

**THE CHAUCER CANON, WITH A  
DISCUSSION OF THE WORKS  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE NAME  
OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER**

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The Chaucer canon, with a discussion of the works associated with the name of Geoffrey Chaucer by Walter W. Skeat

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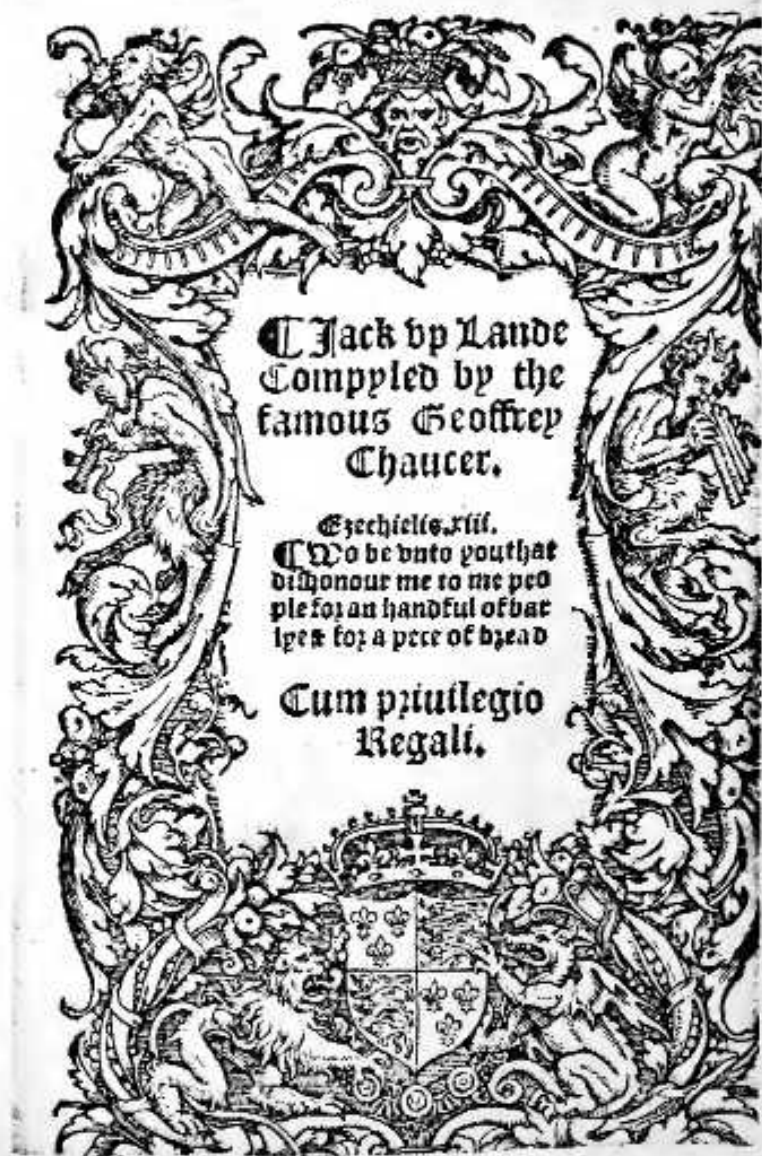
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**WALTER W. SKEAT**

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**J**ack by Lande  
Compyled by the  
famous Geoffrey  
Chaucer.

Ezechiels. xlii.  
Do be vnto you that  
dishonour me to me peo-  
ple for an handful of bar-  
ley & for a pece of bread

**Cum priuilegio  
Regali.**

TSK

# THE CHAUCER CANON

WITH A DISCUSSION OF THE  
WORKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NAME  
OF  
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

BY THE

REV. WALTER W. SKEAT

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Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge*

'Dare not to match thy pipe with Tityrus his style'

*SPEXER, Shep. Kal. Epilogue*

Oxford

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## P R E F A C E

THE subject of the present volume is an examination of the Chaucer Canon. All the pieces that have been at any time associated with his name are here considered; and various tests are given whereby his genuine works can be distinguished from the rest.

Much that is here said is necessarily repeated from what I have already advanced in my six-volume edition of Chaucer and in the supplementary volume entitled *Chaucerian Pieces*; but I have also taken the opportunity, whilst collecting many scattered observations that have been previously made, of introducing a few new suggestions and arguments. In particular, the account here given of the striking parallel between Chaucer's grammatical usages and the regular employment of various grammatical suffixes in the unassailable text of the *Ormulum* is, to the best of my belief, wholly new, and adds much firmness and certainty to the whole argument. It is true that Tyrwhitt (in note 69 to his *Essay on Chaucer's Language*) long ago pointed out the value of 'the practice of Orm, the most authentic metrical composer that we have in our antient language,' but he did not give any detailed account of the conclusions to be drawn from it.

The argument which I adduce is briefly this. The extreme regularity of the metre of the *Ormulum* enables us to deduce with certainty the circumstances under which



grammatical inflexions are employed in it. Precisely similar inflexions occur in the genuine works of Chaucer, but not (speaking generally) in works which have erroneously been connected with his name.

Further, the genuine works, and these only, satisfy various rime-tests which are duly explained, and are all deducible from the *Canterbury Tales*; and in this way the true Chaucer Canon can be established.

