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"In his old dress": Packaging Thomas Speght's Chaucer for Renaissance Readers

Devani Singh

Abstract: This article subjects Thomas Speght's Chaucer editions (1598; 1602) to a consideration of how these books conceive, invite, and influence their readership. Studying the highly wrought forms of the dedicatory epistle to Sir Robert Cecil, the prefatory letter by Francis Beaumont, and the address "To the Readers," it argues that these paratexts warrant closer attention for their treatment of the entangled relationships between editor, patron, and reader. Where prior work has suggested that Speght's audience for the editions was a socially horizontal group and that he only haltingly sought wider publication, this article suggests that the preliminaries perform a multivocal role, poised to readily receive a diffuse readership of both familiar and newer consumers.

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The new Chaucer collection that appeared on booksellers' stalls in 1598 was a Renaissance bestseller. The remarkably short period until the arrival of its second edition, published in 1602, provides the best proof of the project's commercial success.[1] In producing the book, editor Thomas Speght and his publishers had repackaged the poet in humanist trappings, offering readers a convenient interpretative toolkit aimed at attaining Speght's stated goal of "reuiuing the memorie of so rare a man" and "doing some reparations on his works."[2] Its function, in other words, was to serve as the poet's interpreter by translating Chaucer and his *oeuvre* into more accessible terms for a contemporary audience. The editions' preliminaries and other features listed in the central panel of its title page also offer insight into the book's anticipated reception. Significant study of the 1598 and 1602 *Workes* has demonstrated their effectiveness at canonising Chaucer as the preeminent poet in English,[3] while other work has robustly assessed the editor's rhetorical posturing, identifying discourses of privacy and of friendship employed by the book's makers.[4] Additional research dedicated to exploring Chaucer's reception in print and manuscript by drawing upon physical evidence left by individual readers has also contributed to an increasingly nuanced picture of the poet's later reception.[5]

This article bridges these two modes of thinking about Chaucer's Renaissance reception—that is, through the separate lenses of the editor and the reader—with a consideration of how the editions conceive, invite, and attempt to influence their audiences.[6] To do so, I will discuss a set of three letters that prefaces the editions: the dedicatory epistle, a letter to Speght himself, and the address "To the Readers." These three texts may shed light on the anticipated readership implicated in the book's production and early reception, and on the entangled relationships between editor, patron, and reader invoked in what Evelyn Tribble has termed "the dense population of the page."[7]

In Gérard Genette's influential theory, the preliminaries, or front matter, of a book are its paratexts: the add-ons responsible for ushering the reader into and out of the primary text.[8]

Discussing the ubiquity of the Renaissance paratext, Helen Smith and Louise Wilson note that items on the fringes of an author's text—its title page, dedications, and errata, amongst others—were often printed separately from the text itself, engendering a "physical and temporal separation [that] allows many early modern paratexts to be highly self-reflexive."[9] And I shall show here that prefatory paratexts, as self-reflexive bibliographic items, may not only intersect with a book's central text, but can also produce meaning as they impinge upon each other. By attending to the book's invocation of its different readers, this study will illuminate the characteristics of the audiences that Speght and his collaborators envisaged as being interested in, benefitting from, and enabling the success of the new editions. Where prior work has noted that the main audience for the editions was a socially horizontal "genteel circle of like-minded readers" and that Speght presents himself as haltingly seeking wider publication,[10] the present discussion will argue that the composition of this anticipated readership was more mixed than has previously been noted. While private gentleman readers no doubt composed a significant part of Speght's readership, this article suggests that the preliminaries perform a multivocal role, poised to receive a diffuse readership of both familiar and newer consumers.

The first edition of 1598 was prepared by Speght, a London schoolmaster, and was the first Chaucer collection to contain a scholarly treatment of the poet's life and historical contexts. In this compilation of supplementary material surrounding Chaucer's life and works, the editor benefitted from the assistance and collections of the antiquary John Stow.[11] In the 1602 edition, Speght alludes to their collaborative relationship, noting "And in that complaint which he [Chaucer] maketh to his empty purse, I do find a written copy, which I had of Maister Stow (whose library helped me in many things) wherein ten times more is adjoined, than is in print."[12] These "many things" encompass a significant set of contributions by the antiquary, for as Stow recounts in his *Annales of England* (1600), "in the yeere 1597 [I] further increased with other [Chaucer's] workes, as also his life, preferment, issue and death, collected out of records in the towre and else where by my selfe, and giuen to Thomas Spight [sic] to be published."[13] Such

"increases" were encomiastic in their praise of the poet, but they also served the practical role of making Chaucer less distant by packaging him in a new way that improved and, in Stow's phrase, "beautified with noates" the edition that he had previously edited in 1561.[14] Speght's title page boasts a numbered catalogue of the new volume's virtues, including a biography or "Life" of the poet and a copperplate engraving of "His Portraiture," one of the earliest examples of an engraved English author portrait.[15] As the chronological distance between Chaucer and his readership grew, so too had editorial efforts to render the poet familiar by incorporating novel features, such as the "Old and obscure words," "Arguments to every Booke," and "Authors by him Cited," which are also heralded on the title page of Speght's volume. The result, in 1598, was a hefty tome of over 400 folio leaves, designed to enhance a reader's appreciation of Chaucer and his works. The enlarged 1602 edition includes more prefatory verses praising Chaucer, an expanded glossary, and manicules identifying his *sententiae*. Together with a page reprint of 1687, Speght's editions would become the standard mode of reading Chaucer into the eighteenth century, even beyond the publication of John Urry's 1721 *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*.

Though definitive information on the volume's immediate reception and circulation is lacking, the short interval between the two editions indicates the book's success on the marketplace. James Raven, assessing the underlying forces that governed the making of premodern books, asserts that the necessity for profit was the principal determining factor for the businesspeople of the trade.[16] On the one hand, then, the paratextual adornments to Speght's Chaucer promote the editor's conception of Chaucer as the preeminent English poet, but on the other hand, they reflect the most shrewd means of advertising the book to prospective consumers. With the aim of studying how the editor deploys paratexts to shape this prospective readership, my discussion begins by considering his dedicatory epistle to the book's patron.

I. The "worthy patrone" as Ideal Reader

The printing of preliminaries in literary works, a critical means of marketing a printed book to prospective buyers, was conventional by the end of the sixteenth century. Amongst

these introductory texts, pride of place in the early modern printed book was awarded to a pair of paratexts that attempted to influence the readership's reception of the enclosed text—the dedication and the prefatory epistle. In discussing the intended consumers for this collection of Chaucer's writing, I begin with the letter to the dedicatee, whose name is displayed in the very beginning of the book, and who is the book's most visible, and perhaps most powerful, reader. As a reader, the dedicatee's role is symbolic; this prospective patron is called upon to at once admire the volume's contents and to shield it from critics. Yet the early modern dedication is often also a carefully crafted *private* suit, intended to court a powerful reader into granting favor to its author.

