
*Transporting Chaucer* is a series of essays with a similarly dizzying yet stimulating theme. They seek to track the ways Chaucer, via his fictional figures, has been ‘transported’ to other textual environments proximate to his own. Author Helen Barr principally addresses extant manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* itself, all of which postdate Chaucer, and various plays of Shakespeare (reaching to some of their near progeny in the works of Davenant and Dryden) that can claim Chaucer as a source. But Barr is not interested in the way Chaucer provides the source for either the apocryphal ‘Tale of Beryn’ or any post-Chaucerian adaptation of his work in any expected sense. Instead she asks, ‘What is going on when we encounter Chaucer’s characters in works he did not make?’ (p. 17), in an effort to think about the relation of texts beyond the linear and genealogic confines of traditional scholarship. Tracing the ‘intratemporalities’ of these works, Barr focuses on the fissures created among and between, by, for example, Beryn’s insertion into the middle of the Canterbury narrative, despite its status a tale supposedly told in a Canterbury inn and thus after the pilgrims have reached their destination. Similarly, too, Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* occurs in an impossible moment in the Knight’s Tale, upon which its opening scene certainly draws. Shakespeare’s Theseus and Hippolyta may come out of the Knight’s first dozen or so lines, but *Dream* also suspends the action of the Chaucerian opening it invokes by delaying the wedding of Chaucer’s already married figures until the end of the play. Shakespeare’s Theseus and Hippolyta thus are and are not Chaucer’s figures. As such, these essays work to read Chaucer, particularly in the Shakespeare chapters, in the future perfect tense. The post-Chaucerian texts she treats: ‘Beryn’, the Ellesmere and Cambridge GG illustrations, Shakespeare’s plays, reach back to the past in Chaucer’s fiction, working to read Chaucer not as ‘what was’ but as what ‘will have been’.

The chapters of Barr’s book are full of interesting apperçus—especially her reading of the Jailer’s Daughter in the *Two Noble Kinsmen* as an effect of the fabliau energy of the Miller’s Tale, itself a response to the Knight’s Tale, which *Kinsmen* explicitly stages. Such connections are categorically different from the kind of lexical quotation source hunters doggedly pursue, and they open up vistas for seeing Shakespeare’s plays as more inventive and even affective responses to Chaucerian figuration—especially for a story like the Knight’s Tale, which Shakespeare found so difficult to exorcize from his imagination. Yet, how such matters add up to a reading practice or historical observation is less than fully clear. This study is far more valuable for its local observations than its global articulations. The most original and compelling essay is perhaps the book’s last one, which reads Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* not in relation to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, as one might expect, but against the *House of Fame*. Barr notes how the play’s discordant soundscape of a ruined Troy and the degenerate Greeks who conquer it echoes the noise of Rumor and Southwark in its cacophonous whirl, and thereby mixes Chaucer’s earlier poem with his late-medieval locale for the *Canterbury Tales*.

*Transporting Chaucer* is a quirky book, even admittedly so. It opens with a consideration of a suspended modern sculpture in Canterbury Cathedral that poses questions of place, memory, and embodiment that the author wishes to raise more generally—as well as a sense of surprise and accidental discovery, governed by the intrusion of the past into the present (and vice versa) that animates the project(s). This book is informed by queer theory and its efforts to animate historicism anew by addressing temporality in non-linear, non-genealogic ways, but its more than surface relation to the project of queer theory (and indeed any theory) is somewhat unclear. She writes, ‘Meeting Chaucer where he isn’t supposed to
be rearranges normative understandings of before and after, time and place’ (p. 4). Interested in the permeability of bodies and time, nodes of unexpected contact between past and present, or between different pasts that become the future of each other, Barr’s book traces movement without certain destination. I am not sure where we land.

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Robert Thornton, a member of the Yorkshire gentry in the fifteenth century, is known today for two surviving manuscripts which he copied and owned: Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91; and British Library, MS Additional 31042. This book presents nine essays on the conception, construction and possible reception of Thornton’s manuscripts. Michael Johnston’s introduction takes as its task the justification of such a narrow focus, and argues for the exercise as a whole as a kind of micro-historical investigation, unsettling existing narratives of book production by examining idiosyncratic evidence. Johnston admits that Thornton, unlike the subjects of some micro-histories, was not a marginalized figure in his own time, and I would add that Thornton’s books may be idiosyncratic but have hardly been marginalized by scholarship. Nevertheless, this is the first collection of essays entirely devoted to them, and it is an interesting and a very useful one.

Susanna Fein opens the volume with a new listing of the contents of both manuscripts, including transcriptions of incipits and explicits, and some very precise discrimination of bridging passages and other small texts. Fein provides notes guiding readers to editions and reproductions and includes an index of other manuscript witnesses to most of the texts which Thornton copied. This is an excellent, painstakingly compiled handlist. George R. Keiser follows this orientation with the longest conventional essay in the book. Keiser combines evidence from the manuscripts’ collation and watermarks with a close examination of changes in Thornton’s letter forms over time to propose a revised copying sequence. He then explores that possible sequence’s implications in relation to the manuscript’s contents, ultimately building a case for a purposeful Thornton compiling two thought-out books. Manuscript evidence is also the focus of the next essay, in which Joel Fredell places the books in the context of a wider examination of book production, and especially decoration, in York. Fredell argues that variation in decoration styles might allow the identification of smaller divisions within Thornton’s booklets. These divisions might reflect a supply of texts in pamphlets, and those pamphlets’ make-up might in turn reveal a willingness to transmit multiple genres together in fifteenth-century Yorkshire.

In their ‘Prolegomenon for a Future Edition’ of the alliterative Morte Arthure, Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre acknowledge the quality of Mary Hamel’s work on the existing standard edition but part ways with her conservative handling of Thornton’s text in the light of developments in dialectology and in the study of the metre of Middle English alliterative verse since her work. Having reviewed the presence in Thornton’s version of the poem of lines inviting emendation on dialectal or metrical grounds, they turn to Malory’s Morte Darthur. Malory used the alliterative Morte extensively for his Roman War story, and Hanna and Turville-Petre argue that readings in Malory rejected by Hamel as the inter-ventions of an intermediary scribe sometimes in fact preserve lines which have gone astray in Thornton. They finish by proposing that the character Priamus in the alliterative Morte, who seems to convert to Christianity but is never baptized, did originally ask for baptism in