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## CHAUCER AND DANTE'S *CONVIVIO*

In 1891 Koepfel suggested, on the basis of Chaucer's use of the phrase "old riches," both in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* and in the *balade* on *Gentillesse*, that the *Convivio* had a place in Chaucer's library. But he adduced no further evidence than the striking correspondence, in passages having a common theme, of "old riches" and *antica ricchezza*.<sup>1</sup> Eighteen years later Paget Toynbee, in his *Dante in English Literature*, quoted the passage on "gentillesse" from the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, and appended the following note:

This discussion as to the true nature of nobility, though partly based on a passage in the *De consolazione philosophiae* (iii, pr. 6, met. 6) of Boethius, . . . almost undoubtedly owes much to Dante's canzone on the subject prefixed to the fourth book of the *Convivio*; as does also the *Balade of Gentillesse*. . . . There is evidence to show that this canzone of Dante was the subject of discussion, in respect of his opinions as to what constitutes nobility, at a very early date. See for instance the account given by Lapo da Castiglionchio (*ca.* 1310-81) in the second part of the letter to his son Bernardo (ed. Mehus, Bologna, 1753, pp. 11 ff.) of the examination of Dante's arguments by the famous jurist, Bartolo da Sassoferrato (*ca.* 1313-56).<sup>2</sup>

Inasmuch as Koepfel bases his conclusion on a single phrase, and since the plan of Toynbee's work precluded the detailed statement of his evidence, there seems still to be a place for a fuller presentation than has hitherto been made of the grounds for believing that Chaucer knew and used the *Convivio*.

The canzone prefixed to the fourth Tractate of the *Convivio* deals with the nature of *Gentilezza*. Excluding the Preface and the *tornata*, it falls into two parts. The first is negative, and is devoted to the refutation of the view that *Gentilezza* depends on ancestral riches or on descent. The second is positive, and traces *Gentilezza* (or *Nobiltate*) to its ultimate and only source in God. The Tractate that follows is a detailed commentary on the canzone, and poem and

<sup>1</sup> See *Anglia*, XIII, 184-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Dante in English Literature*, I, 14, n. 1. Koepfel's suggestion had long been known to me; Toynbee's note I read only after the present study was practically completed.

comment alike are suffused with Dante's singular nobility and loftiness of thought. And the twofold emphasis of the canzone is maintained throughout the commentary; "gentillesse" does not derive from ancestral riches or ancestral stock; it does derive from God.

Jean de Meun had also discussed *gentillesce* at great length.<sup>1</sup> Like Dante he recognized that true nobility does not depend on birth. But his treatment of its relation to wealth is incidental,<sup>2</sup> and its source in God is not within his ken. That Chaucer drew on Jean de Meun's treatment, there can be no doubt.<sup>3</sup> But no one can read the two passages, I think, without feeling that in this case Jean de Meun's oat has been taken up into a strain of higher mood. The lines which Chaucer quotes from the *Purgatorio* give a clue to the heightening, but not the full solution. It is the spirit of the *Convivio* with which the whole treatment is pervaded. In other words, Chaucer seems to have done in this passage what in his maturer performance he does repeatedly. He has drawn upon all the sources of his inspiration, and has fused them—not dovetailed them, as in his earlier work—into a product that bears his own peculiar stamp. And in the present instance the fine democracy of Jean de Meun's conception of true nobility has been merged with Dante's loftier idealism, and both have been tempered by Chaucer's own broad humanity. That this is true, it is the task of this brief article to show.

The key to Dante's negative treatment of the subject lies in the phrase of the emperor Frederick of Suabia, *antica ricchezza*. The phrase itself does not appear in the canzone, but it occurs six times in the body of the Tractate. It is used, as is well known, three times by Chaucer—twice in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, once in the *balade*. But that is not all. Dante makes much of the implications of *antica*, in a characteristic discussion of *time* (in its relation to *descent*) as a supposed cause of nobility. His argument on this point reappears in Chaucer. His positive doctrine that God is the sole source of *Gentilezza* is fundamental and explicit in Chaucer's treatment too. And finally there are verbal parallels as well. I shall take up these points *seriatim*.

<sup>1</sup> *Roman de la Rose*, ll. 19540–828 (ed. Michel).

<sup>2</sup> See ll. 19760 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., for example, D 1121–23 and RR, 19561–63; D 1150–51 and RR, 19818–21; etc. See further Fansler, *Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose* (1914), p. 221.

