

AI Transparency Document: Activities & Guidance

Notes:

- Comments reference the prompts used for individual generative AI chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT playground, Google Bard/Gemini, and Microsoft Bing Chat/Copilot), and whether Wikipedia data was utilised. The Wikipedia articles drawn on for the prompt were as follows:
 - Ellesmere Chaucer
 - Manuscript culture
 - Codicology
 - Court hand
- Any additions or edits made by the editor to the GenAI outputs are provided in TrackChanges.
- ChatGPT playground was set to gpt-4, 0 for Temperature, around 500-1000 for Maximum length, and 'You are a university academic' for System.
- Sections were decided by the editor following the data retrieved from GenAI and Wikipedia data.
- Please note that there may have been slight changes to the activities (mainly the aesthetics of the final web pages) since creating this document. The ratio of AI use to human edits will be similar to when this document was first created.

Activity 1: Translation

The choices behind the translation of medieval English, incorporating AI methods

Aims

The Modern English translation we have included in this digital edition of The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale was generated by OpenAI's ChatGPT. The role of the human editor was vital for ensuring the translations that were made were understandable to modern audiences while retaining contextual information about the medieval period through annotations.

The aim of the student translation tasks is to understand how and why various translations are made, by assessing their suitability for modern readers. It will also provide a space to practice your translation skills and your ability to interpret Middle English language, ready for independent study, university classroom-based activities or assignments.

In doing so, you will gain an insight into the treatment of various people in medieval England, the way in which Chaucer interpreted these people based on issues such as gender and social class, and recognise and analyse the changing social, political, and linguistic landscape of English.

You will also gain an insight into the possible benefits, as well as biases, stereotypes and flaws, in the use of generative AI to produce translations of Chaucer's works. What are the challenges and implications of using GenAI to interpret medieval texts and language? We have also put together prompts and further reading for critiquing GenAI.

We believe that constructive, collaborative and critical discussion is crucial for modern readers to achieve a fuller picture of medieval English society via Chaucer's tales and translations, particularly when newer technologies are integrated into editorial practices.

Guides

In these translation tasks, we have provided excerpts of the original text for you to gather an initial idea of the medieval context, before making critical comments on the generative AI translations of the tale. You will also be able to compare these translations with resources produced by human translators in medieval studies. Task 1 and Task 2 are available on the left-hand panel.

There are many decisions made in the process of translation which require careful consideration. On the right hand side, you can find a guide which may be helpful to read before delving into the examples of translations made.

Activity 1.1: Nouns and terms of address

We have identified and selected various nouns/noun phrases to address different 'roles', terms of address or descriptors of individuals in medieval English society.

Task:

Your task is to share your thoughts with others on the discussion board about various modern English translations of the Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (made by either a human or generative AI) and how appropriate these are for a modern reader.

You might cover topics related to: language (semantic) change, etymology and words loaned via language contact, the representation of gender and social hierarchies, and Chaucer's own language, portrayal of characters and interpretation of medieval society.

The boxes under each excerpt compare the Middle English transcription with two translations, one by ChatGPT (alongside a human editor), and one produced by the creators of Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer website. The first translation is colour-coded, to show any edits to the generative AI output.

Transcription: Original text transcription from the Ellesmere manuscript

Translation 1: Translation from ChatGPT, alongside the editor

Translation 2: Translation from Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer website

[If you require more specific prompts to get you started, download the task below.](#)

Activity 1.2: The Pardoner's character

[We have identified ways in which the Pardoner's character is represented at various points in the text, including his gender, sexuality, attitudes towards social hierarchy and class, and the way in which the Pardoner engages with his audiences. We want to know what your thoughts are regarding the different sociopolitical climates of medieval and present-day England, and how these are reflected in the character of the Pardoner by Chaucer.](#)

Task:

[Your task is to share your thoughts with others on the discussion board about various modern English translations of the Pardoner's Prologue and Tale \(made by either a human or generative AI\) and how appropriate these are for a modern reader.](#)

[You might cover topics related to: language \(semantic\) change, etymology and words loaned via language contact, the representation of gender and social hierarchies, and Chaucer's own language, portrayal of characters and interpretation of medieval society.](#)

[The boxes under each excerpt compare the Middle English transcription with two translations, one by ChatGPT \(alongside a human editor\), and one produced by the creators of Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer website. The first translation is colour-coded, to show any edits to the generative AI output.](#)

[Transcription: Original text transcription from the Ellesmere manuscript](#)

[Translation 1: Translation from ChatGPT, alongside the editor](#)

[Translation 2: Translation from Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer website](#)

[If you require more specific prompts to get you started, download the task below.](#)

Activity 2: Pronunciation

[**Critiquing Amazon Polly's recreation of Chaucerian and Middle English sounds1**](#)

Commented [1]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Create a lesson plan for teachers which allows university level students to critique Amazon Polly's pronunciation of Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (in Middle English).

Aims

The sound clips of The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale we have included in this edition were produced by Professor Jeremy Smith from the University of Glasgow, and through the text-to-speech service Amazon Polly.

Amazon Polly is a text-to-speech service that can generate synthetic, 'natural-sounding' readings of text in a variety of languages.

There were many challenges to Amazon Polly's production of medieval, Chaucerian poetry. The languages employed by Polly are modern and not medieval, meaning that the 'English' inventory used to recreate the tale does not account for Middle English phonemes (as in the pronunciation guide above). You can only select one language for your voice output, meaning specific sounds from the IPA were not available in the chosen language.

It is also not possible to alter the emphasis and pitch of the tale, without sacrificing the quality of the production, meaning the program relied on punctuation alone to produce rhythm and metre. These prosodic elements were crucial components of verse, especially in medieval English, which often utilised iambic pentameter).

The aim of this activity is to therefore bring you closer to an appreciation of the breadth, depth and variation present in medieval poetry. You will consider some of the differences in language, sounds, rhyme and metre between now and the medieval period, which AI may struggle to replicate.

The task asks you to compare the human and AI recordings and notice these differences, which we hope will open up further conversation about and engagement with Chaucer's texts and storytelling methods.

Guides

In this pronunciation task, we have provided excerpts of the human and AI recordings, alongside prompts for discussion and further guidance. The task is available in the left-hand panel.

There are many challenges and changes within the history of the English language and its sounds. On the right hand side, you can find a linguistic guide to medieval English sounds which may be helpful to read before listening to the excerpts.

The below activity asks you to critique the output provided by Amazon Polly. Your tasks are to:

- ~~Familiarise yourself with the Middle English pronunciation guides.1- Introduction (15 minutes)~~
- ~~Briefly introduce the topic of the day: Amazon Polly's pronunciation of Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale in Middle English.~~
- ~~Discuss the importance of pronunciation in understanding and appreciating literature, especially when dealing with older forms of English.~~

— Play the human recording of the five extracts highlighted in the tale below, writing down any noteworthy features related to rhythm and intonation. You may also want to make a note of any sounds that differ from Modern English. You can find the full recording of the tale here.

2. Review of Middle English Pronunciation (30 minutes)

- Provide a brief overview of Middle English pronunciation rules.
- Play the audio recording of the Middle English expert reading Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale.
- Discuss the pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation of the reading.

3. Introduction to Amazon Polly (15 minutes)

- Introduce Amazon Polly and its capabilities.
- Discuss how text-to-speech technology works and its potential limitations when dealing with older forms of English.

1. Listen to Amazon Polly's production of the five extracts. Again, make any notes related to rhythm and intonation, as well as any potential errors in relation to Middle English sounds.

4. Listening to Amazon Polly (30 minutes)

- Use Amazon Polly to read Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale in Middle English.
- Encourage students to follow along with the handouts and note any pronunciation discrepancies they notice.

2. In a small group or pair, discuss your observations, including the pros and cons of using Amazon Polly to recreate Middle English verse. What are the challenges involved in asking AI to produce medieval languages? What are the potential implications for the future of text-to-speech technology; do you envision it improving?

— Check the discussion points if you would like inspiration about where to begin. Provide your thoughts on our discussion board.

5. Group Discussion and Critique (30 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups and have them discuss their observations.
- Ask each group to prepare a brief presentation critiquing Amazon Polly's pronunciation, highlighting specific examples from the text.

6. Group Presentations and Wrap-up (30 minutes)

- Have each group present their critique to the class.
- Facilitate a class discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of using text-to-speech technology for reading Middle English texts.
- Summarize the main points of the lesson and discuss potential implications for the future of text-to-speech technology.

Activity 3: Manuscripts

Aims

There have been many representations of Chaucer, his works, and his characters through time. In fact, the manuscripts we have access to are not produced by Chaucer himself, but by scribes looking to reproduce his work to more audiences, and are presented with different types of spelling, in different dialects, and alongside all kinds of decoration.

The aim of the student manuscripts tasks is to recognise the benefits and challenges of reading manuscripts, such as the Ellesmere Chaucer, as well as the different forms of the Pardoner and his tale through time.

We hope that you will enjoy different writer's and illustrator's versions of the story as you explore these tasks. You will also understand what decoration and illustration adds to a piece of medieval writing, and gain an insight into reading medieval handwriting (palaeography), the journey from manuscript to print, and the process of textual transmission in England.

Guide

In these manuscript tasks, we have presented you with different images of the tale and the characters through time, from medieval manuscripts, to printed editions, to adaptations in modern literature, TV, film and plays.

There are many challenges to consider when navigating through different types of manuscripts, print and newer technologies. On the right hand side, you can find a guide to medieval manuscript cultures to provide a 'starting point' for your journey. We are looking forward to hearing your views on our discussion board.

Activity 3.1: The Ellesmere manuscript

Handwriting, Decoration, and Marginalia in the Ellesmere Manuscript

In this activity, we have highlighted different aspects of two Ellesmere manuscript folios, with prompts for you to explore. These include medieval palaeography (handwriting), illuminations (e.g. decorative borders, character drawings) and marginalia (writing/text in the margins).

Your task is to comment on aspects of the folios or the manuscript as a whole on the discussion board. Click on each highlighted box to find further information at the bottom of the folio. You may also want to choose another folio to analyse via our Ellesmere Manuscript pages.

One additional question you may wish to ask, given the type of edition produced here, is: in an age where AI is constantly evolving, can you think about how technologies may not be able to undergo the same kinds of investigations you are about to conduct on the manuscript images?

We hope that the activity helps you gain an insight into manuscript culture and textual transmission in the medieval period. There are also opportunities to practice your transcription skills by using our guidance on medieval handwriting to help you, where you can also find information on medieval manuscript culture to get you started.

Activity 3.2: Medieval and modern representations

Illuminations and Visual Representations of the Pardoner

By now you will have familiarised yourself with the Ellesmere manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, with the chance to practise reading medieval handwriting and analyse some of the decoration and illumination present in this manuscript.

In this activity, you will be introduced to different visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale (as well as the Canterbury Tales more generally), such as portrait illuminations from medieval manuscripts of the character himself (specifically, in the Ellesmere manuscript and the Cambridge Library Gg.4.27 manuscript), early modern representations of the Pardoner, and modern-day visual depictions of the the Canterbury Tales in TV and film. Each of these representations are accompanied by short descriptions and/or additional research about them, which you can expand to view.

Your task is to browse through the different depictions below and discuss whether these representations of the Pardoner and his tale are 'accurate', based on what you have learned from reading the Prologue and Tale and our guides to the text.

One additional question you may wish to ask, given the type of edition produced here, is: do you think AI would be able to produce the same kinds of interpretations of Chaucer's characters you see here (whether that be adaptations of his works, interpreting manuscript folios, or generating new images)?

You can use our guide on 'The Pardoner's Tale as an Exemplum' to help, as it introduces you to how authors, directors and creators have adapted the tale to fit new contexts, taking some of the features/the form of the text as inspiration. Then, share your findings in our discussion board.

1. **The Ellesmere Pardoner**

Commented [2]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Write an introduction to the illumination/portrait of the Pardoner from the Ellesmere manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, for university undergraduate students. Begin by referring to the Ellesmere Chaucer, and then describe what the Pardoner's portrait looks like. Bring in additional research that describes the Pardoner's portrait from the Ellesmere manuscript. You should also use the below Wikipedia API output on the Ellesmere Chaucer to assist with this introduction of the Pardoner's portrait: [Wikipedia API output here]

Commented [3]: Wikipedia API output: The Ellesmere Chaucer, or Ellesmere Manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, is an early 15th-century illuminated manuscript of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, owned by the Huntington Library, in San Marino, California (EL 26 C 9). It is considered one of the most significant copies of the Tales.

History
Written most likely in the first or second decade of the fifteenth century, the early history of the manuscript is uncertain, but it seems to have been owned by John de Vere, 12th Earl of Oxford (1408–1462). The manuscript takes its popular name from the fact that it later belonged to Sir Thomas Egerton (1540–1617), Baron Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley, who apparently obtained it from Roger North, 2nd Baron North (1530/31-1600). The library of manuscripts, known as the Bridgewater Library, remained at the Egerton house, Ashridge, Hertfordshire, until 1802 when it was removed to London. Francis Egerton, created Earl of Ellesmere in 1846, inherited the library, and it remained in the family until its sale to Henry Huntington by John Francis Granville Scrope Egerton (1872–1944), 4th Earl of Ellesmere. Huntington purchased the Bridgewater library privately in 1917 through Sotheby's. The manuscript is now in the collection of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California (EL 26 C 9).

Description
The Ellesmere manuscript is a highly polished example of scribal workmanship, with a great deal of elaborate illumination and, notably, a series of illustrations of ... [1]

Commented [4]: Continued:
Illuminations
In order of appearance in the Ellesmere Chaucer (note that not all storytellers have an illumination):
Knight (fol. 10r)
Miller (fol. 34v)
Reeve (fol. 42r)
Cook (fol. 47r)
Man of Law (fol. 50v)
Wife of Bath (fol. 72r)
Friar (fol. 76v)
Summoner (fol. 81r)
Clerk of Oxford (fol. 88r)
Merchant (fol. 102v)
Squire (fol. 115v)
Franklin (fol. 123v)
Physician (fol. 133r)
Pardoner (fol. 138r)
Shipman (fol. 143v)
Prioress (fol. 148v)
Chaucer (fol. 153v) ... [2]

As you will have noted in the first activity, the Ellesmere Chaucer is an early 15th-century illuminated manuscript of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, is a remarkable artifact that provides us with a unique, and perhaps different, insight into the pilgrims and their tales, via portraits of the characters of this seminal work. The manuscript, now housed in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, is renowned for its elaborate illumination and a series of illustrations of the various narrators of the Tales.

Derek Pearsall (1993: 10) explained that the Ellesmere Chaucer is the most famous manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, which is "carefully written and put together, beautifully produced, with handsome miniatures of the pilgrims set in the margin at the head of their Tales for nearly a century." One of the most intriguing of these is the portrait of the Pardoner, which appears on folio 138r.

The Ellesmere manuscript has undergone a series of editing processes, given it was "designed to 'improve' grammar and syntax, to clear up apparent irregularities and inconsistencies, to eliminate what were thought to be infelicities, and to regularise Chaucer's metre according to a ten-syllable pattern" (Pearsall 1993: 13). Thus, it is unclear how many changes have occurred between Chaucer's original text and the Ellesmere version, even if the text, decorations and illuminations could be considered unique and beautiful.

The Pardoner's portrait in the Ellesmere manuscript is a vivid depiction that brings to life Chaucer's description of this complex character. The Pardoner is shown as a gaunt figure in a red tunic (also known as a priest's 'red habit') with a high forehead, a thin golden locks, rosy cheeks straggly beard, and a cap with a relic sewn onto it. He is riding a horse and he carries a cross in his hands. There is a bag of (false) relics, or indulgences, around the horse's neck, to sell to the public in return for money, and a bag of pardons in the other, symbolizing his role as a seller of indulgences. His eyes are narrow and facing onward, and his lips shifty, suggesting his deceitful nature, and his lips are thin and tight, hinting at his lack of sincerity.

This portrait aligns with Chaucer's description of the Pardoner in the General Prologue of the Canterbury Tales, where he is portrayed as a corrupt church official who sells fake relics and indulgences for personal gain. The Pardoner's portrait in the Ellesmere manuscript thus serves as a visual commentary on the character's moral failings.

The Ellesmere manuscript is considered one of the most significant copies of the Canterbury Tales due to its high-quality scribal workmanship and the wealth of information it provides about Chaucer's characters. The Pardoner's portrait, like the other illuminations in the manuscript, is a valuable resource for understanding the social and cultural context of Chaucer's work. It offers a visual interpretation of the Pardoner that complements and enhances our understanding of this character as presented in the text.

The Ellesmere Chaucer is an invaluable resource for students of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Its illuminations, including the portrait of the Pardoner, provide a rich visual context that brings the characters to life and enhances our understanding of this classic work of English literature.

2. The Cambridge Pardoner

In contrast, the Cambridge University Gg.4.27 manuscript (with 'Gg' referring to the cataloguing system/shelfmark of the manuscript at the Cambridge University Library) provides a different depiction of the Pardoner via an illuminated portrait.

The Cambridge University Library manuscript Gg.4.27, often referred to as the "Cambridge Chaucer," is a significant and valuable resource for scholars and students studying Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. This manuscript, dating from around 1410 to 1430, differs quite substantially from the Ellesmere manuscript in terms of its uniformity, handwriting and illuminations. The late 15th-century, is one of the earliest and most complete surviving copies of Chaucer's seminal work. It is particularly renowned for its illuminations, or decorative illustrations, which provide a unique visual interpretation of the text and its characters.

Pearsall (1993: 9) states that the Cambridge University Library Gg.4.27 "seems to have been the product of an attempt to make a collection of Chaucer's poems [...] by someone who had access to some good early exemplars", with eccentric spellings and its own variants, holding "value as a check against the best early manuscripts." The Cambridge manuscript also contains miniature portraits of each of the storytellers on horseback, and in comparison to the illuminations of the Ellesmere manuscript, the Cambridge portraits "appear, from a twentieth-century point of view, to be inferior, poorly modeled, and distorted" (Wolfe 1995: 13). Regardless of how the miniatures might be viewed in the modern-day, Wolfe suggests that the Cambridge manuscript was clearly meant to be lavish and of high prestige, with a plan for how the texts and tales were to be ordered (1995: 13).

