time? We do not know, and to assume that there were no Canterbury tales before Chaucer
would be like assuming there were no cockfights in Staffordshire before the composition
of Wensbury Cocking. Similarly, 'tournament of Tottenham' may for aught we know
have been a byword before the poem was written.

A search of London chronicles for the years 1400–1432 turned up no references to
entertainments at Tottenham; but since those works notice almost nothing except strictly
municipal affairs on the one hand and those of national importance on the other, it would
be unwise to argue from their silence that no such show took place then. Several
occasions, lavishly observed by the Londoners themselves, would have offered
opportunities for the surrounding villages to put on a spectacle of their own for
distinguished company. Such were the reception of the Eastern Emperor by Henry iv
in 1402, the return of Henry v from the Agincourt campaign in November of 1415, the
visit of Emperor Sigismund in the spring of 1416, the reception of Queen Catherine in
February of 1421, that of the Earl of Salisbury in 1427, and the homecoming of Henry
vi after his French coronation in February of 1432, a mere matter of months before the
Exeter performance. It would be nothing incredible if a new kind of spectacle, which
had proved delightful to the young king and his courtiers, had then been repeated in a
provincial centre such as Exeter; but however plausible, that explanation remains a mere
conjecture.

NOTES

1 Middle English Metrical Romances, ed W. H. French and C. B. Hale (New York, 1930), ii, 989–98;
2 The poem survives in primary MSS.: BL Harley 5306 (H, 1456) and Cambridge Univ Lib Fl.II 38
(¢, after 1431); the fragmentary Harvard MS is a 17th-c transcript. See the editions cited above and
David Klausner, NM, 74 (1973), 676–85.
3 The textual and lexical assumptions underlying this summary will be expounded in another article.
They differ at several points from those of the modern editors.
6 Devon, ed John M. Wasson, Records of Early English Drama 7 (Toronto, forthcoming), p. 93, lines
23–5, and p. 369. Dr Abigail Young gave freely of her expertise for the writing of this paragraph,
for which the author wishes to record his thanks.
7 No critical text has ever been printed, but one can glean a fair notion of the variants by comparing
the editions cited in note 1 (founded on H) with that in W. C. Hazlitt, Remains of the Early Popular
Poetry of England (London, 1866), iii, 82–93 (founded on c). Klausner showed that the Harvard
MS is a transcript of c.

MARION COLTHORPE

A 'prorogued' Elizabethan tournament

The College of Arms in London has a collection of score cheques and other material
relating to Elizabethan tournaments. These include a Proclamation which refers to a
Challenge delivered at Woodstock Palace in Oxfordshire for a tournament comprising
tilt, course of the field, tournay and barriers, to be held on May Day. The text of the
Proclamation, with its two endorsements, is as follows:

[i] a proclamation for the prorogyn of Justes 1575
1575
[ii] Justes prolonged after the death of the countis of penbroke where St Henry Leay
was one the Tylt challengers. This was proclaimed at Wytehalle – the prevy
chamber ii days afor st Georges daye – an 1575.

