

**Chaucer's
Grandfather was
a Taverner**

by

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DISCOVER

ASTRONOMY



COURTESY OF SKY & TELESCOPE

Chaucer studied astronomy and astrology. One of his writings is a treatise on the astrolabe, a mediaeval instrument used to figure out the positions of stars. He holds the astrolabe in this woodcut by Edward Burne-Jones.

Tide turns for Chaucer

BY JEFF NESMITH

A Texas physics professor thinks he may have solved a centuries-old mystery from *The Canterbury Tales* by the mediaeval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer.

Donald W. Olson of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos suggests that a rare configuration of the sun, Earth and moon could have produced unusually high tides, thus enabling an astronomer-magician in one of the tales to cause rocks to "disappear."

In this classic collection of stories, which Chaucer wrote in the late 1300s, pilgrims on an April pilgrimage to Canterbury take turns telling stories. The work has been both bane and delight to generations of high school students, many of whom have been forced to memorize and recite its lengthy prologue.

The students are later rewarded when they read the bawdy and hilarious *Miller's Tale*.

But another story, *The Franklin's Tale*, has puzzled scholars for centuries.

The franklin (a landowner of free but not noble birth, that is) entertained the other pilgrims with a story about a young squire who was eager to win the affections of a beautiful woman who lived in a castle on the rocky coast of Brittany in France.

To impress her, the youth hired a magician to cause menacing offshore rocks to disappear. After exacting an enormous fee, the

magician performed an astronomical calculation.

On a particular day in "the cold, frosty season of December," the magician declared that he would cause the rocks to disappear — and they did.

The magician's trick can be explained by an extremely high tide, and Olson believes he has pinpointed that tide.

Writing in the April issue of *Sky & Telescope Magazine*, Olson says that on Dec. 19, 1340, the sun and moon aligned to produce a solar eclipse. Moreover, each body was near its shortest possible distance from the Earth.

Olson says the combination would have led to exceptionally

been familiar with the remarkable tides for which the Brittany coast is famous, Olson writes.

Since Chaucer is believed to have been born in late 1340 or early 1341 — within a very short time of the remarkable tide-raising configuration of Dec. 19, 1340, he could have learned of it and the corresponding Earth-moon-sun alignment while calculating his own horoscope.

If Olson's theory is correct, Chaucer would not be the last Englishman to have a strong interest in the French coast and the way the sun and moon could influence its tides, says Bradley Schaefer, a Yale University astro-physicist.

only haven on the Atlantic coast for the German navy's capital ships, including the formidable battleship Tirpitz.

Like Olson, Schaefer uses astronomy to investigate history. He said in an interview that in planning the raid, the British team knew the vital dock would be heavily fortified.

They chose a night when the moon was full and near "perigee," the closest point its orbit would bring it to the Earth, Schaefer said. The full moon meant the sun and moon were in an approximate line with the Earth. That factor and the proximity of the moon meant tides would be unusually high.

The British commandos altogether avoided the heavily fortified channel leading to the dock. Rather, they took the destroyer, loaded with 4½ tonnes of explosive, over tide-flooded salt flats until they were near the dock.

"In addition to the super-high tides, the captain had to have a full moon in order to navigate over the flats," Schaefer said. After slicing through anti-submarine nets, the ship crashed into the docks at 20 knots.

The commandos who survived the collision scrambled off and started blowing up pumphouses and other facilities. Then the Campbelton exploded and destroyed the dock, which was out of commission for the remainder of the war.

Nearly all of the 300 British officers and men were killed or captured in the raid, and 400 German troops died when the Campbelton exploded.

Cow Newspapers

EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH TIDES COULD HAVE CAUSED BOULDERS TO BRIEFLY DISAPPEAR

high tides, the kind that could have caused offshore boulders to briefly disappear. This type of alignment has only occurred a handful of other times in recorded history; it will not happen again until 3089.

Olson notes that Chaucer studied astronomy and astrology. One of his writings — dedicated to "little Lewis, my son" — is a treatise on the astrolabe, a mediaeval instrument used to figure out the positions of stars. So the poet probably knew about the rare celestial conjunction of Dec. 19, 1340, and the unusual tides it produced.

Chaucer also had visited France several times and he may well have

In March, 1942, almost exactly 600 years after the high tides that may have inspired *The Franklin's Tale*, British commandos on HMS Campbelton took advantage of unusually high tides to pull off one of the most daring raids of the Second World War — also on France's northwest coast, Schaefer says.

The commandos sailed the Campbelton, an old four-stack destroyer Britain had received from the United States under the Lend-Lease program, into the teeth of German defences to destroy a naval dock at St-Nazaire, on the Normandy coast.

The dock, then the largest on Earth, was a worthy target, the

Chaucer

THE CHAUCERS - WERE THEY PART OF THE TAVERNER FAMILY?

Andrew-le-Tavener (De Dinnington) of Ipswich

Mary Westhale (2nd marriage)

=

Robert-le-Taverner of Ipswich
 also Chaucer (shoe maker)
 le Sadlier
 de Malyn
 de Dinnington
 Citizen and Vintner of London
 1308 Deputy Butler to the King , Mary's first husband was John Heron (Heyron) secondly Robert and third Richard Chaucer (d.1349) By John Heron she had a son Thomas (d.1349) By Robert - John Chaucer

John B.1313 D.1366

=

(1) Agnes Copton = (2) Bartholemew Chapel

Geoffrey Chaucer 1343 - 1400

Katherine

=

Simon Manning of Cudham

Phillipa Pan (Paen) M.Circa 1365

Lewis

Thomas B.1368 M.1394 Maud, daughter of Sir John Burghersch

Elizabeth

Agnes

Alice = (3) William de la Pole Duke of Suffolk.

JOHN CHAUCER

Thomas Heron and his half brother John Chaucer fought in Scotland in 1327, and John in Flanders in 1338 at the start of the 100 years war. About this time John was described as a citizen and Vintner of London, or as a merchant of London.

In 1342 John was one of 15 vintners consenting to an ordinance preventing the sale of bad wine in London Taverns.

In 1343 John obtained a permit from the King to ship 40 quarts of wheat from Ipswich to Flanders.

1347 John was appointed deputy in the port of Southampton to the Kings's chief butler John-de-Wesenham. By April his duties had increased and he became Wesenham's deputy for collecting customs on cloth and beds exported by foreign merchants from Southampton, Portsmouth and 3 other ports. He resigned his post in 1349 after the plague had killed his step father Richard Chaucer, his half brother Thomas Heron, his father-in-law Hamo-de-Compton, and his uncle Nicholas-de-Compton they left various properties to John.

Between 1353 and 1364 John Chaucer's name appeared amongst the jurymen of the city and in 1356 John was appointed with 1 other as collector of their ward's share of a subsidy to be raised by the city towards providing two war vessels.

Geoffrey was born around 1343.

Geoffrey Chaucer ref: English Verse 1300-1500 Longman's Paperback - Ed J Barrow.

B.1343 Son of a wealthy London wine merchant named John - see S.T. Thrupp, merchant class of medieval London. University of Chicago 1948.

1347 In service of the Countess of Ulster married Philippa, damsel of the Queen's chamber.

1374-86 Living above Aldgate, controller of petty customs and wool customs and subsidy in the Port of London.

1377 Geoffrey visited Flanders with Sir Thomas Percy, later Earl of Worcester.

1378 Paris with the Earl of Huntington and Milan with Edward Berkeley probably as a secretary.

1378 Revisited Italy.

1383-89 J.P. for Kent, where he probably lived until 1399.

1387 Started Canterbury Tales.

1389 Clerk of the King's Works, including Westminster, Eltham, The Tower of London, Clarendon Sheen, The Castle of Berkhamstead, Byfleet, Hennington, Chilton Longley & Feckenham. Lodges at Hathebury in the New Forest, Gardens, Mills, Ponds, he replaced Roger Elmham. [Note: The Taverners came from North Elmham in Norfolk].

1390-1400 Forester of the King's forest at North Petherton, Somerset. Chaucer owed his appointment indirectly to Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, Lord Lt of Ireland & Hereditary Forrester of Petherton.

1399 Moved to a house adjoining the land chapel of Westminster Abbey - 1400 died and was buried in the Abbey like other courtiers and royal officials.

REF:

M.M. Crow & C.C. Olson - Chaucer life O.U.P. 1966.

G. Mathew - Court of Richard II Murray 1968.

E. Rickest Ed Chaucer's Work, Columbia U.P. 1948.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER & THE TAVERNERS

Chaucer was born in 1343 and died 1400, he was a soldier esquire of the King's household controller of customs, justice of the peace, member of parliament.

He was clerk of the King's Works in charge of repairs at 10 royal residences and a forestry official.

A soldier, Chaucer was captured by the French and ransomed for £16.00.

As customs controller, he maintained a chief source of royal revenue.

As an M.P. in 1388 parliament he saw the first attack on Richard II leading to his deposition in 1399.

He travelled over much of South East England, to France, a number of times to Spain and at least twice to Italy.

Several generations before, his ancestors had lived as merchants in Ipswich, selling wool to Flanders, and importing wine from France. They were called "Taverner" and held positions in the customs service.

Geoffrey's great great grandfather was Andrew-de-Dinnington or Andrew-le-Taverner. Andrew's son was Robert Mayn-le-Chaucer, Robert's son was John Chaucer.

Robert and wife Mary (Westhales) settled in London in 1324 where John, their son was kidnapped by his aunt, who intended him to marry her daughter, in order to keep the Ipswich holdings in the family. John (aged 12) was freed, and the aunt went to prison, also she was fined £250, proof that they were wealthy. John married Agnes, daughter of John Copton, and niece of Hamo-de-Copton "moneyer" at the mint in the Tower of London.

In 1349 Agnes inherited 24 shops.

John's half brother Thomas Heyron was also a vintner as was his father, step father and also cousins. John also held positions in the customs service.

1343 Geoffrey was probably born in Vintry Ward, London. It was a low-lying district on the north bank of the Thames on either side of the Thames Street, and around Paternoster Lane, it was one of the two wealthiest wards in the city. Agnes and John owned property there.

1356-9 When Geoffrey was 13 years old he was a page of Elizabeth-de-Burgh, countess of Ulster, wife of Lionel, a son of Edward III. Christmas 1356 he spent at Hatfield with the Royal Hunting Party, along with the young John-of-Gaunt, Elizabeth's brother-in-law, who later became the richest and most powerful man in England.

1366 John Chaucer died. Agnes remarried Bartholomew-Atte-Chapel.

Geoffrey married Phillipa Pan, daughter of St Giles Paen de Rout, a knight of Hainault and one of Queen Philippa's country men - Chief Herald of Aquitaine.

Another Roet daughter was a mistress of John-of-Gaunt for more than 20 years, marrying him in 1396.

It is believed that he studied amongst lawyers of the inner temple during 137?

Chaucer's first major work is dedicated to Blanche, the first wife of John-de-Gaunt. "The book of the Duchess, a Eulegy for Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster.

Edward III awarded Geoffrey a gallon of wine a day for life in 1374, confirmed on the accession of Richard II. Also in 1374 Chaucer was appointed controller of export taxes and customs of wool, sheepskins and leather in the port of London - Salary £10, an important post, he held for 12 years.

One suit involving Chaucer mentions Isabella-Atte-Halle.

1389 Chaucer lived in Greenwich, Kent.

1368 M.P. for Kent.

Geoffrey and Phillipa are believed to have had 4 children.

REFERENCES:

1396 Thomas Chaucer, son of Geoffrey Chaucer Esq.

1403 Lewis Chaucer referred to.

1381 Elizabeth Chauncy, a nun at Barking.

1399 Agnes attendant at the coronation of King Henry IV.

Thomas Chaucer married Maud, daughter of Sir John Burghersch, a great heiress with annuities from John of Gaunt, Richard II and Henry IV.

Thomas had a long and illustrious career. He was chief butler to the King's Richard II 1377 - 1399 Henry IV 1399 - 1413, Henry V 1413 - 1422 and Henry VI 1422 - 1461. He had large holdings in Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Buckinghamshire. He was also a public official who had a long and distinguished career. He was sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire and constable of Wallingford, he served as an envoy to France, was a member of the King's council, a member of parliament for Kent, and speaker of the house of commons.

The Chaucer seal had a shield within a geometrical pattern bearing "Parti per pale a bend Overall".

His daughter Alice married 3 times. Her 3rd husband was the Duke of Suffolk, William-de-la-Pole whose grandson John, Earl of Lincoln became heir to the throne of his uncle, the nice Richard III. John claimed the throne and died in the Tower in 1539.

The above extracts from "The Riverside Chaucer" - Oxford U.P. By A Burgess.

Geoffrey Chaucer's grandfather married Mary Westhale in Ipswich. In the records of Ipswich there is a land deal involving Ranulphus (Rano) le Taverner, along with Hugh Horaud, Walter-de-Westhale and Robert-de-Reymes, dated 5th September 1312.

CHAUCER'S WORLD

At Ipswich 1312 September 5th Ranulphus (Rano) le Taverner along with Hugh Horaud, Walter de Westhale and Robert de Reymes, (Chaucer's grandmother was Mary de Westhale).

P141 1397 Chaucer made sub forester of Petherton (Somerset). Chaucer owed his appointment indirectly to Roger Mortimer Earl of March Lord Lt of Ireland and hereditary forester of Petherton.