A recent article by Dr. Koch, which appeared in the *Englische Studien* after the main part of the present work had been printed, has suggested the addition of the 'Note on Chapter VI,' printed at p. 149.

The results here arrived at have been compared with those given in Prof. Lounsbury's '*Chaucer Studies*,' from which they do not materially differ. Writing in 1892, Prof. Lounsbury was disposed to claim for Chaucer the whole of the existing English translation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*; but later investigations have shown that this view is no longer tenable.

An Appendix is subjoined, containing a complete List of Chaucer's Works, a List of Authorities for the same, and a Chronological List of all works associated with Chaucer, in the exact order of their publication.

I am indebted to Professor Hales for kindly perusing the proof sheets, though he is in no way responsible for their contents.

W. W. S.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	PAGE v
-------------------	-----------

### CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—§ 1. Object of the work. § 2. Former mistakes. § 3. Chaucer the author of the Canterbury Tales. § 4. Value of the Canterbury Tales. § 5. The Tales written at various dates. § 6. Necessity of examining their grammar. Inaccuracy of the black-letter editions. § 7. Chaucer's usages archaic. § 8. Value of the Ellesmere MS. § 9. Metre of the Ormulum. § 10. Introduction to the Ormulum. § 11. Value of a knowledge of Middle-English grammar. § 12. Final <i>-es</i> in the Ormulum marks ( <i>a</i> ) the infn. mood; ( <i>b</i> ) the gerund; ( <i>c</i> ) the strong pp.; ( <i>d</i> ) the pres. t. pl. or the pt. t. pl. § 13. Final <i>-es</i> marks ( <i>a</i> ) the gen. sing.; ( <i>b</i> ) the pl. of sbs.; ( <i>c</i> ) the adverb. § 14. Final <i>-e</i> marks ( <i>a</i> ) the nom. or acc.; ( <i>b</i> ) the dat.; ( <i>c</i> ) the gen.; ( <i>d</i> ) the def. adj.; ( <i>e</i> ) the pl. adj.; ( <i>f</i> ) part of a verb; ( <i>g</i> ) the weak pt. t.; ( <i>h</i> ) the adverb; ( <i>i</i> ) an A.S. vowel. Note also ( <i>k</i> ) the <i>-e-</i> in <i>blith-e-ly</i> . § 15. Recapitulation . . . . .	f
---	---

### CHAPTER II.

THE TEXT.—§ 16. Two texts of Chaucer. § 17. Comparison of the Student's Chaucer with the Globe edition. § 18. Similarity of the texts. § 19. Child's Essay. § 20. Child's Essay and Wright's text. § 21. The Harl. MS. 7334. § 22. Passage from Wright's preface. § 23. Uncertain	
---	--

	PAGE
value of the Harl. MS. § 24. Wright's treatment of the MS. § 25. Texts by Bell and Morris. § 26. Value of Child's Essay . . . . .	19
CHAPTER III.	
ANALYSIS OF THE SQUIERES TALE.—§ 27. Middle-English pronunciation. § 28. Values of final <i>-es</i> . § 29. Values of final <i>-en</i> . § 30. Values of final <i>-e</i> . § 31. Forms of substantives. § 32. Forms of adjectives. § 33. Verbs. § 34. Adverbs and prepositions. § 35. Suppression of final <i>-e</i> . § 36. Emphatic and unemphatic forms . . . . .	30
CHAPTER IV.	
VARIOUS RIME-TESTS.—§ 37. Chaucer's peculiarities. § 38. Rimes in <i>-y</i> and <i>-ye</i> . § 39. Rimes in <i>-ight</i> , <i>-yt</i> . § 40. Open and close <i>o</i> . § 41. Sources of open <i>o</i> . Examples. § 42. Sources of close <i>o</i> . Examples. § 43. Exceptions. § 44. Occasional riming of close with open <i>o</i> . § 45. Open and close <i>e</i> . Third variety; the neutral <i>è</i> . Examples in the Squires Tale. § 46. Lists of riming words . . . . .	45
CHAPTER V.	
LIST OF CHAUCER'S WORKS; EXTERNAL TESTIMONY TESTED.—§ 47. External evidence. § 48. Works claimed by Chaucer himself. § 49. Legend of Good Women examined. § 50. Final <i>-es</i> ; final <i>-en</i> ; final <i>-e</i> . § 51. Rime-tests applied to the Legend. § 52. Troilus and Cressida. § 53. Testimony of Shillely. § 54. Merciless Beauty. § 55. Balade against Women Unconstant. § 56. Complaynt Damours. § 57. A Balade of Complaynt. § 58. Womanly Noblesse. § 59. Two Complaints . . . . .	56
CHAPTER VI.	
THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE: FRAGMENT A.—§ 60. The Three Fragments. § 61. Fragment A. Final <i>-es</i> ; final <i>-en</i> ; final <i>-e</i> . § 62. Value of riming words. § 63. Correctness of the rimes in Fragment A. § 64. Proportion of feminine rimes. Examples of close and open <i>o</i> and <i>e</i> . § 65. Examples of neutral <i>è</i> . § 66. Lydgate's allusions to Fragment A. § 67. Probable genuineness of Fragment A. § 68. Probable date of the same . . . . .	65