



THE CHAUCER NEWSLETTER

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Chaucer and Mythology

My research for the study of the mythographic tradition in the Middle Ages thus far has revealed that the early Middle Ages had a far more profound effect than is now recognized on what we like to think of as the originality of mythographers such as the Third Vatican Mythographer and Pierre Bersuire as well as on fourteenth-century poets like Chaucer. For example, perhaps the most significant mythographer was the sixth-century Fulgentius whose *Mythologies* and *Expositio* on Virgil were so frequently reworked. The most important contributions derive from the commentaries Chaucer scholars in general are least familiar with—the earlier Martianus Capella, Boethius, and *Ecloga Theoduli* commentaries—although I hope to shed new light also on the later and more familiar (because better known) Ovid, Virgil, and handbook traditions. These later traditions themselves incorporated material from the earlier commentaries. Because individual chapters of my book will be organized by the myths central to each commentary tradition, the survey should facilitate further study of the use of individual myths by medieval poets like Chaucer, whether in the classroom or in individual research projects. I will mention just a few examples of how these traditions may have influenced Chaucer.

While the Virgil tradition has probably been the best documented and studied of all the epic commentaries, little has been done with (and little is generally known about) commentaries on the non-epic Virgilian works, which are commonly thought to have had little influence on later medieval literature. For example, a gloss on the *Georgics* yields an interesting interpretation of Priapus in the *Parlement of Foules*, who

Withinne the temple in sovereyn place
stonde,
In swich aray as whan the asse hym shente
With cri by nyghte, and with sceptre in his
honde.
Ful Besyly men gunne to sette, of sundery
hewe,
Garlondes ful of freshe floures newe.
(11.253-59)

The scepter and the garlands of flowers, their freshness suggesting renewal, even his cen-

tral role in the temple of Venus with the hothouse garden, are clarified by a reference in Virgil's *Georgics* 4.109-11, in which Priapus is a kind of scarecrow, a "god of gardens" whose flowers attract bees and who holds a willow-hook. In the Berne scholia on the *Georgics*, Priapus' role is to protect and ensure fertility; he also holds a willow-hook to guard against thieves, as well as—I hesitate to add this—birds. He is called "lord of the Hellespont" according to Adanan the Scot (ed. H. Hagen, 4.109-11), probable author of the scholia, because he was born in a town thereon and because he is believed to control all magic arts (this ability apparently accounts for the great size of his phallus). This view of Priapus also enhances the allusion to him as "god of gardens" in the Merchant's Tale, in that his protection of the garden in which the blind January and the deceitful May dally may have "improved" January's fertility.

The other non-epic work of Virgil, the *Eclogues*, found imitators as well as glossators in the Middle Ages—for example, the important ninth-century schoolbook *Ecloga Theoduli*. This work, a debate between two shepherds over the superiority of biblical fable to classical myth, provides illuminating parallels between classical gods and biblical figures. An example (ed. M. Y. Jacobs, diss. 1963, pp. 39-41) preserved in Chaucer's lyric "The Former Age" links Nimrod as builder of the Tower of Babel with Jupiter as "the lekerous,/That first was fader of delicacy,/Come in this world" (11.56-58). A similar comparison between Nimrod and the giants Otus and Ephialtes who warred against the gods appears in Notker Labeo's tenth-century Old High German Glosses on Boethius' IIIp12 (ed. E. Sehart and T. Starck, I. 216)—and it is IIm5 on which "The Former Age" in part was based.

Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Philology and Mercury* was for Chaucer a veritable cornucopia of material concerning the gods as planets: the ascent in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, as well as that of Dante in the *Paradiso*, was probably influenced by Philology's ascent through the heavenly spheres, just as it also influenced the ascents of Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* and Bernard Silvester's *Cosmographia*. The characterization of Apollo in the Manciples's Tale was most likely colored by

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The Chaucer Tapes

I have for five years been collecting on cassette tapes oral renditions of *Canterbury Tales* passages famed for their critical ambiguity: the portrait of the Prioress from the General Prologue, plus excerpts from Prologues and Tales of The Pardoner, Merchant, Wife of Bath, and Nun's Priest. I believe that much critical controversy stems from the nature of the performance. When the Host replies to the Pardoner is he furious, or mildly irritated, or joking by pretending to be angry? How should this be rendered by the modern reader? Instead of seeking evidence in the text that one's own interpretation is right, I argue that critics ought to analyze what qualities of a passage allow for flexibility in interpretation; for it is those very qualities that have allowed Chaucer's text to live on through the centuries.

My thesis and data have proved so fruitful that I've written an entire book on just the Prioress, Pardoner, and Merchant; Alysoun and that goodly priest Sir John will have to wait for the next book. Three hours of oral renditions by various scholars accompany my book, including as many as twenty-six renditions of the same passage. Besides comparing readings of passages that have long been argued about in print, I include tapes of other passages in which unselfconscious characterization creates unanticipated variety.

For example, when the Knight quells that quarrel between Host and Pardoner, the readings range from royal command and professional diplomacy, through a variety of spats in gentlemen's clubs and brawls in barrooms, to the increasingly plaintive tones of kindergarten teachers. I would not argue that readers consciously intended the scenarios I describe. I simply provide the aural evidence so you can decide whether you hear a tired kindergarten teacher or a diplomat where I do, and if so what the implications are for Chaucer's text.

As another example, consider the little-discussed reply of the Host to the Merchant, on learning of his woeful marriage:

No . . . Marchaunt, so God yow blesse,
Syn ye so muchel known of that art,
Ful hertely I pray yow telle us part.

(IV. 1240)

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Chaucer and Mythology

Martianus' emphasis on Apollo as god of divination. The situation in which a mortal's petition is considered and granted or denied after a debate among gods—like that of Chaucer's January in the Merchant's Tale—finds mythological antecedents in the granting of divinity to the bride Philology in the first book of Martianus. Further, commentaries on Martianus help to explain the puzzling exaggeration of Venus' tears in the "Envoy to Scogan." Scogan has offended so egregiously by giving up his lady that Venus' tears threaten to drown us all, which sets a humorous turn to the myth of Venus and Adonis. Adonis's death is likened by Martin of Laon, in commenting on Martianus 2.192, to the descent of the sun into the lower hemisphere during the advent of winter, which brings on Venus' tears as terrestrial rivers of plenty—as if she were the source not only of all beauty but also of all abundance: "quasi Venere totam pulchritudinem et copiam lacrimarum fundente" (ed. C. Lutz, 74.13, p. 9). Scogan takes the place of the departed "sun," Adonis.

From the Boethius commentaries—that window into the Homeric poems—comes Greek mythological material concerning heroes that is moralized and used by later writers like Chaucer. The myths primarily glossed in the *Consolation* concern, first, Orpheus's descent into the Underworld and the Underworld inhabitants in III_m12; second, Circe and Ulysses in IV_m3, and Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia at the start of the Trojan War and Ulysses' conflict with Polyphemus in IV_m7; and third, the labors of Hercules in IV_m7. In the Anonymous Erfurt commentator's gloss on Orpheus's descent into the Underworld to retrieve Euridice (III_m12), Pluto is identified as the ruler of the Underworld, one of three brothers who govern the major regions of the cosmos: Jupiter, the air, Neptune, the water, and Pluto the earth and underworld (ed. E. T. Silk, p. 218). Pluto and Proserpina are of course introduced as "gods of the underworld" in Chaucer's Merchant's Tale, meaning mythic rulers of earth as opposed to the heavens or the waters and hence appropriate judges of mortals who choose foolishly and concupiscently. The specific appearance of Pluto in the Merchant's Tale also suggests a kind of literal uxoriousness common both to worldly January and to the hero Orpheus, who functions in both this world and in the underworld.

