Notes

A POSSIBLE PUN ON CHAUCER'S NAME

Assuming his role as judge/timekeeper, Harry Bailly interrupts the Reeve's extended discussion of the potential for passion in old men with a stern reprimand against laymen who would postpone tale-telling by long-winded preaching:

> What amounteth al this wit?
> What shul we speke alday of hooly writ?
> The devel made a reve for to preche,
> Or of a soutere a shipman or a leche.
> Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme.
> Lo Depeford! and it is half-wey pryme.
> Lo Grenewych, ther many a shrewe is inne!
> It were al tyme thy tale to bigynne. (A3901-3908)[1]

The most perplexing line in the innkeeper's rebuke, the reference to Greenwich as the locus of many a *shrewe* "rascal," has been taken by most of Chaucer's editors as a sarcastic allusion to Chaucer himself who had probably taken up residence in or near Greenwich between 1385-91.[2] Chaucer served as Justice of the Peace for Kent between 1385-89 and was granted a commission to oversee walls and ditches on the Thames between Woolwich and Greenwich in 1390.[3]

This explanation seems plausible, given Chaucer's tendency to ridicule himself throughout his works. In the *House of Fame,* for example, Chaucer's pompous eagle berates the poet for his tendency to go home after a full day's work "And, also domb as any stoon,/Thou sittest at another book/Tyl fully daswed ys thy look,/And lyvest thus as an heremyte,/Although thyn abstynence ys lyte" (655-660). And in the prologue to his doggerel *Tale of Sir Thopas* Chaucer is recognized by Harry Bailly as being taciturn and antisocial: "He semeth elvyssh by his contenaunce/ For unto no wight dooth he daliaunce" (B1893-1894).

I believe that this common interpretation of Harry Bailly's sardonic reference to Greenwich finds re-enforcement by a possible pun on Chaucer's name in line 3904 with the word *soutere* "shoemaker." In this and the previous line, the host suggests that the devil that causes a reeve to preach will also make a physician or a shipman out of a shoemaker. Thus Harry Bailly seems to proscribe role switching, directing his anti-sermon campaign against those pilgrims who might disrupt the series of tales with pretentious homilies. But, in reading lines 3903-04, one notices that while the pilgrimage includes a reeve, a shipman, and a leech, no shoemaker rides among them. These lines may assume a new dimension, however, if we recall that the name *Chaucer* means shoemaker.

A. C. Baugh remarks "the name Chaucer (F. *chaussier*) means maker of *chausses,* a kind of footwear, and we may without violence think of it as the equivalent of Shoemaker."[4] The *Middle*

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[1] All quotations from Chaucer are taken from *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* 2nd. ed., ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957).

[2] Skeat, Robinson, Donaldson, Baugh, and Pratt all mention this in their editions.

[3] *Chaucer Life-Records*, ed. Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 348-363, 490-493.

[4] Albert C. Baugh, ed., *Chaucer's Major Poetry* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. xi.

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English Dictionary defines *chaucer* as "footwear, hose of mail" and "only with names, or as a surname: a maker of coverings for legs and feet." As the citation suggests, there is no evidence which suggests that the word *chaucer* was used to mean "shoemaker" except as a proper name. Thus, the poet could not have used *chaucer* in place of *soutere* in line 3904.

In his study of English surnames, C. W. Bardsley remarks "of a similar craft with the shoemaker came the 'hosier' or 'chaucer,' the latter of which has become, surnominally, so famous in English literature. Though now obsolete, such a name as 'Robert le Chaucer' or 'William le Chaucier' was anything but uncommon at this time. Like 'Suter,' it has a Latin source, its root being 'calcearius.'"[5] The Latin root of *soutere* is *sutor.* Like *cobbler* and *cordwaner,* the word *soutere* was very commonly used to describe a shoemaker, and the word became a common English surname.[6]