A portrait of the Pardoner is also included One of the most intriguing illuminations in the Cambridge manuscript Chaucer is the portrait of the Pardoner, a character who sells indulgences, or pardons for sins, to the other pilgrims. Like the Ellesmere manuscript, the Pardoner is In the Gg.4.27 manuscript, the Pardoner is depicted with a red tunic on horseback, yet his golden hair is covered with a hood, as a flamboyant figure with flowing blond hair, a wide-brimmed hat, and a pouch full of pardons hanging from his neck. He is shown holding up a parchment, presumably a pardon, in one hand, while the other hand clutches a cross. His expression is one of self-assured confidence, bordering on arrogance. As Hodges (2005: 228) points out, the Pardoner in the Cambridge illumination is lacking the vernicle, crucifix, and wallet full of indulgences as shown in the Ellesmere miniature, differing greatly from the description of the Pardoner provided in the General Prologue.

One of the main questions regarding the Pardoner's illuminations in both the Ellesmere and Cambridge Gg manuscripts relates to his red tunic. Scala (2010) highlights that the conventional ecclesiastical colour for a priests' dress was red, yet the question arises as to whether the Pardoner's actions could be considered priestly. Scala states:

"While we should not be led by negative evidence to draw too firm a conclusion, we would be remiss if we ignored the irony of the Pardoner's red clothes. His red dress performatively blurs the lines between his profession and the priest's."

(Scala 2010: 384-385)

Commented [5]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Write an introduction to the illumination/portrait of the Pardoner from the Cambridge University Library manuscript (Gg.4.27) of the Canterbury Tales, for university undergraduate students. Begin by describing the Cambridge Gg.4.27 manuscript, and then describe what the Pardoner's portrait looks like in this manuscript. Bring in additional research that describes the Pardoner's portrait from the Cambridge Gg.4.27 manuscript.

Chaucer's satire, present in the actions of the Pardoner as he tells a moral tale – a contradiction given his literary confession that he sells false indulgences despite his own 'sin' – might also be present in these later illustrations of the Pardoner and their red dress. Even though we might not be able to consider the Pardoner's transgressions from his facial and bodily expressions in the illuminations, the presence of a red tunic may in fact encompass Chaucer's intended irony.

We also recently interviewed some students in relation to their ideas about manuscripts. One student mentioned:

"I guess one of the questions I love to ask is: to what extent do the illuminations of the characters inform our interpretation of the characters? So you brought up the issue of the Pardoner, which is really interesting because if you look at the Ellesmere illumination of him, I'd argue that this androgyny that's implied in the text is actually not represented in the illumination at all. I think it's interesting because it was completed in 1410, after Chaucer's death, so whether or not Chaucer had any say in the illumination process is actually highly unlikely. And so then we can interpret the illuminations themselves not as a direct part of Chaucer's creative process or representations of his characters, but rather, as someone else's interpretation of his work."

An interviewed postgraduate student in the US

While there is no definitive answer regarding how one might analyse manuscript depictions of the Pardoner, it is possible to find lines of inquiry through a comparison of how the Pardoner is described in the text, against their illumination.

We have included a number of other medieval and early modern depictions of the character of the Pardoner, medieval pardoners more generally, or the Pardoner's Tale, alongside some descriptions. Share your thoughts in our discussion board.

3. **William Blake's *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1810)**

'The Canterbury Pilgrims' is a painting by the English poet, painter, and printmaker William Blake. It was created in 1810 and is based on Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th-century narrative poem 'The Canterbury Tales'.

The painting above depicts the Pardoner as part of William Blake's painting *The Canterbury Pilgrims*. William Blake is an English poet, painter, and printmaker who was inspired by the pilgrimage of *The Canterbury Tales* to create this painting, a group of pilgrims traveling to the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury. The group is diverse, representing various social classes and occupations, reflecting the social diversity of medieval England. The pilgrim figures are shown in profile, moving from left to right, in a style reminiscent of ancient Egyptian and Greek vase painting. The full painting can be viewed, with further information, at [The William Blake Archive](#).

Commented [6]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground:
Describe William Blake's 'The Canterbury Pilgrims' (1810)

The characters are vividly portrayed, each with their unique attributes and characteristics. From left to right, the painting includes the Reeve, Chaucer, the Clerk of Oxenford, the Cook, the Miller, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Parson, the Man of Law, the Plowman, the Franklin, two citizens, the Shipman and the Host. The Knight, the Squire, the Yeoman, the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar, the Merchant, the Clerk, the Man of Law, the Franklin, the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Weaver, the Dyer, the Tapestry Weaver, the Cook, the Shipman, the Physician, the Wife of Bath, the Parson, the Plowman, the Miller, the Manciple, the Reeve, the Summoner, and the Pardoner are all included.

Blake's painting is notable for its attention to detail, its vivid coloration, and its faithful representation of Chaucer's characters. It is a visual interpretation of the poem, capturing the spirit of the pilgrimage and the diversity of the pilgrims.

4. [The Canterbury Tales, printed by Richard Pynson \(1492\), Ms. Sp Coll Hunterian Bv.2.12 \(Glasgow University Library Special Collections Department: Book of the Month, 2004\).](#)

Richard Pynson Richard Pynson's 1492 edition of *The Canterbury Tales* is a significant piece of early English printing history. Pynson, a London-based printer originally from Normandy, France, was one of the first to print Chaucer's work in a collected edition.

The 1492 edition is a folio-sized book, printed in black letter type, which was common for English texts at the time. The text is adorned with illustrations, with the text underneath in two columns per page. Because of the introduction of the printing press to Europe around 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg, the text is laid out in two columns per page, with a large, ornate initial at the beginning of each tale. The book is printed on paper, which was still a relatively new and expensive material in England at the time.

As for the illustrations, the Pynson edition is also known for its woodcuts. Woodcut is a relief printing technique where an image is carved into the surface of a block of wood, with the printing parts remaining level with the surface while the non-printing parts are removed. The areas to show 'white' are cut away with a knife or chisel, leaving the characters or image to show 'black' at the original surface level. The block is cut along the grain of the wood.

In the Pynson edition, each of the tales begins with a woodcut of the respective pilgrim, and there are several larger woodcuts throughout the book. Glasgow University Library Special Collections chose the Pynson edition as their book of the month in May 2004, stating the following about the woodcuts:

"The work is enlivened by woodcuts that portray the different pilgrims. Although charming in their direct simplicity, they do not always attempt to follow the descriptions of Chaucer's characters accurately. Lacking absolute individuality, they were probably designed more as generic, stock figures."

(Gardham 2004)

Commented [7]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Describe Richard Pynson's *The Canterbury Tales* edition from 1492, including details of the illustrations/woodcuts.

A woodcut of the Pardoner is provided on their website. What do you make of the woodcut illustration, and is it an accurate portrayal of the description of the Pardoner in the Canterbury Tales? These woodcuts depict various scenes from the tales, such as the Knight's Tale or the Wife of Bath's Tale. The woodcuts are quite detailed, with intricate designs and patterns. They are also notable for their depiction of contemporary 15th-century clothing and architecture, providing a valuable glimpse into the period's visual culture.

However, it's important to note that the 1492 edition does not contain a full set of illustrations for each tale. The woodcuts are not specific to each tale but are rather generic scenes that could apply to multiple stories. This was likely due to the cost and labor involved in creating a unique woodcut for each tale.

In summary, Richard Pynson's 1492 edition of The Canterbury Tales is a significant artifact of early English printing, notable for its use of black letter type, its detailed woodcut illustrations, and its status as one of the first collected editions of Chaucer's work.

5. **Images and drawings of the Pardoner and his tale in Mrs. H. R. Haweis' (1877) 'Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key' (published as an ebook in 2013)**

Mrs. H.R. Haweis, born Mary Eliza Joy in 1848, was an accomplished English author, illustrator, and musician. She was married to Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis, a prominent ecclesiastic and author. Mrs. Haweis was known for her works on art, fashion, and social issues, but she also made significant contributions to children's literature. One of her most notable works in this genre is "Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key," published in 1877.

"Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key", published in 1877, is a unique adaptation of Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales," specifically designed for younger readers. The book aims to introduce children to Chaucer's world and his style of storytelling, which is a cornerstone of English literature. Mrs. Haweis skillfully simplifies the complex Middle English language and intricate plotlines of the original work, making it accessible and engaging for children.

Mrs. H.R. Haweis, born Mary Eliza Joy in 1848, was an accomplished English author, illustrator, and musician. She was married to Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis, a prominent ecclesiastic and author. Mrs. Haweis was known for her works on art, fashion, and social issues, but she also made significant contributions to children's literature. In Chaucer for Children, each of the pilgrims' stories (of which she includes the Knight's, the Friar's, the Clerk's, the Franklin's, and the Pardoner's tales)

The book includes eight of Chaucer's most famous tales, including "The Knight's Tale," "The Wife of Bath's Tale," and "The Nun's Priest's Tale." Each story is presented as with a brief introduction and a modern English translation of the tale, alongside illustrations of the pilgrims and characters in the tale, annotations in the margins for different aspects of the Middle English version, notes on the historical context for each tale, and introduction to the author, Chaucer. Mrs. Haweis also includes a glossary of Middle English terms to further aid comprehension.

For instance, the Pardoner is presented within the section 'Chaucer's Pilgrims' and 'Chaucer's Prologue' (the General Prologue in the original text), alongside an illustration.

Commented [8]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Describe Mrs. H. R. Haweis' Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key edition from 1877, including a short biography of the author and details of the text and illustrations.

The Pardoner's Tale is the final tale that is told in the series, and includes an illustration of a rioter wandering the woods. Mrs. Haweis also includes four 'minor poems' in the edition, including Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse, Two Rondeaux, Virelai, and Good Counsel of Chaucer.

As mentioned, one of the most distinctive features of Mrs. Haweis' text "Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key" is its illustrations. Mrs. Haweis herself created these, demonstrating her artistic talent. The book contains 38 full-page illustrations and numerous smaller ones interspersed throughout the text. These illustrations not only bring the stories to life but also provide a visual context for Chaucer's 14th-century England, helping young readers to better understand the historical and cultural background of the tales.

Do the illustrations match your ideas of how the Pardoner and his tale has been portrayed in the text? Do the modern English translations help with your own understanding of the text? You can access an ebook of the text, published in 2013, [here](#). In summary, Mrs. H.R. Haweis' "Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key" is a remarkable work that successfully brings Chaucer's classic tales to a younger audience. Through her careful adaptation and beautiful illustrations, Mrs. Haweis has made a significant contribution to children's literature.

6. The Chaucer Chest

This carved panel on an elmwood chest, currently housed at the Museum of London, depicts a scene from The Pardoner's Tale. The carving shows the young rioter buying poison from the apothecary, followed by the stabbing of the young rioter by the older rioters, and the two older rioters' subsequent death as they drink the poisoned wine. Whitaker (1999) provides further information about 'The Chaucer chest':

"The existence of the front panel from a medieval chest decorated with scenes from Chaucer's the Pardoner's Tale (the Canterbury Tales) first became publicly known in 1972, when the London Museum included it in an exhibition, Chaucer's London. Its then owner had acquired the panel from an interior decorator who, in turn, had found it in an old Suffolk house. Nothing else is known of its provenance. In 1971 it had caught the eye of M. D. Anderson (Lady Trenchard Cox), one of England's leading authorities on English medieval woodcarving. She recognized the panel's significance and dated it ca. 1400-1410, but neither she nor any other specialist has produced a scholarly study. In 1975 the panel was acquired (accession number 75.2) for the collections of the new Museum of London, formed by the amalgamation of the London Museum and the Guild Hall Museum. In 1987 it formed part of the Royal Academy exhibition Age of Chivalry."

(Whitaker 1999: 174)

Whitaker also goes on to say the following about the dress of the rioters in the carving:

"What strikes the viewer particularly is the sophistication of the costumes; they are not what one would expect three young louts in a village tavern to wear. [...] A change

of fashion in the mid-fourteenth century replaced the older style surcoat with garments that had inset sleeves, an improvement that made close-fitting garments possible. [...]

Our revellers [...] display the epitome of aristocratic style ca. 1400 A.D. The doublet revealed beneath the dead man's houppelande in the upper right corner is sufficiently padded to produce a three-dimensional effect. The houppelande's stand-up collar is high enough to touch the fashionably curled hair. Both doublet and houppelande are sufficiently short to confirm the characters' masculinity. The sleeves are dagged (slashed) along the edges to provide additional movement. The long slender legs enclosed in close-fitting, unwrinkled hose and the slightly upturned elongated shoes convey youth and agility. The youngest is distinguished by being bareheaded, a detail that facilitates the blow to his skull. One man wears an elaborate cornette en quatre, while the other and the shopkeeper have flipped the cape forward so that it protrudes in a bag shape over their faces."

(Whitaker 1999: 177-178)

What are your thoughts on the scene depicted by the wooden chest?

Modern adaptations of The Pardoner's Tale and The Canterbury Tales

There have also been many modern adaptations of The Pardoner's Tale in modern literature, media, TV, film, and in the gaming industry, demonstrating the tale's enduring relevance and appeal:

1. [The Pardoner in The Canterbury Tales TV animated series](#) (1998) voiced by Tim McInnerny

"The Canterbury Tales" is a British animated television series that ran from 1998 to 2000, aired in 1998. The series was co-produced by S4C, BBC Wales, and Christmas Films, and it was based on Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th-century Middle English narrative poem, "The Canterbury Tales". The series was comprised of nine episodes, each of which was a retelling of one of Chaucer's tales. The series was praised for its unique animation style, which combined traditional animation with computer-generated imagery.

In this series, the character of the Pardoner is voiced by British actor Tim McInnerny, who is a British actor known for his work in both television and theatre. The Pardoner is a complex character, often seen as a symbol of corruption within the Church. He is a religious official who has the authority to forgive those who have sinned, but he abuses this power to manipulate people and make money.

In the TV series, the Pardoner is depicted as a cunning and deceitful character. He is shown to be more interested in his own financial gain than in the spiritual well-being of the people he is supposed to serve. His tale, "The Pardoner's Tale," is a moral story about three rioters who set out to kill Death but end up killing each other out of greed. The Pardoner uses this

Commented [9]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Describe the Pardoner in 'The Canterbury Tales' TV animated series (1998) voiced by Tim McInnerny, including a short biography of the TV series and details of the character of the Pardoner in this series.

tale to scare his audience into buying pardons and relics from him. [Details of the episodes and cast can be found here, and we have provided a clip from the show above.](#) [Does the bringing to life of the Pardoner via animation match your perspective and interpretation of the Pardoner in the original text?](#)

2. [BBC TV mini series *Canterbury Tales* \(2003\)](#)

The BBC TV mini-series '*Canterbury Tales*' (2003) is a modern adaptation of Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th-century collection of stories, "*The Canterbury Tales*". The series consists of six episodes, each of which reimagines one of Chaucer's tales in a contemporary setting, while retaining the original themes and moral lessons. The series was lauded for its innovative approach to adapting classic literature, and for its ability to make Chaucer's tales accessible and relevant to a modern audience.

The episode on the Pardoner's Tale is a particularly striking example of this. In Chaucer's original tale, the Pardoner is a corrupt church official who sells indulgences, or pardons for sins, for his own personal gain. He tells a moralistic tale about three rioters who set out to kill Death, but end up killing each other out of greed.

The synopsis of the BBC episode is a further instance of The Pardoner's Tale acting as an exemplum for future stories. The tale is reimagined using three con-men from Rochester, Kent – Arty, Baz and Colin – who make a living pickpocketing tourists while Arty diverts their attention by reciting Shakespeare. Their fate changes when they discover that a young girl, Amy, has disappeared, which follows the murder of a girl one year prior. They take advantage of this situation by beginning a false collection for the search party, and later discover that their greed will lead them to their downfall. Actors Jonny Lee Miller and William Beck feature in this episode. In the BBC adaptation, the Pardoner is reimagined as a fraudulent televangelist named Arty, who uses his religious platform to swindle his followers out of their money. The three rioters are portrayed as Arty's security guards, who discover a large sum of money that Arty has hidden away. Their discovery sets off a chain of events that leads to their downfall, mirroring the tragic ending of the original tale.

The episode explores themes of greed, corruption, and the abuse of religious authority, just as Chaucer's tale does. However, by setting the story in a modern context, the episode also raises questions about the role of religion in contemporary society, and the ways in which faith can be manipulated for personal gain.

3. [The Road to Canterbury Game](#)

The Road to Canterbury: A Game of Pilgrims, Pardoner's and the Seven Deadly Sins is a board game where players assume the role of a medieval pardoner, who "sells certificates delivering sinners from the eternal penalties brought on by [the] Seven Deadly Sins". Players can earn money "by peddling these counterfeit pardons to Pilgrims travelling the road to Canterbury", involving characters such as the Knight, the Miller, the Wife of Bath, and the

Commented [10]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Describe the BBC TV mini series 'Canterbury Tales' (2003), as well as the episode on the Pardoner's Tale.

Commented [11]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground and Wikipedia API output 'The Pardoner's Tale': Your task is to write a summary for students, to a university level standard, of the modern-day adaptations of the Pardoner's Tale, drawing on the following Wikipedia API output:

Adaptations

The Road to Canterbury: A Game of Pilgrims, Pardoner's and the Seven Deadly Sins is a board game in which players play as the Pardoner.

The 1927 novel *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is a novelisation of this tale, which was later made into the 1948 film of the same name.

Rudyard Kipling in "The King's Ankus", a story in *The Second Jungle Book*.

The Tale of the Three Brothers, a story featured in the Harry Potter universe, is partially based on "The Pardoner's Tale".

