

**CONSTRUCTING THE FATHER:
FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPTS OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S WORKS**

Roberta Magnani

A Thesis Submitted in Candidature for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Cardiff University

September 2010

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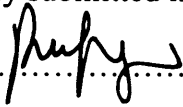
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SUMMARY OF THESIS

This is a study of the multiple constructions and appropriations of Geoffrey Chaucer's *paternitas* of the English literary canon. It examines the evidence from the *compilatio* and *ordinatio* of fifteenth-century manuscript anthologies containing the poet's works, and it interrogates the social conditions of production of these codices, as well as the ideology informing their compositional and paratextual programmes.

Conceptually, my thesis is underpinned by a broad engagement with manuscript studies, as the codices to which I attend become objects of bibliographical and codicological examination, while being scrutinised through a post-structuralist framework. This theoretical approach, which comprises Michel Foucault's revisions of historiography and the contiguous debates on translation practices and queer theories, allows me to read critically the socio-cultural situations which inform the plural incarnations and appropriations of Chaucer's paternal authority.

My study is structured in four chapters. I begin in Chapter I by engaging with Thomas Hoccleve's literary and iconographic mythopoeia of Chaucer who is positioned as the clerical and sober *fons et origo* of English vernacularity. In Chapter II I interrogate the appropriations of this initial paradigm of paternal authorship and I demonstrate how fifteenth-century manuscript collections fabricate Chaucer as a courtly and lyrical Father whose work is validated by his affiliations to and reproduction of dominant aristocratic literary practices.

Chapter III situates these hegemonic modes of composition and *mise-en-page* in the context of French manuscript culture with which Chaucer's paternity of the English canon is inextricably intertwined. These associations with the 'master' culture, however, disperse the Father's authority in an intervernacular site of linguistic and cultural negotiations. Similarly, Chapter IV engages with the displacement of Chaucer's *paternitas* in the material space of the codex, as the glossarial apparatus of the manuscript copies of his works articulates voices of dissent. No longer the stable patriarch constructed by Hoccleve, Chaucer occupies a fluid and permeable space of authority that can be inhabited by a polyvocality of hermeneutic voices and is, therefore, susceptible to perpetual acts of co-option.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAUCER'S LITERARY *PATERNITAS*: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL PALIMPSEST OF AUTHORSHIP

As the earliest and most perdurable definition of Geoffrey Chaucer's authorial agency, his literary *paternitas* is, according to Seth Lerer, the central principle of the fifteenth-century reception of the poet's works. In *Chaucer and his Readers*, a study of the poet's influence on his immediate literary successors and their response to his texts, Lerer argues that 'Chaucer—as author, as “laureate”, and as “father” of English poetry—is a construction of his later fifteenth-century scribes, readers and poetic imitators'.¹ In an earlier assessment of the origins and significance of Chaucer's paternity, A. C. Spearing accorded a more expansive resonance to this trope. Not solely confined to late medieval literary history, the poet's *paternitas* was, instead, 'the constitutive idea of the English poetic tradition' until, at least, the early eighteenth century when John Dryden famously deemed Chaucer 'the Father of English Poetry'.² Ethan Knapp also argues for the ubiquity of the epistemological paradigm of paternity in critical accounts of the history of literary traditions; in *The Bureaucratic Muse*, he begins his chapter dedicated to the fatherly-filial relation between Chaucer and Thomas Hoccleve by stating that '[p]erhaps no ideology is so central to the institution of literary history as that of filial piety'.³

After Hoccleve offered the first recorded articulation of Chaucer's poetic *paternitas* in a eulogising passage of his *Regiment of Princes* addressed to 'his maistir deere and fadir reverent'. in the fifteenth century there is a remarkable paucity of

¹ Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 3.

² A. C. Spearing, 'Father Chaucer', in *Writing After Chaucer: Essential Readings in Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Daniel J. Pinti (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1998), pp. 144-166; originally published in *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 88-110. John Dryden's definition of Chaucer as 'the Father of English Poetry' was formulated in his *Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern*, quoted in Derek Brewer, ed., *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 1995 [1978]), I.164.

³ Ethan Knapp, 'Eulogies and Usurpations: Father Chaucer in the *Regement of Princes*', in *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 107-127 (p. 107).

instances in which Chaucer is identified as ‘father’.⁴ Except for two references, both related to William Caxton and to which I shall return shortly, the copious evidence of reception gathered by Derek Brewer in *The Critical Heritage* does not record any fifteenth-century citation in which Chaucer’s paternity features explicitly as an element of the early critical assessments of his work.⁵ Notwithstanding the sparse direct utterances of the appellative ‘father’, fifteenth-century critical responses to Chaucer’s works are nevertheless underpinned by a genealogical discourse in which Chaucer is constructed as the *fons et origo* of the English vernacular canon. Men of letters such as Eustache Deschamps and John Lydgate predicate their praise of Chaucer upon a patriarchal paradigm which configures canon-formation as a teleological process governed by a father-like founding figure, a view aligned with Hoccleve’s filial devotion to the poet, since they are inscribed in the same epistemological models of organic historical development. The French poet Eustache Deschamps, a contemporary of Chaucer, positions his English colleague in a validating genealogy of Greek and Latin intellectual patriarchs:

O Socratès plains de philosophie,
 Senèque en meurs, Auglius en pratique,
 Ovides grans en ta poëterie,
 Briés en parler, saiges en rethorique,
 Aigles treshaulz, qui par ta theorique
 Enlumines le regne d’Eneas,
 L’Isle aux Geans, ceuls de Bruth. et qu’i as
 Semé les fleurs et planté le rosier
 Aux ignorans de la langue Pandras,
 Grant translateur, noble Geoffrey Chaucier⁶

⁴ Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1999), l. 1961, p. 96.

⁵ For a record of fifteenth-century critical assessments of Chaucer, see Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1.39-81.

⁶ Eustache Deschamps, ‘Une autre balade’, ll. 1-10, cited in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, l. 40. Brewer also provides a prose translation of Deschamps’s ballade: ‘O Socrates, full of philosophy, Seneca for morality, for practical life an Aulus Gellius, a great Ovid in your poetry; brief in speech, wise in the art of writing, lofty eagle, who by your science enlighten the kingdom of Aeneas, the island of Giants, of Brutus, who have sown there the flowers and planted the rose-tree for those who are ignorant of French: great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer’, see p. 41.

As Spearing explains, Deschamps's strategy of authorisation of Chaucer's works through a discourse of inherited prestige and classical descent is a ubiquitous trope in the mapping of literary history: '[t]here is ample precedent for seeing the authority of the literary precursor over his successors as analogous to the authority of the father over his son'.⁷ The French poet's praise constructs Chaucer as a foundation myth whose moral and intellectual excellence, in a direct line of descent from antiquity, is, for the recipients of the myth, inflected with a nationalist concern for the poet as the Father of English vernacularity.

This rhetoric of origins is an overarching tenet of the fifteenth-century fabrication of and response to Chaucer's authorship. In John Lydgate's works he is represented as a literary *fons et origo* responsible for the nourishing of the infant English vernacular tradition:

That made firste, to distille and rayne
 The golde dewe dropes of speche and eloquence
 Into our tunge, through his excellence
 And fonde the floures, first of Retoryke
 Our Rude speche, only to enlumyne
 That in our tunge, was neuere noon hym like⁸

[...] cheeff poete of Breteyne⁹

My maister Galfride as for chefe poete
 Pat euere was 3it in oure langage
 Pe name of whom shal passen in noon age
 But euer ylyche with-oute eclipsinge shyne.¹⁰

Attending to the development and increasing sophistication of the burgeoning English language and literature, Chaucer presides over its genealogy as a nurturing patriarch.

The organic rhetoric deployed to characterise his *paternitas* ('golde dewe dropes');

⁷ Spearing, 'Father Chaucer', p. 148.

⁸ John Lydgate, 'The Life of Our Lady', ll. 1632-1637; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, I.46.

⁹ John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, l. 247; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, I.52-59 (52).

¹⁰ John Lydgate, *Troy Book*, ll. 4556-4559; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, I.46-49 (48).

‘floures’) is founded upon metaphorical figures of fertility, birth and ripening (‘to distille and rayne’; ‘to enlumyne’) which position Chaucer as a God-like creator of life. As a quasi-divine paternal authority, the poet inhabits a space of permanence and stability (‘Pe name of whom shal passen in noon age / But euer ylyche with-oute eclipsinge shyne’) of which he is the unequivocal origin and principle of unity.

This fifteenth-century construction of Chaucer’s paternity is consistent with Roland Barthes’s discussion and interrogation of the fetishisation of the author in literary history. In ‘The Death of the Author’, he examines the specific relation between an author and his works, and Barthes’s paternal metaphor can be extended to Chaucer’s role in the foundation of the English canon:

The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book [...] The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child.¹¹

As ‘the Author-God’ who releases ‘a single “theological” meaning’, the “pre-modern author” is the sole and permanent principle of signification.¹² Not only does the author-Creator precede the text, but he also closes it to the possibility of multiple hermeneutic appropriations. Similarly, Lydgate represents Chaucer as both the ‘firste’ and ‘cheeff’ of English vernacularity and the enduring authority which validates it.

Notwithstanding the encomiastic tonality of fifteenth-century constructions of Chaucer’s paternal role in the genealogy of the English canon, these eulogies can also decentre the Father’s autocratic power. In *The Fall of Princes* Lydgate tersely announces ‘[m]y maistir Chaucer [...] is ded’; also, in *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* he historicises the Father’s works and influence by firmly locating it in the past.

¹¹ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148 (p. 145).

¹² Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, p. 146. Here I use “pre-modern” to signify the traditional paradigm of authorship that Barthes interrogates and supplants with the idea of the decentred ‘modern scriptor’.

that is in the remoteness of ‘hys tyme’.¹³ The anonymous author of the *Book of Curtesye*, published by Caxton in c. 1470, radicalises the displacement of Chaucer’s stable and a-temporal authority as literary Father:

O fader and founder of ornate eloquence
That enlumened hast alle our bretayne
To soone we loste / thy laureate scyence
O lusty lyquour / of that fulsom fontayne
O cursid deth / why hast thou þ¹ poete slayne
I mene fader Chaucer / maister galfryde
Alas the whyle / that euer he from vs dyde¹⁴

A rare and, according to Spearing, the only fifteenth-century explicit address to Chaucer as ‘fader’, except, of course, for Hoccleve’s tribute, this stanza of the *Book of Curtesye* is saturated with images of death and destabilising statements of finitude. In these lines, the God-like author who presides over the text from the moment of its creation *ad infinitum* is displaced in a space which, although still authoritative and exemplary, is transient and mortal. The impermanence of Chaucer’s authority leaves, therefore, his work open to acts of usurpation and appropriation performed by his successors seeking to legitimise their work by inscribing it in the prestigious genealogy established by their literary Father.

This historicisation of Chaucer’s authority problematises not only the stability of his paternal influence, but also its origins. In the 1478 printed edition of the ‘Epilogue’ to Chaucer’s translation of Boethius, Caxton depicts the poet with what, by the third quarter of the fifteenth century, had arguably become a recurrent appellation eulogising his foundational role in the establishment of the English vernacular as a rhetorically accomplished language:

¹³ Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, ll. 246-247; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1.52; also, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, l. 19755; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1.51-52 (51).

¹⁴ William Caxton, ed., *Book of Curtesye*, ll. 330-336; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 1.71-73 (72).

Therefore the worshipful fader & first foundeur & enbelissher of ornate eloquence in our englissh. I mene / Maister Geffrey Chaucer hath translated this sayd werke oute of latyn in to oure vsual and modern tonge.¹⁵

As well as a literary ‘fader’, Chaucer is here identified as a translator. Like Deschamps’s early eulogy of his English contemporary as a ‘grant translateur’ of French verse, later men of letters bring into focus his achievements as a translator of both Latin and French philosophical and poetic traditions, and appear to argue for the centrality of the author’s translations in his process of canonisation.

In *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* Lydgate expands on his laconic displacement of Chaucer’s work in a remote past: the passage that I quoted above, in fact, continues with a praise of the poet’s accurate renditions of French texts:

Affter the Frenche he dyde yt ryme,
Word by word, as in substaunce,
Ryght as yt ys ymad in Fraunce¹⁶

By transferring the privileged discourse of French lyrical culture onto the English vernacular, Chaucer occupies a dialectical space in which he is, at once, the ‘foundeur’ of English vernacularity and the interpreter of a tradition that precedes him. Instead of teleologically fixed and unmovable, the origins of the canon are perpetually deferred and subjected to constant re-inscription, since English vernacularity is itself the result of the appropriation and translation of a prior superior culture. In other words, as it displaces both the permanence of Chaucer’s authority, and his positioning as absolute origin of signification, the fifteenth-century construction of the poet’s *paternitas* is predicated upon a dialectical relation between stability and appropriation, authority and co-option. As a palimpsest, which opens up

¹⁵ William Caxton, ed., ‘Epilogue to *Boece*’, quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, I.74-75 (75). The importance of this quotation also resides in its overt reference to Chaucer’s *paternitas*. This instance is not recorded in Spearing’s account of fifteenth-century uses of the appellative ‘father’ to describe the poet’s literary authority; see Spearing, ‘Father Chaucer’, p. 160.

¹⁶ Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, ll. 19756-19758; quoted in Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, I.51.

its stable material presence and established textual fabric to subsequent gestures of over-writing and re-writing, Chaucer's paternal authority inhabits a porous and permeable space that offers his filial successors (readers, hermeneutists, poets, and critics) an authoritative discursive landscape able to accommodate their culturally-specific acts of usurpation and self-affirmation.

It is within this critical site of resistance to the application of a linear paradigm of patriarchal descent to the study of literary history that my thesis is situated. Although dissent was already apparent in fifteenth-century constructions of and responses to Chaucer's *paternitas*, this epistemological model based on validating literary genealogies has preserved its relevance over the centuries, as Harold Bloom's critical practices exemplify. His account of the history of literature as a continuum, that is as an unbroken line of descent from literary fathers to their sons, is, according to Spearing, 'tensely Oedipal' and 'retains its power'.¹⁷ More recently post-structuralist and feminist voices have interrogated the hegemony of this genealogical and teleological discourse, and have supplanted it with a dispersed field of signification in which the male author, as sole *fons et origo* of meaning, is decentred and the text is opened up to the agency of other, previously marginal, readers and the destabilising multiplicity of their interpretations.¹⁸ In line with these voices of resistance, both late medieval and contemporary, my thesis investigates the dialectical construction and plural incarnations of Chaucer's *paternitas* in fifteenth-century manuscript anthologies containing his works.

This study contributes to the debate on the multifarious incarnations and hermeneutic assessments of the Middle Ages and, in particular, the Chaucerian canon

¹⁷ Spearing, 'Father Chaucer', p. 148.

¹⁸ Knapp offers a short but essential bibliography of the critical articulation of these dissenting voices; see 'Eulogies and Usurpations: Father Chaucer in the *Regement of Princes*', note 1, p. 107.

that in the last ten years has been prompted by influential studies such as Stephanie Trigg's *Congenial Souls*, Steve Ellis's *Chaucer at Large* and David Matthews's *The Making of Middle English*.¹⁹ As Ellis explains in the 'Introduction' to his work, he engages with the 'requisitions' of Chaucer, while Trigg 'tracks the dynamics between the various forms of readership that cluster around Geoffrey Chaucer at different times'.²⁰ Although my thesis is underpinned by a similar preoccupation with the appropriations of the poet's *oeuvre*, it is framed by an overarching concern with Chaucer's literary *paternitas* as cultural construct, or as a discursive site that, being fabricated, is perpetually open to reinventions and, to borrow a term from the title of Matthews's book, re-makings. My investigation of paternal authority also inscribes the scholarly debate on Chaucerian 'requisitions' in the context of power relations between text and paratext, author and readers, dominant cultural practices and new subjectivities, and, ultimately, between linear genealogies of authorship and their dispersal in multiple configurations. The physical space of the fifteenth-century codex is, therefore, central to my research as a site of negotiation in which Chaucer's paternal authority is, at once, constructed and appropriated, emulated and usurped, eulogised and displaced.

Conceptually, my thesis is underwritten by the practices and principles of manuscript studies with which I engage as a multidiscursive scholarly discipline. In his recent discussion of the role of manuscript studies within the broader context of Chaucerian criticism, Robert J. Meyer-Lee defines it as the 'amalgamation' of 'late twentieth-century critiques of authorship, authority and canonicity; historicism and

¹⁹ Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2002); Steve Ellis, *Chaucer at Large: The Poet in the Modern Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000); David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English: 1765-1910* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999).

²⁰ Ellis, *Chaucer at Large: The Poet in the Modern Imagination*, p. xiii; Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern*, p. xvii.

the consequent emphasis on material culture in interpretative studies; and the self-consciousness about the theory and practice of textual criticism'.²¹ Consistently with theories developed by a number of book historians, such as D. F. McKenzie, Jerome McGann and James Thorpe, who urge scholars to engage with literary works as the products of their material conditions of production, circulation, as well as reception and reappropriation, it is this critical attention to manuscripts as cultural artefacts that informs my study of Chaucer's *paternitas* in the fifteenth-century.²² Objects of bibliographical and codicological scrutiny, the codices to which I attend in my thesis are, therefore, also interrogated and examined through a post-structuralist framework which encompasses Michel Foucault's revisions of historiography and the contiguous debates on translation practices and queer subjectivities. This theoretical approach offers appropriate paradigms of interpretation of the cultural situations in which Chaucer's works were copied, disseminated, and his paternal authority constructed and reinvented.

Specifically, Michel Foucault's reconfiguration of history as 'genealogy' underpins the conceptual fabric of this study as a suitable structure within which the paternal construction of Chaucer's position in the English canon can be read and interrogated. In Foucault's words, as a historiographical methodology, genealogy 'opposes itself to the search for "origins"' and, ultimately, to a 'linear development' of events.²³ Foucault supplants the displaced teleological paradigm of direct filiation with the multidiscursivity of history in which 'numerous systems intersect and

²¹ Robert J. Meyer-Lee, 'Manuscript Studies, Literary Value, and the Object of Chaucer Studies', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 30 (2008), 1-37 (2).

²² D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992); James Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 1972).

²³ For a fuller discussion of genealogy, see Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 76-100 (pp. 76-77).

compete', and are 'unable to be mastered by the powers of synthesis'.²⁴ As well as destabilising the fixity of the epistemological model of patriarchal descent, Foucault's theories refocus the debate on authority and power relations. His 'new "economy" of power' is not predicated upon the analysis of unmovable ideological hierarchies (domination and subjugation; master and servant cultures; paternal authority and filial subservience; hegemonic masculinity and inferior femininity; the heteronormative and the queer), but it engages with 'the mechanics of power', that is with the 'procedures' or technologies with which power is reproduced, circulated and redirected.²⁵ In line with Foucault's treatment of authority, I therefore consider the transactions between text and readers, author and hermeneutists, dominant and emerging cultural practices, performed in the physical space of the fifteenth-century manuscripts of Chaucer's works, as a dialectical interplay of forces. My specific preoccupation resides in the investigation of strategies of construction and co-option of Chaucer's *paternitas* enacted by his successors in the attempt to affirm their subjectivities.

The scope of my thesis excludes the early printed editions of Chaucer's works. Although the relation between manuscript and print culture certainly deserves scholarly attention as a central aspect of fifteenth-century book production, my study concentrates on the manuscript copies of Chaucer's texts. In line with Alexandra Gillespie's work on the hybridity of Caxton's 1476 edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, I am mindful of the fallacies of considering fifteenth-century manuscript and print traditions as discrete stages of an evolutionary process. However, focusing on manuscripts allows me, within the space of this thesis, to read Chaucer's *paternity*

²⁴ Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', p. 94.

²⁵ Foucault, 'Truth and Power', in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon; trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 109-133 (pp. 116-119).

before it was monumentalised in single-author editions. Instead, my thesis contextualises the works of the Father in the complex web of intertextual and paratextual relations which underpins manuscript anthologies and eludes single-author printed books.²⁶

My thesis, in sum, engages with the construction, multidiscursivity and plural incarnations of Chaucer's literary *paternitas*. I articulate my argument in four chapters. In the first two I examine evidence from the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of fifteenth-century manuscript collections of Chaucer's works. After investigating in Chapter I the literary and iconographic mythopoeia of the Father, whom Hoccleve positions as the *fons et origo* of English vernacularity, I argue in Chapter II that in the material space of the codex the poet's paternity is inscribed in the validating discourse of courtly cultural practices. In other words, the principles governing the processes of textual selection and the decorative programme of these anthologies construct Chaucer's paternity as predominantly lyrical and aristocratic in order to reproduce dominant subject positions and disseminate them authoritatively among the readers of the poet's works.

Finally, Chapters III and IV interrogate the fixity and stability of the hegemonic literary and social discourse that Chaucer inhabits. Not only is the poet's paternal authority validated by its affiliations with the privileged discourse of French manuscript culture, but it is also, as Chapter III shows, dispersed in a hybrid intervernacular landscape. Such displacement of Chaucer's paternity is, as Chapter IV demonstrates, also apparent in the glossarial apparatuses appended to the manuscript copies of his works. Although annotations police and reproduce the moral and literary authority of the Father's work, they can also articulate dissent and

²⁶ Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473-1557* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 23-24; 55-60.

challenge his paternal autocracy in order to appropriate it as an authorising space in which their heterodox subject positions, whether social or sexual, can be performed. In my thesis, therefore, I argue that in its first manifestations Chaucer's *paternitas* is a dialectical site which, as a palimpsest, accommodates and reconciles a plurality of discordant voices and is, hence, open to perpetual re-writing and over-writing.

CHAPTER I

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE FATHER: HOCCLEVE'S CONSTRUCTION OF CHAUCER'S *PATERNITAS*

Introduction. Chaucer's Manuscript Portraits: A Semiotics of Authorship.

Long before John Dryden's definitive formulation of Chaucer's paternity of English poetry, Hoccleve constructs his predecessor as the *fons et origo* of the burgeoning vernacular canon. Through his eulogies and the tradition of manuscript authorial portraiture of the Father, to the establishment of which he contributes, Hoccleve fabricates a mythopoeia of Chaucer as the exemplary patriarch of Englishness. This chapter engages with Hoccleve's textual and iconographic encomia of the Father's literary authority, as they create a semiotics of authorship which fixes his *paternitas* in a system of conventional signs and positions it in a permanent literary genealogy. In other words, Hoccleve's textual references to Chaucer and the portraiture of the Father affiliated to his manuscripts produce and disseminate verbal and visual signifiers that indelibly write Chaucer's *auctoritas* in the physical space of the codex. Once disseminated, however, these markers of paternity become permeable and susceptible to appropriations. As a palimpsest of authority, Chaucer's literary *paternitas* can be inhabited by his successors (poets, scribes, compilers) who seek professional and intellectual validation through affiliation with the patriarch of English vernacularity.

Chaucer's portraiture is inscribed in a wider codicological tradition in which author portraits, as elements of the *ordinatio* of the medieval codex, are devices whose function is to individuate and gloss specific sections of the text. Through this process of visual selection, likenesses impose a hierarchical and structural order upon the generic and thematic elements of the literary work which they annotate. They have, therefore, a hermeneutic valence, as they direct the reader's interpretation of the text and construct desirable responses to the narratives they frame. As Lori Walters argues, following practices in use in French medieval manuscripts containing music

and songs, portraits are deployed as devices to mark the transition between discrete authorial voices in a work.²⁷ As codicological signifiers with an established function, they inscribe meaning on the material space of the codex by pre-empting and informing the reception and understanding of the text. In parallel, when describing twelfth-century modes of identification of *auctores* and *auctoritas* in the margins of manuscripts, M. B. Parkes describes similar codicological signs of authorship. He explains that citations were demarcated by the name of the author accompanied by a distinctive and unique system of dots or lines and dots.²⁸

This semiotics of authorship, based on symbolic representation, is, however, displaced by the emergent preoccupation with individualisation in thirteenth-century exegesis and visual arts, with which I will engage more closely later in this chapter.²⁹

As Jeanne E. Krochalis argues, iconography in general and author portraits in particular begin to acquire a mimetic quality. In his discussion of the broader context of medieval annotative practices, Stephen Nichols maintains that elements of the *ordinatio* are embodiments:

Annotation [...] became, like the saint's relic, an artefact imbued with the power of an absent presence: in short, metalepsis, in the sense of substituting an indirect expression of a direct one. [...] The annotation is a decorporealization, a substitution for the body, [...] the voice of the body.³⁰

²⁷ For an extensive discussion of the function of author portraits in French manuscripts, see Lori Walters, 'Appendix: Author Portraits, and Textual Demarcation in Manuscripts of the *Romance of the Rose*', in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 359-373.

²⁸ M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1991), pp. 35-69 (p. 36); originally published in *Medieval Learning and Literature*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 115-141.

²⁹ Jeanne E. Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', *The Chaucer Review* 21:2 (1986), 234-245 (238-239).

³⁰ Stephen G. Nichols, 'On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation', in *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 43-73 (p. 46).

Annotations are surrogate voices of the absent author or exegete, as they materialise his removed presence; similarly, a mimetic portrait recuperates and fixes the memory of the *auctor*, by making him visible and tangible in the codex. The portraits of Chaucer, which augment Hoccleve's eulogies of the Father in *The Regiment of Princes*, encompass two conflicting traditions of representation, namely iconographic and individualised portraiture. Chaucer's likenesses construct him as a private and domesticated *auctor* who has the mimetic authority of a historically-recognisable figure. Through his visual representation, the poet is memorialised and recuperated as a living and material presence speaking from the margins of the manuscript in order to enter a dialogue with his literary disciples and readers. He is, nonetheless, simultaneously presented as an icon, or as a universal and perpetually-accessible literary and moral exemplar. At once historically specific and eternally present, individualised and iconised, Chaucer is, therefore, offered to his audience in two co-terminous incarnations: the domesticated 'fadir' and the honourable Father of an emergent vernacular canon.

As the first formulation of Chaucer's authority as paternal, Hoccleve's verbal and visual construction of the poet is paradigmatic of the fifteenth-century reception of the poet's works. Albeit, as I will demonstrate, not the only late-medieval epistemological model of Chaucerian authorship, Hoccleve's fabrication establishes an influential and lasting semiotics of *paternitas* which will later be subjected to acts of re-appropriation and co-option.

1. 'Thow were aqweynted with Chaucer, pardee': Individualising the 'fadir'.

Consistent with an increasing epistemological and aesthetic preoccupation with individual agency, Hoccleve's construction of Chaucer's *paternitas* locates the Father

in the discursive space of the domestic and familial. This strategy of normalisation of the medieval *auctor* is aligned not only with conceptual and ontological changes in notions of authorship and selfhood in fifteenth-century culture, but also with an emerging tradition of realistic representation in the visual arts and manuscript production. Not only a remote *auctoritas* represented exclusively through a symbolic semiotics of authorship, Chaucer is for Hoccleve predominantly a historicised and individualised presence. By claiming personal affiliations with the Father, Hoccleve seeks access to the literary genealogy and socio-cultural circles over which Chaucer presides as the patriarch of English vernacularity.

Two paradigms of authorship appear to conflate in the later Middle Ages, as an emerging individualisation is juxtaposed to an earlier iconographic or dehistoricised model. Krochalis observes that pre-fourteenth-century author portraits were iconographic and idealised types rather than realistic likenesses of an identifiable historical figure.³¹ In parallel, A. J. Minnis maintains that the *auctoritas* of the medieval author is textual: ‘an *auctoritas* was a quotation or an extract from the work of an author [...] an *auctoritas* is also worthy of belief [...] because the man who is proficient and expert in his science must be believed’.³² The authority of the author is, therefore, assessed and established through the intellectual reliability and integrity of his text. In sum, since early-medieval *auctores* were perceived as voices and texts, or as ‘impersonal and conventional’ repositories of textual traditions, authorship functioned as the textual legitimisation of the transmission of narratives, not as an authorising individual presence.³³

³¹ Krochalis, ‘Hoccleve’s Chaucer Portrait’, 235-236.

³² A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984), p. 10.

³³ Krochalis, ‘Hoccleve’s Chaucer Portrait’, 235. Krochalis defines medieval authorship as voice. For a discussion of *auctoritates* as texts rather than individuals, see Parkes, ‘The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book’, note 1, p. 36. In support of this argument,

In line with Minnis's assessment, Seth Lerer describes authorship in pre-humanist manuscript culture as an open and permeable process, as a network of co-operating agents and functions which decentres the author as the sole originator of meaning:

The idea of authority rests with texts, rather than individuals, and it is this distinctive feature of pre-humanist manuscript culture that permits a certain fluidity among author, scribe, and reader.³⁴

As a consequence, an early-medieval pictorial representation of the *auctor* does not portray a historically-identifiable person but a fictional figure, that is a narrative based on conventional iconographic markers of authorship, such as the clerical or legal book accompanying and identifying the author as teacher, or the upright writing desk, emblem of the author as writer.³⁵ The insertion of an author portrait functions as a visual sanctioning, or author-ising, of the text it accompanies and of the authority of the immaterial and impersonal voice of the *auctor*. Mary Carruthers argues that writing, or the *literae*, is a strategy of memory, or a means to conjure up and materialise the voice of the absent dead author.³⁶ Similarly, Chaucer's portraits embody and memorialise his paternal authority.

In the later Middle Ages, portraiture begins to conflate two functions and paradigms of representation, as an iconographic and situational act of legitimisation and memory becomes co-terminous with the principles of realism and authenticity. According to Krochalis, although author portraits are common in thirteenth-century French romance manuscripts, especially those of *The Romance of the Rose*, mimetic

see also A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scholar Press, 1984), p. 10.

³⁴ Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 12.

³⁵ Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall, 'Pictorial Illustration of Medieval Poetic Texts: The Role of the Frontispiece', in *Medieval Iconography and Narrative: A Symposium*, ed. Flemming Andersen, Esther Nyholm, Marianne Powell, and Flemming Talbo Stubkær (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980), pp. 100-123 (pp. 115-116). Salter and Pearsall identify eight types of author pictures in medieval manuscripts; all of them are situational and iconographic.

³⁶ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 225.

portraiture does not emerge until the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.³⁷ By then, as Michael Seymour argues, in manuscript culture a 'portrait' was considered as 'an intended likeness or representation'.³⁸ This increasing interest in individualisation, originated on the Continent, first establishes itself in Britain through funerary practices, memorial portraiture and manuscript illustration in court circles at the end of the fourteenth century during Richard II's reign.³⁹ In *Chaucer and the Subject of History* Lee Patterson confirms an emerging epistemological and ontological shift towards and preoccupation with subjectivity and individuality:

Since at least the time of Petrarch in the mid-fourteenth century [...] the antagonism between the desires of the individual and the demands of society provided one of the great topics for literary exploration throughout the Middle Ages; it is hard, for instance, to think of a medieval romance, and especially one derived from the great mass of Arthurian legend, that does not deal with just this topic.⁴⁰

As Patterson points out, late-medieval literature and culture display a concentration on the individual's relation to societal constraints which historicises the self by inscribing it firmly in its socio-historical situation. By Chaucer's time, representation becomes, therefore, increasingly informed by an ideology of individualism, that is by a rising concern with the specific localities and temporalities defining a subject within his or her social and cultural context.

In line with this emerging individualisation, Hoccleve qualifies Chaucer's portrait as realistic and authentic on the basis of his alleged acquaintance and

³⁷ Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 236-237. James H. McGregor and Seymour appear to concur with Krochalis in linking the increasing use of death masks and effigies to the emergence of realistic portraiture and, by extension, to the demands of a rising individualism, as they both operate as strategies of memory and aim at immortalising the individual mimetically; see Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 238; James H. McGregor, 'The Iconography of Chaucer in Hoccleve's *De Regimine Principum* and in the *Troilus* Frontispiece', *The Chaucer Review* 11:4 (spring 1977), 338-350; and Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 618.

³⁸ Michael Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', *The Burlington Magazine* 124 (October 1982), 618-623 (note 1, p. 618); see also Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 238-239; and Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', note 2, p. 618. Both Seymour and Krochalis speculate that the practice of sitting for portraits began in England with Richard II.

³⁹ Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 238.

⁴⁰ Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 8.

familiarity with the 'fadir'. In his dialogue with the almsman, it is the personal and individualising relation between the literary master and his devoted pupil which establishes Hoccleve's identity and sanctions the aesthetic and moral validity of the

Regiment:

"What shal I calle thee, what is thy name?"
"Hoccleve, fadir myn, men clepen me."
"Hoccleve, sone?" "Ywis, fadir, that same."
"Sone, I have herd or this men speke of thee;
Thow were aqweynted with Chaucer, pardee—⁴¹

The acolyte and his work are defined and validated by a private affiliation with his literary and moral 'fadir'. Also, the traditional sanctioning operated by the *auctor* and his *auctoritas* is here achieved through the devices of mimetic representation, as the poet is historicised and personalised, constructed and disseminated as an identifiable and tangible paternal presence.

According to Roland Barthes, it is the concentration on 'the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions' that becomes central to literary criticism from the Middle Ages onwards.⁴² Foucault expands on Barthes's argument and relates this shift in the theory of authorship to the emergence of a preoccupation with individual agency or 'the privileged moment of *individualization* in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences'.⁴³ In *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, Patterson also echoes Barthes's assessment of authorship and refutes the argument that subjectivity is exclusively a Renaissance prerogative and preoccupation. He critiques Jacob Burkhardt's seminal account of medieval selfhood and his contention that individuality is a post-medieval construction, as well as some

⁴¹ Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1999), ll. 1863-1869. All further references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

⁴² Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148 (p. 143).

⁴³ Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 101-120 (p. 101).

New Historicist works which, at least partly, support this view. Patterson cites Hoccleve's autobiographical writings, amongst others, as an illustration of the medieval concern with the relation between self and history. He also identifies the 'radically subjectivized discourse' of *The Canterbury Tales* and the 'individualizing voice' of the Canterbury-bound pilgrims as early incarnations of the liberal ideology of individualism which will develop fully in the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

The emergence of these personalising narratives in the visual arts is pre-empted and consolidated by the newly-acquired prominence of a Jewish-originated tradition of biblical exegesis in the early fourteenth century. According to Minnis's account of this interpretative practice, the 'Hebrew doctors' are preoccupied with the individual agency of the human authors of the Old Testament, as the moral and literary quality of their activities is scrutinised and becomes the object of critical assessment.⁴⁵ The author, as both an individualised and iconic validating agent, is conspicuous and apparent in the space of the medieval codex. Chaucer's presence, in particular, is articulated and textualised through the manuscript's *ordinatio* not only in the form of a portrait but also as a marginal annotation. In his edition of the *Regiment of Princes*, Blyth transcribes a Latin gloss (p. 215) penned at the beginning of the stanza in which Hoccleve's and Chaucer's names are offered simultaneously for the

⁴⁴ Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, pp. 7-9; 27; and Jacob Burkhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. O. Middlemore (London: Phaidon Books, 1965 [1869]), esp. p. 81. For New Historicist accounts of subjectivity in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, see, in order of publication, Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London: Methuen, 1984); Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the Jewish tradition of exegesis, see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 85-94 (esp. p. 85).

first time (ll. 1863-1869). It reads: 'Nota nomen auctoris [h]uius libri'.⁴⁶ The gloss draws the reader's attention to the importance of this authorial attribution: the name of the author stabilises the text by fixing its provenance.

In his study on medieval authorship, Minnis links the name of the author, *nomen auctoris*, to the authenticity of a work.⁴⁷ The named *auctor*, as 'someone to be believed and imitated', guarantees the text's credibility and value, since it is its *causa efficiens*, the agent who brought the work into being, that is its *fons et origo* or originator. In an Aristotelian logic of causality, the work is sanctioned as its origins are established, its intentions identified and its unfolding teleologically structured.⁴⁸ From the thirteenth century, consistent with principles of Jewish exegesis, this process of validation includes a concern with ascertaining the moral and intellectual standing of the author as individual.

In other words, while the rabbinic tradition of biblical commentary acquires prominence, an interest in the activities of the human *auctor* begins to emerge. As Minnis explains, early fourteenth-century exegetes, such as Nicholas Trivet and Nicholas of Lyre, recuperate Jewish interpretative practices in an attempt to police the excesses of allegorical readings of the Scriptures. Since the 'Hebrew doctors' focus on the literal meaning of the Old Testament rather than on their allegorical signification, they provide an apt and effective exegetical model for commentators preoccupied with the human quality of authorial agency.⁴⁹ As a result of this hermeneutic transition, the exegete's attention shifts from the divine and ultimate *auctor* of the allegories of the sacred text to its human counterpart who penned, produced and disseminated his

⁴⁶ 'Note the name of the author of this book.' Henceforth, unless otherwise stated, the translations provided in the footnotes are mine.

⁴⁷ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 9; 20.

⁴⁸ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 5; 28.

⁴⁹ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 85-86.

narratives in a historical and material context.⁵⁰ In the prologues to the biblical and patristic works upon which they comment, exegetes express an increasing interest in the author's *officium*, or the author's role in producing literal signification. This entails an individualised description and evaluation of the moral and literary activities of the human *auctor*.⁵¹ From the thirteenth century, the *nomen auctoris* as a strategy of authorisation signifies a dialectical fabrication of the author as an individual and, simultaneously, as a repository of an established textual tradition. In sum, these exegetical principles combined with the individualisation of representation in visual arts inform Hoccleve's pictorial and verbal construction of Chaucer's *paternitas*.

Like Dante's and Gower's author portraits, Hoccleve's Chaucer likeness is situated on the threshold of this tradition of recognisable portraiture which, as Jeanne Krochalis and Derek Pearsall argue, becomes a powerful instrument in authorising the vernacular canon in a newly personalised way.⁵² In particular, Hoccleve's Chaucer portrait is inscribed in a wider iconography of the poet which emerges in early fifteenth-century English manuscripts of vernacular literature.⁵³ Together with the

⁵⁰ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 73; 85.

⁵¹ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 5.

⁵² For a discussion of Dante's portraiture as an early example of recognisable representation of an author, see Pearsall, 'The Chaucer Portraits', p. 287. Also, Jeanne Krochalis discusses the late-medieval portraiture of Chaucer and Gower in relation to an emerging individualism; see Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 237.

⁵³ For accounts of the Chaucer portraits, by date of publication, see Henry John Todd, *Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer: Collected from Authentick Documents* (London: G. Woodfall, 1810); M. H. Spielmann, *The Portraits of Geoffrey Chaucer: An Essay Written on the Occasion of the Quincentenary of the Poet's Death* (privately printed, London: Adlard & Son, 1900); Aage Brusendorff, 'The Chaucer Portraits', in *The Chaucer Tradition* (Copenhagen: Branner; London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 13-27; Margaret Rickert, 'Illumination', in *The Text of the Canterbury Tales: Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), I.561-582; Roger Sherman Loomis, 'Portraits of Chaucer', *A Mirror of Chaucer's World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 4-6; Jerome Mitchell, 'Hoccleve and Chaucer', in *Thomas Hoccleve: A Study in Early Fifteenth-Century English Poetic* (Urbana, Chicago and London: University of Illinois Press, 1968), pp. 110-125 (esp. pp. 110-115); McGregor, 'The Iconography of Chaucer in Hoccleve's *De Regimine Principum* and in the *Troilus* Frontispiece', 338-350; Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 618-623; Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 238-239; Richard Beadle, 'The Virtuoso's *Troilus*', in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 213-233; Anthony J. Hasler, 'Hoccleve's Unregimented Body', *Paragraph* 13 (1990), 164-183; David R. Carlson, 'Thomas Hoccleve and the

poet's likeness adorning a number of manuscripts of *The Regiment of Princes*, the individualised portraiture of Chaucer is found in copies of *The Canterbury Tales* and on the frontispiece to *Troilus and Criseyde* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61 (c. 1398).⁵⁴ Four manuscripts of the *Tales* contain portraits of Chaucer, namely MS Ellesmere (Huntington Library MS EL 26 C9), British Library MS Lansdowne 851, Oxford MS Bodley 686 and Tokyo Takamiya MS 24 (MS Devonshire, *olim*).⁵⁵ The earliest likeness is arguably the Ellesmere equestrian portrait produced in London or Westminster (see Illustration 1, p. 27).⁵⁶ The other three occurrences are miniatures embedded in the historiated initial 'W' on the first leaf of the manuscripts of *The*

Chaucer Portrait', *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 54 (1991), 283-300; Derek Pearsall, 'The Chaucer Portraits', in *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 285-305; A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Chaucer Portraits in the Harley and Rosenbach Manuscripts', *English Studies: 1100-1700*, Vol. 4, ed. Peter Beale and Jeremy Griffiths (London and Toronto: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 268-271; Alan Gaylord, 'Portrait of a Poet', in *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Martin Stevens and Daniel Woodward (San Marino, CA, and Tokyo: Huntington Library and Yushodo, 1997), pp. 121-142; John M. Bowers, 'Thomas Hoccleve and the Politics of Tradition', *The Chaucer Review* 36:4 (2002), 352-369; Martha M. Driver, 'Mapping Chaucer: John Speed and the Later Portraits', *The Chaucer Review* 36:3 (2002), 228-249.

⁵⁴ For a description and list of the manuscripts of Hoccleve's *Regiment*, see Michael C. Seymour, 'Manuscripts of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 4:7 (1974), 253-97 (Seymour describes all extant manuscripts apart from the ones described by Green and Edwards); A. S. G. Edwards, 'Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*: A Further Manuscript', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 5:1 (1978), 32; Richard Firth Green, 'Notes on Some Manuscripts of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', *The British Library Journal* 4 (1978), 37-41.

⁵⁵ For an account and description of Chaucer's portraits in the manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, see Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 618.

⁵⁶ Seymour dates MS Ellesmere at c. 1410; see Michael C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), II.234. Charles Owen appears to concur and broadly identifies the manuscript as one of the early copies of *The Canterbury Tales* produced before 1420. More specifically, in two tables he places MS Ellesmere among those copied in 1410 or a little later; see Charles A. Owen, Jr., 'The Six Earliest Manuscripts', in *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), pp. 7-14 (the tables can be found respectively on p. 19 and p. 29). However, a number of scholars argue for a pre-1400 dating of the Ellesmere manuscript; this would open up the possibility of authorial revision of the codex and its illustrations; see Rickert, 'Illumination', I.566; A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), pp. 163-210 (p. 170); Ralph Hanna III, *The Ellesmere Manuscript of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: A Working Facsimile* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), p. 9; Kathleen L. Scott, 'An Hours and Psalter by Two Ellesmere Illuminators', in *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, pp. 87-119 (pp. 104-106); Norman Blake, 'Geoffrey Chaucer and the Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*', *Journal of the Early Book Society* 1 (1997), 96-122; Estelle Stubbs, ed., *The Hengwrt Chaucer Digital Facsimile* (Leicester: Scholarly Digital Editions, 2000).

Canterbury Tales (see Illustrations 2, 3 and 4, pp. 28-30).⁵⁷ Michael C. Seymour deems these three illustrations derivative in consideration of their later dating.⁵⁸ MS Bodley (c. 1425) and MS Takamiya (c. 1450-1460) can be dated after 1415 when, as he observes, the practice of inserting author miniatures in initials was first recorded.⁵⁹ Other fifteenth-century likenesses of Chaucer are present, as a homogeneous iconography, in three manuscripts of Hoccleve's *The Regiment of Princes*, that is British Library MS Harley 4866 (c. 1411), British Library MS Royal 17.D.vi (before 1438) and the otherwise unilluminated Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation MS 1083/30 (MS Phillips 1099, *olim*), dated c. 1425-1450 (see Illustrations 5 and 6, pp. 32-33).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Krochalis identifies two other miniatures representing Chaucer in Bodley MS Rawlinson Poet. 223. According to her description, the first can be found at the beginning of text of *The Canterbury Tales* and the second at the opening of *The Tale of Melibee*. However, other sources appear to provide a different account. Manly and Rickert describe two miniatures in MS Rawlinson but neither is identified as a portrait of Chaucer (one represents the Friar at the opening of his tale, and the other 'probably Melibeus, though Chaucer, the teller of the tale, might be expected in his place'). They do not mention the miniature at the beginning of *The Canterbury Tales*; see Manly and Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, I.464. Similarly, Seymour discusses two figures painted within the illuminated initials, but does not refer directly to Chaucer as the subject of the portraits: 'f. 142 a friar preaching in pulpit in a black gown, perhaps oxidised from an earlier brown. f. 183 Melibeus or another at a desk in full-length blue gown trimmed with brown fur and large hat with upturned brim'; see Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, II.192. Also, Owen's account is consistent with Seymour's; see Owen, *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 54-55. Although I have not personally examined MS Rawlinson, Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield at the Bodleian Library has kindly provided a very accurate description and account of the miniatures adorning this codex. According to Dr Barker-Benfield, there is no miniature at the opening of *The Canterbury Tales*; he confirms the presence of a representation of the Friar at f. 142r and, at f. 183r, of 'a male figure seated alongside a lectern on which a book is opened; but he is not looking at the book, but facing outwards with his right hand raised'. He implies that it is difficult to reach an unproblematic conclusion as to the identity of the man represented in the miniature.

⁵⁸ The historiated initial in MS Takamiya is discussed in Hilton Kelliher, 'The Historiated Initial in the Devonshire Chaucer', *Notes and Queries* 222 (1977), 197. According to Kelliher, the prominence of the gilt purse in the portrait suggests that Chaucer is here depicted as the author of 'The Complaint to his Purse'.

⁵⁹ Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 621.

⁶⁰ For a description and dating of the Chaucer portraits in Hoccleve's manuscripts of the *Regiment*, see in particular Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 618; and Carlson, 'Thomas Hoccleve and the Chaucer Portrait', 287.



Illustration 1

Chaucer's equestrian portrait, MS Ellesmere (Huntington Library MS EL 26 C9), f. 153v, c. 1400, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*



Illustration 2

Historiated initial including small portrait (possibly of Chaucer), British Library MS Lansdowne 851, f. 2r, 1400-1425, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

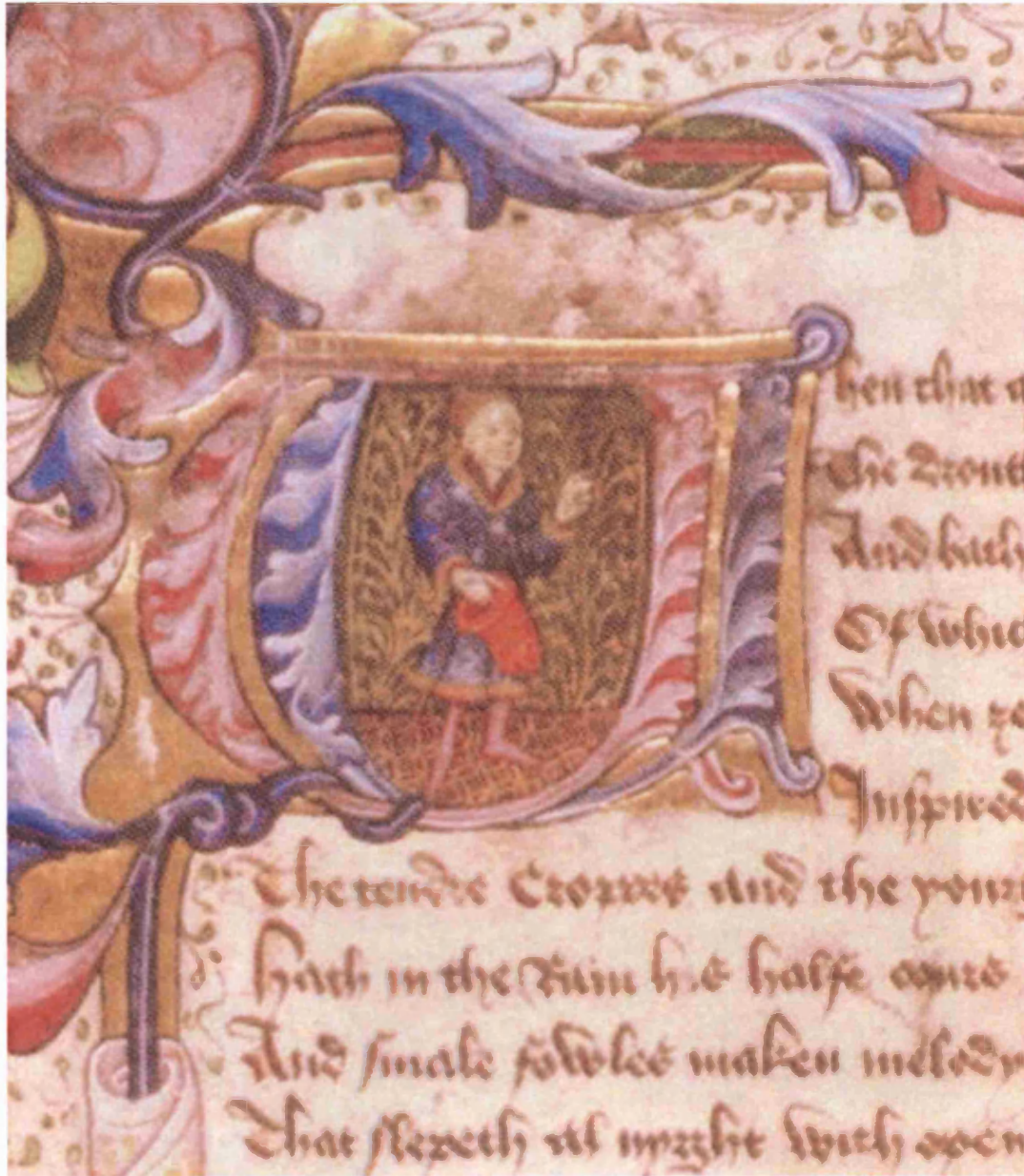


Illustration 3

Historiated initial including small portrait (possibly of Chaucer), Oxford MS Bodley 686, f. 1r, c. 1435, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*



Illustration 4

Historiated initial including small portrait (possibly of Chaucer), Tokyo Takamiya MS 24, f. 1r, 1450-1460, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

The Rosenbach portrait is probably an eighteenth-century addition and, according to Seymour, the MS Royal illumination has no independent value as a likeness, as it is derivative and probably a pirated reconstruction of MS Harley undertaken by a provincial and inferior artist.⁶¹ Two other manuscripts of the *Regiment* are also likely to have formerly contained a portrait of Chaucer, namely British Library MS Harley 4826 in which, as a *marginalium* suggests, the picture was excised by 'summe ffuryous ffoole', and British Library MS Arundel 38 which lacks the leaf containing the eulogising stanza addressed to Chaucer and, presumably, his portrait.⁶² Despite the likely excision of the poet's likeness from the manuscript, MS Arundel (c. 1411) is instrumental in mapping affiliations and disjunctures in the fifteenth-century tradition of manuscript portraiture of Chaucer. Since the presentation scene (an illustration portraying Hoccleve dedicating his work to Prince Henry) is preserved, it is possible to establish stylistic links between the practices of the Arundel illuminator and the features of the Chaucer portrait found in MS Harley.

⁶¹ Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 622. A. S. G. Edwards provides compelling evidence in support of the argument that the Rosenbach portrait constitutes a later addition to the manuscript. Thomas Hearne, a distinguished eighteenth-century antiquary, records that John Murray of London (1670-1748) was in possession of a manuscript of Hoccleve's *Regiment* with a portrait of Chaucer. Edwards refutes that this manuscript is MS Harley 4866, since the description of the portrait and its pagination do not correspond to Harley but they are closer to the Rosenbach Foundation manuscript. He concludes that, considering the evident friendship between Murray and Harley, the portrait was probably inserted in the early eighteenth century and copied directly from MS Harley; see Edwards, 'The Chaucer Portraits in the Harley and Rosenbach Manuscripts', pp. 268-271.

⁶² Pearsall, 'The Chaucer Portraits', p. 289.

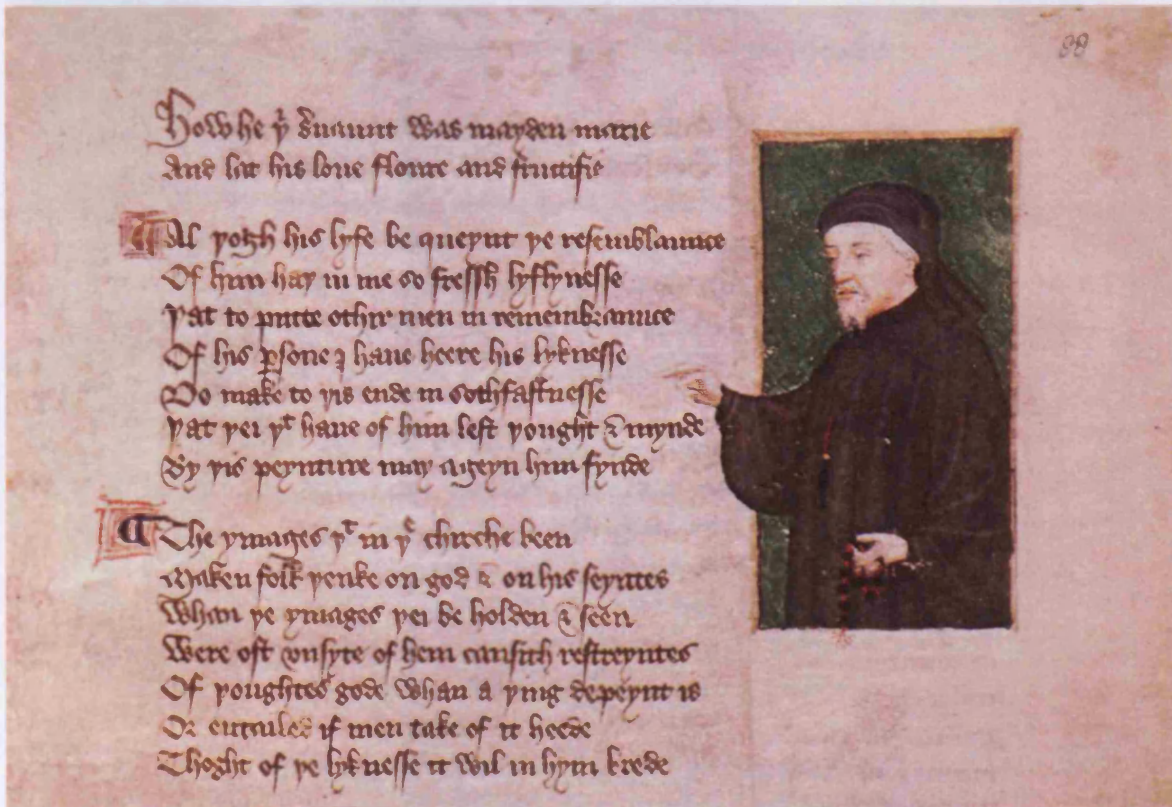


Illustration 5

Chaucer's portrait, British Library MS Harley 4866, f. 88r, c. 1411, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

Illustration 5

Chaucer's portrait, British Library MS Harley 4866, f. 88r, c. 1411, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

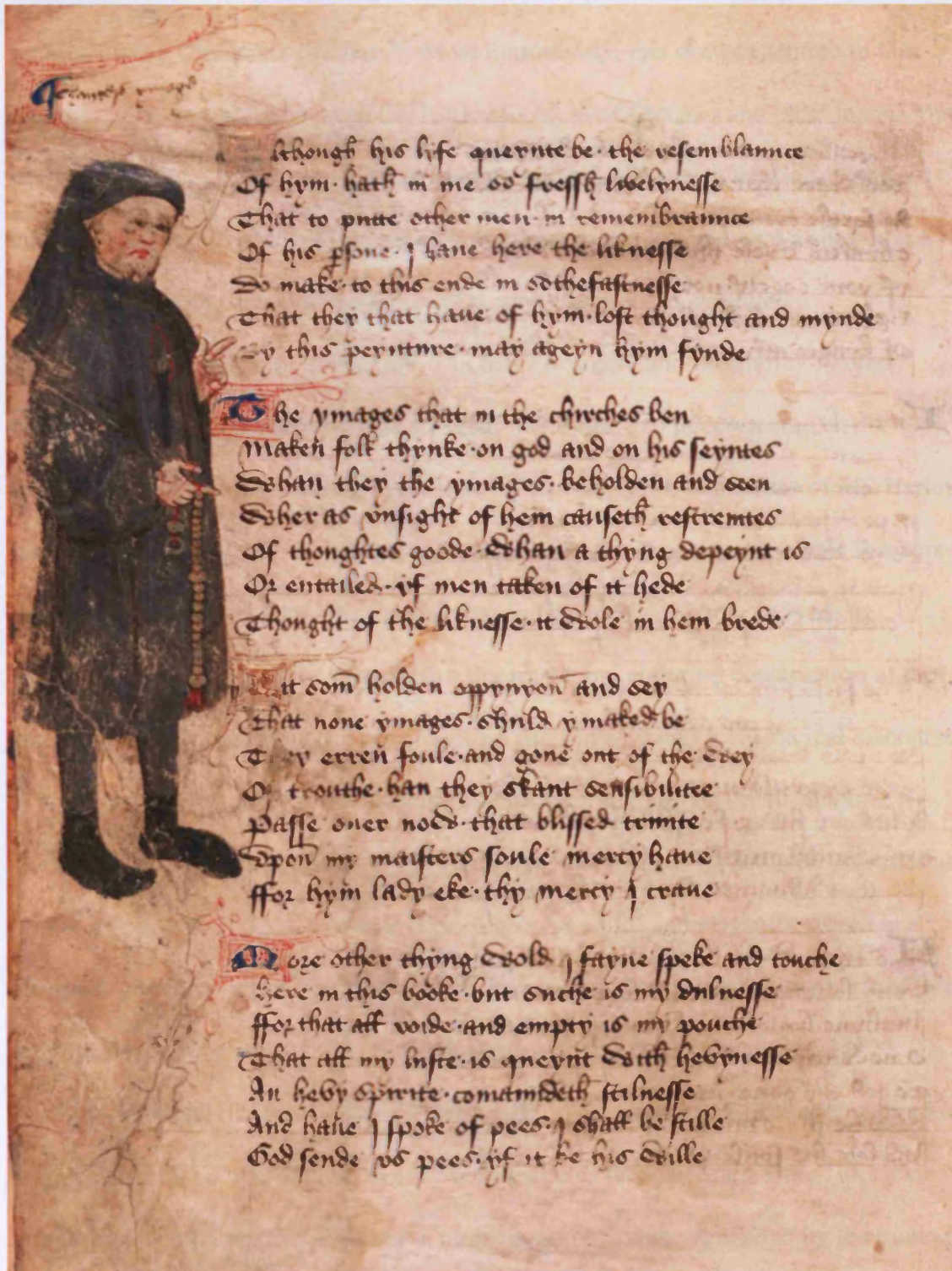


Illustration 6

Chaucer's portrait, British Library MS Royal 17.D.vi, f.93v, before 1438, Geoffrey

Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

These affinities have led Seymour to conclude that the two manuscripts were painted in the same atelier in Westminster or London, perhaps from the same panel portrait painted during Chaucer's lifetime.⁶³ Most importantly, this draws attention to the iconographic continuity between the Harley likeness of Chaucer and other manuscript portraits of the poet. Because of the striking similarities between the Harley portrait and the one adorning MS Ellesmere, Seymour assumes that they were also produced in the same atelier, if not by the same artist, and, therefore, constituted a homogeneous tradition of portraiture.⁶⁴ In MS Ellesmere and the Harley-related codices the Father is represented as an aged, white-bearded poet wearing an unassuming dark cloak, while gravely holding a penner and, in the case of MS Harley, a rosary, absent from the Ellesmere equestrian likeness. These iconographic markers of piety and commitment to the *litterae* signify Chaucer's *gravitas* and moral exemplarity; not only do they establish a dominant and enduring construction of the poet's *paternitas*, but they also position the Father in a distinctively clerical discourse.

This paradigm of paternity is not, however, ubiquitous. In the author portraits accompanying MSS Bodley, Takamiya, and Corpus Christi (see Illustrations 3, 4 and 7, pp. 29-30; 35), Chaucer is beardless, youthful and elegantly attired in a fur-lined gown, vividly painted in blue or red.⁶⁵ MS Takamiya is paradigmatic of this iconographic group in its use of rich colours especially in its rendition of the background which is also red and adorned with gold tracery. A resonant iconographic sign, Chaucer's courtly apparel overtly differentiates these portraits from Hoccleve's construction, and locates the Father in an iconographic space inhabited by the markers

⁶³ Seymour, 'Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve', 618.

⁶⁴ Seymour, 'Appendix B: Chaucer's Portraits in Manuscript', in *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, I.157-162 (158).

⁶⁵ For a fuller discussion of the frontispiece to *Troilus and Criseyde*, see Derek Pearsall, 'The *Troilus* Frontispiece and Chaucer's Audience', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 7 (1977), 68-74; and Anita Hembold, 'Chaucer Appropriated: The *Troilus* Frontispiece as Lancastrian Propaganda', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 30 (2008), 205-234.



Illustration 7

Frontispiece to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, Cambridge Corpus Christi

College MS 61, f. 1v

of aristocratic taste. According to Alcuin Blamires and Gail C. Holian's study of the illuminations of *Le roman de la rose*, Chaucer's positioning in MS Takamiya aligns his visual representation to that of the dreamer (see Illustration 8, p. 37) in the courtly literary tradition of the complaint and the dream vision, whose affiliations with the Father's poetry I will explore in some detail in Chapter II.⁶⁶ While seated on a turf bench, surrounded by vibrantly-drawn flowers reminiscent of the Garden of Pleasure, Chaucer appears pensive, or in a dream-like state, as he rests his chin on his hand.

In Hoccleve's manuscripts of the *Regiment*, Chaucer is portrayed as a historically-specific and recognisable figure, as well as a conventional icon founded upon symbolic indicators, such as the intellectual and clerical penner, and the pious rosary. Chaucer's portraits result from a process of negotiation and are predicated upon a dialectical relation between early-medieval notions of authorship, which viewed *auctores* as textual traditions and moral voices, and late-medieval individualising portraiture. Hoccleve's formulation of Chaucerian paternity constructs the Father as a solemn clerical figure of wisdom and piety; to borrow a term from Ethan Knapp's study of Hoccleve's work, the Harley-related tradition of portraiture and Hoccleve's encomiastic verse establish Chaucer as 'the bureaucratic muse' as opposed to the courtly poet and lover of MSS Bodley, Takamiya, and Corpus Christi.⁶⁷

Notwithstanding the aesthetic affinities between the portraits in MSS Harley and Ellesmere, MS Harley portrays Chaucer as the pilgrim narrator of *The Tale of*

⁶⁶ Alcuin Blamires and Gail C. Holian, *The Romance of the Rose Illuminated: Manuscripts at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), pp. 31-41 (p. 31).

⁶⁷ For an assessment of the relation between Hoccleve and Chaucer, see Ethan Knapp, 'Eulogies and Usurpations: Father Chaucer in the *Regement of Princes*', in *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 107-127.



Illustration 8

Representation of a dreamer, British Library MS Egerton 1069, f.1r, c. 1400, Jean de Meun and Guillaume de Lorris, *Le roman de la rose*

Melibee whose authorial agency and absolute control over his work's signification are dispersed in the polyvocality of the narrative fabric of *The Canterbury Tales*. In brief, Hoccleve invents an influential individualised mythopoeia of the Father of English vernacularity which is predicated upon Chaucer's clerical *gravitas* and moral excellence. Also, in dialogue with other coterminous constructions of Chaucer's authority, the disciple's semiotics of Chaucerian authorship contributes to a complex and multidiscursive configuration of *paternitas* which this thesis endeavours to investigate.

