



The Text of Caxton's Second Edition of the *Canterbury Tales*

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ABSTRACT

This article describes recent research on the textual relationship between the **first and second** editions of the *Canterbury Tales* printed in England by **William Caxton** and it also explores the textual affiliations of the manuscript source for the corrections in the second edition. Using both computerised and manual methods the variant readings **between the first and second** editions of the *Tales* are isolated. Examples of the textual affiliations of the **manuscript source** of Caxton's **second edition** are analysed. This article concludes that the manuscript source for the corrections introduced in Caxton's **second edition** of the *Tales* was of the same quality as the best extant manuscripts and that its readings can help our understanding of the textual tradition and can clarify the text for editors of the *Tales*.

KEYWORDS

Textual criticism, scholarly editing, new stemmatics, stemmatology, *incunabula*, Caxton, Cliaucer, the *Canterbury Tales*, *Canterbury Tales* Project

1. INTRODUCTION

Caxton's editions are often discussed by experts on early printed books. However, since Thomas Dunn (1939), no one had carried out a detailed analysis of the affiliations of Caxton's second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* based on textual variation. This article describes some of the results of my own collation of Caxton's editions with some of the most important witnesses of the text of the *Tales*. I discuss the affiliations of the manuscript source of Cx2 and its place in

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the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales* as well as the implications of Caxton's correction methods.

II. DISCUSSION

The story behind William Caxton's second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* (henceforth Cx2) is widely known: he included a preface to this book in which he wrote that a *gentylman* came to him and said that the text of his first edition of the *Tales* (henceforth Cx1) was not accurate, that it was not what Chaucer had written, and that his father had a better manuscript which he could lend to Caxton.' The implications of this preface generated a series of questions that have drawn the critics to investigate the textual status of Cx2. It is possible to distinguish at least three different problems. Firstly, from the preface one might deduce that there are probably textual differences between Cx1 and Cx2;² secondly one would have to ask by which process Caxton arrived to the text of Cx2; thirdly, there is the question of the affiliations of both Cx1 and Cx2. In his preface, Caxton explains that the *gentylman* told him that:

[H]e kiiewe a book whyche hys fader had and mochie louyd, that was very trewe, and accordyng vn-to hys owen first book by hym made, and sayd more yf I wold enprynte it agayn he wold gete me the same book for a copye, how be it he wyst wel, that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it, To whom I said, in caas that he coude gete me suche a book trewe and correcte, yet I wold ones endeuoire me to enprynte it agayn, for to saysfye thauctour, where as to fore by ygnourance I erryd in hurtyiig and dyffamyng his book in dyuerce places in setting in somme thynges that he iieuer sayd ne inade, and le-utyiig out many thynges that he made wlyche ben requysite to be sette in it, And thys we fyll at accord, And he ful gentyllly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyuerd it to me, by whiche I haue corrected my book (Caxton, *ca.* 1482: aijv).

Afterwards, Caxton states that he answered that if the book could be provided he would produce another edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. As stated, the gentleman delivered the book which was used by Caxton to 'correct' his edition. Critics, however, have interpreted this text very differently. Norman Blake has suggested that this preface was merely "publisher's talk" and that Caxton only made "minor adjustments to the text" (Blake, 1969: 104). Statements such as this have passed on to other scholars, such as Lotte Hellinga, who asserts that Caxton "made a small number of textual corrections, partly derived from his manuscript source and partly independent" (Hellinga: forthcoming). My own collation of the Caxton's editions of the *Canterbury Tales* showed that there are around three thousand significant places of variation between Cx1 and Cx2: approximately one for every six lines of text. 'Significant' places of variation are defined as those in which adjustments have been made to the text that change the wording, word order or the morphology of a word; these are potentially stemmatically significant, that is, they might carry information about the textual affiliations of a witness. Non-significant places of variation comprise all the spelling and punctuation variants, which are likely to be compositorial (or

scribal), and bear no information about the relationship between the different witnesses of the text. The total count of **three** thousand places of variation refers only to 'minor adjustments', for the lines which were added, substituted or deleted between the two editions **have not been considered**.³ It appears that, despite the general opinion of the critics, there are numerous changes that were introduced in Cx2. A look at my edition of the British Library copies of Cx1 and Cx2 makes evident that the texts are very different. Unfortunately, my edition does not include a regularised collation, in which only significant variants would appear; it is nonetheless, a good place to start.