Also from the Anonymous Erfurt commentator on Boethius Vp3 comes a possible model for January in the Merchant's Tale. Tiresias is struck blind by Juno for confessing, after his experience as a woman, that women en-

joy sex more than men, but he is granted divinity for his answer by Jupiter. The ironic connection between blind January and Tiresias—one who can see and refuses to do so and one who chooses to see too much—is found in the Erfurt commentary, which refers the reader back to the Boethian context for the gloss. In Vp3 where the persona Boethius is having trouble understanding the idea of divine foreknowledge and free will—he asks what knowledge is worth, if it is not certain: "Such knowledge is no better than that expressed by the ridiculous prophecy of Tiresias: 'Whatever I say will either be or not be'" (trans. Green). The ambivalence of this "ridiculous prophecy" is related by Erfurt to the change of Tiresias' sex after he had separated two copulating serpents with a rod; the ambivalent answer of Tiresias is linked to his dual sexual nature, whose ambivalence reflects the uncertainty of man's knowing in contrast to God's certainty: "Quod etiam dixi, quoniam nihil differret Dei providentia a uaticinio Tiresiae si incerta prouideret, nec differret etiam ab humana opinione si diceret incerta sicut homines quorum est incertus euentus" (ed. Silk, p. 290).

In Chaucer the two sexual natures of Tiresias are embodied in January and May, just as the punishment and reward bestowed upon Tiresias are both granted as gifts to January and May. Therein, too, Tiresias' copulating snakes are transformed into the serpent-like Damian and the subtle May swiving in the pear tree above January's head, and Tiresias' rod can be visualized quite literally as the pear tree which January embraces. It can be seen symbolically as a symbol of the virility January yearns to demonstrate through May's illusory pregnancy and also a rod that joins the lovers. But most importantly, as the Erfurt commentator moralized this passage, it is man's not knowing—January's uncertainty about what he saw—in contrast to the full knowledge of God, or here the gods Pluto and Proserpina, which provides the butt of the joke.

In terms of my progress on the project thus far, I have finished a thousand-page rough draft of the first volume of this study, which I am slowly revising into publishable copy, and I have collected all the materials for the second volume. Pieces of this have begun to be published here and there. I hope that the first volume will be completed within the next few years.

Jane Chance
Rice University

This is a condensation of one of the reports read at the "Work in Progress" session of the York Congress. Others will be published in subsequent *Newsletters*.

The Chaucer Tapes

According to attitudes projected by the readings, the responses can be grouped as follows:

- six Hecklers (Host mocks or teases Merchant)
- five Nosy Neighbors (Host hopes to learn more details of Merchant's sex life)
- four Happy-Go-Lucky Numskulls (Host is oblivious to Merchant's inner torment)
- four Shrinks (Host urges Merchant to talk out inner torment for own good)
- three Lords of the Revels (Host reminds Merchant of tale-telling contest)
- three Sympathizers (Merchant gets hoped-for response)

Consider the potential variety were we to factor in gesture and appearance as well as voice for each pilgrim and character. We do have some evidence, which I discuss, from artists and illustrators through six centuries. But most Chaucer scholars do not sketch, whereas nearly all teach, right aloud, and thereby pass interpretations on to students and grandstudents.

No one comes cold to Chaucer. It happens that among my data I have two pairs, each consisting of a teacher and former student, whose readings betray remarkable similarities in detail as well as in overall interpretation. For instance, I doubt that reader R1 told his class twenty years ago, "I'd read line 1264 of the Merchant's Tale stressing the adverbs, 'For wedlock is so esy and so clene,'" yet his student R2 read with just this emphasis. Nor did reader R3 tell his class "I'd stress the adjectives in line 1264, 'For wedlock is so esy and so clene,'" yet that is the reading of his student, R4.

