Despite the length of its title, *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer in the Original, from the most Authentic Manuscripts; and as they are Turn'd into Modern Language by Several Eminent Hands* fails to describe accurately what is contained in the pages that follow. The second edition of this text, printed in 1740 for J. Osborn, does indeed contain Chaucer's work, but its title misleads the reader into thinking that it contains *The Canterbury Tales*. Instead, there are only two pieces of Chaucer's masterwork contained in this volume: the General Prologue and the Knight's Tale. Modernized versions of these two parts follow. The General Prologue becomes "Chaucer's Characters, &c.;" the Knight's Tale in John Dryden's capable hands becomes "Palamon and Arcite: or, the Knight's Tale." The updating of Chaucer's works follows a trend in the early eighteenth century of modernizing or adapting the style of Chaucer for new poetic endeavors that nevertheless share in the cultural cache of the "father" of English poetry.

In the aforementioned 1740 edition, that linkage between the past Chaucer and the present work comes immediately when one opens the text. Opposite the title page is a frontispiece — an engraving of Chaucer with an accompanying stanza of poetry that was created by the engraver and antiquary George Vertue (1684-1756). The pictorial representation of the English poet certainly memorializes Chaucer in the sense that it both causes the reader to acknowledge his influence and remember that he is now gone — physically relegated to the cultural past.

Even in the absence of the visual representation, that linkage is ever present. As C. E. Whibley has written, "Chaucer's Characters, &c.;" the Knight's Tale in John Dryden's capable hands becomes "Palamon and Arcite: or, the Knight's Tale." The updating of Chaucer's works follows a trend in the early eighteenth century of modernizing or adapting the style of Chaucer for new poetic endeavors that nevertheless share in the cultural cache of the "father" of English poetry.

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**Al though hys lyf be queynt the resemblance**

*Of hym hath in me so fressh lyflynnesse*  
*That to putte othir men in remembraunce*  
*Of hys [er]sone I haue here hys lyknesse*  
*Do make to thys ende in sothfasnesse*  
*That they jh han of hym lost þouȝt and mynde*  
*By thys peynture may a geyn hym fynde*
This is odd. As a unit of poetry, the stanza creates an active yet unnamed narrator — one who has physically caused an image of Chaucer to be placed into the text — who can then engage the reader in an act of recovery of Chaucer. The rhyme royal verse form — the ababbc pattern deeply associated with Chaucer — links the narrator with Chaucer's legacy, following the metrical footsteps of his predecessor. Yet the stanza consistently points the reader back to the image, divesting itself of the very authorial influence it seems to imbibe. That image itself accomplishes what the enactment of that influence in the stanza seemingly cannot. The portrait, like a wormhole, ruptures the seemingly unalterable progression of time to provide a portal through which the reader may contact — or at least "find" — Chaucer.

Like using a concept from modern astrophysics to describe the portrait's function, the engraving betrays an anachronistic and historically contingent reading of the origin of the portrait and, indeed, Chaucer. The stanza originates neither with Vertue nor with any of the "Several Eminent Hands" that have participated in editing and modernizing the two parts of The Canterbury Tales that have been printed. The stanza comes from a contemporary of Chaucer's, the scribe and poet Thomas Hoccleve (c. 1367–1426), coming at the end of one of his poetic works entitled the Regement of Princes, a work in the speculum regis genre that provided advice to rulers on how best to govern — a work that existed only in manuscript until 1860 (Hoccleve, De Regimine; Hoccleve, The Regiment). As the few lines suggest, a miniature is included in some early fifteenth-century manuscripts of the Regement, depicting Chaucer pointing to the very text describing the picture. Yet the most curious aspect of Vertue's engraving above is that the portrait does not come from any of those manuscripts.

In this study, I examine how Vertue's engraving came into existence: how an image of Chaucer that never appeared with Hoccleve's stanza became joined to it. The multiple remediations of Chaucer's portrait and Hoccleve's stanza reveal that the Vertue image comes into existence not as a representation of any original document but as a conglomeration of various sources that erase the very point of origin they ostensibly provide access to: an authentic or authoritative Chaucer. Although the words of the stanza are clearly Hoccleve's, their origin is constantly erased through various reappropriations only to be fictively reconstructed.