So ubiquitous was the form in the early seventeenth century that the potentially lucrative returns of a well-placed dedication are satirised in Thomas Dekker's *O per Se O* (1612), a pamphlet that catalogues the schemes of contemporary rogues. One ruse featured in Dekker's text is "a new kinde of Hawking, teaching how to catch Birds by Bookes," in which flattering opportunists present prospective patrons with hoax volumes. These makeshift books, adorned with false dedicatory epistles, lure their dedicatees into granting benevolences to the putative "author." The tricksters then replace the dedication and present the work to a new dedicatee, who is unaware that the book is a "bastard, that hath more fathers besides himselfe."[17] Dekker's identification of the dedication as a worthy object of satire highlights the vulnerability of the form to charges of opportunism and superficiality. Many elements of the author's suit in Dekker's fictional account are true to the conventions of early modern patronage, merely amplified for comedic effect. Heidi Brayman Hackel's study of the intersections between imagined and real readers in copies of early modern books catalogues the hallmarks of the printed dedication: "the frequent absence of acquaintance between dedicatee and author, the requisite flattery of the dedication, the ritual of the physical presentation of the book, and the expectation of a monetary 'benevolence.'"[18] This formula for the early modern dedication,

satirised in the form of Dekker's tricksters, suggests that the contemporary system of patronage might reward shrewd manoeuvering as much as literary talent or endeavor.

Yet Dekker's fictional account belies the ease with which authors were favored in this model of patronage.[19] One need only consider the variable fortunes of some of Speght's better-known Cambridge contemporaries: the scholar Gabriel Harvey, who lived out his years self-exiled to Saffron Walden, having failed to procure advancement at court, or the embittered depiction of the ruling elite by Edmund Spenser in the 1596 edition of his *Faerie Queene*.[20] And for lesser known authors in particular, the dividends of the patronage relationship were often hard-won. Wendy Wall has demonstrated that the authorial anxieties surrounding preferment are often manifest in the preliminaries of early modern books, where such "marks of privilege" like dedications and prefatory epistles reinforce the validity of the hierarchical social structures necessary for an author's advancement.[21]

Operating within this elaborate social architecture, each of Speght's dedicatory prefaces enacts the formulaic set of roles identified by Hackel: they nod to the editor's acquaintance with the patron, evoke the physical properties of the book's presentation, flatter the addressee, and allude to the possible reward for his labours. This conventionality is instructive, reflecting as it does the editor's conscious participation in the ritual of dedicating a book, and his implicit pursuit of the most common benefits of literary patronage: social advancement, monetary gifts, or other forms of favor.[22] Yet, as I will demonstrate in what follows, Speght's prefaces are not entirely conventional, but instead rely on exploiting a personal relationship with his prospective patron. Here, the editor implicates the patron in the project of restoring Chaucer to a wider readership, and invokes the poet's historic stature to advance an argument for the necessity of his editorial work.

While deciding on a dedicatee for his Chaucer, another dedication no doubt loomed large in Speght's mind: William Thynne's dedication of the 1532 edition of Chaucer to King Henry VIII, an epistle ghostwritten by Sir Brian Tuke but which speaks in the first-person voice as

though written by Thynne. Thynne was Clerk of the Kitchen in the Royal Household, and by his death had become Master of the household for the King. Greg Walker has convincingly argued that the Preface and the volume in which it appears were both carefully designed for the shrewd purpose of the sovereign's reading. For Walker, the edition is intended to be a tactful counsel to the King, a *speculum principis* to remind Henry to moderate his political extremism. In this reading, the carefully pitched Preface is crafted to persuade Henry of the edition's value as reading material worth serious contemplation.[23]

As Walker's interpretation notes, the visibility of the Preface on booksellers' stalls also made the King an important symbolic reader of the edition; whether he actually engaged with its contents, his name and the promise of royal endorsement presented the book as an attractive purchase to the public.[24] This identification of King Henry VIII as a noteworthy recipient of the Thynne Chaucer affirms the poet's status as a cultural heavyweight upon whose authority Renaissance editors could rely to further their own ambitions. In the case of Thynne, this motive was twofold: to win for the book a seal of royal approval, and to position himself as a loyal subject deserving reward.

While there survives no record of how King Henry received the book, or whether he read it at all, Thynne's Preface enjoyed longevity beyond its initial publication. Not only did it appear in the later editions of 1542 and c. 1550, but it was also included in Stow's 1561 edition, and Speght's editions of 1598 and 1602, as well as the 1687 reprint. It has been noted that the practice of reprinting previous dedications to earlier patrons was a frequent occurrence in early modern print.[25] This assessment is no doubt accurate—and yet, it is not inconceivable that the reasons for this retention might extend beyond tradition. Simple though it may be to dismiss the Thynne Preface as a relic of the earlier edition, retained in later volumes by virtue of inertia, Speght's motivation for including it in his updated volumes is worth critical consideration beyond this easiest of explanations. The high cost of paper in the period meant that every decision to expand a book represented a significant investment on the part of its publishers.[26] In

a pair of volumes as carefully considered as Speght's Chaucers, this inclusion is unlikely to have been a casual one. The attachment could have primarily lay in the implicit royal endorsement encoded in the dedication, but Speght may have also been attracted to the text's blackletter type, with its archaising nod to the gothic scripts of Chaucer's time, or to its tribute to William Thynne, upon whose efforts all subsequent editions in the century relied heavily. Whether on account of royal, nostalgic, or editorial connections, the golden advertising opportunity afforded by including Thynne's Preface in the new edition was promptly seized by Speght.

Beginning in 1598, the Thynne Preface was preceded by a new dedicatory epistle in collections of Chaucer's works: Speght's own preface dedicating the book to Sir Robert Cecil, a minister to Queen Elizabeth. Robert Cecil was the son of William Cecil, Lord Burghley who had been Lord Treasurer under Elizabeth until his death that year. Philemon Holland's translation of Camden's *Britannia* (1637) hails him as "R*obert Cecil*, a good sonne of a right good father," an epithet that conveys the heredity of Burghley's political power.[27] Between them, the two Cecils wielded such influence in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, that the period of their office was derisively termed a *regnum Cecilianum*, a term that demonstrates their monopoly of power and their far-reaching influence.

Speght's second edition in 1602 came complete with a new Preface to the younger Cecil, but his editions were only two of some sixty books dedicated to Robert Cecil between the period of 1592 and his death in 1612.[28] In the last decades of the seventeenth century, literary patronage became harder to obtain but, as before, the most powerful figures attracted the greatest number of pleas for patronage. In the 1590s, those who received the most dedications were Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex and the Queen's favorite; Elizabeth herself; and Lord Burghley, who died in 1598.[29] Upon Burghley's death, his son became the most powerful man in England. Little wonder, then, that Robert Cecil's name headlines the dedicatory pages of dozens of books in the period.