P190 1390 2nd September, One Roger Elinham or Elmham Chaucer's successor as clerk of the works in 1391 were bound as mainpernors for a detinue of 106s 8d (PRO cal of close rolls 1389-92 P286).

P132/1 Law student's in a fray - 1325 On sunday in November, John de Glemham, apprentice of the bench, (1) Lay dead in a house in the parish of St Bride of Fleete Street. It was learned that on St Martin's eve (Nov 10), John de Oxford, clerk at the request of William de Cornelle, went to the taverne of Edmund Cosyn in the parish of St Bride where he assaulted John Wolfel, Edmund's Taverner on the ground of an old quarrel, John de Wolfel made an outcry, whereupon came John de Glemham and a number of apprentices of the bench whose names were unknown.

In the Fray a certain William le Taverner struck John de Glemham with his sword on the forehead inflicting a wound 4" long 2 1/2" deep. Thus wounded he made his way to his chamber where he had his ecclesiastical rights and after lingering until the following saturday died.

P132/2 (1) Law student. Although the students involved in this affair were not attending Oxford or Cambridge they may be regarded as essentially university students, for the Inns of court " were not merely law schools, but rather universities where gentleman's sons were trained for public careers music, dancing, history and divinity were studied as well as the law".

P366 Sir William Walworth, Sir Nicholas Brembre, and Sir John Philipot were all collectors of the customs while Chaucer was controller, the two latter for many years.

ABBREVIATIONS

E 357	L.T.R., Escheators' Accts. Enrolled
E 361	L.T.R., Wardrobe and Household Accts. Enrolled
E 363	L.T.R., Exannual Rolls
E 364	L.T.R., For. Accts., Rolls of
E 368	L.T.R., Memo. Rolls
E 371	L.T.R., Originalia Rolls
E 372	L.T.R., Pipe Rolls
E 401	Excheq. of Receipt, Receipt Rolls
E 403	Excheq. of Receipt, Issue Rolls
E 404	Excheq. of Receipt, Writs and Warrants for Issues

3. COURTS OF LAW

CP 25	Common Pleas, Feet of Fines
CP 40	Common Pleas, Plea Rolls (or De Banco Rolls)
KB 9	King's Bench, Ancient Indictments (Crown Side)
KB 27	King's Bench, Coram Rege Rolls
KB 29	King's Bench, Controlment Rolls
KB 136	King's Bench, Plea Side, Writs (in bulk)
KB 138	King's Bench, Plea Side, Writs and Returns (Selected)
Jl 1	Justices Itinerant, Eyre Rolls, Assize Rolls, &c.
Jl 3	Justices Itinerant, Jail Delivery Rolls

4. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

SC 2	Court Rolls
SC 6	Ministers' and Receivers' Accts.
SC 8	Ancient Petitions

Chaucer - life records
Ed. M. C. Cox Ox. Clarendon Press 1966

CHAPTER ONE

Chaucer's Parents and their Home in the Vintry

I. CHAUCER'S FATHER, JOHN CHAUCER
A LONDON VINTNER

Deed of Geoffrey Chaucer, Son of John Chaucer, Vintner of London, quitclaiming to Henry Herbury, Vintner of London his Right in a Tenement formerly his Father's in the Parish of St. Martin, Vintry, 19 June 1381

PLACITA terre tenta in Hustengo Londonie die Lune proximo post festum Sancte Margarete Virginis anno regni Regis Ricardi secundi quinto [i.e. 22 July 1381].¹

Scriptum Henrici Herbury vinetarii per Galfridum Chaucer.

Noverint universi me Galfridum Chaucer filium Johannis Chaucer vinetarii Londonie remisisse relaxasse ac omnino pro me heredibus et executoribus meis imperpetuum quietumclamasse Henrico Herbury civi et vinetario dicte civitatis totum jus meum et clameum quod unquam habui habeo seu quovismodo infuturum habere potero in quodam tenemento situato in parochia Sancti Martini in Vinetria Londonie inter tenementum Willelmi le Gauger versus orientem et tenementum quod quondam fuit Johannis le Mazelyner versus occidentem et extendit se in longitudine a vico regio de Thamystrete versus austrum usque ad aquam de Wallebroke versus aquilonem et quod quidem tenementum dictus Henricus modo habet et possidet et nuper fuit predicti Johannis patris mei; ita videlicet quod nec ego predictus Galfridus nec heredes mei nec aliquis alius nomine nostro aliquid juris vel clamii in predicto tenemento cum suis pertinenciis nec in aliqua parcella eiusdem decetero exigere vindicare seu reclamare poterimus nec

¹ The deed was dated 19 June 1381, but not enrolled until 22 July 1381. The dates of other deeds enrolled in this court prove that the feast in question was the second of the two feasts of St. Margaret (Margareta, *p. et m.*), namely 20 July, and that the court was held on Monday, 22 July.

debemus infuturum set ab omni accione juris et clamii inde simus exclusi per presentes imperpetuum. In cuius rei testimonium huic presenti scripto sigillum meum apposui. Datum Londonie decimo nono die mensis Junii anno regni Regis Ricardi secundi post conquestum quarto.

(Husting R., 110, No. 8;¹ cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 146.)

John Chaucer, London vintner, who is named in the above record as the father of Geoffrey Chaucer, was born probably in 1312 or 1313 and died in 1366.² He was the son of Robert le Chaucer, known also as Robert Malin le Chaucer, citizen and vintner of London, who was the son of Andrew de Dinnington (Dyny[n]tone, Dyninetone), of Ipswich, sometimes known as Andrew le Taverner.³ John's mother was Mary Chaucer. She was married three times, first to John Heron (Heyron), by whom she had a son Thomas, then to Robert Chaucer, by whom she had a son John (father of Geoffrey Chaucer), and finally to Richard Chaucer, possibly a relative of Robert.⁴ Mary's first husband seems to have been a pepperer. Her last two husbands and both her sons, Thomas Heron and John Chaucer, were vintners.⁵

¹ Concerning the Court of Husting and the enrolment of deeds and wills there see R. R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting*, London, A.D. 1258-A.D. 1688 (London, 1889), I, pp. xxii-xxv.

² Only a résumé of the biography of Chaucer's parents, John and Agnes Chaucer, is given here, inasmuch as a book on Chaucer's ancestry completed by the late Vincent B. and Lilian J. Redstone will, it is hoped, be published in due time as a supplement to the present volume. The record printed above is the only one we have which pertains to either of Chaucer's parents and which also names Chaucer.

Concerning Elizabeth Chauser (Chauchy) and Katherine Manning, supposed sisters of Geoffrey Chaucer, see pp. 288-9 and p. 546, n. 4, below.

³ Ipswich Corporation Records, Recognizance R., 2-3 Edw. III, and Recognizance R., 16-17 Edw. III; Coram Rege R., 263, Hil. 19 Edw. II, m. 13 (cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 8). See also V. B. and L. J. Redstone, 'The Heyrons of London', *Speculum*, xii (1937), 182-95. Robert le Chaucer (Robert Malin le Chaucer) was sometimes known also as Robert of Ipswich (Court of Husting, Common Pleas, R. 30, m. 12). In 1305 he was in the king's service (*ibid.*, m. 14). The latest record which certainly pertains to him is a plea of debt brought by him in Michaelmas term, 1314 (De Banco R., 207, Mich. 8 Edw. II, m. 178 d.). Mary, widow of Robert le Chaucer, is mentioned in a recognizance of 29 Oct. 1315 (Close R., 9 Edw. II, m. 21 d.; cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 5). It would thus appear that John Chaucer's father died when John was only two or three years old. Except for the few facts listed here, nothing definite is known of John Chaucer's father. Certain other records, formerly thought to pertain to Robert le Chaucer, can be shown to pertain to another man, Robert de Gunthorpe, known also as le Chaucer, can be shown to pertain to another man, Robert de Gunthorpe, known also as le Chaucer, but space for presenting the evidence is lacking here. Also, there were other Robert le Chaucers in contemporary records who might or might not be identical with the one who was Geoffrey Chaucer's grandfather. (Concerning early Ipswich records in general see G. H. Martin, *The Early Court Rolls of the Borough of Ipswich*, ed. H. P. R. Finberg (University College, Leicester, 1954).)

⁴ Coram Rege R., 263, Hil. 19 Edw. II, m. 13; De Banco R., CP 40/161, m. 391 d.; Westminster Abbey Muniments, Book II, 'Domesday', fol. 231. Cf. J. M. Manly, 'Mary Chaucer's First Husband', *Speculum*, ix (1934), 86-88. Mary Chaucer may have had another son, named John Heron; see p. 3 below.

⁵ Husting R., 66, No. 41; *ibid.*, 77, No. 59; London Letter-Book E, fol. 94 (cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 6, 14, 24; R. R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of the Letter-Books of the City of London, Letter-Book E* (London, 1903), Pt. 1, 109-10). See also Redstone, op. cit., p. 182; A. A. Kern, *The Ancestry of Chaucer* (Baltimore, 1906), p. 69. Later research has shown certain statements of Kern to be inaccurate.

On 3 December 1324 Agnes de Westhall (Westhale), paternal aunt of John Chaucer, and others of Ipswich abducted him by force (*raperunt et abduxerunt*) in London from the custody of Richard and Mary Chaucer, his stepfather and his mother, in order to marry him to his cousin Joan, daughter of Walter and Agnes de Westhall.¹ In the course of the resultant legal proceedings (January 1326-October 1327) it was brought out that John Chaucer was under fourteen at the time of the abduction but over twelve before the suing of the writ, the date of which would have to be between 3 December 1324 and January 1326. From these facts the year of John's birth may be deduced as probably 1312 or 1313.

The abduction of John in 1324 led to a number of lawsuits relating to his inheritance from his father, Robert le Chaucer, but did not lead to his marriage with Joan de Westhall. In fact he was still unmarried in 1328.² The abduction did, however, lead to the imprisonment in the Marshalsea of John's aunt, Agnes de Westhall, with Geoffrey Stace, her collaborator in the abduction and later her second husband, and to their being fined in 1327 £250, which before 26 November 1330 they paid to John in full. The young heir's tenements were at the time valued at not more than 20s. a year.³

While the outcome of the above legal actions was still pending, a John Chaucer became involved in some military ventures. Along with his half-brother, Thomas Heron, he took part in the ineffectual summer campaign of the English against the Scots in 1327. A Thomas Heron is listed among the mounted men-at-arms raised by the City and also by John de Bedford, London skinner, for this expedition, and this Thomas was accompanied, according to Bedford's list, by a John Chaucer,⁴ who has been identified either as John Heron, full brother of Thomas, or as John Chaucer, half-brother. Also, a 'John le Chaucer, brother of Thomas Heron,' was among persons indicted in January 1329 for having taken part, with John de Bedford's troops, in the earl of Lancaster's abortive attempt to overthrow the government of Queen Isabella and Mortimer. John Chaucer, brother of Thomas Heron, was outlawed on 22 May 1329 for his share in these proceedings.⁵

¹ Coram Rege R., Hil. 19 Edw. II, No. 263, m. 13; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., D 9325. (Cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 8).

² Ancient Petition, 169/8432 (cf. Great Britain, *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, ii. 14); Petitions, 2 Edw. III, No. 6; Coram Rege R., Hil. 19 Edw. II, No. 263, m. 13 (cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 8, 10). See also p. 8 below.

Also concerning the lawsuits: Ipswich Corporation Records, Great Plea R., Mixed Entries, 17-19 Edw. II; Coram Rege R., 274, mm. 126, 120 d.; Chan. Misc., 68, File 1, Nos. 13, 14, 15; De Banco R., 253, m. 231 d.; *ibid.*, 258, mm. 128, 156 d.; *ibid.*, 264, mm. 69 d., 108.

Joan de Westhall in 1334 married a Robert de Beverley (Ipswich Recognizance R., 7-8 Edw. III, Friday after St. Philip and St. James, 8 Edw. III). A Robert de Beverley and his wife Joan, probably this couple, were both in the service of Queen Philippa, Joan de Beverley being one of her *damoiselles*. She was granted a life annuity, after her retirement, in 1359. (Excheq. K.R. Memo. R., 122, *Retorda*, Mich.; CPR, 1358-61, p. 252).

³ Ancient Petition, 169/8432; CCR, 1330-3, pp. 90-91, 93-94; cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 10, 11.

⁴ Excheq. K.R. Accs., 109/18, m. 1; Plea and Memo. R., A 1 b, m. 9 (cf. A. H. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls . . . of the City of London, A.D. 1323-1364* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 41). See also Redstone, op. cit., pp. 186-9.

⁵ Assize R., 548, m. 6 d.; Court of Husting, Common Pleas, R. 53, Monday after St. Dunstan; Assize R., 551; cf. Redstone, op. cit., pp. 187-8. For the general historical backgrounds see May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307-1399* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 96-102.