Such details, retained unconsciously, are analogous to the broader interpretive patterns retained from one's earliest Chaucer teachers. In the pear-tree scene, for example, one senior Chaucerian creates a senile, doddering January easily dissuaded in the end by May's efficient and blatantly insincere tone of voice. That reader's former student has reduced some effects and exaggerated others, to create a mentally retarded adult being cared for by a nurse who knows her duties but wishes January wouldn't keep tugging at her sleeve. These two conflicts between a weak male and a strong female differ from a variety of conflicts represented, between a strong, relatively intelligent January and a May who with elaborately convincing intonation pretends to be weak and helpless, whether helpless as a cute little girl, or as a high-class mistress, or a femme fatale, or a loyally pregnant wife.

Some Mays even seem to fake crying, including the May whose performance Alexander Pope imagined in 1709 when he modernized the tale as *January and May*. Although Pope did not make a tape for me, his imagin-

ed performance can be discerned in his rendering of January's line, "And by my trouthe, me thoughte he dide thee so." Where most of my readers express doubt on "me thoughte," Pope at age sixteen substituted an italicized verb "seem'd":

What I have said, quoth he, I must maintain;
For by th'Immortal Pow'rs, it seem'd too plain—
By all those Pow'rs, some Frenzy seiz'd your Mind,
(Reply'd the Dame:) Are these the Thanks I find?
Wretch that I am, that e'er I was so kind!
She said; a rising Sigh express'd her Woe,
The ready Tears apace began to flow,
And as they fell, she wiped from either Eye
The drops (for Woman when they list, can cry).

Pope's modernizations have been neglected by scholars of both Pope and Chaucer—the latter perhaps because he worked from Speght's 1598 edition which we now know contains non-Chaucerian lines. But early editions, and interpretations based on them, have too long remained on the dust heap where they were tossed by Skeat and others who were devoting their lives to tidying up the texts and eliminating spurious works. Spurious though they be, works and passages long regarded as Chaucerian can give clues to the understandings of scribes and editors, and of the writers who joined Pope and Dryden in modernizing Chaucer for ephemeral eighteenth-century periodicals aimed at readers who could never have afforded to own a folio of Chaucer's more-than-complete works. Before the earliest school edition was published in 1835, nearly every reader's response to Chaucer was first filtered not through a teacher but rather through such modernizations, published separately or in the collections of 1741 and 1795. Rival modernizations abound, especially of the ever-saleable Reeve's and Shipman's and Summoner's Tales, and some modernizers present particularly thorough interpretations because they were being paid by the line.

From an eighteenth-century modernization we can learn, for example, that the Merchant's second wife married him for money, whereas he had hoped for a stepmother to help tame his twenty-year-old son who was running wild during the Merchant's frequent business trips, his playboy son whose own mother had died of grief at seeing him fail so miserably at school and then in the military. If you're musing that he so resembles the Franklin's no-good son, you're quite right, for until Tyrwhitt's 1775 edition, the Franklin's address to the Squire was instead the Merchant's address to the Squire. This and other aspects of reception aesthetics remain to be explored—explored more fully for Chaucer, of course, than for any other writer in English.

Literary theorists these days have much to say about why different readers' interpreta-

1984 Report of the Executive Director, New Chaucer Society

Read at the Business Meeting, York Congress, 11 August 1984

The third year of the location of office of the New Chaucer Society at the University of Tennessee finds the Society in good health. Its membership now stands at 552: 406 from the United States; 53 from the United Kingdom; 28 from Canada; 23 from Japan; 13 from West Germany; 5 from South Africa; 4 from Australia; 3 each from Italy and The Netherlands; 2 each from Belgium, Israel, and Spain; one each from Austria, Denmark, France, Ireland, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, and Switzerland. Several non-U.S. members joined especially to attend the York Congress. They will receive the 1984 publications and we very much hope that they will stay with us and attend the 1986 Congress in Philadelphia.

The Fourth Biennial Congress of the NCS, held at York 5-11 August 1984, was well subscribed. 220 members registered; 90 were on the program, representing nearly all of the regions in which we have members. The NCS members were accompanied by 65 dependents, making a total attendance of 285. We are particularly grateful to Derek Pearsall for handling the arrangements in York. Anna Baldwin, Nicholas Havely, Carol Meale, and Karen Stern served on the Local Committee in York. Mark Allen and William Pollard from the U.S. assisted with administration of the congress.