In Thomas Churchyard's *The Mirror of Man, and Manners of Men* (1594), for instance, the author declares that while other readers may misjudge a writer's works, he places his faith in Cecil, "who knowes that a willing present (duetifully written) offered by humblenesse of mind, merits more good will then [sic] mislike." His dedication concludes with an explicit wish for patronage: "a fauorable censure and supportation."[30] When Thomas Stocker dedicated his translation of a Calvin sermon to Cecil in 1592, he adopted a more tactful approach. His request justifies the request for patronage as a customary, and thus, necessary, part of the publication of works by "the learned": "so hath been also their maner to dedicate them vnto some honorable or worshipfull personages, for the patronizing of those their paines and trauels: which their doings, haue at this present made mee presume vppon your honourable curtesie, to dedicate this my trauell of these Sermons."[31] Like Stocker, the translator of *The Art of Singing* (1609), John Douland, alludes to the relentless jockeying for Cecil's favor in contemporary dedications by authors motivated by the "powerfull encitements [that] draw all sorts to the desire of your most Noble protection." But crucially, the translator then distinguishes his offering from those of other "sorts" by appealing to Cecil's well known appreciation of the musical arts: "such is your diuine Disposition," Douland writes, "that both you excellently vnderstand, and royally entertaine the Exercise of Musicke."[32] On the other hand, a petitioner lacking both a prior connection to Cecil or to any of his cultivated interests, the anonymous author of *The Fierie Tryall of God's Saints* (1611), furnishes his epistle dedicatory with a list of five reasons explaining why he has "presumed to shroud my selfe vnder your Hono: winges."[33] These justifications find their basis in Cecil's integrity and honorable pedigree, and the list registers, like those of Churchyard, Stocker, and Douland, an implicit awareness of the great man's standing as an influential and generous patron.

Speght's own plea for Cecil's patronage is comparably secure, resting upon his history with the aristocratic household and on the book's print history itself. While Thynne no doubt hoped that his royal dedicatee would win the edition favor amongst readers, the rhetoric of

Speght's dedication similarly emphasizes and exploits that royal connection, nearly seven decades later:

> This book, when it was first published in print (right Honorable) was dedicated to the Kings most excellent Maiestie *Henry* the eight, who fauourably entertained the same, as a work deseruing a worthy patrone. These collections and corrections vpon Chaucer as they earnestly desire, so might they better haue deserued acceptance at your honors hands, had they ben as fully perfected, as they haue beene painefully gathered.[34]

The editor's presentation of the book to this new "worthy patrone" mirrors the transfer of editorial responsibility from Thynne to Speght, and represents Cecil as a fitting successor to Henry. In one sense, this flattery is highly conventional, as is perhaps the claim that the book was "fauourably entertained" by the King. Yet at the same time, the choice of Robert Cecil as dedicatee is a politic attempt to procure a powerful reader with known literary interests as supporter of this new venture.

Whatever the outcome of Speght's attempt to forge a patronage relationship with Cecil, it is clear that his dedication deploys more than the *topoi* common to the genre in order to advance his case. This is possible since Speght's appeal for "acceptance" rests on a more personal, and reciprocal, obligation. He invokes their deeper, social connections when he speaks of his duty to the house of Cecil:

> My dutifull remembrance of that honourable good Lady your mother, who gaue mee yearely exhibition all the time of my continuance in Cambridge, enforceth me to offer this slender present vnto your Honour, as a testimonie of the dutie, wherein I acknowledge my selfe bound both to her and hers during my life.[35]

The "honourable good Lady," Lady Mildred Cecil, was another member of the immensely powerful Cecil dynasty and, with her husband Lord Burghley, was a known patron of the arts. Lady Cecil was the eldest of Sir Anthony Cooke's five daughters, a famously well-educated group

of women. Her exceptional education is well documented: she is said to have been as comfortable writing Greek as English, and had an extensive library of her own books, thirty-eight of which survive.[36]

Lady Cecil received three book dedications in her own lifetime, and was a known lover of classical texts. The Cecils were deeply engaged in contemporary artistic culture and their residence, Cecil House in London, has been described as "England's nearest equivalent to a humanist *salon* in the days after More, and possibly the only one in early Elizabethan England."[37] The Cecils regularly opened their home to men of letters, facilitating informal dinnertime symposia that confirm they both welcomed and were courted by a literary and intellectual elite.[38] The household eventually became known as a prestigious site to send young boys from the nobility to gain a humanist education alongside the Cecils' own children and the royal wards.[39]

This engagement with public causes extended, for Mildred Cecil, to charitable donations that supported some of the chief English educational institutions of the period. Following the library losses of the Reformation, benefactions from donors were immensely valued by the old institutions of learning. Lord Burghley's list of his late wife's books, compiled in 1585, records nineteen titles given to Oxford and Cambridge colleges, and to the Westminster Abbey and Westminster School libraries. Contemporary notes in nine titles still held in the libraries of these institutions also preserve material evidence of Lady Cecil's activity as a donor.[40] She was especially generous to St. John's College, Cambridge, where her husband had studied as an undergraduate and where the couple regularly visited while Burghley was Chancellor of the University. To this college, she donated her eight-volume polyglot Bible, and funded scholarships for two boys from Westminster School to attend St. John's each year.[41]

It is in this context that Speght professes a debt to Lady Cecil, who provided him with a scholarship to attend Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he matriculated as a sizar, or poor scholar, in 1566.[42] It is not entirely surprising that the circumstances of their meeting remain unknown, since her undercover generosity towards poor students is elsewhere attested by the fact that she

discreetly supported the St. John's College, Cambridge scholarships using the name of the Dean of Westminster, Gabriel Goodman, as a front.[43] This generosity on the part of the statesman's mother is the ostensible reason for Speght's dedication of the book to Robert Cecil.

The dedication, then, may have been equally motivated by Speght's sense of genuine gratitude and service as by a desire to court the younger Cecil as a benefactor. Like his parents, the younger Cecil was an ardent supporter of the arts. His musical interests were well known amongst his contemporaries, and his patronage was sought accordingly. Lynn Hulse finds that Cecil kept a permanent band of musicians in his household and that he employed over twenty musical artists, tutors, and apprentices during the period from about 1591 to his death in 1612.[44] Evidence of this musical engagement also comes from the library catalogue drawn up for his residence, Salisbury House, which includes "Diverse Bookes of musicke and songes," and from extant accounts that refer to "three great violl books with gilt Covers." Unlike such records, the books and music dedicated to Cecil during his lifetime do not offer certainty about his habits of musical patronage, but they can nonetheless indicate the practical gains anticipated—and achieved—by those who sought his favor.[45] His reading, too, appears to have been extensive, if Robert Proby's claim in their correspondence, "You told me that you esteemed books more than gold," is to be believed.[46]

These details of the Cecils' practice of philanthropy and patronage shed light on the rhetoric advanced in Speght's Preface to his Chaucer. Both the personal connection between Speght and the Cecils and the reputation of the noble household as a meeting-place and crucible of ideas for the *literati* suggest that Speght's "slender present" would have been favorably received by Robert Cecil. Whether the statesman read the antiquary's book, modestly presented in the dedication as "certaine collections and obseruations vpon Chaucer," is unknown.[47] But his dedicatee, Speght suggests, is a worthy choice by virtue of his membership in that "Honourable house" of learning and munificence.[48] And while Lady Cecil had died in 1589, it is equally

apparent that Speght's dedication of his book to her powerful son was at once an act of tribute and of astute self-promotion.