2. The Death of the Father: Portraits as Strategies of Memory.

The Regiment of Princes articulates the late-medieval negotiation between the preoccupations of the emergent ideology of individualism, with its contiguous exegetical concentration on the author's human agency, and early-medieval conventional iconography of authorship. Chaucer's paternal *auctoritas* is, therefore, a dialectical formation, at once individualised and iconic, which Hoccleve's text strives to retrieve and memorialise as a means of author-ising and validating its literary merit. In an attempt to make Chaucer a material presence in the space of the narrative and the codex, the speaker in the *Regiment* refers to the poet four times. The first reference (ll. 1863-1869), which I quoted above, is followed by three other passages eulogising the 'fadir' (ll. 1958-1974; ll. 2073-2085; ll. 4978-4998). Apart from the final extract, they all occur in the prefatory section of the text, since they precede the counsel to princes arguably as a way of pursuing a sanctioning for the principal narrative section of the *Regiment*. Hoccleve's work, therefore, evokes, mourns and seeks to revive Chaucer's paternal (literary and moral) *auctoritas*, in order to inscribe itself in an established and prestigious textual tradition.

The laudatory tone of these passages is predicated upon two dominant and co-terminous discourses. Firstly, Chaucer is constructed as the moral Father of English vernacularity ('the honour of the Englissh tonge', l. 1959). This definition associates a rhetoric of ethical excellence ('honour') with aesthetical-linguistic considerations. The speaker also emphasises the 'fadir''s literary and rhetorical mastery: he is at once 'flour of eloquence' (l. 1963), 'universel fadir in science' (l. 1964), and 'first fyndere of our fair langage' (l. 4978) whose 'swetnesse / Of rhetorik' (ll. 2084-2085) is highly celebrated. Secondly, the 'maistir' is presented as a medieval clerk or 'scoler'; in *The Canterbury Tales* the Clerk of Oxenford studies 'logyk' and his rhetorical skills accompany and enhance his moral standing:⁶⁸

And that was seyde in forme and reverence,
 And short and quyke and ful of hy sentence;
 Sownyng in moral vertu was his speche (I.305-307)

Chaucer's *paternitas* is inscribed in a tradition of scholastic erudition in which liberal arts, such as rhetoric and logic, play a significant role.⁶⁹ Similarly, in his tale the Clerk himself defines Francesco Petrarca, another illustrious medieval 'worthy clerk', with an encomiastic formula:⁷⁰

Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete,
 Highte this clerk, whos rethorike sweete
 Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie (IV.32-33)

According to the Clerk, Petrarca's lyricism and rhetoric 'e[n]lumyned' Italy; this suggests that he contributed to the canonisation of the Italian vernacular by endowing

⁶⁸ Larry D. Benson, ed., *General Prologue*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 23-36 (l.286). All further references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

⁶⁹ For further information on medieval universities and, in particular, on the liberal arts, or the *trivium* (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), see A. B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: their Development and Organization* (London: Methuen, 1975), pp. 10-11. For a more specific discussion of medieval universities in England, see A. B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500* (Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1988), pp. 28-29.

⁷⁰ Benson, *The Clerk's Tale*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 138-153 (IV.27). All further references are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

it with intellectual *gravitas* and aesthetic sophistication.⁷¹ Similarly, Chaucer's excellence becomes a '[m]irour of fructuous entendement' (l. 1963). His effective and edifying judgment is offered as a '[m]irour' or paragon of moral eminence, as his 'excellent prudence' (l. 1965) and 'hy vertu' (l. 1971) testify to the quality of Chaucer's *officium* and contribute to the establishment of an orthodox exegetical tradition and reception of the Father founded upon his moral and literary exemplarity.

Notwithstanding their celebratory tone, Hoccleve's references to Chaucer in *The Regiment of Princes* are structured as eulogies, or as a lament for an absent father. Consistently with Lydgate's historicisation of the dead *auctor*, which I examined in the Introduction to this thesis, a rhetoric and vocabulary of death and loss, as well as desire for a stable paternity, pervade these passages:

But, weleaway, so is myn herte wo
 That the honour of Englissh tonge is deed,
 Of which I wont was han conseil and reed.
 O maistir deere and fadir reverent [...]
 Allas that thow thyn excellent prudence
 In thy bed mortel mightest nat byqwethe!
 What eiled death? Allas, why wolde he sle thee?
 O deeth, thow didest nat harm singuler
 In slaughtre of him, but al this land it smertith. (ll. 1958-1961; 1965-1969)

Loss and void are depicted in the brutal terms of violent death, which is personified and subjected to a defiant rhetorical questioning, as the poet interrogates its inexplicable twofold act of obliteration. While Hoccleve is deprived of his master and Father, England is simultaneously dispossessed of its finest rhetorician and philosopher. Chaucer's absence creates an intellectual, moral, literary and personal aporia which leaves the disciple uncertain, without 'conseil and reed'. In Barthes's

⁷¹ The *MED* provides three groups of definitions of the verb 'enluminen'; two of them appear fitting in the context of this quotation: 1 (a) 'to shed light upon', and (b) 'to give intelligence or spiritual insight to (someone); to enlighten (ignorance)'; also, 3 (b) 'to make illustrious, glorious or famous'; see Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn, eds, *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege for Oxford University Press, 1952-1954), Vol. E-F, p. 160.

terms, Hoccleve constructs a myth of Chaucerian authorship which identifies the author, in this case Chaucer, as sole *fons et origo* of signification:

The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* 'confiding' in us.⁷²

It is the personal knowledge of and access to the author, which Hoccleve claims to have, that guarantees order and closes the text to the dispersal of meaning. The sanctioning presence of the Father offers Hoccleve and his work an authorising literary genealogy and an established authoritative space which the acolyte can inhabit.

Hoccleve's attempt at restoring the authorising voice of the 'fadir', silenced by death, can be aligned with Foucault's discussion of the principles of *écriture* according to which writing is preoccupied with death. One of the traditional functions of fiction and narrative, exemplified by Greek epic and *The Thousand and One Nights*, was 'the eluding of death', or postponing indefinitely the silence and absence of the author.⁷³ Similarly, the acolyte's narrative gradually counteracts the threat of loss and absence; unlike Lydgate's laconic resignation to Chaucer's death, Hoccleve articulates a desire to recuperate his predecessor's stable *paternitas*.⁷⁴ As Hoccleve addresses Chaucer directly in individualising terms as his 'mastir deer and fadir reverent', he initiates a dialogue with his literary Father and, by recuperating his voice silenced by death, seeks to establish an affiliation based on mutual 'confiding', that is access to signification and authorial authority.

⁷² Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p. 143.

⁷³ Foucault, 'What is an Author?', p. 102.

⁷⁴ Patterson claims that for Lydgate Chaucer 'is not source but model, the master who can teach his pupils a technical lesson rather than the father from whom derives an intangible and so all the more indispensable aptitude'; see Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, p. 16.

While making Chaucer present in the textual and paratextual space of his codex, Hoccleve denounces the inefficacy of death's attempts to obliterate the authority of the Father. In particular, the disciple's eulogising references to Chaucer and the author portraits which punctuate his manuscripts preserve and reproduce the master's intellectual and literary excellence, as well as moral exemplarity:

But nathelees yit hastow no power
His name slee; his hy vertu astertith
Unslayn fro thee, which ay us lyfly hertith
With bookes of his ornate endytyng
That is to al this land enlumynyng. (ll. 1971-1974)

The double adversative conjunction, '[b]ut nathelees' (l. 1970), introduces a turn within the process of obliteration generated by death. The moral and literary merit of his works, their *auctoritas*, and his sanctioning *nomen* defy the oblivion of death in virtue of their textuality, that is by being transmitted across cultures and time. Books become relics of the author; they are incarnations of his rhetorical and moral distinction, as well as acts of memory and preservation. The clarity and stability bestowed by the 'enlumynyng' author, as *fons et origo* of signification, is the function of paternity which Hoccleve recuperates in his work in order to validate vicariously his own filial authority.

The forms and modes of paternal authority that Hoccleve's text strives to retrieve are illustrated by the rhetoric of power deployed by the almsman, the other powerful moral 'fadir' in the *Regiment*. The stanza which precedes the second reference to Chaucer has a peremptory and irresistible anaphoric structure, as the first three lines begin with a firm command:

Write him nothing that sowneth into vice.
Kythe thy love in mateere of sadnesse.
Looke if thow fynde canst any tretice
Growndid on his estates holsumnesse. (ll. 1947-1950)

The three imperatives prompt a response which the pupil would be unable to provide without the guidance of his 'fadir'. In fact, the almsman's compelling advice is met with the subservient consent of the disciple: 'Fadir, I assente.' (l.1953). Rather than a lack of authorial agency or a mere act of self-effacement, Hoccleve's deference to paternal authority is a strategy which underpins his desire for the legitimisation of *The Regiment of Princes*. A rubric in British Library MS Additional 18632 (f. 58) labels the passage which contains the third reference to Chaucer, the literary Father, as 'Verba compilatoris ad Regem'. In his edition, Blyth follows MS Additional's title, which he believes to be more accurate, disregarding other manuscript witnesses, and translates and emends this Latin rubric into 'Words of the Compiler to the Prince'.⁷⁵ MS Additional describes the poet offering his work to Henry as the 'Compiler' and not the *auctor* of the *Regiment*. This deferential act of abdication of authorship and admission of creative derivativeness from past textual authorities articulates Hoccleve's desire for a stable literary paternity and genealogy within which he can inscribe his work.⁷⁶

As Knapp argues, Hoccleve's subservient eulogies of Chaucer's *paternitas* are acts of usurpation.⁷⁷ The disciple's urgent recuperation of the moral exemplarity and rhetorical excellence of his literary predecessor is aimed at establishing a discursive space in which Chaucer's successors can retrieve, appropriate and co-opt his

⁷⁵ For more details on this Latin gloss and Blyth's editorial choice, see his edition of the *Regiment*, pp. 97; 218.

⁷⁶ In *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, A. J. Minnis cites St Bonaventure's identification of four phases in book production. *Scriptor*, *compilator*, *commentator*, and *auctor* are the four discrete agents in charge of each stage. Their roles are organised in a hierarchical structure based on the varying degrees of original and creative contribution to a textual tradition. A compiler's involvement is only a little more conspicuous than a scribe's. In Bonaventure's words, translated by Minnis, a compiler's work can be defined in these terms: 'Someone else writes the materials of others, adding, but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the compiler'; see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 94. Bonaventure's discussion of authorship can be found in the 'Prologue' to his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Libri Sententiarum* (1250-1252). I shall return to this important categorisation of roles in Chapter 4. Also, for a psychoanalytical and oedipal reading of Hoccleve's desire for a stable *paternitas*, see Hasler, 'Hoccleve's Unregimented Body', 164-183.

⁷⁷ Knapp, 'Eulogies and Usurpations: Father Chaucer in the *Regiment of Princes*', pp. 109; 114-115.

authority in order to validate their own work and place in the canon. These technologies of usurpation are also apparent in his references to the Aristotelian text *Secreta Secretorum* (ll. 2038-2039) and to Ægidius Romanus's *De Regimine Principum* (ll. 2052-2053) as early examples of counsel to princes which define the generic identity of the *Regiment* and establish a validating genealogy for his work.

However, the 'fadir' is still depicted as silent, an absence to be lamented and mourned. Indeed, it is ultimately only with the insertion of Chaucer's portrait in the manuscripts of the *Regiment* that the author becomes a presence and this sanctioning patrilineal lineage is stabilised. Previous passages eulogising the poet are disembodied, as they address an aporia of signification occasioned by an absent paternity which the disciple desires to recuperate and restore. The final reference to Chaucer is, instead, embodied and material, as it is accompanied by his likeness. Unlike the disembodied passages lamenting a void, this final address to the Father is not located in the marginal prefatory section of the *Regiment*; rather, it is inserted in the main section of the text and it coincides with a fundamental development in the narrative. Validated by his affiliation to his literary Father, Hoccleve the narrator finally fulfils his role of counsellor to princes and discusses, with a newly-found confidence, when it is most appropriate for a Prince to hold council in relation to religious festivities ('De consilio habendo in omnibus factis', ll. 4859-5019).⁷⁸

The presence of the 'fadir' guarantees and validates Hoccleve's textual *auctoritas*, as it effects a dialogue, or an immediate line of communication, between the acolyte and his master. The Harley-related iconography illustrates how this

⁷⁸ James Simpson traces Hoccleve's increasing gain of authorial confidence and authority from the prefatory section to the main narrative of the *Regiment*, especially in relation to his ability to articulate his *captatio benevolentiae* and to address it publicly to Prince Henry; see 'Nobody's Man: Thomas Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*', in *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Julia Boffey and Pamela King (London: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1995), pp. 149-180 (pp. 164-167).

dialogue unfolds, or how it is imagined and constructed. In both MS Harley 4866 and MS Royal 17.D.vi Chaucer points his finger at the text. His hand fractures the frame of the panel-type portrait and guides the reader's attention towards Hoccleve's poem. The 'maister's gesture fulfils the pupil's desire to establish a dialogue with the author, in order to recuperate his legitimising and stabilising 'counsel and reed'. Chaucer's portrait is not, however, the sole codicological strategy deployed to retrieve and reaffirm the poet's paternal authority.

Above the illustration in MS Royal a rubric with a decorated initial reads 'Chaucers ymage' (f. 93 v). Body and name, or the visual and written signifiers of authorship, are conflated to represent, according to Foucault, more than a mere designation. They become a principle of classification and intertextual connection signifying a canon and a tradition:

One cannot turn a proper name into a pure and simple reference. It has other than indicative functions: more than an indication, a gesture, a finger pointed at someone, it is the equivalent of a description. [...] it [an author's name] performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others.⁷⁹

The author points his finger to a literary corpus upon which he confers validation and continuity, or 'a relationship of homogeneity, filiation, authentication'. However, it primarily endows the text of the subservient and infantile disciple with 'a certain status', a literary prestige stemming from the work's lineage. By 'marking off the edges of the text', the portrait locates the *Regiment* firmly in the canon and, at the same time, wards off the transience and aporia imposed by the death of the author and Father.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Foucault, 'What is an Author?', pp. 105; 107.

⁸⁰ Foucault, 'What is an Author?', p. 107.

The role of the portrait is effectively illustrated in MS Harley in which Chaucer's right hand signals a stanza articulating the connection between image and memory:

Although his lyf be qweynt, the resemblance
Of him hath in me so fressh lyflynesse
That to putte othir men in remembrance
Of his persone, I have heere his liknesse
Do make, to this ende, in soothfastnesse,
That they han of him lost thought and mynde
By this peynture may ageyn him fynde. (ll. 4992-4998)

The rhyme scheme suggests that the portrait functions as both mnemonics and a pictorial commentary on the poem.⁸¹ The formal connection between 'resemblance' and 'remembrance' underwrites Chaucer's likeness as an act of recuperation of the author from the oblivion of death. By extension, his pictorial memory not only recovers and offers a tangible relic of his authority, but it also validates the work of his successor. Ultimately, Chaucer's portrait provides the fifteenth-century readers and Prince Henry, the future king, to whom the work is dedicated, with a permanent and secure *speculum* of unwavering paternity. In other words, the void left by the death of the author is addressed and resolved by recuperating and by fixing his body spatially and temporally. The textualisation of the *auctor* is complete, since the strategy of validation in operation in Hoccleve's work is predicated upon a double textuality whereby the written narrative is consolidated by the pictorial element. The author-portrait eulogises and fixes the memory of the lost Father, as the space of the codex becomes at once a site of mnemonics and usurpation of his stable (moral and literary) authority in order to establish a lineage for the *Regiment*.

⁸¹ For a discussion of images as strategies of memory and visual commentaries to words in a text, especially in the cultural transition between orality and literacy, see William K. Finley and Joseph Rosenbaum, 'Introduction', in *Chaucer Illustrated: Five Hundred Years of the Canterbury Tales in Pictures*, ed. William K. Finley and Joseph Rosenbaum (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press; London: British Library, 2003), pp. xx-xxxiii (p. xxiv).

3. From Domesticated Father to Collective Icon: Disseminating Chaucer as a Foundation Myth among Fifteenth-Century Readers.

A device of pictorial mnemonics, Hoccleve's Chaucer portraits act as a visual representation of the disciple's construction and appropriation of Chaucer as a grave, clerical and exemplary Father. Through the manuscripts of Hoccleve's *Regiment*, the semiotics of authorship that he fabricates is disseminated among its fifteenth-century audience. As the frame of Chaucer's panel-like portrait is fractured, his likeness opens up not only to a personal relation with the acolyte, but it is also iconised and made available for a community of readers sharing a common cultural vocabulary of literary practices and moral values. Pearsall describes the pictorial mnemonics in operation in the Hoccleve portrait as the 'iconicization' of Chaucer, as Hoccleve's 'fadir' is transformed into a powerful emblem of authority.⁸² The individualised portraiture of the domesticated and private Chaucer guarantees his credibility by offering an authentic representation of his paternity which can, therefore, be memorialised, fixed and transmitted through time as a valid universal exemplar. The portrait functions as a *locus* of memory, or as a repository of the myth of Chaucer which can be accessed indefinitely through his fixed likeness, so that his readers '[b]y this peynture may ageyn him fynde' (my emphasis, l. 4998). The poet is eternally retrievable and present in the space of the panel-like portrait.

This mythopoeia of Chaucer unfolds as a secular hagiography, that is as a multidiscursive authorising process which is moral, intellectual and spiritual at once. In MS Royal both of Chaucer's index fingers point at the text and the reader's attention is drawn to the stanza highlighted in MS Harley and the one which follows:

The ymages that in the chirches been
Maken folk thynke on God and on his seintes

⁸² Pearsall, 'The Chaucer Portraits', p. 287.

Whan the ymages they beholde and seen,
Where ofte unsighted of hem causith restreyntes
Of thoghtes goode. Whan a thing depeynt is
Or entaillid, if men take of it heede,
Thought of the liknesse it wole in hem breede. (ll. 4999-5005)

His right and left hands point respectively at the first line of the second stanza ('[t]he ymages that in the chirches been') and at l. 4997 in the previous septet ('[t]hat they that han of him lost thoght and mynde'). Chaucer's double hand-gesture has a hermeneutic valence, as it directs the reader's attention towards pictorial memory, by suggesting the idea of the perpetuation of Chaucer's legacy through his image. Here, however, Chaucer's likeness acquires a specific religious connotation, as his portrait is compared with sacred images and he is equated to a saint.

The poet's iconicisation is, therefore, analogous to a process of canonisation, which, as the polysemic quality of the term implies, is simultaneously religious and literary.⁸³ As religious images prompt devotion and 'thoghtes goode', Chaucer's iconised portrait makes the poet's literary and moral excellence permanent. The effectiveness of his exemplarity is based on the 'thought of the liknesse', that is on the embodied memory and iconographic sanctioning of Chaucer's moral and literary authority. While the *paternitas* of the poet is immortalised in a visual narrative of excellence, Hoccleve's work, to which the iconised Father perpetually points, is endowed vicariously with the same authority and permanence in the English canon. David Matthews effectively describes the relation between portrait and poem in the *Regiment* as 'an unbroken memorializing circle' which links 'image, word and person'.⁸⁴

⁸³ For a similar discussion of canonisation as a dual process of authorisation, see Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', 240; and McGregor, 'The Iconography of Chaucer in Hoccleve's *De Regimine Principum* and in the *Troilus* Frontispiece', 344.

⁸⁴ David O. Matthews, 'Speaking to Chaucer: The Poet and the Nineteenth-Century Academy', in *Medievalism and the Academy I*, ed. Leslie J. Workman, Kathleen Verduin, and David D. Metzger (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 5-25 (p. 5).

This process is predicated upon a dialectical relation between mimesis and mythopoeia, since the realistic and individualised portraiture of Chaucer validates and incarnates his moral exemplarity which, in turn, is iconised and dehistoricised. While the mimetic, personal and familiar construction of the poet recuperates his presence from the oblivion of death and fixes it, it also perpetuates it indefinitely as Chaucer becomes the ‘universal fadir in science’ (l. 1964). Through the portrait, the memory of the author is fixed in time. By being always present, it is a-historical and trans-historical; however, by being present, it is also historical and biographical. Consequently, the Hoccleve likeness signals a dialectical strategy of memorisation and reception predicated upon an apparent tension between the construction of a ‘biographical icon’, a historically-situated and domesticated Chaucer, and the canonisation of a classical author, perpetually present as a literary and moral model.⁸⁵ In order to function as a credible exemplar, the *auctor* is simultaneously inside and outside history, individualised and universal, the familiar ‘fadir’ and the literary Father. Conceiving of the historicised man and the dehistoricised writer as mutually-exclusive terms, or as an unsolvable binary opposition, would be unpersuasive and untenable. The historical location of authorship makes it accessible, realistic and credible, while its dehistoricisation is a function of the incorruptibility of its exemplarity, and of its universal, permanent and imperishable quality.

Hoccleve’s construction of and desire for a stable textualised paternity articulates a wider, topical concern with a secure dynastic succession and political

⁸⁵ For a further discussion of Chaucer as biographical icon, see Pearsall, ‘The Chaucer Portraits’, p. 288. Also, Lerer contextualises Hoccleve’s construction of Chaucer by examining a central paradigm of reception of vernacular literature in operation in the Middle Ages. In *Genealogia Deorum Gentilium* (first published in Venice in 1472 from a copy made in 1371 of a single autograph manuscript now lost), Giovanni Boccaccio inscribes contemporary vernacular authors in a mythology of antiquity. Petrarca, in particular, is celebrated as ‘a modern who could stand among the ancients’, that is in a canon where *auctores* are both contemporary and ancient; see Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, pp. 27-28.

order which the poet shares with his contemporary readers and, in particular, with the community of agents involved in book production in early fifteenth-century England. Hoccleve was engaged in the dissemination of the works of major authors of Ricardian vernacular literature, such as John Gower. A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes argue that Hoccleve co-operated on the transcription of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* with a copyist, whom Linne Mooney has recently identified as Adam Pinkhurst, also involved in the production of some of the most prestigious manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, namely MS Hengwrt 154 (also known as National Library of Wales Peniarth MS 392D), MS Ellesmere, British Library MS 7334 and Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 198.⁸⁶ As Bowers points out, Hoccleve's editorial ventures suggest his participation in a community of scribes producing and disseminating a vernacular canon legitimised by the prestigious audience of 'learned clergy and powerful aristocrats' to whom it is addressed.⁸⁷ This social and professional group was likely to have shared Hoccleve's anxiety about paternal authority and the aporia resulting from its absence which, as Lerer argues, can be historically contextualised and explained. Lerer equates Lancastrian rule with an 'aetas puerorum', or an age of children. Henry IV's unsure right of succession, after the usurpation of Richard II's throne in 1399, and the coronation of the boy king Henry VI at the age of seven create uncertainty about dynastic paternity and the stability of political power which infantilises fifteenth-century citizens.⁸⁸ It can be

⁸⁶ Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', p. 203. See also Bowers, 'Thomas Hoccleve and the Politics of Tradition', 356. Bowers claims that Hoccleve cooperated with two scribes also engaged in the production of *The Canterbury Tales* manuscripts. For the recent identification of the scribe of MSS Ellesmere and Hengwrt as Adam Pinkhurst, see Linne R. Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe', *Speculum* 81: 1 (2006), 97-138.

⁸⁷ Bowers, 'Thomas Hoccleve and the Politics of Tradition', 356.

⁸⁸ Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, pp. 13-15.

said that this nostalgia for order and a secure masculine leadership stems from an unstable intellectual and political context.

Helen Cooney argues against C. S. Lewis's damning reading of the fifteenth century as a 'Drab Age' and, instead, highlights the 'acute self-consciousness and anxiety' of an infantilised culture.⁸⁹ In Lerer's words, Hoccleve's fantasy of a stable paternity and his subservience to authority betray the fifteenth-century desire for a 'politically homogenous and artistically glistening past.'⁹⁰ Given the uncertainty of dynastic politics and political *paternitas* in the fifteenth century, Hoccleve constructs a narrative of stable literary genealogy which offers a *speculum principis* to the future king. Chaucer's portrait is at the centre of this process, as the embodiment and incarnation of authority. Some of the manuscripts of the *Regiment* feature an illumination depicting Hoccleve humbly kneeling before Prince Henry and offering his work to him.⁹¹ What the Prince is presented with is a specular narrative, a mirror which is aimed at superimposing the stability of the textual tradition traced in the *Regiment* onto the ruling of his kingdom.

Chaucer's portrait is, therefore, predicated upon a fundamental act of recuperation of (literary and political) authority, as it establishes a dialogue with Hoccleve, the literary "son", but also with a present and future community of readers

⁸⁹ Helen Cooney, 'Introduction', in *Nation, Court and Culture: New Essays on Fifteenth-Century English Poetry* (Dublin and Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2001), p. 11. See also C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954). In the introduction, 'New Learning and New Ignorance', he associates the shortcomings of early sixteenth-century literature with the persistence of medieval qualities, in particular 'the disease of late medieval poetry, its metrical disorder' (p. 1). He also dedicates Book II to a discussion of the 'Drab Age', that is the literary period that precedes the 'golden times' of Sidney and Spenser (pp. 157-317). David Lawton interrogates the ideological agenda behind C. S. Lewis's reading in David A. Lawton, 'Dullness in the Fifteenth Century', *English Literary History* 54 (1987), 761-799. In brief, Lawton's argument is that the alleged dullness of fifteenth-century literary texts is, in fact, derivativeness effected by an anxiety about patronage and commission.

⁹⁰ Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, p. 15.

⁹¹ For alternative readings of this illumination, see Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390-1490: A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, ed. J. J. Alexander, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996); and Kate Harris, 'The Patron of British Library MS. Arundel 38', *Notes and Queries* n.s. 31 (1984), 462-463.

to whom it offers a paternal icon of moral and aesthetic excellence. The Harley-related likenesses position Chaucer in a space of authority that is accessible and perpetually available to a remote readership or literary successors and, therefore, open to appropriation and future incarnations. In other words, Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* and the iconography of Chaucer which adorns its manuscripts establish the first articulation of a semiotics of the poet's paternal authorship. The following chapters will investigate the complex and multidiscursive reinterpretations of Hoccleve's construction of Chaucer's *paternitas* and its dialectical relation to other paradigms of authorship, as they are co-opted by readers, scribes and compilers who seek social and intellectual validation by inhabiting and co-opting the Father's authority.

CHAPTER II

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT PRODUCTION AND THE CANONISATION OF THE COURTLY FATHER

INTRODUCTION

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHAUCER'S COURTLY *PATERNITAS* IN THE *ORDINATIO* AND *COMPILATIO* OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPTS

Hoccleve's construction of Chaucer's authorial authority as clerical, sober and endowed with the *gravitas* of an ageing patriarch is the first articulation of the poet's *paternitas* and establishes a hermeneutic paradigm which can be subjected to gestures of supplementation and co-option. In fifteenth-century manuscript anthologies containing Chaucer's works, the Father functions as a principle of authorisation for the texts of his literary successors and the codices which accommodate them. The multivocality of a manuscript collection, with its plurality of authorial voices, is regulated and rationalised through a network of intertextual affiliations to the hegemonic literary practices articulated and canonised in the works of the Father. Rather than a grave cleric, Chaucer is appropriated as a lyrical and courtly poet whose texts disseminate desirable subject positions consistent with aristocratic ideology. His works, in fact, aestheticise and establish a literary vocabulary of courtly culture and its moral-intellectual preoccupations. Once codified and articulated in the English vernacular, the desirable social, cultural, and aesthetic practices promoted through the Father's texts can be inhabited and performed by his literary successors.

V. J. Scattergood investigates the hegemonic discourse of courtly and lyrical culture, by gathering evidence of reading and collecting practices among aristocratic coteries. His study of Ricardian libraries identifies, albeit speculatively, the literary forms which were dominant at court and in noble provincial households. According to his detailed account, the 'distinctive aristocratic and knightly taste in literature' is

characterised by Latin and French theological, legal and advisory texts, as well as, of course, the Bible.⁹² As for entertainment and leisure, romances and poetry were favoured in royal and patrician circles. In particular, Richard II's library held mostly romance and *chansons de geste*; similarly, the leisure readings of Thomas Woodstock (1355-1397), the duke of Gloucester and the king's uncle, included the *Roman de la rose*, a text on the art of poetry and a large volume of lyrics.⁹³ The editorial concentration on clusters of amorous, advisory and moral verse, which informs the compilation of these codices, responds to and complies with the aristocratic reading and collecting practices identified by Scattergood.

This evidence suggests that, by constructing Chaucer as the patriarch of courtly verse, fifteenth-century verse collections position his *paternitas* of the English canon in the dominant literary modes of patrician culture delineated by Scattergood. As this chapter will explain in some detail, since the *compilatio* of these codices centres largely on Chaucer's and Chaucer-related love poetry, moral narratives and romances, their shared concentration on courtly and lyrical discourses appears to be a socially- and culturally-specific literary construct. In the introduction to the facsimile edition of MS Bodley 638, Pamela Robinson also inscribes the textual selections of fifteenth-century manuscript collections in a social discourse:

As Chaucer's love allegorical visions and courtly love complaints began to inspire more and more works in the same genre by other poets [...], the desire grew among those who aspired to the social and literary refinements of the day to possess anthologies of these works. The notion of such collection did not first arise until the mid-fifteenth century [...], when John Shirley began publishing his verse anthologies [...] and Manuscripts Fairfax 16 and Tanner 346 were also compiled. Anthologies like these were immediately fashionable

⁹² V. J. Scattergood, 'Literary Culture at the Court of Richard II', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 29-43 (p. 36).

⁹³ Scattergood, 'Literary Culture at the Court of Richard II', pp. 32; 34.

and acquired by the “lettered chivalry” of the time to whom their contents appealed.⁹⁴

In Robinson’s lucid account, the Oxford group of manuscripts and Shirley’s anthologies share a readership whose literary taste is dictated by their social status or their social aspirations, and who, therefore, demand a “courtly” Chaucer, the Father and *fons et origo* of a vernacular tradition predicated upon the conventions of romance and *fin’amors*. As a courtly poet, Chaucer legitimises and polices the principles and *topoi* that govern aristocratic literary genres and socially-specific poetic tastes. The poet’s lyrical and courtly paternity is, therefore, an ideological category that, while encompassing dominant literary discourses in operation within prestigious social circles, functions as a strategy of inclusion for those who seek access to them.

This chapter will investigate the elements of the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of the late-medieval codices containing the works of Chaucer, as they offer traces of the early reception and transmission of the poet’s works, and promote desirable constructions of his literary *paternitas*. Except for Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27 and Oxford Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24, two Chaucerian codices produced respectively at the beginning and at the end of the fifteenth century, manuscripts compiled within one hundred years of Chaucer’s death cannot be classified as “collected editions” of his *oeuvre*.⁹⁵ Rather, out of eighty-three extant

⁹⁴ Pamela Robinson, ed., *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1982), p. xxxv.

⁹⁵ Although both manuscripts are largely dedicated to Chaucer, neither is exclusively a Chaucer collection; MS Gg.4.27 contains a copy of Lydgate’s *Temple of Glass*, while MS Selden presents a much wider selection of English and Scottish texts, such as verse by Lydgate, Hoccleve and Walton. Both manuscripts are available as facsimiles; see Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer and The Kingis Quair: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24, with an introduction by Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards and an appendix by B. C. Barker-Benfield* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997); and M. B. Parkes and Richard Beadle, eds, *Poetical Works, Geoffrey Chaucer: A Facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27*, 3 vols (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979-1980). Boffey and Edwards date MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 between c. 1489 and c. 1505; Parkes and Beadle date MS G.g.4.27 1400-1425, ‘in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, most probably in the second half of that quarter’, see Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works, Geoffrey Chaucer: A Facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27*, III.6-7 (especially p. 7).

witnesses of *The Canterbury Tales*, twenty-eight are fragments or selections of individual tales; also, the fifty-three manuscripts which contain Chaucer's short poems and the eighty-eight witnesses of Chaucer's longer, non-*Canterbury Tales*, texts are collections and anthologies also including works by other authors.⁹⁶ As A. S. G. Edwards remarks, the early production and circulation of the poet's texts are characterised by 'individualizing tendencies'.⁹⁷ Piecemeal and haphazard, fifteenth-century book production relies greatly on the availability of booklets assembling clusters of texts and functioning as exemplars for copyists often working

⁹⁶ Ralph Hanna III identifies eighty-two extant manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* (or eighty-three if the last leaf of Pierpont Morgan Library M249, formerly Ashburnham 124, containing a fragment of *The Pardoner's Tale*, is considered as a separate authority). Seymour excludes fragments from his description of extant witnesses of the tales and counts fifty-six, as opposed to the fifty-five recorded by Hanna. Despite his intention not to include selections, Seymour curiously includes Takamiya MS 22 which features four tales only. For more detailed information about extant authorities, see Ralph Hanna III, 'Textual Notes', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 1118-1119; Charles A. Owen, Jr, 'The Six Earliest Manuscripts', in *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), pp. 7-14; Ralph Hanna, 'Problems of "Best Text" Editing and the Hengwrt Manuscript of "The Canterbury Tales"', in *Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), pp. 87-94; Norman F. Blake, 'The Manuscripts and Textual Tradition of *The Canterbury Tales* Again', *Poetica* 28 (1988), 6-15; Charlotte C. Morse, 'The Manuscripts of the "Canterbury Tales"', *Notes and Queries* 238 (1993), 19-22. In vol. I of *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, Seymour accounts for eighty-eight manuscript witnesses of Chaucer's texts that he labels as 'works before the *Canterbury Tales*'. These include longer narratives, such as *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Romaunt of the Rose*, *The House of Fame*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *Anelida and Arcite*, *Boece*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Legend of Good Women* and *The Treatise of the Astrolabe*. In *The Riverside Chaucer*, the textual notes to 'The Short Poems' engage with twenty-one poems featured in fifty-three manuscripts. It is important to specify that short poems and longer works, such as the dream visions, often occur in the same manuscripts. As for terminology, when referring collectively to these two textual categories, I will henceforth adopt A. J. Minnis's classification, that is 'shorter poems': see R. T. Lenaghan, 'The Short Poems', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 1185; Michael C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), I.ix-x; II.3; A. J. Minnis, V. J. Scattergood and J. J. Smith, eds, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). I am also aware of the fluidity and instability of the nomenclature used by critics in their discussion of Chaucer's texts which do not include *The Canterbury Tales*, his dream visions or his longer works such as *Troilus and Criseyde*. The attempt to signal their relative brevity has led the editors of *The Riverside Chaucer*, for instance, to label them 'The Short Poems'; alternatively, George B. Pace and Alfred David presumably intended to indicate their brevity as well as their ancillary role in the Chaucerian canon when they entitled their Variorum edition *The Minor Poems*. Finally, scholars like Julia Boffey have identified a cluster of these poems as lyrics within the wider discourse of prestigious social and cultural practices associated with francophone verse. In my thesis I refer to these texts predominantly as lyrics, as I align the formal sophistication of these texts with the privileged socio-literary discourse of French courtly culture; see Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge and Dover, NH: D. S. Brewer, 1985); and George B. Pace and Alfred David, eds, *Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: The Minor Poems*, Vol. V, part I (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982).

⁹⁷ A. S. G. Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print: the Social Text and the Critical Text', *Mosaic* 28: 4 (1995), 1-12 (1). <http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=EAIM> [accessed on 17 Feb 2008].

independently.⁹⁸ In Edwards's words, '[m]anuscripts could be constructed by a purchaser through choices from among smaller, commercially-produced manuscript "booklets" to create anthologies like the famous "Fairfax" manuscript'.⁹⁹ With specific reference to *The Canterbury Tales*, Seymour explains that 'all 56 extant manuscripts derive ultimately from one set of unbound or partially bound booklets'.¹⁰⁰ This chapter will interrogate and examine the criteria informing the *compilatio* of late medieval manuscripts, or the principles governing the selection and arrangement of booklets in anthologies, as they provide evidence of dominant literary tastes and practices. As illustrated by the paradigmatic collections penned by the prolific scribe John Shirley, the textual and generic associations which constitute the fabric of late medieval manuscript anthologies containing Chaucer's works focus primarily upon the lyricism and moral authority of courtly poetical genres. Similarly, the hermeneutic preoccupations signalled by these codices' *ordinatio*, or their paratextual apparatus of titles, headings and rubrics, concentrate on the affiliations between English verse and prestigious literary traditions.

In the absence of single-author manuscripts dedicated to Chaucer's *oeuvre*, the dominance of composite collections, with their complex textuality and multivocal social networks of professional agents, brings into focus Hoccleve's construction of his 'fadir' as the ultimate *fons et origo* of signification and validation of the emergent English vernacular canon. Grave and clerical, Hoccleve's configuration of Chaucer's paternity is, however, displaced and re-positioned as a paradigm of literary patriarchy which is, instead, predicated on the courtly lyricism of his works. In other

⁹⁸ A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the Canterbury Tales and the Confessio Amantis in the Early Fifteenth Century', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), pp. 163-210 (pp. 197-201).

⁹⁹ Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print: the Social Text and the Critical Text', 1.

¹⁰⁰ Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, II.27.

words, as a principle of coherence and unity within fifteenth-century manuscript anthologies of English vernacular literature, Chaucer's aesthetic articulation of the social and intellectual sophistication of courtly culture disseminates and facilitates access to the hegemonic and authorising discourse of aristocratic literary practices.

SECTION I

EVIDENCE AND PRINCIPLES OF CANON-FORMATION: THE LYRICAL AND COURTLY FATHER IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ANTHOLOGIES OF ENGLISH VERSE

1. John Shirley's Manuscripts: the Vocabulary of Aristocratic Literary Practices.

In the late-medieval manuscript collections containing his works, Chaucer is positioned at the centre of a heterogeneous literary *familia* and genealogy of poets, scribes and compilers whose work is inscribed in the validating tradition of courtly lyrical literature that the Father establishes in England. The complex textual fabric of these anthologies is founded upon multiple literary and social affiliations comprising a plurality of works composed by different authors and circles of professional agents collaborating in the production of the emergent English canon. Chaucer appears to preside over this multiplicity of textual and social voices, as he provides them with the vocabulary of the privileged discourse of aristocratic culture, that is with a unifying and validating cultural model of intellectual and social excellence which his successors and readers can inhabit.

Julia Boffey and John Thompson identify a working strategy to establish the principal features of the production of fifteenth-century literary anthologies. They suggest that an examination of the practices of individual professional agents involved in the "publication" of manuscripts offers a paradigm which illustrates dominant patterns in the circulation and compilation of, and demand for, codices of vernacular literature. The activities of an exemplary figure such as John Shirley (c. 1366-1456) are instrumental in speculating upon 'appetites for certain types of reading material

shared by many different late medieval book producers and their readers'.¹⁰¹ Shirley's work as a scribe and compiler is a particularly apt illustration of early reception and editorial practices pertaining to Chaucer's work, since the principles informing his textual selections, as well as his authorial attributions and annotative material, have had a remarkably durable and significant impact on the establishment and transmission of the Chaucerian canon.¹⁰²

Although the exact nature of Shirley's involvement in fifteenth-century book production is still open to debate, the manuscripts that he compiled or consulted are paradigmatic of the influence and quality of Chaucer's *paternitas*.¹⁰³ Fifteen fifteenth-century manuscripts containing Chaucer's work are related to John Shirley. Three of them are holograph copies: British Library MS Additional 16165 (mid 1420s), Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.20 (early 1430s) and Oxford Bodleian Library MS

¹⁰¹ Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279-315 (pp. 283-284; 291). This article will be hereafter cited as 'Anthologies'.

¹⁰² On the influence of Shirley's attributions on Chaucer's canon and the early circulation of his works, see, in particular, Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, "'Chaucer's Chronicle", John Shirley, and the Canon of Chaucer's Shorter Poems', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 20 (1998), 201-218 (203).

¹⁰³ Margaret Connolly provides a thorough review of the critical assessments of Shirley's role in fifteenth-century book production, from E. P. Hammond and A. Brusendorff in the 1920s to the most recent developments. She identifies two contrasting paradigms that present Shirley as either the supervisor of a profitable and organised workshop, or as an amateur editor and scribe. According to A. S. G. Edwards, Shirley was a proto-publisher engaged in commercial activities. Edwards argues that Shirley's enterprise had commercial motives (the circulation in booklets of his first holograph manuscript, British Library MS Additional 16165, testifies to this theory). On the contrary, Richard Firth Green maintains that the demand for books of court verse, like the ones produced by Shirley, was too limited to substantiate Edwards's claim. Instead, he posits that Shirley was a gentleman of letters or an amateur impresario who set up a circulating library for a courtly rather than a mercantile readership. Similarly, Doyle concludes that Shirley established a 'circulating library [...] perhaps more of a hobby than a business'; see A. I. Doyle, 'English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 163-181 (p. 176). Others, like Thompson and Boffey, are more cautious; however, they point out that the unsophisticated quality of his books 'sits oddly with the reputation Shirley has gained as manager of a 'workshop' of busy London scribes'; see Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 2-3; 191; A. S. G. Edwards, 'John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity: Selected Papers from the Eighth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, The Queen's University of Belfast 26 July-1 August 1995*, ed. Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 309-317 (p. 317); Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 131; Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', p. 286. For a further extensive survey of critical assessments of Shirley's role, see Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', p. 305, note 27.

Ashmole 59 (1440s). London Sion College Arc. L.40.2/E.44 can also be included in the list, as it is a fragment that was originally part of MS R.3.20.¹⁰⁴ As Illustration 9 (p. 63) shows, although *The Canterbury Tales* is one of the texts on which Shirley-related manuscripts focus consistently, as five of them contain copies of single or multiple Tales, the extant holograph codices concentrate on Chaucer's shorter poems.¹⁰⁵

This exemplifies a dominant editorial emphasis on the poet's lyrical and courtly production. As Lerer states in *Chaucer and his Readers*, 'Chaucer was viewed [...] as a great lyric poet by the fifteenth century, and [...] it is in the interest of that century's scribes and imitators to construct a Chaucer of political advice and lyric virtuosity'.¹⁰⁶ As Illustration 9 demonstrates, in Shirley-related books, except for *The Canterbury Tales*, 'Gentilesse', *Anelida and Arcite*, 'The Complaint unto Pity', and 'Lak of Stedfastnesse' appear more frequently than other Chaucer texts, especially 'Gentilesse' which features five times. However, 'The Complaint unto Pity' is copied only in Shirley-related manuscripts rather than in his holographs. 'Fortune' and 'The Complaint of Venus' are also favoured objects of Shirley's scribal activity, as they are inserted in two holograph manuscripts out of three, while 'Truth' is offered twice in MS R.3.20. Notwithstanding some notable absences, Chaucer's longer poems feature in Shirley's books too. Despite not being prominent in his collections, *The Legend of*

¹⁰⁴ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 98, note 36. MS Arc. L.40.2/E.44 contains a copy of Chaucer's 'ABC' embedded in Deguilleville's *Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*. The first thirteen quires of MS R.3.20 circulated separately as MS Arc. L.40.2/E.44 which is a one-text manuscript containing the prose translation of the *Pèlerinage*. The thirteenth quire is missing and part of it has survived in British Library MS Harley 78, a collection compiled by John Stow (ff. 80-83 are in Shirley's hand).

¹⁰⁵ The abbreviations of Chaucer's texts (arranged vertically) and the manuscripts' *sigla* (arranged horizontally) used in Illustration 9 are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 779; 1118-1119; 1185-1192. The manuscripts copied in bold are Shirley's holographs ('R²', 'A²', 'S', and 'A' indicate respectively MS R.3.20, MS Additional 16165, MS Arc. L.40.2/E.44, and MS Ashmole 59). I have italicised and boldened the works which have been attributed to Chaucer solely by Shirley.

¹⁰⁶ Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 7-8.

ILLUSTRATION 9
MANUSCRIPTS OF CHAUCER'S WORKS RELATED TO JOHN SHIRLEY

	Cp	Tc ³	R ²	R ³	A ²	A ⁵	H ¹	HI ¹	H ³	HI ²	H ⁵	S	A	Bo ²	Ra ⁴	Totals	
ABC									✓		✓	✓				3	1
<i>Adam</i>			✓													1	1
<i>Anel</i>			✓		✓			✓		✓						4	2
Bal Comp					✓											1	1
Bo					✓											1	1
Compl d'Am										✓						1	0
CT		MkT							PrT	✓				✓	PrT(partis), CIT	5	0
For			✓						✓				✓			3	2
Gen			✓						✓	✓	✓		✓			5	2
<i>Lady</i>						✓	✓									2	0
LGW		✓													✓	2	0
<i>Mars</i>			✓							✓						2	1
PF		✓								✓						2	0
Pity		✓				✓	✓				✓					4	0
Prov					✓						✓					2	1
Purse						✓			✓	✓						3	0
<i>Sted</i>			✓	✓						✓	✓					4	1
Tr	✓		✓													2	1
Truth			✓							✓						2	1
<i>Ven</i>			✓										✓			2	2
<i>Wom Nobl</i>						✓										1	0
Wom Unc											✓					1	0
Totals	1	4	9	1	4	4	2	1	5	9	6	1	3	1	2		

- Total number of Chaucer's works in manuscripts related to John Shirley
 - Total number of Chaucer's works in manuscript copied by John Shirley
 - Total number of Chaucer's works included in a single manuscript
- Ven* Bold and italicised font indicates works attributed to Chaucer solely by Shirley

Good Women, *The Parliament of Fowls* and *Troilus and Criseyde* all appear in two manuscripts and *Boece* in one.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the fact that only *Troilus* is included in a holograph codex corroborates the thesis that, when selecting and copying Chaucer's works, the scribe's principal editorial preoccupation is lyrical.¹⁰⁸ In fact, while none of Chaucer's shorter poems appears in all three extant books copied by Shirley, the data collected in Illustration 9 (p. 63) demonstrate that he operated according to criteria based upon generic associations which display specific literary and moral concerns.¹⁰⁹ Scattergood's classification of Chaucer's shorter poems proves to be illuminating in identifying Shirley's construction of the poet and his canon.¹¹⁰ Following Scattergood's nomenclature, one can conclude that the scribe's editorial attention is mainly focused on the complaints ('The Complaint of Venus', 'The Complaint unto Pity' and *Anelida and Arcite*), the philosophical and political lyrics ('Gentilesse', 'Lak of Stedfastnesse' and 'Truth'), and the begging poems ('Fortune'). The

¹⁰⁷ MS R.3.20 features, however, only short fragments of *Troilus and Criseyde*. They were probably used as space fillers at the end of quires or/and as gnomic tags with a proverbial valence; for a fuller discussion of the use of one-stanza extracts in manuscripts containing Chaucer's works, see Julia Boffey, 'Proverbial Chaucer and the Chaucer Canon', in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, ed. Seth Lerer (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1996), pp. 37-47.

¹⁰⁸ Notwithstanding Shirley's interest in the courtly and aristocratic literary tradition, in his three holograph manuscripts, he does not display a prominent interest in Chaucerian dream visions or longer texts in general. While MS R.3.20 is predominantly a collection of English and French lyrics and MS Ashmole 59 contains a number of devotional texts, MS Additional 16165 is the only one in which dream visions and works of some length are substantially represented: John Trevisa's translation of *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, Edward of York's *The Master of the Game*, Chaucer's *Boece*, the *Regula Sacerdotalis*, Lydgate's *The Complaint of the Black Knight* and *The Temple of Glass*. However, according to Connolly, the volume lacks a coherent editorial programme and its composition appears haphazard with 'at least three discrete sections'. Shirley's textual selections, undoubtedly dependent on the availability and circulation of booklets, focus, therefore, mainly on shorter pieces which are lyrical and devotional. The conspicuous presence of Lydgate's pageants, especially in MS R.3.20, and their coexistence with and relation to courtly texts may provide further information about Shirley's editorial agenda; see Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 28. Connolly offers a table of contents for each of Shirley's holograph manuscripts, Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 30-31; 70-74; 146-150.

¹⁰⁹ Five poems are copied twice in Shirley's holographs. As well as 'Fortune', 'The Complaint of Venus' and 'Truth', which I have already mentioned, these include *Anelida and Arcite* and 'Gentilesse'.

¹¹⁰ V. J. Scattergood, ed., 'The Short Poems', in Minnis, Scattergood and Smith, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems*, pp. 455-512. In my discussion of Chaucer's shorter poems, I shall henceforth employ Scattergood's formal classification and terminology.

conflation of Boethianism, moral and political advice, petitionary tone, and the debates at the courts of love informs Shirley's exemplary construction of Chaucer's literary *paternitas* as a multidiscursive site of social, literary and moral orthodoxy. The lyrics selected by Shirley reproduce dominant aristocratic intellectual and cultural practices, as they articulate the aesthetic accomplishment of amorous verse, the vagaries and complexities of courtly politics, as well as the moral *gravitas* and social conservatism of Boethian ethics. This cluster of poems composed by Chaucer offers, therefore, his readers and successors the sophisticated vocabulary of lyricism which grants access to the privileged social discourse of aristocratic culture.

The paradigmatic quality of Shirley's production is confirmed by Boffey's account of the circulation of Chaucer's lyrics from the second quarter of the fifteenth century. She lists the most copied poems and establishes that, in line with Shirley's practices, 'Truth' is present in the largest number of extant manuscripts (twenty-two, with two manuscripts offering the poem twice), followed by 'Lak of Stedfastnesse' (fifteen), 'An ABC' (fourteen), *Anelida and Arcite* (twelve), 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse' (eleven), 'Fortune' and 'Gentilesse' (ten), 'The Complaint unto Pity' (nine), and, finally, 'The Complaint of Venus' and 'The Complaint of Mars' (seven). Also, the fact that the earliest recorded survivals are Chaucer's advisory and Boethian pieces ('An ABC', 'Truth', 'Lak of Stedfastnesse', 'Fortune', 'Gentilesse' and 'The Former Age') testifies to his early reception as a moral and lyrical literary Father.¹¹¹ According to Lerer, Shirley's influence on the Chaucerian canon is visible in his dissemination of 'a lyric, public [...] social Chaucer', 'a poet of occasion and request'; Shirley's anthologies function, therefore, as 'acts of canonization',

¹¹¹ Julia Boffey, 'The Reputation and Circulation of Chaucer's Lyrics in the Fifteenth Century', *The Chaucer Review* 28:1 (1993), 23-40 (33).

sanctioning and perpetuating a specific fabrication of Chaucer's literary *paternitas* and a lyrical configuration of his canon.¹¹²

Influential and paradigmatic, Shirley's manuscripts can be inscribed in the tradition of the 'purely poetical collection' which, as a codicological phenomenon, Boffey and Thompson label as a 'noticeable innovation'. Between the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth, they record a 'growing taste' for anthologies which are centred on Chaucer's literary paternity of English vernacularity and disseminate shorter poems of major vernacular authors: 'volumes of Chaucerian and neo-Chaucerian poetry which concentrate particularly on works with secular, usually amorous themes'.¹¹³ Despite a gap of approximately twenty years between the poet's death and their first recorded "publication", Chaucer's lyrics begin to circulate widely after their inclusion in Shirley's anthologies and in the collection of booklets gathered in manuscripts such as Oxford Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 16.¹¹⁴ The impact of these codices on the formation of a Chaucerian and, more generally, of an English vernacular canon is, nevertheless, not only related to their status as the earliest anthologies to disseminate this lyrical tradition, but also to the textual and generic homogeneity they display. In other words, they establish a stable literary tradition predicated upon Chaucer's lyrical and moral *paternitas*.

Central to the textual history and canonisation of Chaucer's shorter poems is a cluster of manuscripts, comprising MS Fairfax 16, Oxford Bodleian Library MS

¹¹² Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, pp. 119-120.

¹¹³ Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', pp. 279-280.

¹¹⁴ For an account of the early publication history of Chaucer's lyrics, see Boffey, 'The Reputation and Circulation of Chaucer's Lyrics in the Fifteenth Century', 33. Also, on the issue of the 'time-lag' between Chaucer's death and the publication of his shorter poems in the 1420s, see A. S. G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, pp. 257-315 (p. 258). They argue that evidence shows that Chaucer's works were in circulation before the surviving manuscripts were compiled; however, the access to these poetic texts was limited to a 'coterie circulation' among members of the same social circles. Boffey also offers an explanation based upon the modes of circulation of Chaucer's lyrics, 'presumably copied in single leaves or into small, unbound, gatherings'; see Boffey, 'The Reputation and Circulation of Chaucer's Lyrics in the Fifteenth Century', 33.

Bodley 638 and Oxford Bodleian Library MS Tanner 346, which in virtue of their consistency and similarities, E. P. Hammond labelled as the ‘Oxford group’.¹¹⁵ In the introduction to the facsimile edition of MS Bodley 638, Robinson extends the editorial concentration on courtly literature apparent in this group of manuscripts to other fifteenth-century anthologies; she refers to Cambridge Magdalene College MS Pepys 2006 (late fifteenth century), Cambridge University Library MS Ff.1.6 (c. 1420), Oxford Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 (late 1480s), and finally, an unidentified volume owned by John Paston II before 1479.¹¹⁶ As noted earlier in this chapter, Robinson succinctly delineates both the courtly content and gentry readership of this extended cluster of codices, as she points out that ‘[a]nthologies like these were immediately fashionable and acquired by the “lettered chivalry” of the time to whom their contents appealed’.¹¹⁷ As well as adding two other codices to Robinson’s list of anthologies of courtly literature (Oxford Bodleian Library MS Digby 181 and Longleat House, Marquess of Bath MS 258), Boffey and Thompson provide a succinct assessment of the textual and generic continuity which characterises the burgeoning fifteenth-century verse collections:

[t]he nucleus of such manuscripts was generally formed by an assortment of Chaucer’s minor poems, around which are fitted attempts to re-distil the influential “aureate licour”—Lydgate’s *Complaint of the Black Knight*, Clanvowe’s *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, Hoccleve’s *Letter of Cupid*.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), pp. 336-339. Robinson dates the manuscripts of the Oxford group as follows: MS Tanner 346 (1440s), MS Fairfax 16 (1450s) and MS Bodley 638 (late fifteenth century); see Pamela Robinson, ed., *Manuscript Tanner 346: A Facsimile* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1980), p. xxiv. MSS Bodley and Fairfax are also available as facsimiles: John Norton-Smith, ed., *MS Fairfax 16* (London: Scolar Press, 1979); and Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*.

¹¹⁶ Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*, p. xxxv. All three manuscripts are available in facsimile editions; see A. S. G. Edwards, ed., *Manuscript Pepys 2006: A Facsimile* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1985); and Richard Beadle and A. E. B. Owen, *The Findern Manuscript: Cambridge University Library MS Ff.1.6* (London: Scolar Press, 1978). The bibliographical details of the facsimile of MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 were provided at the beginning of this chapter.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*, p. xxxv.

¹¹⁸ Boffey and Thompson, ‘Anthologies’, p. 280; for their additions to the list of codices of courtly literature, see p. 303, note 11.

They reiterate the central position of Chaucer as ‘nucleus’ of a literary *familia* and appear to suggest that it is upon relations of filiation and paternity between the Chaucer-the-Father and his immediate successors, as well as upon a homogeneous generic preoccupation with the poetics of *fin’amors*, that these anthologies are structured.

Specifically, as Illustrations 10, 11, 12, and 13 (pp. 69-72) confirm, Chaucer’s complaints and dream visions constitute the centre of the poet’s canon in the fifteenth century.¹¹⁹ Consistently with the *compilatio* of Shirley-related collections, *Anelida and Arcite*, ‘A Complaint to Pity’, ‘The Complaint of Venus’ and ‘The Complaint of Mars’ are the most frequently copied texts in the Oxford group and in the collections of courtly literature associated with them. However, in these codices, Chaucer’s dream visions acquire further canonical dominance; *The Parliament of Fowls*, in particular, is present in all manuscripts of both groups. Apart from *The House of Fame*, which does not feature in MS Tanner 346, all four major dream visions composed by Chaucer are included in the codices of the Oxford group and, with the exception of the neglected *The Book of the Duchess*, a notable absence, they are also present in most of the fifteenth-century books of courtly literature. This editorial

¹¹⁹ The full titles of the works not penned by Chaucer and offered in abridged form in Illustrations 11 and 13 are: Richard Roos, *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*; John Clanvowe, *The Boke of Cupide, God of Love; or, The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*; Thomas Hoccleve, *The Letter of Cupid*; John Lydgate, *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe, The Temple of Glass and The Fall of Princes*; Anon., ‘Ragman’s Roll’; Anon., ‘The Chance of the Dice’; James I of Scotland, *The Kingis Quair*; John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*; Anon, *Sir Degrevant*; Benedict Burgh, *Cato Major and Cato Minor*; John Walton, *Boethius*. For *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*, *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, and *The Boke of Cupide, God of Love; or, The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* I have cited the titles used in Dana Symons’s edition of these poems; see Dana M. Symons, *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications for TEAMS, 2004). Lydgate’s *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* is also known as *The Complaint of the Black Knight*. Later in this chapter I will engage more closely with this titular oscillation and dual tradition of textual transmission. In Illustrations 12 and 13, I have ignored later textual additions to MS Gg.4.27 (‘Gentilesse’ and ‘The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse’ were added in the early seventeenth century); for a dating of the texts and an account of the history of the manuscript, see Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works, Geoffrey Chaucer: A Facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27*, III.32; 34; 65-69 (esp. 68-69).

ILLUSTRATION 10
MANUSCRIPTS OF THE OXFORD GROUP: CHAUCER'S TEXTS

	MS Bodley 638	MS Fairfax 16	MS Tanner 346	Total
ABC	✓	✓		2
Anel	✓	✓	✓	3
BD	✓	✓	✓	3
Buk		✓		1
Compl d'Am	✓	✓		2
For	✓	✓		2
HF	✓	✓		2
Hope	✓	✓		2
LGW	✓	✓	✓	3
Mars		✓	✓	2
PF	✓	✓	✓	3
Pity	✓	✓	✓	3
Purse		✓		1
Scog		✓		1
Sted		✓		1
Truth		✓		1
Ven		✓	✓	2
Wom Unc		✓		1
Total	10	18	7	

ILLUSTRATION 11
 OTHER MANUSCRIPTS OF COURTLY LITERATURE
 CHAUCER'S TEXTS

ILLUSTRATION 11
MANUSCRIPTS OF THE OXFORD GROUP:
RECURRENT NON-CHAUCER TEXTS

	MS Bodley 638	MS Fairfax 16	MS Tanner 346	Total
Belle Dame		✓		1
Book of Cupid	✓	✓	✓	3
Dice	✓	✓		2
Fall of Princes		✓		1
Letter of Cupid	✓	✓	✓	3
Lover's Life	✓	✓	✓	3
Ragman's Roll	✓	✓		2
Temple of Glass	✓	✓	✓	3
Total	6	8	4	

**ILLUSTRATION 12
OTHER MANUSCRIPTS OF COURTLY LITERATURE:
CHAUCER'S TEXTS**

	Arch. Selden B.24	Digby 181	Ff.1.6	Gg.4.27	John Paston II	Longleat 258	Pepys 2006	Total
Anel		✓	Anel Compl only			✓	Compl only	4
ABC				✓			twice	2
CT				✓			ParsT + Mel + Ret	2
For							twice (one is a fragment)	1
HF							✓	1
LGW	✓		Thisbe only	✓	✓		✓	5
Mars	✓					✓	twice	3
MercB							✓	1
PF	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Pity			✓			✓		2
Purse			✓				✓	2
Scogan				✓			✓	2
Tr	✓	✓	fragment	✓				4
Truth	✓			✓			✓	3
Ven	✓		✓				twice	3
Total	6	3	7	7	2	4	13	

ILLUSTRATION 13
OTHER MANUSCRIPTS OF COURTLY LITERATURE:
RECURRENT NON-CHAUCER TEXTS

	Arch. Selden B.24	Digby 181	Ff.1.6	Gg. 4.27	John Paston II	Longleat 258	Pepys 2006	Total
Belle Dame			✓			✓		2
Book of Cupid	✓		✓					2
Cato Major			✓				✓	2
Cato Minor							✓	1
Confessio			fragments					1
Fall of Princes		19-stanza extract	fragment					2
Kingis Quair	✓							1
Letter of Cupid	✓	✓	✓					3
Lover's Life	✓	✓					✓	3
Sir Degrevant			✓					1
Temple of Glass				✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Walton's Boethius	✓							1
Total	5	3	7	1	1	2	4	

construction of Chaucer as the patriarch of an English lyrical and courtly tradition is cemented by the presence of a cluster of neo-Chaucerian dream visions and lyrics which act as a corollary to the Chaucerian ‘nucleus’. Lydgate’s *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* and *The Temple of Glass*, Clanvowe’s *The Boke of Cupide*, and Hoccleve’s *The Letter of Cupid* are copied in all the manuscripts of the Oxford group. Although none of these texts is present in every codex of courtly literature, the fifteenth-century demand for poems engaging with *fin’amors* and the courts of love is once again apparent, as they appear in half of these manuscripts.¹²⁰ Also, unlike Shirley’s books whose *compilatio* is more compendious and multifaceted, the principal editorial focus of these anthologies is Chaucer’s poetical *oeuvre*. In these codices, his corpus of lyrics and dream visions is presented more coherently and expansively. The centre or ‘nucleus’ of the fifteenth-century vernacular canon, Chaucer is presented as the authorising *fons et origo*, or the Father of an increasingly fashionable and established literary tradition.

2. *Compilatio*: Principles of Textual Selection.

The generic and textual consistency displayed by these groups of codices is echoed by the internal coherence which marks their *compilatio*. Booklet II of MS Fairfax 16 is characterised by a significant generic and authorial homogeneity, since eight of its seventeen items, or nine if ‘Complaynt Damours’ is included, are Chaucer’s pieces.¹²¹ Three begging poems (‘Fortune’, ‘The Envoy to Scogan’ and ‘The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse’), two complaints (‘The Complaint unto Pity’ and ‘Complaynt

¹²⁰ The only exception is *The Boke of Cupide* which is copied in two codices out of six, namely in the Findern and the Sinclair manuscripts.

¹²¹ In the *Riverside Chaucer*, this poem is part of a group of lyrics labelled as ‘Poems Not Ascribed to Chaucer in the Manuscripts’ (p. 657). Scattergood includes it in his discussion of Chaucer’s shorter poems, but he specifies that it ‘is nowhere actually attributed to Chaucer, though it is found in Chaucer manuscripts. It has a Chaucerian feel: in individual lines and in some longer passages it recalls genuine poems’; see Scattergood, ‘The Short Poems’, in *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems*, p. 477.

Damours'), two philosophical and political lyrics ('Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton' and 'Lak of Stedfastnesse'), together with one love lyric ('Against Women Unconstant') and one Marian text ('An ABC') are accompanied by various poems by other authors echoing the generic and ideological preoccupations of Chaucer's texts. Boethian, petitionary, advisory or amorous, the non-Chaucerian lyrics that complete Booklet II of MS Fairfax 16 disclose the principles of selection governing the *compilatio* of this section of the manuscript and partly, by extension, of the codex as a whole (a proverbial couplet, an extract on deceit from Lydgate's *The Fall of Princes*, Lydgate's 'Four Things that Make a Man a Fool' 'Doubleness', 'Prayer for King, Queen and People', another 'proverbe' entitled 'On the Mutability of Man's Nature', 'The Complaint Against Hope', and, finally, Hoccleve's 'Balade to Henry V for Money'). MS Fairfax established a paradigm of cultural excellence whose orthodoxy is policed by the authorising presence of the Father's work. The *compilatio* of the manuscript creates a codicological and textual site which articulates the privileged lyrical and courtly discourse as a multiple cultural site which accommodates philosophical-devotional *gravitas*, political and amorous petitions or negotiations, and intellectual-poetic accomplishment.

