

Chaucerian Onomastics: The Formation and Use of Personal Names in Chaucer's Works

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MODERN READERS ENCOUNTER many strange and unfamiliar names and forms of names in Chaucer's works, not only classical names like Eacides and Penneus, but Biblical names like Assuerus and Achitophel, for many people no longer know the Greek and Roman myths or the Bible.¹ Even when they do know the Bible, it is generally the King James Version and not the Latin Vulgate, from which Chaucer took Biblical names. Chaucer uses six hundred and thirty-seven personal names, with an additional twenty-nine names of animals, books, and winds, totalling six hundred and sixty-six, not including the approximately three hundred geographical names Magoun has collected in his *Chaucer Gazetteer*. Consequently, certain questions seem pertinent. Does Chaucer classify names? How are names formed? How does Chaucer use them? Can various stylistic phases be distinguished in this respect?

First, a definition of "Chaucerian spelling." Every Chaucer scholar knows the vagaries of fourteenth and fifteenth-century scribes, against which Chaucer himself warned in his little poem on Adam Sciveyn and in the fifth book of his *Troilus*, where he refers to the diversity of English dialects during the fourteenth century.² J.M. Manly points out

¹E.R. Curtius has mentioned this about Dante's readers, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 365–367. Since Classics I is not generally required of English majors, many graduate students have to educate themselves in the Greek and Roman myths. Similarly, since many people no longer go to Church or read the Bible, Biblical names are equally unfamiliar. My thanks to my colleagues Norman Harrington and Charles Sleeth who read this article and made valuable suggestions for its improvement, especially to Charles who rescued me, several times, from the pit of error.

²*Troilus*, V.1793–1798. All quotations from Chaucer are from F.N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957). I follow Robinson's abbreviations and the line numbers follow his fragment divisions.

that scribes were trained in schools and shops; his study of the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* shows that they are more consistent in adhering to a spelling system than has been generally believed, and that some of the best and earliest manuscripts show a fairly complete standardization.³ Pointing out that there is no way of reconstructing the spelling of the ancestral scribe, Manly observes that "conspicuous words, such as dialect forms, unusual words, proper names, and rhyme spellings are likely to be retained, and these only irregularly"⁴ Manly and Robinson choose the Ellesmere and Hengwrt manuscripts as bases for their texts, and Pratt chooses the Hengwrt; their readings for proper names agree. References to variant spellings in Manly's notes will appear throughout this study. "Chaucerian spelling," therefore, refers to the forms as scribes have rendered them.

Chaucer's names may be broadly classified as astrological, Biblical, classical, and mythological, as shown in the table below, and many appear in rhetorical devices, e.g., catalogues, apostrophes, *exempla*. Although one cannot know if Chaucer deliberately classifies his names, except in *The Hous of Fame*, his style demands their inclusion, for medieval poetic doctrine uses names in a lavish way.

Table I

Arab names	12
Astrological Names	30
Biblical Names	80
Classical Names	90
Doctors of the Church	8
Medieval Names	28
Mythological Names	279
Papal Names	3
Romance Names	18
Saints' Names	36
Story (Character) Names	53
	<u>637</u>

Table II

Animals	14
Books	8
Winds	7
	<u>29</u>

³John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, eds., *The Text of the Canterbury Tales, Studied on the Basis of all known Manuscripts*. 8 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), I.558-559.

⁴Manly-Rickert, I.560.

II

Chaucerian names are formed in six ways. They are:

- 1) determined by what at first seems to be a general inconsistency of spelling in the inter-changeability of vowels and consonants: i/y, e/i, ch/k, p/ph. Some names appear in two or three variants: *Adriane/Adryane*; *Isoude/Ysoude*; *Cerces/Circes*; *Cacus/Kacus*; *Tesbee/Thesbee/Tisbee*;
- 2) formed from Latin and Greek oblique cases, inflectional and derivational;
- 3) borrowed from another language and given as English variants;
- 4) determined by position in the line, most often contracted (there are only two cases of expansion) to accommodate the meter or to provide the rhyme;
- 5) determined by pronunciation, with three cases of intrusive [x] for [s];
- 6) formed by metathesis, the words already formed by Chaucer's time.

1) *Spelling*

In addition to the traditions of schools and shops evident in the manuscripts, spelling variants reflect the influence of pronunciation. Pratt observes that "in general Chaucer's language was spelled as it was pronounced, and pronounced as it was spelled."⁵ Variants indicate pronunciation in *Cacus/Kacus*. All classical and mythological names with initial *AE*- and spelled with initial *E*- are medieval Latin variants influenced by pronunciation: *Eolus (Aeolus)*, *Eneas (Aeneas)*, *Esculapius (Aesculapius)*. Variant spellings for names beginning with *H* show the general instability of this letter, which was not pronounced. The readings in the manuscripts are further evidence of this: *Hester/Ester*,⁶ *Habradate/Abradate*,⁷ *Herro/Erro*, *Herynes/Erinyes*. Names for which only one form appears differ from the Latin in that the initial aspirate has been dropped: *Ypermestra (Hypermnestra)*, *Ypolita (Hippolyta)*, *Imeneus (Hymenaeus)*, *Ipomedon (Hippomedon)*, *Isiphile*

⁵Robert A. Pratt, ed., *The Tales of Canterbury* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966), Introduction, p. xxxviii.

⁶All mss of the CT read *Ester*; *Hester* appears in BD 987. Robinson says that his edition is based on Fairfax 16. Bodleian, and that he has normalized the spelling to bring it into general conformity with the text of the Ellesmere MS of the *Canterbury Tales*, "Textual Notes," p.898. In this case, however, he has left *Hester* as he found it in the ms.

⁷Manly-Rickert, VI.650.

(*Hypsipyle*), *Omer* (*Homer*). Unetymological *h* after *t* was also not pronounced: *Ethiocles* (*Eteocles*), *Tholomee* (*Ptolemy*), *Arthemésie* (*Artemesia*), *Galathee* (*Galatea*). Unetymological *h* after *p* indicates the aspirated [p]: *Phasipha* (*Pasiphae*), *Phytonissa* (*Pythonesse*), *Phytoun* (*Python*), through confusion with names like *Phebus*, *Phedra*, *Pheton*.⁸

Doubled consonants indicate lengthening of the consonant and shortening of the preceding vowel: *Affrican*, *Appelles*, *Appollo*, *Atropos*, *Callyope*, *Ekko*, *Pelleus*, *Penneus*, *Pittagoras*.⁹

2) *Latin and Greek Oblique cases, inflectional and derivational*

Latin and Greek oblique cases furnish additional range for name manipulation. There are three categories: (a) derivational suffixes such as the Greek patronymic, which also appears in Latin works; (b) Latin inflectional case endings; (c) Greek inflectional case endings which also appear in Latin.

(a) Derivational suffixes: the patronymic *-ides*:

Attrides, the Greek patronymic derived from *Atreus*, appears as a name for Agamenmon, *Boece* IV, *Metrum* 7.

Busyrides, derived by analogy from Latin genitive singular *Busyridis*, appears in *Boece* II, *Prosa* 6.

Acides Chiron, derived from Ovid's *Aeacidae Chiron*,¹⁰ appears medially in *Hous of Fame*, III.1204.

Hemonydes, derived from *Haemon*, appears medially in *Troilus*, V.1492.

Pierides, derived from *Pierus*, occurs finally in *MLT*, 90.

Stymphalides, derived from *Stymphalis*, appears finally in *FranklT* 1388.¹¹

(b) Latin inflectional case endings:

Cipride, derived from Latin genitive singular *Cipridis*, appears only finally, *Parlement of Foules*, 277. *Troilus* IV 1216, V.208.

⁸Unetymological *h* after *t* appears in several names, e.g., *Arthur* derived from *Artorius*, *Tholomee* for *Ptolemy*, *Athalante* for *Atalante*. This may have been the insertion of French scribes who did not pronounce the fricatives [ð] and [θ] when they appeared in their orthography. For a full discussion, see Thomas Pyles, *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 63–64. Unetymological *h* after *p* indicated the aspirated voiceless stop [p], Pyles, p.55.

⁹Pyles, pp.70–71.

¹⁰Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I.17.

¹¹Variants are *Simphalides*, *Nymphalides*, preserving the patronymic ending even when the scribe seems unfamiliar with the name (Manly-Rickert, VI.646).

Eriphilem, derived from Latin accusative singular *Eriphilam*, occurs initially in *WBT*, 743.¹²

Gaufride, with elided final *-e*, a variant of Latin genitive singular *Gaufridi*, appears medially in *Hous of Fame*, III.1470.

Iulo, Latin abalative singular of *Iulus*, appears finally in *Hous of Fame*, I.177.

Lino, Latin ablative singular of *Linus*, appears medially and finally, *LGW* 2569, 2604, 2608, 2676, 2711, 2716.

Parcas, Latin accusative plural of *Parcae*, appears medially in *Troilus* V.3.