Each of the 1598 and 1602 Prefaces meekly but unmistakably requests Robert Cecil's patronage of the book:

> And so crauing your honorable acceptance of the same, and patronage of my good meaning towards the Poet, I humbly take my leaue, beseeching God long to continue your Honour in health and happinesse.[49]
>
> I am bold to present the whole to your Honourable fauour and patronage, alwaies mindfull of my bounden dutie to your H. house, which with heartie prayer I commend to the grace of the Almightie.[50]

No evidence suggests that Speght's attempts at securing Cecil's patronage, be it through a benefaction or social favor, were successful. But these direct benefits represent only one possible advantage of giving books as tokens of friendship or favor. As Jason Scott-Warren has noted, in addition to soliciting tangible gains, the early modern practice of naming a patron offered for their presenters "a golden opportunity to fashion a *public* image."[51]

This was true for both the books of Chaucer that William Thynne and Speght presented to their respective patrons. In each case, the editor uses his restoration of Chaucer's works to make bolder claims about his service to the dedicatee and to anticipate a favorable response. In Thynne's formulation, the task of editing Chaucer is a matter of paramount importance to King and country:

> I thought it in maner appertenant unto my dewtye, and that of the very honesty and loue to my country I ought no lesse to do, then to put my helpyng hande to the restauracyon and bryngynge agayne to lyghte of the sayd workes, after the trewe copies and exemplaries aforesaid.[52]

And for Speght, the restoration is ostensibly undertaken for the sake of Chaucer's cultural worth and historic import:

> I trust your Honor, for the Poet's sake, so much alwais liked of the learned, and commended by the best, will receiue withall this already done in the Poet's behalfe, till longer time and further search giue me better instructions.[53]

This framing of work done "for the Poet's sake" is of a piece with the larger rhetorical stance adopted by both editors, as each dedication implies that these powerful dedicatees should desire a stake in the important work of editing the poet's writings. This is accomplished with reminders from each that their dedicatees *should* receive the book positively, since they provided the material means for its production; for Thynne, this is his office under Henry and for Speght, in the support he received for his study at Cambridge.

With the Prefaces' invocations of "dewtye" and "trust," both Henry and Cecil are publicly presented in these dedicatory Prefaces as the books' implied readers and as their protectors. The work of the dedication, as Genette notes, "always is a matter of demonstration, ostentation, exhibition."[54] And while both Henry and Robert Cecil may not have read the books presented to them, the editorial stance that the work is good and their labours worthy rests upon the claim that Chaucer himself is "so much alwais liked of the learned, and commended by the best." As the dedicatee of his respective book, each man is framed not just as an implicit consumer of the text, but as amongst "the best" possible readers—those who recognise Chaucer's excellence. Within this rhetorical framework, Henry and Cecil are ideal custodians whose influence and learning make them key stakeholders in each book's very existence.

Just as Thynne's implicit reliance on Henry lay in his role as a member of the Royal Household, so too does Speght's claim derive from his "bounden dutie" to "that H. house." Speght's dedication implies that the patron is reciprocally "bounden," by his own duty, to the project of restoration on Chaucer and his works. Speght, like Thynne before him, advances his petition for reward on these grounds, and each dedicatee is thus invoked as an ally in the virtuous cause of repairing Chaucer's canon. By reprinting Thynne's Preface nearly a century after its first publication, Speght attempts to capitalise on the royal associations of the book, to

demonstrate to Cecil that he, too, was a "worthy patrone" of Chaucer's works, and to offer a model of "learned" reading that might help to ensure a positive consumer response.

II. Interpreting "our Poet"

While the public naming of these ideal readers represents an attempt at early modern celebrity endorsement, another highly visible category of addressees also invites further attention: the body of anonymous readers invoked in the preliminaries of Speght's volume. These prospective readers, bringing with them the purchasing power that sustained the book trade, represent the commercial incentive for publication often elided in printed dedications, where authors tend to emphasise the patron's generosity over the need for profit. In Marotti's summation of this uneasy balance, "another set of social relations was emerging in which the patron was ultimately eclipsed by the increasing sociocultural authority of authors as well as by the economic and interpretative importance of the reader."[55] The dedication and letters to readers can therefore become *loci* of the delicate balance between the symbolic roles of patrons and purchasing readers in the early modern book. Indeed, Speght's paratexts court a range of audiences, by simultaneously presenting the work to the dedicatee as a token of gratitude, friendship, or invited grace, and to the paying public as a book trade commodity worth the purchase. The following section seeks these invocations in the pages of Speght's volume, assessing the nature of the larger, commercial readership that the editor envisaged for his Chaucer.

Hackel's assessment of those "gentle" readers often summoned in early modern books argues that paratexts such as prefatory epistles and marginalia can "preserve the most local evidence about prescriptive reading, and their very conventionality illuminates early modern attitudes towards books and readers."[56] In Speght's editions, the reader is invoked even before the preliminaries, in the first words that adorn the central block of the title page: *The Workes of our Antient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, newly Printed.* The plural possessive pronoun "*our*" invites those who peruse the title page to view the work as a contribution to a collective

project in which they have a shared interest. The common property invoked here is the cultural and linguistic legacy of Chaucer himself, cited in Speght's edition as the preeminent national poet because of his status as "first illuminer of the English tongue."[57] In Speght's framing, the medieval poet represents the quintessence of English letters—of Englishness itself—and the editor casts the reading public as the beneficiary of Chaucer's literary and linguistic heritage, encouraging them to buy the book for the sake of owning a piece of this national history. These imagined readers, encapsulated in the "*our*" of the title page, are perceived as sympathetic to Speght's antiquarian cause. And in like fashion, the epistle "To the Readers" includes a supplication to those who will use the book: "I earnestly entreat al to accept these my endeuours in best part, as wel in regard of mine owne well meaning, as for the *desert* of our English Poet himself."[58] Here, Speght anticipates the kindness of readers who will appreciate his scholarly "endeuours" in editing Chaucer. These "friendly readers"[59] are thus persuaded to partake of the rewards of Speght's editorial labours "for the *desert*" of Chaucer himself. Both of these invocations of the readers in the book's preliminaries point to a recurring theme in Speght's book: the fact that Chaucer deserves an adoring readership.