The same generic and discursive coherence is also displayed in Booklet I of MS Tanner 346 which is entirely dedicated to Chaucerian dream visions and complaints. As 'one of the earliest extant collections of Chaucer's Minor Poems', MS Tanner offers a paradigmatic selection of Chaucerian and neo-Chaucerian poems which is illustrated in its first Booklet; Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*, *Anelida and Arcite*, 'The Complaint of Mars', 'The Complaint of Venus', and 'Complaint unto Pity' are accompanied, as it is often the case, by Hoccleve's *The*

Letter of Cupid and Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*.¹²² The similarities between this Booklet and other sections of MS Fairfax 16 and MS Bodley 638 are striking and revealing. Although MS Fairfax 16's first gathering, clearly separated from the second by two blank leaves, now singletons, and an additional blank leaf, has a more extensive collection of Chaucerian material, it is very similar to MS Tanner's Booklet I.

An impressively comprehensive anthology of all Chaucer's dream visions and a number of lyrics, and their principal neo-Chaucerian reincarnations, Booklet I of MS Fairfax 16 comprises Chaucer's 'The Complaint of Mars', 'The Complaint of Venus', *Anelida and Arcite*, 'Truth', *The Legend of Good Women*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, *The Book of the Duchess*, *The House of Fame*, Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, *The Temple of Glass*, Clanvowe's *The Boke of Cupide*, Hoccleve's *The Letter of Cupid* and Sir Richard Roos's *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*. In view of the resonant textual affinities between MS Fairfax 16 and MS Tanner 346, it is logical to assume that the missing quire of the acephalous MS Bodley 638, the remaining member of the Oxford group, contained 'The Complaint of Mars', 'The Complaint of Venus' and the first part of *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*. Like Chaucer's portraits adorning the codices of Hoccleve's works, the *compilatio* of these manuscripts or, more specifically, their stable textual and generic nucleus, fixes the canon of late-medieval vernacular literature in a narrative which centres on Chaucer's lyrical and moral paternity.

As Hammond first pointed out, the intertextual and generic consistency within the Oxford group and, by association, within the codices linked to them, is to be traced in their ancestors. While Hammond argues for the existence of a common

¹²² Robinson, *Manuscript Tanner 346: A Facsimile*, p. xxiv.

archetype, which she names “Oxford”, Brusendorff’s re-assessment of the evidence stemming from the collation of the three manuscripts leads him to hypothesise the circulation of individual booklets functioning as exemplars.¹²³ In the Introduction to the facsimile edition of MS Fairfax 16, John Norton-Smith endorses Brusendorff’s theory and advances a plausible reconstruction of scribal practices:

We should now agree to say that there was no ‘Oxford archetype’ of an extensive collection of Chaucer and his contemporaries. The bookseller who made up Fairfax 16 made it up ‘to order’, according to choices offered to John Stanley [its first owner]. [...] Stanley did not choose single works or authors but booklets containing authors or works possibly in already existing saleable copy, or ready to be copied from resident display booklets [...] These booklets were then assembled to form the present manuscript book. [...] Fairfax 16 was made up in five parts, recopied as a whole from booklets acquired on a temporary or permanent basis by the bookseller¹²⁴

These codices’ textual and generic continuity can, therefore, be explained by positing the availability and circulation of fascicular books containing clusters of poems to which booksellers, compilers and scribes had access.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the dissemination of these textual groupings, predominantly focused on Chaucerian material, has resonant implications upon the shaping of the English vernacular canon and its transmission.

As well as displaying generic continuity, the manuscripts of the Oxford group exhibit a codicological homogeneity. MS Bodley 638, in particular, as ‘[a]n anthology of English verse copied continuously’ by the same scribe, Lyty, provides every item,

¹²³ Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, p. 336; Aage Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press; Copenhagen: Povl Branner, 1925), pp. 186-192.

¹²⁴ Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. vii-viii.

¹²⁵ For a discussion of booklets and fascicular circulation in medieval manuscripts of English literature, see Pamela Robinson, ‘The ‘Booklet’: A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts’, *Codicologica* 3 (1980), 46-69; Ralph Hanna III, ‘Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations’, *Studies in Bibliography* 39 (1986), 100-111; A. S. G. Edwards, ‘Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: A ‘Transitional’ Collection’, in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1996), pp. 53-67. On terminology, taxonomy and the accuracy of terms such as miscellany and anthology, see Julia Boffey, ‘Short Texts in Manuscript Anthologies: The Minor Poems of John Lydgate in Two Fifteenth-Century Collections’, in *The Whole Book*, pp. 69-82 (p. 73); and Siegfried Wenzel, ‘Sermon Collections and Their Taxonomy’, in *The Whole Book*, pp. 7-21.

apart from item 12, with a heading, running titles and colophon, as well as demarcating the lemmata, or notable phrases and mottos, within texts by underlining them or by penning them in red ink.¹²⁶ Similarly, in line with Norton-Smith's description of the criteria and processes behind the *compilatio* of MS Fairfax 16, Boffey and Thompson emphasise the consistency and programmatic coherence apparent in this codex which, in their words, is a 'finished' product 'to include a miniature and a scheme of decoration'. According to their account, the homogeneity of these books' codicological programmes excludes a 'piecemeal or random collecting'.¹²⁷ In parallel, the three collaborating scribes transcribing texts seamlessly across the gatherings of MS Tanner testify to Brusendorff's theory of the circulation in the fifteenth century of individual booklets, containing selections of vernacular verse.¹²⁸ This degree of planning suggests a specific codicological and textual agenda. These booklets, bound or unbound, disseminate a lyrical configuration of the Chaucerian and neo-Chaucerian canon, that is they construct a dominant poetic taste generated with and sanctioned by Chaucer, and perpetuated by his literary "children".

Despite the editorial concentration on Chaucerian amorous and advisory verse, as Illustrations 9 and 12 illustrate (pp. 63; 71), *The Canterbury Tales* occupies a prominent place in fifteenth-century anthologies of English poetry. However, with the exception of the manuscript "collections" of Chaucer's *oeuvre*, clusters of Tales are selected and included in a number of codices whose *compilatio* concentrates on the debate on *fin'amors* and moral or philosophical themes. One such manuscript is

¹²⁶ Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*, p. xvii.

¹²⁷ Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', p. 280

¹²⁸ Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', pp. 280-281. They also refer to the scribal phenomenon that Doyle and Parkes describe as 'leap-frogging', that is a method of copying texts from exemplars by apportioning a manuscript and allocating discrete sections and booklets to copyists working independently. The completed codex results from the conflation of the individual stints; see A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the Canterbury Tales and the Confessio Amantis in the Early Fifteenth Century', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), pp. 163-210 (p. 167, especially note 3).

British Library MS Harley 1239 (1450-1475), an anthology containing exclusively Chaucer's romances.¹²⁹ A prestigious codex on parchment, it was assembled and produced in two different stages. To a rather ornate and diligently copied text of *Troilus and Criseyde* (ff. 1r-62v), a less professional hand adds five texts from *The Canterbury Tales* (ff. 63r-106v), namely *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Clerk's Tale*, *The Knight's Tale*, *The Man of Law's Tale*, and *The Franklin's Tale*.¹³⁰ Despite his less proficient scribal practices, the 'heremita de Grenewych', responsible for copying *The Canterbury Tales* in MS Harley 1239, articulates lucidly and effectively the principles informing the codex's *compilatio* in 'a lengthy rhetorical colophon':

Vestre magnifice et generosissime dominacionis humilissimus
seruiens et Orate heremita de Grenewych mundo quasi totaliter
segregatus ac mentibus suorum fortune amicorum et hominum
peroblitus¹³¹

As well as its preoccupation with a social discourse and power relations, a significant aspect of this scribal annotation is the hermit-scribe's address to an aristocratic audience ('Vestre magnifice et generosissime dominacionis') which appears to be consistent with his selection of courtly narratives, amorous and moral. In particular, this selection of romances and Tales of philosophical, ethical and theological significance is located in the Chaucerian courtly canon. Therefore, the materials, the

¹²⁹ For the dating and description of MS Harley 1239, see Owen, *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 28; 108-109; and Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, I.75-76.

¹³⁰ The first section of the codex containing *Troilus and Criseyde* was copied by three scribes engaged in equal stints; the second, on the contrary, was penned by a single scribe. The three hands responsible for *Troilus* produced a professional and neat copy with ornate ascendants and descendants on the first line of every leaf, reminiscent of Shirley's lozenges. The layout is carefully planned and executed; every stanza is signposted by red and blue paraph marks, and red encasing on three sides with visible ruling. The various parts and books of the poem are clearly signalled by an *incipit* and an *explicit* in Latin. The accuracy of the *compilatio* of the first part is not replicated by the scribe copying the five Tales. For a description of MS Harley 1239, see Owen, *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 28; 108-11; and Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, I.75-76; 137-139. For a comment on MS Harley's role in the transmission and formation of the Chaucerian canon, see Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print: the Social Text and the Critical Text', 2; and Nicholas Perkins, 'John Bale, Thomas Hoccleve, and a Lost Chaucer Manuscript', *Notes and Queries* 54 (2007), 128-131.

¹³¹ 'Pray for the hermit of Greenwich, the very humble servant of your magnificent and most generous lordship; he is almost totally isolated from the world and forgotten by the minds of his friends, by fortune and by mankind.' The colophon on f. 106v is transcribed by Seymour; see, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, I.138.

generic focus and the readership of MS Harley 1239 suggest an ideologically-specific construction of Chaucer. The format of this codex is unique in the manuscript tradition of *The Canterbury Tales*; a holster book, this artefact contributes towards the dissemination of the Chaucerian canon as a desirable literary product.¹³² As Manly and Rickert posit, the elongated and narrow design of MS Harley indicates that it was meant for travelling. Their association of this holster book with two Books of Hours owned by aristocratic families, the Talbot Hours and the Hours of Margaret Beauchamp, emphasises the prestige of Chaucer's works, circulating as part of a select range of edifying texts considered appropriate reading material for travelling patricians. In other words, *The Canterbury Tales* is aligned textually and codicologically to the poet's courtly verse.¹³³

The *compilatio* of Shirley-related manuscripts, of the codices of the Oxford group and of other books of courtly literature locate Chaucer's *paternitas* in the privileged social and intellectual discourse of patrician literary culture. As the stable nucleus of these polyvocal collections, Chaucer's courtly and lyrical texts establish a cultural tradition of social and literary sophistication which is co-opted in order to legitimise the English vernacular canon and the books that disseminate it. At the centre of a multifaceted literary and social network of texts and men of letters, Chaucer's paternal authority promotes the dominance of courtly culture and disseminates the desirable subject positions underpinned by it. Through the authorising affiliations to the Father established the space of the codex, his fifteenth-

¹³² This particular elongated and narrow format is discussed by both Edwards and Pearsall, and Boffey and Thompson. Edwards and Pearsall acknowledge the critics' tendency to associate a specific genre with a corresponding layout, as they conclude that *Troilus and Criseyde* is often produced as a small book. This would associate holster books with romances and courtly narratives. Although Boffey and Thompson explore such a possibility, they conclude that the most accurate definition of holster book is codicological rather than generic. They explain that it refers to the preparation of materials in the production and construction of a codex, as it indicates the way in which leaves are folded. For a more detailed discussion, see Edward and Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts', p. 264; and Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', pp. 298; 313 (note 102).

¹³³ Manly and Rickert, *The Text of The Canterbury Tales*, I.191.

century disciples aim at occupying and performing these validating practices and subjectivities.

SECTION II

TITULAR POLYVOCALITY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHAUCERIAN COURTLY CANON

1. Medieval Titology: Chaucer's Palimpsested *Paternitas*.

The emulation of courtly culture and its literary taste in fifteenth-century anthologies of English poetry is not just observable in their *compilatio*, but also in the elements of their *ordinatio*. As Chaucerian works are collected in textual clusters that display and disseminate the poet's status as the Father of a courtly literary tradition, the elements of a manuscript's *ordinatio*, such as Chaucer's author portraits discussed in Chapter I, operate according to the same editorial agenda. In particular, titling apparatuses, including centred or marginal headings, running titles and colophons, offer an insight into the processes of selection of texts based on their generic desirability. More specifically, titles demarcate the space of the codex with designations that establish intertextual networks of generic affiliations and authorise texts by inscribing them in a received lyrical and courtly narrative. Moreover, with its variations, polyvocality and absences, a manuscript's titular apparatus functions as a palimpsest, as it is a collaborative and cumulative process which records the multiple stages of the reception of Chaucer's works and the developments in the fabrication of his "palimpsested" literary *paternitas*.

In *Acts of Literature*, Jacques Derrida provides a resonant definition of the function of a title:

We think we know what a title is, notably the title of a work. It is placed in a specific position, highly determined and regulated by conventional laws: at the beginning of and at a set distance above the body of the text, but in any case *before* it. The title is generally chosen by the author or by his or her editorial representatives whose

property it is. The title names and guarantees identity, the unity and the boundaries of the original work which it entitles.¹³⁴

Derrida's title is an act of designation which endows the literary work with an unequivocal identity demarcated by stable spatial and temporal boundaries.

Presumably concerned with works produced after the invention of the printing press, which heightened legal and epistemological concerns for authorial control and responsibility over a text perpetually fixed in a stable artefact, Derrida deploys a rhetoric of regimentation which presupposes a univocal and unambiguous authorial mastery over the text and its designation. In his account, the titling process operates according to a pre-determined textual hierarchy that deems the title as solely pre-textual or peripheral to it. In *Paratexts*, Gérard Genette provides not only an analogous theorisation of titular practices, but also a precise identification of the genesis of a title:

The time of the title's appearance raises no problem, in theory: the title appears upon publication of the original (or the pre-original, if any) edition. But there are some subtle variations, or twists.¹³⁵

Despite Genette's concession to the possibility of exceptions to his 'theory', and his reference to printed editions and their alleged textual stability, this formulation presents titling as an unproblematic act of designation whose origins can be clearly established and pinned down. Definite and sanctioned by the unquestionable authority of the incorrupt 'original' text, once allocated at the time of publication, Genette's title, much like Derrida's, appears immutable and permanent.

However, Derrida's and Genette's titology is at odds with the codicological evidence emerging from the examination of titling practices in the manuscripts of the Oxford group and other affiliated books of courtly literature, since it does not account

¹³⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Before the Law', in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 181-220 (p. 188).

¹³⁵ Gérard Genette, 'Titles', in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [1987]), pp. 55-103 (p. 66).

for the fluidity of the titular apparatuses of late medieval codices. The information contained in a text's title often varies from manuscript to manuscript, or within the same codex, and this multiplicity applies to the narrative, structure, author and genre of the specific work. In particular, according to Genette, genre is one of the constituent elements of titling; his reappropriation of Leo Hoek's and Charles Duchet's terminology results in a formulation that identifies three components in titular apparatuses: the 'title', the 'subtitle' and the 'genre indication'.¹³⁶ As the evidence that I shall shortly examine testifies, titling practices in late medieval manuscripts emphasise 'genre indication' to the extent that often a work is identified solely by its form ('A balade'; 'A roundell'). However, instead of offering a single generic definition of a text, a number of titular apparatuses designate a literary work through a network of affiliations between courtly poetic forms; this generic complexity is exemplified by the introductory rubric of John Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* in MS Additional 16165 ('a Right lusty balade made in wyse of complaint', f. 190v) which accommodates two distinct formal configurations of the poem, 'balade' and 'complaint', and to which I will return later in this chapter.

The titular fluidity which informs the transmission of medieval texts decentres Hoccleve's construction of Chaucer's clerical authorial authority as the sole stable principle presiding over the hermeneutic coherence and unity of his works and the English vernacular canon. Rather than an unmovable monolithic presence, his paternal voice is a permeable site of power subjected to multiple acts of appropriation which disperse his authority while, simultaneously, reincarnating it into a patriarchal paradigm of courtly and lyrical authorship. In her discussion of the modern title of

¹³⁶ Genette, 'Titles', p. 56. See also Leo H. Hoek, 'Pour une sémiotique du titre', working paper (Urbino: February 1973); Leo H. Hoek, *La Marque du titre: Dispositifs sémiotiques d'une pratique textuelle* (La Haye: Mouton, 1981); C. Duchet, 'La fille abandonnée et la bête humaine, Eléments de titrologie romanesque', *Littérature* 12 (December 1973), 49-73. Duchet is responsible for giving the study of titles the name titology or, in French, *titrologie*.

The Awntyrs off Arthure, Helen Phillips explores the interpretative implications of titular multiplicity, as she points out that the variant designations of a text which can occur in the manuscript witnesses prompt different critical and hermeneutic responses to the work in question:

It is, of course, a matter of chance which manuscript rubric or reference in the text comes to provide the modern title for a medieval work, and there are clearly cases where the commonly used modern title affects critical assumptions about the parameters for discussing the meaning, literary affinities and structure of poems¹³⁷

According to Phillips, the reception and critical-aesthetic assessment of a text is partly dependent upon the specific title that scribes and editors attribute to it. Rather than providing a stable and unproblematic labelling for a literary work, these titling practices offer a plurality of interpretative information about the text and capitalise on the multifarious forms, audiences and hermeneutic-rhetorical approaches that configure a literary piece. Once displaced in the polyvocal and palimpsested space of the codex, the Father's control over his work's signification is not obliterated, but perpetually re-inhabited as a validating *locus* of authority which, in the case of fifteenth-century manuscript anthologies, is co-opted in order to be inscribed in the privileged discourse of courtly culture.

2. Compendious Collections: the Grammar of Courtly Culture.

The openness and porosity of titles in these codices appear to be consistent with the programmatic preoccupation with generic plurality articulated in the preface of MS Ashmole 59. Although, as Boffey and Thompson remark, this manuscript, Shirley's last surviving holograph codex, does not display an overtly coherent textual

¹³⁷ Helen Phillips, 'The Awntyrs off Arthure: Structure and Meaning. A Reassessment', *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993), 63-89 (73).

programme or *compilatio*, the description of the content of the anthology proves to be illuminating¹³⁸:

Here begynneþe þe boke cleped þe Abstracte Brevyayre compiled of diverse balades, roundels, virilayes, tragedyes, envoys, compleyntes, moralites, storyes, practysed and eke devysed and ymagyned as it shweþe here folowyng¹³⁹

After the *Secretum Secretorum*, which occupies most of the first quire of MS Ashmole 59, Shirley marks a change from prose into verse in the second quire by inserting a programmatic heading. Connolly speculates on the meaning of ‘Abstracte Brevyayre’ and concludes, tentatively, that ‘Shirley intended to present a collection of extracts’ in verse rather than prose.¹⁴⁰ As the *MED* confirms, both ‘brevyayre’ and ‘abstracte’ signify an abridgement or a summary of a document, specifically, in the case of the former, of a sacred text, such as the Psalms.¹⁴¹ In particular, a breviary is a comprehensive collection which contains the ‘Divine Office’ for each day of the year. It is also significant that another instance of Shirley’s use of the noun ‘Abstracte’ occurs in the verse preface of MS Additional 16165 in which, in a similar context, he lists the texts selected for his anthology. In MS Additional, ‘Abstracte’ refers to the *Regula Sacerdotalis* which is offered in a shortened Latin prose version of the original text:

Panne shul ye wit and vnderstand
Of an Abstrait made in latyne
Al in proose eke lyne by lyne
Grounded vpon holy writ¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Boffey and Thompson, ‘Anthologies’, pp. 284-285.

¹³⁹ This heading appears on f. 13r and it is transcribed by Connolly; see *John Shirley*, p. 158.

¹⁴⁰ Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁴¹ For a definition of ‘abstract’ as ‘[a]n abridgment or summary of a book or document’, and of ‘breviarie’ as ‘[a]n abridged version (specif., of the psalms); a breviary (containing the ‘Divine Office’ for each day of the year)’, see Kurath and Kuhn, *MED*, vol. A-B (1954), pp. 54; 1160.

¹⁴² This citation appears on f. iiir and is transcribed by Connolly in *John Shirley*, p. 207. The verse preface to MS Additional 16165 is transcribed in full on pp. 206-208.

This extract suggests that, despite the abridgement, the *Regula Sacerdotalis* is an accurate and thorough reworking of its source, a sacred text. The same principle of meticulous and scrupulous selection of passages can be found in a breviary, as an extensive miscellany of the most relevant and significant parts of the Scriptures and other liturgical or hagiographical texts, meant for the devoted daily recital and perusal of the ordained members of the Church.¹⁴³

In the same way, Shirley presents a composite selection of representative courtly poetical forms which he lists comprehensively. By enumerating genres which engage with both *fin'amors* and politico-philosophical advice, he constructs a verse anthology consistent with the aristocratic taste for lyrical and moral texts, and French-derived poetry, and which bears a significant resemblance to the collections held in Richard II's and Woodstock's libraries surveyed by Scattergood. Although, in Boffey and Thompson's words, 'there is little evidence of attempts to arrange or order the manuscript [Ashmole 59] contents in any coherent way', the heading at the beginning of the second quire provides a rather lucid social and literary framework for the codex.¹⁴⁴ In other words, the introductory rubric identifies Shirley's collection as a comprehensive 'brevyayre' of courtly verse. Like the liturgical compendium, 'a book furnishing the regulations for the celebration of Mass or the canonical office', MS Ashmole 59 is at once representative and illustrative, as well as normative.¹⁴⁵

The compendiousness and generic multivocality of the codex inscribe the works it contains firmly in the tradition of aristocratic reading practices; suitable for a patrician readership, it also functions as a socio-cultural "manual", since it decodes

¹⁴³ For a liturgical definition of 'breviary', see Fernand Cabrol, 'Breviary', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, ed. Charles G. Herbermann *et al.*, 15 vols (London: Caxton Publishing Company; New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907-1912), II.768-778 (768-769).

¹⁴⁴ Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies', p. 284.

¹⁴⁵ Cabrol, 'Breviary', II.769.

the intellectual rhetoric dominating prestigious social circles for the benefit of those eager to gain access to them. The generic variety announced in the heading identifies, as a compendious title for the verse section of the poem, the collection as a product appropriating courtly taste for an aristocratic readership or for an audience seeking access to courtly intellectual and social circles through a comprehensive literary 'breviary' of poetical texts. As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter IV, Chaucer's lyrical and courtly *paternitas*, which constitutes the nucleus of these compendious manuscript collections, is a complex socio-cultural construct which establishes a comprehensive vocabulary and grammar of patrician culture and disseminates it among his socially-ambitious readers.

MS Fairfax 16 provides a resonant illustration of the polyvocality and compendiousness of the "palimpsested" space that the titular apparatus occupies in fifteenth-century English collections of vernacular verse, as opposed to Derrida's and Genette's legalistic rhetoric of fixity. The manuscript offers three sets of titles: a contents table at the beginning of the codex, running titles and titles which, when present, designate individual texts within the manuscript. While the codex displays a degree of programmatic coherence, with one scribe employed to copy the text, and one rubricator and one flourisher in charge of the ornament, the titling apparatus appears to be the result of a collaborative and haphazard process of accretion.¹⁴⁶ Seven discrete professional agents contribute to the manuscript's titles in a period that spans from the mid-fifteenth century, when the codex was composed, to the last decade of the sixteenth century, the estimated date of John Stow's annotations.¹⁴⁷ To the fifteenth-century titles penned by the scribe who copied the text, and the rubricator's contemporary running titles, almost 150 years later Stow adds a number

¹⁴⁶ Norton-Smith, 'Script and Ornament', in *MS Fairfax 16*, p. x.

¹⁴⁷ For more details on the various hands recorded in the manuscript, see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. x; xvi.

of scribbles that range from explanatory glosses, to authorial attributions and the insertion of missing or alternative titles.¹⁴⁸ Also, a fifteenth-century hand reviews the individual texts in the codex and provides a complete table of contents (f. 2r-v) whose wording is often different from the manuscript titles and which is supplemented by a sixteenth-century continuator (f. 2v).¹⁴⁹ Finally, two later fifteenth-century hands compile the prose and verse material, and the relative titles found after f. 329v. The evidence suggests that titling practices are accretive and collaborative, and they, therefore, signal not just the fluidity and complexity of the process of compilation of medieval manuscripts, but also the permeable quality of the titular definition of texts whose instability is recorded by the multiple voices and temporalities inscribed in the codex.

Titling apparatuses are palimpsests, as they are supplemented, emended, rerouted and overwritten by different agents disclosing discrete stages of the dissemination and reception of a work. A manuscript allows for absences, gaps, and variations, and often, but not always, for rectifications and additions. Indeed, MS Fairfax 16 does not offer a title which precedes Chaucer's 'Truth' in the body of the codex.¹⁵⁰ It does, however, provide a heading in the table of contents, 'The goode counsell of Chawcer' (f. 1r), and a similar designation, but this time in French, in the *explicit*, 'le bon counsel | De G. Chaucer' (f. 40r). When, at the end of Booklet IV (f. 201r), 'Truth' appears again as a lyric mechanically copied after Lydgate's 'Prayer for King, Queen and People', with which it had become textually associated, its

¹⁴⁸ For a definition of John Stow's annotations as 'scribbling' and their location in the codex, see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. xvi; xxiii-xxix. Also, according to Norton-Smith, Stow, who 'did not use the manuscript systematically', concentrated mainly on *The Temple of Glass*, *The Book of the Duchess* and 'The Chance of the Dice'; see pp. xvi; xviii.

¹⁴⁹ For details of the four items added by the continuator, see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xvi.

¹⁵⁰ For a thorough discussion and examination of titling practices related to Chaucer's 'Truth', see Victoria Louise Gibbons, 'MS Titles of *Truth*: Titology and the Medieval Gap', *The Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History* 11 (2008), 197-206.

identity as a discrete poem is silenced in the table of contents and vaguely signalled as ‘Balade’ in the body of the manuscript.¹⁵¹ Rather than presenting an inconsistent designation for ‘Truth’, these fluid and elusive titles map a variety of possible formal and textual configurations that enhance the poem’s position in the fifteenth-century literary canon and its compliance with the dominant cultural taste. Advisory and lyrical (‘councell’ and ‘Balade’), rooted in the prestige of French poetic traditions (‘le bon counsel’), a textual supplement to a Lydgatean piece of royal encomium, ‘Truth’ is designated as a desirable and relevant literary piece. By extension, through the alignment of Chaucer’s poem to established poetical practices, the poet’s literary paternity is configured as courtly and lyrical, as well as being sanctioned by French cultural traditions, which, as I will argue in chapter III, he appropriates and translates onto English vernacular verse.

These strata of “palimpsested” titles, which record the fluidity of medieval textuality and its transmission, are also traceable in Stow’s additions and emendations. In MS Fairfax 16, Chaucer’s ‘An ABC’ (ff. 188v-191r) is designated as ‘A Devoute balette to oure lady’ in the table of contents, while it is inserted without title in the body of the codex. Two later hands fill in the titling gap left by the silent designation and supplement the fifteenth-century heading. In the margin next to the text, a sixteenth-century reader adds an inscription which provides authorial attribution and a title: ‘Chawcers A.b.c.’ (f. 188v).¹⁵² Similarly, in the same century, Stow pens an authorial attribution accompanied by an alternative title to the fifteenth-

¹⁵¹ Norton-Smith explains that the textual association between the two poems signals a stage of the reception of ‘Truth’ during which the poem became almost an appendage of Lydgate’s text; see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xxviii.

¹⁵² For a list of ‘scribbles’ added between 1500 and 1600, see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xviii.

century designation in the table of contents: 'A.B.C. per Chaucer' (f. 2r).¹⁵³ As R. T. Lenaghan points out in the 'Textual Notes' to Chaucer's short poems in the *The Riverside Chaucer*, 'An ABC' is an editorial title.¹⁵⁴ Out of sixteen manuscript authorities, nine omit the title, while those that insert a heading emphasise the Marian quality of the text: 'Here biginneth a preiour of our ladie that Geffrie Chaucer made affter the ordre of the a b c' (Coventry, City Record Office MS Coventry (Accession 325)) and 'La priere de nostre Dame [...] per Chaucer' (Magdalene College, Cambridge MS Pepys 2006).¹⁵⁵ These traces left by scribes and readers map the stages of the history of the reception of Chaucer's poem and the multiple acts of co-option of his paternal authority. As indicated in the liminal title in Speght's second edition of the poet's works, 'Chaucers ABC called La Priere de Nostre Dame', the residual designation of the poem as a translation of Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (1331; 1355), a devotional and Marian French text, progressively fades as the poem acquires an independent canonical identity based upon its prestigious author and its formal structure.¹⁵⁶ The title, therefore, becomes a complex *locus* in which the identity of a text is established and disseminated, and, in the same fluid space of the codex, rerouted and re-designated.

In sum, the compendiousness of fifteenth-century anthologies of vernacular literature and the polyvocality of their titular apparatuses saturate the material space of the codex with codicological devices that signal and signify courtly culture and its taste for lyrical verse. Through a complex network of textual, generic and narrative

¹⁵³ Anne Hudson does not attribute this annotation to Stow but to a fifteenth-century hand, see Anne Hudson, 'John Stow (1525?-1605)', in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, ed. Paul Ruggiers (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books, 1984), pp. 53-70 (p. 64).

¹⁵⁴ R. T. Lenaghan, 'The Short Poems', p. 1185.

¹⁵⁵ 'ABC' is copied twice in MS Pepys 2006; this heading occurs in the second instance.

¹⁵⁶ In MS Fairfax 16, Stow also corrects the manuscript title of *The Temple of Glass*; the aberrant 'Bras' is replaced by Stow's 'glas' (f. 63r). He also completes the manuscript heading of 'A Complaint unto Pity', by adding 'Complainte of the dethe of pitie' to the scribal 'Balade'. His emendation of the title of *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* will be discussed more at length later in this chapter. Also, I will explore the titular and generic slippage between 'balade' and 'complaint' in some detail in Chapter III.

affiliations, Chaucer's *paternitas* is unequivocally inscribed in the dominant discourse of aristocratic intellectual and social practices. Endowed with the aesthetic sophistication of complaints and ballades, and the devotional *gravitas* of Marian texts, Chaucer's paternity is constructed as a comprehensive, all-encompassing site of authorial authority and as a principle of cultural coherence and validation for the manuscript collections centred on his works.

SECTION III

CHAUCER AS 'FOUNDER OF DISCURSIVITY': LYDGATE'S AFFILIATIONS TO THE FATHER

1. Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* and Courtly Culture.

The accretive and collaborative process which characterises the production of fifteenth-century manuscripts of Chaucer's works contrasts with Derrida's theorisation of titles as spatially and temporally stable acts of designation. The titling apparatus occupies multiple spaces within the codex and it consists of variations that are indicative of a complex overlapping of historical voices. Within the multifarious and saturated network of affiliations to courtly culture established by a manuscript's titular programme, its compiler also locates the works of the Father's successors. Once inscribed in the discourse of courtly and lyrical culture, they are validated and canonised, as they acquire its social and literary prestige and sophistication. Their presence in a codex also substantiates Boffey and Thompson's assessment of the burgeoning fifteenth-century manuscript collections which, as I pointed out earlier in the chapter, are predominantly structured around the 'aureate licour' of Chaucer's minor poems. As the English patriarch of a verse tradition predicated upon aristocratic literary practices, the Father's positioning and construction in anthologies of vernacular literature can be aptly described as that of a 'founder of discursivity'. As Foucault explains, this category of authors is 'unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts.' Chaucer's establishment of an aesthetic grammar and vocabulary of courtly culture locates his authorial function within Foucault's discussion of writers who 'have established an endless possibility of

discourse', as his courtly and literary *paternitas* is subjected to heterogeneous and multiple gestures of appropriation.¹⁵⁷

In the context of the complex networks of affiliations to Chaucer as 'founder of discursivity' established in medieval English manuscripts, the case of Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* is particularly significant and illuminating. As with other fifteenth-century manuscript titles, the titling practices pertaining to Lydgate's poem in Shirley's MS Additional 16165 are not predicated upon uniformity and stability, and do not establish a distinctive and unequivocal identity for the text; on the contrary, they are founded upon a network of generic affinities, as they articulate a multivocality of courtly poetic forms interwoven in the poem. While the first running title (ff. 190v-191r) reads 'A complaynte | of An Amorous Knyght', the following instances offer a range of variant thematic and formal designations for the text. From 'þe complaynt | of þe Lovere' (ff. 196v-197r), to 'Complaynt of | A trewe knight in his ladyes servyce' (ff. 197v-198r), and 'Complaynte | In loves servyce' (ff. 199v-200r), the titular apparatus inscribes the poem in the validating tradition of *fin'amors* and love complaints established in England by Chaucer. This courtly rhetoric of knightly service, in which a lament for unrequited love is associated with chivalric values of fealty and honour, echoes the multifarious characterisation of the poem offered in the introductory rubric:

And here filowyng begynnethe a Right lusty amorous balade made
in wyse of complaint for a Right worshipfull Knight that truly ever
served his lady endityng grete disese by fals envye and malebouche
made by Lydegate (f. 190v)

Here Shirley emphasises the poem's generic affiliations to French courtly lyrical traditions by providing a dual formal definition for Lydgate's text; at the same time, a

¹⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 101-120 (p. 114).

‘balade’ and a complaint, the poem appears to have the longer and more elaborate formal structure of a love-complaint (‘in wyse of complaint’), as well as a narrative focus on a knight’s love for a lady which aligns the amorous complaint to a ‘balade’.¹⁵⁸ Shirley also reinforces the thematic and rhetorical associations of this poem to romances and courtly lyrics, as he highlights the tribulations encountered by an honourable knight in the hopeless pursuit of his love for a lady. In brief, the poem incarnates a multiplicity of contiguous poetic forms whose courtly quality and relation to Chaucer’s lyrical *paternitas* authorises the text’s and, by extension, the manuscript’s position in the literary canon.

The affiliation of Lydgate’s poem to a courtly and knightly discourse is also made apparent in its alternative titular tradition. In the table of contents of MS Fairfax 16, Stow pens ‘or of the blake knight’ next to ‘The complaynt of a lovers lyve’ (f. 2r), which echoes the manuscript title, ‘Complaynte of a louers Lyfe’ (f. 20v).¹⁵⁹ In the textual notes to her edition of the poem, Symons lists the variant titles of the poem found in the manuscript and early printed witnesses.¹⁶⁰ She records that, unlike most of the nine manuscript authorities, MS Pepys 2006 and MS Tanner 346 designate the text as *The complaynt of þe blak Knyght*.¹⁶¹ This became the dominant titling practice for over 400 years, as all printed editions of the poem, from William Thynne’s 1532 collected works of Chaucer onwards, employ this title with some minor spelling variants. John Norton-Smith’s 1966 edition of Lydgate’s poems represents the first

¹⁵⁸ Scattergood briefly discriminates between Chaucer’s love complaints and his love lyrics, with the latter being either in ballade or roundel form, and, normally, shorter and structurally less complex; see Scattergood, ‘The Short Poems’, pp. 465; 478.

¹⁵⁹ Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xviii.

¹⁶⁰ Symons, ‘Textual Notes to *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*’, in *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints*, pp. 136-147 (p. 136).

¹⁶¹ For a brief but informative note on textual matters related to this poem, see Symons, ‘Note on the text’, in *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints*, p. 88. Here I have followed the spelling of the title offered by Symons; however, in my discussion of individual manuscripts, I will provide a transcription of each title.

instance in which *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* is restored as the preferable title.¹⁶²

However, Norton-Smith's recuperation of this tradition was met with resistance. In his 1970 study of Lydgate, Pearsall dismisses this restoration rather peremptorily as unnecessary and unwarranted. Unlike his predecessor, Pearsall keeps the 'usual title', 'since there must be a rooted objection to changes in familiar titles, except where they are positively misleading'.¹⁶³

This account of the history of titling practices pertaining to Lydgate's poem configures a dual tradition of transmission and designation of the text. In this tradition, as the use of the indefinite article suggests, *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* defines the text as a conventional love complaint, while *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, with its shift to the definite article, indicates an individualised and specifically courtly and knightly configuration of the poem which, as I will argue below, is consistent with developments in the reception of Chaucer's works. Although these two incarnations have coexisted and alternated in the history of the transmission of Lydgate's text, the chivalric contextualisation superseded and obscured the generic definition for a long time.

As for a chronology of the transition between the two designations, it is possible to advance a hypothesis based on the bibliographical evidence. Like Stow's notation to MS Fairfax 16, *The complaynt of þe blak Knyght*, offered as an alternative title to Lydgate's text, is not a contemporary, but a later addition in both MS Pepys 2006 and MS Tanner 346. In particular, MS Pepys 2006, which Edwards dates as 'very late fifteenth century', presents a number of added titles penned by later hands.

¹⁶² John Norton-Smith, ed., *John Lydgate: Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966). The critical edition of the poem can be found on pp. 47-66.

¹⁶³ Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970), note 1, p. 120.



¹⁶⁴ Although Edwards does not specify the date of these accretions, in consideration of their palaeographical characteristics and of the dating of the manuscript, it is plausible to assume that ‘The complaynt of y^e blak knyght’ (p. 1) records a designation which establishes itself as a standard title in the early-modern period.¹⁶⁵ MS Tanner’s addition, ‘The complaint of y^e black knight’ (f. 48v), confirms the post-medieval canonisation of this specific designation, as Robinson attributes it to the hand of Archbishop William Sancroft who had access to the codex in the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁶

Therefore, William Thynne’s 1532 edition of the works of Chaucer may represent the first occurrence in which the text is titled *The Complaint of the Black Knight*. By incorporating Lydgate’s poem in the Chaucer canon, Thynne’s book marks a shift in the tradition of transmission and reception of the text. While the first printed edition of the poem published by Wynkyn de Worde (?1531) still labels it *The Cōplaynte of a Louers Lyfe*, Stow’s 1561 (‘The complaint | of the blacke Knight’, f. 270r) and Speght’s three editions (1598; 1602; 1687; ‘The complaint of the | blacke Knight’, f. 257v) follow the titling practices set up by Thynne (‘The complaynt | of the blacke | knight’, f. 107v).¹⁶⁷ *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, the preferred early-modern designation, a title suggestive of medieval knighthood and romance literary traditions, marks a transition to a phase of the reception of the poem whereby its courtly and knightly affiliations are further enhanced. In fact, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, now an integral part of the Father’s works, is consistent with the

¹⁶⁴ Edwards, ‘Introduction’, in *Manuscript Pepys 2006: A Facsimile*, pp. xvii-xxxii (pp. xxiii; xxvii). MS Pepys 2006 is paginated, not foliated.

¹⁶⁵ In his critical edition of the poem, Henry Noble MacCracken also specifies that *The complaynt of þe blak Knyght*, the title provided in both MS Pepys 2006 and MS Tanner 346, was added in the sixteenth century. See Henry Noble MacCracken, ed., *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Early English Text Society, e.s., o.s. 107, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1911), II.382.

¹⁶⁶ Robinson, *Manuscript Tanner 346: A Facsimile*, p. xxiii.

¹⁶⁷ I have consulted the sixteenth-century editions of Chaucer’s works on EEBO; see <http://eebo.chadwyck.com> [accessed on 15 January 2009].

process of gentrification of Chaucer and the Chaucerian canon which is in operation in the Renaissance editions of his works. Single-author printed collections of the Father's *oeuvre* silence, therefore, the multivocality of medieval manuscript anthologies and testify to the canonical dominance of the 'founder of discursivity' whose corpus assimilates his successor's poem as a derivative re-writing.

In his discussion of the late sixteenth-century editions of Chaucer's works, Pearsall comments on the significance of some newly-introduced decorative elements, such as the poet's 'Progeny'. A desirable and appropriate aristocratic pedigree, Chaucer's gentrified genealogical tree validates Speght's editorial agenda and, specifically, his construction of the Father as a patrician and classical author.¹⁶⁸ With *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, the hermeneutic and generic focus appears, therefore, to shift from the lyrical and amorous to the chivalric. Moreover, the substitution of 'knight', an overtly masculine designation, for the non gender-specific 'lover', together with the obliteration of the feminine, as the 'lady' is removed from the title, emphasise the narrative and interpretative concentration on male identity and its centrality in traditional heroic and knightly texts. Once introduced in the Chaucer canon, Lydgate's poem contributes to the construction of Chaucer's literary *paternitas* as ostensibly aristocratic, masculine and chivalric. While *The Complaint of the Black Knight* participates in the Renaissance process of radicalisation of the construction of the Father's canon as lyrical and courtly, Lydgate's authorial agency is subsumed in the all-encompassing literary paternity of the 'founder of discursivity'.

However, despite evidence of a transition in titular practices, the two designations of Lydgate's poem are neither mutually exclusive, nor the discrete

¹⁶⁸ Derek Pearsall, 'Thomas Speght (ca. 1550-?)', in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, pp. 71-92 (p. 73).

phases of an evolutionary process. A paradigmatic illustration of the over-written variations and historical polyvocality of a palimpsested title, *The Complaint of the Black Knight* and *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, with their multiple temporalities, coexist in the space of the codex. Even though it is deemed as ‘a mere reprint of Thynne’s edition with a supplement’, Stow’s 1561 edition of Chaucer’s *oeuvre* benefits from his interest in and knowledge of manuscripts and archival material.¹⁶⁹ His documented familiarity with late medieval codices, especially those related to Shirley, is a plausible explanation for his awareness and acknowledgement of the dual titular identity of Lydgate’s poem.¹⁷⁰ An element of the introductory apparatus of his 1561 edition is ‘A table of all the | names of the woorkes, con- | teigned in this volume’. Item 15 of this list of works included in the collection is designated as follows: ‘The complainte of the blacke Knight, other- | wise called the complaint of a louers life’. Unlike Stow, Pearsall identifies a precise chronological development of the history of the transmission of the text and its title: ‘*The Complaint of the Black Knight*, or as its early scribes and latest editor [John Norton-Smith] prefer to call it, *A Complaynt of a Loueres Lyfe*’.¹⁷¹ The early modern editor presents, instead, the two titular traditions as co-terminous and contiguous and, incidentally, so do MacCracken and Symons.¹⁷² Rather than evolutionary and teleological, the transmission and reception of this text unfolds according to culturally-specific preoccupations. In other

¹⁶⁹ Hudson, ‘John Stow (1525?-1605)’, pp. 53-54.

¹⁷⁰ For more information on Stow’s annotations and consultation of late medieval manuscripts of English verse, see Hudson, ‘John Stow (1525?-1605)’, pp. 55-56; Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. xvi; xxiii-xxix; A. S. G. Edwards, ‘John Stow and Middle English Literature’, in *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past*, ed. Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie (London: British Library, 2004), pp. 109-118; Connolly, ‘Afterwards: The Lost Manuscripts and Shirley’s Successors’, in *John Shirley*, pp. 170-180 (pp. 172-175).

¹⁷¹ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 84.

¹⁷² Symons uses a double designation for Lydgate’s poem, as her edition of the text bears the title ‘*A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight*’; however, she refers to the love complaint predominantly as *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*; see Symons, ‘*A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight*’, p. 91. Although MacCracken preserves the poem’s Chaucerian affiliation by titling it *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, he also offers, in the form of a

words, the editorial choice of one of the two co-existing paradigms appears to be informed by dominant literary tastes and concerns, such as a late-medieval anxiety to legitimise the English vernacular canon through the establishment of affiliations with French courtly lyrics, as I will explain in some detail in Chapter III, and the early modern preoccupation with endowing the Father of the English language with a gentrified genealogy. This titular fluidity is also paradigmatic of the dispersed field of authorial authority in the material space of medieval and Tudor books which accommodate the multiple constructions and temporalities of a work and its reception. Despite its plural incarnations and appropriations, Chaucer's lyrical and courtly paternity appears to be positioned as a dominant and unifying discourse which rationalises this dispersed textual field, as it canonises and, simultaneously, assimilates the work of his successors.

2. *The Complaint of the Black Knight*: Chaucer's *Paternitas* of the Canon.

The alternation between the two titular traditions signals, therefore, changing interpretative stances towards this literary piece. As Helen Phillips remarks in her discussion of the modern title of *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, a work's designation affects its reception and critical assessments; in fact, the use of the plural form 'awntyrs' instead of the singular 'aunter' endorses a reading of the poem as a bipartite structure. Similarly, *The Complaint of the Black Knight* establishes associations between Lydgate's poem and the Chaucerian canon, and, in so doing, informs critical expectations regarding its content and form.¹⁷³ In other words, a title is an act of

subtitle, a variant of the late medieval designation *Complaynte of a Louers Lyfe*; see MacCracken, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, II.382-410.

¹⁷³ Phillips associates the history of the transmission of the title of *The Awntyrs off Arthure* with other late-medieval texts whose modern designations affect their critical reception. She lists *The Complaint of the Black Knight* alongside Chaucer's 'The Complaint of Mars' and 'The Complaint of Venus'; see Phillips, 'The Awntyrs off Arthure: Structure and Meaning. A Reassessment', 73.

hermeneutics aimed at guiding a reader's response to a literary work. In particular, since *The Complaint of the Black Knight* does not occur as a late-medieval rubric in any of the manuscripts that I have examined, it is an editorial and interpretative construct. Editors emphasise the text's knightly connotations, in order to inscribe it in a chivalric discourse and to cement Lydgate's affiliation to Chaucer and Chaucerian poetry.

Specifically, the reference to the Black Knight is, of course, reminiscent of Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess* and its male protagonist, a knight lamenting the betrayal of his beloved. The structure of Lydgate's text is also affiliated to Chaucer's dream vision, as it begins with a conventional garden frame, the traditional *locus amoenus* setting depicted during its spring renewal, followed by the love complaint. Despite a number of elements of continuity between *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* and its precursors, that is the Chaucerian tradition and the French *dits amoureux*, Lydgate's poem introduces some noteworthy changes to the narrative conventions of the genre.¹⁷⁴ The conspicuous absence of a restorative dream, the introduction of elements of disruption and uncertainty in the description of nature and its metamorphoses, as well as the lack of a dialogue between the narrator and the lover validating the narrator's account of the lover's lament are among the principal illustrations of the extent of Lydgate's innovation and experimentation.¹⁷⁵ Although the quality of these variations is not radical, they indicate that the poem is an appropriation and reworking of Chaucerian tropes, rather than a mere unquestioning imitation of a popular genre. Lydgate's modifications of the formal and thematic

¹⁷⁴ For a discussion of analogues and sources, see Symons, 'A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight: Introduction', in *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints*, pp. 71-88 (pp. 71-79); Colin Wilcockson, *The Book of the Duchess*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 329-330.

¹⁷⁵ For an analysis of the narrative innovations introduced by Lydgate, see Martin J. Duffell, 'Lydgate's Metrical Inventiveness and His Debt to Chaucer', *Parergon* 18 (2000), 227-249; Symons, 'A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight: Introduction', pp. 72-78.

constraints of the genre, together with his contribution to the development of the English vernacular canon are, however, contained and rerouted by the editorial fabrication of a Chaucerian title, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*. The hermeneutic rationale behind the choice of this specific designation is made apparent by its relative narrative irrelevance and inaccuracy. In *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, the lover is never referred to as the Black Knight, but once in more unassuming terms as ‘a man | In blake and white colour’.¹⁷⁶ Editorial and ideological, this Chaucerian title is an act of authorial usurpation, since it subordinates Lydgate’s poem to Chaucer’s literary *paternitas* and assimilates it to the Father’s *oeuvre*.

The implications of endowing Lydgate’s complaint with a Chaucerian title are discernible in the scholarly assessments of the text. Following nineteenth-century critical responses to Lydgate’s works, scholarship would deem his literary production over-reliant on Chaucerian forms and tropes.¹⁷⁷ Among others, Pearsall describes *The Complaint of the Black Knight* as ‘a tissue of borrowings’ and Norton-Smith employs a depreciatory rhetoric in his analysis of Lydgate’s experimentations with the conventions of the love complaint: ‘[t]he technical regression nullifies Chaucer’s important addition’.¹⁷⁸ New approaches to Lydgate studies have, however, attempted to refocus the critical debate from aesthetic evaluations of the poet’s rhetorical and poetical skills in relation to Chaucer’s paternity and inventiveness, towards an assessment of his popularity in the fifteenth century and his contribution to the English vernacular canon.¹⁷⁹ The standardisation and longevity of *The Complaint of*

¹⁷⁶ John Lydgate, ‘*A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight*’, in *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints*, pp. 91-111 (ll. 130-131). All further references are from this edition and will be given in parentheses in the text.

¹⁷⁷ For a survey of scholarship assessing Lydgate’s works principally on the basis of his relation to Chaucer and focusing mainly on the inadequacy of the results, see Symons, ‘*A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight*: Introduction’, pp. 83-88.

¹⁷⁸ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 85; Norton-Smith, *John Lydgate: Poems*, p. 161.

¹⁷⁹ Derek Pearsall, ‘Lydgate as Innovator’, *Modern Language Quarterly* 53:1 (1992), 5-22; Susan Bianco, ‘A Black Monk in the Rose Garden: Lydgate and the *Dit Amoureux* Tradition’, *The Chaucer*

the Black Knight is, therefore, a paratextual and editorial signifier of a hermeneutic and critical tradition which dominated Lydgatean scholarship and reception for a number of centuries.

The history of the transmission of Lydgate's poem explains and contextualises its proximity and assimilation to Chaucer's canon. Most of the manuscript authorities containing copies of the text are predominantly Chaucerian collections. Specifically, apart from Edinburgh National Library of Scotland MS 1.1.6 (the Bannatyne manuscript; 1568), Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 16500 (the Asloan manuscript; early sixteenth century) and Shirley's MS Additional 16165, namely two collections of Scottish authors and a largely Lydgatean anthology, the other codices contain mainly Chaucerian material.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, not only is the transmission of *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* closely related to the Father's canon and codices, but it is also often attributed to him. In particular, Shirley's MS Additional 16165 is the only witness in which Lydgate is identified as the author of the poem, while MS Bannatyne and Chepman and Myllar's 1508 printed edition, exemplar of MS Asloan, ascribe the work to Chaucer.¹⁸¹ The disregard for Shirley's attribution and the tradition established in the sixteenth century by the two Scottish books had a remarkable longevity. All sixteenth-century editions of Chaucer's works, namely

Review 34 (1999), 60-68; Susan Bianco, 'New Perspectives on Lydgate's Courtly Verse', in *Nation, Court and Culture*, pp. 95-115; Symons, 'A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight: Introduction', pp. 71-88.

¹⁸⁰ The other six manuscript witnesses are: MS Fairfax 16, MS Tanner 346, MS Digby 181, MS Pepys 2006, MS Bodley 638, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24. For a list of manuscripts and early printed editions, see *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe or The Complaint of the Black Knight: Introduction*, pp. 89-90. For a discussion of the principles governing the selection of texts in these collections and their degree of engagement with Chaucer's and Chaucer-related works, see Edwards, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: A 'Transitional' Collection', pp. 53-67. MS Bannatyne is available as a facsimile; see Denton Fox and William A. Ringler, eds, *The Bannatyne Manuscript: National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 1.1.6* (London: Scolar Press and National Library of Scotland, 1980).

¹⁸¹ See Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar, eds, *The Maying or Disport of Chaucer* (Edinburgh, 1508). This early printed edition is available in facsimile as a collection of nine tracts from the Scottish press; see William Beattie, ed., *The Chepman and Myllar Prints* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 1950). Sally Mapstone has recently produced a digitised edition of the 1950 facsimile; see Sally Mapstone, ed., *The Chepman and Myllar Prints* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society and The National Library of Scotland, 2008).

Thynne's, Stow's and Speght's, incorporate *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* in the Chaucerian canon, as they locate it unquestioningly after *A Treatise of the Astrolabe*.¹⁸²

The subsequent history of the text's authorial attribution is documented by MacCracken. In his edition of Lydgate's minor poems, he surveys the work of scholars who, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, attempted to fix the Lydgate canon. According to his account, following John Bale's and John Stow's sixteenth-century stance, neither Bishop Tanner in the eighteenth century nor Joseph Ritson and Harris Nicholas one hundred years later included *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* or *The Complaint of the Black Knight* in their lists of texts ascribed to Lydgate.¹⁸³ 500 years since Shirley's attribution of the poem to the Monk of Bury in MS Additional 16165, MacCracken is the first editor to reinstate *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* in the Lydgatean canon among other 'Genuine Poems'; even so, he preserves the Chaucerian affiliation by titling the poem *The Complaint of the Black Knight*. At the end of the nineteenth century, Walter W. Skeat and E. Krausser were still editing the poem as an integral part of Chaucer's *oeuvre*.¹⁸⁴

In spite of the hermeneutic differences between the two titular traditions, both bring into focus a central preoccupation in the reception and transmission of the text.

As previously pointed out, the shift from the indefinite articles of *A Complaynte of a*

¹⁸² Notwithstanding Lydgate's popularity in the late fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century, neither Caxton's quartos nor John Mychell's printed editions of the poet's works include *The Complaint of the Black Knight*. This is arguably due to its assimilation to the Chaucer canon; see Alexandra Gillespie, 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos: Miscellanies from Manuscript to Print', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 12 (2000), 1-25; Julia Boffey, 'John Mychell and the Printing of Lydgate in the 1530s', *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 67:2 (2004), 251-261; and Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and their Books, 1473-1557* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁸³ MacCracken, *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, pp. xxxvi-xlvi. John Bale compiled a Lydgate canon and published it in *Scriptores Brit. Centur. Quinta* (1548; 1559); John Stow's list appears at the end of *The Siege of Thebes* in the 1598 edition of Chaucer's works edited by Speght; and Bishop Tanner's version of the canon can be found in *Bibliotheca* (1748).

¹⁸⁴ E. Krausser, 'The Complaint of the Black Knight', *Anglia* 19 (1896), 211-290; Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, in *Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897); Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Complete Works of Chaucer*, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894-1897).

Lovers Lyfe to the definite articles of *The Complaint of the Black Knight* is suggestive of a transition between a conventional and paradigmatic complaint, which complies with the constraints of the genre, and a distinctive and individualised designation, which is founded upon a recognisable character within an established Chaucerian tradition. Nevertheless, the two titles, and the titular variants offered in various manuscript rubrics, are predicated upon a similar concentration on social discourse. The gentrification of the lover and the narrative, and the poem's network of generic affiliations align Lydgate's love complaint to the dominant literary tastes of the court and the provincial patriciate as identified in Scattergood's survey. The aristocratic configuration of the text appears, therefore, to be the hermeneutic stance discernible in the codicological evidence emerging from the manuscript witnesses and the printed editions of the poem.

This courtly construction is echoed by the title offered in MS Digby 181. A discrete and singular instance, the manuscript designation reads 'the man in þe erber'.¹⁸⁵ This is a reference to the *locus amoenus* frame of the poem; in particular, it hints at the 'erber grene' (l. 125), or the 'delytable place' (l. 120), within the walled garden in which the narrator overhears, unseen, the lover's lament. Both MacCracken and Symons translate 'erber' as arbour.¹⁸⁶ However, the *MED* supplements their definition by offering a number of significations ranging from 'a pleasure garden' and 'an herb garden', to 'a bower covered with flowers, vines, shrubs, or the like'.¹⁸⁷ These definitions, far from being mutually exclusive, point at one of the central tropes of a number of French-derived and courtly literary traditions, such as romance, the love complaint and the dream vision. In these texts, the walled garden is the

¹⁸⁵ This is the title as transcribed in Symons, 'Textual Notes to *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*', p. 136.

¹⁸⁶ MacCracken, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, p. 388; and Symons, '*A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* or *The Complaint of the Black Knight*', p. 95.

¹⁸⁷ Kurath and Kuhn, *MED*, vol. G-H (1963), p. 660. The entry I have consulted is the variant 'herber'.

conventional frame of a lover's lament for unreciprocated love and, at the same time, the space of the healing dream.

Therefore, the title found in MS Digby 181 aligns Lydgate's work to these affiliated poetic genres, by providing an iconic tableau which focuses on the lover in the *locus amoenus* as a primary structural and narrative feature; in so doing, this designation promotes the courtly connotations of the poem and, consequently, its cultural prestige. The iconographic resonances of MS Digby's title, 'the man in þe erber', are made apparent by its similarities to Chaucer's portrait featured in MS Takamiya 24 (see Illustration 4, p. 30). In the ex-Devonshire codex, the poet is portrayed seated on a turf bench in a pensive, dream-like pose. Although I discussed the social implications of MS Takamiya 24's courtly iconography of Chaucer in Chapter I, it is here relevant to reflect upon the relation between elements of these two codices' *ordinatio* and their *compilatio*. As Edwards points out, unlike the manuscripts of the Oxford group, that is verse anthologies of Chaucerian dream visions and lyrics, MS Digby 181 belongs to a family of manuscripts descending from MS Gg.4.27 which principally concentrates on disseminating Chaucer's longer works, such as *Troilus and Criseyde*.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, MS Takamiya is largely a collection of *The Canterbury Tales*, with the exception of Lydgate's *Life of St. Margaret*.¹⁸⁹ In other words, in spite of the broader context of the *compilatio* of MS Takamiya 24 and MS Digby 181, two codices that do not engage primarily with Chaucer's lyrical and courtly production, the poet's portrait and the title 'the man in þe erber' locate the Father and the poetic tradition that he establishes in an aristocratic discourse. As elements of a network of textual, paratextual and generic associations, they reroute the Chaucerian canon as a tradition complying with the demands of

¹⁸⁸ Edwards, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: A "Transitional" Collection', p. 56.

¹⁸⁹ For a description of MS Takamiya 24, see Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, II. 237-241.

patrician literary tastes. In brief, the variant forms of the titular apparatuses found in both manuscript collections and printed authorities of Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* act as hermeneutic strategies that inform a reader's reception of the text and through which the poem receives social and literary validation.

In sum, fifteenth-century manuscript collection and Tudor printed editions of Chaucer's works trace unequivocal lines of patrilineal affiliation between Lydgate's work and the tradition of courtly vernacular literature that the Father, as a 'founder of discursivity', codified and disseminated. In other words, the unstable titular tradition of Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe* or *The Complaint of the Black Knight* demonstrates the centrality and foundational role of Chaucer's paternity by appropriating the narrative tropes, formal devices, and social situations of the accomplished modes of courtly versification which Chaucer established in the English vernacular. Firmly inscribed in the literary discourse founded by the Father, Lydgate's poem and the codices which transmit it are sanctioned and vicariously afforded the excellence of the hegemonic culture reproduced in Chaucer's works. However, as a textual principle of coherence within the polyvocality of a manuscript collection, his paternity provides an authoritative paradigm of authorship and canonical stability which not only validates, but also assimilates his successor's work and usurps his authorial agency.

SECTION IV

'TITLED COMPENDIOUSLY': GENERIC COMPLEXITY AND NORMATIVITY

1. 'The Complaint of Mars' and 'The Complaint of Venus' in Shirley's

Manuscripts: Chaucer's Courtly Mythopoeia.

As the case of Lydgate's complaint testifies, the generic multivocality displayed in a title's variations locates a work in an authorising network of prestigious poetic forms. Instead of granting a text a stable and distinct identity, multiple designations consolidate its position in the canon through an expansive process of textual affiliation which maximises a text's generic associations with dominant literary tastes. This plurality is, however, rationalised in the physical space of the codex through its compositional programme, predominantly centred on Chaucer's courtly paternity, as the ratiocinative organisation imposed on knowledge by the practices of biblical exegesis is transferred onto manuscript production.

As I have pointed out previously in this chapter, Genette identifies 'genre indication' as one of the principal aspects and preoccupations of titling. A resonant illustration of the centrality of genre in textual designation is the colophon to 'The Complaint of Mars' and 'The Complaint of Venus' in MS R.3.20; it functions as a link between the two poems and 'Fortune': 'here filloweþe a balade made by Chaucier of þe | louer and of dame ffortune' (p. 142). Rather than providing 'Fortune' with a specific and succinct title, the colophon offers a multiplicity of information about the poem: authorial attribution, genre and a reference to the two interlocutors. While 'Fortune' is introduced to the reader as a 'balade', the first running title supplements the initial designation with further details: 'Dialogue bytwene þe lover

and fortune' (p. 143). Here the titling apparatus draws attention to content and rhetoric; the poem is presented as a negotiation between speakers, or as a debate on amorous matters in the tradition of the courts of love. This courtly configuration is also apparent in the second running title associated with 'Fortune': 'Balade ryale By Chaucer' (p. 144). Here, the emphasis on *rime royal*, or the specific metrical structure of 'Fortune', combines a formal designation of the text with social discourse, through an overt alignment of the poem and of Chaucer's *paternitas* to literary practices and tastes generated within and enjoyed by courtly or royal coteries.

Similarly, 'The Complaint of Mars' and 'The Complaint of Venus', presented as a coherent textual unit in MS R.3.20, are endowed with a plurality of generic incarnations.¹⁹⁰ Shirley's lengthy introductory rubric configures the rhetoric and content of 'The Complaint of Mars' as 'pallyance':

¹⁹⁰ 'The Complaint of Mars' and 'The Complaint of Venus' survive in eight manuscript copies. In six of them they appear together: MS Fairfax 16, MS Tanner 346, MS Pepys 2006 (copied twice by Hand B and Hand E), MS R.3.20 and MS Arch. Selden. B. 24. MS Longleat 258 and MS Harley 7333 only feature passages from 'The Complaint of Mars', ll. 43-298 and ll. 1-176 respectively; instead, MS Ashmole 59 and Cambridge University Library MS Ff.1.6 include exclusively 'The Complaint of Venus'. In the codices in which they are both present, 'The Complaint of Venus' always immediately follows 'The Complaint of Mars'. In MS Fairfax 16, both the table of contents ('[T]he complaynt of Mars and Venus', f. 2r) and the title in the body of the manuscript ('Complaynt of Mars and Venus', f. 15r) designate the two poems as a textual unit. The colophon to 'The Complaint of Venus' confirms the tendency to identify the two texts as one work: 'Here endith the compleynt | of venus and Mars' (f. 20v). However, the manuscript's *ordinatio* gives a firm sense of the texts' discrete identities, as the table of contents expands upon its previous designation and presents the two poems separately: '[T]he complaynt of Mars by him-self' and '[T]he complaynt of Venus by hir-self (f. 2r). Also, in the body of the codex, the beginning of 'The Complaint of Venus' is signalled by a marginal heading: 'The compleynt of venus'. Similarly, the *mise-en-page* of MS Tanner 346 suggests that the two texts, albeit associated, are individual pieces. Although no titles were assigned to the two poems by the scribe, the decoration demarcates them as separate texts; the beginning of 'The Complaint of Mars' is signalled by an illuminated initial (f. 67v) to which in the seventeenth century Archbishop Sancroft added 'The Complaint of Mars'. Furthermore, the *incipit* of 'The Complaint of Venus' is marked by a *littera notabilior* and horizontal decoration stemming from the flourished ascendants of the first line (f. 69v). On the same folio, following his customary annotating practices, Sancroft adds 'The Complaint of Venus'. MS Pepys 2006 presents a resonant case, as it combines the two paradigms of transmission. The poems are copied twice in the codex by two different hands. The texts penned by Hand B (pp. 115-124) are set up as separate poems. An unilluminated initial ('g') indicates the beginning of the 'Proem' (p. 115) and marginal headings signal the beginning of both complaints: 'The 'Compleynt of Mars' (p. 119), added by the scribe, and a compressed 'Compleynt | of | Venus' (p. 122), penned by a later hand. On the contrary, the abridged version of the poems copied by Hand E offers no separation between them (pp. 378-382). Finally, the evidence from MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 may assist in summarising the reception and transmission of these two complaints. In the manuscript's *compilatio* they are inserted contiguously (ff. 132r-137r), but borders and illuminated initials at the beginning of both texts, as well

Loo yee louers gladeþe and comferteþe you of þallyance entrayted
bytwene þe hardy and furyous Mars þe god | of armes and Venus þe
double goddesse of loue made | by Geffrey Chaucier at þe
comandement of þe renommed | and excellent prynce my lord þe duc
John of Lancastre (pp. 129-130)

A dominant rhetoric, the semantic field of negotiation, allegiance and diplomatic relations apparent in this rubric is reiterated in the first set of running titles:

‘þallyance bytwene | Mars and Venus’ (pp. 130-131). These designations are also complemented by a generic definition found in the marginal note (‘Complaint of Mars’, p. 135) which signals the transition between two sections of the text, ‘The Story’ and the actual complaint. Rather than ambiguous or contradictory, Shirley’s titling of the poem explores the complexities of the complaint as a poetic genre, or, in Scattergood’s words, as ‘a type of expression’.¹⁹¹ Scattergood emphasises that, while lament and loss underpin this poetic form, the politico-ambassadorial debate and the articulation of a request are all but peripheral to these types of poems: ‘some complaints, particularly ‘begging’ poems, of which Chaucer wrote several, have a practical end—the acquisition of favour, position, or money.’¹⁹² Consistent with Scattergood’s observation, the *compilatio* of MS R.3.20 reinforces these generic and rhetorical associations, as it incorporates two complaints (‘The Complaint of Mars’ and ‘The Complaint of Venus’), a begging poem (‘Fortune’) and a philosophical and political lyric (‘Truth’) in quire 22, a self-contained and coherent gathering of Chaucerian courtly poetry. This multifarious intertextual network of affiliations underpins, therefore, the fabrication of Chaucer’s *paternitas* of the canon as

as a centred heading for ‘The Complaint of Venus’ (f. 136r), testify to their discrete textual identity and circulation as separated poems. Associated by authorial attribution and by their courtly and classical subject matter, in most authorities, however, they preserve a degree of textual independence. For attempts to establish links between the two poems, see G. H. Cowling, ‘Chaucer’s *Complaints of Mars and Venus*’, *Review of English Studies* 8 (1926), 405-410 and Rodney Merrill, ‘Chaucer’s *Broche of Thebes*: The Unity of *The Complaint of Mars* and *The Complaint of Venus*’, *Literary Monographs* 5 (1973), 3-61. On the manuscript transmission of the texts, see Lenaghan, ‘The Short Poems’, pp. 1186-1187.

