Supplementing

'Every age', Helen Cooper has observed, 'remakes Chaucer in its own image, just as he remade old books in a new image'.[1] Print was a major site of this early modern refashioning of the medieval past, and older manuscript books inherited by the later period bear material traces of those readings which circulated in and were promoted by the new medium. Accordingly, some medieval manuscripts reflect the early modern remaking of Chaucer as it happened. Books, whose pages could be annotated, expanded, and excised, were a convenient medium for readers to revise and augment the canon with various, even narratively or ideologically opposed, texts. Old manuscripts and printed books deemed to be imperfect or mutilated were the most obvious candidates for readerly perfecting, but they were not unique in this regard. Sometimes, readers were explicitly encouraged to perfect books by the editors themselves. The 1687 reprint of Speght's edition concludes with an addendum, appended '[w]hilst this Work was just finishing'. In this 'Advertisement' the editors explain that, very late in the printing process, they 'hapned to meet with a Manuscript' containing the ends of the incomplete *Cook's Tale* and the *Squire's Tale*.[2] '[C]oming so late to our hands', continue the editors, 'they could not be inserted in their proper places, therefore the Reader is desir'd to add them, as here directed'. The Advertisement prints the missing lines, which are preceded by instructions to the reader on where to insert them: 'Immediately after what you find of the Cooks Tale, add this:' and 'Immediately after these words, at the end of the Squires Tale, . . . Let this be added'.[3]

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[1] Cooper, 'Chaucerian Representation', p. 14.
[2] On these spurious endings, see Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1908), pp. 276–7, 311–14.
[3] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Works of our Ancient, Learned, & Excellent English Poet, Jeffrey Chaucer* (London: [s.n.], 1687; Wing C3736), sig. 4S3ᵛ.

At least one reader took these instructions seriously. On
10 December 1663, Samuel Pepys visited St Paul's Churchyard to peruse
and purchase books and reports 'seeing Chaucer' but finally opting to buy
some other titles. But he did come to own a folio Chaucer by the following
summer, when he recorded taking it to be bound and clasped on
8 July 1664:

> So to Paul's churchyard about my books – and to the binders and directed
> the doing of my Chaucer, though they were not full neat enough for me, but
> pretty well it is – and thence to the clasp-makers to have it clasped and
> bossed.[4]

Pepys's Chaucer – a copy of Speght's 1602 edition – is held at Magdalene
College in Cambridge, in the binding he describes in the *Diary*. Its calf
covering, blind tooling, and brass clasps all signal Pepys's penchant for
adding distinguished bindings to his books.[5] In 1664, Speght's 1602
Chaucer, despite being the most complete and recent edition, was itself
an old book, and significantly older than the thirty-one-year-old Pepys. It
is little wonder, then, that he oversaw the perfecting of this prized copy
once it had been superseded by the 1687 reprint. Sometime after that
book's publication, he had a new leaf added to his printed Chaucer,
which reproduced the Advertisement concerning the *Cook's* and the
Squire's Tale. Copied out by an amanuensis, the transcribed text supplies
the conclusions wanting in the 1602 edition and thus follows the later
edition's instructions that 'the Reader' should 'add them as here directed'.
Yet Pepys's scribe also diverged from those directions by making the
additions not in 'their proper places' in the newly reprinted edition of
1687, but as a means of bringing the older volume up to date.

Although buying the latest and most complete edition seems an easy
solution to the problem of finding oneself with an outdated copy of
Chaucer – a solution vigorously promoted by the printed book trade – it
was not the only option available to readers. Early modern collectors also
had the possibility of finding creative ways to supplement their existing
copies, and the example of Pepys illustrates that early modern perfecting
was not exclusive to centuries-old manuscript or printed books. Pepys's

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[4] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription. Vol. 4: 1663*, ed. by Robert
Gordon Latham and William A. Armstrong (London: Harper Collins, 2000), pp. 199, 410–11.

[5] *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, Vol. VI: Bindings*, ed. by Howard
M. Nixon (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1984), VI, p. xiii. On Pepys's love of bindings see
Elspeth Jajdelska, 'Pepys in the History of Reading', *The Historical Journal*, 50.3 (2007), 549–69
(557) and Kate Loveman, 'Books and Sociability: The Case of Samuel Pepys's Library', *RES*, 61.249
(2010), 214–33.

Chaucer, with its newly furnished but spurious endings for two of the tales, shows the ability of new editions to circumscribe as well as to stretch the limits of the accepted canon, and to render older editions obsolete. Both the directive in the 1687 edition and Pepys's insertion of the text into an older copy confirm the contemporary sense of the book as 'relatively malleable and experimental – a thing to actively shape, expand and resituate as one desired'.[6] Old printed books and medieval manuscripts inherited by the early modern period were no exception to these practices.

Medieval manuscripts of Chaucer's works could suffer from an appearance of obsolescence and outmodedness, but they also possessed the authority of age. It was, after all, the fact that the editors 'hapned to meet with a Manuscript' that facilitated the enlargement of the 1687 edition with the conclusions for the two incomplete tales. Manuscripts which lacked newly printed Chaucerian texts might be treated as simultaneously authoritative and somewhat out of date. Their antiquity made them old enough to be treasured as valuable and rare objects, but also old enough to benefit from further expansion and supplementation. It is a peculiar characteristic of many of the volumes discussed in this chapter that they embody both medieval *and* early modern attitudes to Chaucer and his works. As a consequence of their material adaptability, these copies often toggle between the beliefs and tastes of the people who made them and those who later read and reinterpreted them. They reveal an early modern understanding of the material book as open to – and importantly, capable of being improved by – readerly revision and renovation.

Chapter 2 argued that the missing leaves, blanks, and gaps supplied and filled by early modern readers in Chaucer's medieval manuscripts constitute a form of perfecting which privileged ideas of bibliographical completeness influenced by models found in print. The following discussion enlarges that scope to consider books which did not show signs of damage or glaring incompleteness, but which were nonetheless perceived as wanting or inviting expansion. However curious completed, patched, or repaired volumes may initially appear to modern scholars, it is not difficult to understand the motivations that led pre-modern readers to fill the gaps in texts and to perfect their old books, especially when seemingly authoritative exemplars could be easily located. It is less obvious, but essential to literary history, to imagine why readers chose to supplement seemingly complete old books with new texts, and why they chose the texts they did. As this study illustrates, in the early modern period successive printed

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[6] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 4.

editions set the standard for what a correct, complete, and authoritative Chaucerian book should be. The present chapter argues that print made available expansive and apparently complete versions of the canon which readers extracted, assembled, and reconfigured in line with their own tastes and beliefs about what Chaucer wrote. This early modern sense of Chaucer's works as contained in definitive printed volumes is given visual expression in the mid-seventeenth-century triptych commissioned by Lady Anne Clifford (1590–1676) and known as the Great Picture. Amongst the forty-eight labelled volumes in the painting is a copy of Chaucer in folio, which is titled 'All Geffrey Chaucers Workes' on the fore-edge. Of note here is the promise of exhaustive coverage signalled by 'all', a word which does not appear in the title of any editions of the *Workes*, but which almost certainly refers to the contents of a 1602 copy of Speght owned by Clifford.[7] To examine the ways that readers transformed their Chaucer manuscripts in line with the expansive and seemingly definitive prints is to witness the reshaping of the poet's post-medieval reputation, and to understand the role played by the new medium in forging his reception.

Despite its appearance of comprehensiveness, however, the print canon in which most early modern people read their Chaucer was far from fixed. Chaucer's name and fame had a magnetic effect in the early modern period, causing editors and readers to attach new and varied texts to him. With this expansion of the canon, old books fell out of fashion faster.[8] The redrawing of the lines between accepted and apocryphal works had significant material effects on how Chaucer was read, as readers updated and supplemented their older copies to reflect a canon that was regularly in flux. The expanding of Chaucer's manuscript books by medieval and early modern readers alike therefore points to the more fundamental variability of his literary canon itself. The histories of textual transmission explored in this chapter show canonical texts rubbing shoulders with texts today excluded from the canon and readers grappling with the ambiguity of

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[7] The use in the Great Picture of a formula invoking 'all' the works of an author is not unique to the representation of Chaucer's book, but there is 'little reason to doubt that Clifford actually owned and read the books she represented in the *Great Picture*', and by extension, little reason to doubt that the copy pictured is not some representation of the 1602 edition; see Jessica Malay, 'Reassessing Anne Clifford's Books: The Discovery of a New Manuscript Inventory', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 115.1 (2021), 1–41 (3). The painting is an intricate family portrait which represents, amongst other things, Clifford's lifelong relationship to books and reading. On Clifford, the portrait, and her books, see Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*, pp. 222–40, who observes that Clifford was an avid reader of Chaucer throughout her life, writing in a 1649 letter that she had 'exelentt Chacors Booke heere to Comfortt mee' (qtd. at p. 233).

[8] On the progressive expansion of the canon, see Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 24–5; Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, pp. 44–87.

their presentation in print. The bibliographical history of spurious, apocryphal, and ambiguously positioned texts – most of them once assigned to or implied to be by Chaucer in authoritative editions or commentaries – offers a corrective to modern scholarship's preoccupation with attribution and authenticity and a reminder that Chaucer, as a historically constituted entity, has always been subject to reinterpretation.[9] The texts that early editors and readers once attributed to him, and the array of justifications they had for such choices, form a vital chapter in the history of Chaucer's literary afterlife.

3.1   Commonplacing Chaucer

One defining feature of the monumental editions of Chaucer printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is their array and inclusiveness.[10] Although Chaucer's name appears prominently on the title pages of the folio volumes of his works, the editions produced by Thynne, Stow, Speght, and their collaborators also promoted a Chaucer under whose authoritative umbrella other Middle English works could conveniently cluster. This progressive expansion of the print canon was the result of a dual impetus: first, to recover those works of Chaucer which had never before been published; and second, to increase the editions with thematically or linguistically similar works in order to market the number of new texts on offer. Kathleen Forni notes that 'early editors do include genuine works never before printed, but also poems overtly attributed to, or known to be by, other authors'. She cautions, however, against the temptation to 'dismiss these editions as simple miscellanies modelled on the manuscript canon, since these books were sold as Chaucer collections'.[11] In the early prints, many works therefore occupied an unsteady middle ground between genuine and apocryphal status, and contemporary readers were left to grapple with the ambiguity that such configurations present. Sometimes this precarious canonicity was a result of codicological instability, as in the case of short poems, lyrics, or ballades. Julia Boffey has advanced the view that these texts may have been 'registered by Chaucer on perilously unattached single leaves and fragments', that the early copies circulated in 'sometimes confused and

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[9] In a similar vein, the scholarly rewards of examining the apocryphal Shakespeare canon are discussed by Peter Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha: Negotiating the Boundaries of the Dramatic Canon* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 9–14.

[10] Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, p. 255.

[11] This paragraph relies on the insights of Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, pp. 9–10, 17, 27, 41.

confusing forms', and that the mid-fifteenth-century manuscript collections and Caxton's early prints 'offered these essentially ephemeral poems a securer environment'.[12] The brevity that made these texts prone to loss, corruption, and variance also assured their material portability – that is, their capacity to be easily extracted, re-copied, and thus preserved in new bibliographic contexts.

Chaucer's late medieval and early modern reputation for axiomatic wit owes much to the genuine *and* apocryphal works, rich in proverbs and *sententiae*, that circulated under his name in fifteenth-century manuscripts, in Caxton's early quarto editions of the *Parliament of Fowles* and *Anelida and Arcite*, and in the folio canon inaugurated and progressively expanded during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[13] Jennifer Summit has shown, for example, that Pynson's 1526 edition of the *Book of Fame* took pains to frame Chaucer as a moral authority – a designation made explicit in its inclusion of 'certayne morall p*r*ouerbes of the foresaid Geffray Chaucers doyng' – and has demonstrated that the printer appropriated the writing of Christine de Pizan in this effort to establish the poet's sententiousness.[14] The enthusiasm of Renaissance readers for Chaucerian aphorism is witnessed by marginalia in the printed Chaucer folios surveyed by Alison Wiggins, who observes that readerly attention to proverbs and *sententiae* in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Melibee* makes those tales 'by far the most frequently and heavily annotated of Chaucer's works'.[15] Francis Beaumont, a friend of Speght and supporter of the 1598 edition, deemed *Troilus* to be 'so sententious, as there bee fewe staues in that Booke, which are not concluded with some principall sentence'.[16] In the same edition, Speght himself lamented the fact that a lack of sufficient time had prevented him from noting '[s]entences also, which are many and excellent in this Poet' and which 'might haue ben noted in the margent with some marke'.[17] In the subsequent edition, Chaucer's *sententiae* were indeed marked out with printed marginal hands or *maniculae*, and the book's

[12] Julia Boffey, 'The Reputation and Circulation of Chaucer's Lyrics in the Fifteenth Century', *ChR*, 28.1 (1993), 23–40 (34–5).

[13] On their influence, see Boffey, 'Reputation and Circulation'; Boffey, 'Proverbial Chaucer and the Chaucer Canon', *HLQ*, 58.1 (1995), 37–47 (46–7); and Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, p. 54.

[14] Jennifer Summit, *Lost Property: The Woman Writer and English Literary History, 1380–1589* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 87–93.

[15] Wiggins, 'Printed Copies of Chaucer', 16–17. Antonina Harbus, too, has identified a sustained interest in proverbial matter on the part of one contemporary reader of a copy of Thynne's 1532 edition, now New Haven, Beinecke Library, Osborn fpa 5; see 'A Renaissance Reader's English Annotations', 342–55.

[16] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]5ᵛ.   [17] *Workes* (1598), sig. 4B7ᵛ.

status as a repository of 'Sentences and Proverbs' was heralded on its new title page.[18]

It is in this context of the editorial promotion of Chaucer as a moral authority and writer of aphorism that certain supplements made by early modern owners to their medieval manuscripts should be examined. In CUL, MS Gg.4.27 (Gg), an anthology of Middle English poetry, the book's medieval makers appear to have focussed on an idea of Chaucer's oeuvre as their chief organising principle. Joseph Holland's project of perfecting that book, which is discussed throughout this study, is a perceptive elaboration of the manuscript's Chaucerian theme, for his additions show a keen awareness of Chaucer's authority as a literary figure.[19] At the same time, he also recognised and added to the formal and generic miscellaneity of the original manuscript, which already included Lydgate's *Temple of Glass* as well as shorter items which were also unassigned to any author.[20] In addition to an extract from Henryson's *Testament* (to which I will return) Holland had his scribes supply the manuscript with lyric poems and poetic excerpts which he read in Speght's first edition. They appear in Holland's book under the following titles:

'Chaucer, touchinge gen[tle]nes of Birthe: or who is worthy to be called gentill' (*Gentilesse*, IMEV 3348; fol. 1ᵛ and *Canterbury Tales* III.1117–24)
an untitled extract from the *Parliament of Fowles* (IMEV 3412; fol. 4ᵛ)
an untitled extract from the poem then known as 'Chaucer's Prophecy' (*Prophecy*, IMEV 3943; fol. 4ᵛ)
'Bon counsail' (*Yit of the Same*, IMEV 3521; fol. 35ʳ)
'Chaucer to his emptie purse' (*Purse*, IMEV 3787; fol. 35ʳ)
'Chaucers words to his Scrivener' (*Words to Adam*, IMEV 120; fol. 35ʳ)

The excerpt from the *Parliament of Fowles* (ll. 22–5) had also appeared in a cartouche at the head of the architecturally-styled title page of two issues of the 1598 edition (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2).[21] The chosen lines rehearse a well-known Chaucerian quatrain:

> Out of the old fields as men sayth,
> Commeth all this new corn fro yere to yere;
> And out of old Books in good faith,
> Cometh all this new science that men lere.

