



# THE CHAUCER NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the New Chaucer Society

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## A Note on Henri-Augustin Gomont's Chaucer

In spite of his many French connections, Chaucer has yet to become a household word in the country of his poetic, and perhaps even biological, ancestors. Still, to understand the European Chaucer tradition at all well we need an accurate record of such French studies and translations as there may be. Born in Paris in 1815, Henri-Augustin Gomont was a *littérateur* of rather wide interests. He published poetry, historical and literary essays, and translations over a period of nearly forty years (1837-1874). He encouraged understanding of literature in English through essays on Shakespeare and Tennyson and translations of Longfellow and Byron. His book *Geoffrey Chaucer, poète Anglais du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, analyses et fragments* (Paris, Librairie d'Amiot) appeared in 1847. Eleanor Hammond includes it under "Translations into French" (*Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* [New York, 1908; 1933], p. 236) but does not mention Gomont's individual translations anywhere. Thus her *Manual* implies that Chatelain's (1857-60) was the first translation into French of any of the *Canterbury Tales* aside from the Clerk's and that there were no nineteenth century French translations at all of any of the minor poems. Perhaps "analyses et fragments" led her to infer that Gomont had translated nothing in its entirety.

Caroline Spurgeon, on the other hand, obviously looked at the book. She quotes Gomont at length and mentions his translation of the Knight's Tale (*Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, 1357-1900* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1925], 3.55-60). Yet she does not refer to Gomont's translations of another of the tales and of three authentic minor poems and one spurious one. Neglect of Gomont has continued. He does not appear in Derek Brewer's *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage* (2 vols. London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Perhaps it is time to give M. Gomont his due.

In his introduction, Gomont glances briefly at the early centuries of English literary history and provides some details about Chaucer's life. He neither understands nor appreciates Old English literature (pp.4-5), and he chastises Dryden for attributing to Chaucer "le mérite impossible à son époque d'une pro-

sodie achevée" (10). Still, his errors (including some predictable misattributions) are not surprising for his time. He refers in passing to some earlier French studies of Chaucer. Then through summary, translation, and paraphrase, Gomont presents Chaucer's poetry to an audience he clearly assumes to be almost entirely ignorant of it.

He begins the *analyses et fragments* proper with the *poèmes allégoriques et songes*. He treats three at some length: the *House of Fame* (38-48), the *Book of the Duchess* (49-54), and the *Flower and the Leaf* (55-70).

Next, he turns to the *contes et récits non allégoriques*. *Troilus and Criseyde* he dismisses in one short paragraph "d'un style généralement obscur. . . le mauvais gout et la bizarrerie y dominant" (73), an insight duly recorded by Miss Spurgeon. The style of the *Legend of Good Women* "est clair, simple et noble," but, perhaps because "le fond n'offre rien de bien neuf" (74), *LGW* merits no more space than *TC*.

Gomont's treatment of the *Canterbury Tales* is far more extensive. He begins with a translation of the first forty-two lines of the General Prologue and through translation and summary gives a good picture of the Prologue as a whole (75-92). The Knight, we learn, is "une sorte de maréchal de Boucicaud au petit pied" (77). Gomont seems to handle the ME reasonably well, though a statement like "ce modèle parfait du chevalier montait un cheval bon, mais pas très-vif" (78) encourages caution. His general understanding of the Prologue is impressive. Although he overemphasizes Chaucer's Wycliffite sympathies (here and elsewhere), he senses that "il est philosophe aussi bien que peintre" (82) with an interest in "satire social" as well as "satire privée" (84). And he catches the "malicieuse naïveté" in the poet's presentation of the Man of Law.

Concerning the rest of the *Canterbury Tales*, Gomont sees a similarity with Boccaccio's *Decameron* that he assumes to be "le résultat d'une imitation volontaire" (92). He agrees with Tyrwhitt that Chaucer "a perfectionné le plan de Boccace" (93), but he finds most of the stories greatly inferior to Boccaccio's, criticizing in particular those of the Clerk, the Canon's Yeoman, and the Parson. He regrets especially (and often) Chaucer's predilection for "sujets graveleux" (95).