The tale is adapted in Pasolini's film *The Canterbury Tales*. Robin Askwith plays Rufus, Martin Whelar plays Jack the Justice, John McLaren plays Johnny the Grace, Edward Monteith plays Dick the Sparrow and Alan Webb plays the old man who sends them to Death.

The tale is adapted in *Assassin's Creed Valhalla* as a world event that the protagonist, Eivor, encounters. Death is represented by the Old Man that Eivor meets. Eivor pieces together the tale by solving the mystery of what happened to the three young men by the Large Oak.

Finally, write a guide for university level students about how they might analyse the Pardoner's Tale in relation to these modern-day adaptations.

Man-of-Law. For one to succeed as the Pardoner, the player has to use their cunningness, ability to tempt, and manipulation tactics to become wealthy, the Pardoner, reflecting the tale's themes of sin and redemption. The 1927 novel "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," later adapted into a 1948 film, is a novelisation of the Pardoner's Tale, showcasing its narrative structure and moral lessons.

Rudyard Kipling's "The King's Ankus," a story in "The Second Jungle Book," and "The Tale of the Three Brothers" from the Harry Potter universe, are both partially based on "The Pardoner's Tale," indicating its influence on literature and popular culture. Pasolini's film "The Canterbury Tales" and the video game "Assassin's Creed Valhalla" also adapt the tale, with the latter representing Death as an Old Man, a character that the protagonist Eivor encounters.

4. The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (1927) - B. Traven

The 1927 novel "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," later adapted into a 1948 film, is a novelisation of the Pardoner's Tale, showcasing its narrative structure and moral lessons. The story is set in Mexico and follows two American drifters, Fred C. Dobbs and Bob Curtin. After meeting a wise old prospector named Howard, they decide to set off on a quest for gold in the Sierra Madre Mountains. The three men find a rich gold vein and begin mining. However, as they accumulate wealth, they also grow increasingly paranoid and suspicious of each other, particularly Dobbs, who becomes obsessed with the idea that the others are plotting to steal his share. This paranoia and greed lead to tension and conflict among the group, and their later downfall. Thus, the story's themes of greed, betrayal, and retribution are central to both the original tale and this adaptation, demonstrating the timeless nature of these themes.

5. The Canterbury Tales (1972) - Pasolini

Pasolini's film (1972) The Canterbury Tales features an Italian adaptation of the Pardoner's Tale, with various characters playing the roles of the three rioters and the Old Man who sends them to Death. This adaptation brings the tale to life on the screen, allowing viewers to visually experience the narrative and its themes. Pasolini's adaptation also reflects his own cinematic style and thematic interests. The film's explicit depiction of sexuality and its focus on the body can be seen as a modern, cinematic interpretation of Chaucer's interest in the earthly, bodily aspects of life. Pasolini's film, like Chaucer's tales, uses humour, irony, and satire to critique social norms and human folly.

6. Assassin's Creed Valhalla Game

The video game Assassin's Creed Valhalla is also an adaptation of the tale, representing Death as an Old Man, a character that the protagonist Eivor encounters. Eivor must solve a mystery involving three young men by a Large Oak, mirroring the

Commented [12]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground and Wikipedia API output 'The Pardoner's Tale': Your task is to write a summary for students, to a university level standard, of the modern-day adaptations of the Pardoner's Tale, drawing on the following Wikipedia API output:

Adaptations

The Road to Canterbury: A Game of Pilgrims, Pardoners and the Seven Deadly Sins is a board game in which players play as the Pardoner.

The 1927 novel The Treasure of the Sierra Madre is a novelisation of this tale, which was later made into the 1948 film of the same name.

Rudyard Kipling in "The King's Ankus", a story in The Second Jungle Book.

The Tale of the Three Brothers, a story featured in the Harry Potter universe, is partially based on "The Pardoner's Tale".

The tale is adapted in Pasolini's film The Canterbury Tales. Robin Askwith plays Rufus, Martin Whelar plays Jack the Justice, John McLaren plays Johnny the Grace, Edward Monteith plays Dick the Sparrow and Alan Webb plays the old man who sends them to ... [3]

Commented [13]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground and Wikipedia API output 'The Pardoner's Tale': Your task is to write a summary for students, to a university level standard, of the modern-day adaptations of the Pardoner's Tale, drawing on the following Wikipedia API output:

Adaptations

The Road to Canterbury: A Game of Pilgrims, Pardoners and the Seven Deadly Sins is a board game in which players play as the Pardoner.

The 1927 novel The Treasure of the Sierra Madre is a novelisation of this tale, which was later made into the 1948 film of the same name.

Rudyard Kipling in "The King's Ankus", a story in The Second Jungle Book.

The Tale of the Three Brothers, a story featured in the Harry Potter universe, is partially based on "The Pardoner's Tale".

The tale is adapted in Pasolini's film The Canterbury Tales. Robin Askwith plays Rufus, Martin Whelar p ... [4]

Commented [14]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground and Wikipedia API output 'The Pardoner's Tale': Your task is to write a summary for students, to a university level standard, of the modern-day adaptations of the Pardoner's Tale, drawing on the following Wikipedia API output:

Adaptations

The Road to Canterbury: A Game of Pilgrims, Pardoners and the Seven Deadly Sins is a board game in which players play as the Pardoner.

The 1927 novel The Treasure of the Sierra Madre is a novelisation of this tale, which was later made into the 1948 film of the same name.

Rudyard Kipling in "The King's Ankus", a story in The Second Jungle Book.

The Tale of the Three Brothers, a story featured in the Harry Potter universe, is partially based on "The Pardoner's Tale".

The tale is adapted in Pasolini's film The Canterbury Tales. Robin Askwith plays Rufus, Martin Whelar p ... [5]

plot of the original tale. The game doesn't provide a direct narrative of the event, but it's implied that the three men met their end due to their own greed and treachery, mirroring the fate of the three rioters in the Pardoner's Tale who set out to kill Death but end up killing each other out of greed.

7. Global Chaucers

In addition to tales which appear to take the moral lessons of the tale and merge them into a new narrative, there are also modern approaches which adapt the style of the poem (either The Pardoner's Tale, or The Canterbury Tales more generally), to reflect the experiences of different communities, recent sociopolitical events, or matters which directly impact marginalised people. Global Chaucers, by Jonathan Hsy (The George Washington University) and Candace Barrington (Central Connecticut State University), is a resource which covers some of these important adaptations. They state that the resource has "become a valuable conduit for progressive modes of thinking about the global Middle Ages and global medievalism, particularly the translation and reception of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales and other European medieval literature" (Hsy and Barrington 2012). The following pieces of literature and art transform the tales – particularly the Pardoner's Prologue and Tale and the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, two characters which are similar in terms of their unapologetic behaviour – into modern representations of society which encompass and celebrate different communities.

8. Refugee Tales

The "Refugee Tales" is a collection of stories, currently in three volumes, that was inspired by Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales." The project, initiated by the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and Comma Press, brings together tales from refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants, told through the voices of renowned contemporary writers.

While the specific parallels to the Pardoner's Tale are not detailed in the provided information, the overall structure and purpose of "Refugee Tales" echo those of "The Canterbury Tales." Just as Chaucer created a group of pilgrims that varied in their social standing, used a diverse group of pilgrims each telling their own story to shed light on the social issues of his time, "Refugee Tales" uses the stories of refugees and migrants to highlight the challenges, and injustices and marginalisation they face in the modern world.

9. The Wife of Bath in Brixton Market - Jean 'Binta' Breeze

The Wife of Bath in Brixton Market by Jean 'Binta' Breeze, a Jamaican poet and storyteller. In Breeze's poem, the Wife of Bath is reimagined as a Caribbean woman in a modern London market. Like Chaucer's character, she is independent and unashamed of her sexuality. She is also a savvy businesswoman who knows how to get what she wants. The poem uses the rhythms and dialect of Caribbean speech to give the Wife of Bath a new

Commented [15]: The following adaptations were identified by the editor and the prose was written by ChatGPT-4 playground using the following prompt template:
Discuss how [name of adaptation] is an adaptation of the Pardoner's Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer, and how it is a modern take on issues from the Middle English period.

voice, but her character and her arguments are very much in line with Chaucer's original. ~~The parallel between the two works lies in their exploration of female power and sexuality.~~ Both the Wife of Bath in Chaucer's tale and in Breeze's poem challenge the societal norms of their times. They assert their independence, their sexual freedom, and their right to control their own lives. They are both unapologetic about their desires and their manipulation of men, and they use their stories to argue for a different view of women than the one traditionally held by ~~society~~ their societies.

10. Baba Brinkman's *The Pardoner's Tale*

The Pardoner's Tale rap by Baba Brinkman: Baba Brinkman is a Canadian rapper and playwright known for his "lit-hop" adaptations of classic literature. In Brinkman's rap version, the Pardoner's Tale is reimagined in a contemporary urban setting, e.g. 'My story begins in a bar, where three friends / Drink cheap gin and party hard all weekend'. The three rioters are portrayed as modern-day gangsters, and their quest for Death becomes a pursuit of wealth and power. ~~The Pardoner, meanwhile, is depicted as a corrupt preacher who uses his position to exploit his congregation for money.~~ Brinkman's rap adaptation, like Chaucer's original, uses storytelling as a means to expose and critique societal vices, demonstrating the enduring relevance of Chaucer's themes. The use of rap as a medium also parallels Chaucer's use of vernacular English, both serving to make their stories more accessible to a broader audience.

11. Telling Tales - Patience Agbabi

Telling Tales *Telling Tales* by Patience Agbabi: Agbabi, a British poet and performer, transforms Chaucer's medieval collection of stories into a series of poems that reflect the diversity of modern Britain. The Pardoner's Tale, in Agbabi's Telling Tales, is named 'Profit', and is authored by 'Yves Depardon'; a witty biographical take on the character of the Pardoner. The themes of greed and lust come through strongly in the poem 'Profit', along with some of the original characteristics of the Pardoner, e.g. "I take pains to look the part, my greying hair dyed yellow, stringier than Stringfellow, greasy and shoulder length. I dress androgynous, a velvet robe, touch of the Vatican". Agbabi thus appears to adopt some of the perceived characteristics of the Pardoner, with a modern-day twist.

12. The Wife of Willesden - Zadie Smith

The Wife of Willesden *The Wife of Willesden* by Zadie Smith: Smith's novel, originally a theatre production, is set in the multicultural northwest London borough of Willesden, and it tells the story of a modern, independent, and outspoken woman. Like who, like Chaucer's character, the Wife of Willesden has been married multiple times and has a unique perspective on love, sex, and relationships. Even though the Wife of Willesden is for a 21st century audience, many of the Wife's unapologetic and authoritative traits are carried over from the 14th century story.

Student activity

To critically analyse how these adaptations reinterpret and recontextualise the Pardoner's Tale for modern audience, you could When analysing the Pardoner's Tale in relation to these modern-day adaptations, students should consider the following:

- 1. Narrative Structure:** Examine how the adaptations maintain or alter the original narrative structure of the Pardoner's Tale. Consider how these changes impact the overall message or theme of the story.
- 2. Characterisation:** Analyse how the characters, particularly the Pardoner and the three rioters, are portrayed in the adaptations. Consider how these portrayals reflect or deviate from Chaucer's original characterisation.
- 3. Themes:** Identify the key themes of the Pardoner's Tale (e.g., greed, death, betrayal) and evaluate how they are represented in the adaptations. Consider whether the adaptations introduce new themes or perspectives that reflect modern-day scenarios.
- 4. Cultural Context:** Consider how the adaptations reflect their specific cultural and historical contexts. For instance, how does the portrayal of sin and redemption in a board game differ from that in a novel or a film?
- 5. Influence:** Reflect on the enduring influence of the Pardoner's Tale, as evidenced by its adaptations across various media and genres. Consider why this tale continues to resonate with contemporary audiences.

Translation Student Guide

One of the challenges that individuals face in the process of translation, particularly from ancient to modern languages, is the decision between preserving what could be deemed the author's 'original' intentions, and presenting a text to modern audiences that is readable and understandable in the target language. This complex process that translators undergo is not immediately visible to readers when dealing with the text in the target language, yet more scholars are advocating for further transparency about decisions behind word choice, structure, considering prose versus verse, etc. The translation activities in this edition require you to think in-depth and more critically about translators' decisions, particularly new methods of machine translation, and the output of an AI-generated translation from Middle to Modern English.

Non-equivalent translations

The possibility of non-equivalence – i.e. when there are no suitably equivalent words available when translating from the source to the target language – is one issue within

Commented [16]: Prompt for Bard and Wikipedia API output 'The Pardoner's Tale':
Your task is to write a summary for students, to a university level standard, of the modern-day adaptations of the Pardoner's Tale, drawing on the following Wikipedia API output:

Adaptations

The Road to Canterbury: A Game of Pilgrims, Pardoners and the Seven Deadly Sins is a board game in which players play as the Pardoner.

The 1927 novel The Treasure of the Sierra Madre is a novelisation of this tale, which was later made into the 1948 film of the same name.

Rudyard Kipling in "The King's Ankus", a story in The Second Jungle Book.

The Tale of the Three Brothers, a story featured in the Harry Potter universe, is partially based on "The Pardoner's Tale".

The tale is adapted in Pasolini's film The Canterbury Tales. Robin Askwith plays Rufus, Martin Whelar plays Jack the Justice, John McLaren plays Johnny the Grace, Edward Monteith plays Dick the Sparrow and Alan Webb plays the old man who sends them to Death.

The tale is adapted in Assassin's Creed Valhalla as a world event that the protagonist, Eivor, encounters. Death is represented by the Old Man that Eivor meets. Eivor pieces together the tale by solving the mystery of what happened to the three young men by the Large Oak.

Finally, write a guide for university level students about how they might analyse the Pardoner's Tale in relation to these modern-day adaptations.

the process of translation. Baker (2011: 18-23) came up with a number of common problems that might arise during translation, including (but not limited to):

- Culture-specific concepts that are not (yet) lexicalised in the target language, making it difficult to find a one-word equivalent in the target language;
- Loan words in the source text, which might not have been introduced into the target language;
- Differences in physical [and] interpersonal perspectives, including differences in the form and meaning of words and phrases, as well as the frequency and purpose of using specific forms, between both languages.

Invisible translation

The translation process is complex and often invisible to readers. Lawrence Venuti (2017: 1) refers to this invisibility as an “illusion of transparency”. Translators, in their pursuit of fluency for the reader in the target language, do not often disclose the different conditions under which the translator was required to make a decision:

“A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the ‘original.’ The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator’s effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning. What is so remarkable here is that this illusory effect conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator’s crucial intervention in the foreign text. The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text.”

(Venuti 2017: 1)

As Rachel Linn (2023: 75) explains, one of the issues a user might encounter within Middle English editions is that we often cannot see these (often minute) decisions and translations. This process includes selecting a form closest to the medieval ‘original’, or something that is readable and parsable, i.e. a modern equivalent.

Accessibility and representativeness

Linn (2023: 75) refers to two “troubling” aspects of modern-day editions. First, the analytical work, including the accumulation of decisions made by transcribers and editors, is often not made accessible to readers. Second, the decision to select a word that is as close to the manuscript as possible is often considered “the best and most representative of the work”, despite the numerous changes that might have occurred since the word was adopted into the language. There is also the possibility of multiple interpretations of the word, since we do not always know what the original author intended.

This activity thus contributes to the efforts made by scholars to keep the process of translation as open and visible as possible. It invites you to contribute to multiple possible interpretations of a medieval word or phrase. As Linn puts it, there are a number of different ways translators can go about translating. In her translations of Middle English lyrical poems, Linn has decided not to decide, but rather, adopt multiple processes:

“I am working to make the processing (and lack of an identifiable original version) of manuscript texts more visible to the modern reader, to capture a wider range of possibilities when it comes to word choice and meaning (rather than allowing it to appear that these choices are uninterpreted), and to translate multiple poetic features rather than focusing simply on definitional problems—acknowledging that in some cases it might be most meaningful to recreate rhyme scheme, for example, even if that requires a significant shift in content. I have decided to not decide. The point that I am trying to make in my own translation work is that a certain degree of float—not allowing one version to simply stand solidly in place, even if this makes the reader feel adrift—is a good thing.”

(Linn 2023: 75)

Community translations

One of the first community translations to exist – *Beowulf By All*, by Jean Abbott, Elaine Treharne, and Mateusz Fafinski (2021) – provides a space for anyone to submit “non-hierarchical, radical contribution[s] to a more representative Old English Studies”, to counter the “elitist, exclusionary, misogynistic, often racist, and anti-feminist” agenda of academics who fail to uncover histories of marginalisation, or record and represent anyone existing outside of the white, cis-heteronormative sphere (Treharne 2021: 3). The community translation invited people to provide a translation of *Beowulf* that might represent their own communities, dialects, and experiences.

Like *Beowulf By All*, we encourage you to post your own translations of The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale. Part of this process involves critiquing the translations produced by AI and the editor. You may ask questions such as:

- Would I change or edit any of these translations?
- How should editors display the analytical process when translating?
- How can I make translations accessible yet representative?
- How might I guide the reader to interpret the historical context and perceive the word/phrasing choice?

In the main text, we have purposefully left some of the translations produced by AI unedited, and we encourage you to post your analytical process in the Padlet discussion boards to the left of this screen.

Teacher Guidance

We have created two different lesson plans for translation activities in undergraduate lessons. These activities could be used in a university seminar as a task in real time, or adapted for a take-home assignment or task.

The tasks are centred around the translation guide, and encourage flexibility when translating medieval English transcriptions into modern English. They ask students to make decisions about whether to preserve the author's 'original' intentions (whatever these are deemed to be), the context of the time, or whether to adapt language for modern readers. It is important to highlight this (often invisible) process to students, and uncover the complex decision-making process on the way to the final translation as read by current audiences. The endless possibilities when it comes to establishing the meanings behind specific words and structures could also be emphasised.

