

CHAPTER ONE

AT CALAIS GATE

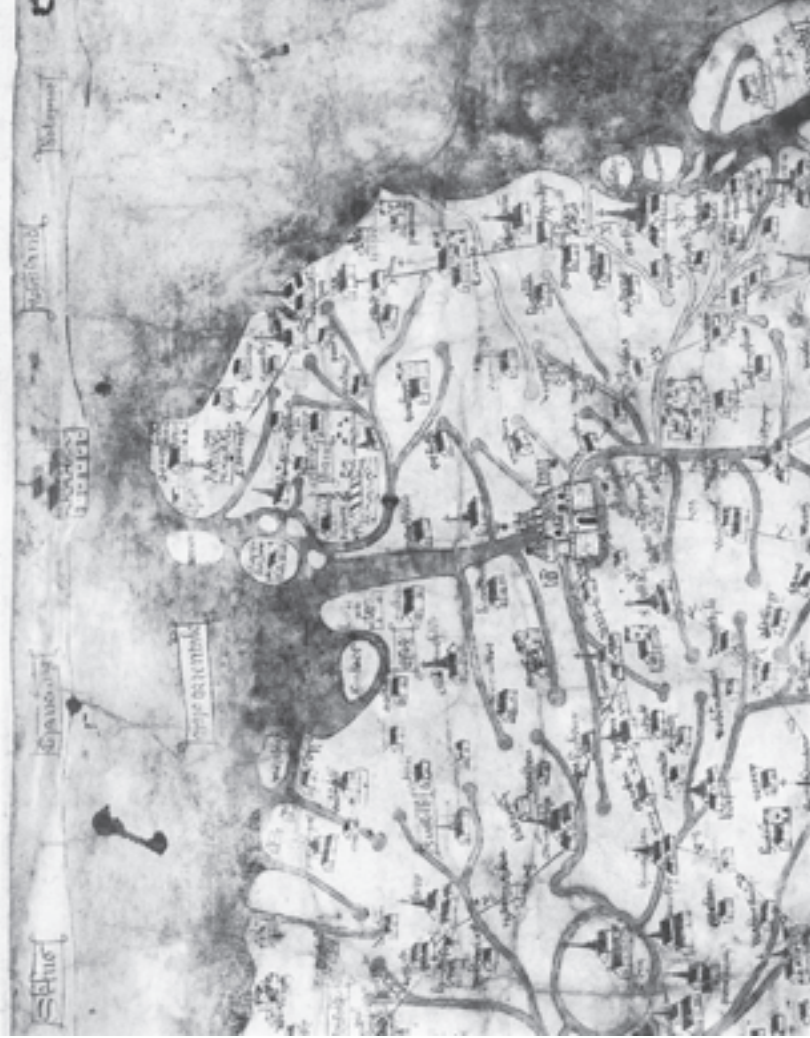
In 1749, William Hogarth painted “The Gate of Calais, or O the Roastbeef of Old England” (figure 1). We see, at left, the artist – Hogarth – practicing his art; above him we notice English coats of arms, picked out by a dramatic, diagonal shaft of light that leads us back down to the artist;¹ and at the center we see a drama played out around the massive, newly arrived, English joint of beef that supplies the painting’s subtitle. All this conspires to remind us that Calais stood upon English ground, or under English rule, for better than 200 years, which is to say from 1347 to 1558, a period taking in the lives of Chaucer, Margery Kempe, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and the recent cultural memory of Shakespeare. La Manche, or the English Channel, has come to assume a mythic role in English self-imaginings since the sixteenth century; but how did the sense of national identity differ for English writers when this seaway – between the white cliffs of Dover and the *pas de Calais* – formed in effect an extension of the highway from London to Canterbury? How did this strongly fortified English presence in continental Europe (boldly represented by the Gough map, ca. 1360, figure 2) affect those living on French or Flemish territory beyond this new frontier? How does their frontier experience (the term “frontiere” is often employed by Eustace Deschamps) compare with that of those living on either side of “St. George’s Channel” (that is, in Ireland and Wales)? And how does the history, culture, and literary production of the Calais colony align with greater and longer narratives of English global movement?



1 William Hogarth, *The Gate of Calais*. Cambridge University Library.

Channel Crossings

Such questions cannot be answered by a simple, precipitate leap back to the fourteenth century. We need, rather, to *work* our way back through time, since strong and complex muddled emotions accrete, century by century, round this prospect of an English Channel. The prospect continues to change. Until the summer of 1999, one in three people in Calais at any given time was English: duty-free shopping drew thousands across the Channel to hypermarkets lying just inland from the ferry terminals. The European age of duty-free goods came to an end in July, but the ferry companies, attempting to maintain their profits, have dropped the prices of their onboard merchandise to duty-free levels. The day-trip return fare from Dover to Calais now costs just six pounds; English shoppers – not permitted to shop until they have left English territorial waters – are reminded that they must actually disembark at Calais and touch French soil before traveling home again. They might wait at the Lighthouse pub (figure 3), which serves London



2 Detail from the Gough map, showing Calais as a fortified town (top), with London at center. Bodleian Library, Oxford.



3 Looking south from the Channel, Calais: foreground, The Lighthouse Pub; background, the often-restored Tour du Guet (known by the English occupiers as “The Watch Tower”). Photograph by David Wallace.

Pride; on your way in you can just see the tower from which *Calaisiens* learned of Edward III’s terms and conditions.

The Channel crossing today, then, is typically an unheroic, short-lived expedition in search of cheap tobacco and booze. And yet, as the white cliffs recede, many English voyagers are clearly or obscurely moved. Several years ago the most demonstrative travelers were teenage girls, hanging over the rails with their arms wide open, proclaiming “I’m the king of the world!” But there were also, as ever, knots of football fans in distinctive liveries muttering – as we approached the French coast – “fucking French peasants.” Such aggression, traditionally acted out by English soccer thugs going continental, taps deep historical roots. The Channel Tunnel, which emerges into sunlight several miles from Calais, clearly promises to change all this. But it was interesting to note, as the giant Japanese tunnelling machine broke through the last thin crust of French soil on April 27, 1989, that here too minds ran to earlier phases of cross-Channel history: to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, when Henry VIII met the French King Francis I between Ardres and Guines. This famous meeting was commemorated by giant, 20-foot polystyrene figures of the monarchs ranged either side of the

tunnel.² Such Styrofoam history is hardly propitious: Francis and Henry, who met only twice, thoroughly disliked and distrusted one another. Within weeks, Henry was plotting an alliance with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V of Spain. Charles actually came to visit Henry in London in 1522; Spanish and English monarchs then traveled to Winchester, where they contemplated Henry VIII as King Arthur (freshly painted on the famous Round Table).

The tendency to exaggerate and racialize the divide between England and the continental landmass was brought to a peak of acuteness by French as well as English writers in the nineteenth century. Hippolyte Taine, in opening his influential *History of English Literature*, imagines himself making the crossing as an early Germanic invader: *pays rude et brumeux*, he says: “a rude and foggy land, like their own, except in the depth of its sea and the safety of its coasts, which one day will call up real fleets and mighty vessels; green England – the word rises to the lips and expresses all.”³ “What impression,” he muses, “must such a land have made on the men of the South, the Romans of Caesar!” (I, p. 25). And how, later, might the Saxons have adapted to this island?

Il leur fallait vivre en chasseurs et en porchers, devenir, comme auparavant, athlétiques, féroces et sombres. Mettez la civilisation en moins sur ce sol. Il ne restera aux habitants que la guerre, la chasse, la mangeaille et l'ivrognerie. L'amour riant, les doux songes poétiques, les arts, la fine et agile pensée sont pour les heureuses plages de la Méditerranée. Ici le barbare, mal clos dans sa chaumière fangeuse, qui entend la pluie ruisseler pendant des journées entières sur les feuilles des chênes, quelles rêveries peut-il avoir quand il contemple ses boues et son ciel terni? (I, p. 6)

They must have lived as hunters and swineherds; grown, as before, brawny, fierce, gloomy. Take civilization from this soil, and there will remain to the inhabitants only war, the chase, gluttony, drunkenness. Smiling love, sweet poetic dreams, art, refined and nimble thought, are for the happy shores of the Mediterranean. Here the barbarian, ill housed in his mud-hovel, who hears the rain rustling whole days in the oak leaves – what dreams can he have, gazing upon his mud pools and his somber sky? (I, pp. 25–6)

Anglo-Saxonism, Taine suggests, cannot be leavened into Englishness without the sunny, civilizing powers of Gallicism.⁴ Constructions of the north and west – Scythia, Anglia, Hibernia – as gloomy and unknowable (from the normative perspective of “middle earth,” Mediterranean culture) extend back beyond Ovid in exile.⁵ Perverse acknowledgment of such notions might be

read in the studied, self-conscious boorishness adopted by elements of the English proletariat in crossing to Calais; they might be read, too, in the pragmatic, anti-theoretical, "I refute it thus" attitude maintained by elements of the English professoriate against the sophistications and abstractions of French theory. Once again (as this quotation suggests),⁶ the eighteenth century demands attention as a crucially determinative period for the formation of such attitudes. Consider this famous account of a Channel crossing, published in 1768:

– They order, said I, this matter better in France –
 – You have been in France? said my gentleman, turning quick upon me with the most civil triumph in the world. –
 Strange! quoth I, debating the matter with myself, That one and twenty miles sailing, for 'tis absolutely no further from Dover to Calais, should give a man these rights – I'll look into them: so giving up the argument – I went straight to my lodgings, put up half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches – "the coat I have on, said I, looking at the sleeve, will do" – took a place in the Dover stage; and the packet sailing at nine the next morning – by three I had got sat down to my dinner upon a fricassee'd chicken . . . incontestably in France.⁷

This passage, which opens *A Sentimental Journey*, Laurence Sterne's last novel, is both conventional and outrageous. Mr. Yorick, the narrator, begins by assuming the superiority of French manners. Challenged to substantiate this conventional, unexamined claim, he pragmatically elects to go to France. It is the sheer unthinking rapidity of his passage to Calais that is, by the standard of post-1558 Channel-crossing narratives, so outrageous: the notion that one can move from lodgings in London to eating fried chicken in Calais on a whim and with no regard to the crossing of borders. Cultural otherness soon asserts itself with the arrival of a figure chosen, it seems, to embody the very essence of un-Englishness: a Franciscan mendicant monk, begging for his convent. For this ingenuous English traveler, we deduce, there may be trouble ahead.

In 1829, a writer of negligible talent called James Albany published a slim volume entitled *The Englishman's Guide to Calais*.⁸ Albany was evidently a great admirer of Sterne. He absorbs whole pages of *A Sentimental Journey* into his narrative and, once landed in Calais, endeavors to track Sterne down: at Dessin's Hotel he finds a room with "STERNE'S CHAMBER" painted on the door and an engraved portrait of his hero over the fireplace (pp. 22–3). But his crossing to Calais could hardly be more different. Progress is premeditated and slow rather than heedlessly rapid. Three pages of

“directions for travellers” tell us of the various applications and visas that must be obtained at London, Calais, and Paris before attempting further explorations; the short water-crossing itself seems thrillingly momentous:

I had never touched foreign ground, and gazed on the opposite and then distinctly visible coast of France with the feelings one may suppose to be excited in the breast of a Mahometan pilgrim at the first glimpse of Mecca. (p. 15)

Albany is here standing on the beach at Sandgate, gazing out over what (as Sterne has reminded us) is little more than a 20-mile stretch of water. Yet his anticipated crossing seems to threaten, promise, or imply a change of religion, an exotic flight from the familiar self. Such promise heightens when his ship – called, it seems inevitably, the *Crusader* – comes in view of Calais:

For some time previously my eyes were fixed on the town glittering in the Sun and on the French hills in its vicinity, which are very sterile and ugly. Nevertheless, they were viewed by me with more interest than would have been created by the finest English scenery. Such is the effect of novelty, under whose magic influence we may be induced to prefer Picardy to Kent or Surrey. (p. 16)

Such alternating play between seduction and repulsion – a sense of sterility and ugliness, and a suspicion of magic – continues throughout Albany’s narrative. This makes it consonant, of course, with many English colonial narratives of this period written much further east of Sandgate beach. Like colonizing Englishmen everywhere, he finds familiar comforts abroad: an English newspaper called the *Pas de Calais*, published twice weekly and distributed to all parts of France; a series of English *cabarets*, such as the “Brittania [*sic*] Tavern and Coffee House,” and “a paltry cabaret y’clept *Robin Hood and Little John*” (p. 36). At the same time, he is titillated and amused by sights turned exotic by his own imaginings, such as what he calls “shrimp girls”: walking around the ramparts, he glimpses “between twenty and thirty shrimp girls, with naked feet, who came scampering towards us with mirthful importunity” (pp. 61–2).⁹ And in Catholic churches he notes “females of the poorer classes” praying to images:

These images in question are rudely carved in wood, and painted in a tawdry manner, resembling those placed at the head of ships. Upon that of the Virgin Mary, I noticed pieces of ribbon, chaplets of flowers, &c. (p. 46)

Albany frequents Calais churches and Calais theaters alternatively, almost interchangeably, in his search for spectacle and entertainment. In viewing a statue of the Virgin he shows no sense or knowledge of an English past continuous with this culture: one that was fond of tying ribbons and flowers to devotional objects, and of fitting little gold shoes or shawls to the statues of saints.¹⁰ And yet, of course, the very power which draws him to these continental objects might speak to, issue from, an encrypted English past (however dimly apprehended). His conscious frame of reference is unmistakably that of the English present, which sees the figureheads of English ships nosing into all corners of the globe to extend networks of commerce and – after Trafalgar – naval dominance. Even his view and taste of food-stuffs is colored by an intense (albeit humorous) anti-Catholic, anti-Gallic vein of nationalist sentiment. On a *jour maigre*, he notes, “the repast was not deficient in heretical viands” (p. 28). Some of the offerings at table – such as the spinach – are delicious, but others are outrageously awful, especially the mustard: “the mustard,” he notes, is “detestable, being strongly impregnated with garlic” (p. 28). What we have here, of course, amounts to more than adulterated condiments: it suggests cultural cross-contamination, miscegenation of the kind that Hippolyte Taine sees as integral to the evolution of the English character. For in England, garlic was (and in certain quarters still is) associated with smelly-breathed Catholic Europe; and mustard is the condiment chosen to dress “the roast beef of Old England,” the heroic viand that dominates the front and center of Hogarth’s *Gate of Calais*.

The Gate of Calais

Albany’s anti-Gallicism is most immediately rooted in memories of the Revolutionary Terror and the Napoleonic wars: he regrets that the English had not possessed Calais in 1793 (hence offering a launch-site for counter-revolution); he notes with satisfaction, on Calais pier, a foot-shaped bronze plate commemorating the first footfall of the returning monarch, Louis XVIII (pp. i–ii, 21). Hogarth’s anti-French animus is immediately fuelled by memories of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 and the invasion of England from Scotland, which got as far south as Derby. The destitute Highlander at the bottom right of *The Gate of Calais*, fled from the failed rebellion and spared the vengeance of Culloden, balances out the three ecstatic women or nutty nuns at left who, it seems, have discovered a new Veronica (Christ’s facial image) on the flank of a fish. Through the gateway we glimpse the poor of Calais, on their knees, fed by a Catholic eucharist; above them the dove of

the Holy Spirit flies (but only as painted on a pub sign). Partially obscuring the view into the city, the slaving corded friar lays one hand on his belly and his other on (or into, by way of *assay*) the English beef; the thin broth intended for the feeding of the Calisian poor, termed by Hogarth “the Kettle of soup meager,” is carried off to the right.¹¹ And observing all this, framed by musket and pike, is Hogarth himself: the heroic English artist/artisan, recording the follies and hypocrisies of this foreign, once-English world for native English consumption.

The hand clapped upon Hogarth’s shoulder in *The Gate of Calais* suggests that our artist-hero is about to be arrested; it also authorizes this image as a celebrated, if much elaborated, personal and historical event. In October 1747, the English Channel fleet won a decisive victory against the French off Cape Finisterre; the War of the Austrian Succession – eight years of continental and colonial conflict that killed half a million people to no conclusive end – was wound down the following year. In the summer of 1748, Hogarth took advantage of the reopening of France to English travelers. At the time of his traveling, England and France quite literally followed different models of time: France, having switched to the Gregorian calendar in 1582, was now 11 days ahead. England did not catch up until 1752, when the day after September 2 became September 14.¹²

By all accounts, Hogarth proved recklessly free and “clamorously rude”¹³ in his criticism of all things French. His companions managed to get him back to the Channel, but at Calais he took inordinate pleasure in the fact that the gate was, “it seem[s] built by the English, when the place was in our possession.”¹⁴ Having whipped out his sketch book, he settled to record the scene, but even as he sketched he was nabbed from behind and carted off to face charges as an English spy. Nearly 60 years earlier, in 1690, the playwright and architect Sir John Vanbrugh had been arrested at Calais in similar circumstances for (according to one report) studying the fortifications.¹⁵ Vanbrugh spent some 18 months in French prisons, including a spell in the Bastille in Paris. Hogarth was also rumored to have been “clapt into the Bastille”: but he was, in fact, merely put under house or hotel arrest before being bundled onto the next packet-boat bound for England. Nonetheless, the profile of Hogarth in tricorne hat from the *Gate of Calais* soon became – along with the famous portrait of the artist with his pug dog – a favorite personal emblem; the “Hogarth’s head” was subsequently adopted as a trade sign by printsellers in Cheapside and Fleet Street and by other tradesmen (such as tailors) elsewhere.¹⁶ Released as a print in 1749, *At Calais Gate* proved to be hugely successful.¹⁷ Tobias Smollett’s *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) features an English painter called Pallet who does time in the Bastille, a “tall,

long-legged, meagre” cook encountered on the road from Calais to Boulogne (clearly wandered from his beef-carrying duties in Hogarth’s print), and some sad-eyed English Jacobins. Exiled for “their adherence to an unfortunate and ruined cause,” these melancholy men go down to the seaside every day “to indulge their longing eyes with a prospect of the white cliffs of Albion, which they must never more approach.”¹⁸

The immense success of Hogarth’s *Calais Gate* among English printmakers, museum directors, and a commercially minded public might be attributed to its suggestive theme of buying British, in art as in beef: a sentiment that resonates down the decades to Mrs. Thatcher and mad cow disease.¹⁹ The superiority of English product is attested by the singing Frenchman in the ballad or “Cantata” that often accompanied Hogarth’s print (very likely published, Nichols tells his eighteenth-century audience, “under the sanction of our artist”):

Ah, sacre Dieu! Vat do I see yonder,
Dat looks so tempting, red and white?
Begar I see it is de *Roast Beef* from *Londre*,
O grant to me one letel bite.

(p. 292)

Following further famished apostrophes to the “Sweet Beef” by a Hibernian and others (“How sweet it would gang down”), a brief recitative, meditating on England as a place where “chains, and racks, and tortures are not known,” leads to the allegory of the *Ox* and the *Frog*. Elucidation soon follows:

Then, *Britons*, be valiant; the moral is clear:
The *Ox* is *Old England*, the *Frog* is *Monsieur*,
Whose puffs and bravadoes we need never fear.
Oh, the Roast Beef, &c.

