ALCUIN BLAMIRES

Chaucer, Ethics, & Gender

OXFORD

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Praise for *Chaucer, Ethics, and Gender*

'The effect is one of enriching a reading of the *Tales*, focussing attention upon what it means to face moral decisions, and contextualising those decisions within their contemporaneous ethico-moral discourses.... The study may profitably be read in conjunction with its author's previous extremely interesting work on Chaucer and gender.... I look forward to returning to it repeatedly with different questions and new curiosities.'
K. P. Clarke, *Review of English Studies*

'What is notable and useful about this book is the use of gender as a critical tool: Blamires proposes a new methodology, employing a gendered discussion of the presentation of ethics . . . to open up a new reading of Chaucer. . . it is the exploration of ethics and morality by reference to contemporary works such as the *Roman de la Rose*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and the *Book of Vices and Virtues* that I found particularly useful since it enables the reader to place Chaucer in his own moral environment. . . . what Blamires does that is new and interesting is to show how Chaucer's treatment of the vices and virtues does not always fall out along expected gender lines. Blamires challenges assumptions about medieval gender stereotyping by showing both how Chaucer sometimes attributes to women virtues normally characterised in medieval thinking as masculine, and how some virtues were, maybe against expectation, gendered feminine. . . . Blamires is at his best when he is engaging with "antique" and contemporary texts to throw light on the ethical dilemmas embedded in the tales.'
Cate Gunn, *Essays in Criticism*

'In each of these chapters, Blamires' analysis leads to rich, new, and often provocative readings of the tales or passages within the tales... *Chaucer, Ethics, and Gender* richly demonstrates how generative it can be to read Chaucer's writings in dialogue with the ideas expressed in the moral and ethical treatises that inform the complicated world view of the late fourteenth century.'
Ann Dobyns, *The Medieval Review*

For my brothers
Gabriel, Cyprian, Benedict, Fabian

Abbreviations

ChauR	*The Chaucer Review*
EETS	Early English Text Society
ELH	*English Literary History*
FM	*Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. and trans. Siegfried Wenzel (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989)
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
JW	*Jacob's Well*, pt 1, ed. Arthur Brandeis, EETS, o.s. 115 (London: Trübner, 1900)
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
MLQ	*Modern Language Quarterly*
MLR	*Modern Language Review*
MP	*Modern Philology*
NML	*New Medieval Literatures*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PL	*Patrologia latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris, 1857–66), cited by volume and column
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
PQ	*Philological Quarterly*
Riv.	*The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987)
SAC	*Studies in the Age of Chaucer*
SN	*Studia Neophilologica*
SP	*Studies in Philology*
VV	*The Book of Vices and Virtues: A Fourteenth Century English Translation of the 'Somme Le Roi' of Lorens D'Orléans*, ed. W. Nelson Francis, EETS, o.s. 217 (London: Oxford University Press, 1942)

Acknowledgements

Contents

Introduction

'The corruption of morals cannot be treated in a short article', John of Salisbury remarked in the twelfth century.[1] Indeed by the fifteenth century the bibliography of morality seemed to swamp the capacity of the individual researcher (predictably assumed to be male) to cope with it: 'ther beth so manye bokes and tretees of vices and vertues and of dyverse doctrynes, that this schort lyfe schalle rathere have an ende of anye man thanne he maye owthere studye or rede hem'.[2] There is therefore conspicuous temerity (or strictly *presumptio*, the attempting of some great work above one's powers),[3] in proposing to encompass the writings of Chaucer, their configurations of ethical and moral teachings, and associated genderings of these teachings, in one book.

