

Chapter 1 : Chaucer in translation | ASU Now: Access, Excellence, Impact

These translations of the Canterbury Tales are for those beginning their study of Chaucer's language. They supply merely a pony and by no means can they serve as a substitute for the original, nor even for a good translation.

There was also a nun, a prioress, Who, in her smiling, modest was and coy; Her greatest oath was but "By Saint Eloy! Full well she sang the services divine, Intoning through her nose, becomingly; And fair she spoke her French, and fluently, After the school of Stratford-at-the-Bow, For French of Paris was not hers to know. At table she had been well taught withal, And never from her lips let morsels fall, Nor dipped her fingers deep in sauce, but ate With so much care the food upon her plate That never driblet fell upon her breast. In courtesy she had delight and zest. Her upper lip was always wiped so clean That in her cup was no iota seen Of grease, when she had drunk her draught of wine. Becomingly she reached for meat to dine. And certainly delighting in good sport, She was right pleasant, amiable- in short. She was at pains to counterfeit the look Of courtliness, and stately manners took, And would be held worthy of reverence. But, to say something of her moral sense, She was so charitable and piteous That she would weep if she but saw a mouse Caught in a trap, though it were dead or bled. She had some little dogs, too, that she fed On roasted flesh, or milk and fine white bread. For pity ruled her, and her tender heart. Right decorous her pleated wimple was; Her nose was fine; her eyes were blue as glass; Her mouth was small and therewith soft and red; But certainly she had a fair forehead; It was almost a full span broad, I own, For, truth to tell, she was not undergrown. Neat was her cloak, as I was well aware. A monk there was, one made for mastery, An outrider, who loved his venery; A manly man, to be an abbot able. Full many a blooded horse had he in stable: And when he rode men might his bridle hear A-jingling in the whistling wind as clear, Aye, and as loud as does the chapel bell Where this brave monk was of the cell. The rule of Maurus or Saint Benedict, By reason it was old and somewhat strict, This said monk let such old things slowly pace And followed new-world manners in their place. But this same text he held not worth an oyster; And I said his opinion was right good. Should he study as a madman would Upon a book in cloister cell? Or yet Go labour with his hands and swink and sweat, As Austin bids? How shall the world be served? Let Austin have his toil to him reserved. Therefore he was a rider day and night; Greyhounds he had, as swift as bird in flight. Since riding and the hunting of the hare Were all his love, for no cost would he spare. I saw his sleeves were purfled at the hand With fur of grey, the finest in the land; Also, to fasten hood beneath his chin, He had of good wrought gold a curious pin: A love-knot in the larger end there was. His head was bald and shone like any glass, And smooth as one anointed was his face. Fat was this lord, he stood in goodly case. His bulging eyes he rolled about, and hot They gleamed and red, like fire beneath a pot; His boots were soft; his horse of great estate. Now certainly he was a fine prelate: He was not pale as some poor wasted ghost. A fat swan loved he best of any roast. His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.

Chapter 2 : Chaucer Translator - Paul Beekman Taylor - Google Books

Translates modern english words into the vernacular of middle english poet Geoffrey Chaucer.

Middle-english hypertext with glossary. About The Book of the Duchess: Scholars are uncertain about the date of composition. Most scholars ascribe the date of composition between and The poem begins with a sleepless poet who lies in bed reading a book. The poet reads a story about Ceyx and Alcyone and wanders around in his thoughts. Suddenly the poet falls asleep and dreams a wonderful story. He dreams that he wakes up in a beautiful chamber by the sound of hunters and hunting dogs. The poet follows a small hunting dog into the forrest and finds a knight dressed in black who mourns about losing a game of chess. The poet asks the knight some questions and realizes at the end of the poem that the knight was talking symbolically instead of literally: The poet awakes and decides that this wonderful dream should be preserved in rhyme. About The Parliament of Fowls: The poem has lines and has the form of a dream vision of the narrator. The poem is one of the first references to the idea that St. As the printing press had yet to be invented when Chaucer wrote his works, The Parliament of Fowls has been passed down in fourteen manuscripts not including manuscripts that are considered to be lost. Scholars generally agree that the poem has been composed in The plot is about the narrator who dreams that he passes through a beautiful landscape, through the dark temple of Venus to the bright sunlight. Dame Nature sees over a large flock of birds who are gathered to choose their mates. The birds have a parliamentary debate while three male eagles try to seduce a female bird. The debate is full of speeches and insults. At the end, none of the three eagles wins the female eagle. The dream ends welcoming the coming spring.

Chapter 3 : Geoffrey Chaucer - Wikipedia

The work displays Chaucer's development as a translator from early attempts to render contemporary French poetry in an English courtly idiom to the later masterly translations in Troilus and The Canterbury Tales.

