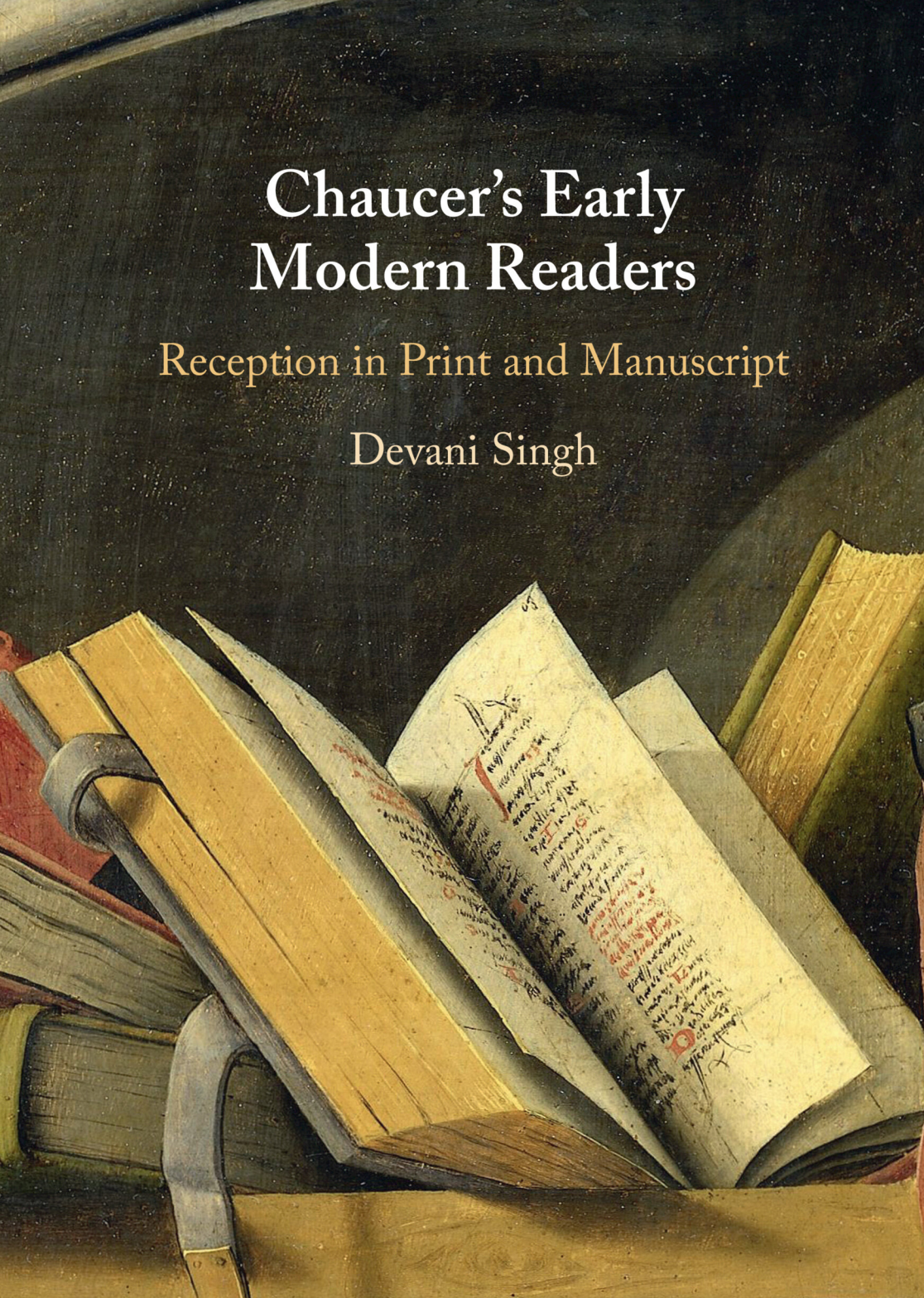
Chaucer's Early Modern Readers

Reception in Print and Manuscript

Devani Singh



CHAUCER'S EARLY MODERN READERS

The first extended study of the reception of Chaucer's medieval manuscripts in the early modern period, this book focusses chiefly on fifteenth-century manuscripts and discusses how these volumes were read, used, valued, and transformed in an age of the poet's prominence in print. Each chapter argues that patterns in the material interventions made by readers in their manuscripts – correcting, completing, supplementing, and authorising – reflect conventions which circulated in print, and convey prevailing preoccupations about Chaucer in the period: the antiquity and accuracy of his words, the completeness of individual texts and of the canon, and the figure of the author himself. This unexpected and compelling evidence of the interactions between fifteenth-century manuscripts and their early modern analogues asserts print's role in sustaining manuscript culture and thus offers fresh scholarly perspectives to medievalists, early modernists, and historians of the book. This title is also available as open access on Cambridge Core.

DEVANI SINGH is an SNSF Ambizione Research Fellow at the University of Geneva, where she specialises in medieval and early modern English literature and book history. Her recent work includes a critical edition of the commonplace book *Bel-vedére* (with Lukas Erne, Cambridge University Press, 2020) and essays which have appeared in *Book History*, *The Review of English Studies*, *The Chaucer Review*, and *Digital Philology*.

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For my parents

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Abbreviations

BL	London, British Library
Bodl.	Oxford, Bodleian Library
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CCCO	Oxford, Corpus Christi College
ChR	*The Chaucer Review*
CUL	Cambridge University Library
Cx1	[*Canterbury tales*] (Westminster: William Caxton, *c.* 1476; *STC* 5082)
Cx2	[*Canterbury tales*] (Westminster: William Caxton, *c.* 1483; *STC* 5083)
DIMEV	*Digital Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. Linne R. Mooney, Daniel W. Mosser, Elizabeth Solopova, Deborah Thorpe, David Hill Radcliffe, and Len Hatfield, based on the *Index of Middle English Verse* (1943) and its *Supplement* (1965), www.dimev.net
DUL	Durham University Library
EEBO	*Early English Books Online*, quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/
Glasgow	University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections
HEHL	California, Henry E. Huntington Library
HLQ	*Huntington Library Quarterly*
IMEV	*Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. by Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Printed for the Index Society by Columbia University Press, 1943), and its *Supplement*, ed. by Robbins and John L. Cutler (1965)
JEBS	*The Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History*
NIMEV	*New Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. by Julia Boffey and A. S.G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2005)

ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
RES	*The Review of English Studies*
SAC	*Studies in the Age of Chaucer*
STC	A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, 2nd ed., rev. & enl., begun by W. A. Jackson & F. S. Ferguson, compl. by Katharine F. Pantzer, 2 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976)
TCC	Cambridge, Trinity College
TCD	Dublin, Trinity College
TCT	John Matthews Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales: Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts*, 8 vols. (University of Chicago Press, 1940) (References are to volume 1 unless otherwise indicated)
USTC	*Universal Short Title Catalogue*, https://ustc.ac.uk
Wing	Donald Wing, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641–1700*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1982–8)

Transcriptions: When particular words are under discussion, any contractions and elisions have been supplied in italics, e.g. 'comp*ar*isou*n*'. When orthography is incidental to the discussion, as in the case of the titles of premodern works, spelling and capitalisation have been regularised in line with general scholarly conventions and where it would aid reading.

Introduction

Chaucer and the Book

In a Glasgow copy of a 1602 edition of Chaucer's *Workes*, one reader did some arithmetic in the margin of this otherwise unannotated book. Perusing Chaucer's biography, specifically a section on 'His Death', the reader would have learned that 'Geffrey Chaucer departed out of this world the 25 day of October, in the yeare of our Lord 1400, after hee had liued about 72 yeares'. Quite remarkably, the reader then paused to determine the mathematical difference between Chaucer's time and their own. The numbers scribbled in the page's left-hand margin reveal that this reader lived in '1656', a number from which they subtracted '1400' to arrive at a difference of '256' years.[1] Lacking the convenient labels of 'medieval' and 'Renaissance' or 'early modern' – the periodising boundaries now enshrined in literary history – the seventeenth-century reader's means of approaching the past was to count the number of years in the intervening period since Chaucer's time. In a copy which bears no other traces of contemporary readers' marks, this glimpse of a historically minded reader peering back across the centuries to consider Chaucer's lifetime is striking.[2] These annotations preserve a sense of the continuity as well as the ruptures of historical time; they imply an awareness of the medieval past as both flowing into the early modern present and as remote enough that its distance had to be computed to be understood. Like the annotator of the Glasgow copy, the readers in this study used books as a means of thinking about the people, culture, and legacy of the medieval

[1] Glasgow, Dr.2.2 (1602; *STC* 5080), sig. c1^{v}.

[2] Another copy of Thomas Speght's Chaucer, a 1598 edition at HEHL, carries a similar genre of annotation on its title page, as a reader (perhaps the 'Antho. Heron' who also inscribed his ownership on the title page in 1683) has calculated the difference between the year 1677 and the book's year of publication; see Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Workes of our Antient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, newly printed*, ed. by Thomas Speght (London: Adam Islip, 1598; *STC* 5078), sig. [a]2^{r}, *EEBO*, HEHL copy, www.proquest.com/books/workes-our-antient-lerned-english-poet-geffrey/docview/2240864652/se-2?accountid=13042.

past. In creative and often surprising ways, they used books to approach and better apprehend that past.

Throughout this study, I identify Chaucer's books as a rich and generative site of what Jonathan Gil Harris has called 'untimely matter'. Harris's work stresses the polychronic and multitemporal possibilities of early modern objects – that is, their palimpsestic ability to 'collate diverse moments in time'. In considering Books of Hours inherited by post-Reformation readers, he recognises their capacity to sustain 'multiple temporal relations . . . among past, present and future'.[3] The Chaucerian books discussed in the following pages are often, like Harris's untimely objects, 'temporally out of step with themselves and their moment'.[4] *Chaucer's Early Modern Readers* shows that an understanding of the layered, sometimes contradictory, relationships between medieval and early modern books may shed new light on the poet's refashioning in the period. The book's central focus is on fifteenth-century manuscripts of Chaucer, and it discusses how these volumes were read, used, valued, and transformed in an age of the poet's prominence in print.

The reception of medieval English manuscripts constitutes a comparatively small body of scholarship. That observation is summed up in A. S. G. Edwards's pronouncement, in 2011, that 'The history of the post-medieval collecting and study of Middle English manuscripts has yet to be written'.[5] Today, a recent flurry of incisive monographs by Margaret Connolly, Hannah Ryley, and Elaine Treharne heralds a new wave of interest in the topic.[6] *Chaucer's Early Modern Readers* joins these studies in answering the call for medievalists to eschew the individual case study in favour of developing 'a synthetic overview of manuscripts and how they work within culture' and 'to begin analyzing the unique contours of manuscript culture writ large'.[7] As is evident in this study, for their early

[3] Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 4, 17.

[4] Harris, *Untimely Matter*, p. 10.

[5] A. S. G. Edwards, 'Sir James Ware, the Collecting of Middle English Manuscripts in Ireland in the Seventeenth Century, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*', *ChR*, 46.1 (2011), 237–47 (237).

[6] Treharne, for example, advances 'An architextual approach to the extant medieval book corpus . . . that encourages an audience to see the manuscript as a whole from its mode of production to its inclusion of later notes and traces of use'; see *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts: The Phenomenal Book* (Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 105. See also Margaret Connolly, *Sixteenth-Century Readers, Fifteenth-Century Books: Continuities of Reading in the English Reformation* (Cambridge University Press, 2019); Hannah Ryley, *Re-Using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England: Repairing, Recycling, Sharing* (York Medieval Press, 2022).

[7] Michael Johnston and Michael Van Dussen, 'Introduction', in *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1–16 (pp. 1, 3).

modern readers, medieval manuscript books could be closer to a desired past, and were rare, authentic, and worth preserving; on the other hand, they could be corrupt, damaged, difficult to read, less complete, and, for their most zealous critics, potentially dangerous. This work is informed by an appreciation of such contradictions, which build towards a more nuanced picture of the role of the manuscript book in history.

Corollary to the book's aim of highlighting the early modern afterlives of fifteenth-century volumes is its intention to refine our understanding of the multiple points of intersection between manuscript and print in the period. In the wake of Elizabeth Eisenstein's field-defining work on the European invention of print, the relationship between manuscripts and printed books has come to be best described as 'less a revolution than an accommodation' between the two forms.[8] This book pushes the now widely adopted idea of coexistence between print and manuscript further, by illustrating that early modern attitudes towards the medieval author were shaped as much by old manuscript books as by the printed books whose company they kept in the lives and libraries of readers. In an essay on the printing of ephemera and other 'little jobs', Peter Stallybrass ventures that 'printing's most revolutionary effect was on manuscript', and suggests some of the means by which print gave (and still gives) rise to writing by hand.[9] Focussing mainly on the incunabula period, and in a similar vein, Aditi Nafde has documented the scribal reliance on printed books as exemplars for newly copied manuscripts.[10] Like those studies, *Chaucer's Early Modern Readers* asserts print's role in sustaining manuscript culture during the pre-modern period. The medieval manuscripts discussed in the following pages preserve unexpected and compelling evidence of print's influence on Chaucer's early modern reception. Each chapter argues that material interventions made by readers in their manuscripts – correcting, completing, supplementing, and authorising – reflect conventions which circulated in print and, in a wider sense, convey prevailing preoccupations

[8] David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 3; Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[9] Peter Stallybrass, '"Little Jobs": Broadsides and the Printing Revolution', in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. by Sabrina A. Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 315–41 (p. 340).

[10] See Aditi Nafde, 'Replicating the Mechanical Print Aesthetic in Manuscripts before circa 1500', *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures*, 9.2 (2020), 120–44; and Nafde, 'Gower from Print to Manuscript: Copying Caxton in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 51', in *John Gower in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books*, ed. by Martha Driver, Derek Pearsall, and R. F. Yeager (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), pp. 189–200.

about Chaucer in the period: the antiquity and accuracy of his words, the completeness of individual texts and of the canon, and the figure of the author himself. Such evidence of the interactions between fifteenth-century manuscripts and their early modern analogues therefore has much to offer Chaucerians and historians of the book alike.

Despite the longstanding scholarly interest in Chaucer's reception in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the afterlives of his medieval manuscripts have not yet been the subject of an extended study. However, Chaucer is the ideal subject for a study of the relationship between old books and new ones because his works were continuously produced, read, discussed, imitated, and even vocally repudiated in the centuries after his death, placing him at the epicentre of concerns about the medieval past in the early modern present. Chaucer's reputation in the early modern period is characterised both by continuity and by radical change. The idea of his antiquity itself offered the grounds for his veneration and a convenient pretext for his continued reinvention, granting him (in the words of Megan L. Cook) a peculiar 'temporal doubleness'.[11] The books studied in this work register the extent to which early modern people saw Chaucer with this type of double vision and, like Harris's untimely objects, they belong at once to the medieval past and the early modern period. As will become clear, such objects reveal the practices through which readers tried to reconcile received ideas about the authority of the past in relation to the present: from repairing old copies with freshly transcribed parchment supply leaves, to supplementing manuscripts with texts newly admitted to the canon, to the painstaking collation and correction of the work of fifteenth-century scribes with later printed texts. They document the creative, appropriative, invasive, and imitative habits by which early modern readers remade their old books in the image of new ones. Throughout, I emphasise the agency of scholars, antiquaries, collectors, and many nameless readers into whose hands manuscript books passed and whose uses of those books reveal the desires that they brought to their copies of Chaucer.

Such interventions matter for two major reasons. First, this evidence of readers' willingness to alter Chaucer's manuscript books disrupts cultural assumptions about the value of the old in relation to the new. It comes up against the proverbial assertion – memorably dramatised by the early seventeenth-century incarnation of John Gower that appeared on stage

[11] Megan L. Cook, *The Poet and the Antiquaries: Chaucerian Scholarship and the Rise of Literary History, 1532–1635* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p. 19.

in *Pericles* – that old things, especially stories, were better than new ones.[12] And it supports instead Daniel Woolf's observation that the early modern historical sensibility emerged in a context where 'such ingrown assumptions as the intrinsic value of oldness were being assailed increasingly by a social, cultural and technological environment in which new things and events were increasingly evident to the senses'.[13] As the ensuing discussions will make clear, Chaucer's antiquity was an ingredient essential to his early modern prominence, but the value assigned to his oldness was far from uncomplicated or unqualified. The readers who subjected Chaucer's old manuscript books to vigorous correction, updating, and improvement according to printed exemplars saw their actions as consistent with the desire to preserve his works for a new age. The contradictions inherent to such beliefs help to illuminate the readiness with which Chaucer was radically refashioned in the early modern period.

Second, the interventions made by readers in medieval manuscript copies of Chaucer provide a material complement to the compelling and widely accepted idea that the early modern period remade or even invented him in consequential ways. Tim Machan's 1995 essay 'Speght's "Works" and the Invention of Chaucer' is a touchstone in this respect, arguing that 'Speght figuratively and materially helped to construct an English literary tradition that began with Chaucer'.[14] The 2020 *Oxford Handbook of Chaucer* repeats in its marketing blurb the dictum that '[e]very age remakes its own Chaucer'.[15] I do not wish to rebut such declarations, but do want to point out that amidst the crystallisation of this view in studies of Chaucer's reception – and in particular, the attribution of that reinvention to single actors, editions, or moments in time – it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the remaking of Chaucer was an active, dynamic process which relied for its materialisation as much on generations of readers as on Speght and his collaborators themselves. The *Workes* collected by Speght and other editors form the basis of many of the stories of Chaucer's reception told in this book, but my focus is on the readers who engaged with these print

[12] '*Et bonum quo antiquius eo melius*.' William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Sc. 1, ed. by Roger Warren, in *The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. by Stanley Wells (Oxford University Press, 2003). Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (2012), https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oseo/instance.00005596

[13] Daniel R. Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500–1730* (Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 45.

[14] Tim William Machan, 'Speght's "Works" and the Invention of Chaucer', *Text*, 8 (1995), 145–70 (170).

[15] *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*, ed. by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson (Oxford University Press, 2020). The assertion echoes a statement made by Helen Cooper (see Chapter 3, p. 127), but my point is the consistency of this language and the process it describes.

authorities and their earlier manuscript counterparts. In the hands of readers, the early modern remaking of Chaucer takes on a new and vivid material dimension.

The readerly and scholarly attention to Chaucer scrutinised (and indeed perpetuated) in this book is predicated on the cultural import that derives much of its power from his antiquity. In early print, Chaucer's antiquity was marked by the fact that his first printers took pains to position him as historically distant. 'The philologist's characteristic posture is melancholy at the tomb', James Simpson has observed, and it is at that locus, Chaucer's Westminster tomb, that the humanist veneration of the English author has been said to begin.[16] It began, more precisely, in books issuing from the press of William Caxton, who dutifully reprinted the Latin epitaph from Chaucer's tomb in his edition of *Boece*, and who composed prologues and epilogues in which the dead poet became 'the subject of a learned elegy, the object of historical recovery, a figure in the origins of literary history from ancient times to the present'.[17] In England as on the Continent, the book itself became both the instrument and the object of philological rediscovery.

Nearly 200 years after Caxton, in 1646, the reader of the Glasgow copy with which I began was still wondering about Chaucer's life and times, for questions about this poet from the past had become no less pressing. The very book in which the annotations were made was brimming with reminders of the poet's historical distance from the reader's present day. The edition's full title as published in 1602 was *The Workes of our Ancient and learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, newly Printed*, and its editor was the London schoolmaster Thomas Speght. In a dedication on the leaf immediately following the title page, Speght's 1602 edition assured the reader of the text's integrity and authenticity. In this second edition, Speght writes, '[B]oth by old written Copies, and by Ma. William Thynns praise-worthy labours, I haue reformed the whole Worke, whereby Chaucer for the most part is restored to his owne Antiquitie'.[18] This 'Antiquitie' was inalienably bound up with Chaucer's early modern identity, and provided the pretext for the work of philological recovery which

[16] James Simpson, 'Diachronic History and the Shortcomings of Medieval Studies', in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 17–30 (p. 27); Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 147–68.

[17] Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, pp. 148, 152–3.

[18] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Workes of our Ancient and learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer, newly Printed*, ed. by Thomas Speght (London: Adam Islip, 1602; *STC* 5080), sig. [a]3^{r}. Further references to the 1598 and 1602 *Workes* are to the Bodmer copies, unless otherwise noted.

Speght saw himself and his fellow editors (like Thynne) as undertaking. The insistence that the poet be restored to 'his *owne* Antiquitie' is revealing in this respect, for the phrase banishes Chaucer to a faraway past from which he could be recovered heroically by the labours of Speght and his colleagues. 'Historical rupture', as Simpson reminds us, 'is the premise of the philological project', and such an endeavour pursues 'the past textual object [which] can be seen "in its *own* terms"'.[19]

Accordingly, and even as they present Chaucer in a new guise, the printed editions trace their own descent from older manuscript books. Those new prints are everywhere branded with what Siân Echard has called 'the mark of the medieval' – 'those elements of the book that connect this new [book] to its past'.[20] Speght and his fellow editors may have been makers of newly printed books for the rapidly expanding English book trade, but they were also scholars who worked in the humanist tradition and who privileged the 'old written Copies' which survived from Chaucer's time. A verse dialogue included in the paratextual material of Speght's editions explicitly frames the enterprise of reading Chaucer in terms of old books and new ones. In it, a fictive Renaissance reader professes that, until now, Chaucer has been 'Unknowne to us, save only by thy bookes'. The poem's second speaker, 'Geffrey', responds that this was true, 'Till one which saw me there, and knew my friends, / Did bring me forth'.[21] Although they brought him forth from this assumed oblivion in a newly printed form, the editors' version of the poet was a 'conspicuously archival Chaucer' – from the black letter type in which he was printed, to the conscious archaising of his orthography, to the claim that Speght had 'repair'd' and thereby rescued the poet's works from the dark corners of the past.[22] The point about Chaucer's restoration from archival obscurity by Speght could not be more plainly or prominently stated than it was on two variants of the 1598 title page. There, in a cartouche at the head of an

[19] Simpson, 'Diachronic History', p. 27; emphasis added.

[20] Siân Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. vii. On the use of this rhetoric in relation to early modern manuscripts, see Cathy Shrank, '"These Fewe Scribbled Rules": Representing Scribal Intimacy in Early Modern Print', *HLQ*, 67.2 (2004), 295–314.

[21] For discussion of the poem, see Louise M. Bishop, 'Father Chaucer and the Vivification of Print', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 106.3 (2007), 336–63 (352–3); Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 133–4; David Matthews, 'Public Ambition, Private Desire, and the Last Tudor Chaucer', in McMullan and Matthews, pp. 74–88 (p. 75); and Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 1–2.

[22] Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 192.

elaborate architectural frontispiece which resembles a monument, is an extract from Chaucer's own *Parliament of Fowles*, which asserts the ability of 'old books' to yield 'al this new science that men lere'.[23] To the literary historian looking back today, Speght's gesture is a poignant one for, as Helen Cooper puts it, '[Chaucer] thought of himself as the new corn; already, to his 1598 editors, he was the old field'.[24] These editions, meanwhile, embodied the 'new science' of the age, representing bibliographic, lexicographic, and iconographic firsts which elevated Chaucer according to the humanist ideals of the Renaissance edition.

For all that sense of Chaucer's historical remoteness cultivated by the prints, his was a towering presence in early modern England. He had already enjoyed an outsized influence in the fifteenth century, thanks to a series of passionate supporters and prolific imitators, but in the sixteenth century he became a cultural behemoth. The inestimable impact of Chaucer's writing on the major authors of the early modern period has long been acknowledged, and the extent of this influence is still being mapped today.[25] More than those of any other medieval English author, his works metamorphosed into new and plentiful adaptations in the subsequent centuries while the accepted canon underwent its own spectacular transformations and expansions, as Protestants, Catholics, antiquaries, philologists, and men of letters all bent Chaucer to their own purposes. 'None of the other English works of literature inherited from the Middle Ages carried with them this kind of cultural urgency', observes Cooper.[26] In 1570, the reformist historian John Foxe could enthuse that 'Chaucers workes be all printed in one volume, and therefore knowen to all men'.[27] The version of Chaucer read by (for example) Spenser and Shakespeare, or Milton and Dryden – to say nothing of generations of readers across two centuries – was therefore refracted through a distinctly early modern understanding of the poet and his works. Given his imposing

[23] The variant title pages which print these lines are *STC* 5078 and 5079 (but not 5077); discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 133–6; see also Figure 3.1.

[24] Helen Cooper, 'Chaucerian Representation', in *New Readings of Chaucer's Poetry*, ed. by Robert G. Benson and Susan J. Ridyard (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 7–29 (p. 14).

[25] An early study is Ann Thompson, *Shakespeare's Chaucer: A Study in Literary Origins* (Liverpool University Press, 1978). Recent work includes Helen Barr, *Transporting Chaucer* (Manchester University Press, 2014); *Rereading Chaucer and Spenser: Dan Geffrey with the New Poete*, ed. by Rachel Stenner, Tamsin Badcoe, and Gareth Griffith (Manchester University Press, 2019); and Jeff Espie, 'Spenser, Chaucer, and the Renaissance *Squire's Tale*', *Spenser Studies*, 33 (2019), 133–60.

[26] Helen Cooper, 'Poetic Fame', in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*, ed. by Brian Cummings and James Simpson (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 361–78 (p. 365).

[27] John Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (London: John Day, 1570; *STC* 11223), vol. II, sig. 3D4^{r}.

cultural and literary presence in the centuries following his death, it is no accident that modern scholarship has repeatedly turned to Chaucer to think about the persistence and reimagining of the English past in the early modern period.

In its dual emphasis on the neglected afterlives of Chaucer's medieval manuscripts and their deeply intertwined relationships with print, this study places the Chaucerian book at the heart of the poet's early modern reinvention. Commercial success in print has long been identified as essential to Chaucer's early modern prominence, for this was the primary form in which his name and works were encountered. So influential was the philological project undertaken by Speght and editors before him that the history of Chaucer's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reception has come to be defined by the landmark folio editions of his classically styled *Workes* – of which the first appeared in 1532, marking a bibliographical first for any English poet. Within the study of literary history, the production, circulation, and reception of Chaucer's works have consequently proven a rich seam of inquiry. As Alice Miskimin pronounced in her 1975 study of *The Renaissance Chaucer*, 'The metamorphosis of one poet's book, from manuscript to print, provides a paradigm of literary evolution'.[28] Subsequent scholarship on Chaucer's reception has also been animated by questions about the printed books that canonised him.[29] The folio editions, as Cook has documented in *The Poet and the Antiquaries*, were part of a broader antiquarian investment in promoting Chaucer's historical and cultural stature during the Renaissance. This book emphasises that Chaucer's medieval manuscripts continued to be collected, studied, and read alongside such volumes, and that they intersected with them in telling ways. Their early modern reception throws new light on contemporary readings and revisions of the poet's oeuvre, and prompts us to recognise print's active role in facilitating the continued use of these older manuscript books.

[28] Alice S. Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 10.

[29] In addition to those already cited, essential studies include A. S. G. Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print: The Social Text and the Critical Text', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 28.4 (1995), 1–12; Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473–1557* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Joseph A. Dane, *Who Is Buried in Chaucer's Tomb? Studies in the Reception of Chaucer's Book* (Michigan State University Press, 1998); Alison Wiggins, 'What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Printed Copies of Chaucer?', *The Library*, 7th ser., 9.1 (2008), 3–36.

Antiquaries Reading Manuscript and Print

A well-known caricature written by the Jacobean satirist John Earle places the antiquary in the library's recesses, amidst spiders and cobwebs: 'Printed bookes, he contemnes, as a novelty of this latter age, but a Manu-script he pores on everlastingly, especially if the cover be all Moth-eaten'.[30] While Earle's extended portrait is satirical, the outlook it describes only exaggerates the quality of bookishness which was known to belong to many enthusiasts in the period. A closer look at the trajectories of medieval manuscripts following the upheavals of the English Reformation will help to elucidate their cultural status and relation to print. By way of routes which are still being mapped, many surviving manuscripts from the dissolved religious houses and institutional collections found their way onto the second-hand market. By the middle of the sixteenth century, stationers who had initially acquired manuscripts for use as waste material were putting these intact whole volumes up for resale.[31] Oxford's university stationer, Garbrand Herkes, is known to have purchased unwanted manuscripts from All Souls College in 1549–50, and to have sold manuscripts on to local collectors.[32] In 1574, John Dee is recorded as having bought a manuscript 'from a stall in London' and Stephen Batman likewise bought a copy of *Piers Plowman* from one 'Harvey in Grac street', probably Gracechurch Street, London.[33] As the century wore on, collectors of modest and greater means alike were able to buy up medieval manuscripts for incorporation into their personal libraries.[34] The scholars, antiquaries, and readers who purchased manuscripts after the Reformation were also

[30] John Earle, *Micro-cosmographie. Or, a peece of the world discouered* (London: William Stansby, 1628; *STC* 7441), sig. C2^{v}–3^{r}. Discussed further in Daniel R. Woolf, 'Images of the Antiquary in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries of London 1707–2007*, ed. by Susan Pearce (Society of Antiquaries of London, 2007), pp. 11–44 (p. 19).

[31] Richard Ovenden, 'The Libraries of the Antiquaries (*c.* 1580–1640) and the Idea of a National Collection', in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Elisabeth S. Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (Cambridge University Press, 2008), I, pp. 527–62 (p. 538).

[32] Andrew G. Watson, 'Thomas Allen of Oxford and His Manuscripts', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. by M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), pp. 279–314 (p. 286), and Watson, 'The Post-Medieval Library of All-Souls', repr. in his *Medieval Manuscripts in Post-Medieval England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 65–91 (p. 87).

[33] Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', pp. 538–40 also notes other sellers of secondhand manuscripts: Stephen Potts, Laurence Sadler, Cornelius Bee, and Launcelot Toppyn. Batman's manuscript is now Bodl. MS Digby 171; see Simon Horobin, 'Stephan Batman and His Manuscripts of "Piers Plowman"', *RES*, 62.255 (2011), 358–72 (368).

[34] By the late seventeenth century, medieval manuscripts could be acquired at auction; see Richard Beadle, 'Medieval English Manuscripts at Auction 1676–*c.* 1700', *The Book Collector*, 53 (2004), 46–63.

(in their other capacities) clergymen, schoolmasters, physicians, lawyers, clothworkers, and civil servants.[35] Some of those copies collected by individuals would eventually find their way into institutional libraries via benefactions; Bodley's library in Oxford, which owed the majority of the 800 medieval manuscripts assembled during its founder's lifetime to donations, is notable in this regard.[36]

These historically-minded people sought out old manuscripts for the laudable purposes of research, study, and sometimes for devotional reading, as well as for copying and thus safeguarding them, but there are indications that they were also collected to be admired as works of art, or amassed for the simple sake of possession and then passed down from one generation to the next.[37] The pleasure and satisfaction of collecting, owning, and reading old manuscript books, although difficult to trace for historical actors, surely undergird the motivations of many of the readers described in this study.[38] Meanwhile, the very top tier of early modern manuscript collecting was occupied by men like Archbishop Matthew Parker (1504–75) and Sir Robert Cotton (1570/1–1631), who were inspired by nationalist ideals and who built libraries with the intent of safeguarding England's bibliographical heritage. Cotton had been a driving figure behind a failed petition for the founding of a national library and he viewed his own collections as serving a surrogate function in this regard, storing and generating an archive of historical and contemporary records for posterity.[39] Parker, on the other hand, was explicitly charged with responsibility for the collection and care of the nation's ancient records and monuments by the Privy Council in 1568.[40] Both were implicated by

[35] See the case studies collected in Watson, *Medieval Manuscripts* and Connolly, *Sixteenth-Century Readers.*

[36] Ian G. Philip, *The Bodleian Library in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, The Lyell Lectures, Oxford, 1980–1 (Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 18. On a smaller scale, the Fellows' Library at Winchester College received seven medieval manuscripts, donated by five individuals, between 1608–14; see Richard Foster, 'Robert Hedrington and Wynkyn de Worde at Winchester College', *New College Notes*, 7 (2016), 1–5 (4).

[37] On the aesthetic considerations of antiquarian manuscript collectors, see Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', pp. 540–5, who observes that Cotton sometimes noted the beauty of his manuscript books in the course of cataloguing them. For a sixteenth-century collector who may have acquired manuscripts 'for their own sake', see Andrew G. Watson, 'Robert Hare's Books', in his *Medieval Manuscripts*, pp. 209–32 (p. 215).

[38] On the joy of reading manuscripts, see Treharne, *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts*, pp. 121–30.

[39] Colin G. C. Tite, *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton*, The Panizzi Lectures 1993, IX (London: British Library, 1994), pp. 20, 51–7, 101.

[40] The most complete study of Parker remains R. I. Page, *Matthew Parker and His Books: Sandars Lectures in Bibliography* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications and Parker Library, 1993); see also Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 38–47.

choice as well as duty in building a set of libraries that would be, in Summit's words, 'a guardian of both heritage and inheritance while creating the English past as a primarily archival entity'. Alongside these broader symbolic goals, such libraries were also enlisted to serve more immediate and practical purposes, as the medieval manuscript books they gathered were mined for precedents that could inform contemporary legal, political, and ecclesiastical debates.[41]

Consideration of those copies of Middle English manuscripts that came into early modern hands gives some sense of their manifold trajectories. In addition to his *Piers* manuscript, Parker's associate, Batman, owned a copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* as well as devotional texts including *The Chastising of God's Children* and *The Doctrine of the Hert*.[42] In his copy of *Piers*, Batman wrote an extended inscription which outlines the rewards he sought from his reading. He praises the work as one that 'diserveth the Reeding' and adds that 'Bookes of Antiquiti' are well served by 'Sober staied mindes'; on the contrary, he writes, 'Frantik braines suche az are more readye to be prattlers than / parformers / seing this book to be olde / Rather take it for papisticall / then else. & so many books com to confusion'.[43] Batman's commentary highlights both the post-Reformation associations of medieval manuscripts with Catholicism, as well as the possibility that discriminating readers might look beyond such associations.[44] The drastically divergent readings of different manuscript copies of the same text are also chronicled in Connolly's account of the afterlife of the *Pore Caitiff*, a work of vernacular religious instruction. While some copies saw parts of the text carefully annotated by sixteenth-century readers, at least two other copies were used as manuscript waste during the binding of late sixteenth-century printed books.[45] That mixed reception is suggested, too, by the work of the antiquary John Weever,

[41] See Summit, *Memory's Library*, esp. pp. 101–96 (p. 108).

[42] Batman's manuscripts are catalogued in M. B. Parkes, 'Stephen Batman's Manuscripts', in *Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of Tadahiro Ikegami*, ed. by Masahiko Kanno and others (Tokyo: Yushodo Press Co., 1997), pp. 125–56 (pp. 139–50).

[43] Bodl. MS Digby 171, fol. 2^{r}, qtd. in Horobin, 'Stephen Batman', 360. Horobin argues that Batman also owned TCC, MS R.3.14, another medieval manuscript of *Piers*.

[44] On Batman's selective reading of medieval manuscripts, see Summit, *Memory's Library*, pp. 114–18. Such discernment is also borne out by the fact that Books of Hours continued to be engaged for devotional and household use by sixteenth-century readers, and some may have preferred them over their more widely available printed counterparts; see Margaret Connolly, 'Late Medieval Books of Hours and Their Early Tudor Readers In and Around London', in *Manuscript and Print in Late Medieval and Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Professor Julia Boffey*, ed. by Tamara Atkin and Jaclyn Rajsic (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2019), pp. 107–21 (p. 114).

[45] Margaret Connolly, 'Reading Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in *Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in England*, ed. by Marleen Cré, Diana Denissen, and Denis Renevey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 131–56.

who, for the purpose of compiling his *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631), consulted medieval literary manuscripts which were 'overlooked by his contemporaries' but which contained works by Gower and Langland (as well as Richard Rolle).[46] Copies of Gower, Chaucer (including at least one *Canterbury Tales* manuscript), and Lydgate were also part of the Middle English holdings in the impressive collection of medieval manuscripts assembled by the politician and historian Sir James Ware (1594–1666).[47]

The motivations of manuscript readers and collectors were various, and the broad impetus behind this activity shifted during the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Andrew Watson has suggested that medieval manuscripts in this period followed a general path after the dissolution, moving first from small-scale to large-scale buyers during the mid- to late-sixteenth century, and thence to the 'great libraries' of the most serious and wealthy collectors.[48] The bookish activities of Parker and his circle are particularly apt for closer consideration here. At least two medieval manuscripts of Chaucer were in Parker's immediate orbit, and two surviving copies of Stow's edition of the *Workes* (1561) bear annotations indicating their presence amongst his associates.[49] For now, though, I am less interested in Parker as a reader of Chaucer *per se* than in his household's use of manuscripts. Their practices of collecting, studying, transcribing, and remaking medieval manuscripts, and the milieu in which they occurred, provide a valuable evidentiary basis for understanding the forms of interventionist reading and book use that the following chapters will detail.

At his death, Parker's library held over 500 manuscripts and around 850 printed books.[50] Notoriously, the Archbishop and his associates had libraries stripped and sanitised according to their compliance with a revisionist history of the nation. According to this scheme, some manuscripts and early printed books – histories, chronicles, commentaries, charters, homilies – were deemed worthy of preservation while breviaries, psalters, missals, and prayer books

[46] Summit, *Memory's Library*, pp. 185–9.
[47] See Edwards, 'Sir James Ware'.
[48] Watson, *Medieval Manuscripts*, p. xix.
[49] CCCC, MS 61, a copy of *Troilus and Criseyde*, passed into Parker's library via Batman, to whom it had been given by one Mr Carey; see Parkes, 'Stephen Batman's Manuscripts', p. 139. A copy of 'Chawcer written', possibly TCC, MS R.3.15, was also to be found in the collection of his son John Parker; see Joseph Dane and Alexandra Gillespie, 'Back at Chaucer's Tomb – Inscriptions in Two Early Copies of Chaucer's "Workes"', *Studies in Bibliography*, 52 (1999), 89–96 (95); and Conor Leahy, 'An Annotated Edition of Chaucer Belonging to Stephan Batman', *The Library*, 22.2 (2021), 217–24. The Parkerian connections of TCC, MS R.3.15 are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 103–5, 161–5.
[50] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 40.

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were condemned to destruction, or else repurposed as decoration or binding waste.[51] Yet this mandate alone does not account for all the transformations that Parker made to his books, nor for the more challenging aspects of his practices as a collector. As Knight reports, Parker 'frequently removed leaves, erased text, or inserted parts of one manuscript into another, sometimes gluing or stitching them in custom arrangements', and accordingly kept his books in a highly contingent state that permitted this easy reshaping.[52] While some of the Archbishop's redesigns were guided by doctrine, many of his bibliographical choices stemmed from a parallel desire to improve manuscripts which were damaged or deemed (following some opaque criteria) to be less than perfect. Parker's methods for improving medieval manuscripts included furnishing newly copied supply leaves to fill in textual gaps, and the removal of leaves from one manuscript to service others.[53] Even more alarming to a modern sensibility is the Parker circle's willingness to refashion medieval books for purely decorative purposes, or for the sake of a cleaner aesthetic effect. For instance, they went to significant lengths to tidy up imperfect volumes, which in practical terms involved the excision, washing, or pasting over (using parchment scraps from other books) of medieval leaves in order to hide unwanted text that served as a marker of a book's incomplete state.[54] Parker's sixteenth-century household represents a unique convergence of privileged access, exceptional manuscripts, and a state-sanctioned religious mission, but their repair, customisation, and remaking of old books place them squarely in the bibliographical culture of their time. Their mission may have had ideological roots but the group's particular habits of transcribing, reshuffling, and migrating leaves and whole quires belonged, more fundamentally, to a reading culture which treated the material book, in Knight's words,

[51] Summit, *Memory's Library*, pp. 106–10. For examples, see discussion of CCCC, MSS 162, 163, 419, 452, and 557 in Page, *Matthew Parker and His Books*, pp. 49–51.

[52] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 41. In some ways, Parker's modular treatment of manuscript books is also reminiscent of the norms of medieval codicological practices, on which see Ryan Perry, 'The Sum of the Book: Structural Codicology and Medieval Manuscript Culture', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval British Manuscripts*, ed. by Elaine Treharne and Orietta Da Rold (Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 106–26.

[53] Parkerian transcripts are to be found, for example, in CCCC, MSS 383 and 449; see R. I. Page, 'The Transcription of Old English Texts in the Sixteenth Century', in *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts 7*, ed. by G. Fellows-Jensen and P. Springborg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2003), pp. 179–90 (p. 183). Manuscripts containing medieval leaves transposed from elsewhere include CCCC, MSS 162, 419, and 452; for discussions of these see Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 42 and Siân Echard, 'Containing the Book: The Institutional Afterlives of Medieval Manuscripts', in Johnston and Van Dussen, pp. 96–118 (pp. 108–9).

[54] For example, in CCCC, MSS 162 and 197. For these and other examples, see Page, *Matthew Parker and His Books*, pp. 46–51; Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 42; and Echard, 'Containing the Book', pp. 110–11.

as 'relatively open-ended and to a great extent bound (in both senses) by the desires of readers'.[55]

Transcription, for instance, was expressly required by the Privy Council decree that manuscripts found by Parker and his agents should be copied if they had to be returned to their owners. In Parker's household, the work of transcribing medieval manuscripts could fall to several people: an especially talented man named 'Lyly' (who could 'counterfeit any antique writing'), Stephen Batman, Parker's secretary John Joscelyn, his son John Parker, or any number of less experienced copyists 'who would have trouble with unfamiliar words, spellings, accidence, and letter forms'.[56] Though highly atypical in their scale and motivations, the Parker circle's practices of transcribing medieval texts and producing supply leaves are not themselves anomalous in the long history of the book. Scholars had been adding supply leaves to old books since the eighth century, and in the sixteenth century it was a regular practice in English institutions concerned with the collection and custodianship of old volumes.[57] For example, at Christ Church, Canterbury during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a series of scribes was responsible for copying both supply leaves and whole books from older copies.[58] John Leland has been shown to be an avid transcriber, while John Bale likewise transcribed (or had professionally copied) historical records of interest to him, and made copies of Leland's own copies. The antiquary James Ussher wrote in 1625 of his quest for 'one that hath already been tried in transcribing of manuscripts', and John Stow and Robert Talbot were themselves avid transcribers of historical works which survived in manuscript.[59] The collector Simonds d'Ewes condemned the scribe Ralph Starkey for making 'copies of [a] book common by his base nundination or sale of them', an offence which caused the dejected d'Ewes to abandon his own copying of the book and hire 'an able librarian' to finish it.[60] A latter-

[55] See Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 9.

[56] Page, 'Transcription of Old English', p. 180; H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558–1640* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 119.

[57] M. B. Parkes, 'Archaizing Hands in English Manuscripts', in *Pages from the Past: Medieval Writing Skills and Manuscript Books*, ed. by P. R. Robinson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 101–41 (p. 101). As McKitterick notes, until the late fifteenth century, copying was the only way of preserving ancient texts; see *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, p. 15.

[58] Parkes, 'Archaizing Hands', p. 110.

[59] Robert Talbot's interest was in making transcripts of now lost charters written in Old English; see Page, 'Transcription of Old English', p. 186. On Bale, Leland, Stow, and Ussher as transcribers, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 118, 124, 129.

[60] *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Bart., during the Reigns of James I and Charles I*, ed. by J.O. Halliwell (London: Richard Bentley, 1845), I, pp. 294–5. As Woudhuysen points out, 'This suggests that at least part of the pleasure of transcription lay in the copying of rare texts'; see *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 128.

day group inspired by the original Society of Antiquaries and led by Christopher Hatton, Thomas Shirley, and William Dugdale included in their founding agreement the pledge that each member should 'borrowe of other strangers ... all such bookes, notes, rolles, deedes, etc., as he can obteyne'.[61] The scholarly networks and private libraries which flourished in the early modern period catered directly to that desire for access to rare texts.[62] Within these networks, successive generations of early modern antiquaries relied on borrowing and transcribing old books for the making of their own fair copies, and many of them also produced new copies for the purposes of creating duplicates and supply leaves of rare and damaged ones. Far from being an esoteric preoccupation, transcription was a practice spurred on by the fragmented state of the country's manuscript inheritance and one which is underacknowledged yet 'integral to the development of the libraries of antiquaries during this period'.[63] Not only were medieval manuscripts plentiful in certain circles, then, but a willingness to reproduce and augment them for the sake of study and preservation is detectable across early modern communities of collectors. These acts of transcription should remind us that medieval manuscripts, while visually and sometimes materially distinctive, existed in this period amidst a vibrant early modern manuscript culture. Like the contemporary transcripts these scholars created by copying historical works, most manuscript copies of medieval texts moved within relatively 'small and compact' networks whose major nodes included the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries, the College of Arms, and Cotton's library.[64]

Early modern English antiquarianism was therefore organised around the search for and securing of rare materials and of medieval manuscript texts in particular but (contrary to Earle's caricature) it did not cultivate an indiscriminate aversion to printed books or harbour the desire to 'contemne' them for their novelty. Instead, the antiquaries demonstrate a vested interest in print as a medium of scholarly exchange and communication. Manuscripts of historical texts provided them with the vital primary materials necessary to sustain their scholarly pursuits, but the most ambitious and influential work was destined for the wider audiences

[61] Qtd. in Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', p. 535; Page, 'Transcription of Old English', pp. 180–7.
[62] Tite, *Sir Robert Cotton*, p. 20; Summit, *Memory's Library*, pp. 104–8, 135–8; William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), pp. 37, 46–50.
[63] Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', p. 545.
[64] Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 120–33 (p. 121).

to be had in print.[65] Speght's *Workes* itself has been recognised as a printed monument to Chaucer, but behind it lay a series of manuscript notes – 'those good obseruations and collections you haue written of him' – which circulated in 'Copies to vse priuatly for mine owne pleasure', as Francis Beaumont's prefatory epistle to the editor puts it.[66] The presence in early modern England of contemporary manuscripts containing Chaucerian material is corroborated by Derek Pearsall's suggestion, concerning the copytexts of *The Isle of Ladies* and *Floure and the Leafe*, that 'manuscript "pamphlets" of old poems were in lively circulation in the sixteenth century, ready to be picked up by collectors such as Stow and put into print'.[67] In turn, printed books could be annotated and excerpted in ways which unsettle any rigid distinction between knowledge that circulated in manuscript and in print.

Medieval texts printed and read in this period preserve evidence of how the early modern period defined itself in relation to the material past. While new editions of old texts could not make a claim for their own material antiquity, they could purport to be superior to their manuscript antecedents in other ways: more legible, more correct, or simply better because they were newer. From its beginnings, the trade in printed books defined itself by its material novelty. As Caxton put it in the *Recuyell*, the first book printed in English, his volume 'is not wreton with penne and ynke as other bokes ben to th'ende that every man may have them atones'.[68] Print's role in mediating the medieval past is also borne out in the early establishment of Chaucer's reputation as a print-published author. This is acknowledged, for example, when Stephen Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure* (1509) celebrates the fact that Chaucer's 'goodly name / In prynted books doth remayne in fame' (ll. 1336–7).[69] The antiquaries of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries likewise endowed print with authority and contributed to its establishment as a learned medium. Ultimately, it was the early modern trade in printed volumes that brought historical works to a wider readership than ever before.

[65] Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', p. 558. D. R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) provides a thorough analysis of historical works in print.

[66] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]4^{v}, [a]6^{r}. On the association of Chaucer manuscripts with intimacy, see Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, pp. 109–43.

[67] Derek Pearsall, 'Thomas Speght (ca. 1550–?)', in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, ed. by Paul G. Ruggiers (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984), pp. 71–92 (pp. 79–80).

[68] *Caxton's Own Prose*, ed. by N. F. Blake (London: Deutsch, 1973), p. 100.

[69] Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, ed. by William Edward Mead (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1928). Discussed in Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, pp. 187–90.

For the antiquaries and the stationers who saw their works through the press, print provided a golden opportunity in which to 'render the antique alluring and desirable', to reframe rarefied work in terms of historical recovery for the common good, and crucially, to profit from the past.[70]

The epithet 'newly printed' adorned the title pages of countless volumes in the period, including successive generations of Chaucer's works. Besides the folio editions from William Thynne (1532) to Speght, which consistently used the phrase in their titles, earlier editions by Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde also advertised themselves as 'newly printed' or 'newly correcked'.[71] By 1612, John Webster could compare an unappreciative theatre audience to readers 'who visiting Stationers shoppes their vse is not to inquire for good bookes, but new bookes'.[72] But old-fashioned texts were not inherently undesirable and the book trade sustained a market for earlier material even as title pages praised the newness of successive editions.[73] Underlying the emphasis on the printed book's novelty, moreover, is another oblique celebration of the poet's oldness – the fact that these works of Chaucer had long existed but 'were never in print before', as the titles of several sixteenth-century editions put it.[74] There was therefore an added cachet to be gained from the claim that an ancient or rare copytext lay behind a newly printed book.[75]

Accordingly, the authority of the Chaucerian text in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was built on bibliographical narratives about the relative reliability of printed books compared to medieval manuscripts, yet these latter

[70] Lucy Munro, '"O Read Me for I Am of Great Antiquity": Old Books and Elizabethan Popularity', in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 55–78, (p. 66); Woolf, *Reading History*, pp. 132–67.