Yet, in reading Chaucer's work, gender questions are frequently also moral questions. Does the Wife of Bath's discourse allege that women are mercenary, or generous, or profligate? What is the status of the friendship between Troilus and Pandarus in *Troilus and Criseyde*, what the value of brotherhood in 'The Knight's Tale'? If a female fortitude is projected in 'The Clerk's Tale', how much are we to admire it? Is Dorigen more sinned against than sinning, and is Arveragus's response to her acute dilemma ethically unsound in 'The Franklin's Tale'? Does 'The Pardoner's Tale' produce a coherent perspective (or any perspective at all) on homosexuality? Are the sexual adventures in 'The Miller's Tale' morality-free or morally significant? Does 'The Shipman's Tale' carry any critique of financial profit? These are the sorts of particular questions that readers find themselves asking when they encounter Chaucer's

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[1] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 2 vols., ed. Clement C. J. Webb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909), vii.7; and *Policraticus: The Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers*, trans. Joseph B. Pike (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 325.

[2] From the 15th-cent. trans. of the *Horologium Sapientiae*, ed. K. Horstmann, '*Orologium Sapientiae* or *The Seven Poyntes of Trewe Wisdom*', *Anglia*, 10 (1888), 323–89 (p. 328).

[3] *ParsT*, x.402.

writing. The questions appear to flow, as one critic has observed, from a profound interest in dramas of personal morality—notably in how people behave when making and justifying their choices in sexual matters.[4] We might add, with another critic, that the narratives project questions more than answers, because Chaucer's creative energy goes into expressing how moral ideals conflict with numerous emotional or pragmatic or social or egocentric impulses that pull away from those ideals. The reader has to fulfil the narrative's potential by participating in the work of discerning and thinking through implied or possible moral choices in it.[5]

Shadowing the particular questions are the general: for instance, whether Chaucer implicitly critiques or endorses homosocial bonding; whether by often locating fortitude in women his moral design is culturally conservative or radical; whether indeed his writings leave moral stereotyping of the feminine and the masculine—e.g. in the domains of sexuality or materialism—where he found it, or whether on the contrary they destabilize it. (It will be seen that I do not scruple to ascribe certain perspectives to 'Chaucer'. Much criticism still searches endlessly for a degree of sophisticated distribution of independent points of view among narrators in Chaucer's works that far exceeds the merely impressionistic varieties of tone and social provenance he actually incorporated.[6] I shall emphasize conceptual continuity more than hypotheses of individuating dramatization in my consideration of questions structured in his writings.) In order to sharpen our sense of what the gender questions actually are and how they are addressed, we surely need to investigate among other things the embeddedness of these questions in the moral discourses with which Chaucer works. A new gender-aware study of his writings' engagement with those discourses is, in a nutshell, what this book undertakes.

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[4] N. S. Thompson, *Chaucer, Boccaccio and the Debate of Love: A Comparative Study of 'The Decameron' and 'The Canterbury Tales'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 226, 228, 270–1.

[5] George Kane, *The Liberating Truth: The Concept of Integrity in Chaucer's Writings*, John Coffin Memorial Lecture (London: Athlone, 1980), pp. 16–17. The questioning, exploratory character of Chaucer's texts is also cogently urged by Jill Mann, *Feminizing Chaucer* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), pp. xiv–xv and xvii (Preface to the revised edn of her *Geoffrey Chaucer*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

[6] For a super-subtle example of such reading, see Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (London: Routledge, 1991), notably his claims for the Merchant's subjectivity at pp. 333–44. The more sceptical view was crystallized by Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), p. 172.

The undertaking is conceived against a background of by now formidably extensive discussion of gender issues in Chaucer's writings, never mind of gender theory. Although the present book espouses no one theory it acknowledges a spectrum of approaches to gender. (It owes least, perhaps, to psychoanalytical gender criticism.) The term 'gender' is not here shorthand for 'women', and the spotlight is on how ethical concerns feed into narrative construction of 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviour.

