The Courtly Rhetoric of Chaucer's Advisory Poetry

While it is a safe assumption that we do not have all of Chaucer's lyrics those hymns for Cupid's holidays 'That highten balades, roundels vire-layes', even the suggestion from Chaucer's 'Retraction' that these included 'many a song and many leacherous lay' has not aroused deep or abiding interest in the poems as poems. [1] Instead of looking closely at the 22 extant lyrics, Arthur K. Moore finds an additional 10 lyrics 'imbedded' in other narrative poems. [2] Rossell Hope Robbins suggests that Chaucer's lost poems will be found written in French. [3] Another, and apparently most often taken route, is to follow E. Talbot Donaldson and dismiss this whole category of 'miscellaneous verse' as part of the ephemeral and occasional verse of a court poem:

> We have enough of his short verse to be able to admire his skill in handling a number of complex verse forms and to judge that he was original in his short flights of fancy as he was in his long narrative - and enough also to make us glad that he did not dissipate too large a portion of his energy in such compositions. [4]

This essay will use another approach to Chaucer's short lyrics. Instead of looking elsewhere, examining metrics, or elegantly dismissing the whole genre, I will pay special attention to the poetic statements that are made, to the special function of what I would call Chaucer's 'advisory poetry', those courtly poems (and most especially balades) addressed to a particular person or audience dealing with specific social, political and cultural issues. To highlight the special contents of this kind of courtly poetry, I will use the earliest piece of literary criticism of Chaucer's lyrics, a courtly and cleverly rhetorical response to Chaucer by Deschamps. [5]

In a clever, complimentary ballade written about 1386, Eustache Deschamps praises the poetry of his English contemporary, Geoffrey Chaucer, by comparing him to such illustrious classical exemplars as Socrates, Seneca, Ovid and possibly Aulus Gellius. Extant in a unique and carelessly executed manuscript, [6] the poem is fascinating as the earliest literary response to Chaucer's work. I will use this poem as a key to the courtly conventions that also operate in Chaucer's poetry. This will require a closer look at both the poet and the poem.

Though not of noble stock, Deschamps was probably the nephew and certainly the literary descendant of Guillaume Machaut. Like Machaut he was a court poet and in that role he has been an easy target for modern critics who find him journalistic and prolix, or, in the words of Brian Woledge, 'prolific and uneven' [7] - and the very bulk of his achievement, 11 volumes in

the SATF (1032 ballades, 142 chansons royales, 170 rondeaux, 84 virelais, 14 lais, 10 strophic pieces, 34 rhymed complaints, 3 works in prose and 12 latin pieces - to be exact) probably bears this out. Yet even his most severe detractors admit to his brilliant technical skills and accomplished handling of fixed forms, 'infallible technical merit, and not much else', sneers Louis Cazamian.[8] This capacity together with his habit of drawing on charmingly outrageous detail (we know, or at least _think_ we do, from Ballade 867 that he was bald) and contemporary references (his dislike of German Inns and lampoons of diplomatic pomposity) have given him a kind of poetic half-life.

Unfortunately few of these piquant details emerge in Deschamps' poem to Chaucer which Lequois calls 'une ballade pompeuse' and which T. Atkinson Jenkins admits is written in a 'high tension style, a style forced and _tourmenté_ to a degree unusual even for Deschamps.[9] Indeed, on first reading it is easy to dismiss the poem as overblown and empty - 'courtly' in the worst sense of the word. Chaucer, we are told, is a Socrates full of philosophy, a Seneca in morals (_meurs_), 'Anglux' (because of the popularity of Aegidius Romanus, as a courtly _auctor_, I take this as a reference to Giles of Rome) in practice (_en pratique_), and a great Ovid in his poetry / Brief in speech, wise in rhetoric (i.e. versifying). Chaucer is a lofty eagle who by his theory has illuminated the reign of Aeneas, the isle of giants, 'Brutland', and who has scattered flowers and planted the rose (i.e. _Roman de la Rose_) among those who are ignorant of the language of Pandarus (probably French).[10] The refrain insists he is a 'Grand translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer'.