The first division of the canzone opens with the following lines:

Tale imperò che Gentilezza volse,  
 Secondo 'l suo parere,  
*Che fosse antica possession d'avere,*<sup>1</sup>  
 Con reggimenti belli.  
 Ed altri fu di più lieve sapere,  
 Che tal detto rivolve,  
 E l'ultima particola ne tolse,  
 Chè non l'avea fors' elli.  
 Di dietro da costui van tutti quelli  
*Che fan gentile per ischiatta altrui,*  
*Che lungamente in gran ricchezza è stata:*<sup>2</sup>  
 Ed è tanto durata  
 La così falsa opinion tra nui,  
 Che l'uom chiama colui  
 Uomo gentil, che può dicere: I' fui  
 Nepote o figlio di cotal valente,  
 Benchè sia da niente.<sup>3</sup>

With this may at once be compared the opening of Chaucer's exposition:

But for ye speken of *swich gentillesse*  
*As is descended out of old richesse,*  
*That therefore sholden ye be gentil men,*  
 Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.<sup>4</sup>

The general parallel is obvious enough, and the similarity of expression is scarcely less striking, even apart from the "old richesse," which is wanting in the canzone.<sup>5</sup> Of this phrase Chaucer's repetitions are as follows:

Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,  
 Nat of our eldres for hir *old richesse.*<sup>6</sup>  
 Vyce may wel be heir to *old richesse.*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf.: Heer may ye see wel, how that *genterye*  
*Is nat annexed to possessioun* [D 1146-47].

<sup>2</sup> Cf. D 1109-11, below.

<sup>3</sup> *Il Convivio*, Trattato Quarto, Canzone Terza, vss. 21-37. I use throughout Moore's text (*Tutte le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, Oxford, 1904). With the last lines quoted above cf. D 1152-55:

And he that wol han prys of his gentrye  
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,  
 And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuuous,  
 And nil him-selven do no gentil dedis, etc.

See also below, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> D 1109-12.

<sup>5</sup> Except as it appears in "*antica possession*" and "*gran ricchezza*."

<sup>6</sup> D 1117-18.

<sup>7</sup> *Gentillesse*, l. 15.

Its salient position in the Tractate may easily be made clear. Dante's exposition of the first words quoted from the canzone (*Tale imperò*) is as follows. When Frederick of Suabia was asked "che fosse *Gentilezza*," he replied:

. . . . ch' era, "*antica ricchezza*," e be' costumi. E dico che "altri fu di più lieve sapere," che, pensando e rivolgendo questa definizione in ogni parte, levò via l'ultima particola, cioè i "belli costumi," e tennesi alla prima, cioè all' "*antica ricchezza*"; e secondochè 'l testo par dubitare, "forse per non avere i belli costumi," non volendo perdere il nome di *Gentilezza*, difinì quella secondochè per lui faceva, cioè "possessione d'*antica ricchezza*."<sup>1</sup>

The next six chapters of the *Convivio* constitute a digression upon the imperial authority; in chap. x Dante returns to his main theme. The Emperor's opinion regarding *belli costumi* he does not deem worthy of refutation.<sup>2</sup> It is Frederick's first phrase on which, throughout his whole negative argument,<sup>3</sup> he dwells. He begins with a statement to which we shall have to return:<sup>4</sup>

L'altra particola, che da natura di Nobiltà è del tutto diversa, s'intende riprovare; la quale due cose par dire, quando dice *antica ricchezza*, cioè *tempo* e *divizie*, le quali da Nobiltà sono del tutto diverse, com' è detto, e come di sotto si mostrerà.<sup>5</sup>

A few lines farther on he reverts to the phrase:

Poi dico "similmente lui errare," chè pose della Nobiltà falso soggetto, cioè *antica ricchezza*.<sup>6</sup>

And finally, in the fourteenth chapter, he treats it under the aspect already foreshadowed in the tenth:

Riprovato l'altrui errore, quanto è in quella parte che alle *ricchezze* s'appoggiava, . . . . in quella parte che *tempo* diceva essere cagione di Nobiltà, dicendo *antica ricchezza*; e questa riprovazione si fa in questa parte che comincia: "Nè voglion che vil uom gentil divegna."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IV, iii, 44-55.

<sup>3</sup> Chaps. x-xv.

<sup>5</sup> IV, x, 12-18.

<sup>2</sup> See IV, x, 1-12.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> IV, x, 48-50.

<sup>7</sup> IV, xiv, 1-8. It is interesting to observe that Dante also uses the same phrase in his *De monarchia*: "Sed constat quod merito virtutis nobilitantur homines: virtutis videlicet propriae vel maiorum. Est enim nobilitas virtus et divitiarum antiquae, juxta Philosophum in Politicis, et juxta Juvenalem:

'Nobilitas animi sola est atque unica virtus.'