[71] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Here begynneth the boke of Troylus and Creseyde, newly printed by a trewe copye* (London: Richard Pynson, *c.* 1526; *STC* 5096); Geoffrey Chaucer, *Here begynneth the boke of Canterbury tales, dilygently and truely corrected, and newly printed* (London: Richard Pynson, 1526; *STC* 5086); Geoffrey Chaucer, *The noble and amerous au[n]cyent hystory of Troylus and Cresyde, in the tyme of the syege of Troye* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1517; *STC* 5095).

[72] John Webster, *The White Devil* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1612; *STC* 25178), sig. A2^{r}.

[73] Some editors, publishers, or printers specialised in publishing older material; see Munro, '"O Read Me"', p. 62.

[74] Thynne's editions are *STC* 5068 (1532) and 5069 (1542). *STC* 5070 is a variant of 5069 also published in 1542. The booksellers' reprint (*c.* 1550) is represented by *STC* 5071, 5072, 5073, and 5074. John Stow's edition is *STC* 5075, with a reissue represented by 5076, and its variant, 5076.3. Pynson's three Chaucer volumes are *STC* 5086, 5088, and 5096, respectively. See Jonathan R. Olson, '"Newly Amended and Much Enlarged": Claims of Novelty and Enlargement on the Title Pages of Reprints in the Early Modern English Book Trade', *History of European Ideas*, 42.5 (2016), 618–28. For this and other 'temporal modifiers' used in title page marketing, see Mari-Liisa Varila and Matti Peikola, 'Promotional Conventions on English Title-Pages up to 1550: Modifiers of Time, Scope, and Quality', in *Norms and Conventions in the History of English*, ed. by Birte Bös and Claudia Claridge (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2019), pp. 73–97 (pp. 81–4).

[75] Varila and Peikola, 'Promotional Conventions', p. 83.

remained at the symbolic centre of the editors' study of Chaucer. Speght (d. 1621), a schoolmaster by profession and former scholar of Peterhouse, Cambridge, was a friend to many in the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries.[76] Though not himself a member of that group, his academic and antiquarian connections furnished him with the necessary materials and support for his editorial project. Chief amongst these was his relationship with the indefatigable antiquary, bibliophile, and editor of the 1561 Chaucer, John Stow (1524/5–1605).[77] Speght recounts in the 1602 edition, for example, that he has consulted a 'written copy' of Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse* 'which I had of Maister Stow (whose library helped me in many things) wherein ten times more is adjoined, than is in print'.[78] So famous were Stow's collections that the antiquary was examined for papistry in 1569, on a charge related to his collecting of old books.[79] Elsewhere, Speght recalls that he has encountered a rare copy of a tract on a visit to the antiquary Thomas Allen, fellow of Trinity College in Oxford, 'a man of as rare learning as he is stored with rare bookes'.[80] The fingerprints of other well-regarded antiquaries and their books are also detectable in Speght's editions. Francis Thynne (1545?–1608), the son of editor William Thynne, served as an unofficial secretary for the Society and was an indirect contributor to Speght's 1602 Chaucer, having written a lengthy series of *Animadversions* (1599) on the first edition, pinpointing perceived textual infidelities and other quibbles which the editor hastened to address in the new volume. The younger Thynne speaks, tantalisingly, of 'written copies there came to me after my fathers deathe some fyve and twenty', but indicates that some of these were stolen, and some given away to Parker's associate Batman.[81] John Speed, another member of the Society, provided the engraving for the Progenie page, while the lawyer Joseph Holland supplied the text to *Chaucer's ABC* from his fifteenth-century manuscript of Chaucer's works.[82] These early modern collections grew out of an

[76] See Pearsall, 'Speght'.

[77] On Stow's involvement in Chaucer's *Workes*, see A. S. G. Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', in *John Stow (1525–1605) and the Making of the English Past*, ed. by Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie (London: British Library, 2004), pp. 109–18.

[78] *Workes* (1602), sig. b8^{v}.

[79] Derek Pearsall, 'John Stow and Thomas Speght as Editors of Chaucer: A Question of Class', in Gadd and Gillespie, pp. 119–25 (p. 121).

[80] *Workes* (1598), sig. 4B5^{r}. Pearsall, 'Speght', p. 82; see also Watson, 'Thomas Allen of Oxford', pp. 279–314.

[81] Francis Thynne, *Chaucer: Animadversions uppon the annotacions and corrections of some imperfections of impressiones of Chaucers workes*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall and G. H. Kingsley (London: published for the Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1875), p. 12.

[82] Martha W. Driver, 'Mapping Chaucer: John Speed and the Later Portraits', *ChR*, 36.3 (2002), 228–49 (238–41); George B. Pace, 'Speght's Chaucer and MS. GG.4.27', *Studies in Bibliography*, 21 (1968), 225–35.

assumed and urgent need to retrieve, chronicle, and archive the past – a cause to which Chaucer and his old books were duly enlisted.

Renaissance scholars regularly bundled the classical and medieval periods into a capacious notion of antiquity into which Chaucer could fit comfortably.[83] Yet this oldness and its attendant challenges – the difficulty of his language, the variability amongst early witnesses, the dispersal and constitution of his oeuvre, the lack of attribution in the manuscript record – did not keep Chaucer exclusively consigned to the past. Rather (as they would tell it) it led his proponents to scour the manuscript and archaeological evidence in order to put forth ever-improved versions of Chaucer in print. On the print marketplace, Chaucer's distance from the early modern present was announced on the ornate title pages of the 1602 edition and its earlier 1598 counterpart, where the poet's 'Ancient' status served as an authorising stamp for Speght's *Workes*. Inside these books, Chaucer was awarded other hallmarks usually reserved for humanist editions of the classics: a 'Life' of the author, a Latin genealogy of the Chaucer family, a glossary of 'Hard Words', and a list of authors cited by Chaucer all cultivate a sense of the poet as a historically distant figure. As an ancient and erudite authority, his works both required and merited explanatory notes, happily supplied by the editor.[84] All of these marked him as worthy of veneration in the same terms as a classical author – an English Homer, in the humanist Roger Ascham's esteem.[85] At the same time, and as this trumpeting of Chaucer's antiquity makes clear, the printed editions were presented not as substitutes for the older manuscripts but as their improved, more accessible surrogates. In this way, the new medium positioned itself as granting access to the medieval past, thereby permitting Chaucer to remain a poet of 'penne and ynke' even as he became a towering literary authority in the new age of printed books. Of course, the categories of old and new did not neatly map on to the media of manuscript and print, and this study occasionally puts them into dialogue with other sorts of books which trouble these convenient divides; incunabula and other old editions, newly copied manuscripts, and annotated

[83] Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', p. 527. As Woolf, *Social Circulation*, p. 48 points out, however, the early modern English adjective 'ancient' might refer either 'to very recent times or to very old times, often by the same writer'. Thus even Chaucer's status as an ancient authority is somewhat blurred by the term's imprecision in speaking about the recent and distant past.

[84] On this paradox, see Machan, 'Speght's "Works"', 157.

[85] Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion (1357–1900)*, 3 vols. (London: published for the Chaucer Society by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, and by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1918), I, p. 85. Further references are to vol. I unless otherwise indicated.

printed copies, too, have much to tell us about the changing value of the Chaucerian book in the early modern period.

Between Medieval Manuscripts and Early Modern Print

Before this book embarks upon its consideration of Chaucer's medieval manuscripts and their relationship to print, it is worth assessing the nature and extent of the accommodation between manuscript and print more generally. To put a notoriously complex matter in the simplest terms, early printed books were like manuscripts in some respects, but departed from them in others. For one thing, print was a more efficient medium; it was expedient to distribute many copies of a book by print compared to copies written by hand.[86] As was noted, the epilogue to Caxton's *Recuyell* made much of the fact that that volume's new technology allowed 'that every man may have them atones'. In doing so, the printer anticipated the comparative reach of printed and manuscript copies of the work, but naturally, he conceived of both forms as books: the version of the *Recuyell* which he 'practysed & lerned at my grete charge and dispense to ordeyne' was a 'book in prynte' and manuscripts are 'other bokes' different for having been 'wreton with penne and ynke'. Such a reframing – in which books are considered first *as* books regardless of their material properties – is instructive for understanding the early printed book 'not as a printed book to which manuscript marks were added, but as a book parts of which were printed'.[87]

With that understanding in place, it becomes easier to appreciate the fact that while print did not universally supplant manuscripts, its technological novelty nonetheless had visible effects in certain corners of the book trade. As McKitterick reports, the 'more ordinary' segment of the Italian manuscript trade, which catered to a mainstream clientele rather than wealthy collectors, was severely curtailed in the latter part of the fifteenth century as a result of the coming of print.[88] Institutional catalogues record this shifting of the bibliographical centre of gravity from manuscripts to printed codices. At Syon Abbey, a place noted as having 'embraced the potential of the printing press early', printed books did indeed replace manuscript copies of the same works.[89] In that religious house, as Vincent Gillespie concludes in a study of

[86] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 100–1.
[87] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, p. 34.
[88] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 30–1.
[89] *Syon Abbey, with the Libraries of the Carthusians*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and A. I. Doyle, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, IX (London: British Library in association with the British Academy, 2001), pp. li–lv.

the library's cataloguing up to the early decades of the sixteenth century, 'Script gave way to print, or was at least increasingly heavily outnumbered'.[90] In Oxford, the acquisition of increasing numbers of printed books led to physical changes in the layout of some college libraries at the end of the sixteenth century, where large lecterns were replaced with bookcases which as much as trebled capacity.[91] The medieval library of All Souls College was gradually transformed during the sixteenth century, from 'a collection of manuscripts with a few incunables' before 1500 to 'a collection of printed books with a few manuscripts' by the mid-1570s.[92]

The number and nature of volumes in institutional catalogues give some sense of the scale of these changes, but it is much harder to apprehend the relative value and associations that handwritten or printed books may have held for readers from the late fifteenth century onwards. As Woudhuysen rather pessimistically puts it, 'it remains generally impossible to capture at first hand the difference they felt between reading works in manuscript and in print'.[93] Notwithstanding the impossibility of recreating any historical experience with complete certainty, there remain some perceptible indications of the shifting status of both types of book in the period under consideration. Many of these changes were aesthetic. The technical operations of the printing press necessitated certain modifications to page layout, resulting first in the absence of signatures, catchwords, foliation, and pagination in incunabula, and later in their positioning within the main text block, thereby rendering these printed features more prominent than they were in manuscripts.[94] Woudhuysen has suggested that the differences between manuscript and print were especially vast for texts such as poetry, 'part of whose aesthetic experience lies in the look of the poem on the page'.[95] Some visual features of scribally copied texts could be accentuated when they passed into print. This dynamic is occasionally detectable in manuscripts transcribed from print, where there is evidence of scribes taking pains to split and compress words or to insert line fillers for the sake of imitating the sharp right-hand edge of the printed text.[96] Other visual features would eventually (though not immediately) be flattened in print. Rubrication and illumination, visual elements widespread in manuscript, were incorporated into the design of some incunabula but would

[90] Gillespie, *Syon Abbey*, p. lxiv. [91] Watson, 'The Post-Medieval Library of All-Souls', p. 76.
[92] Watson, 'The Post-Medieval Library of All-Souls', p. 74.
[93] Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 9.
[94] Nafde, 'Gower from Print to Manuscript', p. 191; see also McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, p. 38.
[95] Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 15. [96] Nafde, 'Mechanical Print Aesthetic', 194.

later be phased out in favour of woodcut initials and printed headings.[97] For all the continuities and interdependencies between the two media, attempts would be made over the subsequent centuries to distinguish them.

At least according to those printers who styled themselves as bringing to light forgotten or neglected texts, print was superior to manuscript in its stability and reliability. When, in 1532, printer Thomas Berthelet had a choice between reproducing Gower's *Confessio Amantis* either according to the manuscripts or to Caxton's 1483 edition (which contains what is now known to be a different recension of the text), he chose to follow the printed precedent. His decision, he writes, was because 'most copies of the same warke are in printe' – a recognition that he saw print as outnumbering and thus outranking manuscripts of Gower's text. At the same time, Berthelet reveals that he nonetheless 'thought it good to warne the reder, that the writen copies do not agre with the prynted', so he also printed the variant lines in the book's preface.[98] Although Berthelet's edition demonstrates the printer's inventiveness and the book's flexibility in containing both versions, the distinction between the more dominant print tradition and the superseded manuscript one persists in the bibliographical hierarchy between the main text and prefatory paratext to which the printer assigns them respectively. Printers themselves were subject to both condemnation and praise – simultaneously seen by the humanists as the preservers of endangered texts, or as sloppy workers and opportunistic salesmen. Erasmus was able to reconcile both views in his *Adages*, in which he lauded the 'positively royal ambitions' of Aldus Manutius to restore ancient texts to circulation only to offer a biting commentary on the printer's dishonest and incompetent peers.[99] In the preface to his translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*, Jasper

[97] For colour printing, see Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 137–9 and *Printing Colour 1400–1700: History, Techniques, Functions and Receptions*, ed. by Ad Stijnman and Elizabeth Savage (Leiden: Brill, 2015). For decorated incunabula, see Lilian Armstrong, 'The Decoration and Illustration of Venetian Incunabula: From Hand Illumination to the Design of Woodcuts', in *Printing R-Evolution and Society 1450–1500*, ed. by Cristina Dondi, Studi Di Storia, 13 (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2020), xiii, pp. 773–816; and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', in *Incunabula: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Books Presented to Lotte Hellinga*, ed. by Martin Davies (London: British Library, 1999), pp. 493–506.

[98] John Gower, *Io. Gower de confessione amantis* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1532; *STC* 12143), sig. 2a3^{r}. For discussion see Daniel Allington and others, *The Book in Britain: A Historical Introduction* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), p. 84; Meaghan J. Brown, 'Addresses to the Reader', in *Book Parts*, ed. by Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 81–93 (p. 89); and Siân Echard, 'Gower Between Manuscript and Print', in Driver, Pearsall, and Yeager, pp. 169–88 (pp. 169–71).

[99] Desiderius Erasmus, Adage II.1.1, *Collected Works of Erasmus, Adages: II i 1 to II vi 100*, trans. by R. A. B. Mynors, Collected Works of Erasmus, 33 (University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 9–15.

Heywood lamented the faults of printers, and singled out Richard Tottell, who was responsible for his earlier *Troas* (1559), as having tampered with his text: 'That though my selfe perusde their prooues', he laments, 'When I was gone, they wolde agayne / the print therof renewe, Corrupted all'. The result, predictably, is 'fowrescore greater fautes then myne / in fortie leaues espyde'.[100] Although Heywood's preface, framed as a dream vision dialogue with the dead Seneca, is conventional in several respects, the level of specificity surrounding the circumstances of *Troas*'s publication – down to the poem's naming of Tottell's premises at the 'sygne of Hande and Starre' – suggests that the author's grievance was genuinely felt.[101]

Manuscripts, meanwhile, were known to have their own affordances and drawbacks. The late medieval abbot Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) praised manuscripts both for the longevity of their parchment medium (assuming the paper used in printing to be less durable), and for the discipline and care of the copyists who made them.[102] But the keeping and study of historical manuscripts would pose practical challenges to some readers. Even the learned antiquary Sir Peter Manwood (d. 1625) mentioned to Cotton his difficulties in 'writing oute of an oulde booke', complaining that 'itt goeth forward slowely because of ye ould hande out of use with us'.[103] Nonetheless, handwriting remained the chosen medium for prestigious presentation copies, and older manuscripts were granted an aura of authenticity. Returning to *Thyestes* and its verse preface, we learn that the ghostly Seneca's solution to the corruptions of his work in print is to read his 'Tragedies' aloud to his translator Heywood from a 'gylded booke' written in glittering letters and on fine parchment made from the skins of celestial fawns by the Muse herself; that is, from an authorially-sanctioned manuscript that represents the truest instantiation of Seneca's works. At this, the dreamer Heywood 'sawe how often tymes / the Printers dyd him wrong' and then adjusts his own copies accordingly – 'styll my

[100] Jasper Heywood, *The seconde tragedie of Seneca entituled Thyestes* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1560; *STC* 22226), sig. [fleuron]1^{r}.

[101] sig. *8^{v}. That suggestion is supported by physical evidence that indicates that the printing of that work was indeed 'renewed' without consultation with the author. H. J. Byrom notes an 'abnormal number of errors' in the 1559 edition; see 'Richard Tottell – His Life and Work', *The Library*, 4th ser., 8.2 (1927), 199–232 (215). On the printing of *Troas*, see Ronald B. McKerrow, 'Notes on Bibliographical Evidence for Literary Students and Editors of English Works of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *The Library*, TBS-12.1 (1913), 213–318 (261). On the early modern model of 'the author-in-the-print-shop' poring over printed proofs, see Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 91–4.

[102] Johannes Trithemius, *In Praise of Scribes. De Laude Scriptorum*, trans. by Roland Behrendt (Lawrence, KA: Coronado Press, 1974), pp. 35, 61–5.

[103] Qtd. in Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', p. 545.

booke, / I did correcte by his'.[104] The preface ends with Heywood awakening to lament the disapearance of Seneca's ghost and penning the text of *Thyestes*. Muses, of course, do not write manuscripts, but Heywood keeps up the conceit for the purpose of promoting the unmediated quality of his new translation, and getting in a barb at Tottell along the way.

Yet the fiction of flawless textual transmission by manuscript that Heywood lays out in his preface necessarily undoes itself through the fact of its own existence in print. In order to disseminate the very copies in which readers could learn how 'the Printers dyd him wrong', he had to turn his new book, *Thyestes*, over to the printing house (this time, Berthelet's) once again. Neither medium could be all things to all people, and textual production in both manuscript and print allowed for 'the cumulative accretion of error'.[105] Partly in response to the fallibility inherent in its technical complexity and the exigencies of the trade, print therefore strove to create an '*impression* of definitive knowledge'.[106] But the seeming miracle of print was at odds with the material and human realities of the process – with the reliance on people working at pace to distribute and set type and to proofread and correct printing errors.[107] Some contemporary accounts of printing house practice nonetheless offered 'reassurance where such reassurance could not be justified', and conjured an ideal of stability which ultimately 'depended on a visual sleight of hand in which most of the slippery manufacture was concealed'.[108] By the end of the period this book investigates, Chaucer's medieval manuscripts were judged (consciously or not) according to standards of design and legibility codified in print. Printed books, for their part, ultimately originated in some manuscript antecedent. McKitterick locates the 'divorce' between print and manuscript in the middle of the seventeenth century, a time when institutional catalogues began listing the two types of book separately.[109] By 1658, the preacher of a London sermon could describe printing as a 'new Art or invention opposed to writing'.[110] Yet as for all things which share

[104] Heywood, *Thyestes*, sig. [fleuron]3^{r}, 7^{v}.
[105] Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham, 'Introduction: Script, Print and History', in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, ed. by Crick and Walsham (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1–28 (p. 5).
[106] Crick and Walsham, 'Introduction', p. 5.
[107] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 113–14. On these complexities, see D. F. McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices', *Studies in Bibliography*, 22 (1969), 1–75.
[108] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 114, 118.
[109] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 12–13.
[110] Qtd. in McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, p. 26.

longstanding affinities, it was not easy to put them asunder. At All Souls College in 1697, a cataloguer working in the library mistakenly listed two lavishly illuminated incunables as manuscripts.[111] A divorce between manuscript and print may have been underway, but the terms of their separation would not be fully settled for some time.

Perfecting Print and Manuscript

Given these entanglements and intersections between printed and handwritten media in the pre-modern period, it follows that many volumes are today recognised as hybrid, composite, or blended in their fusion of old and new elements. Such books were not uncommon, though the later separation of manuscript and print in many of the institutions which hold these books means that the full scale of the phenomenon is difficult to gauge. Parker, already mentioned, 'seems not to have drawn as rigorous a distinction between manuscript and print', and is well known for having fused and remade both manuscripts and printed books according to his own tastes and needs – as when he oversaw the copying of supply leaves in medieval manuscripts, especially those containing Old English.[112] In the case of CCCC, MS 16, a copy of Matthew Paris, the newly restored book was intended to serve as printer's copy.[113]

I have been suggesting that Parker, for all the scale of his resources and ambition, was not unique in his understanding of the codex form as endlessly versatile. Around 1458, a century before Parker's mission, the first print-manuscript hybrid book was produced in Mainz by Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer.[114] The *Canon Missae* was a twelve-leaf publication designed to supplement manuscript missals and, being the part of the book that saw the heaviest use, was sometimes printed on more durable vellum. In practice, Fust and Schoeffer's single printed quire was inserted into both manuscript and printed missals, but there is also evidence of printed missals having been recomposed from fragments of different copies, and of manuscript leaves of the *Canon* replacing missing leaves in printed copies.[115] While the printed leaves of the *Canon* were designed to be mixed with manuscripts, some fifteenth-century manuscripts may be considered hybrid for other reasons – for example, because they were

[111] Watson, 'The Post-Medieval Library of All-Souls', p. 67.
[112] Knight, *Bound to Read*, p. 43.
[113] Parkes, 'Archaizing Hands', pp. 123–4.
[114] Eric Marshall White, 'Fust & Schoeffer's *Canon Missae* and the Invention of the Hybrid Book' (presented at the 2015–16 Book History Colloquium at Columbia University, 2016).
[115] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 42–3.

copied from print and their scribes chose to retain distinctive features such as the printer's colophon, or because they consciously employ elements of the printed page absent in their exemplars.[116] Other early print-manuscript composites may reflect their owners' wishes rather than the design of their makers. For example, Mary C. Erler has identified an early surviving example of a reader pasting manuscript pictures into a printed book: a series of eleven roundels glued into the margins or in place of initials in a Caxton psalter dated to *c.* 1480.[117] In a book culture where differences between the two media were less entrenched in the minds of readers, exchanges could flow freely, and in both directions.

This book is chiefly concerned with the migration of new (often printed) elements into old (especially manuscript) Chaucer books with the aim of improving them. By focussing principally on that form of transmission, this study highlights an overlooked pattern of textual consumption in the history of Chaucer's reception. Writing of the print-to-manuscript phenomenon, Julia Boffey has observed that the transfer of material from printed books into manuscripts 'may have posed more practical challenges [than manuscript into print] but certainly took place'.[118] Blair, meanwhile, has enumerated some of the methodological difficulties of identifying such manuscripts and adds that, as a result of this partial understanding, the copying of manuscripts from print was 'more common than one might expect'.[119] Not only did textual transfers from print into manuscript take place on a scale which is not yet fully appreciated, but they endured far beyond the incunabula period. The addition of manuscript leaves (copied from print) into printed copies where such material was wanting was a common occurrence, and this copying was done by both professional scribes and book owners themselves.[120] For instance, a verse miscellany copied in Oxford around the middle of the seventeenth century includes

[116] The term 'blended' is borrowed from Nafde; see 'Gower from Print to Manuscript', pp. 197–9 and Nafde, 'Mechanical Print Aesthetic', 120, 137.

[117] Mary C. Erler, 'Pasted-In Embellishments in English Manuscripts and Printed Books *c.* 1480–1533', *The Library*, 6th ser., 14.3 (1992), 185–206 (188). An array of examples is also provided in Julia Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London*: *c. 1475–1530* (London: British Library, 2012), pp. 45–80.

[118] Julia Boffey, 'From Manuscript to Print: Continuity and Change', in *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain 1476–1558*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 13–26 (p. 23).

[119] Ann Blair, 'Reflections on Technological Continuities: Manuscripts Copied from Printed Books', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 91.1 (2015), 7–33 (9–10, 21). For a late fifteenth-century Middle English manuscript copied, in part, from a Caxton print of Higden's *Polychronicon*, see Cosima Clara Gillhammer, 'Fifteenth-Century Compilation Methods: The Case of Oxford, Trinity College, MS 29', *RES*, 73.308 (2022), 20–41.

[120] Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 22–5.

faithful transcriptions of two pamphlets published by Wynkyn de Worde, down to the printed title page, woodcuts, colophon, printer's device, and ornaments.[121] Customisation, prestige, practicality, censorship, and devotion were all factors which might drive the copying of manuscripts from print in the handpress period.[122] Of course, the two media could interact in any number of additional configurations too. Besides manuscript-to-manuscript copying (by which means the antiquaries created new transcripts of old texts), manuscript-to-print transmission was commonplace, and lay behind many products of the press. Those printed books were regularly supplied by their readers with additional manuscript features, such as scribbled ownership marks, marginal glosses, and other hand-created embellishments. Individual surviving copies of Caxton's *Canterbury Tales* show the varied receptions that could await printed books: they might be extravagantly illuminated by hand after printing, or fused with manuscript texts and subject to a unifying scheme of decoration, or repaired with new paper and handwritten text copied from print in a later century.[123] Such incunabula have benefitted from a vast amount of prior scholarship, and are consequently well recognised as an important site of interaction between manuscript and print in the history of the Chaucerian book.[124]

Like medieval manuscripts, incunabula were sometimes also subject to schemes of readerly updating and improvement. This book occasionally draws upon those early printed copies for evidence of print-to-print transmission. In doing so, it acknowledges the overlap between practices

[121] Bodl. MS Eng. Poet. E. 97 is reproduced and discussed in Crick and Walsham, 'Introduction', pp. 12–14 and Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 327.

[122] Blair, 'Reflections on Technological Continuities', offers a useful overview on the phenomenon and its possible motivations.

[123] Respectively, these copies are Oxford, Merton College, Scr.P.2.1; Oxford, St John's College, b.2.21/266; and Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Inc.B.70. Discussed in Boffey, 'From Manuscript to Print: Continuity and Change', pp. 18–20; Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', pp. 499–501; Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 77–86; Devani Singh, 'Caxton and His Readers: Histories of Book Use in a Copy of *The Canterbury Tales* (*c.* 1483)', *JEBS*, 20 (2017), 233–49 (241–4).

[124] See, for example, Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons'; Alexandra Gillespie, 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos: Miscellanies from Manuscript to Print', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 12.1 (2000), 1–25; Satoko Tokunaga, 'Rubrication in Caxton's Early English Books, *c.* 1476–1478', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 15.1 (2012), 59–78. Studies of the reception of incunabula include David McKitterick, *The Invention of Rare Books: Private Interest and Public Memory, 1600–1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2018); and Kristian Jensen, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book: Reshaping the Past, 1780–1815* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). The Material Evidence in Incunabula Database is an invaluable resource for the study of copy-specific manuscript additions such as rubrication, decoration, and annotation. See https://data.cerl.org/mei/.

of using later editions to update fifteenth-century manuscripts and fifteenth-century printed books, and views them as a collective testament to the unprecedented scale and influence of print. However, I have largely singled out the manuscripts as a result of this book's interest in transmission across media, and specifically in print-to-manuscript transfers. As the preceding discussion has outlined, medieval manuscripts held a privileged status for early modern readers with antiquarian interests, and one which they did not always share with incunabula. McKitterick has located the emergence of an interest in the rarity (and thus value) of printed books in the late sixteenth century, and consequently begins his study of that phenomenon in 1600.[125] Kristian Jensen has likewise shown that until the late eighteenth century, the commercial resale value of incunabula in England, and even of Caxtons, was mixed.[126] For Chaucer's early modern readers, the material properties and associations of medieval manuscripts distinguished them in ways that were not automatically paralleled by the earliest printed books. In a period where scribal hands were not used to date manuscripts with any precision, handwritten books could benefit from the possibility that they 'seemeth to haue been written neare to Chaucers time', and the antiquaries further relished the thought that some manuscript copies had passed through the poet's own hands.[127] In electing to collect and renovate old handwritten copies when more legible, navigable, and current printed versions were available, early modern readers express an appreciation of the historicity of the medieval manuscript book.

The terminology of hybridity provides a convenient shorthand for describing books that elude easy classification in their sliding between manuscript and print, but such volumes would not have been recognised as 'hybrid' in their own time. In lieu of hybridity, this book considers the corrected, repaired, and expanded medieval volumes which it discusses as having been *perfected*. The idea of the perfected copy offers a historically attested concept for discussing the quality, completeness, and level of finish desired of books in the early modern period and provides a robust framework for characterising the updates that later readers made to their old books in the spirit of improvement. Thinking about the corrected, repaired, and altered medieval books in this study as perfected adds nuance

[125] McKitterick, *The Invention of Rare Books*, p. 15.
[126] Jensen, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book*, pp. 76–81.
[127] *Workes* (1602), sig. Q1^{v}. Francis Thynne, *Animadversions*, p. 6 reports that 'one coppye of some part of [Chaucer's] woorkes came to his [William Thynne's] hands subscribed in diuers places withe "examinatur Chaucer"'.

and specificity to the available scholarly vocabulary and brings us closer to viewing them as their early modern readers did. Moreover, the classification of particular genres of book use under the capacious yet more precise term of perfecting gives modern scholars and students an interpretative guide for understanding the motivations behind seemingly inscrutable, disparate, and idiosyncratic historical practices of bookish activity. This book therefore gathers historical evidence of reading, writing in, and remaking books under this umbrella concept, presenting perfecting as a practice that encapsulates a range of literate, scholarly, and bookish behaviours that are especially relevant to old volumes: glossing, correcting, emending, repairing, completing, supplementing, and authorising. In general terms, this book understands perfecting as the attempt to improve and complete a book according to a physical or imagined model. While it has become customary to apply the language of perfecting to early books which were subject to belated modern enhancements, I wish to reorient this term by recognising the currency and range of meanings it commanded for early modern makers, vendors, and readers of books.

In this, I follow Sonia Massai's observation that in the early modern period the verb *to perfect* could convey a dual sense of completing and correcting.[128] Massai classes authors, publishers, and readers within a larger category of 'annotating readers' whose activities show that 'the text preserved in early modern printed playbooks was in fact regarded as positively fluid and always in the process of being perfected'.[129] While the principal interest of her *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* is in the recovery of early modern practices of preparing copy for the press, Massai's identification of 'an early modern understanding of printed playbooks as endlessly perfectible' also entails, as she goes on to note, 'the projection of the perfecting task onto the text's very recipients, its readers'. Building upon Massai's work, I will suggest in what follows that the early modern usage of *perfect* signals the concept's imbrication in the contemporary book culture that would have been familiar to Chaucer's early modern readers.

The idea of bibliographical perfection, meaning completeness, has its lexical roots in classical ideas about bodily perfection and mutilation which had already been transposed by the early modern period to ideas about books. The Latin 'Imperfectus', John Rider's *Bibliotheca Scholastica* (1589) records, was a synonym for 'Vnperfect, maimed, or wanting some thing'.[130]

[128] Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 3–10.
[129] Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, p. 204.
[130] John Rider, *Bibliotheca Scholastica* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1589; *STC* 21031.5), sig. 2L1^{v}.

Given the word's embodied associations, it is appropriate that when the preacher Henry Smith described the restoration of the 'whole lims' of a faulty and unauthorised prior edition of his sermon, the verb he chose to characterise his work of augmentation was 'perfit'.[131] An understanding of 'perfect' close to the editorial sense proposed by Massai is also detectable in Francis Thynne's report that his father William, in his undertaking to produce the first complete folio edition of Chaucer, 'made greate serche for copies to perfecte his woorkes'.[132] Each of these statements from Smith and Thynne conceives the editorial work of perfecting – implying the augmenting and improvement of a text – as a process that takes place before a book has gone through the press.

However, a different bibliographical application of perfecting appears in Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chesse* (1625), at the point where the Fat Bishop requests information about the printing of a book he has written, to which his pawn replies, 'Ready for publication: / For I saw perfect bookes this morning (sir)'.[133] Middleton's use of 'perfect' here, which conveys the readiness of the material book for distribution after printing, is distinct from the preceding examples. The two senses of perfect – to describe books that are both improved and complete – are blended in the prefatory epistle to Shakespeare's First Folio (1623), which describes the plays in terms of the editors' labours and the resulting book's definitiveness:

> we pray you do not envie his friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them.[134]

Heminge and Condell's sales pitch puns on the corporeal and bibliographical resonances of 'perfect' to suggest that the formerly 'maimed' and

[131] Henry Smith, *Sermon of the Benefit of Contentation* (London: Abell Jeffes, 1591; *STC* 22696.5), sig. A2^{r}; discussed in Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, p. 5.

[132] Thynne, *Animadversions*, p. 6.

[133] Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chesse* (London: [s.n.], 1625; *STC* 17885), sig. D3^{v}. Discussed in Aaron T. Pratt and Kathryn James, *Collated and Perfect* (West Haven, CT: GHP, 2019), p. 31, https://hrc.utexas.edu/collections/early-books-and-manuscripts/pdf/Collated-and-Perfect.pdf. See also the use of perfect books as a synonym for 'gathered books' (meaning sets of printed sheets assembled into complete copies) in Joseph Moxon, *Moxon's Mechanick Exercises, or, The Doctrine of Handyworks Applied to the Art of Printing*, ed. by Theodore Low De Vinne, 2 vols. (New York: Typothetæ of the City of New York, 1896), II, p. 380.

[134] William Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623; *STC* 22273), sig. A3^{r}.

'deformed' copies are 'cur'd, and perfect of their limbes' because their textual and material integrity has been restored. These examples from Middleton and Shakespeare's playbooks evoke the world inside or near the printhouse, though they use 'perfect' not to denote the behind-the-scenes work that happens before printing but as an adjective to characterise printed books on the threshold of their delivery to readers – in other words, completed.[135] Further evidence that 'perfect' could refer to a general sense of textual and bibliographical completeness is supplied by Guy Miège's *A new dictionary French and English* (1677), in which 'perfected' and 'finished' are treated as synonyms in two of the translator's example sentences:

> ALMOST, *presque, quasi, à peu pres.*
> This Book is almost perfected, *ce livre est presque achevé.*[136]
>
> Achevé, *finished, ended, concluded.*
> Ce Livre est presqu'achevé, *this Book is almost finished.*[137]

Although Miège's sample definitions are by necessity stripped of any context, the choice of a bookish example to illustrate the usage of *achevé*, which he translates as finished or perfected, shows the specifically bibliographical associations of the concept of perfecting. This broader definition of 'perfect' to mean 'finished' in early modern English also operates in Robert Herrick's lyric poem 'His Request to Julia' (1648):

> Julia, if I chance to die
> Ere I print my Poetry;
> I most humbly thee desire
> To commit it to the fire:
> Better 'twere my Book were dead,
> Then to live not perfected.

Herrick's latest editors gloss 'perfected' in the final line as 'successfully completed', noting of the lyric that despite its playful tone, it more seriously 'suggests that [Herrick] saw print as the fulfilment of his ambition, with MS circulation an insufficient end'.[138] 'Perfect', then, was

[135] As Pratt notes, 'perfect' in Middleton here refers to the fact that 'all of the sheets had gone through the press and were gathered into individual copies for distribution'; *Collated and Perfect*, p. 31.
[136] Guy Miège, *A new dictionary French and English, with another English and French* (London: Thomas Dawks, 1677; Wing M2016), sig. $^{2}C1^{r}$.
[137] Miège, *A new dictionary French and English*, sig. $*C2^{r}$.
[138] Robert Herrick, *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. by Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly (Oxford University Press, 2013), 1. Accessed via Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (2014), doi:10.1093/actrade/9780199212842.book.1.

a positive label regularly applied to books whose production was complete and which were deemed to be finished and ready for sale.

Perhaps most significantly, the use of the adjective 'perfect' to describe books which were well printed, finished, and available for distribution is also apparent in numerous warranties of perfection issued by booksellers in the seventeenth century. Such texts, in which a stationer makes a written pledge as to a book's completeness, show that bibliographical perfection was a well-established concept for stationers and readers in the early modern trade, and one that was of real economic consequence. These booksellers' warranties allowed early modern readers to shore up their purchases against sloppy work in the printhouse. Evidence of one such transaction survives on a folio-sized paper leaf which is now detached from the book in which it was originally written:

> Bought of ffrancis Smethwicke
> y^e^ 6th of ffebruary 1639 and he
> doeth warent it to be perfit or to
> make it perfeit or to give hime
> his mony againe[139]

Smethwicke's warranty of the book's completeness is atypical in its thoroughness and in his money-back guarantee, while the promise to 'make it perfeit' if it is found to be otherwise reveals that the act of making perfect (whatever that could mean in this context) was an available avenue for improving incomplete books. Stationers and readers alike were accustomed to this sort of improvisation to repair and resolve problems in a book's production, notably in the supplying of both printed and manuscript supplements to furnish text that had been missed out during the printing process.[140] John Buxton, a member of the gentry who kept meticulous accounts during the early seventeenth century, records having paid six shillings 'for the changing of Shak-spheares works for on that is p*er*fect' around 1627.[141] The nature of the imperfection in Buxton's First Folio is unspecified; it might have been badly printed, as has been posited,[142] but

[139] Now Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, X.d.254; see LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection, 'Note concerning the purchase of a book from the bookseller Francis Smethwicke', https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/s/u4pq95. My thanks to Ben Higgins for drawing this note to my attention.

[140] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 102–8, 126, 127.

[141] David McKitterick, '"Ovid with a Littleton": The Cost of English Books in the Early Seventeenth Century', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 11.2 (1997), 184–234 (215).

[142] Michael Dobson, 'Whatever you do, buy', *London Review of Books*, 23.22 (15 November 2001), www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v23/n22/michael-dobson/whatever-you-do-buy.

the fact that Buxton was willing to pay for the privilege of making the trade suggests to me that the damage had been done not in the printshop, but as a result of readerly use. These possibilities for perfecting show the early modern book's existence on a continuum between an imagined ideal of textual fixity and the flexibility born of its material existence. Booksellers might promise that printed books were perfect and complete, but there was always some degree of variance inherent to its production by human hands and eyes, and those that fell short of the ideal could be retroactively perfected according to the means and wishes of their readers.[143]

It has been suggested that booksellers' warranties of perfection for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'related more frequently to new books' (in contrast to the claims of perfection that attached to antiquarian volumes from the eighteenth century).[144] As Aaron Pratt has shown, however, warranties of perfection could be applied to printed books on the second-hand market as well. Pratt has identified three seventeenth-century books which were decades old when they were sold with warranties of perfection inscribed by their booksellers. He observes that in all three cases (plus for a fourth, undated example) the warranties accompany thick books and might have been 'occasioned by a large number of leaves and an awareness that second-hand copies might be missing one or more of them'.[145] In one of these notes, inscribed on the final verso of a copy of John Gerard's *The Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes* (1597), there is evidence of a forward-thinking bookseller, Richard Whittaker, also trying to drum up future business at the point of sale. On 3 December 1632, Whittaker wrote, 'I doe warrant this to bee of the last Impression and Perfect', going on to add that 'if Mr Caprle please to change it for one of the new Impression when it commeth out', he will exchange the old edition with the newly printed one for an extra twenty shillings, provided the first edition is still in good condition.[146] In this case, the bookseller's promise is not simply a *pro forma* guarantee of the old book's completeness. It also serves as an insurance policy for the buyer against his copy becoming superseded, and a savvy play for future sales on the part of Whittaker who, it transpires, was involved in publishing the second edition which would

[143] McKitterick suggests that imperfectly printed books were so common that they were 'merely an irritant' and not systematically insured. See *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 147–9.
[144] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, p. 147.
[145] These are a note by Nathaniel Nowell dated 21 June 1666 in a 1640 folio herbal; a note by Richard Whittaker and dated 3 December 1632 in a 1597 herbal; and a note by a bookseller named Lee and dated 21 June 1664 in a book printed in 1637; see Pratt, *Collated and Perfect*, pp. 29–30.
[146] Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, *STC* 11750 copy 6, sig. 5I4^{v}.

appear in the following year.[147] To these may be added three further seventeenth-century English warranties reported by F. C. Francis (which appear in Continental books printed seven, twenty-seven, and fifty-five years prior to their second-hand sale), and a 1649 warranty inscribed by the bookseller Sarah Jones in a copy of Shakespeare's Second Folio (1632).[148]

This overlap between completeness and currency and their relation to the idea of the perfect book is expressed in the address 'To the Candid and Ingenious Reader' which prefaces the collected *Workes* (1629) of the clergyman Thomas Adams. He writes, 'I cannot but take notice, that much iniurie hath beene done to the buyers of such great bookes, by new additions: so that by the swelling of the later impressions, the former are esteemed vnperfect'.[149] Adams's assurances point to a slippage between material and textual perfection: a book, however complete it may be at the time of purchase, may nonetheless be 'esteemed vnperfect' in relation to later editions which have been augmented or 'swelled' with more material. For his part, Adams promises his readers that the volume they hold in their hands will never become outdated because any future work he produces 'shall be published by it selfe, and neuer preiudice this', the definitive collected edition.

It emerges from this array of evidence that 'perfect' could be used to describe printed books that were complete, finished, ready for distribution, and fully realised. A perfect book was a complete one and an imperfect or 'vnperfect' one was its opposite which was wanting in some way, either because it was faulty, damaged, or simply out of date. This latter condition, of no longer being current and therefore deemed incomplete, was a type of imperfection to which old books were naturally susceptible. But happily for such a book, as Smethwicke reassured his customer in 1639, it was possible 'to make it perfeit' again. The righting of imperfect books was a responsibility shouldered by stationers as well as by customers of the early modern book trade. The shared nature of this burden is most plainly visible in the

[147] John Gerard, *The herball or Generall historie of plantes* (London: for Adam Islip, Joyce Norton, and Richard Whitaker, 1633; *STC* 11751).

[148] The books which Francis reports as containing dated booksellers' warranties are Wolfgang Musculus, *In Esaiam prophetam commentarii* (Basel, 1623), Nicolaus Gorranus, *In quatuour Euangelia commentarius* (Antwerp, 1617), and Jean de Serres, *Opera quae extant omnia* [Plato] (Geneva, 1578). See F. C. Francis, 'Booksellers' Warranties', *The Library*, 5th ser., 1.3–4 (1946), 244–5. The copy of the Second Folio in which Sarah Jones's inscription can be found is now held at the Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library and may be a made-up copy; see Shakespeare Census, 'STC 22274 Fo. 2 no. 03', https://shakespearecensus.org/copy/177/. The inscription is also discussed in Kitamura Sae, 'A Shakespeare of One's Own: Female Users of Playbooks from the Seventeenth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century', *Palgrave Communications*, 3.1 (2017), 1–9.

[149] Thomas Adams, *The workes of Tho: Adams* (London: Thomas Harper, 1629; *STC* 105), sig. ¶3^{r}.

ubiquitous errata notices which encourage readers to correct and amend faults escaped in the book's printing, and many of which directly instruct them to take up their pens to do so.[150] Heidi Brayman Hackel makes the connection explicit in her observation that 'the invitation to "amend" a book from an errata sheet placed readers in the position of "perfecting" printed books'.[151] But what happens to our understanding of historical reading practices if we remove the distance-inducing scare quotes with which the word 'perfecting' is punctuated in this formulation? The preceding discussion has shown that early modern stationers and their customers thought about books in terms of perfection and imperfection. By extension, these terms give book historians another way of apprehending the social, cultural, and economic value that accrued to old and new books, and a framework for interpreting evidence of readers' engagement with them.

My evidence for bibliographical perfecting has so far been confined to products of the press. To what extent was the early modern idea of the perfect book applicable to the manuscripts that form the centre of this study? It is apparent that perfecting was practised in both media. Although booksellers' warranties appear chiefly in relation to printed books, this was not universally the case. On the first leaf of a fourteenth-century parchment missal which had previously been at All Souls College, Oxford, there is a sixteenth-century note which closely echoes those warranties inscribed in printed books: 'Hic liber emptus a garbrando for xs. and if it do lacke anie parte he dothe promisse to make it complete'.[152] The bookseller from whom the book was bought may be Oxford's Garbrand Herks – whom we may recall bought books from the college in 1549–50 and sold them second-hand – or his son, Richard, who inherited his father's business including his 'old parchment bookes'.[153] Regrettably, this Sarum missal is now missing twenty-eight leaves, and it is not clear how 'Garbrando', who surely sold printed wares as well as manuscripts, might have proposed 'to make it complete' but it is conceivable that a manuscript replacement leaf would have been supplied for the purpose.[154] I would venture that some of

[150] Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 95–6.

[151] Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 30.

[152] Oxford, All Souls College, MS 302, fol. 1^{r}; see *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of All Souls College, Oxford*, ed. by Andrew G. Watson (Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 219; and Watson, 'The Post-Medieval Library of All-Souls', p. 88.

[153] Watson, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 219. For Herks's will, see 'Garbrand HARCKS of Oxford', *Oxfordshire Family History Society*, http://wills.oxfordshirefhs.org.uk/az/wtext/harkes_001.html.

[154] As McKitterick notes, manuscript was regularly used to make good printed copies in which text was wanting; *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order*, pp. 102–8, 126–7.

the material techniques for perfecting manuscripts detailed in the subsequent chapters would have been recognisable to the Herkses and their manuscript-buying clients. By the late eighteenth century, when Eliza Dennis Denyer undertook a project of repairing a fifteenth-century psalter by supplying missing text and rendering lost pictures, borders, and illuminated capitals in her own hand and style, the verb used to describe her efforts was 'perfected'.[155] As such cases illustrate, an appreciation of antiquity was not inimical to altering old books in the spirit of improvement. For those interested in the textual and codicological integrity of medieval manuscripts, enhancing and repairing them was a vital practice which elevated their utility, value, or beauty, and made them more, not less, worthy of preservation. To understand such volumes as perfected is to access a reader's-eye view of old books as open-ended, flexible, and conducive to adaptation and improvement.

Often, it was a worry about the state of the text, specifically its accuracy and completeness, that spurred the early modern urge to perfect old books in these ways. These concerns about the integrity of Chaucer's texts, and the reasons one might remedy them, are articulated in a *c.* 1555 revision of *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* undertaken by Walter Stevins. He observes in a preface 'To the Reader' that he found Chaucer's text 'corrupte and false in so many and sondrie places' and 'dyd not a lytell mervell if a booke showld come oute of his handes so imp*er*fite and indigest'. Significantly, Stevins takes Chaucer's exceptionality as axiomatic and justifies his work of perfecting the text of the *Astrolabe* on that basis. Chaucer's 'other workes' are 'reckenyd for the best that ever weare sette fowrth in owre english tonge' and are 'taken for a manifest argumente of his singuler witte, and generalitie in all kindes of knowledge'. He goes on to detail the nature of his interventions: 'in some places wheare the sentences weare imperfite I haue supplied and filled the*m* as necessitie required'. Finally, he professes to have carried out these labours for the sake of Chaucer and the work itself, 'which if it had come parfite vnto owr handes (no dowbte) woold have merited wonderfulle praise'.[156] For Stevins, the text of the *Astrolabe* was unbefitting the author because it was 'imperfite' and he imagines himself as restoring it to the 'parfite' state written by Chaucer. The circumstances surrounding Stevins's revision leave some doubt as to whether he was referring to 'imperfect' printed or

[155] For an account of Denyer's life and her work on BL, Additional MS 6894, see Sonja Drimmer, 'A Medieval Psalter "Perfected": Eighteenth-Century Conservationism and an Early (Female) Restorer of Rare Books and Manuscripts', *British Library Journal*, Article 3 (2013), 1–38.

[156] BL, MS Sloane 261, fols. 3^{r}–4^{r}.

manuscript versions of the text (or both), but the fair copy in which his revisions survive suggests that he planned to circulate his own 'newlye amendyd' version in print.[157] Indeed, it has been judged by A. E. Brae that Stevins's text of the *Astrolabe* 'possesses almost the authority of a printed book zealously edited; and indeed it is very much more correct than any of the printed copies'.[158] Stevins's editorial attention to the *Astrolabe* matters here not only because he intervened to improve its text and framed his amendments in terms of perfecting, but also because (as he tells it) his work was warranted by Chaucer's status as the paragon of English letters. His comments make explicit the assumptions around Chaucer's singularity and superiority which were widely held but, because they were seen as self-evident, were seldom expressed by the perfecting readers who undertook such work.

