



Message from the Executive Director

For the first time, our semi-annual Newsletter is embedded in an email with links rather than being sent as a PDF attachment. You can still download the PDF, but the embedded version is more streamlined, and easier to access and read. The next version will be even better, as we work on putting more links on the website.

NCS is thriving: this Newsletter now goes out to 1,035 members, and membership is growing. Since September 2012, 59 new members have joined the Society: from the US, Germany, England, Wales, Turkey, Finland, France, Canada, Iceland, Korea, Taiwan, and Switzerland. We warmly welcome all our new members. Many of them are young; it's encouraging to know that the future of the Society is looking so good. We are stronger than ever. The membership year runs from July to July; the date for renewing your registration through 2014 is July 1, 2013. We accept renewals at any time; if you know that your membership has lapsed (you can check on the website by entering your name here <http://artsci.wustl.edu/~chaucer/membership/directory.php>), then renew it now.

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We have 417 “likes” on [Facebook](#) and 329 followers on [Twitter](#). We still have a way to go to catch up with The Huntington (9,078 followers), but we’re relatively new to the Twittersphere. It’s important that we keep getting the message out to scholars in other branches of the humanities and to the public that Chaucer studies is perennially popular: not just a niche interest but one with a growing – and younger – fan base. This is how the Society will renew itself, and how Chaucer will continue to be relevant within the humanities at large. People are talking about NCS. That sense of renewal and relevance is integral to the work of all our members, and is especially evident in the quality of our publications.

We warmly welcome Sarah Salih (Department of English, King’s College London) as the new editor of *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* and Shayne Legassie (Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) as the new book reviews editor. On behalf of NCS, I want to thank David Matthews, the previous editor, and Alfred Hiatt, the previous book reviews editor, who stood down from their posts in January 2013. They did an exceptional job, keeping *SAC* at the forefront of scholarly journals in the field. *SAC*’s revenue from Project Muse in 2012 was a healthy \$22,312.26, a sign of how many downloads *SAC* articles receive. Scholars and students the world over want to read our members’ work.

The NCS website has served us well but is very much in need of a makeover. NCS has now commissioned a website designer to redesign it. We will add pages with news, events, and regular guest blog posts with interactive comments.

Members will be alerted to news by periodic emails. The website will migrate from its current server to a new external server. The domain name will change to newchaucersociety.org. The website will launch in June 2013.

The major item in this Newsletter is the Call for Papers for the 2014 Congress in Reykjavík. Many of you have already seen this CFP; it was posted on the website and announced it in an email message in February. The deadline for submissions of abstracts is June 1. Many innovative threads and sessions have been proposed, including an unprecedented number of panels on the history of the book, seminars on close readings of Chaucerian texts, and many sessions on matters “north”. The Program Committee has taken advantage of the fact that we will be in Iceland to feature the exciting research

that is being done on the intersection between Chaucer and Icelandic studies – and Nordic studies in general. There is a vibrant body of work on medieval Nordic culture and its relation to Chaucer and his age, and we are very pleased that it will be so strongly represented at this Congress. Members will also find sessions on many other topics, and there are also open sessions. I will be visiting Reykjavík for a few days at the end of May to look at the various accommodations and to try out some of the reputedly wonderful food and drink – in the interests of our members, naturally. Sif Ríkharðsdóttir and the local arrangements committee have made considerable progress in planning the Congress; I know that they will do an excellent job of providing for participants a memorable and unique experience of Iceland.

Ruth Evans

Reykjavík 2014: Call for Papers

2014 Congress - Reykjavík, Iceland
16-20 July 2014

NCS members who would like to present papers or participate on panels at the Congress should send a one-paragraph abstract to the organizer(s) at the email addresses given below the session description by JUNE 1, 2013. Please also indicate any specific audio-visual/digital needs. Session organizers will select papers and panels in consultation with the Program Chairs and reply to all submitters by June 15, 2013. After June the Program Committee will form additional sessions from among the submissions. Names of the Congress participants will be announced in an upcoming Chaucer Newsletter. Members may apply to participate in more than one session, but they may finally take part in only one. The Program Committee is composed of Glenn Burger and Holly A. Crocker (Co-Chairs), Laura Ashe, Anthony Bale, Seeta Chaganti, Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, Peter Travis, and Daniel Wakelin, with Alastair Minnis (NCS President) and Ruth Evans (NCS Executive Director) *ex officio*.

The session threads were developed by the Program Committee with consideration given to suggestions that emerged from the 2012 Congress in Portland. Session threads for 2014 include: North (Text and Contexts); In Search of Things Past: Periodization, Historicism, Historiography; Scandinavia and Europe, Translation and Literacy; Movement, Networks, Economies; Chaucerian Biographies; Handling Sins; How to Do Things with Texts; How to Do Things with Books; The Book in Practice; The Medieval Sensorium; and The Ways We Read Now. In addition, there will be several "unthreaded" sessions, seminars, and plenaries.

The NCS 2014 organizing committee has determined that the program will comprise three major elements: threads, independent sessions, and seminars.

Sessions are organized according to the following formats:

- Paper Panels (either 3 papers @ 20 minutes each or 4 papers @ 15 minutes each)
- Roundtables (discussions by 5-7 speakers on a topic of common interest; speakers do not deliver papers, though they may speak from notes.)
- Seminars (up to 8 participants; formats determined by organizers)
- There will also be an experimental poster session included in the “How to Do Things with Books” thread

The NCS Constitution requires that Congress participants (except for invited speakers from other fields) be current members with their dues paid. We encourage you to share information about the Congress with other interested people who may not be NCS members at present--graduate students, new colleagues, and others working outside the field who may find sessions related to their areas of interests. (Graduate students and research students may join NCS at a reduced membership rate of \$25). Finally, a tight limit has been set on prior invitations to participate in any session. The overwhelming majority of participants in the Congress will be those who respond to this call.

THREADS

Threads: NORTH: TEXTS and NORTH: CONTEXTS

Organizers: Anthony Bale (a.bale@bbk.ac.uk) and Sif Ríkharðsdóttir (sifr@hi.is)

NORTH: TEXTS

1) Viking Elements in the Romances

Organizer: Helen Cooper (ehc31@hermes.cam.ac.uk)

Paper panel

The porous border between Norse saga and francophone romance is well attested, most famously in the case of the Norse version of the Anglo-Norman *Tristan* of Thomas of Britain. The relationship of Middle English romances to Viking culture may be less immediately striking, only one

(*Bevis of Hamtoun*) being known to have been translated from Middle English, but there are plenty of others that show points of contact. *Havelok* and *Guy of Warwick*, for instance, focus on the Danish invasions or Danish rule; others, such as *King Horn*, offer more complex connections in terms of context or narrative. This session will invite papers on all such intersections of Scandinavian history and literature with medieval English romance, whether in English or Anglo-Norman. Topics might include saga influences on English narratives; the Danish postcolonial; narratology; narrative elements; ideologies of gender or warfare; readership and expectations; vocabulary; the presentation of pagans; or anything else of relevance and interest.

2) Ice

Organizer: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (jjcohen@gwu.edu)

Roundtable

Ice is a precarious substance: the congealing of a liquid into impermanent solid form; asglacier, a living ecology imperiled by global warming; brittle fragility mixed with inhuman power; in the Middle Ages, a step along a geologic process of becoming rock ("crystal" comes from the Greek word for ice); a substance symbolic of a hardened human state, as in Dante's cold hell; an insecure, melting foundation (Chaucer's *House of Fame* atop its glacial mount); and a wellspring of vital resources. Examining ice as actor, symbol, geography and thing, this roundtable explores ice as a living element in medieval and later textual and material ecologies.

3) Norse by Way of Normandy

Organizers: Jeremy DeAngelo (jdeangelo83@hotmail.com) and Benjamin A. Saltzman (benjaminsaltzman@gmail.com)

Paper panel

When the Normans conquered England, they were only a few generations separated from their Norse forebears. Only a few centuries earlier, Northern France, too, was subject to similar Norse invasions. This panel invites papers that might address, *inter alia*, the following questions: How are these Norse legacies manifested in Anglo-Norman and Middle English literature? How was Norse culture imagined when mediated through Normandy? And from a different angle, in what

ways is late Norse literature influenced by French and Anglo-Norman literary genres? In short, what can be gained in our understanding of the North by looking South and of the South by looking North? And how is England in the time of Chaucer and the surrounding periods shaped by the activities of and interactions between these two regions?

4) Northern Arthurs

Organizer: Leila K. Norako
(lnorako@gmail.com)

Paper panel

This panel will explore the literary treatment of Arthur and his knights in the cultures of the North, a subject that Geraldine Barnes has identified as “ripe for further investigation within the fields of medieval translation, cross-cultural relations, and the reception of Arthurian narratives.” Following the work of Marianne E. Kalinke’s edited book *The Arthur of the North*, the panel seeks to inspire additional research in this area by addressing questions like the following: how does a study of the *riddarasögur* — Scandinavian versions of Arthurian narratives — offer up new perspectives on both the literary culture of the North and on the pervasiveness of Arthurian materials? How do such narratives reflect and adapt to their cultural surroundings? What does the transmission of such texts — indelibly tied as they are to the traditions of continental and Insular Europe — reveal about the intersections of Scandinavian, Continental European, and Insular traditions in the late Middle Ages?

NORTH: CONTEXTS

1) Literature at Sea: Hanseatic Textual Networks

Organizers: Amy Appleford (applefor@bu.edu) and Catherine Sanok (sanok@umich.edu)

Paper panel

In Holbein’s portrait, the Steelyard merchant George Gisze is pictured in an office cluttered with books, letters, and artifacts, all of which, like Gisze’s merchandise, are likely to have arrived in London from other Hanseatic cities. This panel explores the network of Hanseatic communities as a theme in and context for the production and dissemination of Middle English textual culture. How do the itineraries of the Shipman, Margery Kempe, and William Caxton, among others, trace

the outline of a specifically Hanseatic form of cultural mobility? How were English textual traditions shaped by contact mediated by Hanseatic trade routes, and how were they shaped by the cultural contact zones of England’s own Hanseatic cities? To what extent did Hanseatic routes serve, in turn, as vectors for the dissemination of English texts and traditions?

2) “Of Yseland to wryte is lytill nede ...”: Cultural and Military Relations Between England and Iceland in the 14th and 15th Centuries.

Organizer: Gunnar Harðarson (gunnar@hi.is)
Paper panel

The year 1396 marked the beginning of the so-called “English Age” in the history of Icelandic-English relations, while the 15th century was characterised by English dominance in trade relations (due to better ships and more competitive prices), as well as skirmishes and real battles, but also cultural and literary influences. Is it possible to evaluate what influence the so-called “English Age” had on Icelandic culture and society in general as well as on the Icelandic worldview and conception of national identity? Do we have any good information as to the English view of the Icelanders and of their Norwegian and Danish officials? Can such items as English alabaster altarpieces, and a collection of medieval tales translated from English into Icelandic, as well as the election of English bishops to the Icelandic bishoprics, inform us in any depth of the nature and extent of English influence? This session is intended to bring together scholars interested in discussing these various aspects of the “English Age.”

3) Linguistic Ideologies, Literary Form and Poetics in Britain and the North.

Organizer: Kristján Árnason (kristarn@hi.is)
Paper panel

The Icelandic grammatical literature and the Prose-Edda provide an insight into traditional Nordic and Germanic poetics *vis-à-vis* southern European trends, which reached England and parts of the North in the Middle Ages. The First Grammarian (12th century) mentions the English and the Irish as forerunners in writing the vernacular, but basically Icelandic poetics stayed conservative, cultivating traditional Germanic

tools such as alliteration and kennings. In Italy new vernacular literary forms and poetics developed, as witnessed by Dante, and Chaucer is the first English poet to use five beat rhythm, while in Iceland the *rímur* with their non-traditional quatrain form, but still adhering to alliteration and "Eddic learning," took over as the most popular genre. However, the "alliterative revival" shows that traditional forms were also appreciated in parts of Britain at least. In all of these cases measures were taken in elaborating, revitalizing or adapting vernacular norms replacing the older global classical culture. Contributions are invited on any aspect of this history of literary form, including work on metrics, poetics, the Icelandic grammatical treatises and comparable work in Chaucerian Britain and other parts of Europe. Contributions on cultural-linguistic ideologies and language planning in the period are also welcome.

4) Views of the Scandinavian (Br)Other in Later Medieval England

Session Organizers: Molly Jacobs (mollyjacobs@berkeley.edu) and Giselle Gos (gisellegos@fas.harvard.edu)

Paper panel

In this session, we invite papers examining the representation of Scandinavians in the post-conquest literature of England (Anglo-Norman, Latin and English). Papers can focus on any literary genre (romance, historiography, hagiography, etc.); we also welcome contributions investigating aspects of social history (i.e. evidence of trade contacts), including material culture that might contribute to or underlie literary depictions. Possible topics include representations or literary implementations of Scandinavian history, culture and language; ideas of "nation" and "nationality"; expressions of similarity/identification/difference; and the place of Scandinavia and Scandinavians in the English view of the world.