Prologue[edit] The general prologue to The Canterbury Tales describes the Miller , Robin, as a stout and evil churl fond of wrestling. However, the Miller insists on going next. He claims that his tale is "noble", but reminds the other pilgrims that he is quite drunk and cannot be held accountable for what he says. He explains that his story is about a carpenter and his wife, and how a clerk "hath set the wrightes cappe" that is, fooled the carpenter. Osewold the Reeve , who had originally been a carpenter himself, protests that the tale will insult carpenters and wives, but the Miller carries on anyway. It is remarkable for its cat hole. In the narrative, a servant whose knocks go unanswered, uses the hole to peek in: The carpenter, John, lives in Oxford with his much younger wife, Alisoun, who is a local beauty. To make extra money, John rents out a room in his house to a clever scholar named Nicholas, who has taken a liking to Alisoun. Another scholar in the town, Absolon the parish clerk, also has his eye on Alisoun. The action begins when John makes a day trip to a nearby town. While he is gone, Nicholas physically grabs Alisoun "by the queynte" and then persuades her to have sex with him. Shortly afterward, Alisoun goes to church, where Absolon sees her and immediately is filled with "love-longing. Alisoun rebuffs all his efforts, however, because she is already involved with Nicholas. With Alisoun, he hatches a scheme that will enable him to do this. He says that God told him they could save themselves by hanging three large tubs from the ceiling to sleep in. Once the waters rose, they would cut the ropes and float away. John believes him and duly climbs into his tub. That same night, Absolon comes and begs Alisoun to kiss him. At first she refuses him, but she finally agrees. Angry at being fooled, Absolon gets a red-hot coulter from the smith with which he intends to burn Alisoun. Absolon thrusts the coulter "amidst the ers" of Nicholas who cries out for "Water! The screams wake John, who thinks the flood is upon them and cuts the rope attaching him to the ceiling. He crashes to the floor, and the townspeople, hearing the noise, rush to the scene. This tale is doon, and God save al the rowte! His Almageste and books grete and smale, His astrelabie longynge for his art, Hise augrym stones layen faire apart On shelves couched at his beddes heed" [6] Nicholas is described not by his valor in battle or honour in the court. Instead, his many skills are described at great length, including the fact that he is studying one of the many scholarly arts that were popular at that time. Chaucer then goes on to describe what Nicholas is wearing and his skills as a musician. His presse ycovered with a faldyng reed, And al above ther lay a gay sautrie On which he made a nyghtes melodie So swetely that al the chambre song, And Angelus ad virginem he song, And after that he song The Kynges Noote; Full often blessed was his myrie throte! He is shown to be very cultured as well as studied. Chaucer shows that Nicholas was skilled in the art of music, as he knew these certain songs which might have been quite popular at the time. What Nicholas wears could also be here to show that Nicholas wore clothes befitting his social class status. This focus on what a person could wear based on status was also important to Richard II. This Absolom, that jolly was and gay, Gooth with a sencer censer on the haliday, Sensynge the wyves of the parisshe faste; And many a lovely look on hem he caste, And namely on this carpenteris wyf. A third theme, that of knowledge and science, appears in several marginal comments. Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed [unlearned] man That noight but oonly his bileve kan! Parody[edit] The tale is replete with word-puns. Much is made of variations on "priv-" implying both secret things and private parts. Continuations[edit] The 15th-century Tale of Beryn depicts the Miller trying and failing to explain the stained glass windows of Canterbury cathedral. Chaucer refers to the Distichs of Cato with this passage: The painting Netherlandish Proverbs by Pieter Breugel the Elder illustrates many of the themes in this story including a shot-window in use, a man with his backside on fire, a falling through a basket from a roof, pious hypocrisy, and cuckolding. According to Amy, it was the dirtiest story she knew.

Chapter 4 : Translation of Boece (Chaucer) in English

Geoffrey Chaucer (; c. - 25 October), known as the Father of English literature, is widely considered the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages and was the first poet to be buried in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Origins[edit] Chaucer as a pilgrim from the Ellesmere manuscript Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London sometime around , though the precise date and location of his birth remain unknown. His father and grandfather were both London vintners ; several previous generations had been merchants in Ipswich. His family name derives from the French *chausseur*, meaning "shoemaker". Career[edit] While records concerning the lives of his contemporary friends, William Langland and the Pearl Poet , are practically non-existent, since Chaucer was a public servant, his official life is very well documented, with nearly five hundred written items testifying to his career. The countess was married to Lionel, Duke of Clarence , the second surviving son of the king, Edward III , and the position brought the teenage Chaucer into the close court circle, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. In , he was captured during the siege of Rheims. Around , Chaucer married Philippa de Roet. It is uncertain how many children Chaucer and Philippa had, but three or four are most commonly cited. His son, Thomas Chaucer , had an illustrious career, as chief butler to four kings, envoy to France, and Speaker of the House of Commons. He became a member of the royal court of Edward III as a valet de chambre , yeoman , or esquire on 20 June , a position which could entail a wide variety of tasks. His wife also received a pension for court employment. He travelled abroad many times, at least some of them in his role as a valet. Two other literary stars of the era were in attendance: Jean Froissart and Petrarch. Around this time, Chaucer is believed to have written *The Book of the Duchess* in honour of Blanche of Lancaster , the late wife of John of Gaunt, who died in of the plague. Numerous scholars such as Skeat, Boitani, and Rowland [12] suggested that, on this Italian trip, he came into contact with Petrarch or Boccaccio. They introduced him to medieval Italian poetry , the forms and stories of which he would use later. Later documents suggest it was a mission, along with Jean Froissart, to arrange a marriage between the future King Richard II and a French princess, thereby ending the Hundred Years War. If this was the purpose of their trip, they seem to have been unsuccessful, as no wedding occurred. It has been speculated that it was Hawkwood on whom Chaucer based his character the Knight in the *Canterbury Tales*, for a description matches that of a 14th-century condottiere. A 19th-century depiction of Chaucer A possible indication that his career as a writer was appreciated came when Edward III granted Chaucer "a gallon of wine daily for the rest of his life" for some unspecified task. Chaucer continued to collect the liquid stipend until Richard II came to power, after which it was converted to a monetary grant on 18 April Chaucer obtained the very substantial job of comptroller of the customs for the port of London, which he began on 8 June His life goes undocumented for much of the next ten years, but it is believed that he wrote or began most of his famous works during this period. He was mentioned in law papers of 4 May , involved in the raptus of Cecilia Champaigne. He is thought to have started work on *The Canterbury Tales* in the early s. He survived the political upheavals caused by the Lords Appellants , despite the fact that Chaucer knew some of the men executed over the affair quite well. It may have been a difficult job, but it paid well: He was granted an annual pension of twenty pounds by Richard II in The last few records of his life show his pension renewed by the new king, and his taking of a lease on a residence within the close of Westminster Abbey on 24 December The last mention of Chaucer is on 5 June , when some monies owed to him were paid. He is believed to have died of unknown causes on 25 October , but there is no firm evidence for this date, as it comes from the engraving on his tomb, erected more than one hundred years after his death. A Medieval Mystery "that he was murdered by enemies of Richard II or even on the orders of his successor Henry IV, but the case is entirely circumstantial. Relationship to John of Gaunt[edit] Chaucer was a close friend of John of Gaunt , the wealthy Duke of Lancaster and father of the future King of England , and served under his patronage. Near the end of their lives Lancaster and Chaucer became brothers-in-law. Although Philippa died c. Chaucer retorts that "My frend maystow nat reven, blind goddesse" 50 and orders her to take away those who merely pretend to be his friends. The three princes are believed to represent the dukes of Lancaster, York , and Gloucester , and a