We have included two possible activities which allow students to critique different types of translations. This includes machine translation by generative AI (ChatGPT), as well as interlinear translations that already exist on the web (Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer website). Students can provide their own thoughts about any ethics of using AI translations and the range of translations and interpretations for medieval words, using our discussion board.

The first lesson plan is based on nouns and terms of address used throughout the text and how these might be interpreted and translated in modern contexts. Students can establish the word's origin and whether the word was borrowed or influenced by other languages. These are words such as *page*, *wench*, *frutesteres*, and *kaityf*, some of which have a complex history that might not be initially clear to students before delving into the OED or further scholarship.

Activity 1.1: [downloadable link]

Possible instructions for students in a classroom setting, based on the above document:

1. Investigate the Middle and Modern English translations (by the editor, Harvard, or ChatGPT) of specific the Middle English words in Chaucer's *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale in the table, following a read through of the original text. There are also annotations in the text itself which provide more detail on the etymology of the word.*
2. Read an extract of the text and identify the listed words in context.
3. Write down your own interpretation of each word based on its context in the story. How do the definitions from the OED and MED compare with your interpretations?
4. Collaboratively discuss how the definitions from the OED and MED compare with your interpretations.
5. Think about how you might choose between various translations for the words in their historical context. Using translation software, translate the words into modern English. Are there any notable differences in meaning? What might these shifts in the use of the word in medieval and modern English suggest about changes in language and society over time?

4. Either individually, or as part of your group, share your thoughts on the below discussion board. What other translations might be possible, and which words would you select for the nominal forms of address in the tale? Do you think they reflect medieval English society, and do they offer enough description for a modern English reader to understand the meaning of the word in its historical context?

Translating Middle to Modern English allows us not only to understand the meaning of the text as Chaucer intended but also to see how words and their connotations have evolved over time, reflecting changes in society's norms, values, and power structures. These translations involve decisions that can shift or shape meaning and imply a greater degree of subjectivity in translation than we might assume.

The second lesson plan surrounds the gendered and sexualised nature of specific types of words and structures with regard to the Pardoner's character. The body of the Pardoner, in particular, has been the centre of much (sometimes derogatory) speculation. These depictions should therefore be read with caution, particularly as many of these comments are used to further marginalise queer people in the present-day. We aim to show that the Pardoner's character should be treated with openness and limitlessness. We also provide more insight into this treatment of the Pardoner in our topic guide.

Activity 1.2: [\[download link\]](#)

Possible instructions for students in a classroom setting, based on the above document:

Step 1: Investigate the ~~translations~~.

1. With a partner, investigate each of the translated lines, drawing from the Oxford English Dictionary, the Middle English Dictionary and other [scholarly or freely accessible materials for references](#) ~~scholar materials for reference~~. Discuss the translations provided and examine how they portray the Pardoner's personality, sexuality, and/or gender representation.

Step 2: Create a Chart

2. Create a chart with three columns: ~~Middle~~ Old English Word or Phrase, Translation, and Implication(s) for Gender and/or Sexuality. Here, summarise the core ideas or connotations held within each term or phrase, and how these might reflect [the character or impact the story on the character](#).

3. Step 3: Report

~~Each pair p~~Present your findings in the discussion board, either individually or a small group and analysis, leading to greater discussion among classmates.

4. Step 4: Write-up.

Commented [17]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Produce an activity for university-level undergraduate students which allows them to investigate the use of the following words from the Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale. Each of the words and their translations relate to referents in the text with different perceived characteristics or roles, all with unique etymologies. Please also include a brief description of each word in relation to data in the Oxford English Dictionary and Middle English Dictionary. [See annotations for words]

Commented [18]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Produce an activity for university-level undergraduate students which allows them to investigate the use of the following words from the Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, in relation to the sexuality and gender of the Pardoner. Each of the lines and their translations relate to descriptions of the Pardoner, or are used in conversation with the Pardoner. [See annotations for words]

Individually, compose a brief essay (about 500 words) summarizing the exploration process and conclusion on the Pardoner's sexuality and gender as suggested by [the original text and the translation you decide on these lines.](#)

Translation Discussion Points (Activity 1.1)

[If you are stuck for inspiration, we have put together some discussion points/short essays about each of the highlighted terms in the text with links to further research.](#)

Key

- Transcription: Original text transcription from the Ellesmere manuscript
- Translation 1: Translation from ChatGPT, alongside the editor
- Translation 2: Translation from [Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer website](#)

'Lordynges'

[Line 3 Transcription: Lordynges quod He in chirches whan I preche](#)

[Translation 1: "Lords," he said, "when I preach in churches,](#)

[Translation 2: "Gentlemen," he said, "in churches when I preach.](#)

The first translation ~~isuses the word~~ "Lords" ~~fromto translate~~ "Lordynges". This translation is more faithful to the original meaning of the word, which was used to address people of high social status or rank. The second translation uses the word "Gentlemen" to translate "Lordynges". This translation is more in line with the modern usage of the word, which is a polite form of address for men in general.

~~The choice of words used in each translation can be attributed to the translator's expertise and understanding of the context in which the original text was written. The translator must have considered both etymology and semantic change while making their choice.~~

~~1: Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website 2: Oxford English Dictionary~~

~~Based on my findings from the Oxford English Dictionary and the Middle English Dictionary, I can provide a commentary on the use of "lordynges" and its translation into "lords" and "gentlemen".~~

~~One of the intriguing aspects of the use of Middle English 'lordynges' and its translation to 'lords' and 'gentlemen' is the gendered underpinnings of the choice of word. According to the MED, 'lordynges' could refer to a number of positions, including 'master of servants', a 'ruler', 'person of high birth or social rank'; some of which are not gendered. While lords in the medieval period were typically men, there were noble women in households of high social ranking. There are also female pilgrims in the Canterbury Tales (including the Wife of Bath, the Prioress, and the Second Nun). The term is primarily used as a polite form of address, for example, the MED states that the term can be "used by persons of humbler station to their superiors; by poets, minstrels, or storytellers to readers or audience", suggesting not all addressees were men.~~

Commented [19]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Produce an activity for university-level undergraduate students which allows them to investigate the use of the following words from the Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, in relation to the sexuality and gender of the Pardoner. Each of the lines and their translations relate to descriptions of the Pardoner, or are used in conversation with the Pardoner. [See annotations for words]

Commented [20]: For Activity 1.1 & 1.2, Bing Chat prompts were set up as the following:
1) Your task is to compare the two different translations of the following Middle English line from Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale [line].

Translation 1:
Translation 2:

Next, provide a university level standard summary as to why the words [trans] and [trans] were used for [word], by bringing in discussion of etymology, semantic change and expertise from translation studies. Cite all sources.

2) Your second task is to provide a commentary, based on your findings from the Oxford English Dictionary and the Middle English Dictionary, on the use of [word] and its translation into [trans] and [trans].

The Harvard translation is 'gentlemen', which, in today's society, is associated with masculine identities. In the OED, 'gentlemen' is referred to as "a man of gentle birth or rank; esp. a man of the lowest rank of the aristocracy, who has a right to bear arms but who does not hold a title. Also more generally: a man belonging to a high social rank (without specification of the particular rank)" (OED Online, 'gentleman (n.)' 2024). Chaucer's intention for the Pardoner might have been to address only the men of the group, yet, the Pardoner likely wanted to involve the entire pilgrimage in his sermon and 'moral tale'.

Likewise, Taavitsainen (1999: 226) states that, rather than focusing on the gender of the recipients, the Wife of Bath uses a 'plain' lordynges versus a 'polite' lordynges. She also uses by youre leve, or even adopts a manipulative lordynges in: lordynges, right thus, as ye have understonde. The use of lordynges thus appears to depend on politeness strategies, and how the speaker adopts the term in certain environments. The Middle English word "lordynges" is a plural form of the Middle English word "lord", which had multiple meanings. It could refer to a master of servants, a ruler, sovereign, king, leader of a tribe or clan, feudal lord, person of high birth or social rank, noble warrior, knight, military commander, judge, ecclesiastic of high rank, bishop, etc¹.

In the context of Chaucer's Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, "LOrdynge quod He in chirches whan I preche" is translated into modern English as "Lords," he said, "when I preach in churches" and "Gentlemen," he said, "in churches when I preach" ².

The choice of translation depends on the translator's understanding of the original text and their expertise in translation studies. The word "Lords" is more faithful to the original meaning of "LOrdynge", which was used to address people of high social status or rank. On the other hand, the word "Gentlemen" aligns with the modern usage of the word "lord", which is a polite form of address for men in general ³.

The translator must have considered both etymology and semantic change while making their choice. The use of "Lords" or "Gentlemen" reflects the translator's interpretation of the original text and their intention to convey its meaning accurately.

'Lewed people'

Line 111 Transcription: For lewed peple louen tales olde

Translation 1: For unlearned lewd people love old tales;

Translation 2: For ignorant people love old tales;

The word 'lewed' in Middle English had a broader meaning than its modern usage. It referred to people who were not part of the clergy or those who lacked formal education. Over time, the term 'lewed' underwent semantic change and acquired negative connotations, including being associated with moral depravity or ignorance⁴.

In Translation 1, the word 'unlearned' is used to convey the lack of formal education among the people who love old tales. This translation emphasizes their educational background as a reason for their preference for old stories. The translated

Translation 2 uses the word of 'lewd' by ChatGPT itself, which reflects the original Middle English term. The word 'lewd' in this context suggests that the people who enjoy old tales might have questionable morals or lack refinement. The word 'lewd' in modern English is very different to the Middle English sense. Today, it is more widely used in English to mean "lascivious, lecherous; (also) involving or relating to sexual activity. Later usually: sexually explicit, offensive, or crudely suggestive; obscene, indecent," and the OED recognises that this is the only surviving sense (OED Online, 'lewd (adj. & n.)', 2024).

Translation 23 employs the word 'ignorant', which to describe the people who love old tales. This choice implies that their preference for old stories stems from a lack of knowledge or awareness.

The senses on the MED for the term 'lewed' are all words that might be considered offensive in the present-day. However, our current understanding of the adjective may not have been the intended meaning of the narrator. Chaucer was likely referring to more objective descriptions of the audience (for example, 'unable to read Latin; lay, non-clerical; also, without special training (in medicine, etc.), inexpert, unskilled; of intelligence, understanding, etc.: untutored, limited').

The OED also recognises that the term lewed does not always carry the same meaning of 'uneducated' or 'ignorant' which might be offensive in some contexts today. Instead, the first attested meaning of lewed is 'Of a person: not in holy orders, not clerical; lay' or 'Of a thing: of, relating to, or suitable for lay people; secular, not religious' (OED Online, 'lewd (adj. & n.)' 2024). Chaucer's use of the term saffron on line 19 shows that his Pardoner character is aware of the abilities of the reader, his usual 'clientele' and the medieval audience of the Canterbury Tales:

"He [the Pardoner] is highly aware of the capacities of his audience, and of the necessity of suiting his preaching to those capacities. The brilliant exemplum which he eventually offers the Canterbury pilgrims, the story of the three revelers in search of death, reveals a fine sense of the rhetorical and affective power of exempla. Preaching, says Ralph Higden, should inflame the human disposition (affectus) toward God, and the Pardoner claims the ability to do just that, in spite of himself."

(Minnis 2013: 119)

The Pardoner thus ensures his tales appeal to a wide audience, despite the majority of the population not being able to access education. Even though these steps are taken, there is an element of deception and hypocrisy to the Pardoner's preaching, where he sells false relics for capital gain. At the same time, the Pardoner's speech may reflect Chaucer's desire to translate literary works into the language of the vernacular as opposed to Latin or Anglo-Norman; the language of the courts and aristocracy.

'The pouereste page'

Line 123 Transcription: Al were it yeuen of the pouereste page

Translation 1: Even if given by the poorest page.

Translation 2: Although it were given by the poorest servant boy.

The word 'page' in Middle English referred to a young boy who was employed as a servant or attendant in a noble household. The term 'servant boy' is a more modern phrase that describes a young male who is employed to perform domestic duties.

~~In Translation 1, the word 'page' is used to convey the idea of a young boy who is not wealthy or influential. This translation emphasizes the social status of the person who gives the gift.~~

~~Translation 2 uses the phrase 'servant boy' to describe the person who gives the gift. This choice reflects a more contemporary understanding of the term and conveys the idea of someone who is employed to perform domestic duties.~~

According to the OED, page now refers to 'a young boy attending a bride at a wedding', but in the medieval period, it had a number of meanings. For example, in the 1300s, it could mean "a boy or youth employed as the personal attendant and messenger of a person of high rank" or more specifically, "an equerry or servant in a royal or noble household, holding a particular office or having a particular ceremonial function" (OED Online, 'page (n.1)' 2024). The example used for the latter meaning is from *The Knight's Tale*: 'A yeer or two he was in this seruyse / Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte'.

'Servant boy' seems appropriate for a modern readership to understand the role of the page in the tale, and an annotation might accompany the translation to explain differences between medieval and modern contexts.

'His knaue'

Line 341 Transcription: That oon of hem gan callen to his knaue

Translation 1: That one of them began to call to his knave:

Translation 2: The one of them did call to his servant:

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "knaveknave" in Middle English originally meant "boy, male child; male servant" in Old English 2. The word is derived from the Proto-Germanic word *knabon-, which means "boy, youth, servant" 3. The word is also related to Old English "cnapa", which means "boy, youth, servant" 4, Old Norse "knapi", which means "servant boy", Dutch "knaap", which means "a youth, servant", Middle High German "knappe", which means "a young squire", and German "Knappe", which means "squire, shield-bearer" 4. The original sense of the word is unknown, but it is suggested that it might have meant "stick, piece of wood" 4. The sense of the word evolved from "a menial" to "one of low birth," and the low character is supposed to be characteristic of such a condition. Through Middle English, it kept also its non-pejorative meaning, as in knave-child (Scottish knave-bairn) meaning male child 4. In playing cards, the term refers to the lowest court card 4.

The word “servant,” on the other hand, comes from the Old French word *servir*, which means “to serve”⁵. It was first used in Middle English around 1175-1225 CE⁶. The word has a more neutral connotation and refers to someone who performs services for another person or organization.

Harris (2023), alongside analysis of the use of ‘wench’ in Chaucerian texts, recognises the similar use of ‘knave’ in medieval works. ‘Knave’, like ‘wench’, is a term that is subordinate to a patriarch, and demarcated by masculine possessives, e.g. ‘his’. While the word originated as a general term of address for male children in Old English – a sense that is now marked as obsolete in the OED – it shortly grew to mean “a male attendant, page, or other servant; (also more generally) a man of low rank or status; a commoner, a peasant.” Unlike ‘wench’, ‘knave’ was initially a gendered term, which is used in cases of exploitation against and authority over young boys, especially those of low social standing. It encompasses the way in which the lower social classes were treated in medieval England, and shows how young disadvantaged children were always subservient to the wealthy.

The term ‘servant’ may not initially reflect the long-standing exploitation of young children, as in modern England the role of servant may be seen as a respectable position held by those consenting to serve the Royal family, for example. However, there is also a long-standing meaning which implies a servant is someone who is subordinate or ancillary to their master. It appears further annotation as to which sense is appropriate in the medieval context is appropriate, like with the term ‘page’.

‘Ioly wenche’

Line 127 Transcription: And haue a ioly wenche in euery town

Translation 1: And have a jolly wench in every town.

Translation 2: And have a pretty wench in every town.

Carissa Harris states that, through time, ‘wench’ came to be known as a ‘structural position’, rather than a ‘gender identity’. She states that “the label of wench is capacious enough to include many, yet binding enough to compel to coerce and to constrain” (Harris 2023). Its roots are the product of colonialism and slavery, and the modern-day use of the term is embedded in racialised misogyny arising from the 17th century.

The medieval use of the term is also encompassed by negative connotations of women in society. In the OED, the term ‘wench’ is derived from Old English ‘wencel’, a now obsolete meaning to refer to “a child (of either sex)’ or ‘a servant or slave; also, a common woman” (OED Online, ‘wencel (n.)’ 2024). Harris (2023) explains that ‘wench’ is used in Chaucer for the purposes of control and coercion, domination, and to denote masculine possession, and is often used to justify violence against those with a degraded social position.

The same could be said of the use of ‘wench’ in the Pardoner’s prologue. In this case, the use of ioly as a premodifier for ‘wench’ objectifies the woman’s body as central to the Pardoner’s pleasure. In Translation 2, ioly is translated as ‘pretty’, which may relate to the physical sense in the OED of ‘having the freshness and lively spirits of youth or good health; fresh, lively, sprightly, spirited’ (OED Online, ‘jolly (adj. & adv.)’ 2023), or in the MED where

joli is presented as "pleasant, beautiful, pretty, elegant, excellent". While the Pardoner might be simply expressing his sexual desires and sin, regardless of his 'responsibilities' within the church, Chaucer's use of the term in this context appears to be embedded in a societal expectation that women be controlled and objectified.

'Frutesteres', 'Wafereres', 'Tombesteres'

Line 153 Transcription: Fetys and smale and younge Frutesteres

Translation 1: Elegant fetid and small, and young fruit sellers,

Translation 2: Elegantly shaped and slim, and girls selling fruits,

In Middle English, the word 'fetys' has undergone a semantic change over time. In Middle English, it meant 'well-formed, shapely, or elegant', but it is now obsolete. However, in modern English, it has taken on a negative connotation of being overly ornate or showy. Therefore, the word 'elegant' in Translation 1 and 'elegantly shaped' in Translation 3 are more accurate translations of the original meaning of 'fetys'. On the other hand, Translation 12's use of 'fetid' is not an accurate translation of the original meaning, as it means 'having an offensive smell; stinking', according to the OED.

The word 'smale' in Middle English meant 'small'. Therefore, all three translations are accurate in their use of the word 'small'.