The splendid program for the York Con-

ditions of a text may differ, but too seldom do they provide evidence that interpretations do in fact vary, and how. Thanks to Caroline Spurgeon, we have a well-indexed guidebook to the varieties of interpretation up to 1900. And in addition to published criticism that shows the varieties of interpretation by contemporary Chaucerians, the Chaucer tapes provide interesting resemblances to and differences from older and recent published interpretation. Who is the old man in the Pardoner's Tale? What sort of monster would, as he does in most tapes, gleefully lure unsuspecting teenagers toward a gruesome death trap? Stay tuned for further adventures in interpretation.

Betsy Bowden
Rutgers University, Camden

This is a condensation of one of the reports read at the "Work in Progress" session of the York Congress. Others will be published in subsequent *Newsletters*.

gress was arranged by Paul Strohm (ch), Florence Ridley, and Derek Pearsall. Donald Rose edited a selection of the papers of the 1980 NCS Congress under the title *New Perspectives in Chaucer Criticism* (Pilgrim Books, 1981). The 1982 Congress came in the midst of the transfer from Oklahoma to Tennessee and no proceedings volume was published. However, the Trustees have authorized a proceedings supplement to the yearbook, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, to publish selections from the York Congress. These will be chosen by the Program Committee. Paul Strohm will serve as guest editor for the volume, working in cooperation with Thomas Heffernan, the regular editor for SAC. Jane Fisher will handle subscriptions and distribution as she does for other NCS publications. Let me say parenthetically that it costs some \$10,000 to publish and distribute a volume of SAC. So far we have received \$2,520 in advance subscriptions for the proceedings volume. We urge all who have not done so already to subscribe.

Hotel reservations have been confirmed for the 1986 NCS Congress to be held in the Hilton Hotel on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, 20-23 March. For this meeting we are returning to the in-term, springtime date of the first three congresses. If members prefer to meet in the summer on a college campus, they should let us know. Such meetings can be easily arranged. The Trustees will soon be discussing the time and place of the 1988 congress—time flies, and such arrangements have to be made several years ahead. (Since this was written, the Trustees have set the 1988 meeting for July or August—see the Acts of the Trustees Meeting printed in this issue.)

The Program Committee for the 1986 Congress will be Chaired by John Fleming (Princeton), assisted by David Anderson (Pennsylvania), Derek Pearsall (York/Harvard), and Florence Ridley (UCLA). They will meet this fall to sketch out a program, and the call for papers will go out in the spring 1985 Newsletter. As with the York Congress, the Program Committee hopes to have the program substantially complete by the fall of 1985 so that members will have ample time to make travel arrangements. Given the time of year and U.S. costs, it is doubtful that the 86 Congress will be as international as the 84, but all of the congresses so far have been gratifyingly international and we want to do everything possible to make it possible for members from outside the U.S. to participate in 1986.

Studies in the Age of Chaucer under the editorship of Thomas Heffernan continues to grow in prestige and circulation. Total circulation now stands at 757; library orders at 205, about 143 in the U.S. and 52 abroad (we

are sometimes not sure where agency orders are going). Heffernan received 26 submissions for SAC 6, of which he printed 8; and 26 books for review, of which he reviewed 19. I hope that as the membership stabilizes and funds accumulate, it will be possible to publish more papers and review more books. Through rigorous screening, Heffernan has managed to keep the backlog low so that accepted papers can still be published within a year of acceptance.

The annual bibliography, compiled under the direction of Lorraine Baird, continues to be a valuable part of SAC. Our profession owes a debt of gratitude to the many scholars throughout the world who contribute annotations to the bibliography, which grows more judicious and more comprehensive with each issue. Discussion is proceeding between Lorraine Baird and A.J. Colaianne about the possibility of storing the annual bibliography in the computers at Virginia Polytechnic Institute along with the data for the Toronto Chaucer bibliographies now being published. Such cooperation could lay grounds for a comprehensive Chaucer data base. Technical and financial details remain to be worked out.