Thread: IN SEARCH OF THINGS PAST: PERIODIZATION, HISTORICISM, HISTORIOGRAPHY

Organizer: Laura Ashe: laura.ashe@ell.ox.ac.uk

1) Anterior Motives: Chaucer and the Place of Early English Literature

Organizer: Jennifer Jahner (jahner@hss.caltech.edu)

Paper panel

Early English literature can seem as much darkened by Chaucer's shadow as later literature is illuminated by his example. Whether cast as precocious or pedantic, pre-Ricardian texts have long borne the burdens of nascency—pointing in the direction of aesthetic accomplishments thought to lie just beyond their own horizons. This panel invites papers that reconsider the categories of "early" and "late" as means of schematizing medieval English literature, with a particular focus on methodologies that might keep Chaucer and his antecedents in productive conversation. How do considerations of language, manuscript setting, and readership impact the division between early and late medieval? In what ways do French and Latin complicate the periodization of Middle English works? How has Chaucer criticism shaped the trajectory of early English literary history, and what alternative patterns emerge outside a framework of linguistic rise and demise? Papers that offer specific readings of texts are welcomed alongside papers that consider issues of critical historiography, codicology, and philology.

2) Institutional Histories of Medieval English Literary Studies

Organizer: Lynn Arner (larnar@brocku.ca)

Roundtable

This roundtable examines recent institutional histories of medieval English literary studies. This session explores topics in the histories of scholarly organizations, journals, long-standing conferences, publication venues, funding agencies, and academic programs in medieval English literary studies during the past forty years. Regarding scholarly organizations, sample topics might include different political moments in the history of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship, the role of the (International) John Gower Society in shaping Gower studies over the past thirty years, or the reasons why the Babel Working Group emerged when it did and assumed some of the forms and politics that it has. In addition, speakers could discuss the funding of, or the divestment from, medieval English literary studies by major grant-giving agencies, specific universities or groups of universities, or various academic presses.

3) (Absent) Jews in the Middle

Organizer: Kathy Lavezzo (kathy-lavezzo@uiowa.edu)

Paper panel

While scholars have cited multiple shifts marking the movement from the medieval to early modern periods in England, one aspect of English history proved continuous. From the time of their forced expulsion in 1290 to the fraught period of their tacit readmission during the seventeenth century, Jews were officially absent from England. This session invites proposals for papers on the image of the Jew in both Chaucer's poetry and other works produced during the some 350 years when England was imagined as a place devoid of Jews. Especially welcome are papers on how English writers proved particularly invested in the relationship between Jews and history (e.g., the Prioress's odd sense that Jews martyred Hugh of Lincoln "but a litel while ago"), as well as papers on how the perceived absence of Jews served to define England as a nation during the late middle ages and renaissance.

4) Epochs and the Medieval Ecological Imagination

Organizers: Mary Kate Hurley (marykatherine.hurley@yale.edu) and Ryan R. Judkins, (ryan.judkins@umb.edu)

Paper panel

This session asks for papers that establish or critique epochs or epochal models of medieval ecological thought. If one considers the ecological imagination to be the way the environment and/or human interactions with it are constructed conceptually or metaphorically, then how, for example, might one position such constructions in the age of Chaucer vis-à-vis ones in earlier or later historical periods, contiguous or not? Papers might take up the question of whether it is possible to distinguish such individual periods and, if so, if it is also possible to identify transition points between them. They might consider how an individual author constructs the "ages" of the natural world or examine the rhetorical dimensions of such formulations. Alternately, papers might explore how a national literary tradition might be connected to particular ecological constructions, such as human/environment or human/animal distinctions.

Papers could also examine how modern ecological views condition investigations of medieval ecologies, or panelists might critique the teleologies implicit in periodization(s). Does, for instance, a notion of "Progress" underlie (some) modern interpretations of medieval ecology? How might medieval and modern ecological ideas be brought together productively in ways that are sensitive both to this problem of teleology and to historical difference? Papers might also situate Chaucer's works within a historical ecological period, such as the late 14th-century climate or the ecological ramifications of the Black Death. Submissions might also consider some combination of the above.

Thread: SCANDINAVIA AND EUROPE, TRANSLATION AND LITERACY

Organizers: Rita Copeland (rcopelan@sas.upenn.edu) and Karl-Gunnar Johansson (k.g.a.johansson@iln.uio.no)

1) *Gesta Romanorum*

Organizer: Hjalti Snær Ægisson (hsae@hi.is)

Paper panel

Gesta Romanorum, a Latin collection of anecdotes, was among Chaucer's sources for the *Canterbury Tales*. This session aims at comparing various vernacular translations of tales from the collection. Thirty-four tales exist in an Old Norse version from the fifteenth century, translated from Middle English and published by Einar G. Pétursson in *Miðaldaævintýri þýdd úr ensku* (1976). By bringing together scholars from translation studies, focusing on *Gesta Romanorum*, the session hopes to provide a description of how the collection was interpreted in the Late Middle Ages. Is there consistency in translations between languages? Does one find traces of the material's reception during the time of translation? How does Chaucer's method compare with the work of other authors and translators?

2) *Mathias of Linköping: Poetics and Learned Translatio in Scandinavia*

Co-organizers: Karl-Gunnar Johansson (k.g.a.johansson@iln.uio.no)

Rita Copeland (rcopelan@sas.upenn.edu)

Paper panel

Mathias of Linköping (b. 1300), author of theological works and confessor of Bridget of Sweden, studied in Paris in the 1320's. It was probably during his Parisian studies that he wrote his *Poetria*, a work that enlarged the scope of the earlier continental *artes poetriae* by making extensive use of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the version known through Herman the German's Latin translation (1256). Mathias dedicated the *Poetria* to the archbishop of Uppsala, and likely intended it for use at the cathedral school there.

The importance of Mathias' work has been recognized in modern scholarship. This session seeks to add to that recognition by placing Mathias' accomplishment in the context of learned *translatio* in the intellectual milieu of medieval Scandinavia. Mathias' *Poetria* is powerful but by no means singular evidence of the movement of learned Latinities between the Continent and Scandinavia. The innovative dimensions of Mathias' *Poetria* can best be understood by considering the larger textual environment of *translatio* and learning in Scandinavia.

3) Circulating Latinities between the North and Britain

Organizer: Dorothy Kim (dokim@vassar.edu)
Paper panel

This panel will consider papers interested in Northern European (including the Baltic region and Iceland) and British cultural encounters that have produced hybrid Latin cultural productions. These products could demonstrate Northern influence (vernacular, Latin, and visual) on British Latin texts or British influence (vernacular, Latin, and visual) on Northern Latin texts. This could involve actual British figures traveling and returning from the North—like Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century. Or a paper could demonstrate how Northern and/or British manuscript culture transformed and shaped cultural production in the other region—by imitation, influence, and/or adaptation. We are interested in discussing how the cultural conduit of Latin textual production helped facilitate these exchanges, hybrid productions, and regional cultural circulations. And how a wider view of circulating latinities can help us reimagine the transnational perspective of learned culture in the North and in Britain.

4) Between the Birgittines: Syon Abbey and Vadstena's Textual Exchanges

Organizer: Laura Saetveit Miles
(lsmiles@umich.edu)

Paper panel

What began as a political relationship between England and Sweden – the 1406 wedding of King Erik of Pomerania to Philippa, daughter of King Henry IV – soon blossomed into a religious one, when the English were inspired to found a Birgittine monastery like the one they encountered in Vadstena. Syon Abbey, founded in 1415, maintained a close bond with Vadstena, the first house of St. Birgitta's Order of St. Saviour. Over the next hundred years the two houses enjoyed a frequent exchange of people, letters, and books. Some of these texts were legislative in nature, such as the extensive *Responsiones* detailing Vadstena's answers to the Syon brethren's many logistical and ceremonial questions. They also exchanged works of devotional, catechetical, and visionary literature. For instance, Syon retained one of the earliest versions of St. Birgitta's *Revelations*, apparently copied at Vadstena by a visiting English scribe. A more unexpected example: Thomas Fishlake's Latin translation of Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* appears in multiple Vadstena manuscripts, apparently an import from Syon.

The textual transmissions between Syon and Vadstena offer a productive view into the ways monastic allegiances enabled the trans-national dissemination of religious writing in the late medieval period. This session would solicit papers that pursue new avenues of research revealing the exchange of texts between two houses equally renown for their learned members and huge libraries. A myriad of questions regarding translation, adaptation, transmission, and production might drive panelists' explorations. What can paleographical or codicological approaches reveal about the ways in which texts were exchanged between the Birgittines? A 1453 letter from Vadstena requests that Syon send a scribe to Sweden to copy texts to bring back to England; this appears to have happened in the case of BL Harley 612. What stories do this and other similar manuscripts have to tell? Latin, of course, allowed the Birgittines on both sides of the North Sea to transcend the language barrier of Swedish

and English. Did the desire to share texts with international brethren initiate translation? Moreover, how might texts have been adapted for their new cultural milieu? This panel would develop conversation around these questions not only to illuminate the complex relationship between these two prominent houses, but also to advance more generally applicable ways of understanding late medieval monastic culture, its textual communities, and the paradoxically international nature of manuscripts written for enclosed readers.

Thread: MOVEMENT, NETWORKS, ECONOMIES

Organizers: Ethan Knapp (knapp.79@osu.edu) and Matthew Boyd Goldie (mgoldie@rider.edu)

1) This World is But a *Thurghfare*: Transit, Transport, Scapes, and Flows

Organizers: Eileen Joy (eileenajoy@gmail.com) and James L. Smith (minor.mundus@gmail.com)
Roundtable

In Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* the aged Egeus, learned in "this worldes transmutacioun," offers stoic counsel to his son Theseus upon the death of Arcite: "This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo," the old man advises, "and we ben pilgrimes, passage to and fro." In the manner of the elderly adviser, Egeus reminds us that our lives are ephemeral pilgrimages, and he also points to the idea of the world as a sort of transit system. In our contemporary world, it would not be unusual to read Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* on a Kindle, iPad, or smart-phone while waiting for a plane, a train, a bus, a tram -- our world is striated by the transit systems and "hubs" in which many of us spend a good deal of our lives (freeways and toll roads, subways and trains, stations and terminals and depots, bus and tram stops, runways and airplanes) and our modes of reading have also become more "transitory" and mobile as a result.

In this roundtable session, we want to consider literary texts themselves, such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, as transit systems in which we can glimpse the manifold mobilities of objects, figures, mentalities, tropes and other "matter" in vibrant intermediate networks where different trajectories of "transit" and modes of "transport" (cultural, historical, social, linguistic, political, and

so on) are connected. What can we learn by tarrying at the nexus points and hubs through which things move in and out of texts, attempting to trace not the things themselves or their supposedly stable significations, but rather their forms of emergence and retreat, of disorder and disequilibrium, as we ourselves are emerging and retreating within our own systems of transit and experiencing our own disequilibrium? Following John Urry's "mobile sociology," this session takes as an initial starting point the idea that we can no longer view either social worlds or textual worlds as uniform surfaces upon which one can trace or write a history of the horizontal movements of humans and human mentalities; rather, everything is in constant motion: objects, images, information/ideas, and mobility is thus also "vertical," involving human and non-human actants. How do medieval literary texts in Chaucer's period "rewarp time and space" (creating "flows" and "scapes") by the means of sophisticated transit and transport structures? Other issues to be considered might also include: reading itself as a mode of transit (both within texts and in our own practices) and the consideration of tropes of post/medieval transit and transportation in medieval literary texts (intersections, networks, routes, flight patterns, traffic jams, terminals, ticketing, global positioning systems, security checkpoints, thoroughfares, hubs, switching stations, depots, subways, and so on).

2) From Ash Clouds to *Grisly Rokkes*: Travel Disruptions in Medieval Literature

Organizer: Jessica Lockhart (jessica.lockhart@utoronto.ca) and Anna Wilson (anna.wilson@utoronto.ca)

Paper panel

Among many whose international travel was disrupted by the eruption of the volcano Eyjafjallajökull in May 2008 were hundreds of medievalists heading to and from conferences, particularly to the International Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Those who managed to attend that year will remember the frustration, confusion and disappointment for missed colleagues, but also the surprising productivity that sprang up. This emerged not only from the necessity of improvisation from respondents asked to step in at the last moment or

speakers facing a change in schedule or topic, but also from the unexpected extra time and intimacy in the depleted panels. These often evolved into conversations, carnivalesque spaces where the formal structures of the conference were transformed.