Quae duae sententiae ad duas nobilitates dantur: proprium scilicet, et maiorum" (II, iii, 12-20).

It is true (though it does not seem to have been noticed) that the words also occur in Jean de Meun:

The emphatic recurrence in both writers of a striking phrase in a context of identical import has, as Koepfel felt, considerable weight. And I have already shown that the connection is much closer than Koepfel pointed out. It is, however, even more organic than has thus far been indicated.

Besides the fallacy involved in *ricchezza* (namely the assumption of *divizie* as the source of *Gentilezza*) stands in Dante's argument the fallacy inherent in *antica*—the error, that is, of assuming that *time* (*tempo*), or the continuance of a single condition (*questo processo d'una condizione*), is the cause of nobility.<sup>1</sup> And upon this idea, which does not appear at all in Jean de Meun, Dante lays, in his fourteenth and fifteenth chapters, unusual stress.

Se Nobiltà non si genera di nuovo, siccome più volte è detto che la loro opinione vuole, non generandola di vile uomo in lui medesimo, nè di vile padre in figlio, sempre è l'uomo tale quale nasce; e tale nasce quale il padre: e così questo processo d'una condizione è venuto infino dal primo parente; perchè tale quale fu il primo generante, cioè Adamo, conviene essere tutta la umana generazione, chè da lui alli moderni non si può trovare per quella ragione alcuna trasmutanza. Dunque, se esso Adamo fu nobile, tutti siamo nobili; e se esso fu vile, tutti siamo vili; che non è altro, che torre via la distinzione di queste condizioni, e così è torre via quelle. E questo dice che di quello ch'è messo dinanzi seguita, "che siam tutti gentili over villani."<sup>2</sup>

Si troveroit toute la terre  
O ses richces ancienes  
Et toutes choses terrienes;  
Et verroit proprement la mer,  
Et tous poissons qui ont amer,  
Et tres toutes choses marines,  
Iaues douces, troubles et fines,  
Et les choses grans et menues,  
En iaues douces contenues;  
Et l'air et tous les oisillons—

and so on through all the elements (ll. 21244 ff.). But the context is totally different—the account, namely, of what one sees in the Garden of Mirth—and the passage can scarcely have any bearing on the present case.

<sup>1</sup> See IV, x, 12–18 (quoted above, p. 22), and add the immediately succeeding lines: "E però riprovando si fanno due parti; prima si riprovano le *divizie*, poi si riprova il *tempo* essere cagione di Nobiltà. La seconda parte comincia: 'Nè voglion che vil uom gentil divegna'" (IV, x, 18–23).

<sup>2</sup> IV, xv, 19–38. Cf. the following, from the preceding chapter: "Dico adunque: 'Nè voglion che vil uom gentil divegna.' Dov' è da sapere che opinione di questi erranti è, che uomo prima *villano*, mai *gentile* uomo dicer non si possa; e uomo che figlio sia di villano, similmente mai dicer non si possa gentile. E ciò rompe la loro sentenza medesima quando dicono che *tempo* si richiede a Nobiltà, ponendo questo vocabolo *antico*; perocch' è impossibile per processo di tempo venire alla generazione di Nobiltà per questa loro ragione che detta è, la qual toglie via che villano uomo mai possa essere gentile per opera che faccia, o per alcuno accidente; e toglie via la mutazione di villan padre in gentil figlio; chè, se 'l figlio del villano è pur villano, e 'l figlio suo fia pur figlio di villano, e così fia anche villano il suo figlio; e così sempre mai non sarà a trovare là dove Nobiltà per processo di tempo si cominci" (IV, xiv, 18–39).

We have already seen that Chaucer follows Dante in his emphasis on the error regarding "old *richesse*." He follows him no less closely in this peculiarly characteristic treatment of the *processo d'una condizione*, implicit in *antica*. For in a striking paragraph he too declares that if "gentillesse" were a matter of direct descent, a stock once gentle could never cease to be what it first was.

Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,  
 If gentillesse were planted naturelly<sup>1</sup>  
 Un-to a certeyn linage, down the lynne,  
 Privee ne apert, than wolde they never fyne  
 To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;  
 They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.<sup>2</sup>

Chaucer has, to be sure, reversed the emphasis of Dante's exposition from "once base, always base" to "once gentle, always gentle"—a change which grows out of the requirements of his Tale.<sup>3</sup> But the argument is Dante's argument.<sup>4</sup>

In a word, Dante's negative treatment of the source of *Gentilezza* involves the implications not only of *ricchezza*, but also of *antica*. The bearing of the first is fairly obvious; that of the second is characterized by Dante's own intellectual subtlety. And both reappear in Chaucer—the first with the repetition of Dante's very phrase; the second, with a masterly compression of the essence of two long chapters into a passage of six lines.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. IV, i, 47-49: "Questo è l'errore dell' umana bontà, in quanto in noi è dalla natura seminata, e che *Nobiltade* chiamar si dee."