Tyro, Latin ablative singular of *Tyrus*, appears medially in *MLT* 81.¹³

Ysidis, Latin genitive singular of *Isis*, appears finally in *Hous of Fame*, III.1844.

(c) Greek inflectional case endings:

Breseyda, variant of Greek accusative singular *Breseydos*, derived from *Breseis*, Greek patronymic of *Briseus*, appears medially in *Hous of Fame*, I.398.

Cerces/Circes, Greek genitive singular of *Circe*, appear medially and finally in *The Knight's Tale*, 1944, and in *Hous of Fame*, III.1272.

Criseyda, variant of Greek accusative singular *Criseydos*, derived from *Chryseis*, Greek patronymic of *Chryses*, appears in every position of the line.¹⁴

Most names in the genitive case function as genitives in the syntax of the lines in which they occur, as in the following examples:

The enchaumentenz of Medea and *Circes*. *The Knight's Tale*, 1944.

I am that ylke shrewe, ywis,

That brende the temple of *Ysidis*. *Hous of Fame*, III.1443–44.

Cipride, however, owes its form to its position in the line, since it appears only in final, rhyming position. Ablatives, on the other hand, function as subject and object, (*italics added*):

¹²Interesting variants are *Exiphilem*, *Exiphilon*, *Erphielen*, *Erphiden*, *Ephilem*, *Epiphilem* (Manly-Rickert, VI.75). The accusative ending is preserved in one form or another. The number of variants listed is insignificant when we remember that we are dealing with 84 manuscripts.

¹³Only three variants occur for *Tyro*: *Tiri*, *Tirus*, *Tirion*, Manly-Rickert, V.447.

¹⁴E.H. Wilkins, "Criseida," *MLN*, 24 (1909), 65–67. Wilkins points out that the correct forms *Breseydos* and *Chryseydos* appear in medieval manuscripts of Ovid's *Tristia* which Boccaccio knew, p.66.

And I saw next, in al thys fere,
 How Creusa, daun Eneas wif,
 Which that he lovede as hys lyf,
 And hir yonge sone *Iulo*,
 And eke Ascanius also,
 Fleden eke with drery chere,
 That hyt was pitee for to here; *Hous of Fame*, I.174–180.

and whan this child was born, this Danao
 Show hym a name, and callede hym *Lino*. *LGW* 2568–69.

And this *Lino* hath of his faders brother
 The daughter wedded, and ech of hem hath other. *LGW* 2608–09.

The patronymic *Attrides* appears in Chaucer's prose translation of Boethius's meter, and *Busyrides* appears in Book II, Prose 6. *Hemonydes* appears medially, but *Pierides* and *Stymphalides* appear in final, rhyming position. Jerome says that it was Stymphalis who clung to Diana's image in her temple until she was slain.¹⁵ The form seems to have been determined by the needs of the rhyme.

Before moving to the next category of personal names, it may be expedient to discuss other kinds of classical names. The *agnomen* of place appears in six names: *Affrican* (Africanus), *Cilenios*, *Delphicus*, *Frygius*, *Ithacus*. The Romans had developed a complete system of nomenclature. The *praenomen* was the given name, the *nomen* indicated the *gens* or clan, and the *cognomen* marked the *familia*, a particular group within the *gens*. People who had distinguished themselves were accorded a fourth name, the *agnomen*, often celebrating a conquest.¹⁶ Publius Cornelius Scipio was given the *agnomen Africanus* as to a tribute to his victories against Carthage (205–202 B.C.); Chaucer refers to him as *Affrican*.¹⁷ Apollo, who conquered the python of Delphi, is Apollo *Delphicus*.¹⁸ Nero Claudius Germanicus inherited the *agnomen* from his father, Nero Claudius Nero, younger brother of Tiberius.¹⁹ *Cilenios* appears as a name for Mercury, from

¹⁵Jerome, *Epistola Adversus Jovinianum* I.41. (Migne, *PL*, vol.23 [Paris: 1844–66], column 284). Chaucer may have derived *Stymphalides* from Jerome's accusative singular *Stymphalidem*.

¹⁶Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*. *Recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit* W.H. Lindsay. 2 vols. (Oxonii: e Typographeo Clarendiano, 1911, repr. 1972), I.vii.1–3.

¹⁷*BD* 287; *PF* 41–153.

¹⁸*Tr* I.70.

¹⁹A. Momigliano and T.J. Cadoux, "Drusus," *OCD*, 2nd ed. (1970). For a complete and illuminating discussion of Roman names see L.R.N. Ashley and M.J.F. Hanafin, "Onomasticon of Roman Anthroponyms: Explication and application," *Names*, 26 (1978), pp.297–401; 27 (1979), 1–45.

Mount Cyllene where he was born; *Frygius*, derived from *Phrygia*, appears as an adjective in *Dares Frygius*; *Ithacus* is a name for Ulysses. In these last three examples, place names appear as personal names.

3) Borrowed from Another Language

The two foreign languages common in Chaucer's time were Latin and French, Latin the language of the Church and of the schools, French the language of the court and of the bureaucracy. Even in the fourteenth century, however, French and Latin were giving place to English.²⁰ In 1363, Higden complained that children in school were compelled to "construe hir lessouns and here thynges in Frensche, and so they haueth seth the Normans come first into Engelonde." By 1385, this situation had changed. Trevisa noted that "now, the yere of our Lorde a thowsand thre hundred and foure score and fyve . . . in alle gramere schools of Engelond, children leueth Frensche and construeth and lernth an Engliche."²¹ Trevisa's observation indicates that by the end of the century a knowledge of French was no longer the distinguishing mark of a gentleman.²² The many French variants in the Chaucerian corpus indicate not only his position as a courtier but also his utter familiarity with his sources.

Names in French, Latin, or Italian provide additional variants for use in rhymes or to suit the meter: *Beneit* and *Benedight* are the French and Middle English developments of Latin *Benedictus*; *Johan* is the Anglo Norman form of *John*; *Mahoun* and *Makomete* are the variants of Old French *Mahun* and medieval Latin *Makometus* for *Muhammad*. The following table shows the distribution of names in five languages:

Table III

Names from Arabic	5
Names in English	105
Names in French	158
Names in Italian	31
Names in Latin	<u>380</u>
	<u>679</u>

²⁰R.D. French, *A Chaucer Handbook*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947), p.339.

²¹French, p.340.

²²French, p.340.

The explanation for the new total is that Chaucer uses two or three variants for one name, depending on the needs of rhyme or meter. For example, in Table I, there are 12 personal names in Arabic; in Table III, 5 of these are approximate transliterations of Arabic, while 7 are the Latin variants of Arabic names. The nymph who loved Narcissus appears as Echo (Latin), Ecquo (French), and Ekko (English), thus adding one name to each of the totals of Latin and French. The difference between the totals of Tables I and III is the total of Table IV: sixteen names are in French, twenty-three in English, and three are in Italian, giving a total of forty-two names.

Table IV

Latin	French	English	Italian
Alcebiades	Alcipyades		
Almachius		Almache	
Aquarius		Aquarie	
Arcturus	Arctour		
Aries			Ariete
		Augustyn	
		Austyn	
Aurelius		Aurelie	
	Beneit	Benedight	
Cancer	Cancre		
Echo	Ecquo	Ekko	
		Emelye	Emelya
	Johan	John	
Leo	Leoun		
Macrobeus		Macrobye	
Magdelene		Maudelayne	
Makomete	Mahoun		
Mars			Marte
Mauricius		Maurice	
Maximus		Maxime	
Mercurius		Mercurye	
Neptunus		Neptune	
Nero	Neroun		
Olofernus		Oloferne	
Pamphillus	Pamphilles		
Pandarus		Pandare	
Pithagores	Pictagores		
Plato	Platon		
Pompeius		Pompei	
Ptholome	Tholome		
Sagittarius		Sagittarie	
Satanas		Satan	
Saturnus		Saturne	
	Susanne	Susannah	
Swetonius	Swetoun		

Table IV (Continued)

Tantalus	Tantale	
Tarquinius		Tarquyn
Valerius		Valerie
Virgilius		Virgile

The Total of columns 2, 3, and 4 is 42, the difference between the totals of Table I and III.

Italian variants of Latin names appear in those works with Italian sources: *Attheon* in *The Knight's Tale*, and *Amete*, *Almena*, *Alete* in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Exceptions are those French names of the allegorical figures in the garden in *The Parlement of Foules* although Chaucer has borrowed much of the description from *Il Teseide delle Nozze d'Emilia*: Plesaunce, Curtesye, Delyt, Gentilesse, Beautee, Flatery, Pees, Desyr, Pacience, Richesse, Jalousye.²³ These names were already in use as English by Chaucer's time.²⁴

4) *Position in the line*

Final, rhyming position provides the greatest variation in Chaucerian names. Generally, Latin names appear as contractions in English when they occur finally: *Constantinus* becomes *Constantyn*, *Collatinus* becomes *Colatyn* (genitive *Colatynes*), *Augustinus* becomes *Augustyn*, but *Austyn* medially. *Dite*, Old French variant of *Dictys*, appears in final, rhyming position. Some names appear in two or three forms depending on their position in the line: *Dant* or *Daunt* in medial positions, and *Dante* with unstressed final -e, in final position.²⁵ *Dane*, Old French variant of *Daphne*, occurs medially and finally.²⁶ Two cases of expansion, *Calistopee* and *Cleopataras*, expanded for meter and rhyme, occur finally, while *Calyxte* and *Cleopatre* occur medially.²⁷

5) *Pronunciation*

As the discussion of spelling illustrates, pronunciation is closely allied with the form of the name. Pronunciation determines spelling in *Aglawros* (*Aglauros*), *Swetonius* (*Suetonius*), *Ladomya*, *Laodomea*,

²³Joseph Mersand, *Chaucer's Romance Vocabulary* (New York: The Comet Press, 1939), p.94.

