

Introduction

Compared to the contents of many other *Festschriften*, the eighteen essays gathered together here are unusually diverse in subject – eclectic, one could say, applying the term as Cicero might, who could find among Posidonius, Philo of Larissa, Aristotle, and their followers much to value equally. Yet while the remarkable diversity of David R. Carlson’s own scholarship must inevitably elicit a corresponding diversity in any collection intended to celebrate him, its editors are perforce obliged to focus on only a handful of his scholarly interests. Carlson’s work ranges across no fewer than fourteen centuries (from portraits of Britain in Claudian and Procopius to treatments of King Arthur in Samuel Butler and Bishop Richard Hurd), and its linguistic reach is equally diverse (ranging from Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, to Latin, Greek, French, and even Provençal). To do it proper justice would take a volume at least twice as long as the present one.

Thumbing through the literature of the past forty years on subjects from the late Antique to early English humanism, it is difficult to turn up much of significance (or much arcane) that footnotes nothing of his. While the literature of the late middle ages provides the main focus for this collection, another equally varied volume might have been devoted solely to the literature of the early Tudor courts. His publications include studies on book history and Renaissance printing (William Caxton, Nicholas Jenson, and Richard Pynson); early Humanists like Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas More, Bernard André, Pietro Carmeliano, and Johannes Opicius; English writers at the courts of Henry VII and VIII (not only John Skelton and Thomas Wyatt, but Alexander Barclay, Lord Morley, and Thomas Elyot); and Tudor antiquarians like John Bale and Francis Thynne. At the earlier courts of Richard II and Henry IV, not only John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer but Thomas Usk and Thomas Hoccleve have attracted his attention, while further afield he has written on the *Pearl*-poet and John Lydgate. Through all his work a seemingly effortless ability to draw on the literary traditions of the classical world sounds like a ground bass. As one colleague has remarked, “David is the only medievalist I know who has published in the *American Journal of Philology* and *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, the

premier journals in their respective fields. How many classicists have appeared in *Speculum* or Byzantinists in *Medium Ævum*?" Essays responding to interests of so wide a range must range widely themselves.

They must also, however, have a centre (or, perhaps better, again like Carlson's work, centres). A major focus of the essays presented here is not only chronological (primarily the period from Richard II to Mary Tudor) but also linguistic and Latinate. Many engage with Carlson's own profound contribution to medieval *literae humaniores*, pursued in its broadest sense, of open-ended engagement with the tight interweavings of poetry, book production, and politics at a time when all three were in a state of flux. All are rich fields, left all the richer after Carlson's learned interventions have revealed fresh fields to contemplate, along with fresh modes of contemplation.

That much of Carlson's scholarship has concentrated on John Gower and John Skelton should not, therefore, surprise. Both poets, in different ways, approached their Latinate muses with courageous innovation, opinionated to be sure, sometimes flamingly so, but keen-eyed more often than not, and on target. (A certain resemblance to Carlson himself shouldn't be discounted.) By taking on their Latin verse especially, Carlson (often joined by A.G. Rigg, for the earlier period) made available the "harder bits" for many. His edition in 1991 of *The Latin Writings of John Skelton*, in which he collected and edited, along with translations and copious notes, all the texts – verse and prose – which now survive, will not soon be superseded. In important articles published decades apart, Carlson convincingly defined Skelton's humanist pedagogy ("Royal Tutors in the Reign of Henry VII" [1991]), confirming his earlier assessments more recently by a critical identification of the poet's hand in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 432, marking Skelton's probable use of it while teaching young Henry VIII ("John Skelton's Autograph Verse Annotations on the *Chronique* of the Minstrel of Reims for Prince Henry's Education" [2015]). And of course, Skelton figures prominently in Carlson's still-essential *English Humanist Books: Writers and Patrons, Manuscript and Print, 1475–1525* (1993), as well as in a pair of authoritative essays charting Skelton's classical engagement ("John Skelton" [2016]) and involvement with his humanist contemporaries ("Skelton and Humanism" [2018]).

