The Biennial Congress of the New Chaucer Society featured the announcement of multiple publication prizes, fellowships, and scholarships:

I. Biennial Publication Prizes
II. Poster Prize
III. SAC Early-Career Prize
IV. Huntington Fellowship
V. Oxford Bodleian Fellowship
VI. Donald Howard Travel Scholarships

These awards seek to support our colleagues by recognizing, supporting, and promoting scholarship that furthers the Society's goals.

I. Biennial Publication Prizes. In December 2025, the New Chaucer Society trustees authorized the inaugural New Chaucer Society Biennial Publication Prizes. In all, we received 35 nominations across 5 categories. Eighteen former trustees and presidents volunteered to serve as referees for the prizes. They were impressed with the number, quality and variety of submissions for this inaugural prize, which speaks to the vitality of our field and the goals of the Society.

Here's what they reported back.

The Chaucer Monograph prize (Category 1) committee found all the submissions to be outstanding contributions to Chaucerian scholarship. Each book makes important interventions and provides thoughtful, erudite, and perceptive analysis of its chosen topics. All are deserving of recognition, and the committee was thrilled to have this unmistakable testimony that the Chaucer monograph, as a genre, is still flourishing. Needing to make a determination among such quality submissions, however, the committee arrived at the consensus decision to have two of them share the prize: **Laura Ashe's *Chaucer's Ethical Philosophy*** (Oxford University Press 2025) **and Ingrid Nelson's *Medieval Media: Bodies, Networks, Chaucer*** (University of Pennsylvania Press 2025).

The committee applauds Ashe for her enormous argumentative verve, which is clearly the product of long teaching of Chaucer. Her book's unabashedly personal approach yields exhilarating and intense engagement with key philosophical questions that Chaucer's poetry raises by way of two unusual interlocutors, Wittgenstein and Hegel. With its convincing arguments, delivered with force and supported by masterful close readings, the book attests to how such traditional methods of analysis, in concert with ideas that matter to us now, continue to yield groundbreaking contributions to Chaucer studies.

The committee was thoroughly impressed by Nelson's insightful and wide-reaching engagement with modern media theory, which she expertly pursues in a manner that reinterprets both Chaucer's writings and contemporary understandings of media in a subtle two-way conversation. Ambitious and capacious, her book supplies a clear articulation of what's at stake in Chaucer scholarship now. With its readings of Chaucer, it achieves the difficult aim of producing fresh and engaging considerations of familiar texts. And with the immense topical span of its

chapters, it stands as a clear demonstration of the ongoing applicability and relevance of Chaucerian scholarship.

The committee members determining the prize for the Monograph on a Topic dealing with Late-Medieval Literature *and* author's first monograph on any topic (Category 2) decided by consensus to award the prize to **Marcel Elias's *English Literature and the Crusades: Anxieties of Holy War, 1291-1453*** (Cambridge University Press 2024) and honorable mention to **William Rhodes's *The Work of Reform: Literature and Political Ecology from Langland to Spenser*** (Cornell University Press 2025). It was a great group of books, and they enjoyed reading and discussing them. However, they felt that Elias and Rhodes especially offered new scholarly and critical perspectives in books whose arguments engage with established views and push beyond them to offer more complicated understandings of the texts they consider and the issues embedded within them. In particular, Elias's analysis of crusader literature is able to place those literary texts within an evolving medieval understanding of war and violence in ways that re-open that literature for discussion.