[18] For this phenomenon, see Sherman, *Used Books*, pp. 44–5; on some enigmatic printed precursors to Speght's marginal manicules in earlier editions of Chaucer's *Workes*, see Joseph A. Dane, 'Fists and Filiations in Early Chaucer Folios, 1532–1602', *Studies in Bibliography*, 51 (1998), 48–62.

[19] Chapter 4, pp. 213–4.

[20] *Temple of Glass* is unattributed in Gg but is identified as Lydgate's in Speght; see *Workes* (1598), sig. 3Z6ᵛ.

[21] *STC* 5078 and 5079; see R. B. McKerrow and F. S. Ferguson, *Title-Page Borders Used in England & Scotland, 1485–1640* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1932), p. 114, no. 132.

Figure 3.1 Title page of Speght's 1598 edition (*STC* 5078) with a cartouche containing a quatrain from the *Parliament of Fowles*. Fondation Martin Bodmer [without shelf-mark], sig. [a]2ʳ. Digitised and reproduced courtesy of the Bodmer Lab, University of Geneva.

Here foloweth the workes of our Antient,
And learned English Poet;

GEFFREY CHAUCER

Out of the old fields as men sayth,
Cometh all this new corn fro yere to yere;
And out of old Books in good fayth,
Cometh all this new science that men Lere :· 448 :·

When faith faileth in Pristes sawes
And lordes hestes are holden for lawes
And Robbery is holden purchas
And lechery is holden solace
Than shall the lond of Albion
Be brought to great confusion

John Lidgate a munke of Buriean
excellent poet, And Chaucers scoller;
amongest diuers others in those days,
wrote in Comendation of Chaucer.

My maister Chaucer, with his fresh Comedies,
Is dead alas, cheife poet of Britaine ;
That whilome made full piteus tragedies,
The faule also of princes he did Complaine,
As he that was of makinge Soueraine :
Whom all this land should of right preferre,
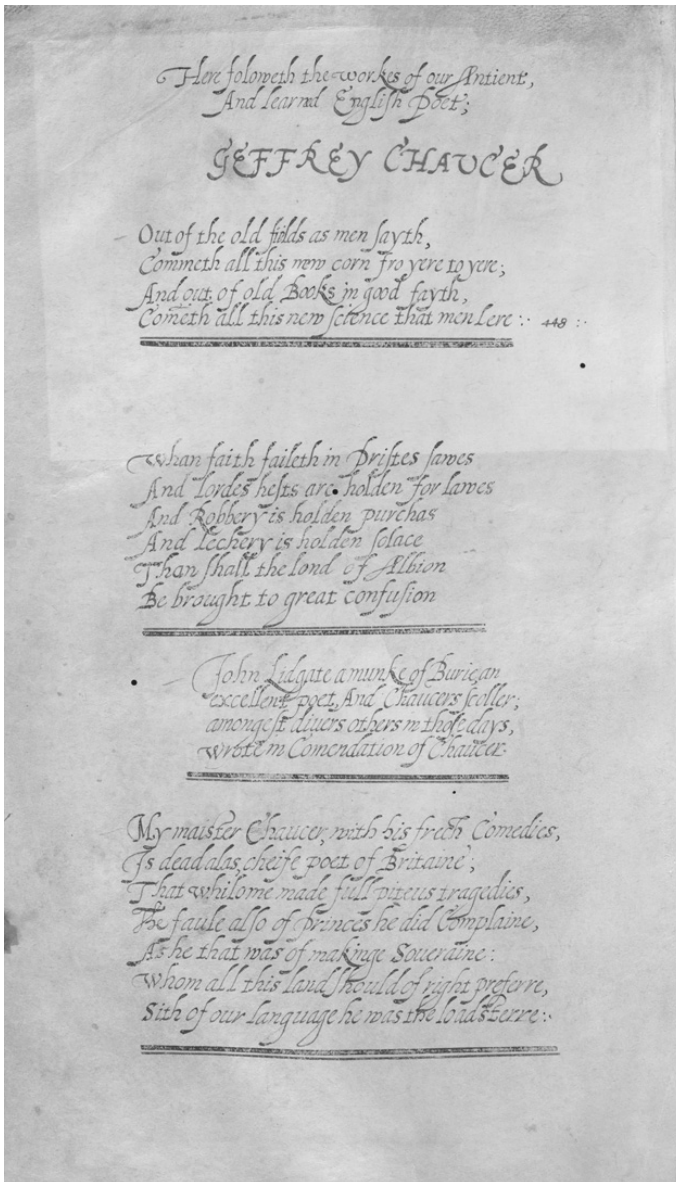Sith of our language he was the lodesterre :·

Figure 3.2 An extract from the *Parliament of Fowles*, the short poem *Prophecy*, and praise of Chaucer from Speght in Holland's manuscript. CUL MS Gg.4.27(1), fol. 4ᵛ. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Holland was partial to these lines, for he also noted them with his characteristic annotation mark where they appear in Gg's complete text of the *Parliament* (fol. 481ʳ). It is not hard to account for their appeal to an antiquary, collector, and bibliophile like Holland. For him, and no doubt for Speght, Chaucer's words encapsulated the guiding ethos of the antiquarian project: to recover 'new science' or knowledge that lay dormant in the 'old Books' collected, preserved, and studied by Stow, Holland, and their circle. On Islip's title pages the lines are contraposed against a quotation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* placed at the foot of the page, and both extracts are neatly framed within the classicising woodcut border selected for the occasion. The Ovidian line 'Seris venit usus ab annis' ('Experience comes with riper years'), a reproach delivered to the youthfully brazen Arachne by Minerva in Book 6, echoes the *Parliament*'s sentiment about the value of the old.[22] The oeuvre of Chaucer, like that of Ovid, is iconographically rendered here as an enduring literary monument worthy of memorialisation and quotation. The Chaucerian quatrain would have been recognised in the Renaissance as a simile or similitude, a rhetorical device whose brevity and epigrammatic wit made it popular for commonplacing.[23] Chaucer had been singled out in this regard by George Puttenham's immensely influential *Arte of English Poesie* (1589): 'his similitudes comparisons and all other descriptions are such as can not be amended'.[24]

   With the exception of the lines from the *Parliament*, which could be seen in pride of place on the Islip title pages, the verses that were newly transcribed into Gg were not especially marked out in the 1598 printed edition. Rather, they represent a series of telling literary choices made by Holland as he sought to supplement his manuscript. Beneath the lines from the *Parliament*, the scribe copied the six-line tetrameter poem *Prophecy* ('When faith faileth in priests saws'), while the rest of the page (fol. 4ᵛ) is dedicated to a description and transcription of

[22] Publius Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses: Books* I–VIII, trans. by George P. Goold and Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library, 42, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), I, pp. 290–1.

[23] As Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique* (London: Richard Grafton, 1553; *STC* 25799) observes, 'A Similitude is a likenesse when .ii. thynges, or mo then two, are so compared and resembled together, that thei bothe in some one propertie seme like' (sig. 2B4ᵛ). Similitudes featured prominently in contemporary printed commonplace books; see *Bel-vedére or the Garden of the Muses: An Early Modern Printed Commonplace Book*, ed. by Lukas Erne and Devani Singh (Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. xix–xxi. For a reader who marked Chaucer's similitudes, see Harbus, 'A Renaissance Reader's English Annotations', 353.

[24] Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, sig. I1ᵛ.

Lydgate's praise of Chaucer. *Prophecy* was frequently re-copied in the medieval and early modern periods, making it 'the most popular apocryphal work'.[25] It is variously assigned to Chaucer or Merlin in early manuscripts, and was 'overwhelmingly attributed' to Chaucer in the early modern period.[26] First printed by Caxton at the end of *Anelida and Arcite* (*c.* 1477), perhaps as filler material, the poem's three rhyming couplets foresee a world in which moral failures – such as 'robbery', 'lechery', and loss of faith – will 'Be brought to grete confusion'.[27] It was later reprinted without explicit attribution by Thynne, Stow, and Speght, all of whom consistently placed it before the beginning of the *Canterbury Tales* within the *Workes*. In this position (as elaborated later), it may have served once again as filler material used to complete a gathering. Holland seems to have appreciated the poem's nostalgic sententiousness as a pairing for the *Parliament*'s lines about the emergence of new learning from 'old Books'. Speght, who did not provide an attribution for *Prophecy*, followed the earlier folios in placing the text in the preliminaries (sig. ¶4^{v}). As Weiskott points out, from the skewed perspective of a literary history which has Chaucer serve as flagbearer for English pentameter verse, the popular tetrameter *Prophecy* appears to be a metrical anomaly. But Holland, like the early scribes and editors who paired it with pentameter poems, registered its oracular tone and its long view of history as an appropriate accompaniment to his favourite lines from the *Parliament*.[28]

Another newly added poem with an edifying moral message, *Gentilesse*, was positioned at the very beginning of the manuscript when Holland owned it.[29] In its dispensation of worldly wisdom about the nature of true nobility – 'For unto vertue longeth dignite' (l. 5) – the transcription into Holland's manuscript of *Gentilesse* affirms Chaucer's posthumous standing as a paragon of moral instruction and courtly counsel. Underneath the transcript of the poem is an eight-line extract on the Chaucerian theme of 'gentlenes' from the so-called pillow lecture of the Loathly Lady to the

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[25] Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, p. 52.

[26] Misha Teramura, 'Prophecy and Emendation: Merlin, Chaucer, Lear's Fool', *postmedieval*, 10.1 (2019), 50–67 (56–8) surveys the poem's early modern afterlife and its Chaucerian association.

[27] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Queen Anelida and false Arcyte* (Westminster: William Caxton, *c.* 1477, *STC* 5090), sig. [A]10^{r}.

[28] On the poem's circulation see Eric Weiskott, *Meter and Modernity in English Verse, 1350–1650* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), pp. 187–8, 216 and Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, p. 172.

[29] *Gentilesse* and the *Wife of Bath's Tale* extract appear on fol. 1^{v} of Gg.4.27(1).

Knight in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*.[30] Both *Gentilesse* and the Lady's words emphasise the 'noblesse' of character which makes men true 'gentlemen Icalled bee' and which, unlike inherited titles or riches, may not be bequeathed by one's ancestors. In Speght, *Gentilesse* is embedded amongst a series of 'Certain Balades' under the heading 'A Balade made by Chaucer, teaching what is gentilnesse, or whom is worthy to bee called gentill'.[31] In Gg, both texts appear under a heading which has been slightly adapted: 'Chaucer, touchinge gen[tle]nes of Birthe: or who is worthy to be called gentill'. As an amateur herald, one of Holland's chief scholarly preoccupations was the study of ancient coats of arms, including that of his own family.[32] His activity as an antiquary during the late sixteenth century and first years of the seventeenth coincided not only with a period of Chaucer's soaring print popularity, but also with a growing enthusiasm in England for arms, pedigrees, and genealogies.[33] In light of the role of the College of Arms and its heralds as the granters of arms and arbiters of claims to gentility, Holland's interest in Chaucer's passages on 'gentlenes of Birthe' is worth pausing over. His taste for aphorism, his notion of Chaucer as a moral author, and his own interests in gentility and genealogy all informed his selection. In Chaucer, Holland saw a poet whose own 'gentilesse' was evinced both by his sententious works and a noble and royal lineage.[34] It is conceivable that Holland strove to cultivate a similar mode of gentility for himself – one defined as much by the arms he was granted in 1588 as by the pursuit of 'vertuous liuing' and the reading of edifying literature.[35]

The last of Holland's interpolated leaves (fol. 35) presents three additional short poems which extend the theme of morality and add an authorising biographical note to the manuscript (see Figure 3.3). The copied texts are all one stanza long and are titled 'Bon counsail', 'Chaucer to his emptie purse', and 'Chaucers words to his Scrivener'. Together, these three stanzas written in Chaucerian rhyme royal fill the recto of fol. 35, but they are not printed as a set in Speght's edition. The poem called 'Bon counsail' in Holland's Gg is the same text which Speght titled simply 'Yet of the same', and which follows a one-stanza poem titled 'A Saying of Dan John'.[36] In the printed editions, then, the poem is clearly