The second stanza continues to play with the possible names of England - _Albie_, _terre Angelique_, _Angleterre_ (vv.11-14) - Deschamps playing at the game he calls _l'ethimologique_ (v.15), or, if you will, the courtly game of elegant poetic diction and facile punning, for the last name _En bon anglès_ (v.16) is at least as old as Pope Gregory. Chaucer is the worldly (_mondains_) god of Love in this Kingdom for he has translated _le livre_ (presumably _Roman de la Rose_), and by so doing has created a garden (_vergier_) for which he has requested 'plants' (flowers and plaints) from those who make poems, who wish to be _auctores_ (v.18) that they may through that edifice (creation) live for a long time (v.19). Grand translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer.

This elaborate, indeed, at times almost excessively clever shower of compliments is balanced by an equally elaborate humility topos in the third stanza. Deschamps asks for the authentic beverage (_un buvraige autentique_) from the fountain of Elias (a branch of the 'fount of Helicon' says Jenkins).[11] Until he receives it, his feverish thirst (_soif ethique_) will not be slaked, and he will remain a paralytic in Gaul, in modern terms a 'poet manque' or poetaster. I am Eustace (that popular saint converted by the stag, noted for his generosity)[12] from whom you will get some plants. Only give them the benefit of your

gracious acceptance, these mere schoolboy efforts (les euvres d'escolier) which are sent to you by (Sir Lewis) Clifford.

The envoy is a request for an official response from a high poet (Poete hault) who is the glory of squires (a rank both Chaucer and Deschamps shared) from one who is but a weed, a nettle in Chaucer's garden of verse, among those noble plants and sweet melodies (v.34). But in order that I may know, return to me your judgement, 'Granť translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier'.

My paraphrase of Deschamps outlines the elaborate courtly game that Deschamps is playing, a game that like the poet it praises will also show Deschamps to be saiges en rethorique.

According to the pseudo-Ciceronian Rhetorica ad Herennium, that uniquely commonplace handbook, 'There are three kinds of causes which the speaker must treat: Epideictic, Deliberative, and Judicial'. Each kind of discourse has its own subject matter, setting, and special strategies or topics.[13] In terms of this convention and commonplace scheme, Deschamps' poem is clearly ceremonial and shows an especially skilful handling of the special topics of epideictic discourse, praise and blame. The comparison of Chaucer with four classical exemplars and the continued hyperbolic compliments (Chaucer is the earthly god of love in Albion, he stands near the fountain of Helicon) is balanced with blame, the unworthiness of the addressee, those equally elaborate humility topoi of stanza three and the envoy which features Deschamps as a paralytic, as a mere student compared with a master like Chaucer, as a producer of mere weeds for the garden of verse. The very extravagance of this contrast, this exaggerated ethical appeal, is itself a mark of the culture that produced it, a setting in which verbal polish and facility were not only expected but rewarded, that is the world of the court. Richard Firth Green has recently re-examined traditional, and in his view, unwarranted assumptions about courtly society:

> The popular myth that English society in the late middle ages consisted of an illiterate mass governed by an able bourgeois administration in the name of an ignorant and boorish aristocracy has taken a long time to die, and its persistence probably explains why we have for so long been willing to accept the notion that Chaucer's learning was acquired at a city law school rather than at the royal court.[14]

In challenging Manly's conjecture about Chaucer and the Inner Temple, Green summarises new evidence and awareness of the educational opportunities available at court:

> Broadly speaking, the court provided an education in two areas: 'noriture', the art of genteel behavior, and 'lettrure', basic scholastic accomplishment. ... In its narrowest sense noriture implied merely the mastery of courtly etiquette (the kinds of lessons taught by the courtesy books), but it might also cover a whole range of activities which were felt to be appropriate to the well-nurtured courtier: not only athletic pursuits, such as riding and archery, but quieter accomplishments like dancing or music making - even perhaps the composition of polite verse. Similarly lettrure, whilst it had the basic meaning of literacy, seems also to have been extended to cover the study of practical or improving works, stopping short of what we should now call higher education. ... The juxtaposition of the various courtly attributes of Chaucer's squire is revealing ('Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write'). [15]