As we travel to Iceland in 2014, we invite panellists to think about movement through space in the middle ages through its interruption – to explore networks at the places where they break down. Travel was a dangerous business in the Middle Ages - its vicissitudes could cause family tragedy, economic ruin, and even regime change, as did the White Ship disaster of 1120, and they shape the narratives of medieval texts in numerous genres, from *The Book of Margery Kempe* to crusader narratives. However, travel disruption can also result in a space of creativity and flux, that disturbs social hierarchy, that suspends rules, and imagines new beginnings and unlikely fellowships. The loss of belongings or even of memories as the result of shipwrecks or robbery was used in romance to investigate questions of identity and birth, from *Apollonius of Tyre* to the Man of Law's Tale.

For this panel we invite proposals dealing with the complicating or creative effects of travel disruptions in medieval thought and writing. How do travel interruptions - shipwreck, roadside accident, robbery, weather or war - figure in medieval writings to develop or complicate ideas of identity, fate, or purpose? How do forced redirections and improvisations reveal, challenge, or rewrite networks of community, economy, space or temporality? How do lost or failed connections (broken bridges, missed boats, lost luggage, lost heirs) lead to the discovery of new connections and creative opportunities?

3) Mapping Narrative(s) in Medieval Literature

Organizer: Emily Lethbridge
(emily.d.lethbridge@gmail.com)

Paper panel

The investigation of spatial aspects of medieval literature is a rapidly growing area of research. In this session, speakers will present on topics that explore what and how new perspectives are revealed when medieval literature is approached with the aim of ‘mapping’ various aspects of it,

both conceptually, and/or technically by utilising digital mapping techniques, for example.

Identifying and plotting the places where the production and consumption of manuscripts containing certain works occurred, for example, might bring forth new insights into the socio-historical contexts in which these works were composed and transmitted. Or, the mapping of a world or worlds within a one specific literary work might enhance the logistical understanding of the narrative mechanics of that work, or enhance its drama. Finally, medieval maps themselves might be examined as artefacts that encode certain kinds of text and communicate a narrative or narratives.

4) Reassembling the Material Turn: Manuscript Texts as Vehicles in Network Formation

Organizers: Michael Van Dussen
(michael.vandussen@mcgill.ca) and Sebastian Sobocki
(s.i.sobocki@rug.nl)

Paper panel

What are the consequences of “localizing” a text in a manuscript culture? What happens when we resist the temptation to fix a manuscript text in space and time, refusing to treat it as a rarefied, static, or completed object? What new concepts emerge when we choose instead to deploy a manuscript as a mediator in the dynamics of group formation? Where do we draw the boundaries between manuscripts as material goods and cultural capital? And is studying the manuscript text as a vehicle compatible with studying its literary qualities? This session invites panelists to do something that we seldom see in manuscript studies: to regard the manuscript (not necessarily the codex) as a mediator, not the product of a completed process. We invite presenters to explore how manuscript circulation affects/effects group formation; how manuscripts are in turn shaped through space and time through this process; and how examining manuscript culture in this way might lead us to challenge current notions of textual or social fixity. Possible topics might also include analysis of the economic value of book contents and think about the role of books (as well as their contents) in European trade networks. Papers can investigate the role of texts or their MS instances in economic networks of exchange. Presenters are encouraged to discuss manuscripts,

networks, and social groups that connect England with parts of the European continent that extend beyond France and Italy (including English links with the Low Countries, the Empire, the Hanseatic League, and Central Europe).

Thread: CHAUCERIAN BIOGRAPHIES

Organizers: Alastair Minnis (alastair.minnis@yale.edu) and Daniel Wakelin (daniel.wakelin@ell.ox.ac.uk)

1) Writing Biography

Organizer: Alastair Minnis (alastair.minnis@yale.edu)

In this panel, Ardis Butterfield, Yale University, and Paul Strohm, Columbia University, will discuss their work on forthcoming biographies of Chaucer.

2) Manuscripts, Texts and Traces of the Poet's Work

Organizer: Linne Mooney (linne.mooney@york.ac.uk)

Paper panel

What evidence do the earliest copies of Chaucer's work offer for his writing processes or for the very fact of his authorship in some cases? Will they allow us to trace the genesis of his text over the poet's lifetime through his decisions and revisions? How secure is our evidence of the poet's corpus and shaping of it? Some manuscripts suggest that we might get closer to the poet himself, by revealing drafts of various works; but such evidence is of disputable significance. Other elements of manuscripts have been argued to be the 'creation' of ingenious scribes rather than the poet. Other evidence raises doubts about which works, or components of works such as 'glosses', are by Chaucer or by others. Papers are invited which address any of these questions.

3) The Teller and the Tale: Life Writing and *The Canterbury Tales*

Organizer: Robert Meyer-Lee (rmeyerle@iusb.edu)

Paper panel

This session seeks papers that draw on the sophistication in the study of life writing realized over the last couple of decades to revisit the longstanding critical question of the relationship between teller and tale in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Without relapsing into the indulgences of the 'roadside drama' argument, we may simply observe that, in several instances, Chaucer appears to model some sort of relation between the life of a 'writer' and the prologues and tales that he or she 'writes.' The nature of these relations themselves continues to be of critical interest, but so is the nature of the relation they may in turn refract between the life of the author and the fictional tellers and tales he puts into text (the painter of the lion is, after all, Chaucer). Proposals for papers that make innovative use of Chaucer's biography and/or theories of life writing to address any aspect of the question of the relation of teller and tale (in any specific instance, or generally) are welcome.

4) Chaucer and the Autobiographical Fallacy

Organizer: Lynn Staley (lstaley@colgate.edu)

Paper panel

This session begins where George Kane's "The Autobiographical Fallacy in Chaucer and Langland Studies," The Chambers Memorial Lecture, 1965 (London: H.K. Lewis & Co. Ltd for University College, London, 1965) ends. In that essay Kane remarks about the need for external evidence to support biographical suppositions, stating that such evidence can be found in literary history. Beginning with Kane's observations, what suppositions about Chaucer's life that are frequently adduced from Chaucer's writing are supported, extended, or destroyed by new investigations in the fields of history or literary history?

Thread: HANDLING SINS

Organizers: Robyn Malo (rmalo@purdue.edu) and Nicole Smith (ndsmith@unt.edu)

1) Catechism, Confession, and Codicology

Organizer: Michael Johnston (mjohnst@purdue.edu)

Paper panel

This session invites papers that engage with the manuscript contexts of confessional and catechetical texts, including but not limited to various confessional formulas, *summae*, manuals, the Decalogue, and the Seven Deadly Sins. Panelists are invited to address the variety of forms in which confessional literature could

appear, as well as the variety of audiences such literature addressed.

In investigating the contexts of confessional literature, papers might examine how (or whether) the works compiled alongside texts about sin and penance illuminate our understanding of the reception, use, and adaptation of confessional literature. Panelists might also take up generic boundaries, asking how we draw the line between catechetical material in general and confessional literature in particular. Papers investigating the circulation and copying of confessional and catechetical works, particularly between lay and clerical readers, would be welcome, as would papers addressing what the reception contexts of confessional literature tell us about the range of cultural meanings such texts could take on in the later Middle Ages.

2) Handling Secular Sins

Organizer: Matthew McCabe
(tmmccabe@ucalgary.ca)

Paper panel

What is secular sin? What discourses and practices existed in the Middle Ages for handling it? Recalling recent debates on religion's role, or lack of a role, in the practice of criticism (e.g. Asad et al., *Is Critique Secular?*), this session invites papers querying the late medieval structures and mechanisms of social critique, and the ways in which religion enables, informs, or hinders their formation. Papers might investigate analogies between the discourses and practices that constitute religion's recourse against "sin" and moments in secular texts—satires, conduct books, verse and prose narratives, etc.—that address failures of civility, decorum, grace, judgment, office, or justice. Alternatively, papers might explore historical evidence of the ways in which emergent forms of late medieval secular critique interact with various resources in Christianity (e.g. canon law, ecclesiastical courts, preaching, devotional reading, and confession in its various senses) or with other religions. Papers might productively attend to the non-religious sources (classical or nonclassical) of late medieval critique as well, provided such papers engage questions of the religious and the secular.

3) Inordinate Love

Organizers: Robyn Malo (rmalo@purdue.edu) & Nicole Smith (Nicole.Smith@unt.edu)

Paper panel

This panel invites a consideration of inordinate, or "wrongly-ordered," love as imagined by medieval writers, artists, and thinkers. Churchmen from Augustine to Aquinas find *amor inordinatus* at the root of vice: sin occurs when love is either misdirected towards evil or miscalculated towards good objects in excessively small or great ways. Inordinate love, however, preoccupied not only theologians such as Franciscan Jean de la Rochelle (c. 1200-1245) and Dominican William Perardus (c. 1200-c. 1271), who both position it as the governing principle of their respective *Summa on the Vices*, but also poets like Dante and Chaucer who conceive of love as a moral structure to organize transgression and repentance.

Papers may address cardinal sins, their myriad subcategories, or vice in general, and they may conceive broadly of the category "inordinate love," to include courtly love, emotion, and desire. Panelists may also choose to explore whether form or genre—from confessional narratives and penitential guides to romances and exempla—provokes alternative considerations of inordinate love; and what social, legal, or political ramifications may ensue for loving inappropriately. Please send abstracts to both coordinators.

4) Sin, Conduct, and Surveillance

Organizer: Sylvia Tomasch
(stomasch@hunter.cuny.edu)

Roundtable

If conduct is the middle term between sin – the cause of conduct – and surveillance – its apprehension and regulation, then medieval religious and secular texts and practices can help us understand that triple intertwining and the complications that result. It might seem an easy thing to regulate conduct, especially when we know the causes, but regulation only seems to beget further regulation as conduct slips always out of control. Taken as a whole, the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council might be understood as comprising a conduct manual that attempted control on a large scale and had far-reaching consequences (though not always the ones they

intended). The canons addressed questions crucial for the early 13th century as well as for centuries thereafter: what makes a good priest? a cleansed church? a true marriage? a good Christian? How are sacraments to be administered and when are they required? What makes a schismatic or a heretic? And what is to be done with a Jew or a Saracen? In addressing these questions, the council presented specific instances of sinful conduct, e.g., heresy, simony, and other forms of corruption, as well as specific remedies, e.g., baptism, confession, excommunication, crusade, inquisition, sumptuary regulation.

For this panel, presenters should be prepared to discuss sin, conduct, and surveillance from a variety of perspectives and in a variety of texts, from theology to poetry. Without discouraging further investigations of confession, an already well-established area of interest, panelists are encouraged to consider other sacraments and other modes of regulation that might similarly be explored. Connections between Lateran IV and later actions and texts as well as a consideration of the council within the tradition of conduct manuals are also encouraged. Presentations dealing with relations between classifications of sin and classifications of people are particularly welcome. Attention to literary works, such as Chaucer's, is always a plus.

Presenters should plan on speaking for no more than 10 minutes (4 double-spaced pages) in order to leave time for substantive discussion among panelists and including audience members.

Thread: HOW TO DO THINGS WITH TEXTS

Organizers: Seeta Chaganti (schaganti@ucdavis.edu) and Daniel Wakelin (daniel.wakelin@ell.ox.ac.uk)

1) How to Do Things with Form

Elizabeth Robertson (Elizabeth.Robertson@glasgow.ac.uk) and Ad Putter (a.d.putter@bristol.ac.uk)

Roundtable

This panel invites papers that consider Chaucer's formal innovations and achievements such as his introduction of rhyme royal and iambic pentameter into English. Panelists might consider one or two

of the following formal elements: line length, enjambment, syntactic variation, punctuation, stanza form and stanza shape, rhyme, white space (is this an issue only for scribes or do poets have a say in it? Is this only a concern of contemporary poets?); the representation of poetic form on the manuscript page (e.g. tail rhyme and brackets), the choice to write in poetry or prose, the presence of forms within forms (e.g. forms such as lyrics, songs, letters, prayers, sonnets that appear within the rhyme royal pattern but indicate their nature as different forms; or alternatively forms such as the roundel that breaks the rhyme royal pattern); punctuation. The panel might also consider formal innovations introduced by scribes (*i.e.* we could look at the formal consequences of various scribal choices). We would like panelists to choose only one formal element as it appears in only one or two short examples that would be distributed to the audience for group discussion. Rather than present a paper, the panelists would act as a discussion leader for the group as a whole. The organizers envision a panel of five or six speakers who would speak for no more than five minutes and then conduct a seven to ten minute discussion in the group. Then at the end we would have fifteen minutes for general discussion.

2) Translation, *Mise-en-Page*, and Form

Organizer: Sarah Noonan (sarahloleet@gmail.com)

Paper panel

As works were translated in medieval Europe between Latin and vernaculars and back again, these translations often altered more than just the language of a text. The *mise-en-page* and/or the material form of the translation were also, at times, adapted to suit its new linguistic context, intended audience, or expected use. In this session, we will query what can be gained by tracing a work's form within its manuscript versions not only within a single language but also across languages. By examining the formal and material adaptations that could occur alongside the linguistic translations of texts, this session welcomes paper proposals that seek to consider the translator's influence over a work's *mise-en-page*, scribal habits of reconciling the form of a text across multiple linguistic traditions, the implied uses of such translations by readers, and other discussions pertaining to the

relationship between translation and material form in medieval works.