Each of the roles mentioned in the text, tombesteres, frutesteres and wafereres, might refer to the labour of women or young girls in medieval England (dancers, fruit-sellers and waferers). They are compound nouns made up of two words: 'frute' (fruit) and '-steres' (a suffix which has been reported to be feminine, yet this is debated).

A number of the quotations underneath the MED definition for 'fetys' include the gendered pronoun 'she'. For example, in Chaucer's General Prologue, 'fetys' is used to describe the Prioress: ... ful fetys was hir cloke... / Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar / A peire of bedes.

The meaning of 'fetys' describes a body as opposed to a personality in the Harvard translation, especially if the 'shapely' meaning is assumed. The Pardoner is talking about the description of a woman's body as enticing or the object of desire, potentially resulting in sinful acts committed by men. The taverns where there are dancers, singers, pimps, etc. are named the verray develes officeres, and used to describe the sin of gluttony. These roles – some of which may be performed by women – are thus placed under the umbrella of sin (lechery and gluttony), especially those that lead to wyn and dronkenesse. Women are placed at the forefront of blame for the sinful acts of men in this section of the tale.

The ending -ster has been assumed to be a feminine ending in historical grammars and dictionaries, according to Jespersen (1927). Yet Jespersen notes that some of the individuals in society, as described by the Pardoner, could equally refer to men (e.g. syngeres) (1927: 133). Harvard and ChatGPT include gendered and non-gendered translations respectively (e.g. 'girls selling fruits' and 'girls selling wafers' versus 'fruit sellers' and 'waferers').

For more information about women in Chaucer, see the following file: [file attached]

How might you have initially read the non-gendered translation; would you have attributed the different types of people and their roles (frutesteres, tombesteres, wafereres) to women, in the absence of gendered pronouns and descriptions? How might the historical treatment of women and their labour, both in the real and literary world, affect your translation and perception of whether Chaucer advocated for 'feminist ideals'?

The word 'Frutesteres' is a compound noun made up of two words: 'frute' (fruit) and 'steres' (a suffix which has been reported to be feminine, yet this is debated, indicating a female agent). Therefore, all three translations are accurate in their use of the words 'fruit-sellers', 'young fruit-sellers', and 'girls-selling fruits'.

'Shrewe'

Line 171 Transcription: But that woodnesse fallen in a shrewe

Translation 1: But that madness, fallen in a scoundrel,

Translation 2: Except that madness, fallen in an evil person.

The fact that more recently attested words, such as 'scoundrel' and 'evil person', are used instead of the word 'shrew', is wrapped up in the evolving gendered connotations of the term. Its initial meaning was not used to describe a particular gender, and was introduced into the English language in the medieval period as a more general term for an evil person.

The translation into 'scoundrel'/'evil person' is necessary given the change in semantics of the word shrew. In the OED, the first attestation for shrew refers to the sense intended in The Pardoner's Tale: "a wicked, evil-disposed, or malignant man; a mischievous or vexatious person; a rascal, villain", from c. 1250 (OED Online, 'shrew (n.2 & adj.)' 2023).

Future terms were applied to the Devil (first attested in 1362), and a derogatory use surfaced in c. 1386 in relation to "a woman given to railing or scolding or other perverse or malignant behaviour; frequently a scolding or turbulent wife". It is therefore important to disambiguate between senses for 'shrew', which in the tale is used specifically to describe a drunken man full of sin.

Based on the Oxford English Dictionary and the Middle English Dictionary, 'woodnesse' is an archaic term that means 'madness' or 'insanity'. The word 'madness' is used to describe the state of being mentally ill or insane. It is derived from the Old English word 'gemædde', which means 'out of one's mind'. Therefore, the use of 'madness' for 'woodnesse' is appropriate as it conveys the same meaning.

The word 'shrewe' is also an archaic term that has undergone semantic change over time. In Middle English, it referred to a male individual who was wicked, evil, or mischievous. However, in modern English, it is used to describe a female individual who is bad-tempered or quarrelsome. The translation choices of 'scoundrel' and 'evil person' for 'shrewe' reflect how the meaning of 'shrewe' has transformed over time. The word 'scoundrel' refers to a person who is dishonest or unscrupulous, while the term 'evil person' describes someone

who is morally wrong or wicked. These translations are appropriate as they convey similar meanings to the original term.

'Dame'

Line 359 Transcription: Thus taughte me my dame I sey namoor

Translation 1: Thus, as my mother taught me; my dame I say no more."

Translation 2: Thus taught me my mother; I say no more."

The word "~~dame~~dame" comes from the Old French word *dame*, which means "lady" or "mistress"². It was first used in Middle English around the 13th century². The word has a formal connotation and is used to refer to a woman of high social status or a woman who is respected for her age or position.

On the other hand, the word "~~mother~~mother" comes from the Old English word *mōdor*, which means "female parent"². It is derived from the Proto-Germanic word **mōdēr*, which means "mother"². The word has a familial connotation and is used to refer to a woman who has given birth to or raised a child.

In this context, the young servant boy is referring to a lesson he was taught by his dame, which, according to the MED, can refer to "A woman of rank, a lady" or "A mother (orig. as mistress of the household)." Given the speech is from a young boy, it is unlikely that 'dame' refers to his wife, thus referring to another woman in his life whom is of high rank in the household. The latter use, related to 'mother', came into use around 1225 according to the OED.

'Kaityf'

Line 403: Thus walke I lyk a resteleees kaityf

Translation 1: Thus I walk, like a restless wretch caitiff,

Translation 2: Thus I walk, like a restless wretch,

The word 'caitiff' – now obsolete according to the OED, but introduced into the English language around 1330 via French – was the most appropriate term for describing the Old Man in this scenario. This is because he was likely a 'captive, a prisoner' (OED Online, 'caitiff (n. & adj.)' 2023). The translation into 'wretch' might refer to the earliest meanings, either "one driven out of or away from his native country; a banished person; an exile" or "one who is sunk in deep distress, sorrow, misfortune, or poverty; a miserable, unhappy, or unfortunate person; a poor or hapless being" (OED Online, 'wretch (n. & adj.)' 2024). Both of these senses describe the Old Man: he has been exiled from death and forced to live on Earth with great sorrow. As Lawrence (2017) states, the old man describes himself as:

"... a 'resteleees kaityf' (l. 728), an impatient captive of the world. He is ready to meet death; in fact he seeks it. He knocks the earth with his staff and asks it to accept him; he says he would be willing to exchange his 'cheste' (l. 734), (his body and worldly coffin), for a burial shroud."

(Lawrence 2017: 871)

This description highlights the Old Man's obsession with his exile, as well as his misery for not being accepted into the next life. Overall, the word 'wretch' would require additional explanation as to which sense of the word is used in this medieval context.

The word 'kaityf' is derived from the Old French word 'captive', which means 'prisoner' or 'captive'. Over time, the meaning of the word evolved to include the sense of 'wretched', 'miserable', or 'despicable'. The word was used in Middle English to describe someone who was considered to be a lowly or contemptible person¹.

The word 'wretch' is derived from the Old English word 'wrecca', which means an outcast or an exile. Over time, the meaning of the word evolved to include the sense of a miserable or unfortunate person². The word was used in Middle English to describe someone who was considered to be a miserable or unfortunate person¹.

Translation Discussion Points (Activity 1.2)

'Peyne', 'Hauteyn speche'

Line 4 Transcription: I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche

Translation 1: I strive to have a haughty speech,

Translation 2: I take pains to have a loud voice,

The word 'peyne' in Middle English has been can be translated into as 'strive' and/or 'take pains' in the two different translations. According to the OED, 'peyne' can mean 'to make an effort, to strive, to take pains, to exert oneself, to labour, to suffer'. The use of term 'strive' in Translation 1 and 'take pains' in Translation 2 implies making a great effort or struggling to achieve something, while 'take pains' suggests putting in considerable effort or going to great lengths. Both translations capture the idea of exerting oneself to attain a particular quality⁴. However, the former implies making a great effort or struggling to achieve something, while the latter suggests putting in considerable effort or going to great lengths.

The MED refers to 'hautein' as "proud, haughty, arrogant; presumptuous", but also "noble, aristocratic; excellent, strong, powerful", as well as 'loud'. Similarly, the first entry of 'haughty' in the OED is 1430 with the adjective 'haught', meaning "high in one's own estimations; bearing oneself loftily; haughty" (OED Online, 'haught (adj.)' 2023). It has declined in frequency in PDE (now used 1-10 times per one million words), meaning its use in a translation requires an accompanying definition.

However, does the use of 'loud', 'strongly audible; making a powerful impression on the sense of hearing', capture the essence of the Pardoner's character? For example, research by Dhouib (2021) finds that the use of 'hauteyn speche' may be the Pardoner countering assumptions made by the narrator in the General Prologue:

"While the narrator pejoratively talks about the Pardoner's small and goat-like voice as indicative of his effeminacy, the Pardoner proudly talks about the resonance and wonder of his voice. He makes of it a potent signifier of his power. His voice, he says, rings out as goes a church bell. It gives him a sense of completeness and wholeness."

(Dhouib 2021: 159)

The use of 'peyne' (meaning 'to strive, attempt, endeavour to do sth.') also emphasises the lengths that the Pardoner would go to ensure others respect his integrity as a figure of authority, regardless of the hypocritical and untrustworthy acts he undertakes, which he is transparent about from the start.

The Pardoner's reclamation of his voice by narrating a tale with a loud voice – with conviction, power and authority – may be a way to oppose prior assumptions that he is not a self-assured, respectable figure, denouncing any negative portrayal of what was perceived as his 'feminine' qualities. The idea that 'femininity', and pride and authority, are not correlated, is immediately denied by the Pardoner from the outset of the tale.

Regarding the phrase 'hauteyn speche', it has been rendered as 'haughty speech' and 'loud voice'. The term 'haughty' refers to an arrogant or disdainful manner, while 'loud' denotes a high volume or intensity. These translations convey different aspects of the original phrase, with 'haughty speech' emphasizing the tone or attitude conveyed through words and 'loud voice' focusing on the volume¹.

'Saffron'

Line 19 Transcription: To saffron with my predicaciou

Translation 1: To saffron with my preaching,

Translation 2: With which to add spice to my preaching,

TheAccording to the etymology of the word 'saffron', it is derived from the Arabic word *az-za'faran*, which means "yellow"⁴. The substance is known for its sweet aroma and deep orange colour⁴. As an adjective-colour word for deep yellow-orange, and an adjective, it dates back to the late 14th century². In reference to the crocus plant itself, it has been used since the early 15th century³.

The choice ofIn translation studies, the use of the word 'saffron' in both translations can be seen as an example of how words can have multiple meanings and how translators must be aware of these nuances when translating texts. The use of 'saffron' in a both translation might s can be seen as an attempt to convey a sense of richness, and luxury, and vibrancy in the Pardoner's preaching⁵. The use of 'add spice' in Translation 2 can be seen as an attempt to convey a sense of flavor and excitement in the preaching⁶. The word 'saffron'

has connotations of something valuable, exotic, and highly prized. By using 'saffron', the translator s-aim to capture these qualities and enhances the impact of the preaching, while maintaining the medieval sense of the word.

As Goedhals (2023: 6) notes, Chaucer's use of 'saffron' here is the first time it is attested for the English language. Goedhals makes an interesting point about whether saffron is used to describe the Pardoner's speech, or whether the focus is on the audience and how they are impacted by his 'saffroning' of Latin terms:

"The Oxford English Dictionary says that the verb is used transitively here, but in fact the Pardoner makes its object deliberately unclear. Is it the Pardoner's speech that is being 'saffroned', or his audience? He does, after all, describe the listening people as being 'stire[d]' by his words, like a pot of stew, perhaps. Saffron was the most expensive spice then, as now (Adamsson 2004: 15), and was associated with aristocratic tables [...]. Weiss Adamson observes that saffron gives a 'golden hue' (2004: 74) to food. It was commonly used in the universal dish of the aristocratic Middle Ages originating in Arabia, the blanc manger, usually made with fowl. It seems that the Pardoner is knowingly (and for an educated, well fed medieval audience not obscurely) invoking such 'sotelties' – the word literally means 'subtleties', as of words (Weiss Adamson 2004: 74) – in his own discourse and its underlying metaphors."

(Goedhals 2023: 6-7)

The use of 'saffron' therefore emphasises Chaucer's knowledge of his audience. Readers would yearn for his imagery, manipulation of prose, and Latinate words—all of which would be characteristic of an aristocratic/wealthy audience. The use of a loan word here is therefore fully intentional and appropriate to describe the eccentricity of the Pardoner, as well as the appetite of the reader.

'Kisse my Relikes'

Line 619 Transcription: And thou shalt kisse my Relikes euerychon

Translation 1: And thou shalt kiss my relics every one,

Translation 2: And thou shall kiss the relics every one,

The phrase "kiss my relics" in Translation 1 suggests a possessive tone, with the possessive pronoun 'my', indicating that the relics belong to the Pardoner himself. This choice of words may convey a sense of pride or ownership over the relics, emphasizing the Pardoner's authority over the relics or self-importance. It could also imply a personal connection between the Pardoner and the relics, as if he has a special relationship with them.

On the other hand, the phrase "kiss the relics" takes a more objective or distant approach. By using the definite article "the," it suggests that the relics are not specifically associated with the Pardoner but are part of a broader collection or tradition. This choice of words may convey a sense of detachment or formality, emphasizing the religious or ceremonial nature of the relics.

The use of either the definite article 'the' or the possessive determiner 'my' in relation to the action of kissing the relics that the Pardoner holds is intriguing and conjures different meanings. The discussion arises from analysis of different manuscript variants. In the Ellesmere Ms. (the manuscript informing the current edition) the possessive 'my' is used, further emphasising the sexual connotations of the line by the Pardoner.

Zeikowitz (2002) refers to the sexual power possessed by the Pardoner, how this authority is affirmed by the words he speaks, and that is embedded in other historical analogues:

"The sexual implication of 'relikes' can be traced to the Roman de la Rose, as Dolores Warwick Frese points out, where the lover is offended by Lady Reason's use of 'coilles'. [...] While one may argue that Lady Reason makes an arbitrary association between relics and testicles, I would suggest that the two words are not arbitrarily brought together. 'Relike' lends itself well to sexual connotations as suggested in the MED, which lists one meaning as 'a valuable object'; it can also be used figuratively to denote a beloved person."

(Zeikowitz 2002: 68-69)

[Extract here]

Zeikowitz also states that the phrase 'unbuckle thy purse right away', a request made by the Pardoner to the Host, might reference an anatomical part (e.g. the scrotum; see this MED entry). This request by the Pardoner can be inferred as a challenge to the Host to display his own sexual authority: "he is challenging him to prove that he possesses the phallus" (2002: 69). The response is also sexualised, with the Host confronting the Pardoner, who then shows a display of hypermasculinity by threatening to cut off his 'coillons' (testicles) and enshrine them in a hog's turd.

This type of discussion, and the variants between manuscripts, further emphasises changing views of sexuality throughout the tale:

"Dinshaw maintains that 'queerness articulates not a determinate thing but a relation to existent structures of power.' The Pardoner's sexual identity cannot be expressed in our modern categories, 'gay' or 'bisexual'. Yet his queerness confuses the narrator and unnerves the Host. His interactions with normative society demonstrate a potent sexuality which challenges masculine heterosexuality."

[Extract here]

The above excerpt is spoken by the Knight, and it has been debated amongst scholars as to whether the response reflects a way to resolve the disagreement between the Pardoner and the Host, or an underlying romantic or sexualised gesture. Given what you know about the Pardoner up until now, what is your impression of the Knight's words? Does this line indicate desire on the part of the Knight, or a platonic request, or neither?

Different identities have existed throughout our history, which challenged and disrupted authority and heteronormativity. The deep-rooted assumptions about queerness as a form of sexual deviancy still exist today as homophobia and transphobia. The character of the

Pardoner reveals that challenges to authority by ordinary people existed even in medieval England, and while structures of discrimination likely existed, the concept of sexuality (as well as gender) was not as strictly defined as in the modern day. See our resources on 'queer medievalism' for recent explorations of gender/sexuality in the medieval period.

Pronunciation Student Guide

Consonants

There are three components to the production of sounds. This includes voicing (whether the vocal cords are vibrating or not), place of articulation (which articulators, or anatomical parts of the mouth, are touching), and manner of articulation (how the sound is produced, e.g. with constant airflow or burst of air).

