

An Annotated Edition of Chaucer Belonging to Stephan Batman

ABSTRACT:

This article introduces a copy of *The Woorkes of Geffrey Chaucer* (1561) formerly belonging to the writer, cleric, limner, and book-collector Stephan Batman. The volume is currently held at the Guildhall Library (SR 2.3.3), and contains Batman's annotations and manicules throughout the text. It also features an 28-line poem in Batman's hand, a short booklist of medieval chronicles, and five line drawings. The book thus offers a fresh insight into the reading practices of one of the most industrious English antiquaries of the sixteenth century, and sheds new light on Chaucer's sixteenth-century reception.

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This article introduces a copy of *The Woorkes of Geffrey Chaucer* (1561; *STC* 5076) formerly belonging to the writer, cleric, limner, and book-collector Stephan Batman (c.1542-1584).¹ The volume is currently held at the Guildhall Library in London, where it has the shelf-mark SR 2.3.3. The words 'Stephanus Batmanus | me possidet' are written beneath the edition's

¹ For Batman's activities as a book-collector and annotator, see M.B. Parkes, 'Stephan Batman's Manuscripts', in *Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of Tadahiro Ikegami*, ed. by Masahiko Kanno et al. (Tokyo: Yushodo Press, 1997), pp. 125-56. Subsequent discoveries are recorded in: A.S.G. Edwards and Simon Horobin, 'Further Books Annotated by Stephen Batman', *The Library*, vii, 11 (2010), 227-31; Simon Horobin and Aditi Nafde, 'Stephan Batman and the Making of the Parker Library', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 15 (2015), 561-81; and A.B. Kraebel, 'A Further Book Annotated by Stephan Batman, with New Material for His Biography', *The Library*, vii, 16 (2015), 458-66. The printed books owned by Batman are listed in A.S.G. Edwards, 'Editing and ideology: Stephen Batman and the Book of Privy Counselling', in *Chaucer in Perspective: Middle English Essays in Honour of Norman Blake*, ed. by Geoffrey Lester (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 267-78 (p. 268, n. 2). See also Edwards and Horobin, 'Further Books Annotated by Stephen Batman', p. 230.

colophon in Batman's cursive italic hand (sig. 3V8^v), along with a short booklist of medieval chronicles. The volume's ownership inscription has been recorded by a Guildhall Library cataloguer on a typewritten pastedown, but scholars interested in Batman's career have not hitherto noted the book's existence. There is also a 28-line poem written on the rear flyleaf in Batman's secretary hand, and at around seventy locations throughout the edition there are annotations, manicules, marginal markings, and line drawings. As this article will establish, the preponderance of the written annotations and manicules are in Batman's hand, and demonstrate some of his varied responses to Chaucer's collected works.²

The characteristics of Batman's secretary and cursive italic hands were described by Kate McLoughlin and Malcolm Parkes in the 1990s, and can be seen in the volume's ownership inscription and booklist (Fig. 1).³ The entries in Batman's cursive italic hand demonstrate his formation of minuscule **g**, in which the descender leans to the right ('genelogia'); his flourished ligatures on **st** ('statu', 'Cirsestria'); his interchangeable use of secretary **d** and italic **d**; and his horizontal or straightened serifs on **f**, long **s**, and **y** ('of malmesburi', 'Elyensis'). The English note in the booklist – 'This book woorthy of recorde' – is written in Batman's secretary hand, and features his majuscule **T** beginning with a looping downstroke ('This'); biting **o** graphs ('book' and 'woorthy'); a downward flick on terminal **f** ('of'); and a pen-lift in the formation of the looped ascender of secretary **d** ('recorde'). A larger sample of this secretary hand is found in the poem on the rear flyleaf, which also features what McLoughlin and Parkes have identified as Batman's distinctive orthography: a present participle in '-eng' ('gapeng'), doubled terminal consonants or vowels ('mee', 'bee', 'remitt',

² Batman has previously featured in the reception history of Chaucer's works as the owner of an early manuscript of *Troilus and Criseyde* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 61) and as the purported owner of a now untraced cache of Chaucer manuscripts, formerly belonging to William Thynne. See Parkes, 'Stephan Batman's Manuscripts', pp. 139-40, 149-50.

³ See Kate McLoughlin, 'Magdalene College MS Pepys 2498 and Stephen Batman's Reading Practices', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 10 (1994), 525-34; and Parkes, 'Stephan Batman's Manuscripts', pp. 131, 154.

‘fitt’), and words that typically terminate in ‘-all’ being spelled as ‘-awle’ or ‘-avle’ (‘fawle’, ‘beffavle’).⁴ Full transcriptions of the booklist and poem are provided below.