(p. 295)

Hogarth’s print and its companion “Cantata” mix much humor and some nastiness with immense complacency. This inconsequential skirmish at the gateway to the continent is to be enjoyed as a garnish to knowledge of continuing English triumphs, east and west (India and North America). It confirms, above all, the wisdom and utility of English insularism; for, as Hogarth remarked (in his characteristically agrammatical way):

The first time anyone goes from hence to France by way of Calais he cannot avoid being struck with the Extreem different face things appear with at so

little distance as from Dover a farcical pomp of war, parade of religion, and Bustle with little with very little bussiness in short poverty slavery and Insolence (with an affectation of politeness) give you even here the first specimen of the whole country . . .²⁰ (p. 463)

Hogarth's casual mention of "slavery" here – in tacit opposition to English "liberty": this at the apogee of English global slave-trading – finds plentiful echoes in English public discourse in this period.²¹ And the more particular differences noted here by Hogarth recall those registered by eighteenth-century Englishmen traveling far beyond the Channel: colorful but inferior military traditions; egregious religious practices; insufficient grasp of sound business principles. Hogarth's view of Calais, of course, busily fabricates rather than passively discovers cultural difference, something that the painting, in portraying the artist at work within it, seems tacitly to acknowledge. Viewed diachronically, the painting reads as a defiant generic anti-type held up against the dominant prior discourse that had long surrounded Calais Gate: that of historical romance. Froissart, whose assiduously translated and oft-printed history was held in the highest regard in England until the mid-nineteenth century,²² unfolds a life-and-death liminal drama before Calais Gate, featuring an irate king, a pregnant queen, six courageous burghers, and the fate of a town; Hogarth gives us one scene, featuring stereotypical comic characters and an outsized joint of meat, which must end with the expulsion of himself, the English painter. The whole painting works to endorse the logic of this expulsion, for there is nothing in it to suggest a genuine desire to make contact with, to comprehend, an English past. Such contact would compel acknowledgment of common ground between the English past and the French present of the painting, something that Hogarth, in this giant blown raspberry of a painting, is loath to admit. His canvas works to widen, rather than to bridge, the gap between England and continental Europe. Viewed within the context of eighteenth-century national rivalries, the discovery of English arms upon French ground seems less like a desire to revive the past than a taunting reference to current global conditions: we, the English, have always already been there, done that, claimed this as our own.

And yet, however much Hogarth revises or exaggerates differences and distances from the continental past in this painting, his original moment of inspiration (the painting's chief subject, as all else flows from it) works in the opposite direction, as the past floods in to dominate the present. The painting's *punctum* is undoubtedly the fourteenth-century coat of arms, seen beaming down to the artist along a shaft of light; all other details (the

ecstatic nuns, the fat friar) might be read as gestures of appeasement, belatedly resisting this moment of collapsed time. Ironically, then, Hogarth both dissuades and persuades us to a reading of Froissart, the most powerful originator of Calais as a site of mythic, national struggle. Froissart's account greatly appealed to English audiences during later, imperially inclined centuries; the placing of Rodin's famed burghers of Calais (surrendering to Edward III) under the shadow of Big Ben, just outside the Houses of Parliament, Westminster, in 1915 caps Froissart's extraordinary run as a classic of English classroom history.²³ Most romancers and historiographers before Froissart tell of Britain's colonization by diasporic Romans and Trojans;²⁴ Froissart, in telling of outward English expansion, offers later centuries a new narrative (in what seems a Renaissance-like strategy) of beginning and forgetting.

Repeopling Calais

Froissart himself was neither French nor English: he was from Hainault, an independent county (now part of northeast France) with a distinctively internationalist culture.²⁵ Born ca. 1337, Froissart crossed the Channel in 1361 to serve Philippa of Hainault, Queen of England and wife to Edward III, as *clerc de chambre*. In 1365 he toured lowland and highland Scotland in the train of King David II; he also visited Severnside and the Welsh Marches with Edward Despenser. He was part of the English party that descended on Milan for the marriage of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, to Violante Visconti. On hearing of the death of Philippa while he was at Brussels, he elected to remain in the Netherlands. Here he first served Robert of Namur, a member of the family of the Count of Flanders who had married a sister of Queen Philippa. Robert, pro-English, commanded a ship in King Edward's fleet at the battle of Winchelsea; it was for Robert that Froissart began writing his *Chronicles* (in or shortly after 1369). Froissart's later patrons were both pro-French: Wenceslaus of Bohemia, son of the blind King John who fell at Crécy, and Guy de Châtillon, Count of Blois, who had extensive holdings in the Netherlands. Froissart's later journeying included a visit in 1388 to Foix and Béarn, a small principality on the north side of the Pyrenees. On Christmas Day of that year he sat down to dinner with his famously blond-haired, hunting-obsessed host, Gaston Phoebus (author of *Le Livre de la chasse*), with two Urbanist and two Clementist bishops, and with Sir William Willoughby (sent from John of Gaunt, then reportedly at "Lerbone," Lisbon).²⁶ In 1395 he made a second visit to England, where – on the very day that he presented

Richard II with a copy of his “book” – he heard and recorded an amazing tale of a seven-year captivity in Ireland from one Henry Crystède.²⁷

Froissart’s extensive, lifelong movements across Europe suggest remarkable continuities of culture. And his career profile – offering instructive points of comparison with those of Chaucer and Boccaccio – suggests that clerkly or writerly skills could be turned to chivalry, religion, and business (or any combination of the above). Froissart’s family were business people and money-lenders: his chronicle-writing characteristically blends feeling for chivalry with a sense of competent accounting. Good accounting, material and spiritual, was as much appreciated in clerics as in courtly chroniclers: having finished Book I of his *Chroniques*, Froissart took holy orders and became parish priest of Estinnes-au-Mont in Brabant. As chivalric historian – a vocation he never renounced – Froissart was sought out by courtiers (like Henry Crystède, unknown to history outside Froissart) wishing to preserve their deeds for posterity. But as a necessary complement to eyewitness testimony, Froissart was obliged to rework prior accounts (particularly those by the worldly canon of Liège, Jean le Bel).²⁸ This process, necessarily most pronounced in Book I, again invites comparison with Chaucer and Boccaccio, particularly their accounts of historical or epical romance. It also proved inviting to later authors, such as John Bourchier, Lord Berners, whose Englishing of the *Chroniques* was very promptly published by Richard Pynson, “printer to the kinges moost noble grace” (volume I in 1523; volume II in 1525).²⁹ Berners also translated the romance *Huon de Bordeux* from the French (thereby introducing Oberon, king of the fairies, to English literature). He also Englished *Petit Artus de Bretayne*, although professing himself unnerved by its “many unpossybylytees.”³⁰ But Froissart too was a romancer: his verse *Méliador* (containing the lyrics of his patron Wenceslaus) wanders widely over Scottish, English, Irish, and Breton territories (with an extended visit to the Isle of Man).³¹ The remarkable longevity of romance as a defining literary genre³² provides just one more reason for viewing the period of English presence in Calais, 1347–1558, as a coherent historiographical phase. There was, of course, continuity of religion, too: when Pynson first published Berners’s Froissart, Henry VIII was in good papal odor as *defensor pacis*. And, in this instance, there was continuity of place: Lord Berners, present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, was appointed deputy of Calais in December 1520; he died at Calais in March 1533.³³

The account of the siege and capitulation of Calais in Froissart and Berners is figured chiefly as a struggle between two distinct forms of polity: the will of a town, collectively represented through its six burghers, and the will of a prince.³⁴ The episode possesses a mythic charge in coinciding with the

period of Edward's foundation of the Order of the Garter.³⁵ Edward is incensed because the city has held out against him for almost a full year (allowing the Scots to invade England from the north). Sir Walter de Manny, English military commander at Calais, reasons with the king, but the king is absolute, requiring the absolute surrender of the town to his will and pleasure. Manny relays the bad news to the Governor of Calais, messires Jehans de Viane (Sir John de Vienne), who has requested that his starving people be allowed to depart in safety. "Saciés que," Manny declares (sounding like a public proclamation):

ce n'est mies se entente que vous en peussiés aler ensi que vous avés ci dit; ains est sa volonté que vous vos metés tous en se pure volenté, ou pour rançonner chiaus qu'il li plaira, ou pour faire morir. (p. 639)

Surely knowe for trouth it is nat his mynde that ye nor they within the towne shulde departe so, for it is his wyll that ye all shulde put your selves into his pure wyll, to ransome all such as pleaseth hym and to putte to dethe suche as he lyste. (I, p. 329)

Manny shuttles back to the king, who restates his intention of enforcing an absolute surrender "to his pleasure" (I, p. 329; p. 641 in French). Finally, however, Edward makes his famous proposal: that the six most prominent *Calaisiens* should leave the town bareheaded and barefoot, with halters around their necks and the keys of town and castle in their hands. A bell summons the people of Calais, men and women, to the market square; the assembly is asked for its collective opinion. At this point the richest citizen of the town, Eustache de Saint-Pierre, stands up and speaks:

"Signeur, grans pités et grans meschiés seroit de lassier morir un tel peuple qui ci a, par famine ou autrement, quant on y poet trouver aucun moiien. Et si seroit grant aumosne et grant grasce à Nostre Signeur qui de tel meschief les poroit garder. Je, endroit de moy, ay si grant esperance d'avoir grasce et pardon envers Nostre Signeur, se je muir pour ce peuple sauver, que je veoil estre li premiers." (p. 642)

"Sirs, great and small, great myschiefe it shulde be to suffre to dye suche people as be in this towne, other by famyn or otherwyse, whan there is a meane to save theym: I thynke he or they shulde have great merytte of our Lorde God that myght kepe theym fro suche myschiefe: as for my parte, I have so good truste in oure Lorde God, that if I dye in the quarell to save the residewe, that God wolde pardone me; wherefore, to save them, I wyll be the first to putte my lyfe in jeopardy." (I, p. 330)

Eustache here shapes a powerfully symbolic role for himself as savior, almost redeemer (“ce peuple sauver”) of his people; five other burgesses soon elect to join “my gossyppe Ewstace” (I, p. 330). Accompanied by the cries and lamentations of men, women, and children, the six pass through the gate of Calais and kneel before the English king:

“Gentilz sires et gentilz rois, ves nous chi six, qui avons esté d’ancisserie bourgeois de Calais et gran marceans. Si vous aportons les clés de le ville et dou chastiel de Calais, et les vous rendons à vostre plaisir, et nous mettons en tel point que vous nous veés, en vostre pure volenté, pour sauver le demorant dou peuple de Calais.” (pp. 644–5)

“Gentyll kyng, beholde here we sixe, who were burgesses of Calays and great marchantes: we have brought to you the kayes of the towne and of the castell and we submyt our selfe clerely into your wyll and pleasure, to save the resydue of the people of Calays.” (I, p. 331)

The French text, which had earlier told of the English king fiercely glaring at and intensely hating the *Calaisiens* – “car moult haoit les habitans de Calais” (p. 644) – goes on to tell of the momentary, rage-induced paralysis effected in the king by this last speech:

Li rois regarda sus yaus très ireusement, car il avoit le coer si dur et si espris de grant courous que il ne peut parler; et quant il parla, il commanda que on leur compast les tiestes tantost. (p. 645)

The king glared at them most fiercely, for his heart was so hard and swollen with anger that he could not speak; and when he spoke, he ordered that their heads should immediately be struck off.

Princely incapacitation through momentary rage – familiar as a nightmarishly recurrent moment in Chaucer – finds no place in the Englishing of Berners (servant to the princely and irascible Henry VIII). But Berners rejoins Froissart (albeit preferring hanging to beheading) for the famous scene of queenly mediation. This begins with Edward’s rejecting the last appeal for the burghers by his tireless military commander, Sir Walter de Manny:

A ce point se grigna [ground his teeth] li rois et dist: “Messire Gautier, souffrés vous, il ne sera aultrement, mès on fece venir le cope teste. Chil de Calais ont fait morir tant de mes hommes, que il convient chiaus morir ossi.”

Adonc fist la noble royne d’Engleterre grant humilité, qui estoit durement enchainete, et ploroit si tenrement de pité que on ne le pooit soustenir. Elle se

jetta en jenoulz par devant le roy son signeur et dist ensi: “Ha! gentilz sires, puis que je apassai le mer par deçà en grant peril, si com vous savés, je ne vous ay riens rouvet ne don demandet. Or vous pri jou humlement et requier en propre don que, pour le fil sainte Marie et pour l’amour de mi, vous voelliés avoir de ces six hommes merci.”

Li rois attendi un petit de parler et regarda la bonne dame sa femme, qui moult estoit enchainete et ploroit devant lui en jenoulz moult tenrement. Se li amolia li coers, car envis l’eüst couroucie ens ou point là où elle estoit; si dist: “Ha! dame, je amaisse mieulz que vous fuissies d’autre part que ci. Vous me priés si acertes que je ne le vous ose escondire; et comment que je le face envis, tenés, je les vous donne: si en faites vostre plaisir.” La bonne dame dist: “Monsigneur, très grans merci.”

Lors se leva la royne et fist lever les six bourgeois, et leur fist oster les chevestres d’entours les colz, et les amena avoecques lui en sa cambre, et les fist revestir et donner à disner tout aise; et puis donna à çascun six nobles, et les fist conduire hors de l’ost à sauveté. (pp. 645–6)

Than the kyng wryed away fro hym, and commaunded to sende for the hangman, and sayd, They of Calys had caused many of my men to be slayne, wherfore these shal dye in likewyse. Than the quene beyng great with chylde, kneled downe and sore wepyng, sayd, A gentyll sir, syth I passed the see in great parell, I have desyred nothyng of you; therfore nowe I humbly requyre you, in the honour of the Son of the Virgyn Mary and for the love of me that ye woll take mercy of these sixe burgesses. The kyng behelde the quene and stode styll in a study a space, and than sayd, A dame, I wold ye had ben as nowe in some other place, ye make suche request to me that I can nat deny you: wherfore I gyve them to you, to do your pleasure with theym. Than the quene caused them to be brought into her chambre, and made the halters to be taken fro their neckes, and caused them to be new clothed, and gave them their dyner at their leser; and than she gave ech of them sixe nobles and made them to be brought out of thoost in savegard and set at their lyberte. (I, pp. 331–2)

Here, as so often, Berners prunes out Froissart’s more affect-laden details: his king does not experience a softening of the heart in contemplating his wife’s pregnant condition (“ou point là où elle estoit”). But it is remarkable how neatly both writers shape the narration of this liminal episode to the generic expectations of romance. We have the irate monarch, exercising his will in haste but with absolute force; the weeping, mediating queen asking – by the rules of courtliness, tacitly understood – for her *don*, or favor; the king, momentarily caught in that suspensive “study” so familiar from Chaucer; the surrender of kingly will to queenly pleasure; the gracious reception of the captives. Froissart and Berners were both, we have noted, authors of

romance; the scene has the comforting finality of conventional romance closure. And yet when the next scene opens, the king soon voices a new ambition, a new *diktat*: all men, women, and children must leave Calais,

“car je voeil la ville repeupler de purs Englès.” (p. 646)

“for I wolde repeople agayne the towne with pure Englysshmen.” (I, p. 332)

This menacing, enigmatic (perhaps incomprehensible) statement troubles the lingering spell of romance with suggestions that our enjoyment of narrative closure was premature. Such a jolt to our reading pleasure compares remarkably with that experienced toward the end of Chaucer’s *Melibee*: the moment when Prudence – another dedicated wifely protector and mediatrix – enquires of her spouse what is to become of those enemies that he had (so it seemed) delivered into her hands:

“Certes,” quod he, “I thynke and purpose me fully / to desherite hem of al that evere they han and for to putte hem in exil for evere.” (7.1834–5)

The grimness of Edward’s resolution in Froissart suggests that his hatred of “chil de Calais” has never abated, and that he has never lost sight of the greater *agon* in which he and they are embroiled. Eustache de Saint-Pierre, we have noted, declared himself unwilling to see “un tel peuple” perish; he is willing to sacrifice himself “pour ce peuple sauver” (p. 642). The implicit hope or assumption here is that Calais will survive *as its people*, whatever becomes of the six burghers. But Edward, having honored or weathered the protocols of queenly mediation, delivers a devastating counter that turns substantive to verb: the burghers aim to save the *peuple*, but the monarch (by sheer force of will) will *repeupler* the town. Such re-peopling, staged within the ancient urban fabric, means that those locked out in exile will lose their collective identity as *Calaisiens*. Rather than being held to ransom, then, or subjected to foreign rule, the town of Calais is straightforwardly colonized. The model of proposed settlement differs markedly from that of classical narrative such as the *Aeneid*, from the Norman Conquest of 1066, or from the later colonialisms of Portugal and Spain. All these involve miscegenation (invading males marrying native women) and cultural admixture. Edward, however, proposes wholesale evacuation of native space and the importation of uncontaminated Englishness (“purs Englès”): an ideological modeling of non-interactive colonizing that would inspire Henry V at Harfleur and prove prescient of English activity further afield in centuries to come.³⁶

Edward's putative re-peopling of Calais "with pure Englysshmen" is enigmatic and self-contradictory *and thus* (postcolonial theory might suggest) characteristic of the modalities of colonizing discourse. What can "purs Englès" hope, expect, or pretend to mean? Can the notion of purity refer to those born on English soil? Hardly: the sons of Edward III (and the sons of his sons) were often born on campaign, at places like Antwerp, Ghent, and Bordeaux; his queen, "qui moult estoit enchainte," is about to give birth again.³⁷ Might then "purs Englès" refer to those of pure, blue, or royal English blood? This too is problematic: the English queen, like so many before or since, is of French-speaking stock. Can Edward be invoking an inchoate, evanescent sense of English nationhood? Perhaps. But it is worth noting that the only usage of the term *nation* in this narrative – and the only convincing exemplification of it – is applied not to England or France, but to Calais itself: "ceuls de la nation de Calais," Edward declares (in the Rome manuscript), "on fera morir, car bien il l'ont deservi."³⁸ The term *nation* here evokes close bonds of kinship, family, and personal ties rather than more abstract notions of political entity; its values are those of medieval *trouthe*, which are quite different from the more universalizing implications of modern *truth*.³⁹ The point is brilliantly made by the chronicling of the *Brut*, which tells how the besieged *Calaisiens*, "for defaute of vitailles and & of refreshyng . . . eten hors, houndes, cattes & mys, for to kepe her trouthe as long as they myghte" (emphasis added).⁴⁰ Edward, having conquered the town, co-opts such language by proclaiming his Calais cathexion a matter of flesh and blood: Calais, he declares, is "the thyng in this worlde that I love best, next my wyfe and chyl dren" (I, p. 336).⁴¹ Such passion seems less than all-consuming, however. Edward, having returned to Westminster, is here upbraiding the military commander to whom he has entrusted his much-loved city. This man, a soldier of fortune called Aymeris de Pavie, has been caught attempting to sell Calais to the French; French overtures were encouraged by the fact that "this Aymeris was a Lombard, and Lombards are by nature covetous."⁴²

Having returned to London, Froissart and Berners tell us, Edward had indeed initiated his plan "repeupler le ville de Calais" (the phrase is repeated, p. 649): 36 prosperous English burghers are sent out with their wives and children, plus more than 400 others of lesser "estat" (p. 649). Numbers increased daily, we are told, "for the kynge graunted there suche lyberties and franchysses, that men were gladde to go and dwelle there" (I, p. 333; p. 649). At this moment of modular shift from romance to urban chronicle in Froissart and Berners, it is worth asking how their accounts square with the greater historical record. Within days of entering Calais, it seems, Edward had

proclamations read in the north and east of England, promising liberties and commercial privileges to would-be Calais residents. About 190 such tenures were registered in the Patent Rolls of 1347, followed by analogous concessions in the French Rolls; other agreements, oral rather than written, may be inferred. Weak and unproductive people, “bouches inutiles,” had been expelled from Calais by the *Calaisiens* themselves in the course of the siege. A document in the French Roll ordains the expulsion of all remaining *Calaisiens*, excepting those expressly granted royal permission to stay. All “Calais clerks and chaplains” were driven out during the period of repopulation; in 1351, a new Augustinian house was established, to be inhabited exclusively by English friars. All chronicles agree that most citizens were forced to leave; legal traces of refugee *Calaisien* communities were left at St. Omer (a favored destination) and at towns as far afield as Carcassonne.⁴³

The English victory at Poitiers in 1356 (featuring the capture of the French King John) and the treaties of Brétigny and Calais in 1360 effectively transformed the English presence in those parts from de facto occupation to consolidated juridical suzerainty; English holdings now included the territory of Marck and three-quarters of the county of Guines. But excessive attention paid to the military and chivalric record – Froissart is particularly difficult to resist – often obscures (as R. R. Davies suggests) the true complexity of colonizing processes.⁴⁴ Indeed, much that Davies and his colleagues have to say about English infiltration of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales bears fruitful comparison with the experience of Calais and its marches. Calais might now be added to the list of “border communities” studied as constituent parts of the British Isles; the kinds of literature favored and produced there might also be read as “history on the edge,” joining and refining long-established traditions of British “border writing.”⁴⁵

The entrepreneurial and commercial skills of foreign settlers (as Gerald of Wales recognized) could prove more difficult to resist than straightforward military domination, especially if such newcomers helped revitalize the local economy. On the other hand, a medieval state (such as England) might become so engrossed in the business of holding together constitutive colonies, palatinates, principalities, and dominions that it finds itself overextended and thus prone to internal collapse.⁴⁶

Calais, we should note, appeared in the twelfth century only as a little fishing village in the territory of Marck.⁴⁷ By the early thirteenth century the town had evolved away from Marck; in 1330 it is designated subject to the duke of Burgundy, count of Artois. Guillaume de Machaut, who was (despite his age) pressed into military service to defend the sacred and royalist city of Reims against English attack in the winter of 1359–60,

contemptuously refuses to name this two-bit village full of foreigners in his *Fonteinne amoureuse*.⁴⁸ Following the 1360 treaty of Brétigny, Jean, duc de Berry (third son of King Jean II of France and Machaut's patron) has been forced to accept exile in England in order to release his captive father; as the poem winds down, poet and patron surrogates approach the "ville petiote" without enthusiasm:

En cest estat nous chevauchames
 Tant que sus la mer nous trouvames
 En une ville petiote,
 De barat pleinne et de riote.
 Or la nommez se vous volez,
 Car il y a moult d'avolez.