<sup>2</sup> D 1133-38.

<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps due in part, as well, to the fact that the apt figure from Boethius' discussion of *dignitees*, of which he makes such consummately effective (and organic) use, suggested itself to him at just this point.

<sup>4</sup> The reference to Adam and Eve in a discussion of "gentillesse" is of course a commonplace. See the *Parson's Tale*, I, 460; *Confessio Amantis*, IV, 2222 ff.; Wyclif (ed. Arnold), III, 125; etc. But the turn which Dante (and after him Chaucer) gives to the familiar argument is Dante's own.

<sup>5</sup> Fansler calls attention (*Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose*, p. 105) to Koepfel's derivation of Chaucer's use of "nacioun" (D 1068) from Jean de Meun's "Par noblece de *nacion*" (RR, 19545), and, with his usual admirable caution, expresses doubt of any necessary connection. It is at least worth noting that *nazion*, in precisely Chaucer's sense, occurs in l. 63 of the canzone: "Nè di vil padre scenda *Nazion*, che per gentil giammai s'intenda." But as in the case of Jean de Meun, so here the parallel is without real significance. *Nassion* occurs in Baudouin de Condé's *Li Contes de Gentilleche* (a poem which I am strongly inclined to think Chaucer knew), l. 11: "Qui gentius est de *nassion*." See also Jean de Condé's *Li Dis de Gentillesse*, l. 148: "Erent gentil de *nacion*." My only reason for referring to the word here is to point out that its use by Jean de Meun has no bearing on the case.

The correspondence in the *positive* phase of the discussion is no less striking. The conclusion of the canzone is explicit:

Però nessun si vanti  
 Dicendo: Per ischiatta io son con lei;  
 Ch'elli son quasi Dei  
 Que' c' han *tal grazia* fuor di tutti rei:  
 Chè *solo Iddio all' anima la dona*,  
 Che vede in sua persona  
 Perfettamente star; sicchè ad alquanti  
 Lo seme di felicità s'accosta,  
 Messo *da Dio* nell' anima ben posta.<sup>1</sup>

And the comment merely elaborates what the canzone states:

Poi quando dice: "Chè *solo Iddio all' anima la dona*"; ragione è del suscettivo, cioè del soggetto, dove questo divino dono discende, ch' è bene divino dono, secondo la parola dell' Apostolo: "Ogni ottimo dato e ogni dono perfetto di suso viene, discendendo dal Padre de' lumi." Dice adunque che *Iddio solo* porge *questa grazia* all' anima di quello, cui vede stare perfettamente nella sua persona acconcio e disposto a questo divino atto ricevere.<sup>2</sup>

Precisely so in Chaucer:

Thy gentillesse cometh *fro god allone*;  
 Than comth our *verray*<sup>3</sup> gentillesse *of grace*.<sup>4</sup>

Dante's entire argument, accordingly, both negative and positive, is resumed in Chaucer's lines—not formally, but with a complete assimilation of its content and with an untrammelled adaptation of it to the more flexible structural outlines of the Tale.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ll. 112-19.

<sup>2</sup> IV, xx, 47-57. Cf. IV, xx, 24-28: "E rende incontanente ragione, dicendo, che quelli che hanno *questa grazia*, cioè questa divina cosa, sono quasi come Dei, senza macola di vizio. E ciò dare non può, se non *Iddio solo*." The whole of the nineteenth and twentieth chapters should be read.

<sup>3</sup> The last words of the preceding chapter (which sum up its theme) are: "ch' è allora frutto di *vera nobiltà*" (IV, xix, 97-98).

<sup>4</sup> D 1162-63. Cf. l. 1117, and the *balade*, ll. 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> The context in the *Purgatorio* of the lines which Chaucer quotes (D 1125-30) embodies once more the doctrine of the *Convivio* as regards descent, and that it should have suggested itself to Chaucer is far more natural than the three lines indicate, when taken by themselves. Dante, at the close of the seventh canto of the *Purgatorio*, is speaking of Peter of Aragon and of his son Alphonso, as contrasted with his other two sons, James and Frederick. Peter, he says,

D'ogni valor portò cinta la corda;  
 E se re dopo lui fosse rimasto  
 Lo giovinetto che retro a lui siede,  
 Bene andava il valor di vaso in vaso;



To the verbal parallels already indicated above may be added at least one more. Lines 1152-58 in Chaucer are as follows:

And he that wol han prys of his gentrye  
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,  
 And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,  
 And nil him-selven do no gentil dedis,  
 Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is,  
 He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;  
 For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.