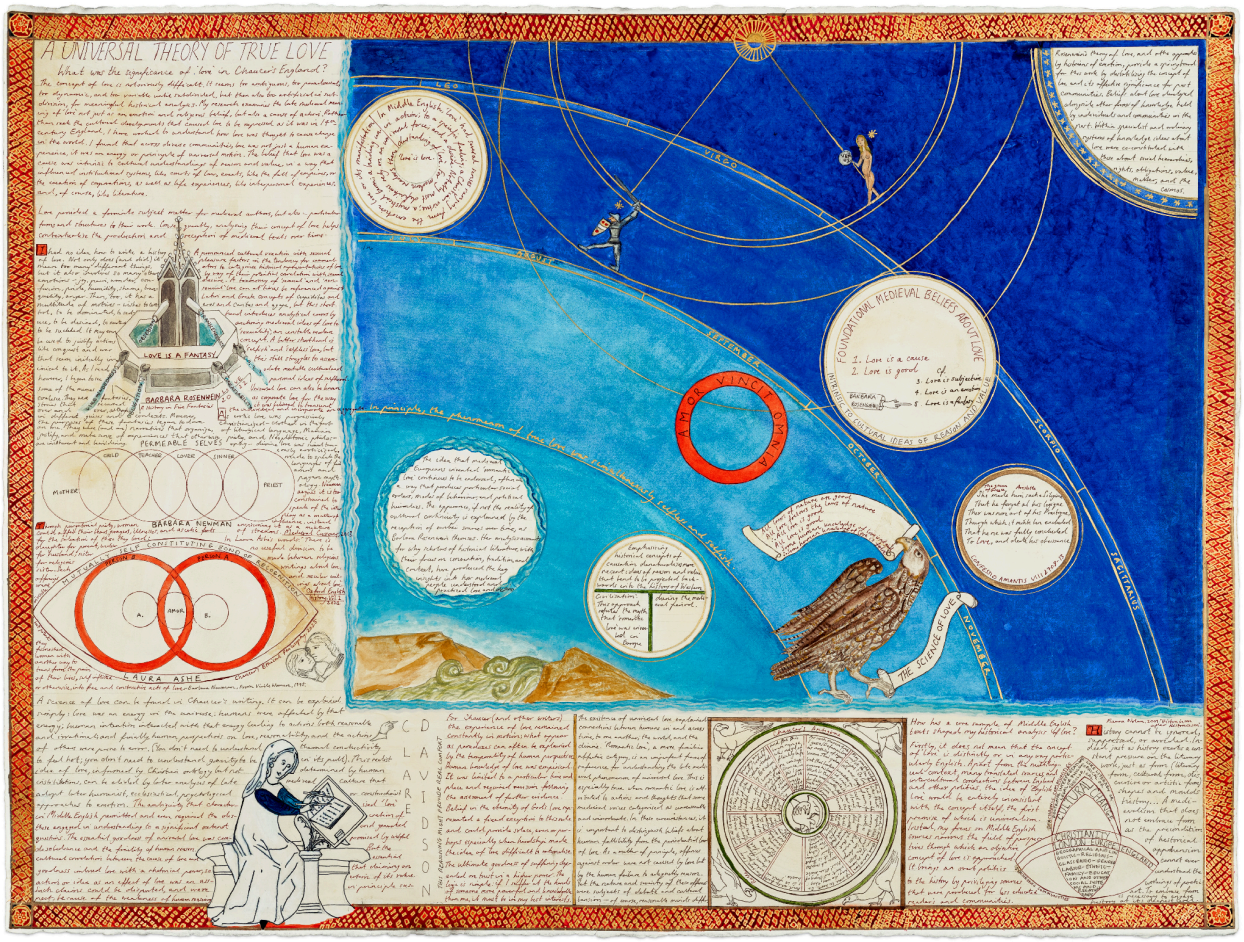
The committee for the Best Monograph on a Topic dealing with Late-Medieval Literature *and* not author's first monograph (Category 3) selected **Shannon Gayk's *Apocalyptic Ecologies: From Creation to Doom in Middle English Literature*** (Chicago University Press 2024) for the award. The committee also identified **CJ Jones's *Fixing the Liturgy: Friars, Sisters, and the Dominican Rite, 1256-1516*** (University of Pennsylvania Press 2024) for honorable mention. *Apocalyptic Ecologies* is an ambitious and deeply rewarding study of how medieval writers imagined catastrophe and its aftermath. Rather than treating such disaster narratives simply as fables of justified and inevitable punishment, she looks for, in her words, "openings, eruptions of potentiality, and invitations to imagine our relationship with the world differently." This commitment to "imagining differently" animates the book's most powerful readings. *Apocalyptic Ecologies* is a striking achievement. Gayk shows how medieval accounts of apocalypse can unsettle familiar assumptions about human relationships to the material world and open new ways of thinking about catastrophe, survival, and change that resonate with questions we are currently asking today. Jones's monograph analyzes, through the study of the Dominican order, how liturgical changes reveal the ways medieval practitioners, including women, exercised forms of agency through ceremonies planned for their communities to experience and enact.

The committee for the Best Edited Collection on a Topic dealing with Late-Medieval Literature (Category 4) unanimously agreed that the award should go to ***Reconsidering Consent and Coercion: Power, Vulnerability, and Sexual Violence in Medieval Literature*****, edited by Jane Bonsall and Hannah Piercy** (Brepols 2025). The volume had its origins in the 2022 discovery, by Euan Roger and Sebastian Sobecki, of two new documents relating to Cecily Chaumpaigne's quitclaim freeing Chaucer from the accusation of rape, a discovery that fostered the editors' desire to reconsider sexual violence in the context of employment and servitude, across a range of later medieval literary texts. The editors have done a first-class job of considering "the broader links between intersectional disadvantage, abduction, and sexual violation, … given that female servants were vulnerable to

sexual abuse from their masters, mistress's sons, and others" (19). They assembled an outstanding group of 15 contributors, in addition to themselves, and ensured the originality, quality, scholarly rigor, and interest of every contribution. The essays range widely over different historical periods, literary genres, and geographical and linguistic cultures: Middle English, Middle and Sixteenth-Century Scots, Middle and Old French, Old Norse, Middle High German, Old Irish, Italian, Latin, Persian, and medieval-era Bengali. They include attention to resistance to patriarchal violence and to men's experience of sexual coercion and rape. We particularly commend the editors for the success of their collaborative, feminist publishing practice. Contributors were encouraged to discuss their work in progress and to contribute to the development of each other's chapters. This practice has not only created a sense of community among participants but has enriched the individual essays. All the essays speak to each other, emphasizing shared concerns as well as differences.