²⁴*The Oxford English Dictionary* cites first occurrences of these from 1225 through 1350.

²⁵LGW F 360; LGW G 336.

²⁶R. Smith, "Five Notes on Chaucer and Froissart," *MLN*, 6 (1951), 27.

²⁷LGW 582 and 601.

Laudomia (*Laodomia*). Three cases of intrusive -x point to a variant pronunciation of -s after the high front vowel [i] and the low central vowel [a]: *Brixseyde* (*Breseyde*), *Amphiorax* (*Amphioraus*), *Calyxte* (*Callisto*).²⁸ The peculiar spelling *Cithero* (*Cicero*) is probably a pronunciation variant, influenced by *Scithero*, which appears in Walter Map's *Dissuasio Valerii ad Rufinum Philosophum ne Uxorem Ducat*.²⁹

6) *Metathesis*

Metathesis, the transposition of sounds or letters, accounts for only two names: *Adriane* (*Ariadne*), *Escaphilo* (*Ascalaphus*). Although metathesis was common in the Middle Ages and appears in the works of Froissart, Machaut, and in the *Ovide Moralisé*, as well as in medieval texts of the *Heroides* and the *Metamorphoses*, few Chaucerian names illustrate the process.³⁰ *Escaphilo* may appear to have Italian antecedents; it does not, however, appear in *Il Filostrato*. Since it occurs finally, position in the line may have determined its final syllable. *Cutberd* (*Cudbert*) and *Note* (*Neot*) may, at first glance, appear to be metathetical, but there is difficulty in thus classifying them. *Cutberd*, a development of Old English *Cudbeorht*, shows that the Germanic development of Indo-European voiced fricative ð has become the voiced stop [ð].³¹ *Note* is derived from Old English *Neot* and Middle English *Neet*,³² but since it is not certain that the final -e was pronounced, it cannot be classified as metathesis.

New Names

There are three new names, borrowed from various sources, but so modified as to become new names. These are *Flexippe*, derived from *Phlexippus* in *Metamorphoses* VIII.440, and the name of one of Criseyde's nieces; *Horaste*, derived from *Oreste*, is the name of an

²⁸ *Brixseyda* occurs in *MLT* 71; *Amphiorax* in *WBT* 741, *Anel* 57, *Tr* II. 105, V.1500; *Calyxte* in *PF* 286.

²⁹ Robert A. Pratt, "The Importance of Manuscripts for the Study of Medieval Education as Revealed by the Learning of Chaucer," *Progress of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Bulletin no.20 (1949), p.48.

³⁰ *Adriane* occurs in Machaut's *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*, 2674. On this topic see also S.B. Meech, "Chaucer and the *Ovide Moralisé*—A Further Study," *PMLA*, 66 (1931), 196.

³¹ Pyles, p.109.

³² W.W. Skeat, ed., *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894–97), V.111.

imaginary lover; *Eclympasteyr*, derived from Froissart's *Enclimpostair*, is the name of the god of sleep's heir.³³

III

Returning to the classifications of Table I, the discussion will continue with Arabic names. Seven appear as English versions of Latin or French variants, four are approximate transliterations from Arabic, and one appears so completely garbled that it defies identification. *Ibn Rushd* appears as the Latin variant *Averrois* and *Ibn Sina* is *Avicenna* by way of Hebrew.³⁴ The others are English pronunciation variants. *Alkabucius* appears for Latin *Alchabitus* from Arabic *al-Qabisi*; *Arsechiele* for Latin *Arzachel* from Arabic *al-Zarqali*; *Alocen* for Latin *Alhazen* from Arabic *al-Haitham*; *Ballenus* for French *Balenuz* from Arabic *Abuluniyus*. *Argus*, however, is not easy to identify. It is meant to indicate the astronomer *al-Khawizmi*, whose name appears in the *Roman de la Rose* as *Algus* (which begets *algorism*), a development of *al-Khwarizmi*.³⁵ Chaucer's *Argus* is derived from *Algus* by rhotacism. *Haly* is the English equivalent of Arabic 'Ali by way of the Latin *Hali*. There are three possible identifications: *Haly Abbas*, or 'Ali ibn 'al-*Abbas*; *Hali filius Rodbon*, or 'Ali ibn *Ridhwan*; and *Albohazen Haly*, or 'Ali ibn *abu-l-Rijal*. Chaucer follows Trevet's variant for one of the forms of Muhammad's name, *Makomete*, derived from medieval Latin *Machometus*; the second variant, *Mahoun*, is derived from Old French and early Middle English *Mahun*.³⁶ Chaucer also uses the common nouns *mawmet* and *mawmetry* for *idol* and *idolatry*, both derived from the medieval Latin variant.³⁷ *Senior* is Latin for the Arabic form of address, *Sheik*, and *Razis* and *Serapion* are spelling variants for Arabic *Rhazis* and *Sarafyun*, respectively.

Most of these names appear in the Physician's catalogue of *auctores*:

Well knew he the old Esculapius,
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,

³³N.R. Cartier, "Froissart, Chaucer, and Enclimpostair," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 38 (1964), 18–34.

³⁴S.M. Afnan, *Avicenna, his Life and Works* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958), p.57.

³⁵Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Ernest Langlois (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1920–1924), lines 12790–12810.

³⁶*Oxford English Dictionary* (1933, reprt.1961), VI.38.

³⁷*Maumet* occurs in *Parst* 745–750, 860–865; *maumetrie* in *MLT* 236, *PardT* 750–755.

Serapion, Razis, and Avycen,
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn. *General Prologue*, 429–434.

They may appear obscure to the modern reader, but not to a sophisticated medieval audience. Merton College owned copies of the works of Albohazen Haly, Avicenna, Bernard Anglicus.³⁸ Chaucer's audience would have known just as much about them as he did.

Astrological Names

These appear as English variants of Arabic, Italian, or Latin forms, as in Aldeberan, Alnath, Ariete, Libra, Pisces; *Arionis harpe* preserves the Latin genitive, and English *Delphyn* preserves Ovid's *Delphina*.³⁹ The names of the planetary gods show more variation: *Martes* appears only as Middle English genitive, derived from Italian *Marte*, and occurs in medial positions to serve the meter. *Jove* and *Jupiter* are interchangeable as meter demands; *Jovis/Joves*, Old French genitive, provide two syllables instead of the three of *Jupiter*. Also interchangeable are *Mercurie/Mercurius*, *Saturne/Saturnus*, *Sagittarie/Sagittarius*.

Biblical Names

Biblical names appear in the Latin derivations found in the Vulgate, some of them in oblique cases, many unfamiliar to the modern reader who, generally, knows the King James Version and not the Latin Vulgate, e.g., *Assuer/Assuerus* for *Ahasuerus*, *Absolon* for *Absalom*, and *Helie* for *Eli*. The instability of the initial aspirate is once again clear: *Elise* for *Elisha* from Latin *Heliseus*; *Esechie*, Middle English variant of Latin dative singular *Ezechiae* for the King James *Hezekiah*. *Elye* for *Elijah* (Latin *Helias*) is derived from Italian *Elia*.⁴⁰ *Michias*, variant of Latin *Michaeas*, appears as *Micah* in the King James Version. Medieval Latin *Sathanas* is interchanged with *Satan*.

Classical Names

The ninety classical names comprise the second largest category of names. The writers loved by the Renaissance humanists are all here:

³⁸J.A.W. Bennett, *Chaucer at Oxford and at Cambridge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p.16.

³⁹Ovid, *Fasti* II.79–118.

⁴⁰Dante, *Inferno*, xxvi.35.