A John Chaucer is included also as one of the ringleaders of John de Bedford's men who made an attack, on 17 Oct. 1328, on the Suffolk manor of the abbot of St. Edmund, carrying off horses, plate, jewels, and other valuables, and even making prisoner the abbot himself (Thomas,

Another military action in which a John Chaucer, possibly the son of Robert le Chaucer, was involved was an expedition beyond the seas in 1338, in the company of William de Northwell, keeper of the wardrobe. John Chaucer was granted royal letters of protection on 12 June, being about to go to parts beyond the seas in the king's service. The occasion for this journey overseas was Edward III's expedition to Flanders, which opened the Hundred Years War that year. The identity of this John Chaucer cannot be established with certainty either. Considering the flexibility of surnames of the time, he might have been that John de Northwell, son of Agnes Chaucer of London, to whom William de Northwell deeded certain properties in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire.¹

John Chaucer's business career, chiefly as a London vintner or wine merchant, can be traced from 26 January 1337 onwards. In a recognizance of that date he is first styled, so far as present records show, as John Chaucer (John le Chaucer), citizen and vintner of London.² He was frequently so called in later records.³ He was also referred to as a merchant of London.⁴ On 1 August 1342 John Chaucer was one of fifteen vintners who were present and consenting to an ordinance made by the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty of London for preventing the sale of bad wine in taverns.⁵ In the following January he received a permit from the king to ship 40 quarters of wheat from Ipswich to Flanders, with the proviso that he should not take out of the realm any wool, hides, and wool-fells not customed.⁶ In February 1347 he was appointed as deputy in the port of Southampton to the king's chief butler, John de Wesenham.⁷ In April 1347 his duties were increased by his appointment as Wesenham's deputy for collecting the custom on cloth and beds exported by foreign merchants from Southampton, Portsmouth, and three other ports.⁸ His office as deputy butler terminated on 28 October 1349, when he was replaced by another.⁹ Possibly he gave up the deputy butlership at this time because, in that year of the Black Death, several family properties came into his possession as the result of death among his and his wife's kinsfolk.¹⁰ For some years after 1349 records of John Chaucer relate mainly to dealings concerning these properties.

op. cit., p. 73, n. 1). The abbot had supported the cause of Isabella and Mortimer and therefore was opposed by Bedford and his men, who were supporters of the earl of Lancaster. Identity of this John Chaucer also is in question, although he is probably the same John Chaucer who had been listed among Bedford's troops previously. (See Redstone, op. cit., pp. 188-9; V. B. Redstone, 'Some Mercenaries of Henry of Lancaster, 1327-1330', *TRHS*, 3rd ser., vii (1913), 151-66.)

¹ Chan. Warr., Ser. I, 1780/25; Treaty R., 12 Edw. III, Pt. 1, m. 8 (cf. Thomas Rymmer, *Fœderata* (London, 1727), v. 51; *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 13. Concerning William de Northwell's deed to John de Northwell, see p. 8, n. 4, below.

² Chan. Files, N.S., G 76.
³ e.g. De Banco R., Common Pleas (1345), 344, m. 182 d.; *ibid.* 392, m. 280; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1471, E 465 (1363, 1366); *Husting R.*, 95, No. 81 (1367). Cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 17, 27, 29, 31, 32, 38, 41.

⁴ De Banco R., 362, m. 78 d.
⁵ London Letter-Book F, fol. 63; cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 17, and Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*, *Letter-Book F*, p. 78.

⁶ *CCR*, 1343-6, p. 82.

⁷ *CPR*, 1348-50, p. 349.
⁸ *CCR*, 1343-6, p. 253.
⁹ *CPR*, 1348-50, p. 349.

¹⁰ His stepfather, Richard Chaucer, and his half-brother, Thomas Heron, both died in 1349, as well as his wife's uncle, Hamo de Copton, and her first cousin, Nicholas de Copton. (*Husting R.*, 76, Nos. 169, 190; *ibid.* 77, Nos. 59, 89, 141, 246; *ibid.* 86, No. 143. Cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 23-29. See p. 7 below.)

In addition to the tenement on Thames Street, which Geoffrey Chaucer quitclaimed in 1381 and which is supposed to have been the family home, John Chaucer owned at one time or another various properties in and about London, including a shop in the parish of St. Anthony which had belonged to his half-brother Thomas Heron; a tenement in the parish of St. Mary Aldermary church, which Thomas bequeathed to be sold; tenements and free rents in London and Middlesex formerly of Hamo de Copton, Agnes Chaucer's uncle; a brewing tenement (*tenementum bracieum*) with houses, buildings, and garden adjacent, and two shops and solars built thereover in the parish of St. Botolph without Aldgate, formerly of Hamo de Copton; 10½ acres of land in Stepney (Stebenheth) and in the parish of St. Mary Matfelon without Aldgate, London; twenty-four shops and two gardens in the parish of St. Mary Matfelon without Aldgate; also quitrents from several other tenements.¹

In 1355 and in succeeding years John Chaucer stood surety for a number of Londoners—among them two taverners, one of whom had been sued by a woman for drawing blood, two alien vintners who were later admitted to the freedom of the City of London, and a tailor thrown into the Tun for being a nightwalker in the City.² Most interesting of the cases in which he stood surety is that in which he and four others gave security, on 9 December 1364, that Richard Lyons, London vintner, would cause no harm to Alice Perrers or prevent her from going where she pleased and doing the business of the king as well as her own (*ita quod prefata Alicia salva et securā absque aliquo periculo ire potest ubicunque voluerit ad faciendam et exequendam negociā domini regis et negociā sua propria*).³

John Chaucer took part in the normal civic duties of a freeman of the City. From 1339 to 1363 he frequently witnessed deeds relating to property in the Vintry, sometimes relating to properties elsewhere, being associated therein with other Londoners.⁴

¹ *Husting R.*, 76, No. 190; 77, Nos. 89, 246; 103, No. 180; 117, Nos. 75-79; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1603, enrolled on *Husting R.*, 82, No. 71; Feet of Fines, London and Middlesex, Edw. III, Files 69-70, Nos. 402, 433; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1471, E 465. (Cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 25-29, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 89, 207.)

Certain Suffolk lands may also have come into the possession of John Chaucer through his aunt Agnes de Westhall's settlement upon him in remainder of two-thirds of her 'Coleste' manor and land in Alderton, Michaelmas term, 1324, shortly before she and others kidnapped her nephew with the intention of marrying him to her daughter Joan. The lands were settled upon Agnes herself for life, with successive remainders to (1) her daughter Sybil, (2) her daughter Joan, and (3) John, son of Robert le Chaucer. We have no proof that these lands ever actually passed to John Chaucer. (Suffolk Feet of Fines, Case 218, File 65, No. 18. Cf. *CCR*, 1330-3, p. 157.)

² Plea and Memo. R., A 7, m. 4 d.; *ibid.*, A 10, mm. 12, 17 d. (cf. Thomas, op. cit., A.D. 1323-1364, p. 250; *ibid.*, A.D. 1364-1381, pp. 30, 43); Court of *Husting*, Common Pleas, R. 81, 31 Edw. III; Court of *Husting*, Pleas of Land, R. 85, 37 Edw. III. Cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 39.

³ Plea and Memo. R., A 10, m. 4 d. (cf. Thomas, op. cit., A.D. 1364-1381, p. 11). Nothing has been found as to the nature of the dispute between Lyons and Alice Perrers, *domicella* of the chamber of Queen Philippa and later mistress of Edward III. Lyons owned properties in London and five of the neighbouring counties (C 136/19/33; C 136/27/25). Concerning Geoffrey Chaucer and Lyons, see pp. 160-1 below. Concerning possible association of Geoffrey Chaucer and Alice Perrers, see Haldeen Braddy, 'Chaucer and Dame Alice Perrers', *Spectulum*, xxi (1946), 222-8.

⁴ *Husting R.*, 66/41, 42; 75/150; 77/66; 78/17; 79/51, 54, 115; 80/162, 163; 82/29, 77; 83/114; 84/44, 52; 85/122; 86/61; 91/104; Harl. MS. 903, fol. 10; *CCR*, 1343-6, pp. 446-7; London Letter-Book F, fol. 216 (cf. Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*, *Letter-Book F*, p. 249; *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 30).

From 1353 to 1364 his name occurs among jurymen of the Vintry ward in four pleas of land in the Court of Hustung.¹ In 1350 he served as a juror in the trial of a false coiner,² and in the same year acted as surety for a fripperer who had been appointed guardian of two orphan children.³ In March 1356 the 'wealthier and wiser' of the commoners of Vintry ward, along with those of other wards, met and appointed John Chaucer and one other as collectors of their ward's share of a subsidy to be raised by the City towards providing two war vessels.⁴ In 1357 he answered as attorney for a minor when an assize of novel disseizin was summoned concerning the rent charge upon certain tenements in the parish of St. Martin in the Vintry.⁵

Besides the prolonged legal proceedings concerning his inheritance in which John Chaucer as a youth appeared at one time or another as both plaintiff and defendant,⁶ he was involved during his lifetime in various other lawsuits. In July 1345 the prioress of Cheshunt sued him for two years' back rent (£6) on the Thames Street tenement, and, after being summoned three times, he appeared in person and satisfied the prioress concerning the said arrears.⁷ There is also record of a plaint of intrusion brought in 1349 against John Chaucer and his wife Agnes touching a tenement in the parish of St. Botolph, Aldgate.⁸ In Easter term 1353 a charge of assault was brought against him in the Court of Common Pleas by one Geoffrey de Darsham, who alleged that at Iseldon⁹ John Chaucer beat and wounded him and committed other outrages to his grave injury and against the king's peace.¹⁰ The outcome of this suit is not known. Nor is the outcome known of the suit for debt brought against John Chaucer in 1357 by John Long, London citizen and fishmonger.¹¹ In January and April 1360 John and Agnes Chaucer brought plaints of intrusion against Roger Thorold, father and son, London vintners, concerning the tenement in the parish of St. Martin in the Vintry.¹²

The year of John Chaucer's death was 1366, as shown by the following evidence: On 16 January 1366 he executed a deed with his wife, Agnes, the last action of his of which we have record.¹³ In a plea of land dated 13 July of the same year Agnes is referred to as the wife of Bartholomew Chappel (at the Chapel).¹⁴ That this Agnes had been wife of John Chaucer is shown by two quitclaim deeds enrolled in the Court of Hustung, both made in May 1367 by Bartholomew Chappel and his wife Agnes, the latter being described as formerly wife of John Chaucer, late citizen and vintner.¹⁵ John Chaucer,

¹ Court of Hustung, Pleas of Land, R. 75, 27 Edw. III; R. 84, 36 Edw. III; R. 86, 38 Edw. III.

² Escheators Rolls, City of London, Misc. R., EE, m. 18.

³ Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*, *Letter-Book F*, p. 224.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Letter-Book G*, pp. 59-61.

⁵ Deeds of Dean and Chapter, St. Paul's, A 15 A 1410-11; cf. A 15 A 163, A 74/1952.

⁶ Although the surname in these documents is spelled 'Cauucer', the identity of John Chaucer as the attorney is made practically certain by circumstantial evidence.

⁷ See p. 3 above.

⁸ Court of Hustung, Common Pleas, R. 69.

⁹ See p. 7 below.

¹⁰ Islington, then a village on the north-west outskirts of London.

¹¹ De Banco R., 373, m. 65.

¹² Court of Hustung, Pleas of Land, R. 81, 82. Concerning the quarrelsome Roger Thorold, *per se*, see London Letter-Book G, fol. xlii (cf. Sharpe, *op. cit.*, *Letter-Book G*, p. 53), translated in full in H. T. Riley, *Memorials of London* (London, 1868), i. 275-7.

¹³ Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A. 1471; Hustung R., 93, No. 154 (cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 41).

¹⁴ Court of Hustung, Pleas of Land, R. 88.

¹⁵ Hustung R., 95, Nos. 80, 81; cf. *ibid.*, Nos. 38, 39; Chan. Inq. Misc., 192/13; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., E. 464 (cf. *L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 44).

therefore, must have died between 16 January and 13 July 1366, and in the same period his wife remarried.

No will of John Chaucer has come to light, either among the wills proved and enrolled in the Court of Hustung or among those proved in the various ecclesiastical courts of London—records of the latter, however, not being entirely complete for the period. If he had retained any property in Suffolk as well as in London, his will should have been proved in the court of the archbishop, records of which begin after John Chaucer's time.

Nor has the place of his burial been ascertained. The church of St. Martin in the Vintry, within which parish the Chaucer home lay, would seem to have been the most likely place of burial, but no record of a Chaucer monument in it has been found.¹

II. CHAUCER'S MOTHER, AGNES CHAUCER

The documents which name Agnes Chaucer as the wife, or former wife, of John Chaucer bear dates ranging from 19 October 1349 to 12 May 1367. The first of these records concerns a plea of intrusion brought against John Chaucer, vintner, and Agnes, his wife, by Nigel de Hackney, son and heir of Richard de Hackney, with reference to a tenement in the parish of St. Botolph without Aldgate.² The matter was settled on 11 November 1349 when Nigel de Hackney quitclaimed to John Chaucer the tenement and other properties which had formerly belonged to Hamo de Copton, London citizen and moneyer.³ Richard de Hackney had been appointed one of the executors under the will of Hamo de Copton.⁴ These pieces of property had come to John Chaucer in the right of Agnes, who was a daughter of John de Copton, a brother of Hamo, and who had become the heir of Hamo's after the death of Hamo's son and heir Nicholas, who had died between 11 April and 27 July 1349.⁵

¹ Cf. John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), i. 248. According to Stow, St. Martin's was rebuilt about 1399. He mentions several fourteenth-century tombs, but none of the Chaucer family. No record of John Chaucer's burial has been found in other churches of the neighbourhood.

² Court of Hustung, Pleas of Land, R. 71.

³ Hustung R., 77, No. 246.

⁴ See n. 6 below.