The first round of book-length studies of gender in Chaucer up to 1992 offered capacious approaches signalled in titles like *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, *Chaucer's Women*, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (in a series of 'Feminist Readings'), and *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender*.[7] Of course these sweeping titles concealed specific agendas. Characteristic of this phase was a debate about a putative 'feminization' of males in Chaucer's narratives, a concept most positively envisaged by Jill Mann, who proposed that Chaucer meant to break down prejudices by deliberately investing males in his texts with 'feminine' virtues. In subsequent years the focus of gender-based books on Chaucer narrowed, either to particular texts or genres, or to particular aspects of gender and sexuality.[8] What is now needed is a period of consolidation, defining gender formulations in Chaucer's poetry with greater precision in relation to the various medieval discourses through and against which his formulations are positioned.

Ideally such a book should include a historicization of its subject. However, in my view a prior objective is to identify and understand more about the doctrines applied (or knowingly misapplied) in his

[7] Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Priscilla Martin, *Chaucer's Women: Nuns, Wives and Amazons* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990); Mann, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (1991); Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

[8] See Margaret Hallissy, *Clean Maids, True Wives, Steadfast Widows: Chaucer's Women and Medieval Codes of Conduct* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993); Anne Laskaya, *Chaucer's Approach to Gender in the 'Canterbury Tales'* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995); Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Angela Weisl, *Conquering the Reign of Femeny: Gender and Genre in Chaucer's Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995); Catherine S. Cox, *Gender and Language in Chaucer* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997); Florence Percival, *Chaucer's Legendary Good Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Peter Beidler (ed.), *Masculinities in Chaucer* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1998); Robert Sturges, *Chaucer's Pardoner and Gender Theory* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999). Gender discussion of Chaucer up to 2000 is incisively reviewed in Mann, *Feminizing Chaucer*, Preface.

works. Historicization can become more confident when that kind of groundwork is more fully established. Here, therefore, while ideas about localization of significance in the appropriate period will certainly be incorporated chapter by chapter, and while suggestions about the interplay between moral positioning in Chaucerian narrative and late fourteenth-century socio-political developments will be canvassed in my Conclusion, discussion is not fundamentally driven by a politically historicizing methodology.

There have of course been studies of Chaucerian narrative in relation to moral doctrine before. A colourful example is the robust disagreement between two eminent medievalists early in the twentieth century. In 1914 Frederick Tupper laid out an argument that the *Canterbury Tales* were designed as exemplifications of sins and virtues, each tale drawing on one of the 'strict categories' of traditional moral analysis. Where a tale had an analogue in Gower's contemporary poem, the *Confessio Amantis*, Gower's explicit moral identification of the story could be taken as a guide to a comparable identification in the *Tales*. 'The Parson's Tale' was a kind of matrix, and in many cases the tale-tellers 'incarnated' the sins that their tales actually condemned. Thus, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' becomes a critique of the arrogance of a knight, while the Wife herself incarnates 'Inobedience', a branch of Pride; and 'The Man of Law's Tale' is based around 'Grucching', a branch of Envy, 'The Manciple's Tale' around 'Chiding', a branch of Wrath.[9] Almost as an afterthought, Tupper becomes terribly embarrassed about the straitjacket he finds that he has imposed. 'The moralization does not at all affect the story, but serves merely as a framework', he wriggles; and Chaucer escapes, with 'artistic dexterity', from the 'fetters of his formula'.[10] It is interesting to see this anxious resistance voiced against the threat of a far-reaching moral subtext in the *Tales*. Beguiled by the sometimes non-judgemental texture of Chaucer's writings, readers often want to rescue them altogether from the embrace of morality. Hence his writings have been held to transcend the moral imperatives of the age, and Chaucer is held to personify a universal principle: 'the artist is a humanist by profession'.[11] It has suited an era of pluralist and sceptical readers to suppose that Chaucer's only moral design is a design to destabilize categorical

    [9] Frederick Tupper, 'Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins', *PMLA*, 29 (1914), 93–128.
    [10] Ibid., pp. 127–8.
    [11] Alfred David, *The Strumpet Muse: Art and Morals in Chaucer's Poetry* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 3–6, 133.