(ll. 2807–12)

In this way we rode along
 Until we found ourselves near the sea
 In a very small village,
 A place full of uproar and license.
 Now you name the town if you like,
 For the town is full of strangers.

In 1363, however, the Wool Staple was transferred to Calais: a move that enhanced its reputation for "riote" in France while decisively transforming its fortunes and international significance. Calais became what Bruges and Anvers once had been: the principal seat of English merchants in continental Europe. And it thereby attracted a great deal of capital to itself. The large military garrison needed to be fed and provided for: most provisions were imported from England, and the cost of maintaining the garrison was always high. In 1371–2, a particularly quiet period, no fewer than 1,112 regular men of arms were in English service "dans l'enclave calaisienne."⁴⁹ Eventually a mint was established in the town – still remembered in John Skelton's time a hundred years later – which led to complex, mutually dependent arrangements between mercantile entrepreneurs, soldiery, townspeople, town authorities, and customs officials.⁵⁰

It is naive to suppose, then, that Calais survived after 1347 in a kind of Babylonian exile, severed from its motherland, awaiting the return of its true French king (although Deschamps – as we shall see – worked hard to disseminate such a view).⁵¹ *Calaisien* identification with the kingdom of France was not, of course, as intense in the Middle Ages as later mythologization would have us believe; and besides, after Poitiers the French king spent



4 Auguste Rodin, *The Burgers of Calais* outside the Flemish-style Town Hall, Calais. Photograph by David Wallace.

much of his time as a prisoner in England. Symbolic reclamation of Calais is eloquently expressed by the placement of Rodin's magnificent sculptural group of six burghers, *Les Bourgeois de Calais*, immediately outside the Town Hall (figure 4). General De Gaulle, famously resistant to further English invasions of French-dominated space (the "Common Market"), actually married a local *Calaisien* girl at "l'église Notre-Dame" (figure 5): his wedding



5 Church of Notre Dame, Calais. Photograph by David Wallace.

reception was held in the Town Hall, where – between sips of *champagne brut imperial* – he might have admired the stained-glass windows commemorating the recapture of Calais from the English in 1558. But it is worth noting that the Town Hall itself had been rebuilt in fifteenth-century Flemish style in 1910, and that the medieval church doorway through which De Gaulle and his bride appeared on April 7, 1921, is unmistakably of English

design (figure 5).⁵² So rather than pressing the point that Calais might be regarded – for essential economic and political purposes – as an English invention, we might rather propose that Calais has always been a place of striking cultural hybridity.

Imagining Calais

In 1377 Edward III died and a new and more effective French king – Charles V – oversaw an invasion that pinned the English back into Calais; English overlordship would henceforth be restricted to the town itself and its immediate rural hinterland. In 1379, following the papal schism, ecclesiastical loyalties were transferred from the diocese of Thérouanne to that of Canterbury (a transfer that was never reversed). Thereafter, for six generations of English merchants, ecclesiastics, and soldiers, Calais became part of the accepted nexus of trade and preferment; a stopping place *en route* to continental Europe or to higher benefices or political places back home.⁵³ The peculiarly intense urban energy of Calais – with its volatile admixture of merchant capital, military might, royal dignity, and native provisioning – is glimpsed in a number of the Cely letters but fully exploited in the sixty-second tale of the Burgundian *Cent nouvelles nouvelles*.⁵⁴ This is set in July 1439, at the time of ransom negotiations for hapless Charles d'Orléans, who had been a prisoner of the English since Agincourt, 1415.⁵⁵ The male principles of the tale are John Stotton, squire and carver, and Thomas Brampton, cupbearer to the cardinal of Winchester; the female lead is the Dutch wife of the hotel-keeper Richard Fery. This wife, unnamed, serves (in narrative terms) to test the mutual devotion of the two young Englishmen, which is intense: they dress alike and carry weaponry and military gear of identical design; they usually share a bedroom and a bed. No harsh or angry words pass between them; they love each other as much or more than would two natural brothers (“se entreaymoient autant ou plus que pourroient faire deux freres germains ensemble,” p. 181). In reading this *novella*, one senses that the intensity of their relation is somehow epiphenomenal of that informing the town: a thought that often occurs in reading Boccaccian *novelle*, particularly those set in Florence. Crucial narrative details – the timing of watch-duty, the crucial mediation of a merchant – recall urban mechanisms employed in the *Decameron*. Italian literary precedent is acknowledged by the book's dedication to the duke of Burgundy, although the places featured here (we are told) are first and foremost northern European.⁵⁶ As a sharply delimited urban space containing such an overcapitalized, overmilitarized,

and (it seems) oversexed mix of social elements, then, Calais seems fraught with imaginative potential.

Such potential is under-exploited (but not entirely neglected) by English writers. Sir Thomas Wyatt, who served as a military captain at Calais, mentions the town in one short and intense poem. All Wyatt's poems are intense, but the intensity here springs not from Calais, but from the thought of accompanying Anne Boleyn, his putative lover, across the Channel in the company of Henry VIII: he travels, he tells us, "from Dover to Calais against my mind" (LIX, 4).⁵⁷ Calais, most probably the place where Anne finally decided to have sex with Henry, features here only as a geographical marker; the Channel seems like a well-worn road. Much the same can be said for the town's appearance in *The Book of Margery Kempe*: Calais, for Margery, is a nice place for a sit-down after laborious traveling. The overland approach to Calais, Margery pointedly observes, is full of sand and short of good lodging: an accurate characterization of the Calais Marches (reminding us of their proximity to Flanders).⁵⁸ More pointedly, the town of Calais itself offers the comforts of home: a return to English ground and an end to the epical journeyings of Book II. Chaucer (to complete this theme) was intensively involved with Calais in all phases of his many careers as soldier, squire, letter-carrier, and controller of customs; he did business at Calais, worked with merchants from Calais, and set off from Calais on many European adventures. Yet he mentions Calais not at all. We might imagine that Calais, for Chaucer, was a place equivalent to Heathrow airport (Terminal Three): a place to pass through, but not to dwell upon; a place at which to fear unforeseen delays; a place familiar, but not loved.

There is, of course, a degree of complacency in all this, a complacency that sets the seal on, is the proof of, successful colonial expansion. And it is in the course of one of his most charmingly complacent pilgrim portraits that Chaucer actually maps the space of Calais, as it were, in silhouette. His youthful, curly-haired, bubble-headed Squire – who spends his days singing and piping, jousting and dancing – has performed war service, we are told, "in chyvachie / In Flaundes, in Artoys, and Pycardie" (1.85–6): that is, in those regions immediately surrounding Calais and its Marches. Such a short list of campaigns shrivels beneath the lengthy roll call of battles undertaken by his father, the Knight (1.151–66). The sense is that they represent a reasonable beginning for one so young; greater things may follow, and his lady (for one) might be favorably impressed (1.187–8). The father, then, commands admiration for extending the limits of the faith at the remote frontiers of Christendom; the son merits less attention for his skirmishing immediately beyond English borders (a domain shared, perhaps, with the

tail-rhyme hero Sir Eglamour).⁵⁹ And the Yeoman bowman who completes this opening triad (1.101–17) attracts no notice as a fighting man; he has typically been regarded as a rural estate manager. But it is possible to view this group quite differently, as, in fact, representative of the basic English military unit of the Hundred Years' War. The old Knight lends his lineage and crusading prestige to the campaign; the son carries out the ruinous English tactic of “chyvachie” (1.85), *chevauchée* (involving the wholesale burning and destruction of villages, towns, and rural settlements); the yeoman fires the arrows that so often (to the secret chagrin of the English mounted classes) proved decisive in pitched battles (and sometimes, as at Agincourt, amounted to technological slaughter).⁶⁰

Chaucer's recurring historical presence at Calais, then, suggests knowledge of the costs of war comparable to that confined by Theseus (in his *Knight's Tale*) to the temple of Mars. “Costs” here is the operative metaphor, for *chevauchées* of the kind essayed by Chaucer and company before his capture early in 1360 (somewhere, he recalled in 1386, in the vicinity of Réthel)⁶¹ were primarily a tactic of economic warfare: “the defenders' means of production (crops, fishponds, mills, barns) were among the prime targets for destruction,” Christopher Allmand writes, “so that their economic capability was seriously undermined.”⁶² Later that year, Chaucer served as a letter-carrier from Calais to Westminster, thus playing a minor role in the treaty-making process that decisively enlarged English holdings in France (while, as a byproduct of the peace, cutting loose – rather than shipping home – thousands of soldiers who would terrify the pope at Avignon before descending into Italy and wreaking havoc – they and their descendants – for the next 200 years).⁶³

Italy might have been spared much unpleasantness had Edward III heeded the arguments of Langland's Lady Meed: for a king should give “mede to men” who serve him, including “aliens.”⁶⁴ Events leading to and ensuing from the treaties of Brétigny and Calais in 1360 are addressed by the A and B texts of *Piers Plowman* as matters of considerable topical urgency.⁶⁵ On the Sunday after Easter, 1360, an English army approaching 10,000 stood arrayed for battle outside Paris. On the following day, April 13, there was a terrifying hailstorm. When it seemed, as Froissart tells it, that the end of the world was nigh, Conscience (according to Langland's Meed) “crope into a cabane for cold of thi nayles.”⁶⁶ Interpreting such natural signs as divine command, the royal conscience was moved to the treaty table: and all, Meed says, through fear of a downpour (“and dreddest to be ded for a dym cloude” [B 3.193; see also A 3.180]). In retreating to Calais, the English army performs its usual feats of pillaging or *chevauchée*, robbing poor men of their brass (coins or utensils):

Withouten pite, pilour, povere men thow robbedest
 And bere here bras at thi bak to Caleis to selle

(B 3.195–6)⁶⁷

Meed goes on to berate Conscience for being excessively money-conscious: for “a litel silver” (some 3,000,000 écus), Edward was persuaded “to leven his lordshipe” (B 3.207), that is – such was the provision of Brétigny – to renounce his claim to the French throne.⁶⁸ Such renunciation was retracted long before Langland undertook the last major revision of his poem.⁶⁹ It is fascinating to note, however, that while the C-text drops some of the topical 1360s references, it actually expands meditation on the rights and constraints governing kings in disposing of conquered territory. For that which has been won through common enterprise, involving the efforts of fighting men under royal direction, cannot just be sold off for profit:

Unconnyng is that Conscience a kyndom to sulle, *Untitled*
 For that is conquered thorw a commune helpe, a kyndom or ducherie,
 Hit may nat be sold sothliche, so many part asketh
 Of folk that fauht therfore and folwede the kynges wille.

(C 3.243–6)

Such an appeal to the rights of common soldiers, as in some sense co-inheritors of conquered land, brings us far from Froissart, but it does suggest that the ideological territory of Langland’s Westminster – of which Froissart formed part through the 1360s – extends out to Calais.⁷⁰ For in each of these intense and pressurized localities we find commercial and royal calculation, profiteering, merchandising, war-mongering, merchant business, and the minting of coin (in the Tower as at Calais); such a heady mixture suggests a whiff of sexual opportunism memorably embodied by Mrs Richard Fery (the Dutch wife in the French *nouvelle*) and by Lady Meed. There is no evidence that Langland ever went to Calais, but (I am suggesting) there is every indication that he knew what went on there. At the very least, we know for sure – from all three versions of his poem – that he treated news from the French front, as purveyed by “mynstrales and messagers,” with extreme skepticism.⁷¹

The debate over the ethics and opportunities of continental warfare staged between Conscience and Meed is remarkable, especially when the King’s kinswoman seems to be winning the debate (“By Crist,” the King exclaims in A and B, “Mede is worthi the maistrie to have!”).⁷² For robustly unambiguous endorsement of Edward’s campaigns we may turn to the delimited

corpus of Laurence Minot (11 poems celebrating English border victories – against French and Scots – from the Battle of Halidon Hill, 1333, to the conquest of Guines, 1352). Minot’s taunting poem on the siege of Calais, addressed to “Calays men,” reads like an appalling antiromantic riposte to Froissart; a whole stanza is taken up by the starving citizenry’s accounting of animals eventually eaten.⁷³ The poem on the English capture of Guines taunts and challenges “men of St Omers” (XI.31, the chief resort of *Calaisiens* in exile) and John, the new French King:

Say now Sir John of France,	how saltou fare	<i>shall you</i>
that both Calays and Gynes	has kindeld thi care?	
If thou be man of mekil might	lepe up on thi mare	<i>great</i>
take thi gate unto Gines	and grete tham wele thare.	<i>your way</i>
		(XI.25–8)

“No notion in France,” Pierre Nora observes, “is so filled with memory as that of the ‘borders’.”⁷⁴ This particular challenge to retake lost cities is taken up, on the French side, with career-long intensity by the poet known to us as Eustache Deschamps.

Brulé des Champs and the English *frontière*

Deschamps feels the loss of Calais with particular sharpness; one of his *pastourelle* refrains emphasizes that there can be no peace so long as the English remain in occupation:

Paiz n’arez ja s’ilz ne rendent Calays.⁷⁵

This remarkable poem, written in August 1384, views political affairs from the perspective of peasants, men and women, who are gathering in the harvest some 40 miles south of Calais. This is a dangerous location. In 1370, Robert Knolles had set out on a march from Calais with 55 named criminals, all granted royal pardons: 43 were murderers and the rest rapists and thieves. In the Pas de Calais, as in Vietnam, there were complex systems of tunnels or *souterrains-refuges* that allowed the peasantry, quite literally, to sink below the earth.⁷⁶ Fat Margot is the first to swear (by her distaff) that there will never be peace until the English give up Calais (344.10). Berthelot is so frightened that he hardly dares get out of bed in the morning, “pour les Anglois qui nous sont destruisans” (“on account of the English, who go

about destroying us”). Guichard the brown, born at Seclin in French Flanders, believes that the English harbor the evil design (“mal engin,” 43) of forever hanging on to Calais (despite projected peace talks); all agree, in the envoy addressed directly to “princes,” that a peace settlement leaving Calais in English hands would be a filthy disgrace (“orde et meschans,” 54).

There is a double mystique at work in this poem: that of the immediate bond between peasants and princes (cutting out all political middlemen), and that of the land, the tilled and harvested ground itself. The first such mystique had proved potent in England just three years earlier; the second, while stronger in 1381 than in later English centuries, proved especially potent in France (which enjoyed a “long Middle Ages”).⁷⁷ Deschamps, in such poems, speaks primarily not as a royal apologist (or critic) but as one who owns, loves, and lives by the land. The point is convincingly if cheekily made in a *ballade* that dedicates a month to each of the poet’s patrons or “seigneurs,” beginning with the king in January and ending with December for the duke of Burgundy. The months from July to October, however, are dedicated to nobody since (so says the refrain) a man must see to his needs:⁷⁸ for he who wishes to maintain social estate (“qui veult estat tenir,” 19) must look to his meadows, gather in his corn, and pluck his grapes (17–21). While this poem may double nicely as a courtier’s excuse for absenteeism,⁷⁹ there is no doubting that Deschamps’ sense of personal identity is intimately bound up with his landholding: indeed, his very name, or change of name, speaks to this. In official documents before 1389 the poet is referred to as Eustache Morel or Eustache Morel de Vertus.⁸⁰ A letter of 1370 locates him at “Maison des champs,” an estate at Vertus; in 1380 this property and its environs were razed by an English *chevauchée*. “Now I am burned,” says ballade 835, “so my name is changed: / from now on I’ll have the name Burned-out⁸¹ of the Fields”:

Or sui tous ars, s’est mon nom remué:
J’aray desor a nom Brulé des Champs.
(835.7–8)

In 1388 Charles VI granted the poet funds to rebuild Maison des champs; the official adoption of the name “Deschamps” shortly thereafter likely marks his elevation to noble status.⁸² His very name, then, carries marks or memories of the endless Anglo-French conflict that structured both his identity and his deepest anxieties. Another of his properties was sacked in 1383, this time by Burgundians. And in ballade 1124 he looks back over 50 years of “universel guerre,” fuelled by “le debat de France et d’Angleterre” (8–9): in

such a world, he reflects, nothing can be truly or securely possessed (“nul n’en a vraie possession,” 13). When peace seems within reach, he takes the occasion to upbraid the kings of France and England alike (1171). For more than 50 years temples, towns, castles, and cottages have been destroyed or defaced by burning; the earth is fruitless and unworked; some places are uninhabited (as people at Calais, Ardres, and Guînes – towns just south and west of Calais – know all too well, 34–9). You are of one blood, he tells the French and English kings; your lust for power has shed the blood of 100,000 men:

Cent milles hommes sont mors pour vo pouoir
(1171.33)

Elsewhere Deschamps singles out individuals from this host of dead warriors for more particular lamentation. People “in Flaundes, in Artoys, and Pycardie” – the three territories that host the brief and cheerfully narrated excursions of Chaucer’s Squire (1. 86) – are here called to regret the death of a good knight:

Picardie bien plaindre le devoit;
Therouenne, Saint Omer et aussi
Flandre et Artois, et chascun qui congnoit
Le bon prodhomme et chevalier Sempy.
(13.24–7)

Picardy should well lament his passing;
So too Théroutanne, Saint Omer and also
Flanders and Artois, and each person who knew
The good man of valor and knight, Sempy.