The Trustees have authorized the creation of an annual New Chaucer Society Prize of \$200 to be awarded each year for the best graduate student paper read before the Chaucer Division at the convention of the Modern Language Association of America. Alan Gaylord, chair of the 1984 Chaucer Division Executive Committee, announced the competition in a mailing to the MLA Chaucerians last spring. He received 22 submissions. Several were superior performances deserving of recognition. (The first winner is Paul Morrison of Victoria College, University of Toronto.) The International Secretaries have been invited to look into the possibility of similar prizes to encourage student research in other countries.

The NCS Trustees met in Knoxville, Tennessee, in May 1983, and in York in August 1984. The Actions of the 1983 meeting were reported in the October 1983 Newsletter; those of the 1984 meeting are reported in this issue. The next meeting of the Trustees is scheduled in Philadelphia at the time of the 1986 Congress.

The terms of Trustees Robert Frank, Donald Fry, Donald Howard, and Paul Ruggiers end with the York Congress. A nominating Committee composed of Florence Ridley (ch), John Fleming, V.A. Kolve, Anne Middleton, and James Wimsatt prepared a ballot of new trustees which was sent to the members in February 1984. As a result of this ballot, Larry Benson, Alfred David, Jill Mann, and Charles Owen were elected trustees to serve from the end of the 1984

Congress until the end of the 1988 Congress. Derek Pearsall, Florence Ridley, and Chauncey Wood continue to serve as trustees until the end of the 1986 Congress.

Paul Ruggiers regretted that he could not attend the York Congress, but his cardiologist has advised against his travelling abroad. As the begetter of our Society, he should be with us, but he promises to attend the Philadelphia meeting in 86.

The term of Derek Brewer as NCS President ends with the York Congress. Derek Brewer was a founding trustee of the NCS, serving from 1978 until he assumed the presidency in 1983. We will hardly know how to get along without his guidance and are happy to think that the completion of his terms as Trustee and President does not cut him off from the society of Chaucerians. I express to him and to our graduating trustees the appreciation of the Society for their good counsel during our formative years, and our hope for their continued interest in our affairs.

Our President to serve from the conclusion of this congress in 1984 to the conclusion of the next congress in 1986 is Beryl Rowland of York University, Canada, who has served as the International Secretary for Canada since 1979. She was scheduled to attend the York Congress but had not recovered from an operation on her hand. She will serve ex officio on the 1986 Program Committee.

At the end of June 1984, the current account of the NCS stood at \$26,988.71 in Knoxville and £5,300 in York. The York account represents payments for the Congress and will be exhasuted by Congress expenses. Against the Knoxville account, we must debit some \$10,000 for the SAC *Proceedings* volume and some \$7,000 for bills not yet paid for SAC 6. However, some \$6,000 will come in from invoices to libraries for SAC 6. In addition to the current account, the endowment fund now stands at \$1,350.69; \$704.97 was added to this fund during 1984. Thanks to the contribution of \$3,000 by the English Department of the University of Tennessee towards the cost of printing the Newsletters and postage, and the contributed services of Jane Fisher in handling membership and finances, the financial situation of the Society is satisfactory.

The revised NCS Constitution was approved by all but a few of those who checked this box on the spring ballot. As you recall, it mandates that the Executive Director shall report to the members on the administration and financial affairs of the Society at each biennial congress, but that all voting on society business shall be by mail ballot of the entire membership. We are just now in the process of establishing our procedures in accordance with the Constitution. This represents

Actions of the Trustees of the New Chaucer Society

The University of York, 4 August 1984

Present President Derek Brewer. *Trustees* Robert W. Frank, Donald K. Fry, Derek Pearsall, Florence H. Ridley, Chauncey Wood. *Trustees elect* Larry Benson, Alfred David, Jill Mann, Charles Owen. *Executive Director* John H. Fisher. *International Secretaries* Juliette de Caluwed'or, Tadahiro Ikegami. *Editor SAC* Thomas J. Heffernan. *Bibliographer* Lorraine Baird. *Secretary for Membership and Finance* Jane L. Fisher.