Our next question, however, is about the nature of these changes. They could **have** arisen by deliberate **import** from the second text, as Caxton suggests, or could **have** occurred independently, as proposed by Hellinga (see quotation above). Greg (1924: 740) and Dunn (1939: 74) **have also** suggested that Caxton is likely to **have** used an unbound copy of Cx1 in which he wrote corrections from the new manuscript. Indeed, Blake offers two examples in which a word has **been mistakenly** placed in a line, therefore proposing that the compositor saw the correction but did not understand the instruction.⁴ However, this is not necessarily the kind of argument that convinces **all** the critics and Joseph A. Dane, in *The Myth of Print Culture*, expresses his dissatisfaction with the way in which Greg's text has **been interpreted**:⁵

This means only that Cx2 was not set up from the 'gentylman's book,' even though it coitains readings aiid the tale order of that copy, aiid that textually is most closely related to the text in Cx1. It is not quite the same thing as saying that Cx2 was set up in the printing shop from a copy of Cx1, the reading that most scholars (and perliaps Greg himself) gave to that argument [...] Greg never proposed as a counter-argument a manuscript printer's copy for both editions; in textual-critical terins, to say that Cx2 was 'set from' Cx1 is the same as saying that it was set from the printer's copy for Cx1, a copy that inust have existed (2003: 135).

It is unclear exactly what Dane is saying here. When he refers to the "printer's copy for Cx1" we can assume that he is thinking of the manuscript from which Cx1 was set up, that is, the exemplar. If this is correct, his statement about the identity—or equivalency—of this with an unbound copy of Cx1 becomes even more peculiar. Indeed, there is an enormous difference between thinking that Cx2 was set up from a corrected manuscript—which was originally used to print Cx1—and thinking that the corrections were written in an unbound copy of Cx1. Both of these options are undeniably possible. However one is more likely than the other.⁶ Even if we accept the possibility of misinterpretation which could have occurred with Greg's text, Dunn was much more specific about this subject:

[I]t must be coiicluded that Caxton inade marginal corrections of the text of Cx1 from Y [the inanuscript source], and that he set up the type for Cx2 from Cx1. This iinterpretatioii of the evidiice is supported by the majority of the sigiificaiit unique variants studied in Chapter III. Caxtoii's inethod was to scratch out the

wroiiig word or phrase of Cx1 and to write in the correction from the new inaiiuscript. But though he often changed a major word in the line, he frequently failed to change the context of the line to meet the requirements of the new word (1939: 74).

Dunn left no space for misinterpretation in his conclusion. His statement about how the text of Cx2 carne to be could not be clearer. Moreover, the author lists many instances of variation that support his conclusion.⁷ In first place, I want to consider the two examples from the *Knight's Tale*, which show exactly what Dunn was referring to:

KT 260 (A 1118, I 1118)

Cx1 The fresslie beautee shal sle me sodeynly

Cx2 The fresslie beautee me sleeth sodeynly

El⁸ The fresslie beautee sleeth me sodeynly

Hg The fresslie beautee sleeth me sodeynly

Sleeth me] Ad3 Bo2 Cp El Ha4 Hg Tol ; *Cleth me* Ch , *shal sle me* Cx1 , *sloth me* Gg , *me sleeth* Cx2 Wy

KT 2001 (A 2865, I 2865)

Cx1 And leet aiion to Iiacke and to hewe

Cx2 Aiid coinanded aiion to hacke and to liewe

El Aiid leet comande anon to Iiakke and liewe

Hg Aiid leet anoon comauuide to hakke aiid liewe

unoon comaunde] *unoon com* Ad3 Bo2 Ch Cp Dd Hg , *unoon* Cx1 , *comanded* *unoon* Cx2 Wy , *comaunde unoon* El Gg Ha4 Tol