The general correspondence of these lines with ll. 34-37 of the canzone has been already pointed out. The parallel with the phrasing of the commentary is closer still:

E così quelli che dal padre o da alcuno suo maggiore di schiatta è nobilitato, e non persevera in quella, non solamente è vile, ma vilissimo, e degno d'ogni dispetto e vituperio più che altro villano.<sup>1</sup>

And finally, it is worth noting that the Loathly Lady's discussion of *poverty* stands in close relation to Dante's exposition of riches as *cagione di male*. For Dante too quotes Juvenal's lines, and in an almost identical context:

Verray povert, it singeth proprely;  
 Juvenal seith of povert merily:  
 "The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,  
 Bifore the theves he may singe and pleje."<sup>2</sup>

Ben lo sanno li miseri mercatanti che per lo mondo vanno, che le foglie, che 'l vento fa dimenare, li fan tremare, quando seco ricchezze portano; e quando senza esse sono, pieni di sicurtà cantando e ragionando fanno lor cammino più brieve. E però dice il Savio: "se vòto camminatore entrasse nel cammino, dinanzi a' ladroni canterebbe."<sup>3</sup>

Che non si puote dir dell' altre rede;  
 Jacomo e Federico hanno i reami;  
 Del retaggio migltor nessun possiede.

Then come the lines which Chaucer quotes:

Rade volte risurge per li rami  
 L'umana probitate: e questo vuole  
 Quei che la dà, perchè da lui si chiami [*Purg.*, VII, 114-23].

The relation to the theme of the *Convivio* is obvious, and the turn which Chaucer gives the passage from *valor* and *probitate* to *gentilezza* makes it clear that the association was in his mind.

<sup>1</sup> IV, vii, 87-92. The same general idea appears in Jean de Meun, ll. 19788-801. But a comparison will leave little question of Chaucer's immediate source.

<sup>2</sup> D 1191-94.

<sup>3</sup> IV, xiii, 101-10. *Poverty* also appears in the conventional discussions of "gentillesse." See, for example, the passage in Gower referred to above (p. 24, n. 4). But once more Chaucer and Dante elaborate the convention in the same way.

That the *balade* on *Gentillesse* is Chaucer's elaboration of Dante's positive argument in the canzone, under the ever-present influence of Jean de Meun as well, it is now not difficult to see. The negative element appears, of course, in the "old richesse" of line 15. But that the canzone was very definitely in Chaucer's mind appears unmistakably from the fifth and sixth lines:

*For unto vertu longeth dignitee,  
And noight the revers, sauffy dar I deme.*

*È Gentilezza dovunque è virtute,  
Ma non virtute ov' ella;  
Siccome è 'l cielo dovunque è la stella,  
Ma ciò non e converso.<sup>1</sup>*

In Chaucer's treatment of "gentillesse," then, there is a characteristic mingling of all the springs of his inspiration. As in the Fortune *balade*, Jean de Meun, Boethius, and Dante<sup>2</sup> are all present—the heart of their teaching grasped and assimilated in Chaucer's own thought, and fused in a new and individual expression by his ripened art. There is here no question of originality. Few passages in Chaucer—unless it be the Fortune *balade* itself—show with greater clearness his consummate gift of gathering together and embodying in a new unity the *disjecta membra* of the dominant beliefs and opinions of his day. To overlook that in any study of external influences on Chaucer is to take the chaff and leave the corn.<sup>3</sup>

If the *Convivio* was known to Chaucer, the question at once arises: Was his use of it confined to the great exposition of *Gentilezza*? I think it was not. I shall make no attempt to adduce all the possible parallels. Two passages in the *House of Fame*, however, seem to be reasonably clear.

The lines that introduce the eagle's demonstration of the way in which all sounds at last arrive inevitably at the House of Fame<sup>4</sup> have

<sup>1</sup> Ll. 101-4.

<sup>2</sup> In that case Deschamps too! In a volume on the *French Influences on Chaucer*, now in preparation, I shall have occasion to deal more fully with the merging, especially in Chaucer's later borrowings, of many sources. The instance under discussion is absolutely typical.

<sup>3</sup> I have discussed certain other matters connected with the Wife of Bath's discourse on "gentillesse" in an examination of Professor Tupper's doctrine regarding Chaucer and the Seven Deadly Sins, which will shortly appear in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.