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[30] On the textual affiliations of these extracts, see Norman Davis, 'Chaucer's *Gentilesse*: A Forgotten Manuscript, with Some Proverbs', *RES*, 20.77 (1969), 43–50 (45–6).
[31] sig. 3P2ʳ.   [32] Chapter 2, p. 96.   [33] Woolf, *Social Circulation of the Past*, pp. 101–7.
[34] Holland also inserted a decorated engraving of Chaucer's genealogy into Gg. See Chapter 4, pp. 213–4.
[35] For a brief biography of Holland, see Christina DeCoursey, 'Society of Antiquaries', *ODNB*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/72906.
[36] sig. 3O2ᵛ. In the choice of title for these short poems, Speght was following Stow's editorial precedent.
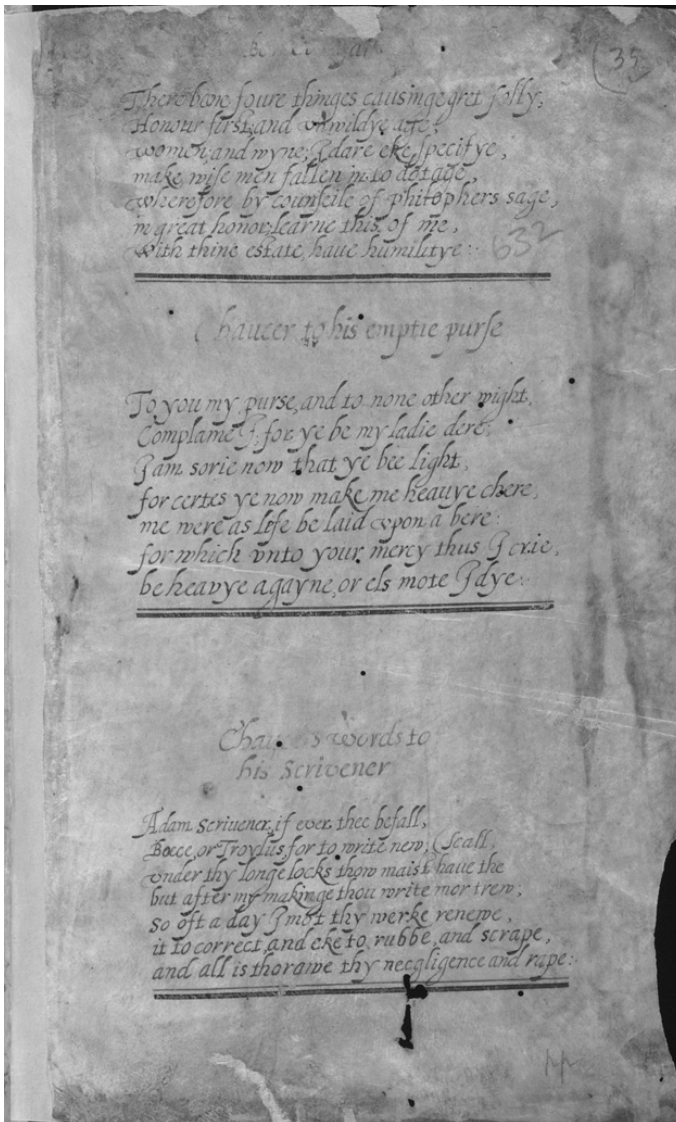
Figure 3.3 Short poems added by Holland to CUL MS Gg.4.27(1), fol. 35^r. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

attributed to Lydgate.[37] The generic title 'Bon counsail' in Holland's manuscript, however, obscures these Lydgatean origins and focusses instead on the poem's advice to embrace humility over folly. The two remaining poems on fol. 35^r both name Chaucer in the title and were no doubt of biographical interest to Holland. In Speght, 'Chaucer to his emptie purse' is buried within an earlier section of 'Balades' (sig. 3O6^v) first printed by Thynne. Meanwhile, the poem which appears in Speght as 'Chaucers wordes vnto his owne Scriuener' becomes 'Chaucers words to his Scrivener' in Gg. Chaucer's witty reprimand of an errant scribe, the poem appears at the terminus of the first part of Speght's edition (sig. 3T4^v), where it immediately precedes the explicit 'Thus endeth the workes of Geffray Chaucer' and the woodcut title page border used to introduce Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* on the facing page. The appearance of the poem at the end of Holland's Chaucer manuscript echoes its placement in the printed editions from 1561 onward where, as Cook has argued, it allows Chaucer an authoritative 'last word' in his own voice.[38] Unlike Chaucer's address to his purse, for which there is evidence of transmission of the text and variants in at least a dozen medieval manuscripts, the poem now known as *Adam Scriveyn* is extant in a single manuscript witness.[39] The decision of Stow, and later Speght, to print the poem at the very end of Chaucer's works in the folios gives that text 'the summative power of an envoy'[40] – a valedictory function that Holland aimed to replicate when he had it transcribed into the end of his manuscript compilation.

   Holland's sense of the Chaucerian canon was profoundly shaped by a knowledge of the body of texts and their paratexts that circulated in the print canon. As a result, it has been suggested that he 'seems to have regarded the collection as analogous to an early printed edition of Chaucer's "Workes"' and that the additions are material 'which a sixteenth-century reader had come to expect in a copy of Chaucer'.[41] This assessment is fair, but it understates the literary judgement and selectivity that characterise Holland's act of enlarging Gg. By 1600, he had access to dozens of printed Chaucerian lyrics which might have been appropriate for inclusion in his own manuscript. That he chose only a handful of particular lines from long poems and certain lyrics shows

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[37] The poem is also attributed to Lydgate in the manuscript witnesses TCC, MS R.3.20 (p. 9) and BL, Additional MS 29729 (fol. 132^{r2}).

[38] Megan L. Cook, '"Here Taketh the Makere of This Book His Leve": The *Retraction* and Chaucer's Works in Tudor England', *Studies in Philology*, 113.1 (2016), 35, 48–9.

[39] TCC, MS R.3.20, p. 367. For copies of *Purse*, see *NIMEV*, p. 253, no. 3787.

[40] Cook, '*Retraction*', 48.   [41] Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, pp. 1, 66.

that Holland's book, for all its comprehensiveness in relation to other Chaucer manuscripts, was not intended to be an exhaustive collection that would achieve the same coverage as the capacious printed folios. Rather, as in any commonplace book of the period, the short texts added to Gg preserve a record of reading and literary taste, which in this case cohered in a particular vision of Chaucer as a sententious author.

Like Holland, the person who supplied missing text in a late fifteenth-century copy of the *Canterbury Tales* now at Trinity College in Cambridge during the sixteenth century also took the opportunity to add a revealing series of supplementary items to the manuscript.[42] In the beginning of this book, an extra quire has been added to accommodate the missing text of the *General Prologue* and the *Knight's Tale*. Its first leaves were then filled out with additional lyrics now known to be apocryphal: *Eight Goodlie Questions* (*IMEV* 3183); a pair of Hoccleve poems, *To the Kings Most Noble Grace* and *To the Lordes and Knyghtes of the Garter* (*IMEV* 3788 and *IMEV* 4251); and *Prophecy* (*IMEV* 3943).[43] The placement and sequence of these items exactly reproduces their appearance in the printed book from which they were transcribed, Thynne's 1532 edition. In that printed book, these texts appear in a prominent if awkward place, between the list of contents ('table of al the workes') contained in the volume and the beginning of the first substantial text, the *Canterbury Tales*.[44] In Greg Walker's reading, this sequence of short texts comprises a 'vitally important' part of the edition's 'poetry of moderation': tactful political and moral counsel directed at the increasingly tyrannical Henry VIII, to whom the book is dedicated and in whose household Thynne worked as 'chefe clerke of your kechyn'.[45] Whether the positioning of these texts reflects a purposeful insertion at a visible point in the book which might catch the King's attention (and his conscience), or whether it results mainly from a more prosaic need to fill the last leaf of the gathering with any printed text, their transcription into the Trinity manuscript confirms their attractiveness to early modern readers, and establishes Thynne's edition as responsible for later interpretations of these apocryphal texts as Chaucer's.[46] Knight notes that their placement in Thynne 'confers on them the status of a preface', and it is this

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[42] The book is TCC, MS R.3.15.   [43] fols. 1ʳ–4ᵛ.   [44] sig. A4ʳ⁻ᵛ.

[45] Greg Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 73–81.

[46] Denton Fox has similarly argued that the apocryphal Chaucerian poems in the *c.* 1568 Bannatyne manuscript owe both their texts and their false Chaucerian attributions to their inclusion in a Thynne edition or one of its successors; see his 'Manuscripts and Prints of Scots Poetry in the Sixteenth Century', in *Bards and Makars*, ed. by A. J. Aitken, Matthew P. McDiarmid, and Derick S. Thomson (University of Glasgow Press, 1977), pp. 156–71 (pp. 158–61).

bibliographical and rhetorical function that another reader reproduced in an older manuscript.[47] They may have occupied a 'curiously liminal position' in Thynne's *Workes*, but that very placement caused the later book owner to select this sequence of short poems as the best material for the newly supplied preliminary leaves in their own manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*.[48] That choice to enhance the book by supplementing it with these poems is also recorded in the manuscript's table of contents, where the three items occupy the prime position at the head of the list. The trio of added texts again underscores Chaucer's early modern reputation for proverbial wisdom and shows that the form of lyrics continued to make them particularly convenient for extraction as filler material or 'make-weights' in manuscripts as well as in printed books.[49] More broadly, these material interpolations show the effectiveness of print in promoting particular versions of Chaucer – in this case, a sententious one – to early modern readers.

Early readers of the Gg and Trinity copies thus responded to print's presentation of Chaucer as a moral authority and treated their manuscripts like personal anthologies that could be expanded to accommodate this sententious matter. Another medieval book, the Fairfax manuscript, appears at first glance to have been supplemented from print following another principle – not with the aim of assembling a repository of gnomic wisdom and pithy sayings by and about Chaucer, but according to a thematic focus on courtly love. In the Fairfax manuscript, the same seventeenth-century hand that filled in gaps in the *Book of the Duchess* and the *House of Fame* also supplied a new text, the *Ten Commandments of Love* (*IMEV* 590), a lyric poem of fourteen rhyme royal stanzas about how women should conduct themselves in matters of the heart. This apocryphal work was first printed by Stow in 1561, and was included in the printed editions of Speght, Urry, and subsequent editions until Thomas Tyrwhitt's edition (1775–8).[50] In Fairfax, the poem has been copied from Speght's 1598 edition onto two blank leaves supplied by the original scribe for the ending of the *House of Fame* (fols. 184^r–185^v).[51] In Speght, *Ten Commandments* is printed with other short works under the heading 'Here followeth certaine workes of Geffray Chaucer, annexed to the impression printed in the yeare,

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[47] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 163.   [48] The phrase is from Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny*, p. 74.

[49] On the use of 'makeweights' in printed books, see Boffey, 'Proverbial Chaucer', 47 and n. 38; see also Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, '"Chaucer's Chronicle," John Shirley, and the Canon of Chaucer's Shorter Poems', *SAC*, 20.1 (1998), 201–18 (213).

[50] Hammond, *Bibliographical Manual*, p. 457.

[51] Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, p. 34; Norton-Smith, *Fairfax 16*, p. xvii.

1561. With an adition [sic] of some things of Chaucers writing, neuer before this time printed, 1597'.[52] Seven lyrics, including *Gentilesse*, precede *Ten Commandments*, and the running head 'Certain Balades' unites these disparate titles, which are generally courtly in nature.[53] Whatever Speght and his predecessors may have believed about the authorship of the *Ten Commandments of Love*, it is clear that the text's placement in the 1598 edition would have led some readers to assume that it was written by Chaucer. *Ten Commandments* is written in rhyme royal and belongs to the lyric tradition of advice to lovers. It may have been these formal and thematic characteristics, which echo those found in other Fairfax texts, that caused the annotator to select it for inclusion in the manuscript. But it is also possible that the annotator took Speght's edition as an authority on Chaucer's text and the canon, and included *Ten Commandments* on the assumption of its genuineness. The early modern addition of *Ten Commandments* to Fairfax offers an instructive counterexample to the book's incomplete *House of Fame*, for which the same annotator also supplied an ending.[54] While the latter is a visibly incomplete text which its seventeenth-century annotator reasonably set about to conclude, *Ten Commandments* was not conceived as part of the medieval manuscript. In both cases, however, the early modern annotator identified obvious or inviting gaps in the manuscript book and chose to fill them in, completing and enhancing the original manuscript in the process.[55] The origins of the Gg, Fairfax, and Trinity annotations in contemporary editions reveal the active role of printed books in shaping literary taste.

At the same time, the status of Gg and Fairfax as anthologies is a reminder that the reconfiguring of texts into new collocations was a literary and readerly activity older than print. The modular potential of the written text was well known to Chaucer, whose poem which he called 'the love of Palamon and Arcite' was conceived as a stand-alone work before it was revised to become the opening text within the collection of his *Canterbury Tales*.[56] Just as the introduction of texts into new bibliographic contexts during the early modern period was not without precedent, neither was the extraction of *sententiae* seen in the books studied here.

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[52] *Workes* (1598), sig. 3P2ʳ.

[53] On this term, see Kathleen Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Selection* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005), p. 3.

[54] See Chapter 2, pp. 117–8.

[55] Yet this recopying was not unthinking, and the annotator did not use all the blank space available. Even after having copied *Ten Commandments*, nearly three pages (the rest of 185ᵛ, and 186ʳ⁻ᵛ) were still available for further additions, but these spaces were left blank.

[56] *Legend of Good Women*, F-Prologue, ll. 420–1.

The copying of aphoristic or amatory poems from sixteenth- and seven-teenth-century printed copies onto blank pages or supplied leaves in medieval manuscripts recalls not only the diligent commonplacing and note-taking practised by humanist readers, but also the widespread medi-eval practice of compiling florilegia.[57] As such readers knew well from the Latin root of *read* (*lego*, *legere*, to read, to gather, to choose), thoughtful excerption was essential to the utility of reading as a means of moral education.[58]

These continuities notwithstanding, the act of extracting printed texts or their fragments for inclusion in medieval manuscripts belongs to a context of reading and compilation which is different from that which initially produced anthologies like Gg or Fairfax in the fifteenth century. The printed books in which early modern people read their Chaucer were widely disseminated and presented a panoply of standardised and author-ised texts which (as we have seen) could be extracted, re-copied, and used to supplement other books. In gathering texts under the authenticating rubric of Chaucer's name and presenting them as the individual parts of a defined canon, the printed folios brought to the fore concerns which were largely secondary to medieval compilers and readers of manuscripts.[59] More so than the older manuscripts, the printed volumes of Chaucer's *Workes* emphatically participated in the monumentalising of the author and his writings. They altered the historical and material circumstances in which the poet was read and venerated, and they presented a canon of his works which was ripe for extraction and quotation at the hands of readers. The use of those printed books as a basis for supplementing fifteenth-century manuscripts with new texts offers striking evidence for the effectiveness of the book trade's promotion of Chaucer and his works.

Manuscript miscellanies compiled during the sixteenth century by George Bannatyne (*c.* 1568) and by readers in the Tudor household of Anne Boleyn (in the 1530s and 1540s) also document the use of printed poems in editions of Chaucer as material for excerpting and adaptation. In the Scottish Bannatyne manuscript, a set of mostly apocryphal poems

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[57] On commonplacing and note-taking see Fred Schurink, 'Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England', *HLQ*, 73.3 (2010), 453–69; and Ann Blair, 'The Rise of Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe', *Intellectual History Review*, 20.3 (2010), 303–16.

[58] Sir Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae* (London: [s.n.], 1542; *STC* 7659.5), '*Lego*, *gi*, *gere*, to gather, to reede, to passe by, to chouse, to stryke' (sig. U1ʳ). On reading as the detachment and attachment of text, see Juliet Fleming, 'Afterword: The Textuality and Materiality of Reading in Early Modern England', *HLQ*, 73.3 (2010), 543–52 (545).

[59] Seth Lerer, 'Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology', *PMLA*, 118.5 (2003), 1251–67 (1253–4).

transcribed from Thynne's *c.* 1550 edition (or a later one based on it) is attributed to Chaucer and grouped under a section titled 'Ballatis of Luve'.[60] In this position, a Chaucerian author-figure is made to ventriloquise differing stances on the contemporary *querelle des femmes* and contributes to the 'inherent moral trajectory' of the manuscript as designed by its compiler.[61] In the early Tudor Devonshire manuscript, verse extracts from texts printed in Thynne's edition were likewise copied in order to voice varied positions in the debate about women's morality, and were sometimes freely adapted to this end. The poetic selections are from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Anelida and Arcite*, Hoccleve's *Letter of Cupid*, and Sir Richard Roos's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, but none of these extracts is attributed to an author in the manuscript.[62] Whereas the compiler of Bannatyne relied on extracts bearing Chaucer's name to authorise competing points of view in the *querelle*, the courtly Devonshire manuscript witnesses the elision of the author's presence – sometimes twice over, as in the case of *Troilus*, where the extracts are detached not only from their prominently named author, but from the much longer and famous poem from which they derive. These sixteenth-century compilations provide valuable context for the early modern practice of copying poems of love or counsel from print into manuscript. Collectively, the supplemented medieval books and the early modern anthologies show that such practices of extraction and supplementation were not anomalous. They provide evidence of a widespread readerly desire to extract, adapt, and reconfigure the contents of Chaucer's printed books to new ends.