Notice how the word *sleeth* in 260 in Cx2 has been placed after the word *me*. Hg and El both agree on the order *sleeth me*. Dunn thought that this was an indication that the correction had been introduced in the margin of the page leaving its position in the line ambiguous to the degree that the compositor got confused. In the case of KT 2001, it seems that the compositor might have misunderstood for a replacement what in fact was simply an addition (the word *comanded*). Variants such as this suggest that the corrections were made not by looking at a different manuscript source at the time of composition, but by directly correcting a text which was then given to the compositors. If we accept this, then we would have to agree in that the compositors must have been in possession of a corrected copy of a document which preserved the text of Cx1. The nature of the variants —many of which are misplaced— also suggests that the corrections were not put 'in place' in the copy-text, but that they were added wherever space was available, often in the margin, without clear instructions as to their correct position within the line. Later the compositors misunderstood the place in which the variant should be introduced and placed

it in a different position. Other examples, first identified by Dunn (1939: 18 & 26) and later by Blake (1976:99), show an emerging pattern. Dane (2003: 135) suggested that "a copy of Cx1" could also be understood as "a printer's copy for Cx1" —or exemplar— and Dunn's data on unique variants is not enough to prove his point. However, Dane's implication that Caxton might have been writing the corrections directly into the manuscript that had served as a source for Cx1, does not appear justified from other perspectives. It is unlikely that Caxton would have damaged a manuscript that he could have otherwise sold or that already belonged to someone else. It is also doubtful that a completely new copy of the *Tales* was specially made to set Cx2, as this would have been costly, unnecessary and would have provided no further benefit to the printer. In order to advance this point, we need to refer not to the unique variants in Cx2, but to those places in which variation does not occur at all. Of all the texts in Cx2, the two prose tales are remarkable in that they present almost no variation at all. My collation detected 35 variants in the *Tale of Melibee*, 50 in the *Parson's Tale* and 1 in the *Retraction*. The vast majority of these variants are compositorial mistakes present in Cx1, which were corrected for the new edition —probably without the help of an external source— or new mistakes introduced during the composition of Cx2. For Dane to be correct in his assumption about the equivalency between saying that "Cx2 was 'set from' Cx1" or that it was set from "the printer's copy for Cx1" (see quotation above) it would be necessary to prove that Cx1 was identical with its exemplar. In reality, the likelihood of a text being identical with another is almost non-existent. The compositors, when setting the text of Cx1, might have made changes or left things out. As mentioned before, even though the prose between Cx1 and Cx2 is virtually identical, there are some differences between the texts. The same can be assumed about the exemplar for Cx1. This makes the only major difference between Cx1 and Cx2 all the more interesting: only in the retraction did Caxton add text. About this addition, Dunn wrote:

Caxton, like any other medieval reader, would have been impressed by Chaucer's retraction, and probably had already made the correction in the margin of the copy of Cx' from which he printed [...]. At any rate, this restoration does not enable one to single out a manuscript source for it, and this passage does not indicate that any other of the prose was collated with the new manuscript (1939: 11).

This appears to be a satisfactory explanation, but Dunn never goes beyond it to explain why the rest of the prose was overlooked at the time of introducing the corrections. While discussing the low rate of variation in the prose, Peter Robinson (Bordalejo, 2003: 26) suggested that this could be due to the fact that it would be easier to calculate the amount of text to be set from an unadulterated printed copy than from either a modified print or a manuscript, *i.e.* that by using Cx1 as a copy text, without any alterations made to it, the compositors would have an easier task while setting Cx2. This appears to be the solution to the prose riddle and it also helps our argument forward. Dane's assessment did not take this factor into account —as he was only considering the Wife of Bath's Prologue.' Robinson's reasoning offers support to Dunn's assessment of the way in which the text of Cx2 came to be; it appears that the argument of the

corrected copy of Cx1 is strongly based on facts.

There is enough evidence to support Dunn's claim about the way in which the text of Cx2 originated and we can now move to the issue of the textual affiliations of the source for the second edition.¹⁰ In my De Montfort University Doctoral thesis (2002),¹¹ I state that there are around three thousand places in which the text of Cx2 differs for that of Cx1.¹² These variants were classified into four groups:

1) **Q variants.** These variants are those in which Cx2 agrees with the archetype of the textual tradition. They are either found in the majority of the witnesses or they are distributed in such way in the textual tradition that they can only be explained as having been present in the archetype. This type of variant confirms the excellence of the manuscript source of Cx2.