Naturally, the verb *to perfect* included the more general meaning of improving something, but this brief history shows that perfecting had a deep and particular resonance within the bibliographical lexicon of the early modern period.[159] To perfect a text might mean to edit and correct it, whereas the adjectival sense designated texts and books which were finished and fully realised (sometimes by the author), and the obverse *imperfect* was applied to faulty or incomplete ones. Historians of the book increasingly recognise the seeming borderland between manuscript and early print as an illimitable site of overlap and exchange. It should be no surprise, then, that a book culture which had learned to think about and value books in terms of their completeness would apply these judgements and desires to volumes new and old, in print and in manuscript. As I demonstrate in the chapters that follow, old written copies were known to be plagued by the same concerns about incompleteness, inaccuracy, and authority which troubled print in this period, and the notion that books could be updated, expanded, and corrected was not confined to contemporary volumes. This book attends to some of those manuscripts which book historians might call hybrid, and recasts them in terms of the practice of perfecting. In the process, it suggests that a sharper understanding of pre-modern book

[157] Stevins's manuscript preface indicates that he was familiar with printed versions of the text but Brae suggests that another manuscript (BL, MS Sloane 314) 'was obviously in the possession of him who wrote 261 – probably the very original from which he copied it'; see Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Treatise on the Astrolabe Edited with Notes and Illustrations*, ed. by A. E. Brae (London: John Russell Smith, 1870), p. 6.

[158] Brae, *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, p. 6.

[159] Pratt, *Collated and Perfect*, p. 31. See also *OED*, 'perfect, *v.*', 2. Subsequent references to the *OED* also refer to its online version, www.oed.com.

culture may be gained from reconceiving such volumes not as hybrid oddities but as having been renovated in the spirit of improvement.

In the printhouses of the early nineteenth century, the verb *to perfect* would come to refer to the impression of the second forme on a sheet.[160] Concurrently, 'making perfect' would become a well-attested phenomenon amongst nineteenth-century collectors, who often had missing leaves in printed books supplied from other copies or with pen facsimile.[161] Although they differ in their detail, these uses of 'perfect' retain the vestigial sense of finishing an otherwise incomplete book – a sense which already had currency in the early modern period. By antedating the well-established later senses of perfecting to the preceding centuries, we may better account for the habits of reading and use early modern owners brought to their books. The readerly techniques and acts of remaking that the following chapters chart in relation to Chaucer will be recognisable to anyone who has spent enough time with medieval manuscripts, but the lexicon for describing and understanding these practices has remained underdeveloped. Thinking about these acts in terms of perfecting grants access to a richer vocabulary for describing what early modern readers did to their manuscripts and provides a new lens on the range of value assigned to different kinds of books in the period.

That early modern readers and owners modified their books is not a new observation, but the choices that they made with a view to improving their manuscripts altered them in suggestive, meaningful ways. Today, scholarship has moved on from condemning the 'deplorable methods' of an age which 'approved the restoration, physically as well as conjecturally, not only of what the author was believed to have written, but what they might have written had they been in possession of other sources of information'.[162] Such judgements have given way to more accommodating views of the past, some of which have been best expressed in those studies of Matthew Parker which acknowledge the relationship between the remaking of old books and the production of meaning. The Parker Librarian R. I. Page once observed that the manuscripts in his care were

[160] *OED*, 'perfect, *v.*', 1(b); for a description of the process see Gaskell, *Bibliography*, pp. 131–3. It is not clear, however, that this usage was in place during the early modern period, when 'reiteration' was the term used to designate this process in printers' manuals. For example, see Christophe Plantin, *Calligraphy & Printing in the Sixteenth Century: Dialogue Attributed to Christopher Plantin in French and Flemish Facsimile*, ed. by Ray Nash (Antwerp: Plantin-Moretus Museum, 1964), p. 248; Moxon, *Moxon's Mechanick Exercises*, II, p. 326.

[161] Sarah Werner, *Studying Early Printed Books, 1450–1800: A Practical Guide* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), pp. 136–7.

[162] May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 36.

'in a sense sixteenth-century ones'.[163] Siân Echard, who cites Page's provocative formulation in a later piece, concludes that 'When Matthew Parker performed surgery on his books, he was usually trying to complete or improve them in some way'.[164] But Parker was not alone in this, and in this book I delineate the insights into Chaucer's reception that may be gained from taking these bibliographical improvements seriously – that is, by studying the principal forms they assumed, and the ends to which they aspired. Such an inquiry reveals a set of early modern assumptions and preferences about Chaucer and his works. The chapters of this book identify and discuss the various means by which early modern readers perfected Chaucerian manuscripts: (1) glossing, correcting, and emending; (2) repairing and completing; (3) supplementing; and (4) authorising. Reading, annotating, and book use are often characterised as highly idiosyncratic activities. Organising the chapters by particular genres of readerly activity rather than by manuscript or text allows for the emergence of common threads from pieces of evidence which might seem anomalous or exceptional in isolation. In each chapter I show that the pattern of reading in question may be connected to broader cultural preoccupations with Chaucer and his works in the period. Thus, the correctors, glossators, and emendators of Chapter 1 convey their anxiety about the intelligibility and accuracy of Chaucer's language as it has been received; the readers in Chapter 2 try to make good old books in pursuit of imagined ideals of bibliographic completeness; those in Chapter 3 reveal their preconceptions about the Chaucerian canon as they augment old copies with additional texts; and the readers in Chapter 4 show their desire to know the author and define his works. Every chapter illuminates the role of print in informing and shaping these readerly expectations and beliefs. Accordingly, the modifications made by such readers signal their appreciation of a set of print conventions surrounding Chaucer whose importance has long been acknowledged but whose impact has been harder to document. Taken together, the book's chapters illustrate that the relationships between medieval manuscripts and early modern printed books cast new light on Chaucer's reception in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though the chapters of this work identify persistent patterns in the early modern reception of the medieval manuscript book, its claims are not exhaustive, nor are they applicable to the entire corpus of surviving

[163] Page, 'Transcription of Old English', p. 6, qtd. in Echard, 'Containing the Book', p. 106. See also Summit, *Memory's Library*, pp. 102–14.
[164] Echard, 'Containing the Book', p. 114.

fifteenth-century Chaucer manuscripts. Its approach is necessarily selective, and my intention is to assemble manuscripts into new formations and to illuminate what their shared histories of reception reveal about Chaucer in the early modern period.

The single-author approach this study takes is facilitated by Chaucer's exceptional place within literary history, for he presents us with the most successful example of how Middle English texts which circulated widely in manuscript were transmitted to readers in a new medium and age. While no other medieval English author enjoyed Chaucer's enduring presence in printed books, he was by no means the only one whose works were repackaged as goods for that burgeoning marketplace. The methods for studying reception that I employ in the ensuing chapters might therefore be applied to studies of the surviving medieval manuscripts of Gower, Langland, and Lydgate, who all received some treatment in early modern print, and whose names (or at least works, in the case of *Piers Plowman*) were well known in the literary and antiquarian circles of England. Other scholars have already identified some of the tangible effects that the entry of these Middle English authors into print had on the afterlives of their manuscripts and on their later reception. For instance, Sarah Kelen has located echoes of the first printed edition of *Piers* in the prophetic interpretations of that text by early modern readers of manuscripts.[165] The scribe of one fifteenth-century copy of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, meanwhile, is known to have used a Caxton edition (1483) as an exemplar.[166] More subtle traces of print's influence on late medieval and early modern reading may well exist in the nearly fifty medieval manuscripts of the *Confessio* that still survive.

It is appropriate at this point to pause over the use of 'readers' in my title. Recent scholarship has acknowledged the problem of classifying idiosyncratic readerly habits and has attempted to accommodate their variety under a more generous concept of 'book use' that has gradually displaced the discourse of reading alone. Books were not only read, many historians of the book assert, but actively used as well, for purposes ranging from handwriting practice, to recording milestones in the lives of their owners, to political self-fashioning.[167] The people whose traces I find in Chaucer's

[165] Sarah A. Kelen, *Langland's Early Modern Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 37–8.

[166] On this manuscript, Bodl. MS Hatton 51, and its exemplar, see Nafde, 'Gower from Print to Manuscript'.

[167] William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

medieval manuscripts often show themselves to be attentive and studious readers, and their cognitive engagement with the book took diverse textual and material forms which reflect their concerns with accuracy, completeness, and authority, all variously conceived. The labours of the attentive reader have come to be emblematised by the image of the bookwheel, an early modern contraption made of wood and cog-wheels which allowed the seated individual to cycle smoothly through open copies of multiple books. As Jardine and Grafton write in their study of Renaissance polymath and aspiring courtier Gabriel Harvey, the bookwheel 'belongs to Harvey's cultural moment, in which collation and parallel citation were an essential, constructive part of a particular kind of reading'.[168] This book uncovers additional cases of readers who were similarly at home in this intellectual milieu, who pored over Chaucerian manuscripts and read them in parallel with different copies of the same text. In doing so, it excavates histories of readers and their books, as well as relationships between books that existed in physical proximity, or which were simply connected in the imaginations of their readers. When this book speaks of readers, then, it does so in order to acknowledge their embeddedness in the matrix of early modern book culture, and is cognizant that the historical practices it studies often defy any strict definition of the term.

Fittingly for a book which charts the interweaving of past and present and invokes Chaucer's untimeliness, I take a broad view of another term from my title: 'early modern'. As Carolyn Dinshaw has noted in a study of medieval asynchrony which also pointedly critiques the idea of historical time, 'period boundaries are inadequate in the face of the complexity of temporal and cultural phenomena'.[169] The misfit is amplified when the materials under discussion are temporally elusive – when it is impossible to date for certain a particular annotator's hand on palaeographic evidence alone, or to determine exactly which of three similar Chaucer editions a copyist used for their transcription. I specify individual instances of reading and reception as precisely as is possible and use the early modern period to mean the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but by necessity this book also ranges more widely, from its discussions of fifteenth-century printed books, manuscripts, and scribes to eighteenth-century editors who played their own part in perfecting old copies of Chaucer. Alongside this study's historical specificity, in other words, is a sense of the Chaucerian

[168] Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, '"Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past & Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78 (48).
[169] Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 19.

book as an object on the move through time. In this way, it models and contributes to a vision of book history articulated by Peter Stallybrass – one that 'should make us think of all history in terms of multiple (overlapping and intersecting) temporalities rather than the punctual time of specific dates and periods'.[170] In drawing attention to practices of reading Chaucer manuscripts in an age which redefined him in print, this book elucidates the layered, often messy, relationships between old and newer books. These are challenging objects which resist easy binaries and prompt a recognition of the Chaucerian book as a perennial site of both historical continuity and reinvention. To observe the movement of these volumes in time is to witness the persistence and transformations of the past through periods of substantial technological, cultural, and linguistic change.

[170] The quotation appears in an unpublished piece by Stallybrass, cited in Harris, *Untimely Matter*, pp. 17–18.

CHAPTER 1

Glossing, Correcting, and Emending

1.1 Chaucer's Japes

One of the most prominent markers of Chaucer's elevation as a subject of historical inquiry was the philological attention accorded to his language by early modern readers. Nestled in the glossary of old and obscure words accompanying Thomas Speght's 1602 edition of the *Workes* is a textual curio which brings contemporary concerns with Chaucer's language to the fore. Written in rhyming couplets, the tale is included as part of the glossary's first entry under the letter *I* and details an extraordinary encounter between a medieval book and an early modern reader:

> *Jape*, (prolog.) Jest, a word by abuse growen odious, and therfore by a certain curious gentlewoman scraped out in her Chaucer: whereupon her seruing man writeth thus:
>
> My mistres cannot be content,
> To take a jest as Chaucer ment,
> But using still a womans fashion
> Allowes it in the last translation:
> She cannot with a word dispence,
> Although I know she loues the sence.
> For such an vse the world hath got,
> That wordes are sinnes, but deeds are not.[1]

In Chaucer's Middle English, a jape is a trick or a frivolity, or the act of conducting one; the Parson uses it as a synonym for a trifling tale.[2] But by

[1] *Workes* (1602), sig. 3T6[r]. These verses also appear on fol. 136[v] in a fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* (Bodl. MS Rawlinson Poetry 149) in a hand contemporary with Speght and beside the name 'Mr Iohn anthonie'. The lines eventually passed into wider circulation via John Hilton's musical compilation *Catch That Catch Can* (London: for John Benson and John Playford, 1652; Wing H2036), sig. F1[r].

[2] *Canterbury Tales*, X.1024; unless otherwise specified, all quotations of Chaucer are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2008). On contemporary anxiety towards Chaucer's obsolete language and a discussion of 'jape' in Speght, see

Speght's time, *jape* had expanded its semantic range to include seduction and other sexual acts.[3] That the old word had 'growen odious' is attested by various knowing allusions to Chaucer's jests in the late sixteenth century. The offending party in this story, however, is not Chaucer's language but the uninformed reader herself, whose feigned modesty results in her erasure of the poet's harmless words. Her servant, to whom Speght attributes the verses, is quick to mock his mistress's prudish sensibilities. The anecdote's wit relies on this tension between women's linguistic restraint and sexual licentiousness. It singles out hypocritical female readers who censor and alter Chaucer's words although they '[love] the sence', and the joke, such as it is, is ultimately on them.

Elizabethan writers, too, exploited the semantic slipperiness of Chaucer's old word *jape* (and its related euphemisms) for comedic ends. Misodiaboles, the pseudonymous author of the pamphlet *Ulisses upon Ajax* (1596), invokes the two distinct types of Chaucerian jest in his pithy description of a certain married gentlewoman who unsuccessfully tries to seduce a tenant farmer: 'A pleasant we*n*ch of the country (who besides *Chaucers* jest, had a great felicitie in jesting)'.[4] The anonymous university play *The Returne from Parnassus I* (1597) presents a more extended joke on this theme. In one scene, the scholar Ingenioso tries to impress the foolish patron Gullio with his ability to compose poetry in the Chaucerian, Spenserian, and Shakespearean styles.[5] The patron Gullio requests a Chaucerian-style composition for his mistress: 'Lett me heare Chaucer's vaine firste. I love / Antiquitie, if it be not harsh'. Ingenioso duly delivers three stanzas of Middle English pastiche modelled on *Troilus and Criseyde*, which quickly descend into mockery: 'For if a painter a pike woulde painte / With asse's feet and headed like an ape, It corded not; sow were it but a jape'. Gullio interjects to express his displeasure at the unusual composition:

> GULL. . . . Besides, thers a worde in the laste canto
> which my chaste Ladye will never endure the reading of.

Lucy Munro, *Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590–1674* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 86–91.

[3] The semantic transformations of *jape* in the early modern period, as well as their impact on Speght's editorial choices concerning the word's spelling, are detailed in Daniel J. Ransom, 'Speght's Jape: A Word History and an Editor at Work', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 118.4 (2019), 517–43.

[4] 'Misodiaboles', *Ulisses upon Ajax* (London: R. Robinson, 1596; *STC* 12782), sig. E8^{v}. George Whetstone's *I Promos and Cassandra* (London: John Charlewood, 1578; *STC* 25347) refers to 'Sir *Chaucers* jests' as 'the fruits of love', sig. B3^{r}.

[5] The passage is discussed in Johan Kerling, *Chaucer in Early English Dictionaries: The Old-Word Tradition in English Lexicography down to 1721 and Speght's Chaucer Glossaries* (Leiden University Press, 1979), p. 14 and at length in Munro, *Archaic Style*, pp. 86–91.

. . .

INGEN. Sir, the worde as Chaucer useth it hath noe unhonest meaninge in it, for it signifieth a jeste.
GULL. Tush! Chaucer is a foole, and you are another for defending of him.[6]

This trio of examples attributing to Chaucer the word *jape* and the euphemised *jest* – in Speght's edition, a pamphlet, and an academic play – date from the late Elizabethan period, when the Middle English language was becoming increasingly difficult for contemporary readers to understand. Strikingly, each story harnesses the suggestive ambiguity of Chaucer's English to gesture playfully towards the female sexual appetite. The three women described by the serving man, Misodiaboles, and Gullio respectively might diverge in their reactions to japing as word or deed, but the possibility of female licentiousness lurks in the background of each account. Whether the case of the censorious gentlewoman in Speght, the 'wench of the country', or Gullio's supposedly chaste mistress, each anecdote excavates the transgressive potential of Chaucer's language to set up familiar tropes about women's sexual modesty or immodesty. Such jokes revel in their use of what was, for the Elizabethans, an explicit word.[7] But if Chaucer's language provided comic fodder for some writers, it proved a more serious problem for his proponents, who harboured the pervasive worry that archaic language was prone to ambiguity and miscommunication.

It is a problem raised by George Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), during his discussion of the Greek *Cacemphaton* or 'figure of foule speech'. Puttenham highlights cases 'when we vse such wordes as may be drawen to vnshamefast sence, as one that would say to a young woman, *I pray you let me iape with you*, which in deed is no more but let me sport with you'. Although such figures are 'in some cases tollerable, and chiefly to the intent to mooue laughter, and to make sport, or to giue it some prety strange grace', he cautions that 'the very sounding of the word were not commendable . . . For it may be taken in another peruerser sence by that sorte of persons that heare it'.[8] This rhetorical figure may legitimately serve a ludic purpose, but such words may also be misinterpreted or 'drawen to

[6] *The Three Parnassus Plays (1598–1601)*, ed. by James B. Leishman (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1949), ll. 1144–79.
[7] See Jackson Campbell Boswell and Sylvia Wallace Holton, 'References to Chaucer's Literary Reputation', *ChR*, 31.3 (1997), 291–316 (306, 308) for two further allusions to Chaucer's jests in the early seventeenth century.
[8] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Richard Field, 1589; *STC* 20519.5), sig. 2E4^{v}.

vnshamefast sence' by others. Thomas Middleton's *No Wit/ Help Like a Woman's* (1611), too, makes a point about the challenge of preserving female modesty amidst linguistic instability and change when one character wonders, 'How many honest words have suffered corruption since Chaucer's days? A virgin would speak those words then that a very midwife would blush to hear new'.[9]

Speght's *Workes* was well aware of this capacity of words to slide between propriety and offensiveness. A recent essay by Daniel J. Ransom which investigates Speght's use of *jape* in the 1598 and 1602 texts shows that the editor appears, for a time, to have opted for the less offensive emendation *yape* so as 'to make a visually and aurally clear distinction between the disreputable word and the word as Chaucer used it'.[10] The anecdote about the serving man's mistress which he prints likewise tries to rein in faulty interpretations, assuring readers that the true meaning of *jape*, 'as Chaucer ment', was nothing more than a jest, a joke, or a gibe.[11] By including the rhyme about the curious gentlewoman, Speght's wider point is a self-congratulatory one: reading Chaucer with his glossary, then the most extensive key to Middle English ever printed, prevents readers from making embarrassing mistakes and assumptions about what 'Chaucer ment'.

Speght's glossary offered a tidy solution to such problems of reading Chaucer's difficult words, but it does not fully account for readers like the serving man's offended mistress. As a reader who takes to the writing surface to 'scrape out' the odious word, she is more likely to have read her Chaucer not in a printed edition of Speght, but in an early manuscript whose parchment leaves would better tolerate the erasure here described. We might imagine her reading Chaucer in an old, scribally copied book and, lacking the apparatus handily furnished in Speght's edition, or a sufficient knowledge of Chaucer's Middle English, taking knife to parchment skin to remove it.

This vignette may preserve nothing more than a story invented for humorous effect, and we need not accept Speght's account that a serving man really wrote these verses, or indeed the verses' own tale of a female reader rubbing rude words out of a manuscript. What is clear is that this fictional reader had real early modern counterparts who continued to read Chaucer in manuscript, and who form the subject of this book. The evidence in surviving copies, which this chapter presents, affirms the

[9] Jackson Campbell Boswell, 'New References to Chaucer, 1641–1660', *ChR*, 45.4 (2011), 435–65 (460).
[10] Ransom, 'Speght's Jape', 534. [11] *OED*, 'jape, *n.*', 2.

willingness of such readers to gloss, correct, and emend Chaucer's Middle English as they found it. Their myriad interventions on the page – in the form of erasure, crossing out, overwriting, and additions – document the commitment of early modern readers to improving and updating the version of Chaucer's language that survived in older manuscript books. Alongside energetic Renaissance debates about literary archaism and the perils of old-fashioned 'Chaucerisms', readers wondered about the meaning of this language and the accuracy of the books that preserved it. The textual and philological attention that early modern readers accorded to Chaucer takes its cue from contemporary printed books. That readers often used printed exemplars as the basis for their manuscript corrections, glosses, and emendations conveys their belief in the narratives of print's reliability promoted in those very books.[12]

1.2 Against Chaucerisms

The case of *jape* would indicate that the archaism of Chaucer's words caused them to be sometimes censured for their coarseness and indelicacy, but the prevailing evidence suggests that his words were more likely to be shunned for their sheer difficulty to early modern readers. These debates about the language's incomprehensibility played out in contemporary commentaries and in the pages of Speght's editions themselves – only to be swiftly despatched. A prefatory letter by the judge Francis Beaumont (d. 1598) which was included in the editions' preliminaries acknowledges the duality of the charges against Chaucer's language: 'first that many of his wordes (as it were with ouerlong lying) are growne too hard and vnpleasant, and next that hee is somewhat too broad in some of his speeches'.[13] As with *jape* itself, a word with which early modern commentators explored the transgressive limits of Chaucer's language and the deeds it describes, 'broad' here carries both a linguistic and moral charge, of which Chaucer must be cleared. Beaumont does so by asserting the poet's commitment to the Horatian principle of decorum, exemplified in Chaucer's aspiration to 'touch all sortes of men, and to discouer all vices of the Age' by reporting them truthfully.[14]

[12] On the similar preference for printed over manuscript legal records exhibited by some Elizabethan lawyers, see Ian Williams, '"He Creditted More the Printed Booke": Common Lawyers' Receptivity to Print, *c*. 1550–1640', *Law and History Review*, 28.1 (2010), 39–70.

[13] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]4^{v}.

[14] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]4^{v}; Devani Singh, '"in his old dress": Packaging Thomas Speght's Chaucer for Renaissance Readers', *ChR*, 51.4 (2016), 478–502 (496–8).

The other common 'reproofe' against Chaucer concerns the difficulty of his words, deemed 'hard and vnpleasant' in the 1598 version of Beaumont's letter, and 'vinewed & hoarie' in 1602.[15] At this time, the epithet 'hard' was itself a stock descriptor for difficult language of all sorts: the old, the specialised, and the foreign. Earlier in the century, someone involved in the printing of the 1553 edition of *Pierce the ploughmans crede* wrote a justification for the book's appended glossary: 'For to occupie this leaffe which els shuld have ben vacant, I have made an interpretation of certayne hard wordes vsed in this booke for the better vnderstandyng of it'. A list of forty-eight Middle English words with glosses follows, along with a concluding note: 'The residue the diligent reader shall (I trust) well ynough perceive'.[16] As Beaumont's comments on Chaucer's language at the end of the century illustrate, however, the 'hardness' of these old words would only increase with time.

Having suffered from neglect through 'ouerlong lying', according to Beaumont, Chaucer's words were out of use and seen by some as no longer suitable for readerly consumption. Yet this preoccupation with the fate of archaic English, which Lucy Munro terms an 'anxiety of obsolescence', also furnished the means for assuring its recuperation and continued veneration.[17] If Chaucer's hard words could be singled out for their age, it was that same antiquity which enshrined them at the head of the emergent canon of literary English and whose rusticity, as E. K.'s preface to the *Shepheardes Calender* (1579) put it, could 'bring great grace and, as one would say, auctoritie to the verse'.[18] In the same decade that Speght's editions were published, Robert Greene's *Vision* (1592), a penitential pamphlet concerned with literary merit and legacy, put these concerns into the mouths of Chaucer and his contemporary John Gower, whose ghosts appear as characters in the narrative. When the dialogue turns to Greene's regrets about his juvenalia, this Chaucer-figure presents himself as an inspiring example: 'whose Canterburie tales are broad enough before, and written homely and pleasantly: yet who hath bin more canonised for his workes than Sir *Geffrey Chaucer*?' Gower counters that Chaucer's case is not applicable to Greene: 'No. it is not a promise to conclude vpon: for

[15] *Workes* (1602), sig. [a]4^{v}.
[16] *Pierce the ploughmans crede* (London: Reynold Wolfe, 1553; *STC* 19904), sig. D3^{v}.
[17] Munro, *Archaic Style*, pp. 69–104; Christopher Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 187–9.
[18] Edmund Spenser, *The shepheardes calender* (London: Hugh Singleton, 1579; *STC* 23089), sig. ¶2^{r}. As Munro notes, E. K.'s championing of Spenser's use of a rustic, native style is framed by a highly defensive stance. See *Archaic Style*, pp. 23–5, 78–80.

men honor his [work] more for the antiquity of the verse, the english & prose, than for any deepe love to the matter: for proofe marke how they weare out of use'.[19] For Greene's 'Chaucer', his language could serve as both the basis for his literary canonisation and the incontrovertible 'proofe' that his work was out of fashion. In the right context, what seemed like the tell-tale mould of obsolescence could be polished into a dignified patina of antiquity.

In addition to facing accusations of broadness and difficulty, Chaucer's language was subject to yet other forms of opprobrium. In 1553, Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetoric* sneered that 'The fine courtier will talk nothing but Chaucer', a retort at fashionable men who imported affectations into their speech, and part of a wider indictment by Wilson of 'ouersea language' spoken pretentiously by gentlemen returning from abroad or using specialist language in their professions.[20] Partly for the obscure status of his own English by the late Elizabethan period, and partly for his reputation for absorbing into English 'termes borowed of other tounges',[21] Chaucer would posthumously become enmeshed in the inkhorn controversy, an impassioned debate which centred mostly (though not wholly) on the use in English of foreign words.[22]

Chaucer was a visible and easy target in the fight against hard and specialist words, so it is little wonder that the period had, by the 1590s, developed a pejorative word for his language too. *Chaucerism*, a neologism probably coined by Thomas Nashe,[23] was synonymous with old-fashioned words which, according to Ben Jonson, 'were better expung'd and banish'd' in contemporary English writing.[24] The glossary at the end of

[19] Derek Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1995), 1, p. 133.
[20] Brewer, *Critical Heritage*, 1, p. 103.
[21] Peter Betham, *The Preceptes of War* (London: Edwarde Whytchurche, 1544; *STC* 20116), sig. A7^{r}; Brewer, *Critical Heritage*, 1, pp. 98–9.
[22] Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, writes that, 'Our maker therfore at these dayes shall not follow *Piers plowman* nor *Gower* nor *Lydgate* nor yet *Chaucer*, for their language is now out of vse with vs' (sig. R2^{v}). His conception of inkhornism, however, is a broad one: 'we finde in our English writers many wordes and speaches amendable, & ye shall see in some many inkhorne termes so ill affected brought in by men of learning as preachers and schoolemasters: and many straunge termes of other languages by Secretaries and Marchaunts and trauailours, and many darke wordes and not vsuall nor well sounding, though they be dayly spoken in Court' (sig. R3^{r}). Cannon, *Making of Chaucer's English*, p. 196 notes that the early modern debate about inkhornism assumed that Chaucer was a borrower of foreign terms.
[23] On Nashe's neologisms, see Jason Scott-Warren, 'Nashe's Stuff', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500–1640*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 204–18 (p. 215). Nashe may have coined the word 'Chaucerism' in *Strange Newes* (1592), which contains the earliest extant use of the term. See also Munro, *Archaic Style*, p. 14 and n. 27, 28.
[24] Jonson's opinion on archaism is more measured than that frequently quoted line perhaps suggests in isolation: 'Words borrow'd of Antiquity, doe lend a kind of Majesty to style, and are not without

Paul Greaves's *Grammatica Anglicana* (1594) lists 121 items of 'Vocabula Chauceriana', but in fact contains many terms from outside the Chaucer canon.[25] The presence in the *Workes* of a wide range of apocryphal texts, some with distinctive styles and their own pseudoarchaisms, also contributed to an early modern impression of Chaucer's hardness.[26] Suitable neither for poetic imitation nor easy comprehension, Chaucer became a byword for difficult, arcane, and obscure language, whose use in literary writing seemed inimical to the Jonsonian plain style.[27]

It was against this background of Chaucer's declining linguistic currency that Speght published his first edition of the poet's *Workes* in 1598 and Beaumont prefaced it with an *apologia* countering the 'obiections . . . commonly alledged against him'.[28] Beginning with Speght and Beaumont, Chaucer's proponents issued new editions and adaptations of the poet's writings for the early modern book trade. This was a bibliographic fix for a linguistic problem. Editions of Chaucer's works had been a successful print commodity since Caxton, but numerous books of Chaucerian works published after 1598 shared the particular goal of recovering his language and rendering it accessible.

When it was published in 1598, Speght's Chaucer edition contained the largest glossary of Middle English words available in print. Unlike the *Life* of Chaucer included in the editions, which relied heavily on materials collected by John Stow, the 1598 glossary seems to have been based on Speght's own scholarship.[29] Both its scale and the importance it is accorded in the edition confirm the extent to which Chaucer's Middle English had fallen into disuse. Speght's glossary is advertised on the title page of the 1598 edition as a list of 'Old and obscure words explaned'. It was first published with 2,034 entries, then augmented with 863 more in 1602, when it was corrected and expanded with the aid of Francis Thynne's *Animadversions*.[30]

their delight sometimes. For they have the Authority of yeares, and out of their intermission doe win to themselves a kind of grace-like newnesse. But the eldest of the present, and newnesse of the past Language is the best'; see Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 2012), VII, ll. 1369–80.

[25] Kerling, *Chaucer in Early English Dictionaries*, p. 14.

[26] Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, p. 258.

[27] Robert C. Evans, 'Ben Jonson's Chaucer', *English Literary Renaissance*, 19.3 (1989), 324–45 (324–5).

[28] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]4^{v}.

[29] On Stow's contributions, see Pearsall, 'John Stow and Thomas Speght', pp. 122–4. On the glossary, see Kerling, *Chaucer in Early English Dictionaries*, pp. 31–40; Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 124–8.

[30] Kerling, *Chaucer in Early English Dictionaries*, p. 39 notes that 189 words have also been left out, and 101 homographs unified.

Its inclusion on the title page suggests its novelty, for prior editions of Chaucer's poetry had assumed and required a working knowledge of Middle English on the part of their readers. The commendatory poem by 'H. B.' that appears facing the engraving of Chaucer accordingly heralds the editor's achievement to have 'made old words, which were unknown of many, / So plaine, that now they may be known of any'.[31] The editing of Chaucer may have been an antiquarian project conducted by learned men, but the language of the prefatory material suggests that its intended readership extended beyond this group, to include 'any' one who might benefit from the glossary.[32]

Beyond Speght, other efforts to update Chaucer for new readers and purposes were also underway. Amidst anxiety about the longevity of literary works 'affecting the ancients' – works exemplified by Spenser, whom Jonson derided as having 'writ no language' – early modern authors found that they need not imitate Chaucer's archaic style to achieve literary credibility, but could instead draw upon him for new adaptations and translations.[33] Although no new editions of Chaucer were printed between 1602 and 1687, the poet and his works were everywhere present in the English book trade of the period: as the named inspiration for anonymous stories in *The Cobler of Caunterburie* (1590); as the pretext for Richard Braithwait's anti-tobacco poem *Chaucer's Incensed Ghost* (1617); as the subject of printed ballads; and in printed editions of plays such as *Patient Grissil* (1603) and *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1634), which reinvented his works for the stage. From the dozens of literary allusions, dramatizations, and adaptations for which records survive, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emerge as a period of 'cultural saturation' with Chaucer.[34]

Several of these books were innovative in their approach to Chaucer's works, for they presented tools aimed at bringing him to new readers. For example, Richard Braithwait also wrote a posthumously published *Comment upon the Two Tales of our Ancient, Renowned, and Ever Living Poet Sr. Ieffray Chaucer, Knight* (1617), supplying a detailed scholarly commentary intended to accompany the texts of the *Miller's Tale* and

[31] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]6^{v}. On this wider readership, see Singh, 'Packaging Thomas Speght's Chaucer', 493–6. For a possible identity of 'H. B.', see Matthews, 'Public Ambition', p. 75.

[32] This strategy echoes the appeal that some contemporary lexicographers made to a group of 'common, and vulger people' amongst their readers; see Andrea R. Nagy, 'Defining English: Authenticity and Standardization in Seventeenth-Century Dictionaries', *Studies in Philology*, 96.4 (1999), 439–56 (451).

[33] Jonson, *Discoveries*, ll. 1281–3.

[34] Cooper, 'Poetic Fame', p. 365. See also Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years*, pp. 131, 192.

the *Wife of Bath's Tale*.[35] Other reworkings of Chaucer were more thoroughgoing still. In 1635, Sir Francis Kynaston's Latin translation of the first two books of *Troilus and Criseyde* was printed by Oxford's university printer, John Lichfield.[36] The book was designed to be read alongside the Middle English, which Kynaston based on Speght's edition and which he presented on facing-pages with the Latin. At the same time, Kynaston's dedication and the book's copious commendatory matter all underscore the necessity for this translation to safeguard the poet's work from 'ruin and oblivion' ('ab interitu & oblivione').[37] Chaucer's enduring presence in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century book trade may seem at odds with the decline of his language which this chapter has been charting, but these books presented the poet in new garb, dressed up with aids for the promotion and understanding of his works. Some works of this nature circulated in manuscript, but never seem to have appeared in print. These include Jonathan Sidnam's *Paraphrase on the first three books of Troilus* (*c.* 1630), whose subtitle describes it as written 'For the satisfaction of those / Who either cannot, or will not, take the paines to vnderstand / The Excellent Authors / Farr more Exquisite, and significant Expressions / Though now growen obsolete, and out of vse'.[38] An adaptation and continuation (in couplets) by John Lane of the *Squire's Tale*, although not published until 1888, was licensed for the press on 2 March 1614.[39] In the same period, an anonymous author composed *Troelus a Chressyd*, a dramatic work which adapts and translates Chaucer's *Troilus* with Henryson's *Testament* into a single Welsh text, now extant in one manuscript witness.[40] In these manuscript works, too, Chaucer's Middle English

[35] Richard Braithwait, *Comment upon the Two Tales of our Ancient, Renowned, and Ever Living Poet Sr. Ieffray Chaucer, Knight* (London: John Dawson, 1665; Wing B4260).

[36] Kynaston had been preparing the entire work for publication, alongside Henryson's *Testament*. The manuscript survives as Bodl. MS Additional C.287. On Kynaston's career, see Richard Beadle, 'The Virtuoso's *Troilus*', in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. by Barry Windeatt and Ruth Morse (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 213–33.

[37] Tim William Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), p. 45. On the verses, see Philip Knox, William Poole, and Mark Griffith, 'Reading Chaucer in New College, Oxford, in the 1630s: The Commendatory Verses to Francis Kynaston's *Amorum Troili et Creseidæ*', *Medium Ævum*, 85 (2016), 33–58.

[38] BL, Additional MS 29494, fol. 1^{r}. Also in Brewer, *Critical Heritage*, 1, p. 151.

[39] *John Lane's Continuation of Chaucer's 'Squire's Tale'*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Pub. for the Chaucer Society by K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1888), p. 237.

[40] National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 106. David Callander, '*Troelus a Chressyd*: A Translation of the Welsh Adaptation of *Troilus and Criseyde*', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 37.2 (2019), 15–73 (15) dates the copying to around 1613 and 1622, and notes that the composition could have been as early as 1532. See also Sue Niebrzydowski, '"Ye Know Eek That in Forme of Speche Is Change": Chaucer, Henryson, and the Welsh *Troelus a Chresyd*', *Medieval English Theatre 38: The Best Pairt of*

works provided the source texts for this flurry of literary production, and his linguistic senescence offered a convenient pretext. The makers of these books ingeniously bridged a linguistic gap between Chaucer's old books and a new readership. In doing so, they contributed to an English literary culture in which Chaucer's works, in their new guise, remained alive and available to new readerships.

These ventures traded on Chaucer's enduring cultural worth even as they sought to alter the forms in which readers encountered him. But new books of Chaucer which glossed and translated his hard words did not automatically replace their older counterparts. As this chapter argues, the interventions early modern readers made to medieval manuscripts constitute a rich and underexplored archive of print's role in materially shaping the language in which Chaucer's texts were conveyed. The rest of this chapter discusses the traces left by those who continued to read Chaucer in fifteenth-century manuscripts alongside print, and under this climate of linguistic change and textual anxiety. Their annotations, additions, and corrections witness them grappling with the poet's old and error-prone language, and updating it using the versions of these texts they located in printed books. For these early modern readers, print served as a conduit to the better understanding and continued engagement with Chaucer's works in older manuscript copies.

1.3 Glossing

CUL, MS Gg.4.27, a fifteenth-century Chaucerian anthology, preserves a record of one owner's use of Chaucer's printed books as an aid to reading older manuscripts. Copied about a century before Thynne published his 1532 edition, MS Gg.4.27 (hereafter Gg) represents the earliest surviving attempt to collect Chaucer's works between two covers.[41] It had already been plundered, probably for its illustrations and borders, by the time Joseph Holland (d. 1605) acquired it around 1600.[42] With an imperfect manuscript in his possession, Holland – who was a lawyer, amateur herald,

Our Play. Essays Presented to John J. McGavin. Part II, ed. by Meg Twycross, Pamela M. King, Sarah Carpenter, and Greg Walker (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017), pp. 38–56.

[41] Holland's added leaves have since been removed from the Chaucer manuscript and bound separately as MS Gg.4.27(1), but I refer to his additions as being part of the medieval Gg.4.27 since it was a single codex when he owned it.

[42] For additional discussion of Holland and Gg see Megan L. Cook, 'Joseph Holland and the Idea of the Chaucerian Book', *Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies*, 1.2 (2016), 165–88; and Robert A. Caldwell, 'Joseph Holand, Collector and Antiquary', *Modern Philology*, 40.4 (1943), 295–301.

and member of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries – set about to furnish the resulting textual lacunae. Relying on Speght's edition, his scribe also supplemented the manuscript with additional material, including a customised glossary of more than six hundred items.[43]

Holland modelled the form and content of his Middle English glossary on the one printed in Speght (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Following the 1598 edition, Holland's scribe ruled each of three parchment leaves into three columns, whose lines were embellished in red ink. Organised in alphabetical order, this new glossary took its title from Speght, 'The old and obscure words of Chaucer explaned' (fol. 30^{r}). Like its printed exemplar, it was designed with care. Holland's glossary allocated space for blue display capitals to be filled in as headings for each letter of the alphabet.[44] Where Speght's edition supplies each Chaucerian lemma in black letter and its gloss in roman, the manuscript glossary presents headwords in a stylised italic hand and their corresponding glosses in secretary. The choice of title, *mise-en-page*, and hierarchy of scripts used in the making of a new glossary for Gg demonstrates the clear affinity between the printed model and its manuscript copy. Not only did Speght's glossary transform the way Chaucer was read in print, but it also allowed readers like Holland to imagine new possibilities for approaching his works in older manuscript books.

Yet the glossary in Gg is a descendant of the printed version made by Speght, rather than its twin. Similar though they may be, the superficial resemblance between these two lists of Middle English words should not obscure their difference. Of 2,034 entries compiled by Speght in 1598, Holland's contains only 661 – just under one-third. Sixteen of these, moreover, are additions not derived from Speght.[45] Elsewhere, Holland's

[43] For Holland's other supplements, see discussion in Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 93–7, 133–41, and *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27*, ed. by Malcolm Beckwith Parkes and Richard Beadle, 3 vols. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979), III, p. 67. Further references are to vol. III unless otherwise noted.

[44] These capitals were only added for the entries under headings 'A' and 'B'.

[45] For a detailed analysis of Holland's list of hard words see Robert A. Caldwell, 'An Elizabethan Chaucer Glossary', *Modern Language Notes*, 58.5 (1943), 374–5. The sixteen entries in Holland's glossary not derived from Speght's 1598 edition are: *Baride*, 'to brove or refuse'; *Burlace*, 'to carry a ded man to bury'; *Chad*, 'I had'; *Crased*, 'broken'; *Chud*, 'I wold'; *Daggled*, 'dirtye'; *Ich*, 'I will'; *Mate*, 'companion'; *Pinge*, 'thrust'; *Queme*, 'knowe'; *Rathe*, 'erl'; *Ruse*, 'to slide downe'; *Shede*, 'spille'; *Vang*, 'take'; *Vanges*, 'teeth'; *Viand*, 'meate'. This group includes six not reported by Caldwell. I have examined several printed glossaries published before 1598 as possible sources for these sixteen entries – *Pierce the ploughman's crede* (1553); the glosses in George Gascoigne's *Posies* (1575) and in *The shepheardes calender* (1579); the glossary in Batman's *Batman upon Bartholomew* (1582); Paul Greaves's *Vocabula Chauceriana* (1594); and Edmund Coote's *The English schoole-maister* (1596) – but their source remains unknown. Several of them would later appear in the expanded 1602 glossary, though all but one in that edition have definitions different from those offered in Holland's glossary.

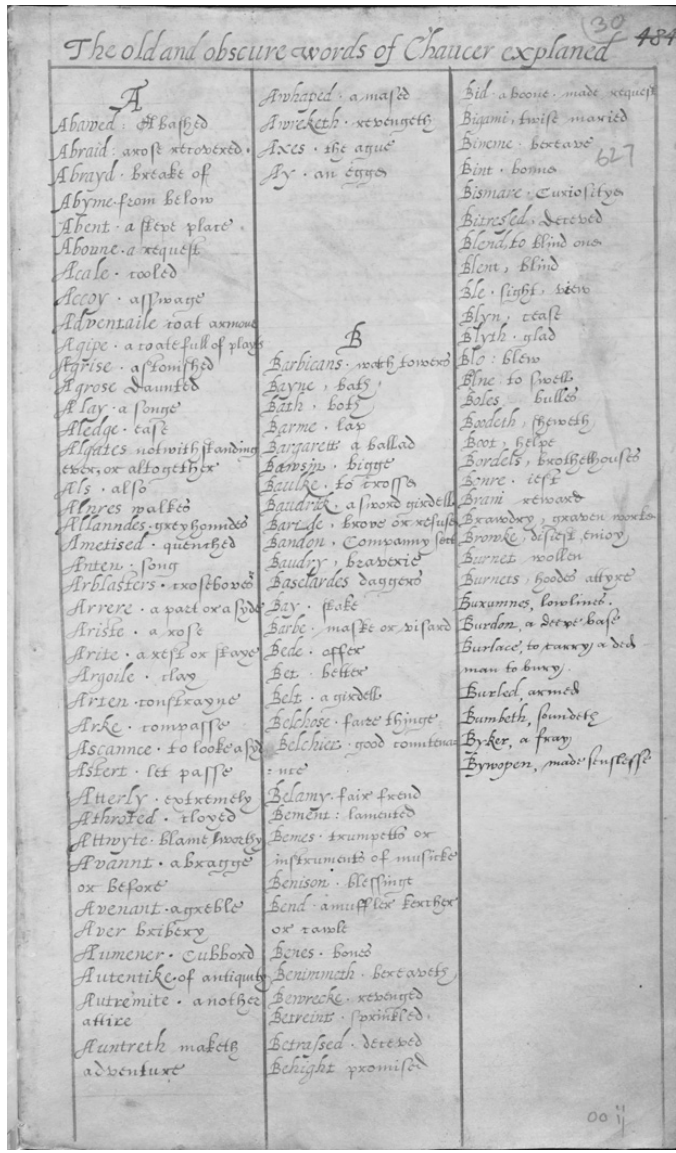


Figure 1.1 Joseph Holland's glossary adapted from Speght's 1598 edition. CUL MS Gg.4.27(1), fol. 30[r]. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

The old and obſcure words of Chaucer, explaned.

ABawed, abaſhed, dãted.
abraid, aroſe, recouered.
abrayd, breake off.
abandon, libertie.
abyme, from below.
abyt, dwelleth.
abydſt, ſuffered.
abent, a ſteepe place, a prominent or hanging hill.
abet, ſetting on.
abcdge, abide.
abying, ſtate.
abode, receiued.
acale, cooled.
ackele, coole.
accelſe, ague.
accoy, aſſwage.
acoyed, pampred.
acroke, awrie.
adaſhed, abaſhed.
adawed, awaked.
aduentaile, coate armour.
afare, a noiſe.
affray, aſſault.
affray, feare, ſtirre.
affray, ſturdines.
affy, haue truſt.
afine, fined.
agaſteth, ſcarreth.
agilted, offended.
agilt, committed.
agipe, a coat full of pleights.
agiler, a marker of men.
agramed, greeued.
agryſe, aſtoniſhed.
agryſe, quaile.
agryſe, to be afraid.
agriſeth, cauſeth to quake.
agredge, aggrauate.
agroted, (*ingurgitatus*) cloyed.
agroſe, daunted.
agroſe, was agreued.
aiuſt, remoaue.
alaies, waies, temperature.
a lay, a ſong.
aledgemeiit, eaſe.
aledge, eaſe.
aledged, diminiſhed.
aledgement, releaſe.
all a bone, made requeſt.
algates, notwithſtanding.
algates, euer.
alestake, a maypole, or alebuſh.
aldrian, (*vide annot.*)
als, aſwell.
als, alſo.
alſwa, alſo.
algate, altogither.
algates, for all that.
algates, euen now.
alcalt, Nightſhade.
almagiſt, a worke of Aſtronomie, written by *Ptolomie*.
alixer, Quinteſſence of golde.
alures, walkes.
allaunds, grayhounds.
ally, kinne.
Amadriades, Nymphes that die and liue with the trees.
Amalgaminge, (*mixtura ex hydrargyro cum metallis.*)
amenuſed, diminiſhed.
amctiſed, quenched.
anney, annoy.
anoy, forethink.
annueler, feculer.
any gate, occaſion.
apparell, prepare.
appall, decay.
appeteth, deſireth,
apies, medicines of Oppium.
apposen, demaund.
apxentile, skill.
aptile, aduenture.
aquite, match.
aquiler, needle caſe.
arace, (*convellere*) to deface.
areſt, ſtay: or, durance.
arblaſters, croſſebowes.
aret, account.
arret, to charge.
arreſt, quietnes.
aretted, accounted.
aretteth, layeth blame.
arrere, apart, aſide.
ariſt, aroſe.

Aaaa.i. aryte

aryte, areſt, or ſtay.
argoile, clay.
arſenethe, ratsbane.
arten, conſtraine.
arke, compaſſe.
aſcaunces, as who ſhould ſay, as though.
aſkaunce, if perchaunce.
aſkaunce, aſide.
aſkes, aſhes, (*cinis.*)
aſhate, buying.
aſure, blew.
aſwith, forthwith, by and by.
aſſiſed, ſure, firme.
aſſoyle, anſwere.
aſſoylen, declare.
aſſeth, aſſent.
aſſile, order.
aſtert, paſſed.
aſtert, let paſſe.
aſterlagour, Aſtrolabe.
attaint, tried.
attaint, found out.
atamed, ſet on broch.
atterly, extremely.
attenes, at ones.
at erſt, in earneſt, indeed.
atthekéd, choked.
attoure, towards.
attoure, attire for women.
athamant, adamant.
athroted, cloied.
atwin, aſunder. (thy.
attwyte, to make blame wor-
a vaunt, a bragge.
auaunt, forward.
auaunt, a pace.
a vale, go downe.
auenant, agreeable.
auer, briberie.
auelace, (*vertinella*) the rings or gymewes of a bagge.
aureat, golden.
aumer, amber.
aumener, cubbard.
augrimſtones, to caſt account withall.
autentike, of antiquitie.

autem

Figure 1.2 Speght's 1598 glossary. Fondation Martin Bodmer [without shelfmark], sig. 4Ar. Digitised and reproduced courtesy of the Bodmer Lab, University of Geneva.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

glossary significantly modifies the definitions provided in Speght. These alterations and additions vary in both degree and kind, and include changes such as *Hine*, 'An hind' to *Hind*, 'servant'; *Recreant*, 'out of hope' to *Recreant*, 'coward'; *Slough*, 'dirty place' to *Slough*, 'ditch'; *Cruke*, 'a pot, a stean' to *Cruke*, 'a post'; and apparent errors in transcription, such as *Curreidew*, 'currie favour' to *Cureidew*, 'currifavour'. Conversely, the manuscript glossary sometimes rejects the printed definitions altogether, as for the words *frouncen*, *hight*, and *misbode*. These items are correctly glossed in Speght's 1598 edition, but left blank in Gg. Two further features of the apparatus appended to the 1598 glossary – a list of Chaucer's French words and a list of the proper names of authors cited by him – were also omitted in Holland's updated manuscript.

It may initially seem that Holland, in imitating the glossary in Speght's edition, intended to make Gg more closely resemble the recent printed book. Yet his glossary did not simply duplicate material from Speght in manuscript form, but shows sustained engagement, customisation, and interrogation of the printed exemplar, which were all part of a larger programme of perfecting planned for Gg. Although his glossary relied on the authority of the definitions provided by the printed book, it also constitutes a lexicographic study in its own right. As an antiquary who owned several manuscripts containing Middle English, Holland could certainly read Chaucer's language and the scribe's anglicana formata script, as is evident from his annotated passages in Gg.[46] He may have used Speght's glossary as a reading aid, but did not require all 2,000 lemmatas furnished by the editor to read his own Chaucer manuscript. Reliant on his own knowledge and interests, his glossary represents a unique adaptation of Speght's 'hard words' which occasionally demonstrates resistance to some of the glosses in the printed edition on which it was modelled.