⁵ Cartulary of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, *per se* the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, fol. 161; transcripts occur in Guildhall MS. 122, fol. 692, and in B.M. Lansdowne MS. 448; cf. E. St. John Brooks, 'Chaucer's Mother', *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, lxxxiii (1929), 391-3, and 'Chaucer's Mother', *LTL*, 14 Mar. 1929, p. 207; Nan Cooke Carpenter, 'A Note on Chaucer's Mother', *MLN* lx (1945), 382-3.

The name of the wife of John de Copton, the mother of Agnes Chaucer, is not known. A John de Copton, living outside Aldgate, London, probably Agnes's father, was slain in 1313 or 1314 (Assize R., 547 A, m. 57). If this was the father of Agnes, she must have been very young at the time. Also, she could scarcely have been younger than her husband, who was born in 1312 or 1313 (see p. 3 above).

⁶ The author of the fourteenth-century commentary in the Cartulary of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, was not fully acquainted with the facts as to Agnes's becoming the heir of Hamo de Copton, for he wrote: *Nota quod supradictus Hamo de Coptone obit sine herede de corpore suo exente et post mortem eius quedam Agnes ut contingit et beres eiusdem Hamonis videlicet filia Johannis fratris dicti Hamonis . . . cepit in virum quendam Johannem Chaucer*. That Hamo did not die without an heir of his body, as the commentary states, but that Agnes became his heir only after the death of his son Nicholas can be deduced from the will of Hamo de Copton, which names Nicholas as his heir (among others), is dated 6 Dec. 1329, and is enrolled in the Court of Hustung, 16 July 1330 (Husting R., 58, No. 80), and from the will of Nicholas de Copton, which is dated 11 Apr. 1349 and was proved 27 July 1349 (Husting R., 77, No. 107).

With the exception of an indent to choose a confessor, dated 6 Id. February (8 February) 1331,¹ all the records naming Agnes as the wife of John Chaucer have to do with legal matters concerning property.² The last of these in which John Chaucer participated is dated 16 January 1366.³ At some time between this date and 13 July 1366 John Chaucer died, and Agnes married Bartholomew Chappel, another citizen and vintner of London,⁴ about whom no records have been found except those relating to the property which he acquired with her.

As no indication has been found that John Chaucer made any earlier marriage than to Agnes, his alleged marriage in 1324 to his cousin, Joan de Westhall, having been disproved,⁵ it seems practically certain that Agnes Chaucer was the mother of Geoffrey Chaucer.

III. THE CHAUCER HOME IN THE VINTRY

The earliest recorded connexion of John Chaucer with the Vintry tenement on Thames Street is dated 1345, when on 25 July he was summoned to answer the prioress of Cheshunt convent concerning two years of back rent.⁶ The exact date when John Chaucer's ownership and/or occupation of the house began is not known;⁷ therefore it cannot be inferred with any certainty that Geoffrey Chaucer was born there, though

¹ Great Britain, P.R.O., *Calendar . . . of Papal Registers, Papal Letters*, iii, *A.D. 1342-1362* (London, 1897), 409. The surname is spelled 'Causer': 'John Causer and Agnes his wile, citizen [sic] of London.' Concerning different ways of computing dates reckoned from the tides of a given month, see F. M. Powicke, *Handbook of British Chronology* (London, 1939), p. 398.

² Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1603, enrolled on Hustung R., 82, No. 71; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1602, enrolled on Hustung R., 84, No. 126; Court of Hustung, Pleas of Land, R. 81, last membrane; *ibid.*, R. 82; Feet of Fines, London and Middlesex, Edw. III, File 92, No. 402; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1598, enrolled on Hustung R., 91, No. 154; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., File 70, No. 433; Ancient Deeds, Feet of Fines, London and Middlesex, Edw. III, File 70, No. 433; Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 1471. (*Cf. L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41.)

³ See p. 6, n. 13, above.

⁴ Agnes (de Copton) seems to have been married but twice, to John Chaucer and to Bartholomew Chappel. Ancient Deeds, P.R.O., A 8733 (undated) records a gift by William de Northwell, appointed keeper of the wardrobe in 1335 and baron of the exchequer in 1340, to his mother, Dame Agnes de Northwell, and to John de Northwell, son of Agnes Chaucer of London, and to the heirs of the body of John, of various pieces of property in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. (*Scient presentis et futuri quod ego Willelmus de Northwell clericus dedi et concessi et . . . confirmavi carissime matri mee et domine Agneti de Northwell et Johanni de Northwell filio Agnetis Chaucer de Londonia et heredibus de corpore ipsius procreatis omnia terras et tenementa . . .*) The precise connexion between William de Northwell and the grantee, John de Northwell, has not been ascertained. No record of marriage between any member of the Northwell family and an Agnes Chaucer has been found. (Concerning William de Northwell, see Excheq. K.R. Writs, 44; Excheq. K.R. Memo. R., 141, Mich. 39 Edw. III; *CPR*, 1334-8, p. 151; *CPR*, 1338-40, p. 551. He died in 1363 or 1364.)

⁵ *Coram Rege R.*, 263, Hil. 19 Edw. II, m. xiii (*cf. L-R*, Pt. IV, Nos. 8, 10). See p. 3 above.

⁶ The tenement was subject to 60s. quitrent payable annually to the nuns of Cheshunt convent. (Court of Hustung, Common Pleas, R. 69; see p. 6 above.)

⁷ No record of John Chaucer's acquisition of this tenement occurs upon the Hustung Rolls. It had been acquired in 1331 by Nicholas de Bristol, London vintner, from Robert de Lynn (Lenne), London vintner, who had it of the enfeofment of the prioress and convent of the Blessed Mary of Cheshunt, to whom he paid 60s. a year in silver, 15s. each quarter (Hustung R., 59, No. 131). Presumably John Chaucer acquired the property from Nicholas de Bristol.

he was probably brought up there.¹ If Geoffrey Chaucer's release in 1381 was based upon the deed whereby his father obtained the tenement, the acquisition presumably took place before the death in 1343 of William Gager (le Gauger), vintner,² whose tenement is described in the release as adjoining the Chaucer property on the east.

John Chaucer presumably retained possession of the tenement until his death in 1366.³ On 12 March 1367 his widow and her next husband, Bartholomew Chappel, London vintner, entered into an agreement concerning this same tenement with Henry Herbury, London vintner, by which for ten years Herbury would hold it and keep it in repair.⁴ In 1381 Geoffrey Chaucer deced his right in this property, possibly coming to him upon the death of his mother, Agnes, to Henry Herbury,⁵ who in 1395 alienated the tenement to the Cheshunt prioress, Tiffany (Tiphania), and her convent, in mortmain.⁶

We have but meagre descriptive detail concerning the Chaucer tenement on Thames Street. In the record of purchase by Nicholas de Bristol in 1331 it is described merely as a tenement with appurtenances in the parish of St. Martin in the Vintry, London, between the former tenement of Robert de Gunthorp on the east and that of John le Mazeliner on the west, and extending from Thames Street on the south to the water of Walbrook on the north.⁷ In the agreement of 12 March 1367, made by Bartholomew

¹ Concerning probable date of Chaucer's birth—1340-5, probably nearer 1345 than 1340—see pp. 372-4 below.

² Of course we cannot be certain that John Chaucer and his family actually lived in this particular tenement. He owned many properties in and about London (see p. 5 above). But all things considered, it seems likely that the Thames Street tenement was the Chaucer home, where Geoffrey was brought up. (*Cf. n. 2* below.)

³ Hustung R., 70, No. 116. John Chaucer's connexion with the Vintry ward can be traced back to 1339, by the appearance of his name as witness to conveyances of property there; but those of 1339 concerned only property in which his kinsfolk were interested. (Hustung R., 66, Nos. 41-42; *cf. L-R*, Pt. IV, No. 14). From Feb. 1341 to July 1363 his name appears so frequently among witnesses in the ward that his residence within it throughout that period is practically certain. (See Hustung Rolls references, p. 5, n. 4, above.)

⁴ See pp. 6-7 above.

⁵ See pp. 1-2 above.

⁶ Hustung R., 95, Nos. 38-39.

⁷ Hustung R., 124, No. 4; Originalia R., 154, m. xli; *CPR*, 1391-6, p. 571.

Herbury apparently made the Thames Street tenement his dwelling-place. In May of 1369 Tiphania, prioress of Cheshunt, came to Herbury's tenement in Thames Street and seized his dossier and curtains, his basins and ewers in lieu of two years' back rent which he owed her (£6). He denied that the quitrent was due to the prioress, brought a plea of *capitio namii*, but lost to her when the case came to trial in the Court of Common Pleas, the prioress proving that she had been seized of 60s. per year quitrent in the Thames Street tenement by the hands of John Chaucer, the former owner. (Court of Hustung, Common Pleas, R. 93.)

Henry Herbury was a London citizen and vintner of high standing. He was among the vintners chosen to regulate the 'mystery' (Thomas, *op. cit.*, *A.D. 1364-1381*, pp. 86, 163, 165). In 1386 he was numbered among the wealthy London merchants who combined to lend £1,000 to the king of Portugal (Excheq. Diplomatic Doct., 1279). He did business on a large scale; e.g. one plea of debt which he brought against a certain knight was for £200 (Common Pleas, De Banco R., 492, m. 38). He owned properties or interests in properties in various parishes (*CPR*, 1377-81, p. 336; Excheq. K.R. Memo. R., 177, Mich. *Recorda*, m. 26; Chan. Inq. *a.g.d.*, 425, No. 23; Court of Hustung, Common Pleas, R. 97, 47 Edw. III). In 1384 he was member of parliament for the City (Great Britain, *Members of Parliament*, Pt. I, *Parliaments of England*, 1213-1702 [1878], pp. 220, 223). In Aug. 1390 he had letters of attorney upon going overseas (Treaty R., 74, m. 18). He was dead by Nov. 1396 (Comm. London, 384, Courtenay).

⁷ Hustung R., 59, No. 131.

Chappell and his wife Agnes with Henry Herbury, this property is described as a tenement with houses built above, solars, cellars, and other appurtenances (*tenementum cum domibus superedificatis solar[is] cellar[is] ac . . . aliis pertinenciis*), situated between the tenement of William Nafferton on the east and that of the heirs of John Long on the west, and extending from Thames Street on the south to the water of Walbrook on the north.¹ In Geoffrey Chaucer's quitclaim of 1381 only the location is given—between the tenement of William le Gager toward the east and that which was formerly John le Mazeliner's on the west, and extending from Thames Street to the Walbrook.² In Herbury's alienation of the tenement to Cheshunt priory in 1395 the jurors describe it as a messuage and two cellars in the parish of St. Martin in the Vintry, worth 13s. 4d. a year beyond reprises and held in free burgage of the king, without mesne lord.³ The deeds relating to Herbury's alienation of the tenement show that it lay between other tenements east and west, abutting on Thames Street to the south and the river Walbrook to the north.⁴

These descriptions of the Chaucer tenement, with the later history of the tenements on either side of it and with title deeds in the possession of the Worshipful Company of Vintners,⁵ identify its site with that of premises known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as No. 177 Upper Thames Street. In 1920-4 this site was covered by a newly built block of offices called College Hill House, which absorbed also the locations of the tenements to the east and west. This area of Thames Street was completely destroyed by bombs during the Second World War.

The Chaucer tenement was typical of dwellings in the Vintry neighbourhood.⁶ The cellar is treated in all evidences as the chief part of the tenement; indeed, the whole of the Vintry was riddled with the cellars of London vintners, who were wholesale wine merchants but sometimes owned their own taverns, each distinguished by its sign, such as the 'Tabbard on the Hoop' in Royal Street (La Rirole).⁷ Wine cellars lying

¹ *Ibid.* 95, Nos. 38-39. The agreement states that the property came to Bartholomew and Agnes by right of Agnes and that it was subject to 60s. annual quitrent to the priory of Cheshunt. In a return of all property belonging to the priory in May 1367, the property is described as formerly belonging to John Chaucer in the Vintry. (Chan. Inq. Misc., 192/13.)

² See p. 1 above. Some details concerning the properties on either side of the Chaucer tenement and their owners will appear in the supplement mentioned, p. 2, n. 2, above. For comparison a brief description of the house of Henry le Gager, vintner, in the adjoining parish of St. Michael Royal ('Paternoster'), as given by him in 1324, may be appended here: (a) a cellar towards the north, with a small hall built above, with a parlour, with a chamber with a chimney, and with an alley built above the cellar to a privy, and with the privy; and (b) a great cellar to the south (of the above), together with a hall built thereon, with a store-room (*depenne*) with a parlour, a chamber called 'bedchambre', a kitchen with a small chamber attached, and with a privy above and below, and a vacant piece of land. (Husting R., 56, No. 55; cf. *ibid.*, R. 63, No. 89; R. 83, No. 114.)

³ Chan. Inq. *q. d.*, 425/23.

⁴ *Husting R.*, 59/131; 95/38-39; 110/8. Location of the Chaucer tenement is shown on a map in Redstone, *Speculum*, xii, facing p. 184. For a map of London in the late fourteenth century, showing location of the Vintry, see Ruth Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London, 1949), facing p. 156.

⁵ Deeds *per* Vintners Company. The Company of Vintners acquired the site of the Chaucer tenement in 1874.

⁶ Except where other dates and references are given, this general account of the Vintry neighbourhood is based upon a study of the deeds enrolled upon the *Husting Rolls* between the years 1340 and 1367.