This recognition of the universe of discourse within which both Deschamps' and Chaucer's poems operate helps explain the range and kind of verbal decoration. After all Deschamps was writing from a court to another courtier and was sending his poem via a noble courier and friend of Chaucer's, Sir Lewis Clifford, one of Richard II's chamber knights. Furthermore, although we have no pictorial evidence of Deschamps reading aloud to a courtly audience as we do in the traditional portraits of Chaucer, it is still certain that Deschamps would have expected his poem to be read aloud when it was delivered to Chaucer, for even (or especially) in courtly circles silent reading was unusual. What I am suggesting is that the poem is much more public (and courtly) than most literary exchanges between poets today. And thus the use of _l'ethimologique_ (England as related to Eneas, Brutus; as Albie, _terre Angelique,_ and finally as a garden) and the continuing metaphor of the garden (with the poet as creator and conservator of roses and rhetoric) would have a dual and appreciative audience. In this courtly context it is only appropriate that Deschamps request an official response (_de rescripre te prie_ v.36) for he is addressing an audience especially aware of stylistic register and diplomatic decorum. In Richard Lanham's terms he is playing _homo seriosus_ before an audience of _homo rhetoricus_. [16] Perhaps this can best be shown by looking at the way Deschamps uses the three appeals or modes of rhetorical persuasion.

The appeal to audience (pathos) is found in the clever punning and in the equally adroit balancing of the special topics of ceremonial discourse, praise and blame. The presentation of self (ethical appeal) is present in the ingenious usage of the humility topos, certainly a rhetorical stance that both Chaucer and Deschamps knew and practised for both artistic and social reasons. Finally, the formal structure of the poem, its logical appeal, is equally striking.

Indeed, it goes beyond the 'technical merit' and mastery of fixed forms which even his detractors allow. Attention to form leads inevitably to the consideration of the refrain, the insistent praise of Chaucer as grant translator. Though Cazamian would see this as an example of French literary chauvinism ('the Canterbury Tales were beyond his ken'), [17] I would urge that we not read this as an example of Deschamps' limited literary awareness. Since we do not know exactly what poems Deschamps received from Chaucer nor what poems he had read (beyond The Romaunt of the Rose, perhaps the Troilus, and even more tentatively the House of Fame) we cannot be certain what he saw as 'carried across' in Chaucer's poetry. As R.A. Shoaf reminds us:

> Deschamps may have meant only that Chaucer made pretty literary gardens where seductive roses grow. But it would be inadvisable to dismiss altogether the possibility that he refers to the English husbandman as a translator sowing the words/seeds of modern poetry in texts formerly exhausted. To Deschamps and other contemporary poets, Chaucer may have been the model of that necessary but cautious 'violence' which makes poetry live and live anew. [18]

Perhaps one way to test the validity of Deschamps' insight and introduce Chaucer's most courtly poetry, is to use Deschamps' four exemplars as descriptions of what is to be found in Chaucer's 'advisory poetry', the kind of poems I think Deschamps had seen. Deschamps' exemplars neatly outline the contents of Chaucer's lyric poems. Like Socrates they are full of philosophy.

Chaucer himself alludes to Socrates as one 'counted nat the strees/ Of noght that Fortune koude doo' (BD, vv.718-19) as a 'stidfast champioun' who since he knew Fortune as 'a fals dissimulour' did not fear 'hir oppressioun' (Fortune, vv.17-23), even as one who endured 'care and the wo' that he 'hadde with his wyves two' (WBT Prologue, vv.727, 28). Yet it is primarily through Boethius that the Middle Ages knew Socrates, and in Book I, prose 3 of Chaucer's Boece he is cited both as a martyr, listed among those philosophers that 'weren pursued to the deth and slayn' (v.51) and as one with an 'opinyoun of felicite, that I clepe welefulnesse' (vv.31-32).