portion of line 76, "as three of you or tweyne," to refer to the ordinance of which specified that no royal gift could be authorised without the consent of at least two of the three dukes. Fortune states three times in her response to the plaintiff, "And also, you still have your best friend alive" 32, 40, 48 ; she also references his "beste frend" in the envoy when appealing to his "noblesse" to help Chaucer to a higher estate. A fifth reference is made by "Chaucer as narrator" who rails at Fortune that she shall not take his friend from him. While the envoy playfully hints to Lancaster that Chaucer would certainly appreciate a boost to his status or income, the poem Fortune distinctively shows his deep appreciation and affection for John of Gaunt. Chaucer seems to have respected and admired sincere Christians and to have been one himself , even while he also recognised that many people in the church of his era were venal and corrupt. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. October Learn how and when to remove this template message

Portrait of Chaucer 16th century , f. This would seem to place the writing of *The Book of the Duchess* between the years and Chaucer wrote many of his major works in a prolific period when he held the job of customs comptroller for London to It is believed that in the early s he started the work for which he is best known – *The Canterbury Tales* , a collection of stories told by fictional pilgrims on the road to the cathedral at Canterbury ; tales that would help to shape English literature. The *Canterbury Tales* contrasts with other literature of the period in the naturalism of its narrative, the variety of stories the pilgrims tell and the varied characters who are engaged in the pilgrimage. Many of the stories narrated by the pilgrims seem to fit their individual characters and social standing, although some of the stories seem ill-fitting to their narrators, perhaps as a result of the incomplete state of the work. Chaucer drew on real life for his cast of pilgrims: The many jobs that Chaucer held in medieval society – page, soldier, messenger, valet, bureaucrat, foreman and administrator – probably exposed him to many of the types of people he depicted in the *Tales*. He was able to shape their speech and satirise their manners in what was to become popular literature among people of the same types. Certainly *Troilus and Criseyde* is a middle period work with its reliance on the forms of Italian poetry, little known in England at the time, but to which Chaucer was probably exposed during his frequent trips abroad on court business. In addition, its use of a classical subject and its elaborate, courtly language sets it apart as one of his most complete and well-formed works. However, it is *The Canterbury Tales*, wherein he focuses on English subjects, with bawdy jokes and respected figures often being undercut with humour, that has cemented his reputation. However, while many scholars maintain that Chaucer did indeed translate part of the text of *Roman de la Rose* as *The Romaunt of the Rose* , others claim that this has been effectively disproved. Many of his other works were very loose translations of, or simply based on, works from continental Europe. It is in this role that Chaucer receives some of his earliest critical praise. Although much of the text may have come from other sources, the treatise indicates that Chaucer was versed in science in addition to his literary talents. Furthermore, it contains an example of early European encryption.

Linguistic[edit] Portrait of Chaucer from a manuscript by Thomas Hoccleve , who may have met Chaucer Chaucer wrote in continental accentual-syllabic meter , a style which had developed since around the 12th century as an alternative to the alliterative Anglo-Saxon metre. The poetry of Chaucer, along with other writers of the era, is credited with helping to standardise the London Dialect of the Middle English language from a combination of the Kentish and Midlands dialects. This change in the pronunciation of English, still not fully understood, makes the reading of Chaucer difficult for the modern audience. When it is vocalised, most scholars pronounce it as a schwa. Apart from the irregular spelling, much of the vocabulary is recognisable to the modern reader. Chaucer is also recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the first author to use many common English words in his writings. These words were probably frequently used in the language at the time but Chaucer, with his ear for common speech, is the earliest extant manuscript source. Acceptable, alkali, altercation, amble, angrily, annex, annoyance, approaching, arbitration, armless, army, arrogant, arsenic, arc, artillery and aspect are just some of the many English words first attested in Chaucer. Writers of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as John Dryden , admired Chaucer for his stories, but not for his rhythm and rhyme, as few critics could then read Middle English and the text had been butchered by printers, leaving a somewhat unadmirable mess. English[edit] Chaucer is sometimes considered the source of the English vernacular tradition. His achievement for the language can be seen as part of a general historical trend

towards the creation of a vernacular literature, after the example of Dante, in many parts of Europe. Original Text This frere boasteth that he knoweth helle, This friar boasts that he knows hell, And God it woot, that it is litel wonder; And God knows that it is little wonder; Freres and feendes been but lyte asonder. Friars and fiends are seldom far apart. For, pardee, ye han ofte tyme herd telle For, by God, you have oftymes heard tell How that a frere ravysched was to helle How a friar was taken to hell In spirit ones by a visioun; In spirit, once by a vision; And as an angel ladde hym up and down, And as an angel led him up and down, To shewen hym the peynes that the were, To show him the pains that were there, In al the place saugh he nat a frere; In all the place he saw not a friar; Of oother folk he saugh ynowe in wo. Of other folk he saw enough in woe. Unto this angel spak the frere tho: Unto this angel spoke the friar thus: Now, sire, quod he, han freres swich a grace "Now sir", said he, "Have friars such a grace That noon of hem shal come to this place? That none of them come to this place? And unto Satan the angel led him down. Hold up thy tayl, thou sathanas! And every one crept into his arse. He clapte his tayl agayn and lay ful stille. He shut his tail again and lay very still. There are 83 surviving manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales in whole or part alone, along with sixteen of Troilus and Criseyde, including the personal copy of Henry IV. In 1440, John Baron, a tenant farmer in Agmondesham, was brought before John Chadworth, the Bishop of Lincoln, on charges he was a Lollard heretic; he confessed to owning a "boke of the Tales of Caunterburie" among other suspect volumes. October Learn how and when to remove this template message William Caxton, the first English printer, was responsible for the first two folio editions of The Canterbury Tales which were published in 1477 and 1483. Both Caxton editions carry the equivalent of manuscript authority. The collection is actually three separately printed texts, or collections of texts, bound together as one volume. Thynne had a successful career from the 1490s until his death in 1546, when he was one of the masters of the royal household. His editions of Chaucers Works in 1532 and 1534 were the first major contributions to the existence of a widely recognised Chaucerian canon. Thynne represents his edition as a book sponsored by and supportive of the king who is praised in the preface by Sir Brian Tuke. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Chaucer was printed more than any other English author, and he was the first author to have his works collected in comprehensive single-volume editions in which a Chaucer canon began to cohere. As "Chaucerian" works that were not considered apocryphal until the late 19th century, these medieval texts enjoyed a new life, with English Protestants carrying on the earlier Lollard project of appropriating existing texts and authors who seemed sympathetic—or malleable enough to be construed as sympathetic—to their cause. The official Chaucer of the early printed volumes of his Works was construed as a proto-Protestant as the same was done, concurrently, with William Langland and Piers Plowman. Testament of Love also appears to borrow from Piers Plowman. Usk himself was executed as a traitor in 1539. John Foxe took this recantation of heresy as a defence of the true faith, calling Chaucer a "right Wiclevian" and erroneously identifying him as a schoolmate and close friend of John Wycliffe at Merton College, Oxford.