Of the *Canterbury Tales* there is one "dont la supériorité est incontestable" (96), the Knight's, which Gomont translates in its entirety (105-204). The only other tale so

## Editorial Animadversion

Emerson Brown, Jr., published a thoughtful note on the Winter Issue of *The Chaucer Newsletter* for 1980 (4-6), urging caution on all editors involved in the Chaucer Variorum, that they should consider carefully the intrusion of their own opinions into the summaries of the work of other scholars. He urged that the editors' opinions of the overt sort be eliminated and that the inevitable, covert, opinions be kept to the minimum so that the editor should as little as possible appear between the work of other scholars and the present reader. In support of this view, he considered briefly the practice of other editions variorum, most of which, while useful, fell far short in the desired editorial modesty. Professor Brown has posed well a problem that confronts editors in the current project for, though the guidelines for the Chaucer Variorum attempt to constrain the editors' admiration and indignation, in practice such constraint is very difficult to achieve, even for an editor who himself holds the view that he should be neither seen nor heard.

Having myself prepared for other editors a series of model fascicles of the short Manciple's Prologue and Tale, each of which has taken quite a different form as the principles of the Chaucer Variorum have been hammered out over the past fourteen years, and having now completed that initial task, and having read all or parts of four other fascicles submitted to the project's editorial board, I should like to share my conclusions with other editors and other potential users of the fascicles.

First, I find myself in agreement with Professor Brown that it is annoying to find an editor, in his summary, reaching a conclusion about the worth of the contribution under discussion in advance of the conclusion which I, the reader, will reach in due course. It is a bit presumptuous, and, finally, unfair, in that the scholar reviewed is in most cases dead, and, if not, can probably find no way of answering the criticism unless he is fortunate enough to be given the fascicle for review by a learned journal. I agree that the kind of terse dismissal found in the Milton Variorum, for instance, is damning in a rather omniscient, divine, way. In most cases the value of the work, if the summary is efficient, will become apparent in context. A particularly silly piece of work will reveal its silliness, most especially

## The 1984 NCS Congress

Plans for the 1984 NCS Congress are proceeding apace. We hope to have the program complete by September 1983 so that participants will have ample time to make travel arrangements.

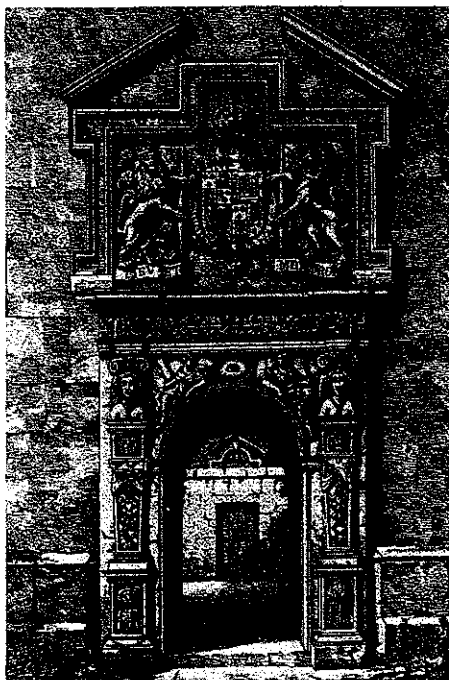
The University of York has set aside accommodations for 300 people from Monday to Saturday, 6-11 August 1984. Total costs at 1982 prices would be £85 per person for lodging, meals, and registration. There will no doubt be some increase between now and 1984. Only members of the NCS may participate, but NCS and the University are happy to welcome accompanying dependents. It should be borne in mind that the accommodations are separate, single rooms, and that there is no provision for accommodating small children in rooms with parents. Bathrooms will be shared down the hall. A list of York hotels will be provided for those who prefer hotel accommodations.

The University is located in Heslington Village, two miles from York Center. There is frequent bus service. The modern buildings are set in an attractive campus. Sports facilities are available at a small extra charge. Each residential college has a licensed bar. An all-day excursion to the Yorkshire abbeys, with lunch at an interesting inn, is planned for Thursday (cost to be determined). The Congress will end on Friday night with a gaudy. It is assumed that all participants will arrive on Monday and stay for five nights. There are no provisions for partial registration.