If Chaucer is, indeed, playing on the etymology of his own name in his reference to *soutere,* it may not be the first time that the poet has manipulated his surname in such a fashion. In his study of the *House of Fame,* John Leyerle suggests that Chaucer may be ironically serving as the "shoes" of the eagle as that windy bird whisks the chubby poet into the heavens.[7] (It is important to remark, however, that the name *Chaucer* does not actually appear in the poem. The eagle refers to the poet as "Geffrey.") In any case, Chaucer does pun on the names of John of Gaunt and Blanche at the conclusion of *The Book of the Duchess:* "A long castel with walles white, / Be seynt Johan! on a ryche hil" (1318-1319). Along with the references to John and Blanche *(white),* these lines may include a play on Lancaster *(long castel)* and Richmond *(ryche hil).*[8]

It is certainly possible that Chaucer was not consciously punning on his own name in his mention of *soutere.* In attempting to explain line 3904, Tyrwhitt refers his readers to the phrase "Ex sutore medicus" from the fables of Phaedrus. And Pynson the printer at the end of his edition of Littleton's Tenures alludes to the line "ex sutore nauclerus."[9] Both of these phrases could have inspired Chaucer's line.

But given the context of Harry Bailly's invective towards Chaucer's hometown and the attack against role switching, it seems an equally acceptable possibility that Chaucer is poking fun at his own name. The host reproves the reeve for assuming the role of preacher. Ironically, Chaucer in his own art assumes the voice of reeve, preacher, shipman, leech, all of the Canterbury pilgrims. It would not be unlike Harry Bailly to hear the name of the poet, take a good look at this rotund figure with elvish countenance, and mistake him for a shoemaker. And it would not be unlike Chaucer to manipulate narrative technique in order to play with language and to have some fun at his own expense.

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[5] Charles W. Bardsley, *Our English Surnames: Their Sources and Significations* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1873), p. 312.

[6] Bardsley, 309. OED, *s.v. souter.* Citations from the OED suggest that the word became a term of abuse during the fifteenth century. Line 3904 represents the only time that Chaucer uses the word *soutere.*

[7] John Leyerle, "Chaucer's Windy Eagle," *UTQ,* 40 (1971), 247-265.

[8] See Robinson's note, p. 778.

[9] See Skeat's note in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* vol. 5, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 115.

ABLE, BAKER, CHARLIE ET SEQUENTIA: NAMES
IN COMMUNICATORS' ALPHABETS

As early as 1898, the military realized the need to avoid any misunderstanding of the words used in the transmission of official messages and communiques. At that time, the British instituted the use of words ak (ack), beer, emma, and toc for clarifying spellings which involved the letters A, B, M, and T (Burchfield, 1972). Through subsequent decades, the British used varying forms of a phonetic alphabet[1] (see Table) which they officially adopted militarily in 1939 and used through 1942 (*Language of World War...,* 1948). Early in the war, American military personnel adopted their own phonetic alphabets (see Table). These alphabets were used by the Army and the Navy (*Army Navy CAA...,* 1945) from December, 1942 (Burchfield, 1972) through February 28, 1956. On March 1, 1956, all of the armed services began to use the International Telecommunications Union List (see Table) now in use throughout the world (*Army Almanac,* 1959).

Various utilities, state and local agencies, and private groups also have adopted such phonetic alphabets for purposes of guaranteeing accuracy of different kinds of transmissions. In an effort to broaden our learning about such alphabets, we added to our reviews the listings used by the Western Union Telegraph Company operators, the General Telephone Company of California operators, the Los Angeles Police Department radio dispatchers, the State of California Department of Motor Vehicles license plate personnel, American air-traffic controllers, and international ham radio operators (see Table).[2]

One of the reasons for our gathering such lists was to review their content, inasmuch as an extensive search of the literature turned up no such documented research. An analysis of the seven alphabets referred to provided the following results: 62.7 percent (114/182) of the words are proper names, 37.3 percent (68/182) are not. If we examine the four alphabets currently in use, 76.0 percent (79/104) of the words used are proper names, 24.0 percent (25/104) are not.

Proper Names
Proper names used in the alphabets consist of personal names (101/182), geographic names (11/182), and miscellaneous names (2/182). The personal names are 80.2 percent (81/101) masculine (Charles, Edward, Oliver, etc.) and 19.8 percent (20/101) feminine (Bertha, Juliette, Mary, etc.). The geographic names range from cities (Denver, Lima, London, Quebec) to region (Yankee, Yorker, Sierra) to states (Utah, Kentucky) to nation (India). Two other names, November and Zulu, also are used.