From the printed editions, the readers I have been discussing in this chapter selected appropriate texts with which to enhance their medieval manuscripts, but they often did so in ways that complement, accentuate, and make meaningful pre-existing features of the older books – the sententiousness of Gg, for instance, or the thematic emphasis on love in

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[60] Fox, 'Manuscripts and Prints', pp. 158–61. The book is Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 1.1.6.

[61] Lucy R. Hinnie, 'Bannatyne's Chaucer: A Triptych of Influence', *ChR*, 55.4 (2020), 484–99 (485).

[62] The Devonshire manuscript is BL, Additional MS 17492. See Ethel Seaton, '"The Devonshire Manuscript" and Its Medieval Fragments', *RES*, 7.25 (1956), 55–6; Richard C. Harrier, 'A Printed Source for "The Devonshire Manuscript"', *RES*, 11.41 (1960), 54. On the anonymity of the Thynne excerpts, see Marcy L. North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 164. Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 125–60 discusses the Chaucerian material in Devonshire as an example of the personalisation of printed texts, and of the familial contexts of reading which gave them meaning.

Fairfax. The three prefatory lyrics added to the Trinity manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*, meanwhile, witness a process of purposeful supplementation which aimed to retrofit the medieval book according to a textual order seen in the later print. The willingness of their owners to introduce such additions suggests a contemporary sense of the medieval manuscripts as open-ended; for all their antiquity and value, they were prime for iterative expansion and personalisation with newly available Chaucerian texts.

These readers were at home in a culture of compilation that saw groups of disparate texts at turns gathered into (sometimes only loosely defined) print and manuscript anthologies and dispersed again by recopying and excerption. Works such as *Prophecy*, *Ten Commandments*, the *Parliament of Fowles*, and *Troilus and Criseyde* might convey some semblance of stability from within the covers of a folio of Chaucer's printed *Workes*, but such appearances are often illusory.[63] The attribution of *Prophecy* and *Ten Commandments* to Chaucer is ambiguous in the prints, and the status of the former as preface or filler material is undetermined; the *Parliament of Fowles* sees its crowning similitude excerpted as an epigraph on a printed title page; and (as I discuss next) the relation of Chaucer's great tragedy to the slighter companion poem that follows it in print is cast into doubt. Moreover, texts collectively designated 'works' and assembled into authoritative editions were still liable to be removed from that bibliographical context and made to serve in new configurations. In particular, the brevity and pithiness of the lyric form often lent itself to the extraction from print into manuscript charted here, and to the reticence about attribution which often accompanied this textual mobility.

3.2 Chaucer's *Troilus* and Henryson's *Cresseid*

With the radical expansion of Chaucer's canon during the early modern period came a good deal of readerly interest in its contents and exclusions. But as with the lyrics and short poems, the placement and clustering of some longer narrative works in the printed folios made their connection to the poet ambiguous at best and misleading at worst. A manuscript now held at St John's College in Cambridge illustrates the consequential effects of that editorial uncertainty on Chaucer's literary reputation. The book is a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Troilus and Criseyde*, MS L.1 (L1). Like other medieval manuscript copies of *Troilus*, the text in L1 is not attributed

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[63] A point made by studies including Dane, *Tomb*, and Gillespie, *Print Culture*.

to Chaucer by means of an incipit or explicit. The manuscript's text was corrected by two annotators in the course of the seventeenth century, but the most substantial early modern addition to L1 is the *Testament of Cresseid* (*IMEV* 285), which was copied onto eight leaves of thick parchment inserted after the final quire of the original scribe.[64] This Middle Scots poem, composed in the fifteenth century by Robert Henryson (d. *c.* 1490), invents for its heroine a tragic fate of her own: her rejection by Diomedes, descent into prostitution and leprosy, and eventual death. Following Chaucer's rhyme royal, the poem's eighty-six stanzas are seven lines long, except for the seven stanzas comprising 'The Complaint of Cresseid', an embedded lament written in the style of Chaucer's nine-line 'Lament of Anelida' stanzas (aabaabbab). This, at least, is the form of the *Testament* as it is read and studied today, in a text based on the 1593 edition printed by Henry Charteris in Edinburgh.[65] But it was another, textually inferior version which William Thynne included as a belated addition to his 1532 edition of Chaucer's *Workes* – one that circulated widely during the sixteenth century and would be reprinted in all editions until 1721.[66] Although Thynne's text is the earliest surviving witness of the *Testament*, its reliability has been questioned on account of its heavy anglicisation of Henryson's Middle Scots and its muddling of the nine-line stanzas.[67] Despite its dubious textual value, this was the version with which many early modern readers were familiar, and it was the text selected to supplement a fifteenth-century *Troilus* manuscript in the seventeenth century.

On the one hand, the motivations behind this reader's choice to import the *Testament* into a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Troilus* appear transparent; the transcription supplies 'evidence of abiding interest of the story'.[68] Not only does the poem rely on Chaucer for its literary form and material, but its narrator frames his work with several hallmarks of Chaucerian dream vision: professed inexperience in love, bookishness, and a narrative self-awareness in relation to his sources.[69] On the other hand,

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[64] On the corrections in L1 see Chapter 1, pp. 60–8.

[65] Robert Henryson, *The testament of Cresseid* (Edinburgh: Henry Charteris, 1593; *STC* 13165).

[66] The bibliographical evidence for the late addition of the *Testament* on cancel leaves after the edition had been printed is summarised in R. F. Yeager, 'Literary Theory at the Close of the Middle Ages: William Caxton and William Thynne', *SAC*, 6.1 (1984), 135–64 (155–6 and n. 49).

[67] On the textual tradition, see Christian Sheridan, 'The Early Prints of the *Testament of Cresseid* and the Presentation of Lines 577–91', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 20.1 (2007), 24–8.

[68] Beadle and Griffiths, *Manuscript L.1*, p. xix.

[69] On the poem's debts to Chaucer, see *Testament of Cresseid*, ed. by Denton Fox (London: Nelson, 1968), pp. 21–4. Quotations refer to this edition.

criticism on the poem has long recognised that the *Testament* is not a mere continuation or sequel to *Troilus* but 'an alternative ending' which, in its pivot to the suffering of Cresseid, refracts and redefines the moral landscape of the earlier Middle English work.[70] Henryson's narrator initially takes up Chaucer's *Troilus* at the point of the lovers' separation but decides to 'nocht reheirs [not retell]' (l. 57) the distress and heartbreak of the hero. Setting aside his Chaucer book, the narrator opts to read an enigmatic 'vther quair [other book]' (l. 61) in which he finds 'the fatall destenie / Of fair Cresseid, that endit wretchitlie' (ll. 62–3). More strikingly still, the poem professes at this point to doubt the authority of its literary sources:

> Quha wait gif all that Chauceir wrait was trew?
> Nor I wait nocht gif this narratioun
> Be authoreist, or fenyeit of the new
> Be sum poeit, throw his inuentioun   (ll. 64–7)

These lines have often been read as a repudiation of Chaucer's literary authority and as Henryson's own claim to vernacular 'inuentioun' and to the mantle of 'poeit'.[71] The Middle Scots poem looks back to Chaucer, but its look is slightly askance. It elides the narrative details of Troilus's death and stellification at the end of Chaucer's Book v and, as Spearing argues, 'more boldly offers an antithetical misreading … in which Cresseid dies and Troilus remains alive'.[72] This acknowledged friction and incompatibility between the two texts should inform our interpretation of a historical reader's choice to pair them in L1. More than a straightforward comparison, the *Testament* invites juxtaposition with the earlier tragedy, and consciously presents itself as a worthy challenger to Chaucer's Troy poem.

Many early modern readers looked past those contradictions, however, and seem to have treated both texts as authentically Chaucerian.[73] The

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[70] A. C. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 110. See also Holly A. Crocker, *The Matter of Virtue: Women's Ethical Action from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), pp. 78–107; and C. David Benson, 'Critic and Poet: What Lydgate and Henryson Did to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 53.1 (1992), 23–40.

[71] See, for example, David Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1985), pp. 134–5; Nicholas Watson, 'Outdoing Chaucer: Lydgate's *Troy Book* and Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* as Comparative Imitations of *Troilus and Criseyde*', in *Shifts and Transpositions in Medieval Narrative: A Festschrift for Dr. Elspeth Kennedy*, ed. by Karen Pratt (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 89–108 (p. 104).

[72] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, pp. 167–8.

[73] Henryson's authorship of the *Testament* was, of course, known by readers of the Charteris edition. Francis Kynaston, who translated the work, noted in the preface to his translation (Bodl. Additional MS c. 287, p. 475) that he had 'sufficiently bin informed … that it was made and written by one Mr

sixteenth- and seventeenth-century folio editions of Thynne, Stow, and Speght themselves appear to register uncertainty on this crucial point. None of these collections attributes the work to Henryson – nor, indeed, does any explicitly name Chaucer as its author. Instead, in these editions the poem nestles suggestively between *Troilus* and the *Legend of Good Women*. The latter poem bears its own intertextual relationship to *Troilus*, since Chaucer's portrayals of women dishonest in love – a group in which the poet includes Criseyde – furnishes the pretext for the *Legend*'s literary catalogue of virtuous women.[74] Whether or not Thynne and the editors who followed him believed the *Testament* to be an authentic work of Chaucer, printing the three poems in immediate succession in the collected works made sense to them.[75] They are silent, however, on the point of the *Testament*'s authorship. In Speght's 1598 volume, for instance, the poem's surrounding paratexts deftly thread it between Chaucer's genuine works. Its incipit reads, 'Thus endeth the fifth booke, and last of Troilus: and here foloweth the pitefull and dolorous Testament of faire Creseide,' and its explicit likewise emphasises continuity with the work that follows: 'Thus endeth the pitifull & dolorous Testament of faire Creseide: and here followeth the Legende of good women'.[76]

One of Speght's editorial innovations was the addition of 'Arguments' or summaries to the major texts in the volume, a feature advertised on the 1598 title page. Both of his editions supply an Argument for *Troilus and Criseyde* but not for the *Testament*. The 1602 Argument is representative:

> In this excellent Booke is shewed the feruent loue of Troylus to Creseid, whome he enioyed for a time: and her great vntruth to him againe in giuing her selfe to Diomedes, who in the end did so cast her off, that she came to great miserie. In which discourse Chaucer liberally treateth of the diuine purueiance.[77]

Robert Henderson'. Francis Thynne also registered doubt about the work's Chaucerian authorship, noting that the poem names Chaucer at many points; see Megan Cook, 'How Francis Thynne Read His Chaucer', *JEBS*, 15 (2012), 215–43 (229).

[74] *G*-Prologue, ll. 255–66.

[75] For an interpretation of *Troilus*, the *Testament*, and the *Legend* as 'a sequence of meditations on love and romance', see Megan L. Cook, 'Author, Text, and Paratext in Early Modern Editions of the *Legend of Good Women*', *ChR*, 52.1 (2017), 124–42 (134).

[76] sig. 2O2ʳ and sig. 2O5ʳ. There is no explicit in the 1602 *Workes*.

[77] sig. 2B5ʳ. The 1598 Argument is identical except for the absence of the final sentence; its addition in 1602 may be part of the attempt to sanitise Chaucer for Protestant readers by absorbing Boethian ideas about *Fortuna* into a more palatable religious worldview. On the Calvinist suspicion of popular notions of luck and fortune, see Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 20–2.

Speght's Argument here is rife with ambiguity, for although he refers chiefly to the single 'excellent Booke' called '*Troilus and Criseyde*', his summary includes incidents proper to the *Testament* (Diomede's spurning of the heroine and her 'great miserie'). Equally inconclusive is the fact that he says this happens 'in the end', leaving open the possibility that Speght is referring to the outcome at 'the end' of the love story as a whole, rather than to 'the end' of Chaucer's *Troilus*. Speght's editorial paratexts and very language thereby evade the question of the *Testament*'s authorship, neither affirming that Chaucer wrote it nor naming Henryson. Instead, he appears to treat the poems scholars now call '*Troilus and Criseyde*' and '*The Testament of Criseyde*' as different but related parts of a larger composite text, also called '*Troilus and Criseyde*'. This move sees Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* come to represent Troilus's side of the tragedy, while Henryson's poem relates its other half, namely Cresseid's fate. Such a reading might be bolstered by the shape of Chaucer's *Troilus* itself, beginning as it does with one aim – 'The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen' (1.1) – and concluding with its male protagonist's lament, death, and stellification.