3) Committing Poetry

Organizer: Ingrid Nelson (inelson@amherst.edu)

Paper panel

The return to form in literary studies in the past decade has sought to bring the insights of New Historicism and cultural studies to bear on the study of literary forms and poetics. This panel solicits papers that consider how medieval poetry, especially in the later Middle Ages, constitutes an intersection between form and action informed by social, historical, or cultural contexts. What kinds of action does poetry commit and permit? What happens to medieval poetry when it is ‘committed’ to writing (i.e. in manuscripts), or to memory? How do poetic commissions (e.g., by patrons) influence poetic form, content, and use-contexts? Do poetics and form constitute a kind of action? This panel especially welcomes papers that put formalist concerns in dialogue with social and material contexts. Papers might address the ritual or performative contexts of poetry; how poetry constitutes a social act; or how the copying of poems in manuscript negotiates the spatial representation of performance contexts or poetic form.

4) Poetics beyond Aureation

Organizers: Anke Bernau

(Anke.Bernau@manchester.ac.uk), and Sarah

Salih (sarah.salih@kcl.ac.uk)

Paper panel

This session will consider questions raised by fifteenth-century vernacular poetry about the nature and process of poetic composition, drawing on medieval literary theory as well as engaging with recent developments in theoretical fields such as visual studies, aesthetics and poetics. The following questions might be considered: What kinds of meanings did poetic form have? How did poets draw on the techniques of other artistic fields in order to develop and comment on their own productions? What kinds of imaginative articulations of the writing process engage with and move beyond the theories provided by philosophy and faculty psychology?

Thread: HOW TO DO THINGS WITH BOOKS

Organizer: Alexandra Gillespie

(alexandra.gillespie@utoronto.ca)

1) Should We Believe in the Agential Object?

Organizer: Susan Crane (sc2298@columbia.edu)

Paper panel

In medieval cultures, certain things are said to have both material and inspirited components. Among these, the Eucharist has exceptional status, but relics, breastplate books, saints’ vitae, and talismans also commingle physical and spiritual properties, as do things inspirited by magic and other arcane practices. Medieval instances of inspirited materiality resonate fascinatingly with contemporary object oriented materialisms that accord agential and psychic properties to all things. Contemporary theory asks whether each and every thing (or object, unit, entity) may be inspirited or act agentially, providing us with revised environments in which humans are no longer dichotomous with and superior to everything else. Medieval arts and philosophies offer similar propositions although they do not tend to be “flat” (they do not accord the same ontological status to every object) nor “pan-psychic” (they do not assign psychic properties to every object). The goals of this session are double: to explore specific instances of medieval thought about the properties of things, and to inquire how contemporary object-oriented ontologies both coordinate with and differ from medieval thought. Focusing on books and representations of books but encompassing other things as well, this session’s topics could include oath-swearing on holy books and relics, the talking book of *Piers Plowman*, the talking birds of the *Parliament of Foules*, lapidaries, book curses and their histories, the responsive temple statues of the *Knight’s Tale*, the brass horse of the *Squire’s Tale*, Robert Mannyng’s cow-sucking bag, and books of “natural magic” such as those used by the Clerk of Orleans in the *Franklin’s Tale*.

2) Chaucerian Parchment

Organizer: Bruce Holsinger

(bh9n@eservices.virginia.edu)

Paper panel

Scraping away the imagined errors of his scribe, absorbing an array of texts preserved on animal

skin, directing his own works' inscription on membrane folios, signing his name to vellum deeds and depositions: Chaucer's relation to parchment was a complex if nearly always implicit dimension of his life and literary career. If Ralph Hanna could rightly contend fifteen years ago that "membrane is difficult to interrogate," advances in the study of the technology, biology, and zooarchaeology of parchment over the last decade suggest it may be time to encourage broader and deeper thinking about the historical, cultural, and economic implications of medieval literature's primary medium. While the allegorical register of parchment has been much studied (the body as book, writing on human heart and skin, etc.), this session will err on the side of the descriptive and the literal. The parchment inheritance presents a spectrum of topics that merit our scrutiny, from Chaucer's relation to animal husbandry and butchery to issues of human-animal relations to the micro-economies of urban and rural England. The Icelandic setting of the conference will provide an apt point of entry into such subjects and a helpful point of contrast, as the character of membrane making up most medieval Icelandic manuscripts varies significantly from its insular counterpart, and Icelandic scribes were quite self-conscious about the often stubborn materiality of the medium. Papers on Chaucerian and non-Chaucerian parchment welcome.

3) Monument, Edifice, Container: The Medieval Manuscript

Organizers: Elaine Treharne (treharne@stanford.edu) and Noelle Phillips (noelle.phillips@utoronto.ca)

Paper panel

Wordsworth's *Preface* to the 1814 Edition of *The Recluse* likens the production of the literary work to the building of an edifice, while for Proust, in his *A la recherche du temps perdu* (II, 1112), he compares the thinness of parts of large works to the 'great cathedrals [that] remain unfinished'. How useful, then, might it be to conceive of the medieval manuscript as architextual, analogous to the masterpieces of architecture that often formed the institutional ecclesiastical or collegiate home of the early book?

This session encourages submissions from those working on the manuscript as whole, in the form

in which it comes to us, but constituted from multiple parts. From books as reliquaries to books as monumental acts of display, understanding the holistic nature of the medieval manuscript has become increasingly important in recent years, particularly as, simultaneously, the codex is fragmented and dismembered by its digitization.

Papers might focus on how the textual relics attached to, yet distinct from, the main book block influence the reception and interpretation of the book-as-text or 'real' text. Such relics may include flyleaves, endleaves, pastedowns, fragments, temporary bindings, or other kinds of textual ephemera. Or, in what ways might conceiving of the books and its component parts (its folio, *mise-en-page*, bifolia, quires, flyleaves and boards) as interrelated elements in a single construction help or hinder our understanding of medieval book production, materiality, transmission and reception? Contrasts between medieval and modern treatments of the different physical parts of a book or codex may also be a fruitful line of inquiry.

4) Teaching Things with Books

Organizer: Erick Keleman (kelemen@fordham.edu)

Roundtable

Even the scientists now agree: we learn by doing. Seeking short presentations and provocations for a roundtable discussion about learner-centered innovations in objectives, methods, resources, courses, or specific assignments for teaching book history and for teaching (other things) with book history. Can we teach book history better? Can we teach other things (like literature) better by using book history? Can we teach better—promote active learning, authentic assignments, and so on—by asking students to *do* things with books?

5) How to Do Things with Books: POSTER SESSION

Organizers: Anthony Bale (a.bale@bbk.ac.uk) and Alexandra Gillespie (alexandra.gillespie@utoronto.ca)

In order to respond to changing modes of conference presentation and to widen the kinds of evidence-based participation at the Congress, we are trialling a poster session in Reykjavík 2014. Poster Sessions—presentations displayed on

bulletin boards by an individual or by research groups—usually include narrative, illustrations, tables, graphs, and similar presentation formats. Our poster session is also likely to include reproductions or facsimiles of archival materials. The poster should concisely communicate the essence of the presenter’s research and/or showcase a particular artefact and the researcher's findings. Colorado State University has published useful general information on Poster Sessions which can be accessed here:

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guidid=78>. Some handsome example posters are available by following this link: <http://www.lifeandliterature.org/p/poster-session.html>

Poster Sessions offer excellent opportunities for extended informal discussion and conversation focused on topics of scholarly or pedagogical research. Posters are displayed for the entire Congress, so that attendees can view the work even when the authors are not physically present. This Poster Session will take place in a busy area, in close proximity to the main conference rooms; there will be one formal session when authors are expected to be physically present and engage in discussion with interested delegates. Authors will not have to make a formal oral presentation about their work, although the session organizers will give a brief introduction to the session on the day. Posters are invited on any topic likely to be of interest to the New Chaucer Society Congress delegates.

Proposals for Poster Sessions must include the following:

- Title of Poster
- Summary of project, not to exceed 250 words

Displays should be assembled during the first day of the Congress. During the live presentation session (90 minutes), presenters stand by their poster displays while others view the presentation and interact with the presenters. We expect to accept up to 16 posters.

Presenters will have wall space on which to affix their poster; they should plan on a poster with dimensions of approximately standard paper size A0 (84 x 118 cm, 33.1 x 46.8 inches). We will

also endeavor to place tables nearby for materials like handouts and sign-up sheets, although we cannot guarantee the layout at this stage. Please be aware that we also cannot guarantee a nearby electric power source.

Thread: THE BOOK IN PRACTICE

Organizers: Glenn Burger (glenn.burger@qc.cuny.edu) and Holly Crocker (hcrocker@mailbox.sc.edu)

1) Things Books Do

Organizers: Allan Mitchell (amitch@uvic.ca) and Alexandra Gillespie (alexandra.gillespie@utoronto.ca)
Roundtable

If we can agree that medieval texts are never just textual compositions, what then are the events, places, occasions, networks, and ecologies of practice that they compose? And what does this have to do with books? We seek panelists willing to offer short (5-8 minute) presentations and then join in a roundtable discussion that addresses such questions with renewed theoretical vigour. What is the location of the book? Where are readers when they read? What is a book among an array of other things and activities in the world? We are interested in hearing from those who could address any of the following topics we have imagined, but also related topics that we have not imagined: medieval (or modern) theories of cognition and books; phenomenology of the book or of reading; the thick materiality of the book as object; Speculative Realism/OOO and the book; Michel Serres and book as quasi-object; Bruno Latour and book as assemblage or actant; the extra-textual vitality of textual inscriptions; the temporality of reading; Maurice Blanchot and absence of the book; Edmond Jabès or Jaques Derrida and The Book; the book as prosthesis, machine, or automaton. We hope that this session can be held towards the end of the congress to allow participants to reflect on other sessions in this thread; we may invite participants to exchange reading material or discuss aspects of the session before the congress begins.

2) The Work of Scribes

Organizer: Stephen Partridge (sbp@mail.ubc.ca)
Paper panel

Scholars working in several areas offer observations about scribal practice: palaeography; textual editing; linguistic analysis; and “manuscript studies” and book history, where arguments are often influenced by literary approaches, including formalist ones. How do the interests, assumptions, and arguments of these approaches overlap, and how do they differ? Is it possible for these approaches to inform each other, and if so, how? For example, how might the methods of textual criticism, such as collation, inform book-historical approaches that often focus on paratextual features of Middle English manuscripts? On the other hand, can the accommodation of literary issues and approaches help strengthen textual criticism and palaeography, as traditionally conceived – or does it dilute such scholarship? How does the analysis of scribal reproduction of texts and paratexts relate to studies of scribal response, editing, and compilation? How might the growth in our knowledge about scribes’ identities and their canons influence the models we assume for scribal practice? How might research on scribal practices intersect with other conversations in medieval literary studies? Statements based on particular manuscripts are welcome, but should engage with issues of method.

3) The Social Lives of Books

Organizers: Heather Blatt (hblatt@fiu.edu), Janice McCoy (jam8y@virginia.edu), and Nicholas Perkins (nicholas.perkins@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk)

Paper panel

When the Wife of Bath takes up a book of wicked wives with which to beat her husband Jankyn over the head, her use of the manuscript illustrates a moment of what Leah Price, author of *How to Do Things With Books in Victorian Britain*, calls “nonreading”: instead of turning to the book for its designed role, the Wife repurposes it into a weapon, one that not only manifests her resistance to the misogynistic literature it contains, but also indicates her resistance to the husband who has read it to her nightly. In the Wife’s moment of nonreading, the book has become “more valuable for some other purpose,” and that new value places it into a fresh network of social relations.

Whether as weapons in marital disputes or myths

to “rede and drive the night away,” how do books themselves act in Chaucerian and other medieval narratives? What do particular surviving codices suggest about how books played a part in relationships or events, for example through dedication, theft, presentation, compilation or customizing? When manuscripts gain value not for their textual contents, but as personal memorials, status symbols, surrogates for prayer, or even weapons, how can we trace the implications of these social lives of books? And how expansive can we be about the vocabulary of (speech) act, play and performative in analyzing medieval books?

4) Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.20: Cultures of the Miscellany in Trilingual England

Organizers: Megan Cook (mcook@bowdoin.edu) and Elizaveta Strakhov (strakhov@sas.upenn.edu)
Roundtable

This roundtable seeks to explore late medieval England’s multilingual manuscript culture through a collaborative discussion of Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.20, a large anthology copied in the 1430s by the scribe and bibliophile John Shirley. Generically, as well as linguistically, TCC, MS R.3.20 is a diverse collection, encompassing both courtly and religious works and containing examples of lyric, prose, and drama. The volume preserves important copies of works by Chaucer, Lydgate, and Hoccleve, as well as longer Latin texts and multiple anonymous French lyrics, including some by Alain Chartier that are ascribed in the manuscript to prominent contemporary English political figure William de la Pole. The anthology further bears the annotations of sixteenth century antiquarian John Stow, who drew heavily from this volume when preparing his 1561 edition of Chaucer’s Works. The diversity of its contents, coupled with what is known about its production and early circulation, makes MS R.3.20 an ideal site in which to explore the intersections of several vibrant areas of scholarship in late medieval studies, including book history, scribal cultures, patronage and coterie lyric production, medieval England’s multilingualism, and pre-modern periodization practices. Our aim is that this roundtable will provide a focused opportunity for scholars working in these subfields to interact with and

learn from one another. Possible paper topics may include but are not limited to:

- the interplay of its multiple genres
- the manuscript as, in part, a retrospective of fourteenth-century literary culture compiled within the fifteenth century
- Shirley's role as scribe, compiler, and commentator
- the anthology's readership and transmission, as well as its position within the larger context of late medieval anthological practice

Thread: THE MEDIEVAL SENSORIUM

Organizers: Andrew Cole (acole@princeton.edu) and Maura Nolan (mnolan@berkeley.edu)

1) Medieval Soundscapes

Organizers: Hannah Johnson (hrj4@pitt.edu) and Adin Lears (ael74@cornell.edu)

Paper panel

From the riot of bells in a city's churches, to the cries of street vendors so memorably ventriloquized in *Piers Plowman*, from the twittering of birds in Chaucer's oeuvre to the voiced sounds of prayer and poetry, this session asks how the medieval soundscape was imagined, experienced, and put to work across the aesthetic and cultural landscape. Sound was often likened to broken air, rippling water, and lighted smoke: the material emphasis on sound gives light, weight, movement, and feeling to sound, attributing to it a span of stimuli that extends far beyond its own sensory borders. This range highlights the capacity of sound for "traversal and transference," in the words of the Sound Studies pioneer, Steven Connor: the ability of aural experience to include the perception of other senses—especially touch—along with it. In recent years, scholars have begun to open important conversations around the subject of sound in Chaucer's work, yet much in the aural realm remains to be explored both within and beyond Chaucer's literary canon. What are the problematics of sound versus hearing in the Middle Ages? How can we reconstruct Chaucer's acoustic environment? Are certain sounds given affective priority, perhaps in ways that are taken for granted? Are there new ways to think about how sound organizes experience at the collective or individual levels? How is sound given form in

the visual arts, and how are these forms perceived? We hope to open a discussion about the lived experience of sound in the Middle Ages, its representation in various media, and the challenges of attending to and reconstructing this aspect of the medieval sensorium in our scholarship. We invite papers theorizing or historicizing sound in any of its myriad manifestations (noise, song, voice, etc.) in relation to texts, songs, or other materials in Chaucer's age. New approaches and the consideration of diverse historical materials are welcome.

2) Thinking Chaucer

Organizer: Marion Turner (marion.turner@jesus.ox.ac.uk)

Paper panel

Our minds are not independent of our bodies: our mental health is displayed somatically, as medieval writers knew well – love sickness and dying for love are only the best-known examples. And neuroscience is extending our understanding of the relationship between the senses, the mind, and the experience of reading in exciting new ways: one recent study demonstrates that our sensory cortex responds differently when we read of a 'velvet' voice as opposed to a 'pleasing' voice. For our brains, there is a blurred boundary between touching, reading about touching, and reading about metaphorical touching. This session invites contributors to think about thinking: about metaphor, the imagination, the memory, the landscape of the mind, mental health, cognition. Presentations might address Chaucer's portrayal of mental change or breakdown, the kinds of imagery he uses, his engagement with contemporary theories of thought. They might also, of course, address Chaucer's contemporaries' engagement with these issues. Papers might also or alternatively focus on how neuroscience can be usefully deployed in medieval literary studies, on intersections between literary and scientific texts and theories, or on the interplay between medieval and current ideas about how we think, how we respond to reading, how we change our minds.

3) Edification of the Senses

Organizers: Richard G. Newhauser (Richard.Newhauser@asu.edu) and Larry Scanlon (lfscanlon@aol.com)

Paper panel

Medieval institutions stressed the importance of edifying the senses: not just guarding the external senses from intrusions of proscribed sensations, but a careful development in learning how to interpret sensory data. Physicians were instructed in how to see, touch, and taste the signs of disease; confessors learned how to query (and instruct further) a penitent's use of the senses; craftsmen learned their trade through a refinement of their senses; etc. Professionalization – including literary professionalization – as well as moral education was marked by one's sensory abilities, acquired through training. This session will explore this broad, complex, and often contradictory cultural conjunction between the physiology of sensation on the one hand and modes of education, training, and discipline on the other, along with the concomitant encounters between religiosity and epistemology. We are particularly interested in the way this problem gets worked out in literary texts, but we invite participation from Chaucerians with an interest in all facets of sensory history, whether that be in relation to the presentation of the senses in Middle English literature, the history of medicine, religious history, or any other field.

4) The Sense of Emotion: A Roundtable

Organizers: Sarah Kelen (sak@nebrwesleyan.edu), Rebecca McNamara (rebecca.mcnamara@sydney.edu.au), and Sarah McNamer (mcnamer@georgetown.edu)

Roundtable

How does emotion make sense, and how does sense make emotion? This roundtable will consider somatic-affective links and the logics that inform them. We invite proposals for very short (five-minute) papers on any aspect of the embodiment of emotion. Specific topics might include: heightened emotions (joy, fear, anger) and the ways they are embodied (swooning, shaking, weeping, warmth and its lack); synaesthetic experiences and their emotional valences; feigned emotions, or the psychodramatic conflicts between reason and emotion. Contributors might also consider which physical spaces or textual places serve as loci for medieval somatic-affective experiences. Papers that continue the many conversations on Affect begun at the 2012 NCS meeting are welcome, as are position statements that might take the study of the medieval sensorium and affect in new directions.

Thread: THE WAYS WE READ NOW

Organizers: Peter Travis (Peter.W.Travis@dartmouth.edu) and Tom Goodmann (tgoodmann@miami.edu)

“Reading” is the complex critical term we use for a panoply of cognitive, interpretative, and evaluative acts, including divagations into the ways in which narratives interpret and critique themselves. This thread explores a number of past protocols of reading Chaucer, and asks how we might now read Chaucer otherwise. Sessions I and II are designed as close-reading, self-reflexive seminars, each comprising five short papers theorizing two Chaucer texts; namely, *The General Prologue* and *The House of Fame*. Sessions III and IV are designed as a critical continuum—six standard-length papers that examine, at a rather abstract level, how we have read Chaucer in the past, and how and why we might read Chaucer differently. Here we imagine not exclusive readings of individual texts, but rather more generalized interventions about “reading Chaucer”—intercessions that are both ludic and lucid—that serve as symptomatic experiments in the craft of reading Chaucer in the twenty-first century.

1) Not Your Doktorvater's *General Prologue*

Organizer: Peter Travis (Peter.W.Travis@dartmouth.edu)

Paper panel

This session solicits short papers offering new views of the most overdetermined of Chaucer's texts, *The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales*. Given the layers of so many readings, so many pedagogical forays (our own included), how is it possible to read the *General Prologue* beneath a new sun? What, for example, would readings of the Canterbury community look like in terms of New Urbanism? Pedestrian studies? Neighbor studies? Narratology studies? Disability studies? Etc.

2) *The House of Fame* as Hermeneutic Sound Garden

Organizer: Tom Goodmann (tgoodmann@miami.edu)

Paper panel

In what modes of cultural architecture does the *House of Fame* reside? How might our readings

comprehend the sonic elevation of its design-in-time, from ekphrasis to ekstasis—echoic, reverberant, anxious, parodic? In what ways does the poem resonate with its imagined pasts—Scipionic, Vergilian, Dantean—and its future translations (Pope, Gröndal), as well as within its many productive critical readings? How might we hear the sound and the fury of *Fama* in our own moment of post-punk *redux* dissonance?

3) The Ways We Read Now

Organizer: Thomas Prendergast

(tprendergast@wooster.edu)

Roundtable

For Session Three we are seeking interrogative accounts of still-productive ways we have read Chaucer in the past—such as ethnicism, feminism, historicism, materialism and object studies, Marxism, medievalism, neo-patristic, neo-philology, psychoanalysis, queer studies, reader-response, the religious turn, etc. These papers might focus on one major critical work that remains resonant—if perhaps under-appreciated, or over-appreciated, as the case may be.

4) The Ways We Might Read in the Future

Organizer: Jessica Rosenfeld

(jrosenfe@artsci.wustl.edu)

Roundtable

For Session Four we are seeking inclusive and meta-critical accounts not only of how we are presently reading Chaucer (productively and counter-productively), but also of how a new Chaucerian hermeneutics might shift our readerly practices in liberation directions—and perhaps towards renewed public intellectualism. Will Chaucer remain, as the late, lamented Lee Patterson once called him, “‘The horse medieval studies has to ride’”?

INDEPENDENT SESSIONS

1) The *Prick of Conscience*

Organizers: Rosemary O’Neill

(oneillr@kenyon.edu) and Ellen K. Rentz

(erentz@cmc.edu)

Roundtable

This roundtable explores the *Prick of Conscience*, a medieval bestseller that circulated in over one hundred manuscripts, appearing alongside such texts as *Piers Plowman*, the *South English*

Legendary, and Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls*. Despite its popularity and longevity, the *Prick of Conscience* has often been overlooked. But recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in the poem, including the first new edition since 1863, and this roundtable session aims to keep the momentum going. Participants are invited to give short presentations (7-10 minutes) on any aspect of the *Prick of Conscience* including, but not limited to: its experiential and topographical exploration of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven; representations of community; penitential economies; sin, penance, and self-knowledge; the fifteen signs of the end; sources and analogues; language, vernacularity, and translation; medieval manuscripts and early printed editions; the problem of medieval popularity and modern neglect.

2) The Learning Space: How’s it Done There

Organizer: Sandy Feinstein (sxf31@psu.edu)

Paper panel

This session invites abstracts that consider the diverse means of giving expression to the process of making something or instruction on how to make or do something. Focus may be on the representations of process, or methodologies, that are embedded in the texts as actions or on the place where they are exercised. Papers are invited on the epistemology of the artisan or the pedagogue, as figured in how-to manuals or any other genre. They may focus more broadly on traditional and untraditional sites of learning in relation to genre and its imperatives. Or attention may be on sites of learning in relation to audience and reception: those outside or inside the home (e.g., *Second Nun’s Tale* or *Treatise of the Astrolabe*); places of presumed study or knowledge acquisition (university, court, or church); or places in the field, workshop, or inn. How is *Auctorite* or the cited, various teachers, their methods and sources, reconfigured in relation to the varied directions of instruction that emerge in any number of medieval texts.

3) Cinematic Adaptations of Medieval Scandinavian Narratives and History

Organizer: Lorraine K. Stock (Lstock@uh.edu)

Paper panel

This session about Scandinavian cinematic medievalism invites papers that interrogate how

filmmakers construct the literature and history of the Scandinavian Middle Ages in the many film adaptations of literary narratives created in or about medieval Scandinavia or the general history of medieval Scandinavia and/or Viking culture. Possible literary texts being adapted include Icelandic sagas or heroic poetry (*The Viking Trilogy* of Icelandic film director Hrafn Gunnlaugsson; *The Viking Sagas*), medieval narratives set in Scandinavia (various film adaptations of *Beowulf*), post-medieval narratives or films representing medieval Scandinavia (Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*, *The Seventh Seal*; Sigrid Undset's Nobel prize-winning novel trilogy, *Kristin Lavransdatter*). Adaptations of Viking history include *The Long Ships*; *The Vikings*; *Alfred the Great*, and even the parodic *Erik the Viking*. Assessment of the adaptation process may consider differences between traditional Hollywood sound stage/star system productions (*The Vikings*; *The Long Ships*), productions striving for authentic *mise-en-scene* (*Beowulf & Grendel*; Gunnlaugsson's *Viking Trilogy*; *The Viking Sagas*), and the fantasy imaging of animation or CGI (*Grendel*, *Grendel*, *Grendel*; Zemekis's *Beowulf*; *The Secret of Kells*). Titles included are suggestive, not prescriptive.

4) Skin Matters

Organizer: Nicole Nyffenegger
(nyffenegger@ens.unibe.ch)

Paper panel

Decades after the 'somatic turn' and following scholarly explorations of the performing, gendered, disabled body, medievalists have recently focused in (again) on individual parts of the body, their roles and functions in literature. Recent and upcoming publications investigate, e.g., flesh, hair or the organs, yet skin seems to be particularly multifaceted. Apart from the disconcerting –and particularly medieval– connections between human skin and animal skin as the primary writing material of the Middle Ages, the human skin is both boundary and container, screen and stage; a place where self and other are negotiated.