According to the evidence of the 23 manuscripts extant, 'Truth, Balade de Bon Conseyl' was Chaucer's most popular short lyric. It has also been seen as one of the 'Boethian balades' since it seems to draw on ideas from the Consolation of Philosophy. The first stanza advises flight from 'the prees', the world of hate, 'tikelnesse' (uncertainty), envy and blindness - a world well known to courtiers- and instead advocates dwelling with 'sothfastnesse' and self-sufficiency even 'though it be smal'. To attain this end one should 'Savour no more than thee bihove shal' (v.5) and should also 'Reule wel thyself'

before (or so that) you can advise other folks (perhaps more practical than platitude-like if one considers the courtly context). These conditions met, the refrain insists, 'trouthe thee shal delivere, it is no drede' (v.7).

The second stanza establishes a note of urgency through repeated usage of imperatives: 'Tempest thee noght' (v.8); 'Be war'(v.11); 'Stryve not' (v.12); 'Daunte thyself' (v.13). The reason for this urgent action is suggested by rhetorical contentio (antithesis) in statement, instruction, and even in individual lines: 'Gret reste stant in litel besinesse' (v.10). Note the double contrast between great / little and rest / busyness.

Such internal contrasts continue in the third stanza between receiving 'in buxumnesse' (obedience) and 'wrastling for this world', between 'hoom' and 'wildernesse' finally leading to the parallel apostrophe:

> Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
> Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
> Hold the heye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede (vv.18-20)

The pun in v.20 ('heye wey' = both high/hay wey) continues this parallel between pilgrims (high) and beasts (hay) and is completed by the address to 'thou Vache' (v.22, that is, cow) and the promise of 'hevenlich mede' (v.27, both reward and meadow) in the 'Envoy' which occurs in only one Ms. (B.L. Add. 10340). Edith Rickert's search for historical personages led her to the conclusion that Chaucer is not suddenly addressing a cow; instead she insisted 'there is no joke: the man's name was Sir Philip la Vache, or de la Vache'.[19] Hence v.18 should be read as also referring to this same friend, 'you who have the crest of the cow's hoof, and you who live at La Vache'.[20] Sir Philip la Vache was one of Richard II's 'chamber knights' like Sir Lewis Clifford (Chaucer's friend by whom Deschamps sent his balade to Chaucer). Perhaps the possibility of an 'inside' joke, or a special occasion explains why the 'Envoy' distrusted by Brussendorff and Alfred David, appears in only one MS. Elsewhere I have suggested that the 'Vache/hevenlich mede' metaphors may also operate as part of a homiletic pattern in the poem that might have been appreciated by devout courtiers like Sir John Clanvowe, an early imitator of Chaucer and author of a moral prose treatise.[21]

Deschamps' next exemplar, Seneca, is for January synonymous with 'proverbes' (there are extant two mediocre metrical examples which are possibly by Chaucer) and is one of the 'clerkes' familiarly cited by Dame Alisoun. In Melibee Prudence cites 'Senek' on Sapience, Patience, Anger, keeping council, vengeance, and a host of other moral topics. In other words, exactly what Deschamps meant by 'moeurs', teachings regarding the moral principles of human conduct, advisory poetry. Now for most moderns, the only advice expected

from poets is ironic, as in an extended piece of deadpan put-on like Kenneth Koch's 'Some General Observations'. But as Richard Green reminds us, 'Few men in the middle ages would have understood our reticence about giving advice'. [22] Indeed, such activity was an important, if delicate, part of court life. Chaucer was familiar enough with the roles of court advisors to parody their extremes in Placebo and Justinus in his Merchant's Tale. In his Boethian ballade Gentilesse, Chaucer writes unashamedly and intelligently about both virtue and vice.

Again, as with Truth, the poem is built on a series of contrasts between 'vertu' and 'vyces'; between past and present; between the 'firste stok, fader of gentilesse' (vv.1, 8, 19) and his often degenerate 'heirs' (vv.12, 15, 17, 20). Those who 'claymeth gentil for to be', writes Chaucer, the civil servant who lived and worked among 'gentil' courtiers, must perform a series of actions to prove their claims, they

> Must folowe his trace, and alle his wittes dresse
> Vertu to sewe, and vyces for to flee.
> For unto vertu longeth dignitee,
> And noght the revers, saufly dar I deme. (vv.3-6)

All this must be done even though they wear 'mytre, croune, or diademe', that is, be they bishop, king, or emperor.