<sup>4</sup> *HF*, ll. 729-45.

been variously fathered. Rambeau's ascription of them to the influence of *Paradiso*, I, 109-17,<sup>1</sup> can scarcely be accepted. That Boethius and perhaps Jean de Meun are again involved is pretty clear.<sup>2</sup> But there are indications also of Chaucer's reading of the *Convivio*. The eagle's exposition begins thus:

Geffrey, thou wost right wel this,  
That every kindly thing that is,  
Hath a *kindly stede* ther he  
May best in hit conserved be;  
Unto which place every thing,  
Through his kindly enclyning,  
Moveth for to come to,  
When that hit is away therfro;  
As thus; etc.<sup>3</sup>

Fansler observes regarding these lines: "In the *Convito*, Treatise III, chap. 3, we find this same idea expressed by Dante, who was doubtless following Boethius, as was Chaucer."<sup>4</sup> Of that there can be no question. But was Chaucer not following Dante too? One striking detail in the eagle's elucidation is the constant repetition of "kindly stede" or its equivalent:

Thus every thing, by this resoun,  
Hath *his propre mansioun*.<sup>5</sup>  
.  
.  
.  
And that *the mansioun*, y-wis,  
That every thing enclyned to is,  
Hath *his kindeliche stede*:  
Than sheweth hit, withouten drede,  
That *kindely the mansioun*  
Of every speche, of every soun . . . .  
Hath *his kinde place* in air.<sup>6</sup>  
.  
.  
.  
Hit seweth, every soun, pardee,  
*Moneth kindely to pace*  
Al up into *his kindely place*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Englische Studien*, III, 247-48. See Sypherd, *Studies in Chaucer's Hous of Fame*, pp. 61, 95-97.

<sup>2</sup> With Chaucer's "Light thing up, and downward charge" (l. 746) cf. Boethius: "sursum levitas . . . deorsum pondus" (Lib. III, Prosa 11), which appears in Jean de Meun (ll. 17700-701) as "Les légères en haut volèrent, Les pesans ou centre avarent" (see Koepfel, *Anglia*, XIV, 246).

<sup>3</sup> *HF*, II, 729-37.

<sup>4</sup> *Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose*, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> Ll. 753-54.

<sup>6</sup> Ll. 827-34.

<sup>7</sup> Ll. 840-42.

In Boethius this appears merely as *loca* (without repetition) in the phrase: "nisi quod haec singulis *loca* motionesque conveniunt"; in Jean de Meun (again without repetition), as "leus convenables." I shall quote a few sentences from the beginning of the third chapter of the third Tractate of the *Convivio*:

Onde è da sapere che *ciascuna cosa*, siccome è detto di sopra, per la ragione di sopra mostrata, ha 'l suo speciale amore, come le corpora semplici hanno *amore naturato in sè al loro loco proprio*, e però la terra sempre discende al centro, il fuoco alla circonferenza di sopra lungo 'l cielo della luna, e però sempre sale a quello. Le corpora composte prima, siccome sono le miniere, hanno amore *al loco, dove la loro generazione è ordinata*. . . . Le piante, che sono prima animate, hanno amore *a certo loco* più manifestamente . . . . le quali, se si trasmutano, o muoiono del tutto o vivono quasi triste, siccome cose disgiunte *dal loco amico*. Gli animali bruti hanno più manifesto amore non solamente *al loco*, ma l'uno l'altro vedemo amare.<sup>1</sup>

Chaucer's striking emphasis, which is also Dante's, is found in neither of his other sources, and it seems reasonable to suppose, in the light of independent evidence of his knowledge of the *Convivio*, that its influence is present here. The discussion in the *Convivio* starts from precisely the passage in Boethius from which Chaucer took his cue.<sup>2</sup> It passes beyond it into subtleties with which Chaucer for the moment was not concerned. But its insistent phraseology seems to have stuck in his mind:

There is still another passage in the *House of Fame* which seems to betray the same source.

"Now," quod he tho, "cast up thyn yë;  
See yonder, lo, *the Galaxyë*,  
Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,  
*For hit is whyt: and somme, parfey,*  
*Callen hit Waitlinge Strete:*  
*That ones was y-brent with hete,*  
Whan the sonnes sone, the rede,  
That highte *Pheton*, wolde lede  
Algate his fader cart, and gye."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> III, iii, 5-33.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. with the close of the first sentence quoted above from the *Convivio* the citations on p. 28, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *HF*, ll. 935-43.