The prior discussion of Speght's dedications noted that the book is framed as "a work deseruing a worthy patron" and that the supplication to Robert Cecil is undertaken "for the Poet's sake." In Trigg's assessment, this language of love and friendship in speaking of Chaucer belongs to the "discourses of affinity" that shape the way some of the poet's readers conceive their relationship to him. Chaucer is presented as an old familiar friend, to whom his later editors and commentators are bound by compassion and duty.[60] Within this homosocial context, the edition's prefatory letter written by Francis Beaumont, a fellow Peterhouse graduate, also proves illuminating as evidence of the academic context in which the edition was born, as Trigg has demonstrated.[61]

Beaumont's letter is a piece of persuasive writing initially intended to convince Speght to "put into print those good obseruations and collections you haue written of [Chaucer]," and has

the tone of an *apologia*. Beaumont's epistle articulates both Speght's objections to publication as well as contemporary criticisms of Chaucer only to defuse them; his letter thus reveals much about the poet's reputation at the end of the sixteenth century. Because the letter relies on convincing Speght to publish his collections for a wider audience, it also provides insight into the early modern readership at whom the book was targeted. That it was ultimately selected for publication in the new edition signals the carefully crafted nature of Speght's paratexts, and his tacit endorsement of Beaumont's account of the book's assembly and importance.

The language of Beaumont's letter to his friend frames Speght as an interpreter of Chaucer for those to whom he is otherwise inaccessible. This imaginary body of readers is presented as benefitting from Speght's efforts at translating Chaucer's language. As voiced by Beaumont, it is for a new readership that Speght's labours will be most valuable. He argues that both classical and vernacular poets have been successfully translated into English, and that Chaucer is also worthy of this service:

> […] shall onely *Chaucer* our Poet, no lesse worthy than the best of them amongst all the Poets of the world lie alwaies neglected and neuer be so well vnderstood of his owne countriemen as strangers are?[62]

Beaumont's assertion that Chaucer needs an "interpretour" reflects the degree to which Chaucer's Middle English had become increasingly foreign. He views the publishing of Chaucer's works, therefore, as a favor done for Chaucer's "owne countrymen," the very readers for whom Chaucer is "*our Poet.*" Just as Chaucer's antiquity provides the justification for Speght's editorial labour, and with it an occasion for reward from Cecil, here the preliminaries suggest that the poet's Middle English shall be "alwaies neglected" until Speght supplies the glossary that permits his words to be "well vnderstood" by his readers.

The group of anonymous readers invoked in the preliminaries is distinct from the educated elite with whom Beaumont reports having read Chaucer during his student days at Cambridge. Far from the group of scholarly readers who profess to have long been "in loue"

with Chaucer,[63] the beneficiaries of Speght's new book also include those who are "strangers" to the poet. Helen Cooper has demonstrated that Chaucer commanded a "broad cultural visibility" in the Renaissance, evident both on the stage and in broadside ballads and contemporary allusions to his works; at the same time, the increasingly archaic nature of his Middle English presented challenges to a late sixteenth century readership.[64] That the book was, in part, intended for a less learned audience than the academic Cambridge circle that initially conceived it has not yet been fully acknowledged. But the composition of this audience is evident from the additional interpretative tools packaged with Speght's edition: beyond the glossary, these include translations of Chaucer's Latin and French, a list of the authors cited in his works, and a tabulated summary of each text in the form of Arguments. On the one hand, these features perform the humanist work of elevating Chaucer as a poet *worthy* of annotation and summary; and yet, on the other, their presence also bridges gaps between the text and its readers, granting access to linguistic and cultural knowledge beyond the grasp of some of the book's expected consumers.[65] Pearsall observes that the translations and list of authors cited could have been familiar to "any man with a reasonable education," while "access to a modest encyclopedia" would have readily furnished the dates of their activity included by Speght.[66] Lacking this training and access, a new reader would be poorly equipped to tackle Chaucer's text. Thus, as a skilled translator and interpreter of Chaucer (goes Beaumont's argument) Speght must not delay in publishing his book and its accompanying glossary for the sake of this uninitiated readership.

In addition to those new readers who cannot access Chaucer's "old and obscure" language,[67] Beaumont's letter suggests concern about a further category of prejudiced readers. He holds that Speght's labours should be favorably received for the most part:

> since you haue opened the way to others, and attempted that which was neuer begun before you, your endeuours herein cannot bee but very well accepted, vnlesse of such as are more readie to find fault, then [sic] willing to amend.[68]

This anxious anticipation of readers only too "readie to find fault" is consistent with contemporary concerns about detractors and challengers in early modern books.[69] In the case of Chaucer, Speght's reluctance to publish is, at least in part, due to a persistent worry for the poet's early modern defenders: the "inciuilitie *Chaucer* is charged" with containing.[70] To alleviate Speght's anxiety that the poet's *Canterbury Tales* is offensive to some readers troubled by Chaucer's indecorous language,[71] Beaumont asserts the poet's intention to "touch all sortes of men, and to discouer all vices of the Age" by reporting them factually.[72] For some Renaissance audiences, the work's accurate portrayal of the "filthie delights of the baser sort of people" was incompatible with Chaucer's place at the head of the English literary canon, and it is to these readers that Beaumont's defence of the poet's "inciuilitie" is addressed.

Later, in the book's "Argument to the Prologues" of the *Tales*, Speght himself defends the poet's decision to report the pilgrims' speech, noting Chaucer's observance of the classical ideal of *decorum* for the purpose of elevating the English language:

> The Authour in these Prologues to his Canterbury Tales, doth describe the reporters thereof for two causes: first, that the Reader seeing the qualitie of the person, may iudge of his speech accordingly: wherein Chaucer hath most excellently kept that *decorum*, which Horace requireth in that behalfe. Secondly to shew, how that euen in our language, that may be perfourmed for descriptions, which the Greeke and Latine Poets in their tongues haue done at large. And surely this Poet in the iudgement of the best learned, is not inferiour to any of them in his descriptions, whether they be of persons, times, or places.[73]