Information about ~~voicing~~**voicing**:

- Voiceless: Consonants that are produced without vibration of the vocal cords. Examples: <p>, <t>, <ck> in the words 'pet', 'top', and 'cat'
- Voiced: Consonants that are produced with vibration of the vocal cords. Examples: , <d>, <g> in the words 'bet', 'dog', and 'get'

Information about place of ~~articulation~~**articulation**:

- ~~Bilabial~~**Bilabial**: Consonants that are produced with the two lips touching. Examples: <p>, , <m> in the words 'pet', 'bet', and 'met'
- Labiodental: Consonants that are produced with the lower lip touching the upper teeth. Examples: <f> and ~~, <v>, <m>~~ in the words 'fat' and ~~, 'vat', and 'mat'~~
- ~~Dental~~**Dental**: Consonants that are produced with the tongue touching the upper teeth. Examples: <θ> and ~~<ð>~~, <n> in the words ~~'teeth' and 'then', 'den', and 'net'~~
- ~~Alveolar~~**Alveolar**: Consonants that are produced with the tongue touching or close to the alveolar ridge (the ridge behind the upper teeth). Examples: <s>, <z>, <r> in the words 'sip', 'zip', and 'ride'
- ~~Postalveolar~~**Postalveolar**: Consonants that are produced with the tongue touching the area behind the alveolar ridge. Examples: <sh>, <szh>, <ch> in the words 'ship', 'measure', and 'chip'
- ~~Retroflex~~**Retroflex**: Consonants that are produced with the tongue curled back and touching the roof of the mouth. Examples: ~~[ʃ], [dʒ], [ŋ]~~~~[<ʃ>, [<dʒ>, [<ŋ>~~ (these consonants are not found in Modern English, but they are common in other languages, such as Hindi and Malayalam)
- ~~Palatal~~**Palatal**: Consonants that are produced with the tongue touching the palate (the roof of the mouth behind the alveolar ridge). Examples: <y>~~, <j>~~ in the words 'yes', ~~'jam'~~

Commented [21]: Prompt for Google Bard: Produce a guide for university level students that describes what each of the following terms mean within the field of phonetics. Include examples from modern English using specific words and highlighting the sound within them:

Information about voicing:

Voiceless
Voiced

Information about place of articulation:

Bilabial
Labiodental
Dental
Alveolar
Postalveolar
Retroflex
Palatal
Velar
Glottal

Information about manner of articulation:

Plosive
Nasal
Trill
Tap or flap
Fricative
Approximant
Lateral approximant

Information about vowel quality:

Close/Open
Front/Back

- **Velar**: Consonants that are produced with the tongue touching the velum (the soft part at the top back of the roof of the mouth). Examples: <ck>, <g>, <ngŋ> in the words 'cat', 'dog', and 'sing'
- **Glottal**: Consonants that are produced with the vocal cords. Examples: [<h>], [<ʔ>] (the glottal stop is found in dialects of English, not found in English, and but it is common in other languages, such as Arabic and Hawaiian)

Information about manner of articulation:

- **Plosive**: Consonants that are produced by stopping the airflow completely and then releasing it suddenly. Examples: <p>, <t>, <ck> in the words 'pet', 'top', and 'cat'
- **Nasal**: Consonants that are produced by lowering the velum and allowing the air to flow out through the nose. Examples: <m>, <n>, <ngŋ> in the words 'met', 'net', and 'sing'
- **Trill**: Consonants that are produced by vibrating the tongue against the alveolar ridge. Examples: [<r>] in some Spanish dialects, <rr> in Spanish
- **Tap or flap**: Consonants that are produced by making a brief contact between the tongue and the alveolar ridge. Examples: [<r>] in American English or Spanish, <ɾ> in Spanish
- **Fricative**: Consonants that are produced by creating a narrow opening in the vocal tract, which causes the air to flow through and create friction. Examples: <f>, <v>, <s>, <z> in the words 'fat', 'vat', 'sip', and 'zip'
- **Approximant**: Consonants that are produced by creating a very narrow opening in the vocal tract, which allows the air to flow through relatively easily. Examples: <w>, <y> in the words 'wet', 'yes'
- **Lateral approximant**: Approximants that are produced with the sides of the tongue touching the upper teeth. Examples: <l> in the word 'light'

Vowel quality

- **Close/Open**: Vowels that are produced with the tongue raised in the mouth are called close vowels. Vowels that are produced with the tongue lowered in the mouth are called open vowels. Examples: <i> in the word 'bit' is a close vowel, <æ> in the word 'father' is an open vowel.
- **Front/Back**: Vowels that are produced with the tongue in the front of the mouth are called front vowels. Vowels that are produced with the tongue in the back of the mouth are called back vowels. Examples: <i> in the word 'bit' is a front vowel, <oo> in the word 'boot' is a back vowel.
- **Rounded/Unrounded**: Vowels that are produced with the lips rounded are called rounded vowels. Vowels that are produced with the lips spread or relaxed are unrounded vowels. Examples: <oo> in 'boot' is a rounded vowel, <i> in 'bit' is an unrounded vowel.

Middle English pronunciation

<u>Symbol (from the International Phonetic Alphabet, IPA)</u>	<u>Type of sound</u>	<u>Middle English word (from PPT) & translation</u>	<u>Similar to (Modern English word)²</u>
<u>[a] [a:] or [æ] [æ:]</u>	<u>Front, unrounded, open/near-open vowels</u>	<u>"hath" (has)</u>	<u>"bat"</u>
<u>[ɑ] [ɑ:]</u>	<u>Back, unrounded, open vowels</u>	<u>"name"</u>	<u>"barge"</u>
<u>[e] [e:] or [ɛ] [ɛ:]</u>	<u>Front, unrounded, close-mid/open-mid vowels</u>	<u>"yeer" (year)</u>	<u>"pear"*</u>
<u>[i]</u>	<u>Front, unrounded, near-close vowel</u>	<u>"thing"</u>	<u>"win"</u>
<u>[i:] [i:]</u>	<u>Front, unrounded, close vowels</u>	<u>"my"</u>	<u>"been"</u>
<u>[ɔ] [ɔ:]</u>	<u>Back, rounded, open-mid vowels</u>	<u>"old"</u>	<u>"more"</u>
<u>[o] [o:]</u>	<u>Back, rounded, close-mid vowels</u>	<u>"would"</u>	<u>"coat"*</u>
<u>[ʊ] or [ʌ]</u>	<u>Back, unrounded, near-close/open-mid vowels</u>	<u>"yong" (young)</u>	<u>"strut"</u>
<u>[u] [u:]</u>	<u>Back, rounded, close vowels</u>	<u>"doun" (down)</u>	<u>"moon"</u>
<u>[y]</u>	<u>Front, rounded, close vowel</u>	<u>"first"</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<u>[ə]</u>	<u>Central, unrounded, mid vowel</u>	<u>"male" (bag)</u>	<u>"speaker"</u>

[aj] or [æi]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"tale"</u>	<u>"buy"</u> *
[aw] or [au]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"draught"</u>	<u>"cow"</u>
[ej] or [ei]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"pray"</u>	<u>"pay"</u>
[ew] or [ɛw]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"shrewe" (shrew)</u>	<u>"few"</u> *
[iw] or [iu]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"shewe" (show)</u>	<u>"few"</u> *
[oj] or [oi]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"joi" (joy)</u>	<u>"boy"</u>
[uj] or [ui]	<u>Diphthong</u>	<u>"stywes" (brothels)</u>	<u>N/A</u>
[p] [b]	<u>Bilabial plosives</u>	<u>"pleyen" (play);</u> <u>"bothe" (both)</u>	<u>"play"; "both"</u>
[t] [d]	<u>Alveolar plosives</u>	<u>"telle" (tell); "daunce"</u> <u>(dance)</u>	<u>"tell"; "dance"</u>
[k] [g]	<u>Velar plosives</u>	<u>"kyng" (king); "God"</u>	<u>"king"; "God"</u>
[tʃ] [dʒ]	<u>Postalveolar affricates</u>	<u>"chirches" (churches);</u> <u>"Iohn" (John)</u>	<u>"churches";</u> <u>"John"</u>
[f] [v]	<u>Labiodental fricatives</u>	<u>"for"; "grove"</u>	<u>"for"; "grove"</u>
[θ] [ð]	<u>Dental fricatives</u>	<u>"forth" "thanne" (then)</u>	<u>"forth"; "then"</u>
[s] [z]	<u>Alveolar fricatives</u>	<u>"saffron"; "weyes"</u> <u>(ways)</u>	<u>"saffron"; "ways"</u>
[ʃ] [ʒ]	<u>Postalveolar fricatives</u>	<u>"shewe" (show);</u> <u>"Jeremye" (Jeremiah)</u>	<u>"show";</u> <u>"measure"</u>

[x]	<u>Velar fricatives</u>	<u>"nyght"</u>	<u>"ich" (German; "I")</u>
[h]	<u>Glottal fricative</u>	<u>"hir" (their)</u>	<u>"hate"</u>
[m] [n] [ŋ]	<u>Bilabial, alveolar and velar nasals</u>	<u>"Mathew"; "many"; "thyng" (thing)</u>	<u>"Matthew"; "many"; "thing"</u>
[r]	<u>Alveolar trill</u>	<u>"honorable" (honourable)</u>	<u>"perro" (Spanish; "dog")</u>
[w] [ɹ] [j] [l]	<u>Bilabial, alveolar, palatal and lateral approximants</u>	<u>"sweryng" (swearing); "presence"; "yong" (young); "wol" (will)</u>	<u>"swearing"; "presence"; "young"; "will"</u>
[kn] [ŋg] [hw]	<u>Complex consonant clusters</u>	<u>"knowe" (know); "syngeres" (singers); "which"</u>	<u>N/A</u>

Teacher Guidance

[The guidance is shaped from the initial activity instructions, see the activity itself for the genAI input]

The below Middle English pronunciation guide has been designed for students so they can familiarise themselves with how Chaucerian tales might have been read aloud in the Middle Ages. This task should also prime students to be able to critique snippets from The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (PPT), as produced by Amazon Polly.

Polly is not trained in medieval languages, meaning some of the outputs might not match what we understand to be Middle English sounds. This activity therefore provides an opportunity for students to critically analyse what AI can currently achieve, allowing them to put their own knowledge of Middle English pronunciation to the test. There is also an opportunity to compare Polly outputs to a human recording of the text. The aim is to ease students into pronouncing Middle English in the classroom, in small groups, or at home, and encourage further engagement with Middle English texts. We also hope that increased engagement with recordings of Chaucer would aid understanding of his tales (i.e. the humour, satire, puns, etc.) and encourage students to provide their own interpretations.

If students would like to listen to a human recording of the entire tale, see our original text pages for a Middle English transcription and a Modern English translation (also generated by AI, see our translation activities). The recordings may also help highlight differences in English pronunciation over time for students' consideration. All of their thoughts can be captured in our discussion board, and we welcome any suggestions for improvement of our activities in this space, too.

Pronunciation Guide

[Activity document]

1. Familiarise yourself with the Middle English pronunciation guides.
2. Play the human recording of the five extracts, writing down any noteworthy features related to rhythm and intonation. You may also want to make a note of any sounds that differ from Modern English. You can find the full recording of the tale here.
3. Listen to Amazon Polly's production of the five extracts. Again, make any notes related to rhythm and intonation, as well as any potential errors in relation to Middle English sounds.
4. In a small group or pair, discuss your observations, including the pros and cons of using Amazon Polly to recreate Middle English verse. What are the challenges involved in asking AI to produce medieval languages? What are the potential implications for the future of text-to-speech technology; do you envision it improving?
5. Check the discussion points if you would like inspiration about where to begin. Provide your thoughts on the discussion board.

Pronunciation Discussion Points

[The below two outputs were drawn on for the final draft of the discussion points]

ChatGPT-4 playground output:

Amazon Polly, like other text-to-speech technologies, is designed to convert written text into spoken words. It uses advanced deep learning technologies to synthesize speech that sounds like a human voice. However, when it comes to producing Middle English verse, there are several challenges that Amazon Polly might face:

- 1. Phonetics and Phonology:** Middle English had a different set of phonemes (distinct units of sound) compared to Modern English. It had certain sounds that do not exist in Modern English and vice versa. Amazon Polly, which is primarily designed for Modern English, might not have the capacity to produce these unique Middle English sounds accurately.
- 2. Vowel Length:** In Middle English, vowel length could change the meaning of a word. Modern English, on the other hand, largely determines vowel length based on the surrounding consonants and the position of the vowel in the word. Amazon Polly might not

Commented [22]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground and Google Bard:
Summarise in detail, for university level students, the challenges that Amazon Polly might face when producing Middle English verse. Why might the Amazon Polly outputs differ from the actual pronunciation of the medieval English period?

be able to accurately reproduce the vowel lengths of Middle English.

3. Stress Patterns: Middle English had different stress patterns compared to Modern English. Amazon Polly, which is programmed to follow Modern English stress patterns, might not accurately reproduce the stress patterns of Middle English verse.

4. Pronunciation of Final -e: The pronunciation of final -e in Middle English is a complex issue. It was often pronounced, especially in poetry, but it's not clear how consistently it would have been pronounced in everyday speech. Amazon Polly might struggle with when to pronounce or omit the final -e.

5. Dialectal Variation: Middle English had significant dialectal variation, with different regions of England having different pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Amazon Polly might not be able to account for these regional differences in its pronunciation.

6. Lack of Standardization: Middle English did not have a standardized spelling system. The same word could be spelled in different ways, and the same spelling could represent different sounds in different contexts. This lack of standardization could pose a challenge for Amazon Polly, which relies on standardized spelling for accurate pronunciation.

In conclusion, while Amazon Polly is a powerful tool for text-to-speech synthesis, it might struggle to accurately reproduce Middle English verse due to the significant differences in phonetics, phonology, stress patterns, and spelling between Middle English and Modern English.

Google Bard output:

Amazon Polly might face a number of challenges when producing Middle English verse. These include:

Pronunciation: Middle English pronunciation was significantly different from modern English pronunciation. Amazon Polly is trained on a corpus of modern English text and speech, so it may not be able to accurately pronounce Middle English words and sounds.

Vocabulary: Middle English contains a number of words that are no longer in use in modern English. Amazon Polly may not have these words in its vocabulary, or it may pronounce them incorrectly.

Grammar: Middle English grammar was also different from modern English grammar. Amazon Polly may not be able to correctly parse and generate Middle English sentences.

Meter and rhythm: Middle English verse is often written in meter and rhythm, which are patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables. Amazon Polly may not be able to correctly generate Middle English verse with the correct meter and rhythm.

In addition to these challenges, the Amazon Polly outputs may differ from the actual pronunciation of the medieval English period for a number of reasons, including:

Lack of data: There is no record of how Middle English was actually pronounced. The only evidence we have is from written texts, which can be difficult to interpret.

Regional variation: There was a great deal of regional variation in Middle English pronunciation. Amazon Polly can only output a single pronunciation for each word, which may not be accurate for all regions.

Time period: The pronunciation of Middle English changed over time. Amazon Polly cannot account for all of these changes in its outputs.

Despite these challenges, Amazon Polly can be a useful tool for generating synthetic readings of Middle English verse. However, it is important to be aware of the limitations of

the technology and to use it with caution.

Here are some additional tips for using Amazon Polly to generate synthetic readings of Middle English verse:

Use a corpus of Middle English text and speech to train Amazon Polly. This will help Amazon Polly to learn the correct pronunciation of Middle English words and sounds. Use a glossary to identify Middle English words that are no longer in use in modern English. Add these words to Amazon Polly's vocabulary and provide the correct pronunciations. Use Amazon Polly's custom voice creation feature to create a voice that is specifically designed for reading Middle English verse. Carefully review the output of Amazon Polly to ensure that it is accurate and consistent. By following these tips, you can use Amazon Polly to generate synthetic readings of Middle English verse that are both informative and enjoyable.

[We have included some discussion points below about the challenges that Amazon Polly, or other text-to-speech software, faces when reproducing medieval speech. You may want to refer to these points when assessing various aspects of the 'Brian' recording. You can access the full recordings on this page.](#)

[Amazon Polly phoneme inventories](#)

Articulation of vowels

- The vowels [a] (e.g. in *radix*; line 8), [e] (e.g. in *be*; line 622), and [o] (e.g. in *grote* 'groat'; line 620) are not included in Polly's British English phoneme inventory, as they are not used widely in standard Modern English. Their pronunciation is dependent on the environment they occur in or the training received by Polly for Modern English. For example, the vowel [a] in *radix* is pronounced somewhat similarly to how it would be pronounced in Modern English, due to the word being a borrowing from Latin. Many words in ModE are borrowings from Latin—for example, Latin *radix* is utilised in the field of mathematics (e.g. 'a root of a number'). The [e] in *be* is pronounced more like a ModE diphthong (similar to [ei]), while *grote* is pronounced more like the ModE monophthong [ɒ].
- Similarly, the Middle English diphthongs (e.g. [aj] and [ej]) are dependent on their environment, especially if one of the vowels in the diphthong is not in the British English inventory. For example, [ej] in *alwey* 'always' (line 7) is pronounced similar to [ei].
- Long vowels: Allosaurus did not consistently pick up on the pronunciation of long vowels, which are pertinent to the pronunciation of Middle English, as the language preceded the shift to diphthongs following the Great Vowel Shift (GVS). For example, the vowel in *nyght* (line 142) would be pronounced with the long vowel [i:], which then shifted to [ai] post-GVS.

Articulation of consonants:

- Velar fricative [x]: There are cases when the velar fricative [x] is required—it is a common feature of Middle English, but is no longer used in the present-day (other than in specific dialects of English, e.g. in the Liverpudlian or 'Scouse' accent). For

example, the rhyming words nyght and myght (lines 142-143) would be pronounced [ni:xt] and [mi:xt], yet the velar fricative consonant [x] in the Polly recording is not clearly pronounced.

- Alveolar trill [r]: there were cases where <r> would have been pronounced as the alveolar trill [r] in ME, yet Amazon Polly does not include the trill in its British English inventory. Thus, words such as round may be pronounced with an initial [ɹ] which is more characteristic of Modern English.

Syllables

- There is not always consistency in terms of whether final [ə] is pronounced in the Polly recording, but this may also be a feature of Middle English pronunciation. Chaucer is likely to have used this final unstressed syllable quite frequently (according to Burrow 1971), yet the Chaucer Studio recording (on which this production of IPA is based) does not always use the syllable consistently.
- Polly appears to struggle with multisyllabic words, for example, compaignye 'company' (line 138), a four-syllable word (com-paign-y-e) which does not flow as well as some of the words with fewer syllables. Without the ability to guide Polly through the pronunciation of each syllable – a process which might be tedious for the editor without some automation – longer words may not be recreated as accurately as possible.

Pitch/Timbre

- There is no change in the pitch (a high or low tone) or timbre (the difference in sound quality) throughout Polly's recording of PPT, making the piece seem monotonous.
- The use of different pitches and timbres might be most relevant for emphasis and to mimic the sound of something else, for example, the line and ryngge it out as round as gooth a belle (5) might appear louder and with more force to mimic the sound of a loud bell.
- The tale might also utilise different pitches and timbres when changing between characters, as one might do when speaking a narrative aloud. In lines (618-625), the Pardoner is speaking to the Host, asking him to kiss one of his relics in order to alleviate the Host of his sin. The Host reacts in a shocked and angry manner, saying, 'Nay, nay!' and, 'Thou would make me kiss thine old underpants, and swear it were a relic of a saint, though it were stained with thy fundament (buttocks)!'. This is a big reaction, and one that might be shown best by changing the pitch and timbre of the voices, to demarcate the change in character, and show the extent of the reaction.
- In order to change the pitch of different parts of the tale, Polly requires the user to revert to its 'standard' voices, rather than the more human-like 'neural' voices. Here is more information about the two types of voices.