“Sempy” is thought to be one Jean de Sempy, knight of Artois, who spent most of his life fighting the English (and occasionally the Flemings); following his death, his wife married another knight (who died at Agincourt). But the ballade might just as well have been written for his father, also Jean de Sempy, who was well-known in the environs of Calais (14) and “maintefoiz les Anglois desconfy” (16).⁸³ There is no doubting the subject of ballade 1366, however: Enguerrand de Coucy, who died as part of the crusader force defeated at Nicopolis in September 1396.⁸⁴ As a French prisoner of war in England, Enguerrand had married Isabella, the oldest daughter of Edward III; he was admitted to the Order of the Garter and created earl of Bedford. In 1377, however, Enguerrand surrendered his garter to Richard II, returned

to France, and then returned Isabella and her young daughter to England.⁸⁵ Deschamps' account of the life, death, and geographical range of his patron Enguerrand evokes a figure of the grandest dimensions: one famed in Lombardy (where, at Pavia, he founded the chivalric "Ordre de la couronne") and feared in Barbary (where, like his "anceserie" on the first crusade, he fought the Turks).⁸⁶ Yet he was ever wise and full of largesse (12): a "beau chevalier" (13), merciful to vanquished enemies and full of "douçour" (23). All this reminds us of the "verray, parfit gentil knyght" of Chaucer's *General Prologue* (1.72): yet it is instructive to note that Deschamps' listing of military campaigns makes no distinction between far-off and neighboring territories, the domains of Chaucerian Knight and Squire, father and son:

Osteriche sentit bien son levain,
 Flandres, Guerle, Savone et Barbarie,
 La frontiere de Calais, Picardie,
 D'Angolesme, de Guyenne environ
 (1366.25–8)

Austria felt the force of his levy,
 [So too] Flanders, Gueldre, Savone and Barbary,
 The frontier of Calais, Picardy,
 Angoulême, the environs of Guyenne

The application of the term "frontiere" to Calais here – and elsewhere in Deschamps⁸⁷ – balances curiously against the term used earlier to evoke Enguerrand's movement into Barbary; all noble hearts, we are told, should lament

La mort et fin d'Enguerrant le baron,
 Qui trepassa pour la foy en Turquie;
 Prions a Dieu qu'il li fasse pardon!
 (1366.8–10)

The death and end of the baron Enguerrand,
 Who passed over for the faith in Turkey;
 Let us pray to God that God might pardon him!

The verb *trespasser* in Old French implies the sense of movement from one sphere or domain to another. So it is that the phrase *trespasser de cest siecle* can mean *to die*; Enguerrand thus crosses one border in Turkey while attempting to invade another. From the evidence of this poem (and from

much else in Deschamps' vast corpus), little distinction is made between eastern and western frontiers, the Pas de Calais and the limits of Christendom: both entail matters of life, death, and lifelong struggle. In Froissart's *Meliador*, too, there is a sense that struggles at Scottish, Welsh, and Irish borders compare with those ongoing in "Prusse" (at the eastern limits of Christendom).⁸⁸ All this differs, of course, from the English experience of reading Chaucer, where matters of war play out far away or long ago, not on native, or insular, ground.

Chaucer and Deschamps develop from places that look remarkably alike. In registering such commonalities, however, we are ultimately led to grasp profound divergences between the polities and cultures each served. They were born within years of each other: just in time to weather, as infants, the Black Death that carried off (as the English were re-peopling Calais) one in three. Each was of humble ancestry: the name of Chaucer suggests descent from makers of *chauceure*, footwear or hose; Deschamps, late in life, was taunted as a *savetier*, a cobbler, by pedigree-minded nobles.⁸⁹ Each became attached to noble and then royal households, where they held the rank of *écuyer* or squire; each showed competence in a range of administrative tasks and served as juror and estate manager. Both fought in the Hundred Years' War. Chaucer started and gave up young, whereas Deschamps began campaigning somewhat later and was still in the saddle when he was approaching 50.⁹⁰ Each married a French-speaking woman who eased access to enlarged circles of courtly acquaintance. Each began (and indeed continued) writing in a French lyric tradition that was profoundly indebted to Guillaume de Machaut: Chaucer's earlier verse, in particular, shows massive absorption of Machaut; Deschamps' bond to the great French poet who "nourished" him ("qui m'a nourry," 447.5) was so tight that he was long rumored to be his nephew. Each poet developed (in part from Machaut) a fine sense of self-deprecating humor that broadened into skillful deployment of estates satire; each courted orthodoxy by putting into the vernacular the *De miseria condicionis humane* of Lotario dei Segni (later Pope Innocent III).⁹¹ And each developed an impressive range of international contacts, through travel or acquaintance, that extended to Bohemia⁹² and Italy.

When Deschamps travelled to Italy, however, he visited Milan and Pavia, but not Florence. His sense of connectedness with the Visconti, rulers of Lombardy, was an intimate, cradle to grave affair. Deschamps was born, he tells us, in the county of Vertus in Champagne (ca. 1340); his first known appointment was as juror of the Count of Vertus (1367). The count in question was Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who had acquired his title by paying 300,000 florins for the hand of Isabelle, daughter of King John (strapped for

ransom money in 1360). In 1387 Valentina, daughter of Gian Galeazzo and Isabelle, contracted a marriage with Louis d'Orléans (younger brother of Charles VI); Deschamps had served Louis, he tells us, since his birth in 1372.⁹³ When he eventually visited Gian Galeazzo at his Francophile Pavian court in 1391, then, Deschamps brought with him a 50-year accumulation of personal, cultural, and territorial ties. Ballade 1037, which finds Pavia “tresbeau,” manages to work in the Vertus connection (22) while commending the quality of wine and court life. In 1396, when Louis decided to have Valentina exiled as a witch, Deschamps defended her orthodoxy and royal lineage in a spirited ballade. Its refrain features the motto that Gian Galeazzo had inherited from Isabelle and made his own, “à bon droyt”:

A bon droit n'est d'elle un cuer plus loyal.⁹⁴

Chaucer's Visconti connections started quite early, too: his first master, Lionel, duke of Clarence, traveled to Lombardy in 1368 to marry Bernabò Visconti's daughter Violante (and died several months thereafter).⁹⁵ Ten years later Chaucer was himself dispatched to Milan to enlist the aid of Bernabò and Sir John Hawkwood, an English mercenary captain, to the English cause against France. His subsequent poetic accounts of Lombardy – testing the rhyming possibilities of *Lumbardye* and *tirannye* – suggest an unfavorable view of Viscontian polity: a view that accords with that vigorously promulgated by Florentines in their perennial struggle, ideological and military, against their northern neighbors. Florence is a city that Deschamps chose never to visit or praise. The name of “Florence” appears just twice in his vast verse corpus: once as a city comparing unfavorably with the French capital (“Riens ne se puet comparer a Paris,” 170.10, 20, 30) and once as the eponymous heroine of *Florence de Rome*, the French romance.⁹⁶ Modalities of artistic production in Florence – emanating from a republican regime that had exiled the nobility from public office – are inimical to the aesthetic of Deschamps: whereas the Frenchman produced a *Livre de memoire* (a versified chronicle of noble doings in verse, now lost), Florence produced the *Decameron*. And London and Westminster, of course, produced the *Canterbury Tales*, a text that has always invited comparison with its Boccaccian antecedent. Juxtaposition of Chaucer and Deschamps, then, can but accentuate the peculiar hybridity of English writing, itself epiphenomenal of peculiar socioeconomic complexities. For Chaucer was dispatched not just to Lombardy, but to Genoa and Florence too: cities involved in networks of commerce that kept Chaucer employed for long stretches of his career. These networks included the precocious cities of Flanders.

As large urban and banking centers with highly complex divisions of labor, Florence and the great textile-making cities of Flanders – Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres – had much in common. To the aristocratic outsider, such complexity spelled chaos: the Florentine regime of 1343–78 was eventually toppled by unemployed wool-workers; the Flemish cities fought one another and were wracked internally by dissent between weavers, fullers, and other trades. Deschamps, who rode wearily through several campaigns in Flanders, expressed his contempt for the region in a ballade beginning “Orgueilleuse, desloial, tricheresse” (“Proud, disloyal, treacherousness,” 18.1) that continues simply to pile up of terms of abuse: it is as if the very thought of Flanders jams the delicacy, wit, and syntactic intelligence of his courtly *forme fixe*.⁹⁷ Perhaps the most telling line is the characterization of the Fleming as “Envieuse subjuguer de noblesce” (“envious subjugator of nobility,” 19). Deschamps, as we have seen, had raised himself from humble origins to become the devoted servant of noble patrons. His wish to serve, praise, and commemorate nobility runs deep; deeper still is a desire to *perform* nobility, season by season, by demonstrating control of a self-sufficient land he can call his own. The presence of the English at Calais troubles this aesthetic in several ways. First, and most obviously, his much-loved country estates might be ruined by *chevauchée* at any time. Second, the development of trade at Calais, involving extensive contacts with Flemish and Italian cities, brings commercial and monetary practices to French territory that might contaminate the pure aristocratic ethos. All this, I would suggest, feeds the anger, contempt, and derision Deschamps feels for Calais, feelings most memorably registered by an actual visit to the town.

In August or September 1384, while negotiations with the English were going on at Boulogne, Deschamps was dispatched by Charles VI to inspect French defenses in Picardy.⁹⁸ It was very likely at this time that he decided, or was persuaded, to slip into Calais; the inevitable ballade report opens thus:

Je fu l'autrier trop mal venuz
 Quant j'alay pour veir Calays;
 J'entray dedenz comme cornuz,
 Sanz congié; lors vint .II. Anglois,
 Granson devant et moy après,
 Qui mi prendrent parmi la bride:
 L'un me dist: “dogue,” l'autre: “ride”;
 Lors me devint la coulour bleue:
 “Goday,” fair l'un, l'autre: “commidre.”
 Lors dis: “Oil, je voy vo queue.”

(893.1–10)

The other day I was miserably received
 When I went to see Calais;
 I entered the town like a fool,
 Without permission; two Englishmen came up
 (Granson riding in front and I behind)
 And seized me by the bridle:
 One said to me “dog,” the other “ride”;
 My coloring then turned pale:
 “Good day,” said one, the other: “come hither.”
 I said to them: “Yes, I see your tails.”

We do not expect Deschamps, of all people, to turn macaronic by featuring *English* words in a French ballade; such contamination neatly emblemizes the anomalous space of the French-founded, English-peopled town that he has just entered. The first of these thickly accented words, “dogue,” perhaps supplies the cue for Deschamps’ refrain: it is the English who – following a long-lived Anglo-Norman and French tradition – are tailed creatures (more probably devils than dogs).⁹⁹ This opens to the wider conceit of Calais Gate as hell mouth (with the English, across the water, in deeper states of damnation). Deschamps, though he does not yet know it, has been betrayed (“trahi,” 17). He is to be imprisoned, the most ill-schooled of the Englishmen tells him, and held forfeit (“vous estes forfaits,” 14). Oton de Granson, his traveling companion, refuses to vouch for him (“Pas ne l’adveue,” 18). Things look bleak for Deschamps at the close of the second stanza: Granson is his fellow poet, but he has long sided with the English as a retainer of both Richard II and John of Gaunt. When he speaks to the soldiers, Granson adopts their native tongue (“en Anglois dist,” 18).

Deschamps now “stretches his talons” (21) and prepares to fight. There is every evidence to suppose that Deschamps was a tough nut: he long held the rank of “huissier d’armes” under Charles VI, was employed by Louis d’Orléans as a sort of aristocratic repo man, and sometimes imposed his will over his rivals by sheer force.¹⁰⁰ At this delicate point in the proceedings, however, Granson extends a restraining hand, smiles, and then agrees to vouch for him. Deschamps and the English exchange final dog-and-tail insults before he is discharged to his escort, Granson:

“Chien, faisoit l’un, vez vous vo guide?”
 Lors dis: “Oil, je voy vo queue.”

(29–30)

“Dog,” said one of them, “do you see your guide?”
 I said to them: “Yes, I see your tails.”

Deschamps' discomfiture in this episode is neatly summed up by the line immediately following the one in which Granson (not yet having vouched for his safety) smiles: "from such love," he says, "I thought to have died."¹⁰¹ Such disorientation is sustained by the remarkable *rondeau* that recalls other aspects of this Calais visit. The insomniac unease here seems almost Joycean ("I hear an army charging upon the land"), although the last line drops us to Joyce in a lower register:

Et, d'autre part, oir la grant mer bruir,
 Et les chevaulx combatre et deslier?
 C'est a Calys; Granson, veillés jugier:
 Est cilz aise qui ne se puet dormir
 Et qui ne fait toute nuit que viller,
 Puces sentir, oyr enfans crier?

(596.8–14)

And, somewhere else, to hear the great sea crash,
 And the horses fighting and breaking off?
 That is [so] at Calais: Granson, judge my nights:
 Is he at ease who cannot sleep,
 Who cannot do anything all night but stay awake
 Bitten by fleas, hearing infants cry?

For Deschamps, memories of lying awake at night on the English *frontière* are clearly strange and estranging, particularly when shared with the English-speaking knight who mock-betrayed him. Granson is indeed the perfect border knight: his family, from Savoy, had developed close ties in England since the thirteenth century (when Peter of Savoy's niece, Eleanor of Provence, married Henry III).¹⁰² John of Gaunt's London manor, known as the Savoy (and sacked in 1381), had been willed to his ancestors by Peter; the name of Granson often shares space in John of Gaunt's Register with the less illustrious, less remunerative name of Chaucer.¹⁰³ Froissart, who names Chaucer but once, speaks approvingly of Granson throughout his *Chroniques*; and Chaucer, who never names Deschamps at all, speaks of his struggle to follow, "word by word . . . Graunson, flour of hem that make in Fraunce" (81–2).¹⁰⁴ Chaucer's Englishing of Granson's triple ballade as *The Complaint of Venus* may have been inspired as much by ties of Lancastrian affinity as by poetic admiration. It is possible that similarly complex calculations inform Deschamps' celebrated missive to Chaucer, ballade 285: a poem thought to date from the period when Philippa of Lancaster was (as we learn from *chanson royale* 765) under active consideration as a possible match for Charles

VI. These two poems, in turn, have been assigned to a period close in time to Deschamps' Calais adventure, namely 1384. But such datings are precarious, and attempts to fix poems to specific events come unglued rapidly because events themselves (as poets themselves seem well aware, even in the act of writing) shift with alarming speed. Deschamps' acclamatory ballade to Chaucer needs to be read, then, in light of the whole Anglo-French nexus adumbrated by this chapter so far, rather than as an isolated *pièce d'occasion*.¹⁰⁵

Read within such a nexus, then, the ballade might be considered as a spirited act of reverse or returned colonization. The first stanza acclaims Chaucer as a Socrates, a Seneca, an Aulus Gellius, and an Ovid in the island kingdom of Aeneas, the Giants, and "Bruth"; but the only actual poetic work going on is that of planting "the rose-tree for those who are ignorant of French," namely Chaucer's translating of *Le Roman de la Rose*. Contemplation of the French Rose on English ground ("de la rose, en la terre Angelique") is continued through the mock-etymology of *Anglia*, a name supposedly derived "from the Saxon lady Angela" ("d'Angela saxonne"). Chaucer's translation of the *Rose* has been executed "En bon anglès"; but "bons anglès" can never be that of a "purs Englès" (the mysterious dream of Edward III) since this island race was conceived through acts of miscegenation. At the Council of Constance, some 30 years later, the French were to argue that the English nation "should be placed back in the German nation, of which it is really a part and joined directly to it"; England does not merit or constitute a nation in its own right.¹⁰⁶ Chaucer, intent on establishing an orchard, thus does well to seek saplings "De ceuls qui font" ("from those who make": in France, of course): "Grand translateur," the ballad refrain teasingly runs, "noble Geffroy Chaucier."¹⁰⁷

In the third stanza, Deschamps represents himself as paralyzed or paralytic in Gaul ("en Gaul seray paralitique") until he receives a drink from Chaucer's Helicon. Such a stream, of course, is likely to refresh or reassure a Gallic poet, for Chaucer's verse will be either in French, or in an English springing from the transplanted *Rose*. Deschamps now names himself – "Eustaces sui" – and assures Chaucer that Sir Lewis Clifford will be bringing over some of his poems for planting ("de mon plant aras"). Having named a knight, Deschamps signs off (by way of envoy) by commending "noble" Chaucer as "glory of the esquires" (a non-noble rank Deschamps shared, but left behind in the late 1380s). He ends oddly by declaring that, in Chaucer's garden, he would fit in no better than a stinging nettle ("ne seroye qu'ortie"); "bear in mind," he continues, "what I said first of your noble plants," and do write back, "Grant translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier." There is no evidence that Chaucer ever did write back.

Deschamps, himself the victim of a practical joke orchestrated by Granson at Calais, was himself something of a joker; it is thus not out of character for him to adopt such a joshing tone with Granson's fellow poet, Chaucer. And Deschamps' praise for Chaucer as rhetorician, Ovidian, and Helicon-dweller compares closely with terms he had applied to Machaut.¹⁰⁸ But such talents would be misapplied (this poem seems to suggest) when turned from the international nexus of French courtly making and exercised on English ground in the English tongue. The disdain for the island territory of England that peeps through in this ballade receives more overt expression elsewhere in Deschamps. Ballade 211, for example, opens thus:

Selon le Brut de l'isle des Geans
 Qui depuis fut Albions apelée,
 Peuple maudit, tardis en Dieu creans,
 Sera l'isle de tous poins desolée.

(211.1–4)

According to the *Brut* of the isle of Giants
 (That was later called Albion) –
 A people accursed, slow to believe in God –
 The island will be utterly destroyed.

The prophet pressed into service here is Merlin, “leur prophete” (6); now that the territory is governed by a child-king (“gouvernée d'enfans,” 11), destruction is nigh (“Destruiz serez, Grec diront et Latin,” 19). “Greeks and Latins agree”: once again, England is isolated as an island of impure, miscegenated stock; Chaucer, as hybridizing *makere*, can hardly hope to escape these limits. His chief value, as “grant translateur” of French texts, may be to help facilitate the more full-blooded act of *translatio* that Deschamps is urging in this period (the mid-1380s): a full-scale French invasion of England. Ballade 211, dating from 1387, urges that French victory in Brittany may be followed by a crossing of the Channel; other poems cheer the active preparations for invasion that began at Sluys in August 1386. When French resolve wavers Deschamps castigates the troops, figured as 10,000 rats (plus accompanying mice) who are afraid to start swimming (1040.4–8) or as rodents (again) who are daunted by the task of belling the cat.¹⁰⁹ Calais, for Deschamps, remains the sticking point; for although nearby towns may have been recaptured from the English, “Forty years of singing *Requiem*” (as one ballade begins) cannot end until the English are expelled. This may entail moving beyond Calais (“d’oultre Calais,” 12) to England itself:

Passons la mer, ou, j'apperçoy trop bien,
 Sanz paix avoir, nous aurons guerre, guerre.
 (48.27–8)

Let us cross the sea or, I see only too well,
 Not having peace, we shall have war, war.

Deschamps had no interest in a new French conquest of England; he was simply outraged by the English presence in France and would support anything that might bring it to an end. His outrage is rooted, I would suggest, in a sense of nobility that would seek deep roots in the land that bore its name; to lie abed in Calais and hear English hoofs drumming over this territory was more than he could stand. France, in the imagining of ballade 1139, is alienated or displaced from itself by the very presence of the English:

France, tu es Jherusalem: se sente
 Et puet sentir estrange nascion,
 Qui tant as eu de paine et de tourmente
 Par les gens Bruth . . .

(1139.17–20)

France, you are Jerusalem: you feel yourself
 And may well feel yourself to be an estranged nation
 Since you have received so much punishment and torment
 From the people of Brut . . .