This preoccupation with Chaucer's reporting of the pilgrims' speech betrays the editor's concern that the poet might be misunderstood by readers who think his portrait of the Canterbury company unrefined and who might believe, in Beaumont's words, that Chaucer "is somewhat too broad in some of his speeches, and that the worke therefore should be the lesse gratious."[74] The rhetoric of Speght's prefatory letter to the reader assures that Chaucer's poetic practice, in

its attention to "shewing the disposition of these meaner sort of men," equals that of the "Greeke and Latine Poets" catalogued in the edition's Preface: Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Plautus, and Terence.[75] And so, Speght concludes in his introduction to the *Tales*, "Who so shall read these his workes without preiudice, shall find that he was a man of rare conceit and great reading."[76] These rhetorical efforts by Speght and Beaumont to dispel the charge of Chaucer's works as "too broad"—that is, vulgar or coarse[77]—reflects the prevailing contemporary unease with the "filthie delights" in his corpus. Where Speght and Beaumont mount their defence of Chaucer's bawdry in the poet's rhetorical practice of *decorum*, other commentators viewed his works as a source of indecent language best left uncovered. Perhaps most notably, Speght's glossary of hard words aims to confute this perspective in the annotation supplied for one controversial lemma, "jape." In Chaucer's Middle English, a jape is a trick or a frivolity, or the act of conducting one; the Parson uses it as a synonym for a trifling tale.[78] Yet as Speght's glossary informs his readers, the word had departed from Chaucer's meaning by the sixteenth century, expanding its semantic range to include seduction and other sexual acts. The word has, Speght writes, "by abuse growen odious," proliferating beyond Chaucer's original definition as a jest.

Speght's efforts to recuperate Chaucer's language and to challenge the charges of uncharitable readers are a reminder of the hazards of sending one's work to the printing press. For this reason, Hackel argues, many early modern prefatory epistles invoke "gentle" or "courteous" readers in a move that is "prescriptive, not descriptive: the business of the preface is to shape each unknown reader into a receptive, pleasant reader."[79] Speght enlists a similar tactic at the conclusion to his letter "To the Readers," identifying the scholarly sort of reader as one who would be most sympathetic to his project:

> And so making no doubt of the friendly acceptance of such as haue taken pains in writing themselves, and hoping wel of all others, that meane to employ any labour in reading, I commit our Poet to your fauourable affection.[80]

This final wish for the "friendly acceptance" of one's book by other writers and studious readers again evokes the scholarly circles in which the edition was conceived. At the same time, Speght's mention of those "that meane to employ any labour in reading" reveals an attempt to actively craft this receptive readership—by explicitly advocating for the type of diligent reading practice that should be adopted in order to understand Chaucer. The proper reading of Chaucer, suggests the editor, requires "labour" as much as "affection."

Where Speght's edition identifies Sir Robert Cecil as an ideal reader for whom Chaucer is a worthy gift, the public audience to whom the editor presents the book must be artfully coaxed into becoming a "friendly" readership. If we are to believe Beaumont's account, then the print history of Speght's Chaucers emblematises the paradox of publishing private work for a commercial readership—and the tension between the initial circulation of the editor's notes on Chaucer amongst friends and these friends' insistence that he put them into print. Discussing Speght's relationship to his Chaucer, Matthews has suggested that "Its editor has, in effect, been pushed out into the public eye in a way he did not seek—or so he says—losing his scholarly privacy."[81] For this reason, Speght's preliminaries collectively function as an *apologia*, by preemptively shielding both the poet and the editor from detractors who may deem Chaucer's language coarse or unpolished, and by defining the uninitiated readership for whom the book will be most valuable. The preliminaries also circumscribe the terms under which readers *should* engage with the book, and finally, in Speght's plea for "friendly acceptance," they mark out the hard work involved in the reading practice of the book's anticipated audience. Also implicit in this language of labour is the editorial effort undertaken for the purpose of interpreting Chaucer for the book's readership, most vividly encapsulated in the short poem that follows Beaumont's letter in the book's preliminaries, "The Reader to Geoffrey Chaucer" by the unidentified "H.B.,"[82] in which a ventriloquised "Geffrey" emerges to express his gratitude to "the selfe same man"—the editor—who "hath no labor spar'd" and "made old words, which were unknown of many, /So plaine, that now they may be known of any."[83] With this tone of vindication, the

preliminaries define multiple readerships for the two editions, both receptive and hostile, and use the space in the front matter to make a careful argument for the necessity for the book's existence on the market.

Speght and Beaumont imagine the editions as supplying a critical need faced by some potential readers of Chaucer, and thus improving the understanding of the poet for the reading public. But they are also wary that some readings might misunderstand or censure the poet's works and, to this end, they use the preliminaries to steer unfamiliar and unfriendly readers towards a more generous and accommodating reception of Chaucer.

III. Chaucer Refashioned

While the sixteenth century saw the volumes devoted to other medieval authors—Gower, Malory, Langland, and Lydgate amongst them—gradually fall out of print, Chaucer's exceptionality is registered by the consistent publication of his works in folio during that century and into the next.[84] The decision to publish, however, was both a financial risk and a venture of reputation and, as this article has shown, author, editor, and patron could all be implicated in the appearance of a book on the print marketplace. In making a book, the agents responsible for its production opened the work, the author, and themselves to public censure. For Speght, the most vocal criticism would come not from an anonymous commentator, but his sometime collaborator and aspiring Chaucer editor, Francis Thynne (1545?-1608) the son of William Thynne. Eager to contribute his own antiquarian knowledge to the endeavour, the younger Thynne penned a series of *Animaduersions* that refuted much historical and philological material advanced by Speght.[85] This article has contextualized existing scholarship on such responses to Speght's Chaucer with the first thorough account of the ways in which the book aims to shape them. I have argued here that Speght was aware of the difficulty of containing the reception of the new edition, and undertook to buffer it from hostile responses by using the folio's preliminaries to project the readerships he sought.

The intended audience for Speght's Chaucer was at once established and new, encompassing the aristocratic patron, ideal readers, and a wider readership of consumers uninitiated into studying the poet and his Middle English. Where Beaumont is the archetype of a "friendly," diligent, and generous reader, Speght's preliminaries also pitch the editions at a more inclusive range of potential consumers. They speak, simultaneously, to a named and "worthy" reader, in Robert Cecil, and to the wider public of scholars, detractors, and "strangers" alike. In this manner, Speght's editorial apparatus performs the work of preparing Chaucer for a favorable reception at the hands of both old audiences and new. With the commercial success and sustained popularity of the editions, there is no doubt that this editorial aim of the editions was largely achieved, aided by the books' guides for the reader as well as by their embellishment of Chaucer as the premier "antient" poet in English.