2) **Unique variants.** One of the main limitations of my collation was related to the number of completed files. For sections in which all the witnesses have been transcribed such as the Wife of Bath's Prologue, the General Prologue or the *Miller's Tale*, the data in my thesis was complete. Other sections of the *Tules* varied according to the number of witnesses transcribed. Therefore, those variants referred to as 'unique' were so in the collation produced using the files available at the time. It is possible that with the transcription of other witnesses some of those variants find counterparts in other witnesses. The most likely candidates to present these variants are the printed editions derived from Cx2, the one printed by Pynson (*ca.* 1492) and the one printed by De Worde (1498). A variant shared only by these three witnesses, however, is likely to have been introduced by Cx2 (the text in which the later editions are based) and therefore could be still considered a unique variant.

3) **Hg versus El variants.** These are cases in which Cx2 agrees with Huntington Library, MS. El. 26 C 9 (El) or National Library of Wales, Peniarth 392 D (Hg) against the other. Because Hg and El have been used as copy text for some of the most widely used editions in the 20th century and because some scholars seem to think that where these manuscripts agree the agreed text represents the archetypal text, then their disagreements require further analysis. If we follow this criterion, then the cases where Hg and El disagree should present interesting points of comparison.

4) **Not in Hg or El variants.** These are variants in which Cx2 agrees with another manuscript against both Hg and El. These are important to test the Hg versus El variants, as they offer the possibility of checking whether these two manuscripts might agree in error. From a classificatory perspective they are also important because if the agreement appears to occur below the archetype this class of variants should be the one that shows more clearly where the affiliations of the manuscript source of Caxton's second edition of the *Canterbury Tules* lie.

Around 11% of the differences between Cx1 and Cx2 fell into categories that presented stemmatically significant variants, *i.e.* they were classified either as Hg versus El variants or as

Not in Hg or E1 variants. The variants which were discarded as not stemmatically significant are those significant variants that are widely spread in the textual tradition." Taking into account the numbers originally put forward in my thesis, around 330 of the total are likely to be classificatory variants. I would like to consider two examples of variants in which Cx2 agrees with Hg against E1. The first case can be found in the *Miller's Tale*:

MI 65

Cx1 Tarselid with greie and perlid with laton
 Cx2 Tarselyd wyth sylk and perlyd wyth laton
 E1 Tasseled withli greie , and perled with latoun
 Hg Tasseled with silk , aiid perled with latoun

*sil*k] Ad1 Ad2 Ad3 Bol Bw Ch Cn Cp Cx2 Dd Ds1 En1 En2 En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2
 Ha3 Ha4 Ha5 Hg Hk Ij La Lc Ldl Ld2 Ln Ma Mg Mm Ph2 Pn Ps Pw Py Ral Ra3
 Ryl Ry2 S11 S12 Tc1 Wy; *grene* Cx1 DI E1 He Ht Ne Se Tc2 To1

Here we have an example of an agreement between Cx2 and Hg against E1 and some other manuscripts —mainly belonging to Manly and Rickert's b group. The variant *silk* is widely distributed within the textual tradition which suggests that it is very likely that this reading was the one present in the archetype. In *The Miller's Tale on CD-ROM*, Robinson wrote:

The variat is so striking that it is unlikely that it has arisen independently. On the other hand, precisely because it is so striking, it might have been reinserted by a scribe who then copied it into a witness from a distinct line of descent. This would explain its appearance in To1 and Se (with DI Ht likely having it by descent within the dl group) (2004: n.p.).

Indeed, Robinson's argument is that this variant arose through memorial contamination. He thinks that the text could have been performed with the b reading and that this might have later been remembered by the scribes who introduced it into different parts of the textual tradition. My second example has also been discussed by Robinson.¹⁴ It is the nonsensical variant in the Wife of Bath's Prologue *troce*:

WBP 484

Cx1 I inade liym of tie saine wode a croce
 Cx2 I inade hym of the saine wode a troce
 E1 I inade liym of tie saine wode a croce
 Hg I inade liym of tie saine wode a troce

trace] Ad1 Ad3 Ch Cx2 Hk Hg Wy; croce Bol Bo2 Bw Cii Cp Cx1 Dd DI Ds E1
 En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2 Ha4 Ha5 He Ht Ii La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Lii Ma Mg Mm Ne N1 Ph2
 Ph3 Ps Pw Py Ry1 Ry2 Se Si S12 Tc1 Tc2 To, *cote* Ra2 , groce Ra

