



The Minor Latin Works

with *In Praise of Peace*

by John Gower and edited by R.F. Yeager and Michael Livingston

DESCRIPTION:

Gower's achievement in writing substantially in all three primary languages of his time—Anglo-French, English, and Latin—was a source of pride to others and, undoubtedly, to him too: into the final years of his life he continued to produce poetry in all three languages. Certainly there is reason to know these poems for the light they shed on the intense partisanship and events of great moment surrounding the usurpation 1399-1400. It was during these parlous times that Gower composed most of the poems included here. All are important documents historically; but they are also poems admirable equally for their skill and craft. *In Praise of Peace* is in the same position as the shorter Latin works edited and translated in this volume: ignored, neglected, reduced, or relegated to the dusty realm of footnotes. But there is far more at work in this complex poem, as Gower's verse deftly weaves in and out of the historical, political, social, and religious contexts and controversies of its day. In tone, *In Praise of Peace* is, if not triumphant, determinedly optimistic. In this light, we might view the poem as a coda to Gower's long career, restating and reinvigorating his famously moral principles about just rule of self and society.

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CONTRIBUTORS BIOGRAPHIES:

R.F. Yeager is Professor of English at University of West Florida. He specializes in Old English, Middle English, medieval European literature and historical linguistics. Michael Livingston is associate Professor of English at The Citadel, in Charleston, S.C. He is an author of both fiction and non-fiction and has published on topics as diverse as early Christianity, Tolkien, and James Joyce.

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