morality ('the fetters of a formula'), a supposition so entrenched that readings affirming the opposite can appear self-consciously embattled.[12] It was less Tupper's moral interpretation in itself than the viability of his sin-categorizations that drew a stern 135-page counterblast from John Livingston Lowes in 1915.[13] Lowes pointed out that medieval 'seven sins' paradigms with their subsets were in practice a maze of complicated interweaving, not reducible to the kind of synoptic grid offered by Tupper. As for the sins allegedly covered by individual tales, there were several objections. First, alternative affiliations could be advanced for every one of Tupper's examples: for example, 'The Man of Law's Tale' was surely about constancy, and the nub of 'The Manciple's Tale' seemed better defined as 'jangling' (garrulity). Second, the methodology was insensitive to the *breadth* of moral issues that might be observable in a given instance. Thus the Wife of Bath in her 'Prologue' couldn't just stand for 'inobedience'. Compounded of many morally nuanced impulses, she could not be 'cabined within the confines of a Sin'.[14] Third, following from that, and intended to bludgeon Tupper's entire thesis, there was the problem (naturally enough, since the doctrine of sins and virtues had been developed to cater comprehensively for the confessional interrogation of every parishioner) that the range of behaviour covered by the categorization of sins was so massively inclusive that 'if one is to tell tales at all, one is foredoomed to run into them'.[15]

Tupper was far from outgunned, and reinforced his moral analyses in a 1916 rejoinder.[16] For our purposes, three salutary warnings can be derived from the case of 'Lowes *vs.* Tupper'. First, Tupper was wrongly trying to read back into Chaucer an inherited technique of moral exemplification, still being applied by Gower with mixed success, but from which Chaucer was slipping away. Even in the *Confessio Amantis* the artificiality of the technique is made palpable because Gower consciously subjects it to such strain. Stories are corralled into signification in the domain of heterosexual love against the grain of their logical application, with the result that the reader's intellect is hard pressed to keep abreast of the exemplifying manoeuvres. Other

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[12] J. Allan Mitchell epitomizes this 'embattled' status even as he urges a rethink, in *Ethics and Exemplary Narrative in Chaucer and Gower* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 1–21, 79–86.
[13] 'Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins', *PMLA*, 30 (1915), 237–371.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 357. [15] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[16] 'Chaucer's Sinners and Sins', *JEGP*, 15 (1916), 56–106.

liminal modes of narrative exemplification are seen at this time in the poems of the *Gawain*-poet; 'liminal' in the sense that they seem on a threshold between stories of strict exemplification (of *trawthe, pacience, clannesse*) and stories which develop a momentum going way beyond that function. Chaucer appears to have stepped more decisively across that threshold: though quite how far, will be part of the business of this book to assess.

A second lesson from 'Lowes *vs.* Tupper' is that attempts to relate particular Chaucerian narratives to single vices or to their single contrary virtues are particularly vulnerable, though that has not prevented continuing experiments in this genre.[17] (Let me accordingly announce in advance a blanket proviso that, wherever Chaucer's works are discussed in terms of categories—e.g. 'Unshamefulness'—in the chapters of the present book, such categories are not advanced as the sole 'key' to interpretation.)

The third warning is that the medieval Christian discourse of virtues and sins was so encyclopedic, so all-encompassing, that hardly any story could avoid stumbling into the lexicography of sin. This problem has since been restated by Derek Pearsall. Analysing the ethos of the meditation on sufferance near the beginning of 'The Franklin's Tale', he suggests that the passage demonstrates how Chaucer 'struggles to disentangle a human truth from a vocabulary dominated by moral and religious ideas'.[18] Elsewhere Pearsall maintains, similarly, that we should not over-read confessional diction in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* because 'any attempt to talk seriously about human behaviour in late fourteenth-century English poetry is bound to take on a Christian colouring, since Christianity dominated the vernacular language of ethics'.[19] The implication is that a medieval writer wanting to analyse behaviour could not help hauling along a certain amount of superfluous Christian moral baggage. But this begs a large question. Should we deem a given passage innocent of doctrinal meaning until proved guilty, if its discussion of human behaviour uses vocabulary overlapping

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[17] Denise Baker takes this risk by associating Griselda, for example, with Obedience (as a branch of Justice): 'Chaucer and Moral Philosophy: The Virtuous Women of *The Canterbury Tales*', *MÆ*, 60 (1991), 241–56.