Nor will any who engage with Gower's major Latin poetry fail to turn to John Gower, *Poems on Contemporary Events* (2011), edited by Carlson with verse translations by Rigg of the *Visio Anglie* (*Vox Clamantis*, book 1) and the *Cronica Tripertita*, now well on its way to overtake G.C. Macaulay's as the edition of those essential works most frequently cited. Without exaggeration, one

might safely claim that between them each of these two works of Gower's touches in some way upon an existential *sine qua non* for Carlson: the dual duty to reject repression of the masses by the powerful, the cause of what he termed the "Social Revolt" of 1381, and to expose the propaganda such regimes so readily turn to hand. Such principles lend to *John Gower: Poetry and Propaganda in Fourteenth-Century England* (2012) a kind of inevitability, making it an indispensable resource for the study of Gower's late poetry. In deft chapters, Carlson develops a view of the "official verse" – writing commissioned to carry the favoured messages of governments in power. His prime example is Gower's *Cronica Tripertita*, its roots deep in Lancastrian sources, crafted to justify the usurpation of Henry IV, the so-called "Record and Process" in particular. Not all of Carlson's extensive engagement with Gower is politically cantered, however, nor is it limited to the Latin works. From among many possible examples, one might cite "Gower's Amans and the Curricular Maximianus" (2017), where he reveals a "moral Gower" building his central *senex amans* character in the *Confessio Amantis* around borrowed lines from the erotic elegies he had studied as a schoolboy. It offers compelling evidence of how often and to what degree Gower's Middle English draws upon a formidable familiarity with Roman models.

While he is probably best known for his work on Skelton and Gower, it would be remiss not to mention here Carlson's important contribution to Chaucerian scholarship: *Chaucer's Jobs* (2004). For one thing, *Chaucer's Jobs* makes explicit a concern underpinning much of Carlson's commentary on, and translation of, important medieval political texts: his strong commitment to a left-wing ideology. The idea that Chaucer was in thrall to the dominant elite, and that he profited handsomely from reflecting and perpetuating its values, may not sit well with many professional Chaucerians, yet it is surely salutary to be reminded from time to time that this was a poet who regarded the "stormy people" as "unsad and evere untrewē," and whose jolly fabliaux conceal a far-from-benevolent attitude to the culture of the masses. If not quite alone (one thinks of Margaret Schlauch or Stephen Knight, for example), Carlson's distinctive brand of Chaucerian criticism is all the more bracing for its clear-eyed refusal to toe a traditional party line.

A theme explored in a number of Carlson's early articles is the connection between popular romance (the Middle English *Lanval*, for instance), and the discourse of the schools, seen in writers like Andreas Capellanus. It is therefore appropriate that we should begin this collection with his colleague Geoff

Rector's study of the Anglo-Norman romance *Ipomedon*, written by the Hereford cleric Hue de Rotelande. Rector locates *Ipomedon*'s strange mixture of urbanity and obscenity in "the schools, marketplaces, streets, satellite villages, and ecclesiastical institutions of [twelfth-century] Hereford." Drawing for us a vivid picture of a learned sodality composed of men like Hugh de Hungrie, Simund de Freine, and Walter Map, Rector demonstrates that the indecencies, scandals, and obscenities of *Ipomedon* are "firmly grounded ... in the social life and occupational labour" of this provincial clerical community.

Simund de Freine had characterized Hereford (in a verse letter to Gerald of Wales) as a city where the liberal arts flourished, so it is fitting that our next two articles should explore medieval guides to that master of erotic urbanity whose presence pervaded the trivium, Publius Ovidius Naso. Frank Coulson takes one section from book 5 of the *Metamorphoses*, the "Song of the Muses," and traces the evolution of Ovidian commentary, from the primarily grammatical explication of the twelfth-century schoolman Arnulf of Orléans, through the richer stylistic exposition of the thirteenth-century Vulgate Commentary, to the allegoresis of the fourteenth-century *Ovidius moralizatus* of Pierre Bersuire. David Gura's study, by contrast, is synchronic rather than diachronic: a description of a fourteenth-century prose summary of the "liber metamorphoseos" owned by John of London, a monk of St Augustine's Canterbury, supplemented by a sample edition of book 1 of this previously unedited work.