¹⁹¹ Scattergood, ‘The Short Poems’, p. 465.

¹⁹² Scattergood, ‘The Short Poems’, p. 466.

aristocratic and lyrical; a complex socio-cultural construct, the poet's articulation of patrician literary practices encompasses an appetite for the amorous debates at the courts of love, philosophical *gravitas*, and a portrayal of the instability of life at court. Connolly interrogates and explores the principles governing the compendious *compilatio* of MS R.3.20. In her discussion of Shirley's treatment of 'The Complaint of Mars' and 'The Complaint of Venus' as 'companion pieces', and his specific interest in the circumstances of their commission, she draws attention to the scribe's preoccupation with constructing a 'courtly context' for these complaints.¹⁹³ The accumulation of prestigious poetic designations for 'The Complaint of Mars' and its association with other equally desirable genres are, therefore, aimed at consolidating the poem's canonical status.

This plurality of prominent generic identifications is accreted by the details of royal occasion and composition provided by the poem's colophon:

Dus endeþe here þis complaint whiche some men sayne | was made
 by my lady of york doughter to þe kyng of | Spaygne and my lord of
 huntyngdon some tyme duc | Excestre and filowing begynneþe a
 balade translated out | of frenshe into englisshe by Chaucier Geffrey
 þe frenshe | made *Sir* Otes de Grauntsome knight Savosyen (p. 139)

The accuracy of Shirley's topical reference to an alleged courtly scandal involving John Holland (1355-1400), Earl of Huntingdon and Duke of Exeter, and Isabel of Castile (1355-1392), wife of Edmund Langley, Duke of York, is debatable.¹⁹⁴

Nevertheless, whether historically reliable or not, the colophon enhances the text's aristocratic connotations and Chaucer's courtly connections, as both Isabel of York and Holland were related to John of Gaunt who, according to Shirley, is the

¹⁹³ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 85.

¹⁹⁴ For an account of this alleged scandalous affair, see Skeat, *The Complete Works of Chaucer*, I:65-66; 86; George Cowling, *Chaucer* (London: Methuen & Co., 1927), pp. 1-64; 110-111; Laila Z. Gross, 'Explanatory Notes: The Complaint of Mars', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 1078-1081 (p. 1079); Minnis, 'Chaucer's Shorter Poems: Social and Cultural Context', in *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems*, pp. 9-35 (p. 30); Scattergood, 'The Short Poems', p. 473; Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 85-86.

commissioner of 'The Complaint of Mars'.¹⁹⁵ Also, the same semantic field of patronage, knightly service and vassalage, which characterises the introductory rubric to 'The Complaint of Mars' ('at þe comandement of þe renommed | and excellent prynce my lord þe duc John of Lancastre'), is replicated in the running title of the contiguous 'The Complaint of Venus': 'Balade made by Chaucer | At þe reverence of a lady þ^l loved a knyght' (pp. 140-141). In MS R.3.20 Shirley reinforces the textual and rhetorical proximity of the two poems, by constructing a topical association between them and by presenting 'The Complaint of Venus' as a continuation or answer to 'The Complaint of Mars'. The colophon to the latter reads:

Hit is sayde þat Graunsome made þis last balade for venus |
resembled to my lady of york aunswering þe complaint of | Mars (p.
142)

Defined respectively as a 'balade' and a 'complaint', the two poems are presented as a unified narrative which voices the amorous dialogue between two members of the aristocracy. While the titular apparatus accommodates a plurality of courtly genres, it also introduces validating references to the French source of 'The Complaint of Venus', five ballads composed by Oton de Graunson, and to the circumstances of the poem's aristocratic commission and composition.¹⁹⁶ Chaucer's paternal authority is, therefore, underpinned by his access to the dominant discourse of French literary culture whose validating practices he transfers onto the emergent English vernacularity.

¹⁹⁵ John Holland was married to Elizabeth of Lancaster, John of Gaunt's daughter, and Isabel was married to Gaunt's brother.

¹⁹⁶ On Graunson's five ballads as the source of Chaucer's 'The Complaint of Venus', see John Scattergood, 'Chaucer's Complaint of Venus and the 'Curiosite' of Graunson', *Essays in Criticism* 44:3 (1994), 171-189; Helen Phillips, 'The Complaint of Venus: Chaucer and de Graunson', in *The Medieval Translator*, vol. IV, ed. Roger Ellis and Ruth Evans (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), pp. 86-103; Jean-François Kosta-Théfaine, 'Teaching Chaucer without (or with) Translations: An Introduction to Othon de Grandson's 'Les cinq balades ensuivans' and Chaucer's 'The Complaint of Venus'', in *Approaches to Teaching Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and the Shorter Poems*, ed. Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2007), pp. 154-158.

As the colophon to ‘The Complaint of Mars’ emphasises the literary prestige of the two poems, similarly the running title of ‘The Complaint of Venus’ situates firmly its addressee, ‘a lady’, and the object of her love, ‘a knyght’, in a courtly discourse. Nevertheless, their identity remains unspecified. Indeed, as the use of the indefinite article suggests, a ‘lady’ designates a generic and conventional character in a courtly lyric. Yet, following Shirley’s topical rubric, this apposition can also be construed as a reference to Isabel of York, or, alternatively, as Venus, ‘a lady’ lamenting a love loss, in the tradition of the amorous complaint. To the gentrification of Venus as Isabel and, by extension, of Mars as Holland, her beloved ‘knyght’, the titular apparatus dialectically aligns the mythologisation of the two aristocrats, whom Shirley imagines engaged in a dialogue disguised as the two mythical figures.¹⁹⁷ Ultimately, the two poems are inscribed in a courtly mythopoeia of the Father’s works which appears to serve Shirley’s editorial agenda. In other words, elements of the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of the codex conflate the classical, amorous and aristocratic qualities of the texts and, in so doing, associate Chaucer’s literary *paternitas* with dominant cultural tastes and validate the authority of Shirley’s collection in which they are included.

2. The ‘kalundare of John Shirley’ and the Scholastic Origins of Titular Multivocality.

From the codicological and contextual evidence stemming from fifteenth-century manuscript collections centred on Chaucer’s courtly paternity, titles encompass the generic and thematic complexities of a text, instead of operating according to principles of synthesis and homogeneous labelling. Such multivocality is, however,

¹⁹⁷ Minnis reads Shirley’s ‘cryptic comment’ on the scandalous affair between Holland and Isabel of York as a reference to a courtly disguising or mumming during which the poems were performed by the two aristocrats; see Minnis, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems*, p. 30.

accommodated and subjected to a process of rational organisation which becomes apparent in the compositional programme of the medieval codex. For example, the ‘kalundare of John Shirley’, which presumably originally appeared in MS R.3.20 and was subsequently transcribed by Stow on ff. 177v-179r of British Library MS

Additional 29729, functions as an editorial manifesto:

looke this calender and than proced
for ther is titled compendiously
all ye storyes hole by and by
eche after other in ther chapytels
as yt sheweth pleyne by ther tytles¹⁹⁸

A ‘calender’ imposes ‘ordre’ upon the miscellaneous and, otherwise, disjointed textual components of a manuscript anthology. As discussed in Chapter I, practices of *compilatio* and *ordinatio*, emerging from twelfth-century scriptural exegesis, are strategies to rationalise and systematise knowledge in the space of the codex. A verse preface, in particular, is a normative act by means of which Shirley exhorts his readers authoritatively to ‘looke’ and be guided by the paratextual signs demarcating his collection. Either ‘a system of chronological reckoning’, ‘a list’, or a ‘guide’ and ‘model’, a ‘calender’ suggests that the compiler sets out to create a logically-structured sequence of texts which is fixed temporally as well as spatially.¹⁹⁹ Through naming and ordering, ‘storyes’ are hierarchised and endowed with a ‘playne’ or stable identity. A verse preface, therefore, fabricates a narrative of order and coherence which is founded upon a dialectical relation between ‘all’ and ‘eche’, that is compendiousness and individuality, multiplicity and consistency. Expansive rather than succinct, the titular apparatus combines accuracy and clarity with a concern for comprehensiveness and thoroughness of reference and designation. It may also imply

¹⁹⁸ The full transcription of Shirley’s verse preface copied by Stow can be found in Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 208-211 (ll. 4-8, p. 209). All further quotations are from this edition and will be given in parentheses in the text.

¹⁹⁹ Kurath and Kuhn, *MED*, Vol. C-D (1959), pp. 17-18 (p. 17).

a normative technology, that is ‘a guide, model; a reminder, a warning’; this connotation would augment the representative and compendious function of the ‘kalundare’ to signify a grammar, or a set of conventions and norms which are codified in order to provide access to the privileged discourse of courtly practices and coteries articulated in Chaucer’s works.

Ultimately, a ‘calender’ is a hermeneutic construction which fictionalises a compiler’s work and a manuscript’s *compilatio*:

and for I haue but shorte space
i must ye lyttler ouer pase
besechyng you to be not wroth
ffor as I could wt outen coth
and as my febles would suffyse
in my rude vplandishe wise
thus haue I them in ordre sete (ll. 9-15)

This editorial programme, composed in rhyming couplets, utilises rhetorical and formal devices, such as *captatio benevolentiae*, that align it to the literary works it cites and positions in the codex. Notwithstanding the conventional apology for the collection’s shortcomings and Shirley’s lack of literary sophistication, he asserts his directive role as editor. Metafictional and metacritical, the verse preface claims the compiler’s “authorial” control over his collection. According to Shirley’s manifesto, this narrative of normativity and power manifests primarily through the titular apparatus as a tangible codicological means of policing meaning, or the reader’s reception of the manuscript and its content. In particular, paraphrasing Hoek, Genette defines titology as the study of acts of hermeneutics, since the title is ‘an artificial object, an artefact of reception and commentary’.²⁰⁰ The titular construct, as well as informing the reader’s response with authority and clarity, inserts individual texts in a

²⁰⁰ Genette, *Paratexts*, pp. 55-56.

validating network of prestigious genres that Shirley enumerates anaphorically in a comprehensive and heterogeneous list:

of morall mater and holynesse,
of salmes and of ympnes expresse
of loue and lawe and of pleynges
of lordes of ladyes of qwenes of kynges (ll. 27-30)

Encompassing religious, legal, amorous, moral and courtly literary discourses,

Shirley's collection conflates programmatic coherence with generic

compendiousness. Simultaneously, he inscribes his codex in the validating literary

tradition of aristocratic versification which Chaucer establishes in the English

vernacular. In the specific case of manuscript titles, a designation functions as an

editorial instrument which, together with other contiguous elements of the *ordinatio*,

provides a plurality of exegetical information about a text and its connection to

dominant cultural and literary tastes.

The epistemological tenets of the titular dialectic between heterogeneous and

homogeneous designation can be traced in scriptural exegesis. In his study of

developments in twelfth-century biblical commentary, Minnis categorises various

types of *accessus ad auctores* and defines 'type C' as a paradigmatic and influential

form. Commentaries on academic texts of all disciplines opened with a prologue

providing interpretative information about the author and the work. The title, or

titulus (inscriptio, nomen) libris, with, among others, *nomen auctoris, intentio*

auctoris, materia libris, is an integral component of the hermeneutic apparatus upon

which a prologue is structured.²⁰¹ As Gilbert of Poitiers's appropriation of the 'type

C' *accessus* suggests, comprehensiveness becomes an epistemological and

hermeneutic imperative. Minnis explains that Gilbert conceived the Psalter as a

whole:

²⁰¹ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 19-25.

the unity of the Psalter is elaborated into a comprehensive view of a work in which the parts interact and ultimately harmonise with each other, thereby serving the whole, while the whole accommodates a variety which is expressed through its different parts.²⁰²

In Gilbert's words, this harmony and cohesiveness between the components of a text is articulated extra-textually by the exegetical material included in the *accessus*:

The whole Christ, head and members, is the material (*materia*) of this work, concerning which the prophet proceeds in this mode (*modus*): sometimes he speaks of the whole together, that is, Christ and the Church, and sometimes of separate parts, that is, Christ or the Church. [...] He deals with this material and in this mode with this intention (*intentio*) [...] The title of the work (*titulus libri*) is: the Book of Hymns begins.²⁰³

The mystical union of Christ and the Church constitutes the theological tenet which informs textual and hermeneutic coherence and compendiousness. The analogy between the body of Christ, 'head and members', and the rhetorical elements of biblical exegesis is founded upon a dialectic between multiplicity and unity, or discrete components and their relation to the whole. A title, as a 'member' of a codex's *ordinatio* and exegetical apparatus, is, by definition, inextricably related to a work in its entirety, that is the intertextual and generic connections that link an individual text to the collection in which it is located and, ultimately, to the canon in general. Like other contiguous elements of the exegetical *ordinatio* of a codex, the titling apparatus is a complex interpretative *locus* which accommodates and negotiates variety; as such it is comprehensive, accretive and expansive. A preoccupation with multiplicity ultimately derives from exegetical practices.

Also, as 'an artificial object, an artefact of reception and commentary', the titular system signposts the text in the material space of the manuscript, by providing interpretative guidance in navigating the work and its signification. Genette's

²⁰² Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 53-54.

²⁰³ Minnis translates this passage from Oxford Balliol MS 36, f. 2r; for his translation and commentary, see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 52-54. The original Latin text is transcribed in note 68, p. 240.

reconstruction of the problematic etymology of the word *titulus* confirms its function as a hermeneutic demarcation of a text; according to his account, a title was ‘a sort of label (*titulus*) more or less firmly affixed to the knob (*umbilicus*) of the roll’.²⁰⁴ As a means of identifying and retrieving a text in a scroll, a title is an apparent paradox. Instead of providing a stable designation, it is subject to slippage and cannot, therefore, be fixed spatially or temporally. The demarcation it offers is fluid and constantly repositioned, because, in Genette’s words, it is inscribed in the ‘titular situation of communication’ which involves a message, a sender and an addressee.²⁰⁵ It is, then, as the evidence from fifteenth-century manuscripts testifies, a cooperative and flexible process which responds to various agents participating in the reception and re-routing of a literary work or a category of works, unified, in the specific context of this study, by Chaucer’s *paternitas*. In late medieval anthologies of vernacular literature, titles inscribe texts in a socially- and culturally-determined communicative context; the works of Chaucer and the literary tradition they influence are designated and validated as aristocratic texts complying with the dominant taste for French-derived lyrical forms. Through the *compilatio* and *ordinatio* of these codices, Chaucer becomes the literary Father of a courtly tradition of English verse.

²⁰⁴ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 64. Minnis provides a different etymology of the word title; citing Remigius of Auxerre’s *In artem primam Donati*, he states that the term *titulus* derived supposedly from *titan*, the sun, which illuminates the world as the title illuminates the work it designates; see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 19.

²⁰⁵ Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 73.

CONCLUSION

CHAUCER AS THE PATERNAL NUCLEUS OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY VERSE ANTHOLOGIES

In the absence of a consistent tradition of single-author or complete collections of Chaucer's *oeuvre* in the fifteenth century, selections from *The Canterbury Tales* and manuscript anthologies of his shorter poems are the dominant mode of transmission of the poet's works. These verse collections, in particular, promote and disseminate a notion of Chaucerian paternity which is predicated upon a courtly culture or, more specifically, upon lyrical accomplishment and philosophico-moral advice. The scribal and editorial practices of John Shirley, a prolific compiler, bibliophile and proto-publisher, are paradigmatic of fifteenth-century book production and central in the construction of Chaucer's literary *paternitas*. The principles which govern the *compilatio* of his holograph manuscripts, together with those related to and derived from them, bear resonant similarities to other contemporary collections centred on Chaucerian dream visions and amorous verse, and consistent with the dominant aristocratic taste for the poetic debates on *fin'amors*, theology and political counsel. As well as illustrating courtly literary practices, the *compilatio* of these composite collections of verse and devotional and advisory material is dictated by the specific conditions of manuscript compilation in late medieval England. At times somewhat haphazardly, these anthologies result from the conflation and subsequent rearrangements of clusters of texts circulating in fascicular groupings and often copied by a number of scribes working independently. Notwithstanding their fragmentary and fluid circulation and compilation, these booklets and the anthologies in which they are diversely conflated display a generic coherence founded upon a stable textual nucleus of Chaucerian courtly verse.

This overarching preoccupation with lyrical forms and aristocratic literary taste is also apparent in the elements of the *ordinatio* of these manuscript collections, especially in the titular apparatus. Collaborative and accretive, titular apparatuses record a plurality of interpretative voices and temporalities. In other words, these palimpsested titles provide a multiplicity of designations which, on one side, signify the discrete stages of the reception of a work and, on the other, function as a strategy to validate the Chaucerian canon through a composite network of affiliations with a number of received poetic forms. As the founder of courtly discursivity, the Father is at the centre of this process of legitimation, since his works provide his successors with a grammar of the dominant discourse of aristocratic cultural and social practices. Also, through the codices which transmit Chaucer's works, the cultural and literary *gravitas* of exegetical and codicological traditions is transferred and translated onto the nascent English vernacularity from scholastic and French manuscript culture. As an act of *translatio*, which will be the focus of Chapter III, Chaucer's paternal agency consists, therefore, in the validating, reworking and establishing of courtly literary conventions or canonical lines of filiation along which English vernacularity and its fifteenth-century exponents can develop and construct their own orthodox positions.

CHAPTER III

FROM FRENCH SONG TO ENGLISH BOOK: THE CODICOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY OF COURTLY VERNACULAR LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

TRANSLATING FRENCH 'CULTURAL CAPITAL' ONTO CHAUCER'S LITERARY *PATERNITAS*

The *compilatio* and *ordinatio* of fifteenth-century manuscripts of Chaucer's works construct the English poet as the literary Father of a poetic tradition whose *gravitas* is legitimised by its courtly and lyrical positioning, that is on a dialectic between social and cultural discourse. This chapter will show how these codices validate the emerging canon of vernacular literature by affiliating Chaucer's *paternitas* of English poetry to the authority of French courtly literature, especially its lyrics codified in the metrical and structural conventions of the *formes fixes*. As a validating epistemological paradigm, Francophone manuscript culture is reverentially inhabited and simultaneously appropriated by Chaucer and the professional agents involved in the production of his codices, in order to transfer fashionable and desirable literary practices onto the burgeoning English vernacularity.²⁰⁶

Intertwined politically and militarily by belligerent disputes over royal lines of succession, England and France were engaged as powerful opponents in the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), a conflict which, despite culminating in the victory of the French house of Valois over the English Plantagenets, was punctuated by numerous significant English successes, such as the battles of Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415).²⁰⁷ Culturally, however, evidence from contemporary library

²⁰⁶ On the development and codification of *trouvère* songs into *formes fixes*, see Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 53.

²⁰⁷ For recent accounts of the Hundred Years' War, see Robin Neillands, *Hundred Years' War* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); and Denise A. Baker, ed., *Inscribing the Hundred Years' War in French and English Cultures* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000). Also, for a study of Anglo-French cultural relations during this period, see Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

collections and the book trade situates France in an unequivocal hegemonic position. The authority of its literary tradition and the status of French as poetic *lingua franca* is tersely posited by Mary-Jo Arn in her comparative study of British Library MS Harley 682 and Paris Bibliothèque Nationale fonds français 25458, that is Charles d'Orléans's manuscript anthologies containing, respectively, his English and French works; she points out that '[a] reading knowledge of French among the English nobility could usually be taken for granted; the reverse could not'.²⁰⁸ Upon examination of both 'book import records and literary lists', A. E. B. Coldiron echoes Arn's assessment and concludes that 'readers in England preferred French literature'.²⁰⁹ As Carol Meale demonstrates, despite the expected anti-French sentiments harboured in England during the Hundred Years' War, French manuscripts were in considerable demand, and Burgundian codicological and literary practices proved to be highly influential in the English book trade.²¹⁰

Notwithstanding the hostile political relations between England and France, French verse and its *mise-en-page* are positioned as a dominant tradition in relation to English manuscript culture. In other words, its 'cultural capital', or, according to Pierre Bourdieu's definition, its 'symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed', identifies French poetic composition and book

²⁰⁸ Mary-Jo Arn, 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d'Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)', in *Charles d'Orléans in England (1415-1440)*, ed. Mary-Jo Arn (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 61-78 (p. 78).

²⁰⁹ A. E. B. Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans: Found in Translation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 21. In her study Coldiron also offers a bibliographical survey of studies on the hegemony of French culture in England, see note 25, p. 21.

²¹⁰ Carol M. Meale, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, pp. 201-238 (pp. 202-209). The historical context of Anglo-French cultural relations during the Hundred Years' War and anti-French sentiments are also explored by Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans*, pp. 85-87.

production as a privileged cultural and social discourse.²¹¹ By incorporating or translating French lyrics, or by replicating French codicological practices, fifteenth-century English verse anthologies recognise French manuscript culture as exemplary and prestigious. In sum, through imitative strategies, these codices replicate and master the aesthetic and codicological grammar which govern the composition, production, and transmission of French courtly poetry. This process is aimed at granting Chaucer, the English audience and the professional agents involved in the practices of book production access to ‘the instruments of appropriation’ of a hegemonic tradition.²¹² As Chapter II has demonstrated, the lyrical and courtly construction of Chaucer’s *paternitas* apparent in fifteenth-century anthologies of his works is, therefore, predicated upon the reproduction of the social and cultural dominance of French aristocratic verse, the ‘master’ culture, over the ‘servant’ English literary canon.

This dialogue between a cultural and a social discourse is integral to Bourdieu’s observation and theorisation of the modes of distribution and transference of ‘cultural capital’; unlike ‘classical theories [which] tend to dissociate the function of cultural reproduction proper to all educational systems from their function of social reproduction’, Bourdieu’s sociology of education offers a portable and appropriate conceptual framework through which to read the processes of reproduction of French cultural hegemony in operation in English manuscript culture.²¹³ Both sites of dissemination of dominant and desirable cultural-literary values, Bourdieu’s

²¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’, in *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education*, ed. Richard Brown (London: Tavistock Publications, 1973), pp. 71-112 (p. 73). For Bourdieu’s further developments of the concept of ‘cultural capital’, see ‘The Forms of Capital’, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1986); and *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Laretta C. Clough (Oxford: Polity Press, 1996).

²¹² Bourdieu, ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’, p. 80.

²¹³ Bourdieu, ‘Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction’, p. 72.

twentieth-century education system and fifteenth-century English manuscript culture operate according to an analogous ideological agenda. As discussed in Chapter I, the sober and clerical fabrication of ‘fadir’ Chaucer, which is apparent in the Harley-related tradition of portraiture, is, therefore, repositioned as courtly and fashionably sophisticated.

This validating strategy of intervernacular translation can be defined as an act of *translatio imperii et studii*, that is as a continuous and direct transference of socio-political and intellectual power across cultures and languages. A concept which, as Ernst Robert Curtius explains, ‘is basic for medieval historical theory’, *translatio imperii et studii* traditionally illustrates Charlemagne’s programme of imperial revival, which pre-empted the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire, ‘as a transferal of the Roman *imperium* to another people’, and, contiguously, ‘the ‘transferal of learning from Athens or Rome to Paris’.²¹⁴ According to Jacques Le Goff’s account of the medieval incarnations of *translatio*, this historiographic method of genealogical sanctioning is adopted by Otto Freising, in order to legitimise the authority of the Holy Roman Empire by positioning it in a teleological and unequivocal line of descent originating with Rome’s Empire. Similarly, at the beginning of *Cligés* (c. 1160), Chrétien de Troyes provides a literary articulation of the validity of France’s genealogical claim to the cultural and political hegemony once enjoyed by Athens and Rome, and now, in Chrétien’s nationalist narrative, rightfully, appropriated by Paris:

Ce nos ont nostre livre apris
Que Grece ot de chevalerie
Le premier los et de clergie.

²¹⁴ Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), p. 29. Two twentieth-century seminal discussions of *translatio imperii et studii* are: Werner Goetz, *Translatio Imperii: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkes und der politischen Theorie im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), and Étienne Gilson, *Les idées et les lettres* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932). For an account of medieval treatments of *translatio*, especially in its rhetorical sense, see Michelle A. Freeman, *Poetics of “Translatio Studii” and “Conjecture”* (Lexington: French Forum, 1979).

Puis vint chevalerie a Rome
Et de la clergie la som,
Qui or est en France venue²¹⁵

The dialectic between power and knowledge, or chivalry and learning, that is between a socio-political and cultural discourse, underpins the construction of the unproblematised linearity and causality which characterises *translatio imperii et studii* as an ideological strategy for the transmission and appropriation of hegemonic subject positions.

Consistently with medieval historical theory, which conceives time as the manifestation of a teleologically-structured divine design, the concept of *translatio imperii et studii* is founded upon the premise that authority is transmitted lineally and through acts of reproduction and transference.²¹⁶ In fact, three centuries after Chrétien, Richard of Bury records the subsequent manifestation of this paternal-filial or genealogical paradigm of translation of power, when in *Philobiblon* he declares England's political and cultural dominance:

The admirable Minerva made a tour of all the human races and carried herself from one extremity of the world to another to bestow herself on all peoples. We observe that she has already passed through the Indians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Arabs and the Latins. She has already abandoned Athens, left Rome, forgotten Paris; she has just arrived happily in Britain, the most illustrious of the isles, the microcosm of the universe²¹⁷

Presented as an inevitable and organic transformation, Minerva's bestowing of her mythical validation upon Britain, after shunning previously dominant cultures,

²¹⁵ 'Our books have taught us that Greece had the first fame of chivalry and learning. Then came chivalry to Rome, and the sum of learning, which now is come to France'; quoted and translated in Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, pp. 384-385. For a reference to Otto of Freising's appropriation of the trope of *translatio imperii et studii*, see Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, trans. Julia Barrow (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1988), p. 171.

²¹⁶ For a discussion of *translatio imperii et studii* and its relation to medieval historical theories, see Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, pp. 165-171.

²¹⁷ Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400-1500*, p. 172; although Le Goff does not provide a reference to the source of his quotation, a translation of the *Philobiblon* can be found in E. C. Thomas, ed. and trans., *Philobiblon* (London: Cheswick Press, 1888).

functions as a classicising metaphor which articulates Richard's appropriation of the 'cultural capital' of Greco-Roman antiquity via France.

In the verse preface to MS Additional 16165, 'þe prologe of þe kalundare of þis little booke' (ff. iir-iiir), John Shirley performs a similar act of *translatio*. When introducing the content of his first surviving holograph collection, he validates his textual selection by adopting a self-effacing strategy. Through his, admittedly formulaic, apology, he abdicates all claims to creative merit, and submits, instead, to the hegemony and prestige of past *auctoritates*:

If þat you list for to entende
Of þis booke to here legende
Suche as is right vertuous
Of maner of mirthe nought vicious
As wryten haue þees olde clerkes
þat beon appreued in alle hir werkis
By oure eldres here to fore
Remembraunce ellys were forlore
Wher fore dere sirs I you beseche
þat ye disdeyne not with my speche
Ffor affter þe symplesse of my witt
So as feblesse wolde suffice hit²¹⁸

This passage, saturated with a rhetoric of antiquity and tradition which bestows validation upon Shirley's 'appreued' *compilatio*, locates unequivocally the authority of his anthology in the canonicity of its texts. As I have argued in Chapter I, Hoccleve's position in the English vernacular canon is acquired vicariously through his remembrance, preservation and continuation of the privileged discourse of Chaucer's *paternitas*; analogously, Shirley's codex reproduces and appropriates the moral *gravitas* of the narratives penned by 'olde clerkes'. In *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, Rita Copeland discusses a similar preoccupation with past *auctoritates* and 'olde bokes' in the *Prologue* to *The Legend of Good*

²¹⁸ Shirley's verse prefaces are transcribed in Margaret Connolly, 'Appendix 3: Shirley's Verse Prefaces', in *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 206-211 (p. 206).

Women in which, as in Shirley's preface, Chaucer's strategy of authorisation of his work and his authorial agency are predicated upon a dialectic of 'veneration' and mediation. In other words, Chaucer's and Shirley's 'hermeneutics of recovery' of past traditions and 'historical difference' stems from a slippage between sources and their subsequent rewriting.

Copeland expands on her reflection by defining translation as 'a vehicle for vernacular appropriation' whose governing principles are founded upon a rhetorical and hermeneutic dialogue between imitative practices and negotiation strategies:

A chief maneuver of academic hermeneutics is to displace the very text that it proposes to serve. Medieval arts commentary does not simply 'serve' its 'master' texts: it also rewrites and supplants them.²¹⁹

Borrowing a term from the formalist taxonomy adopted by the American theorist Eugene Nida and the school of the 'science of translation', 'equivalence', or servitude to a superior source, often professed by medieval translations of texts and, more broadly, of literary and codicological practices, is considered by Copeland to be an inadequate interpretative framework.²²⁰ For this paradigm of feudal hierarchical affiliations, predicated upon power relations of mastery and slavery, she substitutes the concept of displacement which configures translation as a 'disjunctive act'.²²¹ In other words, while displaying a reverent replication of its sources, a medieval text claims their 'cultural capital' for itself, and, endowed with the authority of the prestigious tradition and discourse it now inhabits, it becomes disenfranchised from the 'master' culture and, ultimately, replaces it by assuming its hegemonic position. In Copeland's words, 'we see it in the continuing efforts of translators to [...]

²¹⁹ Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 3-4.

²²⁰ For a survey of theories of translation and their taxonomy, see Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). For a formalist approach to the debate, see Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

²²¹ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 106.

generate a vernacular canon which will substitute itself for Latin models in the very process of replicating them'.²²² She, therefore, identifies a more fitting hermeneutic paradigm in the practice of *exercitatio* which, as enucleated in Roman translation theory, maps out the mode of imitation, and 'mastery and appropriation of a privileged discourse'.²²³

A 'master' cultural tradition is imitated in order to gain command over of its foundational tenets. Simultaneously, the reproduction of these dominant values enables a transferral of their authorising power onto an emerging culture which constructs its identity through a legitimising narrative. As Ardis Butterfield argues in her work on the *mise-en-page* of the *Troilus* manuscripts, the influence of French codicological practices is apparent in the compilation and production of English manuscripts of Chaucer's works.²²⁴ The reproduction of elements of French *ordinatio*, such as titular apparatuses penned in the poetic *lingua franca* or the demarcation of inset lyrics in larger narratives, endows Chaucer's texts and their codices with the validating authority of the privileged discourse of French manuscript culture. In the genealogical continuity of *translatio*, codicological and aesthetic conventions, derived from medieval scholasticism and exegesis, and mediated by French modes of *mise-en-page*, become open to processes of cultural transference which, notwithstanding their deferential replication of the 'master' culture, will gradually supplant it. Chaucer's *paternitas* is, therefore, located in a dialectical intervernacular space suspended between the emulation of Francophone culture and the Father's co-option or translation of its validating practices into English vernacularity.

²²² Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 93.

²²³ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 106; see also, p. 93.

²²⁴ Ardis Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, ed. Seth Lerer (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1996), pp. 49-80.

Ruth Evans reads this slippage between obsequious imitation and self-validating appropriation in the context of a poststructuralist, gender and postcolonial discourse, as she paraphrases Homi Bhabha's conceptualisation of translation as 'third space' and identifies acts of *translatio imperii et studii* as 'zones of *cultural* transaction in the Middle Ages'.²²⁵ These hermeneutic sites of negotiation between 'master' and 'servant' cultures effect a hybrid identity, or a space underpinned by cultural difference and whose alterity resists models of equivalence and full translatability. Poststructuralist theory offers Evans a conceptual framework which she considers more expansive and politically radical than Copeland's 'very circumscribed one'.²²⁶ As Evans convincingly argues, Copeland appears to disregard gender and cultural marginality, with which I will engage in Chapter IV, and focuses, instead, on high-status, academic traditions transmitted exclusively through paternal and patriarchal relations and lines of filiation from French courtly poets, such as Guillaume de Machaut, to the English literary Father. As this chapter (III) will demonstrate, this masculine and aristocratic fabrication of the English canon and Chaucer's *paternitas* is, however, apparent in the manuscript evidence, whether codicological or aesthetic.

In the following pages I will, therefore, investigate the process of *translatio studii et imperii* which, in fifteenth-century manuscripts of Chaucer's works, transfers, in a direct line of male descent, the power and prestige of French lyricism onto English vernacular verse and its literary Father. It will also interrogate modes of

²²⁵ Ruth Evans, 'Translating Past Cultures?', in *The Medieval Translator*, vol. 4, ed. Roger Ellis and Ruth Evans (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), pp. 20-45 (pp. 21-23).

²²⁶ Evans, 'Translating Past Cultures?', p. 30; see also, pp. 22-25; 27-30. Evans links her insights to a number of seminal works that have inflected the topic of literary translation with critical theory; see Joseph Graham, ed., *Difference in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992); Lawrence Venuti, ed., *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), see especially his 'Introduction', pp. 1-17.

intervenacular translation as hybrid cultural encounters and reproductions of dominant paternal power structures. After assessing the extent and manifestations of the influence of French manuscript culture on English book production, I will discuss the strategies that compilers, scribes and editors deploy to appropriate and rewrite the 'cultural capital' which French *formes fixes*, particularly their composition and *mise-en-page*.

SECTION I

THE 'CULTURAL INVASION' OF FRENCH MANUSCRIPT CULTURE IN ENGLAND

1. Translating the 'Cachet of the Literary Chic' into the English Vernacular:

Chaucer's Indebtedness to French *Formes Fixes*.

Chaucer's affiliation to French literature and culture has been the object of consistent scholarly investigation since Charles Muscatine's 1957 influential study entitled *Chaucer and the French Tradition*.²²⁷ The critical consensus as to Chaucer's and, generally, English vernacular literature's indebtedness to Romance sources, especially lyrical forms, is succinctly articulated by John Scattergood:

it is clear that the main influences on the forms and genres of the Middle English love lyrics do not derive from the native tradition. The staple genres of the love lyric—the spring song, the love song, the *chanson d'aventure* and its more particular manifestation the *pastourelle*, the debate, the dawn song—are all found in the Latin literature of the Middle Ages, in the works of the troubadours of Provence, and in the northern French *trouvère* poetry.²²⁸

Whether Occitan or Northern, French literary culture had a profound impact upon English vernacularity which appropriated not only its poetical genres, the *formes fixes*,

²²⁷ Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1957). Other major seminal works on Chaucer's relation to French literary traditions include James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love Poets: The Literary Background to the 'Book of the Duchess'* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968); Larry D. Benson and Theodore M. Anderson, eds, *The Literary Context of Chaucer's Fables: Texts and Translations* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971); Barry Windeatt, *Chaucer's Dream Poetry: Sources and Analogues* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1982); James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Helen Phillips and Nick Havely, eds, *Chaucer's Dream Poetry* (London: Longman, 1997). Earlier works include Étienne Gustave Sandras, *Étude sur G. Chaucer considéré comme imitateur des trouvères* (Paris: A. Durand, 1859), and a series of articles by George L. Kittredge, see 'Chaucer and Froissart', *English Studies* 26 (1899), 321-336; 'Chaucer and Some of His Friends', *Modern Philology* 1 (1903), 1-18; 'Chaucer's *Envoy to Bukton*', *Modern Language Notes* 24 (1910), 14-15; 'Chaucer's *Troilus* and Guillaume de Machaut', *Modern Language Notes* 30 (1915), 69; and 'Guillaume de Machaut and *The Book of the Duchess*', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 30 (1915), 1-24.

²²⁸ John Scattergood, 'The Love Lyric Before Chaucer', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. Thomas G. Duncan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 39-67 (p. 41).

but also its rhetoric and thematic tropes.²²⁹ In Butterfield's words, 'the constraints of war and the exchange of royal hostages', imposed by the Hundred Years' War, inform the cultural and literary relations between France and England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²³⁰ According to Wimsatt's account of the English reworking of *formes fixes*, 1356 marks a significant moment in the history of Anglo-French connections. In that year, Jean II of France, also known as Jean le Bon, is captured at Poitiers and exiled in England (1356-1360; 1364). Thanks to his entourage, especially his son, Jean, Duke of Berry (1360-1367), Guillaume de Machaut's work is disseminated in English royal circles. Chaucer, who starts his career at court in the late 1350s, is at the centre of what Wimsatt calls 'the cultural 'invasion' of London by French nobility'.²³¹ As the literary *lingua franca*, endowed with prestige and *gravitas*, French is the idiom of courtly poetical genres and, as Edwards points out, it affords 'the cachet of the literary chic' to its intellectual and aristocratic coterie readership.²³² In other words, while the English canon is legitimised by its affiliations to Francophone literary culture, it is, at once, decentred and situated in a hybrid intervernacular space. Chaucer's paternal agency as 'founder of discursivity' and sole *fons et origo* of signification is, therefore, deferred and dispersed in multiple temporalities and locales which encompass the poet's indebtedness to a prior and superior culture, and his transference of these privileged practices onto the emergent English vernacularity.

²²⁹ For succinct and lucid definitions of the French *formes fixes* which are more frequently appropriated in English verse, see Douglas Gray, 'Middle English Courtly Lyrics: Chaucer to Henry VIII', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, pp. 120-149 (pp. 124-125).

²³⁰ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 64.

²³¹ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love Poets*, p. 43.

²³² A. S. G. Edwards, 'John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity: Selected Papers from the Eighth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, The Queen's University of Belfast 26 July-1 August 1995*, ed. Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 309-317 (p. 314).

Evidence of the ‘cultural capital’ of French lyrics among the English bilingual or trilingual readers of verse is twofold, since it influences both the composition and the fifteenth-century production and “publication” of English poetry. In the late fourteenth century, authors such as Gower and Chaucer, writing in the burgeoning English vernacular, acknowledged the cultural excellence of French lyricism, as they are credited either with composing poems in the lyrical *lingua franca*, or with translating its thematic preoccupations and formal devices into their own literary tradition. While Gower is the author of two lyrical collections of French poems, namely the *Cinkante Ballades* and the *Traitié pour essampler dez amantz maries*, Chaucer cites and reworks French sources in a number of his texts. For instance, he quotes the ‘newe Frenshe song’, *Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour*, in both *The Parson’s Tale* (X.248) and ‘Fortune’ (l. 7), and Wimsatt associates with Chaucer the fifteen poems glossed as ‘Ch’ in Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania MS Codex 902 (formerly MS French 15).²³³ As the brief general preface testifies, this late

²³³ Julia Boffey, ‘Middle English Lyrics and Manuscripts’, in *Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, pp. 1-18 (p. 2 and note 4). Very cautiously, James I. Wimsatt does not attribute conclusively the ‘Ch’ poems to Chaucer. He, instead, focuses his argument on the English locale of the poems and on the conditions of composition of court poetry in England in the late fourteenth century, at the time when Chaucer was a young courtier. Fluent in French, an English court poet would be initiated to the art of poetic writing by composing lyrics in French and by mastering the *formes fixes* and their concentration on *fin’amors*. He also explores a number of possibilities for the significance of the insertion of ‘Ch’, penned by ‘a different, neat hand after the manuscript had been written’. As well as indicating authorship, they may signify genre and label the lyrics as ‘chant’ or ‘chançon’. This generic hypothesis, however, would not be applicable to the majority of the ‘Ch’ poems which ‘are not of a form customarily set to music’. Also, an attribution to major French poets, whose names would be consistent with abbreviation ‘Ch’, is untenable, since the works of Alain Chartier, Christine de Pisan, and Charles d’Orléans were all composed after the compilation of MS Codex 902. The second part of Wimsatt’s study explores the affinities between the ‘Ch’ lyrics and dominant poetic practices at the English court; see James I. Wimsatt, ‘Introduction’, in *Chaucer and the Poems of ‘Ch’ in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, 1st edn (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer; Totowa, NJ, Rowman & Littlefield, 1982), pp. 1-8 (pp. 1-2); notes 1-3, p. 131. After I completed the research for this chapter a revised edition of Wimsatt’s study was published. Upon consultation of the revised edition, I have decided not to alter my references to the first edition, since the revisions do not affect my discussion; see James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of ‘Ch’*, rev. edn (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications Western Michigan University, 2009). For a further discussion of the gloss ‘Ch’ as a possible marker of authorship, see Charles Mudge, *The Pennsylvania Chansonnier: A Critical Edition of Ninety-Five Anonymous Ballades from the Fourteenth Century*, University of Indiana doctoral dissertation (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972), p. 6.

fourteenth-century codex is a *chansonniere* which anthologises a comprehensive selection of lyrics composed by canonical French authors, such as Eustache Deschamps, Oton de Graunson and Machaut: ‘Ci sensuient plusieurs bonnes | pastourelles *complaintes* lays | et Ballades *et autres choses*’.²³⁴ The textual and generic proximity of these paradigmatic examples of *formes fixes* to Chaucer’s works extends beyond their contiguity with the ‘Ch’ poems in the *compilatio* of MS Codex 902. In his edition of the Penn manuscript, Wimsatt surveys previous scholarship on Chaucer’s use of Machaut’s poems and cites V.-F. Chichmaref’s identification of the items contained in MS Codex 902 that the English poet reworked. Specifically, he accounts for three extracts from the *Louange des Dames*, two *complaintes*, two lays, and three *Balades notes*; this implies that a substantial portion of the thirty-six short poems that Chaucer appropriated from Machaut are preserved in the Penn codex.²³⁵ Wimsatt also provides a specific example of Chaucer’s indebtedness to the French poet, as he demonstrates that the English literary Father memorised and inserted item 112 of the manuscript, that is Machaut’s sixth complaint, in *The Monk’s Tale* (VII.2391-2398).²³⁶

For a discussion of the French works of Gower, see R. F. Yeager, ‘“Oure Englishe” and Everyone’s Latin’, *South Atlantic Review* 46 (1981), 41-53; R. F. Yeager, *John Gower’s Poetics* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), pp. 9-10; 85-88; R. F. Yeager, ‘Politics and the French Language in England during the Hundred Years’ War’, in *Inscribing the Hundred Years’ War in English and French Culture*, pp. 127-157; Ardis Butterfield, ‘Articulating the Author: Gower and the French Vernacular Codex’, *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003), 80-96; R. F. Yeager, ‘Gower’s French Audience: The *Mirour de l’Omme*’, *The Chaucer Review* 41:2 (2006), 111-137; R. F. Yeager, ed., *On John Gower: Essays for the Millennium* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2007).

²³⁴ ‘Here follow several good pastourelles, complaints, lays and ballades as well as other poems.’

²³⁵ Wimsatt, ‘Guillaume de Machaut’, in *Chaucer and the Poems of ‘Ch’ in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, pp. 49-50 (p. 49).

²³⁶ On Chaucer’s appropriation of Machaut’s poems, see V.-F. Chichmaref, ed., *Guillaume de Machaut: Poésies lyriques*, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1908); and James I. Wimsatt, ‘Guillaume de Machaut and Chaucer’s Love Lyrics’, *Medium Aevum* 47 (1978), 66-87; and James I. Wimsatt, ‘Chaucer, ‘Fortune’, and Machaut’s ‘Il m’est avis’’, in *Chaucerian Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Edward Vaste and Zacharias Thundy (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1979), pp. 119-131. See also Larry D. Benson, ‘Explanatory Notes to *The Canterbury Tales*’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 795-965 (p. 933).

A similar intertextual association between English and French poetic traditions is manifest in the positioning of a number of Graunson's lyrics in the Penn codex. The manuscript contains a sequence of five ballades upon which Chaucer based 'The Complaint of Venus'. According to Wimsatt's examination of Chaucer's source, the version of the ballades in MS Codex 902 is textually very close to the exemplar used for 'The Complaint of Venus' and provides the most convincing readings and variants.²³⁷ The *compilatio* of the Penn manuscript provides further evidence of the textual affiliations between Chaucer and Graunson, since eight of the French poet's poems occupy the same section of the codex as the 'Ch' lyrics. Remarkably, this cluster of Graunson's poetic texts survives in only one other manuscript containing his works, namely Neuchâtel Bibliothèque Arthur Piaget, VIII.²³⁸ The rarity of manuscript copies of these poems makes apparent the significance of their connection to English vernacularity, and Chaucer in particular. Not only does the English poet appropriate Graunson's five ballades to compose 'The Complaint of Venus', but the history of the production and dissemination of the 'Ch' lyrics, a group of hybrid French lyrics which, according to Wimsatt, have an 'English locale', is intertwined with the transmission of Graunson's texts. The Penn codex exemplifies, therefore, the cultural-literary dependence of Chaucer's *paternitas* and English vernacular verse upon the paradigmatic quality of the French *formes fixes*, and their vicarious acquisition of the currency of the French 'cultural capital' through a process of *translatio* of the fashionable practices of the poetic *lingua franca*.

²³⁷ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of 'Ch' in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, pp. 50-51; 69. Wimsatt provides a face-page translation, a short introduction and a critical edition of the ballades. Here he claims to have collated all manuscript witnesses and, therefore, produced the first 'full edition' of Graunson's texts; see 'Graunson's Five Ballades', in *Chaucer and the Poems of 'Ch' in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, pp. 69-74 (p. 69); and 'Oton de Graunson', in *Chaucer and the Poems of 'Ch' in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, pp. 50-51 (p. 50); note 10, p. 132.

²³⁸ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of 'Ch' in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, p. 122.

The cultural cachet and validating function of French, as the idiom of lyrical composition *par excellence*, is promptly acknowledged in the introductory rubric to ‘The Complaint of Venus’ in MS R.3.20. Through his paratextual apparatus Shirley, therefore, frames and validates the works of the Father of the English canon within the aesthetic distinction and moral exemplarity of French culture. Correctly, Shirley defines Chaucer’s poem as a translation of the five-ballade sequence composed by Graunson: ‘filowing begynneþe a balade translatid out | of frenshe into englisshe by Chaucier Geffrey þe frenshe | made by Sir Otes de Grauntsome knight Savosyen’ (p. 139). Despite not being as accurate a rendition as the rubric and the ‘Envoy’ state, Chaucer’s debt to the French poet is made apparent in both Shirley’s colophon (‘Hit is sayde þat Graunsome made þis last balade for venus’, p. 142) and the ‘Envoy’ itself:

To folowe word by word the curiosite
Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in Fraunce (ll. 81-82)

As well as Graunson’s skilful versification, which the English translation claims to replicate closely, the ‘Envoy’ exposes Chaucer’s dependence upon and subordinate authorial relation to his French source. The same deference to the poem’s origins is articulated in Shirley’s generic titling apparatus; in two instances, namely the colophon (‘balade for venus’, p. 142) and the running title (‘Balade made by Chaucer’, p. 140), ‘The Complaint of Venus’ is described as a ‘balade’, a definition which preserves its affiliation to Graunson’s original five poems. The “Frenchness” of the text is also particularly relevant to the general editorial programme of MS R.3.20, a trilingual anthology, in which Shirley collects a substantial number of French lyrics, namely thirty-one *rondeaux* and *balades*, arranged individually or in three major

textual clusters.²³⁹

The first selection of seven French poems occurs in quires 15 and 16 (pp. 25-49) and is almost entirely attributed or linked to William de la Pole, later Duke of Suffolk (1396-1450). Apart from 'Puis qualer vers vous ne puisse' (p. 33), whose authorship is not specified, it is only the seventh ballade, 'Dieux nous dona petit de vie' (pp. 36-37), that Shirley does not ascribe to William de la Pole; he does, however, relate it to Suffolk, by branding it as a piece that the Duke much admired: 'Here filoweþe a Balade made in Fraunce which my | lord of Suffolk þeorlle mich alloweþe in his witt' (p. 36).²⁴⁰ By corroborating the information it affords with the solidity of historical discourse, the paratextual apparatus of the remaining five lyrics confidently credits Suffolk with the poems' authorship and situates the circumstances of composition of each text in the context of the Duke's exile in France (1429-1430), which he had to endure after being defeated at Jargeau by the troops of Jean d'Arc.²⁴¹ Like all five attributed lyrics, 'Face vo coer tout ce que ly plera' (p. 33) is introduced by a historically-specific rubric: 'yit filoweþe here anoþer Roundell of my lordes | making of Suffolk whiles he was prisonier in ffraunce' (p. 33). In other words, consistently with his strategies of validation of the works of the Father of the English canon, Shirley positions Suffolk's authorial agency within the authorising discourse of French literary culture.

²³⁹ For more details, see Julia Boffey, 'French Lyrics and English Manuscripts: The Transmission of Some Poems in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.20, and British Library MS Harley 7333', *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 4 (1988), 135-146 (136); and Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 88-94.

²⁴⁰ My examination of MS R.3.20 leads me to disagree with Connolly's contention that 'Puis qualer vers vous ne puisse' is attributed to Suffolk. The poem occurs on the same page as 'Face vo coer tout ce que ly plera' (p. 39) which, instead, is unequivocally attributed to the Duke. The beginning of the second poem is clearly marked by a centred heading which replicates the first two words of the preceding lyric, 'Puis qualer', and, thus, indicates the transition between the two texts. Also, the introductory rubric to the first poem does not extend Suffolk's authorship to the second lyric, since it refers to a single text ('anoþer Roundell'); see Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 71; 88.

²⁴¹ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 88.

In particular, the conditions of war and exile inform, again, fifteenth-century Anglo-French cultural and political affiliations, since the five items attributed to Suffolk are, in Pearsall's words, 'prison-poems', aligned to an established tradition represented by Charles d'Orléans's verse collection 'Poème de la Prison'.²⁴² Shirley's construction of Suffolk's appropriation of and connection to French poetic conventions is consolidated by the introductory note to 'Je vous salue ma maystresse' (p. 35) which is, uncharacteristically, composed in French: 'Ycy comence vn balade que fist monseigneur le Conte | De Suffolk quant il estoit prysonier en Fraunce'.²⁴³ As a hermeneutic device and construct, the paratextual material of MS R.3.20 and, particularly, the atypical use of French to demarcate Suffolk's prison-poems articulate the *translatio* of French literary traditions onto the courtly poetry produced by English writers, such as Suffolk and perhaps 'Ch', whose intellectual status and aesthetic merit are demonstrated by their command and *aemulatio* of the lyrical *lingua franca* and its fixed forms.

Notwithstanding the accuracy of Shirley's reference to Suffolk's exile in France, a number of poems in this first cluster have, nonetheless, been attributed, more or less conclusively, to French authors.²⁴⁴ J. C. Laidlaw ascribes, for instance, 'Lealement a tous jours mais' (p. 32), the second lyric of this short sequence, to Alain Chartier. The presence of the poem in Grenoble Bibliothèque Municipale MS 874, a collection of lyrics exclusively credited to Chartier, offers compelling, albeit not

²⁴² Derek Pearsall, 'The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans and the Duke of Suffolk, and the Authorship of the Fairfax Sequence', in *Charles d'Orléans in England (1415-1440)*, pp. 145-156 (p. 151).

²⁴³ 'Here begins a ballade made by my lord the Earl of Suffolk when he was prisoner in France'.

²⁴⁴ For a list French poems copied in MS R.3.20 and scholarship pertaining to their authorship and textual transmission, see Boffey, 'French Lyrics and English Manuscripts: The Transmission of Some Poems in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.20, and British Library MS Harley 7333', note 9, pp. 144-145.

indisputable, evidence of authorship.²⁴⁵ By implication, Laidlaw's study calls into question the veracity of the remaining authorial attributions to Suffolk in MS R.3.20, and, on the basis of the examination of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century French manuscript anthologies, Boffey reconsiders the extent of the Duke's authority and concludes rather sceptically that he 'might more properly be described as a 'transmitter' of lyrics than as an 'author' of them—if indeed his connection with them has any factual basis at all'.²⁴⁶ In other words, she argues for a re-assessment of Suffolk's role as an *auctor*; instead of being predicated upon moral *auctoritas*, or, in Minnis's words, on 'intrinsic worth' and 'authenticity', his literary agency would be more correctly aligned to that of a subordinate intermediary who 'translates' and disseminates prestigious textual traditions, such as the French *formes fixes*, across cultures.²⁴⁷ Despite the lack of critical consensus about Suffolk's authorial agency, Shirley's attributions testify to the cultural superiority of the 'master' culture which functions as a principle of validation for works penned in the English vernacular, including those of its Father.

A second smaller cluster of three unattributed French poems is situated in quire 17, a gathering otherwise dedicated to Lydgate.²⁴⁸ The paratextual material which punctuates the three anonymous lyrics is unusually sparse and elusive. Lacking Shirley's customary anecdotal rubrics, the titular apparatus appears to focus on the

²⁴⁵ For a discussion of the authorship of 'Lealement a tous jours mais', see J. C. Laidlaw, ed., *The Poetical Works of Alain Chartier* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 385. For a list of further studies, see Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), p. 65 (note 14).

²⁴⁶ Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 66. She also discusses the role of authors as 'translators' and 'transmitters' in relation to Shirley's collections and their concentration on French lyrics; see Boffey, 'French Lyrics and English Manuscripts: The Transmission of Some Poems in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.20, and British Library MS Harley 7333', 140.

²⁴⁷ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 10.

²⁴⁸ The titles of the three poems, as they appear in the manuscript, are: 'Ronde toy a quoy tu le sauras', 'Le monde va en amendaunt', and 'Qui vault son corps en sante maintenir' (pp. 48-52). As Connolly points out, the heading of the first poem, 'Ronde toy la quoy tu le sauras', in quire 17 (p. 49) occurs at the end of quire 16 (p. 48); see Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 90; note 58, p. 100.

moral exemplarity of the texts and their French origins, rather than on their authorship: ‘a balade of frenshe drawing man to þe right wey’ (p. 48), ‘Ycy comence vn balade Frauncoys fait *par* le plus | grande poetical Clerk du parys Regardez *et* lysez’ (p. 49), and, finally, ‘Vescy Vn honnourable balade Francoys de regyment | du corps’ (p. 52). These headings are predicated upon a dialectical hermeneutic preoccupation with the linguistic provenance of the poems and with the *gravitas* of their content. The cultural excellence of the lyrical *lingua franca* is inflected with a rhetoric of moral distinction which identifies the three texts as normative, as they foster restraint, regimentation, and the exercise of self-discipline. Through the legitimising use of French, the fashionable aristocratic language of literature and culture, Shirley reproduces and disseminates a dominant ideological imperative which, in Foucault’s words, is a manifestation of ‘bio-power’.²⁴⁹ Defined by Foucault as ‘the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life’, ‘bio-power’ subjugates an individual’s physicality to ideologically-informed parameters of normalcy.²⁵⁰ Although I will explore the moral exemplarity of Chaucerian literary *paternitas* in Chapter IV, in the context of Shirley’s editorial concentration on the ‘cultural capital’ of French lyricism and its relation to English vernacularity, it is significant to note that the promotion of the moral excellence and normativity of French culture appears to be central to the hermeneutic and ideological fabric of MS R.3.20.

Finally, quires 19 and 20 are entirely dedicated to unattributed French verse with the significant exception of Chaucer’s *Anelida and Arcite* and Lydgate’s ‘A Holy Meditation’, a courtly complaint and a pious poem, both coterminous with the literary

²⁴⁹ For Foucault’s theory of ‘bio-power’, see Michel Foucault, ‘Right of Death and Power over Life’, in *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, trans. Robert Hurley (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1998 [1976]), pp. 133-159.

²⁵⁰ Foucault, ‘Right of Death and Power over Life’, p. 140.

practices of the poetic *lingua franca* and copied at the end of quire 20. Connolly comments on the conspicuous presence of French lyrics in Shirley's collection and argues that:

Shirley's interest in collecting so many French poems in the Trinity manuscript may also indicate that French language and culture had acquired a renewed cachet in England at this time. Under Henry V the English language had been rigorously promoted, but the coronation of his son in Paris had now established a dual kingdom in which the king had French subjects as well as English; one effect of this union may well have been to create a new fashion for all things French on this side of the English Channel.²⁵¹

According to Connolly's cultural and political reading of the editorial rationale behind the *compilatio* of MS R.3.20, Shirley's substantial selection of French poems is consistent with an interest in French culture within royal and courtly circles and the pervasive literary 'capital' of romances, devotional texts and, of course, lyrics. This alignment to dominant literary tastes situates 'The Complaint of Venus', the anthology and, by extension, the canon of English vernacular literature it contains in an authorising association with French verse and the normativity of French culture.

2. Charles d'Orléans and the Usurpation of Chaucer's *Paternitas*.

Together with the textual and codicological contiguity of Chaucer's literary paternity with the French literary tradition, and the large cluster of French poems in Shirley's collection, a resonant illustration of the cultural currency of texts composed in the lyrical *lingua franca* is their conspicuous presence in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century royal and aristocratic libraries.²⁵² A notable example is the survival of two deluxe anthologies of French verse in English book collections, namely British Library MSS Harley 4431 and Royal 16.F.ii. The first manuscript contains poems by

²⁵¹ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 94.

²⁵² For a comprehensive survey of manuscript collections of French verse in English libraries, see Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 138-140.

Christine de Pisan and was probably acquired by the regent John, Duke of Bedford; while MS 16.F.ii is a deluxe codex featuring lyrics by Charles d'Orléans and prepared for a royal patron.²⁵³ Charles, in particular, plays a pivotal and exemplary role in establishing and cementing Anglo-French cultural affiliations which, according to Gray, are, at once, literary and personal:

Chaucer translated Graunson [...], was praised by Deschamps, knew also the work of Machaut and Froissart, and was inspired by both parts of the *Roman de la Rose* [...] Froissart visited England, Charles d'Orléans was prisoner there. Lydgate says he visited Paris and saw the Dance of Death painted there—this would be the period of the English occupation under the regent John, Duke of Bedford, a patron and collector of French painting²⁵⁴

This complex network of politico-cultural relations has a significant impact upon the development of manuscript culture and scribal practices in England, and, as Butterfield argues, Charles d'Orléans's lyrical collections 'represent an interesting point of connection', because they display elements of continuity between French and English literary and codicological traditions, with which I will engage more closely later in this chapter.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ For more information about the presence of the two French codices in English libraries, see Gray, 'Middle English Courtly Lyrics: Chaucer to Henry VIII', p. 122. There are no facsimile editions of these two manuscripts, but they have both been edited either partially or in their entirety; see Andrea Tarnowski, ed., *Le chemin de longue étude: édition critique du ms Harley 4431* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 2000); Leslie C. Brook, ed., *Two Late Medieval Love Treatises: Heloise's 'Art d'Amour' and a collection of Demandes d'amour* (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literatures, 1993). Brook's work is a critical edition of parts of MS Royal 16.F.ii. As for the identity of the recipient of the sumptuously decorated MS Royal 16.F.ii, Gray argues that it was prepared for Arthur, the Prince of Wales, while Butterfield more cautiously describes the heraldic border of the frontispiece as bearing the arms of Henry VII, Elizabeth of York and the Prince of Wales. In a note, she does, however, reference Janet Backhouse's theory that the codex was prepared for Edward IV, possibly by Hughues de Lembourg in the 1480s (Janet Backhouse, 'Founders of the Royal Library: Edward IV and Henry VII as Collectors of Illuminated Manuscripts', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. D. Williams (Donington: Shaun Tyas and Paul Watkins Publishers, 1987), pp. 223-241 (pp. 236-238)); see Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 63 and note 35.

²⁵⁴ Gray, 'Middle English Courtly Lyrics: Chaucer to Henry VIII', p. 122.

²⁵⁵ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 64.

The dissemination of Charles's works in England was arguably facilitated by his courtly associations and, specifically, by his personal relation with William de la Pole, who, as well as being the husband of Chaucer's granddaughter Alice, for a time (1432-1436) acted as Charles's guardian during his exile.²⁵⁶ The presence of Charles's verse in fifteenth-century English libraries, including British Library MS Harley 682 and eleven other extant manuscript witnesses, is defined by Boffey as 'vast'.²⁵⁷

Although the extent of Suffolk's contribution to and his authorial attribution of the English lyrics copied in MS Harley has been the object of critical debate, Mary-Jo Arn argues for Charles's authorship and contends persuasively that during his exile (1415-1440), Charles collected his bilingual body of work and supervised the production of two manuscripts, MS f.fr. 25458, a volume partially copied in his hand and containing

²⁵⁶ For a review of the critical opinions about the conditions of Charles's exile in England, see Mary-Jo Arn, *Fortunes Stabilnes, Charles of Orleans's English Book of Love* (Binghampton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), pp. 15-17. For a discussion of the relationship between Charles and Suffolk, and its cultural context, see Pearsall, 'The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orleans and the Duke of Suffolk, and the Authorship of the Fairfax Sequence', pp. 145-156. The principal editions, biographical and critical studies of Charles include Pierre Champion, *Le manuscrit autograph des poésies de Charles d'Orléans* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1907; repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1975); Pierre Champion, *La librairie de Charles d'Orléans avec un album de facsimilés* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1910); and Pierre Champion, *Vie de Charles d'Orléans 1394-1465* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1911); Enid McLeod, *Charles of Orleans: Prince and Poet* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969).

²⁵⁷ Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 74. For a discussion of Charles d'Orléans's influence on English manuscript culture, see Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 64; and Gray, 'Middle English Courtly Lyrics: Chaucer to Henry VIII', pp. 134-140.

his French lyrics, and an anthology of his output in English, MS Harley 682.²⁵⁸ Unlike the richly decorated MS Royal 16.F.ii, these two codices are largely unadorned and, although produced professionally and on good vellum, they appear to be intended for manageable and frequent consultation.²⁵⁹ Whereas MS f.fr. 25458 returned to France at the end of Charles's exile and was progressively augmented by its French owners, the richly decorated MS Royal 16.F.ii and the more unassuming MS Harley 682 remained available to English readers, compilers and scribes of courtly verse.