The volume contains 27 marginal annotations in total, from single words to a rhymed quatrain. These annotations are written in Batman’s secretary or cursive italic hand, typically in a brownish-black ink. In two sequences of annotation, however, he uses a more distinctive purple ink, which interrupts the darker ink rather than overlapping with it (sigs 2O4^r-2O6^r and sigs S5^v-S6^v). The following notes are written in his cursive italic hand: ‘against workers | of Alcumine | and Alcumiste’ (sig. M1^r; *Canterbury Tales*, VIII. 1477-79);⁵ ‘Regulus’ (sig. S3^r; *Boece*, II. pr. 6, 70); ‘Exerses supposid | to be ye first finder | of ye chesse’ (sig. Y1^r; *Book of the Duchess*, 663-65); ‘/procede/’ (sig. Y2^r; 819-20); and ‘Cadmus bulded | thebes Anno Mundi /15/30 | continued yeres | Nere /3900/10/’ (sig. 3V8^r; *Siege of Thebes*, 4623). A handful of other annotations are in Batman’s secretary hand: ‘Riches drivs | awaye /nead/’ (sig. S6^v; *Boece*, III. pr. 3, 79); ‘frndship’ (sig. S5^v; *Boece*, III. pr. 2, 55); and ‘to | kinges | to | Beggars’ (sig. S5^v; *Boece*, III. pr. 2, 36-40). The use of purple ink confirms Batman’s responsibility for the words ‘/nota/’ or ‘not’ that appear in *Boece* (sig. S6^r; III. pr. 3, 35) and *The Testament of Cresseid* (sig. 2O4^v; 438, 461), while he also notes the year ‘/1255/’ as the date of Gérard de Borgo San Donnino’s heretical writings (sig. 2F5^r; *Romaunt of the Rose*, C. 7097). Additionally, Batman glosses the word ‘iaped’ as ‘scorned’ (sig. M1^r *Canterbury Tales*, VIII. 1385), ‘blisfulnes’ as ‘beatitude’ (sig. S5^v; *Boece*, III. pr. 2, 8), and wrongly corrects the word ‘porrismes’ – a term from Euclidean geometry – to ‘aphorismus’ (sig. T4^r;

⁴ See McLoughlin, ‘Magdalene College MS Pepys 2498’, p. 528; and Parkes, ‘Stephan Batman’s Manuscripts’, pp. 131-32.

⁵ Line references are to *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); John Lydgate, *The Siege of Thebes*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001); or Robert Henryson, *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

Boece, III. pr. 10, 135). He also supplies in his formal roman hand the authorship of *The Romaunt of the Rose*: ‘John Demuhune autor of this’ (sig. 2A2^r).⁶

The most striking additions to the volume, however, are the rhyming annotations that Batman has squeezed into the book’s margins or between gaps in the printed text. These comments mostly relate to the passages beside which they appear, and when re-lineated as verse they read as follows:

The chefe things women Require
[t]here one wills is [t]heire desire
(sig. H1^v; *Canterbury Tales*, III. 1036-38)

ye ould prouerb telleth vs soe
whether yat we com amonge hie or loe
to kepe well thy tonge and think one ye crow
(sig. Q5^v; *Canterbury Tales*, IX. 313-15)

the fresshest floure is daies to see
then dayse floures the fairest bee
(sig. 2O5^v; *Legend of Good Women*, F. 39-41)⁷

the learned Chacer showes his skill;
by discloseng the daysie with good will
(sig. 2O6^r; *Legend of Good Women*, F. 182-83)

What doth auaile ye gridi minde
in midst of goulden flod
The riche inchriase of neat by kinde
when all consumes to mvd
(sig. S6^v; *Boece*, III. pr. 3, 100)⁸

Except yat thow reede chavcer well
I the advise with him not mell
(sig. Y1^r; *Book of the Duchess*, 679-81)⁹

⁶ In a secretary hand that is uncharacteristic of Batman, there is a note reading ‘the fleminge his aduisment in taulke’ (sig. Q5^v; *Canterbury Tales*, IX. 350).

⁷ Beneath this couplet, Batman has written the words ‘/daye / see / or sees/’ in his italic hand in the same purple ink.

⁸ The phrase ‘inchriase of neat’ presumably means ‘increase of need’, as Boethius’s argument at this point is that ‘riches ne maie not all dooen awaie neede, and thei maken their owne neede’ (sig. S6^v).

⁹ Batman has written the word ‘nota’ on the left of the column at line 680, and has marked each of the next twenty lines, though it is not clear what aspect of this passage has occasioned his couplet.