Rhyme/Rhythm/Metre

- Rhyming – a common feature of Middle English poetry – is relatively consistent across each of the extracts (mainly in cases where the vowels are available in Polly's phoneme inventory). For example, the final words of lines (62-63) are pronounced similarly, aiding the rhyme—the final vowel in both yeer 'year' and Pardoner is roughly [e].

- However, it is worth noting that the editor often needed to make changes to the vowels when they were misunderstood by the Allosaurus programme that formed the IPA. For instance, one minor change that the editor had to make was for the final vowels in lines (618-618), in anon 'immediately' and euerychon 'every one'. To add more stress, and to rhyme with euerychon, the vowel in anon was changed from [ə] to [ʌ] before being inputted into Polly.
- Punctuation does appear to have assisted with the rhythm of the verse. Punctuation is not shown in the Middle English version above, but it was added into Polly and adapted from the edition *The Riverside Chaucer* by Larry D. Benson. However, in sentences not guided by pronunciation, the rhythm does not necessarily follow that of verse, with some lines not providing adequate pauses or emphasis. For example, lines (144-146) are not supported by pronunciation, yet the reader of the tale in Middle English would have likely added emphasis to specific words, or more natural pauses, that would be more understandable to a live audience.
- On the other hand, the difference in emphasis can be seen in lines such as that of (140-141), which lists the different types of people who were banded together on this night in Flanders. The speech is much slower and easier to understand compared to lines (144-146).
- As noted in Harvard's pronunciation resource (Daniel Donoghue), Chaucer tended to write in iambic pentameter: five-stress, ten-syllable lines with alternating unstressed and stressed syllables (made possible with the final syllabic -e, as noted above). Using line (137), Heere bigynneth the Pardoners tale, as a test, we can see that the line has five stressed syllables, with nine syllables overall. This does not follow the tendencies of iambic pentameter, which would require ten syllables. It is the final syllabic -e which is not pronounced (see above for why this might be), resulting in only nine syllables. While there is debate as to whether Chaucer used iambic pentameter consistently (e.g. see Solopova 1997), we might expect something close to iambic pentameter for every line. Line (138), In Flaundes whilom was a compaignye, has eleven syllables, with only three areas where stress is visible. Since Polly is not trained to recognise some of the tendencies related to rhythm and metre, the stress and number of syllables for each line is not overly consistent.

Variation in spelling/sound

- There was no standard of spelling in Middle English, with even Chaucer varying in the way he spelled words. Spelling may also map onto the different phonemes used to speak the tale aloud, resulting in variation in speech. Polly likely relies on some standardisation for the process of text-to-speech, as it works with modern-day language inventories, affecting its output.

Evidence

- There is no record of how Middle English was actually pronounced. The only evidence we have is from written texts (e.g. manuscripts, facsimiles, and scholarly/digital editions), which likely tell us more about spelling variation than sound. We are generally relying on early scholars' interpretations of the spelling as different sounds, and even then these spellings and sounds likely varied a lot. The

lack of data we have access to then impacts Polly's recreation of Middle English tales.

Manuscript Student Guide

The Ellesmere manuscript (E1)

The ~~Ellesmere Chaucer, also known as the~~ Ellesmere Manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, also known as the Ellesmere Chaucer (or for short, E1), is an highly-significant early 15th-century illuminated manuscript of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. It is currently housed in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The manuscript is considered one of the most important copies of the Tales due to its elaborate illumination and illustrations of the various narrators of the Tales, including a famous one of Chaucer himself.

The manuscript's early history is uncertain, but it is believed to have been owned by John de Vere, the 12th Earl of Oxford ~~John de Vere, the 12th Earl of Oxford~~. It later belonged to Sir Thomas Egerton, Baron Ellesmere ~~Sir Thomas Egerton, Baron Ellesmere~~, from whom it gets its popular name. The manuscript was part of the Bridgewater Library, which remained at the Egerton house until 1802. It was later sold to Henry Huntington by John Francis Granville Scrope Egerton, the 4th Earl of Ellesmere, in 1917.

The Ellesmere manuscript is a fine example of scribal workmanship, written on high-quality vellum. The leaves are approximately 400mm by 284mm in size, and there are 240 leaves, 232 of which contain the text of the Tales. The manuscript is thought to have been written shortly after Chaucer's death, making it an important source for efforts to reconstruct Chaucer's original text and intentions.

~~The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, like the rest of the Tales, are part of this manuscript. The Pardoner's Tale is a moral tale about three rioters who set out to kill Death and end up meeting their own demise due to their greed. The Pardoner's Prologue, on the other hand, is a confession of the Pardoner's own deceitful practices, revealing his lack of morality and highlighting the theme of corruption within the Church.~~

The Ellesmere manuscript was edited by someone who tried to regularise spelling and put the individual Tales into a smoothly running order, as identified by John M. Manly and Edith Rickert in The Text of the Canterbury Tales (1940). The order of the Ellesmere Chaucer now serves as an exemplar for modern-day editions, with The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale featuring in Fragment VI, after The Physician's Tale and The Shipman's Tale. The scribe's person is believed to have been Adam Pinkhurst, a man employed by

Commented [23]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Describe the details of the Ellesmere manuscript (The Canterbury Tales), with specific reference to the Pardoner's Prologue and Tale, using the following Wikipedia API output as a guide: [API output]

Commented [24]: API output:

History

Written most likely in the first or second decade of the fifteenth century, the early history of the manuscript is uncertain, but it seems to have been owned by John de Vere, 12th Earl of Oxford (1408–1462). The manuscript takes its popular name from the fact that it later belonged to Sir Thomas Egerton (1540–1617), Baron Ellesmere and Viscount Brackley, who apparently obtained it from Roger North, 2nd Baron North (1530/31–1600). The library of manuscripts, known as the Bridgewater Library, remained at the Egerton house, Ashridge, Hertfordshire, until 1802 when it was removed to London. Francis Egerton, created Earl of Ellesmere in 1846, inherited the library, and it remained in the family until its sale to Henry Huntington by John Francis Granville Scrope Egerton (1872–1944), 4th Earl of Ellesmere. Huntington purchased the Bridgewater library privately in 1917 through Sotheby's. The manuscript is now in the collection of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California (EL 26 C 9).

Commented [25]: API output continued:

Description

The Ellesmere manuscript is a highly polished example of scribal workmanship, with a great deal of elaborate illumination and, notably, a series of illustrations of the various narrators of the Tales (including a famous one of Chaucer himself, mounted on a horse). As such, it was clearly a de luxe product, commissioned by a very wealthy patron.

The manuscript is written on fine vellum and the leaves are approximately 400mm by 284mm in size; there are 240 leaves, of which 232 contain the text of the Tales.

Scribe and its relation to other manuscripts

The Ellesmere manuscript is thought to be very early in date, being written shortly after Chaucer's death. It is seen as an important source for efforts to reconstruct Chaucer's original text and intentions, though John M. Manly and Edith Rickert in their Text of the Canterbury Tales (1940) noted that whoever edited the manuscript probably made substantial revisions, tried to regularise spelling, and put the individual Tales into a smoothly running order. Up until this point the Ellesmere manuscript had been used as the 'base text' by several editions, such as that of W. W. Skeat, with variants checked against British Library, Harley MS 7334.

Linne Mooney identified Ellesmere's scribe as Adam Pinkhurst, a man employed by Chaucer himself, but recent scholarship has claimed that this identification is without merit. The same scribe appears to have been responsible for writing the Hengwrt Manuscript of the Tales, now considered the earliest, most authoritative, and closest to Chaucer's holograph. This would also imply, however, that the revisions seen in the Ellesmere manuscript would have been carried out by someone who had worked with Chaucer, knew his intentions for the Tales, and had access to draft materials.

The Ellesmere manuscript is conventionally referred to as E1 in studies of the Tales and their textual history. A facsimile edition is available.

Chaucer himself, [as per Linne Mooney's identification in 2004](#). ~~although recent scholarship has disputed this identification~~. The same scribe is thought to have written the Hengwrt Manuscript of the Tales, which is now considered the earliest and most authoritative version of the Tales. This suggests that the revisions seen in the Ellesmere manuscript were carried out by someone who had worked with Chaucer and knew his intentions for the Tales.

The process of textual transmission in medieval England

[The Wikipedia article utilised for this guide, and fed into ChatGPT-4 Playground is: [Manuscript culture](#)]

Manuscript culture in late medieval England was a significant period in the history of information dissemination and preservation. This culture, which depended on hand-written manuscripts, was a stage that most developed cultures went through in between oral culture and print culture. It was characterized by a desire for uniformity, well-ordered and convenient access to the text contained in the manuscript, and ease of reading aloud. This culture grew out of the ~~Fourth Lateran Council~~ [Fourth Lateran Council](#) (1215) and the rise of the ~~Devotio Moderna~~ [Devotio Moderna](#).

In the early stages of manuscript culture, monks in monasteries were the primary copyists of manuscripts. They copied not just religious works, but a variety of texts including some on astronomy, herbals, and bestiaries. The monks were meticulous in their work, often improving upon texts, retracting errors, and making the text particularly relevant to their local context. This was especially true in the case of herbals, where the monks' intimate understanding of local herbs allowed them to grow some of the plants included in the texts, demonstrating the practical uses of these texts in their lives.

By the 13th century, manuscript culture had transitioned from the monasteries to the market in the cities, and the rise of universities. This shift marked the beginning of commercial trade of manuscripts, with manuscript-book producers being commissioned to make specific books for specific people. Paris was the first city to have a large commercial trade of manuscripts, supported by a population of wealthy literate persons. This era marked a shift in manuscript production from monks in monasteries to booksellers and scribes making a living from their work in the cities.

[The period of "Late Manuscript Culture"](#) dates from roughly the mid-fourteenth century to the fifteenth century, preceding and existing alongside the printing press. During this period, careful attention was paid to the punctuation and layout of texts, with readability and specifically reading aloud taking preeminence. Meaning had to be clear in every sentence, with as little room left to interpretation as possible. Correct orthography was attempted whenever the necessary exemplars made it possible to emend earlier texts, especially Bibles, and this correction made many texts uniform. [This shift in the uniformity of the manuscript potentially explains the orderly nature of the Ellesmere Chaucer, which had regularised spelling, beautiful decoration and illumination, and Anglicana handwriting, also known as 'court hand', which was easily readable.](#)

Commented [26]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Describe late medieval manuscript culture using the following Wikipedia API output: [API output]

Commented [27]: API output:
A manuscript culture is a culture that depends on hand-written manuscripts to store and disseminate information. It is a stage that most developed cultures went through in between oral culture and print culture. Europe entered the stage in classical antiquity. In early medieval manuscript culture, monks copied manuscripts by hand. They copied not just religious works, but a variety of texts including some on astronomy, herbals, and bestiaries. Medieval manuscript culture deals with the transition of the manuscript from the monasteries to the market in the cities, and the rise of universities. Manuscript culture in the cities created jobs built around the making and trade of manuscripts, and typically was regulated by universities. Late manuscript culture was characterized by a desire for uniformity, well-ordered and convenient access to the text contained in the manuscript, and ease of reading aloud. This culture grew out of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the rise of the Devotio Moderna. It included a change in materials (switching from vellum to paper), and was subject to remediation by the printed book, while also influencing it.

Commented [28]: Continued:
Medieval manuscript culture

Beginnings
In Anglo-Saxon England manuscript culture seems to have really begun around the 10th century. This is not to say however, that manuscripts and the recording of information was not important prior to the 10th century, but that during the 10th century, historians see an influx and heavier weight placed on these manuscripts. This was a time when medical practitioners were advancing what they knew about the human body and the way that certain substances interacted with it. These medical practitioners recorded this information and passed it on through the means of literate people. Catholic ... [6]

Commented [29]: Continued:
The consequence of this is that the writers were free to elaborate and embellish upon texts. This was a definite and deliberate attempt to give the animal in question a certain moral or allegorical meaning beyond the physical appearance. These bestiary texts can be very like traditional mythology.

Trade
In the 13th century, Paris was the first city to have a large commercial trade of manuscripts, with manuscript-book producers being commissioned to make spe... [7]

Commented [30]: Continued:
Late Manuscript Culture

Characteristics
The period of "Late Manuscript Culture" dates from roughly the mid-fourteenth century to the fifteenth century, preceding and existing alongside the printing press. While embodying all of the ideals and adhering to the regulations observable in the Devotio Moderna, there are many clear characteristics of Late Manuscript Culture. For instance, careful attention was paid to the punctuation and layout of texts, with readability an... [8]

In conclusion, manuscript culture in late medieval England was a significant period in the history of information dissemination and preservation. It marked a transition from monastic to commercial production of manuscripts, and was characterized by a desire for uniformity, readability, and practicality.

What is the study of codicology?

[The Wikipedia article utilised for this guide, and fed into ChatGPT-4 Playground is: [Codicology](#)]

Codicology is the academic study of manuscript books, also known as codices. This field is often described as "the archaeology of the book," a term attributed to **François Masai**. Codicology involves the examination of the materials, tools, and techniques used in the creation of codices, as well as their distinct features.

The boundaries of codicology are not strictly defined. Some scholars consider it a standalone discipline, while others view it as a supplementary field to textual criticism analysis and transmission, which are typically studied under philology. Codicologists may also delve into the history of libraries, manuscript collecting, book cataloguing, and the work of scribes, all of which fall under the broader history of the book.

Codicology can overlap with palaeography, the study of handwriting, and the study of written features such as marginalia, glosses, and ownership inscriptions. It also encompasses the study of the physical aspects of decoration, which is traditionally a part of art history. However, codicology places a greater emphasis on the cultural aspect of books. The study of codices can be divided into *stricto sensu* codicology, which focuses on the material aspects, and *lato sensu* codicology, which incorporates palaeography, philology, art history, and the history of the book.

Codicologists use palaeographic techniques in conjunction with codicological techniques to analyze the work of the scribe, script styles and their variations. This can reveal the book's character, value, purpose, date, and the importance attached to its different parts. The structure of a codex, including its size, format, sewing, bookbinding, and rebinding, is also studied.

Other features of interest include ownership markings, decorations, and illumination (e.g. like the illustrations we will see shortly in the Ellesmere manuscript). The study of codices involves examining the materials used, such as papyrus, parchment, and paper, as well as the metals, pigments, and ink used for writing and drawing. The quality, size, and choice of these materials can indicate the status of a codex. The structure of a codex, including its size, format, sewing, bookbinding, and rebinding, is also studied. Other features of interest include ownership markings, decorations, and illumination.

Codicologists also study the pages of codices, looking at features such as watermarks, layout, textual articulations, and space reserved for illustrations and decorated guide letters. The development of scholarly apparatus, such as chapter and verse numbering, marginalia finding guides, indexes, glossaries, and tables of contents, is also a focus of this field.

Commented [31]: Define the study of codicology for university level undergraduates, using the below Wikipedia output: [API output]

Commented [32]: API output:
Codicology is the study of codices or manuscript books. It is often referred to as "the archaeology of the book," a term coined by François Masai. It concerns itself with the materials, tools and techniques used to make codices, along with their features.

The demarcation of codicology is not clear-cut. Some view codicology as a discipline complete in itself, while others see it as auxiliary to textual criticism analysis and transmission, which is studied by philology. Codicologists may also study the history of libraries, manuscript collecting, book cataloguing, and scribes, which otherwise belongs to the history of the book. Some codicologists say that their field encompasses palaeography, the study of handwriting, while some palaeographers say that their field encompasses codicology. The study of written features such as marginalia, glosses, ownership inscriptions, etc. falls in both camps, as does the study of the physical aspects of decoration, which otherwise belongs to art history. Unlike traditional palaeography, codicology places more emphasis on the cultural aspect of books. The focus on material is referred to as *stricto sensu* codicology, while a broader approach, incorporating palaeography, philology, art history, and the history of the book, is referred to as *lato sensu* codicology, and the exact meaning depends on the codicologist's view.

Palaeographic techniques are used along with codicological techniques. Analysis of the work of the scribe, script styles and their variations, may reveal the book's character, value, purpose, date, and the ... [9]

Commented [33]: Continued:
Study of codices

Materials
The materials codices are made with are their support, and include papyrus, parchment (sometimes referred to as membrane or vellum), and paper. They are written and drawn on with metals, pigments and ink. The quality, size, and choice of support determine the status of a codex. Papyrus is found only in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Codices intended for display were bound with more durable materials than vellum. Parchment varied widely due to animal species and finish, and identification of animals used to make it has only begun to be studied in the 21st century. How manufacturing influenced the final products, technique, and style, is little understood. However, changes ... [10]

Commented [34]: Continued:
Pages

Watermarks may provide, although often approximate, dates for when the copying occurred. The layout – size of the margin and the number of lines – is determined. There may be textual articulations, running heads, openings, chapters and paragraphs. Space was reserved for illustrations and decorated guide letters. The apparatus of books for scholars became more elaborate during the 13th and 14th centuries when chapter, verse, page numbering, marginalia finding guides, indexes, glossaries and tables of contents were developed.

Medieval handwriting

[The Wikipedia article utilised for this guide, and fed into ChatGPT-4 Playground is: [Court hand](#)]

As noted above, the study of codicology involves using the methods of paleography, such as the study of medieval handwriting. Anglicana, also known as 'court hand', 'common law hand', and 'cursiva antiquior', was a distinctive style of handwriting that was predominantly used in medieval English law courts, and was later employed by professionals such as lawyers and clerks. The defining characteristics of Anglicana include its noticeably upright stance and compact arrangement, with exaggeratedly long ascenders and descenders. These ascenders and descenders were often, and occasionally, brought round in sweeping crescent-shaped curves, adding a unique aesthetic to the script.