Other Names
One fourth of the terms used in communicators' alphabets are not proper names. They are distributable into three small categories—masculine references (boy, papa, uncle), foods (beer, nuts,

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[1] Although technically such a listing is not a phonetic alphabet as known and used by linguists or by speech and communication disorders theorists and practitioners, it has been used as the identifying term for these alphabets from their inception.

[2] Personal communication to the authors by the Federal Aviation Administration, the General Telephone Company of California, the Los Angeles Police Department, the State of California Department of Motor Vehicles, the United States Department of the Navy, and the Western Union Telegraph Company, (Jan. 13) 1976.

Western Union	Telephone Co.	Police Dept. & Dept. Mot. Veh.	Armed Services, Air Trf. Cont., Ham Radio Opr.	British Phonetic Alphabet 1939-1942	U.S. Army 1942-1956	U.S. Navy 1942-1956
Able	Alice	Adam	Alfa	Ack	Able	Afirm [sic]
Baker	Bertha	Boy	Bravo	Beer	Baker	Baker
Charles	Charles	Charles	Charlie	Charlie	Charlie	Charlie
Denver	David	David	Delta	Don	Dog	Dog
Edward	Edward	Edward	Echo	Edward	Easy	Easy
Frank	Frank	Frank	Foxtrot	Freddy	Fox	Fox
George	George	George	Golf	George	George	George
Henry	Henry	Henry	Hotel	Harry	How	How
Ida	Ida	Ida	India	Ink	Item	Interrogatory
John	John	John	Juliette	John	Jig	Jig
King	Kentucky	King	Kilo	King	King	King
Louise	Lewis	Lincoln	Lima	London	Love	Love
Mary	Mary	Mary	Mike	Monkey	Mike	Mike
Nellie	Nellie	Nora	November	Nuts	Nan	Negat
Orville	Oliver	Ocean	Oscar	Orange	Oboe	Option
Peter	Paul	Paul	Papa	Pip	Peter	Prep
Queen	Quaker	Queen	Quebec	Queen	Queen	Queen
Robert	Richard	Robert	Romeo	Robert	Roger	Roger
Sam	Sam	Sam	Sierra	Sugar	Sugar	Sugar
Tom	Tom	Tom	Tango	Tock	Tare	Tare
Utah	Utah	Union	Uniform	Uncle	Uncle	Uncle
Victor	Victor	Victor	Victor	Victor	Victor	Victor
William	William	William	Whiskey	William	William	William
X-ray	X-ray	X-ray	X-ray	X-ray	X-ray	X-ray
Young	Young	Young	Yankee	Yorker	Yoke	Yoke
Zebra	Zebra	Zebra	Zulu	Zebra	Zebra	Zebra

orange, sugar, whiskey), animals (dog, fox, monkey, zebra)—and a large listing of miscellaneous words (e. g., bravo, delta, echo, hotel, interrogatory, jig, kilo, oboe, tango, uniform, x-ray).[3]

[3] Two additional findings of this research are worth mentioning. In these seven alphabets, there are only two words which are used universally: Victor and X-ray. Also, the term Roger as in "Roger, over and out," derives from the early phonetic alphabet used by the Army (Carpenter, 1946).

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A GARDEN EASTWARD IN EDEN:
AN ETYMOLOGICAL NOTE

In the second chapter of Genesis, there appears the sentence, "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and He put there the man whom he had formed."[1] The original Hebrew text--later to be translated into Greek, Latin, and then other languages--contains the phrase / gan bᵊedɛn/[2] "a garden in Eden," which is the focus of this brief note. Down through the ages two facts relating to this phrase have been overlooked. The first relates to the word /gan/ "garden," and the second to the word /edɛn/, universally accepted as a simple place-name, and treated as untranslatable, despite the obvious circumstance that most (perhaps all?) toponymics have, or once had, some significance.