⁷ King's Bench, Controlment R., 30, m. xxiii.

below solars, with chambers used for dwellings above the business premises, constituted the normal buildings of the district. In numerous instances a tenement is described simply as a tenement with cellar and solar, or a cellar with chambers and solars built thereon, or a tenement with houses built thereon and cellars and solars adjacent.¹

The 'fair and large'² houses of the wealthier vintners of the neighbourhood were well and luxuriously furnished. Their appointments included embroidered beds and 'carpets', i.e. table-covers.³ Silver dishes were counted by the dozen, and silver-gilt cups and other articles of plate were engraved with the arms of the owners.⁴

The Vintry was a low-lying district on the north bank of the Thames, and on either side of Thames Street, which was a thoroughfare running east and west, parallel with the river. The street itself was sometimes called 'la Vintrie' in this neighbourhood.⁵ A number of narrow lanes connected it with the quays on the riverside, notably the Three Cranes Quay, at which were then landed wines the importation of which was one of the chief businesses of medieval London. From the close-built frontages upon the narrow thoroughfares of Thames Street and the Royal, or the still narrower ways of Paternoster Lane and 'Les Arches' or Bow Lane, tenements with cellars and overhanging solars, bake-houses, and an occasional shop or bar rambled back irregularly, with here and there a garden and 'places', perhaps open yards. To the rear of the Chaucer tenement and others ran the Walbrook, then an open stream used to carry off sewage from the houses on its banks and given to overflowing when tideswaters were exceptionally high in the Thames.⁶

Residents of the Vintry ward worshipped in three parish churches. The westernmost, St. James, Garlickhithe, was the burial-place of notable persons with whom John and Geoffrey Chaucer were associated,⁷ among them the vintner Richard Lyons,⁸ whose 'picture' on his gravestone may be typical of the rich wine merchant of the time: 'His picture on his grave stone verie faire and large, is with his hair rounded by his eares, and curled, a little beard forked, a gowne girt to him downe to his feete, of branched Damaske wrought with the likenes of flowers, a large purse on his right side, hanging in a belt from his left shoulder, a plaine whoode about his necke, covering his shoulders, and hanging backe behinde him.'⁹

¹ e.g. Chan. Inq. *q. m.*, 1 Ric. II, 33; *Husting R.*, 84, No. 44. In Kiron (Kyrion) Lane (now Maiden Lane) in the Vintry was the tenement of Henry Vanner, London vintner, described in 1349 as follows: a hall built on high (*in alto*) upon a stone wall, with three chambers, a kitchen, and a shop (*expenne*), with a stone chamber below the hall and a shop to the south of it, and with a cellar adjacent to the shop (*Husting R.*, 77, No. 66; cf. description of the Gager house, p. 10, n. 2, above).

² *Stow*, op. cit. i. 238.

³ e.g. will of Lawrence Gleseworth, Comm. London, 149, Courtenay.

⁴ e.g. in the homes of John Studdy (Stoudey, in 1376), father-in-law to Nicholas Brembre, of Henry Vanner, and of John Philipot (Comm. London, 39, Courtenay).

⁵ *Husting R.*, 78, No. 117; *Husting R.*, 124, No. 4. For a map of the neighbourhood, see Bird, op. cit., facing p. 156.

⁶ E. L. Sabine, 'Latrines and Cesspools of Mediaeval London', *Speculum*, ix (1934), 309-10. A special view for the upkeep of the Walbrook's banks was ordered in 1328 (Court of *Husting*, Common Pleas, R. 52, 2 Edw. III. Cf. order for piling and walling its banks in 1415 (Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books, Letter-Book I*, pp. 137-8) and for abolishing the latrines over it and completely vaulting the stream in 1462-3 (*ibid.*, *Letter-Book L*, pp. 21-22).

⁷ *Stow*, op. cit. i. 249.

⁸ Concerning Geoffrey Chaucer and Lyons, see pp. 160-1 below.

The church of St. Michael Royal ('Paternoster') stood in the Royal and was divided from the block in which lay the Chaucers' home only by Paternoster Lane. It was subsequently converted into a collegiate church by the wealthy fifteenth-century mercer, Richard Whittington.¹

The parish boundary between St. Michael Royal and St. Martin in the Vintry passed behind the Chaucer house, which lay in St. Martin's parish. Normally, this church would be the place where the Chaucers worshipped, where Geoffrey, if he was born in the Thames Street house, would have been baptized, and where his father would have been buried. St. Martin's stood at the foot of the Royal, at its junction with Thames Street. By 1376 it had a new chapel to the north, containing an altar of the Assumption.² The church was rebuilt in 1399,³ destroyed in the Great Fire of London, and not rebuilt.

Schools in the neighbourhood included the Almonry School at St. Paul's, the school of the Chapel Royal at St. Martin-le-Grand, and the school of the Arches in the parish church of St. Mary-le-Bow. St. Paul's Almonry School was, we know, well provided with the books which Geoffrey Chaucer's works prove him to have read.⁴ But no direct evidence as to Chaucer's schooling has come to light.⁵

¹ See article on Whittington, *DNB*.

² Will of John Studdy, *Comm. London*, 39, Courtenay; cf. will of the parish chaplain, John de la Mare, 1383, *Comm. London*, 115, Courtenay. The rector of St. Martin's in 1338 was one Roger called Scott. The length of his incumbency is uncertain, but by 1375 Nicholas de Drayton had succeeded to the living (G. Hennessy, *Novum Repertorium Ecclesiarum Parochiale Londinense* (London, 1898), p. 335).

³ Stow, *op. cit.* i. 248.

⁴ Edith Rickert, 'Chaucer at School', *MP* xxix (1932), 257-74. Cf. J. M. Manly, ed., *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (New York, 1928), p. 7. See also G. A. Plimpton, *The Education of Chaucer* (Oxford, 1935).

⁵ The idea that Chaucer later had a university career rests only upon tradition, going back to the sixteenth-century lives of Leland and Bale (E. P. Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (New York, 1908), pp. 1-13; cf. p. 372, n. 6, below). The story that Chaucer, as well as Gower, studied law in the Inner Temple rests upon an assertion by Thomas Speght in his life of Chaucer, written in 1598: 'It seemeth that both these learned men were of the inner Temple: for not many yeeres since, Master Buckley did see a Record in the same house, where Geoffrey Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscane fryer in Fleetstreete' (*The Works of Our Anient and Learned English Poet, Geoffrey Chaucer*, b. iii). Since the Master Buckley in question was probably keeper of the records of the Inner Temple in Speght's time, the statement has some claims to credibility. (See Edith Rickert, 'Was Chaucer a Student at the Inner Temple?', *The Mainly Anniversary Studies in Language and Literature* (Chicago, 1923), pp. 20-31; cf. D. S. Bland, 'Chaucer and the Inns of Court, a Re-examination', *ES* xxxiii (1952), 145-55; Edwin J. Howard, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (New York, 1964), pp. 40-41.)

CHAPTER TWO

Chaucer's Service in the Ulster Household
1357 onwardsI. PAYMENTS TO AND FOR CHAUCER BY
ELIZABETH, COUNTESS OF ULSTER, 1357

Extracts from a Fragment of the Countess's Household
Accounts, June 1356 to April 1359

[fol. 2b]

[24 July 1356]

[E]DEM [operator] pro factura garniture Philippe Pan. ex precepto domine apud Red[ing] xxiiii die Julii anno xxx^o—viii s.

* * * * *

[1357]

v operatoribus conductis . . . i n' domine apud garderobam Londonie per v dies contra festum Pasche² inense Aprilis anno xxxi^o culibet eorum per diem . . . i vid.

* * * * *

iii operatoribus conductis per Robertum Pynel Londonie et operantibus super garnituram domine per iii [dies contra festum] Sancti Georgii [23 April] inense Aprilis anno predicto culibet eorum per diem vid.—iiii s. vid.

* * * * *

Pro factura i tunice Philippe Pan. Londonie contra dictum festum per dictum R. Pynel ii s. vid. . . . i Galfrido Chaucer Londonie xx^o die Maii anno predicto ii s. Gyllelmo gard[erobe] pro iii operatoribus . . . i garniture domine in ebdomada ante Pentecosten apud Wodestoke anno predicto iii s.

* * * * *

Cuidam operatori [consimiliter] conducto per dictum Pynel operanti super garnituram domine per xii dies ante Nativitatem Domini anno predicto capienti per diem v d.—[v s.]

* * * * *

¹ Trimmed away.

² Easter fell upon 9 Apr. in 1357.

Si vous mandons qe sur ce facez faire noz lettres desouz nostre grand seal directes a noz chers e foiaux Nichol Brembre e Johan Philipot coillours de noz dites custumes e subside en port avandit en due forme bene primement qe son lieutenant qe serra illoeges pur le temps soit tiele persone qe soit suffisante pur sauver lonur e profit de nous e de nostre roialme en loffice avandit.

Done souz nostre prive seal a Westmoustre le xxiii jour de Juin lan de nostre regne septisme.

[*Seal wanting.*]

(C 81/481/2838.)

b. Enrolment of letters close, same date, to the collectors to receive Henry Gisors, appointed as Chaucer's deputy.

De deputato contrarotulatoris constituto.

Rex dilectis et fidelibus suis Nicholao Brembre et Johanni Philippot collectoribus customarum et subsidiiorum suorum in portu civitatis sue Londonie salutem. Dilectus nobis Galfridus Chaucer armiger contrarotulator customarum et subsidiiorum nostrorum lanarum coriorum et pellium lanarum in portu predicto nobis humiliter supplicavit ut cum ipse pro certis negociis sit et per certum tempus futurum erit in tantum occupatus quod ipse circa officium suum contrarotulatoris quod in portu predicto habet intendere non potest absque inquietudine nimis gravi velimus ei licenciam concedere quod ipse officium predictum per quemdam locum suum tenentem exercere et occupare possit.

Nos eius supplicacioni ex causa predicta favorabiliter inclinati licenciam huiusmodi ei usque ad festum Omnium Sanctorum proximum futurum duximus concedendam.

Et ideo vobis mandamus quod dilectum nobis Henricum Gisors quem idem Galfridus locum suum tenentem in officio predicto coram nobis in cancellaria nostra deputavit cuius eciam sacramentum de officio illo bene et fideliter loco dicti Galfridi faciendo cepimus ad officium illud vice prefati Galfridi exequendum recipiatis et ipsum Henricum omnia que ad officium predictum in portu predicto pertinent usque ad idem festum Omnium Sanctorum libere et absque impedimento aliquo facere et exercere permitatis; ita semper quod idem Henricus in officio illo interim continue moretur et se (bene et)¹ fideliter gerat in eodem et rotulos suos officium illud tangentes manu sua propria scribat; volumus enim quod altera pars sigilli

¹ Interlineated.

nostri quod dicitur coket in portu predicto in custodia sua remaneat per tempus supradictum.

Teste rege apud Westmonasterium xxiii die Junii.

Per breve de privato sigillo.
(C 54/224, 7 Ric. II, m. 36.)¹

These records, relating to the appointment of Henry Gisors in 1383, were based upon a petition, which has not been found, for a deputy for the wool custom and subsidy. Chaucer already had a general permission to employ a deputy for the petty custom.² The terms of the warrant³ and the letters close,⁴ however, exclude the petty custom; they specify the wool custom and subsidy and are directed to the collectors thereof.

Very little is known concerning this Henry Gisors except that he was Chaucer's deputy in 1383 and his successor as controller of the petty custom in 1386.⁵ His father seems to have been a citizen and vintner of London and to have been named Henry.⁶ The Henry Gisors who was associated with Chaucer was probably the one who was party to a recognizance for £18 in 1391⁷ and in the same year acted as mainpinner with three other men.⁸ In 2 Richard II he was involved in litigation with Henry Fitzjohn of London, a stockfishmonger.⁹

2. *Enrolment of letters close, 25 November 1384, to the collectors of the customs and subsidies to permit Chaucer's absence for a month upon the appointment of a sufficient deputy.*

Pro Galfrido Chaucire.

Rex collectoribus customarum et subsidiiorum suorum in portu Londonie salutem. Quia licenciam dedimus dilecto nobis Galfrido Chaucire contrarotulatori nostro customarum et subsidiiorum predictorum in portu predicto quod ipse se per unum mensem pro quibusdam urgentibus negociis ipsum tangentibus a portu predicto absentare possit ita quod sufficientem deputatum suum ad officium predictum bene et fideliter per idem tempus faciendum et exercendum pro quo respondere voluerit faciat: vobis mandamus quod capto sacramento de sufficienti deputato eiusdem Galfridi

¹ Printed in J. R. Hulbert, 'A Chaucer Item', *MLN* xxxvi (1921), 123.

² See Table 1, pp. 153-6 above, and pp. 159-60 above.

³ See pp. 165-6 above.

⁴ As printed in B. 1. b above.

⁵ See p. 265 below.

⁶ Lambeth Library, 107 Sudbury: will of John Gisors, dated 20 Oct. 1380. John was the brother of the Henry Gisors who was Chaucer's deputy and successor.

⁷ CCR, 1389-92, p. 320.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 325.

⁹ KB 27/473, m. 63; KB 27/474, mm. 11 d. and 35 d.

The duties of the clerk of the works had been increased in the second half of the fourteenth century by transfer, from the chamber to the office of works, of the care of buildings and repairs on chamber manors. Among the places where Chaucer acted were the former chamber manors of Byfflect, Langley, and Sheen.¹

In comparison with Chaucer's former office as controller of the customs, the clerkship of the works represented a heavier and more direct responsibility, even though the sums involved were less. At the customs office he had checked the receipt side of the books of a great revenue department of state; at the works he was himself paying out the moneys of a large spending department.