Derek Pearsall, Director of the University of York Centre for Medieval Studies, is chairing the Committee on Local Arrangements. Paul Strohm, Professor of English, Indiana University, is Chairing the Program Committee. Florence Ridley, Professor of English, UCLA, and Derek Pearsall are serving with Strohm on the Program Committee. Their preliminary plans and call for papers follow. If you would like to attend the 1984 NCS Congress, please fill out the form. No deposit is required at this time and there is no penalty for changing your mind. We would simply like to have a preliminary estimate of the number and nature of the participants. If the demand exceeds 300, we might be able to secure additional rooms; if it falls below 300, we will want to turn some rooms back to the University.

### Publications

Volume I of the ACLS-Scribner's *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* is now available. It is expected that the entire series of thirteen volumes will be complete by 1986. Under the general editorship of Joseph R. Strayer of Princeton University, with articles by specialists, the encyclopaedia will cover the intellectual, cultural, socioeconomic, and political history of Europe, Byzantium, and the Slavic world from c.500-c.1500. The price per volume is \$70.



The Entrance to the King's Manor, Home of the University of York Centre for Medieval Studies. The arms are those of James I.

### Actions of the Trustees of the New Chaucer Society Meeting of 18 April 1982, San Francisco, California

*Present:* President John Fisher; Trustees Derek Brewer, Robert Frank, Donald Fry, Donald Howard, Florence Ridley, Chauncey Wood; Director Paul Ruggers; International Secretaries Tadahiro Ikegami, Beryl Rowland; Observers Donald Rose, Thomas Ross, Roy Pearcy, Thomas Heffernan, Joseph Trahern.

*Absent:* Trustee Derek Pearsall; International Secretaries Juliette De Caluwe-d'or, K. H. Göller, Stephen Knight, Barry Windeatt.

1) *Administration* The move of the office of the Society from the University of Oklahoma to the University of Tennessee and the change of Director from Paul G. Ruggiers to John H. Fisher were approved.

2) *Constitution* Donald Fry was appointed to draft revisions in the NCS constitution, placing the activities of the Society on a two-year cycle and making provisions for the work of the International Secretaries, for the conditions for sponsoring projects, and for other matters not covered in the present constitution. This draft will be circulated promptly to the Trustees and International Secretaries who will reply in writing to Professor Fry. He will then prepare a working draft to be discussed at the May 1983 meeting of the Trustees.

### Program

The Program Committee has arranged several special presentations for the 1984 meeting, but decisions on the majority of paper sessions await proposals by NCS members.

Derek Brewer will deliver the 1984 Presidential Address, and Larry Benson will be the Biennial Chaucer Lecturer. Three plenary sessions have also been scheduled: "Chaucer at Work" (to be chaired by A. J. Minnis); "Theorizing Historical Scholarship" (to be chaired by Lee Patterson); and "Chaucer and Chivalry, at Home and Abroad" (to be chaired by Anne Middleton). While the main outlines of these sessions have already been set, some positions for discussants still remain. We ask interested persons to communicate with the Chair of the Program Committee, who will convey their letters to the session heads.

The balance of the program, including most of the paper sessions, will be planned in response to suggestions received from the membership. The Program Committee solicits such suggestions, with the hope that persons writing at this time will propose *entire sessions* (including topics and likely speakers), or at least clusters of related papers, rather than individual papers.

Please send suggestions for sessions, by December 1, 1982, to:

Paul Strohm  
Chair, NCS Program Committee  
Department of English  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, Ind. 47405

This winter, the Committee will decide on the topics of the twelve paper-reading sessions for the 1984 meeting. These topics, together with information about sessions needing papers and instructions for submitting individual paper proposals, will appear in the February 1983 *NCS Newsletter*.

### Library Orders for SAC

*Studies in the Age of Chaucer* now goes to twenty-five libraries in the United States and seventeen abroad. Increasing the number of subscribing libraries would provide support for the Society as well as strengthen Chaucer studies. The SAC articles, reviews, and annotated bibliographies are already a major resource and will grow more important as they accumulate.

This fall we are circulating major libraries asking them to place standing orders for SAC. However, librarians are influenced far more by their faculty than by circulars. If you would send your Serials Department an encouraging note, it would be most helpful. Our \$25.00 cost is a steal as prices go today. Ask them to order back volumes and place standing orders for future volumes with John H. Fisher, Director, New Chaucer Society, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn. 37996.