Even as it diverges from *Troilus* in its portrayal of a punitive moral universe and in its pivot to Cresseid's suffering, the presentation of the *Testament* in Speght's editions strongly implies Chaucer's authorship. But irrespective of their views on the poem's authorship, Speght and his fellow editors clearly identified the *Testament* as a worthy companion piece, or perhaps counter-narrative, to the longer work. By adding the *Testament* to his own book, the L1 copyist adopted and endorsed this contemporary reputation of the two texts as complementary and may have likewise assumed the work to be Chaucer's. This interpretation is confirmed by the explicit furnished for the transcription. In the 1602 Speght edition no explicit had been printed, but the new scribe supplied one in a display script at the poem's conclusion: 'EXPLICIT LIBER TROILI, & CREISEIDOS' (see Figure 3.4).[78] For the L1 copyist, too, it seems that the texts formed two halves of a single work called '*Troilus and Criseyde*'. The addition of the *Testament* to L1 and the furnishing of an explicit which treats the two texts as one 'liber' demonstrates the influence of the printed edition on this reader's understanding of both poems and their authorship. MS L1 thus preserves valuable evidence of the staying power and interpretation of the apocrypha introduced into the canon by Thynne in 1532 and retained in subsequent editions. Fox has argued that several editions attributing the

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[78] fol. 128ᵛ.

work to Henryson also appear to have been published in Scotland during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.[79] Despite the text's apparently wide circulation under Henryson's name in those books, Chaucer's association with the *Testament* would only be dislodged in the eighteenth century. At the same time, however, L1 also registers a trace of doubt about the poem's provenance. On an otherwise blank flyleaf, a seventeenth-century hand (possibly belonging to another owner) has written out the contents at the head of the page:

> Chaucer's Troilus and Criseid.
> The Testament of Criseid.   (fol. i^r)

This arrangement of the two titles and the conspicuous absence of an author's name in the second line might suggest some questioning of Chaucer's putative role as author of the *Testament*. Another instance of readerly ambivalence concerning the poem's authorship appears in a copy of the 1532 *Workes* now at the Beinecke Library, where a contemporary annotator has observed that while the content of the poem points to Chaucer as the author, 'this meetre is not his'.[80]

   The shared subject matter and literary heritage of Chaucer's and Henryson's texts also captured the attention of Joseph Holland, who oversaw the copying of four stanzas from the *Testament* (ll. 582–609) onto a parchment supply leaf inserted into Gg.[81] In this case, the excerpted lines pertain to Criseyde's last will and testament, an inset text which gives the poem its title. Sheridan has observed that early readers of the *Testament* would have recognised Criseyde's 'Testament' (ll. 577–91) as 'a special category of text embedded in the narrative'.[82] The extract copied into Gg represents the tragic conclusion of the narrative, with a description of Criseyde's dying act, her bequest to Troilus of a 'roiall ringe' that he had given to her as a love token, Troilus's own grief on learning of her death, and his erecting of a marble tombstone and an epitaph for her grave. Holland's excerption of the ten concluding lines (ll. 582–91) of the embedded 'Testament' into Gg confirms their distinctiveness to early modern readers, while the remaining eighteen transcribed lines (ll. 592–609) recount Troilus's actions in the aftermath of her death and supply narrative

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[79] Fox, *Testament of Cresseid*, pp. 3–4 lists lost editions of Henryson.
[80] Beinecke Library, Osborn fpa 5; qtd. in Harbus, 'A Renaissance Reader's English Annotations', 352.
[81] CUL, MS Gg.4.27(1), fol. 9^r.
[82] The start of the inset 'Testament' is marked typographically in only two of the early editions (Thynne, 1532 and Anderson, 1663) but not in Speght, which Holland used. See Sheridan, 'Early Prints', 24–5.
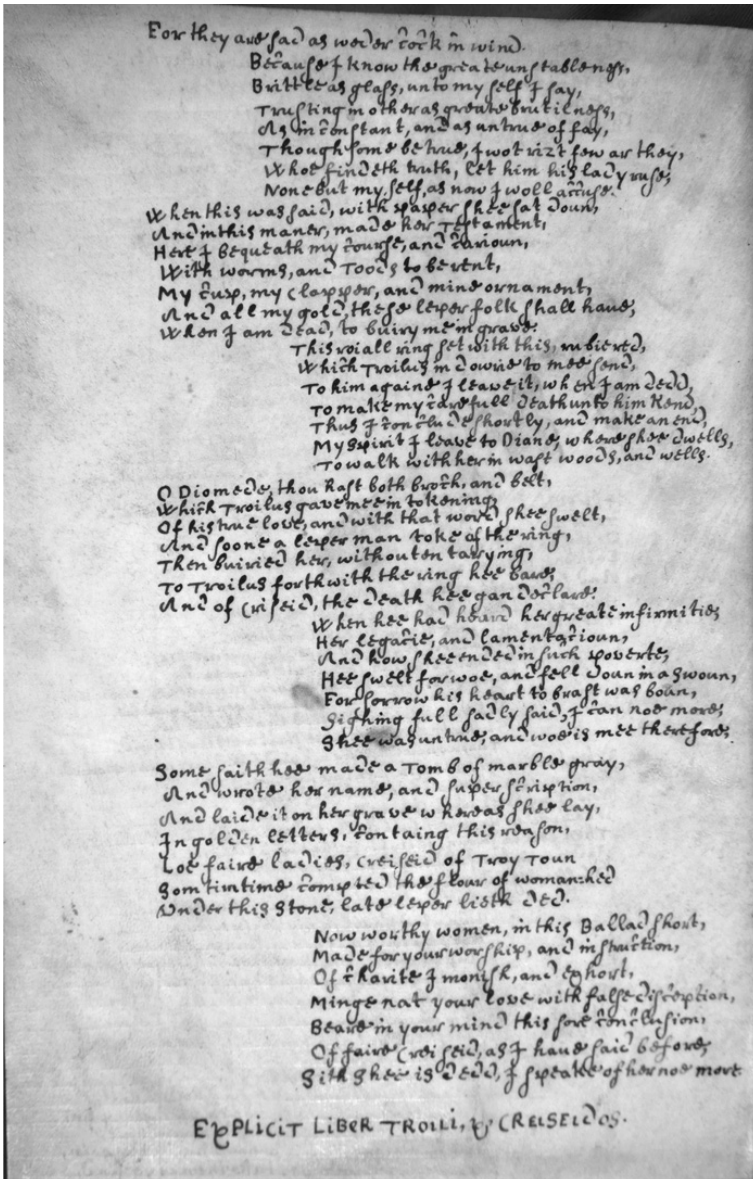
Figure 3.4 An early modern parchment supply leaf containing the end of the *Testament of Cresseid*. Cambridge, St John's College, MS L.1, fol. 128ᵛ. By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.

closure. Holland's scribe did not, however, copy the poem's moralising final stanza (ll. 610–16) with its direct address to 'worthie women' who can learn from Cresseid's terrible example.

While these acts of transcription in Gg and L1 may have been informed by a misguided idea about the authorship of the *Testament*, they also testify to a close readerly affinity to the story and in particular to the character of Criseyde/Cresseid, whose departure from Troy also sees her recede from the narrative of Chaucer's poem. Neither manuscript was conceived to include the *Testament* but by the seventeenth century at least two collectors of old copies of Chaucer expanded their books to accommodate an account of Cresseid's fate. On a broad cultural level, the work of these readers was undoubtedly influenced by the pervasiveness of the Troy story; in a much more direct sense, it was facilitated and encouraged by the juxtaposition of the texts in contemporary printed editions. At least until the lost edition of 1585 and possibly as late as 1593, the majority of sixteenth-century readers learned of the story's outcome from printed copies bearing not the name of the Scottish Henryson but that of England's national poet.

The ambiguous convergence of *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Testament of Cresseid* in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printed editions had far-reaching effects on the story's reception. Authorised in editions of the *Workes*, the figuration of Cresseid by Henryson as a wanton, beggar, and leper filtered into the general consciousness and thereby into the Elizabethan literary tradition.[83] The proliferation of Cresseid-figures in early modern retellings is demonstrably indebted to the Middle Scots response. Unmistakeable allusions to Henryson's Cresseid appear in popular poetry collections including George Turberville's *Epitaphes* (1567), George Whetstone's *Rocke of Regard* (1576), and George Gascoigne's *Posies* (1575). Further echoes are found in dramatic works that include not only Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (*c.* 1602), but also his *Henry V* (1599) and *Twelfth Night* (*c.* 1601), as well as Thomas Dekker and Henry Chettle's lost play 'called Troyeles and creasse daye' (*c.* 1599), and Thomas Heywood's *2 The Iron Age* (*c.* 1613).[84] Around 1585, the courtier Gabriel Harvey included the *Testament of Cresseid* with its 'winterlie springe' in a list which praised Chaucer's 'description[s] of the

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[83] Crocker, *The Matter of Virtue*, pp. 79–80.
[84] The date of Heywood's play is conjectured; see *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, ed. by Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, 9 vols. (Oxford Scholarly Editions Online, 2020), VI, p. 1709, doi: 10.1093/actrade/9780198739111.book.1. This paragraph is indebted to Hyder E. Rollins, 'The Troilus-Cressida Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare', *PMLA*, 32.3 (1917), 383–429 (402–27).

Spring'.[85] Sometime between the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century, an anonymous author translated Chaucer's *Troilus* and Henryson's *Testament* into the Welsh-language *Troelus a Chressyd*, a dramatised fusion of the two works which relied on a contemporary printed edition as its source text.[86]

The intellectual lineage of these early modern Troy stories may be traced to printed copies of Chaucer. By positioning the *Testament* as a product of Chaucer's pen, Thynne and his editorial successors reoriented the narrative away from *Troilus*'s meditation on the transience of the universe in Book v and towards Henryson's wrenching portrayal of human suffering embodied in his Cresseid.[87] Readers of Thynne and the subsequent folio editions then created adaptations informed by the misattribution, and charted a different reception for Criseyde in the process. Books like Gg and L1 show this new literary history in the making. In supplementing each manuscript with text taken from Henryson's sequel, the readers of these old books reveal a literary taste tolerant to adaptation and even contradiction. In bringing the narrative itself to a more satisfying conclusion, they also express a new cultural interest in an imagined textual entity called *Troilus and Criseyde* which accommodates the fate of Criseyde/Cresseid as well as that of Troilus.

3.3   Chaucer's Plowmen

The long history of supplementing Chaucer's books with material from the Middle English Plowman tradition offers further evidence for the central role of print in propagating key textual traditions into the early modern period. In Oxford, Christ Church, MS 152, a late fifteenth-century manuscript containing the *Canterbury Tales* as well as Lydgate's *Churl and the Bird* and *Siege of Thebes*, there is a spurious tale embedded amidst the Chaucerian material. After the abrupt conclusion of the *Squire's Tale* in the manuscript, the rest of the quire was left blank by the first scribe to await finishing. A second copyist working around the same time filled these blank pages with a new text.[88] The supplied poem is a version of Thomas Hoccleve's *Miracle of the Virgin*, also known as *The Monk and our Blessed Lady's Sleeves*.[89] But as part of this textual interpolation, the new work is

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[85] G. C. Moore Smith, *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), p. 159; Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, p. 250.

[86] National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 106.   [87] Crocker, *The Matter of Virtue*, pp. 81–8.

[88] fols. 228^v–231^r.

[89] *IMEV* 4122. For the text, see John M. Bowers, *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), pp. 23–32.

here attributed to Chaucer, not Hoccleve, and is introduced in terms similar to those of any other Canterbury tale. Thus, the poem begins with 'The p*r*ologe of the Ploughman' and the tale proper is introduced with the incipit 'Here begynnyth the ploughmannys tale of owr lady'.[90] As its modern titles imply, the tale is an orthodox miracle of the Virgin; in the Christ Church manuscript, it has been refashioned to fit the mold of Chaucer's storytelling game.[91] 'The p*r*ologe of the Ploughman' consists of a spurious two-stanza link, unique in this copy, in which the Host invites the Ploughman to tell the next tale and the Ploughman vows to tell 'A tale of Crystys modyr dere'.[92] *The Miracle of the Virgin*, with its exemplum of the devout monk praying a Latin *Pater Noster*, has been recognised as a tale of 'unimpeachable orthodoxy' and even one which is 'implicitly anti-Lollard'.[93] The suspected origins of the manuscript at Winchester College, a place known for its Marian devotional traditions, offers a compelling rationale for the supplementation of the blank leaves with a perfectly conventional tale.[94] It was fitting for an institution founded in honour of Mary to fill the lacuna thus; it was also advantageous for Chaucer's fifteenth-century reputation that the theretofore silent Plowman named in his *General Prologue* should prove to be a Catholic conformist fully distinguishable from the notoriously reformist Piers Plowman.[95] The supplementation of the blank leaves (initially set aside for the conclusion of the *Squire's Tale*) with an interpolated 'prologe' and 'ploughmannys tale' is in keeping with the diverse sources used in the manuscript's copying and with the overall effect of tale disorder noticed by Manly and Rickert.[96] It is typical, too, of the resourcefulness which often characterises early practices of bibliographical completing. The *Miracle of the Virgin* was an ideologically appropriate text with which to supplement the Christ Church manuscript, but it also provided a bibliographically convenient fix for the second scribe who copied it. The same hand is responsible for corrections, filled-in lines, instructions, and *signes de renvoi*

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[90] fol. 228ᵛ, fol. 229ʳ.
[91] On the poem's genre, see Beverly Boyd, 'Hoccleve's Miracle of the Virgin', *The University of Texas Studies in English*, 35 (1956), 116–22.
[92] *DIMEV* 681; fol. 228ᵛ, l. 9.   [93] Bowers, *The Canterbury Tales*, p. 24.
[94] Andrew Higl, *Playing the Canterbury Tales: The Continuations and Additions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 108–11.
[95] On the naming of the Christ Church Ploughman as a tactic of differentiation, see Higl, *Playing the Canterbury Tales*, p. 106.
[96] For example, the table of contents on fol. 1ᵛ has the intercalated *Ploughman's Tale* squeezed in between the *Squire's* and *Nun's Priest's Tales*, confirming that it was latterly appended. On the production, see *TCT*, pp. 85–90.

to help the book's reader make sense of leaves disordered during production.[97] That scribe was responsible, in other words, for completing and perfecting the manuscript, and the addition of the *Miracle of the Virgin*, in addition to being doctrinally suitable for the Winchester manuscript, also solved the immediate bibliographical problem of an unsightly gap at the end of the *Squire's Tale*.

In the following century, a very different sort of Plowman tradition – one with an anti-Catholic strain – would come to be tacked on to Chaucer's works by stationers, editors, and readers alike. The title page of the anti-clerical prose satire *Jack Upland* (*c.* 1536) would claim that it was 'compyled by the famous Geoffrey Chaucer', and John Foxe enthusiastically endorsed this attribution when he reprinted the text and promoted Chaucer as a Wycliffite reformer in his 1570 *Actes and Monuments*.[98] The most pervasive textual incarnation of the idea of Chaucer's proto-Protestantism, however, was the anonymous *Plowman's Tale*, a fifteenth-century allegorical debate between a Pelican and a greedy Gryphon (or Griffin) who represent Christ and the Catholic Church respectively.[99] During the sixteenth century, this anonymous work would become hitched to Chaucer's name and eventually to his works. No early manuscript survives, but the text was first printed in the 1530s by Thomas Godfray, who also printed the first collected edition of Chaucer's *Workes* around the same time.[100] From 1542, the association of the *Plowman's Tale* with the *Canterbury Tales* would be fortified by its inclusion in printed copies of the *Workes*. Here, the sixteenth-century Prologue introduces the Plowman as a participant and tale-teller on the 'pylgremage' who is enjoined by the Host to 'tell us some holy thynge'.[101] What follows is a rather one-sided debate dominated by the invective of the Pelican. Originally attached to the end of the *Canterbury Tales* (following the

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[97] For example, an instruction on fol. 181ᵛ reads 'turne ouer iiii lefes to thys sygne'; similar notes appear on fols. 21ᵛ, 26ᵛ, 41ᵛ, 179ᵛ, and elsewhere.

[98] *Jack vp Lande compyled by the famous Geoffrey Chaucer* ([Southwark]: [J. Nicolson], *c.* 1536; *STC* 5098). In 1570, Foxe printed *Jack Upland* and cited the *Plowman's Tale* and *The Testament of Love* as evidence of Chaucer's anticlericalism. See Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 73–90 and Dane, *Tomb*, pp. 77–81.

[99] For an overview, see Andrew N. Wawn, 'The Genesis of "The Plowman's Tale"', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 2 (1972), 21–40.