Holland's adaptations shed precious light on the pragmatic value of Speght's glossaries in their own time. Pearsall has voiced his impression

[46] For Holland's annotations in Gg, see Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, p. 66. Francis Thynne recorded that he borrowed the famed Reading Abbey Cartulary (s. xiii–xv), now BL, Cotton MS Vespasian E.v, from Holland in 1604 or 1605. John Stow cited a charter owned by Holland in his *Survey of London* (1598), and similarly, one of Robert Cotton's papers to the Society cites 'an English translation' of Geoffrey of Monmouth, 'very aunciently written', a book that was most likely Holland's manuscript, now London, College of Arms, MS Arundel xxii; see Caldwell, 'Joseph Holand', 296–97. Other extant medieval books, or copies thereof, once owned by Holland include an Old English-Latin glossary (BL, Cotton MS Cleopatra A.iii, s. x); the Lovell Lectionary (BL, MS Harley 7026, s. xv); armorial rolls of Devonshire and Cornwall (BL, Additional MS 47171, s. xv–xvi); and a volume containing excerpts from fourteenth-century Parliamentary summons, and from the Domesday Book (BL, Cotton MS Faustina C.xi).

that Speght's printed glosses are 'mostly guesswork from context and common sense: most of the guesses are good, but some are completely off target'; some of these latter, despite having been mangled by the editor, enjoyed longevity as 'ghost words in the dictionaries until the eighteenth century'.[47] While many of the glosses would have been essential for the less experienced readers anticipated in Speght's front matter, most seem to have been of limited value to Holland. Nonetheless, it is worth emphasising that the print provided a basis for his own lexicographic investigations. This role of Speght's printed glossaries in giving rise to new work is also apparent in a series of surviving notebooks and annotated copies of Chaucer's *Workes* which once belonged to the distinguished Dutch philologist and scholar of Old English Franciscus Junius (1591–1677).[48] Bremmer has pointed to evidence for the circulation in the seventeenth century of an 'enriched Index' on Chaucer – presumably a fascicle of Speght's 1598 glossary and end matter – detached from Junius's surviving print copy and marked up with his annotations. Both the lost 'enriched Index' and Junius's Chaucer glossary of nearly 4,000 words signal his use of Speght's model as a starting point for his own meticulous study of Chaucer's words. The surviving evidence of Junius's and Holland's reading at once suggests the innovation represented by Speght's glossaries, their perhaps inevitable limitations compared to the work of the more learned readers, and consequently, their role in the incitement of more deliberate lexicographic scholarship.[49]

Both his own experience and the 'somewhat chaotic' presentation of Speght's word list may have played a role in Holland's choice to study the meanings of several of Chaucer's words independently.[50] The minutiae of Holland's reading expose the limited utility of Speght's glossaries to him, and complicate the prevailing picture that they were 'found useful and considered authoritative' by the makers of subsequent seventeenth-century lexicographies.[51] While the influence of Speght's printed glossaries on later

[47] Pearsall, 'Speght', p. 81.

[48] The Chaucer glossary is Bodl. Junius MS 6. These materials, as well as Junius's activities as a scholarly reader of Speght's Chaucer, are surveyed at length in Rolf H. Bremmer Jr, 'Franciscus Junius Reads Chaucer: But Why? And How?', in *Appropriating the Middle Ages: Scholarship, Politics, Fraud*, ed. by Tom Shippey and Martin Arnold, Studies in Medievalism, XI (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), pp. 37–72; and in Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 186–97.

[49] In a 1668 letter to the English antiquary Sir William Dugdale, Junius writes that upon reading Chaucer (most likely in his 1598 copy, Bodl. Junius MS 9), he finds 'innumerable places, hithertoo misunderstood, or not understood at all, which I can illustrate'; qtd. in Bremmer, 'Franciscus Junius Reads Chaucer', p. 45.

[50] The phrase is from Kerling, *Chaucer in Early English Dictionaries*, p. 34.

[51] Kerling, *Chaucer in Early English Dictionaries*, pp. 39–40.

studies of old words is indisputable, the utility and authority that they embodied should also be recognised as a triumph of marketing and, more specifically, of typography. Speght's printed word lists established a typographic distinction between Chaucer's words (in black letter) and the editor's modernised glosses (printed in roman), thereby tapping in to 'the powerful combination of Englishness . . . and past-ness' that the older typeface could represent.[52] That juxtaposition of an archaised typeface and a modern one on the printed page is an expressive visual sign of the editor's willing role as the 'interpretour' (as Beaumont put it) of Chaucer's words for certain early modern readers.[53] For all their lexicographic shortcomings, Speght's glossaries succeed in 'constructing the very sense of historical distance that they purport to resolve'.[54] The 1598 and 1602 glossaries might have been an effective piece of visual rhetoric, but their partial use by Holland indicates that learned readers did not take their authority for granted.

Holland's glossary amounts to much more than a copy of Speght's, and it remains an exceptional record of how an early modern reader might use the printed *Workes* as a model for approaching and updating the language of older manuscript books. But the conditions and challenges of reading that it reveals were familiar to many early modern enthusiasts of Middle English. Reading Chaucer in manuscript, and lacking the option or desire to commission a new glossary, some readers improvised other ways of using print to make old books more readable: by adding marginal glosses or interlinear corrections, reversing archaic word order, and replacing old words with more familiar ones. Like Holland's list of 661 glosses, the corrections of these readers betray a worry about the age of Chaucer's words and a concomitant anxiety about the material books which conveyed them. For some readers, printed editions of Chaucer, with their modernised or glossed language and a stance of textual authority, offered a conveniently packaged solution to such problems.

The linguistic utility of newer printed books to readers of old manuscripts is amply demonstrated by another book, *St. John's College, Cambridge, MS L.1* (hereafter L1).[55] Acquired by the college in 1683, L1 is a manuscript copied as a stand-alone codex of a single work, *Troilus and*

[52] Zachary Lesser, 'Typographic Nostalgia: Playreading, Popularity and the Meanings of Black Letter', in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. by Marta Straznicky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp. 99–126 (p. 107).
[53] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]5^{v}. [54] Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, p. 124.
[55] See Richard Beadle and Jeremy Griffiths, *St. John's College, Cambridge, Manuscript L.1: A Facsimile* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books; Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1983).

Criseyde, in roughly the third quarter of the 1400s.[56] Sometime in the course of the seventeenth century, two readers of the fifteenth-century book undertook to improve its text. They did so by supplying marginal glosses to Chaucer's hard words, and by emending the text where they deemed it faulty or lacking. Where Holland's glossary was a pre-planned and professionally executed tool for countering Chaucer's archaism, the marginal annotations in L1 share an *ad hoc* quality which preserves readerly responses to the Middle English text, localised on the page. The improvised and reactive nature of such marginalia, written alongside the scribally copied text, allows us to shadow the thought-processes of these historical readers as they read and updated their Chaucer. For example, in the very first correction, on fol. 1^{v} (see Figure 1.3), one of the annotators (who Beadle and Griffiths call Scribe 7) underlined and modified L1's original reading, involving the narrator's opening plea on behalf of lovers, to 'sende hem myght hir ladys so to plese' (1.45). Instead, this annotator favoured another reading, 'And sende hem Grace her loves for to plese'. Our annotator also took the opportunity to record the source, for a handwritten note in the margin indicates that the newly supplied reading appears 'in printed books'. In the pages of Chaucer's poem that follow, the two annotators scrupulously noted and corrected points of difficulty and disjuncture between the manuscript and the printed version they used as exemplar, Speght's 1602 edition.[57] The result was a more legible, accurate, and complete version of *Troilus* as they determined it.[58]

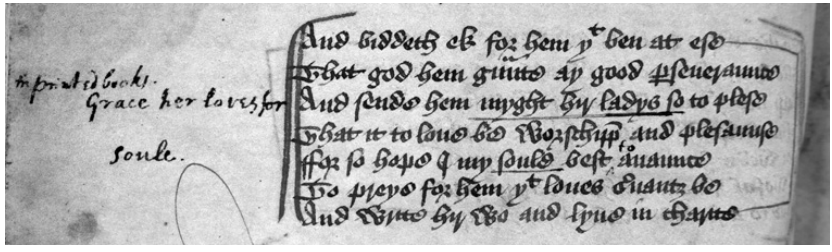


Figure 1.3 Seventeenth-century annotations in a copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* with reference to collation with 'printed books'. Cambridge, St John's College, MS L.1, fol. 1^{v}. By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.

[56] *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, ed. by M. C. Seymour, 2 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995), 1, p. 66.
[57] Beadle and Griffiths, *Manuscript L.1*, pp. xxiv–xxv.
[58] In fact, according to a section of sampled text collated with the *Riverside Chaucer*, the later corrections improve the text a little less than half of the time.

Most of the early modern glosses in L1 supply modernised words in place of their archaic equivalents. For instance, *peacock* was substituted for *pocok* (fol. 3^{v}); *royal* for *real* (fols. 7^{r}, 63^{v}); *man* for *wight* (fol. 16^{v}); *dignity* for *deyte* (fol. 56^{r}); *knees* for *knowes* (fol. 64^{r}); and *supper* for *soper* (fol. 100^{r}). A second, less common category of gloss aimed at improving the text's legibility rather than providing new readings. These sometimes took the form of expansions to the scribe's contraction of the letters in some Middle English words, as in 'P*er*aunt*ur*' (fols. 9^{v}, 10^{v}); 'p*rouer*bes' (fol. 11^{v}); '*ser*uen' (fol. 20^{r}); '*ver*tules' (fol. 21^{v}); 'comp*ar*isou*n*' (fol. 74^{v}); and '*ser*mon' (fol. 87^{r}). Equally, for these annotators glossing entailed the re-transcribing in the margins of words which had proven difficult to read in the text's anglicana script. This was the case for *soule* (fol. 1^{v}); *stil* (fol. 3^{v}); *harme* (fol. 5^{v}); *beareth* (22^{r}); *cheare* (23^{r}); and *espie* (fol. 27^{v}). Although glosses which improve the legibility of the written text are comparatively few in number, they offer a direct insight into the practical challenges faced by early modern readers of medieval manuscripts. Antiquary Peter Manwood's complaint about his difficulties in reading an 'ould hande out of use with us' is emblematic of the obstacles that archaic scripts might raise even for experienced readers of old manuscripts.[59] Modern palaeographers have taken care to emphasise the great variety of scripts to which premodern readers might be exposed, and the differing degrees of legibility that each might present.[60] Secretary, chancery, mixed, or round hands were in regular use in England over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but their legibility to different sorts of readers should not be taken for granted.[61] By the same token, we should not assume that more archaic hands – the predominantly anglicana hands of Gg or L1, for example – were easily or immediately decipherable. In L1, the problem of legibility was compounded by the 'free use of abbreviation' in the scribe's Middle English text, reflecting perhaps the work of someone with 'a professional expertise probably cultivated in the writing of Latin'.[62] As the glosses of these *Troilus* annotators attest, an outmoded or idiosyncratic hand might pose challenges even to experienced antiquarian readers. The presence of archaic scripts made the later reading of medieval manuscripts a distinctive experience, marking them visually and perhaps affording their readers some pride in their palaeographical accomplishments.

[59] See Introduction, p. 24.
[60] Kathryn James, *English Paleography and Manuscript Culture, 1500–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), pp. 92–113 offers an illustrated overview.
[61] Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*, pp. 59–61.
[62] Beadle and Griffiths, *Manuscript L.1*, p. xxv.

In all the examples listed here, and in virtually every instance of glossing in L1, the glosses to these old or illegible words were copied from Speght. For this pair of annotators, the printed edition was an authoritative witness to Chaucer's text. Yet the textual interventions in L1 did not follow the glossary of hard words provided by the editor, nor did they update all points of textual divergence between the manuscript and Speght. Like Holland's glossary in Gg, the choice of which words to gloss and which lines to correct was dictated by the annotators' knowledge and readerly needs. The historical circumstances behind these decisions – such as whether readers glossed books for their own convenience or for future readers with less competence in Middle English – cannot be recovered. What remain, though, are copious traces of reading which illuminate some aspects of the encounter between readers and old books.

Here, the annotations show these readers consulting old and new volumes in parallel, and using a variety of techniques for updating Chaucer's language. The glosses in L1 serve to modify hard words, expand unfamiliar abbreviations, and transcribe illegible marks. Chaucer's language may have been the biggest barrier that his early modern readers faced, but it was not monolithic in nature. The problem of archaism included the challenge of reading these words in books that were themselves old; readers could struggle to make out the words written on the manuscript page, as well as to understand their meaning. Like those who annotated L1, they might grapple with outmoded scribal hands, or strain to make sense of the orthographic and palaeographical tics transmitted by individual copyists, manuscripts, and textual traditions. Such readers looked to newly printed books to aid their comprehension of these and other features of the Chaucerian manuscript text.

1.4 Collating and Correcting

The annotations of early modern readers show that archaism of language and script were not the only obstacles to the early modern reading of Chaucer in medieval manuscripts. The annotators of L1 also moved beyond glossing hard or hard-to-read Middle English words, and used printed books to supplant readings found in the manuscript with new ones. Indeed, the dominant mode of readerly intervention in MS L1 is not the lexical gloss, but the textual emendation. On the whole, the L1 annotators appear less interested in modernising words or syntax than in selectively supplying missing words and reconciling discrepancies between the manuscript and printed book. They paid especial attention to

correcting the text at certain key points in the narrative – for example, on fol. 2[r] (1.92 ff), when Criseyde is introduced, or in the Latin argument to the *Thebaid* on fol. 114[r] (v.1498a ff).

For early modern readers, this concern with textual exactness is rooted in Chaucer's primacy within the vernacular literary canon; his words mattered in a way that those of no other English author did. Consequently, that cultural import gave the philological efforts of his early editors particular urgency. The printed books they produced aimed to embody a model of reassuring textual constancy. In 1532, William Thynne described his attempt to establish a copytext from 'bokes of dyuers imprintes'. In this process, he identified 'many errours, falsyties, and deprauacio*n*s, which euydently appered by the contraritees and alteracions founde by collacion of the one with the other'.[63] Thynne's professed 'collacion' did not involve the study of the codex's constituent parts; that would come much later, with the work of another Chaucerian, the nineteenth-century Cambridge librarian Henry Bradshaw (1831–86).[64] Rather, Thynne's collation refers to a more fundamental bringing together of different texts for the sake of comparison, and gives the *OED* its first usage of the word in this particular sense of establishing textual likeness and difference.[65] Displeased by the printed 'contraritees' revealed by his collations, he resorted to a search for 'very trewe copies or exemplaries of the sayd bookes', and was successful. 'Nat without coste and payne', he stresses, 'I attayned, and nat onely vnto such as seme to be very trewe copies of those workes of Geffrey Chaucer, whiche before had ben put in printe, but also to dyuers other neuer tyll nowe imprinted, but remaynyng almost vnknowen and in oblyuion'. Thynne's concept of collation, with its distinction between 'falsyties' and the 'very trewe', gives error a moral tinge. For Thynne, faulty words had no place in Chaucer's collected works, and it became his job to banish them. 'I thought it in maner appertenant unto my dewtye', he wrote, 'and that of the very honesty and loue to my country I ought no lesse to do, then to put my helpyng hande to the restauracyon and bryngynge agayne to lyghte of the sayd workes, after the trewe copies and exemplaries aforesaid'.[66] Like the

[63] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Workes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed, with dyvers works whiche were never in print before*, ed. by William Thynne (Thomas Godfray, 1532; *STC* 5068), sig. A2[v]. In fact, Thynne's collation of his printed and manuscript copytexts appears to have been more uneven across the edition's individual texts than his prefatory rhetoric allows; see James E. Blodgett, 'William Thynne (d. 1546)', in Ruggiers, pp. 35–52.

[64] See Richard Beadle, *Henry Bradshaw and the Foundations of Codicology: The Sandars Lectures 2015* (Cambridge: Privately printed, 2017).

[65] *OED*, 'collation, *n.*', 1a; Cooper, 'Poetic Fame', p. 368.

[66] *Workes* (1532), sig. A2[v]–A3[r].

humanist editors who prepared books for the early European presses – and who called themselves correctors and castigators – Thynne's rhetoric frames his work in terms of virtuous rigour.[67] By his own measure, his edition represents the culmination of that dutiful effort: a bringing together of different texts, and a bringing to light of the best version of Chaucer's works.

For the humanists in whose tradition Thynne was working, collation was a means of ensuring a text's accuracy, a method that gave rise to 'a culture that staked reputation on practices of emendation and *castigatio*' and in which readers 'corrected errors out of habit and out of self-respect (lest others think that they had not noticed the error)'.[68] During the Reformation and its aftermath, annotation and collation would become scholarly weapons in the bitter fight over doctrinal orthodoxy. The bibliographical spoils of the religious houses were thoroughly combed by the scholars of post-Reformation England in their quest to write a new national history.[69] The practice is exemplified in the figure of Thomas James (1572/3–1629), Bodley's first librarian, and a diligent searcher of manuscripts. During the course of his life, James devoted significant energies to correcting manuscript and printed texts containing writings of the Church Fathers, which he feared had been corrupted by their former Catholic custodians.[70] In 1625, near the end of his life and after his retirement from Bodley's library, he wrote about his plans for correcting faulty ecclesiastical documents through the hiring of twelve scholars for a lengthy project of collation. '[B]ut if I may haue my will', he vowed in a detailed description of the scheme, 'no booke of note or worth shall goe vncompared'.[71] James's practice of collation centred on several precepts,

[67] The humanists' ideal of textual purity is evident in the language they used to describe their work, from *emendare* (to improve) and *castigare* (to correct); see Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011), pp. 51, 110. For humanist appraisals of manuscripts, see Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 59–74 and Grafton, 'Scaliger's Collation of the Codex Pithoei of Censorinus', *Bodleian Library Record*, 11.6 (1985), 406–8.

[68] Ann Blair, 'Errata Lists and the Reader as Corrector', in Baron, Lindquist, and Shevlin, pp. 21–41 (p. 37); Blodgett, 'William Thynne', p. 36.

[69] An argument made in Summit, *Memory's Library*, esp. pp. 101–35. On the relationship between the genealogical and textual purity pursued by the Florentine scholars and later by English collectors such as John Bale and Sir John Prise, see *Memory's Library*, p. 118.

[70] For example, James's *Philobiblon* (1598), *Humble Supplication* (1607), *Bellum Gregorianum* (1610), and *Humble and Earnest Request* (1625); see R. Julian Roberts, 'James, Thomas (1572/3–1629), librarian and religious controversialist', *ODNB*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14619.

[71] Thomas James, *An explanation or enlarging of the ten articles in the supplication of Doctor Iames, lately exhibited to the clergy of England* (Oxford: John Lichfield and William Turner, 1625; *STC* 14454), sig. B3^{r}.

including the authority of old manuscript copies, the comparison with early printed witnesses, and the subordination of individual judgements to the readings found in the oldest or most numerous manuscripts. His vision of textual recovery was lofty, but it was grounded in the minute and fuelled by a worry about the insidiousness of error:

> There is no fault so small, but must be mended, if it may, but noted it must be howsoeuer: these are but seeming trifles I must confesse, yet such as with draw men from the true reading, and draw great consequences with them.[72]

In their meticulous editorial principles, James's dicta model a form of textual criticism which pursues the ideal of an unblemished text. His 1625 tract also includes a list of 'seuerall bookes . . . rescued out of the Papists hands, and restored by me'.[73] In late sixteenth-century England, this worry about the reliability and completeness of old books was the inevitable response to the destruction, loss, and suspicion that coloured the relationship to the past.[74] While the religious impetus behind James's project was particular to his own beliefs and historical moment, in his attention to 'seeming trifles' – to correction on the level of the individual word – his careful comparison of historical texts resembles the work of philological recovery undertaken by editors like Thynne and readers like those of L1.

The early modern annotators of L1 similarly show themselves as keenly alert to the manuscript's possible shortcomings. Throughout the text of *Troilus* in that book, words and phrases deemed incorrect were underlined, and the annotators supplied Speght's 1602 readings in the left and right margins of many pages. Speght's readings were not always correct, however, and the annotators' fidelity to the editions occasionally reveals the impenetrability of Chaucer's language even to experienced readers of medieval manuscripts. For example, there is a moment where the poem's narrator describes Criseyde's loving of Troilus despite his shortcomings,

[72] James, *Explanation*, sig. D2^{r}.

[73] James, *Explanation*, sig. B1^{r}. James's list includes works by John Bodin, Justus Lipsius, Thomas More, Ariosto, Dante, and Petrarch. Additionally, an interest in Chaucer is suggested by his design for the frieze in the Upper Reading Room of the Bodleian Library (*c.* 1616), in which 'Galf*ridus* Chaucer' is one of only two English poets pictured. See Knox, Poole, and Griffith, 'Reading Chaucer in New College, Oxford', 41.

[74] The agonistic relationship between textual error and religious truth is conveyed in the figure invented by Spenser to represent Error in *The Faerie Queene*. Error, the half-woman, half-serpent monster who is the adversary to the holy knight Redcrosse, is an arresting emblem of both moral and textual fallibility: 'Her vomit full of bookes and papers was', and she spews forth a wave of tiny serpents, 'fowle, and blacke as inke' (1.i.20.6; 1.i.22.7); see Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser: In Three Volumes*, ed. by J. C. Smith (Oxford University Press, 1909), II. Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (2013), 10.1093/actrade/9780199679690.book.1

'Al nere he malapert, or made it togh' (III.87). The second later annotator (Beadle and Griffiths's Scribe 6), who wrote a more cursive secretary with distinctive ticks over the letter c, intervened to underline the unfamiliar word and correct the thorny line. Following Speght, the handwritten marginal note suggests that 'malapert' – meaning presumptuous or overly self-assured – be replaced with 'in all apert', in a misreading of the initial three minims which had bedevilled the scribes of other *Troilus* manuscripts, too.[75] In an attempt to emend this line in L1, the annotator inadvertently corrupted the correct text in favour of a faulty reading reproduced in the printed book. Such moments – where corrections made according to the printed text introduce rather than banish error – serve as telling reminders of the chasm between the avowal of accuracy and its more elusive attainment.

Elsewhere in the manuscript, the corrections from Speght appear not in the margins but as annotations inserted between words using carets, which visually disrupt the original scribe's neat anglicana script. In some cases, where whole stanzas in the original manuscript are out of order (fol. 61^{v}) or altogether missing (fol. 13^{v}), the new annotators corrected the errors by cancelling the original text and recopying the text from Speght in what seemed to be its rightful place. On fol. 61^{v}, for example, appear two stanzas in which the narrator interrupts a description of the lovers' meeting to address his audience. His interjection is a typically tentative statement about his lack of experience in love, which he claims affects his ability to render the scene: 'For myne wordes, heere and every part, / I speke hem alle under correccioun / Of yow that felyng han in loves art'. Neatly, it is this stanza and the one preceding it (III.1324–7) that the annotator undertook to correct and move to the previous leaf following Speght, as though he took seriously the narrator's injunction to 'encresse or maken dymynucioun / Of my langage' according to his 'discrecioun' (III.1335–6). As Windeatt has observed, surviving manuscripts of *Troilus* collectively register doubt about the placement of these stanzas, which appear at different positions in other copies.[76] Confronted with one fifteenth-century text and a different editorial choice in Speght, the early modern annotator chose the authority of the printed book, and left carefully cross-referenced notes in

[75] The line was also problematic for the scribe of BL, MS Harley 3943. See B. A. Windeatt, 'The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics', *SAC*, 1.1 (1979), 119–41 (129).

[76] *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. by Barry Windeatt (London: Longman, 1984), III.1324. The use of the phrase 'vnder correccioun' by Chaucer and other Middle English poets is discussed in Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 33–5.

Latin to signal the correct order. On fol. 61^{v}, the originally copied pair of stanzas has been cancelled by a large bracket and the note 'vide fol*ium* p*raeced*e*ns*' added, while the stanzas have been recopied onto fol. 60^{v}, together with construe-marks and *signes de renvoie* indicating where the newly transposed text should be placed.[77]

The energetic correcting in L1 demonstrates resistance to the seemingly flawed readings transmitted in the manuscript. And in correcting the Middle English written by the original scribe – not always for the better – the later annotators express their preference for the updated language and textual variants transmitted in Speght. Why did they trust the reliability of Speght's edition over the medieval manuscript? Or, to put it differently, why did they correct the manuscript using the printed book rather than vice versa? The annotators' approach to the pair of books reveals a set of assumptions about the textual value of L1 relative to the printed volume and encapsulated in the first marginal note which cites a new reading as it appears 'in printed books'. To privilege the readings of Chaucer in print suggests their belief in the reliability and authority of the printed text, error-prone though Speght's edition has since proven to be.[78] L1 contains few traces of readerly engagement in the conventional sense (for instance, subjective reader responses to Chaucer's characters or narrative), yet the marginal notes of the L1 readers preserve their studious and sustained attention to Chaucer's language and texts as they navigated between the manuscript book and its printed counterpart in pursuit of comprehensibility and correctness. The glosses and corrections copied from Speght into L1 document the annotators' concern with the clarity *and* accuracy of the Chaucerian text, a twofold problem which some readers attempted to solve by copying readings from printed books into older manuscripts. For such readers, their updating of hard words was not confined to anxiety about Chaucer's linguistic archaism, but part of a broader sense that the language and texts contained in his antiquated manuscripts could be renewed and perfected using printed books. At the basis of this belief in the authority of print is the desire for an error-free text, an imaginary ideal to which printed editions aspired and which readers' corrections imitated.

The degree to which concerns about the hardness of Chaucer's language were paired with – and sometimes, superseded by – doubts about the text's accuracy is borne out by another manuscript, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 739

[77] On the use of construe-marks and *signes de renvoie* in correcting, see Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, pp. 116–20.
[78] Pearsall, 'Speght', pp. 86–91.

(hereafter Ld2). In this book, a late fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*, the Middle English of the original scribe has been glossed and emended by a sixteenth-century reader, again using a printed edition of Chaucer, possibly a Caxton, for comparison.[79] And so this manuscript, which Manly and Rickert condemned as 'very late, corrupt, and of no authority', had a new authority vested in it through corrections from a print.[80] Here, as in L1, textual emendations significantly outnumber glosses. By my count, there are no fewer than 451 later corrections in Ld2, written in at least two early modern hands. Glosses or identifications of obscure words account for 48, or roughly 11 per cent, of these. The glossing was mostly done in a secretary hand, perhaps of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. For example, hard words such as *gryse* (fol. 3^{v}), *lyte* (fol. 23^{v}), and *athamaunt* (fol. 30^{v}) were glossed respectively as 'grey fur', 'littl', and 'everlasting diamand'. Proper nouns were also singled out for glossing, such as *Phebus* as 'the Sun' (fol. 23^{r}), or *Cythera*, which received a fuller treatment: 'so called after the name of an Ilond in the gulf of Laconia on the sowth part of Greece Seruius' (fol. 34^{r}). Some words, on the other hand, were marked for glossing but never filled in. Of the forty-eight hard words identified in the manuscript, nineteen are unglossed. But the intention to eventually gloss them is indicated by tell-tale asterisks inserted in the text and sometimes duplicated in the margins, where the notes would have been written. The unglossed words marked out for later explanation include *cheuyshaunce* (fol. 4^{r}), *clarre* (fol. 18^{r}), *shode* (fol. 31^{r}), and *bone* (fol. 34^{r}). It does not seem that the copyist responsible for this work had access to Speght's glossary, which defines several words which were marked as troublesome in Ld2 but were ultimately left unglossed.

By far, the largest category of correction in Ld2 is the addition of new words (45 per cent), as in one of the first lines of the *Canterbury Tales*, which in this manuscript reads: 'Whan Zepherus wyth hys soote breth' (fol. 1^{r}).[81] In the hands of the later annotator, this becomes, 'Whan Zepherus *eke* wyth hys soote breth'. After the addition of new words, the second most frequent type of correction is the replacement of existing words with some similar variant (35 per cent). This may have been done for orthographic or metrical reasons,

[79] A determination made in *TCT*, 1, p. 315 and repeated in Seymour, *Catalogue*, 11, p. 180. But while most readings accord with Caxton's first edition, some occasionally diverge from it. For example, at 1.69 the 'porte' of the Knight (fol. 2^{r}) has been corrected to 'sport' by the later annotator. The reading is 'port' or 'porte' in Cx1, Cx2, 1498, 1526, 1532, 1542, and *c.* 1550 and 'sport' or 'sporte' in 1492, 1561, 1598, and 1602. If Cx1 was the text used, as is most likely, the readings therein were also supplemented with reference to another copy – for example at 1.19, 33, 74, 186, 311.

[80] *TCT*, 1, p. 317. Future references are to vol. 1 unless otherwise noted.

[81] 1.5.

or to excise corrupt readings. For instance, on fol. 19[r], the medieval scribe has copied a line in the *Knight's Tale* which describes Arcite's wish to remain a captive of Theseus (so that he may still catch glimpses of his beloved Emily from the window of his cell).[82] Probably following Caxton, the later annotator altered the line by adding a possessive pronoun to refer to Theseus and emending *moore* to *moo*:

> Yfetrede in ^*hys* prison for euer moo~~re~~

These examples of adding words and emending their spelling are particularly noteworthy because they also introduce archaisms transmitted in print into the older manuscript. Both *eke* and *evermoe* were obscure words by the sixteenth century. Spenser liberally sprinkled *eke* throughout his archaic English, and the orthography of *euer moo* and its variants was by this time distinctively outdated compared to *evermore*.[83] Introducing *eke* as the annotator did corrects the line's metre, but the emendation from *euer moore* to *euer moo* is not so easily explained. Rather, this latter correction records the annotator's pursuit of textual authenticity, even perhaps at the expense of clarity. In at least one case, the same hand emended the original scribe's *lyke* to *ylyke* (1.1374, fol. 21[v]). The corrections, then, do not only facilitate the understanding of Chaucer's language, but occasionally do the opposite: they introduce hard words and spellings which lend a seeming authenticity to the text and perhaps an 'auctoritie to the verse', as E. K. would have it.[84]

After glosses, new words, and new variants, the other categories of correction in Ld2 – writing over erasure, supplying missing lines, changes to word order, and cancellations – supply the remaining 10 per cent.[85] The range of textual alterations made in a book like Ld2, glossed and corrected against a printed copy, shows that there was more at stake in this work of annotation than just cracking the text's impenetrable language. Although this reader sometimes glossed the text's hard words, the corrections as

[82] 1.1229.

[83] A search of the EEBO-TCP corpus curated by the EarlyPrint Lab demonstrates that the variants *euer moo* and *euermo* appear predominantly in printed editions of Chaucer and Gower, while *euer more* and *euermore* were much more widely used in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century print. See EarlyPrint Lab, 'Corpus Search', https://eplab.artsci.wustl.edu/corpus-frontend-1.2/eebotcp/search/. Spenser himself preferred *euermore* – for example, in 'Him followed eke Sir Guyon euermore,' in *Faerie Queene*, II.vii.26.3. On Spenserian archaism, including *eke*, see Munro, *Archaic Style*, pp. 204–16.

[84] On the authorising effect of Spenser's Chaucerian archaism according to E. K., see Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 103–11.

[85] Broken down by numbers, the types of corrections are: adding new words (201); changing words (159); glossing (48); overwriting (25); missing lines (14); word order (4); and cancellations (2).

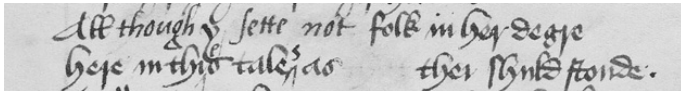


Figure 1.4 Corrections inserted and written over erasures. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 739, fol. 12r.

a whole are less concerned with comprehensibility – achieved by updating Chaucer's Middle English – than with the accuracy of the book's Middle English.

For that reader, a better version of Chaucer's text was to be located in a printed copy. The annotator's reliance on the printed edition is most striking at points where perceived or actual errors left by the original scribe were found and corrected. This is the case on fol. 12r, where the words have been rearranged in a pair of lines as follows: 'All <*though*> y <*sette not*> folk in her degre / Here in thi^e^s tale^s as thei shuld stonde' (see Figure 1.4).[86]

In these two lines, at least four erasures have been made: three at the points where *though* and *sette not* are now written over the erasures, and one between *as* and *thei*, where the trace of a word by the original scribe is just visible, and the space created by erasure has been left blank. The effaced words suggest that someone was bothered by the unusual grammar and syntax of the original line ('All haue y').[87] It is difficult to say who, whether original scribe or later annotator, is responsible for these erasures. But the ink corrections, written in by the later annotator, record a clear attempt to fill these gaps, and to set Chaucer's words in order. This form of correction, in which the annotator has written over erasures in the main text block, occurs twenty-five times in Ld2. Our annotator had no qualms about other invasive modes of correcting, such as striking through the original text, or squeezing new words into existing lines using carets, and may have even been responsible for the rubbed-out words and phrases.[88] At the very least, these annotations written into gaps created by

[86] I.744–5.

[87] The original reading, also attested in other manuscripts, was probably the more archaic 'All haue y nat set folk in her degree / Here in this tale as that thei shuld stonde'; see *TCT*, v, p. 69.

[88] The nature of erasure makes it difficult to determine who did the erasing, and why. BL, MS Royal 18 C.II (Ry2), the textual ancestor of Ld2, gives some clues as to what might have been rubbed out in the later manuscript, but since the Ry2 readings, which were likely to also be copied in Ld2, agree with the early modern annotator's preferred readings about half of the time (fourteen times out of twenty-five), and differ from them otherwise (eleven times out of twenty-five), it is not certain that the Ld2 annotator was responsible for the erasures.

erasure demonstrate an opportunistic use of blank space to put the text right.[89] The new readings supplied in these empty spaces follow Caxton in nearly all cases.[90]

The annotations in these manuscripts of *Troilus* and the *Canterbury Tales* show readers wresting Chaucer's language and text into a form they believed to be more comprehensible, more accurate, or more authentic. All of the medieval books discussed in this chapter passed through the transforming hands of such readers, who modified them based on texts they read in parallel, and typically in print. At the same time, the form of this imitation is always varied, and reveals a rich archive of corrective reading habits which diverge in each reader's preferences and particularities. In Ld2, for example, the annotator responsible for the emendations was extremely attentive to the text, but only at certain points in the manuscript, principally the *General Prologue*, *Knight's Tale*, and *Man of Law's Prologue* and *Tale* (fols. 1–46 and 81–98). By contrast, the annotator skipped over the roguish tales of the Miller, Reeve, and Cook, which are scarcely touched. But the annotator was paying attention even at those moments where they appeared to lose interest, or at least interest in correcting. This is clear at one point in the manuscript's twelfth quire, which should have contained the end of the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*. The annotator's collation revealed that a section of text was wanting, so they tipped in a new leaf supplying the missing twenty-eight lines at this point (fol. 140a^{r}); the *Prologue* and its *Tale* are otherwise virtually uncorrected.[91] The glosses and corrections in Ld2, which number in the hundreds, showcase the array of reading habits that early modern readers might bring to an old manuscript book. In doing so, they reveal aspects of the medieval text – its orthography, syntax, and perceived errors or incompleteness – which later readers strove to update and improve.

The preference for selective correcting present in Ld2 is also evident in BL, MS Royal 18 C.11 (Ry2), a parchment manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* copied around the second quarter of the fifteenth century. In this book, the *Parson's Tale* has been annotated by at least two early modern readers. The first added finding notes in dark ink (e.g. on fols. 238^{r}–247^{r}, 267^{v}–270^{v}), leaving marginal comments to mark 'actions of penitence' (fol. 238^{v}), 'iiii thinges to be co*n*sidered in penitence' (fol. 239^{r}), and 'the spices of penance' (fol. 238^{v}). While this mapping out of the text with finding

[89] On the filling in of blanks, see Chapter 2, pp. 112–22.

[90] In my collation against Cx1, the corrected readings in Ld2 are consistent about 90 per cent of the time.

[91] Discussed further in Chapter 2, pp. 105–7; see also Figure 2.5.

notes served an immediate practical purpose, it might also reflect the reader's familiarity with the *ordinatio* of devotional prose texts found in Middle English manuscripts, in which marginal notes by scribe or author were often embedded as a navigational aid.[92] The second annotator would eventually correct one of those marginal notes, changing it to 'the sp*e*ces <*or kinde*> of penance'. This reader, who wrote in a lighter, now brownish ink, and worked on the book at a later point, supplied corrections from a printed edition at moments where the original text seemed incomplete or faulty.[93] These corrections ranged from small to substantial, from adding an **a** to 'pyne' to describe the 'p^[a]yne of helle' (fol. 240[v]), to marginal insertions of whole clauses more than twenty words long which were wanting in the manuscript.[94] As in the case of the corrected parts of Ld2, this reader's collation of the *Parson's Tale* provides additional insight into the early modern reception of the *Canterbury Tales*. The choice to correct only the *Parson's Tale* would appear to confirm that tale's popularity with later readers who mined it for sententious matter.[95] But the annotations, while densely concentrated in this single tale, do not mark out quotations for commonplacing. Instead, the second annotator aimed to fix obvious errors where they appeared in the manuscript, to furnish omitted words and phrases, and to reconcile inconsistencies in favour of the printed edition. Textual correctness is, after all, an indispensable quality for the Parson's contribution to the storytelling game, a work modelled on the penitential manual and celebrated as 'the tale to end all tales'.[96] These corrections might reflect their especial awareness of the tale's religious and moral authority and its dependence, in turn, on textual authority.[97] Alternatively, the *Parson's Tale* might be the only annotated tale in Ry2

[92] Margaret Connolly, 'Compiling the Book', in *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 129–49 (pp. 133–7).

[93] *TCT*, p. 489 and Seymour, *Catalogue*, II, p. 142 suggest that the comparison text may have been the 1542 Thynne or the *c.* 1550 reprint. However, no readings conclusively point to the use of a single edition. A representative example appears at X.811 (fol. 261[r]): 'whan and eke' has been corrected to 'whan wher ne who and eke', a reading which appears in the *c.* 1550 reprint, and 1561, 1598, 1602, and 1687 editions. A note beside the Parson's *Prologue* (fol. 237[v]) by the black-ink annotator referring to 'the plowmans tale' suggests that the text used for collation may have been a *c.* 1550 (or later) copy of the *Workes*. Early modern readings of the *Plowman's Tale* are discussed further in Chapter 3 at pp. 154–66.

[94] For example, on fols. 240[v], 242[v], and 270[r].

[95] Wiggins, 'Printed Copies of Chaucer', 16; Singh, 'Caxton and his Readers', 233–4.

[96] Lee W. Patterson, 'The "Parson's Tale" and the Quitting of the "Canterbury Tales"', *Traditio*, 34 (1978), 331–80 (380).

[97] For the possibility that religious texts might command greater care in correction, see Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, p. 135.

because it was the only one these particular annotators read, and they might have chosen it for its edifying matter.

Although Chaucer's reputation as a vernacular classic was founded on his 'reverent antiquity', this venerability, as Sir Philip Sidney knew, was not without its 'wants'.[98] Older, then, was not necessarily better. It was this possibility of historical deficiency which made medieval manuscripts containing Chaucer's works particularly susceptible to correction by his early modern readers. The linguistic and textual corrections by later readers register, *in parvo*, their doubt about the accuracy of his works as transmitted in manuscript. Chaucer's words were obscure as well as old and, for some readers, this prompted concern about the other ways in which old words written in manuscripts might be unreliable. Reading Chaucer in scribally copied books forced readers to confront the poet's text in all its unfamiliarity, which extended beyond the hardness of certain words to include challenges which have long been familiar to scholars of medieval manuscripts – scribal error, idiosyncratic spelling, variance, and exemplar poverty amongst them.[99]

Readers nevertheless coveted, sought out, bought, and borrowed these old books, for they were objects of antiquarian desire. Chaucer's manuscripts might be laden with obscure and unreliable words, but they were still valuable, intriguing, and worth collecting. The perfecting of manuscripts according to seemingly superior printed texts offered readers a means of marrying the desirable qualities of the old books with authoritative readings. One such collector, who typifies the twinned impulses to preserve and perfect medieval manuscripts, was William Browne of Tavistock (1590/91–1645?). Browne's life and work were dedicated to antiquarian and literary pursuits. He is today classed amongst a circle of Jacobean Spenserians including George Wither and Christopher Brooke, and his major work, *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613), is an ambitious pastoral epic indebted to Drayton's national poem *Poly-Olbion* (1612). As a collector of medieval manuscripts, Browne's focus was Middle English, with a particular emphasis on Hoccleve.[100] He owned at least one medieval

[98] Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London: James Roberts, 1595; *STC* 22534), sig. I4[r].

[99] For an overview of these and related concerns, see Daniel Wakelin, 'Writing the Words', in Gillespie and Wakelin, pp. 34–58.

[100] A. S. G. Edwards, 'Medieval Manuscripts Owned by William Browne of Tavistock (1590/1? –1643/5)', in *Books and Collectors, 1200–1700: Essays for Andrew Watson*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G. C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 441–9 (p. 447), identifies seventeen medieval manuscripts and two post-medieval manuscripts owned by Browne.

manuscript of Chaucer, a fifteenth-century copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* which also contains, amongst other items, Hoccleve's *Letter of Cupid*.

In this book, now Durham University Library, Cosin MS V.II.13, Browne's signature appears on fol. 4^{r}, at the beginning of Chaucer's *Troilus*. He singled out certain lines with his characteristic annotation mark (a pair of short, vertical parallel lines slightly slanted to the right), identified similes, and added finding notes. He also corrected the Middle English text by filling in faded letters, supplying missing lines, and emending individual words and letters, perhaps according to Stow's printed edition.[101] The copying error 'To Simphone', for example, is marked with an asterisk and is substituted in the margin with the Fury's name, 'Thesiphone' (fol. 4^{r}). In certain places, Browne cancelled words written in the set secretary hand of the scribe to emend 'youre' to 'my', 'mars' to 'March', and 'spite' to 'space' (fol. 25^{r}). Elsewhere, he filled in faded letters in the words 'Route', 'Ride', and 'be' in imitation of the scribe's secretary script (fol. 23^{r}). Browne's corrections, which number about thirty, seem to have been part of a broader programme of perfecting medieval manuscripts.

His intention to put faulty books right is best attested in another book, Bodl. MS Ashmole 40, a copy of Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*. Here, Browne's close reading of the text is evident in dozens of finding notes and commonplace markers discreetly written into the manuscript's margins. His textual emendations are fewer than in his *Troilus* manuscript, but he corrected the text in other ways: by filling in blanks left by the scribe (for example, on fols. 7^{r}, 10^{v}, and 43^{v}), transcribing missing stanzas (fols. 40^{v} and fol. 80^{r}), and by copying and inserting three leaves which were missing in the manuscript (fols. 65, 70, and 74). In the first Eclogue of *The Shepheards Pipe* (1614), published early in his period of manuscript acquisition, Browne had included a modernisation of Hoccleve's *Gesta* story of Fortunatus, based on another of his manuscripts.[102] His printed edition included a postscript about the text and its author: 'THOMAS OCCLEEVE, one of the priuy Seale, composed first this tale, and was neuer till now imprinted. As this shall please, I may be drawne to publish the rest of his workes, being all perfect in my hands. Hee wrote in CHAUCERS time'.[103]

[101] See Martha Driver, 'Stow's Books Bequeathed: Some Notes on William Browne (1591–*c.* 1643) and Peter Le Neve (1661–1729)', in Gadd and Gillespie, pp. 135–43 (p. 136); cf. Edwards, 'William Browne of Tavistock', p. 445.

[102] Durham University Library, Cosin MS V.III.9. See Michelle O'Callaghan, *The 'Shepheard's Nation': Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612–25* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 123–5.

[103] William Browne, *The Shepheards Pipe* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1614; *STC* 3917), sig. $C7^{r}$.

Browne's comment that Hoccleve's 'workes' were 'all perfect in [his] hands' offers some insight into his bookish habit and its status as a source of the collector's pride. Well connected within London antiquarian circles due to his association with the Inns of Court, Browne owned several manuscripts that had formerly belonged to Stow, and it is possible that he consulted John Selden's library, too.[104] His love for collecting old manuscripts, however, did not preclude his altering and transforming them. For Browne, this textual transmission could flow in both directions. As we have seen, during the period that he was using alternative copies of Hoccleve and Chaucer to supply gaps and correct errors in his own Middle English manuscripts, he was also preparing part of another Hoccleve manuscript for the press. Browne's collation and close comparison of old books with their newly printed counterparts is also evident elsewhere. In BL, Additional MS 34360, an anthology of mostly Lydgatean works, he noted beside Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse* that 'Thus farr is printed in Chaucer fol. 320 vnder ye name of Tho: Occleeue', referring to Speght's 1602 edition, where the poem is misattributed.[105] His use of a range of authorities – new and old, manuscript and print – in his efforts to make them 'all perfect' exemplifies the fruitful reciprocity that could exist between print and manuscript books in Browne's day.

In his manuscript of *Troilus*, he was principally concerned with making the book easier to navigate through marginal glosses and with removing errors which marred its text. His study of that book was meticulous and displays, in the words of A. S. G. Edwards, an 'attention to textual detail [that] is striking in itself', as at one point on fol. 58^{v} where he corrected the rhyme scheme.[106] These efforts to collect medieval manuscripts and perfect their texts thus resolve into a portrait of another aspect of Browne's literary life. In one respect, his reading of Middle English manuscripts and his tendency to collate them with printed editions reflect his editorial aspirations and a scholarly attention that would come to inform the later field of textual criticism. That the collations undertaken by Thynne and other editors in order to produce a copytext are now well known means that the practice of textual comparison has become yoked to editorial work intended for publication, but the cases this chapter has been documenting

[104] O'Callaghan, *The 'Shepheard's Nation'*, p. 124 suggests the likelihood that Browne collated his copy of the *Regement* with Bodl. MS Arch. Selden Supra 53. However, the text transcribed by Browne onto supply leaves in Bodl. MS Ashmole 40 differs in some details from that in the Selden MS.

[105] BL, Additional MS 34360, fol. 19^{r}; discussed in Chapter 4, pp. 192, 194. See also Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', p. 113, and Driver, 'Stow's Books Bequeathed', p. 138.

[106] Edwards, 'William Browne of Tavistock', p. 444.

fall largely outside this purview.[107] It has recently been suggested by Jean-Christophe Mayer, in relation to Shakespeare's early modern readers, that 'The extent to which the owners of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of Shakespeare engaged with these books by collating, modernising or even reinventing them is greatly underestimated'.[108] Despite their seeming removal from networks of print publication, these readers were, for Mayer, 'directly involved in the process of editing' and did so '[o]ften simply for pleasure'. The evidence left by early modern annotators of Chaucer's medieval manuscripts reveals that they, too, comprise a category of collating readers whose interest in perfecting the poet's text has previously been overlooked. Amongst the early modern readers who collated Middle English manuscripts with print, Browne, with his editorial eye, was not exceptional. Rather, his textual interventions reflect the spirit of renovation that readers like Holland and the annotators of Ry2, Ld2, and L1 also brought to the words contained in their old manuscript books.

1.5 New Books with 'termes olde'

Collectively, the marks left by these later readers corroborate glossing, correcting, collating, and emending as significant aspects of reading Chaucer's manuscripts in early modern England. This practice, by which readers took to old books with the intent to improve their texts, is perhaps to be expected of an intellectual and bibliographical culture that was acutely alert to the possibility of error. For books printed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, errata leaves and pasted-in correction slips were part of the furniture.[109] Self-consciously directed at fastidious readers, printed lists of faults escaped made a scholarly spectacle of error and its removal.[110] The glossary in Speght's 1598 edition itself conjures the spectre of error by way of a Latin tag from Horace printed at the end of the list of hard words: 'Si quid novisti rectius istis Candidus imperti' [if you can improve these principles, tell me].[111]

Yet within this well-documented culture of correcting, surprisingly few printed books appear to have had their texts corrected by readers.

[107] The early Chaucer editors best known for their collation of the manuscripts are Thynne and John Urry; see William L. Alderson and Arnold C. Henderson, *Chaucer and Augustan Scholarship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 98.
[108] Jean-Christophe Mayer, *Shakespeare's Early Readers: A Cultural History from 1590 to 1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 83.
[109] Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 80–114. [110] Blair, 'Errata Lists and the Reader as Corrector', p. 37.
[111] *Workes* (1598), sig. 4B1^{v}.