*Continued*

### Editorial Animadversion

in a summary. But, more importantly, a bad piece of work will usually have attracted the attention of other scholars who, in the course of a summary, should be allowed to lay bare the faults of the bad work. Pompous, overly schematic, or profoundly sophisticated criticism attracts its own critics; the editor should simply pair them off (e.g. Tupper's piece on the Seven Deadly Sins in the *Canterbury Tales* and Lowes' tedious if right-headed response).

The proper work of the editor gives him, in an indirect way, most of the opportunity which he may wish in assessment: he must organize and shape the flow of commentary, perceive the general trends and developments in criticism and scholarship, lay out the themes and group the "schools" of critical thought. This charge in itself gives him quite enough scope in the normal way for his own

### Gomont's Chaucer

translated is, curiously, *Thopas* (230-38). The rest of the tales he summarizes in a scant thirty-two pages (207-29, 239-47). He believes "le premier mérite peut-être des contes de Cantorbéry, se trouve dans les prologues" (95).

Gomont then turns to the shorter poems, listing and summarizing several. He translates four: "Truth" and "The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse" (254-57, both without envoy), a "Virelai" no longer in the canon (258-59), and the "ABC" (260-71).

He concludes with a list of works in prose and of apocrypha.

Such is the Chaucer available in France in 1847. Ten years later, with Chatelain's translation, the French had a nearly complete *Canterbury Tales*. How much longer, one wonders, will it be before they have a French translation of Chaucer's complete works? Lest we be too hasty in congratulating ourselves on our superiority in such matters, however, we might recall that we still do not have a complete English translation of the works of Guillaume de Machaut.<sup>2</sup>

Emerson Brown, Jr.  
Vanderbilt University

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>A new French translation of the *Canterbury Tales* is now underway: Juliette De Caluwé-Dor, tr. *Les Contes de Cantorbéry: 1ère partie. La Prologue général, Le Conte du chevalier, Le Conte du meunier, Le Conte du prêtre des nonnes* (Ktemata 5; Ghent: Ed. Scientifiques E. Story-Scientia, 1977).

<sup>2</sup>I would like to thank Professor James Patty of Vanderbilt's Department of French and Italian for calling Gomont to my attention. I hope to treat Chaucer's fortunes in France at greater length some day and would appreciate receiving any information readers of the *Chaucer Newsletter* might have.

opinions, for such work demands opinions and judgements.

But what, the editor may ask, of the inevitable conclusions and discoveries that I reach in the course of this monumental task of winnowing and sifting? Is there no place for them? Indeed there is. I do not agree with Professor Brown that the editor must first rush in to print himself in order to be able to cite himself. Although the Chaucer Variorum has on principle limited citations to that which is "in print," the variorum fascicle is itself "print." It is the editor's duty to note, for instance, that a recent "discovery" has in fact been anticipated by two hundred years; this is, of course, an adverse criticism—the scholar in question should have looked into the matter more thoroughly. But as long as the editor does not remark upon the slothfulness of the scholar, he is in duty bound to call, by implication, attention the lapse. The editor is called upon frequently to annotate where he feels annotation needed—he is not just a collector—and if the annotation has not been provided by others, he must provide it himself. He is editing, after all, not merely summarizing. Particularly in the Textual Introduction will the editor be dealing often with materials which, in the case of the poem, will not have been dealt with before. Should he ignore matters such as relations between base MSS and Printed Editions, or how editors apparently arrived at their readings, simply because no one has written of the matter before? Of course not. Anything said which is not attributed is either of such common knowledge as to make attribution unnecessary (though even here it is better to find out, if possible, who said it first) or it should be taken, and will be taken, to be the voice of the editor.

The treatment of the text will demand judgement from the editor and criticism of his predecessors. In determining the text he will inevitably discover errors, for instance, in the great Manly-Rickert *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*. He must note these and say that they are errors. If he finds inconsistency in editorial method, he must say that there is inconsistency (critiques of a general sort have, of course, appeared in print and will be cited, but the editor is dealing with particular cases which will more often than not be treated for the first time). Occasionally such dealing will demand a quarrel with critical conclusions as well. Let me give an example.