wode a troce] cloth an hood Mc Ra1

Here we have a case in which a perfectly good reading, according to the meaning of the line, has been changed to the meaningless *troce*. But the reading *troce*, although nonsensical, is present in several other witnesses besides Hg and Cx2. The reading can also be found in Ad3 Ch Ad1 Hk Pn Wy. Naturally, the printed editions should not be taken into account as they are derived from Cx2, but of all the other witnesses, five are considered Q witnesses, *i.e.* they represent independent lines of descent from the archetype, and only one (Ad1) is affiliated to a group. If we were to hypothesise that this reading is an agreement by coincidence, we would have to accept that scribes would have to have arrived at the same mistake independently. This is unlikely, as it is almost impossible to confuse a clear reading such as *croce* and write [*roce* by mistake, independently. However, if the archetype had the word *croce* written in such way that the <c> might be taken for a <t>, then some scribes might have realised what the word was while some others might have thought that Chaucer's text was about something that they did not understand. Most of the agreements between Cx2 and Hg against El are archetypal, but this is not necessarily the case of the agreements of Cx2 and El against Hg:

SQ 194

Cx1 Dyuerse folk diuersly deinede

Cx2 Dyuerse folk dyuersly tley demed

El Diuerse folk , diuersely tley deined

Hg Dyuerse folk dyuersely iian deined

dyuersely han] dyuersely Ch Cx1 , dyuersely they Cx2 El Gg Ha4 Ht, dyuersely han Ad3 Bo2 Cp Dd Ds En1 Hg La

Just as for MI 65, the origin of the variants in SQ 194 can be explained by memorial contamination;¹⁵ however, this must have occurred in a common hyparchetype as there are several variants in the *Squire's Tale* in which Cx2, El and Gg agree in variants below the archetype.¹⁶ Unfortunately, my research did not show consistency throughout the *Tales* and no firm conclusion can be drawn from my collation for this purpose. However, the line of enquiry remains open and future fully automated collations might show variation that was overlooked in the semi-automated one.

Of all the analysed variants, the cases in which Hg and El agree in error are the most interesting. The quality of the text in these two manuscripts is the reason why this should not occur on many occasions, but it is also likely to explain why such mistakes have not been more widely discussed as scholars expect these witnesses to present a very good text. The most striking example of Hg and El agreeing in error, which I have found is in the *Clerk's Tale*:

CL 1067

Cx1	Shal be myn heir	as I haue	disposid
Cx2	Shal be myn heyr	as I haue	purposyd
El	Shal be myn heir ,	as I haue ay	supposed
Hg	Shal be myn heir ,	as I haue ay	supposed

The Hg scribe made a mistake while copying the text, because two lines before, in CL 1065, we find the rhyme word is *supposed*. This type of error, due to eye skip, can be easily committed and easily explained if it happens once. However, this scribe did it twice: once in Hg and the other, perhaps ten years later, when he copied El. The variant distribution for this reading shows that there are two other manuscripts, which agree with Hg and El, Bo2 and Gg. This is not surprising, since variants such as SQ 194 suggest that El might be farther away from the archetype than has been thought up to this point. In CL 1067 it is likely that the archetypal variant is the *lectio difficilior*, *purposid*, found in Ad3 Ch Cp Cx2 Ha4 Ht La and Ra3, while witnesses belonging to the b group, have the reading *disposid*. The archetypal reading is not found in witnesses Hg and El.

Cases such as this one make evident how a thorough study of all the witnesses of the text, even those which do not appear to be the most obvious choices, might shed light on the textual tradition of the *Tales*. The analysis of the collation produced for my thesis offered a preliminary result about the affiliations of Cx2's manuscript source. Dunn had concluded that there were six manuscripts that were very close to this source:

Dd is the closest to Cx2 in the number of lines which both contain. Ad3 and El are closer than Dd to Y in the number of omitted passages though the passages themselves are longer in Ad3 and El. Though Ch follows at a considerable distance in the matter of lines, it has a high percentage of important readings. I shall, therefore, take only representative manuscripts of the sub-groups that are nearest to Y. I shall list Ad3 Ch Dd El En1 En3 and not concern myself with the multitudinous and shifting agreements that are to be found among all the manuscripts of every group from time to time (1939: 42-3.)