[18] *The Canterbury Tales* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 160.

[19] Derek Pearsall, 'Courtesy and Chivalry in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: The Order of Shame and the Invention of Embarrassment', in *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 351–62 (p. 352).

with sins-and-virtues analysis? Or, is such a passage to be deemed resonant with doctrinal meaning unless self-evidently dissociated from that? These, indeed, are adjudications out of which major interpretative differences can arise.

I would rather start from the premise that if vocabulary is used that is reminiscent of the formal moral discourses of the period, we should not lightly unplug that vocabulary from its meanings in those discourses. 'Ethics in our time', as Patrick Boyde has commented, 'tends to be pluralistic, relativist, tolerant, and anxious to free itself from the preconceptions of the past.'[20] While a move in the direction of such pluralism is rightly considered one of the glories of Chaucer's writings, I shall hope to demonstrate how they everywhere interact profoundly with moral doctrine inherited by his period (which is not to say that they do so unquestioningly).[21]

As readers may by now be thinking, the terms 'ethics' and 'morals' are potentially troublesome. It will be necessary, so far as feasible, to sustain a distinction between them for the purposes of this study. (It should also be mentioned that although 'ethical' reading has been theorized in recent decades, contribution to such theorization is not the purpose of the present project.)[22] In general the term 'ethics' will be reserved for that part of the behavioural code that was inherited from antiquity and roughly associated, by the later Middle Ages at least, with the *Ethics* of Aristotle and with the Roman Stoicism which later succeeded it.[23] This is in line with David Burnley's use of the term 'secular ethics' to designate 'the ethical traditions descending by grace of the twelfth-century *ethici*

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[20] Patrick Boyde, *Human Vices and Human Worth in Dante's 'Comedy'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 3.

[21] As Kane puts it, 'in [Chaucer's] historical circumstances considerations of morality were integrally a component of the truth of representation of a personality or an action', *The Liberating Truth*, p. 14.

[22] I have found more stimulus in Carol Gilligan's observations on psychology, morality, and gender difference: notably, her model of an 'ethic of justice' favoured by males as against an 'ethic of care' preferred by women: *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[23] Aristotle, *Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953). The work was brought back into European consciousness after Grosseteste produced a full Latin translation in 1249, though a partial Latin translation was already in circulation in the 13th cent.: see *Ethica Nicomachea, Aristoteles Latinus*, ed. R.-A. Gauthier (Leiden and Brussels: E. J. Brill and Desclée de Brouwer, 1972). The medieval commentaries are reviewed in Georg Wieland, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Ethics*', in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 657–72.

from the rational philosophy of the classical past'.[24] Chaucer may not have had first-hand knowledge of Aristotle's book, though he appears to identify it for its theory that behavioural ideals are the 'mean' between failings of excess or deficiency: 'vertu is the mene, / As Etik seith' ('Prologue' to *The Legend of Good Women*, 'F' text, 165–6).[25] The term 'morality' on the other hand will generally refer to the Christian moral schema, though this schema, it cannot be sufficiently emphasized, systematically sought to subsume antique ethics. Distinctions cannot be at all watertight. What I am referring to as Christian 'morality' is the more capacious descriptor, often encompassing or overlapping with what I am referring to as 'ethical' teachings, 'ethics' being the narrower descriptor. In a project of the present kind a residual sense of the distinction needs to be retained.