Aristotle, Cicero, Homer, Livy, Plato. Medieval scholars knew Plato's *Timaeus* in the fourth-century translation of Calcidius; two other works, *Meno* and *Phaedo*, had been translated by Aristippus, Arch-deacon of Catania, before 1162, but neither appears to have been widely known.⁴¹ Aristotle, on the other hand, was widely studied in Latin translations. The Clerk's twenty books would have included commentaries as well as texts, and would have been a very expensive library.⁴² The high Middle Ages are known as the *Aetas Ovidiana*, since Ovidian meters and Ovidian sentiments dominate much of the poetry.⁴³ Cicero appears once as Cithero,⁴⁴ but more often as *Tullius/Tullyus*, the *nomen* of his *gens* or clan. Classical names appearing as French variants may have been chosen to suit the needs of meter and rhyme: *Stace* for *Staius*, twice in medial positions, twice in final, rhyming positions.⁴⁵ *Platon*, *Neroun*, appear once each in rhyming position, *Swetoun* in medial position to suit the meter.⁴⁶ *Scipioun/Cipioun* appears most often in rhyming position, while *Scipio* appears once, in rhyming position.⁴⁷ The names in *Boece*, like the title, appear as French variants pointing to Chaucer's use of Jean de Meun's translation in addition to the Latin text.⁴⁸

Medieval Names

The names of people from the Middle Ages appear as follows:

⁴¹R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1954), p.172.

⁴²Gerard of Cremona did a version of Aristotle's *Physica* and *Analytica Posteriora* in the twelfth century, and Alfredus Anglicus translated *De Plantis* about the same time. See F.E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), pp.63–64. A library like the one the Clerk would have liked to have would have cost approximately \$3,200 (W.L. Schramm, "The Cost of Books in Chaucer's Time," *MLN*, 48 [1933], 1939–145). In 1980, \$8,000, approximately.

⁴³The most recent study of Chaucer and Ovid is J.M. Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979). See also R.L. Hoffman, *Ovid and the Canterbury Tales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967) and E.F. Shannon, *Chaucer and the Roman Poets* (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1964), pp.3–325.

⁴⁴*FrankIT* 722. See also Note 29 above. *Tullius/Tullyus* appears 18 times in *The Tale of Melibee*, corresponding to similar occurrences in *Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence*; once in *PF* 31, and twice in *Boece*.

⁴⁵*KnT* 2294; *Anel* 21; *HF* III.1460; *Tr* V.1792.

⁴⁶*Neroun*, *MkT* 2537; *Platoun*, *HF* II. 759; *Swetoun*, *MkT* 2730.

⁴⁷*Scipio*, *HF* II.916.

⁴⁸V.L. Dedeck-Héry, "Jean de Meun et Chaucer, Traducteurs de la Consolation de Boèce," *PMLA*, 52 (1937), 967–991; Dedeck-Héry, "Le Boèce de Chaucer et les Manuscrits français de la *Consolatio* de Jean de Meun," *PMLA*, 59 (1944), 18–25.

Table V

Africans	1
Englishmen	15
Frenchmen	5
Italians	4
Poles	1
Spaniards	2

There is some doubt about the birthplace of Constantinus Africanus, who appears in the Physician's list of *auctores*. He is said to have been born in either Carthagenia in modern Tunis or in Sicily of Arab stock. He was obviously perceived as African by his contemporaries, hence his *agnomen* of locality, Africanus.⁴⁹ He was a much cited authority from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries until the sixteenth century. His translations were widely circulated, among them texts of the surgical part of Ali ibn Abbas's great work, *Kitab-al-maliki*, translated as *Pantegni*, or *The Whole Art*.⁵⁰ His *De Coitu* had achieved notoriety by Chaucer's time, and it provides Januarie with recommendations for aphrodisiacs.⁵¹

The names of Englishmen, including Chaucer's contemporaries, are the most numerous, but their works do not influence Chaucer's to any great extent. Bradwardyn appears in the Nun's Priest's humorous application of his doctrine of free will.⁵² The other names (Gower,

⁴⁹After Scipio Aemilianus finally defeated Carthage in 146 B.C., the territory was constituted into the Roman province of Africa. Julius Caesar settled veterans and retired legionnaires in Carthage, and Augustus continued and completed Caesar's plans for colonization. The original inhabitants, descended from the Phoenicians who had settled the area and who spoke Punic (a language akin to Aramaic and Hebrew) intermarried with the Roman colonists and many of them adopted Roman names. Septimius Severus was a descendant of both peoples: his father was of Punic origin and his mother of Italian stock, and Septimius spoke Punic before he spoke Latin. He retained his African accent even in old age (*Scriptores Historia Augustae*, with an English translation by David Magie. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London, W. Heinemann, 1921 [1967], vol.I, p.419). See also Anthony Birley, *Septimius Severus, the African Emperor* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971), pp.20–25, 44–63). After the Arab invasion of North Africa, 642–648, another kind of intermarriage took place, and it was gradually less possible to speak of "Roman Africans." The *agnomen* Africanus in Constantinius's name indicates that his contemporaries perceived him as African. If he came from Sicily, the *agnomen* indicates that his contemporaries perceived him specifically as Arab. The Arabs governed Sicily for more than a hundred years before the Guiscards and their Normans conquered the island, 1068–1072.

⁵⁰M. Bassan, "Chaucer's 'Cursed Monk', Constantinus Africanus," *Mediaeval Studies*, 24 (1962), 127–140.

⁵¹*MerchT* 1807–1812. For the aphrodisiacs see Paul Delany, "Constantinus Africanus and Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*," *Philological Quarterly*, 46 (1967), 560–566.

⁵²*The Nun's Priest's Tale*, 3242.

Gordon, Bukton, Scogan, Bernard Anglicus, Vache) appear in one-line references or in poems addressed to them. Astronomers Somer and Lenne appear in the *Astrolabe*. The names of three English Geofreys show variation: Geoffrey de Vinsauf is *Gaufride*, Geoffrey of Monmouth is *Gaufred*, variants of the genitive singular *Gaufredi* and of nominative singular *Gaufredus*, respectively; the former echoes the phrase *Gaufredi Anglici* of the Incipit of the *Poetria Nova*.⁵³ Chaucer indicates his sources by the use of Latin variants, but reserves plain English *Geffrey* for himself.⁵⁴

Of the names of Frenchmen, *Aleyn* and *Petro*, one is an English variant, the other Spanish, for Alain de Lille and Pierre de Lusignan. Of the Italians, three names vary from their original spellings: Dante appears as *Dant/Daunt*, always in medial positions, while *Dante*, with final syllabic -e, appears in final position.⁵⁵ *Petrak* is nearer the way Petrarch's father spelled his name,⁵⁶ and *Lynyan* is a development through pronunciation of the Italian *Legnano*. The Polish physicist Witelo appears as *Vitulon*, derived from Latin genitive singular *Vitelonis*, and is modified for the rhyme.⁵⁷ The Spaniard Petrus Alphonsus, author of *Disciplina Clericalis*, appears as *Piers Alfonse*, the Anglo Norman variant of French *Pierre Alphons* in Renaud's *Livre de Melibee et de Prudence*.⁵⁸ The second Spaniard is Don Pedro of Castile in *The Monk's Tale*.

Doctors of the Church

Of the eight names in this group, only three show change. The English variants *Austyn* and *Augustine* for *Augustinus* appear five times, four times in the medial positions, once in final, rhyming position.⁵⁹ *Orygenes*, Latin form of *Origen*, appears initially,⁶⁰ and *Ysidre*, French variant of English *Isidore*/Latin *Isidorus*, appears in *The Parson's Tale*, as does French *Damasie* for *Damasus*, pointing to a possible lost French source for this tale.⁶¹

⁵³E. Faral, *Les Arts Poétiques du XII^e et du XIII^e siècle: Recherches et Documents sur la Technique littéraire du Moyen Âge* (Paris: H. Champion, 1962), p.197, note 1: Incipit *Poetria novella magistri Gaufredi Anglici de artificio loquendi* P.

⁵⁴*The House of Fame*, II.729.

⁵⁵*LGW F*, 360; *LGW G*, 336.

⁵⁶Robinson, "Explanatory Notes," p.109.

⁵⁷*The Squire's Tale*, 232.

⁵⁸The variants appear in three languages, *Piers*, *Peter*, *Petrus*, Manly-Rickert, VII.295, 321.

⁵⁹In medial positions, *Gen ProI* 187, 188; *ShipT* 259; *LGW* 1690; in final position, *ShipT* 441.

⁶⁰*LGW F*, 428; *LGW G*, 418.

⁶¹For Chaucer's Latin sources, see K.O. Petersen, *The Sources of the Parson's Tale* (Boston:

Thus, the needs of rhyme and meter determine the form of the name. Chaucer, an accomplished metrist, can choose a variant from three languages or from oblique cases of Latin variants for metrical regularity and to provide rhymes.

Names from Romance

Of the eighteen names from romance, three are Old French variants: *Gy*, *Lybeaux*, *Rowland*; one is a pronunciation variant: *Isaude/Isoude* from Old French *Yseut*.