In his treatment of the textual tradition of the Manciple's Prologue as distinct from that of the Manciple's Tale, Manly argues strenuously that the evidence of the MS tradition demands a late date for the Prologue and a relatively early date for the Tale (2: 450). In examining Manly's textual evidence I became convinced that that great scholar has allowed his oft-expressed critical judgement of the relative merits of the Tale (early, rhetoric-padded, dull, discarded chip from Chaucer's workbench) and the Prologue (late, lively, realistic, in Chaucer's best style) to influence fatally his assessment of the evidence for text-

ual affiliation. He turned completely on its head his usual theory of the relation between stability of text and its age, and he put forward a summary of textual evidence, which was in detail extremely tenuous, as a conclusive argument. The point is that no one had ever dealt with this matter after Manly. My entire discussion of relative dates, from textual evidence, would then have been simply a summary of Manly's argument which would not, in my opinion, have withstood even a casual examination. Should I have nevertheless let the matter lie, simply citing Manly? I could not. For those who may suspect that constant study of McP and T may have in turn influenced my own critical judgement, and so on to my textual judgement, I must say in all honesty that, after long years of studying Fragment H, I have no great love either for the Manciple's Prologue or his Tale, and, after reading proof, will not likely be drawn into reading them again!

If the editor of the fascicle of the Chaucer Variorum is not to be allowed to discuss such matters and raise such questions, who is? He is, after all, in most cases himself creating a text which has never existed before in all its details. This is certainly original. He must therefore be prepared to give his arguments in support of his reading of the evidence, even if it runs counter to the published opinions of some or all scholars. And, as exemplified in the instance above, this must frequently run to questioning the critical opinions of one's predecessors as well. To continue, I was led into a discussion of the relative dates of the Manciple's Prologue and Tale in which, though I cited everyone whom I could find who had ever uttered an opinion on the subject, I came to certain conclusions for textual and critical reasons which had not before appeared in print. I could, agreed, have held off final submission and sent off my finds to *Chaucer Review* or another journal where, after a couple of years, they might have appeared, and then I might have smugly cited myself. (But this is presumptuous: how many of editors of journals would knowingly accept work which the author will in any case shortly publish in another form?) But this would have unnecessarily have delayed publication of a long-promised work, and would have contributed nothing. My conclusions were the tightly-integrated last section of the Textual Introduction. My opinion is that they should appear in the context that brought them forth, set side by side with Manly's arguments, interspersed with the comments of other scholars, where they can be judged by the reader with all relevant material at hand. To have said simply "See my article in opposition to Manly" or to have summarized it, would not have served. It is already as summarized and lean as I could possibly make it in the form in which it will appear. Just as I would not want to expand it for an article (such an essay would have to be as long as the Textual Introduction itself for the argument to make sense), so I could not summarize it further.

*Continued*

## Final Report of Paul Ruggiers as Director of the New Chaucer Society

For many years, I have, I hope unwittingly, proved to be a bore to my friends and colleagues in the profession, fighting a small battle against the size of the institutions that in some way hold us all together. I refer of course mainly to the MLA, but the yearly medieval meeting at Kalamazoo is not far behind. To me they have always seemed bustling; everyone is looking for a place to eat, trying to remember someone's name, and even trying to find a meeting place. I could never figure out the purpose of the large meeting, whether it was primarily to meet and greet people we had not seen in a long time, or to improve our minds by hearing the latest research in our various disciplines. The pragmatic American mind has solved the problem of real purpose by making the meetings employment markets. And all of us can recall the bands of angry, frustrated, baffled young people roving the halls and populating the elevators, dispirited and depersonalized by the experience of rejection, or simply fatigued by the distractions of finding a place for themselves in a profession experiencing hard times.

My nostalgia was for that non-existent (for us) golden age of scholarship when small societies devoted to the study of a particular poet (Dante, Shelley, Browning, Shakespeare, Chaucer) met in their quiet way, heard papers, and eventually published volumes of proceedings containing all sorts of good things, like bibliographies, papers, necrologies, and the like. Why not capitalize, I thought, on the experience we had had with a really small group, the editors of the *Variorum Chaucer*, who had already met five times in biennial meetings devoted to investigation of carefully stated problems concerning the manner of presentation of the *Variorum* volumes? We had the advantage of the pressure arising from the absence of a good model to emulate; our purpose was real; and though the atmosphere had its festive moments, with good food and drink, the tenor of the meetings remained steadily serious and the motives high. It is in a peculiar way telling that the critiques of the National Endowment have always attacked these meetings. What could they have been comparing us to, do you suppose?