The next two clusters of essays are concerned with the major court poets of the Ricardian period (both subjects of monographs by Carlson), Chaucer and Gower.

It is not Ovid, but another classical poet revered in the middle ages, Statius, who, as James Simpson shows, provided Chaucer with a source for his heroine's startling assertion, in book 4 of *Troilus and Criseyde*, that the gods are a product of human fear: "drede fond first goddes, I suppose." After tracking down the source of this "crisply atheistic maxim," Simpson then relates it to Criseyde's own predicament and to a wider medieval tradition of "repudiating prudential, prophetic voices." Returning to the theme of Ovidian scholasticism, the curious prominence of eroticism in medieval pedagogy (implicit in Rector and touched on by Gura), is used by Richard Firth Green as a yardstick for measuring the contrasting tolerance for ribaldry in Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower. Green reads the much-discussed battle of the books between the two poets in terms of a Gowerian distaste for Chaucerian fabliaux answered by Chaucer's mockery of what he sees as Gower's misuse of an unduly sanitised Ovid.

John Gower, particularly Gower the Latinist, has been a major focus of Carlson's work, so it is only proper that this volume should contain a handful of essays on Chaucer's distinguished contemporary. It opens with Michael Bennett's study of Gower's Kentish gentry connections, particularly the Northwood and Grandison families, and the way this local milieu informs his work right down to the period of the *Vox Clamantis*. The presence here of Bennett, a distinguished historian of fourteenth-century England, attests to Carlson's reputation for grounding his own scholarship on solid historical research. Matthew Irvin examines those passages in Gower's anti-Lollard *Carmen super multiplici viciorum pestilencia* that have been lifted directly from his earlier *Vox Clamantis* and explores both the stylistic and doctrinal implications of this reworking. Finally, R.F. Yeager demonstrates that Gower's debt to the thirteenth-century English schoolman Robert Grosseteste goes far beyond the apocryphal story of the talking head in book 4 of the *Confessio Amantis*; in his handling of the central metaphor of light and darkness in his poem *De lucis scrutinio*, Gower displays a previously unnoticed familiarity with both Grosseteste's pastoral *Hexaëmeron* and his treatise *De luce*; Yeager also suggests reasons why Gower himself should have been reluctant to acknowledge this debt openly.

John Gower was essentially a man of peace, but an interminable war with France dominated English life through long periods of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Three of our contributors explore literary aspects of that war.

The Black Prince's Castilian campaign of 1367 was something of a side-show in the larger Anglo-French conflict, but his victory at the Battle of Nájera inspired an interesting poem, Walter of Peterborough's *Victoria belli in Hispania*. Stephanie Batkie augments David Carlson's own important account of this poem by analysing its sophisticated rhetorical effects, particularly in a section extolling John of Gaunt, and by showing how, and why, John Wilde, the scribe of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl. B. 214, draws them to our attention. If Michael Bennett's contribution offers an example of a historian making a valuable contribution to literary research, Andrew Taylor shows us a scholar bringing the tools of literary analysis to an ostensibly "historical" text. The account given by Jean Froissart of the brutal sacking of Limoges by the Black Prince in 1370 is read against the chronicler's attitude to civilian casualties elsewhere and the way in which successive revisions of his text reflect his changing attitudes; the result reveals a rather different Froissart than a first reading of this account might suggest. The second phase of the Hundred Years War began promisingly for the English under Henry V, and the victory of Agincourt furnished them

with a particularly valuable prisoner in the person of Charles, duke of Orléans. During his long exile in England Charles composed courtly poems in English as well as French, and most commentators have regarded this as merely a graceful way to allay the boredom of his captivity. John Scattergood, however, shows us that beneath their elegant surface these accounts of flirtation and recreation conceal a darker side – ambitions frustrated and discontents repressed.