Chapter 5 : Chaucer, Geoffrey (c1340) - The Canterbury Tales: I; The General Prologue

Translate Old English text and words to Modern English and Modern English text and words to Old English Old English to Modern English Translator Website developed by www.nxgvision.com

One is a new verse translation by Burton Raffel published in 1978, the other a prose translation by Peter Ackroyd, from 1987. What always surprises me is how widely these translations range in wording, rhythm and style. I have only skimmed some works on learning Middle English, not studied it beyond casual reading. For me, trying to read and understand Chaucer in his original tongue is part of the pleasure of it. I feel a great sense of accomplishment when I figure out a verse that looked cryptic at first but clarity has broken upon me, or when the words coalesce into a tale. There are four things to keep in mind when reading Chaucer. First is to try to read it aloud. The sound and rhythm of the spoken word often helps makes the meaning evident. Chaucer wrote to be heard, not just read. You can hear some Chaucerian poetry online to get a sense of how it sounded. It's a lot more Germanic than it does today. But just reading him aloud helps you appreciate his work. Second is the pronunciation. You can get basic pronunciation guides online, too. Third is the spelling. He was not always consistent in his spelling. Many common words in his day were also spelled differently than today. His *sadel* was of *brend gold newe y-bete*, A *mantelet* upon his *shuldre* hanginge *Bret-ful* of *rubies rede*, as *fyr sparklinge*. *Shuldre* today is *shoulder*, *sadle* is *saddle*, *perles* are *pearls*, *clooth* is *cloth*, and so on. But what is *y-bete*, or *brend*, or *armure*? In prose translation, this can be rendered: His tunic, blazoned with his arms, was of cloth of Tartary, laid with pearls, white, round, and great. His saddle was of burnished gold, freshly forged. A short mantle hung upon his shoulders, stiff with red rubies sparkling as fire. And here it is in poetry from an online interlinear site: His saddle was hammered out of bright new gold, And the mantle hanging high across his shoulders Was heavy with fire-red rubies, sparkling in sunlight. Fourth reminder is that words come and go in English, and can even change meaning from one period to the next. When you read Chaucer, you will find words no longer in use, as well as words that have shifted meaning since his day. But the Riverside, New Cambridge and Penguin original spelling versions all use the numbering noted above. It can be tricky finding the reference. Many translations are unnumbered, making it difficult to locate a particular line. His coat of arms was woven of rare silk and embroidered with white pearls; his saddle was of newly beaten gold, and the mantle around his shoulders was studded with glowing rubies. Over his gear a Tartar coat; each fold With large pearls was embroidered, round and white. His saddle was of forged gold, beaten bright. A little mantel from his shoulders spread Brimful of fiery rubies, glittering red. He had a mantle hanging from his shoulders, Which, crammed with rubies, dazzled all beholders. Here are a few other translations of those four lines from the Web. His coat-of-arms was cloth of the Tartars, Begemmed with pearls, all white and round and great. Of beaten gold his saddle, burnished late; A mantle from his shoulders hung, the thing Close-set with rubies red, like fire blazing. Which I find a bit stilted begemmed, rubies red, etc. His coat of arms of cloth from Turkestan, Adorned with large round pearls of polished white; His pure gold saddle was a wondrous sight; A short cloak on his shoulders all admire, Brimful of rubies red as sparkling fire;.

Chapter 6 : Geoffrey Chaucer () - "The Canterbury Tales" (in middle english and modern english)

In my last two visits to the nearby Chapters, I picked up from the bargain books section two recent, hardcover, versions of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. One is a new verse translation by Burton Raffel published in , the other a prose translation by Peter Ackroyd, from