Virtus non sanquis, the rest of the poem continues. The 'firste stok' is described in terms of active social virtues, 'besinesse / Ayeinst the vyce of slouthe' (vv.10-11). Unless these virtues are maintained, and what maintains them is 'love' (see vv.10, 12), Chaucer does not mince words 'He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme' (v.13). Indeed, the third stanza suggests that 'Vyce may wel be heir to old richesse' for no man may 'Bequethe his heir his vertuous noblesse' (v.17). Only God, 'the firste fader in magestee' (v.20) can make 'hem his heyres that him queme/ Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe' (vv.20-21). Henry Scogan's quotation of the whole poem in his 'Moral Balade to my lorde the Prince, to my lord of Bedford, and to my lord of Gloucestre' (that is, the sons of Henry IV to whom he was tutor) suggests the kind of moral 'advisory' role that Chaucer's friends assigned to his works, and in this case again in a courtly context by a royal tutor. [23]

Deschamps' third exemplar, 'Anglux en pratique' (v.2), is the most enigmatic reference in the poem for it can either mean Aegidius Romanus (d. 1316, the Giles of Rome famous for his De regimine principum) or the second-century Latin grammarian and author of Noctes Atticae, Aulus Gellius. While both authors wrote of practical matters, the circulation of de regimine principum, 'the most popular treatise on government in late 14th century England', especially its appearance in noble libraries (including that of Sir Simon Burley, Richard

II's tutor), makes Giles the better candidate.[24]

As an example of Chaucer's political poetry, I offer Lak of Stedfastnesse which, according to Shirley, is a 'Balade Royal made by oure laureal poete of Albyon in hees laste years'. Like that other Boethian balade, Former Age, this poem uses the past to judge and comment on the present, but it does so in a more succinct and artistically successful way. In stanza one the 'stedfastnesse'and stability of the past (vv.1-2) are contrasted with the 'fals and deceivable' present where 'word and deed ... Ben nothing lyk' (vv. 4-5) since the whole world has been 'turned up-so-doun.... for mede and wilfulnesse' (vv.5-6).

These two causes of social disorder are traced in the second stanza. The variable (as opposed to the earlier stedfast) world is the result of 'lust that folk have in dissensioun' (v.9). 'Wilful wrecchednesse' is so thoroughly in control that one is held incompetent unless he can, 'by som collusioun' (v.11), do 'his neighbour wrong or oppressioun' (v.12).

The third stanza notes the consequences:

> Trouthe is put doun, resoun is holden fable;
> Vertu hath now no dominacioun;
> Pitee exyled, no man is merciable (vv.15-17)

It also underlines the causes: 'Through covetyse' (i.e., 'lust' for 'mede') 'discrecioun' is blinded (the same figure occurs in v.4 of Truth) and the result of this process is that the world 'hath mad a permutacioun/ Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelnesse' (vv.19-20).

In the envoy, which according to Shirley was addressed to King Richard, Chaucer suggests a way beyond these problems. Like the 'swerd of castigacioun' Chaucer's words cut both ways. Richard should desire to be honourable (is he not already?). He should 'Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun' again a sharp contentio, and in terms of events in the 1380s and 90s a courageous suggestion. And that tone continues:

> Suffre nothing that may be reprevable
> To thyn estat don in thy regioun.
> Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun.
> Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
> And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse. (vv.24.28)

Richard, in other words, is reminded of his proper role as king. Not only should he not allow reprovable actions from others, he obviously should not

commit them himself. Instead, when exhibiting his 'swerd of castigacioun' he should fear God (for the king is also subject to divine law), execute the law (that is, act on the earlier imperatives 'desyre'(v.22); 'Cherish' (v.23); 'hate' (v.23); 'Suffre' (v. 24); and 'Shew' (v.26)) and through an active love of 'trouthe and worthinesse' (v.27 - and the exact opposites of 'mede and wilfulnesse') wed his people again to stedfastness. What seems a clever handling of commonplaces of past and present, of social analysis, and of the necessary repeated rhymes of the ballade takes on social dimension and power in this envoy, in what I have chosen to call 'advisory poetry'.[25]

Ovid, Deschamps' final exemplar, would seem to most of us moderns, at least, the pre-eminent model for courtly poets (even though his own career as a courtier was less than a success). What Deschamps draws attention to are two specific qualities which make for grand Ovidian poetry: Bries en parler, saiges en rethorique (v.4). As an example of both of these qualities of brief polished talk and wise rhetoric I suggest the balade Womanly Noblesse.

