

## Chaucer



Figure: Portrait of Chaucer in the Ellesmere MS (public domain: [source](#))

# Bureaucracy

- ▶ Laws
- ▶ Charters

# Bureaucracy

- ▶ Laws
- ▶ Charters
- ▶ Writs (Chancery)
- ▶ Balance sheets
- ▶ Taxation (Exchequer)
- ▶ Court documents

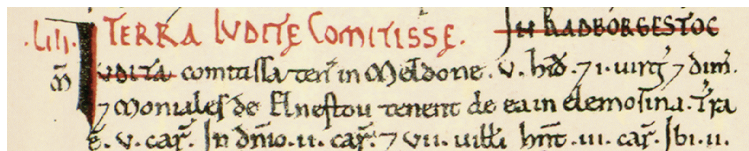


Figure: Domesday Book (public domain: [source](#))

# Family Background

- ▶ Ipswich → London
- ▶ Vintnery
- ▶ Wool export

## Essential Dates

- ▶ born c. 1342
- ▶ died c. 1400



**Figure:** Hoccleve's portrait of Chaucer  
(public domain: [source](#))

# Career

1357–	Page of Countess Elizabeth de Burgh
1359–	Soldier under Prince Lionel
1367–	Esquire of Edward III
1374–1385	Customs controller
1385–	Justice of the Peace in Kent
1386–	Member of Parliament
1389–1391	Overseer of the king's works
1391–	Deputy forester

# Works

Period	Date	Title	Genre
"French"	pre-1372	<i>The Romaunt of the Rose</i>	Dream Vision
	c. 1374	<i>The Book of the Duchess</i>	Dream Vision
"Italian"	late 1370s	<i>Anelida and Arcite</i>	Romance
	1379–80	<i>The House of Fame</i>	Dream Vision
	1380–82	<i>The Parliament of Fowls</i>	Dream/Debate
	1380s	<i>The Legend of Good Women</i>	Dream Vision
	1382–86	<i>Troilus and Criseyde</i>	Romance
	pre-1386	<i>Boece</i>	Metaphysics
"English"	1388–1400	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	Estates Satire
	c. 1391	<i>A Treatise on the Astrolabe</i>	Science
	1392	<i>The Equatorie of the Planetis</i>	Science

# Metre

Type	Works
Four-beat line (~iambic tetrameter)	<i>Book of the Duchess</i> <i>House of Fame</i>
Five-beat line (~iambic pentameter)	Other works
Rime royal (stanzas of 7 five-beat lines)	<i>Parliament of Fowls</i> <i>Troilus &amp; Criseyde</i> <i>Man of Law's Tale</i> <i>Clerk's Tale</i> <i>Prioress's Tale</i> <i>Second Nun's Tale</i> <i>Anelida &amp; Arcite</i>



# Pronunciation

Phoneme	Spellings	Examples
/æ/	<e, a>	lady, therto, was, atte
/i/	<i, y>	knyght
/y/	<u>	vertu
/u:/	<ou, ow>	housbonde
/au, eu, ou/	<aw, ew, ow>	lawe
/χw/	<wh>	whan, what, who, which
/j/	<3, y>	3ere
/χ/	<3, gh, g>	tho3te

## *The General Prologue*

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote  
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,  
And bathed every veyne in swich licour  
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;  
5 Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breath  
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth  
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne,  
And smale foweles maken melodye,  
10 That slegen al the nyght with open ye  
(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;

## *The General Prologue*

- 15      And specially from every shires ende  
          Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,  
          The hooly blisful martir for to seke,  
          That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.  
          Bifil that in that seson on a day,
- 20      In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay  
          Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage  
          To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,  
          At nyght was come into that hostelrye  
          Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye
- 25      Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle  
          In felawshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,  
          That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.

## *The General Prologue*

- The chambres and the stables weren wyde,  
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
- 30 And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,  
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon  
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,  
And made forward erly for to ryse,  
To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.
- 35 But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,  
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,  
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun  
To telle yow al the condicioun  
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
- 40 And whiche they weren, and of what degree,  
And eek in what array that they were inne;  
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

## *The General Prologue*

A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,  
That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
45 To riden out, he loved chivalrie,  
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.  
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,  
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,  
50 And evere honoured for his worthynesse;  
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.  
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;  
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,  
55 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.  
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be  
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.

## *The General Prologue*

At Lyeys was he and at Satalye,  
Whan they were wonne, and in the Grete See  
60 At many a noble armee hadde he be.  
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
And foughten for oure feith at Tramysse  
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.  
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also  
65 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye  
Agayn another hethen in Turkye;  
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.  
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.  
70 He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde  
In al his lyf unto no maner wight.  
He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.

## *The General Prologue*

But for to tellen yow of his array,  
His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.  
75 Of fustian he wered a gypon  
Al bismotered with his habergeon,  
For he was late ycome from his viage,  
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.  
With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER,  
80 A lovyere and a lusty bachelor,  
With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.  
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe.  
85 And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie  
In Flaundes, in Artoys, and Pycardie,

## *The General Prologue*

And born hym weel, as of so litel space,  
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede  
90 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.  
Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day;  
He was as fressh as is the month of May.  
Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde.  
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.  
95 He koude songes make and wel endite,  
Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write.  
So hote he lovede that by nyghtertale  
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.  
Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,  
100 And carf biforn his fader at the table.



# The Seven Cardinal Sins

1. Lechery (*luxuria*): excessive desire
2. Gluttony (*gula*): excessive indulgence
3. Avarice (*avaritia*): greed for material goods
4. Sloth (*acedia*): inaction
5. Wrath (*ira*): uncontrolled anger
6. Envy (*invidia*): desire for something that belongs to another
7. Pride (*superbia*): excessive self-admiration