As well as these written annotations,¹⁰ the volume's margins also feature 36 manicules, which fall broadly into three types. The first type typically has long, carefully-defined fingers and a drooping sleeve, while the second lacks a sleeve. These two types of manicule, appearing at 28 locations throughout the volume, closely resemble those found in Batman's commonplace books and manuscripts (Figs 2 and 3), and can be confidently ascribed to him.¹¹ The remaining manicules are more sloppily drawn, often with splayed fingers and a scribbled cuff, and cannot definitively be attributed to Batman.¹² Also appearing in the margins of the edition are five line drawings. These drawings typically appear in the vicinity of Batman's annotations or manicules, and are stylistically consistent with the drawings found in other books he owned and annotated.¹³ Beside a reference to a dragon in 'The Canon's Yeoman's Tale', there is a small sketch of a dragon's head (sig. M1^r; *Canterbury Tales*, VIII. 1435); beside the words 'Whoso woll sowe a felde plenteous, let him firste deliueren it of thornes' (sig. S5^r; *Boece*, III. met. 1, 1-2), there is a rudimentary drawing of a man digging in a field; while other pages of *Boece* have been decorated with a man's profile (Fig. 4; sig. T2^v), a hare in flight (sig. V1^r), and a chasing wolf (sig. V3^r).

Batman's markings and annotations reveal a wide-ranging interest in Chaucer's works. He takes note of the edifying precepts of *Boece*, identifies passages of anti-clerical satire from *The Canterbury Tales*, and marks historical references or allusions throughout the volume.

¹⁰ Another couplet has been rendered illegible by erasure and faded ink (sig. Z3^r; *The Floure of Curtesye*, 226-29).

¹¹ In order of their appearance in the edition, the manicules point to the following lines: *Canterbury Tales*, I. 3736 (sig. D2^r), I. 3878 (sig. D3^r), VIII. 1400 (sig. M1^r), VI. 621, (sig. M4^v), *Plowman's Tale*, 219 (sig. R1^r), *Canterbury Tales* X. 899 (sig. V3^r), X. 956 (sig. V4^r), *Romaunt of the Rose*, A. 742 (sig. 2A6^r), C. 7009 (sig. 2F4^v), C. 7093 (sig. 2F5^r), C. 7103 (sig. 2F5^v), *Testament of Cresseid*, 407 (sig. 2O4^r), *Boece*, II. pr. 6, 25 (sig. S3^r), II. pr. 6, 67 (sig. S3^r), II. pr. 6, 98 (sig. S3^v), II. pr. 6, 125 (sig. S3^v), II. pr. 7, 136 (sig. S4^v), III. pr. 3, 15-17 (sig. S6^r), III. pr. 6, 36 (sig. S6^v), III. met. 5, 1 (sig. T1^v), III. pr. 9, Latin heading (sig. T2^v), III. met. 10, Latin heading (sig. T4^v), *Book of the Duchess*, 642 (sig. Y1^r), 663 (sig. Y1^r), 727-28 (sig. Y1^v), 1015-18 (sig. Y2^v), *Siege of Thebes*, 659 (sig. 3S1^r), heading above 1225 (sig. 3S4^r).

¹² Several of the messier manicules appear immediately beneath some of Batman's rhyming annotations, sometimes in a different ink (as on sig. 2O6^r), and it is possible that a later reader decided to mark the annotations. In one of the manuscripts that Batman owned and annotated, however, there is a similar juxtaposition of carefully-formed manicules and scribbled ones (Cambridge, University Library, MS li.6.31).

¹³ See the drawing of a man's profile in British Library, Arundel MS 158, fol. 34^v, reproduced in Kraebel, 'A Further Book Annotated by Stephan Batman', p. 465.

These markings are generally consistent with how Batman read and annotated other medieval texts, such as *Piers Plowman* and *The Book of Privy Counselling*.¹⁴ But in his copy of Chaucer, he also shows an appreciation for the poet's comedy and his descriptive abilities, noting several passages from 'The Miller's Tale' and 'The Reeve's Tale', and observing how 'the learned Chacer showes his skill' in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* (sig. 206^r). Indeed, although Batman does not include any rhapsodic remarks about Chaucer's 'Gallant varietie of notable veines' (as Gabriel Harvey later put it),¹⁵ it is clear that he was receptive to the different moods and genres that were juxtaposed in the collected edition. In a striking couplet, he notes that an investment of time and energy is required to appreciate the poet's works: 'Except yat thow reede chavcer well | I the adwise with him not mell' (sig. Y1^r).