The term 'court hand' originated from its association with the formal records of the courts of Common Pleas and King's (or Queen's) Bench. However, its usage was not limited to these courts. Over time, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries, the writing style became increasingly stylised, to the point of being virtually illegible to those unfamiliar with its conventions. This led to the banning of court hand from English law courts in 1731 by the Proceedings in Courts of Justice Act 1730. The Act mandated that court proceedings be written in a common legible hand and character, similar to the script used in Acts of Parliament, and not in the court hand. Despite this, the ability to read court hand remained a useful skill for those dealing with old court records well into the 19th century.

In the context of late medieval England, the use of Anglicana is evident in various manuscripts, including the Ellesmere Chaucer of the Canterbury Tales. The Ellesmere Chaucer is a significant manuscript as it provides a rich source of information about the social, cultural, and literary contexts of the period. The use of Anglicana in this manuscript not only reflects the prevalent handwriting style of the time but also adds to the historical and aesthetic value of the document. The elongated ascenders and descenders, along with the compact arrangement of the script, contribute to the visual appeal of the Ellesmere manuscript, making it a valuable artefact for the study of Chaucer, and late medieval English literature and culture more generally.

In conclusion, the use of Anglicana or court hand in late medieval England, as exemplified in the Ellesmere Chaucer, provides a fascinating insight into the historical and cultural contexts of the period. It also underscores the importance of understanding the evolution of handwriting styles in interpreting and appreciating historical documents.

Transcription of folio 1r, Ellesmere manuscript

Here is a transcription of the folio included in the above digitised image from the Ellesmere manuscript. These images are often called 'facsimiles', a copy of a manuscript or printed book which scholars use when they are unable to access the

Commented [35]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Using the below information from Wikipedia, discuss the use of Anglicana handwriting, or court hand, in manuscripts in late medieval England, with specific reference to the Ellesmere Chaucer of the Canterbury Tales. Ensure the output is suitable for university undergraduate students: [API output]

Commented [36]: API output: Court hand (also common law hand, Anglicana, cursiva antiquior, charter hand) was a style of handwriting used in medieval English law courts, and later by professionals such as lawyers and clerks. "It is noticeably upright and packed together with exaggeratedly long ascenders and descenders, the latter often and the former occasionally brought round in sweeping crescent shaped curves".

The hand took its name from the fact that it was particularly associated with formal records of the courts of Common Pleas and King's (or Queen's) Bench, although its use was not confined to them. In the 17th and 18th centuries the writing became increasingly stylised, to the point that it was virtually illegible to any reader unfamiliar with its conventions. The hand was banned from English law courts in 1731 by the Proceedings in Courts of Justice Act 1730, which required that, with effect from 25 March 1733, court proceedings "shall be written in such a common legible Hand and Character, as the Acts of Parliament are usually ingrossed in ... and not in any Hand commonly called Court Hand, and in Words at Length and not abbreviated". Even in the 19th century, however, an ability to read court hand was considered useful for anyone who had to deal with old court records.

actual manuscript in an archive or library. Are there any letter forms or characters that are distinct to you, which you would not see in a modern-day text?

Whan that Aprill with hise shoures soote
The droghete of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed euery veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour
Whan Zephirus eek wt his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in euery holt and heeth
The tendre croppes and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne
And smale foweles maken melodye
That slepen al the nyght with open eye
So priketh hem nature in hir corages
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
And Palmeres for to seken straunge strondes
To ferne halwes kowthe in sondry londes
And specially fram euery shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende
The hooly blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan þt they were seeke
Bifil that in that seson on a day
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To Caunterbury with ful deuout corage
At nyght were come in to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
Of sondry folk by auenture yfalle
In felaweshipe and pilgrimes were they alle
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde
The chambres and the stables weren wyde
And wel we weren esed atte beste
And shortly whan the Sonne was to reste
So hadde I spoken wt hem euerichon
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon
And made forward erly for to ryse
To take oure wey ther as I yow deuyse
But nathelees whil I haue tyme space
Er that I ferther in this tale pace
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoū
To telle yow al the condicioū
Of ech of hem so as it semed me
And whiche they were and of what degree
And eek in what array that they were Inne
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne
A knyght ther was and that a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out he loued chivalrie

Trouthe and honour fredom and curteisie
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre
And ther to hadde he riden no man ferre

(Transcription from The Multitext Edition, University of Sheffield, 2014)

Manuscript characters and letter forms

To help you learn about the different types of handwriting, the authors of Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website go into detail about the types of medieval script – Textura, Anglicana and Secretary – and when they appeared, and have also provided a guide for reading and studying medieval handwriting.

The Late Medieval English Scribes project (compiled by Linne Mooney, Simon Horobin, and Estelle Stubbs) goes into detail about the scribal hands of different manuscripts, with images of individual letters by each scribe. For example, this page shows examples of the scribal hand of the Ellesmere Chaucer, along with details of the borders, illuminated initials and miniatures, and the marginalia present in the manuscript. The handwriting of the manuscript's scribe, here identified as Adam Pinkhurst, features lower-case 'a's that stand above surrounding letters, triangular lower case 'd's, a 'barbed wire' decoration on the stem of a 'h', and a 'z'-shaped lower case 'r'.

There are also a number of special Middle English characters and letter forms that you may come across when analysing images of the Ellesmere Chaucer (as well as other medieval manuscripts), images of which are listed on the Harvard website. Here are some noteworthy characters:

- thorn, represented as 'þ' or 'ƿ', pronounced /θ/ "th".
- eth, represented as 'ð' or 'Ð', pronounced /ð/ "th".
- yogh, represented as 'ȝ' or 'Ȟ', pronounced /y/ "gh" or /j/ "y".
- wynn, represented as 'ƿ' or 'Ʒ', pronounced /w/ "w".
- ash, represented as 'æ', pronounced /æ/ (somewhere between "ah" and "eh").
- Minims: short vertical strokes used to form letters, with several making up a single or group of letters (e.g. in 'i', 'j', 'm', 'w').
- Macrons: indicate a missing 'm' or 'n', e.g. the word latoū means 'Latin'.
- Superscript characters: are a form of contraction marking missing characters (e.g. w^t for 'with').
- Punctuation: there is limited punctuation in medieval manuscripts, including the punctus (a short pause, separating clauses), punctus elevatus (a raised point, separating sentences), and virgula (similar to a forward slash '/', and representing a short pause of caesura, e.g. at the end of a line of verse).

Using the Harvard website for further guidance, can you spot any of these letter forms, characters and punctuation in the above image from the Ellesmere Chaucer?

Teacher Guidance

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to introduce you to our upcoming student activity, 'The codicology of the Ellesmere Chaucer manuscript, and visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale'.

This activity is designed to immerse students in the rich world of medieval manuscript culture, specifically focusing on the Ellesmere manuscript of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in the beginning, and then medieval and modern representations of the original text in the second part.

The first part of the activity, 'Handwriting, decoration and marginalia in the Ellesmere manuscript', will allow students to engage directly with the manuscript through transcription (via learning about palaeography) and analysis of the codicology of the manuscript. They will explore the manuscript's illuminations, decorative borders, and marginalia, developing their understanding of medieval handwriting and the aesthetic considerations of manuscript production. This hands-on approach will not only enhance their palaeographic skills but also deepen their appreciation of the manuscript as a historical artefact.

The second part of the activity, 'Illuminations and visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale', will introduce students to various visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale, a character from the Canterbury Tales. They will compare these representations, ranging from medieval illuminations to modern-day depictions in TV and film, with additional textual notes and translations alongside the textual description provided by Chaucer. This will encourage them to critically engage with the ways in which literature is interpreted and adapted over time, and how these interpretations reflect societal values and attitudes in the respective time periods.

This activity is not about producing perfect transcriptions or analyses, but rather, the activity is about fostering a deeper understanding of the Ellesmere manuscript, its historical context, and the process of textual transmission. The aim is to empower and encourage students to be critical about the medieval period, analyse the various sources adapted from the 'original text', and discuss, with others, about the ways in which medieval literature has been interpreted over time. It is also about encouraging critical thinking and discussion about the ways in which medieval literature has been interpreted and adapted over time.

I am confident that this activity will provide a valuable and engaging learning experience for our students, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback.

Commented [37]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Create an introduction for teachers for an edition of Chaucer, for a university student activity titled 'The codicology of the Ellesmere Chaucer manuscript, and visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale'. Use the following information provided in the activity as a guide.

Information provided in the activity:
[See below comments]

Commented [38]: Continued:
Activity 3.1. Handwriting, decoration and marginalia in the Ellesmere manuscript.

In this activity, you will develop a deeper understanding of the Ellesmere manuscript, by practising your transcription skills (using the above guidance on medieval handwriting), and providing your thoughts on the illuminations (e.g. decorative borders, character drawings) and marginalia (writing/text in the margins).

1. Choose two different pages from the Ellesmere manuscript. You may wish to use the two images we have provided below from The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (folios 136v and 138r), or access further images of the manuscript via the Huntington Library's digital collections.

2. For each page, select two lines of text that you find interesting. Provide a written transcription for these lines (do not worry about translating from Middle to Modern English). Remember to refer to the guides provided on the Harvard Geoffrey Chaucer Website and the L... [11]

Commented [39]: Continued:
Activity 3.2. Illuminations and visual representations of the Pardoner.

By now you will have familiarised yourself with the Ellesmere manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, with the chance to practise reading medieval handwriting and analyse some of the decoration and illumination present in this manuscript. In this activity, you will be introduced to different visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale, such as portrait illuminations from medieval manuscripts of the character himself (specifically, in the Ellesmere manuscript and the Cambridge Library Gg.4.27 manuscript), early modern representations of the Pardoner, and modern-day visual depictions of the Pardoner and his tale in TV and film. Each of the... [12]

Commented [40]: Continued:
How does the context in which the representation was created (e.g. medieval manuscript, early modern engraving, modern TV show) influence the depiction of the Pardoner?

How does the representation interpret the Pardoner's moral and ethical character, or the themes of sin and satire present in his tale?

How does the representation engage with the Pardoner's tale as an exemplum? Which aspects has the representation taken from the tale (e.g. features from the narrative, poetic form, structure, etc.), transforming them into a new piece? ... [13]

Best regards,

[Your Name]

Activity 3.1. Handwriting, decoration and marginalia in the Ellesmere manuscript

Activity: Analysing the Ellesmere Manuscript

Objective: To develop a deeper understanding of the Ellesmere manuscript, its decoration, illumination, and the process of transcription.

Instructions:

1. ~~1.~~ Choose two different pages from the Ellesmere manuscript. You may wish to use the two images we have provided below from The Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (folios 136v and 138r), or access further images of the manuscript via the Huntington Library's digital collections. You can access the manuscript online through the Huntington Library's digital collections.
2. ~~2.~~ For each page, select two lines of text that you find interesting. Provide a written transcription for. Transcribe these lines into modern English. Do not worry about translating from Middle to Modern English. You could Remember to refer to the guides provided on the Harvard Geoffrey Chaucer Website Harvard Geoffrey Chaucer Website and the Late Medieval English Scribes Late Medieval English Scribes project for help with reading and studying medieval handwriting (palaeography).
3. ~~3.~~ Analyse the decoration and illumination present on each page. Consider the following questions:
 - a. ~~a.~~ —What colours are used in the decoration and illumination?
 - b. ~~b.~~ —What images or symbols are depicted?
 - c. ~~c.~~ ~~e.~~ —How do these decorations and illuminations contribute to the overall aesthetic of the page?
 - d. ~~d.~~ —How do they relate to the text on the page?
 - e. Can you see any marginalia on the page? What might it symbolise?
 - f. Thinking about when the Ellesmere Chaucer was produced (between 1400 and 1405), and the time when Chaucer was said to have written The Canterbury Tales (c. 1387-1400), what might these decorations and illuminations symbolise in terms of the sociocultural climate of the late Middle Ages?
 - g. Which audiences would have had access to this kind of work?
 - h. Do you think the Ellesmere Chaucer and its illustrations might have represented what Chaucer intended for the Tales' dissemination?
 - i. Does it make a difference that this text was written in English by Chaucer (and the manuscripts produced by various scribes years later), versus the many texts in Latin prior to the late medieval period?

Commented [41]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Form an activity for university level undergraduate students, which follows this guidance that would have already been provided to them. [See above sections for the manuscript guidance] The activity should ask students to analyse two different pages of the Ellesmere manuscript, where they will provide a transcription of two lines of their choice from the manuscript, and a description of the decoration and illumination present in the manuscript.

4. Write a brief description of the decoration and illumination present on each page. Include your thoughts on how these elements contribute to the overall presentation and interpretation of the text, as well as the sociocultural context of the late Middle Ages.

5. Feel free to sShare your transcriptions and interpretationsdescriptions on our discussion boardwith the class. If you have used a different image to the one we have included, ensure to provide a link to the image.Discuss the similarities and differences in your interpretations.

6. How do your interpretations relate to broader discussion on medieval manuscript culture, and the process of textual transmission?Reflect on this activity. What did you learn about the Ellesmere manuscript, medieval manuscript culture, and the process of transcription? Write a brief reflection on your experience.

TheRemember, the goal of this activity is not to produce a perfect transcription or analysis, but to engage with the Ellesmere manuscript in a meaningful way. This activity will help you develop a deeper understanding of the manuscript, its historical context, and the process of transcription.

Activity 3.2. Medieval and modern representations of the Pardoner and his tale

Activity: Visual Representations of the Pardoner

Objective: To critically analyze and discuss the various visual representations of the Pardoner from the Canterbury Tales, from medieval to modern times.

Instructions:

1. Review the list of medieval and modern representations of the Pardoner provided.

2. For each representationrepresentation, you may want to consider the following questions:

1. —a. How does the visual representation of the Pardoner (or his tale) in this source compare to the description given in the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, as well as in his literary confession in his Prologue and subsequent Tale?

2. —b. What aspects of the Pardoner's character or tale does the representation emphasize or downplay?

—c. How does the context in which the representation was created (e.g.: medieval manuscript, early modern engraving, modern TV show) influence the depiction of the Pardoner?

4. —d. How does the representation reflect the cultural and societal values of the time it was created?

Commented [42]: Prompt for ChatGPT-4 playground: Using the below information, create an activity for university students which provides them with questions/prompts for discussing the various medieval and modern visual representations of the Pardoner from the Canterbury Tales. These questions should incorporate discussion of the visual aspects of the Pardoner in the Ellesmere and the Cambridge Library Gg.4.27 manuscript illuminations, as well as from other medieval and modern outputs which are listed in the below discussion:

Information already provided to students in an introduction:

"By now, you will have familiarised yourself with the Ellesmere manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, with the chance to practise reading medieval handwriting and analyse some of the decoration and illumination present in this manuscript. In this activity, you will be introduced to different visual representations of the Pardoner and his tale, such as portrait illuminations from medieval manuscripts of the character himself (specifically, in the Ellesmere manuscript and the Cambridge Library Gg.4.27 manuscript), early modern representations of the Pardoner, and modern-day visual depictions of the Pardoner and his tale in TV and film.

Browse through the different depictions below (some of which are links to external material such as IMDB and freely available texts), and discuss whether these representations of the Pardoner and his tale are 'accurate', based on what you have learned from ... [14]

Commented [43]: Continued:

List of medieval/modern representations:

An illumination of the Pardoner cropped from folio 138r of the Ellesmere manuscript (The Huntington Library, San Marino, California)

An illumination of the Pardoner cropped from folio 306r of the Cambridge University manuscript (Cambridge University Library)

The Pardoner depicted in William Blake's The Canterbury Pilgrims (1810), cropped from a large engraving of the entire pilgrimage

An illumination from a Czech manuscript (the Jenský kodex) by Janicek Zmilely, depicting 'Satan distributing indulgences' (c.1490-1510)

The Canterbury Tales, printed by Richard Pynson (1492), Ms. Sp Coll Hunterian Bv.2.12 (Glasgow University Library Special Collections Department: Book of the Month, 2004)

A carving from an elmwood chest panel housed at the Museum of London, depicting a scene from The Pardoner's Tale.

Images and drawings of the Pardoner and his tale in Mrs. H. R. Haweis' (1877) 'Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key' (published as an ebook in 2013)

Depictions of the Pardoner on the 'Visualizing Chaucer' website (a project that "documents through a bibliography and numerous images the history of illustrations of Chaucer's works")

The Pardoner in 'The Canterbury Tales' TV animated series (1998), voiced by Tim McInnerny

The Pardoner's Tale Animated (YouTube) ... [15]

3. —e. How does the representation interpret the Pardoner's moral and ethical character, or the themes of sin and satire present in his tale?

—f. How does the representation engage with the Pardoner's tale as an exemplum? Which aspects has the representation taken from the tale (e.g. features from the narrative, poetic form, structure, etc.), transforming them into a new piece?

You may want to discuss the following questions as part of a larger group:3. After analyzing each representation, participate in a group discussion using the following prompts:

1. —a. Which representation do you find most 'accurate' to the Pardoner's character and tale as described in the Canterbury Tales? Why?

—b. How do the different representations reflect changes in societal values and attitudes over time (e.g. in relation to a reliance on morals and sin, the representation of gender and sexuality, and the form and function of poetry)?

—c. How do the different representations engage with the themes of greed, deceit, and moral corruption present in the Pardoner's Tale?

—d. How do modern adaptations of the Pardoner's Tale reinterpret the character and his story for contemporary audiences?

2.

3. Can/should we rely on medieval and modern-day interpretations of the pilgrims and their tales to provide us with an accurate representation of Chaucer's intentions for the Canterbury Tales?4. Share your findings and thoughts on the discussion board.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers here. The goal of this activity is to encourage your critical thinking and discussion about the ways in which medieval literature has been interpreted and adapted over time.