When the book was reissued in 1687, it was in the form of a page reprint of the 1602 volume, accompanied by only scant new material: the addition of spurious lines to the unfinished *Cook's* and *Squire's* tales, in an appended Advertisement detailing their discovery; and a second Advertisement at the beginning of the book written by one "J.H." In presenting the newly printed work "to the Reader," not only does this unknown figure recycle the tropes of gentlemanly amity, scarcity of exemplars, and editorial humility by now familiar to consumers of the printed Chaucers, but he also comments on the absence of any new, extensive adornment in the book. He describes himself as having:

> perform'd the Obligation long since laid upon me, and sent *Chaucer* abroad into the World again, in his old dress, and under the Protection of his own Merits, without any new Preface or Letters Commendatory, it being the Opinion of those Learned Persons, that his own Works are his best Encomium.[86]

In conflating Speght's apparatus and Chaucer's "own Works", J.H. confirms the efficacy of Speght's paratextual apparatus, now deemed to be enmeshed with the primary text of the poet's writing. For "J.H." in 1687, as for Speght nearly a century prior, the printed Chaucer required

some form of encomiastic packaging that validated the enterprise to their various audiences. These paratexts reveal that the makers of Thomas Speght's book ventured to imagine its reception amongst heterogeneous audiences capable of a range of readerly responses, all potentially influential—generous or learned, prejudiced or adoring. Closer attention to the composition of these anticipated readerships of early modern books may, in turn, enable book historians to determine how some historical readers engaged with paratextual prompts and the extent to which they adopted prescribed modes of reading.[87] This insight into a book's intended audience fills gaps in our knowledge of the bestsellers on the early modern marketplace, and demonstrates new ways of considering the copious paratexts printed to adorn Renaissance volumes.

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1. Lukas Erne and Tamsin Badcoe estimate that, of all poetry books published in the two decades between 1583 and 1622, only 13.1%—or about 1 in 8—received a second edition or reprint within 5 years. See their "Shakespeare and the Popularity of Poetry Books in Print, 1583-1622," *RES* 65 (2014): 33–57, at 44.

2. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Workes of our Antient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, newly printed* (1598, *STC* 5077), [a]iii^{v}, "To the Readers." Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to Speght are from this edition.

3. Louise M. Bishop, "Father Chaucer and the Vivification of Print," *JEGP* 106 (2007): 336–63; Helen Cooper, "Poetic Fame," in Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford, 2010), 361–78; Martha W. Driver, "Mapping Chaucer: John Speed and the Later Portraits," *Chaucer Review* 36 (2002): 228–49; Tim

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William Machan, "Speght's *Works* and the Invention of Chaucer," *Text* 8 (1995): 145–70; and Kevin Pask, *The Emergence of the English Author: Scripting the Life of the Poet in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, U.K., 1996), 36–45.

4. These latter discussions are David Matthews, "Public Ambition, Private Desire, and the Last Tudor Chaucer," in David Matthews and Gordon McMullan, eds., *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, U.K., 2007), 74–88; and Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis, 2001), 109–43.

5. Seth Lerer, "Latin Annotations in a Copy of Stowe's Chaucer and the Seventeenth-Century Reception of 'Troilus and Criseyde,'" *RES* 53 (2002): 1–7; Robert C. Evans, "Ben Jonson's Chaucer," *ELR* 19.3 (2008): 324–45; Megan Cook, "How Francis Thynne Read His Chaucer," *JEBS* 15 (2012): 215–43; Antonina Harbus, "A Renaissance Reader's English Annotations to Thynne's 1532 Edition of Chaucer's *Works*," *RES* 59 (2008): 342–55; Antonia Harbus, "Interpreting *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Tale* in a Contemporary Note to Thynne's 1532 Edition," *ANQ* 22 (2009): 3–11; Alison Wiggins, "Frances Wolfreston's Chaucer," in Philippa Hardman and Anne Lawrence-Mathers, eds., *Women and Writing, c.1340-c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture* (Cambridge, U.K., 2010), 77–89.

6. Other recent studies of the triangulated relationship between paratexts, editors, and their intended audiences include Sonia Massai, "Editorial Pledges in Early Modern Dramatic Paratexts," in Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, eds., *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge, U.K., 2011), 91–106; and Yu-Chiao Wang, "Caxton's Romances and their Early Tudor Readers," *HLQ* 67 (2004): 173–88.

7. Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville, 1993), 100.

8. See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge, U.K., 1997), 1–2.

9. Smith and Wilson, *Renaissance Paratexts*, 3.

10. Cf. Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 134; Machan, "Speght's *Works*," 155; Matthews, "Public Ambition," 82–85.

11. The extent to which Stow participated in the production of the edition published under Speght's name remains debated. See Derek Pearsall, "John Stow and Thomas Speght as Editors of Chaucer: A Question of Class," in Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie, eds., *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past* (London, 2004), 119–25, at 123–24.

12. For discussion of Stow's involvement in the printing of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* within Chaucer's *Workes*, see A.S.G. Edwards, "John Stow and Middle English Literature," in Gadd and Gillespie, eds., *John Stow*, 109–18, at 117.

13. John Stow, *The annales of England* (1600, *STC* 23335), Ll.viii^{v}. Speght acknowledges Stow's supplying of the two new poems added to the canon in 1598—'Chaucers Dreame' (*The Isle of Ladies*) and *The Floure and the Leafe*—as well as Stow's library, which furnished manuscript copies of *The Plowman's Tale*, a variant of the *Complaint to his Purse*, and commendatory verses included in the *Life*. Pearsall, "John Stow and Thomas Speght," 122.

14. John Stow, *A suruay of London* (1598, *STC* 23341), Bb.8^{r}.

15. On English author portraits, see Sarah Howe, "The Authority of Presence: The Development of the English Author Portrait, 1500-1640," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 102 (2008): 465–99.

16. James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850* (Cambridge, U.K., 2007), 6, suggests, "The financing and business arrangements of the early modern book trade were surprisingly sophisticated, and very often profit, not ideology, proved the more compelling."

17. Thomas Dekker, *O per Se O or A new Cryer of Lanthorne and Candle-light* (1612, *STC* 6487), E.3^{r}, F.1^{v}.

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18. Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge, U.K., 2005), 104. Dekker's satire on the dedication is more fully treated at 110–12.

19. For discussion of the dynamics of sixteenth-century patronage, see B. B. Gamzue, "Elizabeth and Literary Patronage," *PMLA* 49 (1934): 1041–49; Michael G. Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance: The Pembroke Family* (London, 1988); Alistair Fox, *Politics and Literature in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII* (Oxford, 1989).

20. Alison Chapman, *Patrons and Patron Saints in Early Modern English Literature* (New York, 2012), 23–24. On the variable rewards of wooing patrons, see also Hackel, *Reading Material*, 106–7. For discussion of one Renaissance author's personal record of his printed works from 1576–99 along with the benevolence he received from each book's dedicatee, see George McGill Vogt, "Richard Robinson's Eupolemia," *Studies in Philology* 21 (1924): 629–48.

21. Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, 1993), 55–57.

22. Arthur F. Marotti, "John Donne and the Rewards of Patronage," in Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel, eds., *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1981), 207–34, at 207–8.

23. Greg Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford, 2005), 56–58.

24. Walker identifies two secondary audiences beyond the King: the wider, coterie audience of courtly and politically powerful readers and the "wider, more diffuse 'public' readership that might buy the text." Walker, *Tyranny*, 59.