[100] *The ploughman's tale* (London: Thomas Godfray, *c.* 1535; *STC* 5099.5). The exact publication date of Godfray's edition of the *Plowman's Tale* is uncertain, since the only known copy is missing its first leaf, but it is now thought to have been published 'before or in 1533'; see Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 198 and n. 33.

[101] ll. 12, 46. For the text, see *Chaucerian and Other Pieces: A Supplement to the Complete Works*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), pp. 147–90.

Parson's Tale) in 1542, the text was transferred to a more secure position between the *Manciple's Tale* and *Parson's Tale* from *c.* 1550.[102]

As with *Jack Upland*, the attribution of the *Plowman's Tale* to Chaucer was further promulgated by Foxe's extremely popular martyrology. In 1647 the Gloucestershire preacher John Trapp could remark that, 'M. Fox tels us, that by the reading of Chaucers books, some were brought to the knowledge of the truth'.[103] Speght avowed that the *Plowman's Tale* was 'made no doubt by Chaucer with the rest of the Tales', while his fellow antiquary Francis Thynne recounted that Cardinal Wolsey had suppressed an anti-clerical text called the 'pilgrymes tale' from his father's edition while the *Plowman's Tale* was 'with muche ado permitted to passe with the reste'.[104] In 1606, it was published in quarto format by Samuel Macham and Matthew Cooke, with an attribution to an ennobled Chaucer on the title page: 'Written by Sir Geffrey Chaucer, Knight, amongst his Canterburie tales: and now set out apart from the rest'.[105] This edition of the *Plowman's Tale*, dense with explanatory marginal glosses, begins with 'A description of the Plowman' from the *General Prologue*, then presents a note on the place of the tale within the Canterbury collection:

> In the former editions of Chawcer. This Tale is made the last, but in the latter, set out by M. Spights aduise, and commendable paine, it is the last sauing the Parsons Tale, I doubt not but this change is warranted by some olde coppies written

For the majority of early modern readers, then, the *Plowman's Tale* was a genuine Chaucerian work – one whose authenticity was affirmed in authoritative printed books like those of Foxe and Speght. Problematically, however, the *Plowman's Tale* was conspicuously absent from the manuscript record. If it were a genuine Chaucerian work, as commentators like Foxe insisted, and as the editions also attested, then its authenticity should be verified by 'olde coppies written' as the 1606 edition assumed – that is, by evidence of circulation with the rest of the *Tales* or attribution to Chaucer in early manuscript copies. Speght's reassurance to

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[102] Gillespie notes, however, that the new position gives the Parson 'the last, wholly Catholic word'; see *Print Culture*, p. 201.

[103] Boswell, 'New References to Chaucer, 1641–1660', 440.

[104] Thynne, *Animadversions*, pp. 6–8. The details in Thynne's account do not correspond to any surviving edition; on the 'bibliographical fictions' spawned by his story, see Joseph A. Dane, 'Bibliographical History Versus Bibliographical Evidence: *The Plowman's Tale* and Early Chaucer Editions', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 78.1 (1996), 47–62.

[105] *The plough-mans tale* (London: G. Eld, 1606; *STC* 5101), sig. A1ʳ. On this edition, see Paul J. Patterson, 'Reforming Chaucer: Margins and Religion in an Apocryphal *Canterbury Tale*', *Book History*, 8.1 (2005), 11–36.

his readers of the tale's genuineness stops short of such a claim; as it turns out, his belief that it was authentically Chaucer's was based on rather shaky proof: 'For I haue seene it in written hand in Iohn Stowes Librarie in a booke of such antiquitie, as seemeth to haue been written neare to Chaucers time'.[106] The nature of this antique 'booke', whether a collection of Chaucer or not, goes unspecified, and the facts about what Speght has 'seene' – an evidently old book which merely 'seemeth' to date from Chaucer's lifetime – are put into service of the bolder conclusion that the tale was 'made no doubt by Chaucer' and belongs 'with the rest of the Tales'. In 1570, Foxe had served up an ingenious reason to explain the paucity of manuscript evidence for the authenticity of the *Plowman's Tale*: the tale had, naturally, been suppressed. Given its 'play-nely tolde' exposure of the Catholic Church, he argued, it is 'therfore no great maruell, if that narration was exempted out of the copies of Chaucers workes: which notwithstandyng now is restored agayne, and is extant, for euery man to read that is disposed'.[107] The absence of the *Plowman's Tale* from the early manuscript copies of the *Canterbury Tales* could therefore be accounted for by its heterodoxy. This sixteenth-century myth that Chaucer wrote the tale (only for it to be suppressed) persisted for centuries, aided by the continued commercial success of Foxe's and Speght's books.

So pervasive was this story, in fact, that the absence of the tale from manuscript and printed collections of Chaucer was starkly obvious to some readers. A seventeenth-century hand that might belong to the antiquary John Barkham observed in a *Canterbury Tales* manuscript that the collec-tion was missing only the *Plowman's Tale* and that 'if it were Chaucers, it was left out of his Canterbury Tales, for the tartnes against the Popish clergie'.[108] A copy of the 1532 Thynne edition held in Glasgow likewise contains marginalia which record a reader wondering about the missing *Plowman's Tale* in the seventeenth century (see Figure 3.5). Amidst the printed table of contents, the annotator observed that 'The Tale of the Ploughman / The Pelican & Griffin omitted' and has squeezed in a precise cross-reference to John Foxe's 'Actes & monum*en*tes fol. 56. colum. 1 – volume last edit... Printed anno 1641: Chaucer comended'.[109] In a 1709 commentary on Chaucer, the antiquary Thomas Hearne remarked simi-larly: 'Now the *Plough-man's Tale* having given more offence than all the rest of Chaucer's Works, perhaps that is the reason why it appears in so few

[106] *Workes* (1602), sig. Q1ᵛ.   [107] Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (1570), vol. ii, sig. 3D4ᵛ.
[108] Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600, fol. iiʳ. See Chapter 2, pp. 102–3 and Figure 2.3.
[109] The copy is Glasgow Bs.2.17 (*STC* 5068; sig. A3ᵛ). The reference is to John Foxe, *Acts and monuments* (London: Stationers' Company, 1641; Wing F2035), vol. ii, sig. E4ᵛ.

Figure 3.5 An early modern reader's note on the omission of the *Plowman's Tale* and
a reference to Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* in a copy of Thynne's 1532 edition.
University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections, Bs.2.17 (*STC* 5068;
sig. A3ᵛ).

MSS'.[110] A few years later, in 1715, the young Thomas Martin bound his
copy of the 1606 *Plowman's Tale* with a 1591 Spenser quarto and reinscribed
what he believed to be the authorship of each text on his improvised title
page: 'Chaucers Plow-mans Tale: with some of Spencers Works'.[111]

In one copy of Thynne's 1532 *Workes*, now held at the Harry Ransom
Center in Austin, Texas, the *Plowman's Tale* also constituted a conspicuous
absence. In this copy, the text has been transcribed by a sixteenth-century
hand onto sixteen paper leaves and bound into the book at the end,
following the *Parson's Tale*.[112] There is some scholarly disagreement
about whether this manuscript copy was transcribed from a lost printed

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[110] See Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years*, p. 309.
[111] Martin's copy is Glasgow, Co.3.20. The Spenser edition is *Daphnaïda* (London: [T. Orwin], 1591; *STC* 23079).
[112] Austin, Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Q PR 1850 1532. For a description see Annie S. Irvine, 'A Manuscript Copy of "The Plowman's Tale"', *Studies in English*, 12 (1932), 27–56.

exemplar, a lost manuscript, or from one of several editions printed in
the second quarter of the sixteenth century.[113] While its textual origins are
uncertain, the text copied into the Texas Thynne remains significant
because it represents a codicological affirmation of a widespread belief
that would be 'decisively rejected' only centuries later: that the polemical
Plowman's Tale was written by Chaucer.[114] Its retroactive addition to the
book is an act of textual supplementation, but it is also an attempt to
correct a historical record which would suppress heterodox works. One
modern commentator has expressed 'bewilderment that so unsophisticated
a piece could ever have been seriously thought of as Chaucer's'.[115] But
readers in the sixteenth century, who believed Chaucer was sympathetic to
the reformist beliefs of the Lollard John Wyclif, had good reasons for
finding the national poet's voice in the *Plowman's Tale*. Although the text
circulated independently and in smaller-format editions, early modern
commentators, as we have seen, judged its legitimacy in part on biblio-
graphical grounds. Its proximity to 'the rest of the Tales' in printed books
was (they assumed) a token of Chaucer's authorship, of genuineness, and
of some rare but incontrovertible manuscript evidence which had been
semi-successfully suppressed. Meanwhile, books in which the *Plowman's
Tale* was absent furnished proof of its radically righteous message and
a spur to see it reinstated, as in the Texas copy. However incongruous its
attribution to Chaucer may appear with the benefit of hindsight, the
Plowman's Tale was an appropriate text with which to supplement
a copy of Thynne's 1532 *Workes* in the sixteenth century, for that edition
was the last to exclude the *Plowman's Tale* for nearly two and a half
centuries, until Tyrwhitt oversaw its removal from the print canon in 1775.

Writing of this tale, Brendan O'Connell has observed that there can be
'far-reaching implications when an apocryphal work is incorporated into
the canon, and in particular when a new tale is incorporated into a framed
story collection such as the *Canterbury Tales*'.[116] Some of these implica-
tions, as he argues, were thematic; others took the form of the material and
bibliographical interventions into copies of Chaucer's works that I have
been describing, as medieval and early modern books alike were evaluated

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[113] Irvine, 'A Manuscript Copy', takes the manuscript in the Harry Ransom Thynne to be an
independent witness while Dane, *Tomb*, p. 60 observes 'no convincing evidence that this is not
simply copied from a readily available 1542 version and used to complete a 1532 edition'. Gillespie,
Print Culture, p. 200, meanwhile, considers the possibility that the *Plowman's Tale* had 'an
independent life in some lost edition or one or more manuscripts'.

[114] Skeat, *The Chaucer Canon*, p. 100.   [115] Wawn, 'The Genesis of "The Plowman's Tale"', 21.

[116] Brendan O'Connell, 'Putting the Plowman in His Place: Order and Genre in the Early Modern
Canterbury Tales', *ChR*, 53.4 (2018), 428–48 (429).

and perfected to reflect the new realities of the accepted canon. The variously supplied explanations for its absence posit that the *Plowman's Tale* could belong 'with the rest of the Tales' (Speght), that it was 'exempted out' of the manuscripts (Foxe), that it may have been deliberately 'left out' of the collection (Barkham), and that its offensiveness caused it to be removed from 'all the rest' of the works (Hearne). Foxe went further to add that this omission 'now is restored agayne' in the printed copies. To be 'brought to the knowledge of the truth', as the preacher Trapp hoped they would be, readers needed access to the entire, unredacted book. Such remarks reveal that what was at stake in the early modern establishment of Chaucer's canon was not only a matter of philological and scholarly investigation, but of religious truth itself. In the context of this widespread cultural narrative about the censorship and later reintroduction of the *Plowman's Tale*, it is easy to understand why an early modern reader might supplement their copy of the *Canterbury Tales* with the tale of the Pelican and the Gryphon, or remark upon its absence. Moreover, the fact that other Plowman literature was similarly crowbarred into surviving copies of Chaucer's works shows the cultural persistence of the narrative promoted by Foxe and the Chaucer editors in print.

The Trinity College manuscript with the inserted lyrics in its initial quire also contains another sixteenth-century supplement in the same hand. At the end of the original codex, after the conclusion of the *Parson's Tale* and the *Retraction*, the later hand has supplied the anonymous alliterative poem *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* on twelve paper leaves.[117] The poem, an anti-fraternal satire influenced by Langland's *Piers Plowman*, dates from the late fourteenth century, although the earliest surviving complete copy is an edition published in 1553.[118] Two early modern manuscript copies of the poem, of which the Trinity text is one, also survive. Unlike the short poems copied from Thynne's edition at the beginning of this manuscript, this version of *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* appears to have been copied from an authoritative manuscript which has since been lost. This reader, who Skeat characterises as 'a scrupulous and painstaking antiquary, who carefully put down what he saw before him', was influenced by Chaucer's contemporary reputation for Wycliffite views and by the attribution to him of the *Plowman's Tale*.[119] A title for the work was written above the top line on the first page, likely in the same hand, but

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[117] *IMEV* 663, in TCC, MS R.3.15, fols. 317–28.
[118] *STC* 19904. For the textual tradition and the edited text, see *Pierce the Ploughmans Crede*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906).
[119] Skeat, *Pierce the Ploughmans Crede*, p. xii.

it is now illegible due to cropping.[120] It is therefore not certain that the copyist thought *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* to be written by Chaucer, but its inclusion in a copy of the *Canterbury Tales* shows that they thought it an appropriate fit.