Once the idea was conceived, with the stalwart support of Don Rose, in June 1977 we incorporated the New Chaucer Society in the State of Oklahoma and proceeded to take steps towards bringing the association to life. Though some of the steps occurred concurrently, for the benefit of those of you eager to start a society of your own, here are the procedures.

1. Incorporation. Lawyers smooth the way here.

2. A feasibility survey. In general this means

writing to as wide an assortment of scholars as possible asking them a number of questions: Should a Chaucer Society be brought into existence? What goals should it pursue? Should it be a pen-pal club or something more serious, with dues, regular meetings, papers, etc.? When the responses are in, if they are generally affirmative, and you remain convinced that this is something you really want to do—something that is more than the result of Wellers on ice—you proceed to:

3. A preliminary meeting with persons of good sense. We were fortunate to have present at a meeting in Santa Fe, supported by a grant from the University of Oklahoma, in March of 1978, Derek Brewer, E. Talbot Donaldson, Donald Baker, John Fisher, Charles Muscatine, Alice Miskimin, along with Sally Mussetter, Roy Percy, Don Rose, and myself. Most of the good sense was provided by various spouses.

4. A membership drive based mainly upon lists derived from the MLA, CARA, the Medieval Academy, and the Arthurian Society.

5. Implementation of the plans for a yearbook, the guidelines of which were written by Roy Percy, who became the editor of the first four volumes, and a newsletter, to be issued twice a year; the first issues were edited by Don Rose, Lynne Levy, and Lane Goodall, with some assistance from Dan Ransom.

6. Approval of a Constitution presented by Don Rose. Some changes were made, but in substance, the Constitution remains as presented in 1977.

7. Decisions as to places of meetings. Here the problem is simply that of funding: Does the registration fee plus membership dues cover the burgeoning expenses of international conventions? You will appreciate the task of coordinating the affairs of even a small organization when you consider postal costs for mailing membership drive flyers, for example, or printing and mailing costs for the yearbook and newsletter, and add to these expenses those resulting from the cost of the convention. Naturally the officers work without remuneration, but we could not have got started without office space and clerical support from the University of Oklahoma.

8. Making the program. This is a lot of fun! If you can adopt a theme, then develop the sections, panels, lectures around the theme, find the right scholars to make presentations in the various categories, then juggle the mix until it comes right—the telephone stays busy—, then remember to print a sample program for the Newsletter, then a revised program for the registration packet. Along the way you must find the money for cocktail hours, luncheons, and dinners. Most of the cost is defrayed by the registration fee (which

### Trustees' Actions

3) *Finances* It was decided to leave dues at \$25 for regular members and \$15 for students for the time being. The Director was instructed to solicit special contributions from members towards an endowment fund, and to explore with experts the possibility of undertaking a fund-raising campaign. Donald Howard also volunteered to explore the possibility of fund raising.

4) *1984 Congress* York University, 6-11 August 1984, were approved as the date and place of the next Congress. Derek Pearsall was approved as Director of the Committee on Local Arrangements. Paul Strohm was appointed Chair of the Program Committee, with Florence Ridley and Derek Pearsall as the other members on the committee. The committee was encouraged to complete the program by the summer of 1983 so that participants would have time to plan for their attendance in 1984.

5) *1983 Trustees Meeting* It was agreed that the Trustees would meet for three days in May 1983, the exact date and place to be ascertained. [The meeting of The Trustees will be in Knoxville, Tennessee, 27-29 May 1983.]

6) *Elections and Appointments* Derek Brewer was elected NCS President for a term beginning in January 1983 and extending through the 1984 Congress. Terms of the present trustees were extended through the 1984 Congress to allow time for revising the constitution and holding new elections. Thomas J. Heffernan was appointed editor of *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*.

7) *Future Business* Time did not serve for reports on projects or full discussion of the roles of the International Secretaries. These will be taken up in detail at the next meeting of the Trustees.

never seems to keep pace with the rising expense of the conference). Fortunately your colleagues are willing to help out in planning the program, and some departments have been willing to help defray the costs.