Absent President elect Beryl Rowland. *Trustees* Donald Howard, Paul Ruggiers.

1. Publications

Thomas Heffernan was added to the editorial committee for the Proceedings volume of *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* (the other committee members are Paul Strohm, ch., Florence Ridley, Derek Pearsall). The Presidential Address and the Biennial Chaucer Lecture are to be printed in the SAC Proceedings volume. Other than this, the Proceedings edi-

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the first official report of the Executive Director. I would propose, Mr. President, that the floor now be thrown open for discussion of the report. If there are questions I can answer, I will be glad to do so. If there are suggestions as to procedures or future activities of the society, I will take them before the Trustees who will either act on them or submit them to a mail ballot of the membership.

John H. Fisher
Executive Director

In the discussion that followed at the York Business Meeting, it was suggested that concurrent sessions be dropped at congresses, or that cassette recordings of all papers be provided; that individual sessions be limited to two papers; that session chairpersons not read papers and hold deliveries firmly to the allotted times; that name tags be made more legible. The Director promised to take these matters up with the 1986 Program Committee, but pointed out that the SAC *Proceedings* volume is intended to make most or many of the papers available to the whole membership.

Formal thanks were voted to Derek Pearsall, to the students and faculty, and to the staff of the University of York for their splendid conduct of the 1984 NCS Congress; to Joseph Trahern, Head, and to the English Department of the University of Tennessee for their continuing support of the Society; and to Jane Fisher for her warm and skillful administration of its affairs.

Actions of the Trustees

torial committee has authority to select which of the congress papers are to be included in the Proceedings volume and make editorial changes. It is understood that congress participants are not obliged to offer their papers to SAC.

2. NCS Prize

A New Chaucer Society Prize of \$200 was authorized for the best graduate student paper on Chaucer to be read at the MLA Chaucer Section in 1984, 1985, and 1986. The effectiveness of the prize will be re-evaluated by the Trustees at their 1986 meeting. The International Secretaries were encouraged to propose similar prizes to recognize student research in their countries.

3. Constitution

A possible contradiction between sections IIIg and Xc of the NCS Constitution was resolved by specifying that the "pecuniary profit" from which NCS members are enjoined in IIIg does not apply to payment for services such as those referred to in Xc.

4. 1986 Congress

20-23 March and the Philadelphia Hilton Hotel were confirmed as the time and place of the 1986 Congress. John Fleming was appointed chair of the 1986 Program Committee, with David Anderson and Derek Pearsall as members. (After the meeting, the President also appointed Florence Ridley.) The 1986 Biennial Chaucer Lecturer and members of the 1986 Nominating Committee will be chosen through mail ballots by the Trustees.

5. 1988 Congress

The time of the 1988 Congress was set as late July or early August 1988; the preferable place, a college campus in Western Canada or Northwestern United States.

6. International Secretaries

Jeorg O. Fichte was appointed International Secretary for Germany; A.S.G. Edwards was appointed International Secretary for Canada. A mail ballot will be circulated among the Trustees to select International Secretaries for Britain and other countries.

7. Finance and Administration

In response to complaints from members about the expense of having to purchase dollars to pay NCS dues, registrations, and other costs, a subcommittee was appointed to look into the possibility of having non-U.S. members pay dues abroad, ch. Derek-Pearsall, Charles Owen, John Fisher.

The auditor's report by Joseph B. Trahern was accepted. Jane L. Fisher was voted \$100 per month reimbursement for expenses beginning 1 July 1984.