While the sixteenth-century compiler of the new additions remains unidentified, the book's place in Archbishop Matthew Parker's orbit via his son John points to the reformist motivations which may lie behind this choice of supplement. The Parkerian red crayon used to paginate the manuscript, including the leaves of the belatedly added *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed*, suggests that they were in place – and perhaps even appended – during the book's time in the Parker milieu. As is well established, the antiquarian pursuits of the Archbishop and his circle were animated by a desire to assert ancient precedent for English Protestantism. According to John Foxe, Parker wished to prove that the new religion 'is no new reformation of thinges lately begonne, which were not before, but rather a reduction of the Church to the Pristine state of olde conformitie, which once it had'.[121] Forni, Gillespie, Cook, and others have described the processes by which the works of Chaucer, a paragon of English learning and literary authority, provided a convenient vessel for conveying the antiquity of the new religious way. Apocryphal texts and tales were key to that mission and the printed canon of Chaucer was duly made to accommodate such works.[122] The presence in the Trinity manuscript of *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* – a text deemed 'the most obviously Lollard member of the *Piers* tradition' – appears a comparably politic addition.[123] The supplement demonstrates the gravitational pull of Chaucer's name and authority, as well as the perceived extent and capaciousness of his literary works. This text, unlike the *Plowman's Tale* and *Jack Upland*, was not included in any printed collection of Chaucer's *Workes*, nor was it attributed to him in any extant edition. But while there is no explicit link to a printed source behind this particular supplement, it remains impossible to discount the background involvement of the influential printed tradition in establishing and extending Chaucer's

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[120] fol. 317^r. The title appears to begin 'The p[. . .]' but the rest is illegible.
[121] John Foxe, *Gospels of the fower Euangelistes* (London: John Day, 1571; *STC* 2961), sig. ¶2^r.
[122] Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, pp. 88–105; Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 187–206; Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 73–99. An early study is Felix Swart, 'Chaucer and the English Reformation', *Neophilologus*, 62.4 (1978), 616–19.
[123] *The Piers Plowman Tradition: A Critical Edition of Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger and The Crowned King*, ed. by Helen Barr (London: Everyman, 1993), p. 9.

reputation as a writer of stories about Plowmen and setting the readerly expectation that his books should contain such tales.[124]

In the Trinity copy, the added *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* begins on what is now fol. 317[r], on the facing page to the conclusion of the *Parson's Tale* and the *Retraction* on fol. 316[v]. The latter pair of works has an entangled relation to the Plowman tradition associated with Chaucer, and modern critics have pointed out that the placement of each in early editions generates a series of interpretative ambiguities. The position of the *Plowman's Tale* at the end of the *Tales* in 1542 might be a marker of that pilgrim's moral triumph over the Parson, parts of whose own contribution are labelled a 'Canterbury tale', or trifle, by printed marginal glosses.[125] But that statement of approval for the heterodox is somewhat undone by the new position of the *Plowman's Tale* before the *Parson's* in the *c.* 1550 and subsequent early modern editions, where it is the more orthodox pilgrim who has the final word. Similarly, the deployment of the word 'fable' by each of the two tellers leaves the question of their moral authority open to readerly interpretation, as Ensley has observed.[126] Several of these problematics concerning the tale order may be extended to the text of *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* in the Trinity manuscript. Appearing directly after the conclusion of the *Parson's Tale* and the *Retraction*, the anti-fraternal supplement works as a counterweight to the Catholic piety of the Parson's prose treatise. Yet the added satire spoken by Piers the Ploughman only rebalances, rather than replaces, the more orthodox texts which claim the authority of Chaucer himself.[127] In the Trinity copy, the *Parson's Tale* is unmarked by any dissenting marginalia on the part of its later owner. This tolerant approach to Middle English devotional texts and Catholic doctrine is reminiscent of the 'dispassionate objectivity' exhibited by Parker's associate Stephan Batman in his annotations on *Piers Plowman* and other medieval religious texts.[128] The architect of the satirical supplement did not reject the *Parson's Tale* or *Retraction*, but opted instead to reframe and complete the tale collection with a genre of text already associated with Chaucer. It is even possible that the annotator

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[124] Lawrence Warner, *The Myth of Piers Plowman: Constructing a Medieval Literary Archive* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 129–40 locates a longstanding early modern and eighteenth-century tradition of attributing *Piers Plowman* to Chaucer.

[125] An observation made by Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 187–206. See also Mimi Ensley, 'Framing Chaucer's Plowman', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 32 (2018), 333–51 (342–6).

[126] Ensley, 'Framing Chaucer's Plowman', 344–5.

[127] fol. 316[v], 'Explicit Tractatus Galfridi Chaucer de penitencia vt dicitur pro fabula Rectoris'.

[128] Horobin, 'Stephan Batman', 372.

made the supplement on the basis of a mix-up between *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* and the assumedly Chaucerian *Plowman's Tale*, having no copy of the latter to hand.[129]

In the snippets of commentary that survive from early commentators and readers, there are nonetheless glimmers of hesitation about the genuineness of the *Plowman's Tale* and other anti-fraternal plowman works as Chaucer's: in Speght's too-emphatic phrase 'no doubt', in the 'ifs' of Foxe and Barkham, and in the 'perhaps' that qualifies Hearne's statement about its offensiveness.[130] In the absence of physical evidence from the manuscripts, the authenticity of this cluster of texts became a matter to be untangled. A published record of another copy (now lost) of *The Vision of Pierce Plowman* and *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed* (1561) supplies further evidence of the confusion these texts wrought.[131] The reader of this copy appears to have used their acquired knowledge of Chaucer's canon to make some deductions about the authorship of *Piers Plowman* and *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed.* In a note dated 1577, they observed that 'Mention is made of Peerce Plowghman's Creede, in Chawcers tale off the Plowman', and 'I deeme Chawcer to be the author [of the *Creed*]'. On the other hand, the note continues, 'I thinke hit not to be on and the same yt made both [the *Creed* and *Piers Plowman*]'. The reader's conclusions are drawn from a range of first- and second-hand evidence: the note cites John Bale's assertion that the *Piers Plowman* poet was a Wycliffite named 'Robert' Langland; the Latinate language of that poem; perceived inconsistencies in the chronology of the two texts; and the apparently unshakeable belief about the authorship of 'Chawcers tale off the Plowman'. It has been suggested by Simon Horobin that these annotations 'fit closely with Batman's recorded interest' in *Piers Plowman*; however, the loss of the copy precludes any palaeographical confirmation that they are his.[132] There is nonetheless some insight to be derived from this inscription, independent of the annotator's identity. What interests me most about this unknown reader is their interest in authorship and their reasoned triangulation of the three texts according to knowledge

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[129] Such a possibility is supported by the fact that the edition used to copy the front matter in TCC, MS R.3.15 was probably that of 1532; see *TCT*, p. 527.

[130] Pearsall, 'Speght', p. 74, proposes that Speght's 'no doubt' 'seems to imply a reservation', one overruled by Stow's persistence.

[131] *The vision of Pierce Plowman [. . .] Wherevnto is also annexed the Crede of Pierce Plowman* (London: Owen Rogers, 1561; *STC* 19908); Silverstone, 'The Vision of Pierce Plowman', *Notes and Queries*, 6, 2nd ser., 142 (1858), 229–30.

[132] Horobin, 'Stephan Batman', 36. Even without that confirmation, however, the interest of the Parker circle in Chaucer, in Plowman literature, and in *Pierce the Plowman's Creed* specifically is confirmed by TCC, MS R.3.15.

they had gathered from printed sources or observed from the texts themselves. For this learned reader, the question of what Chaucer wrote was far from settled. Thus the deluge of anti-clerical Plowman literature in circulation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gave rise to some understandable confusion amongst Chaucer's early modern readers. Quibbles and commentary on the authenticity of the *Plowman's Tale*, voiced by authorities like Foxe and Speght as well as by diligent and curious readers, show a series of arrestingly similar attempts to circumscribe the limits of Chaucer's canon.

The evidence from extant copies and surviving marginal notes – in which early readers supplemented Chaucer's print and manuscript works with anti-clerical material or simply remarked on the absence or authorship of the *Plowman's Tale* or topically related works – constitutes a material testament to the pervasiveness of the proto-Protestant Chaucer established in print. Such evidence illustrates, too, the widespread belief that the *Canterbury Tales* was an incomplete, fragmentary, or censored work, and the willingness of readers to 'restore agayne' in their own books the parts of the canon that they thought wanting. In 1570, Foxe had characterised Chaucer as gifted with a special foresight – he 'saw in Religion as much almost, as euen we do now, and vttereth in his workes no lesse'. His anti-Catholic views had successfully evaded censorship under Henry VIII's *Act for the Advancement of True Religion* (1543) and now, proclaims Foxe, 'Chaucers woorkes bee all printed in one volume, and therefore known to all men'.[133] The *Plowman's Tale* and the *Testament of Love* – works which Foxe believed confirmed Chaucer's Wycliffite views – already comprised part of that 'one volume' in the early sixteenth century, and *Jack Upland* would follow in 1602. But the same was not true of the fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, which, of course, were produced under different circumstances and which (for the most part) did not purport to contain these texts. Early modern Protestant readers thus sought to bridge a seemingly censored and partial textual tradition with the clear-eyed religious beliefs of their own day – to augment the older books with what was suppressed in the past and what is 'knowen' to Foxe and his contemporaries 'now'. The rehabilitation of the poet for the Reformers' cause thus finds its material correlative in the supplementation of his books with tales of Chaucer's Plowman.

The means by which the *Plowman's Tale* and other anti-clerical literature became tethered to Chaucer's oeuvre is remarkable in itself, for it

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[133] Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (1570), vol. ii, sig. 3D4ʳ.

demonstrates the authority and persistence of narratives about the poet and his canon that circulated in popular printed volumes, and the agency of readers in adapting other books to reflect, interrogate, or at least engage with those narratives. More extraordinary still is the fact that this anti-clerical polemic is only one of two very different types of text which masqueraded in the guise of a Plowman poem written by Chaucer. The codicological complexity of the *Canterbury Tales*, which in the fifteenth century saw a Marian devotion enlisted to serve as an orthodox 'plough-mannys tale' in the blank space in one copy, also left room for a radically different interpretation of Chaucer's Plowman and his ideological stance in the sixteenth century. Forni has suggested that his putative authorship of the acerbic *Plowman's Tale* enhanced Chaucer's reputation amongst his readers in Protestant England.[134] Books like the Glasgow copy of Thynne and Barkham's manuscript support that suggestion, showing that seven-teenth-century readers wondered about the absence of the *Plowman's Tale* in copies of Chaucer. The Texas Thynne and Trinity manuscript, mean-while, affirm the desirability of Plowman literature within a conception of the Chaucer canon shaped by contemporary printed books, and the willingness of readers to supplement older copies of Chaucer in that image. In these ways, the surviving medieval manuscript books render vivid the early modern remaking of Chaucer in line with persistent narra-tives about him which circulated in print.

3.4   Locating Chaucer's *Retraction*

Religious ground was also at stake in the reception history of another frequently supplemented text, Chaucer's *Retraction*, in which the author seeks divine mercy for having written sinful works, revoking these and expressing gratitude for his moral and devout writings. While the *Plowman's Tale* is a spurious work added to the canon as part of the attempt to 'Lollardize' Chaucer in the early modern period, the *Retraction* seems to be genuine, but was probably excised on account of its orthodox piety. This, at least, is the scholarly consensus today – but not so in the late medieval and early modern periods.[135] The examination of evidence from the fifteenth century reveals that the *Retraction* appears in a 'slight majority' of the surviving complete manuscripts and was included by Caxton in his first and second editions of the *Canterbury Tales* (though not by all of the early

134 Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, p. 97.
135 Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 195 provides a summary.

printers who succeeded him).[136] William Thynne's exclusion of the text from his 1532 edition proved to be decisive, for the *Retraction* would not again be printed with Chaucer's works until Urry's edition. Some therefore believed that the *Retraction* was a spurious addition to the canon. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was the Plowman's polemic that was able to secure a place in the print canon, and the *Retraction* that was overlooked. While Thynne's refusal to print Chaucer's final revocation of worldly vanity in 1532 may have stemmed from causes that were more accidental than ideological,[137] its occlusion in this first collected edition would come to be extremely convenient for the version of the poet put forth in later editions and in Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. For the most zealous followers of the new religion, the penitent Chaucer who ultimately revoked some of his most celebrated works but not his 'bookes of legendes of seintes, and omelies, and moralitee, and devocioun' was scarcely compatible with the author of *Jack Upland* and the *Plowman's Tale*.[138] The author of the *Retraction* was a poor fit with the proto-Protestant Chaucer who Speght made famous for having beaten a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street. The antiquary Thomas Hearne preserved the sentiment about this mutual opposition between different parts of the canon in a diary entry written in 1709:

> I believe the Revocation annex'd to the Parson's Tale in some Copies of Chaucer not to be genuine, but made by the Monks, who were strangely exasperated for the Freedom he took, especially in the Plow-Man's Tale of exposing their Pride, Loosness and Debauchery.[139]

The idea that the *Retraction* was a late interpolation into the canon and introduced at the expense of the *Plowman's Tale* was popularised in the 1721 *Works*, where it was included even though the lately deceased editor Urry, following the opinion of his friend Hearne, had doubted its genuineness, guessing that 'the Scriveners were prohibited transcribing [the *Plowman's Tale*] and injoyn'd to subscribe an Instrument at the end of the Canterbury Tales, call'd his Retraction'.[140]

Tracing the revival of the *Retraction* in eighteenth-century print, Dane has suggested that '[t]he Chaucer canon is a question of what belongs in a printed edition of Chaucer'.[141] The varying answers to that question provided by individual editors over the centuries resulted in a canon that

[136] Cook, '*Retraction*', 35.
[137] On some possible reasons for its exclusion, see Cook, '*Retraction*', 40–1.   [138] X.1088.
[139] Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years*, pp. 301–2.
[140] *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (London: for Bernard Lintot, 1721), sig. 2Z1ᵛ; Dane, *Tomb*, p. 96.
[141] Dane, *Tomb*, p. 102.

was frequently subject to change. Chaucer's *Retraction* had an irregular presence in the pre-1532 editions, and was then out of print until 1721. Having been produced by a committee of editors following Urry's death in 1715, even the 1721 edition had an ambivalent approach to the text's authenticity.[142] Urry wanted to exclude it, while his collaborators William and Timothy Thomas probably believed it to be a genuine work of Chaucer. Dane suggests that the black letter type in which the *Retraction* is printed in 1721, and which Urry had intended to mark textual authenticity in the edition, would actually become 'the mark of something spurious'.[143] As with the *Plowman's Tale*, the result of this long history of variability in print was doubt and confusion on the part of readers about the place of the *Retraction*, not only within Chaucer's printed books, but in the early manuscripts and in the canon itself.

Three surviving volumes show readers across different centuries reckoning with the presence or absence of the *Retraction* in early copies of the *Canterbury Tales*. The first is an incunable, a copy of Richard Pynson's 1492 edition held at the John Rylands Library.[144] Pynson based the text of the *Tales* on Caxton's 1483 edition, but the 1492 volume is distinct for being the only early edition to exclude the *Retraction*. In passing over the *Retraction*, Pynson deviated from the standard set by his Caxton copy text, and would evidently have a change of heart by 1526, when he restored it in his second edition of the *Tales*. The Rylands copy of Pynson's first edition bears the marks of this patchy publication history. On the recto of the original blank leaf following the *Parson's Tale*, a fifteenth-century hand has copied out the *Retraction* in its entirety.[145] This amounts to twenty-eight lines, which are written in a neat and heavily abbreviated script. The *Retraction* was added to this book by (or for) Robert Saham, a chaplain from Bury St Edmunds who also personalised the ending of Chaucer's prayer by adapting it into his own voice: 'Amen quod Saham' follows the text apparently copied from Caxton's second edition.[146] With its solemn notes of penitence and prayer, the *Retraction* serves as an appropriate supplement to a cleric's copy of Chaucer, a readerly move that invites a quick dismissal of the 'worldly vanytees' contained in the preceding collection in favour of its 'other bokes as of legendys of seyntes and omelyes moralite and devocion'. This

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[142] For a full discussion of this point, see Dane, *Tomb*, pp. 95–114.   [143] Dane, *Tomb*, p. 99.
[144] The copy is Manchester, John Rylands Library, Incunable Collection, 10002.   [145] sig. K6ʳ.
[146] The Rylands copy has the variant 'my translac*iou*ns and endytynges' which matches that in the *c.* 1483 edition ('my translacions and endytynges', sig. L3ᵛ) but not that of the first edition ('my translacions', sig. [3A5ᵛ]). On Saham, whose will was proved in 1519, and the book's early provenance, see Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 91–2.

completion of Saham's book with the *Retraction*, that is, achieves
a necessary spiritual ending for his copy of the *Canterbury Tales*. At the
same time, aesthetic considerations are also present in this programme of
supplementation, for the book has been embellished with rubricated
initials in several places for which space had been left in the printing.[147]
The last of these rubricated letters, a capital letter *N*, appears not on
a printed page but in the first word of the transcribed *Retraction*, suggesting
that the book was rubricated in the same period that the text was added.[148]

About a century after Saham's copy of Pynson was supplemented with
the *Retraction*, Joseph Holland also had the same text added to his manu-
script copy of Chaucer's collected works.[149] In the interim, the
Reformation had indelibly altered the devotional context in which
Chaucer might be read, and although his reputation for anti-clerical
commentary kept him in favour, the religious orthodoxy which had
made the *Retraction* so desirable, perhaps even necessary, in the chaplain
Saham's book at the beginning of the century had become uncomfortable
by its close. The transcription in Holland's Gg manuscript reflects this
anxiety, and shows that the text of the *Retraction* in Caxton's second
edition was tellingly adapted for its new context in what was now a post-
Reformation manuscript. Thus while the text in Caxton (and in Saham's
book) sees the speaker praising Christ, Mary, and the saints – 'our lord
Jhesu Crist and hys blessyd moder and alle the sayntes of heuen' – only
Christ is retained in the version copied into Gg.[150] This was no accidental
omission by Gg's early modern scribe, for the third-person plural pronouns
which in Caxton refer to Christ and the holy intercessors – 'hem' (Middle
English 'them') and 'they' – also become masculine singular in Holland's
copy – 'hem' (now serving as 'him') and 'he'. As Wolfe has pointed out, the
privileged place of the *Retraction* at the end of Chaucer's collected works
invites a reading of that text as 'a general work' which comments seriously
on the poet's literary legacy; it 'may well be the one place we hear the "real"
Geoffrey Chaucer speaking to us'.[151] For Holland, the *Retraction* was
significant enough to be included in his improvement of Gg, yet even

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[147] On sig. a2^{r-v}, a3^r, c4^v, c5^r, and on K1^r and following; my thanks to Julianne Simpson at John
Rylands Special Collections for answering my queries related to this copy.