The procedure is enormously challenging, most rewarding. You meet very fine people along the way, including the hotel management staffs; you come to know the varieties of personalities our profession has attracted; and you come to recognize the virtues of your own staff. The real satisfaction for us at the University of Oklahoma is that we had the imagination and the temerity to do it. It is small return on the rich capital created by the labors of the great Chaucer scholars of the 19th century, and a sign of the vitality of Chaucer scholarship in our time.

16 April 1982  
San Francisco

## Chaucer at MLA

Three sessions on Chaucer are planned for the MLA meeting in Los Angeles, and two on Chaucer Apocrypha. Planned by the Chaucer Division, Alfred David (Indiana) presiding; 10:15-11:30 a.m., 28 Dec., Galeria, Biltmore; "Chaucer's *House of Fame* and the French *Palais de Justice*," Laura Kendrick (Rutgers); "Chaucer, Boccaccio, London, Florence," John M. Ganim (California, Riverside); "Chaucer's Squire's Tale and the Rise of Chivalry," Jennifer R. Goodman (Texas A&M); "Chaucer: The Life and Its Work," Donald R. Howard (Stanford).

Two special sessions. Planned by David W. Burchmore and Bernard S. Levy (SUNY Binghamton), "Chaucer and Biblical Parody"; 1:45-3 p.m., 28 Dec. Roman, Biltmore; panelists, James I. Wimsatt (Texas), Ruth M. Ames (CUNY Queensborough), Peter W. Travis (Dartmouth), Kenneth A. Bleeth (Connecticut C), Melvin G. Storm (Emporia SU). Planned by Alexander Weiss (Radford U), "Native Elements in Chaucer's Poetry"; 9-10:15 p.m., 29 Dec. Moroccan, Biltmore; panelists, Judith Kellogg (Hawaii, Manoa), Seth Lerer (Princeton), Susanne Woods (Brown), John H. Fisher (Tennessee).

Two sessions on "The Chaucer Apocrypha" planned by the Middle English Division, Russell A. Peck (Rochester) presiding: 8:30-9:45 a.m., 29 Dec. Renaissance, Biltmore; "The Chaucer Apocrypha," Rossell Hope Robbins (SUNY Albany); "The Historical background of the *Floure and the Leafe*," Caroline D. Eckhardt (Pennsylvania SU); "A Historian's Reading of the *Tale of Gamelyn*," Richard Kacuper (Rochester); "Henryson's *Testament of Cressid* and the *Judicio Solis* of Simon of Couvin, 1350," John Block Friedman (Illinois); "Love and the *Testament of Love*," John Fleming (Princeton). 10:15-11:30 a.m., 29 Dec. Galeria, Biltmore; "Changing Visions of the Poet: The Chaucerian Apocrypha as Poetic Theory," Robert Yeager (Warren Wilson); "The Case for Clanvowe: Judgement and Understanding in the *Boke of Cupide*," Seth Lerer (Princeton); "Flouting Literary Convention: Structural Irony in *Assembly of Ladies*," Judith Davidoff (Miami); "Love's Renewal: A Chaucerian Dream Vision by Charles of Orleans," Diane R. Marks (CUNY Graduate Center); "The 'Lamentation of Mary Magdalene' as a Love Poem," James I. Wimsatt (Texas).

From 5-7 p.m. 29 December, the Huntington Library will have a reception for MLA members. A complimentary shuttle bus will run hourly from 9 a.m., 28-30 Dec. See further details in the MLA Program.

Announcements of books, meetings, or other activities of interest to Chaucerians are welcome and will be published at no cost. Deadline for the February 1983 *Newsletter* is 15 January. Send materials to John H. Fisher, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37996.

## The Fifteenth-Century Symposium in Regensburg

Over four hundred medievalists from all over the world met 11-16 August in Regensburg for an interdisciplinary conference on the fifteenth century. The historical setting was a congenial one, for leading burghers and rich merchants brought the city to its architectural zenith in the 15th century, and the passage of the centuries since have not erased their legacy.