Where as the yere now last past two Straunge knightes wyth there Assocyatter
in Armes, at her maigestyes most Royall pallace of Woodstocke, upon there
discontented causes, made an open and Solempne proclamation ageynst all
nobellmen and gentyllmen at Armes that willingelie for Love, and vertues sake
wolde despose themselves to Encouter them at the Tylt, course of the fylde,
the Turney and barriers, there determynatly to holde and kype the Course of
there pretencis, and marshall purposes, where soever the most highest and
bewtynfull prince shulde holde her courte, and presences on Maye daye then next
followinge, To prove whether the farr spred prayse of the noblest yonge
gentillmen of theys partes of the worlde, mought he founde as certayne in there
warlicke forces, as fame hath throughly publyshed the same, Now therefore,
wyth gryffe they let you know that thus unhappily it is come to pas, that the
Chefest of them and in there opinion of gretest worth In love of his mistris,
the only fortunat, hath by the cruell stroke of deathe, even at this Instant against
this tyme lost the cause of all his confort: A lady; for whom he wofully
wayleth, and we, even all we most worthely bemone, for theys great causes,
of as great reson, as excydyng grefe, her most excellent maigesty understaundyng
the nere approche of thes warlicke knights to holde there daye, and mayntayne
there promyse, graciously forseyng that marshall deedes, and waylyng handes,
are far unfyty matched, hath Countermaundy there desieres, and therefore,
of her princely Charge I pronounce that there shalbe no further procydyng
daye, and mayntayne promyse as same, Now therefore,
wyth gryffe they let you know that thus unhappily it is come to pas, that the
Chefest of them and in there opinion of gretest worth In love of his mistris,
the only fortunat, hath by the cruell stroke of deathe, even at this Instant against
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there promyse, graciously forseyng that marshall deedes, and waylyng handes,
are far unfyty matched, hath Countermaundy there desieres, and therefore,
of her princely Charge I pronounce that there shalbe no further procydyng
...
in deference to the bereaved Earl but part of general Court mourning, as this
Proclamation implies. The Earl was not inconsolable: he married again exactly twelve
months after the Proclamation (on 21 April 1577; his third wife was Mary Sidney, Philip
Sidney’s sister).

The Proclamation refers to a man described as ‘the Chefest of them’, – ‘them’
apparently being the challengers and their associates in arms. This man, who is mourning
the loss of a lady, is presumably the Earl of Pembroke. As Henry Lord Herbert he had
been one of the defendants at a tilt and tourney after the wedding of the Earl of Warwick
in November 1565, but the only other tilt-list at the College of Arms which mentions
him is a list dated 1578 which names him as one of four Judges for that tilt.5 No evidence
has been found that the prorogued tournament took place.5

The Proclamation refers to the original Challenge (which is itself also called a
Proclamation) as having been made at Woodstock Palace in the previous year, ie, in 1575.
Elizabeth I stayed at Woodstock during several of her summer progresses, and the longest
of all her visits was that of 1575, when she remained at Woodstock from late August until
early October.6 Sir Henry Lee, who is named as one of the challengers, was Lieutenant
of the Manor of Woodstock, as well as a leading participant in, and often a prime mover
of, many Elizabethan tournaments.7 He was involved in a similar Challenge in 1571, for
on Twelfth Night 1570/1 he was one of four challengers (‘knights errant’) named in a
Proclamation announcing a tilt, tourney and barriers to be held at Shrovetide, but which
were eventually held on May 1, 2 and 6. The other challengers were the Earl of Oxford,
Charles Howard (later Lord Howard of Effingham) and Christopher Hatton.8 The
reason for the postponement in 1571 is not stated. Other Elizabethan Proclamations for
adjourning or derring tilts which have been preserved at the College of Arms are couched
in matter-of-fact ‘unliterary’ language. These are a Proclamation probably of 1581,
deferring a tournament for a few days ‘for sundry respects’,9 and several Proclamations
in November 1599, deferring tournaments because of bad weather or illness,10 which
may have been composed by the Heralds who are mentioned as having delivered the
respective Proclamations (who included in 1599 the historian William Camden). The
proroguing Proclamation is rather different in style, and it is tempting to speculate as
to its author, and in particular as to whether Sir Henry Lee might himself have been the
author, since the Challenge was originally made at Woodstock and since he alone is
named in one of the Proclamation endorsements.