H. S. Bennett estimated that 75 per cent of the 'some thousands' of printed books examined in his survey contained no manuscript corrections and that errata were 'for the most part ignored by readers'.[112] How to account for this conspicuous absence? It is possible that readers only silently emended the text as they read, and it is certain that some readers of such books had not mastered the more advanced skill of writing.[113] Alternatively, such corrections may have been part of those copies read to pieces, or of those copies cleaned by later owners in their zeal for pristine margins.[114] It is equally possible, as Adam Smyth suggests, that the errata list had less of a prescriptive function than a ludic, even literary role in the early modern printed book, where it could serve as a 'rhetorical set piece' to signal the book's status as book.[115] Whatever the interpretative possibilities of the errata list, that ubiquitous reminder of print's imperfection, the reticence of their readers to correct and emend throws the early modern corrections to Chaucer manuscripts into fine relief.

This silence in the margins of printed books is relevant to my discussion for two reasons. First, it is a reminder that early modern correcting by readers, like the medieval scribal correcting studied by Daniel Wakelin, was 'not an automatic or unreflective thing to do' but which, in its pursuit of accuracy, 'witnesses processes of thinking consciously about language and texts'.[116] The resultant texts, while not verbatim transcripts of their printed relatives, preserve the worries about correctness and comprehensibility that readers brought to their manuscripts, and their scholarly attempts to improve them through collation with other books, especially printed ones. This attention to language, evident in the impulse to gloss hard words and fix errors, might be an entirely typical response to a faulty and difficult text. At the same time, the work of glossing and correcting laid out in this chapter is only possible when readers are paying close attention. The readers studied here did not merely register and mark out hard or incorrect words. They also went to the trouble of finding comparison

[112] H. S. Bennett, *English Books & Readers 1603 to 1640: Being a Study in the History of the Book Trade in the Reigns of James I and Charles I* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 208. More recently, Mayer, *Shakespeare's Early Readers*, p. 79 has observed of early Shakespeare editions that 'What stands out . . . is the relatively small number of corrections to the text made by early seventeenth-century hands' and that '[e]mendations are far more frequently the work of later eighteenth-century readers'.

[113] On the acquisition of reading and writing skills in early modern England, see Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material*, pp. 57–68.

[114] These possibilities are offered by Stephen B. Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 59.

[115] Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 97–101. [116] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, p. 4.

volumes and performing the tedious and technical work of collation to produce what they deemed to be a better text.

Second, the relative absence of readers' corrections surviving in printed copies spurs further questions about the presence of correction in manuscripts more generally. In the case of books containing Chaucer's works, printed volumes seem less liable than manuscripts to be corrected by early modern readers, a trend that may be attributed both to the stance of authority assumed by print and to the desire for accuracy on the part of those readers who sought out manuscripts.[117] In a similar vein, we might ask whether certain media, genres, or authors inspired more frequent and energetic emendation by their readers. While the majority of research on early modern correcting has focussed on their appearance in printed books, isolating particular media like manuscripts or genres such as historical texts might better allow such trends to emerge.[118]

To further contextualise the early modern annotations studied in this chapter, we might also zoom out to the broad category of corrections, glosses, and emendations in manuscripts. To what extent does the print-to-manuscript transmission which is the primary subject of this book differ from the manuscript-to-manuscript transmission of textual details such as corrections, or from the emendations readers might make spontaneously as they read? While the proclivity (or at least the potential) to correct presents a compelling example of continuity in the reading of Chaucer across manuscript and print, my discussion allows that print-to-manuscript correcting (as well as glossing or emending) possesses some distinctive features. One of these is its scale. To understand the importance of print-to-manuscript correcting, we must recognise the relative infrequence of readers' corrections in medieval manuscripts more generally. Wakelin's survey of correction in late medieval English manuscripts finds that while nearly all manuscripts contain some correction by readers, 'most only have a few'.[119] While the types of textual transfers from print to manuscript

[117] Textual corrections do not figure in Wiggins's survey of readers' annotations in folio editions of Chaucer. My own survey of printed copies of Chaucer locates textual corrections in the minority of surviving copies. However, two learned readers, the philologist Franciscus Junius and the eighteenth-century zoologist and amateur lexicographer Richard Warner, corrected and glossed printed copies of Chaucer in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by which time the volumes of Speght they used were themselves old books. See Bremmer, 'Franciscus Junius Reads Chaucer', p. 56; Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 186–93; and Seth Lerer, 'Discovering Wadham's Chaucer', https://youtu.be/-WZzIUyrzpU.

[118] For example, Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, p. 146, notes that the annotations of readers might distinguish between utilitarian books and texts to be read, as in a copy of a medical herbal where later hands have supplemented the text but 'do little correcting and show little care over wording'.

[119] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, p. 76.

documented here are not to be found in all surviving fifteenth-century Chaucer manuscripts, my research suggests that when readers did correct, gloss, or emend a text systematically they were more likely to do so based on comparison with a print than with a manuscript or their own knowledge. Taken together, their interventions expose a pattern of textual consumption and transmission which is noteworthy in itself. Crucially, these textual interventions simultaneously register outdated, difficult, or undesirable aspects of the text and work to improve upon them. The histories of reading found in medieval manuscripts preserve vital evidence of early modern attitudes to the comprehensibility and correctness of the Chaucerian text in both media. An additional feature which distinguishes the interventions studied in this chapter is precisely that movement across media, since it reveals not only what readers thought of the text itself, but of the value, authority, and reliability of the material contexts in which they were located. The readerly attention to Chaucer's text observed in this chapter is predicated upon an appreciation of the manuscript books, whether for their beauty, the peculiarities of their writing support or scripts, their intrinsic age, or some confluence of these.

At the same time, this chapter has shown that early modern readers worried over the Chaucerian text borne in those manuscripts, and strove to rectify it. Both Chaucer's historical distance and the availability of comparison texts, particularly newly printed ones, made his older books suitable candidates for glossing and correction. Chaucer's oeuvre had long been haunted by the possibility of error, and his nervous literary statements about the fallibility of textual transmission – which Lerer calls a 'poetics of correction' – cast a long shadow over his reception.[120] Strikingly, the errata list in the 1598 Speght, a book which itself professes to have been made in haste, casts the greatest blame not on printshop practices nor on the editor or author, but on medieval scribal culture itself: 'These faults and many mo committed through the negligence of Adam Scriuener, notwithstanding Chaucers great charge to the contrary, might haue ben amended in the text it selfe, if time had serued'.[121] Naming the figure known as Chaucer's scribe allows the edition's makers to adopt a sceptical posture towards medieval manuscripts and the material processes and agents by which they were created.

[120] Seth Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 19.
[121] *Workes* (1598), sig. 4B7^{v}.

The problem of Chaucer's language became, then, a bibliographical one – transmitted in old books and resolved using new books. Print's self-promotion as the antidote to the ailments of old books is encapsulated in a vivid envoy written by poet and printer Robert Copland in 1530. Copland used a still-extant manuscript, now Bodl. MS Bodley 638, as copytext for the Wynkyn de Worde edition of the *Parliament of Fowles*, and took the opportunity to juxtapose the new edition with the decrepit manuscript book which the printed book intended to supersede.[122] His envoy imagines an old book 'Layde vpon shelfe / in leues all to torne / With letters dymme / almost defaced clene' ... 'Bounde with olde quayres / for aege all hoore & grene'. In Copland's narrative of the restorative powers of print, Chaucer's text is now directed to 'ordre thy language' and to produce on 'snowe wyte paper / thy mater for to saue / With thylke same langage that Chaucer to the gaue / In termes olde'. Here, in Copland's verses, as in the light-hearted rhymes on *jape* with which this chapter began, there is a focus on the authenticity of Chaucer's words – 'thylke same langage' – and a desire to preserve the Middle English as Chaucer meant. In both accounts, it is print that can 'saue' Chaucer's words from destruction and obscurity. Copland's envoy and the folio editions alike asked their readers to believe in the convenient fiction that the new book is, as Gillespie puts it, 'a recovery of all that is good from the literary past'.[123] That desire for 'termes olde' jars with the desire for innovation, for bibliographic novelty, for the books that declare themselves on their title pages to be 'newly printed'. The early modern editions embody some of these contradictions. Simon Horobin's work has shown that as early as Caxton, printers deliberately retained certain archaisms to preserve or embellish 'marked Chaucerian linguistic forms'. Thynne, for example, both modernised *and* selectively reprinted archaisms in Chaucer's printed language; by some measures (particularly Chaucer's third-person pronouns *hem* and *her* for *them* and *their*) his edition contains more archaism than those of his predecessors de Worde and Pynson.[124] That ideal of an archaic Chaucerian English is also apparent in black letter's persistence as the typeface of choice for printing the Middle English texts in the *Workes* until the eighteenth century. Even

[122] See *Robert Copland: Poems*, ed. by Mary C. Erler (University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 137–43. For the relationship between the two books, see Mary C. Erler, 'Printers' Copy: MS Bodley 638 and the "Parliament of Fowls"', *ChR*, 33.3 (1999), 221–9.

[123] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 123.

[124] Simon Horobin, *The Language of the Chaucer Tradition* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 83–8 (p. 87).

as they assumed such markers of textual antiquity, these printed books bemoaned the obscurity in which Chaucer's texts existed before the advent of print.

Readers, especially those of an antiquarian bent, prized the manuscripts that were the objects of their study and collection, and they continued reading Chaucer in what they termed 'ancient' copies. Yet antiquaries like Thomas Speght, William Browne, and Joseph Holland recognised that Chaucer's old books, and the old words they conveyed, would benefit from updating in order to be better understood. For some readers, the correct version of Chaucer's English was that conveyed in printed books, although it is noteworthy that even those readers who had access to Speght appear to have used the printed glossaries only selectively, if at all. Despite the limited use that he made of the terms in Speght's glossary, that printed tool provided Holland with a template which he adapted to his own tastes. For him, it was the book's scholarly apparatus, rather than the text itself, which should be helpfully improved. And for one sixteenth-century annotator of Bodl. MS Bodley 638, who modernised the language in a small section of the *Legend of Good Women*, the retention of Chaucer's original words as he wrote them – the primary concern of most of the correctors discussed here – was perhaps less important than preserving his underlying 'sentence'.[125] Chaucer's early modern readers sought authenticity and accuracy as well as comprehensibility. When they crossed out errors, overwrote outmoded syntax, or glossed obscure words in Chaucer's early books – even when they introduced archaism into an older manuscript – they were guided by a set of ideas, often inherited from print, about the best forms of Chaucer's language. Whatever form their improvements took, they show a collective willingness to augment and perfect their old copies.

As these observations make clear, the surviving annotations of Chaucer's early modern readers in medieval manuscripts offer a new window onto his reception. To read Chaucer in the early modern period was not simply a matter of having an 'interpretour'. Readers sought not only greater clarity, but also authenticity and accuracy. Against expectation, they looked to the printed medium to supply

[125] This reader corrected and modernised a chunk of eighteen lines in eleven places on fol. 80^{v}: for instance, 'Hem' becomes 'thym', 'leue sustre' becomes 'my sustre', 'I wis me ys as wo' becomes 'I wis am as wo', and 'we don' becomes 'we cause'. These corrections do not find an obvious source in a printed edition.

these and perfected older manuscripts in its image. This treatment of Chaucer's language exposes his untimeliness, or temporal dislocation, in the period. His words, manuscript and printed, came into the hands of early modern readers carrying both the weight and promise of his cultural baggage and marking Chaucer's texts as, at once, hard to read and worth reading.

CHAPTER 2

Repairing and Completing

While some readers of Chaucer fretted over the archaic and potentially faulty words borne in manuscript books, others were worried by the missing leaves and textual gaps that plagued their copies. In the books considered here, the belated interpolation of missing words, lines, and whole leaves suggests a pursuit of bibliographical and narrative closure for Chaucer's oeuvre. At the same time, this type of book use is always reliant on the creative engagement of those who continue, complete, and perfect these works, and on an understanding of the codex as open to such change and transformation. The desire for closure in the Chaucerian book begins, unsurprisingly, with its first makers, who had long sought the poet's works in their most complete state, a scholarly quest energised by the seemingly unfinished nature of several of his works.[1] Working from an incomplete exemplar, the scribe of the earliest surviving copies of the *Canterbury Tales* anticipated an ending for the incomplete *Cook's Tale* by leaving blank space on the page for its conclusion to be filled in.[2] In other manuscripts of the *Tales*, some scribes improvised to create an effect of completeness – by omitting the *Cook's Tale* altogether, by supplying other spurious lines, and, most commonly, by compensating for the absence by adding the apocryphal *Tale of Gamelyn* immediately after the Cook's fragment, where it is linked as 'another tale of the same cooke', according to one manuscript.[3] These decisions reveal the fixes devised by Chaucer's

[1] These include the *House of Fame*, *Anelida and Arcite*, the *Legend of Good Women*, the *Cook's Tale*, and the *Squire's Tale*.

[2] Timothy L. Stinson, '(In)Completeness in Middle English Literature: The Case of the *Cook's Tale* and the *Tale of Gamelyn*', *Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies*, 1.1 (2016), 115–34 (123).

[3] BL, MS Royal 17 D.xv, fol. 66^{v}. Seventeen of the twenty-five copies of *Gamelyn* supply such a link. See *TCT*, II, p. 171; *The Tale of Gamelyn, from the Harleian MS. No. 7334, Collated with Six Other MSS*, ed. by Walter William Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), p. xvi; Stinson, '(In) Completeness', 126.

earliest critics when they were confronted by the instability of his oeuvre, and capture the pursuit of completeness on the page.[4]

The early printers, too, discovered inconvenient gaps in the material remains of Chaucer's works. Famously, Caxton, who could 'fynde nomore' of the *House of Fame* when he came to publish his 1483 edition, composed and printed twelve lines to conclude the poem.[5] In de Worde's 1498 edition of the *Tales*, the incomplete *Squire's Tale*, which trails off abruptly near the beginning of a new section in the narrative, was followed by an earnest note from the printer: 'There can be founde no more of this forsayd tale. whyche I have ryght dilygently serchyd in many dyuers scopyes'.[6] Later recycled in Thynne's influential edition, de Worde's note about the missing end to the *Squire's Tale* would be disseminated in each successive print until the eighteenth century. Faced with the variability of a literary legacy in manuscript, Chaucer's early printers were thus 'led to systematize [the earlier] intermittent ad hoc strategies for dealing with the problem of completeness'.[7] In Thynne's case, the appropriation of the earlier printer's comment caused his son Francis to avow that his father had 'made greate serche for copies to perfecte his woorkes, as apperethe in the end of the squiers tale'.[8] The *Squire's Tale* would be acknowledged as incomplete for centuries to come, but the fiction of completeness remained fundamental to the commercial enterprise of editing and publishing Chaucer. Although they were prone to inheriting spurious lines or gaps from their manuscript exemplars, the printed editions could profess to present the text in an improved and expanded state – not 'in leues all to-torne', as printer Robert Copland imagined the Chaucerian manuscript book, but one sold in newly printed authoritative editions. As we have seen, the successive printed volumes of Chaucer's collected *Workes* pursued an ideal of definitiveness. It is an aspiration conveyed as much in their claims of novelty and fidelity to what Chaucer wrote as in the material heft of the

[4] Windeatt, 'Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics', 119–41.

[5] For discussion of Caxton's epilogue to the *House of Fame*, see Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 62–4.

[6] *The boke of Chaucer named Caunterbury Tales* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1498; *STC* 5085), sig. m6^{r}. As Dane notes, de Worde's note was appropriated without attribution in Thynne's 1532 edition: 'There can be founde no more of this fore said tale, whiche hath ben sought i*n* dyuers places' (1532, *STC* 5068; sig. H2^{v}). An editorial comment identical to that of Thynne would be included in all editions until 1687, and was updated by Urry's edition in 1721 to confirm that the ending could not be found in 'all the Printed Books that I have seen, and also MSS.' (sig. R2^{v}). See Joseph A. Dane, '"Tyl Mercurius House He Flye": Early Printed Texts and Critical Readings of the "Squire's Tale"', *ChR*, 34.3 (2000), 309–16 (312–13).

[7] Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print', 5.

[8] Thynne, *Animadversions*, p. 6.

large folios produced by Thynne and the later editors.[9] Speght's declaration in the 1602 dedication that he has 'reformed the whole Worke' using a combination of manuscript and print witnesses encapsulates this sense of his own edition's reliability and thoroughness.[10] That desire for textual and bibliographical completeness is founded on a conception of the Chaucerian oeuvre as a known and recoverable entity, capable of being accessed, copied, contained, and preserved in books. Joseph A. Dane has pointed out that the semblance of stability in the entity he calls the Chaucer book is ultimately illusory given its 'problematic multiplicity' in thousands of surviving copies.[11] This might be so from the vantage point of the modern bibliographer, yet the fact that early modern readers hand-reproduced printed texts in order to repair and restore older copies shows that they invested the idea of the Chaucer book with some degree of textual stability. For all print's susceptibility to variance, the impression of its reliability and near-completeness was one actively cultivated by the printers, stationers, and editors responsible for making new books of Chaucer's works, and who announced that they had 'repair'd / And added moe' to his fragmented corpus.[12] The success of their venture is evident in the early modern use of printed books as a model for supplying the unsatisfying gaps, blanks, erasures, and lacunae found in old copies. The book's ability to be reshaped and repaired in the ways surveyed by this chapter is predicated on its openness to change – to destruction as well as improvement. Although these repairers of manuscripts pursued an ideal of textual fixity inherited from print, their variability brings them back in line with Dane's assertion of each copy's singularity – it is only amplified in the perfected and completed volumes under consideration here, for every book's individualised programme of completion and repair makes it all the more unique. This ability of the codex to tolerate seemingly endless additions and completions suggests that the form of the book might render it, for all the efforts of Chaucer's perfecting early readers, 'a constitutively incomplete and unfinishable object'.[13]

The present chapter tracks the historical convergence of incomplete Chaucerian texts in manuscript with the seemingly authoritative printed

[9] On the stature of Speght's 1598 *Workes* compared to contemporary folios, see Francis X. Connor, *Literary Folios and Ideas of the Book in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 99 and n. 25.

[10] *Workes* (1602), sig. [a]3^{r}. [11] Dane, *Tomb*, p. 4. [12] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]6^{v}.

[13] Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch, 'Introduction', in *The Unfinished Book* (Oxford University Press, 2020), ed. by Gillespie and Lynch, pp. 1–15 (p. 6).

copies that followed them. Its subjects of interest are the material and textual absences that early modern readers found in early Chaucerian books, the measures they took to fill them, and the attitudes to Chaucer and his books that lay behind such acts. This impulse to complete and perfect was roused not only by conspicuously unfinished or damaged works but also by more innocuous absences: the gaps left during copying, or blank spaces allotted for decoration. Blank space, as Laurie Maguire has argued, 'activates the reader's restorative critical instincts', and such absence spurs the modes of perfecting considered in this chapter.[14] The means and methods of repair carried out by later book owners in their 'torne' and ruptured manuscripts exposes contemporary concerns with the integrity and preservation of Chaucer's oeuvre, thereby positioning repair as one of the most revealing forms of perfecting undertaken by his early modern readers.

2.1 Mutilated Manuscripts

The volumes under discussion were carefully repaired in this later period but like many medieval books, they had all been previously despoiled or damaged through neglect.[15] Before they were valued as old and rare copies of Chaucer's writing, some copies were prized for the attractive decorative art most prominently on display in their borders and which likely served as motivation for their removal.[16] Beyond their susceptibility to iconoclasm, old books were subject to destructive household and commercial uses and to the ravages of time.[17] In particular, the durability of parchment saw manuscripts repurposed for myriad material purposes. Christopher de Hamel has shown that the use of discarded vellum as a structural reinforcement for European bindings has been in practice for over a millennium, and long before the introduction of moveable type.[18] Parchment fragments from European medieval manuscripts have been found strengthening

[14] Laurie Maguire, *The Rhetoric of the Page* (Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 1.

[15] While it is seldom possible to have absolute precision about the dates at which leaves or decorative elements were removed from manuscripts, the presence of manuscript replacement leaves (dateable on the basis of script) provides a *terminus ante quem* for their removal.

[16] For example, in CCCO, MS 198, which has had its illuminated borders cut out on fols. 110, and 195, and in CUL, MS Gg.4.27, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600, and Lichfield Cathedral Library, MS 29, described in this chapter.

[17] For a vivid account of children's interactions with the Helmingham manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* in a sixteenth-century household, see Seth Lerer, 'Devotion and Defacement: Reading Children's Marginalia', *Representations*, 118.1 (2012), 126–53 (130–5).

[18] Christopher de Hamel, *Cutting Up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit* (Charlottesville: Book Arts Press, 1996), p. 5.

bindings, wrapping the goods sold by grocers, and repurposed as stiffening material for clothing in later periods.[19] Such habits of book-breaking gathered momentum during the Reformations of the sixteenth century, a period marked by iconoclastic fervour and suspicion of the material remains of the medieval past.[20] During the sixteenth century, images cut from manuscripts might be pasted in to serve as up-market adornment in devotional printed books, while discarded parchment sheets might elsewhere serve as cheap wrappers for newly printed books in bookbinders' shops. Some enthusiasts, like Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), who was furnished with samples of ancient handwriting snipped from two early Gospel books at Durham Cathedral, collected manuscript fragments for their palaeographical interest.[21] The bookseller and collector John Bagford (d. 1716), motivated by an interest in the history of scripts and typography, compiled, sold, and gifted fragments of medieval and rare early printed books (sometimes whole albums of them) to his associates and clients, including Humfrey Wanley, Hans Sloane, and Pepys himself.[22] The majority of Bagford's manuscript fragments seem to have been obtained from binding waste created from books that were cut up in the sixteenth century.[23]

John Manly and Edith Rickert, together responsible for the eight-volume editorial feat titled *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts* (1940), had a choice word for such books and their texts: 'mutilated'.[24] It is a word uncomfortable to modern ears for its connotations of physical brutality, but one they used to describe the

[19] See de Hamel, *Cutting Up Manuscripts*, p. 6; Erik Kwakkel, 'Wearing a Book', https://erikkwakkel.tumblr.com/post/88698949876/wearing-a-book-books-are-objects-to-read-from.

[20] Hannah Ryley, 'Constructive Parchment Destruction in Medieval Manuscripts', *Book 2.0*, 7.1 (2017), 9–19; Nicholas Pickwoad, 'The Use of Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts in the Construction and Covering of Bindings on Printed Books', in *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments of Medieval Books*, ed. by Linda L. Brownrigg and Margaret M. Smith (London: Red Gull Press, 2000), pp. 1–20.

[21] De Hamel, *Cutting up Manuscripts*, pp. 7–8; Rosamond McKitterick and Joyce Irene Whalley, 'Calligraphy', in *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, Vol.* IV*: Music, Maps and Calligraphy*, comp. John Stevens, Sarah Tyacke, and Rosamond D. McKitterick (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), pp. 6–7.

[22] Bagford's study of printing history led him to produce a memorandum on the history of printed Chaucer editions, with which Thomas Hearne later engaged in his edition of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*; see Milton McC. Gatch, 'John Bagford, Bookseller and Antiquary', *British Library Journal*, 12 (1986), 150–71 (164–5); and Milton McC. Gatch, 'John Bagford as a Collector and Disseminator of Manuscript Fragments', *The Library*, 6th ser. 7.2 (1985), 95–114 (96–7).

[23] Gatch, 'Manuscript Fragments', 114. Bagford is also known to have owned a Caxton *Canterbury Tales*; see Dane, *Tomb*, p. 103.

[24] A label applied, for example, to BL, Egerton MS 2863, BL, Additional MS 25178 and CCCO, MS 198.

state of many of the manuscript books this chapter will discuss. Within the lexicon of the book world, where it has resided for hundreds of years, 'mutilated' takes on a more benign appearance. But the word and others like it reveal a deeper obsession with bibliographical completeness that has long been present in language which figures the book as a human body. If (as this book's Introduction lays out) the Latin *imperfectus* denotes a body which is not in its complete and fully realised state, *mutilus* is its more terrible twin, used to describe those bodies that have been made imperfect through absence or excision of some part.[25] In the early modern period, to mutilate was 'To make Vnperfect', as a sixteenth-century English-Latin lexicon records. 'Imperfectus', meanwhile, was listed in that dictionary as a synonym for 'Vnperfect, maimed, or wanting some thing'.[26]

Religious, classical, and literary books, texts, and canons of work could all be appraised according to this vocabulary of bodily perfection and mutilation. Leah Whittington locates the genesis of this idea in the language of the Italian humanists who, surveying the incomplete volumes that transmitted an impoverished record of the totality of Greek and Roman learning, 'turn[ed] to metaphors of mutilation to register their grief and indignation, and to announce their project of cultural reconstruction'.[27] Completing, like correcting, was a philological endeavour bound up with the humanists' agenda of historical recovery. And as with the practices of emendation and *castigatio*, the project of textual repair was pitched in morally freighted terms: integrity, virtue, and dignity.[28] In English, it was a lexicon available to the recusant Catholic William Reynolds when he denounced the Calvinists for introducing into Luther's works

> the most filthy mutations and corruptions . . . In one place some wordes are taken away, in an other many mo, some where whole paragraphs are lopte of . . . Where Luther doth reproue the Sacramentaries, there especially those falsifiers tooke to them selues libertie to mutilate, to take away, to blotte out and change.[29]

In Reynolds's view, this textual violence mounted a challenge to both theological and historical verity. John Healey, in his translation of

[25] *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, s.v. *mutilus*; *imperfectus*.
[26] Rider, *Bibliotheca Scholastica*, sig. 2L1^{v}.
[27] Leah Whittington, 'The Mutilated Text', in Gillespie and Lynch, pp. 429–43 (p. 432).
[28] Whittington, 'The Mutilated Text', pp. 440–2. See also Chapter 1, p. 65.
[29] 'Lopte of' is glossed in the margin as 'Detruncati', as Reynolds is here translating from the Latin of Joachim Westphal; see William Rainolds, *A refutation of sundry reprehensions, cauils, and false sleights* (Paris: for Richard Vestegan?, 1583; *STC* 20632), sig. A4^{r}.

Augustine's *Of the citie of God* (1610), describes Cicero's *De Fato* as 'wonderfully [i.e. exceedingly] mutilate, and defectiue as we haue it now'.[30] An inverted invocation of the same trope appears in Shakespeare's First Folio (1623), whose plays are proclaimed in the prefatory epistle to be 'cur'd, and perfect of their limbes . . . as he conceived them'.[31] These images hearken, too, to a longer tradition of likening the human body to the book and other material texts. Richard de Bury's image of the fire at Alexandria's library as 'a hapless holocaust where ink is offered up instead of blood' and the archetypal description of Christ's crucified body as a charter are prominent late medieval appearances of the conceit.[32] Like bodies, old books in that period could be described as 'aged and worn out' (*vetere et debili*), as falling apart (*caducus*), headless (*acephalus*), or grey with age ('for aege all hoore').[33] In their tendency to deteriorate with time, books were similar to bodies according to this worldview – and like a person, a mutilated book was fundamentally imperfect.

When Manly and Rickert classified Chaucerian manuscripts as mutilated, or when historical readers described old books by analogous terms – mangled, lopped off, cut to pieces, dismembered, or imperfect – they were thinking about them in terms of the completeness that they lacked, and imagining them relative to other, ideal books.[34] Books could be messy and imperfect, but this is not a state that most readers desired for them. As Copland's description of an 'al to-torne' Chaucerian book suggests, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries inherited manuscripts in varying states of deterioration and neglect. Even after manuscript books had outworn their welcome as reading material, their illuminations were prized as decoration, and often excised.[35] One such purloining of a painted Chaucer portrait from a fifteenth-century manuscript of Hoccleve's

[30] John Healey, *St. Augustine, Of the citie of God* (London: George Eld, 1620; *STC* 916), sig. S4^{v}.

[31] See Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 281–337.

[32] Richard de Bury, *Philobiblon*, trans. by Ernest Chester Thomas (Oxford: published for the Shakespeare Head Press by B. Blackwell, 1970), pp. 72–75; Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 49–52. My thanks to Lucy Allen-Goss and Bruce Holsinger for these examples.

[33] Daniel Sawyer, 'Missing Books in the Folk Codicology of Later Medieval England', *The Mediaeval Journal*, 7.2 (2017), 103–32 (114); Erler, *Copland*, pp. 137–43; Whittington, 'The Mutilated Text', pp. 436–8.

[34] Sawyer, 'Missing Books', 123–4.

[35] On this phenomenon, see de Hamel, *Cutting Up Manuscripts*, pp. 7–8; Sherman, *Used Books*, pp. 107–9; Stella Panayotova, 'Cuttings from an Unknown Copy of the *Magna Glossatura* in a Wycliffite Bible (British Library, Arundel MS. 104)', *British Library Journal*, 25 (1999), 85–100.

Regement provoked the ire of a reader in the sixteenth century, who subsequently inscribed two stanzas of doggerel verse onto the same page:

> Off worthy Chaucer
> here the pickture stood
> That much did wryght
> and all to doe vs good
>
> Summe Furyous Foole
> Have Cutt the same in twayne
> His deed doe shewe
> He bare a barren Brayne.[36]

With some wit, the verses memorialise the absent 'pickture' and 'worthy Chaucer' himself. Their real subject, however, is the 'Furyous Foole' who did the 'deed'. The culprit is figured as a moral and intellectual antithesis to the benevolent Chaucer; while the poet 'much did wryght', the despoiler of this book wrought only destruction.[37] Righteous outrage at the dismemberment of medieval manuscripts, it turns out, is a great Chaucerian tradition. Describing the same lines in the last century, Derek Brewer could not help but concur: 'All readers will echo the sentiments expressed by the infuriated sixteenth-century reader'.[38] Early in the eighteenth century, John Urry noted of another imperfect manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* that 'It has been a noble book, but by some wicked hand many of the leaves are cutt out in diverse places of the book'.[39] Of CUL, MS Gg.4.27 (later discussed), Urry wrote that it is 'a very fine book' but laments the loss of many leaves and its pilgrim-figures, 'which I have not seen in any other MS of this author, & doubtless were once all there, but the childishness of some people has robbed us of them'. The perpetrators of this destruction are, in such accounts, 'childish', 'wicked', and 'Foole[s]'. In truth, there are many reasons for historical readers to have cut up old books; not all of them are malicious and some were even aimed at preservation.[40] Such terms, however, reflect an often rash moral judgement of the people who cut

[36] BL, MS Harley 4826, fol. 139^{r}; Brewer, *Critical Heritage*, 1, p. 96.
[37] On the varied reasons for removing author portraits from books, see Chapter 4, p. 212.
[38] Brewer, *Critical Heritage*, 1, p. 97.
[39] Formerly the Norton MS, now BL, MS Egerton 2863. Urry's notes are cited from his copy of Speght's 1602 edition, Bodl. MS Rawlinson Poet. 40a, fol. 3^{r}.
[40] The 'Calligraphical Collection' assembled by Pepys is one such case. On early modern collections of historical fragments and specimens as situated '[b]etween the poles of loss and possibility', see Whitney Trettien, 'Creative Destruction and the Digital Humanities', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Digital Medieval Literature*, ed. by Jennifer E. Boyle and Helen J. Burgess (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 47–59 (p. 55).

images and leaves from old books, and one which was implicitly projected onto the imperfect books themselves.

While the language of mutilation implied the moral failure of those responsible for the act, the damaged volume itself was frequently allied not with the perpetrator but with the book's creator. Thus, the book became a metonymic representation of the author's physical body and of their body of work.[41] To mutilate any individual copy was also to rupture the integrity of the author's whole *corpus* – a threat literalised in the clipping out of Chaucer's painted portrait from the *Regement* manuscript. This figural association between the individual copy and the author's entire body of writing undergirds the anxiety discernible in the comments on the mutilated works of Luther and Cicero and lent further urgency to the project of textual repair. For such authors, as for Chaucer, the worry about the fragmentation of their works is informed by an appreciation of their historicity and cultural significance. All the works Chaucer 'did wryght' make him 'worthy', but the earliest copies risked slipping into neglect and disrepair. Historians of the medieval and early modern book have already begun to reckon with, survey, and theorise the loss, destruction, and archival absences that occupy the penumbra of their area of study. Accounts of pre-modern mending, repair, and other programmes of preservation before the nineteenth century are fewer, but these acts – the subject of this chapter – constitute a prehistory of bibliographical conservation and a worthy complement to the expanding history of book loss.[42] Supplying missing text copied from readily available printed editions onto new (or newly furnished) leaves was one means of perfecting incomplete manuscript copies, but one whose motives and methods have not yet been fully accounted for or theorised.

If printed volumes did not explicitly purport to be an exhaustive repository of all that the poet wrote, they were nonetheless positioned as the authoritative record of the corpus of diverse Chaucerian works rescued from oblivion. No surviving medieval manuscript (not even Holland's Gg) ever made the same claim. Enterprising early modern readers thus seized the opportunity to repair and complete texts contained in medieval manuscripts according to their newer printed counterparts. For Chaucer's works,

[41] Whittington, 'The Mutilated Text', p. 437.

[42] Recent studies of book loss and destruction include Sawyer, 'Missing Books'; *Book Destruction from the Medieval to the Contemporary*, ed. by Gill Partington and Adam Smyth (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Richard Ovenden, *Burning the Books: A History of the Deliberate Destruction of Knowledge* (London: John Murray, 2020). On repair, see Trettien, 'Creative Destruction'; Sonja Drimmer, 'A Medieval Psalter "Perfected"'.

print culture became not only the mode of their dissemination in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but an unexpected contributor to their restoration and survival in earlier manuscript copies.

2.2 Supplying Lost Leaves

Perhaps the best-known case of the destruction and repair of a Chaucer manuscript is that of CUL, MS Gg.4.27, the Cambridge copy described by Urry as 'very fine'. It is a justifiably famous collection which contains a greater number of Chaucer's works than any other manuscript, and a copy unique for its combination of minor poems – the *Legend of Good Women*, the *House of Fame*, and the *Parliament of Fowles* – with the more substantial *Troilus* and the *Canterbury Tales*.[43] In addition to its role as a witness to early canon formation, the manuscript is distinguished by an elaborate programme of illustration and decoration, again unique amongst Chaucer manuscripts. In its original state, the book contained at least one, and possibly two, full-page illustrations.[44] It was decorated with borders to mark major textual breaks, including the beginning of every tale and prologue, and illustrated with pilgrim portraits and with depictions of Vices and Virtues from the *Parson's Tale*. Many of the book's illustrations were removed sometime before the end of the sixteenth century, taking with them significant sections of the text written on the corresponding leaves. Malcolm Parkes and Richard Beadle have suggested the possibility that the illuminations were removed for the sake of preservation (rather than on the 'childish' whims condemned by Urry) and that, having safeguarded its most precious parts, 'The rest of the manuscript could be discarded since from 1532 onwards virtually all the texts in this volume would have been available in print'.[45]

Joseph Holland, the antiquary who owned the manuscript around 1600, had other ideas.[46] Although nothing definitive is known of the book's

[43] Unlike Lydgate, Hoccleve, and Charles d'Orleans, whose works appeared in single-author manuscript compilations, with the exception of Gg 4.27 (which itself contains several non-Chaucerian texts) there is no material evidence that Chaucer's minor works were collected with the *Canterbury Tales* in the fifteenth century. See Kathleen Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Counterfeit Canon* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), p. 25.

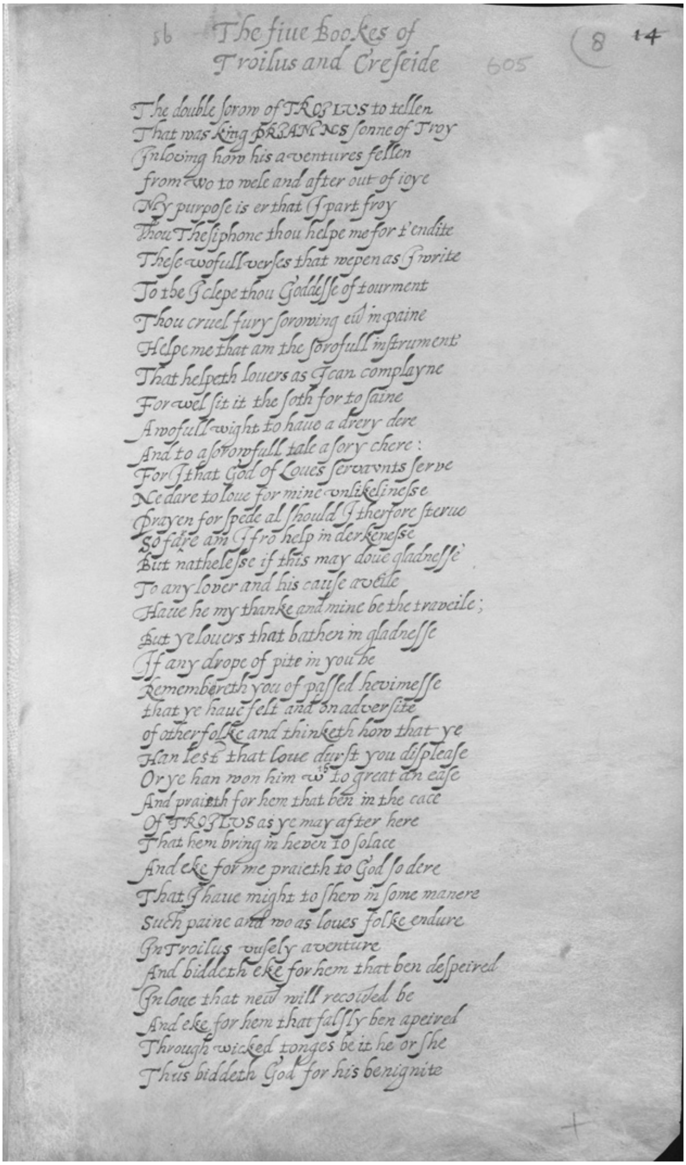
[44] On what were once fols. '130^{v}' and '131^{r}'. The description of the manuscript that follows is indebted to Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, pp. 1–68.

[45] Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, p. 66.

[46] The first four folios of Gg are also missing and it is reasonable to assume that they were already absent in 1600, since Holland marked his ownership with a note, 'JOSEPH HOLAND 1600', on what was then the first leaf of the manuscript, fol. 5^{r}. See Pace, 'Speght's Chaucer', 225.

provenance before that date, the details of its repair and embellishment under Holland's instruction have been thoroughly documented.[47] Far from confirming the obsolescence of the plundered manuscript book, the printed editions that Holland had at his disposal provided the means for its restoration. Holland's project of perfecting the damaged manuscript included supplying the text lost during the removal of the book's pilgrim portraits and illuminated borders. When he inherited it, the beginnings of a group of lyrics, the five books of *Troilus*, the *General Prologue*, and the introductions of many individual tales all lacked their medieval leaves.[48] Copying from Speght's 1598 edition, Holland's scribe supplied the opening section of *Troilus and Criseyde* (1.1–70) and multiple missing sections in the *Canterbury Tales*, which were inserted into the manuscript on a series of eighteen parchment supply leaves in a stylish and extremely neat italic hand (see Figure 2.1).[49] Holland's perfecting of Gg went considerably beyond the repair of its ruptured text – extending to cleaning its annotated margins, and adding new literary and biographical material about Chaucer – but I am concerned here with the most glaring signs of the book's incompleteness, and his intention to fill them in.[50] In this context, the choice of writing support is telling for, as Cook observes, the use of parchment 'suggests a specific investment in the unity of the book itself'.[51] For Holland, who rightly identified Gg.4.27 as a historically important attempt to collect Chaucer's works in a single codex, the decision to perfect it through consultation with the latest Speght edition was an astute one. Like Speght's *Workes*, Holland's manuscript aspired to a degree of completeness. Its integrity was threatened by the earlier excisions it had borne, and the repairs undertaken by Holland were an attempt at setting this right. For instance, the supply leaf which replaces the lost opening leaf to *Troilus and Criseyde* is headed 'The fiue Bookes of Troilus and Creseide', a title not matched by the printed edition (where the incipit heralds only 'The Booke of Troilus and Creseide'),[52] as though the person who made these repairs wished to emphasise the contiguity of the first supplied leaf with what follows. The scribe also smoothed over the inevitably sharp transitions between the early modern and medieval hands by adding catchwords and

[47] In addition to the studies by Parkes and Beadle and Pace, see Cook, 'Joseph Holland', 165–88 and Caldwell, 'An Elizabethan Chaucer Glossary', 374–5.
[48] For the manuscript's collation see Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, pp. 8–9.
[49] For a full description of the lost sections of the text, see Parkes and Beadle, *Poetical Works*, pp. 4–6.
[50] For Holland's other interventions in Gg, see Chapters 1, 3, and 4, pp. 54–60, 133–41, 151–3, 169–70, 213–4.
[51] Cook, 'Joseph Holland', 173. [52] *Workes* (1598), sig. 2G1^{v}.



56 The fiue Bookes of
Troilus and Creseide 605 8 14

The double sorow of TROILUS to tellen
That was king PRIAMUS sonne of Troy
In louing how his aventures fellen
from wo to wele and after out of ioye
My purpose is er that I part froy
Thou Thesiphone thou helpe me for t'endite
These wofull verses that wepen as I write
To the I clepe thou Goddesse of tourment
Thou cruel fury sorowing euer in paine
Helpe me that am the sorofull instrument
That helpeth louers as I can complayne
For wel sit it the soth for to saine
A wofull wight to haue a drery chere
And to a sorowfull tale a sory chere:
For I that God of Loues servants serve
Ne dare to loue for mine unlikelinesse
Prayen for spede al should I therfore sterue
So fare am I fro help in derkenesse
But nathelesse if this may doue gladnesse
To any lover and his cause aveile
Haue he my thanke and mine be the traveile;
But ye louers that bathen in gladnesse
If any drope of pite in you be
Remembereth you of passed hevinesse
that ye haue felt and on adversite
of other folke and thinketh how that ye
Han felt that loue durst you displease
Or ye han won him wt to great an ease
And praieth for hem that ben in the cace
Of TROILUS as ye may after here
That hem bring in heven to solace
And eke for me praieth to God so dere
That I haue might to shew in some manere
Such paine and wo as loues folke endure
In Troilus unsely aventure
And biddeth eke for hem that ben despeired
In loue that new will recoured be
And eke for hem that falsly ben apeired
Through wicked tonges be it he or she
Thus biddeth God for his benignite

Figure 2.1 A parchment replacement leaf for the opening of *Troilus and Criseyde*. CUL MS Gg.4.27(1), fol. 8r. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

incipits, drawing attention to the repairs and highlighting the book's newly restored status. As Cook notes, the bright blue ink used for this purpose may have been a choice designed to echo the book's surviving decoration.[53]

Holland understood that textual integrity was essential to the project of historical preservation, and he expended considerable resources and effort to this end. A glance at some of the other books he had copied and completed illustrates the importance he attached to the idea of repair. A sixteenth-century manuscript now held at the British Library contains a collection of painted arms executed by Holland. This book is a copy of rolls of arms for Devonshire and Cornwall produced during the fifteenth century. On the inside back cover of his own transcript, Holland (who was himself from Devon) recorded the source of his copy and gave a reason for this work in a note dated 1584: 'because manie of their names are almoste worne out [in the original], I haue sett them downe agayne / as neere as I can according to the auncient writinge'.[54] As Holland tells it, the primary motivation for collecting this historical material was not possession, but preservation. Another of his manuscripts, now in the College of Arms, is a fourteenth-century copy of *The Seege of Troye* and a purported translation of *Historia regum Brittaniae*.[55] But like his Chaucer, that manuscript was incomplete, so Holland supplied the wanting text on an additional paper leaf and dutifully recorded his intervention in a note dated 1588. Having noticed that 'the end of this booke is imperfect', he wrote, he subjected it to close examination against 'an auncient originale written in lattine by Gefferay of Monmouth de gestis Briton*um*; (out of the which this semeth to be Translated)', and 'thought it good to make this addition out of the sayd Gefferay of Monmouth'.[56] Although these interventions date from more than a decade prior to Holland's remodelling of Gg, they reveal him to be concerned with the same practices of transcription, collation, and repair seen in his Chaucer and reflect a concern with historical preservation that would be a lifelong preoccupation.[57] The leaves that he supplied to Gg achieve a similar end, by

[53] Cook, 'Joseph Holland', 175.

[54] Holland's own book is BL, Additional MS 47171 and it was copied from London, College of Arms, MS M.3 'Tiltinge'. For the relationship see *A Catalogue of English Mediaeval Rolls of Arms*, ed. by Anthony Wagner (Oxford: Printed by Charles Batey for the Society of Antiquaries, 1950), pp. iii–16.

[55] London, College of Arms, MS Arundel xxii. This copy of the *Seege* is an abridged version of *IMEV* 3139 while the latter text is a composite translation of the *Historia* and Wace's *Brut*. See Robert A. Caldwell, 'The "History of the Kings of Britain" in College of Arms Ms. Arundel xxii', *PMLA*, 69.3 (1954), 643–54.

[56] The ending and note are written on fols. 81^{r} and 82^{r} respectively.

[57] There are further echoes of the bibliographical perfecting seen in Gg in Holland's other books. For example, MS Arundel xxii contains additional but unrelated medieval material that was probably appended by Holland himself: a fragment of two leaves from a Lectionary of the Gospels (s. ix/x)

mending Chaucerian texts which were in danger of becoming fragmented.[58] In light of his commitment to repairing old books, it is significant that Holland used the Latin word *procurare* – meaning 'To see to, or to take heede of a thyng: to chearishe: to keepe' – to describe his relationship to the splendidly illuminated Lovell Lectionary, an early fifteenth-century book he owned and which he saw as a type of family heirloom.[59]

Gg.4.27 is exceptional for the scope achieved by those who initially conceived it, and Holland's additions show that he recognised its attempt at assembling Chaucer's works. But damaged Chaucerian manuscripts of less ambitious sorts also inspired similar programmes of perfecting through the supplying of missing leaves bearing text copied from print. Another manuscript book, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600 (henceforth Ld1), is a copy of the *Canterbury Tales* from around the middle of the fifteenth century. According to Manly and Rickert, it was '[o]riginally a rather expensive MS', but its condition had deteriorated by the early seventeenth century, when it came into the hands of John Barkham (1571/2–1642), an antiquary and clergyman who would eventually gift the book to Archbishop William Laud in 1635. Around this time, and most likely under Barkham's direction, eighteen parchment leaves were supplied to repair some of those missing in the book, and an additional leaf for a table of contents was added.[60] Transcribing the lost text from a printed copy of Chaucer, probably the 1602 edition, the early modern scribe wrote in black ink and produced a tidy if laboured imitation of the secretary hand written by the original scribe (see Figure 2.2).[61]

This seventeenth-century approximation of the book's original aesthetic extends to the new decoration, where flourished initials, running heads, and paraf signs have been carefully executed by the scribe in a style

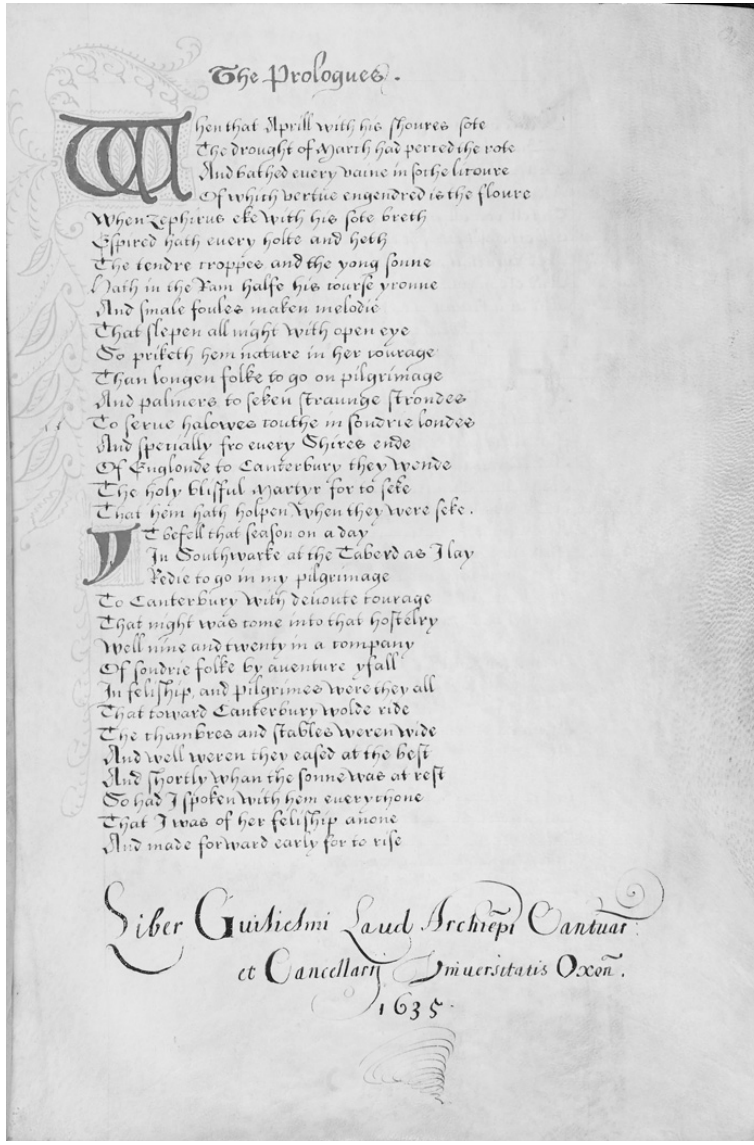
and two sets of three leaves from a psalter (s. ix). The whole is united by a contemporary binding of blind-stamped boards with the initials 'IH' tooled into both covers.