Notwithstanding its disputed authorship, MS Harley 682 is a remarkable artefact whose significance in late medieval English book production lies in its atypical *compilatio* and editorial programme. Aligned to the tradition of the French *chansonnier*, and the *dit*, rather than the English miscellaneous collection, MS Harley 682 is one of the few English manuscripts compiled at the time to be an exclusively

²⁵⁸ Opposing views, sceptical of and arguing for Charles's authorship of the Harley lyrics, are exposed respectively in William Calin, 'Will the Real Charles of Orleans Please Stand! Or, Who Wrote the English Poems in Harley 682?', in *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honour of Douglas Kelly*, ed. Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1994), pp. 69-86; and Mary-Jo Arn, 'Charles of Orleans and the Poems of BL MS, Harley 682', *English Studies* 74 (1993), 122-35. In a separate paper, Arn explores the possibility that MS Harley is not the work of Charles, but she concludes persuasively that the similarities between this manuscript and the *fonds primitif* of MS f.fr. 25458, that is its original cluster or texts, are too striking, especially in consideration of MS Harley's unusual layout. She compares it with a number of contemporary codices of courtly verse produced in England in the first half of the fifteenth century, namely MS Gg.4.27, the Hengwrt manuscript, New York Pierpont Morgan MS M817, MS Tanner 346, MS Fairfax 16 and the Ellesmere manuscript. Her contention is that 'he [the Duke of Orléans] supervised the copying of the French manuscript (O) and later showed it or lent it to the English scribe and that scribe then modelled his work (H) on that of the French scribe (of O), with directions from, but only intermittent supervision by, the duke.'; see Arn, 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d'Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)', p. 67. To corroborate the theory of Charles's authorship, Coldiron cites four examples of authorial self-naming within MS Harley 682; see Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans*, p. 15 and note 4. Charles's English poems are collected in a critical edition prepared by Arn, see *Fortunes Stabilnes*. Despite MS Harley 682's atypical predominant concentration on lyrics, other notable, but earlier, exceptions are London, British Library MSS Sloane 2593 and Harley 2254; Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Digby 102 and Eng. Poet.a.1, also known as the Vernon manuscript. They all contain a sizeable number of lyrics. A facsimile edition is available only for the latter manuscript, see A. I. Doyle, *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile Edition of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Poet.a.1* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987).

²⁵⁹ Mary-Jo Arn compares the content and the *compilatio* of the two collections in 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d'Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)', pp. 61-78. Descriptions of MS Harley 682 and MS fr. 25458 can be found respectively in Arn, *Fortunes Stabilnes*, p. 101, and Mary-Jo Arn, *The Poet's Notebook: The Personal Manuscript of Charles d'Orléans (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 25458)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 19-54.

lyrical collection and to offer over 6600 lines of lyric and narrative verse unfolding in a coherent *fin'amors* poetic sequence. While Coldiron acknowledges the exceptional quality of the Harley manuscript in the dissemination of lyrics, as 'England's largest and earliest surviving self-contained, author-assembled body of personal lyric',

Boffey comments on the subordinate and ancillary status of English lyrical forms:

Statistically, Chaucer's dominance as an author of the courtly lyrics copied and read in the fifteenth century is far surpassed by the supposed achievements of Charles d'Orléans (with or without the collaboration of his friend the Duke of Suffolk), and it is a telling irony that this study of English poetry should be so persistently deflected towards a discussion of essentially French material²⁶⁰

The primacy and authority of French lyricism appears to usurp Chaucer of his literary *paternitas* and, with Charles's prominent presence, casts a long and perdurable shadow of indebtedness and vicariousness over the development of English vernacularity.

Such influence extends beyond Charles's own collections to anthologies that appropriate his verse as a congruous element of their *compilatio*, and aristocratic programme. In such manuscripts, affiliations to Charles's work are ideological constructs which configure and promote the collections' *compilatio* as authoritative and fashionable. Either anonymously, as in MS Fairfax 16, or through direct attribution, as in the Shirley-related MS Harley 7333, works associated with Charles are inserted in these codices in order to enhance the courtly preoccupations that dominate their textual selections. In the case of MS Fairfax 16, its collection of courtly pieces concludes with a number of ballades, complaints, and letters. A sanctioning *coda* to a rather sophisticated codex, these English lyrics, copied at the end of Booklet V (ff. 318r-329r), comprise a 'compleynt' (IMEV 2567) which,

²⁶⁰ Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans: Found in Translation*, p. 16; Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 74.

according to Norton-Smith, can be conclusively attributed to Charles. By association, Norton-Smith suggests that the cluster of six complaints which, with Charles's lyric, forms group 'd' of the manuscript Table, is arguably also the work of the French poet.²⁶¹

Similarly, the Shirley-derived MS Harley 7333 prefaces and, therefore, appears to authorise its selection from *The Canterbury Tales* with *Mon cuer chante*, a poem which the scribe attributes to Charles: 'Balade made by þe duc of Orlience' (f. 36v). This 'Balade', which appears partly in other manuscripts, is, however, attributed to the French poet exclusively in MS Harley 7333.²⁶² Although H. N. MacCracken identifies William de la Pole as the author of the Harley lyrics and notwithstanding the lack of authorial attributions in most manuscript witnesses, by ascribing the poem to Charles, Shirley constructs a desirable line of affiliation which, as in MS Fairfax 16, connects Chaucer to Charles and, therefore, aligns *The Canterbury Tales* and the poet's *paternitas* with the validating tradition of French lyrics represented by the 'balade' allegedly composed by Charles.²⁶³

²⁶¹ As in the case of the Harley lyrics, the authorship of the poems copied at the end of MS Fairfax 16 has been the object of scholarly debate. While H. N. MacCracken attributes them to the Duke of Suffolk, Norton-Smith follows Steele and refutes this theory. As I have pointed out, he attributes at least one of the poems to Charles; however, Jansen concludes that there is no evidence which links the Fairfax poems to those in MS Harley 682. Pearsall does not negate the possibility that Suffolk is the author of the Harley lyrics, but, instead, displaces the debate by arguing that the question of authorship is elusive, since it is impossible to ascertain it conclusively, and, most importantly, secondary to the investigation of the circumstances of book production in fifteenth-century England; see Pearsall, 'The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans and the Duke of Suffolk, and the Authorship of the Fairfax Sequence', pp. 150-156. See also H. N. MacCracken, 'An English Friend of Charles of Orleans', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 26 (1911), 142-180 (148-151); Robert Steele, *The English Poems of Charles of Orleans*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 215, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press for the Early Text Society, 1941-1946), I.xii-xiii; John Norton-Smith, ed., *MS Fairfax 16* (London: Scolar Press, 1979), p. xxix; and J. P. H. Jansen, 'Charles d'Orléans and the Fairfax Poems', *English Studies* 70 (1989), 206-224.

²⁶² Boffey, 'French Lyrics and English Manuscripts: The Transmission of Some Poems in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.20, and British Library MS Harley 7333', p. 138.

²⁶³ MacCracken, 'An English Friend of Charles of Orleans', 142-180. For a more detailed account of MacCracken's argument, the French poem featured in MS Harley 7333 and attributed to Charles, and Suffolk's role in the dissemination of Charles's works in England, see Boffey, 'French Lyrics and English Manuscripts: The Transmission of Some Poems in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.20, and British Library MS Harley 7333', 136-138.

The presence of Charles's manuscripts in English libraries, as well as in English verse anthologies, such as MS Fairfax 16 or MS Harley 7333, transfers the literary gravitas of French lyricism onto English vernacularity. A sanctioning genealogy retrospectively inscribes Chaucer's paternity of English verse in a courtly poetic tradition, as Charles and Chaucer become associated through their contiguity in the codices they simultaneously inhabit, and through their shared coterie audience and gentry readership. In other words, the textual affinity between the lyrics of the aristocratic French court-poet and the work of the sober English clerk, as portrayed in the Harley iconographic tradition, is endowed with the patrician literary cachet of French, the dominant vernacular culture.²⁶⁴ Chaucer's *paternitas* of the canon is, therefore, inextricably imbricated in the privileged discourse of French literary culture. While Hoccleve's construction of his predecessor as a foundation myth is displaced, it is repositioned in an equally authoritative but dialectical and intervernacular space. Instead of questioning the central role played by Charles and French poetic forms in late medieval English verse manuscripts, the uncertain and elusive authorship of these lyrics, not unlike the elusive rubrics in MS R.3.20, signifies the process of translation and normalisation of *formes fixes* in English poetry. Although authorial attribution remains problematic and, as in MS Fairfax 16, unacknowledged, the circulation of Charles's English and French works testifies to the pervasive presence and authorising function of French traditions in the fifteenth-century English verse collections in which they are embedded and often silently appropriated as an integral part of a hybrid poetic canon.

²⁶⁴ William Askins surveys the connections between Chaucer and Charles, by identifying owners of manuscripts of the English poet's work among the guardians and gentry coterie frequented by Charles and his brother, Jean d'Angoulême, during their exile in England. Askins aims to gather evidence of the two brothers' interest and knowledge of Chaucer; see William Askins, 'The Brothers Orléans and their Keepers', in *Charles d'Orléans in England (1415-1440)*, pp. 27-45 (pp. 36-44).

As the author of both French and English lyrics, Charles is a mediating agent who, by occupying, like Chaucer, a dialectical cultural and linguistic space, connects French and English manuscript culture in a homogeneous, yet fluid, intellectual *locus*. His pivotal role is, at once, cultural and political. In the article ‘The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans and the Duke of Suffolk, and the Authorship of the Fairfax Sequence’, Pearsall offers a succinct survey of Charles’s and Suffolk’s ambassadorial commitments. Not only was Charles a primary agent in the transference of the ‘cultural capital’ of French manuscript culture onto the English vernacular, but he was also engaged in peace-weaving activities during the final stages of the Hundred Years’ War. Whether negotiating at Calais or at the Congress of Arras in 1435, mediating at the siege of Calais or at the peace conference at Oye in 1436, Charles acted as a ‘political broker or bargaining-counter’, and an envoy.²⁶⁵ A polysemic sign which alludes simultaneously to the poetic form traditionally articulating a *captatio benevolentiae* and to the role of the professional mediator weaving a dialectic between discrete cultural, linguistic and political systems, the term ‘envoy’ epitomises the rhetoric of negotiation that characterises Charles’s work both as a poet and as a prisoner of war with ambassadorial duties. In her discussion of Charles’s English verse, Coldiron provides a succinct assessment of his lyrical “translations” as an ‘act of a superior cultural missionary or ambassador more than those of a humble servant of *translatio [imperii]*’.²⁶⁶ Instead of acting as a strategy of cultural colonisation perpetrated by a dominant vernacular, Charles’s English poetry, like his peace-keeping activities, inhabits the permeable and fluid space of exchange and negotiation, since its validating excellence and authority, whether political or aesthetic, is claimed

²⁶⁵ Pearsall, ‘The Literary Milieu of Charles of Orléans and the Duke of Suffolk, and the Authorship of the Fairfax Sequence’, p. 146.

²⁶⁶ Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans: Found in Translation*, p. 2.

by Shirley and other scribes and compilers, in order to legitimise their collections of vernacular literature.

3. Chaucer's Infantilised *Paternitas* and French Manuscript Culture.

The circumstances of war and exile which inform Anglo-French connections in the fifteenth century comprise and extend, nevertheless, beyond Charles's cultural mediation and influence on the "publication" and reception of Chaucer's works. Charles's relation to the English court and its manuscript culture traces a paradigmatic pattern of cultural exchange which informs the dissemination of the work and practices of *mise-en-page* of other French poets and war prisoners such as Jean d'Angoulême, Charles's brother, Jean le Bon and Jean Froissart. Their primary contribution is to occasion the circulation in England of codices that illustrate desirable literary tropes and codicological conventions displayed in French verse manuscripts. As the fifteenth-century collections containing Chaucer's works show a marked indebtedness to these dominant practices, they present the poet's *paternitas* of the English vernacular as profoundly intertwined with Francophone courtly culture. According to Owen's reconstruction of the history of the transmission of *The Canterbury Tales* and, specifically, of clusters of Tales, the selection of romances featured in the holster book MS Harley 1239 (1450-1475) derives, albeit indirectly, from a codex, now Paris Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds anglais 39 (c.1430),

prepared for Jean d'Angoulême during his long exile in England (1412-1445).²⁶⁷

Characteristically, as other comparable books found in the aristocratic fifteenth-century English libraries surveyed by Scattergood, this manuscript, which its owner collated and corrected consistently for a long period of time, displays an overt preference for courtly narratives.

In the hand of the scribe John Duxworth, but presumably penned to articulate Jean's response, a number of rubrics convey critical assessments of the Tales. In particular, it is the romances which appear to attract Jean's attention and *The Knight's Tale*, for instance, receives, in its *explicit*, a hermeneutic sanctioning, as it is glossed as 'valde bona' (f. 17v), or very good and worthy.²⁶⁸ As Owen argues, MS Harley 1239 is the 'only manuscript that definitely uses a number of Paris exemplars', since it contains a collection of texts which possibly Jean himself had once selected and gathered as a cluster of co-extensive Tales. These five romances, *The Knight's Tale*, *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Clerk's Tale*, and *The Franklin's Tale*, most likely began to circulate in England in fascicular form and, after Jean's departure in 1445, were acquired and copied by the hermit of Greenwich, whose hand penned the second part of MS Harley 1239.²⁶⁹ The moral and aristocratic quality of these romances underpins the hermit-scribe's editorial programme which, as discussed previously in Chapter II, is informed by a preoccupation with responding to

²⁶⁷ Owen, *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 28; 44; 108-109. For more detailed accounts of Jean d'Angoulême and his manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*, see Martin Crow, 'Jean d'Angoulême and his Chaucer Manuscript', *Speculum* 17 (1942), 86-99; Meredith Clermont-Ferrand, ed., *Jean d'Angoulême's Copy of the Canterbury Tales: an Annotated Edition of Bibliothèque Nationale's fonds anglais 39 (Paris)* (Lewiston, NY; Lampeter: Mellen Press, 2008); Gilbert Ouy, 'Recherches sur la librairie de Charles d'Orléans et de Jean d'Angoulême pendant leur captivité en Angleterre, et étude de deux manuscrits autographes de Charles d'Orléans récemment identifiés', *Comptes-Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 99:2 (1955), 273-287; and Paul Strohm, 'John of Angoulême: A Fifteenth-Century Reader of Chaucer', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 72 (1971), 69-76.

²⁶⁸ For the identity of the scribe and a brief history of the ownership of the manuscript, see Michael C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), II.216.

²⁶⁹ Owen, *The Manuscripts of The Canterbury Tales*, p. 28.

the literary taste of a courtly audience. This editorial agenda appears to be partly fulfilled by the hermit's act of transference onto his own collection of principles of textual selection, as well as hermeneutic concerns, that are distinctively French, or courtly and edifying, possibly the work of Jean d'Angoulême himself. The French-derived criteria which govern the hermit's *compilatio* legitimise not only his English manuscript, MS Harley 1239, but also an English narrative, *The Canterbury Tales*.

Notwithstanding the influence of Charles and Jean on English literary tradition and manuscript culture, Wimsatt positions both Jean le Bon and Jean de la Mote as central agents in the process of cultural translation of prestigious poetic forms and their *mise-en-page* from France to England. While, in *Chaucer and his Contemporaries*, Wimsatt remarks that Jean de la Mote's development of the ballade pre-empted Machaut's impact on English courtly literature, in his work with William Kibler he argues for Jean le Bon's critical role in introducing Chaucer to the *mise-en-page* of Machaut's manuscripts.²⁷⁰ They contend that Chaucer may have had access to BN MS f.fr. 1586 which, together with BN MS f.fr. 1584, is the only manuscript to contain Machaut's complete works and whose production was probably overseen by the poet himself. Their hypothesis is founded upon the assumption that Jean le Bon, after being captured at Poitiers, took the gorgeously illuminated MS f.fr. 1586 with him to England.²⁷¹ Although Butterfield acknowledges and briefly surveys the affinities between scribal practices in copies of *Troilus* and Machaut's works, especially in *Remede de Fortune* and *Le Voir Dit*, she interrogates the plausibility of

²⁷⁰ Wimsatt, 'Poetry in the English Court before Poitiers (1356): Jean de la Mote', in *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, pp. 43-76 (on Jean de la Mote's development of the ballade, see p. 69); Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', pp. 65-66.

²⁷¹ James I. Wimsatt and William W. Kibler, *Guillaume de Machaut: Le Jugement du roi de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune* (Athens, GA, and London: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 53.

Wimsatt and Kibler's speculation about Chaucer's extensive and direct access to the French poet's manuscripts. Instead, she cautiously concludes:

some, at least, of these surviving Machaut manuscripts (or copies derived from them) would have been seen by Chaucer and the influence of their *mise-en-page* felt and experienced by both the poet and his contemporary scribes.²⁷²

As I will discuss in more detail shortly, whether direct or indirect, Machaut's influence on Chaucer's works and fifteenth-century English manuscript culture resides primarily in his development of *formes fixes* and their arrangement on the page of his manuscripts. Specifically, Butterfield identifies parallels between the *ordinatio* of the *Troilus* codices and the titling, rubrics, and other codicological and rhetorical strategies deployed in collections of Machaut's work, in order to demarcate embedded lyrics within larger narratives.²⁷³ Through the mediating agency of French artists and war prisoners, the 'cultural capital' of the *formes fixes* and their *mise-en-page* is translated from the French vernacular onto Chaucer's literary paternity and the modes of production and transmission of his work.

One of the principal agents of this transference of cultural excellence and *gravitas* between vernacular cultures is Jean Froissart whose manuscripts of love poetry circulated among fifteenth-century aristocratic English readers and had a considerable impact upon English book production. Froissart was employed as a semi-official court poet in the service of Queen Philippa. Born in Valenciennes, like his queen, he arrived in England in 1361 and stayed until 1369.²⁷⁴ In view of Chaucer's presence at court at the time of Froissart's employment, it is logical to

²⁷² Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 66.

²⁷³ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', pp. 66-67.

²⁷⁴ Wimsatt, 'Chaucer and Jean Froissart', in *Chaucer and His English Contemporaries*, pp. 174-209 (pp. 176-177); and Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 68.

assume that the French poet participated, personally or through his works, in the initiation of the younger English courtier to the art of versification. Whether thematic, aesthetic, or codicological, Froissart's influence on Chaucer's verse is well documented, as the opening of the *Paradis d'Amour* is translated almost *verbatim* in *The Book of the Duchess*; also, the ballade and the 'daisy' trope in the 'Prologue' to *The Legend of Good Women* are again reworked from Froissart's *Paradis*. However, like Charles's dialectical positioning, Froissart's most notable role is that of the mediating agent who facilitates the transition from French to English manuscript culture and vernacularity, by replicating and disseminating Machaut's codicological and aesthetic practices.²⁷⁵ His own work is, in fact, modelled on Machaut's *Fonteinne Amoureuse* and *Remede de Fortune*, the ultimate sources of the *Paradis d'Amour* and, therefore, of Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess* and *The Legend of Good Women*.²⁷⁶ Wimsatt eloquently illustrates Froissart's medial positioning, by tracing a pattern of linear genealogical descent, from Machaut to Chaucer via Froissart, through a filial-paternal metaphor which he deploys when describing the relationship between Chaucer and his French 'literary parent', Machaut, and his 'literary older brother', Froissart.²⁷⁷ This paradigm of genealogical relations between French authors, such as Machaut and Froissart, and English vernacular verse is predicated upon the desirable teleological construction of exclusively male familial affiliations which legitimise, while, paradoxically, infantilising Chaucer's vicarious *paternitas*.

As both Wimsatt and Butterfield point out, such line of male descent manifests itself in the literary tropes that Froissart reworks from his lyrical 'father', but also in

²⁷⁵ A selection of Froissart's poetic works is available with facing-page translations, see Kristen M. Figg and R. Barton Palmer, trans., *Jean Froissart: An Anthology of Narrative and Lyric Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2001).

²⁷⁶ Wimsatt discusses Chaucer's indebtedness to Froissart and, indirectly, to Machaut in 'Chaucer and Jean Froissart', in *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, pp. 178; 181-185.

²⁷⁷ Wimsatt, 'Chaucer and Jean Froissart', p. 174.

the layout, appearance and composition of the only two extant manuscript collections of his love verse, namely BN MSS f.fr. 830 and 831. Specifically, these codices, coherently organised and luxuriously decorated and illuminated, adopt the strategy of rubrication and demarcation of intercalated lyrics found in Machaut's manuscripts.²⁷⁸ In consideration of the involvement of both Froissart and Machaut in the production and dissemination of their books, these structured and consistent programmes of *compilatio* and *ordinatio* are self-reflexive and hermeneutic acts of authorial control over the reader's response to a poem's rhetorical and formal sophistication.²⁷⁹ This preoccupation with arrangement and composition resonated with fifteenth-century scribes involved in the production of verse collections in England. In particular, as I have discussed in Chapter II, Shirley's verse prefaces pinpoint coherence and comprehensiveness as the dominant principles governing a manuscript's *compilatio*. This compositional agenda may have been influenced by the *mise-en-page* of MS BN f.fr. 831 which Shirley is likely to have consulted during his service of Richard Beauchamp, the Earl of Warwick. Since the inscription on the inside cover of the volume claims ownership for Shirley's employer, it is plausible to presume that the prolific scribe had access to the Beauchamp library and that this particular volume was formative in his activities as compiler of verse anthologies of vernacular

²⁷⁸ Wimsatt, 'Chaucer and Jean Froissart', p. 189; Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 68. Froissart's two only extant manuscripts of love verse are discussed and described in A. Fourrier, ed., *Jean Froissart: l'Espinette amoureuse*, 2nd edn (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972), pp. 9-14; A. Fourrier, ed., *Jean Froissart: 'Dits' et 'Debats'* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), pp. 7-12; and R. S. Baudouin, ed., *Jean Froissart: Ballades et Rondeaux* (Paris and Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1978), pp. ix-xi. A description of MS f.fr. 831 can also be found in R. R. McGregor, *The Lyric Poems of Jehan Froissart*, Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 143 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 17-21. Boffey situates Froissart's manuscripts in the context of fifteenth-century production of verse collections in England, see *Manuscripts of English Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 52-53; 136; 139-140.

²⁷⁹ As Boffey reports, Froissart displayed an acute awareness of the impact of a lavishly produced volume upon its readers, when he recounts Richard II's reaction to being presented with a codex of the French poet's poetical works; see Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 52-53.

literature.²⁸⁰ The French prisoners of war and artists, protagonists of what Wimsatt defines as the ‘cultural ‘invasion’’ of the English court in the second half of the fifteenth century, acted as pivotal agents in the dissemination and reproduction of the dominant cultural imperatives of French courtly literary taste. The influence of French manuscript culture and vernacularity is, at once, formal and codicological, as the tropes of *fin’amors* and the *formes fixes* in which they are framed are translated onto English verse, together with the strategies of *mise-en-page* developed by French authors to signpost their works.

As Chaucer emulates and translates the authorising discourse of Francophone courtly literary practices onto the English vernacular, his works and the canon over which he presides as a patriarchal figure are validated and inscribed in a prestigious cultural genealogy. The hybridity of the intervernacular space that Chaucer’s *paternitas* now inhabits disperses, however, Hoccleve’s construction of the Father as the ultimate *fons et origo* of English poetry; no longer a ‘founder of discursivity’, Chaucer is re-appropriated and re-positioned as the founder of a transdiscursive or multidiscursive literary tradition which encompasses the prestige and sophistication of French culture and the English *translatio* of its desirable modes of lyrical composition and *mise-en-page*.

²⁸⁰ The inscription is transcribed by Connolly; the claim for ownership reads: ‘Se livre est a Richart le gentil fauls conte de Waryewyck’; see Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 118, note 64. For further information about the Beauchamp library and Shirley’s access, see Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 114-116. Doyle hypothesises that the inscription is in Shirley’s hand, see A. I. Doyle, ‘Further Light on John Shirley (c. 1366-1456?)’, unpublished paper given at the York Manuscripts Conference (1983), subsequently revised for a lecture to the Oxford English Faculty (1989). Both Connolly and Butterfield agree with Peter Dembowski’s suggestion that MS f.fr. 831 could be the copy that, in his *Chroniques*, Froissart recounts presenting to Richard II in July 1394. In turn, Richard may have given the *deluxe* book to the Earl of Warwick, his godson. Dembowski’s examination of the manuscript unearths internal evidence which suggests that it was prepared for an English audience; see Peter Dembowski, ed., *Le Paradis d’amour/L’Orloge amoureux* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), pp. 3-4; 6-12; Butterfield, ‘*Mise-en-page* in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture’, p. 68; and Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 115.

SECTION II

TRANSLATING *MISE-EN-PAGE*: THE USE OF FRENCH TITLES IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPTS OF CHAUCER'S WORKS

1. Titles as Sites of Negotiation between Emulation and Co-option.

The processes of transference of the prestige of French manuscript culture onto English book production are not only formal and generic, but also codicological, as it is both the compositional tropes and the strategies of *mise-en-page* of the *formes fixes* that are translated into the fifteenth-century English codices disseminating Chaucer's works. As well as including poems composed in the lyrical *lingua franca*, these verse anthologies occasionally deploy French titular apparatuses to identify works penned in English. In the material space of the codex, Chaucer's poems and his *paternitas* of the English canon are framed and demarcated through overt codicological gestures which articulate the Father's validating emulation and, simultaneously, his co-option of the dominant practices of Francophone courtly literature.

In *The Chaucer Tradition*, Aage Brusendorff recognises a resonant instance of this titling practice; in a number of manuscript witnesses, a group of six Chaucerian lyrics are, in fact, endowed with French titles.²⁸¹ To his list, which comprises 'Fortune', 'Truth', 'An ABC', 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan', 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton' and 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', I would add a further lyric, 'Complaynt d'Amours', on the basis of Larry D. Benson's cautious inclusion of the poem in the

²⁸¹ Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, pp. 192-207.

Chaucerian canon.²⁸² According to Scattergood's classification of Chaucer's shorter poems in discrete categories, this cluster of texts with French titles displays political and devotional-philosophical *gravitas*. Apart from 'Complaynt d'Amours', a love lyric predicated upon the principles of *fin'amors*, and 'An ABC', a Marian prayer, the remaining texts can be defined as begging poems ('Fortune', 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan' and 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse') or as texts of philosophical and political interest ('Truth' and 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton').²⁸³

In this group of poems, therefore, the pervasive rhetoric of negotiation and petition complements the moral exemplarity of their dominant Boethianism, or a stoic forbearance of the vagaries of fortune. In this context, it is particularly significant that Speght's 1602 edition of Chaucer's *Workes* attributes one of the begging poems, 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', to a paradigmatic fifteenth-century petitioner, Thomas Hoccleve, whose attempts at gaining professional and literary favour relate to his filial association with 'fadir' Chaucer which I discussed in Chapter I. This affiliation comes to fruition in the early seventeenth century when Speght displaces the authorial attribution of Chaucer's *captatio benevolentiae* onto the subservient

²⁸² Brusendorff does not include 'Complaynt d'Amours' in the Chaucerian canon. In his catalogue of 'works written by or ascribed to Chaucer', he marks the poem with an asterisk to signify that it is spurious; see Brusendorff, 'Index A: works written by or ascribed to Chaucer', in *The Chaucer Tradition*, pp. 497-502 (p. 497). Despite not being attributed to Chaucer in any of the manuscript witnesses, 'Complaynt d'Amours' is now, with some caution, included in the canon. In *The Riverside Chaucer*, it is grouped with a number of poems 'not ascribed to Chaucer in the manuscripts'. Strong reservations about Chaucer's authorship are also voiced elsewhere in this edition; Laila Z. Gross, the editor of 'The Short Poems', while surveying the history of the textual transmission of the text, expresses her reluctance to attribute the text to Chaucer and brands it as an inferior Chaucerian imitation or *exercice de style*: 'It was first proposed for inclusion in the canon by Skeat, who was impressed by its Chaucerian touches and the obvious allusion to *The Parliament of Fowls*. Few critics have shared his opinion. It was perhaps written as a poetic exercise for St. Valentine's Day by one of Chaucer's skilled but uninspired admirers'; see Laila Z. Gross, 'The Short Poems', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 631-637 (p. 637).

²⁸³ V. J. Scattergood, ed., 'The Short Poems', in A. J. Minnis, V. J. Scattergood and J. J. Smith, eds, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: The Shorter Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 455-512.

disciple.²⁸⁴ Speght's displacement is, however, authorial, as well as linguistic: 'Th. Occleve to his empty purse' (sig. Iii4r). At a later stage of the lyric's reception, as Speght changes the title to English, he removes the text from its authorising association with French 'cultural capital' which characterises, instead, the validating strategies in operation in the titular apparatuses of a number of fifteenth-century manuscript copies of the poem.

Notwithstanding Speght's enfranchisement from a cultural subjection to French literary traditions, this group of Chaucerian texts still displayed varying degrees of textual and generic affinities with the *formes fixes*, as well as being endowed with the vicarious prestige of French lyricism bestowed upon them by their fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries titles. With the exception of 'An ABC' which, as we have seen in Chapter II, is a translation of Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, all the other poems have rather tenuous connections to identifiable French texts. As Pace and David demonstrate in the Variorum edition of Chaucer's minor poems, even 'Fortune', despite its citation of *Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour*, corresponds more closely to Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* than to *Le Roman de la Rose*. As they put it tersely, '[t]here is no good reason [...] why Chaucer should not have written *Fortune* independent of any influence save that of Boethius'.²⁸⁵ MS Ashmole 59, Shirley's last holograph collection, identifies, however, the poem as a translation of an unspecified French text: 'Here foloweþe nowe a compleynte of þe Pleintyff ageinst agenst (*sic*) fortune translated oute of Frenshe in to Englisshe by þat famous Rethorissyen | Geffrey Chaucier'.²⁸⁶ Although Shirley's rubric proves to be incorrect, the poem's replicativity and equivalence, that is, as

²⁸⁴ For the history of the textual transmission of 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', see George B. Pace and Alfred David, eds, *The Minor Poems: Geoffrey Chaucer*, Vol. V, part I (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1982), pp. 121-132 (p. 128).

²⁸⁵ Pace and David, 'Fortune', in *The Minor Poems: Geoffrey Chaucer*, pp. 103-119 (pp. 104-105).

²⁸⁶ This introductory rubric is transcribed in Pace and David, 'Fortune', p. 110.

Coldiron puts it, a 'faithful servitude' to French sources, fulfils Shirley's programme of designation and validation of 'Fortune' and, by extension, of the remaining Chaucerian lyrics identified by a French title.²⁸⁷ In other words, despite the inaccuracy of Shirley's annotative apparatus, the scribe firmly situates 'Fortune' and Chaucer's authorial agency in the dominant discourse of French literary practices. His strategies of validation of the works he disseminates in his manuscript are predicated upon a deferential acknowledgement of the excellence of the 'master' culture which he transfers onto Chaucer's vicarious *paternitas*.

While Kittredge, Lowes and Wimsatt, among others, trace resonances of Machaut's or Deschamps's ballades and complaints in all poems belonging to this French cluster, I contend that it is not solely the direct and literal indebtedness to particular French texts and traditions that provides an illuminating contextualisation for the practice of penning titles in the *lingua franca*.²⁸⁸ Chaucer's *translatio* of the tropes of *fin'amors* and the moral *gravitas* of devotional-philosophical texts is not configured as a pedestrian and subservient replication of his sources, but, rather, in Copeland's words, as a displacement and reworking of courtly literary genres, or an act of cultural and linguistic negotiation.²⁸⁹ The most significant aspect of Chaucer's association with the French literary tradition is his appropriation and rerouting of the thematic concerns and formal incarnation of the *formes fixes*. Notwithstanding the distinctive "English matter" of a number of these poems with French titles, such as the topicality and locality of 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton' and 'Lenvoy de Chaucer

²⁸⁷ Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans: Found in Translation*, p. 19.

²⁸⁸ For a succinct review of critical assessments of the poems' French sources, see Pace and David, *The Minor Poems: Geoffrey Chaucer*; in particular, 'Truth', pp. 49-52; 'Fortune', pp. 103-105; 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', pp. 121-124; 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton', pp. 139-141; 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan', pp. 149-151; 'Complaint D'Amours' was to be included in part II of vol. V of the Variorum edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems which, however, has not been completed and published.

²⁸⁹ Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, p. 106.

a Scogan', both addressed to members of Chaucer's bureaucratic and royal circles in London, or the 'Envoy' to 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', addressed to Henry IV, it is the received formal types and conventions upon which these poems are structured that make the French designation resonant and appropriate. Comprising a three-stanza ballade ('Truth'), two triple ballades ('Fortune' and 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse'), with or without envoy, and two verse epistles ('Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton' and 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan'), this group of lyrics is a manifestation of the transference onto the English vernacular canon of French poetic conventions as authorising devices of lyrical composition.²⁹⁰ They also situate Chaucer's *paternitas* of the emergent English literary tradition in a dialectical space of intervernacular transaction between validating acts of *imitatio* of Francophone manuscript culture and gestures of co-option and Anglicisation of the dominant aesthetic and codicological modes established by the 'master' language of courtly literature.

Evidence of the dominance of a paradigm of appropriation and affiliation over a pedestrian equivalence to sources, as a principle governing titling practices, is afforded by Chaucer's works, such as *The Book of the Duchess* or *The Romaunt of the Rose*, with a more apparent and direct relation to their French sources. Perhaps unexpectedly, these texts are not designated by a French title in any of their manuscript copies.²⁹¹ As these works' more overt indebtedness to Francophone literary tropes remains silent, it could be argued that titles penned in French do not

²⁹⁰ Despite its formal affinities to the three-stanza ballade, Pace and David align 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton' with 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan' and define it as a verse epistle: 'Both may be loosely classified as ballades, even though they do not observe the metrical restrictions of the French fixed forms'; see Pace and David, 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton', p. 139.

²⁹¹ For a survey of the titular tradition of *The Book of the Duchess* and *The Romaunt of the Rose*, see Alfred David, 'Textual Notes to *The Romaunt of the Rose*', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 1198-1210 (pp. 1198-1199). Since the only manuscript copy of *The Romaunt* is acephalous, there is no record of the poem's title. For *The Book of the Duchess*, whose title is penned consistently in English in all manuscript copies, see Larry D. Benson, 'Textual Notes to *The Book of the Duchess*', pp. 1136-1138 (p. 1136).

necessarily signify an unproblematised equivalence or replicativity; they appear to act, instead, as ideological and codicological acts of disjuncture, as they inhabit French modes of lyrical and courtly composition and *mise-en-page*, in order to supplant them with a tradition whose locale is distinctively English. Whether authorial, as Brusendorff argues, or editorial-scribal, French titles construct a prestigious, albeit vicarious, and courtly configuration of Chaucerian *paternitas*, founded, at once, upon the influence and displacement of the *lingua franca* and its poetic traditions.²⁹²

2. The Manuscripts of the Oxford Group and the ‘Cultural Capital’ of French Verse.

The dialectical construction of Chaucer’s *paternitas* of the English canon informs the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of fifteenth-century anthologies containing his works. In some codices, such as the manuscripts of the Oxford group, affiliations to the privileged discourse of French aristocratic literary practices appear to be central to both their compositional and the paratextual programme. Notwithstanding their deference to the ‘master’ culture, other books, as Shirley’s holograph manuscripts, perform acts of disenfranchisement and emancipation from the dominance of French verse and its *mise-en-page*. In sum, these discrete collections which, as discussed in Chapter II, are centred on the ‘laureate licour’ of Chaucer’s courtly texts, articulate the plural incarnations of the hybrid and multidiscursive construction of the poet’s paternity suspended between emulation and co-option of its French sources.

²⁹² Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, p. 200. Similarly, in the textual notes to ‘Truth’ in the Variorum edition of Chaucer’s minor poems, Pace and David contend, on the basis of the lateness of the manuscripts which feature a Latin or English heading, that French titles are original; Latin and English designations are, therefore, deemed as translations of the earlier French designation, see Pace and David, ‘Truth’, p. 59.

In particular, the fabrication of Chaucer's paternal agency apparent in the paratext and textual selections of the manuscripts of the Oxford group is consistent with the appetite for French lyricism which informs English courtly literary practices and attracts a readership comprising aristocratic coteries and the wider circles of ambitious courtiers. The social positioning of the audience of manuscripts of Chaucer's works with French titles is instrumental in investigating the ideological and hermeneutic implications of this specific titular apparatus. MS Fairfax 16, a gentlemanly collection of Chaucerian pieces, corroborates the connection between French titles and an aristocratic audience's predilection for the lyrical discourse of the courts of love and for poems of devotional-philosophical exemplarity. MS Fairfax 16 is the only manuscript witness to contain all seven Chaucerian lyrics to which French titles are traditionally ascribed. As Norton-Smith observes, five of these poems are presented in sequence as a coherent group.²⁹³ Booklet II of MS Fairfax 16 (ff. 187r-200v) features, in fact, all lyrics except 'Truth' which precedes the others in Booklet I (f. 40r). Most importantly, 'An ABC', 'Fortune', 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan', 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse' and 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton' constitute, in Norton-Smith's words, 'an integral collection' (ff. 188v-194r) in which the poems form a seamless textual unit whose homogeneity is signified, on a codicological level, by the absence of colophons, the conventional markers of a text's individuality and of the boundaries of its discrete identity within an anthology.²⁹⁴

Titular practices in operation in MS Fairfax 16 are paradigmatic and illustrate the dominant tendencies observable in manuscript and early printed copies of the cluster of Chaucer's "French" lyrics identified by Brusendorff. A manifestation of MS Fairfax 16's exemplarity is the absence of French titles for 'An ABC' and 'The

²⁹³ Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. viii.

²⁹⁴ Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. viii. 'Complaynt D'Amours' (ff. 197r-198v) is also included in Booklet II, but it follows the sequence of five Chaucerian poems.

Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', and the use, instead, of English headings.²⁹⁵

Rather than being aberrant designations, the English variants of these poems' titles in MS Fairfax 16 represent, in fact, a pervasive titular practice. As Illustration 14 (p. 164) demonstrates, out of twelve manuscript copies of 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', only MS Pepys 2006 features a French title ('La Complainte de chaucer A sa Bourse Voide', p. 388), while the majority are penned in English (six) or are untitled (five).²⁹⁶ Similarly, the prevailing mode of designation for 'An ABC' is to omit the poem's heading, with eight out of sixteen witnesses bearing no title, and only two copies, both in MS Pepys 2006, featuring a French heading.²⁹⁷ The titular apparatus of MS Fairfax 16 affords, therefore, an exemplary illustration of the heterogeneity and instability of titles across multiple manuscript copies of a text. However, these discrepancies also occur internally, within the same codex, as in MS Fairfax, in which the table of contents and the titles in the body of the manuscript present inconsistent designations. All seven poems are given an English title in the manuscript's table, penned by a contemporary but distinct hand, while five of them are directly introduced by a French heading.²⁹⁸

These incongruities confirm the haphazard processes governing the compilation of titular apparatuses within the compositional programme of a codex, as they appear to be partly dependent on the individual agency of the scribe. Also, in the

²⁹⁵ The English title of 'An ABC' in MS Fairfax 16 reads: 'A Devoute balette to oure lady' (f. 2r). The manuscript features two titles of 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse'. The first, copied in the table of contents, reads: 'The Complaynt of Chawcer to his purse' (f. 2r); the second, situated in the body of the manuscript, is: 'The Complaynt of Chaucer to his Purse' (f. 193r).

²⁹⁶ The manuscript *sigla* used in Illustration 14 are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*; see R. T. Lenaghan, ed., 'Textual Notes to the Short Poems', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 1185-1192.

²⁹⁷ Although the textual notes to 'An ABC' in *The Riverside Chaucer* indicate that the title is omitted in the first copy of the poem, in fact both occurrences bear French titles: 'Pryer A nostre Dame—par Chaucer' (p. 88) and 'Prier A nostre Dame—par Chaucer' (p. 386). For the textual notes in *The Riverside Chaucer* and for a complete list of manuscripts in which the title of 'An ABC' is omitted, see Lenaghan, 'The Short Poems', p. 1185.

²⁹⁸ Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. x.

ILLUSTRATION 14
CHAUCER'S LYRICS WITH FRENCH TITLES IN
LATE-MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS

LYRICS (editorial titles)	French	English	Latin	Untitled	Generic	Total MS Copies
An ABC	2 (P ₁ P ₂)	2 (F Cov)	3 (A6 Ff ² S)	8 (Bod Gg H ³ H ⁵ G J L Mel)		15
Complaynt D'Amours	3 (F Bod H ⁴)					3
Fortune	3 (li Bod F)	2 (A R ²)	3 (Ld Leyd S ¹)	2 (H ³ P)		10
Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan	2 (F P)		1 (Gg)			3
Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton	1 (F)				1 (Cov)	2
The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse	1 (P)	3 (F H ⁴ Mg)		5 (Ff ¹ A ⁴ A ⁵ H ³ Ca ₂)	3 (Ca ₁ Co Cov)	12
Truth	7 (Cov Gg F ₁ Ld Leyd Nott P)	7 (Co H ⁴ Hat Lam R ²⁻¹ R ²⁻² S ²)	2 (Cp S ¹)	7 (A ¹ Ph A ⁴ C El A ⁶ Kk)	1 (F ₂)	24
Totals	19	14	9	22	5	

B: Oxford Bodleian Library MS Bodley 638

F: Oxford Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 16

A: Oxford Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 69 (John Shirley)

R²: Cambridge Trinity College MS R.3.20 (John Shirley)

case of MS Fairfax 16, they bring into focus the significance of the individual circumstances of production, circulation and readership pertaining to single manuscripts and their discrete booklets, with which I engaged more closely in Chapter II. In particular, in MS Fairfax 16 the absence of French titles in the table of contents and their presence in the body of the manuscript can be related to their proximity to or distance from the texts, and, as a consequence, to the increased relevance and urgency to acknowledge their affiliations to the thematic and formal tropes of the *formes fixes*. This urgency resonates with the “Frenchness” and the editorial agenda of the manuscript as a whole; as well as featuring the French lyrics which I considered earlier in this chapter, the codex includes a copy of the English translation of Alan Chartier’s *La Belle Dame sans Mercy* (ff. 50v-62v) and a copy of Hoccleve’s *Letter of Cupid*, an English adaptation of Christine de Pisan’s *L’Epistre au Dieu d’Amours*.²⁹⁹ Notwithstanding the discrepancies between its table of contents and the titular apparatus offered in the body of the manuscript, MS Fairfax 16 displays a marked editorial concentration on lyrical forms which it firmly inscribes in the validating framework of French aristocratic modes of versification. Since the textual nucleus of the manuscript is constituted by Chaucerian courtly literature, MS Fairfax 16 also constructs Chaucer’s *paternitas* of the canon it transmits as unequivocally and vicariously French.

Despite their textual affinities to MS Fairfax 16, the remaining manuscripts of the Oxford group, that is MS Bodley 638 and MS Tanner 346, feature a less

²⁹⁹ The translation of *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is attributed to Sir Richard Roos in a gloss to British Library MS Harley 372; the late-fifteenth-century note, transcribed by Norton-Smith, reads: ‘Translatid out of Frenche by Sir Richard Ros’: see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xxiv. For a biography of Sir Richard Roos, see E. Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos (c. 1410-1482): Lancastrian Poet* (London: Hart-Davies, 1961). For a discussion of the affiliations between Christine de Pisan’s work and Hoccleve’s *The Letter of Cupid*, see Thelma S. Fenster and Mary Carpenter Erler, eds, *Poems of Cupid, God of Love: Christine de Pizan’s Epistre au dieu d’amours and Dit de la rose, Thomas Hoccleve’s The Letter of Cupid: editions and translations, with George Sewell’s The Proclamation of Cupid* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1990); and Roger Ellis, ‘Chaucer, Christine de Pizan, and Hoccleve: The Letter of Cupid’, in *Essays on Thomas Hoccleve*, ed. Catherine Batt (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 29-54.

comprehensive collection of Chaucer's shorter poems. In the case of MS Tanner, the absence of all seven lyrics with French headings illustrates the codex's concentration, rather, on longer poetic texts, such as Chaucerian dream visions and complaints, while MS Bodley offers a more substantial selection which comprises a copy of 'An ABC', 'Fortune' and 'Complaint D'Amours'. However, in this manuscript, only 'Fortune' and 'Complaint D'Amours' bear French titles ('Balade de vilage [*sic*] saunz peynture' (f. 208r) and 'Complaynt Damowrs' (f. 212r)), whereas 'An ABC' (ff. 204r-207v) remains untitled.³⁰⁰ As Robinson observes in her 'Introduction' to the facsimile edition of MS Bodley 638, unlike the carefully compiled MS Fairfax 16, the manuscript's decoration and paratextual apparatus, instead of appearing as integral parts of the codex's compositional programme, often result from the uncoordinated accumulation or palimpsesting of later contributions:

Whereas in Manuscript Fairfax these [subheadings and Latin citations] formed part of the design of the book (each page had wide margins in which the learned apparatus was neatly written in red and prefaced with a blue paraphs mark), in Manuscript Bodley they are squashed onto the outer margins of the page [...] and have frequently been cropped in binding.³⁰¹

The palimpsested space and multiple temporalities inhabited by a manuscript's titular apparatus signify the accretive process and discrete stages of composition, revision and reception of a codex and the works it disseminates. MS Bodley 638 provides a significant illustration of such titular instability and multiplicity, as the heading 'Complaynt Damowrs' (f. 212r), compressed in the narrow gap between the explicit of 'The Complaint against Hope' and the incipit of 'Complaint D'Amours', is visibly

³⁰⁰ For an explanation of the spelling variant 'vilage' and 'visage', and their meaning, see Pace and David, 'Fortune', pp. 110-111.

³⁰¹ Pamela Robinson, ed., *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1982), p. xxvi.

a later addition, in the hand of the sole scribe, to his initial paratextual programme.³⁰²

The poem's French titular variant and its codicological relevance are, however, preserved and punctuated by the use of a Bastard display script, red ink and its positioning within a banner.³⁰³

Although their less prominent focus on the seven Chaucerian lyrics with French titles differentiates MS Bodley 638 and MS Tanner 346 from MS Fairfax 16, they articulate a comparable acknowledgement of the 'cultural capital' of French manuscript culture and its legitimising authority over Chaucer's *paternitas* of the canon. In MSS Bodley and Tanner, nonetheless, the cachet of the *lingua franca* extends beyond this specific lyrical cluster to include other fashionable and distinguished poetic genres, such as complaints and dream visions. Both manuscripts signpost, for instance, the beginning of the second part of the dream in Lydgate's *The Temple of Glass* with a French rubric which is phrased almost identically in the two codices, despite few minor spelling variants: 'Et cest le fine del primer parte | Et ycy commence la secounde parte del Songe' (MS Bodley 638, f. 25r), and 'Ycy commence le secound parti de la sounges' (MS Tanner 346, f. 83v).³⁰⁴ This French annotation signals a cultural and hermeneutic preoccupation with the 'Songe', or dream vision, as genre and in the structural articulation of Lydgate's poem; this concern is also echoed by the centred rubrics in French which, accompanied by paraphs, demarcate the rhetorical structure of Chaucer's 'Fortune' in MS Bodley 638: 'le pleyntyff encountre Fortune'; 'Fortune encountre le pleyntyff'; and, again, 'le pleyntyff encountre Fortune' (f. 209r). As I have previously pointed out, the influence

³⁰² Robinson identifies only one hand in the manuscript, see Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*, p. xxviii.

³⁰³ The identification of this type of script is Robinson's, see Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*, p. xxviii.

³⁰⁴ Julia Boffey, 'John Lydgate, *The Temple of Glass*', in *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 15-89 (ll. 550-551).

on English manuscript culture of French poets, such as Machaut, Froissart and Charles d'Orléans, resides principally in their formal development and *mise-en-page* of the *formes fixes*. The presence of a French titular apparatus in MS Bodley 638, therefore, makes apparent the validating provenance of the codicological and literary practices which inform the composition and compilation of English lyrics like 'Fortune'.

This sanctioning association with French 'cultural capital' acquires a significance which pertains to the whole manuscript. With the exception of *Anelida and Arcite* (ff. 5r-11r), whose paratextual apparatus is penned both in English and in Latin, a scribal signature punctuates the explicit of Lydgate's *A Complainte of a Lovers Lyfe* and *The Temple of Glass*, as well as Chaucer's 'Fortune', all of which feature titles in French. The scribe places his name ('Lyty', 'Lity' or 'JL') at the end of the 'Envoy' of *A Complainte of a Lovers Lyfe*, which is signalled by a marginal gloss in French ('l'envoye | De quayre', f. 4v); a cropped 'Ly<ty>' coincides with the explicit of the 'Complaint' of *Anelida and Arcite* (f. 4v); the colophon of *The Temple of Glass* also concludes with 'lyty' (f. 38r); and, finally, a similar practice is reserved for 'Fortune' whose explicit is signed by 'Lyty' (f. 209v).³⁰⁵ The articulation of the scribe's name functions as a strategy of self-announcement which enables Lyty to assert his identity, by individualising and signposting his agency within the manuscript. Through his signature, Lyty eschews the absence and silence which characteristically shroud the work of a scribe and confine him or her to the effacement of anonymity, in order to establish himself in a quasi-authorial role.

³⁰⁵ On MS Bodley 638's scribe's signature, see Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, I.89; and Robinson, *Manuscript Bodley 638: A Facsimile*, p. xxvii. On the identity of Lyty, Robinson specifies that '[a]part from his name we know nothing of Lyty, the scribe and possible first owner of the manuscript'.

As Foucault argues, since ‘all discourses are objects of appropriation’, the ‘author function’ is a discourse predicated upon the acknowledgement and accountability of ownership.³⁰⁶ In other words, by demarcating the manuscript with his name, Lyty claims authority over the entire codex which, in fact, he single-handedly compiled and copied. The specific positioning of the scribe’s signature suggests, however, that his act of appropriation is founded on a dialectic between self-validation and authorisation. As his name is affiliated to texts inscribed within a tradition of French *mise-en-page*, Lyty’s signature, at once, signals and authorises their centrality and excellence in the *compilatio* of the codex, and establishes an association between the scribe’s agency and the sanctioning cachet of French manuscript culture. Despite being less numerous than in MS Fairfax, the French titular apparatuses of MS Bodley have a similar function, as they endow a codex of courtly literature and Chaucer lyrical *paternitas*, on which it is centred, with the authorising currency of the lyrical *lingua franca* and its forms.

Among these courtly manuscripts, Illustration 14 (p. 164) shows that, except for MS Fairfax 16, MS Pepys 2006 is the codex in which French titles are more frequently ascribed to Chaucer’s poems. Specifically, in MS Pepys 2006, four out of these seven lyrics are designated by means of French headings, namely ‘Truth’ (‘Le bon Counsell—de Chaucer’ (p. 389)), ‘The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse’ (‘La Compleint de chaucer A sa Bourse Voide’ (p. 388)), ‘Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan’, and both copies of ‘An ABC’ (‘Pryer A nostre Dame—par Chaucer’ (p. 88) and ‘Prier A nostre Dame—par Chaucer’ (p. 386)). Furthermore, the centrality of the role of MS Pepys 2006 in the transmission of Chaucer’s texts and their titular apparatuses is corroborated not only by the substantial proportion of poems that are endowed with

³⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’, in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault’s Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 101-120 (p. 108).

a French title in the manuscript, but also because of its distinctive titling practices. In particular, MS Pepys 2006 is the only witness of ‘An ABC’ which features a French heading, and, similarly, it is one of only two manuscripts to provide French titles for ‘The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse’ and ‘Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan’. Of the two codices which feature the most extensive number of French titles for this cluster of Chaucerian poems, MS Fairfax 16 is a more coherently produced and compiled codex, whose frontispiece is adorned with a remarkable illumination of Chaucer’s ‘The Complaint of Mars’, ascribable to the prestigious School of William Abell, the Abingdon Missal Master; albeit not a deluxe codex, it is copied on parchment of good quality and, according to Norton-Smith, its production and its *compilatio* reproduce a socially and culturally specific ‘courtly experience’.³⁰⁷ A less homogeneous and carefully compiled manuscript, MS Pepys 2006 is a codex copied on paper and, according to Seymour, ‘compiled from at least two disparate parts originally circulating independently’.³⁰⁸ Its programme of decoration is very sparse in the first part, but it appears more coordinated, yet ‘fairly crude’, in the second.³⁰⁹ Despite being a less impressively produced artefact, MS Pepys 2006 is consistent with the tradition of books of courtly vernacular literature compiled in fifteenth-century England; as Edwards explains, the first segment is affiliated to the lyrical *compilatio* of the major collections of Chaucerian material (the Oxford group and Shirley’s holographs), and the second displays a ‘less pronounced tendency in the fifteenth-century compilation’ to combine the *The Canterbury Tales* with Chaucer’s shorter poems, as in MSS Gg.4.27 and Harley 7333, but also British Library Harley 2251,

³⁰⁷ For a description and brief discussion of the frontispiece of MS Fairfax 16, and for a note on materials, see Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. vii; ix; xii-xiii.

³⁰⁸ Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, 1.90.

³⁰⁹ A. S. G. Edwards, ed., *Manuscript Pepys 2006: A Facsimile* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1985), p. xxvii.

Henry E. Huntington Museum and Art Gallery MS HM 140 (formerly MS Phillips 8299), and MS R.3.19.³¹⁰

In other words, both sections of MS Pepys 2006 reproduce the dominant cultural values of the English aristocracy and gentry who commissioned, owned and perused these codices. Predicated upon a courtly and lyrical construction of Chaucer's *paternitas* and the English canon over which he presides as a patriarch, MS Pepys 2006 and comparable courtly manuscripts disseminate the desirable and hegemonic subject positions translated from French literary culture by the works of the Father. While a reconstruction of the history of the ownership of the manuscript cannot be conclusive, it appears that the first section was owned by John Stow, and the second by the Kentish Kiriell family, and later possibly by John Fetipace or Fetplace who, according to Edwards, 'may be representative of a number of London merchant families who in the late fifteenth century became owners of manuscripts of vernacular poetry'.³¹¹ Whether intended for the aristocracy and the gentry, or addressed to the burgeoning merchant and curial classes with aspirations of gentrification, codices like MSS Pepys 2006 and Fairfax 16 compile and disseminate a literary 'grammar', or a compendium to dominant poetic genres. The nucleus of manuscripts collections as MSS Fairfax 16 and Pepys 2006, the works of the intervernacular Father, through their affiliations to the *lingua franca*, transfer 'cultural capital' from the French to the English vernacular, while serving the aristocracy's appetite for narratives of *fin'amors* and the gentrified middle classes' desire to emulate courtly practices.

Nonetheless, the currency of French titular apparatuses is not uniformly articulated and represented in the manuscript witnesses. The examination of the information collected in Illustration 14 (p. 164) demonstrates that titles are unstable

³¹⁰ Edwards, *Pepys 2006: A Facsimile*, p. xxii.

³¹¹ For a history of the manuscript's ownership, see Edwards, *Pepys 2006: A Facsimile*, pp. xxvii-xxxii (p. xxix).

and inconsistent, as these codices accommodate a number of linguistic titling variants. Although English and Latin variations are present, they are not as conspicuous as the instances of untitled poems. The absence of identification become pervasive in the case of ‘An ABC’ whose designation remains silent in nine out of sixteen manuscript copies, while ‘Truth’ is allocated an equal amount of English and untitled designations, namely seven for each variant, with the French title prevailing only by one copy. The fluidity of these titling practices illustrates the codicological and rhetorical function of the late-medieval title which, as I have already pointed out earlier in this chapter and in Chapter II, is a hermeneutic and codicological *locus* open to individual agency and, therefore, to haphazard scribal and editorial interventions. In some manuscripts, the title exists as a gap to be filled and appropriated, and the two manuscript collections of Charles d’Orléans offer an eloquent depiction of such titular traditions, especially in relation to French titology. As Arn observes in her comparative work on MSS Harley 682 and f.fr. 25458, while the two codices present a considerable number of similarities, the role of titles in their compositional design is one resonant exception:

The English scribe’s most striking divergence from his model [MS f.fr. 25458] is his omission of the many headings that the French scribes [*sic*] uses, including ‘titles’ such as ‘Complainte de France’ or ‘Copie de la lettre de Retenue’ as well as the words ‘Balade’, ‘Chançon’, or ‘Lenvoy’ at appropriate points.³¹²

Evidently not a matter of urgency in the English scribe’s writing schedule, titles are absent from MS Harley 682, despite its exemplar’s consistent titling system. As the evidence from MS Fairfax 16 or MS Bodley 638 testifies, headings, much like *litterae notabiliores* or rubrics, are often absent or later additions inserted by a

³¹² Arn, ‘Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d’Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)’, p. 74.

different hand in charge of a separate aspect of the *ordinatio* of a codex, or by a reader.

The programme of decoration and the titular apparatus of MS Tanner 346 also offers an effective illustration of the multiple temporalities and agencies inhabiting the space of the manuscript title. In her introduction to the facsimile edition of MS Tanner, Robinson remarks on the haphazard quality of the codex's titling mode and she concludes that only 'three of the fourteen items in the manuscript were originally provided with headings', and the titles that now designate most of the works are later insertions, mostly penned, as we have seen, by Archbishop William Sancroft in the seventeenth century.³¹³ While, according to Robinson's assessment, titling gaps in MS Tanner may be explained by the 'lack of coordination among the scribes', the consistency in script and decoration displayed by MS Fairfax 16 suggests a much more homogeneous and effectively orchestrated compositional process, whereby the titling apparatus is considered as a constituent element of the paratextual material and, therefore, allocated to a separate professional, the rubricator.³¹⁴ This separation of roles within the process of production of a codex may explain the scribes' individualised responses to titles and the titular apparatus's ultimate dependence on the individual agency and habits of single scribes. Therefore, as Arn suggests in relation to Chaucer's verse collections, despite their significant hermeneutic function, titles can be determined by purely professional and technical considerations: 'this is not the sort of thing that concerned the poet and he left it to his (surely professional) scribes to do as they saw fit'.³¹⁵ However, Charles's French anthology has a consistent programme of headings which the English scribe, perhaps because it is

³¹³ Pamela Robinson, ed., *Manuscript Tanner 346: A Facsimile* (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books; Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1980), pp. xvii; xxiii.

³¹⁴ Robinson, *MS Tanner 346: A Facsimile*, p. xxv; Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. x-xi.

³¹⁵ Arn, 'Two Manuscripts, One Mind: Charles d'Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)', p. 75.

alien to his customary duties, chooses to ignore or defer to a later stage of composition. Rather than invalidating the codicological and hermeneutic relevance of titles, these incongruous and individualised practices define the titular apparatus as a space of appropriation, that is as an open and fluid signifier that can be inhabited by multiple interpretative stances. They are, in other words, an articulation and manifestation of the hybrid and multifarious positioning of Chaucer's *paternitas* in relation to French manuscripts culture. This instability and lack of uniformity consequently alerts the reader to the ideological implications of each linguistic and cultural variation.

3. Disjunctive Acts of Translation in Shirley's Holograph Manuscripts.

While French titles function as strategies of validation and affiliation, English titular variants can be read as an act of Anglicisation of the permeable space of the medieval title. As in the case of generic French designations, it is the displacement of the source texts, rather than equivalence, that underpins the rationale behind anglicised titles. Instead of offering a pedestrian duplication of the 'cultural capital' of French lyricism, the use of English headings, as manifested in Shirley's verse collections, is an ideological device which claims literary authority for the English vernacular. Once authorised by an accomplished emulation of the hegemonic aesthetic and codicological practices of Francophone manuscript culture, Chaucer's *paternitas* can perform acts of disjuncture and emancipation from the dominance of the 'master' language and supplant it by positioning itself as the unifying principle of the emergent and newly-enfranchised English canon.

Illustration 14 (p. 164) shows that, despite his editorial focus on French texts and forms, the scribe-collector's holographs or the anthologies related to him display

a tendency to designate Chaucer's lyrics with English titles. The only two manuscript copies of 'Fortune' which bear an English title are codices copied by Shirley, MSS Ashmole 59 and R.3.20. While the Trinity manuscript also ascribes an English heading to both its copies of 'Truth' ('Balade þat Chaucier made on his deeth bedde', p. 144; 'Balade by Chaucier <on his dethe bede>', p. 357), MS Harley 7333 represents the only copy of 'Complaint D'Amours' in which the lyric's title is not French, but anglicised ('an amoureuse complaynte made at wyndsore in the laste Maye tofore November'). Shirley's English titles articulate an editorial policy of Anglicisation of the French *formes fixes* which indicates a stage of the reception of Chaucer's works and of the establishment of the English vernacular canon predicated upon the progressive acknowledgement of the legitimacy of its own 'cultural capital' and its aesthetic-creative emancipation from its Romance sources.

This implies that in Shirley's books, the process of *translatio studii*, or the transference of status and prestige from French to English culture, begins to come to fruition and English vernacularity ceases to be constructed as a vicarious cultural system, and, instead, it is presented as an autonomous and canonised tradition in its own right. MS Ashmole 59 articulates the stages of this transition by means of a dialectical relation between elements of its paratextual and titular apparatuses, and their hybrid linguistic configuration. As I argued earlier in this chapter, the English introductory rubric which precedes the manuscript's copy of 'Fortune' constructs an incorrect acknowledgement of the poem's indebtedness to an undetermined French source; nonetheless, it also situates the lyric within the English canon: 'Here foloweþe nowe a compleynte of þe Pleintyff ageinst agenst (*sic*) fortune translated oute of Frenshe in to Englisshe by þat famous Rethorissyen | Geffrey Chaucier'. The cultural and linguistic hybridity of the poem also resonates in its 'Envoy' which is

demarcated by a French heading: ‘Lenvoye de Fortune’.³¹⁶ This dialectic between native and Romance canon signifies a transitional phase of the reception of ‘Fortune’ and, in general, of English vernacular that is suspended between the reproduction of French dominance and the assertion of the autonomy of England’s own cultural currency. This intervernacularity also signals a moment of disjuncture in the reception of the poem and in the construction of Chaucer’s *paternitas* as simultaneously deferential to and enfranchised from French cultural hegemony.

A similar dialectical strategy of cultural and linguistic negotiation is in operation in MS R.3.20. Shirley’s hermeneutic agenda of gradual emancipation of the English poetic canon from the ideological superiority of French culture is apparent in the elliptical rubrics introducing the second cluster of unattributed French poems in MS R.3.20, which I cited and discussed in section I of this chapter. Notwithstanding Shirley’s apparent subjugation to and dissemination of the moral excellence and normativity of French culture, this ideological dominance is called into question by the obscure attribution in the introductory rubric to ‘Qui veult son corps an sante maintenir’ (p. 49). According to Connolly, Shirley’s elusive reference to ‘le plus | grande poetical Clerk du parys’ may allude to either Alain Chartier or Eustache Deschamps, both engaged in the service of French nobility.³¹⁷ This uncharacteristically elliptical gloss is, however, in stark contrast with the specificity of Shirley’s authorial attributions of the poems which form the remainder quire 17. His unequivocal identification of ‘daun Johan Lidegate of Bury þe Munke’ (p. 52) as the author of ‘So as the Crabbe Goth Forward’ (p. 50), a translation of the preceding French poem, is an act of *translatio* and Anglicisation of the moral and cultural excellence of French as the dominant ideology. As Connolly explains, ‘Shirley [...]

³¹⁶ This rubric is transcribed in Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 159.

³¹⁷ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 91; note 60, p. 100.

invites his readers to judge between the French and the English versions of the poem. It is hardly a fair comparison. Lydgate's version is not a close translation of the French, and is not represented as such, but his poem is exactly twice as long as the original [...] the difference between the two may be a subtle attempt to influence a preference for Lydgate's version'.³¹⁸ By guiding the reader's reception of the texts through his titular apparatus, and by presenting the English poem as a more accomplished and impressive composition, Shirley appropriates and transfers the cachet and the 'capital' of French culture onto its English counterpart.