The idea of eliminating witnesses that did not contain all the lines added in Cx2 appears as a straightforward procedure, and was the base of most of the collations presented by Dunn. Once Dunn decided on the closeness of those manuscripts, he only collated those against Cx2. As one of Dunn's conclusions was that no extant manuscript could be the source for the correction in Cx2, the only real reason to suppress other witnesses from the collation is a practical one: the manageability of the data. When all the witnesses are taken into account, the results obtained are slightly different.

III. CONCLUSIONS

My collation established that Ad3 is the closest manuscript to the source of Cx2. Ad3 is followed very closely by Ch and Ha4, which are also frequently in agreement. The fourth closest

manuscript seems to be Ht.¹⁷ Most of the manuscripts excluded from Dunn's collation do not appear as closely related to the source of Cx2 as previously thought.

Greg (1924: 761) had suggested the possibility that more than one manuscript was used to make the corrections for Cx2. However, my research has shown consistency in the variation throughout the text, that is, the agreements found in the different parts of the *Canterbury Tales*, if occasionally slightly different, do not appear to contradict each other. On the contrary, the variation in Cx2 tends to point in a single direction. Those places in which the variants appear to differ from the overall tendencies in the greater part of the text may be due to factors other than a change of exemplar, e.g. agreement by coincidence, contamination, or compositorial intervention. This means that stemmatically significant variation appears to be coherent across different sections of the *Tales*.

The fact that Manly and Rickert did not carry out textual analyses of the variants and that they delegated this task to Dunn might suggest that they had early reached their conclusions about the state of the text in Cx2. They might have felt inclined to dismiss the study of the edition because it is a conflated text and therefore the whole of the text of Cx2 was considered unreliable. My research shows that variants from Cx2 are of the very best quality. Some of these can help support the variants of Hg or El when these manuscripts are not in agreement. Occasionally, the variants from the manuscript source of Cx2 can help to make evident the cases in which Hg and El agree in error, as seems to be the case of CL 1067. In the worst-case scenario, variants found in Cx2 are very useful to understand a part of the development of the textual tradition of the *Tales*.

NOTES

1. For I fynde many of the sayd bookes , whyche wryters haue abrydgyd it and niany thynges left out, And in somme place haue sette certayn versys , that he neuer made ne sette in his booke , of whyche bokkes so incorrecte was one brought to me vj yere passyd , whyche I supposed had ben veray true & correcte, And accordyng to the same I dyde do enpriiite a certayn nombre of thein , whyche anon were sold to many and dyuerse gentyl men , of whome one gentylman cam to me , and said that this booke was not accordyng in many places vnto the booke that Gefferey chaucer had niade , To whom I answerd that I had made it accordyng to my cople , and by me was nothyng added ne mynusshyd (Caxton, *ca.* 1482: aij).

2. Before I produced a complete collation between Cx1 and Cx2 as part of my De Montfort University doctoral thesis, this task had only been carried out by Thomas Dunn (1939). Greg only collated lines at the beginning of KT (1924), while Kilgour collated PD (1929). Each of these scholars offered his or her own perspective about the possible affiliations of the manuscript source of Cx2

3. I am currently working on an article which offers a detailed assessment of Caxton's lineage as a publisher. The number of lines which were added to the text of Caxton's first edition is 244. There are 81 lines in Cx2 which replace lines in Cx1, 31 lines were deleted without replacement and there are 14 instances of line rearrangements (more details will be offered in the forthcoming article).

4. Norman Blake, for example, states: "It has been proved that he took a copy of his own first edition and emended that against the new manuscript. The changes were haphazardly and irregularly made. The following types of mistake arose. In the first edition a line in The Miller's Tale reads A clerk had lowdly bisef his whyle. But in the second edition the reading of this line is Lyfherly a clerk had bisef his whyle. The reading arose through Caxton crossing our lowdly and putting the correction for it, *litherly* was to replace lowdly and simply placed at the front of the line because it was in the left-hand margin. In other passages there has been conflation. In a line in The Pardoner's Tale the first edition reads *Thou my bel amy* John Pardoner, he sayde, whereas most manuscripts read *Thou beel amy* fhoupardoner, he sayde. One may assume that *John* was deleted and *fhou* added either above or in the margin. But in this case the compositor included both words so that the line became *Thou beel amy*, ihou John Pardonei; he sayde. The effect is disastrous in poetry" (1976: 99).