[58] Henry Bradshaw, the nineteenth-century Cambridge librarian, removed Holland's additions when he took the book apart to study its codicological structure; see Richard Beadle, 'Bradshaw's Chaucer: Some Preliminary Observations', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 17 (2019), 557–74 (568–9).

[59] Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* (London: Henry Denham, 1578; *STC* 5688), sig. 5I6^{r}. The inscription on fol. 1^{r} of BL, MS Harley 7026 specifies that Holland took the manuscript into his care so as to preserve love and respect ('propter amorem et reverentiam Fundatoris preservari procuravit') for John Lord Lovell (d. 1408), who commissioned the book as a gift to Salisbury Cathedral.

[60] The replaced leaves are fols. 2–3, 29–30, 50, 88, 100–1, 140, 143, 194, and 298–304. Barkham's scholarship also connects him to John Speed, who engraved the Progenie portrait of Chaucer for Speght's editions; see T. F. Henderson and D. R. Woolf, 'Barkham, John (1571/2–1642), antiquary and historian', *ODNB*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1421.

[61] Seymour, *Catalogue*, II, p. 176.


The Prologues.

Whan that Aprill with his shoures sote
The drought of March hath perced the rote
And bathed every veine in swich licoure
Of which vertue engendred is the flour
Whan Zephirus eke with his sote breth
Inspired hath every holte and heth
The tendre croppes and the yong sonne
Hath in the Ram halfe his course yronne
And smale foules maken melodie
That slepen all night with open eye
So priketh hem nature in her corages
Than longen folke to go on pilgrimages
And palmers to seken straunge strondes
To serue halowes couthe in sondrie londes
And specially fro every Shires ende
Of Englonde to Canterbury they wende
The holy blisful martyr for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan they were seke.

Bifell that season on a day
In Southwarke at the Tabard as I lay
Redie to go in my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with deuoute corage
That night was come into that hostelry
Well nine and twenty in a company
Of sondrie folke by auenture yfall
In felischip and pilgrimes were they all
That toward Canterbury wolde ride
The chambres and stables weren wide
And well weren they eased at the best
And shortly whan the sonne was at rest
So had I spoken with hem everychone
That I was of her felischip anone
And made forward early for to rise

Liber Guilielmi Laud Archiepi Cantuar.
et Cancellarij Vniuersitatis Oxon.
1635.

Figure 2.2 A parchment supply leaf in the *General Prologue*, imitating the secretary hand of the fifteenth-century scribe. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600, fol. 2[r].

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generally compatible with the rest of the book. The same may not be said of the new colour scheme, which has been described as 'a crude imitation . . . of the original decoration, but in red, yellow, and black'.[62] Despite these incongruities, it is clear that considerable effort was expended in the process of repairing the damaged medieval book that would become Ld1. For a volume that was 'evidently in very bad condition', the procurement of parchment, the thorough cleaning of the medieval leaves, the supplying of missing text and decoration, and its new leather binding show that the book was subjected to a scheme of perfecting by its early modern owner in preparation for its presentation to Laud.[63] Together with the three other manuscripts and a collection of coins which he presented to the Archbishop around the same time, Barkham's gift of the newly repaired *Canterbury Tales* volume was designed to appeal to Laud's historical interests as a collector, possibly in the hope of securing preferment.[64] As a Latin inscription to Laud signed by Barkham on fol. 1^{v} indicates, the gift functioned as a type of presentation copy – not of a literary work written by Barkham himself, but one whose repair he commissioned as a token of the friendship and shared interests of the two antiquaries.[65]

While Holland saw the repairing of Gg's missing text as an opportunity to supplement it with material about Chaucer's life and canon which he had seen published in the printed volume, Barkham's means of improving the condition of Ld1 involved restoring the book to a state near its original. Although both men used the latest printed edition to perfect their respective manuscripts, the final products show two varying materialisations of what a complete Chaucerian book could be. For Holland, the book should be as capacious as possible, accommodating not only additional Chaucerian content, but also a medieval fragment which he saw as belonging to the same broad historical period and to the same vernacular literary tradition.[66] Meanwhile, Barkham's cleaned-up and polished copy of the

[62] *TCT*, p. 311.

[63] *TCT*, pp. 311–12. Marginalia have been scraped away, for example, on fols. 131^{v}, 160^{r}, 172^{r}, and 176^{v}.

[64] The three other books are Bodl. MSS Laud Misc. 30, 178, and 264; see Henderson and Woolf, 'Barkham'.

[65] The book is inscribed 'Eminentiss*im*o Archipraesuli Cant. D*omi*no suo summe Reverendo / Devinitissimus; Deuotissimus / Joh*an*es Barkham [To the most eminent Archbishop of Canterbury, his most Reverend Lord; his most devoted servant John Barkham]'.

[66] Holland also added to Gg a thirteenth-century quire of fourteen leaves containing the Middle English romances *Floris and Blancheflur* (*IMEV* 2288.8) and *King Horn* (*IMEV* 166) as well as 'Assumpcion de nostre dame' (*IMEV* 2165). This loose quire, now bound separately as CUL, MS Gg.4.27(2), was inserted by Holland after the Lydgate at the end of the original manuscript, but before the added *Retraction* and the material that follows. See further discussion of Gg's supplements in Chapter 3, pp. 133–41, 151–3, 169–70.

Canterbury Tales for Laud reveals an imitative quest for authenticity cultivated in the writing support, archaising script, decoration, and *mise-en-page* adopted by the manuscript's new scribe. His additions show that he wished to preserve some visual elements particular to the medieval manuscript book, but used the printed copy as a means of improving its text. In each case, the use of supply leaves to effect repairs in damaged manuscripts exposes the bibliographical ideals of those who oversaw these efforts of completion.

Although Barkham's restored *Canterbury Tales* approximates the aesthetic of a fifteenth-century manuscript, that volume nonetheless preserves further evidence of print's impact on the idea of the Chaucer canon. One of the leaves added to Ld1 in the seventeenth century (fol. ii^{r}) now bears two columns of text written in a contemporary hand, possibly that of Barkham himself (see Figure 2.3).[67] The first, left-hand column is headed 'The order of this book MS' and consists of a numbered list of the volume's contents, beginning with '1. The Prologues of the Author' and ending with '25. The Parson'. The second, right-hand column is titled 'The order of the Printed' and contains another numbered list of tales as they appear in Speght's edition, which does not wholly correspond to that of Ld1. For the person who drew up this table, 'the Printed' volume provided a benchmark by which the older book could be measured. Notes surrounding the two columns on the same page witness a rare moment of reading early modern print and a medieval manuscript in parallel.

Ld1 also contains the spurious *Tale of Gamelyn*, introduced in the original scribe's incipit as the Cook's main contribution to the storytelling game: 'Here begynneth the Cokes tale Gamelyn'.[68] To accommodate this interpolated tale in the frame narrative, the manuscript treats the fragment that is now called the *Cook's Tale* (about an apprentice named Perkyn Revelour) merely as a 'prolog' to *Gamelyn*.[69] The seventeenth-century annotator observed the importance of *Gamelyn* in a marginal note beside the table of contents: 'This Tale of the Cooke, is perfect in this MS. but the Publisher of the Printed, hath omitted it, supposing it has been lost. vide f.16 of the printed'.[70] Indeed, the early editions before Urry did not include

[67] Thomas Hearne believed it to be Barkham's hand; see Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years*, p. 222.

[68] fol. 62^{v}. For a consideration of the manuscript evidence for *Gamelyn*'s place in the canon, see A. S. G. Edwards, 'The *Canterbury Tales* and *Gamelyn*', in *Medieval Latin and Middle English Literature: Essays in Honour of Jill Mann*, ed. by Christopher Cannon and Maura Nolan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), pp. 76–90.

[69] Twenty-two of the twenty-five surviving manuscripts containing *Gamelyn* position it immediately after the *Cook's Tale*; see Edwards, '*Gamelyn*', p. 83.

[70] fol. 1^{r}.

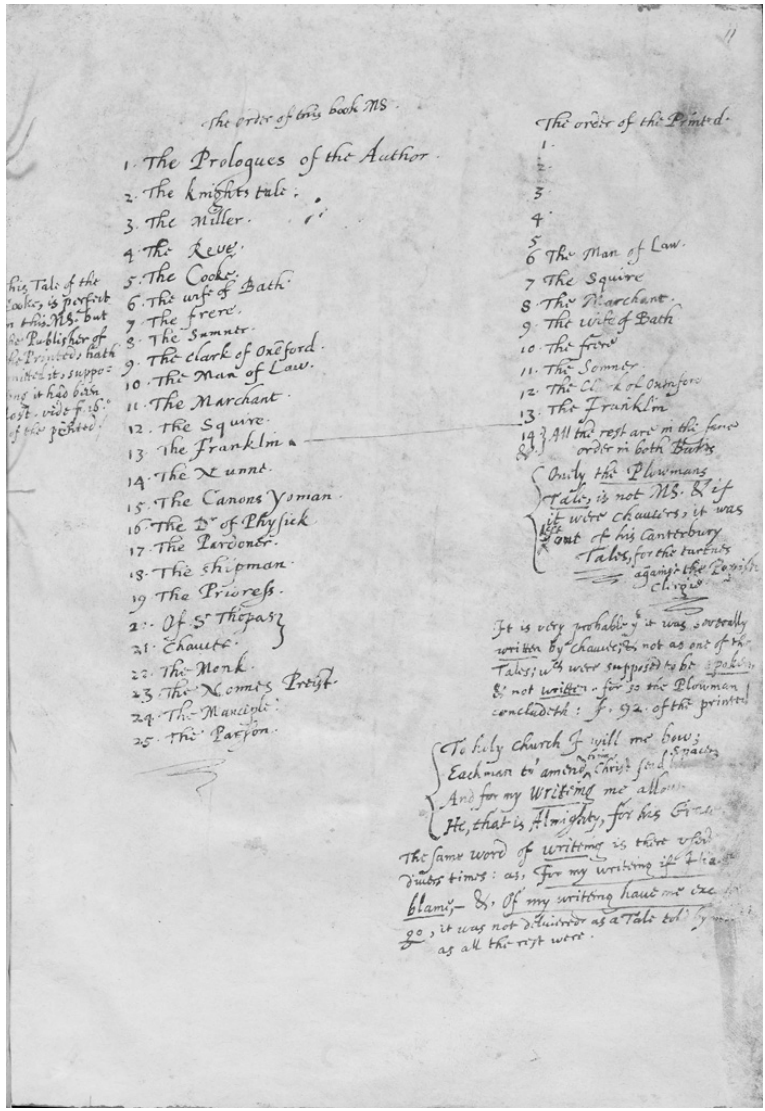

Figure 2.3 A collation of the manuscript's contents with a printed edition, possibly by John Barkham. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600, fol. ii^{r}.

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Gamelyn, but those of Speght do comment on the unfinished status of the *Cook's Tale* of Perkyn Revelour: 'The most of this Tale is lost, or else neuer finished by the Authour'. In Speght's 1602 edition, this note is printed on the verso of 'Fol. 16', the same page cited by the creator of the manuscript's table of contents when he cross-referenced his book with 'the Printed'.[71] It is clear that the annotator, following the scribal incipit that refers to 'the Cokes tale Gamelyn', assumed *Gamelyn* to be the missing bit of the *Cook's Tale* which Speght had deemed 'lost'. The marginal note conveys a certain pride that the tale 'omitted' from the printed edition was 'perfect in this MS', his own copy of Chaucer.

Beside the table of contents, another set of notes written in the same hand weighs up the manuscript's completeness in relation to Speght. Here, after the listing for the *Franklin's Tale*, the annotator has observed that 'All the rest [of the tales] are in the same order in both Bookes', with one exception:

> Only the Plowman's Tale, is not MS. & if it were Chaucers, it was ^left out of his Canterbury Tales, for the tartnes against the Popish clergie. It is very probable yt it was severally written by Chaucer, & not as one of the Tales, wch were supposed to be spoken & not written

The *Plowman's Tale*, a satire against the clergy, had appeared in copies of Chaucer's *Workes* since Thynne's 1542 edition and was accepted during the early modern period as a genuine addition to the *Canterbury Tales*. But this reader of Ld1 concludes that the purported origins of the *Plowman's Tale* in writing deviate from the orality fundamental to the premise of the *Canterbury Tales*. He observes of the *Plowman's Tale* that 'The same word of writeing is there vsed diuers times', citing examples, and concludes that 'it was not deliuered as a Tale told by mouth as all the rest were'. Barkham is known to have been a learned antiquary and it is likely that the hand is his; if so, he shows better judgement of Chaucer's canon than Speght himself, who believed the *Plowman's Tale* to be 'made no doubt by Chaucer, with the rest of the Tales. 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'.[72] The seventeenth-century annotator of Ld1 doubts this straightforward history, suggesting instead that the tale was written separately by Chaucer and excluded from the *Canterbury Tales* due to its anticlerical content. Speght had claimed that a copy of the *Plowman's*

[71] *Workes* (1602), sig. D4^{v}.
[72] *Workes* (1602), sig. Q1^{v}; see further discussion in Chapter 3, pp. 157–8.

Tale 'in written hand' was proof of its Chaucerian origin, but Barkham's copy, in which it was 'left out', provides grounds for the clergyman to speculate that the text may have had a separate origin.

Each of these comments on the transmission of the *Plowman's Tale* and *Gamelyn* captures this annotator's efforts to delineate the borders of the Chaucerian canon and to assess the completeness of his manuscript – an endeavour enabled by the existence of multiple versions of the *Tales* in written and printed copies. Quite conveniently for Barkham, his book is determined to be superior on both counts, containing what was assumed to be a full copy of the *Cook's Tale*, and excluding the incongruous *Plowman's Tale*. This attentiveness to the transmission history of the *Canterbury Tales* and the implied orality of the pilgrimage frame show a critical appraisal of Speght's printed edition in relation to its manuscript counterpart. Barkham's desire to repair the book for presentation to the Archbishop, it would seem, was not guided by solely aesthetic concerns for the torn volume, but also by a concern for the textual integrity of a book which he already deemed to be 'perfect' in several respects.[73] So successful was this project of repairing Ld1 that the manuscript was later used as an exemplar to supplement the text of another manuscript.[74] For both Holland and Barkham, recently printed copies of Chaucer's *Workes* allowed them to transform their damaged manuscript books into objects of aesthetic as well as historical value, suitable to be cherished by their owners or gifted to a worthy recipient.

Another manuscript of the *Tales* which benefitted from codicological repair in the early modern period was TCC, MS R.3.15 (hereafter Tc2), a late fifteenth-century paper copy likely associated with Archbishop Matthew Parker and once owned by Thomas Neville (1548–1615), former Master of Trinity College in Cambridge.[75] Noticing that the text began

[73] In fact, not all of the missing leaves have been supplied; for example, there is text missing between fols. 207 and 208, between the *Physician's Tale* and *Pardoner's Prologue*; between fols. 247 and 248 (*Melibee* and *Monk's Tale*); and between fols. 263 and 264 (*Nun's Priest's Tale* and *Manciple's Tale*).

[74] Ld1 is the source of the copy of *Gamelyn* supplied into BL, MS Egerton 2726 by Timothy Thomas around 1730; see *TCT*, pp. 130–5, and Chapter 3, pp. 170–2.

[75] Neville's other gifts to the college include some of its treasures, such as the Eadwine Psalter; see Ovenden, 'Libraries of the Antiquaries', p. 560. The manuscript appears in an inventory of manuscripts owned by the Archbishop's son John, and the red crayon common amongst the Parker circle has been used to paginate the book and to inscribe the letters 'TW' on fol. 5^{r}. Neville's older brother, Alexander Neville (1544–1614), had served as Parker's secretary, although the trajectory by which the manuscript could have moved from Parker's circle to Neville is not known for certain. See Sheila Strongman, 'John Parker's Manuscripts: An Edition of the Lists in Lambeth Palace MS 737', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 7.1 (1977), 1–27 (5–7) and J. B. Mullinger and Stanford Lehmberg, 'Neville [Nevile], Thomas (*c.* 1548–1615), college head and dean of Canterbury', *ODNB*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19965. On the letters 'TW' and

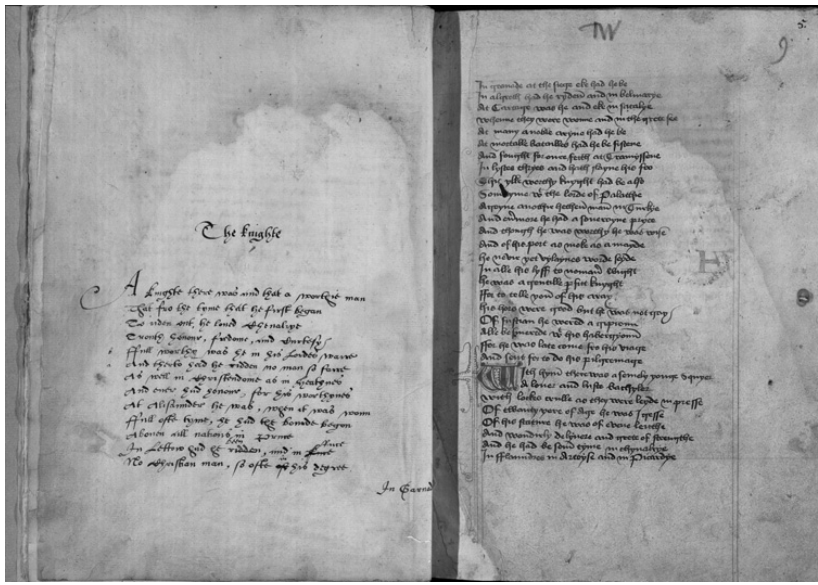


Figure 2.4 A paper replacement leaf in the *General Prologue* alongside a fifteenth-century original, with text lined up to avoid a gap. TCC MS R.3.15, fols. 4a^{v}-5^{r}. The Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

abruptly, halfway through the description of the Knight (1.56), someone furnished paper leaves and copied the missing lines (1.1–55) under the newly supplied headings of 'The Prologues' (1.1–42, fol. 3^{v}) and 'The Knight' (1.43–55, fol. 4a^{v}). It may have been Nevile (who bequeathed the book to Trinity) or a Parker associate who carried out this work but whoever it was wrote in a fluent secretary hand with sixteenth-century features.[76] They began the *Knight's Tale* halfway down a fresh page so it would join up more smoothly with the medieval text's continuation of that tale on fol. 5^{r} (1.56 ff.) (see Figure 2.4). There are other leaves missing from this copy (gaps which also result in loss of text) but only the first two were

their use in Parkerian books, see Mildred Budny, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University in association with Research Group on Manuscript Evidence, Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 1997), 1, pp. 248–9.

[76] Philip Gaskell, *Trinity College Library: The First 150 Years*, Sandars Lectures, 1978 (Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 81. The paper used for the supply leaves dates from the sixteenth century; see Daniel Mosser, 'Tc2', *A Digital Catalogue of the Pre-1500 Manuscripts and Incunables of the Canterbury Tales*, www.mossercatalogue.net/.

replaced by the early modern copyist, who also copied the additional items that were placed at the beginning and end of the book.[77] Here, the principal concern for the integrity of the *Tales* was limited to its opening, where the lost text was plainly visible at the head of the volume.

Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 739 (Ld2) is a late and plainer manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*, but one in which an early modern codicological repair also survives. This book contains more than 450 individual corrections to the Middle English text, generally concentrated in a few tales.[78] At the end of the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, however, appears a tipped-in leaf (fol. 140a[r]) on which a set of twenty-eight lines which were omitted by the original scribe – and known as the 'words between the Summoner and the Friar' – have been supplied (see Figure 2.5).[79] They appear to have been transcribed from Caxton's first edition.[80] The writing support chosen for the job was vellum; on the verso of the supplied leaf is the text of a thirteenth-century treatise on canon law. The physical dimensions of this fragment enlisted to serve as a replacement leaf are noticeably smaller than the manuscript's other leaves, but its comparative flimsiness might signal not parsimoniousness but the substantial difficulty of obtaining medieval vellum for copying. Despite such evident effort, the work of perfecting this book is itself incomplete. The version of the *Summoner's Tale* in this copy is a truncated form also found in a handful of other manuscripts, in which the text ends at l. 2158 and an additional four spurious lines provide a narrative transition to the *Clerk's Prologue*. Observing this discrepancy between Ld2 and the printed copy that was evidently at hand, the early modern annotator crossed out the four spurious lines, drew an arrow towards this cancelled text, and noted instead the absence of two leaves ('Hic desu*n*t 2 folia').[81] Unlike the lines missing in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, they did not (or could not) supply these missing leaves.

The work of perfecting a book by supplying missing text, as such examples illustrate, could itself be left unfinished in some copies. But the fact that the completing of medieval manuscripts was sometimes attempted piecemeal is a reminder of the exceptional and purposeful nature

[77] The other missing leaves are in Q2 (I.971–1098, *Knight's Tale*) and Q12 (III.1049–1115, *Wife of Bath's Prologue*). Further supplementation to this manuscript is discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 141–2, 161–3.

[78] See Chapter 1, pp. 68–72.

[79] III.829–56. *TCT*, p. 317 suggests that the omission may be a result of scribal eyeskip.

[80] There are some textual clues that the exemplar for the early modern transcription was a Caxton. For instance, the annotator has 'Good dame' at III.853, as does Cx1. All the other early printed editions have 'Do dame'.

[81] fol. 158[v]. The missing lines are III.2159–2294, a loss common to several *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts of textual group *d*; see *TCT*, II, pp. 227–42.

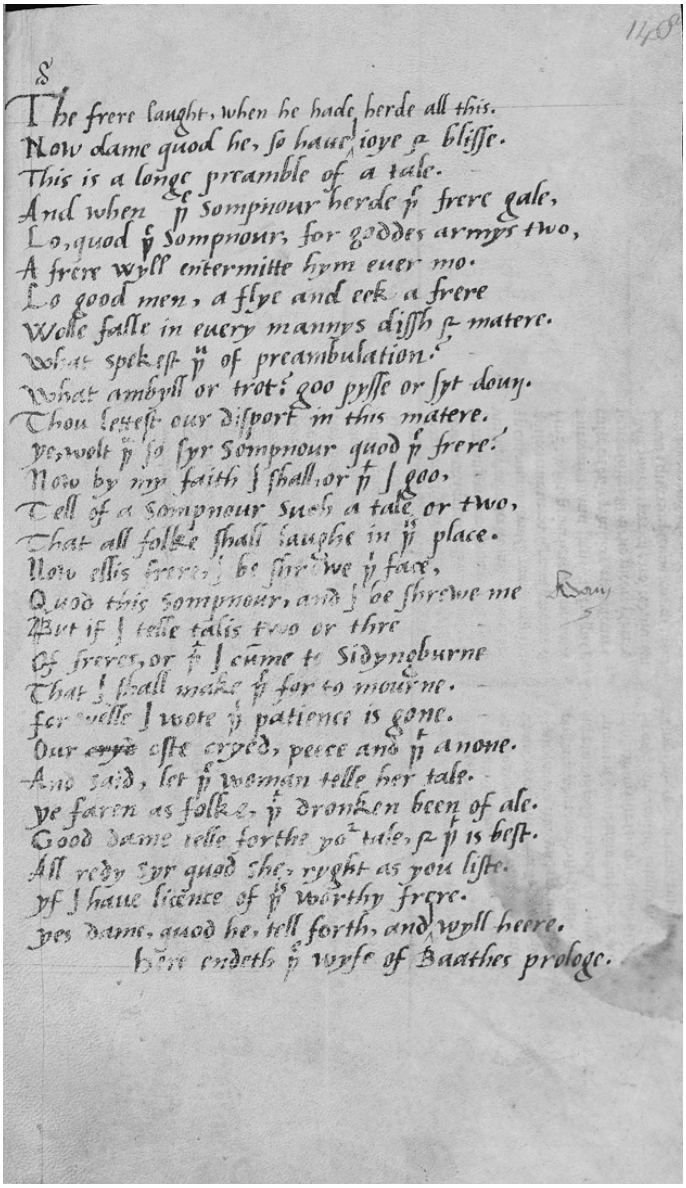


Figure 2.5 A replacement leaf supplying text in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 739, fol. 140a^{r}.

of these efforts. The process of sourcing exemplars, materials, and copyists for the making of manuscript supply leaves (especially those written on parchment) was neither easy nor inexpensive. Even those cases where only some missing parts of the text were repaired – for example, the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* at the expense of the *Summoner's Tale*, or the beginning of the *Canterbury Tales* rather than leaves in the middle of the book – reveal something about early modern taste and judgement. In Ld2, not only do the newly supplied lines offer a smooth transition to the Wife's *Tale*, which immediately follows, but they also sow the narrative seeds for the bitter *animus* between the Friar and the Summoner which will later be developed in their own respective tales.[82] While the replacement leaves surveyed here represent varying degrees of planning, improvisation, and execution, they all show the attempts of early modern readers to compensate for material absences in a range of manuscript books, normally by completing them with text copied from printed editions. If manuscripts are considered in the context of their textual lacunae, it is not surprising that early modern readers of Chaucer should have relied on print for access to complete and authoritative versions of the text. This evidence of the use of print to repair and complete such books revises the assumption (*pace* Parkes and Beadle) that a damaged and incomplete Chaucer manuscript 'could be discarded . . . from 1532 onwards'. Instead, it shows that the existence and accessibility of printed copies of Chaucer did not hasten the obsolescence of manuscripts, but enabled their repair, preservation, and continued use at the hands of new readers.

It is worth noting that the spirit of renovation and repair which such supply leaves expose was not unique to readers who consulted manuscripts alongside print. Lichfield Cathedral Library, MS 29, a *Canterbury Tales* manuscript copied around 1430, contains four parchment replacement leaves that were added in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. This book was part of a bequest of 1,000 volumes made to the Cathedral by Frances Seymour, Duchess of Somerset in 1673.[83] Leaves are missing from the beginning of the *General Prologue* (fol. 1), and from other moments of transition in the frame narrative; two were the outer leaves of their respective quires, while three were internal. The book's tight binding makes it difficult to determine whether these losses were accidental or deliberate (or some combination of the two), but it is a virtual certainty that all of the lost leaves were accompanied by the vivid decoration seen in

[82] Paul E. Beichner, 'Baiting the Summoner', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 22.4 (1961), 367–76.
[83] B. S. Benedikz, *A New Catalogue of Printed Books in the Library of Lichfield Cathedral* (The Dean and Chapter of Lichfield, 1998), p. 5.

the illuminated initials and borders elsewhere in the manuscript.[84] The additional lost leaves marked changes of action from the *Squire's Tale* to *Merchant's Prologue* (fol. 93), from the *Friar's Prologue* to the *Friar's Tale* (fol. 125), from the *Prologue of Sir Thopas* to the *Tale* that follows it (fol. 206), and from the Host's interruption of the *Tale of Sir Thopas* and the opening to Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* (fol. 209). All but the lattermost of these five leaves have been replaced by early modern supply leaves.[85]

These four leaves have been tipped in, 'usually on to the small remnants of the lost leaves'.[86] And intriguingly, the person who copied these leaves for the Lichfield manuscript in the early modern period may have used another manuscript, not a printed edition, as a source.[87] With characteristic candour, Manly and Rickert determined that 'The supplied leaves . . . show a feeble and unsuccessful attempt to imitate the original writing, with crude ornament in crimson ink'.[88] While the early modern leaves in Gg and in Ld1 seem to have been professionally and meticulously copied and decorated (in italic and an archaising style respectively), the mixed, sometimes hasty, hand of Lichfield's supply leaves does not make such concessions to the book's original anglicana script (see Figure 2.6). But if the copying and decoration lack finesse in their execution, the whole project was nonetheless motivated by great care, evident in the procurement, pricking, and ruling of the new parchment leaves, and in the rendering of running heads and initial words in red ink. As in Holland's Gg, an interest in restoring the book's visual as well as textual integrity is evident in other details which create an effect of continuity across the fifteenth-century leaves and the early modern additions. The carefully portioned margins, number of lines per page, rubricated running heads, incipits, and explicits all deliberately mirror the *mise-en-page* of the book's original leaves. It is in this sense that such old books might be considered perfected – not because their later repairs blend in seamlessly with the original leaves (for they do not), but

[84] Amongst the losses is what the manuscript's first limner, responsible for fols. 1–104, called 'i hole venett' – a full-page border probably for the missing fol. 1 – in his tally for payment on fol. 104^{v}. In this manuscript, tales are introduced by demi-vinets (decorative initials linked to three-quarter-page borders) and links and prologues by champs (decorative initials which extend into the margin). See *TCT*, p. 323.

[85] A sixth missing leaf, the original fol. 293, probably blank, was also not replaced. See *TCT*, pp. 321–2.

[86] *TCT*, p. 321.

[87] Certain variants present in the transcribed text are not consistent with any one printed edition. For example, in *Sir Thopas* 'prilace' (VII.720) is a reading that survives in no early edition, and in only one manuscript (CUL, MS Mm.2.5), which differs from the supplied text at other points. In most cases, the newly transcribed text (unlike the original text proper) accords with that in Sussex, Petworth House National Trust, MS 7, whose scribe, coincidentally, also copied the second half of the Lichfield manuscript.

[88] *TCT*, p. 325.

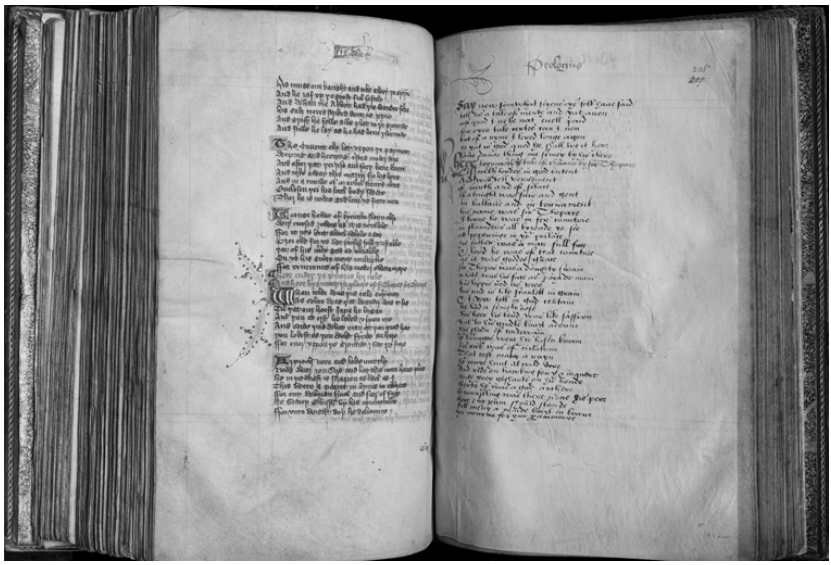


Figure 2.6 An early modern replacement leaf in the *General Prologue* alongside a fifteenth-century original. Lichfield Cathedral Library, MS 29, fols. 205^{v}-206^{r}. © Lichfield Cathedral.

because the books were subject to effortful, sometimes intensive programmes of repair in order to supply their missing parts. The early modern supply leaves in a book like the Lichfield *Canterbury Tales* thus underline a desire for bibliographic completeness which was common to many readers of medieval manuscripts, whether or not they completed their books using printed exemplars.

As might be expected, the early modern intention to mend old books with newly supplied leaves was not particular to manuscripts either. Like the fifteenth-century manuscripts which are the focus of this book, the oldest printed books were sometimes subject to the same fate of destruction and repair. There is evidence of this practice in the Pepys collection, which in the late seventeenth century held incunabula containing missing leaves. Clerks were duly tasked with copying new transcriptions to replace lost parts of these texts.[89] Thus Pepys, who was accustomed to taking clippings

[89] In Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library, nos. 1945, 1997, and 2126, copies of *The game of chess* (Caxton, 1483), *Chronicles of England* (William de Machinlia, *c.* 1486), and John Trevisa's translation of *De proprietatibus rerum* by Bartholomaeus Anglicus (Wynkyn de Worde, *c.* 1496). See J. C. T. Oates, *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge*, ed. by N. A. Smith (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1978), 1, pp. 195–7; McKitterick, *Rare Books*, p. 121 and n. 38.

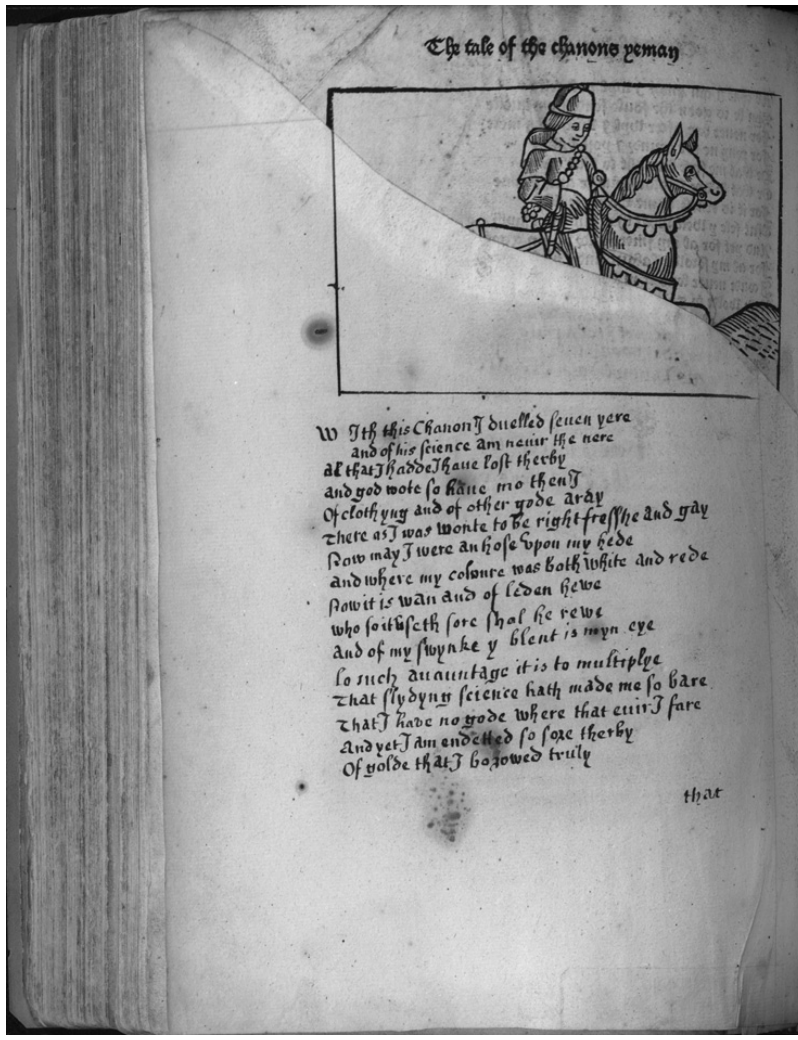


Figure 2.7 Early modern repairs imitating the printed page in a copy of Caxton's second edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cologny, Inc. B. 70, sig. 2d7^{v}. Digitised and reproduced courtesy of the Bodmer Lab, University of Geneva.

of medieval manuscripts owned by others as samples, proves to have been less tolerant of incompleteness in his own books. We may locate a Chaucerian example of the same phenomenon in a *c.* 1483 Caxton *Canterbury Tales*, now in Geneva, which lacks thirty-one leaves, and

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which already had several leaves damaged and torn in its pre-modern history.[90] An early owner repaired these leaves by patching holes and tears, furnishing partially torn leaves with new paper, and recopying missing passages on the freshly mended pages (see Figure 2.7). A watermark on one of the newly added leaves suggests a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century date for the repairs, while similarities between the supplied text and Richard Pynson's *c.* 1492 edition single it out as the repairer's most likely source text.[91] The material and textual mending of this copy by an early modern user illuminate certain bibliographic expectations about the early printed book which parallel those gleaned from the previously discussed manuscripts. In this case, the copyist supplied the missing text in an archaising script that approximates the black letter in which Chaucer was printed until the eighteenth century. Significantly, they also reproduced extraneous technical and visual details from the printed edition which were no longer strictly necessary in a manuscript copy: the indented spaces left blank for decorated initials at the beginning of tales and prologues, page signatures, and a catchword.[92] This programme of repair may have been necessitated by the desire to supply the missing text, but efforts were made to match the aesthetic of the original page and to ensure visual continuity with the rest of the book. Medieval manuscripts and the earliest printed copies of Chaucer therefore have certain aspects of their reception in common – notably their status as objects of value for later collectors like Pepys, who dealt in both.[93] But medieval manuscripts, as David McKitterick observes in his recent history

[90] Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Inc. B.70; *STC* 5083. On this copy, see Singh, 'Caxton and His Readers', 233–49.

[91] Geoffrey Chaucer, [*Canterbury tales*] (Westminster?: Richard Pynson, *c.* 1492; *STC* 5084). The details in the supplied manuscript text peculiar to Pynson 1492 are evident, for example, in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* where 'white and rede' appears where all the other black letter editions have 'fresshe and rede' (VIII.727); and in the inversion of the lines 'There as I was wont to be right fresshe and gay / Of clothynge and of other good aray' (VIII.724–5, sig. 2d7^{v}). The watermark features a large fleur-de-lis in a shield with the initials 'WR' at the base; the watermark is most similar to those catalogued as Briquet 7210 and Heawood 1721, although the absence of any complete sheets of paper in the repairs prevents the identification of any countermarks. See C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes: Dictionnaire Historique Des Marques Du Papier Dès Leur Apparition Vers 1282 Jusqu'en 1600*, ed. by A. H. Stevenson (Amsterdam: Paper Publications Society, 1968), III; Edward Heawood, *Watermarks: Mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hilversum, Holland: Paper Publications Society, 1950).

[92] Ink transfer onto the original pages suggests that the pages were physically repaired and then rewritten, rather than vice versa, eliminating the practical need for catchwords or page signatures.

[93] For other material and textual repairs in early modern printed Chaucers, see Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, p. 181; and Antonina Harbus, 'A Renaissance Reader's English Annotations to Thynne's 1532 Edition of Chaucer's *Works*', *RES*, 59.240 (2008), 342–55 (346).

of print and bibliographical rarity, also 'have their own trajectories', and it is these that the present work seeks to trace.[94]

In identifying the pattern of print-to-manuscript transmission in the history of reading Chaucer, this study highlights a phenomenon which confounds expectations about the linear progression of objects through historical time and the value of newness in relation to the old. Manuscripts perfected in these ways show that readers appreciated their age and material properties even as they sought to improve their texts. The creation of supply leaves for damaged or unfinished Chaucerian manuscripts may thus be taken as a proxy for their value in the early modern period. It is a value that could be construed in economic, cultural, social, antiquarian, textual, or other terms – meanings which are seldom expressed but which are hinted at in their owners' expenditure on parchment and scribal labour, in the careful collation of one text with another, in the use of a book to pledge friendship and loyalty, or in the efforts of imitation and decoration taken during repair. In turn, the omitted, torn, and lost leaves returned to manuscripts by their readers and owners affirm the utility of print in enabling the appraisal and renewal of older books.

2.3 Textual Lacunae: Reading the Gaps

Unlike the transcription and intercalation of leaves replacing lost text, the filling in of textual gaps is a type of preservation which happens on a smaller scale, typically on the level of the word or the line. Compared to the loss of whole leaves or quires, scribal lacunae might seem a relatively minor imperfection, but early modern readers often noticed and filled in these gaps. This attention to the minutiae of the page provides a valuable record of early modern resistance to incompleteness in the corpus of medieval Chaucer manuscripts. The lacunae exist because scribes sometimes interrupted the flow of their copying when they noticed something either missing or puzzlingly amiss in their exemplars.[95] As Wakelin explains, the resulting gaps may be interpreted as thoughtful scribal pauses, and suggest 'a plausible aspiration to perfect the book in stages'.[96] This *gradatim* perfecting of books in scribal workshops is also discernible on the manuscript page at points when one hand suddenly intervenes to correct or supplement what another has copied. In the earliest manuscript of the

[94] McKitterick, *Invention of Rare Books*, p. 637.
[95] On the two reasons Middle English scribes left gaps in the text, see Daniel Wakelin, 'When Scribes Won't Write: Gaps in Middle English Books', *SAC*, 36.1 (2014), 249–78 (esp. 260–7).
[96] Wakelin, 'When Scribes Won't Write', 271.

Canterbury Tales, for instance, a scribe contemporary with the main copyist found two missing lines as well as two half-lines and, lacking a reliable exemplar, 'was forced to rely on his own invention to fill these gaps'.[97] In print, too, textual gaps could invite completion. Peter Stallybrass, who has studied the proliferation of printed forms designed to be filled in by hand, has remarked that 'the history of printing is crucially a history of the "blank"'. Early modern readers were accustomed to gaps, and to filling them in.[98] They operated in a do-it-yourself textual culture which invited people to take the book's completeness, accuracy, appearance, and configuration into their own hands – for instance, to correct and amend printed texts by hand, to locate suitable maxims for recopying or material extraction, or to unite choice titles in a desired binding.[99]

For some readers, the habit of supplying missing words or whole lines was a natural response to a type of incompleteness which was relatively commonplace.[100] The production of medieval manuscripts often included the processes of locating exemplars; preparing and ruling the leaves; copying, rubricating, correcting, and decorating the text; and binding the resulting book. But this process did not necessarily unroll in a sequential manner, and many manuscript books contain some evidence of things having been done out of order, of having been started and then aborted, or of having been planned but never begun at all. Such is the case in a Parkerian copy of *Troilus and Criseyde*, a fifteenth-century manuscript in which space was apportioned for a *de luxe* programme of over ninety images, but which lacks all but its frontispiece illustration.[101] In another copy of the *Canterbury Tales*, the mid-fifteenth-century scribe, who named himself 'Cornhyll', left an abundance of gaps – not only for unavailable bits of text such as the ending of the *Squire's Tale*, but also for images.[102] Throughout the manuscript, lacunae ranging in length from seven lines to twenty-three (and probably intended for portrait miniatures of the

[97] This scribe (Hengwrt's Hand F) is generally agreed to be that of Thomas Hoccleve; see Simon Horobin, 'Thomas Hoccleve: Chaucer's First Editor?', *ChR*, 50 (2015), 228–50 (236).

[98] Stallybrass, '"Little Jobs"', p. 340. The point is also argued in Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship*; and Maguire, *Rhetoric of the Page*.

[99] Smyth, *Material Texts*, pp. 22–3, 95–6; Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 46–60; Knight, *Bound to Read*, pp. 150–79.

[100] In practice, wealthy collectors like Holland, Cotton, and Parker could hire scribes to carry out such repairs, rather than implement them themselves. On the employment of scribes and amanuenses by early modern antiquaries, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney*, pp. 118–33.

[101] For this manuscript, CCCC, MS 61, see *Troilus and Criseyde: A Facsimile of Corpus Christi College MS 61*, ed. by Elizabeth Salter and M. B. Parkes (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1978).

[102] BL, MS Harley 1758, in which fol. 75$^{r–v}$ and two (now excised) leaves were left for the conclusion of the *Squire's Tale*. Cornhyll's signature appears at the end of the book, on fol. 231^{r}.

pilgrims) have been left between the rubricated explicits and incipits, thereby punctuating the conclusion of one speaker's tale and the start of another's prologue. In one such case, a blank space which stretches across an opening from fol. 126^{v} to 127^{r} and which separates the end of the *Clerk's Tale* from the beginning of the *Franklin's Prologue* has been populated not with pictures of the pilgrims but with birth records for the children of Jane Otley and Edward Foxe, who owned the manuscript in the sixteenth century.[103] For the most part, though, these yawning gaps in Cornhyll's manuscript remain vacant, and remind us that filling in either a book's missing text or pictures, even when exemplars might have been at hand, was not an unthinking reflex but a deliberate act intended to finish a text left incomplete.

In the Fairfax manuscript, a mid-fifteenth-century miscellany containing short courtly works of Chaucer, Lydgate, and others, two quires were also left blank at the beginning as well as at the end of the manuscript to await further text.[104] The Fairfax scribe was a scrupulous copyist. Where words and lines were missing in his exemplar, he left blank spaces on the page and observed the absence with a note ('hic care*t* versu*m*') in several places, perhaps signalling that he or a colleague should revisit and fill these gaps, although neither ever did.[105] The meticulous John Stow was one reader who noticed these gaps. In Fairfax, he seems to have paid closest attention to the texts of Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*, Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, and the anonymous Middle English poem *Chance of the Dice*, which Stow also believed to have been written by Chaucer.[106] In this manuscript, Stow not only supplied glosses and contextual and historical tidbits, but he also restored missing snippets of text.[107] In *Temple of Glass* and *Book of the Duchess*, Stow supplied one and two missing lines respectively, showing an instinct for textual completeness rooted in his philological and antiquarian preoccupations.[108] In the case of Chaucer's dream poem – which was missing two lines, for each of which the Fairfax scribe

[103] For provenance see *TCT*, pp. 204–6.

[104] For a full description and facsimile of the manuscript, see John Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16* (London: Scolar Press, 1979), to which my discussion is indebted.

[105] On fols. 89^{r}, 103^{r}, and 180^{v}, 181^{v}, in copying the *Legend of Good Women* and the *House of Fame* respectively. On *caret* and other scribal notes which describe absence, see Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, pp. 258–61.

[106] On *Chance of the Dice* (*IMEV* 803), see Walter W. Skeat, *The Chaucer Canon: With a Discussion of the Works Associated with the Name of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 126.

[107] See Chapter 4, pp. 182–94.

[108] On fol. 67^{r}, Stow supplied l. 320 (missing in the original text of *Temple of Glass*), 'his matire was of thes ballads fewe', which is the reading in Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2006. In the *Book of the Duchess*, a space left on fol. 133^{v} by the original Fairfax scribe has been supplied by Stow

left a one-line space – Stow's source text appears to have been that of his predecessor, Thynne, or a later print based on it.[109] It has been recognised by Edwards that Chaucer's early printers had to undertake a certain degree of 'textual housekeeping' in order to prepare their texts for the press, since 'printed texts had to meet audience expectations that were different from those for manuscripts'.[110] Stow's minute additions to Fairfax show him undertaking a different but recognisable type of textual housekeeping – not necessarily adapting manuscript texts for print, but using printed books as a means of textual repair.

Another early modern reader of Fairfax was confronted by a longer gap at the foot of fol. 130^{r}, where the *Book of the Duchess* stops abruptly after its first thirty lines. The verso of the same leaf (fol. 130^{v}) is also blank, and the copying resumes at the head of fol. 131^{r}, but at a different point in the story. The lacuna created by this interruption is a visual as well as narrative disruption, appearing during a description of the dreamer's lovesickness only to pick up in the midst of the tale of Seys and Alcyone. A seventeenth-century reader with a hand that seems later than Stow's supplied the missing sixty-six lines (ll. 31–96), either from Thynne or from a later edition based on his text (see Figure 2.8).[111] The linguistic particularities of this transcription are worth noting. In copying Chaucer's text from print to manuscript, this later anonymous reader took the opportunity to modernise certain words from Thynne – for instance, 'her' becomes 'ther' and 'nyl neuer' becomes 'will neuer'. And after copying line 96, the last line on fol. 130^{v} and the final line that had been missing, the annotator also added catchwords ('Had such'), in imitation of the original scribe's hand and in anticipation of the line to follow. Such welding is an attempt to establish visual unity between the pair of previously disjointed leaves and to restore the manuscript book to a state even better than its original. While the single lines filled in by Stow operate on a different scale from the sixty-six lines later supplied by the seventeenth-century hand, both annotators register a striking response not to the book's matter but to its unfinishedness.[112] Each shows an instinct to improve the *Book of the Duchess* by completing the lacunae found in its text, and each turned to

with the line, 'Suche marvayles fortuned than' (l. 288); and on fol. 141^{v} with the line, 'But whether she knewe, or knewe it nought' (l. 886).

[109] It is not certain when Stow encountered Fairfax, but it is most likely to have been around 1600; see Chapter 4, p. 187.

[110] Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print', 6.