Those erasures, I believe, are most clearly visible when progressing forward through time; therefore, this study begins with the manuscripts of Hoccleve, progresses through the printing of a false "Hoccleve" portrait across the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and ends with Vertue's multiple printings of a "Hoccleve" Chaucer portrait.

**THE REGEMENT MINIATURES**

Hoccleve's Regement of Princes was written in 1411 for Prince Henry of Monmouth, who would later become Henry V. Hoccleve produced a series of presentation copies, the production of which he oversaw (Carlson 283). Although he was not the scribe nor the illustrator, he had an executive role in some of the manuscripts. Of the 43 extant manuscript copies, three manuscripts contain miniatures of Chaucer: British Library Harley MS 4866, British Library Royal MS 17 D vi, and Rosenbach Museum and Library MS 1083/30. Of these, the first Harley MS 4866, was a presentation copy for Edward, Duke of York, or John, Duke of Bedford, and probably created under Hoccleve's supervision between 1411 and 1425 (Carlson 287; "Detailed"). The portrait of Chaucer that exists on folio 88v is of a man in a black robe with white hair and a forked beard. He holds a rosary in his left hand; his right hand extends beyond the golden border surrounding the green background and points to the stanza given above. From his neck hangs a pendant that may be a pen-case (Brosnahan).
Another pointing Chaucer is given in Royal MS 17 D vi, though it is a full-length picture compared to Harley’s waist-up portrait. The figure of Chaucer fills most of the width of the outer margin of folio 93v; its cramped location perhaps signals that this image was not a part of the original plan for the manuscript, especially since it was partially painted over some of the flourishes from other decorated initials on the page. This image of Chaucer shares many similarities with the Harley version. Chaucer points to the passage given above and holds a rosary — being in the outer margin has caused the poet to switch hands to left for pointing and right for holding the rosary. The same black robes, the same pendant, the same folds in his head-gear, and the same forked beard suggest a link between the two.

The last manuscript, Rosenbach Museum and Library MS 1083/30, presents an interesting case. The composition of the manuscript is somewhat later, from the mid-fifteenth century. The picture occurring in the margin very closely resembles the Harley portrait, including its border, background, and details of Chaucer’s appearance. The image, however, is a forgery, from a much later illustrator, probably from the seventeenth century (Carlson 285). Given its later date and it clearly being a reproduction of the Harley portrait, the Rosenbach portrait provides at least one useful insight: that the Harley portrait had not entirely fallen out of currency.

The pointing Chaucers have been significant in recent scholarship. In his *Bureaucratic Muse*, Ethan Knapp discusses the way that Hoccleve’s text and image work together to generate a new authoritative stance surrounding Chaucer:

> In later portraits Chaucer is uniformly shown pointing to himself, or to a pen-case worn on his chest, as a metonymic sign of his occupation and source of his fame. In the Regement portraits, however, the gesturing hand points away from Chaucer’s body and towards the text, specifically toward that portion of the text directing the reader to look into the margin at the illustration. The portrait would then direct them back to the text and then the text back to the portrait, ad infinitum. In other words, the relation of image to text does not establish Chaucer as an authority underlying Hoccleve’s text but rather creates a circuit of authority, one in which
Knapp's conception of the "circuit of authority" is given in generative terms: that authority is created in the manuscript itself, not as a pre-existing flow of authority from Chaucer to Hoccleve. Hoccleve's use of the word "peynture" may indeed capture this in the stanza that Chaucer points to. Although the term does mean painting, picture, or drawing, it also means a "description in words" ("peintûre (n.).") The overlapping definitions of painting and describing—image and text—enclose the generation of that authority within the manuscript. That generation is kinetic as well, requiring the reader to look back and forth between the text and image. That kinetic energy and the generation of authority instead of its reception deepen the import of the final lines of the stanza, that the reader can "find" Chaucer through the image, since it portrays the reader's engagement in that process as active.

