thanks, again, to Richard F. Green, University of Western Ontario, who created the original.



Across:

- The Nun's Priest's upset; the host says 'e was rude in the loft. (9)
- Philosopher Dan ... (5)
- ... Was a labouring man. (7)
- The confused scorn it, but the converted believe ... (2,5)
- Choice of spirit? Rye for me! (4)
- Did Absolon's mother cause this? (4,3,3)
- Mr. Steed, you're asleep! (7)
- Ten pets have shown contempt. (7)
- Which Italian among you French is on German grant? (10)
- Suffer when you hear of drought. (4)
- Island's the problem. Noun's the solution. (7)
- Sounds like the one Theseus could answer. (3,4)
- Russell's home? (5)
- Oswald's lord's too trusting for his... (5,4)

Down:

- A damned quick score! (1,6,5,3)
- Surveyed non-u hundred! Picture it. (8)
- An actual king? (4)
- Steady under tons of cant. (8)
- It's all one to Arcite in his grave. (6)
- The papelard priest, for instance. (8)
- Crowing at daybreak? (6)
- Fine! But burrow under the clothes for better reading. (6,5,4)
- Out of Africa and on the pie. (8)
- The Parson's point? (8)
- Constance's birthright. (8)
- Tune me! I may be discordant. (6)
- An older writer on alchemy? (6)
- Alan's happiness in "lusty lese"? (4)

Chaucer Bibliographies

Notice of Transition

In October, the files and back copies of *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* of the New Chaucer Society were moved from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Columbus, Ohio. It will take a little time for the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Ohio State University to set up its operation, but after 1 November 1989, all correspondence about membership and other NCS business, subscriptions and orders for back issues of *SAC*, and items to appear in the *Chaucer Newsletter* should be addressed to C. K. Zacher, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CMRS), Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210 (telephone 614-292-7495). Chris Zacher becomes NCS Director as of 1 January 1990.

The January dues notices and February *Newsletter* will be sent out from Ohio State. John and Jane Fisher will, however, send out the program and registration material for the Canterbury Congress from Tennessee, and receive and record registration fees and reservations.

Thomas Heffernan will continue as editor of *SAC* through volume 13 (1991). Articles and books for review should continue to be sent to *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37996 (telephone 615-974-5401), through 1990 and until such as time as volume 13 is substantially complete, at which time they will be sent to Lisa Kiser, incoming editor, at Ohio State. But stay tuned for that date, which will appear in an appropriate issue of the *Newsletter*.

In parting, John and Jane Fisher express their heartfelt gratitude to the English Department of the University of Tennessee for eight years of financial and logistic support of the work of the New Chaucer Society. The society came to Tennessee with a membership of 125 and library circulation of 42. It goes to Ohio State with a membership of 650 and a library circulation of 300. This growth would not have been possible without the good work of Tom Heffernan and Norma Meredith with *SAC*, the splendid congresses at York arranged by Derek Pearsall and Paul Strohm, at Philadelphia arranged by John Fleming and David Anderson, and at Vancouver arranged by Robert Jordan and Anne Middleton, and the logistic support of Joseph Trahern and Wanda Giles of the University of Tennessee English Department. We relinquish our charge with nostalgia, but we are sure that it will continue to thrive in new hands.

John H. Fisher

including editions, studies of language, manuscripts, sources, backgrounds, influence, and audience, including publications in all languages. The ensuing volumes will aspire to similar comprehensiveness. The individual scholars committed to the project are Kenneth Bleeth, Peter Brown, T. L. Burton, Sarah Collins, Caroline D. Eckhardt, Melissa Furrow, Stanley Hauer, Anne Higgins, Anne Hutchison, C. Anne Lakaya, Monica E. McAlphine, Mary Maleski, David Mycoff, Howard Needler, Michael Oliver, Russell Peck, Marilyn Sutton, Beverly Taylor, Hope Weissman, Marjorie Woods, Robert Yeager. The Editorial Board includes Derek Brewer, Emerson Brown, John Fisher, David Fowler, John Leyerle, James J. Murphy, Russell Peck, Florence Ridley, Paul Ruggiers. E. Talbot Donaldson and Donald R. Howard served as members of the Board before their deaths in 1987. Thomas Hahn serves as General Editor and Manager of the Project.

Thomas Hahn
University of Rochester

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