Chaucer's expenditures were, however, not nearly so large as those of certain other clerks of the works appointed during Richard II's reign. Table V indicates the varying rates of expenditure in the office during this time.

The figures represent expenditures for varying periods of time and for a varying number of estates. In some instances they include items for military purposes.² Allow- ing, however, for all variations in the scope of the office, one sees clearly from these figures that the period of Chaucer's appointment immediately preceded the great building developments for which Richard II is noted. Gedney's, Chamberlain's, and Bernard's average weekly rates of expenditure were nearly two and a half times as great as Chaucer's had been. Chaucer's rate of expenditure was almost exactly the same as the average rate for his five immediate predecessors had been.

A study of Chaucer's predecessors and successors as clerk of the works shows that this appointment set him on a level with some notable royal officials, among whom he stands out as one of two laymen holding this office in Richard II's reign.³ The most distinguished of his predecessors was Arnold Brocas, a remarkable member of a remarkable family, who in 1388 became a chamberlain of the exchequer.⁴ Elmham was possibly of the Elmham family of Norfolk.⁵ He was clerk of the privy seal between 1384 and 1391, and as such was sent to Calais in 1384 to assist in peace negotiations with France.⁶ After retiring from the clerkship in July 1389, with an annuity of £10 as a reward for good service,⁷ Elmham was sent twice on journeys to Portugal on the king's business.⁸ He was ranked as an esquire of the king and along with his wife had various grants and annuities from both Richard II and Henry IV.⁹ Elmham's career thus offers a number of parallels with Chaucer's.

Among Chaucer's successors as clerk of the works the most important was John Gedney, who took office in June 1391. He was rector of a church in the diocese of

¹ Tout, op. cit. iv (Manchester, 1928), 312 and n. 2; Colvin, op. cit. i, 187.

² e.g. Brocas paid for the making of certain *groste machine pro certis arduis et secretis negotiis a bataille* at Calais.

³ See p. 412, n. 7, above. The clerk of the works was 'clerk' in the sense of being literate and often also of being in orders. (Salzman, op. cit., p. 8.) Concerning laicization in government appointments, see Tout, op. cit. iv, 223; Tout, *Collected Papers*, iii (Manchester, 1934), 211-17.

⁴ Montagu Burrows, *The Family of Brocas of Beaurepaire* (London, 1886), pp. 123-7, 178-81; CPR, 1385-9, pp. 382, 416, 479.

⁵ See DNB, *sub nom.* Elmham, Thomas.

⁶ Tout, *Chapters in Administrative History*, v (Manchester, 1930), 48, 111.

⁷ C 66, 13 Ric. II, Pt. 1, m. 30; CPR, 1388-92, p. 83; cf. CPR, 1389-92, p. 129.

⁸ In May 1391, in Mar. 1397. (E 403/333, m. 6; Treaty R., C 76/75, m. 2.)

⁹ CPR, 1399-1401, pp. 235, 245, 502; CPR, 1413-16, p. 107; E 101/572/2; CPR, 1388-92, p. 505; CPR, 1396-9, p. 160.

The records extant concerning Chaucer as clerk of the works do not furnish direct evidence as to the relationship between Chaucer and the king's master craftsmen. It must have been close, although Chaucer's responsibility for their payment and his higher wages (twice theirs) do not necessarily imply their dependence upon him. They were appointed directly by the crown, and their patents were not renewed with each change in the clerk of the works. They were appointed as *dispositores*, or directors of those parts of the works with which their own crafts were concerned. An agreement or

TABLE V

Table showing expenditures by clerks of the works from September 1374 to May 1398¹

Reference to Roll in E 364	Accountant	Period of the Account	No. of Weeks and Days	Total Expenditures*
14 H	Sleaford	24 Sept. 1374-20 June 1377	142 6	£681
19 D	Hannay	21 June 1377-14 Apr. 1378	42 4	£235
15 I	Blake	14 Apr. 1378-2 May 1381	159 1	£2085
19 F	Brocas (1)	3 May 1381-30 Sept. 1384	178 1	£1888
22 C	Brocas (2)	1 Oct. 1384-5 Jan. 1388	170 2	£1630
22 K	Elmham	6 Jan. 1388-11 July 1389	79 0	£624
25 C	Chaucer (a)	12 July 1389-17 June 1391	100 6	£1130
	Chaucer (b)	12 July 1390-8 July 1391	51 5	£101
	(Windsor)			
29 E	Gedney (1)	17 June 1391-17 June 1393	104 3	£1584
29 E d.	Gedney (2)	17 June 1393-17 June 1394	52 1	£997
36 H	Gedney (3)	17 June 1394-14 Oct. 1396	121 3	£4502
35 G	Chamberlain	14 Oct. 1396-16 Dec. 1396	9 0	£400
33 F	Bernard	16 Dec. 1396-21 Sept. 1397	39 6	£1866
33 G	Bulcote	21 Sept. 1397-23 May 1398	34 6	£934

* To the nearest pound.

contract might be entered into by the crown directly with a group of masons for the construction of a building, e.g. the wharf at the Tower of London; yet these same masons worked under the survey of the clerk of the works, and of the master mason.² A master mason such as Henry Yeaveley functioned not only as a master craftsman but also as a designer of buildings, an architect.³ The clerk of the works was, however, 'the head of the clerical staff in charge of operations'.⁴

¹ Cf. Colvin, op. cit. ii, 1024-5.

² See p. 470 above.

³ Such also was William Winford, master mason, probably architect of Winchester College and Cathedral, as well as of New College, Oxford. (Salzman, op. cit., pp. 8-9.)

⁴ Salzman defines the duties of a medieval clerk of the works as the payment of wages and the provision of materials and of workmen, and no doubt the execution of the architectural design, once it had been agreed upon. But the design was made nearly always by a master mason or a master carpenter, not by a clerk of the works. (*Ibid.*, pp. 8, 24.)

Concerning the organization of the office of works and the principal officers included in it—clerk of the works, controller, purveyor, chief mason, chief carpenter, chief joiner, chief plumber, chief glazier, chief smith, and various underclerks—see John H. Harvey, 'The Medieval Office of Works', *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd Ser., vi (1941), 20-87. Cf. Martin S. Briggs, *A Short History of the Building Crafts* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 28-33; Wyatt Papworth, *Notes on the Superintendents of English Buildings in the Middle Ages* (London, 1887), pp. 196-9; Colvin, op. cit. i, 189-90.

John Newark (Newerke) quitclaimed to Ballard 10 marks of rent which had been granted to Newark by Arundel to be taken from the manor of Spittlecombe.¹

An interesting feature of documents II. A, B, and C above is that the names of the witnesses are identical and are listed in exactly the same order, beginning with Chaucer, and that the attorneys appointed by Ballard (record II. D) include Chaucer and two others of these witnesses, Hugh de Middleton and John Fox. Hugh de Middleton had also been associated with Chaucer as a witness to a double charter at Woolwich, 4 May 1393 (records I. A and I. B above). Nothing of especial interest is known concerning any of these men except Chaucer, and in several cases their identities cannot be clearly determined because more than one person with the same name is known to have been living in a certain community at the same time.

III. RÉSUMÉ OF CHAUCER'S ASSOCIATIONS WITH KENT

Chaucer's associations with Kent were of long standing. The date of the traditional marriage between his sister, Katherine,² and Simon Manning of Cudham and East Greenwich is unknown; but Simon's wife Katherine was living in 1365-6, and Chaucer stood surety for him twenty years later.³ The custody of two Kentish heirs granted to him in 1375 need not necessarily have brought him into contact with their lands, since in one instance he made a money bargain with the heir,⁴ whose chief property was the manor of Bilsington near Ashford, and in the other, the only property in the guardian's control was a small rent in Nonington near Wingham.⁵ Chaucer's appointment upon the commissions of the peace for Kent, with only a short break, between 1385 and 1389⁶ indicated a closer connexion with that county, as did his election as knight of the shire in 1386.⁷ The commission to inquire into the abduction of Isabella Hall (at the Halle) at Chislehurst provided a record that he sat at Dartford as one of the commissioners on 1 August 1387.⁸ John Churchman's exchequer action against Chaucer began in London, 16 April 1388, and was continued in Kent, 25 April to 1 July 1388. The transfer of the action to Kent implied that the court considered Kent to be Chaucer's habitat at that time.⁹ He was definitely specified as 'of the county of Kent' when he undertook in Michaelmas term 1388 to have Matilda Nemeq in the Court of Common Pleas on 20 January following.¹⁰ His appointment as commissioner of walls and ditches along the banks of the Thames between Greenwich and Woolwich in March 1390 may have implied an association with that particular district,¹¹ or the appointment could perhaps have arisen from his position as clerk of the works at the royal manor of Eltham near by.¹² His being robbed in September 1390 near the 'Fowle Ok' in Kent may also have been a result of his duties as clerk of the works.¹³ His connexions with Woolwich and Combe in Kent, 1393-6, are set forth above. The removal

¹ CCR, 1396-9, pp. 283-4.

² Cf. Alfred A. Kern, 'Chaucer's Sister', *MLN* xxiii (1908), 52.

³ See pp. 283-9 above.

⁴ See pp. 296-9 above.

⁵ See pp. 301-2 above.

⁶ See pp. 364-5 above.

⁷ See pp. 384-7 above.

⁸ See pp. 490-1 above.

⁹ See nn. 478, 480 above.

of the charge of 20s., recoverable from him in connexion with a prest upon his exchequer annuity, from the account of the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, where the debt was contracted, to that of the sheriff of Kent in the exchequer year beginning Michaelmas 1391 implied actual residence in Kent at that time, or, at least, that the exchequer still charged with the debt, failed from Michaelmas 1393 until Michaelmas 1397 to find goods to distraint and was unable to attach Chaucer in person may, therefore, be mere formalities.¹ It is not clear why this item was returned to the account of the sheriffs of London and Middlesex for the year from Michaelmas 1397 to Michaelmas 1398, before being enrolled among the desperate debts;² but this may indicate Chaucer's return to London or Middlesex more than a year before he took the lease of the house at Westminster.³ On the other hand, in May 1398 protection was issued to him on the ground that he was engaged upon the king's business in various parts of England.⁴

¹ See pp. 339, 332-4; also p. 139, above.

² See p. 334 above.

³ See pp. 535-6 below.

⁴ See pp. 62-63 above.

time, appointed the king's chief butler. Although he was superseded in this position several times, he held it intermittently until his death.¹

The house which was leased to and apparently occupied by John Edrich, Geoffrey Chaucer, Master Paul, William Horscroft, and Thomas Chaucer is variously described in leases to these men as being 'in the garden of the chapel of the Blessed Mary', 'next to the chapel of the Blessed Mary within the sanctuary', 'next to the chapel', and 'within the sanctuary'.² It seems clear, therefore, that it adjoined or stood very near the former Lady Chapel, which occupied the site on which stands the present Lady Chapel usually referred to as the chapel of Henry VII, erected in the early sixteenth century.³

¹ Ruud, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39, 125-6; Baugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 467-9, 471-4, 481, 500.

² See pp. 535-9 above.

³ Westlake, *op. cit.* ii. 360-1; Lawrence E. Tanner, *The History and Treasures of Westminster Abbey* (London, 1953), pp. 17, 55; cf. 'Old Brickwork at Westminster, Possible Link with Chaucer', *The Times* (London), 25 Feb. 1928, p. 7.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Chaucer's Children

I. CHAUCER'S SONS, THOMAS AND LEWIS

A. Evidence that Geoffrey Chaucer had a Son Thomas

1. *Action brought in Michaelmas term 1396 by Ralph Barton, citizen and skinner of London, against Thomas Chaucer, Esquire, son of Geoffrey Chaucer, Esquire, to recover a debt.*

Londonia.

Radulfus Barton civis et pelliparius Londonie per attornatum suum optulit se iii^{to} die versus Thomam Chaucer armigerum filium Galfridi Chaucer armigeri de placito quod reddat ei quatuordecim libras viginti et duos denarios. Et versus Philipum fitz Eustace armigerum de placito quod reddat ei sexaginta solidos. Et versus Johannem Walshe de comitatu Cestrie de placito quod reddat ei quadraginta et unum solidos. Et versus Rogerum Geoffrey de Shrovysbury de placito quod reddat ei quadraginta solidos quos ei debent et injuste detinent etc.

Et ipsi non venerunt. Et preceptum fuit vicecomitibus quod summonerent eos etc. Et vicecomites modo mandant quod nichil habent etc. Ideo preceptum est vicecomitibus quod capiant eos si etc. Et salvo etc. Ita quod habeant corpora eorum hic in octabis Sancti Martini [18 November 1396] etc. per justiciarios etc.

(CP 40/543, Mich. 20 Ric. II, m. 240 d.)¹

The legal process used by Ralph Barton was the normal one for recovering debts in the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster. As was customary, the same record includes a number of separate actions against several debtors by one creditor. At the stage indicated by this entry, the London sheriffs, having returned that they could not distrain the defendants to appear because they had no property within the sheriffs' bailiwick, had been ordered to attach the persons of the defendants and have them in court on 18 November. A subsequent entry on the same roll² carries the proceedings

¹ Printed in part in J. M. Manly, 'Thomas Chaucer, Son of Geoffrey', *LTL*, 3 Aug. 1933, p. 525; cf. Manly, 'Three Recent Chaucer Studies', *RES* x (1934), 262-3.