Names of Saints

Of the thirty-six names of saints, only four are unusual: *Beneit/Benedight*, *Cutbert*, *Maudelayne*, *Note*. *Beneit* is the Old French variant of *Benedict* and *Benedight* is the Middle English development of Latin *Benedictus*. *Maudelayne* is the Middle English development of Latin *Magdalena* from Old English times through pronunciation change. In late Old English times, *g* /*g*/ is vocalized to *i* after front vowels (OE *sægde* > ME *saide*), and later *g* (the voiced velar fricative) was vocalized to *u* [u] after back vowels, for example, OE *boga* [bɔga] > ME *bowe* [bɔuə] and OE *lagu* [lagu] > ME *lawe* [lauə] > ModE *law* [lɔ].⁶²

Names from the Tales

These are either found in Chaucer's sources or are everyday names modified to fit rhyme, meter, and stress patterns. Thus *Griselde/Grisildis*, *Janicle/Janicula*, *May/Maius*.⁶³ Some names are allegorical

Ginn, 1901) and S. Wenzel's two articles: "The Source for 'Remedia' of The Parson's Tale," *Traditio*, 27 (1971), 433–454, and "The Sources of Chaucer's Seven Deadly Sins," *Traditio*, 30 (1974), 351–378. For the possibility of French sources, see W. Ellers, *The Parson's Tale and the "Somme de Vices et de Vertus of Frere Louens"* (London: Published for the Chaucer Society by N. Trubner, 1884. The Chaucer Society, 2nd series, Pt. V, no. 16).

⁶²The *OED*, VI.23, suggests development through pronunciation change of French *Madeleine*; however, Charles Sleeth has pointed out to me that, in spite of the *OED* reference, the sound change [ag] > [au] was a well established change. See also Pyles, pp.162–63.

⁶³Baugh's suggestion that exigencies of meter account for the form seems to be correct (*Chaucer's Major Poetry* [New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963], p.448, note to l.1643). E. Brown, Jr., "The *Merchant's Tale*: Why is May called "Mayus"?" (*Chaucer Review*, 2 [1968], 273–277) suggests that the month *Maius* was favorable to physicians, and that since Damyan becomes physician to Januarie, i.e., he cures him of blindness, *Maius* is a appropriate name for Januarie's wife who helps in his cure. Januarie's wife, however, is named *May* 26 times, while *Maius* occurs only 4 times, in every position of the line. E. Brown, Jr., quotes several Latin verses which link *Maius* with healing, but he cannot help translating the word for the month as *May* in English, p.276, note 12. He admits: "Further, although the tradition contained in these verses

(*Prudence, Melibee, Sophie*, in *The Tale of Melibee*), but names appear in the Tales as they do in Chaucer's sources.

Except for *Canacee* and *Cambyuskan*, the unusual names in *The Squire's Tale* have not been traced.⁶⁴ *Elpheta* appears in medieval lists of stars and is Arabic *al-fakka*, referring to Ariadne's crown.⁶⁵ *Algarsyf* has recently been shown to be derived from *Saif-al-Jabbar*, the Arabic name for the three central stars forming the sword which hangs from Orion's waist. *Saif-al-Jabbar*, it is suggested, has been transposed into *al-gar-syf*.⁶⁶ It is not known how Chaucer could have known the name, or where he may have found it. *Cambyuskan* is a variant of *Camius Khan*.⁶⁷

Several characters are homonymous, sharing the same name. From 1100–1399, six names and their variants account for 60 percent of all Christian names in England: *Johannes, Ricardus, Robertus, Rogerus, Thomas, Willelmus*.⁶⁸ *Johannes* and *Thomas* are Biblical names, and the rest are Continental German names. Of the nine English names appearing in the corpus, seven are names of saints: *Albon, Dunstan, Edward, Cutberd, Frydeswyde, Kenelm, Note. Kenelphus*, father of Kenelm, is not a saint, neither is Oswald the Reeve although he is named after one. There are five characters named John: John the carpenter in *The Miller's Tale*, John the Cambridge student in *The Reeve's Tale*, Friar John in *The Summoner's Tale*, Dan John the Monk in *The Shipman's Tale*, and Sir John the Nun's Priest. Bailly calls the Monk Daun John before he learns that his name is Daun Piers. The saint's name, John the Evangelist, occurs most often as a rhyming tag, and the Anglo-Norman form *Johan* appears once to suit the meter.⁶⁹ *Jankin*, the diminutive of John, is the name of four people. Two appear in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*: one, the clerk in her fourth husband's

may help to explain why Chaucer named his heroine May and wished to emphasize her connection with the month, they do not fully account for the form "Mayus." If Chaucer wanted the form *Mayus* to have special significance other than the metrical, he certainly would have found ways to use it more often.

⁶⁴*Canacee* appears in Ovid, *Heroides* XI; *Metamorphoses* IX.507.

⁶⁵R.H. Allen, *Star Names and their Meanings* (New York: G.E. Stechert, 1899), p.178. *Elpheta* is found as a star in the *Liber Astronomicus* ascribed in the fourteenth century to Richard de Walingford (Manly, *The Canterbury Tales* [New York: 1928], p.598).

⁶⁶D. Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby in Medieval England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp.78–80.

⁶⁷J.M. Manly, "Marco Polo and the Squire's Tale," *PMLA*, 11 (1896), p.349.

⁶⁸Bo Seltén, *The Anglo Saxon Heritage in Middle English Personal Names, East Anglia, 1100–1399* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1972), pp.38–39.

⁶⁹*BD* 1318.

employ, and the other, the Oxford student whom she eventually marries. The third Jankin divides the fart and wins a new gown,⁷⁰ and Bailly applies the name derisively to the Parson.⁷¹

Similarly, there are three Alisons: Alison of *The Miller's Tale*, Alison of Bath, and Alison her close woman friend. Both the young Alys of Bath and the carpenter's wife resemble Alison of the Harley lyrics who is part of the evocation of spring.⁷² Chaucer's Alison, the carpenter's wife, embodies the description of spring in the first stanza of the lyric; she is the "springing spray," the "newe perejonette tree," and instead of the "little foul" she is the "wezele."⁷³ Like Alison of the lyric, the carpenter's wife and Alys of Bath arouse sexual desire, while Alison the "gossib" gives advice on sexual matters.⁷⁴

The other homonyms are Robin (diminutive of Robert), Thomas, and Cambalo. There are three Robins: the Miller on the pilgrimage, the apprentice in the Tale, and proverbial Robin in Pandarus's expression of incredulity that Criseyde will return.⁷⁵ Of the four Thomases, two are saints: Thomas of Kent and Thomas of India; the third is the sick man in *The Summoner's Tale*, and the fourth appears in Bailly's address to the Monk.⁷⁶ Are there, in reality, two Cambalos? Scholars have noted that *The Squire's Tale* remains unfinished because Chaucer did not want to write a tale of incest.⁷⁷ It has also been suggested that Chaucer deliberately botches the Tale by giving two characters the same name to show the Squire's utter confusion about the story.⁷⁸ Canacee's lover and brother may be one person, or they may be two different people in the story with the same name. The Squire, however, is not presented as a confused young man either in the portrait of the *General Prologue* or in any part of the Tale. If the events are not leading to an incestuous conclusion, if Cambalo is not brother and

⁷⁰*SumT*, 2288–2893.

⁷¹*MLT*, 1172.

⁷²K. Sisam, ed., *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 165.

⁷³*MillT*, 3233–3249.

⁷⁴*WBT*, 530–538.

⁷⁵Similarities in the description of Robin the Miller and Robin the apprentice have prompted suspicions that the two Robins are one, R.A. Pratt, "Was Robyn the Miller's Youth Misspent?" *MLN*, 59 (1944), 47–49. Does Pandarus refer, anachronistically, to Robin Hood, *Tr* V.1174–76? Perhaps he does.

⁷⁶*The Monk's Tale*, 1930.

⁷⁷F.W. Emerson, "Cambalus in *The Squire's Tale*," *Notes and Queries*, 203 (1958), 461. See also H. Braddy, "The Genre of Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*," *JEGP*, 41 (1942), 279–290.

⁷⁸N.E. Eliason, "Personal Names in *The Canterbury Tales*," *Names*, 21 (1973), 141.

lover, there seems little reason for Chaucer's bestowing the name on two different characters.

A small group of names appears generically. Daun John, Daun Albon, Daun Thomas are generic names for priests, as Harry Bailly indicates to the Monk.⁷⁹ The Friar also uses a group of other names generically:

He hadde eek wenchis at his retinue,
That, wheither that Sir Robert or Sir Huwe,
Or Jakke, or Rauf, or whoso that it were
That lay by hem, they told it in his ere. (CT, III [D], 1355–1358).

Sir Robert and Sir Huwe may designate priests, or men of higher rank who patronized "wenches."⁸⁰

There is also a small group indicating the bearer's characters. Of the 637 names, only 20 may be called *redende namen*, names defining character.⁸¹ Isidore suggests that if one knew the original sense of a name, one could understand the essential nature of what the name suggested:

Etymologia est origo vocabulorum, cum vis verbi vel nominis per interpretationem colligitur. . . . Nam dum videris unde ortum est nomen, citius vim eius intellegis. Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est.⁸²

Matthew of Vendome says that names define character:

Argumentum sive locus a nomine est quando per interpretationem nominis de persona aliquid boni vel mali persuadetur, ut apud Ovidium:
Maxime, qui tanti mensuram nominis imple
Et geminas animi nobilitate genus . . .⁸³

Recent Chaucerian scholarship has been examining Chaucerian name-play. Robertson and Huppé suggest an etymological pun in the name *Octavyen*: *Octo*- eight, *yven*- coming, the end of the eight years' malady to which the poet refers at the beginning of *The Book of the*

⁷⁹*The Monk's Tale*, 1929–1930.