Rambeau referred this passage to the *Inferno*,<sup>1</sup> where the connection between the galaxy and Phaeton's journey is implied. But the galaxy is not specifically named and the allusion (though undoubted) is by no means obvious. In the fifteenth chapter of the second Tractate of the *Convivio*, however, Dante is dealing with the galaxy explicitly. I shall quote two passages from the beginning of the chapter:

. . . e siccome la *Galassia*, cioè quello *bianco* cerchio, che il vulgo chiama la *Via di santo Jacopo*.<sup>2</sup> . . . Perchè è da sapere che di quella *Galassia* li filosofi hanno avuto diverse opinioni. Chè li Pittagorici dissero che 'l sole alcuna fiata<sup>3</sup> errò nella sua via, e, passando per altre parti non convenienti al suo fervore, arse il luogo, per lo quale passò; e rimasevi quell' apparenza dell' *arsura*. E credo che si mossero dalla favola di *Fetonte*, la quale narra Ovidio nel principio del secondo di *Metamorfoseos*.<sup>4</sup>

The substitution of the English "Watling Street" for Dante's "Via di santo Jacopo" (cf. "somme . . . callen hit" with "il vulgo chiama") is the obvious thing. And the explicit connection in both (even to verbal agreement) of the origin of the galaxy with the story of Phaeton—which Chaucer characteristically proceeds to summarize—is too striking to need comment. It is of course possible that Chaucer may have known the connection from some other source. No other, so far as I know, has been pointed out, and in view once more of independent evidence of his acquaintance with the *Convivio*, it seems highly probable that he recalled it here.

There is another passage—this time in an unexpected and even incongruous setting—which contains an unmistakable reminiscence of the *Convivio*. Two lines in the *Compleynt of Mars* I have long suspected, from their tone and phraseology, to be a borrowing from Dante, but no definite suggestion for them appears in the *Divine Comedy*. In point of fact, Chaucer is recalling the doctrine of the most intricate and baffling section of the *Convivio*, in which Dante explains and interprets the conflict between his two loves. The second Tractate opens with the canzone beginning: "Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete," addressed to the Intelligences who move the third heaven. The passage in Chaucer, unequivocal

<sup>1</sup> *Inf.* XVII, 106-8 (cf. *Purg.*, IV, 71-72). See *Englische Studien*, III, 245-46.

<sup>2</sup> II, xv, 8-10.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chaucer's "ones."

<sup>4</sup> II, xv, 45-55.

as the reminiscence is, does not involve the more complex subtleties of Dante's argument, and for our purpose these may happily be disregarded. The lines, in their context, are these:

The firste tyme, alas! that I was wrought,  
 And for certeyn effectes hider broght  
 By him that lordeth ech intelligence,  
 I yaf my trewe servise and my thoght,  
 For evermore—how dere I have hit boght!—  
 To hir, that is of so gret excellence, etc.<sup>1</sup>

In the fifth chapter of the second Tractate Dante discusses the *Intelligenze* at length, and a few lines may be quoted:

Poich' è mostrato nel precedente capitolo quale è questo terzo cielo e come in sè medesimo è disposto, resta a dimostrare chi sono questi che 'l muovono. È adunque da sapere primamente, che li movitori di quello sono Sustanze separate da materia, cioè *Intelligenze*, le quali la volgare gente chiama Angeli. . . . Altri furono, siccome Plato, uomo eccellentissimo, che puosono non solamente tante *Intelligenze*, quanti sono li movimenti del cielo, ma eziandio quante sono le spezie delle cose . . . e vollero, che siccome le *Intelligenze de' cieli sono generatrici di quelli, ciascuna del suo*, così queste fossero generatrici dell' altre cose, ed esempli ciascuna della sua spezie; e chiamale Plato Idee, che tanto è a dire, quanto forme e nature universali. Li Gentili le chiamavano Dei e Dee, etc.<sup>2</sup>

In this same chapter the effects (*effetti*) of the Intelligences are referred to, but it is in the ninth chapter that this phase of the subject is explicitly treated:

Potrebbe dire alcuno: conciossiacosachè amore sia effetto di queste *Intelligenze* (a cui io parlo), e quello di prima fosse amore così come questo di poi, perchè la loro virtù corrompe l'uno, e l'altro genera? . . . A questa quistione si può leggermente rispondere, che lo effetto di costoro è amore, come è detto. . . .<sup>3</sup>

The emphasis on "effect" is Dante's own: "Dico *effetto*, in quanto," etc.<sup>4</sup>

In Chaucer's lines, now, it must be remembered that it is *Mars*—that is, one of the Intelligences themselves<sup>5</sup>—who is speaking, and

<sup>1</sup> Ll. 164-69.