"HOCCLEVE'S" CHAUCER IN PRINT

The actual portraits in the Regement bear a strong resemblance, though slightly modified to many later depictions of Chaucer in print. The hands that pointed to the passage become turned, instead, toward that pendant hanging around the neck of Chaucer. Through 1687, the most common depiction of Chaucer in print was of him standing on the tomb of Thomas Chaucer, his son, surrounded by coats of arms denoting his progeny — an engraving done by John Speed. The engraving first appeared in the 1598 Speght editions of Chaucer (STC 5077, 5078, 5079) as well as the reprints in 1602 (STC 5080, 5081) and in 1687 (Wing C3736), shown below (Driver). The text beneath the portrait reads "The true portraiture of GEFFREY CHAUCER / the famous English poet as by Thomas OCCLEVE / is described."
The image depicted of Chaucer, however, is not from Hoccleve's *Regement* but from British Library Additional MS 5141 — late sixteenth-century manuscript. That image has been displaced from its context as the first folio of that book, with a brief biographical sketch of the poet on the verso of the page, and supplanted the image coming from Hoccleve's work. The full-body portrait, the hand turned in, and even the points on his shoes all closely align the engraved image in print with the Additional MS 5141. The attribution to Hoccleve, therefore, is problematic. The Additional MS 5141 miniature does bear a strong resemblance to the extant Hoccleve portraits, and it is also entirely possible that the Additional MS 5141 portrait is based on some miniature that appeared in a copy of the *Regement* that has since been lost. This is the explanation given in the front matter of the 1598 Speght edition (STC 5077, transcribed from EEBO copy):

The which Occleue for the loue he bare to his Master, caused his picture to be truely drawn in his booke *De Regimine Principis*, dedicated to Henre the fift: the which I haue seene, and according to the which this in the beginning of this booke was done by Iohn Spede, who hat annexed thereto all such cotes of Armes, as any way concerne the Chaucers (sig. c. ii r)

After this description, the stanza from the *Regement* is given.

Once that image is in print, it proliferates and no longer requires a return to the manuscript...
The movement of Chaucer's physical remains prefigures the movement of Chaucer's symbolic remains in print: the Speed engraving is frequently removed or reinserted into early print editions of Chaucer. EEBO actually shows a progression of movement done by printers: the early copies of Speght's edition have the engraving within the front matter; the 1687 edition moves it to be the frontispiece. But EEBO also shows other interesting movements of the engraving. A copy of a 1561 Thynne edition of Chaucer's works (STC 5075) held at the Huntington Library and digitized in EEBO has the Speed engraving within the front matter, but the engraving was produced over three decades after the 1561 edition came off the presses. EEBO does not alert the reader to the plate's inclusion being a later addition; the Huntington Library, however, does explicitly reference the plate being a later insertion from one of the 1598 Speght editions ("The workes"). Removing the plate with Chaucer's engraving — whether to insert into another book or to use, perhaps, as wall decoration — was common; it is the same fate that befell one of the 1598 Speght editions held at the University of North Carolina's Rare Book Collection. The stub where the full-page engraving should be marks the engraving's careful removal at some point in the book's life. The engravings could also shift around not anachronistically, but to repair or replace other damaged copies. UNC's copy of the 1687 edition in the Rare Book Collection (pictured above), shows the engraving inserted as a frontispiece, pasted onto a stub of paper.

source. Yet the image actually belies a potentially different source for its inspiration: Chaucer's tomb. In 1556, Nicholas Brigham paid to have Chaucer's remains moved within Westminster Abbey and a new monument erected (Dane 14, 17-18). According to the 1602 Speght edition (STC 5080, transcribed from EEBO copy): "M. Nicholas Brigham did at his owne cost and charges erect a faire marble monument for him, with his picture, resembling that done by Occlue" (sig. c. j. v). This linkage between Chaucer's tomb and Hoccleve's portrait may have inspired Speed to place his image of Chaucer in the context of a tomb — though it is the poet's son instead of himself. The connection, therefore, between Chaucer's portrait, his remembrance, his physical self, and his works becomes etched and enclosed in marble, permanently joined. Brigham's actions make the last line of Hoccleve's stanza actual: Hoccleve's portrait can quite literally help you find the remains of Chaucer.

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The movement of Chaucer’s portrait from the context of its production — especially the excision and reinsertion into other volumes — underscores how early readers of Chaucer did not always value the original production context of Chaucer’s image. Similarly, the Hoccleve portrait that may derive from Additional MS 5141 — a non-Hocclevean manuscript — but is still given as Hoccleve’s own reflects a desire for readers to have an authorized and authentic connection to Chaucer instead of an accurate depiction of the artifacts that led to a certain depiction.