[111] The lines are likewise missing from all manuscript witnesses.

[112] The same seventeenth-century hand also filled in a one-line gap in the *House of Fame* on fol. 182^{r} ('Some within and some without', l. 2036).

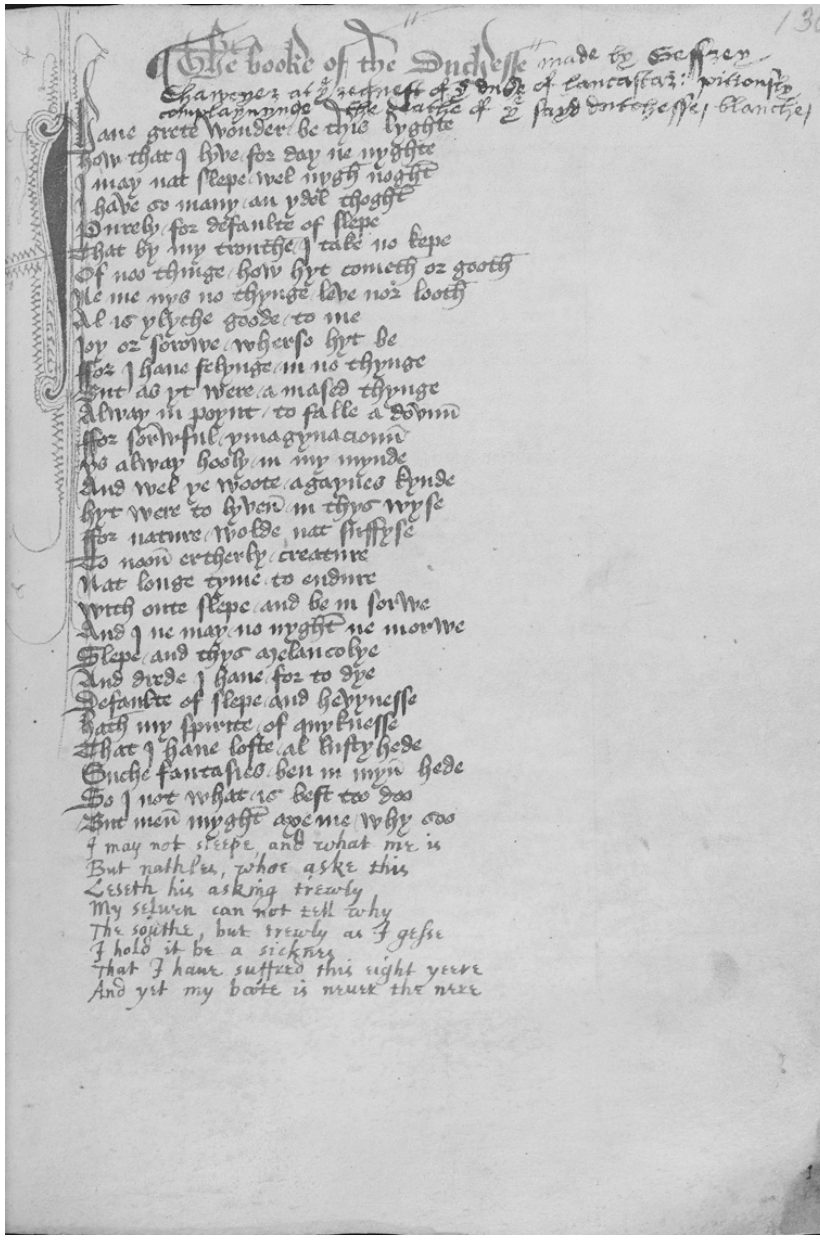


Figure 2.8 Filled-in space in the *Book of the Duchess*. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Fairfax 16, fol. 130[r].

readily available printed books for what they believed were reliable copies of Chaucer's dream vision.[113]

Another significant textual gap in Fairfax appears at the end of the *House of Fame*. These lines have a complex history which is bound up with the seemingly unfinished nature of the *House of Fame* itself. The final line of Chaucer's poem in the authoritative witnesses (including Fairfax) occurs at the precise point where the dreamer Geoffrey espies 'A man of gret auctorite' (l. 2158) whose appearance promises to restore order to the poem's cacophony.[114] In other manuscripts, however, the copying appears to have stopped even before this – at the point where the embodiments of a lie and a truth jostle for passage ('And neyther of hym myght out goo', l. 2094). The copy on which Caxton based his 1483 edition contained this earlier ending but he was evidently displeased with the lack of narrative resolution, and so composed a tidy twelve-line ending for the poem himself, which sees the dreamer awakening and writing down his dream. Caxton conscientiously printed his own name beside the new verses and added a further prose note surmising that since he could not locate its ending, Chaucer had probably 'fynysshyd' the poem prematurely at the 'conclusion of the metyng of lesyng and sothsawe'.[115] When it came time for Thynne to prepare the *House of Fame* for his 1532 edition, he relied on a text which, like Fairfax, ended with the 'man of gret auctorite'. Thynne would have recognised the discrepancy between the ending in his copytext (l. 2158) and that of Caxton (l. 2094), but liked the earlier printer's neat 'conclusion' for the poem enough to retain it. His solution was to rewrite the first two-and-a-half lines of Caxton's continuation, removing mention of the jostling 'lesyng and sothsawe' in order to fuse them seamlessly with the last line in his own exemplar, l. 2158. From 1532, this became the form in which the end of the *House of Fame* was printed and read until the nineteenth century: with both Caxton's continuation and Thynne's rewritten lines, but without any indication of their spurious

[113] The authenticity of ll. 31–96, 288, and 886, none of which are attested in any manuscript witness, has been questioned by modern critics; see N. F. Blake, 'The Textual Tradition of *The Book of the Duchess*', *English Studies*, 62.3 (1981), 237–48.

[114] This is the last line of the poem in Fairfax and in Bodl. MS Bodley 638; the third manuscript witness, Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2006, ends even earlier, at l. 1843. For an overview, see Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Early Reception of Chaucer's *The House of Fame*', in *Chaucer and Fame: Reputation and Reception*, ed. by Isabel Davis and Catherine Nall (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), pp. 87–102.

[115] *The book of fame made by Gefferey Chaucer* (Westminster: William Caxton, *c.* 1483; *STC* 5087), sig. d3^{r}.

status, or of Caxton's initial concern that Chaucer may have left the poem incomplete. All of this reveals an accretive process by which Chaucer's poem was 'fynysshyd' by two early and influential editors who reconciled the manuscript evidence before them with a new ending which offered the satisfaction of a neat 'conclusion'.

Encountering the printed conclusion alongside the substantial gap left for it in Fairfax, the same seventeenth-century reader (who filled in the gap in the *Book of the Duchess*) supplied the twelve lines:

> And therewithall I abrayde
> Out of my sleepe halfe afrayde
> Remembring well what I had seene
> And how hye and ferre I had beene
> In my goost, and had great wonder
> Of that the god of thunder
> Had let me knowen, and began to write
> Lyke as ye haue heard me endite
> Wherefore to study and rede alway
> I purpose to do day by day
> Thus in dreaming and in game
> Ended this litel booke of Fame. /
>
> Here endeth the booke
> of Fame.[116]

The lines have been copied from Thynne or a later edition based on it.[117] But the annotator also diverges from Thynne's text in the decision to supply an explicit – 'Here endeth the booke of Fame' – which appears almost redundant in its position following Caxton's final couplet, 'Thus in dreaming and in game / Ended this litel booke of Fame'. By filling this textual gap, the new annotator responded not only to the unsatisfying lack of an ending in Chaucer's poem, but also to an invitation to supply the missing text cued by the blankness of the page left by the original scribe. This reader's heavy-handed explicit heralds the appearance of this new ending and supplies a closure with whose absence the original scribe, Caxton, and Thynne had all previously grappled. Consistent across these successive layers of editorial and readerly finishing is a preference for completeness motivated by a concern with the text's integrity and preservation. The confected endings in the scribal and editorial history of

[116] fol. 183^{v}.

[117] Contrary to the suggestion of Norton-Smith in the Fairfax facsimile (p. xvii), it is unlikely that the source of the filled-in lines was a Caxton edition; see N. F. Blake, *William Caxton and English Literary Culture* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), p. 300.

Chaucer's works, John Burrow has observed, 'betray a desire for immediate closure, as if the texts could not, without discomfort, be left gaping open'.[118] The latterly filled-in gaps, blanks, and lacunae in medieval manuscripts confirm the susceptibility of early modern readers to the same desire.

In a Glasgow copy of the *Canterbury Tales*, another seventeenth-century reader took to their manuscript of Chaucer with the same intention to perfect its incomplete text. Glasgow, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1), which also contains *St Patrick's Treatise on Purgatory*, was copied by the father-son pair of scriveners named Geoffrey and Thomas Spirleng, who were working in Norfolk in the late fifteenth century. The Spirlengs left the manuscript with forty gaps for words, phrases, and lines they could not or did not copy, and which often show them 'choosing not to copy things they thought they could not correctly render', such as illegible or unusual text in the exemplar.[119] A later reader, probably working in the late seventeenth century, noticed these gaps and decided to fill them. The furnishing of textual lacunae was part of a larger programme of perfecting undertaken by the same person, who dutifully reports at the head of fol. 1^{r} that the manuscript has now been 'Compared w*i*th ye printed Coppy'.

On the basis of textual variants which the annotator transcribed from the print, the comparison text is likely to have been Stow's edition.[120] This reader was diligent, often recording the source of his interventions with a discreet abbreviation – 'pr.' – after the words themselves, to signify the printed origins of these additions.[121] Like Spirleng, this later copyist from print to manuscript was committed to supplying the best readings. Some of Spirleng's largest gaps occur on fol. 65^{r}, where parts of five individual lines in the *Tale of Sir Thopas* have been left incomplete (see Figure 2.9). The early modern copyist finished the first line by directly filling in the blank space – 'His Jaumbes <*were of cure buly*>' – following the printed exemplar. But the transcription of the other line endings is more tentative, and they have been written not in the obvious gaps that had been left for that purpose by the first scribe, but in the column's right-hand margin. Such annotations witness the early modern reader's response both to cues left by the book's first copyist and to the text in a seemingly authoritative 'printed

[118] John Burrow, 'Poems Without Endings', *SAC*, 13.1 (1991), 17–37 (23–4).
[119] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, pp. 61–3.
[120] Seymour, *Catalogue*, II, p. 83. See, for example, *Sir Thopas*, VII.914, where this reader has copied that Thopas feeds his horse 'herbs finde & good' (fol. 65^{r}), a variant that appears with the same orthography in Stow's edition only.
[121] For instance, on fols. 5^{r}, 5^{v}, 6^{r}, 6^{v}, 7^{v}, 12^{r}, 12^{v}, 17^{v}, 25^{r}, and 35^{v}.

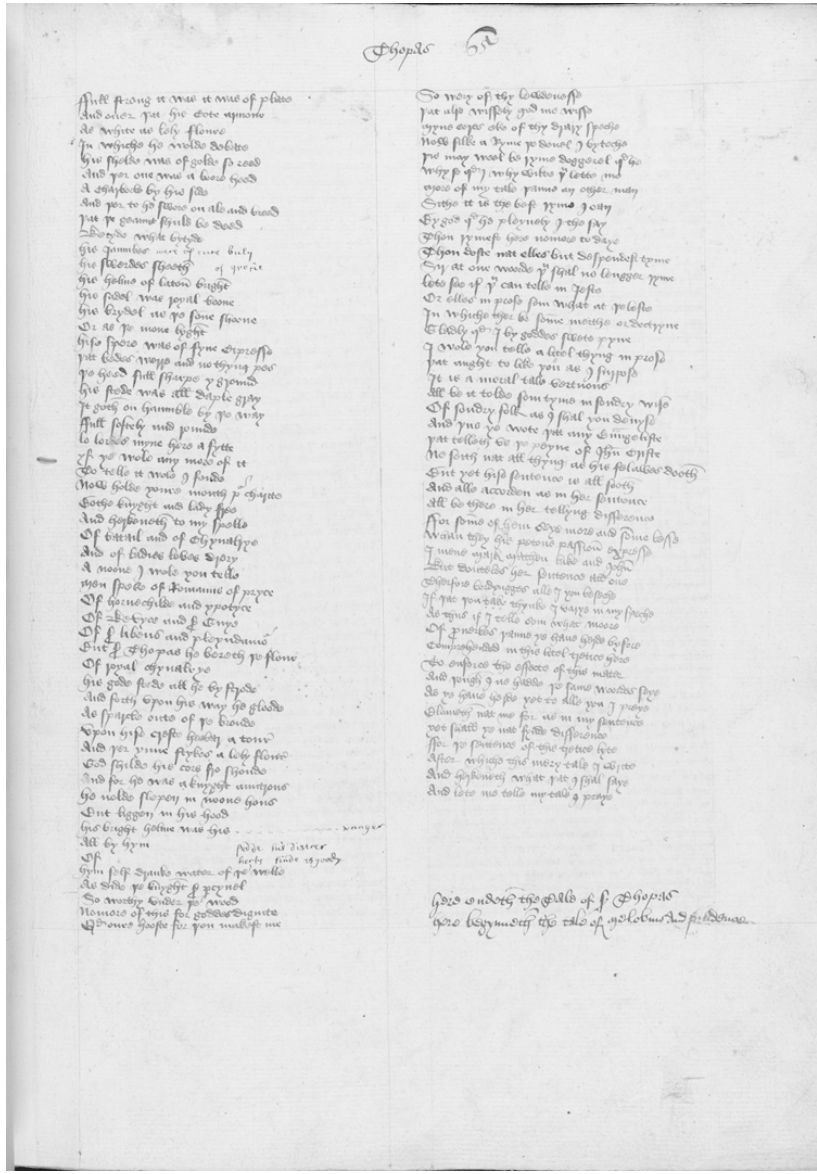


Figure 2.9 Filled-in gaps in *Sir Thopas*. University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1), fol. 65r.

Coppy'. The annotator guessed, correctly, that these were textual cruces which the original scribe had been unable to resolve, and which resulted in a series of gaps. Some of the supplied words in this passage would have been curious to an early modern ear and eye – such as 'cure buly' for *quyrboilly* or boiled leather; 'wanger' for *wonger* or pillow; 'destrer' for *dextrer* or war-horse – while others like *yvorie* and *finde & good* would have been familiar, so the annotator's hesitation to fill the gaps in the latter two cases is curious.[122] Perhaps it is the earlier scribe's silence on these points, marked by five ominous blank spaces in the text block, which likewise led the later reader to be cautious about the readings in the printed copy and to relegate the supplied line endings – 'of yvorie', 'wanger', 'fedde his distrer', and 'herbes finde & good' – to the margins.

The Glasgow copy of Chaucer is unusual for the number of gaps left in the text by the Spirlengs, but not for its evidence of later annotators who were eager to fill them. Another fifteenth-century manuscript, a copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* at the British Library, contains five instances of gap-filling by a later hand with sixteenth-century features. Some of these additions are written over erasures and in this case, too, the supplied text is likely to have originated in a print.[123] Similarly, it is possible that the careful annotator of Ld2, whose hand appears over rubbed-out words more than two dozen times in that copy of the *Canterbury Tales*, was populating gaps of someone else's making.[124] For such book owners, the seemingly trivial act of completing the text by filling in blank spaces was part of a sustained intellectual engagement with the puzzles presented by the medieval manuscript, and another way that they could perfect scribal copies of Chaucer's works which were visibly wanting. The afterlives of manuscript books up to two centuries after Caxton show that it was not only the early printers or editors like Stow who engaged in textual housekeeping of the sort described by Edwards. It emerges from the copies considered here that early modern readers – the consumers for whom Middle English texts were tidied up by the makers of printed books – were liable to do their own upkeep, repair, and perfecting of incomplete manuscripts. By keeping the old books functional and intact, those readers assured their continued use and longevity.

As with replacement leaves, the dislike of blank space or the opportunistic filling in of gaps is not in itself a consequence of print culture. Some

[122] VII.875–6 and 912–14.
[123] BL, Additional MS 12044, fols. 6^{r}, 26^{v}, 27^{v}, 50^{v}, and 57^{r}; see Seymour, *Catalogue*, I, p. 62.
[124] Chapter 1, pp. 71–2.

campaigns of decoration in medieval manuscripts, for instance, were carried out decades after space was allocated for them initially.[125] What print offered to early modern readers of Chaucer was an accessible and seemingly authoritative model for repairing and completing older copies. For these readers, the interrupted narrative and the blank page were unwelcome absences in the Chaucerian manuscript book, and printed copies provided a template for finishing them. In the care and attention they show to filling gaps in Chaucer's oeuvre, these forms of perfecting echo the interest previously observed in relation to his words. Like correcting, glossing, and emending, the repairing and completing of his manuscripts demonstrate Chaucer's elevation as an object of philological study and a site of cultural value in the early modern period.

2.4 Mutilated Bodies and Books

The early modern instinct to supply lost leaves or missing words on the pages of a Chaucer manuscript reveals a predisposition for textual and bibliographical completeness conditioned and enabled by print. This chapter has cited the fact that the philological project of textual recovery employed a trope of corporeal destruction and reconstitution and has alluded to the moralised tenor of this discourse. Mutilation, it has been shown, was used as a master metaphor for damaged and fragmented books since the Italian Renaissance, and one which provides vital context for the early modern acts of repair with which this chapter is concerned. I wish now to revisit the concept through a more critical lens and to consider some of the latent anxieties signalled in this language of bookish perfection and mutilation.

The scholarly language of perfecting or 'making good' a faulty book is as fraught as the descriptors 'perfect' and 'good' suggest in their everyday usage. The suggestion that historical texts have moral properties has been entrenched in modern bibliography at least since A. W. Pollard's proposal that some of Shakespeare's early play texts were 'bad quartos' with no textual authority. As Random Cloud suggested over four decades ago in a denouncement of this idea and the editorial traditions behind it, 'The real problem with good and bad quartos is not what the words denote, but why we use terminology that has such overt and prejudicial connotations'.[126]

[125] Kathryn M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized Their Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016), pp. 8–9.

[126] Random Cloud, 'The Marriage of Good and Bad Quartos', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 33.3 (1982), 421–31 (421).

This implicit moral orientation of textual criticism is discernible across the entire constellation of the humanist intellectual endeavour. According to Tim Machan, the study of Middle English texts inherited the 'moral overtones that characterised as degeneration the developments a text underwent through transmission'. Carolyn Dinshaw has likewise exposed the 'pervasively moralised, gendered diction' inherent to modern textual criticism.[127]

For example, Sidney Lee's 1902 census of surviving copies of the First Folio categorised entries according to his own hierarchy of perfection: Class I represented 'Perfect Copies', Class II, 'Imperfect', and Class III 'Defective' ones.[128] For collectors in the nineteenth century, the best copies were those that were 'tall', or in 'handsome' bindings.[129] Emma Smith has pointed out that the use of such terms is problematic; due to the 'anthropomorphic drift of the use of a term for assessing human not bibliographic proportions', Lee's classifications 'slipped uneasily into a judgement on the owners themselves'.[130] The same range of descriptors was used in modern philological scholarship on medieval manuscript books. As Tom White has demonstrated, for late nineteenth-century medievalists, the concept of 'defectiveness' was available in that period 'as a powerfully generic metaphor that conjoins editorial theory's moralism and positivism with contemporary discussions around disability, class, and race'.[131] 'Perfect' books were complete; 'imperfect', 'defective', or 'mutilated' ones were not. These bookish words still have currency in scholarship today but their histories are not neutral, as scholarship in the field of disability studies has shown.[132] Rather, they enfold historical attitudes to human bodies of the past which, like the books to which they would be compared, were seen as unfinished, incomplete, or fragmented. An excavation of the past usage and historical register of these now ubiquitous terms is appropriate to the widening and self-critical purview of the history of the book.[133] A knowledge of their

[127] Machan, *Textual Criticism*, p. 16; Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 13.
[128] Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 296.
[129] Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 298; Dane, *Tomb*, p. 130.
[130] Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 297.
[131] Tom White, 'National Philology, Imperial Hierarchies, and the "Defective" *Book of Sir John Mandeville*', *RES*, 71.302 (2020), 828–49 (845).
[132] Susan M. Schweik, *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 1–22; Douglas C. Baynton, *Defectives in the Land: Disability and Immigration in the Age of Eugenics* (University of Chicago Press, 2016).
[133] An approach modelled, for example, by Alexandra Gillespie, 'Turk's-Head Knots', in Gillespie and Lynch, pp. 201–18.

origins also deepens our understanding of the latent historical anxieties around textual loss encoded in these terms.

Printed and handwritten artefacts alike have long been described as though they were bodies, and consequently idealised in a language of perfection (and its lack) that is steeped in prejudiced views about their reliability and authority. For Aristotle, whose influence on the matter would persist until the Enlightenment, the human female body existed in a perpetual state of 'mutilation' or 'deformation', terms which he also applied to the physical conditions of castration, disability, and dismemberment.[134] In the Aristotelian tradition adopted by Galen, the less-than-perfect female body was viewed as an incomplete expression of the male form, and all bodies which deviated from the normative male standard were comparatively deficient.[135] Early modern medicine and theology inherited these ideas about imperfect bodies, and used the language of mutilation to characterise them. In the same period that the collected plays of Shakespeare were advertised (as was noted) as 'cur'd, and perfect of their limbes . . . as he conceived them', children born with physical disabilities could be described as 'mutilate of some member'.[136] The pairing 'imperfect and mutilate', used to refer to people who were missing limbs, encapsulates the historical antithesis between the ideas of incompleteness and perfection.[137]

This troubling resonance within the nomenclature adopted by scholars and historians of the book is important to confront in itself, and it is essential to an understanding of the intellectual scaffolding upon which modern conceptions of the book have been built. Such concerns are not as distant from Chaucer as they might initially appear. Although it does not explicitly invoke the rhetoric of mutilation and perfection, one of Chaucer's tales exposes the imbrication of the concept of completeness in gendered, ableist, and even bookish ideals. The Wife of Bath, whose first named characteristic in the *General Prologue* is the fact that she is 'somdel

[134] Charlotte Witt, *Ways of Being: Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 110–11.

[135] *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. by Alcuin Blamires, Karen Pratt, and C. William Marx (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 39–42.

[136] William Cowper, *The anatomie of a Christian man* (London: T[homas] S[nodham], 1611; *STC* 5912), sig. $F1^{r}$.

[137] William Tyndale, *The whole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doc. Barnes* (London: John Day, 1573; *STC* 24436), sig. $2P3^{v}$. More recently, the discriminatory connotations of 'mutilate' have seen it phased out of discussions of congenital disorders and its use in clinical contexts questioned; see Hope Lewis, 'Between Irua and Female Genital Mutilation: Feminist Human Rights Discourse and the Cultural Divide', *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 8 (1995), 1–56.

deef', goes on in her *Prologue* to explain that her condition results from a single biblioclastic act:

> By God, he smoot me ones on the lyst,
> For that I rente out of his book a leef,
> That of the strook myn ere wax al deef.[138]

She later clarifies that what she finally 'rente out of' her husband Jankyn's misogynist book was more than a single 'leef': 'Al sodeynly thre leves have I plyght / Out of his book, right as he radde'.[139] In her telling, the bodily violence she suffers is a direct requital of her own violation of the book's textual integrity.[140] It is an equivalence embedded in the poetic form of her *Prologue* itself, where 'leef' is twice used as the rhyme word for 'deef'.[141] Alisoun's enduring punishment – to be 'al deef' for the rest of her life – points once again to the twinned historical anxiety about faulty books and imperfect bodies encoded in the very language used to describe and study those books.

The language of the book world is still replete with corporeal imagery: books have spines and joints, and pages possess a head and a foot. Those that show signs of damage are still labelled 'defaced', 'dismembered', 'defective', or 'mutilated' by modern scholars. Less apparent, and teeming beneath this language, is its mass of pejorative associations. This analogy made by early modern people between the imperfect book and the body matters because it helps to account for the sometimes radical efforts taken to restore, complete, preserve, and perfect old books that were wanting some part. In this context, for an early modern book to be imperfect meant not simply that it fell short of an abstract ideal, but that it was fundamentally, unsettlingly, and undesirably incomplete.[142] If books were not already in a complete state, however, then they could be *made* perfect by the scholars who styled themselves as the healers and restorers of a fragmented literary culture. The somewhat solipsistic position of the early modern scholars and collectors who felt compelled to preserve old and endangered books is also expressed in their chosen language – in Poggio's use of the Latin *integer* to describe the 'bodily integrity and moral blamelessness' of the restored text,[143] and in Joseph Holland's choice of *procurare*, a word related to modern English *cure*, from the Latin *curare*

[138] III.634–6. [139] III.690–91.
[140] Tory Vandeventer Pearman, *Women and Disability in Medieval Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 67.
[141] Also at III.667–8. [142] *OED*, 'mutilate, *v.*', 1.
[143] Whittington, 'The Mutilated Text', p. 440.

(meaning to take care of, to care for, or to heal or cure) to describe his relationship to a medieval manuscript book.[144]

* * *

The history of the book is peppered with arresting stories of bibliophilia and destruction, and of volumes at turns cherished and plundered. Sometimes, these whirlwind trajectories can be tracked through the history and provenance of a single copy.[145] Following Chaucer's books from their fifteenth-century origins and into the early modern period brings to light a comparatively neglected history of book repair and conservation *avant la lettre*. In an era better known for its destruction and disassembly of manuscripts, this surviving evidence of book repair is worthy of note. It has been suggested by Burrow that unfinished works written by 'named vernacular masters' such as Chaucer were more likely to be published posthumously during the Middle Ages.[146] Then, as now, even a fragmented text by a venerable Middle English *auctor* was invested with a high cultural value. But a complete text was superior to a fragmentary one and in the course of their scribal and later print publication, attempts were made to conclude or at least superficially wrap up Chaucer's incomplete works in these new tellings: the Cook is assigned the *Tale of Gamelyn*, the dreamer in the *House of Fame* wakes up to write his poem, and the *Squire's Tale* is capped off by a series of apologetic explicits. These efforts to paper over the textual cracks in Chaucer's oeuvre speak to a pre-modern desire for closure. Burrow argues that this preference for completeness dissipated in the twentieth century, a period when '[w]hat we like is openness'.[147] Many readers in the late medieval and early modern periods, however, tried to recover, complete, and multiply what was in danger of being lost. In isolation, the filling in of physical tears in a book's parchment, of lost leaves, and of lacunae in the written text by later readers may appear idiosyncratic; assessed cumulatively, they articulate an ideal of wholeness pursued by the people who made these repairs.

[144] *OED*, 'cure, *n.*', 1.
[145] See, for example, Kathryn M. Rudy, *Image, Knife, and Gluepot: Early Assemblage in Manuscript and Print* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2019).
[146] Burrow, 'Poems Without Endings', 18. [147] Burrow, 'Poems Without Endings', 35.

CHAPTER 3

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]

[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. 4S3^{v}.

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

[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

[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

[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

[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*ro*uerbes 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]5^{v}. [17] *Workes* (1598), sig. 4B7^{v}.

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. 1^{v} and *Canterbury Tales* III.1117–24)
an untitled extract from the *Parliament of Fowles* (*IMEV* 3412; fol. 4^{v})
an untitled extract from the poem then known as 'Chaucer's Prophecy' (*Prophecy*, *IMEV* 3943; fol. 4^{v})
'Bon counsail' (*Yit of the Same*, *IMEV* 3521; fol. 35^{r})
'Chaucer to his emptie purse' (*Purse*, *IMEV* 3787; fol. 35^{r})
'Chaucers words to his Scrivener' (*Words to Adam*, *IMEV* 120; fol. 35^{r})

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.

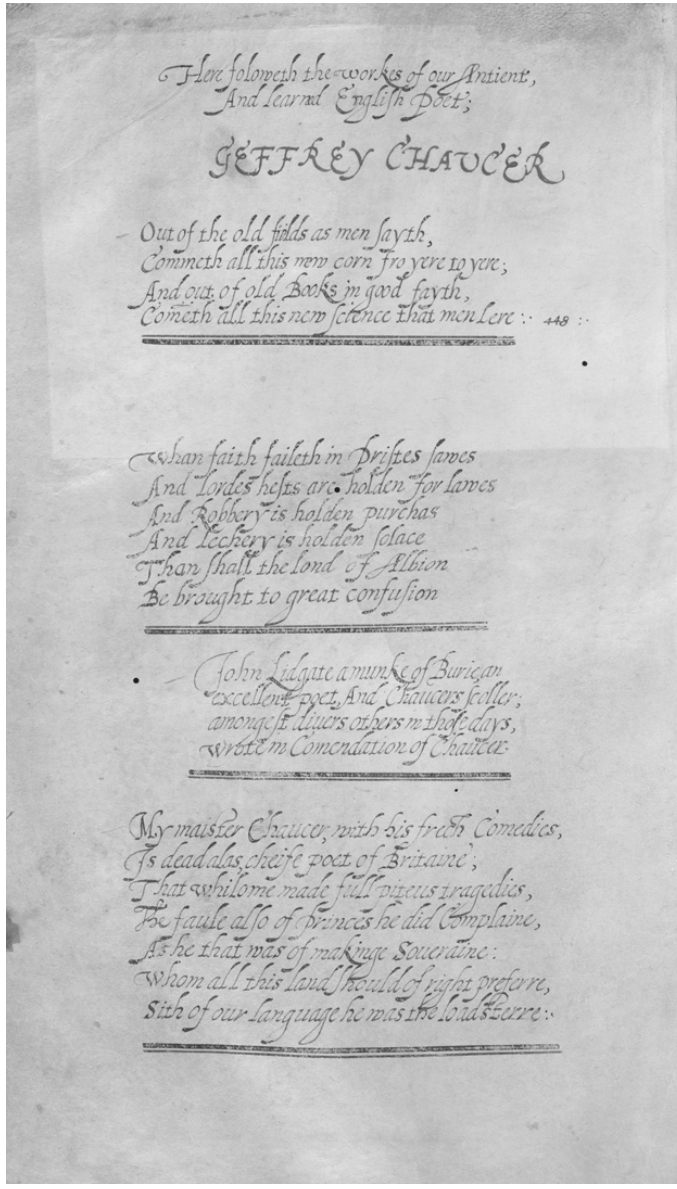
[18] For this phenomenon, see Sherman, *Used Books*, pp. 44–5; on some enigmatic printed precursors to Speght's marginal manicules in earlier editions of Chaucer's *Workes*, see Joseph A. Dane, 'Fists and Filiations in Early Chaucer Folios, 1532–1602', *Studies in Bibliography*, 51 (1998), 48–62.

[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. 3Z6^{v}.

[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]2^{r}. 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,
Commeth all this new corn fro yere to yere;
And out of old Bookes in good fayth,
Cometh all this new science that men lere :: 448 ::

Whan faith faileth in Prestes 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 Burie an
excellent poet, And Chaucers scoller;
amongst 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 pitteus tragedies,
The fawle 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 lode Sterre:

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. 4^{v}. 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. 481[r]). 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. 4[v]) 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 com*p*ared and resembled together, that thei bothe in some one propertie seme like' (sig. 2B4[v]). 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. I1[v].

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

[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

[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. 3P2^{r}. [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. 3O2^{v}. In the choice of title for these short poems, Speght was following Stow's editorial precedent.

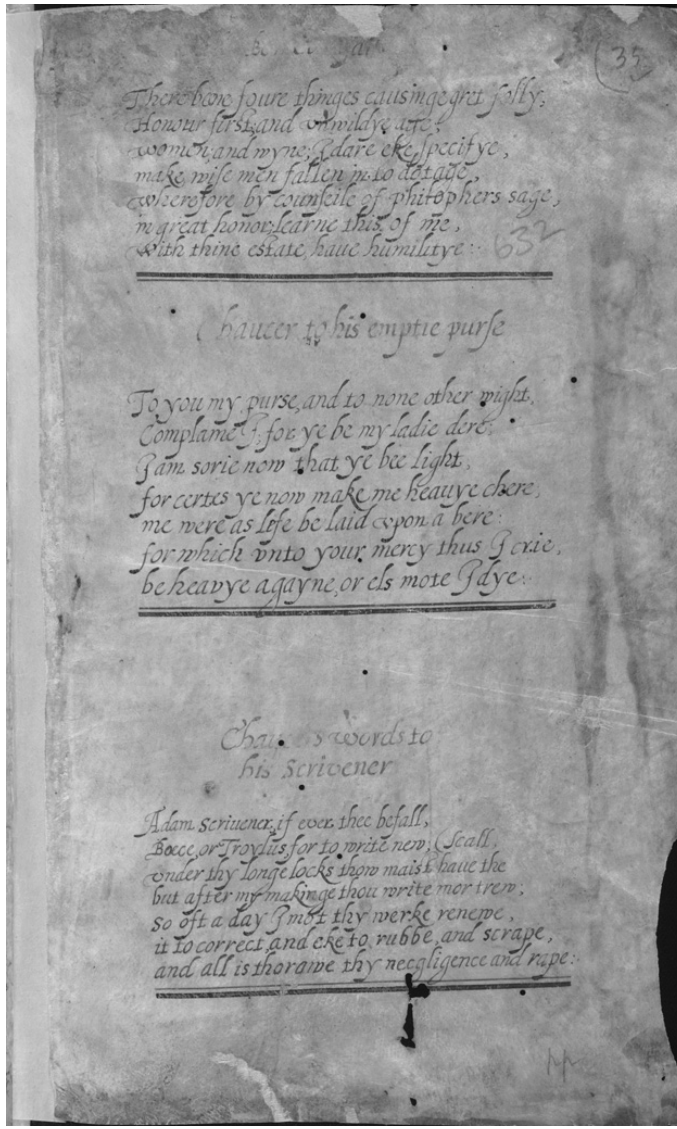


Figure 3.3 Short poems added by Holland to CUL MS Gg.4.27(1), fol. 35^{r}. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

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

[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

[42] The book is TCC, MS R.3.15. [43] fols. 1^{r}–4^{v}. [44] sig. $A4^{r-v}$.

[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,

[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.

[52] *Workes* (1598), sig. 3P2^{r}.

[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 185^{v}, and 186$^{r–v}$) 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 seventeenth-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 medieval 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 authorised 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

[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. U1^{r}). 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

[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

[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,

[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 Ll. 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

[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. 2O2^{r} and sig. 2O5^{r}. There is no explicit in the 1602 *Workes*.

[77] sig. 2B5^{r}. 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

[78] fol. 128^{v}.

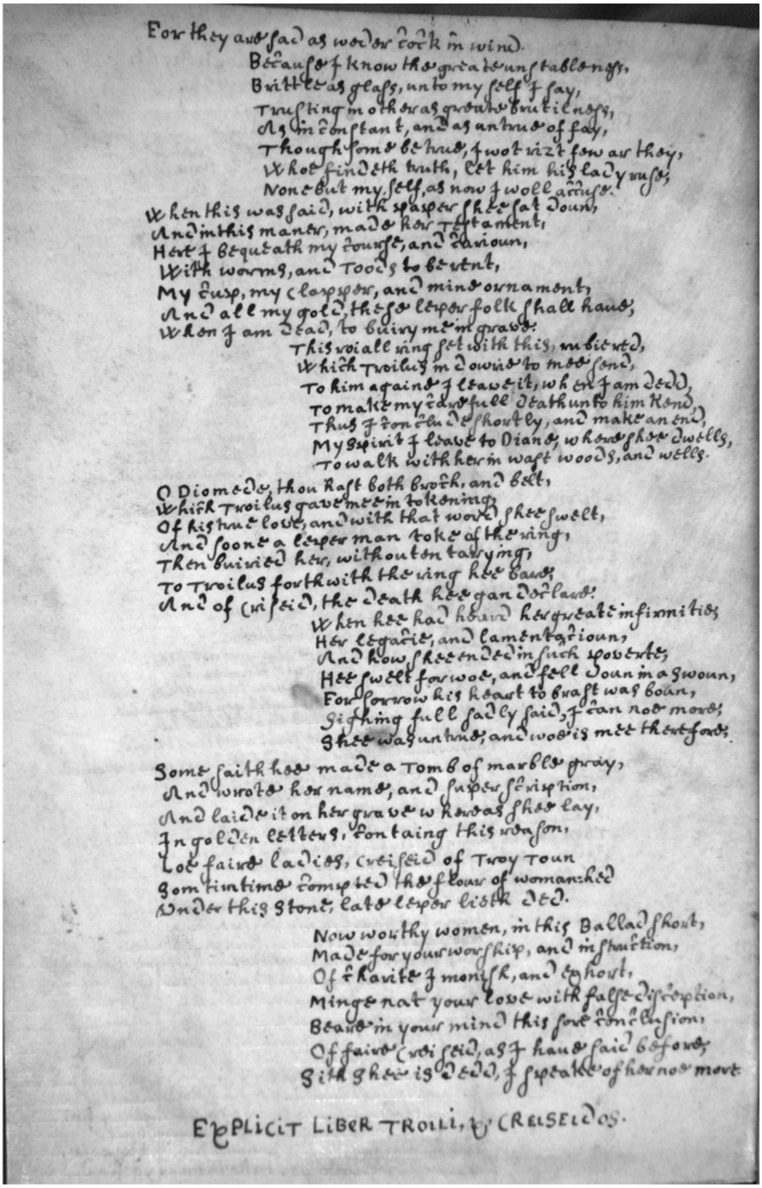
work to Henryson also appear to have been published in Scotland during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.[79] Despite the text's apparently wide circulation under Henryson's name in those books, Chaucer's association with the *Testament* would only be dislodged in the eighteenth century. 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

[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.



For they are sad as weder cock in wind.
Because I know the great unstablenes,
Brittle as glass, unto my self I say,
Trusting in other as great brutilnes,
As inconstant, and as untrue of fay,
Though some be true, I wot right few are they,
Who findeth truth, let him his lady ruse;
None but my self, as now I will accuse.
When this was said, with paper she sat doun,
And in this maner, made her Testament,
Here I bequeath my corse, and carioun,
With worms, and Toods to be rent,
My cup, my clapper, and mine ornament,
And all my gold, the lepper folk shall have;
When I am dead, to bury me in grave.
This royall ring set with this rubie red,
Which Troilus in drowrie to me send,
To him againe I leave it, when I am dead,
To make my care full death unto him kend,
Thus I conclude shortly, and make an end,
My spirit I leave to Diane, where she dwells,
To walk with her in wast woods, and wells.
O Diomede, thou hast both brotch, and belt,
Which Troilus gave me in tokening
Of his true love, and with that word she swelt,
And soone a lepper man toke of the ring,
Then buried her, withouten tarying,
To Troilus forthwith the ring he bare,
And of Cresseid, the death he gan declare.
When hee had heard her great infirmitie,
Her legacie, and lamentatioun,
And how shee ended in such povertie,
Hee swelt for woe, and fell doun in a swoun,
For sorrow his heart to brast was boun,
Sighing full sadly said, I can no more;
Shee was untrue, and woe is mee therefore.
Some saith hee made a Tomb of marble gray,
And wrote her name, and superscription,
And laid it on her grave where as shee lay,
In golden letters, containing this reason,
Loe faire ladies, Creisseid of Troy toun
Somtime compted the flour of womanhede
Under this stone, late lepper lieth dead.
Now worthy women, in this Ballad short,
Made for your worship, and instruction,
Of charitie I monish, and exhort,
Minge not your love with false deception,
Beare in your mind this sore conclusion,
Of faire Creisseid, as I have said before;
Sith shee is dead, I speake of her no more.

EXPLICIT LIBER TROILI, & CREISEIDES.

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. 128^{v}. 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

[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 Ll 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

[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*ro*loge 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*ro*loge 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*

[90] fol. 228^{v}, fol. 229^{r}.

[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. 228^{v}, 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. 1^{v} 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

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

[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.

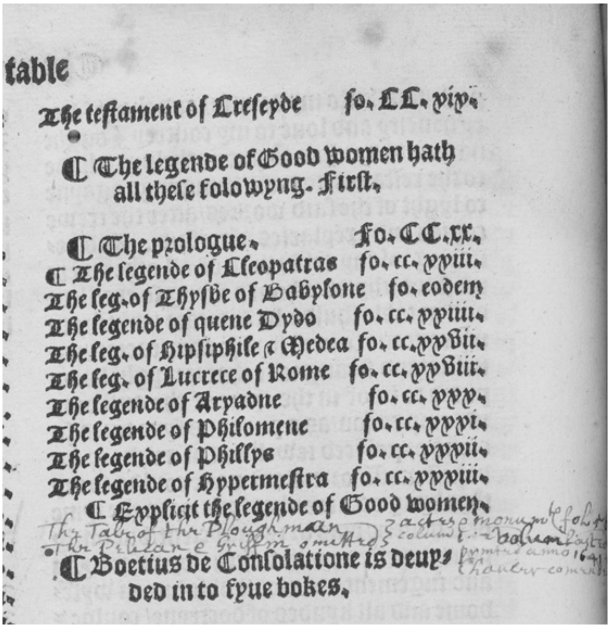
[104] Thynne, *Animadversions*, pp. 6–8. The details in Thynne's account do not correspond to any surviving edition; on the 'bibliographical fictions' spawned by his story, see Joseph A. Dane, 'Bibliographical History Versus Bibliographical Evidence: *The Plowman's Tale* and Early Chaucer Editions',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

[105] *The plough-mans tale* (London: G. Eld, 1606; *STC* 5101), sig. A1^{r}. 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 'playnely 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 collection 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 similarly: '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. Q1^{v}. [107] Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (1570), vol. II, sig. 3D4^{v}.
[108] Bodl. MS Laud Misc. 600, fol. ii^{r}. See Chapter 2, pp. 102–3 and Figure 2.3.
[109] The copy is Glasgow Bs.2.17 (*STC* 5068; sig. A3^{v}). The reference is to John Foxe, *Acts and monuments* (London: Stationers' Company, 1641; Wing F2035), vol. II, sig. E4^{v}.



table

The testament of Creseyde fo. CC. xix.

¶ The legende of Good women hath all these folowyng. First.

¶ The prologue. fo. CC. xx.
¶ The legende of Cleopatras fo. cc. xxiii.
The leg. of Thysbe of Babylone fo. eodem
The legende of quene Dydo fo. cc. xxiiii.
The leg. of Hipsiphile & Medea fo. cc. xxvii.
The leg. of Lucrece of Rome fo. cc. xxviii.
The legende of Ariadne fo. cc. xxx.
The legende of Philomene fo. cc. xxxi.
The legende of Phillys fo. cc. xxxii.
The legende of Hypermestra fo. cc. xxxiii.
¶ Explicit the legende of Good women.
The Tale of the Ploughman
The Pelican e Griffin omitted
¶ Boetius de Consolatione is deuyded in to fyue bokes.

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. A3^v^).

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

[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 bibliographical 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 implications, 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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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 knowen 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

[133] Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (1570), vol. II, sig. 3D4[r].

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 'ploughmannys 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 seventeenth-century readers wondered about the absence of the *Plowman's Tale* in copies of Chaucer. The Texas Thynne and Trinity manuscript, meanwhile, 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 narratives 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. 2Z1^{v}; 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 q*uo*d Sah*a*m' 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 'oth*er* bokes as of legendys of seyntes and omelyes moralite and devocion'. This

[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. K6^{r}.
[146] The Rylands copy has the variant 'my t*r*anslac*i*ou*n*s and endytynges' which matches that in the *c.* 1483 edition ('my translacions and endytynges', sig. L3^{v}) but not that of the first edition ('my translacions', sig. [3A5^{v}]). 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 manuscript 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

[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 'Saham', 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

[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

[157] That is, between 1.4404 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. k2^{r}.

[160] sig. K2^{v}.

[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

[163] Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Selection*, p. 59.
[164] Manchester, John Rylands Library, English MS 113, fols. 3^{r}–5^{v}. 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

[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'

[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.

[172] *Io. Gower de confessione Amantis* (1532), sig. 2a3^{v}. Discussed by Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 134–5.

CHAPTER 4

Authorising

4.1 'Unknowne to us'

Even as they work to perfect medieval manuscripts, early modern acts of correcting, glossing, repairing, completing, and supplementing all recognise a value that is intrinsic to these old books. Behind the choice of readers to improve outdated copies of Chaucer, in other words, is an appreciation of a special cultural status ascribed to them. From their attention to minute linguistic and orthographic details, to lacunae in the manuscripts, and to the completeness of the Chaucerian canon, the transformations made by readers to these volumes intersect, in one way or another, with broader matters of textual, literary, and bibliographical authority. For all Chaucer's apparent ambivalence to the idea of poetic *auctoritas*, his posthumous fate would be to become the pre-eminent English author, and his books were increasingly framed by the signs of this authority. To grant a book or a text such authority might take many forms. It is a quality that could be inscribed not only by virtue of the individual who wrote a literary work, but also by means of other characteristics associated with them: their place in historical memory, their larger body of work, their social or intellectual standing, or the authorities which they invoke in turn.[1]

'The Reader to Geffrey Chaucer', a dialogic poem attributed to 'H.B.' in Speght's editions, locates the ultimate seat of literary authority in the person of the author: 'Where hast thou dwelt, good Geffrey all this while, / Unknowne to us, save only by thy bookes?'[2] This fictive Renaissance reader imagines a Chaucer who is absent, 'save only' for the 'bookes' in which his works have been presented since his death. Chaucer's corpus has been neglected 'all this while', the reader complains, while the

[1] Machan has outlined these varieties of literary authority, and notes the tendency of both editors in the humanist tradition and modern textual critics to equate the authoritative text and the authorial one; see *Textual Criticism*, pp. 18–38, 93–135.

[2] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]6^{v}.

poem's second speaker, a ventriloquised 'Geffrey', responds that this was true, 'Till one which saw me there, and knew my friends, / Did bring me forth'. Given its placement within the preliminaries of Speght's new edition, the poem serves as a paean to the editor, 'who hath no labor spar'd / To helpe what time, and writers had defaced'. The poem thus traces a narrative that begins with Chaucer's temporal exile and concludes with his return in the newly updated and accessible edition the reader holds in their hands. In staging an encounter between a revenant Chaucer and a grateful reader, the edition declares itself to be a new and different kind of book: one that Speght has 'repair'd / And added moe' and one that enables the enlivened Geffrey himself to emerge from its pages before the reader. The desire for the vernacular author to be expressly 'knowne' to readers was still unusual in Elizabethan England. More remarkable still is this interest in the author-figure which is related to but ultimately distinct from an interest in his 'bookes'. Yet this is precisely the dialogue's central premise: Speght's edition repairs not just Chaucer's neglected volumes, but as good as revives the man himself. It is a sentiment expressed in the volume's prefatory epistle, addressed to Speght by Francis Beaumont: 'in the paines and diligence you [Speght] haue vsed in collecting his life, mee thinkes you haue bestowed vpon him more fauorable graces then *Medea* did vpon *Pelias:* for you haue restored vs *Chaucer* both aliue again and yong again'.[3] As Lucy Munro has noticed, Beaumont's reference is to Medea's empty promise that the youth of the ageing Pelias would be restored if he were killed, cut up, and his body parts boiled.[4] At first glance, Beaumont's macabre allusion to this murderous ruse from Greek mythology is tonally peculiar in the context of praise for Speght's new edition. Its message, however, is clear: in contrast to the dead and dismembered Pelias, Chaucer has been reconstituted by the new biography (or 'Life') published under Speght's name. The effectiveness of the conceit relies upon the imagined contiguity of bibliographical and bodily completeness, and adds to them a biographical element. This new book of Chaucer, Beaumont suggests, has gathered up and recomposed both his works and his Life, such that they enable a virtual reanimation and rejuvenation of the poet himself. Beaumont's rhetorical play between 'life' and 'aliue' points to the perceived role of Speght's apparatus in resurrecting Chaucer's reputation, his biography, and his works.[5] Both the reader's dialogue with 'Geffrey' and

[3] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]4^{v}–5^{r}. [4] Munro, *Archaic Style*, p. 75.

[5] For the early modern desire for Chaucer to live in the pages of his books see Bishop, 'Father Chaucer', 336–8. On the intimately connected relationship between the Life of the author and emergent ideas of

Beaumont's letter work rhetorically to persuade readers of the edition's merits, and their hyperbole is bolstered by the fact that Speght's paratextual additions broke genuinely new ground in the history of editing Chaucer. The edition gave Chaucer an English-language Life and a glossary for the first time, while its specially commissioned genealogical portrait was a technological novelty and one of the first engraved portraits of an English author. Arguments, lists of authors cited, a Latin stemma of his noble descendants, and glosses on the poet's foreign borrowings are all further additions covered by H.B.'s claim that Speght had 'added moe' to Chaucer's old books. As Speght and Beaumont tell it, such innovations make all the difference between an 'unknowne' Chaucer and a famous one, the one dead and the other 'aliue and yong again'.