This 'charming and graceful bit of conventional love poetry' is found in a unique manuscript (B.L. Add. 34360). Because of its 'skillful handling of a difficult metre Robinson dates it from 'Chaucer's middle period, probably around 1380'.[26]

The poem begins with an explanation of the poet's motive for action:

> So hath myn herte caught in remembraunce
> Your beaute hoole and stidefast governaunce,
> Your vertues alle and your hie noblesse,
> That you to serve is set al my plesaunce. (vv.1-4)

It continues in the next lines to record the poet's pledge 'That whiles I live' you will have 'myn herte' in 'trewe perseveraunce/ Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse' (vv.7-8).

The second stanza considers the consequence of this act and pledge of devotion. It delicately reminds the lady of the necessary and appropriate rewards for service, 'this observaunce/ Al my lif, withouten displesaunce' (vv.10-11). She is to 'have me somwhat in your souvenaunce' (v.13). To make certain of this proper remembrance (and hence sympathy, for after all 'remembraunce' caught in the heart is his motive), the poet describes the 'greet duresse' his 'woful herte suffreth' because it humbly and simply conforms to his lady's 'ordynaunce', as she well knows. And only she has the power 'my peynes for to redresse' (v.17).

The third stanza continues this skilful translatio of feudal legal terms, the kind of bright and clever 'parler' or 'daliaunce' that courtiers like Gawain were famous for. The poet asks his lady to consider his precarious state, 'how I hange in balaunce,/ In your service' (vv.18-19). Like all courtiers, I am dependent on 'your gentilnesse' for like all courtiers I abide in the presence of the one I serve only at her grace. At this point the poem virtually becomes a courtly petition. The poet reminds her of 'alleggeaunce' (the act of Alleviation, OFr) so that her 'pite' will 'me som wise avaunce,/ In ful rebatyng' (in its technical legal sense this French-based word means 'voiding') of 'myn hevynesse' (vv.22-23). As a last clever thrust he adds that it is only reasonable ('by resoun')'that wommanly noblesse/ Shulde nat desire for to do the outrance' (again a technical legal term for injury) where she finds 'non unbuxumnesse', that is no disobedience.

The envoy, following usual practice, recapitulates the language ('plesaunce' vv.4, 11, 27) and neatly frames the poem by returning to the first lines. It also addresses the lady as 'Auctour of norture', that is, source of that courtly mode of education which according to Romaunt of the Rose if lacking marks one as 'foule and cherlish', as 'vileynous' rather than courteous. She is 'Soveraigne of beautee, flour of wommanhede' and thus will not take 'hede unto myn ignoraunce' (v.29, a modesty topos that may refer to the whole poem) but instead receive this

> of your goodlihede,
> Thynkyng that I have caught in remembraunce,
> Your beaute hole, your stidefast governaunce. (vv.30-32)

The poem is brief (indeed, the unique manuscript seems to lack a line in the second stanza) and polished. It is also an effective and witty example of persuasion. Unlike the comically inept eagles in 'Parliament of Foules', the poet is always in control, even if the lady denies his overt request (couched in appropriate courtly metaphors), she will be flattered by his cleverness and courtesy.

While I cannot suggest that Deschamps actually read the four poems I have discussed, I do hope that his four exemplars have been helpful in focusing on those qualities in Chaucer's lyrics that seem to set them off from the narratives. Like Socrates, the lyrics are indeed full of philosophy (though I would insist that Chaucer is playful as well as serious with ideas, indeed, is most serious when he is playful). Their subject matter is that of Seneca, morals, about which they unashamedly give advice. They are furthermore like Ovid briefly stated in polished language, Gawain's 'luf-talkyng', and wise in their rhetoric of love. If we add to this that they are mostly written in French forms (balade, virelai, roundel) and self-consciously play with French courtly and

legal language, I think we can begin to understand what Deschamps saw as 'carried over' and what he praised to 'Grand translator, noble Geffroy Chaucier'.[27]

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NOTES

1. 'Prologue to LGW', F 423; 'Retraction to The Canterbury Tales', X.1093. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson, (Boston 1957[2]). All subsequent citations of Chaucer are from this text and reference will follow the quotation in the text.