8. Acknowledgements

Gratitude and admiration were expressed

Nomination by Petition for Trustees 1986-90

Because of the March date of the 1986 NCS Congress, election of the 1986-90 class of trustees must take place in the spring of 1985. The terms of Derek Pearsall, Florence Ridley, and Chauncey Wood will end with the close of the 1986 Congress. Larry Benson, Alfred David, Jill Mann, and Charles Owen will continue to serve through the 1988 Congress.

By Constitutional provision, a Nominating Committee appointed by the President will submit six nominations for the three positions. Nominations may also be made by written petition. Such nominations, signed by ten members, should be mailed to the Executive Director (John H. Fisher, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37996) before 15 January 1985. Assurance must be provided that the nominees are willing to serve. Both nominees and signees must be members of the NCS in good standing. Nominations by petition will be put on the ballot in addition to nominations by the Committee.

The ballot will be attached to the February 1985 *Newsletter* and the election will end 1 April 1985.

Ohio State Medieval Conference

The sixteenth annual conference sponsored by the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at The Ohio State University will be held in Columbus 22-23 February 1985. The topic will be "Popular Religious Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance." Expected speakers and topics are Ruth Mellinkoff (UCLA), "Warts and Wens of Infamy"; Elizabeth Fernea (Texas, Austin), "Islamic Saints and Spirits"; Henry Kamen (Warwick, U.K.), "Jews and the Inquisition"; William Prizer (Santa Barbara), Liturgy and church music; Susan Karant-Nunn (Portland State), "Lutheranism and Peasant Culture in 16th-Century Germany"; Brian Armstrong (Georgia State), "Protestant and Catholic Clergy Before the Revocation."

For further information, write Ken Schurb, 322 Dulles Hall, Ohio State University, Columbus 43210.

for the splendid arrangements for the York Congress by Derek Pearsall, the members of his Local Committee on Arrangements, and the officers and staff of the University; for the excellent program arranged by Paul Strohm, Florence Ridley, and Derek Pearsall; and for the continuing financial and administrative

St. Mary's Ewelme Restoration Appeal

One of the interesting questions, given the stratification of medieval society, is how Thomas Chaucer managed to marry Maud Berghersh, one of the richest heiresses in England; how their daughter Alice became by her first marriage Countess of Salisbury and by her second Duchess of Suffolk; and how their grandson (Geoffrey's great grandson), John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, came to be officially recognized as the heir to the English throne (only to die in battle before he could inherit). Such advancements are not usual for the descendants of an esquire of lesser degree. They have been explored by M.B. Rudd, Russell Krauss, and others (see the *Chaucer Life Records*, pp. 541-44).

The mystery still broods over the lovely village of Ewelme (pronounced youlm) near Henley in Oxfordshire. Ewelme was the principal seat of Thomas and Maud, and later of Alice and William de la Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk.

Nothing remains of the manor house, fine enough to be confiscated by Henry VII and eventually deeded to Elizabeth, who spent part of her childhood there. But the tombs of Thomas and Alice still stand in the handsome stone church built after 1430 by Alice and William, and the lovely brick almshouses and school adjoining the church, built in 1437. These are as close a physical link as we have with Chaucer the man—Aldgate, the Wool Quay, Westminster Close, the Tabard Inn all having long since disappeared.

To combat rising damp, which is affecting the east end of the church and threatening the tomb of Alice Chaucer, and to make other needed repairs, the St. Mary's Restoration Appeal has been established. Chaucerians who wish to contribute should make checks to St. Mary's Ewelme Restoration Appeal, Account no. 65283902, and mail them to the Hon. Treasurer, Ewelme P.C.C., 1 Chaucer Court, Ewelme, Oxon. OX9 6HW.

And Ewelme itself rewards a visit. Geoffrey can hardly have spent much time there: Thomas married Maud in 1395 and Geoffrey died in 1400. But one would like to imagine that he retreated there at least once or twice from the bustle of Westminster. One would like to know what he thought of the rural serenity, so different from what he wrote about in his poetry.

assistance by the English Department of the University of Tennessee and by John and Jane Fisher.

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