Chaucer’s tomb also provides insight into the relation between finding an “authentic” Chaucer and actual artifacts. As Joseph A. Dane in his book *Who’s Buried in Chaucer’s Tomb?* states, there may not be anyone buried in Chaucer’s tomb. It may just be a memorial that serves a larger cultural need to create the mythos that surrounds the “father” of English literature.

**VERTUE’S "HOCCLEVE"**

Vertue’s engraving of Chaucer that began this study clearly comes from the Additional MS 5141-Speed engraving lineage. The likenesses between the multiple copies — the direction Chaucer is looking, the hand on his pendant — all confirm the relation. Vertue, then, aligns his work with the precedent in print, ostensibly giving a Hoccleve portrait of Chaucer while supplying something different. The bonds that link the image and its accompanying text back to its original manuscript context fade from importance as they are restructured in the engraving itself. Vertue’s new engravings of Chaucer owe debts not just to Hoccleve’s manuscript miniatures, but to print production and Chaucer’s tomb itself.

Indeed, the 1740 engraving above looks rather monument-like. The pedestal upon which the stanza appears engraved and the image rests seem lithic. The links between Chaucer’s tomb and Vertue’s portrayals of Chaucer are much stronger in other productions. In the 1721 print of John Urry’s edition of Chaucer’s works, the printer uses an engraving of Chaucer in the frontmatter.

On the very bottom of the pedestal, one can read, “Tho: Occleve Contemporar, & discipulus ejusdem Chauceri ad viv: delin: Geo: Vertue sculp: 1717.” The link between this portrait, another in the Additional MS 5141-Speed engraving line, and Hoccleve is made explicit; its authenticity is underscored by the statement that it comes from someone who knew Chaucer while the poet was alive. Like the 1740 engraving, the image on top of a pedestal invokes the aura of a tomb-like monument. This association is deepened by two further included images in the text. The first is an actual depiction of Chaucer’s tomb on the title page, complete with a pointing Chaucer on the tomb’s edifice.
This image, supposedly based upon Hoccleve's Chaucer miniature, depicts him pointing to a new set of Latin verses upon the poet's tomb. The Additional MS 5141-Speed engraving Chaucer appearing opposite — marked as Hoccleve's own — betrays the multiplicity of the "authentic" Hoccleve image itself. The second image that deepens the association between the frontispiece Chaucer engraving being tomb-like comes on the next page in the copy examined above.
The image of John Urry, editor of the current volume is clearly a monument to his death. It states in Latin the year of his death as well as his age at that time. On the bottom of the pedestal, it reads "N. Pigné sculp." Although this may have not been an engraving done by Vertue — or an actual monument sculpted by N. Pigné was later made into an engraving by Vertue—the similarities between the Urry engraving and the Chaucer engraving in the 1721 edition are striking. Both round portraits sit atop pedestals from which hang the poet's and editor's coats of arms. The visual similarity suggests an interdependence between the two men. Although differences between the portraits — such as the laurels that sit above Chaucer's image — affirm that the two are not synonymous in their actions as poet and editor, their visual resemblance depicts both as necessary to the current edition's existence in an almost equivalent pictorial discourse.

Vertue, therefore, seems entangled in a series of remediations of the Hoccleve portrait that lead to different instantiations of the image and stanza in the context of a monument to Chaucer's death or his tomb. When examining Vertue's corpus of engravings, however, something interesting emerges: Vertue clearly knew of the pointing image in Hoccleve.

In 1728, Vertue produced an engraving of Chaucer that twice uses the pointing Hoccleve portrait. The stanza describing the painting is included below a monument of Chaucer that states in Latin the year of his death as well as his age at that time. On the bottom of the pedestal, it reads "N. Pigné sculp." Although this may have not been an engraving done by Vertue — or an actual monument sculpted by N. Pigné was later made into an engraving by Vertue—the similarities between the Urry engraving and the Chaucer engraving in the 1721 edition are striking. Both round portraits sit atop pedestals from which hang the poet's and editor's coats of arms. The visual similarity suggests an interdependence between the two men. Although differences between the portraits — such as the laurels that sit above Chaucer's image — affirm that the two are not synonymous in their actions as poet and editor, their visual resemblance depicts both as necessary to the current edition's existence in an almost equivalent pictorial discourse.