⁸⁰Eliason, p.144.

⁸¹Trask translates *redende namen* as "speaking names," Curtius, p.500.

⁸²Isidorus, *Etymologiae, Liber I*, xxix.1–2: Etymology is the origin of names when a word or name acquires meaning through signification. . . . For provided that you see the origin of a name, you understand its meaning more quickly. Indeed the consideration of every thing is clearer once the etymology is known.

⁸³E. Faral, *Les Arts Poétiques*, p. 36, paragraph 78: A name provides evidence or proof when something good or bad is established about a character by the interpretation of a name, as in Ovid: "O Maximums (Greatest one), you fill the measure of so great a name and double your birthright by the nobility of your character."

Duchess.⁸⁴ S. Schibanoff shows that *Argia*, the name of Criseyde's mother, is connected by medieval etymologists with *providentia*, and suggests that the name is etymologically fitting for the wife of Calcas and mother of Criseyde.⁸⁵ John Conley posits that the name *Thopas* means that its bearer is a very jewel of a knight.⁸⁶ *The Reeve's Tale* has been mined by scholars for word-play and puns.⁸⁷ Lexically, *Malyne* means "dish cloth";⁸⁸ Hinton, however, suggests that it is part of an etymological pair: *Aleyne* and *Malyne*, and derives them from Old French *alignier* and *malignier*.⁸⁹ John M. Steadman suggests that *Symond* is derived from Latin *simus* (i.e., "flat-nosed" or "snub-nosed").⁹⁰ The Reeve refers to his chief character by the diminutive *Simkin* throughout the Tale; the socially pretentious wife calls her husband *Symond*, shouting for *Simkin* only during the fight which erupts at the end of the story.

It is doubtful that Chaucer chose *Octavyen* and *Argia* having in mind the etymologies critics suggest. He is quite aware of the place of etymology in poetry, and offers an *interpretacio nominis* when he thinks it is fitting, as in the cases of *Calcas* and *Cecile*. For *Calcas*, he says:

So whan this Calkas knew by calkulyng
And eke by answer of this Appolloo . . . (Tr I.71–72).

Calcas thus calculates. The Second Nun gives the etymologies for *Cecile* as found in Jacobus Januensis, *Legenda Aurea CLXIX*.⁹¹ In these two instances Chaucer has made it clear that he has taken the meanings of the names into consideration. The meanings of eleven other names speak for themselves: *Custance* in *The Man of Law's Tale*; *Prudence* and *Melibee* of *The Tale of Melibee* where the author gives the etymology for *Melibee*—one who eats honey; *Chauntecleer* in *The*

⁸⁴B.F. Huppé and D.W. Robertson, Jr., *Fruyt and Chaf* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p.49.

⁸⁵S. Schibanoff, "Argus and Argyve: Etymology and Characterization in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *Speculum*, 51 (1976), 647–658.

⁸⁶John Conley, "The Peculiar Name Sir Thopas," *Studies in Philology*, 73 (1976), 42–61.

⁸⁷N.E. Eliason, "Some Word-Play in Chaucer's *Reeve's Tale*," *MLN*, 71 (1956), 162–164; Helge Kökeritz, "Rhetorical Word-Play in Chaucer," *PMLA*, 69 (1954), 937–952.

⁸⁸Skeat, V.126.

⁸⁹N.D. Hinton, "Two Names in The Reeve's Tale," *Names*, 9 (1961), 117–120. The derivations here are highly speculative.

⁹⁰John N. Steadman, "Simkin's Camus Nose: A Latin Pun in *The Reeve's Tale*?" *MLN*, 75 (1960), 4–8.

⁹¹*Interpretacio Nominis Cecilie quam ponit Frater Jacobus Januensis in Legenda, The Second Nun's Tale*, 85–112.

Nun's Priest's Tale. These names appear in Chaucer's sources. He has devised *Pertelote*—one who ruins someone's fate or lot—for the hen, changing it from *Pinte* of *Renart le Contrefait*,⁹² and has named Melibee's daughter *Sophie* when she had no name in his French and Latin sources. Chaucer makes it very clear when he intends to exploit the meanings of names. Attempts to do so when he does not become rather Procrustean.

IV

Of the twenty-nine pilgrims, only eight have names: Madame Eglentyne the Prioress, Huberd the Friar, Piers the Monk, Harry Bailly the Host, Alys of Bath, Robin the Miller, Oswald the Reeve, and Roger the Cook.⁹³ The majority of the pilgrims are, therefore, anonymous, representative of the three medieval estates—the clergy, the nobility, and laymen and ordinary folk.⁹⁴ Their anonymity suggests that they are types, but they are also individuals made alive by Chaucer's art. Chaucer shows no class distinction by naming the aristocrats and leaving the lower-class members nameless. The Knight and the Squire, at the top of the scale, have no names, nor do the Doctor of Physik, the Man of Law, the Franklin, all thriving men of the middle classes. In fact, Chaucer deliberately says that he does not know the Merchant's name, the only pilgrim accorded that distinction, calling attention to several suggestions in the portrait that would prompt the Merchant to travel *incognito*. While anonymity may serve to place certain pilgrims firmly within their class, it does not hold them there. Little touches of individuality reinforce their vitality: Dame Alys's ten-pound hat, the Cook's sore on his shin, the Miller's bagpipes, the crowned A hanging from Madame Eglentyne's rosary, the Knight's rust-spotted gypoun.

Anonymity occurs in several tales. The stories may be divided into

⁹²R.A. Pratt, "Three Old French Sources for the Nonnes Preestes Tale," *Speculum*, 47 (1972), 655.

⁹³For *Eglentyne*, see J.L. Lowes, "Simple and Coy: A Note on Fourteenth Century Poetic Diction," *Anglia*, 33 (1910), 440–451; for *Huberd*, see C. Muscatine, "The Name of Chaucer's Friar," *MLN*, 70 (1955), 169–172. See also P.B. Rogers, "The Names of the Canterbury Pilgrims," *Names*, 16 (1968), 339–346; E. Rickert, "Chaucer's 'Hodge of Ware'," *TLS* Oct. 20, 1932, p.761; J.M. Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York: Holt, 1926), pp.77–83.

⁹⁴Jill Mann, *Chaucer and the Medieval Estates Satire: the Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1973).

two categories: those with named characters and those with un-named characters. The following Tables will illustrate:

Table VI

Tale	Nomenclature
<i>The Knight's Tale</i>	Source names
<i>The Miller's Tale</i>	Everyday names
<i>The Reeve's Tale</i>	Everyday names; nameless wife and child
<i>The Cook's Tale</i>	Everyday names; nameless wife
<i>The Man of Law's Tale</i>	Source names; nameless Sultanes nameless young knight
<i>The Wife of Bath's Tale</i>	nameless characters
<i>The Friar's Tale</i>	nameless characters
<i>The Summoner's Tale</i>	Everyday names; nameless wife
<i>The Clerk's Tale</i>	Source names; nameless son and daughter
<i>The Merchant's Tale</i>	Allegorical names
<i>The Squire's Tale</i>	Oriental names
<i>The Franklin's Tale</i>	Possible source names; nameless brother and magician
<i>The Physician's Tale</i>	Source names
<i>The Pardoner's Tale</i>	nameless characters
<i>The Shipman's Tale</i>	nameless characters
<i>The Prioress's Tale</i>	nameless characters
<i>Sir Thopas</i>	Comic names
<i>Melibee</i>	Source names, except for <i>Sophie</i>
<i>The Monk's Tale</i>	Source names
<i>The Nun's Priest's Tale</i>	Source names, except for <i>Pertelote</i>
<i>The Second Nun's Tale</i>	Source names
<i>The Canon's Yeoman's Tale</i>	nameless characters
<i>The Manciple's Tale</i>	nameless characters, except for <i>Phebus</i>
<i>The Parson's Tale</i>	source names

Of the twenty-four tales, fifteen have roots in the folk tale. Of these, six are literary versions, nine retain a close relationship to the original, while the remaining nine are a mixed variety: three romances (*The Knight's Tale*, *The Squire's Tale*, *Sir Thopas*), one from historical sources (*The Physician's Tale*), two translations (*Melibee* and *The Parson's Tale*), a series of tragedies (*The Monk's Tale*), one saint's legend (*The Second Nun's Tale*), and a tale based on alchemical literature (*The Canon's Yeoman's Tale*). The characters' names are Italian, French, and Latin, depending on Chaucer's immediate or ultimate sources: Palamon, Virginia, Prudence. Some names are

symbolic and descriptive: Custance, Justinus, Placebo, vestiges of the Tales' folk ancestry. The minor characters are anonymous: the Sultaness, Aurelius's brother, the magician.⁹⁵ In five tales, the characters are all anonymous, but their relationships to folk tales have been clearly demonstrated.