Three further papers deal with texts from the middle years of the fifteenth century. Rita Copeland compares the contents of two British Library manuscripts – Royal 5.C.iii and Cotton Cleopatra A.xiii – the first a pastoral collection that belonged to a London rector called Thomas Eborall, the second an anonymous *Fürstenspiegel*, the *Tractatus de regimine principum ad Regem Henricum Sextum*. She points out that each displays an intermingling of two genres normally thought of as distinct, Eborall’s pastoral book incorporating advice to princes and the *Tractatus* reshaping its royal advice as a pastoral companion. She attributes this generic malleability to each genre’s “inherent practicality” and “immediacy of public purpose.” Roughly contemporary with Copeland’s two collections is the vast resource book for preachers, the *Liber de veritatibus*, compiled by the Oxford academic Thomas Gascoigne. Michael Van Dussen uses Gascoigne’s entries on the Jews to show that his famous account of Chaucer’s death is far from the only time that he introduces contemporary material into his collection, in this case augmenting traditional borrowings from St Jerome with references to the recent history of the Jews in Spain and the Holy Land. Van Dussen also provides us with a helpful edition of the most relevant sections. Finally, Andrew Galloway throws valuable new light on the circumstances surrounding Abbot John Whethamstede’s commissioning John Lydgate to compose the *Lives of St Albon and St Amphibalus* as part of a coordinated campaign to raise the prestige of St Albans. Using abbey muniments, Galloway shows how, after his successor, the myopic Abbot John Stoke, had stalled the project for eleven years, Whethamstede returned to Lydgate’s poem with renewed vigour during his second stint as abbot (1451–1465), having it rebound and placed on public display, an honour Lydgate himself did not live long enough to enjoy.

David Carlson’s work on the literary culture of early Renaissance England is particularly extensive, and three contributions focus on aspects of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century book history. In a piece that neatly complements Andrew Galloway’s, James Carley shows how the activities of another publicity-seeking abbot, Richard Beere of Glastonbury (1493–1525), prompted the copying of the only surviving manuscript of William of Malmesbury’s *Life of St Dunstan* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl. D. 263) by

a rival monastery, Christ Church, Canterbury. Beere's efforts had caused a long-running dispute between the two institutions over the ownership of St Dunstan's relics to flare up again, and Carley detects unmistakable signs of a Canterbury bias in the Rawlinson *Vita Dunstani*—evidently reflecting an effort to co-opt William of Malmesbury's text in support of Archbishop William Warham's claims. At around the same time, an account of the feast held to celebrate the installation one of Warham's predecessors, Archbishop John Morton, was included in the commonplace book of a London haberdasher called Richard Arnold. Julia Boffey identifies a number of other such late medieval and early Tudor "bills of fare," and explores the cultural meaning of this "slight but nonetheless generically recognizable form"; though the sources of these texts and the reasons for their collection and preservation were varied, she concludes that Richard Arnold, at least, had had a sense that "a grand feast made for tasty reading." Our final contributor to this section is also interested in the cultural meanings of an early Tudor book. Ana Sáez-Hidalgo gives us the early history of a manuscript of Rodrigo de Cuero's *Historia de Inglaterra con el Fructo de los tiempos*, now in the Escorial Library in Madrid. This *Historia de Inglaterra*, a Spanish translation of the *Cronycles of Englonde with the Fruyte of Tymes*, was commissioned by Henry VIII's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and passed from her to her daughter Mary, and finally to the royal library in Spain, following Mary's marriage to Philip II. Sáez-Hidalgo shows how the cultural meanings of this politically charged text shifted with the changing fortunes of its three royal owners throughout a period of particular political and confessional volatility.

Our final contribution, acting as a kind of scholarly cadenza to the volume, is a brief overview of the life and work of the great American editor of John Lydgate's two longest works, Henry Bergen. Inevitably, A.S.G. Edwards spends much of his time investigating how Bergen, with few models to follow, tackled the problems of editing these enormous poems (the *Troy Book* runs to 30,000 lines and *The Fall of Princes* to 36,000), preserved in multiple witnesses (Bergen knew of fifteen manuscripts of the first and some thirty of the second). However, Edwards bookends an assessment of Bergen's editorial industriousness with an account of his youthful enthusiasm for socialism and his later attraction to the *beaux arts*, particularly ceramics. Doubtless, David Carlson will be pleased to discover a kindred spirit in the socialist Bergen, but the editors of this volume trust that all its varied offerings, inspired as they are by his own multiplicity of interests, will furnish him with comparable pleasures.