Strikingly enough this first use of the phrase appears in precisely the section of Genesis for which Père Scheil of the Sorbonne, Professor Samuel Noah Kramer of the University of Pennsylvania, and others (including the author of this note[3]) have suggested various Sumero-Akkado-Babylonian

[1] Line 8.

[2] The transcription gives the Ashkenazic pronunciation of Hebrew, not the Sephardic now standard in Israel, since /e/ and /ɛ/ have merged in the latter, which would have /ɛdɛn/, not /edɛn/. The word for "eastward" follows the /edɛn/ in accord with normal Hebrew word order, but is omitted in the transcription since it plays no role in the analysis that follows.

[3] L. G. Heller, "The Epithets of Ninurta: A Revised View of Original Sin and the Jewish Taboo against Swine," *Names*, 21:2 (March, 1973), 58-59.

antecedents, that is, examples ultimately of Sumerian origin, transmitted to the Akkadians, inherited by the Babylonians, and then given final form by the Jews in the version attested in the Bible. Consequently any additional suggestions of the same sort should hardly occasion great surprise, particularly since they do occur, as indicated, in the same section. The first fact, then, that calls for attention is the curious coincidence, long overlooked, that the phonological sequence /gan/, the standard Hebrew word for "garden," also meant "field" in Sumerian, with shades of meaning varying from "territory" to "a section or parcel of land," all covered by the Akkadian word /eqlu/, used by the East Semitic scribes to translate the Sumerian /gan/. There were, furthermore, other Sumerian words for measures of land, one--/edin/--ranging in meaning from "field," whereby it overlapped the significance of /gan/, to "plain" or "territory." Needless to say, the precise nuances are far from assured. Nevertheless, since the Sumerian language is attested for a fundamentally agglutinative stage of its development, it also offers enhanced possibilities for etymological reconstruction.

If the word /edin/ consists of two morphemes, the first may be /e/, a morpheme that appears, both free and bound, in the basic meaning of "house," as in /e-gal/ "palace" or "temple," from /e/ "house" plus /gal/ "great." This analytic split, however, is justifiable only if the residue, /din/, was a morpheme. Yet for /din/ one encounters the classic morphological riddle, analogous to that seen for the *cran-* of the English *cranberry*: one can only identify the element as a morpheme by virtue of its combination with one or more *other* elements identifiable as morphemes. The /din/ does appear in a very common Sumerian word, /dingir/ "god," for which the /-gir/ may be suspected of being an agent-noun suffix, seen for example in /ligir/ "prince, ruler," with the /li-/ probably being the same morpheme found in the verb /litar/ "to give judgment," "to protect or take care of," whence the /ligir/ originally meant, morpheme-by-morpheme, "the one who gives judgment, protects, or takes care of." Exactly what the characteristic function of deity was (i.e., the meaning of the /din-/ of /dingir/) must remain problematic, as does the meaning of the English *cran-* which fills a slot equally occupiable by more readily analyzable elements (e.g., the *blue-* of *blueberry*). Nonetheless, if the /din/ of Sumerian /edin/ relates in some fashion to the homophonous segment of /dingir/ "god," then the noun /edin/ would mean roughly "house of god," and the entire phrase, perhaps, "a field in the house of god."

Our postulated Sumerian antecedent phrase, which was eventually to lead to the Hebrew /gan bᵉedᵻn/ would probably have had the relational elements "in" and "of" postposed to the end of the entire phrase complex, as was normal for Sumerian: /ganedinakta/. With the /-ta/ "in" translated ultimately by the Hebrew /bᵊ/ "in," the /k/ of /-ak/ "of" would have been left in final position, hence dropped, giving /edina/, later /edin/. The occurrence of /i/ rather than /ᵋ/ in the second syllable of /edin/ poses no special problem since these vowels alternated frequently in Sumerian, with an (undifferentiated) /e/ *regularly* replacing /i/ in the Eme-sal dialect. As ages passed then, the Sumerian /gan/ "field" was reinterpreted as the Hebrew word for "garden," and the once transparent meaning of /edin/ was forgotten by a West Semitic speaking people for whom Sumerian was not even a liturgical language, as it had been for the East Semitic Akkadians and Babylonians.

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