This is apparently the only time that Deschamps applies the term *nation* to the sum total of people living in the kingdom of France.¹¹⁰ Invasion and occupation – as in the case of Scotland – may speed the need for integrationist metaphors, although it is worth noting that (as with Froissart on Calais), the term *nation* is applied (here metaphorically) to a town or city rather than to a kingdom. And if France, like Jerusalem, is an “estranged nation,” the English are like infidels, like those “Saracen” invaders who, as Margery Kempe was to discover, controlled the holiest sites of Christendom.¹¹¹ The author of *Arthur and Merlin* simply concedes that if Arthur’s Britons are truly English, then the Anglo-Saxons are Saracens: such are the complexities and loose ends of English foundational myth that Deschamps was able to exploit.¹¹²

It is perhaps surprising to learn that Deschamps, so wedded to his country estates, was prone to praise cities.¹¹³ But there are good cities – like “Jherusalem” – and bad. A good and orderly city loves and submits to her prince; she prospers in his presence, accepts his largesse, and laments his

absence. Bad cities, denounced by Deschamps through many a poetic *vituperatio loci et populi*, rebel against their prince and imagine themselves able to manage without him. Calais thus stands as a Babylon on French soil, embodying everything despicable about England, for it is a heady, unpedigreed admixture of military prowess and merchant calculation, knight-hood and commerce, *otium* and *negotium*. Even when attempting to compliment Chaucer as the great translator of England, Deschamps barely conceals his contempt for the mishmash of Saxonism, gigantism, and derivative Gallicism over which “Chaucier” rules. Although English-speaking critics have been tempted to imagine that Chaucer’s verse might have received an appreciative audience across the Channel, there is little in Deschamps to encourage such a view.¹¹⁴ Indeed, the appearance of a fragmentary English lexicon within a ballade of Deschamps – “dog, ride, good day, come hither,” 893 – seems as calculatedly outlandish as the rude irruption of plebeian English names amid the measured Latinity of Gower’s *Vox Clamantis*.¹¹⁵

Deschamps’ land-locked poetics, fixated on nobility, might be read as epiphenomena of a localized, high-volume, low added-value economy, that of a primarily agricultural region with limited interest in intensive industrialization. Movement of commercial products through such terrain was difficult, since local toll stations occurred with great frequency. Florence and the Flemish cities, by contrast, are moderate-volume, high added-value economies, producers of cloths and other intensively worked commodities that could be shipped long distances for profit.¹¹⁶ These economies are intensively urban, relying on highly complex divisions of labor. England, characteristically, is attracted by both models of economy: excellent local soils facilitate an agriculture which manages (for the most part) to feed the population and to export fleeces abroad. Flanders, by contrast, must depend upon England for its wool and France for its grain. The precocious successes of Flanders and Florence in manufacturing, and in necessary adjunct enterprises such as moneylending, stir English dreams of emulation; they also expedite a peculiar alliance of Crown and commercial interests that grows more urgent as the demands and rewards of continental campaigning complicate the equation. Chaucer’s career was defined, to a very considerable extent, by movements within this Flemish/Italian/English nexus of capital, warfare, and wool.¹¹⁷ Calais, flanked by Flanders, Artois, Picardy, and the open sea, at once English and continental, military, mercantile, and (even) ecclesiastical, might be considered epiphenomenal of a Chaucerian poetic: for if Chaucer is to be imagined as the “poet of England,” this is what his England looked like in its most intense and concentrated form.

The hybridity imputed by Deschamps to Chaucer's England and egregiously exemplified by Calais does become, ultimately, the salient feature of Chaucer's literary opus. Chaucer's earliest writing does indeed conform to the pattern envisaged by Deschamps: the translation of the *Rose*, the steady absorption of French lyric and narrative models, the unremitting exaltation of courtly and aristocratic ideals. Such attachments survive Chaucer's first visit to Italy. The *Troilus* is certainly possessed of a new generic diversity, but its concerns remain chiefly aristocratic. And when Chaucer comes to incorporate a rare gem of a Petrarchan sonnet into his poetic fabric, he chooses to translate the 14-line Italian sonnet into 21 lines of English, which is to say, he aligns it – a gem in its appropriate setting – with the ballade tradition of Granson and Deschamps.¹¹⁸ In Boccaccio, however, he discovers a poet of undoubted cultural hybridity: a poet attached with equal passion to the French-derived court culture of Angevin Naples (hence the *Decameron's* rotating monarchy) and the mercantile ingenuities and street-smarts of Florence (hence Day VI). This emboldens him to recognize the peculiarities of his own social condition and so explore hybridities of class, style, and gender through the extraordinary compiling of his *Canterbury Tales*.

Such adventures in hybridity extend, however, to form: for whereas Boccaccio repeats himself through one hundred *novelle*, Chaucer compiles (his word) an extraordinary range of genres and registers, sacred and secular. In this, finally, he does seem (for all his continental encounters) English: more like the *compiler* of Harley Manuscript 2253 (or of other, similarly eclectic collections) than, say, the presiding spirit of University of Pennsylvania, MS French 15.¹¹⁹ English, but not insular (and here the Calais of Deschamps' imagining seems to place him most suggestively). To the one side lies Flanders: the territory narrated by Chaucer's Pardoner, the pilgrim who (so the next chapter argues) undoes all assumptions about the natural, the profitable, the pleasurable. To the other side lies France,¹²⁰ domain of an aristocratic ethos aspiring to a condition of pure art: "the note, I trowe, imaked was in Fraunce."¹²¹ In between lies Calais: an intermediate zone of imagining that was to become, over the next 150 years, essential to the staging of Englishness within and as part of Europe.

Keeping Calais: Music, Sex, and Reformation

From 1400 to 1558 Calais remained both a familiar and an exceptional part of English experience: it continued to function within extended circuits of trade, military calculation, diplomacy, and ecclesiastical preferment; it was

increasingly used as a “staging post” to signal English designs to greater Europe. Anxiety about the “keeping of Calais” sounds throughout this period: the Emperor Sigismund, who allied with Henry V in 1416, urged the English monarch to maintain Dover and Calais as the twin eyes of his kingdom:

“Kepe these too townes sure to youre mageste
As youre tweyne eyne to kepe the narowe see.”¹²²

A high percentage of English military expenditure was, in fact, dedicated to Calais. Control of the town thus became a matter of considerable importance during the Wars of the Roses; the Calais garrison was the closest thing to a standing army medieval English kings ever had.¹²³ It is thus not surprising that between 1457 and 1460 an anonymous “parson of Calais” should have chosen to translate the treatise on war, *Epitoma rei militaris*, by Vegetius (ca. 383–450 CE). The first vernacular translation of this work had been into Anglo-Norman, intended for “Lord Edward” (the future Edward I or Edward II of England); the Calais parson, siding against Edward IV, dedicates his work to Henry VI.¹²⁴ His *Knyghthode and Batayle*, which survives in three manuscripts, offers a very loose rendition of the Latin original (eschewing French intermediaries), with frequent digressions supporting the Lancastrian cause. The parson poet, who favors stanzas of eight lines in his “Proemium” and of seven in the poem proper, apostrophizes himself early on:

Now, person of Calais, pray euery Seynte	
In hevenys & in erthe of help Thavaile.	<i>To avail you of help</i>
It is, That in this werk nothing ne feynte,	<i>grows weak</i>
But that befor good wynde it go ful sayle	

(33–6)

The metaphor of sailing out in beginning a literary work is thoroughly conventional – the Calais parson owes much to Chaucer – and yet is here, we later learn, peculiarly apt. Late on in the poem we are treated to an imagining of an unruly sea, developed from slight hints in Vegetius. Anyone caught on board a ship in such a storm – “Heryn beleve me,” 2692 – fears for his life as the winds shake their chains:

Sum varyaunce of tyme will refreyne	
Her cruelous & feers rebelloun,	<i>Their</i>
A nothir helpith hem to shake her cheyne	<i>Another [wind]</i>
As all the firmament shulde falle adoun	
And Occian lepe ouer Caleys Toun;	

And after in a while it is tranquille
 And playne & calme, as who seith "husht, be stille!"

(2693–9)

In the last lines of the poem proper (before the "Epilogus" or "Recapitulatio"), Calais itself is apostrophized as a port desired as journey's end, but currently barred to the author (who remains all at sea, or, in his own terms of imagining, seasick):¹²⁵

Hail, port saluz! with thi pleasaunt accesse,
 Alhail Caleis! ther wolde I faynest londe;
 That may not I [-] oo, whi so? for thei distresse *happen constrain*
 Alle, or to deye or with her wrong to stonde. *either*
 That wil I not, to wynne al Engelonde!
 What might availe, a litil heer to dwelle,
 And worlde withouten ende abide in helle.

(2980–6)¹²⁶

At the beginning of the stanza, Calais is greeted as the longed-for, suggestively salvific port ("saluz"); by the end it is disavowed as a hell-mouth (recalling imagery previously employed by Deschamps).¹²⁷ The reason for this unhappy change is the Yorkist occupation; the poem proper ends with the Calais parson mourning for the house he calls his own, like a mid-Victorian having home thoughts from the sea:¹²⁸

O litel case, o pouere hous, my poort *shelter*
 Saluz thou be, vntil that ayer amende, *may you remain well*
 That is to sey, vntil an other soort *fortune/ group of people*
 Gouverne there, that by the kynge be sende.

(2987–90)

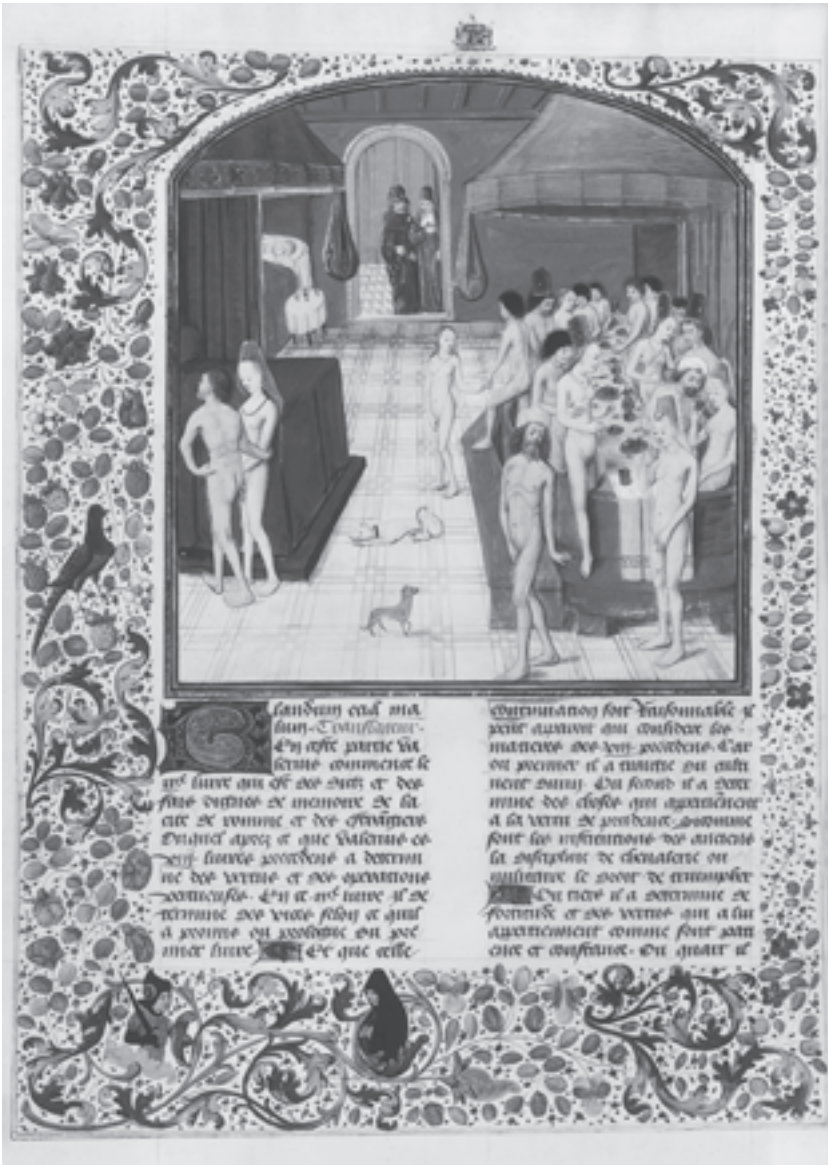
King Henry VI did indeed send forces to recover Calais for the Lancastrian cause during 1459–60, but they were not successful.¹²⁹ Calais remained a Yorkist outpost (and platform for invasion), which is why it features only intermittently in the earlier Paston papers.¹³⁰ In 1452 we have a letter from Calais by John Paston's servant, Osberne Mundeforde, promising John that if he comes to Calais with the King he "shul haue a stope of bere to comforte you aftere your trauaille of the see" (II.79); in 1457 John is told how the earl of Warwick, the captain of Calais, has thanked the people of Canterbury and Sandwich for "her gode hertes and vytaillyng of Calix" (II.172).¹³¹ We find John's son, John II, entertaining thoughts of traveling to Calais in 1472; on

November 6, 1473, he feels more urgently impelled to go, remarking to his brother John III that “it were better for me to be owt off syght” (I.469). John II here refers to his soured romance with Anne Haute: he has employed more than one “Rome-rennere” to try and dissolve the engagement (he tells John III on November 22, I.471). A little later in the same letter he asks his brother to retrieve “myn instrumentys” from a chest in his chamber at Norwich: “Thys most be had,” he adds, “to avoyde jdelnesse at Caleys” (I.472). The appeal of Calais as a bolt hole or remedy for soldierly fortunes had already occurred to John III, finding that “argent me fawlt” in 1469: “I preye yow remember Caleys,” he tells the older John, “for I am put owt of wagys in thys contré” (I. 551). In 1473 he was hoping to drop by Calais on his way back from pilgrimage to Compostella (I.465).

Once settled in Calais, John II looked to amuse himself and traveled out to Bruges to be measured for a new suit of armor; a letter of August 28, 1473, from Martin Rondelle, “Armurier de Monsire le Bastart de Bourgogne,” tracks him down following “nouvelles” from several “marchans de Calais” (II.409). Four years later other attractions of Bruges are joshingly evoked in another letter to John II at Calais, this time from one John Pympe (who shows impressive knowledge of the term *frowe* – which passed into Middle English from Middle Dutch *vrouwe*, thus betokening a woman of the Low Countries and hence often, in England, a prostitute).¹³²

Mary, we have herd sey that the frowys of Brvggys wyth theyre hye cappys have gyven sum of yow grete clappys, and that the fete of [her] armys doyng is such that they smyte al at the mowthe and at the grete ende of theyeh; but in feith we care not for yow, for we know well that ye be gode ynowh at defence. But we here sey that they be of such corage that they gyve yow moo strokys than ye do [to] them, and that they strike sorer than ye also. But I thinke that the English ladyes and jantylwomen, and the pore also, can do as well as they and lyste not to lerne of them no thing . . . (II.414)

Pimp and *clap* do not acquire their current sexual connotations until the seventeenth century (a medieval *pympe* is a flock of chickens), but this is still quite racy (and Pympe goes on in this vein for ten more lines). John II was vulnerable to such innuendo, since he had fled to Calais from Anne Haute (and at the time of Pympe’s letter was still not legally free of her). And of course, Calais was a garrison town and Bruges¹³³ catered to foreign visitors: a copy of Valerius Maximus’ *Faits et dits mémorables* produced at Bruges ca. 1475 (figure 6) contains a sumptuous depiction of a bathhouse; following a good meal in a large communal bathtub, men are led away to beds by women wearing nothing but elaborate headgear, the “hye cappys” evoked



6 Bordello scene in a public bath, Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* (produced at Bruges, ca. 1475). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS fr. 289, volume II, folio 414v.

by John Pympe.¹³⁴ The wool-stapler George Cely, who also arrived at Calais in 1473, had a series of mistresses before settling down with Margery Rygon in 1484. (She was the widow of a London draper who was sole heir to his property in Calais and its marches.) George's Calais career thus ended better than that of his wastrel brother Robert: having been given 30 shillings to pay for his lodging (brother Richard tells George, writing from Calais to Bruges), "he has playd hyt at dys, euery farthing"; plans are laid to bail him out of prison and ship him back to London.¹³⁵

It seems that John II did not much care for Pympe's insinuations: Pympe wrote him six times in 1477 and yet (so the last letter tells us) received no reply. His final effort to rouse his erstwhile friend sees him resorting to verse; Pympe now represents himself as the abandoned lover, forgotten by the foreign adventurer:

Fresh amoureuse sihtys of cuntreys ferre and straunge
 Have all fordoone yowr old affeccioun.
 In plesurys new yowr hert dooth soore and raunge
 So hye and ferre that, like as the fawcon
 Which is a-lofte tellith scorne to loke a-down
 On hym that wont was her federys to pyke and ympe,
 Ryht so forgotyn ye have yowr pore Pympe

(II.417)

Pympe carries on in this vein for four more stanzas. Better verse was read and sung at Calais by George Cely, such as this:

Go hert, hurt with aduersite,
 And let my lady thi wondis see;
 And sey hir this, as y say the:
 Far-wel my Ioy, and wel-com peyne,
 Til y se my lady Agayne.¹³⁶

George paid Thomas Rede, a Calais harper, 20 pence for the teaching of this song; he learned others in English, French, and Italian. These included "O rosa bella," deemed "one of the most famous songs of the century" and associated with the Este court of Ferrara (which correctly attributes its composition, in the best manuscript copy, to Englishman John Bedyngham, 1422–60) and "Votre tres douce" by Binchois (Gilles de Bins).¹³⁷ Cely also took harp and lute lessons, paid for instruction in the playing of 40 dances, and learned dance steps by employing "bills of footing"; he mastered new ways of tuning his harp and took refresher courses "to amende all my davnsys

a3en.”¹³⁸ He also seems to have combined singing, *daliaunce*, and French lessons at one point, to judge from some jottings on the back of a business letter sent to him in 1479.¹³⁹ John Paston III also appreciated the value of multilingualism in this part of the world: in 1476 he wrote to Lord Hastings, Lieutenant of Calais since 1471, recommending a young protégé:

He is well spokyn jn Inglyshe, metly well in Frenshe, and verry parfit in Flemyshe. He can wryght and reed. Hys name is Rychard Stratton. Hys moder is Mastress Grame of Caleys. (I.600)

Since virtually everything had to be shipped to or foraged for outside Calais – “ther is non hey to gete at Caleys,” complains John III (I.598) – the Pastons often ranged quite far afield. On January 17, 1475, John II planned to seek new horse and harness in Flanders and was hoping to see Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, besieging Neuss “iff I have tyme” (I.482). Neuss is on the Rhine, some 10 miles from Dusseldorf: it is not surprising that his next letter to his mother Margaret, dated February 22, 1475, is full of aches and pains (I.485). He promises “to daunce atendaunce” upon his mother just as soon as he can: but for now he is preoccupied by the labors that have taken him “nowe in-to Fraunce warde” (I.485). Such prolonged absences made Margaret, famously, a very full participant in this family enterprise. Their sense of territory, as a perennially traveling, minor East Anglian dynasty, was genuinely cross-continental. Some years after his return to England, the Calais connections of John III are recognized by an invitation for him to spy on “a soudiour of Caleis called John Jacob, of olde tyme dueling in Lynne.”¹⁴⁰

On February 18, 1492, William Paston III (the youngest surviving brother to Johns II and III) wrote excitedly of his plans “to goo to Caleys to purvey me of harneys and suche thyngys as I schall need besides hors” (I. 660). William clearly thought that in forming part of Henry VII’s invasion force he might remedy his fortunes. In 1477 the family matriarch, Margaret, had refused to pay his debts at Eton (I.379–80); two years later, he is looking into marriage prospects but is unwilling to leave school until he has perfected his poetry (“I lake no-thinge but wersyfyngge,” I.651). However, when Henry eventually set sail for France – at about the time Columbus was first sighting the New World – William was too sick to travel; by 1503 or 1504 he was so “troubelid with sekenes and crasid in his myndes” that his patron, the Earl of Oxford, sent him home to John III (II.486). In 1520, however, another William Paston sailed with a King Henry to Calais. This time it was William IV, son of John III; he was to attend Henry VIII at the famous Field of the Cloth of Gold.¹⁴¹

Henry VIII saw his meeting with the French king Francis “within our dominion, pale, and marches of Calys” as momentous, since it marked the first time (so a letter from Henry claims) that a French monarch had explicitly acknowledged English “preheminence” in this region.¹⁴² The following year saw Cardinal Wolsey, who had served as chaplain to the deputy of Calais earlier in his career, busily organizing the Calais conference designed to reconcile Francis and Charles V; Skelton satirically advises “Seigneour Sadoke” – who has taken the great seal of England with him “over the fome” – to come home “From Calys to Dovyr, to Caunterbury in Kent.”¹⁴³ In 1532, Henry met with Francis at Calais again, hoping to agree on a policy that would speed his divorce from Katherine of Aragon and marriage to Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth Barton, a nun of St. Sepulchre’s (just outside Canterbury, on the Dover road), had a vision which saw her mysteriously transported to the English-built “Churche of our Lady” (where General De Gaulle was married: figure 5) “at Caleis”: Henry was denied sight of “the blessed Sacrament in forme of breade, for it was takyn away from the Prest . . . by an angel, and mynystered to the seid Elizabeth then being there present and invisible.”¹⁴⁴ Elizabeth Barton was dragged the five miles from the Tower of London to Tyburn on April 20, 1534 (on a hurdle, with her hands roped into an attitude of prayer). Henry VIII, having employed his coronation oils to cure a little Calais boy of scrofula and (like the Wife of Bath before him) having offered to Our Lady of Boulogne, left Calais on November 13, 1532.¹⁴⁵ The 25 parishes of Calais assumed increasing importance throughout Henry’s reign as, in Diarmaid MacCulloch’s words, “an English listening post for the burgeoning variety of Continental Reformation,” and also as “a showcase to bewildered foreigners for the latest religious intentions of the king of England.”¹⁴⁶ Calais, with its now traditionally volatile mix of royal, mercantile, and military interests, saw a succession of struggles between Protestant evangelicals and conservatives, which got Cranmer’s full attention.¹⁴⁷ The 1,000-strong garrison, containing a high proportion of East Anglians and Welshmen, proved a potent site for disseminating ideas that might then be carried back to remoter corners of the realm.