Burnley's *Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition* is still the single most valuable contribution to the study of the penetration of Chaucerian vocabulary by ideas reaching back through ethical writings. Burnley organized his book around sub-themes of rulership and tyranny within both the political and psychological contexts. It was a structure conducive to tracing ethical and social themes across Chaucer's writings but it was less hospitable to extended comment on individual narratives and it only produced incidental insights into aspects of gender. Building on Burnley's work, a new approach will allow questions about ethical/moral issues and their gendering to be applied to a selection of Chaucer texts. What might particularly be expected of Chaucer, with his conspicuously eclectic tastes open to a mixed medieval-classicizing inheritance, is that he would be particularly interested in the accommodations negotiated between ethical concepts and the moral systems into which Christianity sought to assimilate them.

Reaching Chaucer partly as independent texts, partly through their assimilation into the pastoral literature, but partly filtered through other channels such as Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and the *Roman de la Rose*, were

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[24] J. D. Burnley, *Chaucer's Language and the Philosophers' Tradition* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979), p. 9.

[25] For Chaucer's other references to the 'mean' see *TC*, 1.687–90, and *CYPr*, VIII.645–6, 'That that is overdoon, it wol nat preeve / Aright . . . it is a vice' (cf. Aristotle, *Ethics*, II.6, trans. Thomson, pp. 100–2). However, such summaries of the doctrine may have reached Chaucer as commonplaces, as the *Riv.* note to VIII.645–6 suggests. All Chaucer quotations are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); The *Canterbury Tales* are cited by Roman numeral and line number in the body of my text.

readings and extracts from antique ethics, which means primarily Stoic ethics. Neo-Platonic ethical philosophy was also transmitted to the Middle Ages, and it too influenced Chaucer—perhaps most visibly in his early poetry and in *Troilus and Criseyde*. However, the Neo-Platonic strain is only incidentally glanced at in the present book, whose focus rests on practical ethics. The two most noted practical ethical writers from Latin antiquity were Seneca and Cicero. Cicero's *De officiis* ('On Duties'), Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius*, and his treatises on Favours, on Clemency, on Constancy, and on Wrath, were goldmines of ethical analysis and advice.[26] The Senecan *Letters* were probably the most widely available of these writings, though not often as a complete set until late in the Middle Ages.[27] Here in pleasantly digestible format were the hallmarks of Stoic ethical thought: ideals of self-sufficiency, magnanimous tranquillity of mind, and the elimination of fear and strong emotions. Whether Chaucer actually read whole 'works' of Cicero or Seneca is open to doubt.[28] Deschamps probably didn't imply that Chaucer had *read* Seneca when he hailed him as a new 'Seneca in morals';[29] it was just a grand compliment to a morally sophisticated

[26] Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. and trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913) will be quoted in this book; I have also consulted Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For transmission of the text see N. E. Nelson, 'Cicero's *De Officiis* in Christian Thought: 300–1300', *Essays and Studies in English and Comparative Literature*, University of Michigan Publications (Ann Arbor), 10 (1933), 59–160. For Seneca's Letters see *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, 3 vols., trans. Richard M. Gummere (London: Heinemann; and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917 [Letters 1–65], 1920 [Letters 66–92], and 1925 [Letters 93–124]). For Seneca's Dialogues and Essays see Seneca, *Moral Essays*, 3 vols., trans. John W. Basore (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928, 1932, and 1935); also consulted, *Senecae Dialogi*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), and *Seneca: Moral and Political Essays*, trans. John M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[27] For summaries of the transmission of Seneca's *Epistulae*, see Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), pp. 153–4, and Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales: A Study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 29–33.

[28] However, Harry M. Ayres argues quite persuasively for the poet's direct knowledge of at least some of the Letters, 'Chaucer and Seneca', *Romanic Review*, 10 (1919), 1–15.

[29] In a *balade* (probably of the mid-1380s) entitled 'O Socrates plains de philosophie', heralding Chaucer as 'grant translateur': see Derek Brewer, *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, vol. i, *1385–1837* (London: Arnold, 1978), p. 40. Thomas Hoccleve hailed Chaucer as a modern Cicero in rhetoric and as 'heir in philosophie' to Aristotle (grandiose, but probably thinking of moral philosophy): *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles Blyth, TEAMS Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Western Michigan University, 1999), 2085–8.