[148] The name 'Sah*a*m', probably a signature, has also been written in red at the foot of the page which
bears the newly supplied *Retraction*, in what seems the same ink used for rubrication.

[149] Gg may have originally contained the *Retraction*, which was possibly copied onto a now-excised
leaf; see Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, p. 10.

[150] Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, p. 169.

[151] Matthew C. Wolfe, 'Placing Chaucer's *Retraction* for a Reception of Closure', *ChR*, 33.4 (1999),
427–31 (427, 430).

that locus of Chaucerian literary authority could be modified and adapted for new religious ends which could ultimately 'outweigh the textual authority of an exemplar' found in Caxton's print.[152] The versions of the *Retraction* copied from Caxton and inserted into other copies of Chaucer by Saham and Holland demonstrate markedly different forms of readerly adaptation and supplementation which rely on print for their models if not for their ultimate forms. Both books show that their owners actively sought out what had become a rare text for the purpose of completing their own copies.

The return to print of the *Retraction* in Urry's edition is marked by another instance of supplementation in the same approximate period. A copy of the *Canterbury Tales*, BL, MS Egerton 2726 has had a paper leaf containing the end of the truncated *Retraction* appended where the original vellum leaf has been lost (fol. 271). It has been suggested that the hand may be that of the eighteenth-century antiquary William Thomas.[153] As was observed, William and his brother Timothy were contributors to the 1721 edition and they likely believed, unlike Urry himself, that the *Retraction* was a genuine Chaucer text. Dane has demonstrated that the Thomas brothers had only partial access to and an imperfect understanding of the textual tradition of Chaucer's works in manuscript as well as print. The resulting gaps in their understanding of these historical books allowed them 'to imagine their contents however they wished'.[154] If the hand belongs to William, the supplied conclusion to the *Retraction* provides additional evidence for his belief in the text's authenticity as a Chaucerian piece, and for the codicological interventions that accompanied the brothers' reconstituting of the poet's corpus.[155]

The furnishing of the *Retraction* in Egerton, especially if it is the work of William Thomas, should be considered, too, in the context of another supplement made to the same manuscript. This latter takes the form of eight parchment leaves inserted in the eighteenth century, this time by Timothy Thomas.[156] The leaves contain the spurious *Tale of Gamelyn* and

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[152] Cook, 'Joseph Holland', 178.   [153] *TCT*, p. 131.

[154] Timothy Thomas erroneously thought that Pynson's second edition of 1526 was the first to print the *Retraction*, unaware of the fact that it was Pynson, in his first edition, who first excluded the text from the print canon. See Dane, *Tomb*, pp. 109–11.

[155] The text used for this later repair to Egerton is not certain, but Vaughan suggests that the exemplar may have been 'a manuscript (or print) related to Pepys 2006'; see Míċeál Vaughan, 'Creating Comfortable Boundaries: Scribes, Editors, and the Invention of the *Parson's Tale*', in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602*, ed. by Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. 45–90 (p. 89).

[156] fols. 56–63. On the book's provenance see *TCT*, pp. 134–5.

have been inserted in the midst of the *Cook's Tale* of Perkyn Revelour.[157] According to notes made by Timothy, he copied the text from the manuscript now called Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600 (then MS Laud K.50) while Egerton was on loan from the Earl of Carnarvon during the preparation of the 1721 edition.[158] A headnote to *Gamelyn* in the edition indicates that Urry himself had considered the tale to be genuine and wondered why no previous editor had previously printed it, given its presence in many manuscripts.[159] He reasoned that perhaps they had never encountered these manuscripts, or perhaps they simply doubted its genuineness. He was ultimately in favour of its inclusion: 'But because I find it in so many MSS, I have no doubt of it, and therefore make it publick, and call it the Fifth Tale'.[160] Timothy's supplementation of the Egerton manuscript with the *Tale of Gamelyn* therefore coincides with a second wave of its inclusion into the definitive Chaucer print canon. The apocryphal *Gamelyn* achieved such canonicity in 1721, but it would only maintain this status until the publication of Tyrwhitt's edition, which excised it once again, and for good.[161] Given that the editions that came before and after 1721 ruled against the inclusion of *Gamelyn*, the legacy of that book on the tale's canonicity might appear slight. This should not detract from the considerable periods in which *Gamelyn* was considered canonical, for about fifty years following 1721, and for much of the fifteenth century, when it was accepted as a second tale for Chaucer's Cook in at least twenty-five manuscripts that survive today.[162]

Was the addition of *Gamelyn* to Egerton an act of improvement carried out at the request of the book's owner while it was on loan? Whatever its immediate motivations, Timothy's perfecting of the manuscript with a missing text which he believed to be canonical suggests an attempt to put right the manuscript record itself – to bring it into line with the textual state of 'so many MSS' that he had examined. The Thomas brothers emerge

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[157] That is, between l.4404 and 4405, or between the former fols. 55 and 56.   [158] *TCT*, p. 135.

[159] Although the edition was a collaborative work in which it is sometimes difficult to disentangle the voices of individual contributors, the Preface (written by Timothy Thomas) indicates that Urry was responsible for what became the headnote: 'As to the Tale of *Gamelyn*, Mr Urry's Sentiments concerning it may be seen in the Note before it'; see *Works* (1721), sig. k2ʳ.

[160] sig. K2ᵛ.

[161] *Gamelyn* would be included in Skeat's *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, a seventh volume appended to a series originally comprised of six. Dane, following Forni, calls this seventh volume a 'canonical apocrypha'; see Dane, *Tomb*, p. 146; on Tyrwhitt, see pp. 188–9. An earlier (and reverse) case of supplementation involving *Gamelyn* was carried out by the antiquary Elias Ashmole, who used the fifteenth-century manuscript Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 to supplement his printed copy of Thynne (1532) with a copy of the tale; see Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 181–2.

[162] Seymour, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 22.

as the final actors in this history of supplementation and it is fitting that they appear to have been engaged with improving these manuscript books at the same time that they were editing Chaucer. Their retrofitting of the Egerton manuscript is a material reshaping of the medieval book to align with the editorial practice of their own historical moment and with a Chaucerian canon whose limits were accustomed to being redefined in print.

3.5   Chaucerian Compilations

The material supplements traced in this chapter enact, in codicological form, responses to the canon which are often overlooked in favour of more straightforward textual or literary evidence of Chaucer's reception, such as that detectable in the work of early modern authors who used the poet's work to inform their own creations. But that evidence – much of it indebted to the influence of successive generations of editors – is matched by a rich record of readerly engagement with the same ideas and their offshoots: that Chaucer was a poet of *fin amour*, that he condemned Criseyde to a wretched death, that he assigned his Plowman an anti-clerical tale, and that the Retraction was a later monkish forgery.[163] Both medieval readers of manuscripts and their early modern counterparts exploited the book's seemingly limitless capacity to be annotated, supplemented, and expanded to particular ends. Sometimes, a codex might be updated to include new texts that are apparently unrelated to its prior contents, as in the case of a manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* copied in the second half of the fifteenth century by John Brode and now at the Rylands Library in Manchester.[164] Brode went on to add further short texts, such as verses on the death of Edward IV, a religious lament, and articles on Christ's passion, to blank leaves in the beginning of the book.[165] In her recent study of medieval manuscripts in the *longue durée*, Elaine Treharne writes that the addition of drawings or texts to blank space is 'not at all rare', and invokes the 'tens of thousands of manuscripts where incomplete, partial, or abbreviated notes, comments, drawings, and literary snippets are written into space'.[166] Despite this proliferation, the practice should not be dismissed as quotidian or commonplace, and

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[163] Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Selection*, p. 59.
[164] Manchester, John Rylands Library, English MS 113, fols. 3ʳ–5ᵛ. The added poems are *IMEV* 4062 and 2227.
[165] N. R. Ker, ed., *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–92), III, pp. 420–1.
[166] Treharne, *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts*, pp. 93, 106, 88–114.

Treharne goes on to argue compellingly for the meaning inherent to any intervention in a manuscript.

This book demonstrates that the identification of patterns is one means of recovering the meaning behind historical acts of reading, and the present chapter has located a series of such patterns in the early modern supplements made to Chaucer manuscripts by their readers. The juxtaposition of manuscript and printed Chaucerian books in this chapter has turned up striking parallels in the ways certain texts moved within and across volumes. Cycles of textual attachment and detachment are evident, for instance, in the use of Chaucerian lyrics as fillers in fifteenth-century anthologies, in Thynne's editions (and subsequent ones), and in manuscripts supplemented by Holland and the Trinity annotator. Ways of reading also repeat themselves in the persistent yet ambiguous pairing of *Troilus* with Henryson's *Testament* in sixteenth-century print and manuscripts, in the repeated assignation of a voice to Chaucer's Plowman, and in the desire – of fifteenth-century scribes and eighteenth-century editors alike – to furnish a satisfying supplement to the aborted *Cook's Tale*. These patterns and echoes in a text's reception point to certain enduring readings of Chaucer across manuscript and print. From these histories, the book emerges as modular, changeable, and capable of being adapted to the ends desired by its readers or required by historical circumstance. What for Jeffrey Todd Knight is true of the printed editions – that they possessed 'a flexibility in poetic content that permitted inclusions, annexations, and other forms of textual intervention by publishers' – is also demonstrably true of the manuscripts.[167] These fifteenth-century volumes and their afterlives embody Knight's notion of the 'custom-made corpus' and demonstrate some of the entanglements and continuities possible between medieval and early modern habits of book use. Such exchanges moved across different media as well as across different temporal horizons. The textual and codicological supplements, alterations, and transformations that are this chapter's chief focus took place in medieval manuscripts, but they were carried out in light of versions of Chaucer and his canon which circulated in contemporary printed books and were often directly extracted or informed by those volumes.

This enlargement of physical copies to accommodate different texts which early modern readers believed belonged in the Chaucer canon reveals a mode of reading guided by a spirit of renovation.[168] In this

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[167] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 166.
[168] Fleming notes that reading-as-sticking 'is committed, not to the preservation of writing in its original state or context, but rather to its *renovation*'; see her 'Afterword', 545.

context, supplementing old books with desired texts copied from print was a logical part of updating and improving prized volumes. It went hand in hand with the careful handwriting often used in copying and the frequent choice of parchment as a writing support. As with the repairs and continuations previously discussed, such choices signal that these books were cherished for their age and cultural importance. From erasure marks, for instance, it seems that Holland had all of the pages of Gg cleaned to remove existing marginalia that had accumulated over nearly two centuries, pursuing a bibliographical ideal of unadulterated authenticity even as he added post-medieval and non-Chaucerian material to the same book.[169] For these readers, to supplement a book with new leaves and text was fully compatible with the guiding desire to preserve their old copies of Chaucer.

For all their mobility, the Chaucerian texts copied from print were assembled into formations which were meaningful to their compilers and copyists, or out of which meaning could be later constructed. The author, as Gillespie has compellingly argued, was one increasingly prominent site of meaning for the printed collections of Chaucer's works, but the makers of those books could only suggest, rather than contain, the forms and readings later imposed upon them. Chaucer-the-author was the primary selling point for the *Workes* but he was also, to some extent, an abstraction – 'a category grand enough, and convenient enough, to accommodate the writings of other medieval authors'.[170] As this chapter has shown, he could accommodate other identities too: amongst them, a moralist, love poet, Wycliffite, or repentant author writing from his deathbed. It is not always clear from the volumes studied here whether Chaucer-the-author was an organising principle around which texts were grouped, or to what extent his name simply functioned as a magnetic pole that attracted texts which appeared generically, linguistically, or historically compatible. In this too, the printed editions retain some of the ambiguity present in their manuscript antecedents and reflect it back onto the newly supplemented copies. This elastic conception of Chaucerian authorship is in keeping with the material contingency of the pre-modern bibliographical culture that Knight describes – one characterised by 'insertions and other forms of intrusion and compilation', and one in which individual texts could move across multiple constellations of meaning.[171] When it appeared in 1532, the first collected edition of Chaucer garnered praise from printer Thomas Berthelet, who emphasised its variety and capacity to convey 'many other'

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[169] Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, p. 66.   [170] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 135.
[171] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 159.

of Chaucer's works 'that neuer were before imprinted, & those that very fewe men knewe, and fewer hadde them'.[172] With each successive edition, greater numbers of readers 'knewe' and 'hadde' access to a growing body of texts associated with Chaucer's name, and were able to assign new, and newly relevant, meanings to them. The acts of supplementation considered here show readers appraising lyric poems, the *Testament of Cresseid*, the diverse tales of different Plowmen, the *Retraction*, and *Gamelyn* for their suitability in the books discussed. The conclusions they reached about Chaucer's authorship of these works are sometimes indeterminate, but their interventions in older copies are precious evidence of early modern literary taste and judgement on the matter of what belonged in a Chaucerian book.

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[172] *Io. Gower de confessione Amantis* (1532), sig. 2a3ᵛ. Discussed by Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 134–5.