See Article History Geoffrey Chaucer, born c. He also contributed importantly in the second half of the 14th century to the management of public affairs as courtier, diplomat, and civil servant. But it is his avocation—the writing of poetry—for which he is remembered. Yet his writings also consistently reflect an all-pervasive humour combined with serious and tolerant consideration of important philosophical questions. From his writings Chaucer emerges as poet of love, both earthly and divine, whose presentations range from lustful cuckoldry to spiritual union with God. He died in or at age The name Chaucer is derived from the French word *chaussier*, meaning a maker of footwear. No information exists concerning his early education, although doubtless he would have been as fluent in French as in the Middle English of his time. He also became competent in Latin and Italian. His writings show his close familiarity with many important books of his time and of earlier times. Chaucer first appears in the records in , as a member of the household of Elizabeth, countess of Ulster, wife of Lionel, third son of Edward III. The king contributed to his ransom, and Chaucer served as messenger from Calais to England during the peace negotiations of Chaucer does not appear in any contemporary record during — On February 22, , the king of Navarre issued a certificate of safe-conduct for Chaucer, three companions, and their servants to enter Spain. Probably his wife was Philippa Pan, who had been in the service of the countess of Ulster and entered the service of Philippa of Hainaut , queen consort of Edward III, when Elizabeth died in In Philippa Chaucer received an annuity, and later annuities were frequently paid to her through her husband. These and other facts indicate that Chaucer married well. Such officers lived at court and performed staff duties of considerable importance. In Chaucer was abroad on a diplomatic mission, and in he was on military service in France. Also in he and his wife were official mourners for the death of Queen Philippa. For this first of his important poems, Chaucer used the dream-vision form , a genre made popular by the highly influential 13th-century French poem of courtly love , the *Roman de la rose*. Chaucer translated that poem, at least in part, probably as one of his first literary efforts, and he borrowed from it throughout his poetic career. Nothing in these borrowings, however, will account for his originality in combining dream-vision with elegy and eulogy of Blanche with consolation for John. Also noteworthy here—as it increasingly became in his later poetry—is the tactful and subtle use of a first-person narrator , who both is and is not the poet himself. The device had obvious advantages for the minor courtier delivering such a poem orally before the high-ranking court group. Diplomat and civil servant During the decade of the s, Chaucer was at various times on diplomatic missions in Flanders, France, and Italy. Probably his first Italian journey December to May was for negotiations with the Genoese concerning an English port for their commerce, and with the Florentines concerning loans for Edward III. His next Italian journey occupied May 28 to September 19, , when he was a member of a mission to Milan concerning military matters. Several times during the s, Chaucer and his wife received generous monetary grants from the king and from John of Gaunt. On May 10, , he obtained rent-free a dwelling above Aldgate, in London, and on June 8 of that year he was appointed comptroller of the customs and subsidy of wools, skins, and tanned hides for the Port of London. Now, for the first time, Chaucer had a position away from the court, and he and his wife had a home of their own, about a minute walk from his office. In he was granted two wardships, which paid well, and in he received a sizable sum from a fine. Certainly during the s fortune smiled upon the Chaucers. So much responsibility and activity in public matters appears to have left Chaucer little time for writing during this decade. The great literary event for him was that, during his missions to Italy, he encountered the work of Dante, Petrarch , and Boccaccio, which was later to have profound influence upon his own writing. In addition to its comic aspects, however, the poem seems to convey a serious note: He continued to work at the Customs House and in was additionally appointed comptroller of the petty customs for wine and other merchandise, but in October his dwelling in London was leased to another man, and in December of that year successors were

named for both of his comptrollerships in the customs; whether he resigned or was removed from office is not clear. Between and he had arranged for deputiesâ€”permanent in two instances and temporary in othersâ€”in his work at the customs. In October he was appointed a justice of the peace for Kent , and in August he became knight of the shire for Kent, to attend Parliament in October. Further, in he probably moved to Greenwich, then in Kent, to live. These circumstances suggest that, for some time before , he was planning to move from London and to leave the Customs House. Philippa Chaucer apparently died in ; if she had suffered poor health for some time previously, that situation could have influenced a decision to move. On the other hand, political circumstances during this period were not favourable for Chaucer and may have caused his removal. Numerous other officeholdersâ€”like Chaucer, appointed by the kingâ€”were discharged, and Chaucer may have suffered similarly. Perhaps the best view of the matter is that Chaucer saw which way the political wind was blowing and began early to prepare to move when the necessity arrived. The period â€”89 was clearly difficult for Chaucer. Although he was reappointed justice of the peace for , he was not returned to Parliament after In a series of suits against him for debts began, and he sold his royal pension for a lump sum. In May , however, the year-old King Richard II regained control, ousted his enemies, and began appointing his supporters to office. Almost certainly, Chaucer owed his next public office to that political change. Surprisingly, these works do not in any way reflect the tense political scene. Indeed, one is tempted to speculate that during this period Chaucer turned to his reading and writing as escape from the difficulties of his public life. The Parlement of Foules , a poem of lines, is a dream-vision for St. The narrator searches unsuccessfully for an answer and concludes that he must continue his search in other books. For this poem Chaucer also borrowed extensively from Boccaccio and Dante, but the lively bird debate from which the poem takes its title is for the most part original. The poem has often been taken as connected with events at court, particularly the marriage in of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia. But no such connection has ever been firmly established. The Consolation of Philosophy , written by the Roman philosopher Boethius early 6th century , a Christian, was one of the most influential of medieval books. But the two works are so different that comparative evaluation seems fruitless. Against the background of the legendary Trojan War , the love story of Troilus, son of the Trojan king Priam , and Criseyde, widowed daughter of the deserter priest Calkas, is recounted. The poem moves in leisurely fashion, with introspection and much of what would now be called psychological insight dominating many sections. Despite her promise to return, she gives her love to the Greek Diomede, and Troilus, left in despair, is killed in the war. These events are interspersed with Boethian discussion of free will and determinism. The effect of the poem is controlled throughout by the direct comments of the narrator, whose sympathy for the loversâ€”especially for Criseydeâ€”is ever present. Also in the s Chaucer produced his fourth and final dream-vision poem, The Legend of Good Women , which is not a success. It presents a Prologue, existing in two versions, and nine stories. In the Prologue the god of love is angry because Chaucer had earlier written about so many women who betrayed men. As penance, Chaucer must now write about good women. The storiesâ€”concerning such women of antiquity as Cleopatra, Dido, and Lucreceâ€”are brief and rather mechanical, with the betrayal of women by wicked men as a regular theme; as a result, the whole becomes more a legend of bad men than of good women. Perhaps the most important fact about the Legend, however, is that it shows Chaucer structuring a long poem as a collection of stories within a framework. Seemingly the static nature of the framing device for the Legend and the repetitive aspect of the series of stories with a single theme led him to give up this attempt as a poor job. But the failure here must have contributed to his brilliant choice, probably about this same time, of a pilgrimage as the framing device for the stories in The Canterbury Tales. During that tenure he was robbed several times and once beaten, sufficient reason for seeking a change of jobs. He retained his home in Kent and continued in favour at court, receiving royal grants and gifts during â€” In so doing, he left his country ready to rebel. Henry, exiled in but now duke of Lancaster, returned to England to claim his rights. The people flocked to him, and he was crowned on September 30, In December Chaucer took a lease on a house in the garden of Westminster Abbey. But in October of the following year he died. He was buried in the Abbey, a signal honour for a commoner. Harry Bailly , host of the Tabard, serves as master of ceremonies for the contest. The pilgrims are introduced by vivid brief sketches in the General Prologue. Interspersed between the 24 tales told