Whether absent, palimpsested, or dialectical, titles are fluid signifiers whose linguistic hybridity also manifests itself ostensibly in designations that are exclusively generic. Three manuscript copies of 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse' (MS Harley 7333; MS Coventry (Accession 325); and New York Morgan Library MS.4) introduce the lyric solely as 'Balade'.³¹⁹ As well as constituting a significant proportion of the poems' titling variants, with the same number of instances as the English titles, and French designations surpassing it only by one unit, these generic indications inhabit a bilingual space. A French-derived term used both in Middle English and Old French to designate a poetic form, 'balade' is also often deployed as the sole element in the titular definition of a poem, a codicological practice which testifies to the influence of the French *mise-en-page* on English book production. As Butterfield argues in her comparative work on the *ordinatio* of the *Troilus* manuscripts and their French sources, especially the *Remede de Fortune* and *Le Voir Dit*, '[f]requent rubrics are characteristic of all the manuscripts: lyrics (both those set into narrative and in separate groups), are given generic titles ("balade", "rondeau", "chanson royal") usually set on a separate line within a column and sometimes in the

³¹⁸ Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 90-91.

³¹⁹ For more information about titular variants, see Pace and David, 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', p. 128.

margin as well'.³²⁰ She observes and records the same practice in the hybrid codex MS Royal 16.F.ii, a collection of French lyrics produced in England, in which '[e]ach song is given a generic title ("Balade", "canson", "carole")'.³²¹ The custom of ascribing titles that indicate exclusively a lyric's form is in operation in both French and English codices. As this constitutes compelling evidence of the transference from French to English manuscript culture of conventions governing a manuscript's *mise-en-page*, it also articulates the linguistic and cultural hybridity of poems, like 'The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse', whose titular configuration and validation, 'Balade', marry their authoritative French origins with the demands of the progressively emancipated English verse and Chaucerian literary *paternitas*.

A similar culturally dialectical book is MS Codex 902, the French *chansonnier* containing, as we have seen, the 'Ch' lyrics associated with Chaucer. A miscellaneous collection of various *formes fixes* composed by major medieval French poets, such as Machaut and Deschamps, the codex announces itself as a lyrical compendium, and meticulously records and attributes a title to each poem.³²² Apart from some partial exceptions in which the definition of a poem's form is combined with a brief thematic description (i.e., 'Complainte de Pasteur et de | pastourelle amoureuse', f. 8v; 'Le complainte de lan | nouvel', f. 11v), the headings are predominantly generic ('Pastourelle', 'Rondel', 'Chancon Royal', 'Virelay').³²³ The *ordinatio* of MS Codex 902 is very rationally orchestrated, since each heading is

³²⁰ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 66.

³²¹ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 63.

³²² Wimsatt comments on the compendiousness and coherence of the *ordinatio* of MS Codex 902 and maintains that it was compiled 'with a deliberate aesthetic intention; the anthologist aimed at pleasing variety'; see Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of 'Ch' in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, p. 47.

³²³ I have consulted the electronic edition of MS Codex 902, available at <http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/codex/public/PageLevel/index.cfm?WorkID=907> [accessed on 26 Jul 2009].

centred and penned in red ink, and the metric structure of the lyrics is neatly articulated by means of marginal initials, or *letrines*, decorated in black and red, with individual stanzas demarcated by a gap.³²⁴ Resonances of these codicological practices are traceable in manuscripts produced in England in the fifteenth century, such as those containing the three copies of ‘The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse’ featuring a generic title. The linguistic hybridity and fluidity of headings which provides a poem with a formal identity, enable, however, English literary culture to translate the established cachet of French practices onto the production and dissemination of its own canon, while asserting the validity and progressive emancipation of its own vernacular tradition.

If English headings displace and appropriate the ‘cultural capital’ of French lyricism in a number of manuscript copies of Chaucer’s lyrics, the use of Latin paratextual material provides a contiguous sanctioning strategy of the poet’s *paternitas* of English vernacularity. Also, in the palimpsested and polyvocal space of the codex Latin titles augment the hybridity of Chaucer’s paternal agency, as they inscribe his works within a more complex framework of emulation of and indebtedness to dominant cultures which now encompasses both Frenchness and Latinity. In particular, a titular apparatus composed in Latin establishes affiliations with the medieval scholastic tradition of *ordinatio* and, as Chapter I details, the codicological practices of arrangement and structural-rhetorical articulation of texts subjected to exegetical commentary. In the case of Chaucer’s lyrics, three

³²⁴ Although Wimsatt does not comment specifically on the titular apparatus and its *mise-en-page*, he remarks on the copyist’s ‘care in arranging the contents of Penn’, especially in the ‘customary alternation of forms, the maintenance of natural groups of works (for instance, double and triple ballades), the frequent matching of poems in which men are speakers with poems in which women speak, the varying of topics and the treatments of them, and the groupings of the works of Machaut and Granson’, see Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of ‘Ch’ in University of Pennsylvania MS French 15*, p. 79.

manuscripts offer Latin headings for ‘Fortune’ (British Library MS Lansdowne 699; Leiden University Library MS Vossius GG.qv.9; and Oxford Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B.10) and in all of them introductory rubrics have a titular function. Instead of a descriptive and thematic title, like the more detailed French heading found in MS Fairfax 16 (‘Balade de vilage saunz Peynture. Par Chaucer’, f. 191r), the three Latin headings provide a discourse analysis of the poem: ‘Incipit quedam disputacio inter conquerulatorem & Fortunam’ (MS Lansdowne 699).

Notwithstanding minor variants, the same rubric is repeated twice in MS Vossius GG.qv.9: ‘Incipit quedam disputatio inter conquerulatorem & Fortunna (f. 94r) and ‘Disputatio inter Conquerutorem (*sic*) et Fortuna (f. 94v).³²⁵ The heading in MS Arch. Selden. B. 10 (‘Paupertas conqueritur super fortunam’) is configured, instead, as a gloss on ‘Fortune’’s pervasive legal vocabulary and, according to Pace and David, a topical reference to a law granting the poor the right to go to court without bearing the legal costs.³²⁶ On the contrary, the Latin titles assigned to ‘Truth’ in MS Arch. Selden. B.10 and Oxford Corpus Christi College MS 203 are aligned with the poem’s French and English headings, since they echo their emphasis on Chaucer’s gnomic counsel. They designate the lyric respectively as ‘Ecce bonum concilium Galfredi Chaucer | contra fortunam’ and ‘Prouerbum Scogan’.³²⁷ In the case of ‘Truth’, the Latin titular apparatus proves to be a particularly apt device, as it voices and enhances the Boethian quality and *gravitas* of the lyric.³²⁸ Chaucer’s cultural affiliations to Latinity and scholasticism, established through Latin titles, translate the

³²⁵ ‘Ballade of the face (*sic*) without painting. By Chaucer’. Despite some minor variants, all Latin headings can be translated as ‘The debate between the plaintiffs and Fortune’.

³²⁶ Pace and David, ‘Fortune’, pp. 110-111. ‘Poverty conquers fortune.’

³²⁷ ‘Here is Geoffrey Chaucer’s worthy advice against fortune’ and ‘The proverb of Scogan’.

³²⁸ On the Boethian resonances of ‘Truth’, see Pace and David, ‘Truth’, pp. 49-50; and Scattergood, ‘The Short Poems’, pp. 492-503.

philosophical sophistication and moral distinction of sources such as Boethius, and the codicological authority of exegetical practices onto his literary *paternitas*.

This *translatio* from classical to vernacular culture characterises the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of MS Arch. Selden. B.10 as a whole. *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* describes the codex as a bilingual manuscript, produced in Latin and English on parchment, with a consistent decorative programme of illuminated borders and capitals, despite resulting from the conflation of two discrete phases of composition.³²⁹ The first part, written between 1470 and 1480, is a historical manuscript containing John Hardyng's *The Chronicle of England*, as well as a 'curious' map of Scotland, a pedigree showing 'The title of Fraunce to claim England', and, finally, Latin and English prose and verse extracts from *The Chronicle*. The second and later part was composed in c. 1520 and is principally a poetic codex which includes, apart from Chaucer's 'Fortune' (ff. 200r-201v) and 'Truth' (ff. 201v-202r), Lydgate's *Proverbs* copied from the 1520 (?) edition produced by Wynkyn de Worde.³³⁰ Like the first part, but to a lesser degree, the second segment of the codex associates English literary traditions to the eminence of classicism, through its Latin titular apparatus. Adorned with fine capitals and the arms of Henry Percy, the fifth Earl of Cumberland, MS Arch. Selden. is perhaps not a *deluxe*, but a carefully produced artefact whose prestige has to befit the social excellence of its owners and the refinement of their literary taste. As Boffey suggests, a scribe involved in the production of the manuscript worked for members of the northern Percy family between the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries; like

³²⁹ F. Madan and H. H. E. Craster, *Collections received before 1660 and miscellaneous manuscripts acquired during the first half of the seventeenth century*, Vol. II, part I, in *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895-1953), p. 617.

³³⁰ Madan and Craster, *Collections received before 1660 and miscellaneous manuscripts acquired during the first half of the seventeenth century*, II.i.617.

other copyists producing manuscripts in England and Scotland at the time, the Selden scribe had affiliations with a noble household and was familiar with their literary taste.³³¹ In MS Arch. Selden. B.10, the strategy of *translatio imperii et studii* appears, therefore, to focus on Latin, and epitomises a sixteenth-century tendency, with which I briefly engaged in Chapter II in relation to the reception of *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, to classicise and gentrify Chaucer's *paternitas* and his work, that is to fabricate a genealogical descent, both personal and literary, which stems from classicism.³³²

The fifteenth-century manuscript copies of Chaucer's works deploy, therefore, a twofold strategy of validation of the English canon over which the poet presides as a literary patriarch. The material space of the codex becomes saturated with the codicological signifiers of the Father's affiliations to two 'master' cultures and their traditions of *mise-en-page*, that is French aristocratic literary practices and scholastic modes of rationalisation of knowledge. Titular apparatuses, in particular, frame and firmly inscribe a text within these hegemonic cultural discourses. The frequent use of French titles to identify Chaucer's lyrics legitimises his paternal authority by affiliating it to the fashionable and dominant Francophone manuscript culture, while, simultaneously, dispersing it as a vicarious and derivative agency. As palimpsested spaces, constantly re-written and over-written, titles record multiple hermeneutic voices and constructions of Chaucer's *paternitas*. In their polyvocality, they

³³¹ Julia Boffey, 'Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and Definitions of the 'Household Book'', in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie and Ralph Hanna (London: The British Library, 2000), pp. 125-134 (p. 130).

³³² However, with the exception of Wynkyn De Worde who worked on MS Arch. Selden. B.10 and may have used it as his exemplar, the principal sixteenth-century editions of Chaucer's works do not ascribe Latin titles to 'An ABC', 'Fortune', or 'Truth'. De Worde's 1498 reprint of Caxton's edition is, in fact, the only early printed copy of 'Fortune' and 'Truth' to use a Latin heading. Pynson's 1526 reprint of Caxton's edition also ascribes a Latin title to 'Truth', probably following de Worde's variant. For a brief discussion of the relation between De Worde's and Pynson's work and Caxton's edition of Chaucer's *oeuvre*, see Beverly Boyd, 'William Caxton', in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, pp. 13-34 (p. 27).

accommodate a dialectical relation between the poet's emulation of a superior culture and its practices, and his acts of disjunction from and usurpation of the authority of the 'master' language in order to claim it for his works and the newly-established English canon.

SECTION III

‘TRANSLATED OUT OF FRENCH’: ‘LYRICO-NARRATIVE’ DISCOURSE.

1. The Composition and *Mise-en-page* of Interpolated Poems.

As the transference of titling practices from French manuscript culture onto English book production testifies, the central strategies of legitimisation of the English vernacular canon are, at least partly, predicated upon the imitation and appropriation of the ‘cultural capital’ of French traditions of composition and *mise-en-page*. Fifteenth-century manuscript anthologies of Chaucer’s works construct, therefore, his literary *paternitas* on the social and cultural prestige of the *formes fixes*, that is the courtly lyrical forms which the Father rewrites in English. According to Patterson, it is, indeed, through its lyrical tradition, rather than through its romances or histories, that French culture influences Chaucer’s writing. Specifically, in Patterson’s account, ‘the currently fashionable *dits amoureux*’, with their narrative structure punctuated by lyrical interpolations, prove instrumental in Chaucer’s initiation into the art of poetic composition:

Romances and histories, almost entirely in prose, continued to be copied and read [...] But the literature of fashion produced within the court—excluding, that is, works of instruction—was almost exclusively lyric. This category includes not only lyrics per se, the many “compleyntis, baladis, roundelis, virelais” that Lydgate ascribed to Chaucer and that must have been written by other courtly versifiers in the hundreds, but also the new genre of the *dits amoureux* produced by Machaut and Froissart. For all their apparently narrative form, these works are in fact sets of lyric performances enclosed within a narrative frame³³³

³³³ Lee Patterson, ““Thirled with the Poynt of Remembrance”: The Theban Writing of *Anelida and Arcite*”, in *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 47-83 (pp. 52; 57).

Helen Phillips expands on Patterson's argument by defining the elusive category of the 'Chaucerian', or the impact of Chaucer's literary paternity upon the English canon, as an appropriation and reworking of French lyrical forms:

In practice today 'Chaucerian' usually denotes lyrics in the forms Chaucer brought into English from French, especially complaints, ballades, and envoys, and also lyrico-narratives: those framed narratives whose titles typically work variations on *Court, Dream, Palace, Temple, Parliament, Cupid, Love, Ladies*, and *Venus*, and make up a large part of the late medieval and Tudor anthologies containing poetry of Chaucer and other writers.³³⁴

Patterson and Phillips situate the 'Chaucerian' firmly and distinctively not only in the broader context of its indebtedness to French conventions of *mise-en-page*, but also in the aesthetic and codicological practices which conflate narrative and lyrical modes of articulation.

Sylvia Huot investigates the history and incarnations of this structural oscillation in a range of French manuscript collections in circulation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In *From Song to Book*, she traces the development of what she terms the 'lyrico-narrative' discourse in Old French and she argues for the exemplarity of the *Roman de la rose*, a poem whose structure affords the first instance of the intercalation of lyrics within a text's narrative fabric.³³⁵ A hybrid, compendious and encyclopaedic vernacular model, the *Roman* accommodates and negotiates multiple genres. Also, according to Huot, the poem inhabits a 'writerly' tradition which privileges the visual signposting and marking of the material space of the codex, rather than performance or oral delivery which, instead, characterise a 'readerly' culture. As a consequence of their cultural location, the manuscript copies of the *Roman de la rose* display a preoccupation with articulating such generic

³³⁴ Helen Phillips, 'Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry', in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 71-97 (pp. 71-72).

³³⁵ Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry*, p. 83.

complexity by devising codicological strategies aimed at demarcating the book into ‘poetic and narrative units’.³³⁶ According to Huot, in a ‘writerly’ tradition, a manuscript’s programme of decoration and rubrication becomes central in providing a visual representation of a text’s rhetorical structure. Both Old French didactic and narrative anthologies, and the *chansonnières*, or lyrical compilations, make extensive use of decorated initials, vine patterns and author portraits (as discussed in Chapter I) to provide ‘a visual record’ of the plurality of narratives in a text, and the multivocality of the oral performance of songs and poems set to music.³³⁷

In their examinations of the annotative apparatuses of the manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*, both Julia Boffey and Ardis Butterfield echo Huot’s assessment and remark on the preoccupation with interpolated lyrics apparent in fifteenth-century collections of English verse.³³⁸ Boffey, in particular, points out that MS Arch. Selden. B.24 is exemplary in its concentration on a vast number of poems with inset pieces and argues for this practice’s ‘significance for the history of English poetry in the fifteenth century’.³³⁹ In line with Huot’s observations, she also maintains that, on a codicological level, the centrality of songs and lyrical forms in composite poetic texts is signified by a manuscript’s *mise-en-page*, since the various elements of its *ordinatio* map the individual inset lyrics in the space of the codex. In her classification of marginal glosses and visual markers in functional categories, Boffey notes that in MS Arch. Selden. B.24 ‘by far the greatest number of marginal notes [...] concern the rhetorical texture of the poem, apportioning appropriate terms to

³³⁶ Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry*, p. 28.

³³⁷ Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry*, pp. 28-29; 47-48; 54.

³³⁸ Butterfield, ‘*Mise-en-page* in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture’, pp. 49-80; Julia Boffey, ‘Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*’, in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, vol. V, ed. Peter Beale and Jeremy Griffiths (London: British Library, 1995), pp. 1-17.

³³⁹ Boffey, ‘Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*’, p. 13.

particular sequences'.³⁴⁰ Specifically, glosses which annotate lyrical passages provide a 'structural analysis' and offer a spatial articulation of the oscillation between rhetorico-generic modes. Together with centred and marginal headings, the programme of decoration of both French and English verse anthologies assumes a titling function, as its components signal visually the generic multiplicity and composite quality of the texts they designate.

According to Butterfield's account, however, *Troilus* is not the only 'lyrico-narrative' poem composed by Chaucer which is punctuated by interpolated lyrical forms; she, in fact, compiles a catalogue of similarly structured texts which comprises 'The Book of the Duchess (with its two lyrics), the *Parliament of Fowls* (the closing roundel), and the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* (the ballade 'Hyd Absalon thy gilte tresses clere')'.³⁴¹ Despite not being comparable to the structural complexity of *Troilus* or French composite poems, and perhaps only matched by the frequent intercalations which punctuate Lydgate's *The Temple of Glass*, these Chaucerian interpolated narratives are consistently glossed and their discrete lyrical elements signposted in a number of fifteenth-century anthologies of English verse. In Butterfield's words, '[t]here is considerable agreement among the manuscripts [MS Bodley 638, MS Tanner 346, MS Fairfax 16, MS R.3.20] about the visual attention given to songs'.³⁴²

The prominence of these aesthetic and codicological practices in English manuscript culture suggests a pervasive concern with disseminating composite texts whose polyvocality receives a visual articulation through the elements of a manuscript's *ordinatio*. They also point at the normalisation of and familiarity with

³⁴⁰ Boffey, 'Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*', pp. 2-5.

³⁴¹ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 61.

³⁴² Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', pp. 61; 63.

framing devices and inset pieces within larger narratives displayed by fifteenth-century compilers of anthologies of vernacular English poetry. These texts, like their precursors, the *dits amoureux* and *Le Roman de la rose*, in particular, reconcile a number of genres, narrative voices and tonalities whose polyphony appears to be showcased, as discussed in Chapter II, by the multifarious designations of their titling apparatuses and programmes of decoration.³⁴³ In sum, they trace a validating process of *translatio* of established prestigious modes of *mise-en-page* from the dominant ‘master’ culture to its affiliated English tradition and the works of its Father. Since Chaucer’s intercalated texts translate French forms and practices, his *paternitas* of the English literary canon becomes firmly situated in the Francophone codicological and aesthetic tradition.

2. *Anelida and Arcite* and the ‘Hermeneutics of Recovery’ of the French *Mise-en-page*.

While providing a comprehensive examination of the apportioning of inset pieces within the fabric of a number of Chaucerian texts, which also include ‘The Complaint of Mars’ and ‘The Complaint of Venus’, Butterfield briefly refers to *Anelida and Arcite*, another hybrid ‘lyrico-narrative’ composition.³⁴⁴ In the following pages, I will investigate her allusions to Chaucer’s Theban poem and, particularly, the extent to

³⁴³ For a discussion of the influence of the *dits amoureux* on Chaucer and fifteenth-century English writers, see Phillips, ‘Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry’, p. 71.

³⁴⁴ Butterfield, ‘*Mise-en-page* in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture’, pp. 61-62 (see also note 29, p. 61, and note 32, p. 62). Earlier in this chapter I have examined the relation between ‘The Complaint of Mars’ and ‘The Complaint of Venus’, their *mise-en-page* and circulation history, see this chapter. Notwithstanding the substantive codicological attention paid to ‘Fortune’’s polyvocality in manuscripts such as MS R.3.20, MS Pepys 2006 and MS Fairfax 16, in her article on Chaucerian inset pieces, Butterfield does not include a discussion of ‘Fortune’ which, as I have pointed out earlier in this chapter, is often heavily glossed and its rhetorico-formal structure is consistently signposted through the *ordinatio* of its manuscript witnesses. Rather than an oversight, Butterfield’s omission of Chaucer’s poem is most likely due to its structure and genre. A triple ballade with envoy, the poem is a composite text which, however, does not alternate between narrative elements and lyrical ones, unlike the Chaucerian works cited by Butterfield.

which its metrical complexity and ingenuity, together with the specific layout used in a group of manuscript witnesses, provide a significant illustration of the function of Chaucer's literary paternity as an act of translation of codicological and aesthetic practices from France to England. Not only does *Anelida and Arcite* offer traces of Chaucer's debt towards and reinvention of *formes fixes*, specifically their versification and literary tropes, but it also testifies to the transference of modes of *mise-en-page* pertaining to the formal and structural-rhetorical ingenuity of composite texts.

The composition and *ordinatio* of Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*, therefore, inscribe the poem in the French-derived literary and codicological tradition that Huot explores in *From Song to Book*, and situate it within the 'hermeneutics of recovery' of past *auctoritates* that, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, Copeland identifies as a dominant preoccupation in medieval texts. In his study of Chaucer's indebtedness to fourteenth-century French poets, Wimsatt observes that 'in its [*Anelida and Arcite*'s] medley of metrical stratagems the versification is unique, but all details have counterparts in the *formes fixes*, and there is no question about its French affiliations'.³⁴⁵ Phillips broadens the scope of Wimsatt's remark and extends her assessment of the influence of French manuscript culture beyond Chaucer to his fifteenth-century literary disciples: '[l]ate medieval writers are fond of extracting lyrics from longer works, and conversely of adding frames or narrative contexts to pre-existing lyrics'.³⁴⁶ The lyrico-narrative multivocality of *Anelida and Arcite* and other contiguous intercalated texts, such as Lydgate's *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, *The Temple of Glass*, and Chaucer's 'The Complaint of Mars', 'The Complaint of Venus' and 'Truth', represent a desirable and thriving *aemulatio* of French sources.

³⁴⁵ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, p. 125.

³⁴⁶ Helen Phillips, 'Chaucer's French Translations', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 37 (1993), 65-82 (81).

Notwithstanding Patterson's account of the 'almost entirely dismissive criticism' that *Anelida and Arcite* has received, it is its complexity and ingenuity that resonates in scholars' studies of Chaucer's Theban text. Patterson's argument articulates a critical preoccupation with and questioning of Chaucer's ability to reconcile the poem's generic polyvocality with a coherent structural fabric; unlike a number of previous unfavourable scholarly assessments, Patterson's discussion 'means to demonstrate the unity of the poem [...], its poetic sophistication, and above all its profoundly Chaucerian character'.³⁴⁷ Paull F. Baum's earlier study matches, in decidedly more encomiastic tones, Patterson's concentration on Chaucer's virtuosity and accomplishment: 'In *Anelida's Complaynt* (ca. 1380) Chaucer has left us a veritable studio-piece of *art poetical* and *maistrye*'.³⁴⁸ Wimsatt contextualises the intricacy and symmetry of *Anelida and Arcite's* verse by suggesting that it illustrates a central tenet of medieval vernacular poetics. In both Dante Alighieri's *De vulgari eloquentia* and Eustache Deschamps's *Art de dictier*, vernacular verse is defined as 'natural music'. In other words, such theorisation aligns the mathematical and structural precision of music to poetic composition, and, in so doing, endows verse with both organic sophistication and scientific exactness.³⁴⁹

Comprising two sections, or, possibly three, *Anelida and Arcite* accommodates two generic modes of composition; the first is a narrative segment subdivided into two parts demarcated respectively by the editorial titles 'Invocation' (ll. 1-21) and 'The Story' (ll. 22-210), and, finally, 'The Complaint of *Anelida*', the lyrical

³⁴⁷ Patterson, "'Thirled with the Poynt of Remembraunce'", note 56, p. 62. For a survey of criticism on *Anelida*, see Russell A. Peck, *Chaucer's Lyrics and Anelida and Arcite: An Annotated Bibliography (1900-1980)* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1983).

³⁴⁸ Paull F. Baum, *Chaucer's Verse* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961), p. 99.

³⁴⁹ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, pp. 12-14; see also Wimsatt, 'Natural Music in Middle French Verse and Chaucer', in *Essays on the Art of Chaucer's Verse*, ed. Alan T. Gaylord (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 229-265 (pp. 237-240).

component of the text.³⁵⁰ Arranged in seven-line stanzas, both the ‘Invocation’ and ‘The Story’ are rigorously composed according to the received conventions of the rime royal (*ababbcc*), whose appropriation firmly locates Chaucer’s literary paternity in the French tradition of Machaut’s ballade stanzas and the medieval poetic principles of ‘natural music’.³⁵¹ The precision of its composition is also articulated by a variation in the musico-mathematical fabric of the text which ostensibly punctuates the transition from the narrative to the lyrical modes of the poem. As Patterson observes, *Anelida* is characterised by ‘a reduplicative structure’ in which the 70 lines of the epic-narrative section of the poem are doubled twice into the 140 lines of both parts of the romance-lyrical component of the text.³⁵² In turn, the latter, that is ‘The Complaint of Anelida’, begins with ‘The Proem’ and then comprises a ‘Strophe’ and ‘Antistrophe’ which stand in a symmetrical relation to each other, since they both consist of five stanzas of nine lines (*aabaabbab*) and a sixteenth-line verse (*aaabaaabbbbabbba*). ‘The Complaint of Anelida’ displays, therefore, a remarkable compositional regularity and compliance with what Daniel Poirion identifies as ‘the triangular proportions of the ballade’.³⁵³ In other words, from the seven-line pattern of its narrative component, the poem shifts to two units of six stanzas, five of which comprise nine lines which delineate a mathematical pattern founded upon multiples of three; this mathematical regularity aligns Chaucer’s

³⁵⁰ Four out of thirteen manuscript authorities add a final stanza to the text of *Anelida*. This appendix, which announces a continuation of the poem, is considered to be a scribal interpolation by Patterson. For a structural-metrical analysis of the poem, see Baum, *Chaucer’s Verse*, pp. 99-100; Patterson, “‘Thirled with the Poynt of Remembraunce’”, p. 62; and Vincent J. DiMarco, ‘*Anelida and Arcite*’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 375-376. Despite the established practice of defining the components of ‘The Complaint’ as ‘strophe’ and ‘antistrophe’, Baum suggests that these terms are misleading and used inaccurately, as they are more appropriately associated with Greek choral odes, see Baum, *Chaucer’s Verse*, note 5, p. 99.

³⁵¹ Wimsatt, ‘Natural Music in Middle French Verse and Chaucer’, p. 251.

³⁵² Patterson, “‘Thirled with the Poynt of Remembraunce’”, p. 62.

³⁵³ Daniel Poirion, *Le poète et le prince: L’évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d’Orléans* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), p. 374; quoted and translated in Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, p. 117.

interpolated poem with the prestige of the French courtly ballade and, more broadly, to medieval vernacular poetics as enucleated by Dante and Deschamps.

The formal sophistication of *Anelida and Arcite* and, by extension, of Chaucer's literary *paternitas*, manifested through his accomplished translation and appropriation of French poetic models, is articulated in the *mise-en-page* of the manuscript witnesses recording the textual tradition of his Theban poem. In line with French codicological practices discussed by Huot and Butterfield, the elements of the *ordinatio* of fifteenth-century manuscript copies of *Anelida and Arcite* not only offer a visual apportioning of the plurality and complexity of the poem, but they also impose order on the material page of the codex and, therefore, guarantee the logico-rhetorical unity of such composite text. This policing strategy appears to contain the potentially implosive quality of the multiple generic voices which resonate in *Anelida and Arcite*.

A multivocal poem, *Anelida* is susceptible to the fragmentation of its individual components during its textual dissemination. This plurality may, indeed, assist in explaining the piecemeal early transmission of the text. Four fifteenth-century manuscript witnesses, including MS Pepys 2006, MS R.3.20, the Findern manuscript, and MS HM 140, only offer 'The Complaint', which, therefore, appears to have circulated as a discrete textual unit separately from the narrative part of the text.³⁵⁴ As A. S. G. Edwards specifies, *Anelida and Arcite* survives in twelve manuscripts, but in only five of them is the poem copied in a sequence similar to the established editorial version found in modern editions; other two, MS Fairfax 16 and MS Bodley 638, invert the received structure of the text, by featuring the introductory

³⁵⁴ DiMarco, 'Anelida and Arcite', p. 1144.

narrative material, the 'Invocation' and 'The Story', after 'The Complaint'.³⁵⁵ The elements of the *mise-en-page* of the manuscript copies of *Anelida and Arcite*, therefore, preserve the aesthetic and compositional integrity of the poem, by offering visual markers of the text's structural coherence.

Consistently with the modes of *mise-en-page* of the majority of authoritative manuscript witnesses, the decorative apparatus of MS Tanner 346 functions as a titling device which displays a concern with manifesting and mastering the composite quality of Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*. The insertion of *litterae notabiliores* at the beginning of the 'Invocation', 'The Story' and 'The Complaint' discriminates between the epic-narrative and the romance-lyrical sections of the poem and identifies them as discrete structural and formal units. In MSS Pepys 2006 and R.3.20, the decorative programme enhances the titling function of the *litterae notabiliores* by complementing them with paraphs. Such graphic pointing of the text often pre-empts, through decoration and layout, the verbalisation of the structural-generic analysis of the poem; as demonstrated by Archbishop Sancroft's annotative practices in MS Tanner 346, which I discussed in more detail in Section III of Chapter II, section titles are ancillary in the manuscript's decorative programme, since they are appended only at a later stage: 'Of Queen Annelida, & y^e false Arcite' (f. 59v) and 'The complaint of Annelida to y^e false Arcite' (f. 62v).

Unlike the copy of the poem in MS Tanner, with its received editorial structure, MSS Bodley and Fairfax invert the narrative and lyrical elements of the

³⁵⁵ According to A. S. G. Edwards's analysis of the codicological evidence, Shirley is likely to have had access to conflicting witnesses: one incorrect authority, which he used for both MS Additional 16165 and MS R.3.20, and which led him to define Anelida as the queen of Carthage, and one for the lost manuscript presumably used as the exemplar for MS Harley 7333; see A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Unity and Authenticity of *Anelida and Arcite*: The Evidence of the Manuscripts', *Studies in Bibliography* 41 (1988), 178-188 (180-181). See also, DiMarco, '*Anelida and Arcite*', p. 1144. The text in *The Riverside Chaucer* is based on MS Fairfax 16, notwithstanding the manuscript's inversion of 'The Complaint of Anelida' and the introductory narrative.

text. In MS Fairfax the explicit introduces the title retrospectively ('The compleynt of feire Anelida | And fals Arcite', f. 32r) and the colophon is replaced by a quotation which instructs the reader to return to the incipit of the lyrical component of *Anelida* ('So thirled with the point etc.', f. 32r). Analogously, in MS Bodley, the explicit, penned with an elaborate and square textura hand, points at the circularity and self-contained quality of 'The Complaint of Anelida' which, despite minor differences, begins and ends with the same line ('Explicit. So thirlid with the point | of Remembraunce', f. 7r). Following the dominant practices of French codicology and consistently with the 'writerly' tradition of the 'master' culture, *Anelida and Arcite's* compositional plurality is made apparent, but is also contained and framed in the material space of the codex by tracing the generic and rhetorical boundaries of a text.

3. *Anelida and Arcite's* Sixteen-line Stanzas and their Diagrammatical Layout: a Codicological Hybrid.

Attention to metrical and structural complexity, which marks Chaucer's *paternitas* as an accomplished appropriation of French courtly aesthetics, is also apparent in the layout that a number of manuscripts utilise to present the sixteen-line stanzas that punctuate both the 'Strophe' and the 'Antistrophe' of 'The Complaint of Anelida'. A variant of the regular basic pattern of the nine-line stanza (*aabaabbab*), the longer verse is formed by adding two *a* lines to the existing sequence (*aaaba_{ab}*). As well as shortening the appended *a* lines to four stresses, the metrical configuration of the sixteen-line stanzas is completed by inverting the initial sequence (*bbabbaaba*) and inserting two *b* lines (*bb_{ab}bb_{ab}*).³⁵⁶ While marking a departure from the exactness of the metrical scheme, they also accommodate and articulate a development in the

³⁵⁶ Baum, *Chaucer's Verse*, p.100.

poem's argument and, specifically, in the characterisation of Anelida. As Stephen Knight argues, in the fifth and longer stanza of the 'Strophe', Anelida sheds the virtuous meekness and 'lowly' (l. 142) demeanour of 'The Story' and becomes 'a mouthpiece for metrical virtuosity' while asserting her lament:³⁵⁷

Now, certis, swete, thogh that ye
Thus causeles the cause be
Of my dedly adversyte,
Your manly resoun oghte hit to respite
To slen your frend, and namely me,
That never yet in no degre
Offended yow, as wisly He
That al wot, out of wo my soule quyte! (ll. 256-263)

The spondaic opening foot of the first line pre-emptes the stanza's dominant tone of assertiveness and heightened pathos which resonates in the longer, decasyllabic, tail-rhyme lines, saturated with allusions to Anelida's affecting lament and plea ('respite', l. 259; 'quyte', l. 263; 'cruelte', l. 271). As the narrative develops and places an increased emphasis on Anelida's despair, the versification marks this move away from the mathematical control and containment of the basic pattern of the nine-line stanzas towards the metrical accomplishment and sophistication of a self-standing sixteen-line stanzaic unit, structured on an intricate alternation of octosyllabics and decasyllabics linked solely by two rhymes.³⁵⁸ In other words, the ingenuity of the form signifies and enhances the narrative shift to a dramatic tonality.

The *mise-en-page* of the β family of manuscript witnesses of *Anelida and Arcite* signals visually the disturbance and development of the formal and narrative pattern of the poem apparent in the two sixteen-line stanzas of the 'Complaint'.³⁵⁹ MS R.3.20 offers a paradigmatic instance of the codicological strategies adopted by the

³⁵⁷ Stephen Knight, 'Anelida and Arcite and The Parlement of Foules', in *Rymyng Craftily: Meaning in Chaucer's Poetry* (Sydney and London: Angus and Robertson, 1973), pp. 1-48 (p. 20).

³⁵⁸ For a discussion of the poem's metre and the two sixteen-line stanzas in the 'Strophe' and 'Antistrophe', see Knight, 'Anelida and Arcite and The Parlement of Foules', pp. 19-20; Scattergood, 'The Short Poems', pp. 469-473 (p. 471).

³⁵⁹ For a textual genealogy of *Anelida and Arcite*, see DiMarco, 'Anelida and Arcite', p. 1144.

scribes of this group of codices which are mostly associated with John Shirley. As Illustration 15 (p. 197) shows, the Trinity manuscript maps the rhyme scheme of the fifth stanza of both the ‘Strophe’ and the ‘Antistrophe’ with a specific layout which signposts the virtuosity and individuality of the metrical fabric of the poem. In order to provide a visual representation of the specific characteristics of the text’s rhyming structure, four paraphs and a system of brackets subdivide the stanza in four metrical units each comprising four lines. Also, as the rhyme of the final line of every internal quatrain is distinctive and differs from the one-rhyme pattern of the first three (*aaab* or *bbba*), it is displaced in the margins of the text and linked to its corresponding lines by brackets. Also, Shirley’s *mise-en-page* appears to be suggestive of an attempt to contain formal difference, as he omits four lines (ll. 265-268) in the fifth stanza of the ‘Strophe’. Together with the displacement of three other lines in the margins, this obliteration normalises the metre of the sixteen-line stanza, by reducing it to the basic nine-line unit. Notwithstanding Shirley’s aberrant shortening of the stanza, which aligns it with the dominant metrical pattern in the complaint, the idiosyncratic layout is preserved and the fifth stanza of the ‘Antistrophe’, the other sixteenth-line verse in the ‘Complaint of Anelida’, is copied in full.³⁶⁰

Chaucer’s use of the sixteen-line stanza locates his work in the tradition of the French complaint. As Wimsatt records this practice in the works of Froissart and Machaut, he provides a list of the French poets’ poems which feature sixteen-line verses and tentatively hypothesises that Machaut’s use of this specific stanzaic form is an attempt at standardising an otherwise rather fluid genre. Although the rhyme scheme of the longer stanzas in *Anelida* is identical to the one used by the French

³⁶⁰ In the ‘Textual Notes’ to *Anelida and Arcite* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, DiMarco does not record the omission of these lines in any of the manuscript witnesses, including MS R.3.20; see DiMarco, ‘*Anelida and Arcite*’, p. 1145.

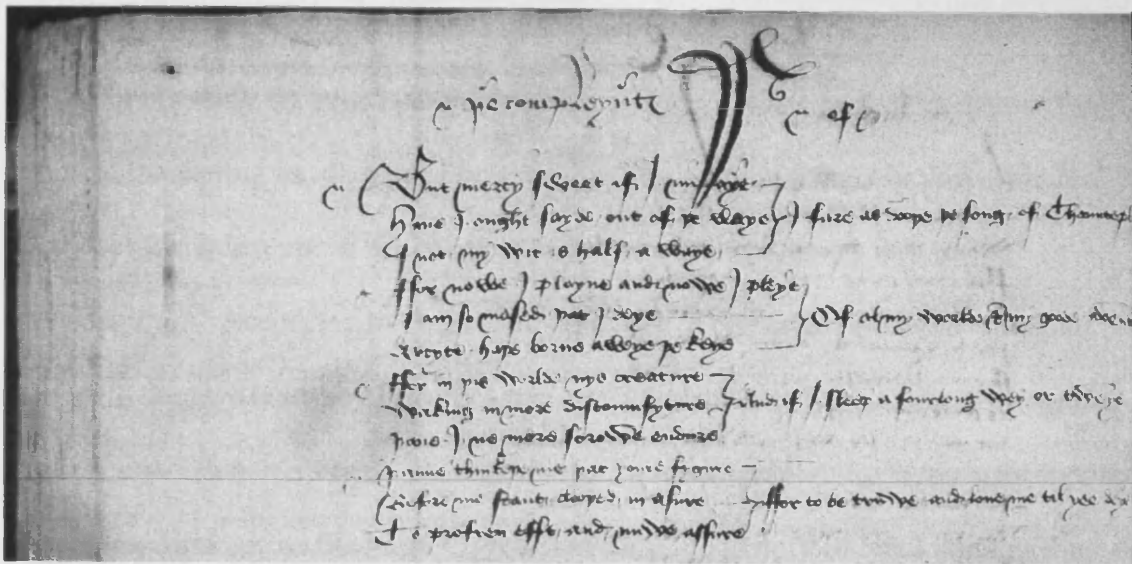


Illustration 15
 Example of graphic tail-rhyme, Cambridge Trinity College MS R.3.20, f. 110v (detail)

authors, its metrical form, specifically the length of the individual lines, varies.³⁶¹

Notwithstanding these formal discrepancies, Chaucer's sophisticated literary *paternitas* becomes material in the space of the codex through the flamboyant visual signposting of the distinctive sixteen-line stanzas and their rhyme scheme. The poet's paternity, therefore, positions itself as an accomplished reworking and appropriation of the French *formes fixes*. Rather than a pedestrian *imitatio*, Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*, while validated by its affiliation to the 'master' culture, negotiates and accommodates the creative demands of the 'servant' culture.

In his study on punctuation, *Pause and Effect*, Malcolm Parkes defines these forms of bracketing as 'displayed layouts', or 'the graphic manifestation of rhyme', since they provide a visual articulation of the metrical symmetry of a poetic composition.³⁶² According to Parkes, this practice is consistent with the emerging thirteenth-century tendency to copy Latin and vernacular texts, such as *The Regular Sequence* and Beneit's *Vie de Thomas Becket*, with diagrammatic layouts, as opposed to copying them across the page.³⁶³ When tracing the history of bracketing in English medieval manuscripts, Rhiannon Purdie establishes a connection between the use of braces and texts composed in tail-rhymes, whether lyrical or dramatic:

Graphic tail-rhyme was a traditional layout for tail-rhyme poetry. Although its use was never universal, it was regularly employed by copyists of Anglo-Norman tail-rhyme poems in manuscripts dating from the end of the twelfth century into the fourteenth century. It was inherited by the scribes of Middle English tail-rhyme verse, and can still be found in some early sixteenth-century copies of lyrics and medieval plays. Most importantly for the present argument, it is also used for a handful of copies of Middle English romances.³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love Poets*, p. 104. For a list of Machaut's and Froissart's works which feature sixteen-line stanzas, see note 1, p. 173.

³⁶² M. B. Parkes, 'The Layout and Punctuation of Verse', in *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), pp. 97-114 (pp. 97; 100).

³⁶³ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 99.

³⁶⁴ Rhiannon Purdie, 'The Implications of Manuscript Layout in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 41:3 (2005), 263-274 (264).

In the specific context of Middle English romance, Purdie labels this mode of *mise-en-page* as ‘graphic tail-rhyme’ and, in so doing, links the use of braces to poetic structures whose unity and coherence reside in the insertion of tail-rhymes which bind together series of rhyming couplets.³⁶⁵

The origins of this rhyming pattern are, according to a broad scholarly consensus, lyrical and can be located in medieval Latin hymnody.³⁶⁶ Its associations with religious and lyrical composition are also manifest in the Anglo-Norman tradition whose devotional, specifically Marian, poetic texts are often composed in tail-rhyme, or *rime couée* (*aabccb*).³⁶⁷ Similarly, Parkes’s survey of the strategies of presentation of thirteenth-century Italian sonnets identifies the use of diagrammatic layouts as one of the four principal practices which emerge from the manuscript evidence. The relevance of such mode of *mise-en-page* is corroborated by Petrarch’s adaptation of the codicological conventions developed for the *Regular Sequence* for the layout of his own sonnets.³⁶⁸ Despite its Latin origins and subsequent Romance incarnations, the late medieval use of bracketing as a graphic representation of metrical symmetry can, however, be confidently confined to English codicological practices.

Purdie maintains that it is a ‘recognisably insular tradition’ and argues for a relation between the use of graphic tail-rhyme and the construction of an English literary and political identity, a central discourse in the late-medieval configuration of Chaucer’s *paternitas* of the vernacular. An extension of Latinate scribal habits, this

³⁶⁵ Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), p. 7.

³⁶⁶ Derek Pearsall, ‘The Development of Middle English Romance’, *Medieval Studies* 27 (1965), 91-116 (99); Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 98; Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 6; 26-28.

³⁶⁷ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 34-38 (p. 34).

³⁶⁸ Malcolm B. Parkes, ‘Medieval Punctuation and the Modern Editor’, in *Filologia classica e filologia romanza: esperienze a confronto*, ed. Anna Ferrari (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 1998), pp. 337-349 (p. 341).

distinctive layout is predominant in English contexts as early as Beneit's twelfth-century *Vie de Thomas Becket* which, as Purdie points out, is the mythopoeia of an insular hero.³⁶⁹ Purdie also provides a list of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts produced in England which feature lyrics laid out diagrammatically; she includes the encyclopaedic trilingual collection Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.1.1 (c. 1330) in which both Anglo-Norman and Middle English lyrics are copied in 'graphic tail-rhyme'. Her short catalogue also comprises the Shirley-related MS R.3.19, as well as the predominantly theological collection, British Library, MS Sloane 2478, and, finally one item of MS Harley 2253.³⁷⁰ Also, the use of a displayed layout in a conspicuous number of manuscript copies of Chaucer's *The Tale of Sir Thopas* consolidates the formal-generic affiliation between braces and Middle English tail-rhyme romance.³⁷¹ In her article on the *mise-en-page* of Chaucer's tale, Purdie argues that this distinctive layout is authorial, as she concludes that, on the basis of the circulation and availability of codices containing Middle English romances copied in 'graphic tail-rhyme', Chaucer was most likely to have had access to and be familiar with such a practice. She tersely posits: '[t]he *Topas* manuscripts that use graphic tail-rhyme are therefore deliberately mimicking the physical appearance of Middle English tail-rhyme romances in at least some of their manuscript copies'.³⁷²

Unlike the substantial number of instances found by Purdie in English medieval manuscripts, *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit*, an exhaustive and detailed study of French medieval codicology, records a remarkable

³⁶⁹ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 45-46; 72.

³⁷⁰ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 36; note 57, p. 79.

³⁷¹ Purdie, 'The Implications of Manuscript Layout in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*', p. 263. Purdie specifies that twenty out of fifty-three manuscripts use 'graphic tail-rhyme' for the *mise-en-page* of *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, and eleven of them use it throughout.

³⁷² Purdie, 'The Implications of Manuscript Layout in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*', p. 266.

paucity of instances of bracketing. Despite being a mode of *mise-en-page* unrelated to French poetic compositions in tail-rhyme, the infrequent use of braces appears, instead, to be linked to the rationalisation of a codex's *compilatio* through its table of contents.³⁷³ Notwithstanding their different functions, these two forms of bracketing operate according to the same hermeneutic principle, as they both impose and police order over the heterogeneous material, whether metrical or thematic, contained in a collection. In French manuscript culture, conversely, braces appear to be dissociated from the visual articulation of rhyme and metrical symmetry.

The insularity and Englishness of bracketing, signified by the Father's parodic appropriation of both the aesthetic and the codicological patterns which govern Middle English romance, are not structured on the ubiquitous twelve-line verse, but on the less common six-line stanza in which three rhyming couplets are held together by the same number of interpolated tail-lines. A similarly infrequent diagrammatic layout punctuates rhyming triplets, as in the case of *Sir Degrevant*, *The Avowing of King Arthur* and *Percyvell of Gales*.³⁷⁴ This formal and structural interweaving forms a sixteen-line stanza (*aaabcccbdddbbeeb*) whose formal features are reminiscent of, but not identical to, the oscillation between rhyming triplets and tail-line in the fifth verse of *Anelida and Arcite*'s 'Strophe' and 'Antistrophe' (*aaabaaabbbbabbba*). Chaucer's Theban poem and *Sir Degrevant* are also textually connected, as they both appear in the Findern manuscript. This codex is firmly inscribed in the context of English country gentility. As Richard Beadle and A. E. B. Owen argue in the 'Introduction' to the facsimile edition of the manuscript, *Sir Degrevant* has 'prominent affiliations with northern alliterative tradition, and the thematic interest in

³⁷³ Henri-Jean Martin and Jean Vezin, eds, *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit* (Paris: Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie – Promodis, 1990). Bracketing is not discussed in this volume, but a small number of illustrations reproduce facsimile images of manuscript folia which feature the use of braces in relation to table of contents, see figures 297 and 298, p. 332.

³⁷⁴ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 4.

such matters as local feuds over land again fits in well with [...] English provincial life noticeable elsewhere in the manuscript'.³⁷⁵ The *compilatio* of the manuscript, therefore, enhances the Englishness of *Sir Degrevant* (ff. 96r-109v) which is followed by an authorising genealogical national narrative, that is a succinct chronicle of historical events associated with English kings and saints spanning from Brutus to Henry VI (ff. 110r-113r).

Unlike the Findern manuscript's copy of *Anelida*, the sixteen-line stanzas of *Sir Degrevant* are partly copied using the insular 'graphic tail-rhyme'. Of the three scribes (A, B and C) responsible for copying the romance, no-one is, in fact, at work on the manuscript's copy of Chaucer's Theban poem and only hand B resorts to bracketing. Although hands A and C are cursive and untidy, scribe B displays an attention to the manuscript's decorative programme and a more professional approach to his stint on *Anelida and Arcite*.³⁷⁶ With a homogeneous book-hand, scribe B marks the rhyming triplets by bracketing them together. Notwithstanding his meticulousness and professional diligence, the graphic representation of rhymes in the second column of f. 100r appears hastily penned and incomplete; indeed, it is not maintained throughout his stint (ff. 100r-108r), but ceases after two leaves (ff. 100r-100v). In a manuscript with a rather sparse decorative apparatus and, in Beadle and Owen's words, with a multiplicity of "private" and amateur scribes [...] at work', the partial use of brackets by scribe B constitutes a conspicuous exception and an evident codicological strategy of metrical pointing.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Richard Beadle and A. E. B. Owen, eds, *The Findern Manuscript: Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 1.6* (London: Scholar Press, 1979), pp. vii-xiv (p. xiii). The manuscript is also described in some detail in L. F. Casson, ed., *The Romance of Sir Degrevant: A Parallel-text Edition from MSS Lincoln Cathedral A.5.2 and Cambridge University Ff.1.6*, Early English Text Society 221 (London: Early English Text Society, 1949), pp. xi-xv.

³⁷⁶ The characteristics of the three hands responsible for the copy of *Sir Degrevant* in MS Ff.1.6 are examined in Casson, *The Romance of Sir Degrevant*, pp. xii-xv.

³⁷⁷ Beadle and Owen, *The Findern Manuscript*, p. xi; note 24, p. xvii.

As Boffey's analysis of the three collaborating hands who copied the text of *Troilus and Criseyde* in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson poet. 163 indicates, the stints undertaken by hand C are characterised by a marked concern with decoration, since he 'gives his marginalia a distinctive appearance by flourishing and touching them in red'.³⁷⁸ Although Boffey's focus is primarily on the manuscript's annotative apparatus and not with the use of bracketing, the manuscript illustrations appended to her paper show the presence of braces in MS Rawlinson. As a codicological mode of rationalisation and representation of rhymes, this diagrammatic layout makes apparent the rhymic links between the *a*, *b*, and *c* lines of the conventional *Troilus rime royal stanza (ababbcc)*.³⁷⁹ 'Graphic tail-rhymes' appear, nonetheless, to be exclusively part of the paratextual programme of the thorough scribe C whose efforts are also directed towards purveying marginal glosses. Hand B of the Findern manuscript and hand C of MS Rawlinson, in sum, suggest that a scribe's proficiency and understanding of aesthetic conventions dictate the accuracy and detail of the graphic apportioning of a text's structure and metre in a codex.³⁸⁰

Albeit clearly dependent on a scribe's individual agency and appreciation of metrical structures, modes of *mise-en-page* are, of course, subjected to the specific conditions of transmission of the text and production of the codex which disseminates it. As Casson points out in his description of the copy of *Sir Degravant* in Lincoln Cathedral MS A.5.2, also known as the Thornton manuscript, rhyming triplets are identified as metrical units by means of braces and the tail line is copied in the

³⁷⁸ Boffey, 'Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*', pp. 6-11 (esp. p. 9).

³⁷⁹ For a comprehensive note on meter in *Troilus*, see B. A. Windeatt, ed., *Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde: A New Edition of 'The Book of Troilus'* (London and New York: Longman, 1984), pp. 55-64.

³⁸⁰ Descriptions of MS Rawlinson can be found in Robert Kilburn Root, *The Manuscripts of Chaucer's Troilus*, Chaucer Society, 1st series, 98 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1914), pp. 37-42; and Windeatt, *Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde*, pp. 73-74.

margins, adjacent to the bracket. Despite the scarcity of manuscript authorities, it is plausible to assume that the exemplars on which both copies are based feature ‘graphic tail-rhyme’.³⁸¹ On the contrary, in view of the rarity of braces in the copy of *Anelida and Arcite* in MS Ff.1.6, it can be argued that, consistently with the other codices belonging to the α family of manuscript authorities of Chaucer’s Theban poem, the scribes’ exemplar either omitted or made irregular and sparse use of such diagrammatic layout.

Conversely, the more frequent use of ‘graphic tail-rhyme’ in the *mise-en-page* of *Anelida* in MSS Pepys 2006 and R.3.20, representative of the β family of manuscripts, has resonant implications for the wider context of English fifteenth-century book production and its relation to French manuscript culture. Specifically, bracketing signifies the hybridity of the process of *translatio* of codicological and aesthetic practices across the two languages and cultures. The scribes inflect *Anelida and Arcite* with a layout which, in late medieval books, is primarily associated with English codicology and, specifically, with the development of a national romance tradition. Bracketing or ‘graphic tail-rhyme’ function, therefore, as a palimpsest, or, in Ruth Evans’s terms, as a fluid site of cultural and codicological negotiation in which intergeneric (i.e. romance and lyricism) and literary-linguistic relations are constantly rewritten and overwritten. In other words, an anglicised codicological convention, which derives from Latin hymnody and Anglo-Norman scribal practices, is transferred onto Chaucer’s *Anelida*, a ‘lyrico-narrative’ poem affiliated to and the reworking of the French *formes fixes* and their *mise-en-page*. Chaucer’s *paternitas* is, therefore, positioned in a porous intervernacular space which accommodates, at once,

³⁸¹ Beadle and Owen, *The Findern Manuscript*, p. ix. For an account of the textual transmission of *Sir Degrevant* and the genealogical relation between the two manuscript witnesses, see Beadle and Owen, *The Findern Manuscript*, pp. xxviii-xxx.

the emulation of the hegemonic practices of Francophone manuscript culture and the emancipation or self-affirmation of the newly-established English canon.

4. Chaucer's Intervernacular *Paternitas*.

The manuscript evidence, therefore, appears at odds with the teleological construction of *translatio* enucleated by Le Goff and Curtius. Instead, in Homi Bhabha's words, it maps a 'third space', that is a space 'other' than the 'master' or 'servant' cultures, or a dialectical site predicated upon non-linear temporalities and multiple localities.

Despite the aesthetic affinities between *Anelida and Arcite* and the *formes fixes*, the poem's unequivocal alterity is formal and generic, as well as codicological. In his discussion of the text, Patterson argues for its generic fluidity: 'a title that misleadingly attempts to fit into a familiar courtly category a poem that in fact asserts an almost *sui generis* idiosyncrasy'.³⁸² As my examination of *Anelida*'s titular apparatus in Chapter II also confirms, the poem resists unproblematic classification and direct transference from lyrical French forms. In particular, the titling and formal slippages between complaint and ballade are apparent in Shirley's MS Add 16165 in which the second copy of 'The Complaint of Anelida' is designated by a tellingly hybrid heading, 'Balade of compleynte' (f. 256v). Such fluidity also resonates in the seemingly discordant definition provided by Shirley in the two copies of the Theban poem offered in MS Add 16165. While the running title, the introductory rubric and the explicit of the first copy consistently label the poem as a complaint ('þe compleynte Of Anelyda', ff. 241v-242r; 'þe compleint of Anelyda þe feyre Qweene of Cartage', f. 241v; 'þe compleynt of Anelyda', f. 243v), the second copy is, instead, identified by a more unstable titling apparatus. In particular, a heading which defines

³⁸² Patterson, "'Thirled with the Poynt of Remembraunce'", pp. 61-62.

the ‘Complaint of Anelida’ as ‘Balade of Anelyda Qweene of Cartage made by Geffrey Chaucyer’ (f. 256v) is punctuated by the first running title which offers a dialectical designation for the lyrical section of Chaucer’s poem (‘Balade of compleynte | Complaynte of Anelida and Arcyte’, ff. 256v-257r).³⁸³

In the same manuscript, such oscillation also manifests itself in the headings that Shirley ascribes to Lydgate’s *A Complaynte of a Lovers Lyfe*, uniformly designated as a complaint by the running titles: ‘A complaynte of An Amorous Knyght’ (ff. 190v-191r), ‘þe complaynt of þe Lovere’ (ff. 196v-197r), ‘Complaynt of A trewe knight in his ladyes servyce’ (ff. 197v-198r); ‘Complaynte In loves servyce’ (ff. 199v-200r). The introductory rubric, nonetheless, identifies the poem in a more unstable and porous manner: ‘And here begynneth a Right lusty amorous balade made in wyse of complaint’ (f. 190v). This titular permeability suggests that formal designations of Chaucer’s translations of *formes fixes*, such as complaints and ballades, are fluid and mobile. Alfred David appears to corroborate this argument, as he observes that:

the poet displays his virtuosity by following a relatively few prescribed stanzaic forms made difficult by the repetition of the same rhymes. The most popular of these is the ballade, which Chaucer and his contemporaries imported from France. The rules for the French ballade were strict, but in England the term was used more loosely so that eventually nearly any stanzaic forms might be called ballade. [...] The ballade could serve almost any subject.³⁸⁴

In line with Copeland’s theorisation of medieval translation as an act of ‘displacement’, the Father’s and his literary disciples’ appropriation of the prestigious French ‘balade’ sanctions their output while supplanting the hegemony of the ‘master’ culture with a more pliable metrical and thematic form. As Friedman

³⁸³ Edwards argues that Shirley defines the ‘Complaint of Anelida’ as a ‘balade’ because he uses an incorrect exemplar; see Edwards, ‘The Unity and Authenticity of *Anelida and Arcite*: The Evidence of the Manuscripts’, 182-183.

³⁸⁴ Alfred David, ‘Introduction: The Poems of Part One’, in *The Minor Poems: Geoffrey Chaucer*, pp. 3-9 (p. 5).

remarks, in Machaut's day a 'balade' had a specific formal configuration, as it was typically a coherent composition which comprised three stanzas linked together by the same rhyme scheme, common rhyme sounds and a refrain.³⁸⁵ As demonstrated by Chaucer's reworking of the French *forme fixe* in triple ballades, such as 'Fortune' and 'The Complaint of Venus', or in a double ballade without refrain ('Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan'), the Anglicisation of the form entails a revision and loosening of French conventions, and signifies the process of enfranchisement of Chaucer's *paternitas* from the hegemony of Francophone literary culture.³⁸⁶

Similarly, Chaucer's complaint is afforded the validation of the French lyrical tradition it inherits and inhabits; yet, as Wimsatt observes, his appropriation of the French 'complainte' in his Theban poem distances it from French conventions, as its debt to it is 'minimal'.³⁸⁷ Wimsatt expands on his point by maintaining that, notwithstanding Chaucer's familiarity with the French form and, in particular, with at least one of Machaut's complaints, 'A toi, Hanri', Chaucer's poems identified as such are unrelated to the French poet's work.³⁸⁸ While the legitimising titular apparatus labels *Anelida* simultaneously as a complaint and a ballade, the formal structure of the poem affiliates it, albeit silently, to the French 'virelay' with its internal rhymes.³⁸⁹ Chaucer's poem, therefore, results from the dual process of *translatio* and negotiation between the sanctioning of and emancipation from the 'cultural capital' of

³⁸⁵ Friedman, 'The Late Medieval Ballade and the Origin of Broadside Balladry', p. 98. In her discussion of the genesis of the *formes fixes*, Butterfield considers the idea of fixity to be an inaccurate conceptual paradigm to describe French late medieval lyrical forms. She, instead, engages with the generic mobility of such forms; see Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 276-277.

³⁸⁶ Wimsatt catalogues Chaucer's shorter poems and identifies a number of 'single ballades' ('To Rosemounde', 'Truth', 'Gentilesse', 'Lak of Stedfastnesse', 'The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse', 'Against Women Unconstant', and a passage from *The Legend of Good Women*); triple ballades ('Fortune' and 'The Complaint of Venus'); and 'near ballades' (five terms of 'The Complaint of Mars', the nine-stanza 'Bill of Complaint' in 'The Complaint unto Pity', 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan', 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton', 'Womanly Noblesse', 'A Balade of Complaint'); see Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, notes 75-77, pp. 300-301.

³⁸⁷ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, p. 29.

³⁸⁸ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, p. 111.

³⁸⁹ Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, p. 110.

the French *formes fixes*. It is in Chaucer's composition and in his scribes' *mise-en-page* of the two sixteen-line stanza of 'The Complaint of Anelida' that the process of transference of prestigious codicological and aesthetic practices is most effectively illustrated. In her study of Chaucer's translation of French narrative and lyrical frames, Helen Phillips identifies the poet's 'combinational inventiveness' as a central characteristic of his literary *paternitas*, since the canonicity of his and his disciples' works results from their ability to reinvent French genres and their *mise-en-page*.³⁹⁰

The implication of these modes of transference is that, in late medieval manuscripts of Chaucer's works, the aesthetic boundaries which underpin the formal identity of courtly poetic genres are blurred and mobile. It is not just the individual metrical configuration of the anglicised ballade or complaint that becomes fluid through Chaucer's appropriation, but the relation between these forms is also informed by a degree of permeability. As the titles of MS Add 16165 ascribe a dialectical label to Lydgate's *A Complainte of a Lovers Lyfe* and Chaucer's 'The Complaint of Anelida', respectively defined as 'balade made in wyse of complaint' and 'Balade of Compleynte', analogously, the titling apparatuses of the manuscript copies of *Troilus and Criseyde* locate the poem's inset letters and songs in a similar opaque generic site. According to Butterfield, a comparable mode of *mise-en-page* can be found in the culturally hybrid MS Royal 16.F.ii, a lavish manuscript produced under English direction which, as I point out earlier in this chapter, is a collection of the French poems of Charles d'Orléans. Titles with multiple generic descriptions, such as 'Lettre en balade', provide evidence of the dialogue and exchange between English and French literary forms.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Phillips, 'Frames and Narrators in Chaucerian Poetry', p. 77.

³⁹¹ Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', p. 63.

The mobility of poetic genres in titular apparatuses positions Chaucer's literary *paternitas* as a reworking of the privileged discourse of French courtly literary forms. In his examination of *Anelida*, Patterson reads the poet's veneration of and disenfranchisement from the *formes fixes* as a 'reified extravagance', that is a fetishisation of the poetics of *fin'amors* articulated in the complaint.³⁹² A 'quintessentially courtly form', the complaint is coextensive with the ballade which, with the *virelay* and the *rondeau*, is, according to Wimsatt, the most desirable poetic form at the French-speaking court in fourteenth-century England.³⁹³ 'Balade of complaint', or the conflation of the metrical accomplishment of the ballade and the fashionable rhetoric of the complaint, with its aristocratic focus on the debates and courts of love, operates as a double authorising strategy founded upon the formal and thematic *translatio* of the French 'cultural capital'.

³⁹² Patterson, "'Thirled with the Poynt of Remembraunce'", pp. 53-54.

³⁹³ Patterson, "'Thirled with the Poynt of Remembraunce'", p. 53; and Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries*, pp. 21; 44-45; 117. Wimsatt argues that in the fourteenth century the ballade supplants the hegemony of the *grand chant courtois*, whose analogues are the Italian *canzone* celebrated by Dante and the Occitan *canço*, as the dominant poetic genre at the French court.

CONCLUSION.

INHABITING THE INTERVERNACULAR ‘THIRD SPACE’.

As the evidence from the fifteenth-century manuscript copies of Chaucer’s lyrics suggests, the poet’s literary *paternitas* is profoundly imbricated in the privileged discourse of French courtly poetry, especially its *formes fixes* and their *mise-en-page*. In Scattergood’s words, the ‘cultural invasion’ of Francophone literary practices through the political exchanges of prisoners and envoys in the context of the Hundred Years’ War underpins English verse in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By means of the works of its Father, the burgeoning English canon translates the validating ‘cultural capital’ of French aesthetic and codicological traditions onto the composition and production of its own vernacularity. While French manuscript culture becomes the object of what Copeland calls a ‘hermeneutic of recovery’, it is also simultaneously superseded, since English constructs itself as a canonical tradition.

Rather than a teleological and direct line of affiliation and transference of power, the intervernacular *translatio* of modes of versification from France to England creates a linguistic and literary ‘third space’. In other words, the dialectic between political enmity and cultural congeniality, which informs Anglo-French relations, unfolds in a space of negotiation. The boundaries informing linguistic and national identity are mobile and hybrid. In a masterfully detailed illumination adorning MS Royal 16.F.ii (f. 73r), Charles d’Orléans is depicted as a poet-prisoner inhabiting the London cityscape while composing his bilingual verse (see Illustration 16, p. 212); similarly, as discussed at length in Chapter I, Chaucer’s author-portrait in MS Takamiya 24 locates the English Father in the French iconographic tradition of

the dreamer-lover articulated in *Le roman de la rose*. Such intercultural encounters and palimpsests position Chaucer's paternity in a linguistically and culturally hybrid landscape in which the canonicity of his work is manifestly and inescapably defined by his transactions with Francophone culture.



Illustration 16

Charles d'Orléans in the Tower of London, British Library MS Royal 16.F.ii, f.73r, c. 1500, trilingual collection of the works of Charles d'Orléans

CHAPTER IV

ANNOTATIVE TEXTUALITY AND PATRIARCHAL AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION

'ANNOTATIO: ID EST LEX': GLOSSING CHAUCER AND THE VIOLENCE OF POLICING

1. The Vernacularisation of Scholastic Exegesis: The Functions and Distribution of Glosses in the Manuscript Copies of Chaucer's Works.