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In Vertue's own notes, he references seeing the exact Harleian and Royal MS portraits of Chaucer given above. He also notes a portrait of Chaucer given in the Cottonian MS Otho A. XVIII, which was unfortunately destroyed in the 1731 fire (Lam and Smith 305). The Otho Chaucer, Vertue conjectures, was the one used for Speed's engraving, which suggests that it was visually similar to the more widely circulated Additional MS 5141-like portrait. But Otho did not contain the Regement; it contained four poems attributed to Chaucer and the portrait that accompanied along with saints' lives and chronicles (Pace). To sum up: Despite knowing both extant Hoccleve Chaucer miniatures, despite using the Harleian image in engravings, despite knowing that the image that was the basis for the Speed engraving came from a non-Hoccleveian setting, Vertue still insisted in his work that the portrait used was from Hoccleve.

We cannot know why, of course. But the context of production supplies one interesting possibility. During the early eighteenth century, modernizations of Chaucer were common, as was writing in the style of Chaucer. Works like the 1712 modernization of Chaucer's Miller's Tale by Samuel Cobb conveyed the need for continuity with and distance from the father of English poetry. In that slim volume, Cobb's modernization is printed in a Roman font. After the modernization are two new works by Matthew Prior, Esq. described on the title page as "Two Imitations of Chaucer." Those imitations — though they are original works by Prior — are given in a black-letter font that had been used for editions of Chaucer throughout the seventeenth century. The use, then of the Additional MS 5141-Speed engraving as a base for frontispiece of the 1740 edition at the beginning of this study suggests, perhaps, that a different image was needed to preface a work that included modernizations of Chaucer's own work. The framework for The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer in the Original, from the most Authentic Manuscripts; and as they are Turn'd into Modern Language by Several Eminent Hands implicates the modernizers in an oddly tense relationship with the preeminent poet: one of productive poetic strife. By using Chaucer as a springboard to launch their own reputations, they must show themselves as both indebted to and improving upon the verses of their literary progenitor. Yet for their work to function as their own and be valuable, the Chaucer that they are striving against must be present, vivid, and not subject to the ravages of time that have eaten away at any claims of having a textual artifact that contains the pure intention of Chaucer — perhaps one reason why the 1740 edition even does away with attributing either the portrait or the stanza to Hoccleve. Instead, the Chaucer needed by modernizers must be one created in the immediate mental space of a contemporary reader, one whose historical remediations are not explored but glossed over in all-too-quick attributions to a source that seems authoritative but does not exist.

Thus in creating a false "Hoccleve" Chaucer portrait, Vertue actually engages in a similar generation of authority as in the Regement of Princes. The authority of Chaucer is generated in a circuit between the image at the front portending to give the reader access to a pure, spiritual Chaucer, and the modernized versions that follow. Vertue has definitely short-circuited authority of Hoccleve's Chaucer by directing the route of that generative authority along different lines. That current may be diverted, but it still flows.

NOTES

[1] The Middle English phrase "do make" uses "do" in its causative sense: Hoccleve caused the image to be made, hence "commissioned" ("don").


[3] Three of the 43 surviving manuscripts actually have this image. As discussed below, one is from a much later date. See Spielmann, Pearsall (specifically the appendix entitled, "The Chaucer Portraits"), and Carlson.

[4] I give much greater focus to the portrait itself than to remediations of the stanza that accompanies it; however, that stanza certainly contains many of the erasures we find with the picture. It should be noted, however, that neither the spellings of the words nor the font can be traced to any of the manuscripts of Hoccleve's Regement that contain Chaucer's portrait.
Other miniatures exist in the manuscript, and the various stages of manuscript production being done by different scribes, rubricators, and illuminators, may have led to the image being painted over the flourishes of the initial capitals even if the intent had always been to have it there.

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"The workes of Geoffrey Chaucer, newlie printed, with diuers addicions, whiche were neuer in print before: with the siege and destruction of the worthy citee of Thebes, compiled by Ihon Lidgate, Monke of Berie. As in the table more plainly doeth appere." Rare Books 84667. Catalog Record. Huntington Library Catalog. San Marino: Huntington Library. Web. http://catalog.huntington.org/record=b1499196.