by the pilgrims are short dramatic scenes presenting lively exchanges, called links and usually involving the host and one or more of the pilgrims. Chaucer did not complete the full plan for his book: The work is nevertheless sufficiently complete to be considered a unified book rather than a collection of unfinished fragments. Use of a pilgrimage as a framing device for the collection of stories enabled Chaucer to bring together people from many walks of life: Also, the pilgrimage and the storytelling contest allowed presentation of a highly varied collection of literary genres: Because of this structure, the sketches, the links, and the tales all fuse as complex presentations of the pilgrims, while at the same time the tales present remarkable examples of short stories in verse, plus two expositions in prose. In addition, the pilgrimage, combining a fundamentally religious purpose with its secular aspect of vacation in the spring, made possible extended consideration of the relationship between the pleasures and vices of this world and the spiritual aspirations for the next, that seeming dichotomy with which Chaucer, like Boethius and many other medieval writers, was so steadily concerned. For this crowning glory of his 30 years of literary composition, Chaucer used his wide and deep study of medieval books of many sorts and his acute observation of daily life at many levels. He also employed his detailed knowledge of medieval astrology and subsidiary sciences as they were thought to influence and dictate human behaviour. Over the whole expanse of this intricate dramatic narrative, he presides as Chaucer the poet, Chaucer the civil servant, and Chaucer the pilgrim: On that note he ends his finest work and his career as poet. The probability is that he and Philippa had two sons and two daughters. One son, Thomas Chaucer, who died in , owned large tracts of land and held important offices in the s, including the forestership of North Petherton. The records lend some support to speculation that John of Gaunt fathered one or more of these children. Chaucer seems to have had no descendants living after the 15th century. Over the succeeding centuries, his poems, particularly *The Canterbury Tales*, have been widely read, translated into modern English, and, since about the middle of the 19th century, the number of scholars and critics who devote themselves to the study and teaching of his life and works has steadily increased.

Chapter 7 : Chaucer, Geoffrey (câ€™) - The Canterbury Tales: Complete and Modernised

The General Prologue An Interlinear Translation The Middle English text is from Larry D. Benson., Gen. ed., The Riverside Chaucer, Houghton Mifflin Company; used with permission of the publisher.

It befell that in that season on a day, In Southwark at The Tabard as I lay, Ready to set out on my pilgrimage To Canterbury with pious courage, There came at night to that hostelry Quite nine and twenty in a company Of sundry folk who had chanced to fall Into a fellowship, and pilgrims all, That towards Canterbury meant to ride. The chambers and the stables were full wide, And we housed at our ease, and of the best; And shortly, when the sun had gone to rest, I had such speech with each and everyone, That of their fellowship I soon made one, Agreeing I would make an early rise, To take our way there, as I now advise. When we took Alexandria was there; Often at table held the place of honour, Above all other nations too in Prussia; Campaigned in Lithuania and Russia, No Christian man of his rank more often. Of mortal battles he had seen fifteen, And fought for the faith at Tramissene Thrice in the lists and always slain his foe. This same worthy knight had been also With the Emir of Balat once, at work With him against some other heathen Turk; Won him a reputation highly prized, And though he was valiant, he was wise, And in his manner modest as a maid. And never a discourtesy he said In all his life to those who met his sight; He was a very perfect gentle knight. But to tell of his equipment, his array, His horses fine, he wore no colours gay Sported a tunic, padded fustian On which his coat of mail left many a stain; For he was scarcely back from his voyage, And going now to make his pilgrimage. Of his stature, he was of middle height, Wonderfully agile, powerful in a fight. Like to a meadow he was embroidered, One full of fresh flowers white and red. Singing he was, or playing flute all day; He was as fresh as is the month of May. Short was his gown, with sleeves both long and wide; He knew how to sit a horse, and could ride. He could make songs, and compose aright, Joust and dance, and draw things well and write. He loved so hotly night through without fail He slept no more than does the nightingale. Courteous he was, humble, attentive, able, And carved for his father at the table. A sheaf of peacock arrows, bright and keen Sheathed in his belt he bore right properly â€™ Well could he dress his gear, yeomanly; His arrows never drooped with feathers low â€™ And in his hand he bore a mighty bow. Cropped hair he had, and a nut-brown visage; Of woodcraft he well knew all the usage. He bore a horn, the baldric was of green. He truly was a forester, I guess. Full well she sung the service, divine, Intoning through her nose, all seemly, And fair French she spoke, all elegantly, After the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe; For French of Paris was not hers to know. At meals she had been taught well withal; And from her lips she let no morsel fall, Nor dipped her fingers in the sauce too deep; Well could she take a morsel and then keep The slightest drop from falling on her breast; Courtesy it was that pleased her best. Her upper lip she would wipe so clean That in her cup no trace of grease was seen When she had drunk her draught; and to eat, In a most seemly manner took her meat. And certainly she had a cheerful manner, Pleasant and amiable in her behaviour, Took pains to imitate the ways of court, Display a stately bearing as she ought, And be considered worthy of reverence. As for consideration of her conscience, She was so charitable, tender, anxious, She would weep if she but saw a mouse Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled. Of slender hounds she had, that she fed With roasted flesh, or milk, and fine white bread; But wept sorely when one of them was dead Or if men struck it with a stick too hard, And all was sentiment and tender heart. Her wimple was pleated in a seemly way, Her nose was elegant, her eyes blue-grey; Her lips quite fine, and also soft and red, But certainly she had a fair forehead, It was almost a span broad, I deem, For she was not small of build, I mean. Her cloak was very elegant, I saw; Fine coral round her arm she wore A rosary, the larger beads were green, And from it hung a brooch of golden sheen, On which there first was writ a crowned A, And after: Another NUN she had with her, and she Was her chaplain, and with them priests three. Full many a fine horse had he in his stable, His bridle, when he rode, men might hear Jingling in a whistling wind as clear, And quite as loud as does the chapel bell. And I agreed his views were scarcely bad: Should he study, drive himself quite mad, In his cloister over a book must pore, Or labour with his hands, and toil the more As Augustine bids? How would the world run? Let Augustine keep his labour for his own! Therefore he was a hunting man outright. Greyhounds he had, as swift as birds in