5. Greg's text reads: "Indeed, I may say at once that it is clear that no print after the first was set up from manuscript; each successive printer, whatever alterations or corrections he may have introduced, set up his edition from one or other of its predecessors" (1924: 740).

6. We should also take into consideration that it has been suggested that Caxton used to trade manuscripts (Blake, 1976: 34-35). There would be no reason for him keeping a manuscript that could have been sold, especially after he was made aware that the text was from a poor recension

7. Some of the clearest examples are: KT 608 (A 610, I 610), KT 1378 (A 2236, I 2236), MI 113 (A 3299, I 32399), WBP 632 (D 645, I 11 645), L21 30 (C 318, V1 318), PR 223 (B2 1865, VII 672), NP 234 (B2 4244, VII 3055). The abbreviations for the parts of the Tales are as follows: KT: the *Knight's* Tale; PD: the Pardoner's Tale; MI: the *Miller's* Tale; WBP: the *Wife of Bath's* Prologue; PR: the *Parson's* Tale; NP: the *Nun's* Priesf 's Tale; SQ: the *Squire's* Tale.

8. See the appendix for an index of the manuscript sigils.

9. Although, The *General* Prologue on CD-ROM (Solopova, 2000) and The *Hengwrt* Chaucer *Digital Facsimile* (Stubbs: 2000) were both published before Dane's book appeared, he only appears to have consulted The *Wife of Bath's* Prologue on CD-ROM (Robinson: 1996).

10. Manly and Rickert, in their edition of the *Canterbury* Tales, state that Cx1 is affiliated to their b group (Manly & Rickert, 1940: vol.2, 57 and ff.). Any point in which Cx2 differs from Cx1 might indicate a correction from the manuscript source. If the affiliations of the manuscript source are different from those of the b group, it should be possible to discover the textual affiliations for this manuscript..

11. Although the thesis' main aim was to study the textual affiliations of the source for Cx2, it also showed the relationships between other witnesses in this textual tradition.

12. Although the collations I carried out were produced using COLLATE, the raw, unregularised texts were used. This means that significant variation was established by reading the computer produced collations. In a paper delivered at Nowton Court as part of the Colloquium on the History of the Book and Digitisation, I analysed the differences between a partly computerised collation and a fully computerised collation and concluded that it was likely that partly computerised collation could have an error rate of around 20%, while fully computerised collation had an error rate of 2% (this also due to human error). If my figures are correct, I could have missed around 750 variants in total.

13. For example, in the second line of the General Prologue Cx1 reads *And the droghte of* March hafhpercedi*he* *roote* where the word *And* is a unique variant in Cx1. The change from *And* *the* in Cx1 to *the* in Cx2 is significant, but the variant distribution shows that it is not a stemmatically significant change, as it preserves no information

regarding the affiliations of either the text of Cx1 or of Cx2. In line 29 of the *Franklyn's Tale* Cx1 reads *Telle here his wo or peyne or distress* while Cx2 reads *Telle here hys wo hys peyne and hys dystres*. The variant distribution for this line is as follows:

his] Ad1 Ad3 Bol Bw Ch Cn Cp Cx2 DI Ds El Enl En3 Gg Ha2 Ha5 Hg Ht La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma
Mg Mm Ph2 Ph3 Pl Ps Pw Py Ry1 Ry2
or] Cx1 Ha3 He Hk Ii Ne
not present] Gl N Ra3

This variant is deemed stemmatically significant in reference to Cx1: the variant distribution indicates that this variant is a **h** group variant (Manly and Rickert suggested that the **h** group was comprised by Cx1 He Ne and Tc2, the *Canterbury Tales Project* research shows that Ii is consistently aligned with these manuscripts). However, the same variant conveys very little information about Cx2, just that the restored variant is archetypal, as it is widely distributed in the textual tradition.

14. See Robinson (1997).

15. This line reflects the structure of L2 3 *Diuerse folk, diuersely they seyde*. See Bordalejo (2003: 213 and ff.).

16. These can be found in SQ 231, SQ 290, SQ 419, SQ 447, SQ 491 and SQ 502.

17. Naturally, this can only be established about those parts of the text extant for Ht. Had this manuscript been more complete, then it is possible that the results of the collation might have been different.