This panel invites speakers to think about why exactly skin matters as much as it does –to us as literary scholars as to Chaucer and his contemporaries. Topics may include but are not

restricted to: the role of skin in the performance of self and in the construction of gender, aspect and beauty, skin as place of communication, the readability of skin (scars, skin color), touch and sensation, nakedness.

5) Chaucer and the Tales of the Romans

Organizer: Richard Firth Green
(green.693@osu.edu)

Paper panel

Two major collections of exempla, the *Gesta Romanorum* and *The Seven Sages of Rome*, were widely known throughout medieval Europe, translated into several vernaculars, and provided popular versions of stories that appear, not only in the works of Chaucer (*The Man of Law's Tale* and *The Manciple's Tale*), but in Gower, Hoccleve, and in Chaucerian apocrypha (*The Tale of Beryn*). In addition, they offer prominent examples of story collections (and in the case of the Seven Sages, a framed story collection) that predate the *Canterbury Tales*. Papers are invited that explore the connections, whether structural or thematic, between these "tales of the Romans" and the works of Chaucer, his contemporaries, and his followers.

6) Erotic Flesh in Late Medieval Discourse

Organizers: Virginia Blanton
(blantonv@umkc.edu) and Mary Beth Long
(longm@obu.edu)

Paper panel

Chaucer's interest in erotics has long been noted regarding the fabliaux and romances, and it is perhaps germane, if unexpected, that the NCS will convene in Reykjavík, which has recently attracted attention as the new site of the Phallogical Museum. This panel is interested in less-straightforward, less-conventional attention to late-medieval erotics by interrogating the ways in which medieval anxieties about sex, sexuality, and eroticism are a (hidden, submerged, covered) feature of late medieval discursive space. We seek papers that address these anxieties in texts where we might not expect to encounter them (e.g., sermons that titillate even as they denigrate sexual behavior, or theological treatises that engage the senses even as they denounce the sensory).

7) Wycliffite Bible Networks: Makers, Patrons, and Users

Organizer: Kathleen E. Kennedy
(k.e.kennedy@gmail.com)

Paper panel

The first complete translation of the Bible into English, the Wycliffite Bible remains today in over 250 medieval copies: thus, copies of English scripture far outnumber copies of the Canterbury Tales. This fact is remarkable given both the popularity of the Tales, and the outlawing of the Wycliffite Bible in 1409. Such numbers argue that Chaucer and his audiences would have been familiar at least in passing with English scripture. Indeed, it appears that some Chaucerian volumes and Wycliffite Bibles were made and disseminated within the same networks, and this panel may explore such interconnections. We seek papers which develop arguments about the manufacturing patterns, patronage networks, and original users, as well as subsequent collectors, of Wycliffite Bibles in order to develop a more complete picture of late medieval book culture. Above all, “Wycliffite Bible Networks” seeks to nuance our traditional association of the Wycliffite Bible with heresy through close examination of physical copies.

8) Medieval Governmentalities

Organizer: Ian Cornelius
(ian.cornelius@yale.edu)

Roundtable

How does an intention to govern become realized within different scales and contexts of community? In the name of what, and by what technical means, did medieval people in various circumstances attempt to govern their possessions, themselves, and their subordinates? How did practices of government serve to define and locate individuals within class or status groups? And what links grew up between the “government of self” and the “government of others” -- the latter perhaps instanced within different fields as direction, visitation, and administration, military leadership, and sovereign rule? This roundtable invites discussion of medieval practices of governynge, understood in the wide range of meanings possible for that word during the age of Chaucer.

Possible materials for discussion include manuals and records of estates management, treatises of advice to princes, chronicle histories, fiscal and administrative records of royal government, legal theory and practice, conduct manuals, sermons, and manuals of pastoral care. Proposals that link theoretical thinking to empirical research are especially encouraged.

9) Global Chaucers

Organizer: Candace Barrington
(BarringtonC@mail.ccsu.edu)

Roundtable

To date, Chaucer’s global reception has received only slight attention. Although extensive scholarship has examined and analyzed Chaucer’s reception in Britain, Australia, and the United States, little work has been done with his reception outside this inner circle of English-speaking countries, and even less in non-Anglophone cultures. To correct this oversight, we invite each speaker give a 10-12 minute introductory presentation on any work of Chaucerian adaptation created in a language other than English.

For the purposes of this roundtable discussion, we would like to focus on non-Anglophone, post-1945 translations, adaptations, and appropriations of Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. How might different types of Chaucer adaptation help us more effectively examine the worldwide pathways through which cultural traditions travel, encounter, and shape one another? To what extent do modern Chaucerian adaptations adapt the poet’s own interests in polyvocality, multiple perspectives, diversity of genre? How might the appropriation of Chaucerian material in postcolonial contexts – areas of the world where “new” nations are articulating a sense of identity that is both informed by and resisting more powerful cultural models – provide a potential point of contact between Chaucer’s own period and post-1945 settings? This roundtable welcomes discussion of Chaucerian adaptation of any kind: children’s books, films, dramatic works, comic books, or other media.

Participants are encouraged to explore the developing collection of texts and translations at <http://globalchaucers.wordpress.com>.

10) Networks of Solitude

Organizers: Susannah Chewning (chewning@ucc.edu) and Liz Herbert McAvoy (e.mcavoy@swansea.ac.uk)

Paper panel

Medieval solitude, as manifested within the medieval anchoritic and hermitic traditions in particular, was, by the era of Chaucer, an extremely popular and common form of religious and cultural experience and, as Anne Savage has persuasively argued, the practices it generated were by no means restricted to those women and men entering the anchorhold as religious recluses. Although the original ideologies of anchoritism certainly encouraged isolation and solitude, there were also many networks and communities, both religious and lay, running throughout England and the Continent that shared ‘anchoritic’ texts, ideas, and spiritual practices.

In this session we seek to include presentations on the networks constructed around and by medieval solitary experience and the types of communication – textual or otherwise – that manifested itself during the time of Chaucer, whether among and between anchorites and other solitaries, their patrons, their spiritual advisors or the community at large. Papers addressing specific authors who participated in these ‘networks of solitude’ (Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich, William Flete, Margery Kempe, and the adapters of the Katherine and Wooing Group texts, for example) are welcome. Also invited are those dealing with the transmission of manuscripts, the spread of solitary practice and devotion, the reception of anchoritic traditions, relationships between Continental and English solitary traditions and their texts, and the spatial networks that built up around solitary practice in individual locations (for example, East Anglian churches and communities, or the Low Countries).

11) Chaucer’s life, Chaucer’s libraries

Organizer: Orietta Da Rold, University of Leicester (odr1@leicester.ac.uk)

Paper panel

It is a truism of any critical literary enquiry that authors’ works reflect their libraries, and that these libraries are intrinsically determined by their biography. Conceptually, an author’s library

represents the ‘mental space’ which encapsulates his/her experience and authorities. Centuries of scholarship about Chaucer’s sources and analogues have demonstrated how Chaucer’s library developed and augmented over time through readings, conversations, travel and exposure to literary and non-literary milieux. But how real were the books that he consulted? Books in Chaucer’s works are real physical objects. The Clerk owns ‘Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed’ (The General Prologue, CT, l. 294), and the Wyfe of Bath tears pages from Jenkin’s book (The Wyfe of Bath’s Prologue, CT, l. 636). Which libraries did Chaucer have access to when he was traveling in Italy, Spain, or staying in and out of London? Although it may be argued that libraries in a modern sense with books on shelves are a fifteenth century invention, recent advances in understanding the circulation of books in the medieval period may help us to identify more precisely what Chaucer had available. But how much do we know about those books that he may have looked at? It was thought that Chaucer may have looked at the Auchinleck Manuscript (NLS Adv MS 19.2.1), are there any other extant manuscripts in Britain or abroad which could have been consulted by him? This session seeks papers which will explore the intersection of biography and book history to explore how Chaucer’s library was shaped overtime. Proposals can consider the state of the field, relevant methodologies, or offer detail studies of research completed or in progress.

12) Late medieval speech communities

Organizer: Isabel Davis (i.davis@bbk.ac.uk)

Paper panel

This session seeks to explore the evidence, in late medieval text and manuscripts, for “speech communities,” that is, social networks created in and understood through spoken interaction. Proposals are invited for papers which explore ways into late medieval attitudes to speaking and dialogue, even through textual and material sources of evidence. Papers might consider any of the following questions: how far can we consider the heard and said, as well as the seen and written, when we approach Middle English text and manuscript? How are relationships based upon dialogue and speech represented in writing and so converted into the very different transactions between reader and text? Why do so many

medieval texts fictionalise the face-to-face, voiced encounter as a way to efface their own textuality? Are there medieval communities or social relationships which we necessarily observe today only through text and image but which medieval people understood to be more especially established and conducted through sound and speech

13) Masculinity and 14th century literature

Organizer: Ásdís Egilsdóttir (asd@hi.is)

Paper panel

Recently, there has been a growing interest in men and masculinity in the Middle Ages. The aim of this session is to discuss and compare masculinity in late medieval Icelandic literature and Chaucer. Possible topics may include: Theory and methods, bodily boundaries, the male body/clothes, cross-dressing, masculinity and space, homosocial relationships, friendship, homosexuality.

14) Recovering the Middle Ages

Session Organizer: Tim W. Machan

(tim.machan@marquette.edu)

Paper panel

In eighteenth-century England, two antiquarian impulses coalesced. One, witnessed in the editions of Ritson or the criticism of Warton, was the championing of pre-Reformation English literature for the recovery of meaningful native traditions. The other, catalyzed by Percy's Northern Antiquities and the work it inspired in poets like Gray, traced English cultural practices and temperament to specifically Scandinavian beginnings. Both impulses strengthened in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, producing an English medievalism that, as in the work of William Morris or J. R. R. Tolkien, owed equally to Middle English and Old Norse. This session invites papers on this Scandinavian-English nexus and the way it recovered a usable Middle Ages that could further the production of literature but also art, architecture, ethnicity, and history.

SEMINARS

1) Editing [for] the Future

Organizer: Vincent Gillespie

(vincent.gillespie@ell.ox.ac.uk)

2014 marks the 150th anniversary of the Early English Text Society. This is an opportune

moment to reflect on the future of the scholarly edition. The scholarly fields of Book History, the New Philology, Material Philology, and the evolving areas of eco-criticism, space theory and other theoretical discourses continue to require edited texts to explore, and increasingly need more in the way of collateral and contextual information about the transmission of those texts in the manuscript matrix. How should editors respond? Papers are invited to reflect on changes needed to accommodate the needs of students, the scholarly community, and the wider reading public, and to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of the textual archive. We will aim to circulate papers in advance and to dedicate our time to a round-table discussion of the issues.

2) Ecomaterialism:

Questions/Problems/Ideologies

Organizers: Myra Seaman (SeamanM@cofc.edu) and Kathleen Kelly (k.kelly@neu.edu)

Ecomaterialist theories and practices vary widely and proliferate rapidly these days, and variations therein and their genealogies (speculative realisms, new materialisms, object-oriented-ontologies, to name a few) are constantly subject to debate—often heated—in the academy. Medievalists are right in the middle of such debates. How might medieval studies continue to contribute to ecomaterialist theories? How might ecomaterialism help us form a more nuanced understanding of medieval people and their interactions with, and understanding of, their environments? How do medieval literary texts, philosophical treatises, historical documents, and natural histories contribute to the history of our own involvement with the natural world? More broadly, an all-too-familiar divide separates the humanities and the sciences with respect to studying the natural world and its history: as the sciences and the social sciences come to dominate the new sustainability studies in universities, how might humanists take their place at that table?

Questions/problems/ideologies under discussion may include: What *kind* of ecomaterialism? Aesthetic? Activist? Environmentalist? Humans first? Things first? Enmeshed things? All things in their unique, solitary, unknowable orbits? Networky? Combined with other theories and practices such as eco-criticism, neo-ecocriticism,

and/or zoocriticism? Marxist, feminist, queer, postcolonial, and/or psychoanalytic theory? First wave, second wave, third wave? How do politics/geopolitics/biopolitics figure in ecomaterialist thought and practice? Theology? Gender, race, sexuality? What is ecoliterature—or is *everything* ecoliterature?

In this seminar, participants (and, we hope, session attendees) will read a set of texts (tba, with participant input and made available to all attendees) that take up current debates on ecomaterialist theories and practices as well as that showcase ecomaterialist readings of medieval texts or other medieval cultural artifacts. Participants are invited to present in a variety of modes—a work-in-progress, a theorized close reading, a blog post, a meditation on one or more of the readings, a set of questions, a suggestion for a new direction, a manifesto, a digital media presentation, a video, a creative piece—anything that engages with the readings while enacting an ecomaterialist practice. Limited to eight participants. Abstracts should include a description of the mode of presentation, for a 4-minute presentation. In order to increase opportunities for participation and dialogue, seminar attendees are invited to bring their own brief (one page) pieces to share (though this is not required!).