² m. 516 d.

further against Philip FitzEustace, John Walsh, and Roger Jeffrey. The sheriffs returned that they had not found the defendants within their bailiwick and were ordered to bring them into court on the octave of St. Hilary, i.e. on 20 January 1397. At that date, Barton, appearing by an attorney named Thomas Hornby, continued his suit against FitzEustace, Walsh, and Jeffrey.¹ Thesheriffs again returned that these three had not been found in their bailiwick, and they were ordered to have them in court on the octave of the Purification, i.e. on 9 February. The proceedings have not been followed further. The disappearance of Thomas Chaucer's name from the records after the first entry probably indicates that a settlement was made out of court, i.e. that the son was following his father's practice of settling debts upon being sued.²

It is unusual for the defendant in such actions to be described as the son of his father. The description here may be based upon the entry concerning the transaction in the account books of the plaintiff, and may have been that given by Thomas Chaucer when he incurred the debt.

2. Use of a seal of Geoffrey Chaucer by Thomas Chaucer at Ewelme, 20 May 1409.

The only instance in which Thomas Chaucer is known to have used a seal bearing the name of Geoffrey Chaucer is that of a deed to uses, made at Ewelme on 20 May 1409, and bearing an armorial seal with the legend: *S' Gofrai Chaucer*. All letters in the name are quite distinct except the G, which is much worn.³ The purpose of this document was to secure to Thomas Chaucer and Maud, his wife, and to their heirs the reversion of certain lands and tenements in Ewelme, Swyncombe, Nuffield (Tuffield), Benson (Bensington), Newnham Murren, Mongewell, and Warborough, including the manors of Hook Norton and Kidlington (Cudlyngton) in Oxfordshire and the manor of Dorton in Buckinghamshire. This deed was one of the steps taken by Thomas Chaucer to consolidate and increase his wife's holdings at Ewelme. The language of the deed, which is English, is informal in style; but there is no reason to doubt its authenticity, although it is quite different from the normal form of an English deed to uses and is not a verbatim translation of the usual Latin or Anglo-French forms of similar deeds.

The design on the obverse of the seal is a shield, within a geometrical pattern, bearing *parti per pale a bend over all*. The reverse, or counter-seal, seems to show a pelican vulning herself, or, as it is also described, a pelican in her piety. This device may also be taken for a wing. On certain other seals of Thomas Chaucer's a device which appears to be a wing encircled by a chain was used.⁴ The seal used on the deed made at Ewelme, 20 May 1409, is the only direct and contemporary evidence which has come to light concerning the arms used by Geoffrey Chaucer. On 27 February 1427 Thomas

¹ CP 40/544, m. 194.

² See pp. 391, 393, 397 above.
³ Ancient Deeds, DS. 79; cf. L-R, Pt. IV, No. 286. The entire text of this deed is printed and the design of the seal is engraved in an article by Joseph Hunter, 'The Seal of Chaucer: Copy of the Deed to which it is appended . . .', *Archaeologia*, xxxiv (1832), 42-45; cf. M. B. Rund, *Thomas Chaucer* (Minneapolis, 1926), pp. 75-78. The seal is reproduced and its use is discussed by Russell Krauss, 'Chaucerian Problems', Pl. IV and pp. 39, 132-3, 136-7, 146, 167-8, in *Thirre Chaucer Studies* (New York, 1932).

⁴ E 101/43/38; Ancient Deeds, C 6160, C 9414, D 7938.

Chaucer used: incorporating the same arms and having the legend *Sigillum Thome Chaucer* on a deed whereby he and Richard Wyatt (Wyot) assigned the manor of Gresham in Norfolk to John duke of Bedford and others, including William Paston of Paston.¹ Geoffrey Chaucer must frequently have used a seal, but no identifiable surviving impression except that made by Thomas in 1409 has been found.²

3. Thomas Gascoigne's statement, between 1434 and 1457, that Thomas Chaucer, Knt., who is buried at Ewelme near Oxford, was the son of Chaucer the poet.

Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, twice chancellor of the University of Oxford in the fifteenth century, compiled a *Dictionarium Theologicum* ('Liber de Veritatibus'), between the years 1434 and 1457.³ In this work, after stating that on his deathbed Geoffrey Chaucer lamented the fact that he had portrayed the evil love of men for women in his writings, Gascoigne wrote: *Fuit idem Chawversus pater Thome Chawversus armigeri qui Thomas sepelitur in Nubelm [Ewelme] iuxta Oxoniām*.⁴ It seems very probable that Dr. Gascoigne had been personally acquainted with Thomas Chaucer.

¹ Manly, *L.T.L.S.*, 3 Aug. 1933, p. 525, and *RES*, x, 263. The deed is now in the library of Harvard University. For background information concerning the sale of Gresham Manor, see James Cairdner, ed., *The Paston Letters, 1422-1509 A.D.*, new ed. (London, 1904), ii. 30-31.

For uses of Geoffrey Chaucer's coat of arms in shields of Thomas Chaucer depicted in church windows, see Rund, op. cit., pp. 79-80; Krauss, op. cit., pp. 31, 51. Cf. E.A. Greening Lamborn, 'The Arms on the Chaucer Tomb at Ewelme', *Oxononiensia*, v (1940), 80-82, and 'Notes on Some Wood MSS. in the Bodleian', *N. & Q.* xciii (2 Oct. 1948), 420-2.

² A mere fragment of a seal remains attached to Chaucer's indenture with Elmham as clerk of the works. See p. 408 above.

Heraldic writers from the mid-fifteenth century onwards have ascribed a *parti per pale* coat to Geoffrey Chaucer or the Chaucer family generally, but with the blazoning *parti per pale argent and gules, a bend counterchanged*. This is the blazoning of the arms in the top corner of a portrait of Chaucer reproduced by George A. Plimpton as a frontispiece to his book *The Education of Chaucer*, and erroneously described as 'the Occleve portrait'. (R. Call, 'The Plimpton Chaucer and Other Problems of Chaucerian Portraiture', *Spectulum*, xxii (1947), 135-44. The portrait is quite clearly reproduced as a frontispiece to this article.) The same coat of arms also appears in the top corner of the portrait of Chaucer now in the library of Harvard University and formerly called the Seddon portrait. It is reproduced as the frontispiece of Manly's *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York, 1926). (Cf. Manly, ed., *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (New York, 1928), pp. 37-39.)

The arms occur more than once in this form in a book of arms of the mid-fifteenth century, where the entry concerning them is headed (a) 'Oxynford chyre Jaffrey Chawversys' in the same hand as the rest of the book and (b) on a later page, and in another and later hand, 'Chaucer'. (B.M., MS. Harl. 2169, fols. 27 and 59; cf. *Ancestor*, No. IV [1903], 259, and No. IX [1904], 166.) The attribution to Oxfordshire must have arisen from the eminence of Thomas Chaucer in that country. These arms also appeared on the sixteenth-century tomb of Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. (See p. 549 below.)

³ J. E. T. Rogers, ed., *Locī e Libro Veritatum, Passages Selected from Gascoigne's Theological Dictionary* (Oxford, 1881), p. vi; Winifred A. Pronger, 'Thomas Gascoigne', *EHR* liii (1938), 606-26; liv (1939), 20-37. Miss Pronger corrects Rogers as to the date when the theological dictionary was begun—1434, not 1433.

⁴ The manuscript of this work, which has not been published as a whole but of which a complete edition is reported to be in preparation, is now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Lincoln Coll., Lat. 117, 118). The passage quoted is on p. 377 of *Pars Secunda*. Cf. L-R, Pt. IV, No. 284, and n. 3, p. 332. See also J. W. Hales, *Folia Litteraria* (London, 1893), pp. 109-13; Manly, *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, pp. 36 and 657, and *RES*, x, 262-3.

x 15 miles N.E. of Elmham

x 12 m S. W. of Oxford

Thomas Chaucer was not only a wealthy landed gentleman with large holdings in Oxfordshire, Hampshire, and Buckinghamshire, but also a public official who had a long and distinguished career. He was sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire and constable of Wallingford. He was also a member of many royal commissions, was chief butler to four successive kings, from Richard II to Henry VI, served as an envoy to France, and was a member of the king's council, a member of parliament, and speaker of the house of commons. His wife was Maud Burghersh, daughter of Sir John Burghersh; and his daughter Alice became, by marriage, the duchess of Suffolk.¹

B. Evidence that Geoffrey Chaucer had a Son Lewis

1. Chaucer's reference to 'lyte Lowys my sone' in A Treatise on the Astrolabe, 1391.

Chaucer's work entitled *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* begins as follows:

Lyte Lowys my sone, I aperceyve wel by certeyne evydences thyn abilitie to lerne sciences touching nombres and proporciouns; and as wel considre I thy besy praiser in special to lerne the tretys of the Astrelabie. . . . This tretis . . . wol I shewe the under full light reules and naked wordes in Englishsh, for Latyn ne canst thou yit but small, my litel sone.²

2. Payments to Thomas and Lewis Chaucer as men at arms for service at Carmarthen, 1403.

In the Retinue Roll of William Lovenay, keeper of the great wardrobe, is a long list of the men at arms and the archers who formed the garrison of the royal castle of Carmarthen in 1403. One group, with the payment they received, is as follows:

*Thomas Chaucer, — Treverek, Willelmus atte Lee, Ludowicus Chaucer, bomines ad arma, with twelve archers (sagittarii)—£14. Os. Od.*³

¹ Ruud, op. cit.; A. C. Baugh, 'Kirk's Life Records of Thomas Chaucer', *PMLA* xlvii (1932), 461-515, and 'Thomas Chaucer, One Man or Two?' *PMLA* xlviii (1933), 328-39. See also J. S. Koskell, 'The Medieval Speakers for the Commons in Parliament', *BHR* xxiii (1950), 43-44, and *The Commons in the Parliament of 1422* (Manchester, 1954), pp. 165-7.

² Thomas Chaucer's position at North Petherton (see pp. 498-9 above) and his occupancy of a house at Westminster (see pp. 538-40 above) are merely circumstantial evidence and do not in themselves prove that the Thomas Chaucer involved was the son of Geoffrey Chaucer. For theory that Thomas Chaucer was the son of John of Gaunt and Philippa Roet-Chaucer, see Krauss, op. cit., pp. 131-69. For refutation see Manly, *RES* x, 262-7.

³ F. N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1957), p. 545. The colophon of the fifteenth-century MS. Cambridge Dd. 3. 53, *Tractatus de Conclusionibus Astro-labii*, states that this treatise was compiled by Geoffrey Chaucer for his son Lewis, then a scholar at Oxford and under the tutelage of that most noble philosopher Master N. [or R.?] Strode (*ibid.*, p. 867). Chaucer's statement in the treatise that he had given Lewis an astrolabe marked for the latitude of Oxford and the fact that the problems were made to be correct for Oxford lend support to at least the first part of the statement in the colophon. Concerning Ralph Strode (probably not Lewis Chaucer's tutor), see A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1509*, iii (Oxford, 1959), 1807-8. See also p. 284 above.

⁴ E 101/43/22, m. 4 d.; printed by E. A. Lewis, 'Carmarthen Castle, A Collection of Historical

Although it might seem that Chaucer's direct address to 'lyte Lowys my sone' in *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* should establish definitely that he had a son by that name, the theory has been advanced that the boy was the son of Chaucer's friend, Sir Lewis Clifford and was Chaucer's godson.¹ The discovery of the record concerning the payments to Thomas and Lewis Chaucer, however, has tended to strengthen the idea that Lewis was Chaucer's own son, and was perhaps the godson of Sir Lewis Clifford.²

II. THE CONJECTURE THAT CHAUCER HAD A DAUGHTER NAMED ELIZABETH

A. Elizabeth Chausier nominated to be a Nun in the Priory of St. Helen in London, 1377

A privy seal warrant, dated 27 July, 1 Richard II (1377), addressed to the lord chancellor, instructs him to make out letters patent under the great seal nominating Elizabeth Chausier to be received as a nun in the priory of 'Saint Eleyne' in London.³ The letters patent to this effect, directed to the prioress and convent of 'St. Elen' in London, bear the same date.⁴

Documents relating to Carmarthen Castle from the Earliest Times to the Close of the Reign of Henry VIII', *Wes. Wales Historical Records*, iv (1914), 4-5. This Retinue Roll was a list compiled for the purpose of paying wages. A parallel account of the wages and other expenses for the same service (E 101/43/13) shows that the men-at-arms were paid at the rate of 12d. and the archers at the rate of 6d. a day for 28 days from 29 Sept. to 26 Oct. 1403. This document mentions both Thomas and Lewis Chaucer. Another item of expense was a payment of 20s. to Thomas Chaucer for the carriage of victuals from Bridgwater to the town of Carmarthen (Lewis, op. cit., p. 6). The identity of this Thomas Chaucer with the sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire and the constable of Wallingford is proved by a petition and consequent letters patent to the sheriff, Thomas Chaucer, respecting victuals received by him within the town of Carmarthen (Kermerdyn) (E 368/176, *Records*, East, m. 1 d.; C 81/1401/51; CPR, 1401-5, p. 356). The business occupying Thomas Chaucer, the sheriff of Oxfordshire at the time, included a commission received in the previous July to inquire concerning Welsh conspirators within the town of Oxford. (C 81/1549/33; cf. KB 27/566, Rex m. 5 d.; KB 9/178/1, m. 5 d.; Baugh, *PMLA* xlvii, 466. Cf. p. 499 and n. 1 above. The following rolls have been examined without producing additional information about the Chaucers: E 101/43/13, 21, 22, 29, 37.)