As discussed in previous chapters, the fabrication of Chaucer's literary authority as distinctively aristocratic and lyrical is performed and articulated by the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of the manuscript copies of his works. Along with other elements of a codex's decorative programme, such as illuminations (Chapter I) and titling practices (Chapters II and III), the annotative apparatus, which comprises a wide range of *marginalia* ranging from source glosses to brief rubrics, constructs and aligns Chaucer's paternity with courtly practices that are both authorising and hegemonic. Additionally, annotations appropriate modes of textual exposition established by scholastic exegesis and endow Chaucer's text with the validating currency of biblical commentary. Simultaneously, by framing the Father's texts both spatially and hermeneutically, a manuscript's annotative apparatus polices the multifarious construction of his *paternitas* and the elusive intervernacular 'third space' he inhabits. As glosses and annotations occupy the material space of the codex, they enclose Chaucer and his works within codicological and hermeneutic boundaries which promote orthodox critical readings.

In an essay on the scholastic origins of the annotative apparatuses augmenting Chaucer's works, Lawrence Besserman traces the genesis of rubrication in the early Christian tradition of commentary on patristic and biblical texts.³⁹⁴ According to his

³⁹⁴ Lawrence Besserman, 'Glosynge is a Glorious Thyng: Chaucer's Biblical Exegesis', in *Chaucer and Scriptural Tradition*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984), pp. 65-73 (p. 65).

account, these modes of textual explication acquired progressively more codicological visibility and theological prominence, as they developed from a single explanatory word arranged interlineally to a marginal 'running commentary on one or more entire biblical books'.³⁹⁵ By the twelfth century, glossing had become an established practice and glossaries, or *summae* of patristic exegesis, such as St Anselm's *Glossa Ordinaria* or Peter Lombard's *Magna Glossatura*, began to be produced. Also, as Graham D. Caie points out, while it expanded, glossing ceased to be the exclusive province of theologians and clerics, but was, instead, extended to the evangelization of the laity through the dissemination of *Biblia Pauperarum* and *bibles moralisées* accompanied by visual commentaries.³⁹⁶ The development of annotative textuality entails, therefore, an expansive movement from language to interpretation in which the exegete's hermeneutic agency becomes gradually more overt. This dialectic between the explication of obsolete or unfamiliar terms and the critical assessment of a text will remain a central tenet of glossing.

In the later Middle Ages, scholastic exegetical practices were transferred onto vernacular culture as technologies aimed at validating the 'servant' language by aligning it with a dominant hermeneutic and codicological tradition. Specifically, Parkes identifies the Ellesmere manuscript as 'the most spectacular example' of the translation of principles and modes of textual commentary onto the production of English texts and their manuscripts.³⁹⁷ Beyond Parkes's cursory remark, a number of scholars have investigated in some detail the use of glosses in codices of Chaucer's

³⁹⁵ Besserman, 'Glosynge is a Glorious Thyng: Chaucer's Biblical Exegesis', p. 65.

³⁹⁶ Graham D. Caie, 'The Significance of Marginal Glosses in the Earliest Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*', in *Chaucer and Scriptural Tradition*, pp. 75-88 (p. 77).

³⁹⁷ M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1991), pp. 35-69 (pp. 64-65, esp. p. 65); originally published in *Medieval Learning and Literature*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 115-141.

works. Along with Stephen Partridge's unpublished doctoral thesis, which discusses the glossarial apparatuses of the manuscript copies of *The Canterbury Tales*, other studies have focused on individual works and Tales.³⁹⁸ Notwithstanding their concentration on specific texts, most of the scholarship on glosses engages with the wider debate on their function and authorship.³⁹⁹ Vernacular appropriations of exegetical practices appear to adopt the multiple functionality of the scholastic tradition they imitate. In fact, as well as offering a rhetorical and thematic indexing of a text, as discussed in Chapters II and III, annotations can be classified, as Boffey

³⁹⁸ For a selection of studies on the glosses to the entire *Canterbury Tales* and for general overviews, see David Greetham, "'Glosynge Is a Glorious Thyng, Certayn'", in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, ed. Vincent P. McCarren and Douglas Moffat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 287-302; Stephen Partridge, 'The *Canterbury Tales* Glosses and the Manuscript Groups', *The Canterbury Tales Project Occasional Papers I*, ed. Norman Blake and Peter Robinson (Oxford: Office for Humanities Communication, 1993), pp. 85-94; Stephen Partridge, *Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: an Edition and Commentary*, unpublished doctoral dissertation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1992), consulted online at <http://legacy.cf.ac.uk/infos/resource/dissertations/Partridge.pdf> [accessed 15 Oct 2009]; Robert W. Hanning, 'I Shal Finde It in a Maner Glose': Versions of Textual Harassment in Medieval Literature', in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 27-50; Daniel S. Silvia, Jr., 'Glosses to the *Canterbury Tales* from St. Jerome's *Epistola Adversus Jovinianum*', *Studies in Philology* 62 (1965), 28-39.

For *Troilus and Criseyde*, see Ardis Butterfield, 'Mise-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, ed. Seth Lerer (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1996), pp. 49-80; and Julia Boffey, 'Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*', in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, vol. V, ed. Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths (London: British Library, 1995), pp. 1-17; C. David Benson and Barry A. Windeatt, 'The Manuscript Glosses to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', *The Chaucer Review* 25:1 (1990), 33-53.

For *The Man of Law's Prologue and Tale*, see Graham D. Caie, 'Innocent III's *De Miseria* as a Gloss on *The Man of Law's Prologue and Tale*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 100:2 (1999), 175-185; Graham D. Caie, "'This was a thrifty tale for the nones': Chaucer's Man of Law", in *Chaucer in Perspective: Middle English Essays in Honour of Norman Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Lester (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 47-60; Robert Enzer Lewis, 'Glosses to the *Man of Law's Tale* from Pope Innocent III's *De Miseria Humane Conditionis*', *Studies in Philology* 64:1 (1967), 1-16.

For *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, see Graham D. Caie, 'The Significance of the Early Manuscript Glosses (with Special Reference to the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*)', *The Chaucer Review* 10:4 (1999), 350-360; Catherine S. Cox, 'Holy Erotica and the Virgin Word: Promiscuous Glossing in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*', *Exemplaria* 5:1 (1993), 207-237; Carolyn Dinshaw, "'Glose/bele chose': The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators", in *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp. 113-131.

For *The Clerk's Tale*, see Thomas J. Farrell, 'The Style of the *Clerk's Tale* and the Functions of Its Glosses', *Studies in Philology* 86:3 (1989), 286-309; Germaine Dempster, 'Chaucer's Manuscripts of Petrarch's Version of the Griselda Story', *Modern Philology* 41 (1943), 6-16.

³⁹⁹ For a classification of the various categories of glosses, see Boffey, 'Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*', pp. 2-3; Farrell, 'The Style of the *Clerk's Tale* and the Functions of Its Glosses', 286-289 (see also note 1, p. 286); Caie, 'The Significance of Marginal Glosses in the Earliest Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*', pp. 76-78.

argues, in ‘different categories of indicator’ which range from short elucidations of difficult vocabulary to glosses with more complex interpretative functions.⁴⁰⁰

‘Commentative’ glosses, in particular, exercise hermeneutic control over a text, as they are more apparent articulations of a specific critical approach to it. To this category belong the annotations that Boffey defines as ‘terse nota’, or brief rubrics which generally signpost passages of proverbial or gnomic quality.⁴⁰¹ Also, as Caie observes in the context of astronomical references in *The Man of Law’s Tale*, annotations can serve as strategies of domestication of a work presenting an aberrant appropriation of its sources.⁴⁰² By rectifying misquotations, or by punctuating the space of the codex with indicators of Chaucer’s moral excellence, this category of glosses can perpetuate a normative construction of the poet who is, therefore, (re)positioned as exemplary and orthodox.

According to Thomas Farrell’s succinct assessment of the multifarious functions of glosses, they appear to have ‘no single purpose’; similarly, their distribution in the manuscripts of Chaucer’s works and their concentration on specific texts are equally varied.⁴⁰³ For example, *The Riverside Chaucer* edition of *The Legend of Good Women* records only one gloss, penned in the margins of the F version of the *Prologue*, which, however, is not shared by all witnesses; comparably sparse are the annotations to *The Book of the Duchess* which, according to Helen Phillips, is punctuated by three identical marginal glosses (‘blanche’) added to MS Fairfax 16 by a sixteenth-century hand who presumably alludes to Blanche the

⁴⁰⁰ Boffey, ‘Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*’, p. 2.

⁴⁰¹ Boffey, ‘Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*’, p. 3. Owen offers a tripartite classification of glosses in which he distinguishes between explanatory, indexing and commentative functions, see Charles A. Owen, Jr., ‘The Alternative Reading of *The Canterbury Tales*: Chaucer’s Text and The Early Manuscripts’, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 97 (1982), 237-250 (238-239).

⁴⁰² Caie, ‘The Significance of Marginal Glosses in the Earliest Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*’, pp. 78-88.

⁴⁰³ Farrell, ‘The Style of the *Clerk’s Tale* and the Functions of Its Glosses’, p. 286.

Duchess of Lancaster, the likely topic of the poem.⁴⁰⁴ *The Parliament of Fowls* features, instead, eleven annotations which, albeit confined to MS Fairfax 16, offer a structural, metrical and narrative apportioning of the text in the form of marginal *notae*.⁴⁰⁵ Of all the dream visions *The House of Fame* is most richly annotated with sixteen marginal glosses, ten of which are sources glosses shared by MSS Fairfax 16 and Bodley 638. The scribe of MS Fairfax 16 also added twenty *notae* whose functions include, in Nick Havely's words, 'several assertions about personal conduct'.⁴⁰⁶ In line with Boffey's sapiential 'terse nota', a number of these 'pointers' assume, therefore, a function similar to John Shirley's brief personalised annotations which, as I will discuss in the first section of this chapter, construct Chaucer's works as a repository of moral precepts and his paternity as normative.

Although some glossarial attention is paid to Chaucer's longer poems, including *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Legend of Good Women*, manuscript copies of *Boece* and *The Canterbury Tales* feature a more conspicuous and consistent annotative apparatus and will, consequently, be the focus of this concluding chapter.⁴⁰⁷ In particular, as Manly and Rickert observe, the most abundantly glossed Tales are *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, *The Clerk's Tale*, and sections of *The Merchant's Tale* and *The Franklin's Tale*.⁴⁰⁸ Notwithstanding the richness of these Tales' glossarial apparatus, not all of them are consistently

⁴⁰⁴ M. C. E. Shaner and A. S. G. Edwards, eds, 'Explanatory Notes: *The Legend of Good Women*', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 1059-1075 (p. 1061); Helen Phillips, ed., 'Textual Notes', in *Chaucer: The Book of the Duchess*, 2nd edn (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1993 [1982]), pp. 109-124 (p. 121).

⁴⁰⁵ Nick Havely, ed., 'Notes on the Text: *The Parliament of Fowls*', in *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, ed. Nick Havely and Helen Phillips (London and New York: Longman, 1997), pp. 274-280 (p. 276).

⁴⁰⁶ Nick Havely, ed., 'Notes on the Text: *The House of Fame*', in *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, pp. 214-218 (p. 215). MS Pepys 2006 only shares one source gloss with MSS Fairfax 16 and Bodley 638.

⁴⁰⁷ In his doctoral dissertation, Partridge argues that Chaucer's most glossed text is *The Canterbury Tales*, see *Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: an Edition and Commentary*, chapter II, p. 13. As discussed in Chapter III, the manuscript copies of *Troilus and Criseyde* are also richly annotated.

⁴⁰⁸ Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', in *The Text of the Canterbury Tales: Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), III.483-527 (525-527).

annotated in the manuscript tradition of *The Canterbury Tales*. Instead, as can be inferred from Partridge's findings, there appears to be a stable cluster of Tales, comprising *The Knight's Tale*, *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Squire's Tale*, and *The Pardoner's Tale*, that are annotated in all groups of witnesses.⁴⁰⁹ Although not all of these texts are as thoroughly framed and explicated as *The Man of Law's Tale*, which is punctuated by the most conspicuous number of annotations of all the Tales, they attract constant exegetical attention. The editorial-scribal concentration on this selection of Tales privileges an aristocratic and devotional discourse which, by combining courtly genres and chivalric narratives with *exempla* of Christian or classical morality, inscribes Chaucer and his *paternitas* of the English canon in a tradition of cultural and ethical excellence.

As well as editorial and hermeneutic, the relevance of this cluster of Tales is also textual. Partridge argues for the centrality of glosses in establishing the history of the transmission of *The Canterbury Tales*; in fact, he rearranges the families of manuscripts identified by Manly and Rickert into three groups whose affiliations are dictated by the source glosses they share.⁴¹⁰ The groups comprising the earlier and more authoritative codices, MS Ellesmere and MS Hengwrt in particular, present the most extensive and consistent glossarial apparatus. Since groups 2 and 3, which include respectively MS Hengwrt and MS Ellesmere, gloss thirteen Tales each, Partridge's classification corroborates Manly and Rickert's observation that glossing is 'very largely confined' to these two early codices and those affiliated to them.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ Partridge, 'The Glosses and the Manuscript Groups', p. 88.

⁴¹⁰ Partridge, 'The Glosses and the Manuscript Groups', pp. 87-89. On the basis of his newly-identified groups of manuscripts, Partridge concludes that MS Bodley 686 and Oxford MS Christ Church 152 ought to be accorded more scholarly attention in the establishment of the text of *The Canterbury Tales*. According to Partridge, they both present an accurate and complete version of the glosses.

⁴¹¹ Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', p. 525. They also include University Library, Cambridge MS Dd.iv.24 in their list of the most annotated manuscripts.

Partridge exposes, however, some of the limitations of the appendix on glosses offered in volume III of the Manly and Rickert editions of *The Canterbury Tales*.

One of the inaccuracies that he cites concerns the distribution of glosses in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*. Partridge argues that the transmission of this particular annotative tradition is more composite and haphazard than Manly and Rickert's account would lead to believe; rather than deriving from a common exemplar, several manuscripts feature annotations sourced and added independently of MS Ellesmere and its three closely affiliated codices, namely British Library MS Additional 35286, Oxford Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson poet. 141, and Cambridge Trinity College MS R.3.15.⁴¹² Unlike *The Man of Law's Tale*, whose rich annotative apparatus is transmitted consistently throughout its textual tradition, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue's* glossarial programme is limited to a relatively small cluster of witnesses. As the Ellesmere-related manuscripts offer an independent and more thorough annotative apparatus, they display a specific and more pronounced hermeneutic interest in the *Wife of Bath*.⁴¹³ This raises resonant questions about the conditions of production and transmission of these codices, as well as the scribes' or compilers' editorial and hermeneutic practices. According to Stephen Nichols, glosses are inflected with a 'cultural materiality' which signifies their response to the social processes and cultural situations specific to the contingent circumstances of their

⁴¹² Partridge, 'The Glosses and the Manuscript Groups', note 4, p. 91.

⁴¹³ Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', p. 496. Although Manly and Rickert acknowledge the independent quality of the glosses to *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, they appear to imply that shared annotations are mere variants of the earlier Ellesmere glosses. Partridge rectifies their assumption by specifying that 'other manuscripts [...] preserve independent series of glosses which sometimes closely resemble the El glosses in their wording'. However, they acknowledge the Ellesmere group is not the only one to offer extensive glossing of *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*. The group constituted by British Library MSS Egerton 2864 and Additional 5140 has a conspicuous number of additional annotations principally taken from the Bible, unlike the Ellesmere-related manuscripts whose source glosses derive mainly from St Jerome's *Against Jovinian*; see Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', pp. 496; 525; and Partridge, 'The Glosses and the Manuscript Groups', note 4, p. 91.

production.⁴¹⁴ In the second part of this chapter, I will interrogate the material conditions which underpin the making of MS Ellesmere, since they contextualise the manuscript's codicological and interpretative preoccupation with the Wife of Bath and her Tale.

2. Serving the Masculine Authority of the Text.

As cultural constructs, glosses are material manifestations of dominant ideologies and, therefore, articulate desirable critical responses to a text and, in particular, to Chaucer's orthodox *paternitas*. By encasing the text, a glossarial frame fabricates Chaucer as an erudite scholar and rhetorician committed to the scholastic practices of exegesis. The privileged discourse of textual explication not only authorises Chaucer's work by positioning it in a validating scholarly tradition, but it also identifies the literary landscape which the poet inhabits as quintessentially patriarchal and male. Endowed with a 'masculine valence', glossing is, according to Carolyn Dinshaw's reading of the Wife of Bath's assessment of expository practices, the exclusive province of male, specifically clerical, modes of learning and hermeneutics.⁴¹⁵ In the *Prologue* to her Tale, the Wife addresses a paradigmatic masculine exegetical voice:

Men may devyne and glosen, up and down,
But wel I woot, expres, withoute lye,
God bad us for to wexe and multiplie;
That gentil text kan I wel understonde.
Eek wel I woot, he seyde myn housbonde
Sholde lete fader and mooder and take to me.
But of no nombre mencion made he,
Of bigamy, or of octogamy. (III.26-33)

⁴¹⁴ Stephen G. Nichols, 'On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation', in *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 43-73 (p. 47).

⁴¹⁵ Dinshaw, 'Glose/bele chose': The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators', p. 123.

Notwithstanding her denunciation of the logical fallacies in the argument propounded by this generic male, presumably clerical, agent, the Wife clearly equates scholastic commentary with masculinity. The trochaic opening of the first line speaks the primacy of male agency ('Mén may') in biblical interpretation and, by extension, in the establishment of moral precepts for the laity. A glossarial apparatus, then, positions Chaucer's aesthetic authority in a discourse of patriarchal power and knowledge; in turn, the fabricated male textuality of Chaucer's works, predicated upon his paternal exemplarity, serves and reproduces the hegemony of clerical culture.

This centrality of Chaucer's paternal authority also underpins more recent critical assessments of the glossarial apparatuses in the manuscript copies of his works. The scholarly debate on the authorship of the glosses is largely dominated by an estimation of the glossator's erudition as a governing epistemological principle. Apart from Charles A. Owen, an isolated critical voice who denies Chaucer's authorship of the glosses, most scholars argue for an authorial origin, perhaps influenced by the knowledge that authors like Petrarch, Machaut and Boccaccio had provided their own glosses and annotations.⁴¹⁶ Although scribal intervention is generally not denied, it appears to be confined to less sophisticated and learned source glosses citing texts whose knowledge does not presume unparalleled erudition. According to Partridge, glosses from the Vulgate, the *Dicta Catonis* and other brief sententious material, which was readily available and widely disseminated, are the

⁴¹⁶ Owen, 'The Alternative Reading of *The Canterbury Tales*: Chaucer's Text and The Early Manuscripts', 237-50.

work of scribes.⁴¹⁷ Instead, in line with other critics, such as Manly and Rickert, Caie and Silvia, he attributes the ‘traditional apparatus’ of learned glosses to Chaucer.⁴¹⁸

Although the criteria that inform their ‘*a priori*’ ascription of several annotations to the author remain elusive, Manly and Rickert’s selection of rubrics penned by the poet is remarkably similar to Partridge’s ‘traditional apparatus’, as they both include Petrarch’s Latin version of the Griselda narrative, Albertano da Brescia’s philosophical treatises, and Jerome’s anti-marital epistolary, *Against Jovinian*.⁴¹⁹ A number of critics appear to fetishise Chaucer’s authorial paternity, as they consider the mastery of the prestigious Latinate tradition, which underpins Chaucer’s texts and their glosses, too sophisticated to be associated with minor professional figures involved in the production of the poet’s works; rather, these erudite references to past *auctoritates* can only be convincingly attributed to the superior intellectual authority of the patriarch of English vernacularity.

In response to the general critical concern with authorial attribution, Caie’s study of annotations in the early manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* offers a reframing of the scholarly debate on the genesis of glosses. As Farrell points out, Caie displaces the epistemological focus of the investigation from an author-centred speculation about their elusive origins to a reflection on the interpretative function of glosses as traces of early reception.⁴²⁰ Consistently with the social and haphazard modes of transmission and circulation of medieval literary texts and their books, which I examined in Chapter II, Caie defines glossing in the manuscripts of *The*

⁴¹⁷ Partridge, *Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales: an Edition and Commentary*, chapter II, p. 10.

⁴¹⁸ Caie, ‘The Significance of the Early Manuscript Glosses (with Special Reference to the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue*)’, 357; Silvia, ‘Glosses to the *Canterbury Tales* from St. Jerome’s *Epistola Adversus Jovinianum*’, 31; Manly and Rickert, ‘Glosses’, p. 527.

⁴¹⁹ Partridge, *Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales: an Edition and Commentary*, chapter II, p. 10, and Manly and Rickert, ‘Glosses’, p. 527.

⁴²⁰ Farrell, ‘The Style of the *Clerk’s Tale* and the Functions of Its Glosses’, 290.

Canterbury Tales as ‘collaborative work’.⁴²¹ Boffey expands on the social connotation of book production by outlining the processes of ‘gradual accretion’ and multiple authorship which govern the development of the annotative apparatuses of *Troilus and Criseyde*.⁴²² Despite Caie’s reconfiguration of the debate, the fetishisation of Chaucer’s authorial power as sole possible *fons et origo* of erudite annotations in the context of a clerical-patriarchal textuality has dominated Chaucerian criticism since its early manifestations.

Glosses, therefore, inflect Chaucer’s literary authority with the paternal and ‘masculine valence’ of patristic exegetical practices which are founded upon a rationalisation of knowledge, or, in Parkes’s words, upon ‘the ratiocinative scrutiny of the text’.⁴²³ This linear and structured methodology of scriptural interpretation developed in the twelfth century, but came to fruition in the thirteenth century when the rediscovery of Aristotelian logic imposed more rigorous modes of organisation on the practices of *lectio divina*.⁴²⁴ The epistemological imperative to impose an argumentative and rhetorical order on knowledge results, in textual terms, in the application of Aristotelian rationality to the material space of the book, that is, as Nichols suggests, in an ‘impulse to rubricate’.⁴²⁵ As the physical manifestation of the analytical ordering of knowledge, a manuscript’s paratextual apparatus rationalises the fabric of the text by means of a schematic framework. This logical apportioning of a work in thematic and structural sections signalled by rubrication is a strictly regulated process whose orthodoxy and normativity are clearly articulated in treatises

⁴²¹ Caie, ‘The Significance of the Early Manuscript Glosses (with Special Reference to the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue*)’, 357.

⁴²² Boffey, ‘Annotations in Some Manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*’, p. 12.

⁴²³ Parkes, ‘The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book’, p. 35.

⁴²⁴ Parkes, ‘The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book’, p. 50.

⁴²⁵ Nichols, ‘On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation’, p. 50.

such as St Victor's *Didascalion*.⁴²⁶ Patristic exegesis fabricates, therefore, a clerical, inherently male, textuality in which rhetoric and aesthetic are policed by the strict principles of logic.

In the late Middle Ages, when scholastic modes of textual exposition began to be transferred onto the production of vernacular texts and books, glosses provided a material and formal authorisation for Chaucer's works and, in general, for the emerging European national languages and literatures.⁴²⁷ This analytical schema not only elevated vernacular codicology and aesthetics to the prestige of exegetical discourse, but it also framed the text with an interpretative scaffold aimed at rationalising and regulating access to it. This normative function of glosses unfolds in multiple temporalities, as the act of policing the hermeneutic and semantic boundaries of a text extends over past, present and future. As Parkes remarks, rubrics 'facilitate the readers' access' to a work in virtue of their medial position between audience and literary work.⁴²⁸ They mediate between a remote (future) reader and a prior text by dehistoricising and normalising a literary work through the exposition of obsolete or culturally unfamiliar terms.⁴²⁹ Also, they domesticate the text, as they make its rhetorical, thematic and argumentative fabric apparent through a visual segmentation and signposting of its components. However, as well as engaging with a future 'belated audience', glosses offer a select record of the past *auctoritates* to which a text is indebted and regulate the reader's response to them. To paraphrase Genette's

⁴²⁶ Nichols, 'On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation', p. 51.

⁴²⁷ For more information on the vernacularisation of exegetical practices, see Hanning, 'I Shal Finde It in a Maner Glose': Versions of Textual Harassment in Medieval Literature', pp. 32-50. In the second and third part of his paper, Hanning examines examples of vernacular appropriation of glossarial apparatuses in the works of Marie de France and Chaucer; see also, Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book', pp. 64-65.

⁴²⁸ Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book', p. 53.

⁴²⁹ For a discussion of glosses as strategies of dehistoricisation of 'the prior text [...] to a belated audience', see D. C. Greetham, 'The Deconstruction of the Text: [Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction: *Supplément*', in *Theories of the Text* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 326-366 (p. 343).

words, annotations are a ‘threshold’ to the text, since their function is to police simultaneously a work’s relation to antecedent authorities and subsequent readers, in order to ensure the orthodoxy of its interpretation and appropriation of sources.⁴³⁰

Consistent with the rationalising and normative discourse of clerical exegesis, the regulatory purpose of glosses is encapsulated in their legalistic etymology and signification. In post-Augustan Rome *annotatio* designated a ruling or a legal pronouncement. Also, the original meaning of the noun ‘rubric’ (red ochre or chalk) testifies to the contiguity of glossing and legislation, as red, the colour used to signal a law in a codex, signifies metonymically a legal corpus of which it is a material manifestation.⁴³¹ Since its Greco-Roman origins, rubrication was profoundly imbricated in the discourse and technologies of power, whether political or textual. Its normativity has, therefore, implications that encompass the literary and socio-political realms. Specifically, in reference to medieval canon law, Johannes Teutonicus proclaimed that ‘*annotatio: id est lex*’.⁴³² A conspicuous and visible presence in the codex, glossing was an act of autocracy, as legislation was the exclusive prerogative of the emperor. In accordance with its etymology, the glossarial apparatus of a late medieval vernacular manuscript voices authority and encases the text in a framework of normalcy and orthodox hermeneutics. In the specific instance of Chaucer’s works, annotations position the poet’s literary patriarchy firmly within the authorising and privileged tradition of masculine, specifically, clerical exegetical practices.

⁴³⁰ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [1987]). The idea of ‘threshold’ is suggested by Genette’s subtitle.

⁴³¹ For a brief pre-Christian history of glossing, see Nichols, ‘On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation’, p. 43; see also, Dinshaw, ‘“Glose/bele chose”: The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators’, p. 121.

⁴³² ‘Gloss: it is the law’; quoted in Greetham, ‘The Deconstruction of the Text: [Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction: *Supplément*’, p. 343.

3. Glosses as Dialectical Formations: Power and Dissent.

Since the origins of rubrication, scholastic modes of textual exposition and male textuality have been equated with absolute power. In particular, Chaucer's texts are segmented, apportioned and signposted in order to manifest materially their contiguity with validating Latinate modes of *mise-en-page*, but also to police and contain the uncontrolled proliferation of aberrant critical readings of a text. As Dinshaw argues, 'the glossa undertakes to speak the text, to assert authority over it, to provide an interpretation, finally to limit or close it to the possibility of heterodox or unlimited significance'.⁴³³ In sum, through a glossarial apparatus, voices of hermeneutic dissent are silenced.

A manuscript's annotative programme functions, therefore, as a technology of surveillance. Foucault's discussion of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, as 'the architectural figure' of policing, offers a fitting theoretical paradigm of interpretation of the normative functions performed by a codex's *ordinatio*.⁴³⁴ A *techne* of power, the Panopticon provides a spatially and temporally uninterrupted supervision of disciplinary institutions, such as the prison. As Foucault explains, it exercises control and power by policing a space that 'is enclosed, segmented, [...] observed at every point'.⁴³⁵ The 'meticulous tactical partitioning' according to which the Panopticon operates is co-extensive with the ratiocinative process that governs the structural and rhetorical apportioning of texts in a manuscript.⁴³⁶ Both the Panopticon and the *ordinatio* of a medieval codex structure space analytically, as they impose a rational schema upon it. By policing the prison, or the realm of the outlaw and the agents of dissent, the Panopticon aims at 'assuring the ordering of human multiplicities' and at

⁴³³ Dinshaw, 'Glose/bele chose': The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators', p. 122.

⁴³⁴ Michel Foucault, 'Panopticism', in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1977 [1975]), pp. 195-228 (p. 200).

⁴³⁵ Foucault, 'Panopticism', p. 197.

⁴³⁶ Foucault, 'Panopticism', p. 198.

counteracting ‘the adverse force of multiplicity’.⁴³⁷ Just as the moral malady which afflicts and corrupts society is eradicated, so a manuscript’s *ordinatio* encloses a text in order to regulate the production of undesirable and unsanctioned hermeneutic appropriations.

Notwithstanding their moralising and normalising programme, Foucault deems the acts of surveillance performed by the Panopticon as ‘perfect, but absolutely violent’.⁴³⁸ A repressive strategy of control, it serves and reproduces an autocratic and absolutist power. Similarly, when scholars scrutinise the relation between Chaucer’s texts and their glossarial apparatuses, their observations are saturated with a rhetoric of coercion and co-option. For instance, Dinshaw expands on her assertion that rubrication is a ‘gesture of appropriation’, by aligning the act of glossing *The Wife of Bath*’s text with rape and violation.⁴³⁹ Greetham echoes Dinshaw’s preoccupation with the coercive force of glosses, as he argues that the paratextual ‘*supplément*’ amounts to ‘an aggressive act of controlling audience consumption of the text’ whose relation with annotations is not predicated upon a ‘peaceful coexistence [...] but rather [upon] a violent hierarchy’.⁴⁴⁰ The physical space of the manuscript becomes, therefore, a site of negotiation and conflict between power positions. Chaucer’s paternal authority enters a zone of transaction and displacement, as the glossator acquires authorial and hermeneutic agency. Subsequently, by redirecting the reader’s response according to the cultural imperatives of a belated or remote exegete, the annotative apparatus usurps the dominance of the author and the text it glosses, in order to replace it with its own ideologically-specific hermeneutics.

⁴³⁷ Foucault, ‘Panopticism’, pp. 218-220.

⁴³⁸ Foucault, ‘Panopticism’, p. 207.

⁴³⁹ Dinshaw, ‘“Glose/bele chose”: The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators’, pp. 122; 127-131.

⁴⁴⁰ Greetham, ‘The Deconstruction of the Text: [Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction: *Supplément*’, pp. 336; 347.

Suzanne Reynolds begins her exploration of the dialectical power relation between text and glosses by interrogating Mary Carruthers's reading of an annotated work as 'the most satisfying model of authorship and textual authority which the Middle Ages has produced'.⁴⁴¹ According to Reynolds, rather than manifestations of the undisputable authority of the text, or subsidiary means of lending currency to a literary work, annotations are a contrary force which destabilises the aesthetic and codicological primacy of the text. She offers a terse summary of the transactions between conflicting power positions, as she concludes that a gloss's function is 'to preserve and create authority, but also to undermine and, occasionally, usurp it'.⁴⁴² Despite serving the antecedent text, by restoring and perpetuating its intelligibility to its belated readership, glosses also resist the superiority of a work so as to appropriate and supplant it. In sum, the assistive function of annotative textuality coexists with its violent co-option of the text it frames.

Not only an ancillary codicological *techne*, but a usurping force, rubrication transforms the physical space of the manuscript into a site of textual politics in which power negotiations between the text and its glossarial apparatus unfold. The conflict between authorial and hermeneutic authorities assumes a codicological as well as a textual connotation, as the layout of a work in relation to its paratext results from the determination of power positions of centrality and marginality, or dominance and servitude. Parkes defines such negotiations in dialectical terms, since the positioning of the text accommodates the materiality of the commentary, and simultaneously, the structure of the commentary is dictated by the narrative-rhetorical fabric of the text, or

⁴⁴¹ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 194; quoted in Suzanne Reynolds, 'Inventing Authority: Glossing, Literacy and the Classical Text', in *Prestige, Authority and Power in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. Felicity Riddy (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 7-16 (p. 7).

⁴⁴² Reynolds, 'Inventing Authority: Glossing, Literacy and the Classical Text', p. 7.

its ‘*ordo narrationis*’.⁴⁴³ The codex becomes, therefore, the material landscape in which the conflict and mutuality between rubrication and literary work manifest themselves concomitantly.

As the materiality of a manuscript accommodates seemingly conflicting forces, similarly, the dialectical space of the gloss is concurrently inhabited by a plurality of functions, such as violent surveillance and assistive technologies, normativity and dissent, which operate as coterminous discourses. Specifically, the paratext is at once the visual articulation of the absolute patriarchal authority of clerical exegesis and a distorting voice which manipulates the meaning of the work it annotates. A gloss reconciles the apparent binary opposition between a linear and rational narrative, constructed around a text to contain the disruptive possibility of heterodox and multiple interpretations, and the very distortion and dispersal of meaning it strives to police. Not a paradox but a dialogue between possible glossarial functions, this dialectic is embedded within, and realised by, the multiple significations which the Middle English verb ‘to glosen’ encompasses. A number of scholars, such as Watts and Dinshaw, discuss the apparently contradictory meanings and usages of the verb.⁴⁴⁴ Along with its deictic function, that is the act of ‘comment[ing] on, interpret[ing], explain[ing], paraphrase[ing]’ a word or an entire text, the *MED* defines ‘to glosen’ as self-interested manipulation and cloaking of the truth, deception and flattery.⁴⁴⁵ The semantics of glossing articulates its functional complexity and the plurality of significations it accommodates.

⁴⁴³ Parkes, ‘The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* in the Development of the Book’, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁴⁴ Dinshaw, ‘“Glose/bele chose”: The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators’, p. 122; William Watts, ‘Glossing as a Mode of Literary Production: Post-Modernism in the Middle Ages’, *Essays in Medieval Studies* 8 (1991), 59-66 (59).

⁴⁴⁵ Information retrieved electronically at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED18852> [accessed on 31 August 2010].

A critique of glossing as distortion is voiced in a passage from *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* which I quoted earlier. While addressing a paradigmatic male hermeneutic agent, the Wife of Bath interrogates his authority. The Wife deems unconvincing and unfounded the theological-biblical argument, propounded by a generic masculine, presumably clerical, agent, against her multiple marriages. She defies the logical structure of his argumentation by denouncing its lack of corroborating evidence: 'But of no nombre mencion made he / Of bigamy, or of octogamy' (III.32-33). As the Wife dismisses the 'auctoritee' (III.1) of masculine exegesis as conjectural and fabricated ('devyne and glosen, up and down', III.26), she supplants it with her own hermeneutic manipulation of Scripture, which she co-opts to sanction her sexual profligacy: 'But wel I woot, expres, without lye, / God bad us for to wexe and multiplie' (III.27-28).

The twofold deception, perpetrated by both the male exegete and the Wife of Bath, contextualises the late medieval controversy and suspicion surrounding the tradition of biblical exposition. Robert of Melun and John Wyclif, among others, were critical of self-serving commentators who indulged in self-aggrandising embellishments and adulterations of the Scriptures; as Hanning explains:

the friars soon invaded the universities, became biblical scholars [...]; in reciprocation the interpretative techniques of the universities appeared more and more frequently in mendicant preaching, where they mingled with the virtuosic retelling of exemplary stories and the intense rhetoric of affective piety to create a rich, compelling homiletic brew. To maximise the impact of the gospel, mendicant preachers also different rhetorical styles to appeal to audiences of varied estates in life—a strategy known as the *sermo ad status*, that involved further manipulation of biblical texts and their message.⁴⁴⁶

In the late Middle Ages there was, therefore, an ideological conflict between the evangelising practices of mendicant friars, who were accused of coercing biblical

⁴⁴⁶ Hanning, 'I Shal Finde It in a Maner Glose': Versions of Textual Harassment in Medieval Literature', p. 30 (see also pp. 31-32).

texts to pursue their material interests, and a literalism, promoted by Wyclif and his followers, which advocated a more orthodox and rigorous reading of the Bible.⁴⁴⁷

The dialectical relationship between text and gloss, and the dialogue between power and dissent as contiguous tenets of rubrication will be the focus of this final chapter. I will first investigate how the annotative apparatus to Chaucer's *Boece* constructs the poet as the moral literary Father of English vernacularity. In particular, John Shirley's personalised annotations are paradigmatic of the early reception of Chaucer's works; his rubrics, while inscribing the poet's text in an authorising clerical-masculine tradition of *mise-en-page* and exegesis, co-opt Chaucer's exemplarity in order to reproduce and appropriate a hegemonic aristocratic discourse. In the second part of this chapter, I will concentrate on how, in the physical space of the manuscript, these annotative acts of appropriation are inflected with the violence of policing the patriarchal orthodoxy of the text and, simultaneously, with the articulation of dissenting critical voices which distort and disrupt the dominance of this masculine paradigm. Geographically peripheral, sexually promiscuous, and socially mobile, the Wife of Bath perverts biblical and patristic texts and represents a resonant instance of glossing as distortion of a dominant clerical ideology. By resisting the normativity and linearity of male textuality, the Wife, as a female agent of textual disruption, opens up the text to the possibility of heterodox signification, or, in Greetham's words, to the 'infinite play of signifiers'.⁴⁴⁸ Chaucer inhabits, therefore, a fluid hermeneutic and codicological landscape in which his *paternitas* is asserted and over-written, served and displaced, differentially constructed and violently co-opted.

⁴⁴⁷ For an account of late medieval opposition to exegetical practices, see Dinshaw, "'Glose/bele chose': The Wife of Bath and Her Glossators', p. 121; and Besserman, '*Glosynge is a Glorious Thyng*: Chaucer's Biblical Exegesis', p. 68.

⁴⁴⁸ Greetham, 'The Deconstruction of the Text: [Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction: *Supplément*', p. 349.

SECTION I

JOHN SHIRLEY'S GLOSSES TO CHAUCER'S *BOECE*: SOCIAL CONSERVATISM AND BOETHIANISM

1. 'Nota per Shirley': Glossing Orthodoxy.

Glosses serve and reproduce the authority of Chaucer's literary *paternitas* by making it apparent to the reader in the material space of the codex. Simultaneously, as acts of hermeneutic negotiation, they co-opt the moral and cultural excellence of the works of the Father of English poetry through the selection and signposting of specific passages in a text. In so doing, glossators over-write Chaucer's canon with the ideologically- and culturally-determined critical orthodoxy to which they adhere. A gloss becomes, therefore, a site of transaction between the commentators' deference to the authority of the text and the assertion of their own interpretative agency.

A paradigmatic hermeneutic voice is that of the fifteenth-century scribe and bibliophile John Shirley, whose influence on the reception of Chaucer's work I have examined in some detail in Chapter II. Shirley's textual selections, authorial attributions and annotative material are exemplary illustrations of the early configuration and dissemination of the Chaucerian canon as a conflation of Boethianism, moral and political advice, the rhetoric of petition and the lyrical aestheticism of the debates at the courts of love. In particular, Shirley's construction of Chaucer as a poet of sapiential *gravitas* generates from the Boethian fabric of his work. A resonant instance of Shirley's editorial and hermeneutic concentration on Chaucer's appropriation of the ideas articulated in Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* is offered by the scribe's glossarial apparatus to *Boece*, Chaucer's prose

translation of the Latin treatise, which the scribe includes in his earliest holograph anthology, MS Additional 16165. The first major text of copied in this heterogeneous manuscript, Chaucer's vernacular version of the *Consolatio*, originally composed by Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c. 475-524), is punctuated by a number of personalised annotations which, albeit very sparse throughout the rest of the codex, afford a record of Shirley's diligent perusal and attentive critical response to the translated text.⁴⁴⁹ Aligned with the type of *marginalia* that Boffey defines as 'terse nota' or 'pointers', the scribe's 'nota per Shirley' are brief rubrics which demarcate passages of gnomic valence in Chaucer's translation; in other words, they police and promote the normativity and ethico-philosophical orthodoxy of the text by containing both codicologically and hermeneutically the possibility of multiple and undesirable interpretations. Chaucer's *paternitas* is, therefore, a palimpsest or a dialectical space open to a plurality of re-appropriations which generate an unstable heterodoxy that annotations seek to frame and circumscribe.

Notwithstanding the lengthy and anecdotal quality of his centred rubrics, Shirley's marginal notes are rather unobtrusive. However, even in his more inconspicuous annotations, his presence becomes material through the use of his customary and ubiquitous 'nota per Shirley' which the scribe intercalates in his holograph manuscripts, the codices related to them and those he owned or

⁴⁴⁹ For a general introduction to Boethius's work, see Margaret Gibson, ed., *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981). Major scholarly contributions on the critical debate on Chaucer's and other European vernacularisations of Boethius's *Consolatio* are: Pierre Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire: antécédents et postérité de Boèce* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1967); Seth Lerer, *Boethius and Dialogue: Literary Method in 'The Consolation of Philosophy'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); A. J. Minnis, ed., *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987); A. J. Minnis, *Chaucer's 'Boece' and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993); Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen and Lodi Nauta, eds, *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the Consolatio Philosophiae* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Silvia Albesano, *Consolatio philosophiae volgare: volgarizzamenti e traduzioni discorsive nel Trecento italiano* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006).

consulted.⁴⁵⁰ Through his scribal-authorial signature, the annotator positions himself not as a mere subsidiary agent, but as a destabilising presence in the codex. By articulating his *nomen scribentis*, and, therefore, by subverting the customary strategies of self-effacement or oblique self-revelation adopted by fourteenth-century glossators, he challenges the power relations upon which the hierarchy of professional agents involved in the production of a medieval book is founded.⁴⁵¹ According to Minnis's translation of St Bonaventure's classification of such roles, Shirley aligns his agency with a quasi-authorial position:

The method of making a book is fourfold. For someone writes the materials of others, adding or changing nothing, and this person is said to be merely the scribe. Someone else writes the material of others, adding, but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the compiler. Someone else writes both the materials of other men, and his own, but the materials of others as the principal materials, and his own annexed for the purpose of clarifying them, and this person is said to be the commentator, not the author. Someone else writes both his own materials and those of others, but his own as the principal materials, and the materials of others annexed for the purpose of confirming his own, and such must be called the author.⁴⁵²

In other words, his annotative apparatus endows him with the creative agency of the commentator, as he transcends the ancillary role of the copyist. Also, as an assertion of ownership and authenticity, his signature usurps Chaucer's paternal authorial agency and the *auctoritas* of the text he glosses by acquiring the position of power associated with the author and the production of original meaning.⁴⁵³

Shirley's hermeneutic agency and the significance of his critical response to *Boece* are also illustrated by evidence that his personalised brief rubrics might constitute an independent tradition of interpretation. Although further research beyond

⁴⁵⁰ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 33.

⁴⁵¹ Minnis observes that the practice of giving the name of a text's writer obliquely by means of an acrostic was 'favoured by fourteenth-century commentators on theological texts and by writers of *artes praedicandi*'; see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 170 and notes 34-35, p. 274.

⁴⁵² Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, p. 94.

⁴⁵³ For a discussion of the function of the *auctor* as a principle of authenticity, see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 20; 28.

the scope of my thesis ought to be undertaken, my preliminary findings suggest that the scribe's *notae* do not merely reproduce selected extracts from the commentaries composed by antecedent hermeneutists, such as Nicholas Trevet, Jean de Meun and perhaps Chaucer himself, with new material, but they supplement the text's annotative tradition with new material.⁴⁵⁴ As proven by Machan's collation of the *marginalia* found in manuscripts of *Boece*, the passages that Shirley signposts with his signature are glossed exclusively in MS additional 16165 and are not shared with other witnesses.⁴⁵⁵ Also, since Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler's edition of Chaucer's work claims to offer a comprehensive account of the manuscript annotations, by attempting 'to indicate everything Chaucer took from Trivet and other commentaries and glosses', the lack of correspondence between the *glosa* they include in *The Riverside Chaucer* and Shirley's own annotations offers further evidence of the independence of the scribe's apparatus.⁴⁵⁶

As acts of appropriation and assertion of critical agency, while articulating *Boece*'s moral and literary excellence, Shirley's personalised and arguably autonomous *notae* claim it for themselves in order to situate MS Additional 16165 within the validating discourse of Chaucerian Boethianism. As they punctuate and frame the text hermeneutically, the scribe's brief rubrics inscribe Chaucer's *paternitas* in a discursive space of orthodoxy. A widely-disseminated treatise, the *Consolatio* interweaves Neo-Platonism and Stoicism into Lady Philosophy's consolatory

⁴⁵⁴ Tim William Machan disputes the critical stance, presented by Skeat, Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler, according to which at least some of the glosses to *Boece* are authorial. He argues instead that, in view of the instability and inconsistency of the glossarial tradition, the annotations are likely to be post-Chaucerian; see Tim William Machan, 'The Gloss Tradition of the *Boece*', *Chaucer's 'Boece': A Critical Edition Based on Cambridge University Library MS li.3.21, ff. 9'-180'*, ed. Tim William Machan (Heidelberg: Winter, 2008), pp. xxvi-xxvii (p. xxvii).

⁴⁵⁵ My observations originate from the direct examination of MS Additional; however, a record of Shirley's personalised *notae* can be found in Machan's edition of *Boece*, see 'Commentary', in *Chaucer's 'Boece'*, pp. 163-188.

⁴⁵⁶ For an exposition of the principles governing Hanna and Lawler's critical edition of *Boece*, see Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler, eds, *Boece*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 1003-1005 (p. 1004).

response to Boethius's dejected status. *Contemptus mundi* and Philosophy's invective against the pursuit of worldly happiness are framed by advice on strategies for a stoic forbearance of the instability of Fortune.⁴⁵⁷ As Catherine E. Léglu and Stephen J. Milner observe, the presence of Boethius's text 'in the literary inventories of most religious houses, schools and secular courts of the period in Western Europe' attests to its aristocratic-religious audience and its scholastic-devotional use, and, therefore, to its moral *gravitas* and centrality in late medieval culture.⁴⁵⁸ As interpretative constructs, Shirley's brief rubrics position Chaucer and his work unequivocally within a prestigious literary and philosophical tradition whose moral authority and orthodox ideology the Father transfers onto English vernacularity. In particular, Shirley's annotations construct Chaucer's *paternitas* as simultaneously moral and national:

translated by the moral and famous Chaucyer which first enlumyned
this lande with retoryen and eloquent langage of oure rude englisshe (f.
94r)

As the colophon to *Boece* in MS Additional 16165 testifies, Chaucer's excellence is predicated on two co-extensive discourses, since his moral exemplarity is aligned to his foundational role in the legitimisation and canonisation of the English language and literature.⁴⁵⁹

Hermeneutically, Shirley's paratextual apparatus to *Boece* appears to constitute an independent critical response, despite being inscribed in a wider tradition

⁴⁵⁷ A succinct introduction to the philosophical principles which inform Boethius's text can be found in Richard Utz, 'Philosophy', in *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Steve Ellis (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 158-173 (pp. 159-160).

⁴⁵⁸ Catherine E. Léglu and Stephen J. Milner, 'Introduction: Encountering Consolation', in *The Erotics of Consolation: Desire and Distance in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Catherine E. Léglu and Stephen J. Milner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1-18 (p. 2).

⁴⁵⁹ In relation to the inclusion of a stanza from John Walton's translation of Boethius in four manuscripts related to Shirley and its attribution to Chaucer in a number of witnesses, Julia Boffey points out that these codices present a multifarious fabrication of the poet's canon whose principal facets are proverbial and national; see Julia Boffey, 'Proverbial Chaucer and the Chaucer Canon', in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, pp. 37-47 (pp. 39-40; 46-47). For a further discussion of the recurrence of stanza 11 of Walton's Prologue to his translation, the so-called 'Walton's Prosperity', in Shirley-related manuscripts, see Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 110-111.

of glossed translations of Boethius's work in the late Middle Ages. In France, for instance, these annotated vernacular versions were, by the fifteenth century, the most frequently produced manuscripts of the *Consolatio*.⁴⁶⁰ There is ample scholarly consensus on the influence of the French glossarial tradition on the English versions of the treatise, including the *Boece*. In Minnis's account, the major sources for the glosses in manuscripts of Chaucer's *Boece* were *Livre de Boece de Consolacion*, attributed to Jean de Meun, *Li Livre de Confort de Philosophie*, as well as Nicholas Trevet's comprehensive Latin commentary on the 'Vulgate' Latin text of the work, together with Remi of Auxerre's annotations.⁴⁶¹ *Boece*'s apparatus of annotations results, therefore, from a cumulative process of amalgamation of its antecedent vernacular versions and, as Tim Machan explains, the haphazard quality of such accretions produces an unstable glossarial tradition which varies considerably from manuscript to manuscript.⁴⁶² In fact, Machan tersely posits that 'no gloss is found in every manuscript'.⁴⁶³

Despite the lack of consistency in the annotative apparatus of the manuscript copies of *Boece*, Machan's survey of the shared glosses leads him to conclude that Book II is the least glossed section of the text and Book V is, instead, the most densely annotated.⁴⁶⁴ Alongside the traditional explanatory or analytical notes, which in MS Additional are seamlessly integrated within the body of the text, Shirley

⁴⁶⁰ Glynnis M. Cropp, 'Le Livre de Boece de Consolacion: From Translation to Glossed Text', in *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), pp. 63-88 (p. 65). Cropp records that 48 of the extant manuscripts of the French translations are glossed versions, while only 16 are un glossed. She also points out that this glossarial tradition derives from William de Conches's commentary. For a brief survey of the European textual tradition of vernacular versions of the *Consolatio*, see Léglu and Milner, 'Introduction: Encountering Consolation', pp. 3-4.

⁴⁶¹ A. J. Minnis, "'Glosynge is a Glorious Thyng": Chaucer at work on 'Boece'', in *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae*, pp. 106-124 (pp. 108-109).

⁴⁶² Minnis investigates the genesis of the glossarial tradition of *Boece* in "'Glosynge is a Glorious Thyng": Chaucer at work on 'Boece'', pp. 107; 109; see also Tim William Machan, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's 'Boece'', in *The Medieval Boethius*, pp. 125-138 (pp. 107; 109).

⁴⁶³ Machan, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's 'Boece'', p. 130.

⁴⁶⁴ Machan, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's 'Boece'', p. 131.

intercalates his personalised series of ‘nota per Shirley’. Their distribution in the codex is, nonetheless, far from being homogeneous. Unlike the pattern observed by Machan, Shirley’s *notae* in MS Additional concentrate exclusively on Books II and III. Completely absent from Books I, IV and V, the positioning of the glosses is at least partly consistent with the manuscript’s decorative programme which becomes progressively less detailed and is finally abandoned on f. 33 during Prosa IV of Book III. Irrespective of this interruption in the manuscript’s paratext, Shirley’s disregard for Book I alerts the reader to the possible critical autonomy of his glosses and to the significance of the concentration of personalised *notae* in Books II and III, which feature respectively 3 and 4 ‘nota per Shirley’.

The distribution of the glosses to *Boece* suggests that Shirley’s central hermeneutic preoccupation does not reside in the debate on free will, which occupies Book V, or in the account of Boethius’s dejected status, the narrative focus of Book I, but in Philosophy’s pronouncements about the seductive and capricious nature of Lady Fortune, as well as in her theorisation of true happiness as the pursuit of spirituality rather than inferior secular values. Specifically, the scribe frames and co-opts Chaucer’s text so as to direct the reader’s attention to Lady Philosophy’s concern with the imperfection and transience of worldly ‘welefulnesse’, specifically, the desire for material objects, such as ‘precyous stones’ and ‘precious ostelementz’, or socio-economic ‘estat’.⁴⁶⁵ In Shirley’s glossed passage, this corrupt covetousness is presented as coterminous with the denunciation of a perversion of natural order:

Is it thanne so, that ye men ne han no propre good iset in yow, for whiche ye mooten seke outward your goodes in foreyne and subgit thynges? So is thanne the condicion of thynges turned up-so-down, that a man, that is a devyne beest be meryte of his resoun, thynketh that

⁴⁶⁵ Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler, eds, *Boece*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 397-469 (2.pr5.37; 118-119; 2.pr4.75). All further references are from this edition and will be given parenthetically at the end of each quotation.

hymself nys neyther fair ne noble but yif it be thurw possessioun of
ostelementz that ne han no soules. (2.pr5.124-132)

The cultural dominance of an evaluative system based on contingent and superficial goods ('foreyne and subgit thynges') inverts the divine design that regulates worldly and celestial phenomena, since the longing for a transitory and inferior incarnation of 'welefulnesse' debases and negates the God-given spiritual and intellectual superiority of mankind. Seduced by the deceitful and soulless objects, Boethius is a paradigmatic example of the misguided search for self-validation in lesser secular signifiers of social and economic success. In sum, Shirley's hermeneutic pointing of Chaucer's translation constructs *Boece* as a hortatory text which engages with the deviation from natural order effected by the sustained attachment to the imperfect realm of the contingent.

Through the scribe's insertion of notes with a hermeneutic valence, Chaucer's *Boece* is, therefore, fabricated and disseminated as a normative work which reproduces desirable subject positions dictated by a pre-ordained design. One of these brief personalised rubrics demarcates the text and directs the reader's critical attention to a section of the treatise which promotes an ideology of stability and orthodoxy. A lyrical passage saturated with the imagery and rhetoric of astronomy, Metrum 8 of Book II conceptualises such design as the containment and harmonisation of difference:

That the world with stable feyth varieth accordable chaungynges; that
the contrarious qualites of elementz holden among hemself allayaunce
perdurable; that Phebus, the sonne, with his goldene chariet bryngeth
forth the rosene day; that the moone hath comaundement over the
nyghtes, whiche nyghtes Esperus, the eve-sterre, hath brought; that the
see, gredy to flowen, constreyneth with a certein eende his floodes, so
that it is nat leueful to strecche his brode termes or bowndes uppon the
erthe (2.m8.1-12)

William Watts's syntactical and thematic analysis of Boethius's Latin *Metrum*, along with Jean's and Chaucer's vernacular versions, focuses on the 'mimetic purpose' of the passage's hypotactical structure which offers a visual and rhetorical articulation of cosmic order, the thematic nucleus of the piece.⁴⁶⁶

The sequence of subordinate clauses, preceded by the conjunction 'that' or 'quod', creates a composite list of astronomical and natural elements whose logical and syntactical connection remains unresolved until the principal clause is introduced:

al this accordaunce [and] ordenaunce of thynges is bounde with love,
that governeth erthe and see, and hath also comandement to the
hevene. And yif this love slakede the bridelis, alle thynges that now
loven hem togidres wolden make batayle contynuely [...] This love
halt togidres peoples joyned with an holy boond, and knytteth
sacrement of marriages of chaste loves (2.m8.13-18;21-24)

While 'love', or divine Providence, as the subject of the main clause, resolves the syntactical-logical indeterminateness of the secondary clauses, simultaneously, on a theological level, it also binds together the heterogeneous and often discordant objects of creation. In Watts's words, 'the sentence, like love itself, encompasses an entire cosmography, with the sun, the moon, the earth and the ocean each assigned its proper place'.⁴⁶⁷ The structural coherence of *Metrum* 8 and, by extension, that of the cosmos is underpinned by the strict policing of natural boundaries, and by the exercise of power and control over chaos and excess. In the final part of the *Metrum*, this paradigm of divine order, named 'love', is clearly represented as a principle of social unity, as it presides over society and its founding institutions like marriage.

Given their preoccupation with the impermanence and fickleness of the public sanctioning of one's social subject position, whether 'estat' (2.pr4.75), 'the holy

⁴⁶⁶ William Watts, 'Translations of Boethius and the Making of Chaucer's Second "Canticus Troili"', *Chaucer Yearbook* 3 (1996), 129-141 (132).

⁴⁶⁷ Watts, 'Translations of Boethius and the Making of Chaucer's Second "Canticus Troili"', 131.

boond' of matrimony (2.m8.22-23) or 'renome' (2.pr7.110), a social discourse constitutes an overarching conceptual framework to the passages appropriated and policed by Shirley. For instance, the coveting of 'precious stones' and the material wealth that they metonymically signify is underwritten by social inequality. Not only are riches imperfect and transient, but monetary success can only be sustained by an uneven distribution of the social capital and, therefore, by a vast number of people's deprivation:

And also yif al the moneye that is overal in the world were gadryd toward o man, it scholde make alle othere men to be nedy as of that. [...] O streyte and nedy clepe I this richesse, syn that many folk ne mai nat han it al, ne al mai it nat comen to o man withoute povert of alle othere folk. (2.pr5.23-26;33-36)

The devious seduction of 'the schynynge of gemmes' (2.pr5.36) blinds gluttonous mankind to the destabilising effect of the economic inequality and perpetual frustration to which it is condemned through the fallacious pursuit of material advancement.

Similarly, in Prosa 7 of Book II 'renome' (l. 110) is presented as unstable and impermanent because it is founded on an arbitrary and contingent evaluative system:

And forthi is it that, although renome, of as longe tyme as evere the list to thynken, were thought to the regard of eternyte, that is unstaunchable and infynyt, it ne sholde nat only semen litel, but pleynliche right nought. But ye men, certes, ne konne doon no thyng aryght, but yif it be for the audience of peple and for idel rumours; and ye forsaken the grete worthynesse of conscience and of vertu, and ye seeken yowr gerdouns of the smale wordes of straunge folk. (2.pr7.110-120)

If subject positions are determined solely by 'the audience of peple' and not by an introspective concentration on conscience and piety, the metaphysical principles that govern the relation between materiality and spirituality are inverted, and, as a consequence, chaos is allowed to dominate. As the *MED* indicates, 'the idel rumours' which define reputation are not only 'unsubstantiated report[s]', or unwarranted

evaluations, but they are also signifiers of ‘a disturbance, stir, tumult’.⁴⁶⁸ While subverting the metaphysical superiority of transcendental values, ‘rumours’ eschew the perfection and immanence of divinely-ordained social and moral hierarchies in favour of contingent and mutinous ideologies.

By marking the space of the codex with his personalised rubrics, Shirley imposes an orthodox hermeneutic framework upon *Boece*, in order to close the text to the destabilising agency of heterodox interpretations. Through this act of surveillance, the scribe inhabits Chaucer’s *paternitas*, as he re-writes and over-writes it as morally exemplary and socially orthodox, and positions it in a discourse of social stability predicated upon on a natural and, therefore, unquestionable order.

2. ‘þe gret and þe comune’: Fifteenth-Century Deference and Social Mobility.

Notwithstanding Shirley’s overt personalisation of the annotative apparatus to Chaucer’s translation of the *Consolatio*, I would dispute Machan’s reading of the scribe’s hermeneutic interest in ‘the *Boece* largely as a book of moral precepts of his own life’.⁴⁶⁹ I would contend, instead, that this co-option of Chaucer’s translation and its *auctoritas* does not serve solely Shirley’s appetite for literature of advice; rather, he alternates between his personalised ‘nota per Shirley’ and other brief rubrics (‘videte’ and ‘loke and rede’) through which he ostensibly addresses his readership. As he occupies the codex with the markers of his hermeneutic agency, Shirley appropriates Chaucer’s moral and literary paternity and inscribes it with desirable subject positions that are relevant to his audience. In his self-reflexive discussion of annotative practices, Ralph Hanna III maintains that ‘rather than serving a community

⁴⁶⁸ <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED38114> [accessed 13 August 2010].

⁴⁶⁹ Machan, ‘Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer’s ‘Boece’’, p. 133.

[of readers], I [the annotator] have articulated it, created it'.⁴⁷⁰ He adds that, although it is an 'aggressive act', glossing is also 'society enabling', as it creates and imposes a unifying and communal hermeneutics of the text whose agenda is clearly set by the glossator.⁴⁷¹ Acts of fabrication of a community of readers, glosses such as the Latin 'videte' and the English 'loke and rede' are normative and construct a shared configuration of a desirable 'moral and famous' Father of English poetry.

Not as frequent as his personalised 'nota per Shirley', the scribe's annotations *ad lectorem* have a similar distribution in the codex.⁴⁷² As direct addresses to the readers, they dislodge the confines of fictional communication and break the narrative framework within which the text and its hermeneutic apparatus are written. Instead of mere personal annotations voicing individual taste in a confessional mode, they function as acts of fabrication of a community of readers-hermeneutists. The principles of moral instruction imparted by Boethius, translated by Chaucer and selected or co-opted by Shirley are shared with a wider audience. In particular, although the philosophical-moral preoccupations articulated by these 'pointers' *ad lectorem* are consistent with Shirley's overarching concern with 'mortel thynges' (2.pr4.124), here social discourse, that is a preoccupation with the stability of hierarchical structures and order, is more pervasive.

A paradigmatic example of the concerns that Shirley voices in his annotations *ad lectorem* is offered in Prosa 4 of Book III in which Philosophy critiques social mobility as the coveting of 'honours', that is one's reputation and engagement in public offices. The pursuit of 'verray reverence' is obscured by the seduction of 'thise

⁴⁷⁰ Ralph Hanna III, 'Annotation as Social Practice', in *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 178-184 (p. 181).

⁴⁷¹ Hanna, 'Annotation as Social Practice', p. 181.

⁴⁷² During my examination of MS Additional I have recorded 2 instances of notes *ad lectorem* in both prosa IV and V of Book II, and 1 in prosa IV of Book III.

schadwy transitorie dignytes' (3.pr4.57-59), that is titles whose currency is illusory and deceptive, since they are culturally- and historically-specific:

yif that a man hadde used and had manye maner dignytes of consules,
and weere comen paraventure among straunge nacions, scholde thilke
honour maken hym worschipful and redouted of straunge folk? Certes
yif that honour of peple were natureel yifte to dignytes, it ne myghte
nevere cesen nowhere amonges no maner folk to don his office
(3.pr4.60-67)

Arbitrarily determined, the process of public validation which establishes social and moral subject positions is transient because it is not dictated by nature but fabricated by social ideologies. Shirley's rubrics present Chaucer's agency and literary paternity as the vernacularisation of dominant orthodox social practices whereby the desire for promotion is seen as the pursuit of excess and, therefore, as a destructive act and principle of chaos. As signalled by a further 'videte', the 'outrage of covetye' (2.pr5.123) exceeds, displaces and supplants the natural apportioning of worldly possessions and social status ('the nede of kynde', 2.pr5.122) established by a divinely-designed order.

In other words, Shirley's *notae ad lectorem* construct *Boece* as a socially-conservative text which promotes dominant subject positions through a conceptualisation of order as divine design, that is as a necessary and unquestionable natural programme. As I will argue in some detail later in this chapter, medieval cosmological theories, which conceive the universe as governed by Providence, are coterminous with political and social ideologies, since they are both predicated upon what Eleanor Johnson identifies as 'the inevitable truth of causation'.⁴⁷³ In her essay

⁴⁷³ Eleanor Johnson, 'Chaucer and the Consolation of 'Prosimetrum'', *The Chaucer Review* 43:4 (2009), 455-472 (456). In note 1 (p. 470) she provides a brief survey of critical works which engage with order as a foundational metrical, narrative and philosophical tenet of the text, see especially Elaine Scarry, 'The Well-Rounded Sphere: the Metaphysical Structure of the Consolation of Philosophy', in *Essays in the Numerical Criticism of Medieval Literature*, ed. Caroline Eckhardt (London: Associated University Press, 1980), pp. 91-140, and John Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 148.

on the centrality of the idea of order in Boethius's text, she maintains that philosophical consolation resides in the comprehension of causality, or 'God's perfect awareness of all events' organised in a sequence of 'necessary, successive, orderly moments'.⁴⁷⁴ The healing of the dejected subject can only begin once Boethius accepts that 'his own place in the ordered universe' is an unmovable piece in a universal system which embraces all created phenomena and immutably determines their role.⁴⁷⁵ She also aligns the politics and sociology of cosmology with the prosometric structure of the *Consolatio* which, in its precisely-orchestrated alternation of narrative and verse, aestheticises both celestial and class structures seen as essentially unchanging.