Batman's literary and antiquarian interests are evidenced more broadly in Guildhall Library, SR 2.3.3 by the material he inscribes at the back of the edition. In its diagnosis of contemporary ills, the poem on the rear fly-leaf resembles some of the prophecies and cautionary verses recorded in Batman's commonplace books, such as 'The trwe shape of Britine, who liste to be holde' (Houghton Library, Eng. MS fl015, fol. 19^r) or the poem beginning with the lines 'The name of Nobilitie in England beares swaye | The name of vertwe dothe dayly decaye' (Bodleian Library, Douce MS 363, fol. 1^r).¹⁶ It is also tempting to connect the booklist of medieval chronicles on sig. 3V8^v to Batman's activities as a book-collector for Matthew Parker. Three of the eight chronicles in the list survive in Parker Library manuscripts that have already been connected to Batman by Simon Horobin and Aditi

¹⁴ See Simon Horobin, 'Stephan Batman and His Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*', *RES*, 62 (2011), 358-72; and Edwards, 'Editing and ideology'.

¹⁵ Gabriel Harvey, *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, ed. G.C. Moore Smith (Stratford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), p. 226.

¹⁶ For a recent edition of two of the political poems recorded in Batman's commonplace books, see Steven W. May and Alan Bryson, *Verse Libel in Renaissance England and Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 187-89.

Nafde,¹⁷ while others are extant in manuscripts formerly owned by Parker.¹⁸ Guildhall Library, SR 2.3.3 thus offers a fresh insight into the reading practices of one of the most industrious English antiquaries of the sixteenth century, and exhibits some of the interrelations between Batman's activities as a book-collector, annotator, and writer.

London, Guildhall Library, SR 2.3.3

sig. 3V8^v

*Cronica de genelogia set Etheldrede virginis
et regimine; et de fundacione et statu Ecclesiae /
Elyensis / This book woorthy of recorde /*

*Richardus de Cirsestria Cronicon ante conqestum /
friar Jones Cronicon / Roger houenden Cronicon /
Guido de Columna / Cronicon / Regestrum de Burie /
William of malmesburi Cronicon / Robart Auesburi / Cronicon*

rear fly-leaf

tel mee, how this lande wilbee /
after the .40. yeres of the .eighthe. henry
governed by a mayde many adaye
but after wo / & wellawaye
sum gapeng for gaine, before shalbe fawle 5
the riche from, the poore shal have nothing at all /
the chvrche shalbe robbed / both of word & of deede
the clergy & *commonis* a freshe shall bleede /
thus instede of loye, alsorow shalbe
In | borowe / towne / felde / & Cytye / 10
pray to God, yat better maye bee
for his mercy in trinity.

¹⁷ An extract from what Batman calls 'Roger houenden Cronicon' is found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 138, while extracts from 'Richardus de Cirsestria Cronicon ante conqestum' and 'Guido de Columna / Cronicon' appear in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 427. See Horobin and Nafde, 'Stephan Batman and the Making of the Parker Library', pp. 574, 580.

¹⁸ Several William of Malmesbury manuscripts are connected with Parker (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 43; Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.7.13; Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.1.25.1-3; and Princeton, Scheide Library, MS 159), while he also owned a Robert of Avesbury manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce MS 128). The first entry on Batman's list, 'Cronica de genelogia set Etheldrede virginis et regimine' refers to a work that E.O. Blake described as 'a radically abbreviated version of the *Liber Eliensis*', which survives in two early manuscripts: British Library, Cotton Nero, MS A XV/XVI, and Lambeth Palace Library, MS 448. See E.O. Blake (ed.), *Liber Eliensis* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962), pp. xxv-xxvi. The identity of 'friar Jones Cronicon' is less clear, but Batman is presumably referring to the same book that John Stow cites in his antiquarian notes: 'an olde booke in the Grey friars library in London, written by one friar Jones' (British Library, Harley MS 367, fol. 19^r). Cited in John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), II, p. 342.

for eightty eighte will tell the playne
 that all thy labor is in vayne
 this have I set / as came to mynde 15
 for yat I see all are vnkinde
 I gesse the same by mercis grace
 I therefore here have made the place
 to tell my cvntry the beffavle /
 of kings / of nobles / & commons all / 20
 beseching God oure sinnes remitt
 & mak vs in his chirst so fitt
 yat wele or wo what so ever bee
 in mersis gras we maye be free

Bees be *common* at vercis end 25
 & bees not trvbled doth none offend
 woes be two . therefore beware
 in minde, in fleshe / therefore *prepare*

Adiuua nos domine Deus Amen