¹ G. L. Kittredge, 'Lewis Chaucer or Lewis Clifford?' *MP* xiv (1916-17), 513-18; J. M. Manly, 'Litel Lowys My Sone', *LTLs*, 7 June 1928, p. 430.

² Manly, *LTLs*, 7 June 1928, p. 430; 'Memorabilia', N & Q cliv (1928), 433. For the suggestion that Lewis may have been the son of Geoffrey Chaucer and Cecily Champain, see the article on Chaucer by J. W. Hales, *DNB*; W. W. Skeat, *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford, 1894), i, p. xxxiii; and P. R. Watts, 'The Strange Case of Geoffrey Chaucer and Cruxilla Chaumpaigne', *LQR* lxiii (1947), 491-515. Concerning Cecily Champain, see Chap. 15 above. See also Emden, op. cit. i (Oxford, 1957), 396-7.

³ Chan. Warr. Ser. I, file 453, No. 27; cf. L-R, Pt. IV, No. 6 Add. Concerning St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, a Benedictine nunnery founded in the early part of the thirteenth century, see William Page, ed., *The Victoria History of London*, i (London, 1909), pp. 457-61. See also p. 381 and n. 6 above.

⁴ Patent R., i Ric. II, Pt. I, m. 15; cf. L-R, Pt. IV, No. 7 Add.

Chaucer's Death and Burial, 1400

I. CHAUCER'S REPORTED REPENTANCE AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH

Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, chancellor of Oxford University, wrote the following in his *Dictionarium Theologicum*, sometime between the years 1434 and 1457:

Sic plures penitere se postea dicunt quando mala sua et mala per eos inducta destruere non possunt; sicut Chawserus ante mortem suam sepe clamavit ve michi quia revocare nec destruere jam potero illa que male scripsi de malo et turpissimo amore hominum ad mulieres et jam de homine in hominem continuabuntur. Velim. Nolim. Et sic plangens mortuus.¹

This passage follows an allusion to Judas Iscariot among examples of people who had repented too late to make restitution for their sins. Although the authenticity of this statement has been questioned, it receives support from the existence of the so-called 'Retraction' at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*, which is now commonly accepted as by Chaucer. The statement may, however, be merely an inference, based on the 'Retraction' alone.²

II. THE TRADITIONAL DATE OF CHAUCER'S DEATH
25 OCTOBER 1400.

Under the date of 5 June 1400 the exchequer clerks entered a payment of £5 to Geoffrey Chaucer by the hands of Henry Somer.³ This is the latest known reference to Chaucer as living. It represented the payment of an instalment of the arrears due on his annuities, £10 of which had been paid through Somer on 21 February 1400.⁴

At the time of these payments Chaucer was presumably living at Westminster in the house of which he had taken a lease on 24 December 1399.⁵ The tenancy of the house passed to one Master Paul between 28 September 1400 and 28 September 1401.⁶

¹ Printed in J. W. Hales, *Folia Litteraria* (London, 1893), pp. 109-12; cf. L-R, Pt. IV., No. 284. Concerning Gascoigne see p. 543 above.

² J. M. Manly, ed., *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (New York, 1928), pp. 656-8; F. N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1957), pp. 772-3.

³ See p. 532 above.

⁴ See p. 530 above.

⁵ See pp. 535-6 above.

On 12 May, 4 Richard II (1381), at the Savoy, John of Gaunt issued a warrant to Sir William Oke, the clerk of his great wardrobe, instructing him to pay out of the issues of his receipt the sum of £51. 8s. 2d. for various expenses and gifts for Elizabeth Chauncy at the time she was made a nun in the abbey of Barking.¹

An entry from Register Braybroke, fol. cccxvi, states that in 1397 Elizabeth Chausir, a nun at Barking Abbey, took a vow of obedience to a new abbess in the presence of the bishop of London.² The spelling of the surname as 'Chausir' in this entry suggests that the Elizabeth Chausier and the Elizabeth Chauncy named in the records above were probably the same person.³ Various scholars have conjectured that she may have been a daughter of Geoffrey Chaucer.⁴

¹ DL Registers, vol. 14, fol. 46; cf. L-R, Pt. IV, No. 144. Concerning the Benedictine Abbey of Barking, one of the oldest and richest nunneries in England, see William Page and J. Horace Round, eds., *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, ii (London, 1907), pp. 115-22; concerning Elizabeth Chauncy, *ibid.*, p. 118.

² Edith Rickert, 'Elizabeth Chausir a Nun at Barking', *LJLS*, 18 May 1933, p. 348.

³ This conjecture is strengthened by the fact that in several records the surname of both Philippa and Geoffrey Chaucer is spelled Chauncy (Chauncy, Chancy). See Chap. 10, pp. 272, 274, above, and Chap. 5, pp. 87-91, above. Since all these records, as well as record II. B above, are from the Duchy of Lancaster Registers between the years 1373 and 1382, the spelling with 'y' is probably due to a scribal pattern.

⁴ e.g. Hales, *Folia Litteraria*, p. 113; Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer*, p. 52; Margaret Galway, *MLR* lv (1960), 483. Manly suggests also that 'the Agnes Chaucer who with Joan Swynford was one of the "damsels" in waiting at the coronation of Henry IV' may have been another daughter of the poet (*Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, 1928, p. 36; cf. A. A. Kern, *The Ancestry of Chaucer* (Baltimore, 1906), p. 35). The suggestion has also been made that Elizabeth Chauncy or Chausier may have been a sister of Geoffrey (Robinson, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. xix; cf. N. H. Nicolas, 'Life of Chaucer', in *Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Richard Morris (London, 1891), i. 52). For the conjecture that Elizabeth Chaucer was a daughter of John of Gaunt and Philippa Chaucer see George Williams, *A New View of Chaucer* (Durham, 1965), pp. 45-47.

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1398 Trinity term. Enrolment of the appointment of an attorney by Isabella Buckholt in connexion with her plea of debt against Chaucer. pp. 397-8

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1398 Trinity term. Enrolment of further process in connexion with the above plea, ending with an order for a *Capias sicut prius* for Chaucer's appearance on 1 July. P. 398

466

1398 Trinity term. Enrolment of further process in connexion with the above plea, ending with an order for a *Capias sicut prius* for Chaucer's appearance on 13 October. P. 398

467

1398 July 24. Issue Roll entry of a preste to Chaucer upon his exchequer annuity. Table 2, Chap. 7 Table, Chap. 27

468

1398 July 31. Issue Roll entry of a preste to Chaucer upon his exchequer annuity. Table 2, Chap. 7 Table, Chap. 27

469

1398 Aug. 23. Issue Roll entry of a preste to Chaucer upon his exchequer annuity. Table 2, Chap. 7 Table, Chap. 27

470

1398 Sept. 29. Entry on the Pipe Roll for the preceding year concerning preste of 20*l.* made to Chaucer on 21 December 1387. P. 334

471

1398 Michaelmas term. Enrolment of the appointment by Chaucer of an attorney in a plea of debt brought against him by Isabella Buckholt. P. 399

472

1398 Michaelmas term. Enrolment of further process in connexion with Isabella Buckholt's plea of debt against Chaucer, ending with an order for an *Exigi facias* for Chaucer's appearance on 1 June 1399. P. 399

473

1398 Oct. 13. Chaucer's petition for letters patent in accordance with a grant of a tun of wine yearly by Richard II in December 1397, converted into a warrant for issuing the patent. pp. 116-17

474

1398 Oct. 13. Enrolment of letters patent for a grant to Chaucer of a tun of wine yearly to be received in the port of London at the hands of the chief butler. P. 117

475

1398 Oct. 15. Privy seal warrant for issuing letters patent in accordance with Chaucer's petition of 13 October. P. 117

476

1398 Oct. 15. Enrolment of letters patent for a like grant of wine to Chaucer to be received at the hands of the chief butler, retroactive to 1 December 1397. pp. 117-18

477

1398 Oct. 16. Order for passing without fee the second of the above patents for grants of wine to Chaucer. P. 118

478

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480

1399 July 9. Issue Roll entries of remainder of half-yearly payment and a preste to Chaucer upon his exchequer annuity. Table 2, Chap. 7 Table, Chap. 27

481

1399 Sept. 29. Entry on the Pipe Roll for the preceding year concerning preste of 20*l.* made to Chaucer on 21 December 1387. Table 2, Chap. 7 P. 334

482

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O. U. P.

Ely Ho.

Laden W1

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ABBREVIATIONS

- st. statute
- s.v. *sub verbo*
- TCAS *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*
- Tib. Tiberius
- T.R. Treasury of Receipt
- TRHS *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
- Trans. transcript(s)
- Trin. Trinity
- v (superscript) *verso*
- v. virgin
- Var. variant
- W.A.M. Westminster Abbey Muniments
- Warr. warrant(s)

Some P.R.O. records may at some places in the text be referred to by letters and numbers only. For these the corresponding class titles are as follows:

I. CHANCERY RECORDS

- C 47 Miscellanea
- C 54 Close Rolls
- C 65 Parliament Rolls (*Rotuli Parliamentorum*)
- C 66 Patent Rolls
- C 76 Treaty Rolls
- C 81 Warrants for the Great Seal (Ser. I)
- C 131 Extents for Debts
- C 135-9 Inq. *p.m.*
- C 143 Inq. *a.q.d.*
- C 145 Misc. Inq.
- C 202 Chancery Files or Brevia Regia (Ser. H)
- C 219 Writs and Returns of Members to Parliament

2. EXCHEQUER RECORDS

- E 13 Excheq. of Pleas, Plea Rolls
- E 28 T.R., Council and Privy Seal Records
- E 32 T.R., Forest Proceedings
- E 101 K.R., Accts. Various
- E 122 K.R., Customs Accts.
- E 136 K.R., Escheators' Accts.
- E 143 K.R., Extents and Inquisitions
- E 146 K.R., Forest Proceedings
- E 156 K.R., Original Letters Patent
- E 159 K.R., Memo. Rolls
- E 179 K.R., Lay Subsidy Rolls
- E 199 K.R., Sheriffs' Accts.
- E 202 K.R., Writs
- E 207 K.R., Bille
- E 356 L.T.R., Customs Accts. Enrolled

ABBREVIATIONS

- general
- Harl. Harleian
- Hil. Hilary
- ides
- inquisitions
- Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
- Journal of Economic History*
- Justices Itinerant (MSS.)
- King's Bench
- knight
- King's Remembrancer
- Law Quarterly Review*
- Life-Records of Chaucer*, Pts. I-IV, pub. for the Chaucer Society, London, 1875-1900
- (London) *Times Literary Supplement*
- Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer
- monieur*
- martyr
- membranes, membranes
- manerium*
- Memoranda
- Michaemas
- Modern Language Notes*
- Modern Language Quarterly*
- Modern Language Review*
- Modern Philology*
- Notes and Queries*
- nomen*, and its inflectional forms
- new series
- new style
- obolus*
- Oxford English Dictionary*
- Prerogative Court of Canterbury
- perfolium*, and its inflectional forms
- post mortem*
- Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
- Philological Quarterly*
- Public Record Office (London)
- quadrans*
- recto*
- respondet, respondent*
- roll(s)
- Romanic Review*
- register
- Review of English Studies*
- Special Collections
- solutum*, and its inflectional forms

- Gen.
- Harl.
- Hil.
- Id.
- Inq.
- JEGP
- JEH
- Jl
- KB
- knt.
- K.R.
- LQR
- L-R
- L.TLS
- L.T.R.
- M.
- m.
- m., mm.
- man.
- Memo.
- Mich.
- MLN
- MLQ
- MLR
- MP
- N & Q
- nom.
- n.s.
- n.s.
- ob.
- OED
- P.C.C.
- persol.
- p.m.*
- PMLA
- PQ
- P.R.O.
- q., q^s, qua.
- r (superscript)
- r.
- R.
- RR
- Reg.
- RES
- SC
- sol.

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Abbreviations

(Keys to tables, including special abbreviations, are printed with the tables)

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Acct.	account
ap.	<i>apud</i>
<i>a.q.d.</i>	<i>ad quod damnum</i>
Archd.	archdeaconry
Ash.	Ashmole, Ashmolean Museum
B.	<i>beatus</i> , and its inflectional forms
bdle.	bundle
Bibl.	<i>bibliothèque</i>
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
B.M.	British Museum
Bodl.	Bodleian (Library)
c.	<i>capitulum</i>
C, Chan.	Chancery
Cal.	calendar
CCR	<i>Calendar of the Close Rolls</i>
CCbr	<i>Calendar of the Charter Rolls</i>
CFR	<i>Calendar of the Fine Rolls</i>
Chart.	charter(s)
cl.	<i>clavus</i>
Com.	common
Comm.	commissary
Comp.	<i>comptus</i> , and its inflectional forms
Cott.	Cottonian
CP	Common Pleas
CPR	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</i>
d.	dorse
DL	Duchy of Lancaster
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Doct.	document(s)
E.	earl
E, Excheq.	Exchequer
East.	Easter
EcHR	<i>Economic History Review</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ELH	<i>Journal of English Literary History</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
fol.	folio
For.	foreign

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