In 1533 Lord Lisle, illegitimate son of Edward IV, succeeded Lord Berners as Governor of Calais and took up residence in the Staple Inn; a superb cache of letters gives a vivid, cumulative picture of this turbulent period up to 1540 (when Lisle died in the Tower of London).¹⁴⁸ Calais was by now no longer the plum posting it had been in earlier times (since the Staplers were in decline and there were ever-expanding civil-service opportunities at Westminster); Lisle informed Thomas Cromwell shortly after his arrival that the royal servants of Calais “were never so poor since it was first English” (I.548).

French and Flemish “strangers” began to predominate, although Lisle found it difficult to get his most wayward son, James, properly educated in French.¹⁴⁹ Sir Francis Bryan (recipient of Wyatt’s famous *Satire*) was appointed Lisle’s deputy: “I perceive that in Calais,” he wrote Lisle on October 24, 1533, “that ye have sufficient of courtezans to furnish and accomplish my desires.”¹⁵⁰ Intense disputes raged between the long-established mayoral family of the Whethills and the come-lately Lisles, climaxing in Lady Whethill railing at Lady Lisle in church (as Lord Lisle complains to Henry VIII) “in Pilates’ voice” (III.337). More conventional dramatic entertainment was provided (in 1538) by “an interlude which is called *Rex Diabole*”; Lisle, who had officiated at Anne Boleyn’s coronation banquet, was able to assist Henry in the affecting drama of her beheading (by shipping him an expert swordsman from Calais).¹⁵¹

We might expect the Lisle letters to differ from those of the Paston and Cely collections through their focus on royal and courtly, rather than mercantile, matters. Lisle certainly devotes considerable energy to building up an impressive network of friends, informants, and spies. His best man at court was Henry Norris: in 1533, Norris tells how Henry, having taken a great fancy to a spaniel given by Lisle to Robert ap Reynold, took it from the Welshman (I.597); three years later, however, Norris was “judged to be drawn, hanged and quartered” as a supposed lover of Anne Boleyn (III.360). Wheels of patronage are greased in the Lisle letters by a steady flow of gifts: Lady Lisle’s famous homemade marmalade and preserves, ornamental toothpicks, every conceivable item of clothing, and an endless parade of fish, birds, and animals (which might be kept as pets or eaten – or both, in succession) pass through Calais.¹⁵² All this, of course, depends upon networks of trade which could stretch extremely wide, as when the Admiral of France presents Lady Lisle with “certain small beasts, the which are come from Brazil” and which are said to eat “only apples and little nuts, or almonds” (II.316–17). Lisle himself traded across the Mediterranean to the Levant through his ship *Mary Plantagenet*; his ship-man John Cheriton tells lurid tales of Genoese betrayal at sea (“Jenevayes,” III.308) and of being “taken with Turks slave into Barbary” (V.40).

In 1535 Lisle was keen to convince Cromwell that he was working diligently with “the King’s Highness’ commissioners” in assessing “the yearly value of all the spiritual benefices and promotions on this side the sea”; he was, however, berated for not certifying Sandingfield priory and “the House of the Sisters by the walls of Calais.”¹⁵³ When Mary succeeded Edward VI in 1553 there was, of course, great consternation in Protestant quarters at the prospect of Calais returning to Catholicism. In 1557, the exiled English

Protestant Robert Pownall raged – in his pamphlet *An admonition to the towne of Callays* – at the prospect of Calais being now again subject to “papistical pigges” and their stinking doctrines; the “backslydinge Towne” was urged to return to the true religion, or it was surely doomed.¹⁵⁴ In 1558, the following year, the town did indeed fall to the French: “well might Queen Mary exclaim,” James Albany exclaimed in his dim-witted *Guide to Calais* of 1829, “that Calais would be found engraven on her heart. If her sister Elizabeth had then occupied the throne,” Albany continues, “perhaps Calais would at the present time have constituted a part of the dominions of George IV” (p. i). Albany knows, as every nineteenth-century English Protestant Sunday schoolboy knew, that Mary died with Calais “engraven on her heart” because John Foxe says so in his *Book of Martyrs*; vilification of Mary quickly became folded in with her “losing” of Calais.¹⁵⁵

Losing Calais: Braudel and Shakespeare

It is perhaps otiose to point out, against such a mighty tide of historiographical tradition, that the “losing” of Calais was as much an accident as the “finding” of it. In the summer of 1346, Edward III had landed in Normandy and marched south, east, and north before deciding to besiege Calais. In 1557 the French had assembled a sizable army in Picardy in case Philip II decided to march on Paris. Once it became clear that Philip had no such intentions the French army decided to redeem a disappointing year by embarking upon some “enterprise”: Calais was first mentioned on December 6 and by January 7 the town, poorly garrisoned and expecting no such threat, had surrendered.¹⁵⁶

Earlier in 1557, the Venetian ambassador to London had recognized the importance of Calais to England as a “second frontier” (the first being against the Scots) and argued that, without Calais, England “would consequently lose what is essentially necessary for the existence of a country.”¹⁵⁷ There was certainly a good deal of hankering for Calais throughout the Elizabethan period: Harley Manuscript 283 (in the British Library), for example, contains a “certyffycate” listing “persones dwelling in Callyce and Hames, as be well affected to the English Natyon.”¹⁵⁸ Richard Hakluyt, in thinking of people who might be fed by cultivating land discovered by Martin Frobisher’s “Northwest discouerie” of 1578, thinks “of a towne as big as Calice.”¹⁵⁹ And it is worth noting that the Calais region long remained one of the strongholds of Protestantism in northern France.¹⁶⁰ But no serious plans for reconquest were laid and, as it turned out, the Venetian ambassador was quite wrong to suppose that without Calais, England “would not only be

shut out from the continent, but also from the commerce and intercourse of the world" (p. xxv). Indeed, when viewed from longer historiographical perspectives, the losing of Calais may be read as integral to the rise of English fortunes. For as Braudel suggests, the *Calaisien* foothold forever enmeshed the English in the temptations of gigantism, those perennial battles against fellow European territorial powers that had absorbed so much blood and so many resources over two centuries (and would still be raging when Hogarth came to Calais). Once England had become (in Braudel's famous formulation) "an island," it was left to consolidate its own identity by attending to its other "borders" – Scotland, Wales, Ireland – and by expanding the reach of its sealanes south and west.¹⁶¹ By 1589 Richard Hakluyt felt emboldened to boast that the English, "in searching the most opposite corners and quarters of the world, and to speake plainly, in compassing the vaste globe more than once, haue excelled all the nations and people of the earth."¹⁶² Catholic Mary, the notorious "loser," might thus be rehabilitated – if we are still keeping score – as the only begetter of England as a global and imperial power: Duessa beats out Gloriana.¹⁶³

But it is Shakespeare rather than Spenser who deserves the last word in this account of Calais and its historical importance. The plays in which Calais figures most prominently are *Henry V* and (perhaps a little more surprisingly) *Richard II*. It is in Calais (glossed by the Norton editor as "French port town") that Nim and Bardolph, "sworn brothers in filching," think to steal "a fire shovel."¹⁶⁴ More instructive, however, is the way that Shakespeare holds Calais and England punctiliously apart – we will proceed "to Calais," the victorious Henry V declares, "and to England then" (4.8.119) – and the way he stumbles at the Channel. Such stumbling – more pronounced in the would-be Shakespearean *Edward III* – is evidenced by the egregiously lengthy Prologue that opens Act V. "Now we bear the King," the Chorus says, "Towards Calais" (5.0.6–7). Once there, we are to immediately imagine him (for six full lines) crossing the Channel, to be acclaimed by "men, maids, wives, and boys." Once landed, he is brought to Blackheath and thence to London, where he enjoys the kind of triumph reserved for a conquering Roman emperor (and perhaps for a conquering English hero, Essex, about to return from Ireland with "rebellion broachèd on his sword," line 32). We are then to imagine the King in London (line 35); then engaged in a hurried "back-return again to France" (42); then finally – after fully 46 lines, back where we started, in France. All this is very odd and, of course, thoroughly undramatic; it suggests that the foreign victories of an English monarch can no longer be registered until they are, quite literally, brought home to an English public.

In *Richard II*, Calais is bad news, bad news structuring a play about political disaster: Acts I and IV (the first and second halves of most productions) begin with trials and challenges to combat over malfeasance – corruption and murder – committed just across the Channel. In Act I, Bolingbroke accuses Mowbray of embezzling 8,000 nobles, intended for payment of the garrison at Calais, which he has spent on “lewd employments, / Like a false traitor and injurious villain” (1.1.90–1). At the opening of Act IV, in proceedings now governed by Bolingbroke, Bagot accuses Aumerle of having boasted that his arm “reacheth from the restful English court / As far as Calais,” where it chops off Gloucester’s head (4.1.10–12). The insular logic informing all this is entirely consistent with the famous sentiments of the dying John of Gaunt: England will do well to conceive of itself as a “sceptred isle,” as a “fortress built by nature for herself,” as a “little world,” a “precious stone set in the silver sea, / Which serves it in the office of a wall, / Or as a moat defensive to a house / Against the envy of less happier lands” (2.1.40–9). Calais – very likely the place where England’s Virgin Queen was actually conceived – should, by this logic, be left to its own continental devices: a logic strengthened by the fact that from 1596 to 1598, Calais was in the hands of the Spanish. Whether through short-term calculation or visionary genius, then, Shakespeare views Calais as a hot spot needing to be dumped in pursuit of ambitions at once more local and global. Such logic harmonizes sweetly with Braudel’s account of the loss of Calais as an accident, historically speaking, needing to happen.

The closing scene of Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, which negotiates the union between the victorious English monarch and the French princess, looks both backwards and forwards. Peace, according to the Duke of Burgundy, has been too long absent from “this best garden of the world, / Our fertile France” (5.2.36–7). “Alas,” he continues,

“ . . . she hath from France too long been chased,
 And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,
 Corrupting in it own fertility. its
 Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
 Unpruned dies; her hedges even-plashed
 Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair
 Put forth disordered twigs; her fallow leas
 The darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory
 Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts
 That should deracinate such savagery.”¹⁶⁵

(5.2.38–47)

This is a remarkably revisionary assessment of the ills of fifteenth-century France. For, as we have seen, the French countryside suffered not so much from the neglect of its landowners, riding to battle, as from the systematic destruction imposed by English *chevauchées* as a policy of war. Northern France has always been admired by the English (and by all Europe) as a fertile land; the idea that it needs the touch of a firm, seigneurial hand to be fruitful is a fanciful extravagance.¹⁶⁶ But such a notion is applied to other parts of the globe by the English after the loss of France: there are, it is imagined, fertile places whose fruitfulness can be realized by cultivated hands only through deracination of native “savagery.” The verb *deracinate* appears only twice in Shakespeare: here it looks directly to its etymological root in *radix*, suggesting organic ties to the soil, while glancing sideways at other, complex, evolving senses of *race* (denoting differences of gender, descent, or status between various groups of living things).¹⁶⁷ Some Shakespearean usages of the term evoke medieval senses of *nacioun* or family tie, as in speaking of “the Nevilles’ noble race” (2 *Henry VI*, 3.2.215); others drift between familial, ethnic, and statist terms of reference. But such a drift is not so great that Edward III’s desire to *repeupler* the town of Calais and Burgundy’s formula for deracinating the fields of France escape affiliation, for each sees *nativi* displaced or subjected to governing principles (and physical bodies) brought over from England. Except that, as we have noted, the fertile and unruly France of *Henry V*’s last act now stands in for territories and ambitions further afield. And here again, certain continuities of experience will link the “vile race” commanded by Prospero (and his historical surrogates) with medieval peasantry, the native people of the *vill*.¹⁶⁸

NOTES

- 1 What we see, precisely, are English leopards or *lions léopardés* and French fleurs-de-lys on separate escutcheons above the center gate, and the same motifs halved on escutcheons left and right. Edward III, conqueror of Calais, was the first monarch to quarter the Royal Arms of England with the French fleurs-de-lys: see *Historical Poems of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Rosell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 268.
- 2 See the photograph by Tim Bishop in *The Times*, April 28, 1989; Sidney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London: Seaby, 1992), p. 2. See further Eve Darian-Smith, *Bridging Divides: The Channel Tunnel and English Legal Identity in the New Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

- 3 See H. A. Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, 2nd edn., 4 vols (Paris: Hachette, 1866), I.5; Taine, *History of English Literature*, trans. H. Van Laun, 2 vols. (New York: Holt and Williams, 1871), I.25.
- 4 "It is the conception of the binding core of the English nation as the Anglo-Saxon race," Kwame Anthony Appiah writes, "that accounts for Taine's decision to identify the origins of English literature not in its antecedents in the Greek and Roman classics that provided the models and themes of so many of the best-known works of English 'poesy,' not in the Italian models that influenced the drama of Marlowe and Shakespeare, but in *Beowulf*, a poem in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, a poem that was unknown to Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare" ("Race," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 2nd edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 274–87 (p. 285). On "the need to emphasize the essentially Germanic origins of the English people and its institutions" that drove the accounts of nineteenth-century English historians, see Rees Davies, *The Matter of Britain and the Matter of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 21.
Seamus Heaney, having meditated on northernness in his collection *North* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), later impishly laid his Celtic hands on the Ur-text of Saxonism: see *Beowulf*, trans. Seamus Heaney (London: Faber and Faber, 1999).
- 5 See chapter 4 below, p. 191.
- 6 The stone-kicker is, of course, Samuel Johnson.
- 7 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy By Mr. Yorick*, ed. Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 3.
- 8 James Albany, *The Englishman's Guide to Calais, and thence by the route of Beauvais and Amiens to Paris, including an essay on colloquies and extracts from Froissart's Chronicles* (London, St. Paul's Churchyard: Hurst, Chance, 1829).
- 9 Hogarth's *The Shrimp Girl*, it is perhaps worth noting, is one of his most sensuous and vibrant paintings; it looks back to and extends established "street cries" traditions of English and European painting. See Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and a World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pp. 53, 408–9 and plate X.
- 10 On this past, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 166–9.
- 11 For an account of Hogarth behaving badly in France and Calais, see John Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth with a Catalogue of His Works*, 3rd edn. (London: John Nichols, 1785), pp. 49–50; Uglow, *Hogarth*, p. 464.
- 12 See "Calendar" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2002), 15.417–34 (pp. 430b–432b). There was considerable sectarian resistance to this long-anticipated change: see for example John Willes, *The Julian and Gregorian Year, or, The difference betwixt the old and new-stile shewing, that the reformed churches should not alter their old-stile, but that the Romanists should return to it* (London: Printed for Richard Sare, 1700).
- 13 Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes*, p. 50.