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APPENDIX : Witness Sigils

1.1. Manuscripts

- Ad1 London, British Library, MS. Add. 5140
- Ad2 London. British Library, MS. Add. 257 18
- Ad3 London, British Library, MS. Add. 35286
- Ad4 London, British Library, MS. Add. 10340

- Bo1 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodl. 414
- Bo2 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodl. 686
- Bw Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Barlow 20
- Ch Oxford, Christ Church College, MS. 152
- Cn Austin, University of Texas, Humanities Research Center, MS. 143 (ex Cardigan)
- Cp Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS. 198
- Ct Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS. 6709
- Dd Cambridge, University Library, MS. Dd.4.24
- Dl Tokyo, Takamiya MS 24 (ex Delamere)
- Ds1 Tokyo, Takamiya MS 32 (ex Devonshire)
- El California, San Marino, Huntington Library, MS. El. 26 C 9 (Ellesmere)
- En1 London, British Library, MS. Eg. 2726
- En2 London, British Library, MS. Eg. 2863
- En3 London, British Library, MS. Eg. 2864
- Fi Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS. McClean 181
- Gg Cambridge, University Library, MS. Gg.4.27
- Gl Glasgow, Hunterian Museum, MS. U.1.1 (197)
- Ha1 London, British Library, MS. Harley 1239
- Ha2 London, British Library, MS. Harley 1758
- Ha3 London, British Library, MS. Harley 7333
- Ha4 London, British Library, MS. Harley 7334
- Ha5 London, British Library, MS. Harley 7335
- He New Jersey, Princeton University Library, MS. 100 (Helmingham)
- Hg Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 392 D (Hengwrt)
- Hk Norfolk, Holkham Hall, MS. 667
- Hi1 London, British Library, MS. Harley 1704
- Hi2 London, British Library, MS. Harley 255 I
- Hi3 London, British Library, MS. Harley 2382
- Hi4 London, British Library, MS. Harley 5908
- Hn California, San Marino, Huntington Library, MS. HM 144
- Ht Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Hatton Donat. I
- li Cambridge, University Library, MS. li.3.26
- La London, British Library, MS. Lansdowne 851
- Lc Lichfield Cathedral, MS. 29
- Ld1 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc. 600
- Ld2 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc.739

- Ll1 Wiltshire, Longleat House, MS. Longleat 257
Ll2 Wiltshire, Longleat House, MS. Longleat 29
Ln Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS. 110
Ma University of Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS. English 113
Mc Chicago, University of Chicago Library, MS. 564 (McCormick)
Me Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS. 21972 D (Merthyr)
Mg New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 249
Mm Cambridge, University Library, MS. Mm.2.5
Ne Oxford, New College, D.3 14
Nl Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, MS. 455
Np Naples, Royal Library, MS. XIII.B.29
Ox1 University of Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS. English 63 (Oxford)
Ox2 Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library, MS. 108412 (Oxford)
Ph1 Austin, University of Texas, Humanities Research Center MS. 46 (Phillipps 6570)
Ph2 Geneva, Bodmer Library, MS. 48 (Phillipps 8136)
Ph3 Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library, MS. 108411 (Phillipps 8137)
Ph4 California, San Marino. Huntington Library, MS. HM 140 (Phillipps 8299)
Pl New York, Columbia University Library, MS. Plimpton 253 (Phillipps 9970)
Pp Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS. Pepys 2006
Ps Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fonds Anglais 39
Pw Sussex, Petworth House, MS. 7
Py London, Royal College of Physicians, MS. 388
Ra1 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet.141
Ra2 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet.149
Ra3 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet.223
Ra4 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. poet C.86
Ry1 London, British Library, MS. Royal 17 D.XV
Ry2 London, British Library, MS. Royal 18 C.II
Se Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Arch. Selden B.14
Si Tokyo, Takamiya 22 (Sion College)
Sl1 London, British Library, MS. Sloane 1685
Sl2 London, British Library, MS. Sloane 1686
Tc1 Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. R.3.3
Tc2 Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. R.3.15
Tc3 Cambridge. Trinity College, MS. R.3.19
To1 Oxford, Trinity College, MS. 49

To2 Oxford, Trinity College, MS. 29

I.2. Pre-1500 Printed Editions

Cx1 Caxton, first edition (ca. 1476)

Cx2 Caxton, second edition (ca. 1482)

Ph Pynson (ca. 1492)

Wy Wynkyn de Worde (1498)