In these tales several characteristics of the folk tale appear. The events in folk tales happen in no time, in no country, and the heroes and villains are generally anonymous. The action in the literary versions takes place in recognizable places—Syria, Rome, Italy, Lombardy, Armorik (Brittany)—while that of the *fabliaux* is set closer to home: Oxenford, Trumpyngton near Cambridge, London. Conversely, events in three of the five tales take place in a variety of places: Holderness in *The Summoner's Tale*, in the far country (Asia) in *The Prioress's Tale*, Flanders in *The Pardoner's Tale*, and in no country in *The Manciple's Tale*. The time is the mythical past: "in the days of Kyng Arthour," in *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, and "when Phebus dwelled here in this erthe adoun" in *The Manciple's Tale*.

Anonymous names or descriptive and symbolic names are important elements in folk tales. Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Blue-Beard, Beauty, the Beast. Bruno Bettelheim points out:

The fairy tale, . . . , makes clear that it tells about everyman, people very much like us. . . . The protagonists of fairy tales are referred to as "a girl," for instance, or "the youngest brother." If names appear, it is quite clear that these are not proper names, but general or descriptive ones. We are told that "Because she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Cinderella," or: "A little red cap suited her so well that she was always called 'little Red Cap'." Even when the hero is given a name, as in the Jack stories, or in "Hansel and Gretel," the use of very common names makes them generic terms, standing for any boy or girl.⁹⁶

The anonymous summoner in *The Friar's Tale* thus represents all summoners; the Friar obviously intends this identification since there is a feud between the two men on the pilgrimage. The three rioters in *The Pardoner's Tale* illustrate four of the seven deadly sins the Pardoner discusses in his sermon. The unscrupulous canon in *The Canon's*

⁹⁵For the folk-tale original of each tale, see Robinson, "Explanatory Notes" to each tale. See also Margaret Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York: New York University Press, 1927); J. Burke Severs, *The Literary Relationships of Chaucer's Clerkes Tale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942).

⁹⁶Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p.8.

Yeoman's Tale appears in a story indicting all canons and their alchemy. All the main characters in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* are anonymous, the rapist knight as well as the shape-changing Loathly Lady. The "little clergeon" and his persecutors are nameless in *The Prioress's Tale*, thus emphasizing differences between them. In *The Second Nun's Tale* the saint, her friends, her enemies, all have names, but they remain one-dimensional and are in no way complex.

Chaucer further refines his use of anonymity. Although a few good people may be nameless, it is generally the not-so-good and the downright evil who have no names. All the characters in *The Shipman's Tale* are anonymous: the avaricious merchant, his lustful wife, the monk, named generically Daun John. Except for Donegild, all the wicked people in *The Man of Law's Tale* are anonymous: the Sultanness, the young knight who implicates Custance in Hermengild's murder, the renegade who attacks her. The socially ambitious wife in *The Reeve's Tale* and the faithless wife in *The Manciple's Tale* are nameless. Aurelius's brother and the magician in *The Franklin's Tale* are not evil; they would, however, help Aurelius to his desire—adultery. The wife eagerly welcoming Friar John in *The Summoner's Tale* is also nameless, and there is a hint that there is mutual interest between them:

The frere ariseth up ful curteisly,
And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kiste hire sweete, and chirkeþ as a sparwe
With his lypes: "Dame," quod he, "right weel,
As he that is youre servant every deel,
Thanked be God, that yow yaf soule and lyf!" (CT, III [D], 1802–07).

The anonymous characters are one-dimensional and show little complexity. They may be agents for the action, like the magician who makes the rocks disappear in *The Franklin's Tale*; they may represent the evils a good Christian must endure, as in *The Man of Law's Tale*. They are generally punished. The three rioters meet death under the tree in *The Pardoner's Tale*; the faithless wife dies at Phebus's hand in *The Manciple's Tale*. On a lighter scale of punishments, the socially ambitious wife, "digne as water in a dich," has her pride humbled when John "swyves" her and Alyene takes her daughter's virginity. While Chaucer gives us anonymous pilgrims who, although typical of their class, show liveliness and individuality in their conversations, confrontations, and tale,⁹⁷ his anonymous characters remain types.

⁹⁷N. Harrington, "Experience, Art, and the Framing of *The Canterbury Tales*," *Chaucer Review*, 10 (1976), 187–200.

A name confers individuality, even when symbolic. Isidore tells us:

Nomen dictum quasi notamen, quod nobis vocabulo suo res notas efficiat. Nisi enim nomen scieris, cognitio rerum perit. Propria nomina dicta quia specialia sunt. Unius enim tantum personam significant.⁹⁸

Preservation of some aspects of the folk tale (anonymous characters, anonymous countries, simplicity of plot and action) does not move a story completely into the folk tale category. Certain elements of style must be considered in their definition. Chaucer elaborates *The Manciple's Tale*, for instance, with 183 lines of rhetoric, thus making it a literary tale as well.⁹⁹ It is still rather close to the folk tale genre, however, in spite of its literary characteristics. It is difficult to make neat equations out of the work of a supreme artist like Chaucer, who progresses from imitator of medieval rhetorical theory to conscious exploiter of formal rhetoric to make it serve dramatic purposes.¹⁰⁰

IV

Much work has appeared on the relation of medieval aesthetic and poetic theory to Chaucer's style, especially on the colors and figures presented in the works of Matthew of Vendome and Geoffrey of Vinsauf.¹⁰¹ Many rhetorical devices such as *apostrophe*, *exclamatio*, *sententia*, *exemplum*, *circumlocutio* demand the use of names, and it is in these that the majority of Chaucerian names appear. Even here Chaucer assumes an ironical, paradoxical, and comical stance. The learned Eagle in *The Hous of Fame* knows his categories; Harry Bailly is a literary critic; the Clerk, as the reader expects, knows his rhetoric, while the Franklin says he knows only the colors that grow in a meadow. After his interminable discussion of the cause and production of sound, the Eagle asks the poet:

⁹⁸Isidorus, *Etymologiae*, I.vii.1: "A name is said to be a means of making a thing known, as it were, because it makes things known to us through its distinguishing word. For unless you know the name, the knowledge of things is lost. Thus particular names are indicative of special qualities. For to such an extent do they signify the persona of one person." My thanks to Professor Gail Smith, Dept. of Classics, Brooklyn College, for help in translating the Latin.

⁹⁹J.M. Manly, "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians" in *Chaucer Criticism*, ed. Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960), I, pp.284-285.

¹⁰⁰Manly, pp.287-290.

¹⁰¹Faral, pp.110-193 and pp.203-245.

Have I not preved thus simply,
 Withouten any subtiltee,
 Of speche, or grete prolixitee
 Of termes of philosophie,
 Of figures of poetry,
 Or colours of rhetorike? (*HF* II.853–859)

Harry Bailly warns the Clerk when he asks him for a tale:

Telle us some murie thyng of aventures.
 Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures,
 Keep hem in stoor til so be that ye endite
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write. (*CT*, IV [E] 15–18)

The Franklin disclaims all knowledge of rhetoric in the modesty *topos* which contradicts the ignorance he claims:

Thynge that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
 I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,
 Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero.
 Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,
 But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
 Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
 Colours of rethoryk been to me queynte. (*CT*, V [F] 720–726)

In spite of the disdain of the Eagle and the Franklin for the colors of rhetoric, their creator's work shows a profusion of all devices. Manly, discussing Chaucer's reliance on medieval poetic theory, suggests that he moves from the artificial elegance of *The Book of the Duchess* to the psychological probings of *Troilus and Criseyde* by making the precepts of the medieval textbooks serve his purpose.¹⁰²

Among the techniques for embellishing a poem, medieval rhetoricians set great store by amplification using, among other tools, digression. *Sententiae* and *exempla* form part of digression.¹⁰³ In the works of the *auctores*, Christian and pagan authors studied in medieval schools, poets found much material for both figures, especially in Ovid, whose work yielded a rich harvest. For those who had not read Ovid at first hand, there were *florilegia* or "bouquets," anthologies replete with examples to school them in the use of rhetoric. Chaucer, of course, knew Ovid intimately; it cannot be said as positively that he

¹⁰² Manly, p.271.

¹⁰³ Geoffrey discusses *sententia* and *exemplum* as ornaments of style in *Poetria Nova*, lines 1117 and 1254–1259, 1352; Faral, pp.231–232, 235–236.

knew the rhetoricians at first hand.¹⁰⁴ His models—Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meun, Machaut, Deschamps, Froissart—were well schooled by Matthew of Vendome and Geoffrey of Vinsauf, who devoted the bulk of their discussion to ornament and embellishment.

Chaucer's early work is crammed with rhetorical devices which Chaucer scholars have discussed at length.¹⁰⁵ No one has commented, however, on the frequency of proper names in many of the devices. For many of the colors and figures the poet needs personal names, and Chaucer's style provided opportunity for their display.