<sup>2</sup> II, v, 1-8, 20-25, 28-35. Juno, Vulcan, Minerva, and Ceres are then mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> II, ix, 22-27, 31-33. Cf. also II, vi, 109-19.

<sup>4</sup> II, ix, 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. II, vi, 105 ff. Into Chaucer's variation from Dante in his use of "the third heaven" (l. 29) it is not here necessary to go. Mars is not, strictly speaking, one of the

as such he declares that he has been brought hither for "certeyn [i.e., fixed, determined] effectes." In other words, he was brought and set in his place for the *effetti* that belong to the Intelligences—" [e] lo effetto di costoro è amore."<sup>1</sup> And the reference to "him that *lordeth* ech intelligence" is no less clear. The canzone is directly addressed, as we have seen, to the Intelligences, and in the address Dante names his "soave pensier," that went often "a' piè *del vostro Sire*."<sup>2</sup> In the comment this line receives its explanation: ". . . questo pensiero che se ne già spesse volte a' piè *del Sire di costoro a cui io parlo, ch' è Iddio*."<sup>3</sup>

Chaucer's lines, accordingly, in the light of their source, are clear. Mars complains that as one of the Intelligences he was created by his lord—"the god that sit so hye" (l. 218)—to fulfil the very end of his existence, which end was love. He *has* loved—has given to his lady his true service and his thought, and his love has ended in "misaventure." The cause of his complaint, on which he lays such stress,<sup>4</sup> lies therefore deep enough. The fact that Dante's whole doctrine of the Intelligences is implicit in two lines is evidence again of Chaucer's power of assimilation. And his ability to "reject what cannot clear him"<sup>5</sup> is no less striking. For what he takes from the *Convivio* (as well as how he takes it) and what he leaves are equally significant.

There are other passages that Chaucer may have drawn from the *Convivio*, but there are equally possible sources elsewhere. The lines invoking the "firste moeving cruel firmament" in the *Man of Law's Tale*<sup>6</sup> are in striking accord, in their phraseology, with certain statements of the *Convivio*.<sup>7</sup> But in this case Chaucer and Dante may be,

Intelligences of the third heaven. But Chaucer's whole conception in the poem is as far removed from that of Dante's canzone as the conception of the *House of Fame* is remote from that of the *Divine Comedy*, and his recollection of certain phrases must be treated, in the one case as in the other, independently of any idea that he is following in Dante's footsteps in his *plan*. It is only a single idea and its phraseology that is involved.

<sup>1</sup> For the indubitable astrological significance of the next stanza, which describes the lady, see Manly, *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, V, 125-26.

<sup>2</sup> Canzone, ll. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> II, viii, 38-40.

<sup>4</sup> See the preceding stanza throughout.

<sup>5</sup> The whole passage in Arnold (*The Second Best*, ll. 13-19) is rather curiously applicable to Chaucer.

<sup>6</sup> B 295-98.

<sup>7</sup> See II, vi, 145-151; II, iii, 39-45; II, iv, 19-27.

and probably are, drawing on a common source.<sup>1</sup> The "Etik" passage in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* finds an interesting parallel in the canzone upon which Chaucer drew for his account of "gentilesse."

. . . for "vertu is the mene,"  
As Etik saith.<sup>2</sup>

*Virtute* intendo, che fa l'uom felice  
In sua operazione.  
Quest' è (*secondochè l' Etica dice*)  
Un abito eligente,  
*Lo qual dimora in mezzo solamente.*<sup>3</sup>

But, as I have pointed out elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> there is a similar passage in John of Salisbury, and as between the two, honors seem easy.<sup>5</sup> Such parallels as the two just cited, accordingly, are inconclusive, even though the list might easily be lengthened.

The correspondences, however, in the cases of the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, the *Gentilesse balade*, the *House of Fame*, and the *Compleynt of Mars*, are of a different character, and they seem to establish beyond doubt the conclusion tentatively suggested by Koepfel and Paget Toynbee. And the addition of the *Convivio* to Chaucer's library is an important one.

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<sup>1</sup> See Skeat's note on l. 295 (*Oxford Chaucer*, V, 148-49).

<sup>2</sup> Prologue, B-version, ll. 165-66.

<sup>3</sup> IV, canzone, ll. 83-87. Cf. IV, xx, 8-10: "dunque ogni Virtute . . . cioè l'abito elettivo consistente nel mezzo."

<sup>4</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, XXV (March, 1910), 87-89.

<sup>5</sup> The context in the *Convivio*, however, is closer than in the *Polycraticus* to the context in the *Legend*.