2. The Secular Lyric in Middle English (Lexington 1951), pp.107-112. Both Neville Coghill and James Reeves have edited anthologies using this principle: A Choice of Chaucer's Verse (London 1972) and Chaucer: Lyric and Allegory (New York 1971).

3. 'Geoffroi Chaucier, Poete Francais, Father of English Poetry', Chaucer Review, 13, 1978, 93-115; 'The Vitner's Son: French Wine in English Bottles', in Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician, ed. William W. Kibler (Austin 1976), pp.147-72.

4. Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader (New York 1975[2]), p.1123.

5. For a somewhat different definition of poetic function see Anne Middleton, 'The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II', Spectrum, 53, 1978, 94-114; and J.A. Burrow, Ricardian Poetry: Chaucer, Gower, Langland and the Gawain Poet (London 1971).

6. Gaston Raynaud, Deschamps, (SATF), XI.102. The poem is found in II 138-40: all subsequent citations are from that edition and line references follow quotations in the text.

7. The Penguin Book of French Verse: To the 15th Century, ed. Brian Woledge (Baltimore 1961), p.xiv.

8. A History of French Literature (New York: Oxford 1959), p.30.

9. 'Deschamps' Ballade to Chaucer', MLN, 33, 1918, 268.

10. James I. Wimsatt, 'Chaucer and French Poetry', in Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. D.S. Brewer (Athens, Ohio 1975), p.109; Eugen Lerch, 'Zu einer Stelle bei Eustache Deschamps', Romanische Forschungen, 62, 1950, 67-8.

11. Jenkins, MLN, 275.

12. Jenkins, MLN, 276-77

13. De Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium), ed. & trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Mass. 1954), I.ii, 2, p.5.

14. Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages (Toronto 1980), p.71.

15. Green, Poets and Princepleasers, p.73.

16. Richard A. Lanham, Motives of Eloquence (New Haven, 1976), pp.1-5; see also Stephen Manning, 'Rhetoric, Game, Morality, and Geoffrey Chaucer', Studies in the Age of Chaucer, I, 1979, 105-18.

17. Cazamian, p.30.

18. 'Notes Toward Chaucer's Poetics of Translation', Studies in the Age of Chaucer, I, 1979, 58-9.

19. Edith Rickert, 'Thou Vache', MP, II, 1913-14, 209.

20. Rickert, 224.

21. See my note 'The Truth of "A Vache"': The Homely Homily of Chaucer's Truth, PLL, 9, 1973, 311-14; cf. Alfred David, 'The Truth About "Vache"', Chaucer Review, II, 1977, 334-37. For Clanvowe see Works, ed. V. J. Scattergood (Cambridge 1975) and my article 'Tradition and Meaning in The Cuckoo and the Nightingale', PLL, 3, 1967, 49-62.

22. Green, p.161.

23. 'A Moral Balade by Henry Scogan', in Supplement to the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. W.W. Skeat (London 1897), VII, 237-44.

24. D.W. Robertson, Chaucer's London (New York 1968), pp.168, 208.

25. See the discussion of Lak of Stedfastnesse in Paul A. Olson's forthcoming book, Chaucer and the Good Society. J.E. Cross would have us leave the poem 'undated and unaddressed'. 'The Old Swedish Trohetsvisan and Chaucer's Lak of Stedfastnesse - A Study in a Medieval Genre', Saga-Book of the Viking Society, 16, 1965, 302.

26. R.K. Root, The Poetry of Chaucer (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1922[2]), p.79; cf. Robinson, p.859.

27. Research for this paper was begun during a Summer Fellowship at the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies; earlier versions of the paper were read at The Medieval Institute (Western Michigan University, May 1980) and at the International Courtly Literature Society Symposium (Liverpool University, August 1980).