

MEDIUM AEVUM TRAVEL BURSARY
Awarded October 2016

FINAL REPORT

I am grateful to the Medium Aevum Travel Bursary for enabling me to travel to Geneva in March 2017 (delay approved by Stephen Pink) to examine a manuscript of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* as part of my research toward publishing, with Prof. Derek Pearsall, a *Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts of John Gower's Confessio Amantis*, now under contract with Boydell & Brewer for its John Gower Society series, forthcoming in 2019. This manuscript of the *Confessio Amantis* has rarely been seen by scholars of Middle English literature because it is both the only copy of the work on the mainland continent and in private hands. I sought permission to examine the manuscript, kept by the Bodmer family in their home rather than deposited in the Fondation Martin Bodmer in Cologny near Geneva. It was brought to the Fondation for three days for my private examination.

I travelled to Geneva 20-23 March 2017 and examined the manuscript during two full days in the locked reading room of the Fondation, 21 and 22 March. The examination, photographs and notes proved extremely fruitful. This manuscript had previously been dated to the 1430s to 1450s, but on examining it I was able to confirm that it is a very early copy of Gower's work, directly copied from one of the earliest manuscripts now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fairfax 3. Furthermore my expertise enabled me to identify that one of the principal scribes of the Bodmer manuscript is also the principal scribe of the Fairfax manuscript, and another of the scribes can be identified as a Scrivener of London at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Thus the trip enabled me to place the manuscript at the very heart of the earliest production and dissemination of Gower's greatest work.

I have underspent the amounts I requested for two reasons:

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[REDACTED], thus also eliminating the train fares to Manchester or London.

Thank you again for assisting me to travel to examine this important manuscript, enabling me to not only complete the *Catalogue* but discover a vital link in the production and dissemination of Gower's work.

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