flight; Tracking with dogs and hunting the hare Was all his pleasure, no cost did he spare. His head was bald, and shone like any glass, And his face, as if he had been anointed; He was a lord full fat, and well appointed. His bulging eyeballs, rolling in his head, Glowing like a cauldron-fire well-fed; Supple his boots, his horse in perfect state. Now certainly he was a fair prelate; He was not pale like some tormented ghost. A fat swan he loved best of any roast; His palfrey was as brown as is a berry. And he had arranged many a marriage Of young women, granting each a dower. He was a noble pillar of his Order. Well-beloved and intimate was he With Franklins within his boundary, And also worthy women of the town; Had power to confess coat and gown "As he said himself" more than a curate, Having licence from his bishop to do it. Full sweetly he would hear confessions, And very pleasant were his absolutions. He was an easy man at granting penance From which he made more than a pittance. For many a man is so hard of heart He cannot weep, though he feels the smart. Therefore instead of weeping and prayer, Better to give the poor friars silverware. He could hold a note for sure; could sing And play quite sweetly on the tuneful string. Such competitions he won easily. His neck was white as the fleur-de-lis; And he was as strong as any champion. He knew the taverns well in every town, And all the barmaids and innkeepers, Rather than the lepers and the beggars Since such a worthy man as he It suited not his calling or degree, With such lepers to maintain acquaintance. It is not seemly "helps no man advance" To have dealings with such poor people, Only with the rich, sellers of victuals. An everywhere a profit might arise, He wore a courteous and humble guise; There was no man half so virtuous. He was the finest beggar of his house "and paid a fixed fee for the right; None of his brethren poached in his sight. His income was far greater than his rent, And he romped around, like any whelp. In settling disputes he could help, Not like a friar from a cloister, With threadbare cloak, like needy scholar, But he was like a doctor or a pope; Of double worsted was his demi-cloak, A bell shaped from the mould, its fashion. He lisped a little out of affectation, To sound his English sweet upon the tongue; And in his harping, whenever he had sung, His eyes would twinkle in his head aright As do the stars on high in frosty night. Hubert his name, this worthy Limiter. Upon his head a Flemish beaver hat, Buckled his boots were, fair and neatly. He made his comments solemnly, fully, Boasting of profits ever increasing, Wishing sea-trade secure, more than anything, Twixt Middleburgh and the River Orwell. He could exchange monies, buy and sell. This worthy man made such use of his wits; No one knew he was beset by debts, So stately his manner of behaving, In his bargaining, and money-lending. His jacket threadbare, where the eye could see; For he had not yet found a benefice, Far too unworldly ever to seek office. He would rather have at his bed-head Twenty books, clad in black or red, Of Aristotle and his philosophy, Than rich robes, fiddle, and sweet psaltery. But though he was a true philosopher No stone for making gold lay in his coffer! But every single penny his friends lent, On books and on learning it was spent, And for the souls he offered up a prayer, Of those who funded him to be a scholar. Of study he took most care, and most heed. He spoke not one word more than he need, And that was formal, said with reverence, Short, and quick, and in a noble sentence. Agreeing with moral virtue all his speech, And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach. Discreet he was, a man for reverence "Or so he seemed, his words being so wise. He had often been a Justice at assize, By letters patent and by full commission. By his science and his high renown Of fees and robes he garnered many a one. So great a buyer of land was never known; All was his in fee-simple, in effect. His purchases were not the least suspect. More business than he had, no man has, And yet he seemed busier than he was. Moreover he could draw up anything, That no man might find fault with its drafting; And every statute he could cite by rote, He rode along in a simple striped coat, Tied with a silken belt, its clasps of metal; Of his array I will no further tell. Of his complexion he was sanguine; He loved a sop in wine each morning. A hospitable householder was he Saint Julian he was to his county. His bread and ale always second to none; And no better wine than his was known. His house was never short of fish and flesh, Of pastry dishes, and all so plenteous It snowed in his house with meat and drink, And all the dainties of which men might think. In accordance with the seasons of the year, So he changed his dinner and his supper. Full many a fat partridge had he in coop, And many a bream and pike in the pool. Woe to his cook unless his sauces were Pungent and tasty, and every dish prepared! His table fixed in his hall stood always Ready set with covers, every day. At court-sessions he was lord and sire; And oftentimes was Member for the Shire. A two-edged dagger and a purse of silk Hung at his girdle, white as morning milk. A Sheriff had he been, and a

lawyer; Nowhere lived so worthy a landowner. Full fresh and new their costume was; Their knives were mounted not with brass But all with silver, wrought clean and well, Their girdles and their pouches as befell. Each of them seemed a splendid burgess Fit to grace a guildhall on a dais. Each owning as much wisdom as man can, Was suitable to be an alderman, For they had property enough and rent, And wives too who would give their assent. Well could he distinguish London ale; He could roast and seethe and boil and fry, Make thick soup and bake a tasty pie. But a mortal pity, it seemed to me, That on his shin an ulcerous sore had he. Yet a fricassee, he made it with the best. He rode a hired hack, as best he could, In a woollen gown that reached his knee, A dagger hanging on a cord had he, About his neck, under his arm, and down. The summer heat had tanned his visage brown. And certainly he was a splendid fellow; Full many a draught of wine he made flow From Bordeaux, the merchant fast asleep, The nicer rules of conscience did not keep: If he fought, and gained the upper hand, He sent men home by water to every land. As for his skill in calculating tides, Currents, and every other risk besides, Harbours and moons, on every voyage, There was none such from Hull to Carthage. Hardy he was, wise in his undertakings, In many a tempest had his beard been shaken. In all this world none ever saw his like On points of physic and of surgery, For he was grounded in astronomy. He knew the best hours for the sick, By the power of his natural magic.

Chapter 8 : Chaucers Middle English Glossary Dictionary | Free Literature Dictionary

The General Prologue. When that April with his showers sweet. The drought of March has pierced root deep, And bathed each vein with liquor of such power.