3) Digital Chaucer

Organizer: Simon Horobin
(Simon.Horobin@magd.ox.ac.uk)

The purpose of this seminar is to provide a forum for the discussion of the role of digital resources and methods in Chaucer Studies. The seminar has space for up to 8 speakers who will circulate short papers of no more than 2000 words before the Congress; these draft papers will be made available to prospective audience members electronically. Speakers will be expected to summarise these papers briefly in the seminar; the majority of the seminar will be focused on discussion among the panel and audience members. Possible topics for discussion include the use of existing resources, such as digital facsimiles, online manuscript catalogues, electronic texts, the Middle English Compendium, the Glossarial DataBase, for teaching and research. Prospective speakers embarking on new digital projects are also encouraged to present their work-

in-progress or future plans. As the New Chaucer Society establishes its presence on Twitter and Facebook, participants might also consider the possible impact of social media on Chaucer Studies, as well as new forms of online collaboration such as Crowdsourcing and Wikis.

4) Creatura

Organizers: George Edmondson
(George.Edmondson@dartmouth.edu) and Robert Stein
(rms9@columbia.edu)

For the past century, thinkers of a certain political-theological bent have found themselves returning with a new urgency to the category that might well be regarded as the master category of medieval being: the category of *creatura* that included all created things. Franz Rosenzweig stresses the *ura* in *creatura*: the imperfect construction, the thing always undergoing creation, always being subjected to transformation. For Walter Benjamin the creature appears, at moments of crisis, as the half-formed harbinger of another form of life, and for him the storyteller is both the advocate of creaturely life and its highest embodiment. Eric Santner gives the concept a humanist inflection by arguing that “creatureliness [signifies] less a dimension that traverses the boundaries of human and nonhuman forms of life than a specifically human way of finding oneself caught in the midst of antagonisms in and of the political field.” Finally, Giorgio Agamben has thrust creatureliness into the center of his ethical and political critique. Even as philosophy’s reengagement with the creature poses a problem for modernity, it raises a question for medieval studies: To what degree is the modern conception of the creature already operative in the Middle Ages? Would it get us anywhere if we approached medieval subjects (and/or literary creations) not as creatures of a sovereign creator but as creatures of another sort: creatures of institutions, of corporations, of communities, of language, of one another? Would the category add another turn to the ongoing reconsideration of medieval animal-human relations? Would it allow us to think more broadly about craft and making? Would it help us, at the most basic, literary-historical level, to reevaluate a character like the Pardoner or “this creature,” Margery Kempe? Should we detect, in the creatures of the Middle Ages—real, imaginary, symbolic—the figures of a future politics still in

the making? This seminar invites short papers exploring these and other questions pertaining to creatureliness as a point of contact between medieval and modern. The seminar has room for up to 8 participants. Members of the seminar will circulate papers in advance of the congress.

5) Re-orienting Disability

Organizers: Jonathan Hsy (jhsy@gwu.edu) and Julie Orlemanski (julie.orlemanski@bc.edu)
Since the category of “disability” was not in circulation in the Middle Ages, what exactly does a medievalist disability studies investigate? The scholarship of the last decade suggests that such research begins with acts of translation: by moving between disability in the present and its analogues and precursors in the past; by crossing from disability’s recent discursive contexts to distinctly medieval configurations of care, sensory experience, constructed environments, physical impairment, and notions of embodied difference; and by marking both the similitudes and the disjunctions between, say, blindness then and blindness now, between literal blindness and spiritual, between blindness as a narrative device and as a lived experience. Building on such insightful recent work, this seminar will bring together up to six participants engaged in “re-orienting” the study of disability in the Middle Ages. What questions and methodologies, we ask, promise to open up new lines of theoretical, historical, or literary-critical inquiry? How do disability approaches (re)constitute and (re)configure social relations and modes of analysis?

Interested participants should submit brief abstracts outlining the most compelling, urgent, or exciting question(s) facing a medievalist disability studies. We welcome submissions from scholars who work in fields outside of English literature, including literature in other languages, as well as the history of medicine, music, art history, or people who work on material outside the medieval Latin West. Selected participants will be asked to submit papers of no more than 2000 words prior to the conference, concerning new directions (in methodology, subject matter, or theoretical conceptualization) in the study of disability in the age of Chaucer. In the interest of being “oriented” and well as “re-oriented” within disability studies,

we will also ask participants each to recommend an essay or book chapter that s/he considers essential reading in the field. Participants’ papers as well as their recommended readings will be available to prospective audience members registered for the seminar. The conversation at NCS, informed by our shared reading, will explore the new possibilities for studying medieval disability.

6) The Boundaries of Medieval Drama

Organizers: John T. Sebastian (jtsebast@loyno.edu), and Christina M. Fitzgerald (christina.fitzgerald@utoledo.edu)

This seminar seeks to draw together 6-8 scholars to explore the question “What intersects with drama at its boundaries?” In order to facilitate our conversation, participants will be asked to read the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, a dramatic text that, in the words of Michael Jones, “demonstrates the same transgression of boundaries—generic, cultural, historical—as it thematizes in its own plot.” To help ground discussion of the play, we will also consider

Theresa Coletti and Gail McMurray Gibson, “The Tudor Origins of Medieval Drama,” in Kent Cartwright, ed., *A Companion to Tudor Literature* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 228-245; and

Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (U of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), Introduction: “Palimpsested Time: Toward a Theory of Untimely Matter.”

Building on this work of Coletti and Gibson and Harris, seminar members will use the *Play of the Sacrament* as a test case for exploring more generally medieval drama’s complex temporalities, manuscript situations, appropriations of other genres, ideologies, and contexts. We invite participants who are interested in a variety of medieval literatures and cultural practices that overlap with the *Play of the Sacrament*’s own concerns and claims as well as scholars pursuing a variety of critical approaches (e.g., eco-criticism, object-oriented ontology, history of affect) to studying early drama.

The seminar will open with five-minute statements from participants, followed by 30 minutes of

roundtable discussion among presenters. The audience will then be invited to participate during the remainder of the seminar.

7) Reading Chaucer

Organizer: Helen Barr (helen.barr@lmh.ox.ac.uk)

This 2 hour session will focus on communal reading of selections from Chaucer's works. A chief aim of the session is to encourage conversation between readers of Chaucer from a range of academic backgrounds and career points. The session will have 5 "lead" participants who will introduce passages no longer than 200 lines, or a pair of passages no longer than 200 lines in total, by outlining a brief response to them from any critical or textual perspective. To leave time for as much discussion as possible, these introductions should last no longer than 5 minutes. Reference citations for the passages chosen for discussion in the seminar will be circulated in advance so we all have common ground and can share different ways of reading Chaucer. To apply to the seminar, please send the passage you propose.

8) Extracurricular Chaucer: Creative Pedagogies

Organizer: Ruth Evans (revans19@slu.edu)

This seminar is less about the practical and experiential – "how I teach Chaucer" – and more about reflecting on our practices and experiences: how we teach Chaucer now (and why) and how we might teach Chaucer in the future (and why). The seminar aims to consider the impact of changes in our institutional and disciplinary environments on the content and mode of delivery of our teaching and of students' learning. Topics might include: to what extent does the lack of consensus about the disciplinary protocols of "English" help or hinder our teaching of Chaucer? how might the medieval liberal arts help us to reimagine the modern classroom? the impact of digital humanities (changes in information technology, access to scholarly research tools, etc.); how we incorporate blogging, tweeting, and

social media into our teaching practices; canons/traditions; the connections between Chaucer and disciplines that seem very removed (such as the sciences); the place of affect in the classroom; the decline of language learning and its impact on teaching Chaucer and his age; teaching Middle English; orality in the classroom; how might the emerging discipline of Future Philology affect our teaching? Or the new humanisms? the university as "the marketplace of ideas" – or its opposite; "critical thinking"; why teach Chaucer? medievalism and Creative Anachronism; the turn towards objects; crowdsourcing, the Internet of Things, and the wikiality of it all.

The session is limited to 8 participants. There will be some reading (TBA) for everyone to do beforehand. Participants will present short position papers (5 minutes max.), allowing time for discussion amongst themselves and the audience. The session does not seek *ex cathedra* pronouncements but impromptu critical debate about teaching Chaucer now. You may present in any format you wish: position-paper, lesson plan, video, Prezi/PowerPoint, poster + ad libbed explanation, dramatic piece, Socratic method, poem, etc. I welcome joint presentations and encourage interventions of a tentative, experimental, impure, hesitant, incomplete (but not inarticulate) nature.

Reading might include

Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges* (2006).
Rita Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent in the Middle Ages* (2001).
Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (2012).
Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* (2010).
Dany Nobus and Malcolm Quinn, "Reading Seminar XVII: From the Desire to Know to the Fall of Knowledge," *Knowing Nothing, Staying Stupid: Elements for a Psychoanalytic Epistemology*. (2005). 107-37.

Other Conferences and Calls

III International John Gower Congress Rochester, 30 June-3 July, 2014 “JOHN GOWER: LANGUAGE, COGNITION, AND PERFORMANCE” OFFICIAL CALL FOR PAPERS

The John Gower Society will hold its third International Congress on the campus of the University of Rochester, in beautiful upstate New York, 30 June-3 July, 2014. The Congress title, “John Gower: Language, Cognition, and Performance,” defines a wide focus: “Language,” in all its many aspects, and languages, translations, specialized discourses, dialects, idiolects, and influences, as well as manuscript printed, and digital texts—and Digital Humanities, generally, with application to Gower; “Cognition,” including medieval memory and ideational theory, cognitive science, mental (and physical) health and models of therapy, general modes of perception and more specialized (e.g., Gower and suffering, political, salvific and emotive discourses—“Gower and the non- / supra-human

world”); “Performance,” anticipating sessions on performance and performance theory, on the staging of ideas, on philosophy (people/characters “staged” by deeds and choices, etc.), narrativity.

MEMBERS OF THE GOWER AND CHAUCER SOCIETIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUGGEST POSSIBLE SESSION TOPICS, AND TO CONSIDER ORGANIZING FULL SESSIONS.

150-word abstracts by 1 July 2013 to the RF Yeager and/or Russell A. Peck

R.F. Yeager (rfyeager@hotmail.com)

Russell Peck (russell.peck@rochester.edu)

Medieval Association of the Midwest, 29th annual conference September 26-28, 2013; Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana Call for Papers

Theme: A Sense of Place

Papers on all aspects of the Middle Ages are invited; the theme encompasses spaces interior and exterior, physical, spiritual, and social, communities and locales.

Deadline for proposals: **August 1.**

Contact: Harriet Hudson, Department of English, Indiana State University, Terre Haute,

IN 47809; harriet.hudson@indstate.edu. 812-237-2786

<http://www.hmml.org/mam/mamconferences.htm>



Julian of Norwich: Contexts and Continuities

International Symposium and Book Fair

Norwich Shire Hall and Norfolk Record Office, Friday, 10 May

Carrow Abbey, Saturday, 11 May

Registration <http://www.umilta.net/CBVI.html>

Intersections - Call for Manuscripts

Intersections is a peer-reviewed series on interdisciplinary topics in early modern studies. Each volume focuses on a single theme and consists of essays that explore new perspectives on the subject of study. The series aims to open up new areas of research on early modern culture and to address issues of interest to a wide range of disciplines.

More information on *Intersections*: brill.com/inte

We are now soliciting manuscripts for a special volume in the series on:

Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion

The editors, Bart Ramakers and Walter S. Melion, welcome contributions in English from multiple disciplines (literature, history, art history, etc.) that address the topic, contextualizing it within a wide range of geographical regions and languages. Papers may be written on one or more of the following questions:

The Theory of Personification: What ideas about allegorical personification allegory circulated in late medieval and early modern times? How were its principles and workings described, either explicitly or implicitly? How can modern neuropsychological insights concerning metaphorical thinking be linked to theories of personification based in contemporary literary theory and philosophy?

The Perception of Personification: How did contemporary audiences perceive and interpret personifications? How did they react to them and make use of them? Did the device fulfill instructive, persuasive, propagandistic, mnemonic, or even meditative and contemplative functions?

To what extent did personification stimulate the imagination or the inner eye? What about the element of playfulness?

The Means of Personification: How was the device constituted? What (self-)descriptive naming procedures were involved? What kind of visual and verbal interactions were involved? What clothes, attributes, gestures, facial expressions, positions and actions? What courses of events or chains of thought, aided either by dialogue (in plays) or inscriptions (on prints)?

The Context of Personification: What were the wider circumstances within which personification and genres based on personification allegory came to be employed, and how do these circumstances help to explain both the contents and effects of the device in practice? Did particular religious, social, and political situations stimulate its use?

A separate colloquium is being planned. Alternatively, in order further to develop the topic and to foster prospective contributions, clusters of authors will be invited to participate in a series of panels on the theme of personification, to be proposed for the Renaissance Society of America's 2014 Annual Meeting in New York. Similar panels may also be proposed for the 2014 Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in New Orleans.

