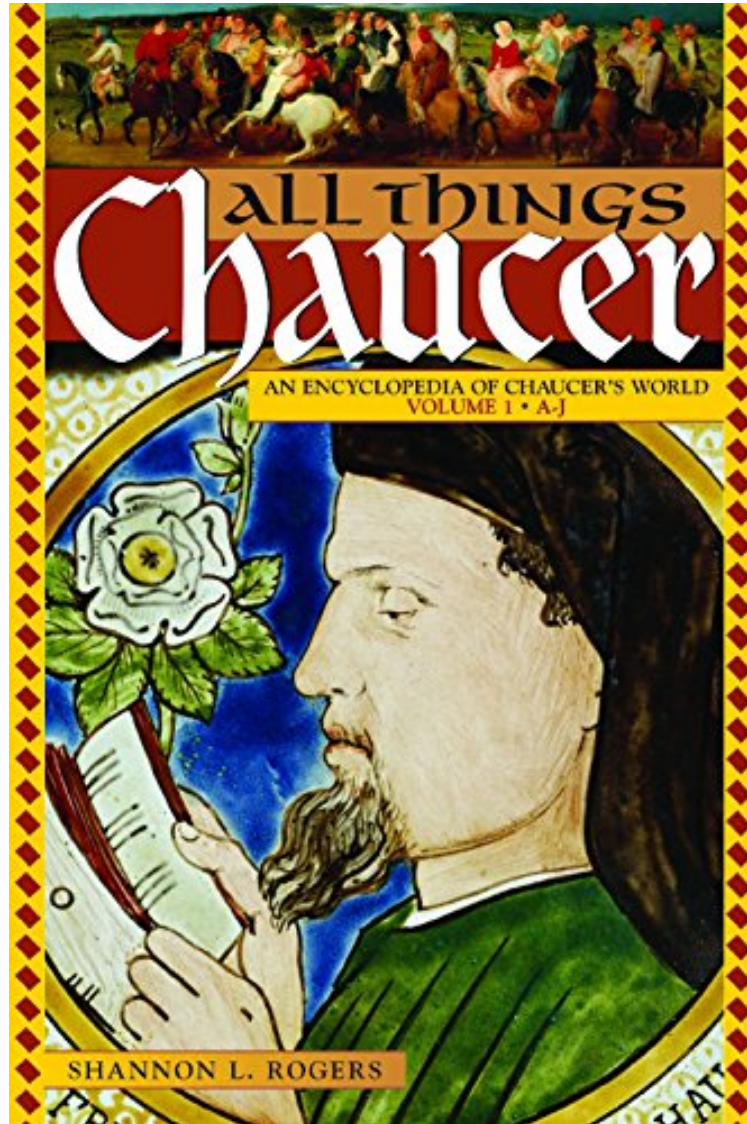


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## All Things Chaucer [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Chaucer's World

*From Greenwood*

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**From Greenwood :** All Things Chaucer [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Chaucer's World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All Things Chaucer [2 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of Chaucer's World:

Chaucer is the most widely read medieval author, and his works reflect the fascinating world of the Middle Ages. Written for students and general readers, this book includes numerous alphabetically arranged entries on items mentioned in all of his works and references the items to his writings. In addition to exploring Chaucer's material world, the encyclopedia surveys the beliefs, customs, and rituals of the Middle Ages. The encyclopedia broadens the general reader's understanding of Chaucer and his world and helps students analyze and interpret his texts. Chaucer is the most widely read medieval author, and his works reflect daily life in the Middle Ages. Written for students and general readers, this encyclopedia surveys Chaucer's texts and provides background information on items mentioned in all of his works. Included are numerous alphabetically arranged entries, which direct the reader to passages from Chaucer's writings. In addition to physical things, the encyclopedia also explores the customs, rituals, and belief systems of the Middle Ages. Thus the book is a portal to late medieval culture, identifying for readers the individual items that make up the physical world of Chaucer's time. This encyclopedia broadens the general reader's understanding of Chaucer and his world and contributes to an ability to interpret and understand his writings. Students will value it as a guide to literature and the medieval world.