A pamphlet describing The Queenes Majesties entertainment at Woodstocke (in 1575)
was published in 1585. No reference to the Challenge appears in the pamphlet, but the
first leaves of the unique Quarto at the British Library are missing.11 Portions of this
entertainment, together with speeches and verses delivered at various Elizabethan
tournaments, are also in the ‘Ditchley Manuscript’, now in the British Library but
formerly preserved at Ditchley in Oxfordshire, once the home of Sir Henry Lee.12 It
is probable that Lee had a hand in the composition of some at least of these speeches
and verses.13 By reason of its tone and content the proroguing Proclamation would not
be out of place in this collection, but it is not in fact included in the Ditchley Manuscript,
which may be a point against Lee’s authorship. The first item in the Ditchley Manuscript
is a short ‘Cartel for a Challenge’. This was printed by William Hamper in 1820 from
another manuscript – now lost – which gives a somewhat better text.14 In both
manuscripts the Cartel is undated but immediately precedes Sir Henry Lee’s Challenge
before ‘Shampanie’. Lee tilted at Greenwich before M de Champagney on about 2 March
1575/6.15 As, however, the Cartel refers to a Challenge by three knights, and as other
items in the Ditchley Manuscript are not in chronological order, the Cartel cannot with
any certainty be connected with the 1575 Challenge at Woodstock.

Elizabeth’s next, and final, visit to Woodstock was from 18–23 September 1592,16
and on 20 September as part of an entertainment at Sir Henry Lee’s house at Ditchley
she heard an 'Olde Knightes Tale' which apparently referred back to the 1575 Woodstock visit:

Not far from hence, nor verie long agoe,...
Of all the pleasures there, among the rest,
(The rest were Justes and feates of Armed Knightes),...17

This implies that there was more than merely a Challenge at Woodstock in 1575, but all that is known as to 'Justes and feates' is that the 1575 Entertainment includes (at the very beginning of the imperfect Quarto) a combat between knights which is stopped by one Hemetes, a hermit.

NOTES

1 The (undated) Proclamation is in a neat secretary hand, but the endorsements are in a different hand, a 'running' secretary hand. 'Prolonged' (in the second endorsement) is used in its obsolete sense.
2 Biographical details of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke are from V. Gibbs, ed, Complete Peerage, x (1945), 410–11. This gives the date of the Countess's burial, but not of her death. The Earl was born 'probably after 1538' and died in 1601.
3 J. Hunter, ed A. Gatty, Hallowsham (Sheffield and London, 1869), 113.
4 College of Arms: Anglo no 9a (Nov 1565); Ms 4bis, iii (1578 list). Ms 4bis is another collection of tilt-lists and score cheques, listed by S. Anglo in the Journal of the Society of Archivists, ii (1960–64), 161–2.
5 The College of Arms has no tilt-list or score cheque dated 1576; there is a score cheque dated 1577 (Ms 4bis, ii), but its true date appears to be May 1581, for it lists the four challengers and the defendants (including Sir Henry Lee) who took part in the celebrated tilt when the Four Foster-Children of Desire besieged the Fortress of Perfect Beauty. (See J. Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth (1823), ii, 312–329).
8 College of Arms: Ms 4bis, la; printed from Asholean Ms 837, which gives the dates May 1, 2 and 6, by R.C. Clephan, The Tournament: its periods and phases (London, 1919), 126–7.
9 College of Arms: Ms 4bis, 1b. This undated Proclamation 'By the Queen', on the back of the 1571 Proclamation, postpones a tilt and tourney at Whitehall from Monday 1 May until Sunday and Monday 7 and 8 May. It cannot refer to the May 1571 tournament, which ended on Sunday 6 May, but the dates would fit the 1581 tournament, which eventually began on 15 May after several postponements. (Nichols, Progresses, ii, 315).
11 It was reprinted by A. W. Pollard (Oxford, 1919) and by J.W. Cunliffe in PMLA, 36 (1919), 121–127.
12 Ms Add ms 41499a.
13 Chambers, Sir Henry Lee, 268–297, discusses and prints part of the manuscript.
14 Masques: performed before Queen Elizabeth (Chiswick, 1820); reprinted in Nichols, Progresses, iii, 196. A 'cartel' is defined by the OED as a written challenge.
15 See Champagney's own letters of 28 February and 3 March 1575/6, in Kervyn de Lettenhove (ed) Relations Politiques des Pays-Bas et de l'Angleterre (Brussels, 1882–1900), viii, 207, 221.
16 Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, iv, 107.
17 Chambers, Sir Henry Lee, 282.