When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun
Into the Ram one half his course has run,
And many little birds make melody
That sleep through all the night with open eye
So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage -
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.
Befell that, in that season, on a day
In Southwark, at the Tabard, as I lay
Ready to start upon my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, full of devout homage,
There came at nightfall to that hostelry
Some nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry persons who had chanced to fall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all
That toward Canterbury town would ride.
The rooms and stables spacious were and wide,
And well we there were eased, and of the best.
But none the less, whilst I have time and space,
Before yet farther in this tale I pace,
It seems to me accordant with reason
To inform you of the state of every one
Of all of these, as it appeared to me,
And who they were, and what was their degree,
And even how arrayed there at the inn;
And with a knight thus will I first begin.
A knight there was, and he a worthy man,
Who, from the moment that he first began
To ride about the world, loved chivalry,
Truth, honour, freedom and all courtesy.
In Latvia raided he, and Russia,
No christened man so oft of his degree.
In far Granada at the siege was he
Of Algeciras, and in Belmarie.
This self-same worthy knight had been also
At one time with the lord of Palatye
Against another heathen in Turkey:
And always won he sovereign fame for prize.
Though so illustrious, he was very wise
And bore himself as meekly as a maid.
He never yet had any vileness said,
In all his life, to whatsoever wight.
He was a truly perfect, gentle knight.
But now, to tell you all of his array,
His steeds were good, but yet he was not gay.
Of simple fustian wore he a jupon
Sadly discoloured by his habergeon;
For he had lately come from his voyage
And now was going on this pilgrimage.
Some twenty years of age he was, I guess.
In stature he was of an average length,
Wondrously active, aye, and great of strength.
Prinked out he was, as if he were a mead,
All full of fresh-cut flowers white and red.
Singing he was, or fluting, all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his gown, with sleeves long and wide.
Well could he sit on horse, and fairly ride.
He could make songs and words thereto indite,
Joust, and dance too, as well as sketch and write.
So hot he loved that, while night told her tale,
He slept no more than does a nightingale.
Courteous he, and humble, willing and able,
And carved before his father at the table.
A yeoman had he, nor more servants, no,
At that time, for he chose to travel so;
And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
A sheaf of peacock arrows bright and keen
Under his belt he bore right carefully
Well could he keep his tackle yeomanly:
His arrows had no draggled feathers low,
And in his hand he bore a mighty bow.
A cropped head had he and a sun-browned face.
Of woodcraft knew he all the useful ways.
Upon his arm he bore a bracer gay,
And at one side a sword and buckler, yea,
And at the other side a dagger bright,
Well sheathed and sharp as spear point in the light;
On breast a Christopher of silver sheen.
He bore a horn in baldric all of green;
A forester he truly was, I guess.

Chapter 9 : Chaucer's Middle English Glossary

The Canterbury Tales The General Prologue (In a Modern English translation on the left beside the Middle English version on the right.).

Here bygynneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury. Who helped them when they were sick. Who intended to ride toward Canterbury. And we were well accommodated in the best way. To take our way where I will tell you. And at a knight then will I first begin. Fidelity and good reputation, generosity and courtesy. He was at Alexandria when it was won. No Christian man of his rank so often. Of Algeciras, and had ridden in Morocco. He had been at many a noble expedition. Three times in formal duels, and each time slain his foe. And of his deportment as meek as is a maid. In all his life unto any sort of person. He was a truly perfect, noble knight. His horses were good, but he was not gaily dressed. And went to do his pilgrimage. With locks curled as if they had been laid in a curler. He was twenty years of age, I guess. And wonderfully agile, and of great strength. All full of fresh flowers, white and red. He was as fresh as is the month of May. His gown was short, with long and wide sleeves. He well knew how to sit on horse and handsomely ride. Joust and also dance, and well draw and write. He slept no more than does a nightingale. And carved before his father at the table. And he the yeoman was clad in coat and hood of green. And in his hand he carried a mighty bow. He had a close-cropped head, with a brown face. He well knew all the practice of woodcraft. A Christopher-medal of bright silver on his breast. He was a forester, truly, as I guess. And she was called Madam Eglantine. For French of Paris was to her unknown. That no drop fell upon her breast. Her greatest pleasure was in good manners. Of grease, when she had drunk her drink. She reached for her food in a very seemly manner. And to be considered worthy of reverence. Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled. With roasted meat, or milk and fine white bread. And all was feeling and tender heart. Her mouth very small, and moreover soft and red. For, certainly, she was not undergrown. Her cloak was very well made, as I was aware. And after "Love conquers all. Who was her secretary, and three priests. A virile man, qualified to be an abbot. Where this lord was prior of the subordinate monastery. And followed the broader customs of modern times. This is to say, a monk out of his cloister. And I said his opinion was good. How shal the world be served? How shall the world be served? Let Augustine have his work reserved to him! Therefore he was indeed a vigorous horseman: Was all his pleasure, by no means would he refrain from it. There was an elaborate knot in the larger end. And his face did too, as if he had been rubbed with oil. His boots supple, his horse in excellent condition. He was not pale as a tormented spirit. A fat swan loved he best of any roast. His saddle horse was as brown as is a berry. A limiter with an assigned territory, a very solemn man. So much of sociability and elegant speech. Of young women at his own cost. He was a noble supporter of his order. For he was licensed by his order. And his absolution was pleasant: Where he knew he would have a good gift. He can not weep, although he painfully suffers. One may give silver to the poor friars. And pins, to give to fair wives. And certainly he had a merry voice: He absolutely took the prize for reciting ballads. Furthermore he was strong as a champion fighter. To have acquaintance with sick lepers. But all with rich people and sellers of victuals. There was no man anywhere so capable of such work. Yet he would have a farthing, before he went away. His total profit was much more than his proper income. And he knew how to frolic, as if he were indeed a pup. But he was like a master of arts or a pope. Which was round as a bell fresh from the clothespress. As do the stars in the frosty night. This worthy friar was called Huberd. Do you want to check your understanding of the text? If so take a brief quiz.