The Prize for the Best Special Journal Issue or Cluster within a Periodical dealing with Late-Medieval Literature (Category 5) is awarded to **"New Directions in Medieval Postcolonialism" edited by Marcel Elias**, which appeared in the September 2025 issue of *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies,* volume 55, number 3. The volume revisits the vexed relationship between modern postcolonial theory and the challenge of the premodern, seeking "to enlarge the conceptual and theoretical arsenal used by medievalists to understand cultural contact in the distant past." The essays in the volume, by such scholars as Sierra Lomuto, Anthony Bale, Rachel Schine, Christine Chism, Karla Mallette and Sharon Kinoshita, shuttle between enormous vistas and microscopic details, taking us to Chaucer's England, the Mediterranean basin, the Balkans, Central Asia and beyond. In addition to the scholarly quality and originality of the individual essays, the committee was impressed with the remarkable conceptual unity and mutual interrogation achieved by the editor and contributors. Honorable Mention goes to the *Chaucer Review's* special issue, **"Chaucerian Obscenity," edited by Mary Flannery, Lucy Fleming, and Kristen Haas Curtis**. With admirable cohesion and clarity, the collected essays track the ways obscenity came to be associated with Chaucer by his translators and biographers, particularly in the 18th century. Reviewers also commend the volume for its value to teaching: what counts as obscene in different historical times and contexts, how contemporary adaptations for children address Chaucer's explicitly sexual scenes, and what, in fact, does "queynte" actually mean? This special issue was made possible with the support of the University of Bern, and resulted from the Swiss National Science Foundation Eccellenza project "Canonicity, Obscenity, and the Making of Modern Chaucer, 1700-2020 (COMMode)."

II. Biennial Poster Prize. Presentations at the 2026 Biennial Congress included 10 posters. The winning poster was designed and created by Clare Davidson. Her poster, "A Systematic Analysis of Love in the Age of Chaucer," combined visual beauty with careful analysis to present a "totally unique" work of art and work of scholarship.



III. The *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* Early-Career prize for article published in the society's flagship journal during the previous two years was awarded to **Katherine Churchill for "'The Bokes Duelle': John Gower's Poetics of Futurity and the Development of the Late Medieval Archive," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Vol. 47 (2025).** The prize includes a $2000 cash award. Per the committee determining the prize, Churchill's essay is an excellent example of deep scholarship, clear argumentation, and important innovation in late-medieval English literary studies. The essay's careful integration of theory and historical context emphasizes the materiality of the archives. As such, it promises to be applicable beyond our study of Gower but also all medieval authors and even those beyond the scope of our field.

IV. Over the past two years, the Society awarded two **NCS Huntington Early-Career Fellowships**. Offered in collaboration with the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, the Early-Career Fellowship allows the recipient to spend one month in residence at the Huntington Library, allowing them access to the library's collections in order to conduct advanced research in the history, literature and culture of the time of Chaucer. The amount of the fellowship is $3500 plus travel expenses. **Olivia Baskerville's** proposed project, "The Market for Pre-Modern Manuscripts

and the Rhetoric of National Value in Britain in the Early Twentieth-Century," received support for 2026-2027. Izzy Thomas Howard's project, "'Made a Living Soul': Genesis and the Creation of the Soul in Medieval Devotional and Mystic Literature," received support in 2025-2026.

V. The Society also awarded two **NCS Bodleian Early-Career Fellowships** in 2025 and 2026. Offered in collaboration with the Bodleian Libraries, the Early-Career Fellowship supports a one-month research visit by an early-career member of the New Chaucer Society to the Special Collections of the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford. The award is £1,800 for an applicant based in the UK or the Republic of Ireland and £1,900 for international applicants. The recipients can also claim travel expenses. **Arkaprabha Chakraborty**'s proposed project to study *Piers Plowman* manuscripts at the Bodleian Libraries received support for 2026-2027. Stacie Vos's project, "Women Doing Medieval Studies in the Twentieth Century," was supported for 2025-2026. This work largely focused on studying documents associated with Hope Emily Allen; the research forms part of a book project on twentieth-century pioneering female medievalists.

VI. Finally, 35 doctoral students and early-career researchers received **Donald Howard Travel Scholarships** to attend the NCS Congress in Freiburg, Germany. One of the largest cost items on the NCS budget, the travel scholarships have long represented the society's stated aim to support as many early career scholars as possible.