Exempla appear with greatest frequency. They may be used in three ways: (1) as part of an interpolated anecdote serving as an example; (2) as an exemplary figure, the incarnation of a quality, known also as an *imago virtutis*; (3) as the reference to a person for the purpose of making comparisons. In *The Book of the Duchess* there are eight blocks or units of single allusions and four blocks of names in a series, either for making comparisons or to serve as exemplary figures.¹⁰⁶

May noght make my sorwes slyde,
 Nought al the remedyes of Ovyde,
 Ne Orpheus, god of melodye,
 Ne Dedalus with his playes slye;
 Ne hele me may no phisicien,
 Noght Ypocras, ne Galyen;
 Me nys wo that I lyve houres twelve. (BD 567–573)

And again:

“To speke of godnese, trewly she
 Had as moche debonairte
 As ever had Hester in the Bible,
 And more, yif mor were possyble. (BD 985–988)

¹⁰⁴E.R. Curtius has discussed rhetoric as the basis of much medieval poetry, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, pp.148–163.

¹⁰⁵Manly, pp.283–284. For Chaucer's use of rhetorical devices see Agnes K. Getty, “The Medieval-Modern Conflict in Chaucer's Poetry,” Marie P. Hamilton, “Notes on Chaucer and the Rhetoricians,” Florence E. Teager, “Chaucer's Eagle and the Rhetorical Colors,” all in *PMLA*, 47 (1932), pp.385–402; 403–409; 410–418; John Nist, “Chaucer's Apostrophic Mode in *The Canterbury Tales*,” *TSL*, 15 (1970), 85–98.

¹⁰⁶In *The Book of the Duchess*, the single units occur in lines 435–437, 587–594, 662–664, 665–667, 708–709, 717–719, 985–988, 1244–1249; the larger units occur in lines 567–573, 725–739, 1056–1087, 1117–1123.

B.S. Harrison comments: "In these wild and rampant comparisons, Chaucer is most medieval and rhetorical."¹⁰⁷ The second book of *The Hous of Fame* begins with a series of famous dreamers with whom the poet compares himself:

For now at erste shul ye here
So sely an avisyon,
That Isaye, ne Scipion,
Ne kyng Nabugodnosor,
Pharoo, Turnus, ne Elcanor,
Ne mette such a drem as this! (*HF* II.512–517)

Later, two lists of celestial voyagers are introduced for comparing the poet's own journey with the Eagle: Ennok, Elye, Romulus, Gany-mede.¹⁰⁸ The greatest frequency of names, however, appears in the catalogues, and here Chaucer classifies names. In the second book there appears one short catalogue of the "stellified" birds, fish, and men:

"Yis, pardee!" quod he; "wostow why?
For when thou redest poetrie,
How goddes gonne stellifye
Bridd, fissh, best, or him or here,
As the Raven, or eyther Bere,
Or Arionis harpe fyn,
Castor, Pollux, or Delphyn,
Or Athalantes doughtres sevene,
How alle these arn set in hevene; (*HF* II, 1000–1008)

In the third book there are five catalogues of specific classifications: musicians (harpers, pipers, trumpeters), magicians (sorcerers, alchemists, sorceresses), writers on war (Theban, Trojan, Arthurian, Roman), poets of the underworld, introduced in Book I and mentioned again in Book III, and, finally, the poet of love, Ovid.¹⁰⁹ Such classifications provide a quantity of names. The first part of the *Parlement of Foules* provides several classifications: trees, allegorical figures, lovers. The roll-call of false lovers, the *blazon des faulses amours* of Old French poetry, appears in *The Hous of Fame*, I.388–436, summing up Eneas's falsity to Dido; the roll-call of love's martyrs

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin S. Harrison, "Medieval Rhetoric in the "Book of the Duchesse", " *PMLA*, 49 (1934), p.433.

¹⁰⁸ *The Hous of Fame*, II.588–592; 914–924.

¹⁰⁹ *The Hous of Fame*, II.1001–1008; III.1201–1512.

in Venus's temple in the *Parlement of Foules* illustrates the power of love in humans before the poet moves on to the debate on love among the eagles in Nature's court.¹¹⁰

Robert O. Payne has shown that Chaucer follows a pattern of book-dream-experience in the early poems.¹¹¹ The first part of this sequence allows the mention of old books and their characters. *The Book of the Duchess* begins with Ovid's story of Ceys and Alcione, followed by the dream of the Man in Black and the elegy; in *The Hous of Fame* the dream begins with the narration of the Trojan War from Virgil's *Aeneid*, then leads into the celestial voyage; in *The Parlement of Foules*, the poet reads Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* (combined with Macrobius's *Commentary*), then dreams that Scipio Africanus conducts him to the garden of love. This book-dream pattern, lengthened by elaborate summaries from old authors, allows the insertion and use of a number of personal names.

Turning to *The Canterbury Tales*, we find more of some devices and less of others. The *General Prologue* consists mainly of the *effictio* or portrait, the outward, physical description of a person, and yields few names since most of the pilgrims are anonymous. The catalogue appears in two places: the list of *auctores* in the Physician's portrait and the list of Chaucer's works in *The Man of Law's Prologue*. The apostrophe, one of the means of amplification, becomes more numerous. Those in *The Man of Law's Tale*, *The Prioress's Tale*, *The Second Nun's Tale* are used to arouse pathos in the listener.¹¹² The apostrophes of *The Pardoner's Tale* are part of the demagoguery of which he is expert, while those in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* parody the use of apostrophes as found in Geoffrey of Vinsauf, whom the Nun's Priest specifically mentions.¹¹³

Periphrases (*circumlocutio*) appear throughout the tales, elaborate passages setting the time of the year in astrological configurations, using the signs of the zodiac and the planetary gods. The most famous one begins the *General Prologue*, but others appear in *The Merchant's*

¹¹⁰*The Parlement of Foules*, 288–294.

¹¹¹Robert O. Payne, *The Key of Remembrance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, Published for the University of Cincinnati, 1963), pp.112–146.

¹¹²Thomas H. Bestul, "The Man of Law's Tale and the Rhetorical Foundations of Chaucerian Pathos," *Chaucer Review*, 9 (1975), 216–226, and B.S. Harrison, "The Rhetorical Inconsistency of Chaucer's Franklin," *Studies in Philology*, 32 (1935), 55–61.

¹¹³Karl Young points out that the fifth apostrophe which Chaucer parodies in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, 3347–3351, was cited in manuals of rhetorical instruction of the time, and that

Tale, *The Squire's Tale*, *The Franklin's Tale*.¹¹⁴ *Exempla*, however, remain Chaucer's extravagance. In the Wife of Bath's *Prologue* they are used dramatically. Dame Alys is full of anecdote to prove one thing and another, but when she describes Jankin's *Book of Wikked Wyves*, she gives the names of ten authors and summaries of stories involving fourteen characters. Her heroine, the "olde wyf," appeals to authority, like her creator, to embellish her harangue to her reluctant husband. Extravagance of *exempla*, however, belongs to *The Franklin's Tale*; Dorigen's complaint, yielding twenty-four names, is composed of purely exemplary figures.

In *Troilus and Criseyde* rhetorical figures and colors are kept well in hand. Astrological periphrases, apostrophes, *exempla*, swift summaries of old stories occur, but they are woven into the drama, and the *topoi* of dedication yield the only catalogues:

Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye,
 Ther God thi makere yet, er that he dye,
 So sende myght to make in som comede!
 But subgit be to alle poesy;
 And kis the steppes, where as thow seest pace
 Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace (*Tr V*. 1786–1792)

O moral Gower, this book I directe
 To the and to the, philosophical Strode,
 To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to correcte,
 Of youre benignites and zeles goode. (*Tr V*. 1856–1859)

Chaucer's style, typically medieval in his use of the figures and colors of rhetoric, almost compels him to the lavish use of names. That the majority are Biblical, classical, and mythological indicates the use of *auctores*, Christian and pagan. Appeals to authority, not only by the author but also by his characters (even Chauntecleer and Pertelote have their *auctores*), invocations, apostrophes, *exempla*, all devices for amplification, are an integral part of the structure of Chaucer's poetry. Elaborate summaries of stories in the first part of the book-dream-experience pattern provide an abundance of names. Catalogues, roll-calls, used to stall and delay the narrative, create stasis, emphasizing the dreamlike quality of the visions where no action

Chaucer need not have known Geoffrey's work itself to have been acquainted with the apostrophe, "Chaucer and Geoffrey de Vinsauf," *Modern Philology*, 41 (1943–44), 172–182.

¹¹⁴*The Merchant's Tale*, 2219–2224; *The Squire's Tale*, 263–265; 671–672; *The Franklin's Tale*, 1245–1255.

moves the poem forward. In *The Canterbury Tales* and in *Troilus and Criseyde* they are part of the dramatic structure, illuminating and defining character. Out of the plots of old books, from the theories of medieval poetic and rhetoric, Chaucer has created something new, as he says in *The Parlement of Foules*:

For out of olde felde, as men seyeth,
Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere,
And out of olde boke, in good feyth,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere. (22–25)

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