25. Cf. Sandra Hindman and James Douglas Farquhar, *Pen to Press: Illustrated Manuscripts and Printed Books in the First Century of Printing* (Maryland, 1977), 102.

26. It is estimated that paper comprised about 75 percent of a book's total manufacturing costs. See Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1974), 177.

27. William Camden, *Britain, or A Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1637, *STC* 4510), Xx.3^{v}.

28. Franklin B. Williams Jr., *Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses in English Books before 1641* (London, 1962), 35.

29. On the decline of patronage in the final decade of the sixteenth century, see Alistair Fox, "The complaint of poetry for the death of liberality: the decline of literary patronage in the 1590s," in John Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, U.K., 1995), 229–57.

30. Thomas Churchyard, *The m[i]rror [of man,] and manners of men* (1594, *STC* 5241), [A]2^{r}.

31. Thomas Stocker, *Sermons of Maister Iohn Calvin, on the history of Melchisedech* (1592, *STC* 4440), A2^{r-v}.

32. Iohn Douland, *Andreas Ornithoparcus his Micrologus, or Introduction: containing the art of singing Digested into foure bookes* (1609, *STC* 18853), A2^{r}.

33. Anonymous, *The fierie tryall of Gods saints as a counter-poyze to I.W. priest his English Martyrologie.* (1611, *STC* 24269), A3^{v}-A4$^{r.}$

34. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil," [a]iii^{r}.

35. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil," [a]iii^{r}.

36. On the intellectual achievements of Lady Burghley's female relatives and on her proficiency in Greek, see Caroline Bowden, "The Library of Mildred Cooke Cecil, Lady Burghley," *The Library* 6 (2005): 3–29, at 4–6; on her surviving books, see Bowden's Appendix, 26–29.

37. Jan Van Dorsten, "Literary Patronage in Elizabethan England: The Early Phase," in Lytle and Orgel, eds., *Patronage in the Renaissance*, 191–206, at 195.

38. Van Dorsten, "Literary Patronage," 197.

39. Van Dorsten, "Literary Patronage," 198.

40. Bowden, "Mildred Cooke Cecil," 13, 26–29.

41. Evidence of Lady Cecil's close relationship with that Cambridge college survives in her correspondence to the Fellows, now British Library, MS Lansdowne 104, no. 60, fol. 158^{r}. See Bowden, "Mildred Cooke Cecil," 4, 21–22.

42. Derek Pearsall, "Thomas Speght (ca. 1550-?)," in Paul Ruggiers, ed., *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition* (Norman, OK, 1984), 71–92, at 71.

43. Bowden, "Mildred Cooke Cecil," 22.

44. Lynn Hulse, "The Musical Patronage of Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury (1563-1612)," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 116 (1991): 24–40, at 25.

45. For example, Thomas Morley's dedication to Cecil of *The First Booke of Balletts* (1595) likely helped him to secure a licence to operate his music-printing business. See Hulse, "Musical Patronage of Robert Cecil," 29, 34.

46. The Marquess of Salisbury, "The Library at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire," *The Library* 18 (1963): 83–87, at 84.

47. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil," [a]iii^{r}.

48. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil" (1602), [a]iii^{r}.

49. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil," [a]iii^{r}.

50. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil" (1602), [a]iii^{r}.

51. Jason Scott-Warren, *Sir John Harington (1560-1612) and the Book as Gift* (Oxford, 2001), 17.

52. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The workes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed, with dyuers workes whiche were neuer in print before* (1532, *STC* 5068), A.ii^{r}.

53. "To the Right Honorable Sir Robert Cecil," [a]iii^{r}.

54. Genette, *Paratexts*, 135.

55. Marotti, "Patronage, Poetry, and Print," 2.

56. Hackel, *Reading Material*, 70.

57. B.ii^{v}.

58. "To the Readers," [a]iv^{r}, emphasis added.

59. "To the Readers, " [a]iii^{v}.

60. Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 111-12. See also Trigg, "Discourses of Affinity in the Reading Communities of Chaucer," in Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline, eds., *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602* (Ohio, 1999), 270-91.

61. This Francis Beaumont (*d.* 1598) is the judge, not the playwright (1584/5-1616), his son.

62. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v^{v}-[a]vi$^{r.}$

63. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v^{v}. This love is mentioned in the context of the Cambridge fraternity of Chaucer scholars described in the letter.

64. Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London, 2012), 204–8.

65. A similar device was implemented Abraham Fleming, one of the editors of Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, "in the form of 'summarie contents foregoing everie chapter' so that it was 'of no difficultie to comprehend what is discoursed and discussed in the same'". See Felicity Heal, "Readership and Reception," in Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, and Felicity Heal, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles* (Oxford, 2013), 355–74, at 357. For a treatment of Arguments as a paratext in printed playbooks, see Tiffany Stern, "'Arguments' in Playhouse and Book," in *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, U.K., 2009), 63–80.

66. Pearsall, "Thomas Speght," 82.

67. This is the epithet used to describe the poet's language on the book's title page.

68. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v^{r}.

69. Remarks addressing hostile readers appear in books ranging from medical to literary texts, and books on subjects as mild as letter writing. Such readers are often cast in early modern preliminaries as the archetypal classical figures of Zoilus and Momus. See Hackel, *Reading Material*, 116–25.

70. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v[r].

71. As Beaumont notes, it is a concern that Chaucer himself anticipates when he professes, "I mote reherce / Her tales all, ben they better or werce, / Or else falsen some of my matere". "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v[r].

72. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v[v].

73. c.iv[r].

74. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]iv[v]

75. "F.B. to his very louing friend T.S.," [a]v[v].

76. c.iv[r].

77. *OED*, s.v. *broad*, adj., 6b., 6c.

78. *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Boston, 1987), X 1024. See Lucy Munro, *Archaic Style in English Literature* (Cambridge, 2013), 89–91, for a consideration of contemporary anxiety towards Chaucer's obsolete language.

79. Hackel, *Reading Material*, 117.

80. "To the Readers," [a]iv[r].

81. Matthews, "Public Ambition," 85.

82. Matthews tentatively identifies "H.B." as Henry Beaumont, brother of the Francis who pens the prefatory epistle. See "Public Ambition," 77.

83. [a].vi[v].

84. For further discussion see Siân Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2008), 101.

85. Francis Thynne, *Animadversions uppon the annotacions and corrections of some imperfections of impressiones of Chaucers workes*, in Frederick J. Furnivall and G. H. Kingsley, eds., (London, 1875; repr. 1965).

86. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Works of our Ancient, Learned, & Excellent English Poet* (1687), "Advertisement to the Reader."

87. This methodology has been usefully adopted, for instance, in Hackel, *Reading Material*, 149-95, where the relationship between an idealised set of "fair ladies" who read Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* is treated alongside copies annotated and commonplaced by female readers.