From Booklist All Things Chaucer departs somewhat from the two earlier All Things titles, covering Shakespeare and Jane Austen, which focused on the world in which each author lived. More than half of the 188 alphabetically arranged entries in this set identify selected places, people, and mythological and biblical figures mentioned in Chaucer's writings, while the remaining articles address broad topics concerned with aspects of life in fourteenth-century England. Thus, brief entries such as Catalonia, Narcissus, and St. Ronan are interspersed with longer articles like Agriculture, Food, and Weaponry. Most entries feature pertinent passages from Chaucer in both Middle English and modern translation. Often these sections are quite lengthy (sometimes as much as a page), and in a number of instances the same passage appears under more than one entry. The amount of quoted material in relation to original commentary is excessive, particularly in light of the significant topics omitted (such as Middle English and women). The majority of entries provide bibliographical citations to sources for additional information and cross-references to related articles. Numerous black-and-white illustrations appear throughout the set, and volume 2 contains an extensive bibliography and an index. Prefacing both volumes are alphabetical and thematic lists of entries, a brief chronology of Chaucer's life, and additional introductory material. Without this duplication of 36 pages and with a more judicious use of quotations, this title easily could have been published as a one-volume work, presumably for a considerably lower price. Despite its flaws, libraries may want to consider adding All Things Chaucer to their collections due to the useful information contained in its topical entries. Ellis, Marie Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Like previous titles in the All Things series, this volume focuses on background materials relating to the author's life and works that give readers a fuller context for understanding them. Alphabetically arranged entries range from a paragraph to several pages in length. They include aspects of Chaucer's life and world (e.g., Agriculture), along with major characters and some classical and/or literary references. Most entries offer brief lists of suggested readings for further research, including other reference and research guides. These are followed by an extensive general bibliography at the back of the second volume. Other resources include a map of the route taken by Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims and a chronology of Chaucer's life. Rogers's writing is lively, and she does a good job of explaining what is known (and less known) about Chaucer's life and world (e.g., the current debate over which disease the Black Death really was).[a]n attractive introduction. Recommended. Lower-/upper-level undergraduates and general readers." - Choice "Her intent in this two-volume companion is to help students and general readers better understand the context of English author, poet, and philosopher Geoffrey Chaucer's (1342-1400) world. She addresses that goal through some 150 A-to-Z entries, most ranging from 500 to 1000 words, on various people, habits, beliefs, and customs of the day. Readers will learn, e.g., that in Chaucer's time uncovered arms were considered risqué and that Chaucer made the first reference to dogs in vernacular English literature. For comprehensive Chaucer collections and for school and public libraries that don't have Chaucer A to Z." - Library Journal "This companion to Chaucer is a welcome resource to which one can turn to appreciate more fully his allusions, humor, and grasp of motivations and emotions. To know Chaucer, it is said, is to have an understanding of medieval culture, and All Things Chaucer will be of special value to the student, to whom it is primarily directed. Chaucerian specialists will also find this work useful for its bibliographies and various appendixes." - American Reference Books Annual "High school and beginning undergraduate students and the popular reader will enjoy this encyclopedia, which contains entries describing the people, places, beliefs, and practices of Chaucer's day. Entries devoted to daily life include those on taverns, travel, food and money. References to classical, biblical, and other literature are entry topics, as are the people and places named in Chaucer's works. The significant noble figures in Chaucer's work and life are described and the text includes a lengthy bibliography." - Reference Research Book News "All Things Chaucer includes all things about Chaucer: the historical background of his time, his writing and the medieval and physical cultures. Included are the money, the food, the tools, the clothing and the weapons as well as the rituals, superstitions, politics and daily life. Frontmatter provides an alphabetic list of entries, a guide to related topics, an introduction reporting Chaucer's life and a 2-page chronology. Articles often have examples of his writing to illustrate the meaning of the entry, and each entry has

suggestions for further reading. Black-and-white illustrations include buildings, manuscripts, woodcuts and objects from the era. This will be a prize for English literature teachers who must present Chaucer to their students and may need a little review. When students become interested in doing further study, this will be their first stop in planning their research journey." - GALE Reference for Students "[L]ibraries may want to consider adding All Things Chaucer to their collections due to the useful information contained in its topical entries." - Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin "This set is very approachable and user-friendly, with plenty of excerpts from Chaucer's writing to encourage further reading of his poetry, a good number of black and white illustrations and a very attractive colourful hardback cover which should encourage readers new to Chaucer to pick this title off the shelves." - Reference s "[S]urvey's the master's texts and provides background information on items mentioned in all of his works. Included are numerous A-Z entries that direct readers to passages from Chaucer's writings. In addition to physical items, the encyclopedia also explores the customs, rituals, and belief systems of the Middle Ages." - Library Media Connection

About the Author Shannon L. Rogers is presently an independent scholar and was Assistant Professor of History at Juniata College. She has also taught at Penn State Abington College and Saint Joseph's University. She has previously published on medieval Wales and medievalism in the works of Thomas Hardy and Benjamin Disraeli.