- 14 "There is," Hogarth continues, "a fair appearance still of the arms of England upon it" (quoted in Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth*, vol. 2, *High Art and Low, 1732–1750* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 353.
- 15 See Laurence Whistler, *Sir John Vanbrugh, Architect and Dramatist* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), pp. 22–3; Paulson, *High Art and Low*, pp. 445–6, n. 55.
- 16 See Paulson, *High Art and Low*, p. 55.
- 17 The painting was exhibited and reexhibited: in 1814, for example (the year of Napoleon's exile to and escape from Elba) it was on view at the British Gallery: see John Bowyer Nichols, *Anecdotes of William Hogarth, Written by Himself: with Essays on His Life and Genius*, etc. (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, 1833), p. 359.
- 18 *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, ed. James L. Clifford (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 194, 195.
- 19 "An English historical painting," Iain Pears has argued, "challenged the public to live up to their patriotic words and pay as much for domestically produced works as for foreign ones" (*The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680–1768* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 125; see also Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth*, vol. 3, *Art and Politics, 1750–1764* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), pp. 321–2. Hogarth resisted efforts to establish an Academy for painting in England; English painters (his canvas argues) have no need of such French-inspired affectations.
- 20 William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, ed. Joseph Burke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 227–8.
- 21 See Suvir Kaul, *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire: English Verse in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).
- 22 James Albany's *Englishman's Guide to Calais* (cited above) advertises (in its title) "Extracts from Froissart's Chronicles." The extent to which Froissart's *Chronicles* shaped English views of European medieval history through countless school-boy editions can hardly be exaggerated. F. Carruthers Gould, in his *Froissart's Modern Chronicles* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902), gives an illustrated account of the battle for Irish Home Rule featuring Sir Stuart de Parnell and Sir Gladstone Le Grand.
- 23 The copy of Rodin's statue may still be found in Victoria Tower Gardens, close by statues of Emmeline (1930) and Christabel (1959) Pankhurst.
- 24 See *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Acton Griscom (London: Longman, 1929); Lawman, *Brut*, trans. Rosamund Allen (London: J. M. Dent, 1992); Andrew Galloway, "Writing History in England," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 255–83.
- 25 "As the westernmost tip of the Empire adjoining France," Juliet Vale writes, "Hainault's geographical position helped ensure widespread diffusion of French literary and artistic influences within the county" (*Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context, 1270–1350* [Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1982],

- p. 44). "While [Froissart's] birthplace lay near to territory ruled by the Kings of France and his language was French," Geoffrey Brereton remarks, "his nationality was not" ("Introduction" to Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. and trans. Brereton [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968], p. 10).
- 26 See Jean Froissart, *Voyage en Béarn*, ed. A. H. Diverres (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), p. 112; Anthony Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 193–4.
- 27 Conveniently available in Froissart, *Chronicles*, trans. Brereton, pp. 409–17.
- 28 See Peter F. Ainsworth, *Jean Froissart and the Fabric of History: Truth, Myth, and Fiction in the Chroniques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 38–47, 87–90, 296–7 (the "Calais Gate" episode); Paule Mertens-Fonck, "Un chroniqueur Liégeois sur la route de Canterbury," *Bulletin de la Société Royale le Vieux-Liège* 13 (1997), 707–18. The well-dressed canon satirized for his knightly and veneral inclinations by Jacques de Hemricourt's *Le Miroir des Nobles de Hesbaye* resembles Le Bel and, Mertens-Fonck shows, compares suggestively with the Monk of Chaucer's *General Prologue*.
- 29 *The Chronicle of Froissart. Translated out of French by Sir John Bourchier, Lord Berners*, ed. William Paton Ker, 6 vols. (London: David Nutt, 1901–3), I, p. xv. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from Froissart follow the text of Berners (a text of considerable literary interest in its own right, not to be mistaken for a literal translation). Textual relationships between various manuscripts of Froissart are complex; unless otherwise indicated, my citations follow *Chroniques. Livre I (première partie, 1325–1350) et Livre II. Rédaction du manuscrit de New York Pierpont Morgan Library M. 804*, ed. Peter F. Ainsworth and George T. Diller (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2001).
- 30 "Translatour's Prologue," from *The hystory of the moost noble and valyaunt knyght Arthur of lytell britayne*, published ca. 1534 (probably by Wynkyn de Worde) as cited in Froissart, *Chronicle*, introd. Ker, p. xviii. Berners also made several translations from Spanish texts.
- 31 See Jean Froissart, *Méliador. Roman comprenant les poésies lyriques de Wenceslas de Bohême, duc de Luxembourg et de Brabant*, ed. Auguste Longnon, Société des anciens textes français, 3 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1895–9); Peter F. Dembowski, *Jean Froissart and his Meliador: Context, Craft, and Sense* (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum Publishers, 1983). On Froissart's debt to antecedent traditions of romance, chronicle, and history, see Ainsworth, *Fabric of History*, pp. 23–50.
- 32 See Helen Cooper, "Romance after 1400," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Literature*, ed. Wallace, pp. 690–719; Andrew King, *The Faerie Queen and Middle English Romance: The Matter of Just Memory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).
- 33 It is worth remembering that the Order of the Garter, the model for future chivalric orders, evolved during the period between Crécy and the taking of Calais: see Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1982), pp. 81–2.

- 34 Analogous conflicts were, of course, acted out between London and Westminster throughout this period: it would be rash to assume that the sympathies of Londoners were necessarily invested in the English king.
- 35 See Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, pp. 76–91. Almost all the founding Garter knights had fought at Crécy, the great English victory immediately preceding the siege of Calais (p. 86).
- 36 Henry V cleared the townspeople, recruited English immigrants, and (so fifteenth-century sources claim) burned the muniments of the town and its inhabitants' title deeds in the market place; according to Jacques du Clerq, some 1,500 English inhabitants left (not all returning to England) when the town passed to the French king 35 years later: see Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 1–2. For the argument that the “stuffing” of Calais with a substitute English population provided a precedent for Henry V's policies at Harfleur, see C. T. Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy: The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 50–1.
- 37 To a daughter, called Margaret of Calais (1347–69).
- 38 Froissart, *Chroniques. Début du premier livre. Edition du manuscrit de Rome Reg. lat. 869*, ed. George T. Diller (Geneva: Droz, 1972), p. 840; Ainsworth, *Fabric of History*, p. 298.
- 39 For a superb account of the shift “from a truth that resides in people to one located in documents,” see Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 41–164 and *passim*.
- 40 *The Brut. Edited from MS Rawlinson B 171*, ed. Frederick W. D. Brie, Part II, Early English Text Society, os 136 (London: EETS, 1908), p. 300.
- 41 “Tu scès,” Edward tells Aymeris, “que je t’ay donnet en garde la riens ou monde que plus ayme apriès ma femme et mes enfans, le chastiel et le ville de Calais” (p. 654).
- 42 “Et s’i enclina, pour tant que cilz Aymeris estoit Lombars, et Lombart sont de leur nature convoiteus” (p. 654).
- 43 See John Le Patourel, “L’occupation anglaise de Calais au XIVE siècle,” *Revue du Nord* 33 (1951), 228–41 (pp. 228–30); Dorothy Greaves, “Calais under Edward III,” in *Finance and Trade under Edward III* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1918), pp. 313–50 (pp. 314–15, 337); Henri Platelle and Denis Clauzel, *Histoire des provinces françaises du Nord, II: Des principautés à l’empire de Charles-Quint* (Dunkirk: Westhoek-Editions, 1989), pp. 150–4.
- 44 “The English diaspora within the British Isles may have been seignorially led,” Davies remarks, “but it was demographically and economically determined” (*The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093–1343* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], p. 149). See further *The British Isles 1100–1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections*, ed. R. R. Davies (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988).

- 45 Michelle Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 3. For a brief but cogent comparison of events in Calais with impositions of English communities in Wales and southern Scotland, see Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy*, pp. 50–1.
- 46 Calais is thus configured with the palatinates of Chester, Durham, and Lancaster; with the dominions of Gascony and the Channel Islands; with the principality of Wales and its Marches; with Ireland, and the Isle of Man. For the argument that tensions between the English center and these peripheral territories had much to do with the Wars of the Roses, see Ralph A. Griffiths, “The Provinces and the Dominions in the Age of the Wars of the Roses,” in *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Sharon D. Michalove and A. Compton Reeves (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1998), pp. 1–25.
- 47 See Alain Derville, “Une ville vers 1300: Calais,” *Revue du Nord* 72 (1990), 737–56. Derville estimates the population of Calais to have been between 13,000 and 15,000 by 1300; this made it the third largest town in Artois (and a very large town by contemporary English standards): see Derville, “Calais avant 1347: La vie d’un port,” *Revue du Nord*, special extra-series volume, 1 (1986), 189–213 (p. 190). Alain Joblin estimates a population of approximately 15,000 for the region made up by Calais, Gravelines, and Guînes around 1700; Calais itself had 5,000 inhabitants (“Le protestantisme en Calais aux XVIe–XVIIe siècles,” *Revue du Nord* 80 (July–December 1998), 599–618 (p. 600).
- 48 Text and translation follow Machaut, *The Fountain of Love (La Fointeinne amoureuse)*, ed. and trans. R. Barton Palmer (New York: Garland, 1993). See also Jacques Le Goff, “Reims, City of Coronation,” in Nora et al., *Realms of Memory*, 3.193–251.
- 49 Platelle and Clauzel, *Histoire*, p. 151. The head count includes Calais and its satellite towns: some 320 men at Ardres and others at places such as Guînes, Marck, and Sangatte. Such numbers “font de Calais un phénomène presque unique de concentration des troupes en Europe” (p. 151).
- 50 See the remarkable collection of essays in *Les champs relationnels en Europe du Nord et du Nord-Ouest des origines à la fin du Premier Empire: 1er Colloque Européen de Calais*, ed. Stéphane Curveiller (Calais: La Municipalité de Calais, 1994). In “The Bowge of Court,” Ryote swears [by] “The arms of Calyce, I have no coyne nor crosse!” (John Skelton, *Poems*, ed. Robert S. Kinsman [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969], line 398); fifteenth-century English coins, Kinsman notes, were often marked with a cross on the reverse side (p. 142). Countenance swears “By the arms of Calais” in *Magnificence*, line 675 (ed. Paula Neuss [Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980]).
- 51 Alain Derville writes of Calais before 1347 as “le centre actif et peuplé d’une petite région riche et populeuse”; after 1347 it becomes “une ville coloniale, une ville de garnison tremblant de peur au côuer d’un pays dépeuplé, parfois devasté, toujours manacé.” And yet between 1347 and 1558, he continues (in

- comparable hyperbolic vein), Calais becomes a town to reckon with across Europe: “l’histoire de Calais, c’est d’abord l’histoire générale de l’Europe” (*Histoire de Calais*, ed. Derville and Albert Vion [Dunkirk: Westhoek, 1985], p. 55).
- 52 See Geneviève Moll, *Yvonne de Gaulle: L’Inattendue* (Paris: Éditions Ramsay, 1999), p. 37 (for the wedding reception menu); Christine Clerc, *Les de Gaulle: Une famille française* (Paris: Nil éditions, 2000) (featuring the epigraph, from a 1916 letter from Charles to his father Henri, “Notre chère et vaillante famille, parcelle de nostre glorieuse patrie”); Philippe Ratte, *De Gaulle: La vie, la légende* (Paris: Larousse, 2000), p. 29.
- 53 It is remarkable to note, for example, how continuously well informed the Benedictines at York were about various aspects of Calais. In 1376, a knight visiting their chapter house speaks of (assumes their prior knowledge of) “lestaple des layns et autres marchandys . . . a Kalays”: see *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333 to 1381. From a MS. Written at St. Mary’s Abbey, York*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), p. 81, but see *passim* too.
- 54 See *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, ed. Pierre Champion (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1977), pp. 180–5; *The One Hundred New Tales (Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles)*, trans. Judith Bruskin Diner (New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 234–8.
- 55 See *Charles d’Orléans in England, 1415–1440*, ed. Mary-Jo Arn (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2000); A. E. B Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
- 56 The tales to come, we are told, are set in “parties de France, d’Alemaigne, d’Angleterre, de Haynau, de Brabant et aultres lieux.”
- 57 Sir Thomas Wyatt, *The Complete Poems*, ed. R. A. Rebholz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), LV.4 (p. 96); Kenneth Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1963), pp. 23–4.
- 58 See *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech and Hope Emily Allen, Early English Text Society, os 212 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1940), pp. 239–41 (and see chapter 2 below, pp. 95–6).
- 59 The Middle English *Sir Eglamour*, a tail-rhyme romance dating from the late fourteenth century, has no discernible French antecedents. “Artois” is not viewed as an exotic or indeed exotic-sounding location in this poem: indeed, it rhymes with *was* and *place* and the manuscript evidence suggests it should properly be entitled *Eglamour of Artas*. See *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, ed. Frances E. Richardson, Early English Text Society, os 256 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1965), pp. ix–xlili. The father of Chaucer’s Sir Thopas was born not far from here: see chapter 2 below.
- 60 See John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976). Archers are celebrated in a broadside entitled “Agincourt, or the English Bowman’s Glory”: but this dates from 1665, a much later phase of the complex afterlife of the 1415 battle. See Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), pp. 302–4. In his *History of the Battle*

- of *Agincourt* (London: Johnson, 1832), Sir Harris Nicholas, K. H., includes an extensive listing of retinues, pp. 331–404.
- 61 See *Chaucer Life-Records*, ed. Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 23–8.
- 62 *The Hundred Years' War: England and France at War c.1300–c.1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 56; *Chaucer Life-Records*, p. 27. See further the excellent account of Nicholas Wright, *Knights and Peasants: The Hundred Years' War in the French Countryside* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 68–9. It is argued that a typical radius of burning and destruction was five leagues (about 20 kilometers) either side of the main body of the army. Such an army “depended almost entirely on its foragers” (p. 69).
- 63 Chaucer was to meet up with some of this soldiery during his two visits to Italy in the 1370s.
- 64 William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman. A Critical Edition of the B-Text based on Trinity College Cambridge MS B.15.17*, 2nd edn., ed. A. V. C. Schmidt (London: Everyman, 1995), B 3.210–11. I here prefer the reading “mede to men” to Schmidt’s “[men mede]”; the former reading appears in all B MSS. For texts of A and C, I follow *Piers Plowman: The A Version. Will’s Vision of Piers Plowman and Do-Well. An Edition in the Form of Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.14 Corrected from Other Manuscripts, With Variant Readings*, ed. George Kane, rev. edn. (London: Athlone Press, 1988); William Langland, *Piers Plowman. An Edition of the C-text*, ed. Derek Pearsall (London: Edward Arnold, 1978).
- 65 The question of Langland’s attitude to the continental campaigns deserves further reflection. Even if (as a poet finely attuned to the delicate mechanisms of the rural economy) Langland knew little of the English ruination of the French and Flemish countryside, he would have known of the wide-ranging royal agents who raised money and supplies, and of “the demobilized troops who often continued the habits of violence and pillage picked up on active service in enemy territory” (W. M. Ormrod, “The Domestic Response to the Hundred Years’ War,” in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years’ War*, ed. Anne Curry and Michael Hughes [Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1994], pp. 83–101 [p. 86]).
- 66 See Froissart, *Chronycle*, trans. Berners, II.59 (“suche a tempest of thonder, lyghtnyng, rayne, and hayle, in the kinges oost, that it semed that the worlde shulde have ended” (a translation very close to the wording of French sources); *Piers Plowman*, B 3.191; see also A 3.178. By all contemporary accounts (Jonathan Sumption cites seven), this was a spectacular storm: the English army was caught in open country; many men and horses died (Sumption, *The Hundred Years’ War*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990–), II.443, 623 n. 73; see further Andrew Ayton, “English Armies in the Fourteenth Century,” in *Arms, Armies*, ed. Curry and Hughes, pp. 21–38 (pp. 21–2)).
- 67 These lines are not present in A. Bennett surmises that B 3.194–202, referring to a later phase of continental pillaging, were inserted during revision. See Langland, *Piers Plowman. The Prologue and Passus I–VII of the B Text as found in*

Bodleian MS. Laud Misc. 581, ed. J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 139.

- 68 King John II of France, imprisoned in London, signed the Treaty at a banquet in the Tower on June 14, 1360. He was transferred to Calais on July 8, but was only released – following slow French fund-raising efforts – on October 24 (when the Treaty of Brétigny, with amendments, was ratified by Kings Edward and John). See John Palmer, “The War Aims of the Protagonists and the Negotiations for Peace,” in *The Hundred Years’ War*, ed. Kenneth Fowler (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 59–60; Sumption, *Hundred Years’ War*, II.445–54.
- 69 Hostilities broke out again in 1369. Putative dates for the composition of *Piers Plowman* seem to be getting earlier: in 1978, Pearsall had A “still being revised and rewritten in 1369–70,” with B “mainly assigned to the 1370s” and C “probably complete by 1387” (*Piers Plowman*, p. 9).
- 70 Conversely, we might meditate further on how the military and economic practices of the continental war return to trouble the rural settings of Langland’s poem. See Ormrod, “The Domestic Response to the Hundred Years’ War,” in *Arms, Armies*, ed. Curry and Hughes, p. 86.
- 71 “Mynstrales and messagers,” it is said, once met up with Lyere “And [with]helden hym half a yeer and ellevene days” (B 2.229: here I accept Schmidt’s emendation, since the term *withholden* can imply the joining of a household and the taking of a livery). See further A 2.185–90 (“And withheld him”); C 2.237–8. Half a year and eleven days measures the exact duration of Edward III’s French campaign, from his landing on October 28, 1359, to the signing at Brétigny on May 8, 1360: see J. A. W. Bennett, “The Date of the A-text of *Piers Plowman*,” *PMLA* 58 (1943), 566–72.
- 72 B 3.228; see also A 3.215–16. Anna P. Baldwin, in reviewing past accounts of Langland’s poem as moral critique, asks some good questions: “Why is Meed a noblewoman, the kinswoman of the king, if she represents only a moral threat? Why does her own defence of her activities to Conscience in Passus III have so much to do with war?” See *The Theme of Government in Piers Plowman* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1981), p. 25.
- 73 Oure horses, that war faire and fat,
 er etin up ikone bidene; *everyone together*
 have we nowther conig ne cat *rabbit*
 that thai ne er etin and hundes kene. *fearless dogs*
 All er etin up ful clene;
 es nowther levid biche ne whelp— *left bitch nor pup*
 that es wele on oure sembland sene— *seen by our appearance*
 and thai er fled that suld us help.

Text (and most marginal glosses) from *The Poems of Laurence Minot, 1333–1352*, ed. Richard H. Osberg (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996), p. 58 (lines 73–6).

- 74 *Rethinking France*, p. xxxviii.
- 75 Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Auguste Henri Edouard Queux de Saint-Hilaire and Gaston Raynaud. Societé des Anciens Textes Français, 11 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1878–1903), item 344, lines 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 56. All references will be given from this edition in this format. Volume 11 of this edition contains a useful “Vie de Deschamps” (pp. 9–99). Navigation of the Deschamps corpus has been greatly eased of late, however, by the excellent biographical essay of I. S. Laurie, “Eustache Deschamps: 1340?–1404,” in *Eustache Deschamps, French Courtier-Poet: His Work and his World*, ed. Deborah M. Sinnreich-Lévi (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 1–72. See further, for an anthology of Deschamps’ work with excellent commentary, *Eustache Deschamps en son temps*, ed. Jean-Patrice Boudet and Héléne Millet (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997).
- 76 See Nicholas Wright, *Knights and Peasants*, pp. 69, 101. A stairway leading from the church tower at Hermies (Pas-de-Calais) leads to a vast complex of some 300 subterranean cells.
- 77 On the endurance of “the feudal mode of production in which agriculture is still the basis of production” into the French eighteenth century, see Pierre Vilar, “Constructing Marxist history,” in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 47–80 (p. 65). As the essays in this volume demonstrate, French historiography contemplates many different cycles and time-scales at work (to different social and economic effects).
- 78 “Les autres mois vueil faire ma besonge” (1047: 8, 16, 24, 28).
- 79 A suspicion neatly anticipated by the poem’s *envoy* (lines 25–8).
- 80 See Laurie, “Deschamps,” pp. 1–2.
- 81 Thomas Kelly suggests that Deschamps is here riffing on his name, Eustache Morel, “Eustache the Moor,” a name accorded to him “on account of his dark complexion”: “Deschamps, Eustache,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer, 12 vols. (New York: Scribner’s, 1982–9), 4.163–4 (p. 163).
- 82 See Laurie, “Deschamps,” p. 19.
- 83 The ballade thus floats between three chivalric generations, all killed in the Anglo-French conflict. See Froissart, *Oeuvres*, 1.330–2.
- 84 On the “crushing” Christian defeat and its long-term consequences, see Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades: From Lyon to Alcazar, 1274–1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 75–8 (p. 77). Enguerrand actually died in captivity in February 1397 as his ransom was being arranged; see John Bell Henneman, “Enguerrand VII of Coucy (1340–1397),” in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Strayer, 4.490–1.
- 85 See May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century. 1307–1399* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 268; Malcolm Vale, *War and Chivalry: War and Aristocratic Culture in England, France, and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), p. 34.