It was the first time since its founding in 1977 that the annual symposium had met in Europe. The organizers, Professors DuBruck and Mermier of Michigan and professor Göller of Regensburg were impressed by the great response both in Europe and abroad to their invitation. Participants from as far away as Japan and Africa, and a large number of English and American scholars made the conference truly international. Almost all disciplines involved in medieval studies were represented. The interdisciplinary approach proved particularly fruitful in the fields of iconography, drama, religious lay movements, the *Legenda Aurea* and its reception, medieval mysticism, and women's studies. In all there were some 155 lectures divided into 31 sessions. Chaucerian matters were not neglected—two sessions on the continuity of Chaucerian tradition included lectures on the Chaucer pilgrims (Kohl), Lydgate (Tripp), Henryson (Niticki), Hoccleve (Markus, McMillan), the *Tale of Beryn* (Rendall), and Dunbar (Fries, Schatterberg).

The plenary speakers reflected the entire spectrum of conflicting views on the fifteenth century. Prof. Otto Grundler emphasized the 15th century's attachment to medieval tradition. Prof. Derek Pearsall saw it as a period of transition. Prof. Charles Moorman wryly called it an age of stasis or even stagnation. And Prof. Karl Bosl, one of Germany's leading older historians, went even further in claiming that the close of the Middle Ages should be seen not as 1500 but rather 1700.

But the "Turning Tide" envisioned by the conference's title was taken up in a more positive sense by many speakers who emphasized the period as an age of brinkmanship, on the verge of humanism and the modern age.

"The Turning Tide" proved an apt title for the state of medieval studies in Germany as well. Dampened by the stasis of the sixties, when any subject not socially relevant was relegated to the sidelines, medieval studies in Germany are also marked by the isolation caused by the university structural division into individual departments independent of one another. To these problems shared by other countries is added the burden of the language barrier. Many excellent, even indispensable secondary works have gone practically unheeded abroad because their potential

## Editorial Animadversion

This is but one example. I would imagine that at least one out of every two editors of the *Canterbury Tales* will have roughly the same experience in working through the Manly-Rickert *Tales*. Nearly all the specific material to be provided on the relations of the Printed Editions will be original with the editor responsible, for of others' general opinions he must make specific applications, in which he will at times agree and at times disagree.

The editor has quite enough of a burden, and at almost every point he will be expressing an opinion. I therefore agree with the general tenor of Professor Brown's remarks, but I suggest that he has greatly oversimplified the problem; if an editor were indeed to confine himself to summarizing what has appeared in print, without intruding himself, he would produce, I think, a work of very questionable value, one much more easily produced by key-punch and computer. I do not snidely dismiss any view, no matter how foolish I think it, and have tried to keep my own intrusions to a minimum. However, since I have read and reread a tiny piece of the *Canterbury Tales* for the better part of twelve years, I frankly feel that the reader is being cheated if I do not—with all modesty, I hope—occasionally share with him some of what I think I may have learned.

Donald C. Baker  
University of Colorado

## Mellon Fellowships

You saw the announcements last spring, but we remind you of the Mellon Fellowships for graduate study in the humanities that will begin with awards for 1983-84. For each of five years, 100-125 fellows will be appointed who show outstanding promise for careers as teachers and scholars. Within certain limits, fellows may take their awards to the graduate schools of their choice. Stipends will be in the vicinity of \$7,500 in addition to full tuition. Able undergraduates pointing towards careers in the humanities should be made aware of this possibility. Information may be secured from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Box 642, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

readers were reluctant to broach the intricacies of scholarly German.

To promote interdisciplinary contact at home and scholarly exchange with medieval study centres abroad, a new German Society for Medieval Studies is being founded, which will cooperate with similar societies and academies abroad, and which will promote the publication of important German medieval scholarship in English translation. The Fifteenth Century Symposium has not only brought new insights in scholarship, but has also given the field of medieval studies in Germany new—and it is to be hoped—lasting impulses for the future.

Jean Ritzke-Rutherford  
University of Regensburg

**PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION FOR THE NCS CONGRESS, YORK, 6-11 AUGUST 1984**

I plan to attend the 1984 New Chaucer Society Congress.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

I will be accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_ (number) dependents.

I (We) would plan to join the Thursday excursion to the Yorkshire abbeys. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I (We) plan to travel to York by public transportation \_\_\_\_\_ by car \_\_\_\_\_.

Return to the New Chaucer Society, Department of English,  
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