Shirley's hermeneutic preoccupation with framing Chaucer's *paternitas* as socially conservative and orthodox arguably resonates with the social milieu within which MS Additional 16165 was produced. Engaged in the service of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, for most of his life, Shirley had access to both his lord's aristocratic affinity and his family's extensive book collection. This suggests that the social identity of the community that Shirley addresses and constructs in his first holograph anthology can arguably be located within the gentle ranks serving the Beauchamp family. Such reading is corroborated by Ralph Hanna's analysis of the provenance and date of the manuscript; notwithstanding the unequivocal municipal locale of Shirley's later books, Hanna situates MS Additional in the cultural context of the 'aristocratic coterie' and circulation of books associated with Warwick.⁴⁷⁶

I suggest, however, that the social make-up of Shirley's coterie readership is more complex. In fact, a number of extant letters of protection for individual

⁴⁷⁴ Johnson, 'Chaucer and the Consolation of 'Prosimetrum'', p. 456.

⁴⁷⁵ Johnson, 'Chaucer and the Consolation of 'Prosimetrum'', p. 455.

⁴⁷⁶ Ralph Hanna III, 'John Shirley and British Library, MS. Additional 16165', in *Studies in Bibliography* 49 (1996), 95-106 (100-101).

members of Beauchamp's retinue point to the composite social configuration of the Earl's circle.⁴⁷⁷ This list, which includes Shirley, affords a social mapping of Beauchamp's group which consisted mainly of a broad representation of the gentry, but also included at least a member of the clerical class. Also, in order to gain a comprehensive picture of Shirley's fabricated interpretative community, a further affinity ought to be added to Warwick's socially-heterogeneous, but mainly aristocratic and provincial, circle. As Connolly determines, MS Additional was begun in the mid-1420s, a time of transition in Shirley's professional life. Still engaged in Warwick's service and travelling as his secretary, by the late 1420s and early 1430s he had taken permanent residence in London after visiting the capital on a number of occasions in the 1420s. During these travels, he presumably began to establish civic networks with the mercantile classes. He subsequently consolidated such affiliations in the 30s and 40s when he was awarded the free rent of two shops and was appointed controller of petty customs.⁴⁷⁸ In Connolly's words, 'without losing touch with the aristocratic world of the Earl of Warwick's household and affinity, he started to develop a wide range of civic connections across the city's merchant class'.⁴⁷⁹ Aristocratic, gentle, clerical and civic, the social milieu in which MS Additional was conceived is likely to encompass Beauchamp's patrician retinue and Shirley's newly-established mercantile-curial London affiliations. As he states in his verse preface to MS Additional, his codex and, consequently, his rubrics *ad lectorem* appear to be addressed to 'boþe þe gret and þe comune' (f. iir), that is to a socially-fluid and expansive interpretative community.

⁴⁷⁷ Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 15-16. These letters of protection were composed for members of the Earl's retinue who were reticent to follow him to Wales to take up his position as Joint Keeper of Brecon Castle. Connolly provides a detailed account of both Shirley's work for the Beauchamp family and his London networks in 'Biography' (pp. 10-26) and 'John Shirley, esquire, London' (pp. 52-68).

⁴⁷⁸ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 27.

⁴⁷⁹ Connolly, *John Shirley*, p. 55.

The slippage between provincial nobility and municipal classes, whether curial or mercantile, appears, therefore, to be a central and overarching feature of the editorial programme of MS Additional. In the verse preface to his first holograph manuscript Shirley introduces the composite configuration of his intended audience with a *captatio benevolentiae*:

Wher fore dere sirs I you beseche
Pat ye disdeyne not with my speche
ffor after þe symplesse of my witt
So as feblesse wolde suffice hit
Þis litell booke with myn hande
Wryten I haue ye shul vnderstande
And sought þe copie in many a place
To haue þe more thank of youre grace
And doon hit bynde In þis volume
Pat boþe þe gret and þe comune
May þer on looke and eke hit reede (f. iir)

Although the petitionary tonality of Shirley's passage is clearly informed by the conventions of the rhetorical device he deploys in order to secure the readers' benevolence, his obsequious address to the 'dere sirs' recalls the power dynamics of patronage. His efforts are aimed at satisfying the discerning taste of his audience with authoritative texts written by 'olde clerkes', in order to gain their 'grace', or intellectual, if not monetary, favour. Shirley's social and literary deference to his noble addressees at the beginning of the quoted passage is, however, inflected with the social fluidity and openness of the social configuration of his audience that he articulates in the last two lines, referring to both 'þe gret and þe comune'.

As the petitionary rhetoric of MS Additional's verse preface exemplifies, Shirley positions Chaucer's moral and literary paternity in a discourse of subservient deference to and reproduction of dominant aristocratic cultural practices. The scribe's orthodoxy is consistent with Maurice Keen's characterisation of pre-eighteenth-century England as a 'deference society' organised in 'an ordered

gradation' of social roles and statuses. M. J. Bennett echoes Keen and argues that 'the relations of deference and service that persisted between the grades [of society] were the basis of social order, of its essence: they had not yet come to regard social distinctions as divisive, as forces with the potential to tear society apart'.⁴⁸⁰ Shirley perpetuates the unquestioned dominance of the ideology of deference, as, he provides, for instance, details of patrician commission and patronage in the colophon to *Boece*. This rubric serves a double annotative function, as it signals the end of Chaucer's translation and, at the same time, introduces John Trevisa's *Gospel of Nichodemus* as a work 'laboured at þe instaunce of Thomas some tyme Lord of Berkley', the father of Richard Beauchamp's first wife Elizabeth.⁴⁸¹ Similarly, an aristocratic appetite for devotional and courtly narratives dominates the *compilatio* of MS Additional 16165 which conflates works of theological interest (the *Doctrina sacerdotalis* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*), dream visions and lyrics (Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* and *The Complaint of a Lover's Life*, Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*), and Edward of York's *Master of the Game*, a translation and anglicised adaptation of the fashionable *Livre de chasse*, a widely-disseminated hunting treatise composed by Gaston de Phébus, Comte de Foix.⁴⁸²

The glossarial apparatus and *compilatio* of MS Additional 16165 accommodate, nevertheless, a disjuncture between the deferential dissemination of an aristocratic discourse and the inclusion of a composite group of lower gentry and London citizens. Broadly, the process of vernacularisation of Boethius's *Consolatio in*

⁴⁸⁰ Maurice Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1358–1500* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 1; and M. J. Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 67.

⁴⁸¹ For a discussion of Thomas Berkeley's patronage of Trevisa, and his relation to the Beauchamp family, see Ralph Hanna III, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and his Patronage', *Speculum* 64:4 (1989), 878-916 (esp. 892-899 and note 28, p. 890).

⁴⁸² For more details about Edward's adaptation of the French hunting treatise, see Connolly, *John Shirley*, pp. 35-36.

the late Middle Ages is characterised by a widening of the social composition of its audience, which customarily was aristocratic or religious. As Léglu and Milner argue, *Boece* and, to varying degrees, the other European translations of the treatise are aimed at disseminating the text among lay readers interested in ‘the vagaries of Fortune [which] had connections with their secular aspirations as inhabitants of courts’.⁴⁸³

Philosophy’s discussion of ‘gentilesse’, which is signposted by a ‘*nota per Shirley*’ in MS Additional, resonates with the socially-ambitious lay audience of the vernacular translations of Boethius’s treatise:

But now of this name of gentilesse, what man is it that ne may wele seen how veyn and how flyttyng a thyng it es? For yif the name of gentilesse be referred to renoun and cleernesse of lynage, thanne is gentil name but a foreyne thyng [...] foreyne gentilesse ne maketh nat gentil. But certes yif ther be ony good in gentilesse, I trowe it be al only this, that it semeth as that a maner necessite be imposed to gentil men for that thei ne schulde nat owtrayen or forlynen fro the vertus of hir noble kynrede. (3.pr6.32-37;45-51)

Prosa VI exposes the fluidity and permeability of ‘gentilesse’, that is the disjuncture between social status and moral excellence, as, according to Philosophy’s account, aristocratic ranks do not always display behaviours suited to the ethical distinction that their lineage implies. This slippage articulates the elasticity and porosity of the discursive space of ‘gentilesse’ and suggests that the desirable social and moral subject positions defined by it are open to appropriation and co-option. They can, therefore, be inhabited by the socially-mobile municipal readership of *Shirley*’s manuscript. Philosophy does not, however, voice dissent, as the passage ends by urging the noble classes to conform to the moral exemplarity dictated by their rank. As a social paradigm, ‘gentilesse’ remains the dominant discourse and model, but is now susceptible to be penetrated and occupied by emerging social subjectivities. A

⁴⁸³ Léglu and Milner, ‘Introduction: Encountering Consolation’, p. 4.

dialectical space that reconciles an aristocratic ideology of stability and order with new social forces and their pursuit of mobility, 'gentillesse' offers an authoritative model on which new identities can be inscribed.

The openness of 'gentillesse' contextualises the inclusion of a reference to Chaucer's son in MS Additional. Notwithstanding its sustained engagement with patrician literary taste, the codex incorporates the only extant copy of a poem by Lydgate composed on the occasion of one of Thomas Chaucer's ambassadorial missions in the service of the king. The rubric to 'Departure of Thomas Chaucer' succinctly glosses the lyric as 'Balade made by Lydegate at þe departing of Thomas Chaucyer on ambassade in to France' (f. 248r). Through his gentrified son, Chaucer is presented, as I discussed in Chapter I, as a 'bureaucratic muse', since they are positioned as exemplary figures of social mobility and advancement through the Civil Service. As Glenn Burger argues in his discussion of 'gentillesse', the poet becomes the prototype 'of the early modern gentry that will follow with the likes of Thomas Chaucer in the fifteenth century'.⁴⁸⁴ Non-baronial groups, who found employment and social advancement in the service of the Crown, are, therefore, represented and legitimised in MS Additional by their cultural and literary contiguity to devotional and courtly texts.⁴⁸⁵ 'On the Departing of Chaucer' affords a paradigmatic illustration of the social mobility of the curial classes, who, according to S. H. Rigby, through their employment in the service of the king, were pursuing the most effective professional route towards social promotion and gentrification:

Along with marriage, service in office, particularly service to the Crown, provided the other main avenue of personal advancement within late medieval English society. Among the most dramatic examples of such promotion were those which occurred in time of war when military service offered lucrative prizes and the opportunity for

⁴⁸⁴ Glenn Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 56-57.

⁴⁸⁵ Connolly discusses the possible occasion and date of the poem in *John Shirley*, pp. 41-44.

men to move up through the ranks. [...]Less dramatically, service to the Crown in administrative office was another means of individual advancement. This was certainly the case in this period, as it had been before, for clerical high-flyers.⁴⁸⁶

Shirley's editorial choice to copy a poem depicting the diplomatic commitments of Chaucer's gentrified son broadens the social scope of MS Additional to include the ambitious group of 'gentlemen-bureaucrats' who, according to Robin L. Storey, pursued social elevation through the service of the Crown.⁴⁸⁷

The scribe's fabrication of Chaucer's *paternitas* inhabits a dialectical space which encompasses aristocratic orthodoxy and the social aspirations of the non-patrician classes involved in public service. Such heterogeneous social mapping is configured by Paul Strohm as a conflation of 'the aristocrats with whom he was connected through marriage, the gentry with whom he served the king, the citizens, the burgesses, and artisans he met as controller of customs and clerk of the works'.⁴⁸⁸ He continues by bringing into focus the 'middle strata' of Chaucer's group. The 'core' of the Father's affiliation included 'several knights in royal and civil service, [...] London acquaintances [...] and newcomers of the 1390s (Scogan and Bukton): all gentle and none, apart from William Beauchamp, was aristocratic or baronial'.⁴⁸⁹ Chaucer is, therefore, at the centre of a socially mobile and successful circle of men whose advancement is effected and sanctioned by their subservience and affiliation to

⁴⁸⁶ S. H. Rigby, 'English Society in the Later Middle Ages: Deference, Ambition and Conflict', *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture c.1350–c.1500*, ed. Peter Brown (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), Blackwell Reference Online [accessed 15 August 2010].
http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9780631219736_chunk_g9780631219736_7.

⁴⁸⁷ Robin L. Storey, 'Gentlemen-Bureaucrats', in *Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Later Medieval England*, ed. C. H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), pp. 90-129. For more information about Thomas Chaucer's gentry marriage and sustained engagement in public office, see Carole Rawcliffe, 'Chaucer, Thomas (c.1367–1434)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) [accessed 15 Aug 2010].
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5192>.

⁴⁸⁸ Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 41.

⁴⁸⁹ Strohm, *Social Chaucer*, pp. 42-43.

the king; in Strohm's words, 'each seems to have prospered mainly as a result of their own exertions, and all—excepting only John Gower—were in the service of lords or parties greater than themselves'.⁴⁹⁰

This composite social group, pursuing advancement through the Civil Service, is often the subject or addressee of Chaucer's Boethian shorter poems, such as 'Fortune', 'Truth', 'Lak of Stedfastnesse', 'Gentilesse', and 'The Former Age', which, except for the latter, are all included in Shirley's anthologies (see Illustration 9, p. 63). For instance, the first of the two copies of 'Truth' in MS R.3.20, Shirley's second holograph codex, bears one of the scribe's customary anecdotal titles, 'Balade y^t Chaucier made on his deeth bedde' (f. 143v). Also, the opening line articulates a Boethian position of anguish and the speaker's vigorous appeal to reject the ambitious and envious courtly cohort:

Flee from the prees and dwelle with sothfastnesse.
Suffyce unto thy thing, though it be smal,
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal.⁴⁹¹

The poem's damning assessment of courtly politics as capricious and self-serving is punctuated by advice against social ambition and the promotion of 'sufficaunce', or acceptance of one's status, as a principle of stability. The Stoic forbearance and invective against the moral corruption of the courts resonates powerfully with the Boethian fate of dejection suffered by Sir Philip de la Vache to whom the 'Envoy' of 'Truth' is dedicated in British Library, MS Additional 10340.⁴⁹² Like Boethius, Vache

⁴⁹⁰ Strohm, *Social Chaucer*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁹¹ Geoffrey Chaucer, 'Truth', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ll. 1-4, p. 653.

⁴⁹² For more information about the poem's textual tradition and the identification of the wretched 'Vache' addressed in 'Truth' as Sir Philip de la Vache, a knight engaged in royal service under Edward III, Richard II and Henry IV, see Laila Z. Gross, 'Explanatory Notes: 'Truth'', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 1084-1085 (p. 1084); Pace and David, 'Truth', in *The Minor Poems: Geoffrey Chaucer*, pp. 50-51.

fell in disfavour after serving the Crown for a number of years, although, in the process, he acquired considerable social prestige.

In Deanne Williams's words, Chaucer's shorter poems display a 'Boethian concern with the loss of power, honour, and the vagaries of fortune becomes [...] the discourse of patronage, connections, and *Realpolitik*'.⁴⁹³ Ethan Knapp discusses the 'profound sense of anxiety' experienced by fifteenth-century bureaucrats in the context of the uncertainty of remuneration in the Civil Service. Changes to central bureaucracy, such as its increased independence from the Crown, destabilised its foundations and created administrative instability.⁴⁹⁴ Such anxieties resonate with both Shirley's brief annotations to *Boece* and the lyrics' thematic concentration on and disenchantment with the impermanent and fallacious realm of worldly pursuits, whether social or monetary. In particular, the scribe's co-option of Chaucer's Boethianism as a reflection on the implications of the desire for social advancement and material possessions is aligned with the professional disquiet of the curial class portrayed in Chaucer's shorter poems. Chaucer's diverse circle of socially-mobile interlocutors offers, therefore, a paradigmatic social palimpsest upon which Shirley can overwrite his own complex interpretative community.

In sum, as manifestations of textual authority in the material page of the codex, Shirley's personalised *notae* serve and perpetuate the literary and moral excellence of Chaucer's *Boece*. Simultaneously, they construct Chaucer's *paternitas* and his vernacularisation of Boethianism as orthodox and normative. Through their critical signposting of selected arguments in the text, Shirley's 'pointers' reproduce dominant aristocratic practices which advocate social conservatism. As worldly

⁴⁹³ Deanne Williams, 'Boethius Goes to Court: The *Consolatio* as Advice to Princes from Chaucer to Elizabeth I', in *The Erotics of Consolation*, pp. 205-226 (p. 216).

⁴⁹⁴ Ethan Knapp, 'Identity and Self in the *Formulary* and 'La Male Regle'', in *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 17-44 (p. 23 and note 19).

incarnations of divine design, social hierarchies are presented as necessary and unmovable.

Shirley's specific configuration, focused by his annotations, of the text's moral normativity, that is its Stoic promotion of forbearance and its Christian-Platonic rejection of earthly attachments, is addressed to an interpretative community whose social fabric is composite and comprehends baronial classes as well as the mobile middle strata of fifteenth-century English society. While reproducing the cultural and literary dominance of an aristocratic discourse, Shirley's *notae* offer his audience a dual strategy of *consolatio*. Along with a reconfiguration of their subject position, through the annotations *ad lectorem* they are included in a communal attempt to disengage readers from their material pursuits. According to Léglu and Milner, Philosophy's advice provides the readers with a 'cognitive remapping' which consists of an orthodox reprogramming of their desire for worldly 'welefulness'.⁴⁹⁵ This epistemological shift displaces their preoccupation with contingent objects and the public realm, and substitutes it with Christian ascetism and a Stoic distaste for materialism.

However, in her analysis of the impact of the late thirteenth-century systematic 'Aristotelianizing' of philosophical thinking on Chaucer's reworking of Boethianism, Jessica Rosenfeld argues for 'a reevaluation of the active life so that practical goods might come to the fore and secular concerns could therefore emerge more fully in vernacular literature'.⁴⁹⁶ This secularisation of *consolatio* effects a move away from transcendence and the exclusive dialogue between the divine and the dejected subject which is specific to ascetism. As Williams observes, instead, 'salvation is a communal

⁴⁹⁵ Léglu and Milner, 'Introduction: Encountering Consolation', p. 11

⁴⁹⁶ Jessica Rosenfeld, 'The Doubled Joys of *Troilus and Criseyde*', in *The Erotics of Consolation*, pp. 39-59 (p. 43).

enterprise',⁴⁹⁷ in other words, like Shirley's rubrics *ad lectorem*, rather than an individualised, confessional meditation on transcendental happiness, consolation stems from a shared and societal acknowledgement not only of the inherent imperfection and deviance of an attachment to the realm of the contingent, but also of its cultural centrality. Coveting social advancement and its material signifiers is a manifestation of chaos, as well as the historical and social reality in which Chaucer's and Shirley's composite affinities operate.

In MS Additional this communal *consolatio* is articulated through the orthodox glosses to *Boece*. While perpetuating Chaucer's sapiential *auctoritas*, Shirley's personalised glosses to *Boece* close the text to the possibility of multiple interpretation. As they frame and police Chaucer's translation both materially and hermeneutically, they contain its thematic plurality. In so doing, the annotative apparatus constructs desirable modes of interpretation, in order to direct the readers' reception of the work. Shirley's textual selections and personalised annotations position, therefore, the manuscript and *Boece*, in particular, as a literary and social manual, or, as seen in Chapter II, a 'breviarie' which provide its readership with the cultural instruments of interpretation, dissemination of and access to the privileged discourse of aristocracy.

The social and moral orthodoxy promoted by Shirley's paratextual apparatus and principles of compilation are not challenged, but emulated and perpetuated. Although dissidence towards the dominant ideology is silenced, orthodox subject positions can be penetrated, co-opted and inhabited by the ambitious 'gentlemen-bureaucrats' at the core of Chaucer's and Shirley's diverse circles. The scribe's 'nota per Shirley' and his 'pointers' *ad lectorem* fabricate Chaucer's literary *paternitas* as

⁴⁹⁷ Williams, 'Boethius Goes to Court: The *Consolatio* as Advice to Princes from Chaucer to Elizabeth I', p. 216.

socially hybrid, or imbricated in a validating aristocratic discourse and, simultaneously, preoccupied with the unstable politics of curial life in the service of the Crown. These rubrics and, by extension, MS Additional 16165 become, therefore, sites of transaction in which Chaucer's hybrid paternity functions as an authoritative and orthodox palimpsest upon which new ethic and social subjectivities can be overwritten and performed.

SECTION II

GLOSSING MARRIAGE: THE FATHER'S QUEER WIFE

1. Natural Order and the Clerical Construction of Subject Positions.

As the 'bureaucratic muse' to an emerging rank of ambitious men seeking social promotion through the Civil Service, Chaucer inhabits an exemplary paternal space which offers access to hegemonic subject positions. The glosses to *The Canterbury Tales* represent a discursive site in which these new subjectivities can find strategies of self-representation. Their specific hermeneutic focus on the policing of marriage reproduces the dominant and orthodox constructions of conjugal relations established by theologians and clerical legislators. Simultaneously, the annotative apparatus frames and attempts to contain alternative (non-clerical) sexual, gender and social forces who find in the sacrament of marriage a validating institutional space in which to perform their newly-formed identity. The Wife of Bath is an emblematic instance of the fourteenth-century 'subjects-in-process' which Glenn Burger identifies as new social forces.⁴⁹⁸ An overtly sexual and professionally successful middle-class woman, the Wife decentres the dominance of clerical and patriarchal paradigms governing social hierarchies, power relation between the sexes, and the epistemological superiority of clerical celibacy over conjugality. These multiple social and sexual formations interrogate, therefore, Chaucer's *paternitas* as a monolithic exemplar of the essentialism of patriarchal authority.

In the *Prologue* to her Tale, the Wife of Bath responds to the clerical anti-matrimonial and misogynistic tradition, encapsulated in her fifth husband's 'book of wykked wyves' (III. 685), with an erudite disquisition about planetary opposition

⁴⁹⁸ Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. 57.

which the accompanying source gloss identifies as a citation from the astronomical treatise *Almansoris Propositiones*.⁴⁹⁹ According to the Wife, the chasm between clerical textuality and femininity is irreconcilable because it is dictated and fixed in cosmology as a necessary and ineluctable condition:

The children of Mercurie and of Venus
Been in hir wirkyng ful contrarius;
Mercurie loveth wysdam and science,
And Venus loveth ryot and dispence.
And, for hire diverse disposicioun,
Ech falleth in otheres exaltacioun. [...]
Therefore no woman of no clerke is preysed. (III. 670-675; 706)

The conflicting orbits of Mercury and Venus determine the essential and unmovable quality of the binary opposition which, in the masculine discourse of astronomy, permanently separates Mars and Venus and, by analogy, clerical culture from female identity. As Chauncey Wood points out, in medieval astronomical science, stars and planets were seen as ‘agents or ministers of providential order’ and, consequently, all created phenomena consisted of ‘series of obediences’ to a natural design.⁵⁰⁰ Pierre Payer also provides a lucid account of the medieval concept of the ‘natural’:

The natural is either what results of necessity from the principles of nature [...], or what nature inclines to but which perfected by the mediation of the will.⁵⁰¹

Unlike the corresponding Latin source annotation appended to MS Ellesmere and its related codices which equates the woman-Venus to the pursuit of aestheticism and bodily pleasures (‘song, lively joys, and whatever is pleasant to the body’), the Wife

⁴⁹⁹ As Silvia explains, Jankyn’s book is part of a widely disseminated tradition of anti-matrimonial writings collected in anthologies circulating both in England and in France. Theophrastus’s *Liber Aureulus Theophrasti de Nuptii*, copied in St. Jerome’s *Against Jovinian*, was one of the best known texts in such collections; for further information, see Silvia, ‘Glosses to the *Canterbury Tales* from St. Jerome’s *Epistola Adversus Jovinianum*’, 30; and Robert A. Pratt, ‘Jankyn’s Book of Wikked Wyves: Medieval Antimatrimonial Propaganda in the Universities’, *Annuaire Medievale* 3 (1962), 5-27.

⁵⁰⁰ Chauncey Wood, *Chaucer and the Country of the Stars: Poetic Uses of Astrological Imagery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 213.

⁵⁰¹ Pierre Payer, *Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 67, cited in Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn’t* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2005), pp. xxii-xxiii.

radicalises the dichotomy Venus-Mercury by positioning femininity in a less domesticated space of sexual profligacy and monetary greed ('ryot and dispenche').⁵⁰²

Not only does the Wife of Bath appropriate the erudite discourse of astronomy, but she redirects it towards a more markedly misogynistic stance whereby the Venus-woman is both intellectually inferior to Mercury-cleric, who signifies 'wysdam and science', and an agent of chaos and destabilisation of the social and sexual position culturally assigned to her. While the gloss defines the Venus-Mercury dualism in the essentialist terms of a dehistoricised natural order articulated in the stars, the Wife identifies this 'diverse disposicioun' underpinning the relation between female and male agency as a culturally-constructed opposition between 'clerk' (III. 689) and 'womman' (III.690):

That any clerk wol speke good if wyves,
But if it be of hooly seintes lyves,
Ne of noon oother womman never the mo (III.689-691)

Clerical misogyny appears, in fact, to be preoccupied with the 'oother womman', that is with an unspecified and, therefore, unstable signification of femininity which, as the *MED* suggests, is semantically related to Eve and the Fall.⁵⁰³ On the contrary, clerical discourse identifies the regulated institutional role of the wife as a desirable female subject position.

Similarly, masculinity is here inflected with a culturally-determined connotation of celibacy and intellectualism that, although ideologically dominant, does not, as we will see below, exhaust the possible configurations of medieval male identity. While appropriating the learned discourse of astronomy, the Wife, therefore, interrogates the natural essentialism of clerical anti-feminist writing and exposes its

⁵⁰² Unless otherwise stated, translations of the glossarial apparatus to *the Canterbury Tales* are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*; Larry D. Benson, 'Explanatory Notes to *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*', pp. 864-872 (p. 871).

⁵⁰³ *MED*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED53363> [accessed 1 September 2010].

cultural specificity. In so doing, she opens it up to the possibility of alternative signification. In other words, within a framework of ‘necessity [derived] from the principles of nature’, as Payer puts it, the gloss polices and restores the orthodoxy of Chaucer’s text. The function of the glossarial apparatus is to preserve and reproduce the exemplarity of the poet’s literary *paternitas* which becomes dislodged as the Wife of Bath co-opts and reconfigures the clerical articulation of the binary opposition between femininity and masculinity.

A comparable act of surveillance is performed by the glossarial apparatus to *The Man of Law’s Tale* in which an extensive source annotation from Ptolemy’s *Almagest* normalises and domesticates the Man of Law’s unorthodox reading of the function of the *Primum Mobile*:

O firste moevyng! Cruel firmament,
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
And hurlest al from est til occident
That naturally wolde holde another way (II. 295-298)

The Man of Law’s lament about Custance’s ill-fated marriage, caused by an unfavourable positioning of the stars at the time of her departure from her paternal home, not only berates cosmic order for its brutality, but, most importantly, poses a fundamental epistemological question about the principles of the celestial spheres and their natural design. As Caie succinctly and lucidly explains:

according to Platonic and Aristotelian teaching, the *Primum Mobile* (‘the firste moevyng’) in its daily motion from east to west is associated with order and rationality, as in the rising and setting of the sun, and was traditionally equated with God’s power and harmony [...] the second movement is that of the planets in their annual motion from west to east and is associated with irrational desire, as the planets struggle against the *Primum Mobile*⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁴ Caie, ‘‘This was a thrifty tale for the nones’: Chaucer’s Man of Law’, p. 54. For a more detailed explanation of the complex medieval discourse of celestial spheres, see J. D. North, ‘The Celestial Sphere—A Modern Reader’s Introduction’, in *Chaucer’s Universe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 22-26.

As I pointed out earlier in this chapter in reference to Boethian cosmology, the First Mover and the divine order it governs found their stability on a reconciliation, or the ‘allayauce perdurable’, of ‘the contrarious qualites of elementz holden among hemself’ (*Boece*, 2.m8.1-12). Blasphemously, the Man of Law deems such harmonisation of difference as incongruous and ultimately unnatural.

By reinstating Ptolemy’s *auctoritas* and orthodoxy in the physical space of the codex, the source gloss, which occurs in representative manuscripts of all groups, controls the Man of Law’s deconstruction of the epistemological tenets of determinism.⁵⁰⁵ As divine order is deterministically translated into unmovable social structures and sexual/gender identities, the Man of Law’s alternative glossing of divine design destabilises, much as the Wife’s hermeneutics does, the fixity of hegemonic ideologies dictating both rank and gender hierarchies. In sum, the annotative framework, enclosing both the Wife’s and the Man of Law’s dissenting narratives, polices Chaucer’s text and his *paternitas* so as to close them to the performance of alternative subjectivities.

2. ‘Femme covert de baron’: Glossing as Cloaking and De-robing.

In his study of matrimonial practices in the Middle Ages, Glenn Burger’s observation about the “‘weird centrality” of bourgeois marriage in late medieval society’ appears to be corroborated by the Wife’s and the Man of Law’s preoccupation with conjugal relations in the two paradigmatic passages that I have just examined.⁵⁰⁶ In these two Tales, narrated by two members of the emerging ‘middle strata’ of fourteenth-century English society, marriage becomes a resonant site which displays the cultural

⁵⁰⁵ For details about the distribution of this source gloss, see Manly and Rickert, ‘Glosses’, pp. 492-493.

⁵⁰⁶ Burger, *Chaucer’s Queer Nation*, p. 44.

dominance of clerical thinking over the Wife of Bath's and the Man of Law's lay identities:

ecclesiastical authority thereby extended its earlier established claim to control all aspects of clerical life and the disposition of church property (by its recent campaigns against simony and clerical marriage) into new and pervasive aspects of lay private and public life⁵⁰⁷

While mapping the theologico-legal debate on marriage and its culmination in the thirteenth-century Gregorian Reform, Burger discusses clerical strategies of surveillance of the laity through the regulation of marital relations. He elaborates on his argument by exposing the specific clerical construction of femininity and masculinity:

these new definitions of marriage also validate the new 'separate spheres' delineation of sex (male/female) and estate (clerical/lay) difference after the Gregorian Reform: that is, a separate celibate male clergy placed over a married laity, but within that lay sphere, a dominant masculinity (husband and father) directing and controlling a carefully circumscribed femininity (wife and mother)⁵⁰⁸

Identity, whether social or sexual, is predicated upon a central differentiation between conjugality and celibacy; lay subjectivity is, therefore, defined exclusively by matrimonial relations according to which female and male sexuality and gender are established as familial hierarchies of dominant husbands and fathers, and subservient wives and mothers. Marriage is, then, a privileged discursive site in which lay subject positions are not only constructed, but also allowed to be lawfully performed. As the gestures of appropriation and dissent enacted by the Wife and the Man of Law demonstrate, once they are exposed as culturally-specific and not permanent or natural, marital relations and the hierarchies on which they are founded can be co-opted as a space of self-representation, rather than subjection, for the laity.

⁵⁰⁷ Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. 62.

⁵⁰⁸ Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. 69.

Rather than an exemplary paradigm of absolute patriarchal authority, Chaucer's literary *paternitas* becomes a landscape of negotiation between hegemonic (aristocratic and clerical) ideologies and the emerging "bourgeois" and feminine subjectivities of the fourteenth century. Such negotiation is performed in the material space of the manuscript copies of *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*. A source gloss, appended to the codices associated with MS Ellesmere and, in an independent form, to MS Egerton 2864, encloses within an orthodox frame the Wife's assertive rejection of the norms about appropriate attire for women enucleated by St Paul in 1 Timothy 2.⁵⁰⁹ According to Theresa Tinkle, this passage addresses a masculine, specifically ecclesiastical, anxiety towards female agency, in sexual, intellectual and economic terms:

First Timothy 2 memorably portrays women as resistant to ecclesiastical and domestic governance. The author urges women not to adorn themselves, assert their voices, teach men, or seduce men. The passage suggestively links women's control of material resources, intellectual leadership, and seductive powers⁵¹⁰

A measure to protect and promote chastity, and to contain female sexuality within the confines of its subjugated role in reproductive marital relations, Paul's advice is first accurately cited and then firmly refuted by the Wife of Bath:

"In habit maad with chastitee and shame
Ye wommen shul apparaille yow", quod he,
"And noght in tressed heer and gay paree,
As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche."
After thy text, ne after thy rubriche,
I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat. (III. 342-347)

⁵⁰⁹ Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', p. 496. This Latin gloss is transcribed on p. 498.

⁵¹⁰ Theresa Tinkle, 'Contested Authority: Jerome and the Wife of Bath on 1 Timothy 2', *Chaucer Review* 44:3 (2010), 268-293 (272); see also note 2, pp. 272-273 for an extensive bibliography on traditional damning critical readings of the Wife's exegesis, inspired by D. W. Robertson in *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 317-36), and recent responses. Other discussions of the Wife of Bath's commentary on Paul and Jerome include Warren S. Smith, 'The Wife of Bath Debates Jerome', *The Chaucer Review* 32:2 (1997), 129-145; and Thomas C. Kennedy, 'The Wife of Bath on St. Jerome', *Mediaevalia* 23 (2002), 75-97.

By citing and glossing the Scripture, the Wife self-assuredly inscribes her argumentation in the clerical tradition of biblical exegesis and, thus, positions herself as a credible commentator and interlocutor in this debate on desirable clothing. As she challenges the patriarchal-patristic asceticism of St Paul with her defiant carnal hermeneutics, she claims mastery over her body.

To the erudite and Latinate register of exposition ('habit', 'chastitee', 'apparaille'), she juxtaposes the irreverent tonality of her response. Through her use of an idiomatic phrase, augmented by a code-switch to a Germanic-derived vocabulary ('I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat'), the Wife of Bath reduces the scriptural argument to an inconsequential foible. Also, her bodily and linguistic self-affirmation dislodges both 'text' and 'rubriche' which, as seen in the Introduction to this chapter, designate metonymically the linear and ratiocinative sequentiality of clerical modes of textual exposition. By voicing the Wife's interpretative dissent, the text displaces the normative function of glosses as technologies of surveillance of orthodoxy. By extension, it also destabilises the construction of Chaucer's paternity as a principle of patriarchal control and suppression of multiple hermeneutic appropriations.

Unlike the group of codices affiliated to MS Egerton 2864, which characteristically gloss the passage with a citation from the Bible, the Ellesmere manuscript creates a double clerical-patriarchal frame around the Wife's narrative of exegetical resistance.⁵¹¹ Although MS Ellesmere ascribes the authorship of his source to Paul ('Hec Paulus'), 1 Timothy 2 is quoted indirectly through Jerome's *Against Jovinian*. To the biblical *auctoritas*, MS Ellesmere, therefore, adds a second hermeneutic layer derived from the patristic tradition of commentary. This twofold

⁵¹¹ Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', p. 525. Manly and Rickert specify that the manuscripts associated with MS Egerton 2864 identify 1 Peter 3, 2-3 as their source, see p. 498.

technology of policing encases the Wife's counterargument within two central tenets of clerical discourse on gender and sexuality, as it conflates the scriptural repression of femininity with the patristic defence of the superiority of clerical celibacy.

One apparent difference between the two glosses, which would corroborate the independence of the textual transmission of the Ellesmere manuscript and MS Egerton, is Jerome's substitution of the word '*castitas*' for '*sobrietas*' when dispensing his sartorial advice. This textual variant, adopted by MS Ellesmere, suggests that Jerome's and, by analogy, the glossator's moral surveillance of female agency is overtly sexual. As Tinkle explains:

Jerome wrote a commentary on the entire Bible, in the course of which he touches very briefly on 1 Timothy 2 to express his dissatisfaction with the word *sobrietas* ("if she continue in faith, and love, and sanctification, with *sobriety*"). He atomizes the text, focusing on the single word in the passage that has potential for ascetic interpretation. He then uses translation to create an opening for that interpretation, substituting the Greek for the Latin text: women are now saved by chastity (*castitas*) [...] by atomizing the text, he erases women's leadership. He reduces women's role in religion to sexual restraint. His brief commentary forcefully revises the Pauline epistle, significantly narrowing the sense of the passage.⁵¹²

Jerome's openly repressive act epitomises MS Ellesmere's extensive glossing of *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* with masculine and forcefully anti-feminist and anti-matrimonial authorities which, as the oppressive attire imposed on women, cloak the Wife's sexual and intellectual agency with the hermeneutic and codicological frame of clerical orthodoxy.

What the Wife of Bath resists is a domestication of the woman which is, as Dinshaw argues, both sexual and textual:

The Hieronymian image of the classical text as alien women to be passed between men, stripped, and reclothed for the bridal—the

⁵¹² Tinkle, 'Contested Authority: Jerome and the Wife of Bath on 1 Timothy 2', 274.

representation of allegorical reading as a trade, reclothing, marriage, and domestication of a woman⁵¹³

She points at the epistemological contiguity between clerical textuality, especially the tradition of biblical glossing, and the acts of robing and de-robing the female body. As a palimpsested textual space, a woman is subjected to re-inscription by male agents' intent on normalising her alterity. The glossing and cloaking of female corporality occupies a space of transaction and exchange between men which culminates in a woman's transition between virginity and conjugal sexuality. The cultural centrality of his passage from paternal to marital protection is signified by its social rituality, that is by the public affirmation of familial masculine dominance over the woman. The numerous gestures of robing and de-robing to which Griselda is subjected punctuate *The Clerk's Tale* and illustrate Walter's ruthless exercise of such power.

Chaucer's reinvention of the Griselda narrative tradition positions female subjectivity under the policing of a double clerical authority. Not only is the pilgrim-narrator the 'Clerk of Oxenford', but Francesco Petrarca, the author of the Latin source of the story, is defined as a 'clerk'.⁵¹⁴ Chaucer's paternal voice is here firmly circumscribed within the patriarchal paradigm of clerisy. A resonant example of the hegemony and surveillance of the clerisy over the feminine is offered by the passage describing Walter's denudation and re-clothing of Griselda. According to Sarah

⁵¹³ Dinshaw, 'Griselda Translated', in *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, pp. 132-155 (p. 133).

⁵¹⁴ Larry D. Benson, *The Clerk's Prologue*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 137 (IV.1; 32). All further references are to this edition and will be given in parentheses in the text. Petrarca's Latin version of the Griselda story, entitled *De obedientia ac fide uxoria mythologia*, was written in 1373 and revised in 1374. It is included, in the form of a letter, in his *Epistolae Seniles*. For an account of critical speculations about the manuscript copies of Petrarca's work consulted by Chaucer, see Warren S. Ginsberg, 'Explanatory Notes to *The Clerk's Prologue and Tale*', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 879-884 (p. 880).

Stanbury, this act signifies a ‘transformation and sacramental ritual’, as it marks her transition into marriage⁵¹⁵:

And for no thing of hir olde geere
She sholde brynge into his hous, he had
That wommen sholde dispoillen hire right there;
Of which these ladyes were nat glad
To handle hir clothes, whereinne she was clad.
But natheless, this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe [...]
Of hire array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hir knew for hire fairnesse
Whan she translated was in swich richesse. (IV.372-378; 383-384)

As Christiane Klapisch-Zuber demonstrates, Griselda’s “translation” into her new marital habit is founded upon an established practice whereby a husband provides new clothes for his bride in order to offer a public display of his newly-acquired authority over her.⁵¹⁶ In his case study of matrimonial relations in late medieval York, Frederik Pedersen reports that, during the discussion of a court case, a witness described marriage ‘as a process consisting of a series of steps, from the initial *traductio* of a woman into the man’s household, through the solemnization of the marriage at the church in front of witnesses’.⁵¹⁷ Like the Hieronymian figure of a classic text as woman recalled by Dinshaw, Griselda is subjugated to male authority as the object of a power transaction between father and husband, or between the superior agents engaged in the policing and performance of the social ritual of marriage.

⁵¹⁵ For a more detailed discussion of the sacramental significance of the ritual of de-robing and re-clothing, see Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 131–34. For a close examination of Griselda’s clothes, see Laura F. Hodges, ‘Reading Griselda’s Smocks in the *Clerk’s Tale*’, *The Chaucer Review* 44:1 (2009), 84-109 (91-100).

⁵¹⁶ Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, ‘The Griselda Complex: Dowry and Marriage Gifts in the Quattrocento’, in *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 213–246 (pp. 219–30).

⁵¹⁷ Frederick Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), p. 172, cited in Burger, *Chaucer’s Queer Nation*, p. 65.

The Latin source gloss appended to this passage in a substantial number of manuscript copies of the Tale, including MSS Ellesmere and Hengwrt, writes Griselda in an inescapable frame of translation:

De hinc ne quid reliquiarum fortune veteris nouam inferat in domum nudari eam iusserit⁵¹⁸

By signposting Petrarca's Latin version of the narrative which, in turn, is an adaptation of the final tale of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the gloss draws the reader's attention to Chaucer's own translation. Griselda is, then, perpetually translated, since she is at once inscribed in the cultural discourse of medieval matrimonial transactions and refashioned by the clerical authors who rework her story. The translative and sartorial practices pertaining to medieval matrimonial rituals, which *The Clerk's Tale* describes, are contextualised by the normative rhetoric ('iusserit') of the corresponding source gloss. Its judicial tone resonates with the legal connotations of the de-cloaking and re-cloaking of the female body as a medieval social practice pertaining to the sacrament of marriage. As Lochrie explains:

English common law borrowed a curious term for married women from French legal terminology. While the widow and the singlewoman were designated by the French term *femme sole* ('independent women'), married women were commonly referred to in English law as *femmes covertes*, which literally means 'hidden/secret women', but was loosely translated to mean 'married women'. The term is actually a shortened form of the longer legal description of the wife as *covert de baron*, usually translated to mean 'under the protection of a husband'.⁵¹⁹

Although the acts of removing the sartorial signifiers of a woman's virginity and endowing her with the coverture of marriage were intended to offer her legal and financial protection within the marital household, they also despoiled her of agency. In the specific case of Griselda, once 'de-subjectivated', she becomes, in Lochrie's

⁵¹⁸ 'Then, that she not bring any remnant of her old fortune into her new home, he ordered her stripped'. A transcription of this source gloss is offered in Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', p. 506.

⁵¹⁹ Karma Lochrie, 'Covert Women and their Mysteries', in *Covert Operations: Medieval Uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 135-176 (pp. 139-140).

words, a textual and sexual 'site of patriarchal self-definition and power'.⁵²⁰ In other words, Chaucer's text positions her as a desirable *exemplum* of subjugated femininity. In fact, in the first 'de-robing scene' of *The Clerk's Tale*, the source gloss confirms not only the accuracy of Chaucer's translation, but also the orthodoxy of his literary paternity in reproducing dominant modes of policing and repression of female desire within the clerical configuration of marriage.

The Tale's 'Envoy', however, affords an alternative construction of Chaucer's authorial *paternitas*. Instead of participating in the processes of paternal-marital translation of Griselda's female agency, Chaucer repositions his narrative and subverts the obsequious emulation of his Latin source, ostensibly and consistently signposted by the glossarial apparatus. Aptly entitled 'Lenvoy de Chaucer', the final section of *The Clerk's Tale* articulates a rewriting of the Griselda story which Dinshaw tersely deems as 'a revision of the model of patriarchal hermeneutics more radical than the one he [Chaucer] has developed through the Wife of Bath'.⁵²¹ The heading separates the Father's authorial voice from the clerical discourse that underpins the main section of the narrative⁵²²:

Grisilde is deed, and eek hire pacience,
 And bothe atones buryed in Ytaille [...]
 O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
 Lat noon humylitee youre tonge naille,
 Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
 To write of yow a storie swich mervaille [...]
 Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,
 But evere answereth at the countretaille.
 Beth nat bidaffed of youre innocence,
 But sharply taak on yow the governaille.
 Empreth wel this lessoun in your mynde,

⁵²⁰ Lochrie, 'Covert Women and their Mysteries', pp. 138; 148.

⁵²¹ Dinshaw, 'Griselda Translated', p. 137.

⁵²² Although the textual notes to *The Clerk's Tale* in *The Riverside Chaucer* do not provide any details of the distribution of the Envoy's heading in the manuscript tradition of the Tale, Farrell states that '[m]ost of the best manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* attribute the 'Envoy' at the end of the *Clerk's Tale* to Chaucer', see Thomas J. Farrell, 'The 'Envoy de Chaucer' and the *Clerk's Tale*', *The Chaucer Review* 24:4 (1990), 329-336.

For commune profit sith it may availle. (IV. 1176-1177; 1183-1186; 1189-1194)

As the speaker incites the addressees of ‘the Envoy’, namely the Wife of Bath and ‘al hire secte’ (IV.1171), to resist the oppression advocated by clerical anti-feminist culture, the principal semantic field appears to align acts of female counterhegemony with the acquisition of agency through voice (‘tonge’, ‘no silence’, ‘answereth’) and the social visibility it accords.

The ‘Envoy’ constructs, therefore, a feminised hermeneutic space that escapes the policing and normative gaze of the glossarial apparatus. While source annotations legitimise Chaucer’s text by situating his work in a patriarchal genealogy of prestigious clerical writing originating with Petrarca and Boccaccio, the unorthodox and feminine space of the ‘Envoy’ remains unglossed and visibly disregarded across the entire manuscript tradition of the Tale. The end of Chaucer’s text is a space of subversion of Petrarca’s narrative and the orthodoxy of the homosocial clerical culture it articulates. As the last glossed passage (IV.1142-1148) in the Tale suggests, *De obedientia ac fide uxoria mythologia* constructs, through its ‘heigh stile’ and its coterie readership, an exclusive textual landscape:

Hanc Historiam stilo nunc alto retexere visum fuit non tamen ideo vt matronas nostri temporis ad imitandam huius vxoris paciencia que mihi inimitabilis videtur quam vt legentes ad imitandam saltem femine constanciam excitarent vt quod hec viro suo prestitit hoc prestare deo nostro audeat quilibet⁵²³

Rhetorically magniloquent (‘stilo alto’) and theologically oriented (‘hoc prestare deo nostro audeat quilibet’), Petrarca’s re-weaving of Boccaccio’s tale effaces femininity (‘matronas’) from the text and engages with an intellectual elite of ‘legentes’. As

⁵²³ Manly and Rickert, ‘Glosses’, pp. 507-508. ‘This story seemed good to weave anew in a high style not so much that the matrons of our time might be moved to imitate the patience of this wife, which seems to me inimitable, but that the readers might be stirred at least to imitate this woman’s constancy, that what she did for her husband they might dare to do for God’; see Larry D. Benson, ‘Explanatory Notes to *The Clerk’s Prologue Tale*’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 880-884 (p. 883).

Dinshaw maintains, by addressing this ‘brotherhood of literate men’, the Italian poet identifies his text as a discursive location in which clerical masculinity can be promoted and performed.⁵²⁴

The ‘Envoy’’s resistance to this dominant paradigm of homosociality and clerical culture fabricates unchartered subjectivities that the source glosses added to *The Clerk’s Tale* cannot contain and cloak with an orthodox framework. These dissident identities, in fact, appear to transcend and elude the patriarchal hermeneutics of Petrarca’s work that the glosses inscribe on the page of the codex. This progressive enfranchisement from its Latin source manifests itself not only as the advocacy of female agency in the context of marital relations, but also as the ‘Envoy’’s speaker’s rejection of Petrarca’s ‘stilo alto’. The Italian poet’s rhetorical virtuosity is replaced, instead, with a proto-capitalist, mercantile rhetoric which is akin to the Wife of Bath’s use of idiomatic language in her refutation of St Paul’s oppressive sartorial normativity. The speaker’s positioning of his narrative in an economic discourse (‘countretaille’, ‘governaille’, ‘commune profit’), together with his promotion of female self-determination, configure the ‘Envoy’ as a site of subversion towards the dominance of clerical masculinity and a space of self-affirmation for new social and sexual identities. This group, which Burger defines as ‘a sexually active, economically vigorous, socially mobile middle estate’, encompasses the entrepreneurial Wife of Bath and an early incarnation of the ‘bureaucrat-gentlemen’ who, like Thomas Chaucer, pursue social promotion at the time of John Shirley, as I have discussed earlier in this Chapter.⁵²⁵

As the unglossed or unrobed ‘Envoy’ to *The Clerk’s Tale* demonstrates, Chaucer’s *paternitas* accommodates voices of resistance to cultural coverture and

⁵²⁴ Dinshaw, ‘Griselda Translated’, p. 150.

⁵²⁵ Burger, *Chaucer’s Queer Nation*, p. 43. For a discussion of lay bureaucrats in relation to gentility, see also pp. 53-60.

offers, especially through his marital narratives, a fluid discursive location which they can claim and appropriate.⁵²⁶ Once displaced as constructed rather than natural and necessary, the binary oppositions which underpin the clerical fabrication of social structures and gender hierarchies (celibacy/marriage; laity/clerisy; dominant masculinity/subjected femininity) dissolve into uncontrollable queer subjectivities. In David Halperin's words, 'Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence'.⁵²⁷ The hybrid textuality of Chaucer's manuscripts and, by extension, of his literary paternity reconciles glossarial acts of surveillance and reproduction of an essentialist moral and social orthodoxy with the queering of subjectivity. These queer and unorthodox 'subjects-in-process' pursue access to hegemonic cultural practices like marriage in order to position themselves in a legitimising framework which would allow them to perform their fluid identities.⁵²⁸

3. The Wife of Bath's 'Female Masculinity'.

In their discussion of Chaucer's representation of anomalous sexuality, critics such as Burger and Lochrie have echoed Judith Halberstam's analysis of nineteenth- and twentieth-century 'female masculinity'.⁵²⁹ As a mode of dissent towards the dominance of clerical ideology, the Wife of Bath's subversive sexual subjectivity, according to Burger, 'interrupts the kind of straight journey between male and female, masculine and feminine that would allow us comfortably to 'end' in a dominant and

⁵²⁶ For a discussion of 'the importance [of marriage] in asserting new forms of lay identity', see Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. 72.

⁵²⁷ David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (London: Routledge, 1990), cited in Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker, 'Gay, Lesbian and Queer Theories', in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 5th edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005 [1985]), pp. 243-266 (p. 255).

⁵²⁸ Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. 57.

⁵²⁹ Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); see also Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, pp. 89-102; and Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, pp. 79-100.

heteronormative masculinity and its productive circulations of male power'.⁵³⁰

Although Lochrie argues that heteronormativity is irrelevant to the multifarious manifestations of medieval sexuality, she largely concurs with Burger's assessment and states that '[h]er [the Wife of Bath's] sexuality is construed through her assertion of the independence of her pleasure and sheer clitoral capacities. Both constitute her performance of female masculinity and her resistance to conjugal sexuality'.⁵³¹ Her analysis, therefore, points clearly at the relation between 'female masculinity' and authority, since the Wife's sexual self-affirmation implies a threat to clerical intellectual culture, through the appropriation of the male discourse of textual exegesis, to marital dominance, through her advocacy of female sexual agency, and, finally, to economic structures, through her successful entrepreneurial career in the wool trade. As the Father of English poetry creates a textual space of resistance for the 'female masculinity' of the Wife, the paternal and patriarchal paradigm which underpins his literary authority is interrogated and displaced.

Such multidiscursivity is illustrated in a central passage of *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* in which the Wife reverses the "natural" pattern of wifely submission by glossing, that is co-opting and displacing, the theological and judicial principle of the conjugal debt propounded by St Paul and reproduced in medieval canon law.

Elizabeth M. Makowski summarises the canonists' appropriation of Pauline thinking in the following terms:

Adopting a debt-model of conjugal relations, the canonists maintained that each partner owed marital coitus to the other. The lawyers emphasized the mutually binding character of this obligation, and consistently defended the right of spouses to exact their marital due, insisting that this duty could be abrogated only by mutual consent.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, p. 89.

⁵³¹ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p. 91.

⁵³² Elizabeth M. Makowski, 'The Conjugal Debt and Medieval Canon Law', *Journal of Medieval History* 3:2 (1977), 99-114 (99).

According to Makowski's account, the epistemological dialectic between economic transaction ('debt') and political-legal authority informs medieval marital relations. Notwithstanding the traditional effacement of the female voice in marriage, the Wife of Bath claims forcefully her legally-sanctioned right to sexual satisfaction and socio-economic agency:

Myn housbonde shal it have bothe eve and morwe,
Whan that hym list come forth and paye his dette.
An housbonde I wol have—I wol nat lette—
Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
And have his tribulacion withal
Upon his flessh, whil that I am his wyf.
I have the power duryng al my lyf
Upon his propre body, and noight he.
Right thus the Apostel tolde it unto me,
And bad oure housbondes for to love us weel.
Al this sentence me liketh every deel. (III.152-162)

The Wife's aggressive glossing of Pauline doctrine overturns the violent policing that clerical exegesis imposes on femininity, as, for instance, in the case of the manipulation of a woman's corporality through practices of denudation and sartorial containment. In appropriating patriarchal hermeneutics, she inhabits an intellectual and political space that, no longer the exclusive province of men, she is able to reconfigure as a hybrid site of 'female masculinity'. Consequently, Paul's teaching on mutual sexual gratification is co-opted in order to serve as a strategy of female self-representation as a powerful subject rather than as a perpetually robed and de-robed appurtenance of male autocracy.

Her act of defiance and self-affirmation is inflected with an overt concern for power relations and positions. The passage is, in fact, saturated with the vocabulary of sexual, social and economic dominance ('dettour'; 'thral'; 'dette') augmented by a volitive tonality ('I wol have—I wol nat lette'; 'I have the power'). The Wife, therefore, positions herself as a dominatrix within what Lochrie defines as 'a game of

power, of dominance and submission, of sadomasochistic play'.⁵³³ Such play is not, however, solely sexual, since the power she pursues will later translate in Jankyn's renunciation of a husband's prerogative to have exclusive control over the household properties and finances. By relinquishing his rights over his wife's assets to which the practice of *corvert de baron* entitles him, he endows her with the multidiscursive 'governance' (III.814), 'maistrie' and 'soveraynetee' (III.818) that she demanded through sexual gratification and that the 'Envoy' to *The Clerk's Tale* prompted her and 'hire secte' to claim.

Unlike the glossarial apparatus to *The Clerk's Tale*, whose principal function is to validate Chaucer's translation of the Griselda story by framing it into a prestigious genealogy of past *auctoritates*, the annotative apparatus to *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* polices and attempts to reinstate the exegetical orthodoxy manipulated by the Wife. As Caie observes, 'by means of them [annotations] the glossator could ensure that the reader was not deceived by the Wife's false logic and her persuasive misinterpretations of Scriptures and Jerome'.⁵³⁴ In other words, the programme of rubrication of the manuscript copies of *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* resonates with the same concern for the moral excellence and exemplarity which underpins the construction of Chaucer's *paternitas* in the glosses to *Boece*. In particular, the gloss framing the Wife's co-option of the principle of the conjugal debt is shared only by the manuscripts of the MS Ellesmere group and not by those affiliated to MS Egerton which, instead, quote directly from the New Testament.⁵³⁵

As previously noted in the context of the glossarial policing of Pauline sartorial advice for women, MS Ellesmere displays a more apparent preoccupation

⁵³³ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p. 94.

⁵³⁴ Caie, 'The Significance of the Early Manuscript Glosses (with Special Reference to the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*)', 351.

⁵³⁵ Manly and Rickert, 'Glosses', p. 496; and Benson, 'Explanatory Notes to *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*', pp. 866-867.

with the surveillance of sexuality as it is articulated in the patristic-clerical anti-matrimonial tradition. Its specific hermeneutic focus appears to be on displaced masculinity and on the danger of hybrid sexual/gender formations, like ‘female masculinity’, exposing the arbitrariness of ‘natural’ binary divides which inform medieval marital law:

Qui vxorem habet et debitor dicitur et esse in prepucio et seruus vxoris
et quod malorum seruorum est alligatus⁵³⁶

Not simply a source gloss, this annotation from Jerome provides a stark cautionary citation aimed at preserving the dominance of masculinity through a hermeneutics that is distinctively clerical in its anti-feminist and anti-marital orientation. It articulates a central anxiety engendered by marriage in general, but also, specifically, by forms of queer sexuality apparent in the Wife’s ‘female masculinity’.

Notwithstanding the urgency of the fear of emasculation and sexual-social subjugation, it is the anxiety about the dissolution of boundaries and sexual/gender differentiation that is voiced in the gloss.

The undesirability of the ‘in prepucio’ status stems from the cultural significance of foreskin as a marker of masculinity. In her discussion of the circulation of Christ’s foreskin as a relic in the Middle Ages, Dinshaw defines it and, by extension, its removal as ‘an index virility’.⁵³⁷ Theologically, as Laura Kendrick explains, medieval iconography depicts Christ’s circumcision as an anticipation of his suffering on the Cross; being uncircumcised, therefore, signifies an unchristian aversion to partake in God’s redemptive plan accomplished through the crucifixion of

⁵³⁶ Manly and Ricklert, ‘Glosses’, pp. 497-498. ‘He who has a wife is regarded as debtor, and is said to be uncircumcised, to be the servant to his wife, and like bad servants to be bound’; see Benson, ‘Explanatory Notes to *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*’, pp. 866-867.

⁵³⁷ Dinshaw, ‘Eunuch Hermeneutics’, in *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics*, pp. 156-184 (p. 165).

his Son.⁵³⁸ The uncircumcised body is, however, primarily a queer and undefined entity. The presence of the foreskin marks the impossibility to discriminate between masculinity and femininity as the physiological boundaries between the two sexes become indistinct. According to Lochrie's account of medieval medical knowledge, the uncircumcised penis is morphologically analogous to the clitoris; this hybridity invalidates essentialist models of sexuality and allows the performance and self-affirmation of the anomalous 'female masculinity' of the Wife.⁵³⁹

The Wife's appropriation of the male discourse of exegesis, together with her destabilisation of sexual and socio-economical subject positions perceived as necessary and essential, challenges the clerical construction of desirable models of superior celibacy and inferior matrimonial sexuality, or male dominance and female subservience within marital relations. For the emerging lay subjectivities, depicted in *The Canterbury Tales* by pilgrims like the Man of Law and the Wife of Bath, marriage becomes a discursive space that provides them with a social representation and a culturally-sanctioned identity. Simultaneously, however, it offers a landscape that, being fabricated, seems to invite being palimpsested and re-written to accommodate the sexual desires and socio-economic ambitions of the burgeoning middle strata of fourteenth-century English society. While positioning the "bourgeois" characters and readers of *The Canterbury Tales* in the orthodox and hegemonic discourse of clerical culture, Chaucer's literary *paternitas* accords them an authoritative and canonical voice with which they can formulate and enact their anomalous subjectivities.

⁵³⁸ Laura Kendrick, *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the Canterbury Tales* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 5-19 (pp. 11-15).

⁵³⁹ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p. 95. For more information on anomalous female sexualities described in medieval medical texts, see also pp. 88-89.

CONCLUSION

THE POLYVOCALITY OF CHAUCERIAN ANNOTATIVE TEXTUALITY.

According to William Watts, the principal function of the annotative apparatuses of Chaucer's works is to bring 'very different voices into contact with one another'.⁵⁴⁰

The composite textuality of a glossed manuscript configures, therefore, the codex as a dialectical and polyvocal site. Because of the multiplicity of the voices it accommodates, the manuscript manifests materially, through its layout and decorative programme, the negotiations and power relation between its textual and paratextual components. As Derrida argues, these transactions are characterised by violent acts of appropriation, as 'the dangerous supplement' usurps the authority and primacy normally accorded to the text it glosses.⁵⁴¹

A resonant example of appropriation is offered by John Shirley's brief personalised rubrics which punctuate the text of *Boece* in his first holograph manuscript, MS Additional 16165. His 'nota per Shirley' signpost specific passages of Chaucer's translation of Boethius in order to construct and make visible the poet's exemplary literary *paternitas*. As Shirley positions Chaucer as a 'bureaucratic muse', he co-opts the orthodoxy of Boethian philosophy, and the conservative social subject positions it advocates, so as to disseminate these dominant values among a socially-composite readership in a culturally-constructed space of authority. As the Harley-related iconography of Chaucer demonstrates, the poet became a paternal figure for the fifteenth-century men of letters, scribes, compilers, and especially poets, who, as their patriarch had done, searched for social advancement through service of the Crown. Chaucer's paternity is, thus, positioned as a trans-social discourse in which

⁵⁴⁰ Watts, 'Glossing as a Mode of Literary Production: Post-Modernism in the Middle Ages', 65.

⁵⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, '...That Dangerous Supplement', in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 141-164.

new “bourgeois” subjectivities can find the intellectual and social strategies of inclusion into gentry circles, and, simultaneously, an authoritative space where to enact and represent their emerging identities.

Similarly, the *de-luxe* MS Ellesmere reproduces the cultural and literary practices of hegemonic social ranks, represented by its likely commissioners or early-fourteenth-century owners, such as the gentry/aristocratic De Vere or Paston families.⁵⁴² For instance, by policing the representation of sexuality and erudite *auctoritas* in *The Canterbury Tales*, the glossarial apparatus of MS Ellesmere articulates the essentialism which underpins social conservatism and sexual/gender identities. When Robert Drury, a knighted barrister, and a later incarnation of Shirley’s “bourgeois” audience in pursuit of gentrification, acquired the manuscript, he found a material and cultural signifier of his own inclusion in prestigious social and intellectual circles, and a prior realisation of his self-realisation.⁵⁴³

Chaucer’s *paternitas* and the physical space of his codices accommodate and facilitate, therefore, this hermeneutics, at times cacophonous and polyvocal, as disparate voices are interwoven in the fabric of the manuscript page. The Wife’s glosses, for example, disperse the linearity and rationality of scholastic textuality and replace it with a radial dissemination of alternative interpretative readings of a text. The framed space of the glossed manuscript, instead of policing a unified and unequivocal patriarchal hermeneutics, becomes a multi-layered landscape in which Chaucer’s *paternitas* is, as a palimpsest, open to plural re-writings. Rather than a monolithic and autocratic authority, the poet’s authorship is, in Greetham’s words, a ‘dispersed field’. In his reflection on the (pluri)-annotated text, he states that ‘if this

⁵⁴² For a fuller discussion of the early ownership of MS Ellesmere and the hypothesis that it might have been in the possession of the De Vere family, see Ralph Hanna III and A. S. G. Edwards, ‘Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer’, in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, pp. 11-33.

⁵⁴³ Hanna and Edwards, ‘Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer’, pp. 15-16.

Supplément and its layering and enfolding [...] of texts have any overriding function, it is precisely that: to demonstrate graphically the ‘dispersed field’ rather than the ‘false unitary identity’.⁵⁴⁴

Chaucer’s *paternitas* is, in sum, displaced and re-articulated by a plurality of agents according to different epistemological paradigms. Instead of the logical and linear arrangement of texts, interpretations, subjectivities governed by a strict hierarchy over which presides a God-like author with absolute power over the production of meaning, the poet’s paternal authority is rewritten as a ‘rhizome’. As Greetham explains, Deleuze and Guattari juxtapose the permeability and fluidity of the rhizomatic dispersal of hierarchical structures to ‘the patriarchal tree-like constructs’ that dominate our culture.⁵⁴⁵

A dialectical discursive site, the paternity of the poet provides an open and porous, yet authoritative, space in which a polyphony of subjectivities can be performed. The history of the reception of Chaucer’s *paternitas* and his canon is marked by perpetual acts of appropriation and co-option of the palimpsested authority of the Father. Whether clerical and sober, or courtly and lyrical, *fons et origo* of English vernacularity or validated by ‘master’ cultures, patriarchal or feminised, Chaucer’s paternity is continually inhabited and re-inhabited, dispersed and re-written by multiple hermeneutic agents and their multifarious ideological agendas.

⁵⁴⁴ Greetham, ‘The Deconstruction of the Text: [Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction: *Supplément*’, p. 358.

⁵⁴⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 1987), p. 15, cited in Greetham, ‘The Deconstruction of the Text: [Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction: *Supplément*’, p. 356.

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