The final collection of essays will appear in 2015.

Proposals (300 words) for contributions should be sent electronically no later than **June 1, 2013** to: Bart Ramakers (University of Groningen) b.a.m.ramakers@rug.nl Walter S. Melion (Emory University) wsmelio@emory.edu

Spreading the Light: Mapping the Vernacular *Elucidarium* in Medieval England
15th-17th November 2013
Call for Papers

The conference will take place at the Cathedral Lodge, based in the Cathedral close at Canterbury, Kent. It forms the concluding event of the AHRC-funded research project ‘Spreading the Light: Mapping the Vernacular *Elucidarium* in Medieval England’. The project as a whole seeks to understand how this important text of basic theology was produced and disseminated in England across the Middle Ages, and to place it within the broader context of late-medieval concerns for pastoral care and the consequent production of vernacular theology. Our research focuses on manuscripts of the text in both Middle English and medieval French, and among its outputs is a web-based descriptive catalogue of all extant manuscripts, which will be previewed during the conference. Keynote lectures will be given by Professor John Thompson (Queen’s University, Belfast) and Professor Keith Busby (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

Proposals for papers are now invited. We are interested in receiving papers which relate closely to the themes of our research, but also those which address the issues of the production and transmission of theological texts more broadly. Topics might include:

- the patronage, production, dissemination and reception of the *Elucidarium*,

- whether in Latin, English, French, or any other vernaculars
- the extent to which vernacular theological writings in English, Anglo-Norman and French map onto contrasting cultural and religious concerns for their respective readerships
- ways in which particular instances of textual translation, adaptation or transmission can be linked to culturally specific historical moments
- the study of late-medieval vernacular theological manuscripts more broadly
- problems of using manuscript evidence to identify real and intended audiences
- studies of individual manuscripts

These are suggestions only, and papers which in any way address the broad themes of the project are welcome. Interdisciplinary contributions are warmly encouraged.

Proposals should be no more than 500 words in length and should be submitted to both the conference organizers by **12th April 2013**.

Conference Organizers:

Dr Sarah James (s.james@kent.ac.uk) and Dr Huw Grange (h.r.grange@kent.ac.uk), Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, University of Kent.

International Medieval Conference 2013
Registration Now Open

The annual IMC will take place **1-4 July 2013** in **Leeds** on the University of Leeds main campus and will focus on the special thematic strand “**Pleasure**”. Registration is now open and our programme is now available online. For more information, please see <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2013.html>. There is also an exciting range of ticketed events, excursions, and concerts that are open to the public. These items can be booked by clicking on the following link to the University of Leeds Online Store: <http://store.leeds.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?catid=77&modid=2&compid=1>.

International Medieval Congress 2014 Call for Papers and Sessions

The twentieth International Medieval Congress will take place in Leeds, from **7-10 July 2014**. If you would like to submit a session or paper proposal for the IMC 2014 you can complete the **IMC Online Proposal Forms**. **This will be available from 15 May 2013 onwards**. Paper proposals must be submitted by **31 August 2013**; session proposals must be submitted by **30 September 2013**. Hard copies of the proposal forms are available on request after 16 July 2013. If you would like to apply for an IMC bursary, to help with the cost of the Registration and Programming Fee, accommodation and meals at

the IMC, please complete the online Bursary Application Form, which will also become available from late May 2013. You should submit your Bursary application at the same time as your paper or session proposal. The IMC seeks to provide an interdisciplinary forum for the discussion of all aspects of Medieval Studies. Paper and session proposals on any topic related to the European Middle Ages are welcome. However, every year, the IMC chooses a specific special thematic strand which - for 2014 - is **“Empire”**.

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2014_call.html

FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS 14th Biennial MEDIEVAL ROMANCE IN BRITAIN CONFERENCE 12-14 April 2014, Clifton Hill House, University of Bristol

Papers are invited on all aspects of medieval romance. The conference marks the conclusion of an AHRC-sponsored research project on the verse forms of Middle English Romance, and papers that address questions of verse form are particularly welcome.

To propose a paper, please send a brief abstract to one of the conference organizers, before **31 September 2013**:

Dr Judith Jefferson: j.jefferson@bristol.ac.uk,
Professor Ad Putter: a.d.putter@bristol.ac.uk

Further information about the conference will be made available at
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/medievalcentre/events/conferences>

Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture

Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture (<http://tinyurl.com/c9k9ymu>) is a series which publishes new research on the literary cultures of medieval Britain (including Anglo-Norman, Anglo-Latin and Celtic writings), including post-medieval engagements with and representations of the Middle Ages. We are interested in proposals for monographs, essay collections, or editions. Proposals can be sent to the general editors, Anke Bernau and David Matthews (University of Manchester):
anke.bernau@manchester.ac.uk; david.matthews@manchester.ac.uk.

Conquest: 1016, 1066
An interdisciplinary anniversary conference
20-23 July, 2016
St Anne's College, Oxford



Topics include (in no particular order):

Danish connections, invasion and conquest; Norman connections and conquest; eleventh-century law, kingship, and governance; language contact and change; multilingualism and translation; the Church, reform, and change; England's Scandinavian contacts; England in Europe; eleventh-century warfare and conduct in war; Old English, Old Norse, Latin, and French literature; the archaeology of the eleventh century; Domesday Book; material culture and art history; chronologies and geographies, personalities and movements; the historiography of the long eleventh century.

Invited plenary and public lectures will be combined with a stranded call for papers and round table sessions. Academics and scholars at all career stages are warmly invited to participate.

To join the mailing list contact laura.ashe@ell.ox.ac.uk

Southern African Society for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
22nd Biennial Conference
28-31 August 2014, Stellenbosch, South Africa
CALL FOR PAPERS

The Art of Reading in the Middle Ages and Renaissance

Keynote Address: Professor Henry Woudhuysen, Lincoln College, University of Oxford

The Southern African Society for Medieval and Renaissance Studies promotes scholarly discussion in all disciplines relating to Medieval and Renaissance Studies. We invite proposals for papers on any aspect of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies addressing the conference theme.

Abstracts should be no more than 250 words long.

For information about previous conference, and the conference venue, please consult the society website:

<http://www.sasmarsnewsletter.blogspot.com>

Please send abstract and enquires by email to:
Professor David Scott-Macnab
Department of English
University of Johannesburg
Dscott-macnab@uj.ac.za

Deadline for proposals: 31 January 2014

Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale
Semaines d'études médiévales - 17-28 juin 2013
<http://cescm.labo.univ-poitiers.fr/>

Le CESCO organise depuis 1954 une session annuelle internationale de formation qui regroupe une quarantaine d'étudiants, doctorants et jeunes chercheurs, français et étrangers. Les conférences, les séances de travail autour des ressources documentaires, les excursions et visites au programme des stagiaires sont proposées par des spécialistes du Moyen Âge venus du monde entier. Cette manifestation interdisciplinaire, unique en son genre, a contribué à construire et à renforcer, depuis une cinquantaine d'années, un solide réseau national et international dans le domaine de l'étude du

Moyen Âge. Elle est accompagnée par des facilités d'hébergement et un tarif modique.

Les Semaines d'études médiévales se tiendront du 17 au 28 juin 2013 à Poitiers.

La conférence d'ouverture sera assurée par Piotr SKUBISZEWSKI.

Les candidatures peuvent être envoyées dès à présent au moyen du [formulaire de candidature](#).

Consulter [les modalités pratiques](#)

Consulter [le programme 2013](#)

Les candidatures peuvent être envoyées dès à présent au moyen du formulaire de candidature.

Date limite de dépôt des candidatures : **30 avril 2013**

Other News on Resources and Announcements

Royal Entertainments

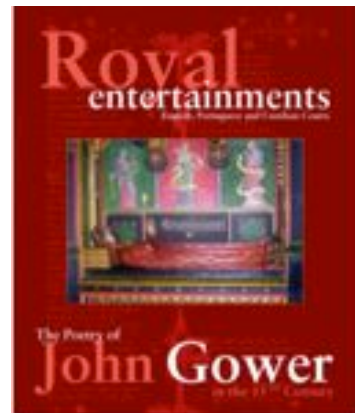
Texts and readings from the Middle English *Confessio Amantis* by Brian W. Gastle, and the same passages as they appear in the 15th-century translations into Portuguese (read by Tiago Viúla de Faria) and Castilian (read by Clara Pascual-Argente), with contemporary music by Luis Delgado, the foremost early music authority in Spain. Edited and with introduction by Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and R.F. Yeager.

US \$15.00, € 14.43 (Payable to The John Gower Society)

Available in dollars from: R.F. Yeager, Department of English
University of West Florida Pensacola FL 32514

Available in euros from:

Ana Sáez-Hidalgo, Dpto. Filología Inglesa Universidad de Valladolid
Plaza de Campus s/n, 47011 Valladolid Spain



<http://metro.fas.harvard.edu>

Over the past several years, teachers of Middle English at Harvard have been working to develop a new electronic resource for Middle English language learning. Classroom time is always limited; we therefore developed a web-based program that students can use outside class to master some basic linguistic and analytical skills, in a variety of Middle English dialects. Now, through a collaborative effort between faculty members and graduate students in the Department of English, we are happy to announce the public release of METRO (Middle English Teaching Resources Online). This project was financed and developed under the auspices of Harvard's FAS Presidential Instructional Technology Fellows (PITF) program, with support from the Academic Technology Group, FAS Information Technology.

METRO is a virtual classroom designed to teach students how to read and analyze Middle English texts. Through a series of self-testing exercises, students are invited to explore the meter, grammar, syntax, diction, and figural language used by a variety of Middle English

poets. Currently, METRO features Chaucer, the *Gawain*-poet, and the Wakefield Master, with plenty of room for expansion. The site also offers resources for graduate students seeking to learn the basics of manuscript editing.

METRO has already been used successfully in a number of Harvard English courses, and it is completely free and available to the public.

If you decide to use METRO as a resource in your teaching, we would be delighted to know! Please feel free to contact Shayna Cummings <shaynacummings@fas.harvard.edu> with any feedback or suggestions. Also, be sure to encourage students to fill out the feedback forms available within each of the site's three "author stations." The input that we receive from student users will help us continue to develop and improve the site.

Thank you for your interest in METRO!

Daniel Donoghue (dgd@wjh.harvard.edu)
James Simpson (jsimpson@fas.harvard.edu)
Nicholas Watson (nwatson@fas.harvard.edu)

The Chaucer Review

"Medieval English Manuscripts: Form, Aesthetics, and Literary Texts"

Susanna Fein and David Raybin announce that the April 2013 issue of *The Chaucer Review* examines the special topic "Medieval English Manuscripts: Form, Aesthetics, and Literary Texts." Articles include an introduction by guest editors Arthur Bahr and Alexandra Gillespie and contributions by Jessica Brantley, Simon Horobin, Maura Nolan, Noelle Phillips, Martha Rust, and D. Vance Smith. Copies of this special issue will be available for separate purchase at the Penn State UP booth at Kalamazoo.

London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x. (art. 3): A Digital Facsimile



[Browse the Manuscript Images](#)

The Cotton Nero A.x. Project, led by Murray McGillivray, has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to permit us to license the images displayed here. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.

This resource is one part of *London, British Library MS Cotton Nero A.x. (art. 3): A Digital Facsimile and Commented Transcription*. Publications of the Cotton Nero A.x. Project 3 (Calgary: Cotton Nero A.x. Project, 2012).

For the commented transcription, to be published shortly after this digital facsimile, please see the main Web site of the Cotton Nero A.x. Project

<http://www.gawain-ms.ca>

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الوسطى والقرن الاستشراق

A book by Past President John M. Ganim *Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on Literature, Architecture and Cultural Identity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005) has been translated into Arabic as *الوسطى والقرن الاستشراق* (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Kalima Foundation, 2012.) The mission of the Kalima project is to revive the translation achievements of Arabic culture. As the *Independent* put it, when announcing the series, Kalima targeted “landmark foreign works to Arabic speaking readers. *The Collected Stories Of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, by an author who was raised in Poland but for decades dominated Yiddish writing in New York, will join titles ranging from Sophocles and Chaucer to Stephen Hawking and Haruki Murakami among the first selections of the Kalima translation programme.”

Langland and the Rokele Family: the gentry background to Piers Plowman

Four Courts Press are delighted to announce the publication of ***Langland and the Rokele Family: the gentry background to Piers Plowman*** by Robert Adams, a new study of the social background and family history of William Langland. For additional details, including a full contents list, please see: <http://fourcourtspress.ie/product.php?intProductID=1135>

NCS announces with regret the recent death of Professor André Crépin
<http://www.aibl.fr/membres/academiciciens-depuis-1663/article/crepin-andre?lang=fr>.
He had just finished his translation into French of Chaucer's works.

The New Chaucer Society

President: Alastair Minnis

Executive Director: Ruth Evans

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