- 86 On the founding of this order on April 26, 1390, see ballade 212, rondeaux 655, 656, and Laurie, "Deschamps," p. 22; on the famed origins of the Coucy family arms in the first crusade, see Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 131.
- 87 See ballade 883 (which opens with a typical roundup of towns encircling Calais): "Guynes, Hames, Merc, Sangattes, Calays, / Oye et Puille, qui nous faites frontiere, / Finerons nous de guerrier jamais? / Tout est destruit en plain et en costiere" (1–4). Usage of the term *frontière* in Deschamps (and Froissart) seals a shift from the more concrete sense of the thirteenth century (indicating a "front d'une armée" or a particular fortified place, facing the enemy) to a more abstract sense of territorial limit or boundary.
- 88 Such is the argument of Dembowski, *Jean Froissart*, pp. 139–44. The Knight of Chaucer's *General Prologue*, famously, had been honored in "Pruce" and "reysed" (gone raiding) in Lithuania and Russia (1.53–4).
- 89 See Laurie, "Deschamps," p. 2 and ballades 803, 1199; *Eustache Deschamps*, ed. Boudet and Millet, p. 10. Ballades 772, 773, and 803 tell how, on a different occasion (possibly the failed invasion of England), Deschamps was beaten, paraded backwards on a horse, and put in irons by young nobles resenting the excessive cheek of his satire.
- 90 See ballades 128, 191. Deschamps later jousted at a Prague tournament in 1397 when he was well into his fifties (and managed to pick up an eye injury); on this "grotesque" exercise, see Laurie, "Deschamps," and rondeau 1321.
- 91 On estates satire, see Deschamps, *Oeuvres*, 804, 908, 909, 910, 912, 913, 1022, 1205, 1217, 1285, 1389, 1404, 1492; Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). Deschamps presented his *De miseria* translation as *Double lay de la fragilité humaine* to Charles VI on April 18, 1383: see Deschamps, 309, and Laurie, "Deschamps," pp. 14 and 47 n. 65. On Chaucer's (lost) translation of this text, see *Legend of Good Women*, G 414–15 and Lotario de Segni, *De miseria condicionis humane*, ed. and trans. Robert E. Lewis, Chaucer Library (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978).
- 92 Deschamps was dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Bohemia and Moravia in 1397; his experiences at Prague and elsewhere are described in 11 poems (see Laurie, "Deschamps," pp. 25–6). On Chaucer's Bohemian connections, see Alfred Thomas, *Anne's Bohemia: Czech Literature and Society, 1310–1420* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* (Stanford, Calif. Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 357–64.
- 93 See Laurie, "Deschamps," pp. 1–6, 21; Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, p. 45. The marriage was not celebrated until 1389; Valentina processed into Paris on August 22, 1389.
- 94 Ballade 771.10, 20, 30. The motto "à bon droyt" is boldly employed by the artists of the celebrated *Visconti Hours*: see Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, pp. 45–51 (and plate 2d).

- 95 Chaucer “passed at Dover” on July 17, 1368, and could have been out of the country for up to 106 days. He might have gone only as far as Calais, where Henry le Scrope had recently assumed governorship, or he might (easily, in this time frame) have traveled to Italy. See *Life-Records*, ed. Crow and Olson, pp. 30–1.
- 96 See ballade 170.14; ballade 1274.8.
- 97 For alternative terms of abuse heaped on Flanders by Deschamps, see ballades 16, 17, 19. On 16.4, which associates the “mauvais pueple” of Flanders with the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah; see p. 112 below.
- 98 It is worth noting, with Kenneth Fowler, that more than half the years between 1337 and 1453 saw periods of truce. 1360–9 saw the period of incompletely ratified peace following Brétigny; between 1337 and 1400 there were 29 years of general and 7 of local truce, and 18 years of major campaigns. See “Truces,” in *The Hundred Years’ War*, ed. Fowler, pp. 184–215 (p. 184).
- 99 The phrase *Angli caudate* is found in twelfth-century Latin texts; in the first continental redaction of *Bueve de Hantone*, tailed English children issue from the union of the French giant Açopart and an English bride. See Peter Rickard, “*Anglois coué* and *l’Anglois qui couve*,” *French Studies* 7 (1953), 48–55 (pp. 48–9); Rickard, *Britain in Medieval French Literature 1100–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 165–6. Deschamps makes further use of this tradition in rondeau 671 and (to obscene effect) ballade 868.
- 100 In 1382 Deschamps was accused of exploiting his powers as “huissier d’armes” to prevent a rival in a property claim from entering the courts. Shortly thereafter he persuaded or coerced the inhabitants of Fismes into making him the master of the local leprosarium. In 1393, following the death of Blanche, duchess of Orléans, Deschamps went on a tour to secure properties for the widowed duke. See Laurie, “Deschamps,” pp. 11, 13, 23.
- 101 “De tel amour ma mort me cuide” (27).
- 102 Oton de Granson was in the service of John of Gaunt from 1374 to 1386. He seems likely to have met Deschamps in the spring of 1375 during a phase of knightly feasting that saw Deschamps deliver a presentation copy of Machaut’s *Voir Dit* to Louis de Mâle at Bruges. See Joyce Coleman, “The Text Recontextualized in Performance: Deschamps’ Prelection of Machaut’s *Voir Dit* to the Count of Flanders,” *Viator* 31 (2000), 233–48 (pp. 235–6).
- 103 See Haldeen Braddy, *Chaucer and the French Poet Graunson* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), pp. 22–3; *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 1081. The work of Arthur Piaget, *Oton de Grandson: Sa vie et ses poésies* (Lausanne: Payot, 1941) is still valuable.
- 104 This compliment is rendered by the closing line of the poem known as *The Complaint of Venus*, a translation of a triple ballade by Granson (that was sometimes treated by medieval scribes as a continuation of the poem known as *The Complaint of Mars*). For the best text of Granson’s poem, see James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the Poems of “Ch”* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), pp. 69–74. On

- the Granson/Chaucer relationship, see Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 234–41.
- 105 For a fine account of this ballade (as “a valuable contribution to our understanding of Chaucer’s social and literary world”), see Glending Olson, “Geoffrey Chaucer,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. Wallace, pp. 566–88 (p. 566). For a fine analysis of Deschamps’ ballade, viewed within a full account of Deschamps’ poetic corpus, see Wimsatt, *French Contemporaries*, pp. 242–72.
- 106 From the diary of Cardinal Guillaume Filastre (*licenciatus in legibus* at the University of Paris, 1382; dean of Reims cathedral, 1392) in *The Council of Constance*, trans. L. R. Loomis, ed. J. H. Mundy and K. M. Woody (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 200–465 (p. 317).
- 107 For the view that Chaucer “must have made the first move” in this exchange, see William Calin, “Deschamps’ ‘Ballade to Chaucer’ Again, or the Dangers of Intertextual Medieval Comparatism,” in *Deschamps*, ed. Sinnreich-Lévi, pp. 73–83 (p. 76). All translations from the text of this ballade follow the text of Calin (p. 75).
- 108 See Wimsatt, *French Contemporaries*, p. 251; Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 291–2.
- 109 On “belling the cat” as a metaphor for the French invasion of England, see Deschamps 58 (where the refrain runs “Qui pendra la sonnette au chat?”); 1085.13–15. For other poems associated with French invasion plans in this period, see 8, 48, 58, 62 (a morale-boosting ballade for the fleet, now embarked), 211, 228, 445, 822, 847, 848, 854, 1040, 1059, 1060, 1145; and see Laurie, “Deschamps,” pp. 17–19.
- 110 See *Eustache Deschamps*, ed. Boudet and Millet, p. 162.
- 111 See *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. S. B. Meech and E. H. Allen, Early English Text Society, os 212 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1940; reprint, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997), pp. 66–73.
- 112 See Derek Pearsall, “The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century,” in *Nation, Court and Culture*, ed. Helen Cooney (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 15–27 (p. 25).
- 113 “Deschamps est le premier grand poète français de la ville” (*Eustache Deschamps*, ed. Boudet and Millet, p. 165, with acknowledgment of the work of Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet).
- 114 It is quite reasonable to anticipate that Chaucer himself (as a fluent French speaker, deeply read in French courtly tradition) would have been warmly welcomed into the company of French poets anywhere. It is perhaps worth noting that when Charles d’Orléans left England, having labored for so long on poems in English and French, he took the French poems with him and left the English ones behind. See Mary-Jo Arn, “Two Manuscripts, One Mind:

- Charles d'Orléans and the Production of Manuscripts in Two Languages (Paris, BN MS fr. 25458 and London, BL MS Harley 682)," in *Charles d'Orléans in England*, ed. Arne (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 61–78 (p. 76).
- 115 See David Aers, "Vox populi and the literature of 1381," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. Wallace, pp. 432–53 (pp. 441–2); Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), chapter 5.
- 116 See Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 61–7; Michael M. Postan, "The Trade of Medieval Europe: the North," in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. II, 2nd edn., *Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages*, ed. Postan and Edward Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 168–305 (p. 183); Jacques Bernard, "Trade and Finance in the Middle Ages, 900–1500," in *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*, vol. I, *The Middle Ages*, ed. Carlo M. Cipolla (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), pp. 274–338 (p. 299).
- 117 See Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, pp. 11–40, 62–4.
- 118 See Wimsatt, *French Contemporaries*, pp. xi–xii.
- 119 The Penn MS contains 310 neatly copied French lyrics: see Wimsatt, *Poems of "Ch"*. On the altogether more eclectic British Library MS Harley 2253, see Derek Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 120–32.
- 120 Deschamps actually wrote a rondeau on the subject of crossing the border – formed by the river Lys – between Flanders and "ce doulz pais de France" (548.3).
- 121 *The Parliament of Fowls*, 677. If there is a questioning of this ethos in Chaucer, it is surely most forcefully supplied by Chaucer's Franklin, a character of indeterminate social status floating somewhere below aristocratic *otium* and above mercantile activity. His tale is set in ancient times, yet plays out across a territory – Brittany – that was being fought over by French and English forces even as Chaucer wrote (see Deschamps, ballades 211, 822). One male protagonist, a knight, feels the need to travel to England to test his prowess; this precipitates a crisis of *trouthe* requiring the kind of fairytale ending that the tale's genre allows (but that the tale's practically minded narrator, the English Franklin, clearly does not believe in). For a poem expressing the regret of a lady at the departure of her husband, who is about to cross the sea and seek renown in England, see Deschamps, ballade 1040: "De son retour suy en trop grant doubtance," 1040.7.
- 122 *The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye: a poem on the use of sea-power, 1436*, ed. Sir George Frederic Warner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), lines 20–1.
- 123 Ayton, "English Armies," p. 37; David Iain Grummitt, *Calais 1485–1547: A Study in Early Tudor Government and Politics*, University of London Ph.D. thesis (February 1997), pp. 33–48.

- 124 See *The Earliest English Translation of Vegetius' De Re Militari, from Oxford MS Bodl. Douce 291*, ed. Geoffrey Lester, *Middle English Texts*, 21 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988), pp. 9–17; *Knyghthode and Battle*, ed. R. Dyboski and Z. M. Arend, *Early English Text Society*, os 201 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1935), “Proemium.” The Anglo-Norman translation antedates the influential translation of Jean de Meun (1284) by some 30 years.
- 125 “See seke am I, fulfayn o lande I wolde!” (line 2979). The term “Epilogus” appears in MS Pembroke College, Cambridge 243 (chosen as base text by Dyboski and Arend); “Recapitulatio” is favored by MSS BL London, Cotton Titus A XXIII and Bodleian Oxford, Ashmole 45.
- 126 Lines 2982–5 differ somewhat in the two other MSS. Dyboski and Arend report the other two MSS thus:

That may nat Joo. whiso. for they distresse
 All or to deye or with her werke to stonde
 That dar to right go wynne all Engelonde
 What myght availe, a lite in errour dwelle

- The reading “That may nat joo” seems preferable, given the precedent of *Troilus and Criseyde*, 3.33 (“Whan they” [folk] “kan nought construe how it may jo [Hrl: Ioo]”): *Middle English Dictionary*, jo.
- 127 See above, p. 55. The term *saluz*, employed twice here by the poet, relates to the Middle English verb *salusen*, to greet, while resonating more precisely with Latin *salus*, “a wish for one’s welfare (expressed by word of mouth or in writing), a greeting, salute, salutation (the state of being safe and sound, in whole condition, in safety)” (*A Latin Dictionary*, ed. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987 [first published in 1879]], *salus*, I (B)).
- 128 Browning’s “Home-Thoughts from the Sea,” located further south, also entail mooning over a passing English colony (Gibraltar); the poem closes as “Jove’s planet rises yonder, silent over Africa” (*Poems by Robert Browning*, introd. Richard Garnett [Ipswich: Boydell Press, 1973], p. 83).
- 129 See Anthony Goodman, *The Wars of the Roses: Military Activity and English Society, 1452–97* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 22–40.
- 130 See G. L. Harris, “The Struggle for Calais: an Aspect of the Rivalry Between Lancaster and York,” *English Historical Review* 75 (1960), 30–53.
- 131 Citations follow *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Norman Davis, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971–6).
- 132 “Frowe” thus appears as a female surname in English records associated with prostitution: while less spectacular than surnames such as “Clatterballock,” “Frowe” is nonetheless (like other Middle English surnames) suggestive of a specialist trade. See Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 56–7, 745.

- 133 On brothels at Bruges, see chapter 2 below.
- 134 See André Vandewalle, *Hanze@Medici: Bruges, Crossroads of European Cultures* (Oostkamp: Stichting Kunstboek, 2002), p. 18; this manuscript is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Caxton's edition of Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers' translation from the French text of Valerius Maximus, was very likely the first book printed in England (November 18, 1477); William Caxton worked in Bruges (where the first books in English were printed, 1474–5). See *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers: The Translations made by Stephen Scrope, William Worcester and an Anonymous Translator*, ed. Curt F. Bühler, Early English Text Society, os 211 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1941), p. ix; Seth Lerer, "William Caxton," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. Wallace, pp. 720–38.
- 135 *The Cely Letters*, ed. Alison Hanham, Early English Text Society, os 273 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1975), p. 29 [August 27?] 1478.
- 136 *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. Rosell Hope Robbins, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 150 (from MS Ashmole 191). The lyric in the Ashmole MS is set for three voices (p. 275). See further Douglas Gray, "Fifteenth-century Lyrics and Carols," in *Nation, Court and Culture*, ed. Helen Cooney, pp. 168–83 (p. 172).
- 137 Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music, 1380–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 392, 393.
- 138 Alison Hanham, "The Musical Studies of a Fifteenth-Century Wool Merchant," *Review of English Studies* 8 (1957), 270–4.
- 139 George had a French-speaking mistress called Clare at about this time; the jottings make up a dialogue in French between male and female parts.
- 140 This letter is dated "probably after 1479, not after June 1483" (II,441).
- 141 See *Paston Letters*, ed. Davis, p. lxiv. William Paston IV died in 1554.
- 142 BL MS Cotton Caligula D. vii f. 227 as cited in *The Chronicle of Calais, in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII*, ed. John Gough Nichols, Camden Society (New York: AMS Press, 1968), pp. 78–9 (p. 78). *The Chronicle of Calais* was written by Richard Turpyn, a garrison soldier at Calais whose son became a herald. See Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years' War* (London: Macmillan, 1993), p. 19.
- 143 "Speke, Parrot," in *Poems*, ed. Kinsman, lines 302, 304, 340.
- 144 *Statutes of the Realm*, 25 Henry VIII c. 12 (1533–4), "An Acte concerning the Attaynder of Elizabeth Barton and Others."
- 145 See Alan Neame, *The Holy Maid of Kent: The Life of Elizabeth Barton, 1506–1534* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), pp. 177, 331–6; *Canterbury Tales*, 1.465. The cathedral of Notre Dame at Boulogne-sur-Mer, destroyed during the French Revolution, housed a statue of the Virgin Mary that had been washed up on the shore. Edward II married Isabella of France here in 1308. See James Bentley, *The Gateway to France: Flanders, Artois and Picardy* (London: Viking, 1991), p. 16.

- 146 *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 111.
- 147 See Joblin, "Le protestantisme en Calais," pp. 600–1.
- 148 *The Lisle Letters*, ed. Muriel St. Clare Byrne, 6 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). See further *The Lisle Letters: An Abridgement*, ed. Byrne, selected by Bridget Boland, foreword by Hugh Trevor-Roper (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
- 149 James' tutor Thomas Rainolde, educated at Oxford and Paris, clearly despaired of his pupil: "by my advice," he informs Lady Lisle, "he should be utterly from the company of English men, or else it will hinder the learning of the tongue very much" (III.122; see further III.108).
- 150 I.596; see Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 161–83.
- 151 For "Rex Diabole," see V.238 (October 5, 1538). See also V.428 (with talk of "players' garments" plucked from a shipwreck "upon Margate"); V.437 (on the safe arrival of the rescued garments, "which with much ado are received"). Henry VIII composed a tragedy for the occasion of Anne's beheading which he would take from his pocket for people to read: see Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, p. 384.
- 152 See Trevor-Roper, "Foreword," in *Lisle Letters Abridgement*, ed. Byrne, pp. xiv–xv.
- 153 II.505 (June 5, 1535); II.609, 610 (October 28, 1535).
- 154 STC 19078 (BL C.38.c.32); the text declares itself written "From Exile the. 12 of April 1557."
- 155 See David Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor*, 2nd edn. (London: Longman, 1991), p. 300.
- 156 See Loades, *Mary Tudor*, pp. 316–17. The words of Mary Tudor, here attributed to Holinshed, conclude what is perhaps the most poignant account of English occupation, Marcel Denquin, "Calais sous la domination Anglaise." Poignancy in this case is afforded by the date of this address, delivered by Marcel Denquin, Président d'Honneur des Rosati de Calais on February 19, 1939 (Cambridge University Library 9560 c.1, author's presentation copy).
- 157 Cited in *The Chronicle of Calais*, ed. Nichols, p. xxv.
- 158 *The Chronicle of Calais*, ed. Nichols, p. xxx.
- 159 Richard Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations . . . (1589)*, photo-lithographic facsimile, introd. David Beers Quinn and Raleigh Ashlin Shelton, 2 vols, Hakluyt Society, Extra Series, 39 (Cambridge, Mass.: Hakluyt Society and Peabody Museum of Salem, 1965), pp. 636, 638. Hakluyt thus correctly remembers Calais as an infertile outpost, in need of continuous supply.
- 160 Huguenot members of the newly installed French garrison carried out acts of iconoclasm at Calais in 1560: See Joblin, "Le protestantisme en Calais," p. 606.
- 161 See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), III.353–6. The retreat from Calais coincides with the period of English withdrawal from

- the Mediterranean: see Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (continuous pagination), I.615–21.
- 162 Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations (1589)*, “The Epistle Dedicatorie,” p. 2b. Earlier in his “epistle,” dedicated to Walsingham, Hakluyt acknowledges that he has “heard in speech, and read in books other nations miraculously extolled for their discoveries and notable enterprises by sea, but the English of all others for their sluggish security” (p. 2a). Hakluyt’s work thus knowingly sets out to chronicle a global mission yet to be achieved: see chapter 2 below.
- 163 England was actually offered a new foothold on continental Europe in 1658 when Cromwell was awarded Dunkirk for the loan of 8,000 Ironsides; Charles II, however, promptly sold the town back to Louis XIV for 5,000,000 livres. See Bentley, *Gateway to France*, p. 3.
- 164 *Henry V*, 3.2.42 in *Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt et al.
- 165 The *coulter* is the iron blade of the plough (rather than just, as the Norton has it, the “plow”) fixed in front of the share to cut the furrow; a *coulter* is warmed by Gervaise the Blacksmith in the *Miller’s Tale*.
- 166 “Both within France and without, French soil has enjoyed an unshakeable reputation for being rich, fertile, productive, [and] ardently sought after” (Armand Frémont, “The Land,” in Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 2.3–35 (p. 17)).
- 167 The other usage of *deracinate* is at *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3.99. Scotsman William Dunbar, in speaking of “bakbyattaris of sindry racis” (1508), has been identified as the first person to employ *race* in something like its modern sense; his usage is perhaps too broadly generic to deserve this distinction: see Michael Banton, *Racial Theories*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 17. *Race* is a term that is foreign to the *Middle English Dictionary*, except as denoting a narrative or story (from Old English *racu*; not attested after 1225) or (after 1450) the root of ginger. See further *Race and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas Hahn, a special issue of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (Winter 2001).
- 168 See *The Tempest*, 1.2.361; the phrase, glossed by Norton as “hereditary nature,” is Miranda’s. For more on such linkages, see the last two chapters below; for earlier confluences between the terms *vill* and *vile*, see especially p. 250.