This enhanced paratextual presentation has been recognised as pivotal to the 'invention of Chaucer's preeminent, mythic status' in early modern print.[6] As Machan puts it, 'Throughout the Renaissance period, no other Middle English writer is presented with this kind of critical apparatus or the status it imputes', and such a treatment was exceptional for any English author in the sixteenth century.[7] The innovative nature of these editions has long been known, but much less attention has been afforded to the engagement of readers with this apparatus and with the ideas of English authorship that it promotes. Recent work by Megan Cook and Hope Johnston represents an exception in this regard. Johnston's 2015 essay on readers' memorials and commemorations of Chaucer in early editions concludes that 'The ways in which owners of early editions of Chaucer altered their books represent forms of reception that have yet to be considered fully'.[8] This book has been arguing that medieval manuscripts, too, preserve vital evidence of Chaucer's early modern reception, and that they merit consideration alongside the printed editions against whose backdrop they were often read in the early modern period. Accordingly, this chapter looks to medieval manuscripts which passed through the hands of early modern readers and finds evidence that reveals what readers made of the new conventions for presenting Chaucer. It draws attention to readers' striking embellishment of manuscripts with authorising paratexts in the same period that parallel conventions commemorated Chaucer in contemporary prints, and determines that this new presentation of Chaucer the man and of his works in print gave rise

poetic authority in the sixteenth century, see Kevin Pask, *The Emergence of the English Author: Scripting the Life of the Poet in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 9–52.

[6] Machan, 'Speght's "Works"', 161. [7] Machan, 'Speght's "Works"', 154.

[8] Hope Johnston, 'Readers' Memorials in Early Editions of Chaucer', *Studies in Bibliography*, 59.1 (2015), 45–69 (69); Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 163–97.

to an attributional and biographical interest on the part of his early modern readers. Inscriptions of the author's name, lists of contents, standardised titles, comments on the canon, snippets of biography, and even imitations of his printed portrait were added to older manuscripts (and sometimes prints) by early modern and eighteenth-century readers who sought to perfect those volumes according to the new standards of literary authority codified in print. Their concerns about Chaucer's name, canon, life, and image reflect a new investment in paratextual expressions of literary authority and furnish direct evidence for print's role in crafting a preoccupation with the author in the early modern book.

4.2 Canonicity and 'Chaucer's goodly name'

Chaucer knew well the value of the author's name and its relation to poetic glory, however illusive such fame might be. Memorably, the *House of Fame*'s Chaucerian dreamer denies that he seeks fame and declines to name himself when asked: 'For no such cause, by my hed! / Sufficeth me, as I were ded, / That no wight have my name in honde'.[9] Ever in pursuit of fame on his own terms, Chaucer nonetheless took care to embed his name into his works.[10] Fifteenth-century manuscripts also reveal a scribal interest in conveying the author's name – not only on the part of well-known figures like John Shirley, who famously added titular rubrics naming Chaucer to his manuscripts, but also by the scribe of the celebrated Ellesmere manuscript, who wrote a colophon identifying the work as compiled by Chaucer, as well as the many others who routinely labelled *Melibee* as *The Tale of Chaucer* in the running titles, incipits, and explicits of surviving manuscripts.[11] These written traces reinforce a point illustrated in studies by Alistair Minnis and Alexandra Gillespie: that the cultural worth of the vernacular author's name and canon was already well recognised by those who copied and commissioned manuscript books in the era before print.[12]

[9] *House of Fame*, ll. 1875–77. [10] See *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 47–50 and *House of Fame*, l. 729.

[11] For Shirley's emphasis on attribution, see Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, pp. 117–41 and Margaret Connolly, 'What John Shirley Said About Adam: Authorship and Attribution in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.20', in *The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript: Text Collections from a European Perspective*, ed. by Karen Pratt and others (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2017), pp. 81–100. The Ellesmere colophon (HEHL, MS EL 26 C 9, fol. 232^{v}) describes the *Tales* as 'compiled by Geffrey Chaucer of whos soule Ihesu Crist / haue mercy Amen'; online at 'Canterbury Tales', The Huntington Digital Library, https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/iiif/p15150coll7/2829/full/full/0/default.jpg.

[12] For example, Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), pp. 160–210 argues that Gower cultivated an *apparatus criticus* 'which the discerning reader had come to expect in copies of many "ancient" works' in manuscripts of his own writings (p. 210). Meanwhile, Connolly,

In the early modern period too, the claim of his poetic greatness was 'very firmly attached to Chaucer's name'.[13] As Gillespie has shown in relation to Chaucer, medieval authorising traditions were successfully adapted and multiplied in print. Chaucer, whose name had been associated with poetic and rhetorical excellence since the early fifteenth century, was the first English poet to be granted a single-volume collection of *Workes* when Thynne produced his first edition in 1532. Print thus afforded the author more widespread visibility and cultural prominence.[14] On the printed title pages of lyric poetry collections and of professional playbooks as well as in poetic miscellanies compiled in manuscript, the English author's name acquired greater literary weight in the second half of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth.[15] This growing emphasis on identifying named authors is exemplified by Robert Crowley's address 'The Printer to the Reader' in the first edition of *Piers Plowman* (1550), which opens with the proclamation that the publisher was 'desyerous to knowe the name of the Autoure of this most worthy worke'.[16] Scribes and early readers of *Piers* had long puzzled over the question of the author's name (prompted, in part, by the elusiveness of the poem's authorial voice), but the publication of new books by John Bale and by Crowley in the mid-sixteenth century has been identified as a turning point at which '[a]fter nearly two centuries of anonymity, Langland comes to have a name and a public identity'.[17] This is not, however, a tale of obscurity in manuscript yielding to a new awareness of named authors in print; both the writerly self-awareness that characterises the work of Chaucer and Langland (and their fifteenth-century successors) and the persistence of anonymous writing conventions in the early modern period warn against such a reading. It is more instructive to adopt North's characterisation of the relationship between medieval and early modern conceptions of authorship as

'Compiling the Book', p. 139 identifies CUL, MS Dd.5.64 as a late medieval attempt to assemble the collected works of Richard Rolle. See also Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 27–60.

[13] Helen Cooper, 'Choosing Poetic Fathers: The English Problem', *Medieval and Early Modern Authorship*, SPELL: Swiss papers in English language and literature, 25 (2011), 29–50 (35).

[14] A point also made, for example, in Kelen, *Langland's Early Modern Identities*, pp. 19–22; and Jane Griffiths, 'What's in a Name? The Transmission of "John Skelton, Laureate" in Manuscript and Print', *HLQ*, 67.2 (2004), 215–35 (219).

[15] See, for example, Marotti, *Manuscript, Print*, pp. 223, 329; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 56–89.

[16] William Langland, *The vision of Pierce Plowman, now fyrste imprinted by Roberte Crowley* (London: Robert Crowley; *STC* 19906), sig. *2^{r}.

[17] Kelen, *Langland's Early Modern Identities*, p. 39.

a 'recurring echo rather than an evolution',[18] and, where Chaucer is concerned, to observe print's role in amplifying, rather than inaugurating, the cultural emphasis on authorship in the early modern period.

As a Middle English writer who was successfully ushered onto the print marketplace of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, Chaucer's case affords a unique vantage point on the changing understanding of literary authorship and its relation to anonymity, naming, and publication in the period. With the editions of his works produced in the sixteenth century, Chaucer's literary authority was increasingly seen to reside in his name, his works, and eventually his person. While the poet and courtier Stephen Hawes affirmed near the beginning of the century that Chaucer's 'goodly name / In prynted bookes, doth remayne in fame', this had not always been the case. Only with Wynkyn de Worde's edition of 1498 did the *Canterbury Tales* receive its first title page, a feature absent from medieval English manuscripts. Where most fifteenth-century manuscripts and the first printed edition of the *Tales* had not mentioned Chaucer in their opening paratexts, de Worde's 1498 title page proudly declares both author and title: 'The boke of Chaucer named Caunterbury tales'.[19] By the late seventeenth century, Chaucer's name and his works were common cultural currency in England, accessible not just in the most recent 1687 reprint of Speght's editions or in those that had come before, but also in myriad imitations and adaptations. One of these, a Chaucer-inspired jestbook also published in 1687, was titled *Canterbury Tales: composed for the Entertainment of All Ingenuous young Men and Maids* and professed on its title page to be 'By *Chaucer* Junior'.[20] Chaucer's name, then, had come to be well known in early modern England and it was closely associated with his body of work, in particular with the *Canterbury Tales*, which had been given pride of place as the first text in every volume of his works since Thynne. As Machan puts it, the critical apparatus introduced by Speght, in particular, 'solidifies the identification of the *Works* with a specific historical personage and thereby supports both the ideology of a canon and the mediation of literary history through exalted individual writers'.[21]

[18] North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, pp. 35–55 (p. 36).
[19] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 92–3. Likewise, only two surviving manuscripts of *Troilus* bear Chaucer's name; see *Print Culture*, p. 36.
[20] Chaucer (Junior), *Canterbury tales: composed for the entertainment of all ingenuous young men and maids at their merry meetings* (London: for J. Back, 1687; Wing C455A).
[21] Machan, 'Speght's "Works"', 154.

The association between the name of an individuated author and a printed oeuvre belied a more complex textual reality, and one of which the early modern editors were keenly aware. Chaucer's name may have become virtually inseparable from the marketing of his printed works but the oldest and most authoritative witnesses often lacked this ultimate sign of authority. Manuscripts of Chaucer's works were usually produced for and by people who already knew the author's identity, or to whom it did not matter; as Gillespie notes, in the context of medieval manuscript production 'traditions of anonymity are evidence of things which did not need to be said'.[22] The immediate interests of patrons, compilers, and scribes of manuscript works typically trumped investment in the author's name, and most of the earliest scribal copies of Chaucer's works do not prominently declare their author. As Chaucer became a dominant cultural figurehead, these volumes without a named author posed new challenges for readers and editors alike. A comment made by Speght following his list of Chaucer's 'Bookes' in 1598 underlines the difficulty presented by old copies: 'Others I haue seene without any Authours name, which for the inuention I would verily iudge to be Chaucers, were it not that wordes and phrases carry not euery where Chaucers antiquitie'.[23] Lacking an authorial ascription, books had to be assessed for inclusion in the collected *Workes* according to other criteria – in this case, a sense of Chaucer's style and the antiquity of his language. As Speght's vacillation demonstrates, however, this was not always a straightforward matter for an editor, and a text 'without any Authours name' could be a source of doubt and confusion.

One of the foremost Chaucerians of the sixteenth century, John Stow, took some of this work of attribution upon himself. Surviving medieval manuscripts that passed through Stow's hands reveal traces of the shift towards Chaucer's increasing prominence in the period, and Stow's own contribution to that shift. It is difficult to overstate Stow's role in promoting the study of medieval England and its literature. Gillespie pegs him as 'easily the most prolific writer of history of the Tudor age and . . . the most widely read', while William Ringler long ago voiced the necessity for a checklist of Stow's literary manuscripts, along with an analysis of his marginalia and commentary on poetry and poets.[24] Stow was an avid scholar and bibliophile with sustained interests in medieval literature and

[22] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 36. [23] *Workes* (1598), sig. cɪ[r].

[24] Alexandra Gillespie, 'Introduction', in Gadd and Gillespie, pp. 1–12 (p. 2); William Ringler, 'John Stow's Editions of Skelton's "Workes" and of "Certaine Worthye Manuscript Poems"', *Studies in Bibliography*, 8 (1956), 215–17 (215, n. 2). A digital project at the University of Toronto, led by

history; his work unearthing, collecting, copying, preserving, and interpreting antiquities has in recent decades brought him to greater scholarly attention and seen him credited with no less an achievement than the 'making of the English past'.[25] Despite his undeniable place at the centre of medieval manuscript study in the period, Stow's readerly engagement with his books has been construed as something of an intractable problem. Edwards has characterised Stow's marginalia as 'seemingly cryptic' and has confessed that it is 'not at all easy to determine what features of a work he felt to be significant', while the editor of the Fairfax manuscript containing Stow's annotations (to be discussed) concludes that 'From the disconnectedness of [Stow's] entries it is not possible to say how he used the manuscript', beyond a general interest in certain texts over others.[26] But more particular questions about Stow's taste in medieval literature remain unanswered, in part because his interests skewed more heavily towards the historiographical and the local than towards concerns that might today be considered aesthetic or literary.

Stow's commentary on medieval texts might also seem inscrutable because it is often preoccupied not with the 'features of a work' (as Edwards has it) but with the features surrounding a work. It is these features that I now wish to consider more closely. His notes show that he paid careful attention to paratextual devices such as names, titles, lists of contents, and other framing devices that lend context and authority to a given text. Edwards has observed the 'largely attributional' nature of Stow's annotations in the Fairfax manuscript and in a similar vein, Gillespie has noted that 'characteristic of his literary work is a prevailing concern with questions of authorship and canonicity'.[27] The present discussion assesses Stow's annotations in medieval manuscripts through the lens of his editorial work. The attributional impulse on display in Stow's notes in medieval manuscripts mirrors the emergent interest in early English authors found in contemporary printed books – and for some of which he was directly responsible. The fact of Stow's involvement in the book trade as an editor and contributor to printed books as well as a 'searcher' and reader of manuscripts makes his engagement with Chaucer two-pronged.[28] In some of the cases outlined in what follows, it

Gillespie, takes up Ringler's challenge; see Old Books New Science Lab, 'John Stow's Books', https://oldbooksnewscience.com/aboutobns/lab-projects/.

[25] The phrase comes from the title of Gadd and Gillespie's essay collection on Stow.

[26] Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', p. 109; Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xvi.

[27] Gillespie, 'Introduction', p. 6; Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', pp. 111–14.

[28] On Stow's self-styling as a 'serchar of antiquities', see Gillespie, 'Introduction', p. 1.

is impossible to determine whether Stow wholly conforms to the print-to-manuscript model of readerly perfecting, whether his interventions in the manuscripts originate in the results of his archival research into England's medieval past, or whether both of those things are true and his notes in fact reflect his own discoveries as mediated through Speght. Whatever their origins, his surviving notes in medieval manuscripts constitute a record of Stow's longstanding preoccupation with authors and their canons. Even if the relationship between their appearance in print and their parallel introduction into the manuscripts by Stow is not a causal one, his annotations express his desire to perfect fifteenth-century manuscripts according to some of the hallmarks of literary authority.

Bodl. MS Fairfax 16 is a miscellany including a large number of Chaucer's lyrics, as well as works by Clanvowe, Lydgate, and Hoccleve, amongst others. Given his interests in Middle English and especially in the works of Chaucer and Lydgate, Stow's interest in Fairfax is unsurprising and his engagement with the book is well documented.[29] However, his annotations have not been fully considered in the context of parallel advancements in the conception of authorship in the sixteenth century and the growing body of accepted knowledge about medieval poets and their oeuvres, in whose compilation Stow had a hand. At several places within Fairfax, Stow added marginal notes pairing authors' names with works initially copied without attribution by the manuscript's medieval copyist. In the list of contents, for example, Stow glossed several works with succinct notes about their matter and titles, and identified the respective authors of three works as Chaucer, Hoccleve, and Lydgate (see Figure 4.1).[30] In one sense, these belated additions bring the titles in line with others in the list of contents copied by the fifteenth-century Fairfax scribe, who had declared the Chaucerian origins of certain texts: 'The goode councell of Chawcer', 'The sendyng of Chawcer to Scogan', or 'The complaynt of Chawcer to his purse'. In another respect, however, the alternative titles, authors' names, and seeming trivia added into Fairfax reveal Stow's abiding preoccupation with the most prominent figures of Middle English literary history. The most

[29] Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, pp. xvi, xviii–xix; Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', pp. 111–15; Anne Hudson, 'John Stow (1525?–1605)', in Ruggiers, pp. 53–70 (pp. 57, 64).

[30] The four works as listed in the table of contents (fol. 2r), and their accompanying notes by Stow, are: 'The complaynt of a lovers lyve' (Stow: 'the blacke knight'; 'The lett*er* of Cupydge gode of love' (Stow: '*per* T. Hocleve'); 'The Temple off Glasse' (Stow: 'lidgate'); and 'A devoute balette to oure lady' (Stow: 'A.B.C. p*er* Chaucer').

substantial and consequential addition of this type appears on fol. 130[r], where the poem titled by its fifteenth-century scribe as 'The booke of the Duchesse' has been glossed with further information in a hand that is now generally regarded as Stow's: 'made by Geffrey

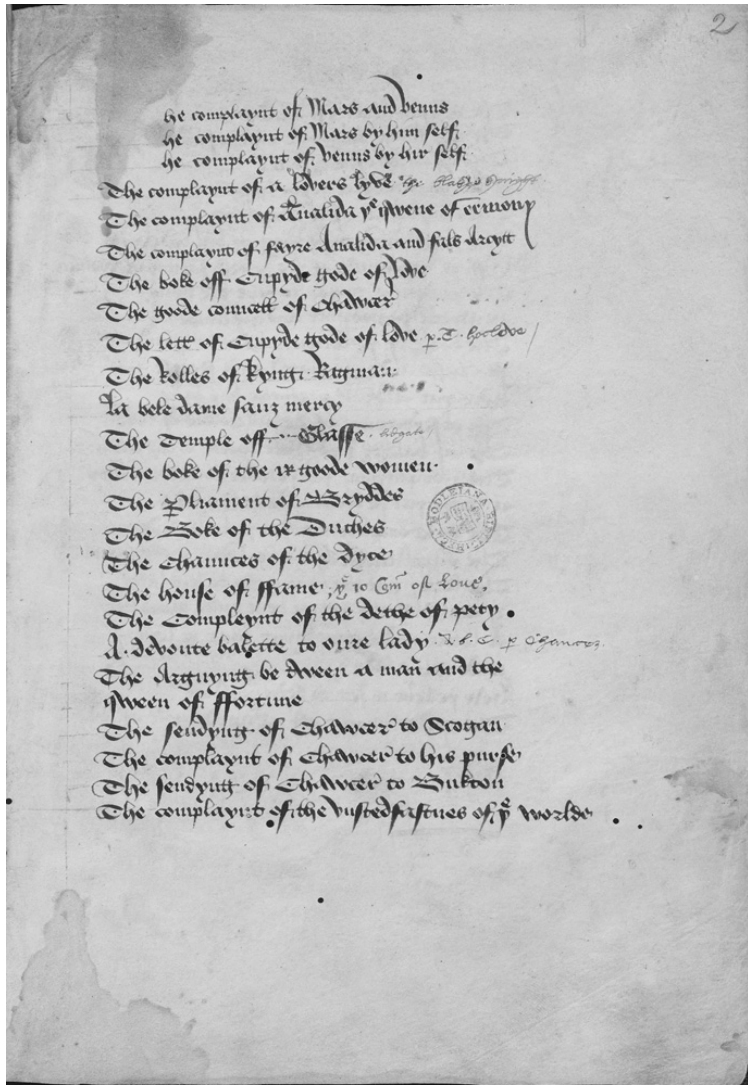


Figure 4.1 Table of contents and accompanying notes by John Stow. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Fairfax 16, fol. 2[r].

Chawcyer at ye request of ye duck of lancastar: pitiously complaynynge the deathe of ye sayd dutchesse / blanche/'.[31] As if to validate this claim, the marginal gloss 'blanche' is also added in Stow's hand at three points within the poem where the whiteness of the lover's dead lady is recalled (ll. 905, 942, 948).[32] This trio of terse notes, in their provision of a layer of historical, biographical, and attributional context, is typical of Stow's marginalia. The antiquary's particular interest in the circumstances around the composition of the *Book of the Duchess* is confirmed elsewhere, in a copy of Stow's 1561 *Workes* which Dane and Gillespie posit once belonged to the editor himself. Inside this copy, Stow's hand has supplied a note which again shows a concern with the occasion of the poem's composition: 'This booke was made of ye death of Blanch Duches of Lancaster'.[33] This persistent pattern affirms Stow's interest in detailing the origins and patronage of the *Book of the Duchess* within an aristocratic circle frequented by Chaucer.

In book historical terms, these additions made by Stow indicate that he saw both the older 1561 edition and the manuscript as deserving further explication of the poem's patronage and, specifically, Chaucer's connection to the House of Lancaster.[34] For Stow, these were facts that merited publication alongside the text. The widely accepted modern view that Chaucer wrote the *Book of the Duchess* 'at ye request of ye duck of lancastar' has its genesis in Stow's note to that effect in Fairfax, and in the corresponding argument on the allegory in Speght's 1598 edition: 'By the person of a mourning knight sitting vnder an Oke, is ment Iohn of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, greatly lamenting the death of Blaunch the Duchesse, who was his first wife'.[35] In all likelihood, this identification may be based on material supplied to Speght by Stow himself, who characterised that edition as 'beautified with noates, by me collected out of diuers Recordes and Monumentes, which I deliuered to my louing friende Thomas Speight'.[36] Stow's handwritten notes on the *Book of the Duchess* have

[31] Hammond, *Bibliographical Manual*, p. 363. For identification of the hand with Stow, see Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', p. 114; Gillespie, 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos', 25 and n. 95.

[32] fols. 141^{v}–142^{r}. [33] Dane and Gillespie, 'Back at Chaucer's Tomb', 95.

[34] In the 1561 edition Stow had listed the work as 'The dreame of Chaucer, otherwise called the boke of the Duches, or Seis and Alcione', but the connection to John of Gaunt was not explicitly made there; see *Workes* (1561; *STC* 5076), sig. ❧3^{r}.

[35] *Workes* (1598), sig. c5^{v}. In the 1602 edition the statement is more speculative: 'greatly lamenting the death of one whom hee entirely loued, supposed to bee Blanch the Duchesse' (sig. 2R1^{r}).

[36] John Stow, *A suruay of London* (London: [John Windet], 1598; *STC* 23341), sig. 2B8^{r}.

been identified as 'the sole authority' for the poem's Lancastrian connections,[37] but the exact date at which Stow encountered Fairfax is uncertain, and there are several suggestions that he came across it around the year 1600,[38] towards the end of his long life, and at a time when he was still clearly occupied with questions pertaining to Chaucer's life and works. If Fairfax came into Stow's hands around 1600, as seems most likely, then his comments post-date Speght's argument to the poem in 1598, and that edition's assertion about the identity of the 'mourning knight sitting vnder an Oke' assumes priority. This sequence of events would recontextualise Stow's marginalia in Fairfax as having been influenced by Speght (or even by research he undertook on behalf of Speght, who went on to publish it). Whatever the order of this chain of events, it attests to the early modern circulation of certain details of Chaucerian biography in a variety of media – not only in printed books and older literary manuscripts, but also in the historical 'Recordes and Monuments' examined by Stow and in the 'noates' based on them which he delivered to Speght.

Stow's notes on the *Book of the Duchess* in Fairfax thus echo, or at the very least mirror, concurrent and consequential claims about the text which were being made in print, and for whose discovery he may have been responsible. The simultaneous attachment of this information about Blanche to printed and manuscript versions of the text speaks to a broader contemporary interest in the details of Chaucer's life and career. That desire to know the author was one which was fuelled and, in large part, even ignited by Speght's elaborately annotated edition. Stow's annotations in Fairfax and in his own 1561 copy of the *Workes* convey the extent to which the editions published under Speght's name advanced a new model for literary authority in print and transformed the idea of the Chaucerian book. More so than any prior edition, these prints presented Chaucer's texts inside a dense paratextual frame which intertwined biographical, literary, and historical forms of authority. After Speght's edition supplied new knowledge about Chaucer's life and his canon, old books of the poet's works might, by comparison, be viewed as lacking this crucial layer of authority. The extent to which Speght's editions shaped readerly expectations and knowledge about Chaucer and his works is demonstrated by another piece of marginalia in a copy of Thynne's

[37] Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', p. 114.

[38] Stow's mention in Fairfax (fol. 82^{v}) of the Gg manuscript as 'Josephe hollands boke' places Fairfax in Stow's hands around 1600, when Holland is thought to have acquired his manuscript; see Caldwell, 'Joseph Holand', 299, n. 38. Norton-Smith, *MS Fairfax 16*, p. xvi suggests that Fairfax may have been in Stow's hands 'some time in the late 1590s' while Hudson, 'John Stow', p. 64, weighs the evidence and suggests that Stow may have encountered the book at two different points in time.

1532 edition now held in Glasgow. Inside the woodcut frame used as an inset title page for 'The dreame of Chaucer' – that is, the *Book of the Duchess* – a contemporary hand has added the poem's alternative titles: 'Or The booke of Duchesse or the death of Blanche as sayeth Mr Speght' (see Figure 4.2).[39] Here is a later reader who, in light of reading Speght, noticed the older book's lack of up-to-date information about the poem's title and occasion and decided to supply them. In that effort to note Chaucer's aristocratic subject matter and the exalted patron who stood behind the work, this annotator meshes the personal with the public and the poetic. Like the contextualising headnotes about Chaucer inscribed by John Shirley into fifteenth-century manuscripts, this biographical snippet supplied by Speght and transcribed by an early modern reader seeks 'to personalize and historicize the act of writing and reveal the living maker behind the poet'.[40] Much had been made of Chaucer's relation by marriage to John of Gaunt in the genealogical portrait and Life of Speght's edition.[41] In all likelihood, that information gleaned from Speght about Chaucer's powerful patron and eventual brother-in-law was also at the forefront of the annotator's mind when they noted the poem's connection to the Duchess.[42] In this sense, it is as much a note about the life of Chaucer as it is about 'the death of Blanche'. It is striking that both Stow and the Glasgow annotator updated older books according to newly available knowledge about the *Book of the Duchess* and the circumstances of its composition. Their annotations demonstrate the crucial and highly valued context for reading Chaucer's works supplied by Speght's new edition. They enable us, moreover, to pinpoint those facets of Chaucer's biography which early modern readers deemed most pertinent.

Stow is best known as a collector of manuscripts but he also collected printed books, and much of his scholarly energy was spent producing work for the press.[43] Just as his lifetime bridges the periods traditionally designated in English history as 'medieval' and 'early modern', so too his work ranged across the parallel worlds of manuscript and print.[44] Stow thus emerges as a figure

[39] Glasgow, Bs.2.17 (*STC* 5068; sig. 3B1^{v}). [40] Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, p. 120.

[41] Chaucer's relationship with Gaunt is elaborated in the sections of the 1598 Life concerning 'His Marriage' (sig. b3^{v}) and 'His Friends' (sig. b6^{v}), as well as in the *Stemma peculiare* of Chaucer's pedigree made by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald (sig. b4^{r}) .

[42] In Bs.2.17, the same reader also left notes identifying the 'man in black' (l. 445) as 'John of Gau[nt] duke of Lanca[ster] (sig. 3B4^{r}) and his lady ('fayre whyte she hete', l. 948) as '[B]lanche: by [w]home he had [th]e duchie of Lancaster' (sig. 3B6^{v}).

[43] See Barrett L. Beer, 'Stow [Stowe], John (1524/5–1605), historian', *ODNB*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26611.

[44] On Stow's role in bridging the medieval and early modern periods, see Gillespie, 'Introduction', p. 6.

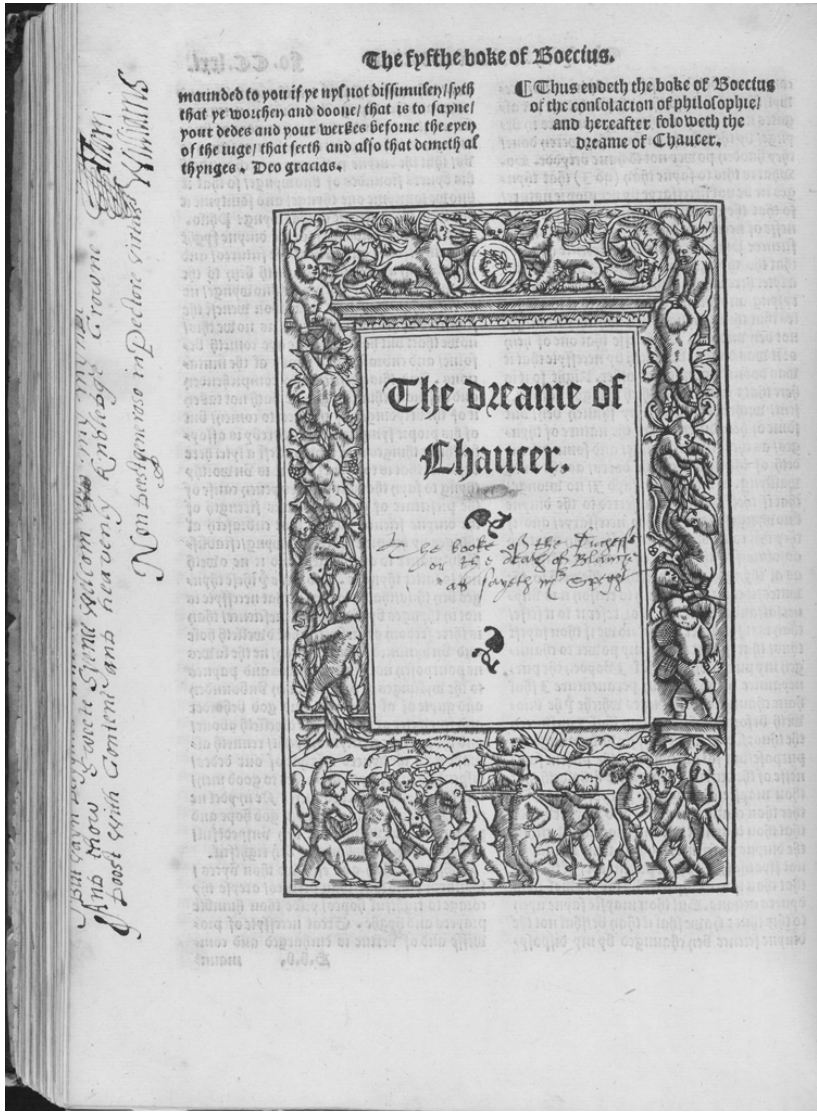


Figure 4.2 A reader's addition of alternative titles in a 1532 edition of Chaucer's *Workes*. University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections, Bs.2.17 (*STC* 5068; sig. 3B1^{v}).

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invested in print as a vehicle for promoting medieval literature, and via whom the stream of information from older, handwritten books, into updated transcriptions, and even into print may occasionally be traced.[45] In many of these efforts, too, Stow's organisational principle was the figure of the author.

His first certain publication, the 1561 edition of Chaucer, was the expanded sequel to Thynne's folio *Workes*, a book which in 1532 had rewritten the rules of the literary prestige normally accorded to English authors. He was probably also responsible for editing a reprint of the prose *Serpent of Division* (1559), which appears in a manuscript he once owned and which he believed to be by Lydgate.[46] In a revised dedication to his *Summary* (1567), Stow asks for patron Robert Dudley's support so that 'I shall be encouraged to perfecte that labour that I haue begon, and such worthye workes of auncyent Aucthours that I haue wyth greate peynes gathered together, and, partly yet performed in *M. Chaucer* & other I shal be much incensed by your gentlenes to publyshe, to the commodity of all the Quenes maiesties louynge Subiectes'.[47] As Stow relates it, his Chaucer folio was only the beginning. His stated intention to continue to 'publyshe' the 'worthye workes of auncyent Aucthours' affirms that his scholarship was undertaken for the purpose of public dissemination, and that the promotion of medieval authors was a driving motivation for him. Stow would go on to publish an edition of Skelton's *Pithy Pleasaunt and Profitable Workes* (1568) and, as was noted, contributed materials on Chaucer and Lydgate to Speght's Chaucer (1598). These supplements include an extensive list which follows the *Siege of Thebes* in Speght and is titled the 'Catalogue of translations and Poeticall deuises, in English mitre or verse, done by John Lidgate Monke of Bury, whereof some are extant in Print, the residue in the custodie of him that first caused this *Siege of Thebes* to be added to these works of *G. Chaucer*' – that is, Stow himself.[48]

The sixteenth century in England saw an unprecedented awareness of vernacular authorship, one promoted by Stow's editions of Lydgate, Chaucer, and Skelton. Seen in this context, Stow's attributional annotations, with their imposition of authorial names and titles, reflect the work in progress of an editorially-minded reader, and they offer a glimpse into

[45] For a discussion of Stow's manuscript sources and the difficulties of pinpointing his editorial method, however, see Hudson, 'John Stow', pp. 62–8.
[46] Now BL, Additional MS 40831A. See Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', p. 116.
[47] John Stow, *The summarie of Englishe chronicles* (London: Thomas Warshe, 1567; *STC* 23325.5), sig. a3^{v}.
[48] *Workes* (1598), sig. 3Z6^{r}.

the antiquary's motivation as he studied and compiled the materials that would make up future printed volumes of 'worthye workes of auncyent Aucthours'.[49] Stow's discreet attributional annotations in books like Fairfax show him relying on manuscripts for his research, even as he reckoned with their limitations and tellingly, as he updated them by superimposing authors' names and titles of their works. His annotations provide a small but perceptible trace of the shift as it happened – a change whereby manuscript books from the previous century could be retrofitted with paratextual markers such as attributions, titles, and biographical snatches, all hallmarks of the growing recognition accorded to the author in the English book trade.

I have already suggested that Stow's *Book of the Duchess* annotations appear synchronised with the printed editions of Speght in circulation at the time. Another instance of likely influence from print to manuscript, in which Stow's addition to the Fairfax manuscript runs in parallel with his editorial choice in print, is his addition of a gloss 'the blacke knight' to the Lydgate poem listed as 'The complaynt of a lovers lyve' (*IMEV* 1507) on the manuscript's contents page. The poem likewise appears in the editions of Speght and Stow himself as 'The complainte of the blacke knight, otherwise called the co*m*plaint of a louers life'.[50] No surviving manuscript of this poem contains both titles paired as Stow presents them in his edition and in Fairfax. Here too, Stow's scrupulous attention to the makeup of a medieval author's canon, and the way that his gloss echoes a print authority, is emblematic of an emerging cultural interest in the authenticity and canonicity of particular works.[51] Similarly, the emphasis on authorship in the printed editions is echoed by Stow's marginal addition to the Fairfax poem which is titled 'A devoute balette to oure lady' in the manuscript, and which he glossed as 'A.B.C. *per* Chaucer' (fol. 2^{r}) and elsewhere as 'Chawcers A.b.c.' (fol. 188^{v}), a new title that may likewise have been influenced by Speght's printed edition, in which the work is named 'Chaucers A.B.C., called La Priere de Nostre Dame'.[52] Stow's habit of titular correction is evident

[49] For further discussion of Stow's notes on Lydgate, which suggest editorial intentions, see Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', pp. 116–17.

[50] *Workes* (1561; *STC* 5076), sig. ❧3r.

[51] The title *The Complaint of the Black Knight* originates with Thynne (1532).

[52] Although the *ABC* survives in seventeen whole or fragmentary manuscripts, it was not printed until Speght's edition of 1602, using the text found in Holland's Gg manuscript. Only one medieval manuscript, Coventry, Coventry Archives Acc. 325/1, refers to this work using the formulation 'ABC', where the title is 'Here biginneth a preiour of oure ladie þat Geffreie Chaucer made affter the ordre of the A.b.c.' (fol. 72ra). Stow might even have seen the poem and this title in Gg itself, where the sixteenth-century scribe has inscribed it in bold blue ink, following Speght (fol. 5^{r}).

elsewhere in Fairfax too – for example, in his correcting of the title 'the temple of Bras' to 'glas' at the beginning and end of Lydgate's poem (fols. 63[r], 82[v]), or in his addition of a title to Chaucer's *Compleynt unto Pite* (*IMEV* 2756), where its original scribe had titled it simply 'Balade'.[53] Stow's annotations in Fairfax are scattered and generally sparse, rather than methodical, but his interest in correctly attributing and titling works in medieval manuscripts is sustained across numerous volumes.

In a predominantly Lydgatean manuscript miscellany which dates from the late fifteenth century (BL, Additional MS 34360), for instance, Stow made a note correctly assigning to Chaucer the poem now known as *Complaint to his Purse* (*IMEV* 3787), an attribution supported in some manuscripts (including Fairfax) as well as the folio editions of the *Workes* before 1602, where the poet is named in the title as the speaker.[54] Elsewhere in the Additional manuscript, Stow assigned to 'Chauser' the apocryphal poem that he called 'La semble des dames' (fol. 37[r], *IMEV* 1528), perhaps following the poem's French title in TCC, MS R.3.19.[55] In the same manuscript, Stow also added the attribution 'The horse the shepe and the Gose, by John Lydgate' to that work (*IMEV* 658, fol. 27[r]), and supplied a title to the work he there called 'The crafte of love' (*IMEV* 3761, fol. 73[v]). It received a more elaborate description in his 1561 edition, where it appeared under a heading 'This werke folowinge was compiled by Chaucer and is caled the craft of louers'. In TCC, MS R.3.19, which Stow is known to have used as a source for much of the new material he appended to his Chaucer edition, he likewise added a note 'The Crafte of lovers Chaucer' at the poem's head (fol. 154[v]).[56] At the conclusion of this text he also added a biographical note about Chaucer, 'Chaucer died 1400',[57] a response in the margins to the narrator's assertion that he heard this dialogue 'In the yere of oure lord a Ml. by rekenyng / CCCC xl. &. viii'. Stow, taking issue with an internal date that post-dated Chaucer's lifetime, emended this to '1348' in his 1561 edition.[58]

Both Stow's surviving medieval manuscripts and the annotations in these volumes thus demonstrate his abiding interest in historiography

[53] The title that Stow adds is 'complainte of the deathe of pitie' (fol. 187[r]). Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowles* was titled *The Temple of Bras* by Caxton (Westminster: William Caxton, *c.* 1477; *STC* 5091).
[54] fol. 19[r]. In addition to Fairfax, *Purse* is attributed to Chaucer in Pepys 2006, BL, MS Harley 7333, and New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS 4. In the 1561 and 1598 editions, it is 'Chaucer to his emptie purse' but retitled 'Hoccleve to his emptie purse' in 1602.
[55] This poem was added to the canon by Thynne in 1532.
[56] On Stow and TCC, MS R.3.19, see Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', p. 114.
[57] fol. 156[r]. [58] *Workes* (1561; *STC* 5076), sig. 3P3[v].

and in the literature of late medieval England. Studied in isolation, his marginal notes may seem trifling or reactive. However, they are collectively underwritten by an attributional and biographical impulse directed towards Chaucer and Lydgate, Hoccleve and Gower, as well as towards figures such as Blanche of Lancaster, Gildas, William de la Pole, and other historical personages.[59] His literary attributions witness a highly developed awareness of the canon and authors of Middle English literature – a canon which he aspired to shape.[60] Such an observation is not new, but the degree to which Stow's notes anticipate, echo, or otherwise correspond to print has not been fully appreciated. The nature of his annotations on *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, *Chaucer's ABC*, and *The Craft of Lovers* in fifteenth-century manuscripts all match framings of these texts in his or other printed versions, and they provide direct evidence for the increasing prominence afforded to authorial figures and their canons in late Elizabethan England.

Stow's manuscript annotations reflect editorial habits of identification, comparison, and correction which persisted far beyond his editing of Chaucer for the press in 1561. They show that he maintained an editorial and readerly sensibility which sought to ascribe authorial agency and to circumscribe literary canons. In his reassigning of the names attached to particular texts in manuscript, Stow attempted to impose new order onto these old books, to map the terrain of Chaucer's oeuvre and, in so doing, to shed new light on the author's life. As Gillespie has shown, preoccupations with the figure of the medieval author may be gleaned from the ways manuscripts and printed books were organised, produced, and received by their makers and early readers; in the case of Stow and his fellow antiquaries, 'the medieval author had become a stable place for the remnants – whether old manuscripts or the learned texts in them – of a vanishing medieval past'.[61] But it was not enough to search and collect old manuscript books. Stow also needed to make sense of them by updating, annotating, and situating their texts historically – for example, by correcting a faulty date, setting the record straight about their proper titles, or providing vital context about their composition. Stow was a reader of old books

[59] For example, see Stow's habit of naming in his annotations on Gildas in BL, MS Lansdowne 204, fols. $22^{r–v}$, 39^{r}, $41^{r–v}$; and on William de la Pole in TCC, MS R.3.20, pp. 25, 32, 35, 36.

[60] Stow's activities of collecting, transcribing, and editing Middle English works are discussed in Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', pp. 109–18.

[61] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 208.

and a maker of new ones, and his marginalia in Fairfax and other medieval manuscripts record the evolution of a suite of ideas about Middle English authorship. Whether updating manuscript texts to bring them into line with information conveyed in print, or to classify and perfect them with an eye to print publication, Stow's marginalia in medieval books expose some of their perceived limitations in the face of emerging standards of bibliographic authority. The frequent lack of authorial attribution, uniform titles, or relevant historical detail in medieval manuscripts were all shortcomings which Stow sought to redress through the research and editorial work that would ultimately define an early modern canon for Chaucer (and equally for Lydgate).

Stow was extraordinary in his diligent scouring of ancient volumes, but he was not unique in his aim to impose a new order onto old manuscript books. Other readers, too, compared fifteenth-century manuscript volumes with the more recent printed collections, and left notes to suggest that they, like Stow, appraised the older books according to new standards of authority and canonicity as they read.[62] In BL, Additional MS 34360 an early modern hand which may be that of the poet William Browne of Tavistock has furnished a table of contents listing 'A Catalogue of the Poems in this Volume' (fol. 3^{r}).[63] The second item in the list, Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse*, receives an extended entry:

> 2 An Expostulation with his purse, that proues a
> light mistris: but the same is verbatim in Chaucers
> printed workes fol. 320, & is there exprest to be
> Tho Occleeves making for the 3 first stanzas

Browne also noted the discrepancy in attribution beside the scribally copied text itself (fol. 19^{r}).[64] The later poet's interest in Hoccleve's purported authorship of *Purse* (a curious assignation made in Speght's second edition) manifests his particular preoccupation with collecting and elevating the works of the Privy Seal clerk.[65] That Browne twice took pains to cross-reference the older book with the more recent Hoccleve ascription found in the newer print reflects his attempts to weigh up and reconcile the competing author attributions he observed across the two volumes.

[62] The Oxford antiquary Thomas Allen, for instance, was a sparse annotator but is known to have added titles, lists of contents, and (in at least one case) a note on authorship to his medieval manuscripts; see Watson, 'Thomas Allen of Oxford', p. 296.
[63] Driver, 'Stow's Books Bequeathed', p. 138. [64] See Chapter 1, p. 76.
[65] Pearsall, 'Speght', p. 86 reads the editorial reattribution of the poem to Hoccleve as 'part of the plan to present Chaucer as a "serious" poet' rather than an impecunious one.

For Browne, a would-be editor of Hoccleve, Speght's choice in assigning the poem would have furnished compelling proof of the clerk's historical importance.

Durham University Library, Cosin MS v.II.14 is a fifteenth-century manuscript containing Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* alongside shorter Middle English works including Benedict Burgh's *Magnus Cato* and *Parvus Cato*, and the anonymous *Life of St Alexius*.[66] Notes written in this book by the clergyman and collector George Davenport (d. 1677) similarly show him wondering where Chaucer's oeuvre ended and that of his followers began.[67] Like Browne, Davenport attempted to establish these boundaries using information gathered from printed editions. On fol. iii^{r}, Davenport wrote a heading under which he assigned not only the *Siege*, but all the manuscript's major works, to Lydgate: 'In this volume are contained these books of Lidgate'. Davenport's table of contents fulfilled the practical aim of identifying the volume's matter and aiding navigation. It also erroneously named 'Lidgate' as the author of all the titles in the list, while another hand later cross-referenced the table against 'Stow's list' of Lydgate's works in Speght's edition.[68] On the verso of the same leaf, Davenport supplied three lines of Lydgate biography collected from John Pits's 1619 Latin life of the poet.[69] Underneath it he added a further note referring specifically to the *Siege of Thebes*: 'This book is printed at the end of Chaucers works'.[70] Such notes reveal the print contexts that ineluctably shaped the experience of reading Chaucer and Lydgate in early modern England, and make explicit the constant reckoning which readers like Davenport and Browne performed when they opened their medieval manuscripts. In imagining his volume as a collection of several 'books of Lidgate', Davenport superimposed a new (albeit misjudged) author-centric order upon the miscellaneous manuscript. Attribution thus proved to be

[66] Respectively, *IMEV* 3955, 854, and 3156.

[67] On Davenport, see A. I. Doyle, 'The Cosin Manuscripts and George Davenport', *The Book Collector*, 53 (2004), 32–45.

[68] This later hand, possibly that of librarian Robert Harrison (1744–1802), singled out 'The life of St Margaret' (*IMEV* 439) as being 'in Stow's list'; for a description based on A. I. Doyle and A. J. Piper, see Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections Catalogue, 'Durham University Library Cosin MS. v.ii.14', http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s1kp78gg42d.xml.

[69] John Pits, *Relationum historicarum de rebus Anglicis tomus primus* (Paris: Rolin Thierry and Sebastien Cramoisy, 1619; *USTC* 6015910), sig. 4K4^{v}. Davenport's full inscription mentions Lydgate's status as an imitator of Chaucer and as author of the *Siege*. In full, it reads: 'Pitsaeus anno 1440 / Johannes Lidgatus ordinis S. Benedicti monachus in celeberrimo cœnobio Buriensi ad S. Edmundum, multum ornatus patriæ linguæ contulit imitatus in hoc Chaucerum nostrum. scripsit de bello Thebano lib. 3. Quoniam vestra clementia Domini. / This book is printed at the end of Chaucers works'.

[70] fol. iii^{v}.

a thorny matter in print as well as in manuscript. The assurance of authorial stability which Davenport constructed around 'Lidgate' in the Durham manuscript quickly crumbles with the realisation that several of these texts are not Lydgatean. In Additional, Browne likewise embraced the reassigning of *Complaint to his Purse* to Hoccleve in 'Chaucers printed workes'. But many early attributions, whether implied or explicit, stood on precarious foundations within the manuscript record. Speght had hinted at the issue when he invoked the problem of manuscript books 'without any Authours name' (which he singled out from 'those bookes of his which wee haue in print'); that is, he too worried about the authorship of anonymous manuscript works which bore no attribution.[71] Working out genuine Chaucerian works from those that might only resemble them was not straightforward, but a matter Speght realised one must 'iudge'. Both Browne's and Davenport's comments, as well as Speght's quibble about those texts 'without any Authours name', signal the emergence of a readership concerned with accuracy of attribution, and who looked to print to supply it.[72] The promotion of a literary corpus went hand in hand with celebration of the author responsible for its creation. What had been true in Chaucer's and Lydgate's own time still held in the era of their print prominence; in Gillespie's words, 'Works must be listed and their authorship declared if writers are to hold onto their place in literary history'.[73] In their promotion of the individuated author and the circumscribed canon, the volumes produced by the early modern book trade engendered a powerful readerly desire to reproduce these paratextual trappings in order to authorise older books which lacked them.

The weighty influence of print on early modern conceptions of Chaucer and his canon may also be gleaned from Bodl. MS Tanner 346, a manuscript anthology copied on parchment and dated to the second quarter of the fifteenth century.[74] The Tanner manuscript contains works by Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Clanvowe, and also reflects an early attempt to collect Chaucer's minor poems. In the late seventeenth century, Tanner was owned by the collector and Archbishop of Canterbury William Sancroft (d. 1693), who amassed a personal library of at least 7,000 volumes, most of

[71] *Workes* (1602), sig. c1[r].

[72] Such concerns, Machan has argued, were not universally shared by the poets of the Middle English literary tradition nor by their immediate audiences, since vernacular writers were officially denied the status of *auctor* and the necessity for naming which accompanied it; see his *Textual Criticism*, pp. 93–135.

[73] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 60.

[74] For the facsimile, see *Manuscript Tanner 346: A Facsimile*, ed. by Pamela Robinson (Norman, OK; Suffolk, UK: Pilgrim Books; Boydell & Brewer, 1980).

which were printed books which he bequeathed to Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The majority of his manuscript collection, however, was sold to Thomas Tanner and subsequently entered the Bodleian Library.[75] Tanner 346 was amongst these volumes, and still bears evidence of Sancroft's engagement with the poet and his works. The date at which the Archbishop acquired the manuscript is not known, but he marked his ownership by inscribing his name, 'W: Sancroft', on the recto of its first leaf (fol. 1[r]), at the beginning of the *Legend of Good Women*. When Sancroft owned this manuscript, it was around two hundred years old and carried the signs of its long life. Most noticeable, perhaps, were the badly faded words and letterforms on fol. 1[r], which either Sancroft or a reader contemporary to him traced over with black ink and in a cursive secretary hand.[76] Despite these markers of the book's age, the fifteenth-century hands of the Tanner scribes, who wrote in a distinctive 'amalgam of Anglicana Formata and Secretary' and in a secretary hand typical for the date, appear to have been sufficiently legible to the Archbishop.[77]

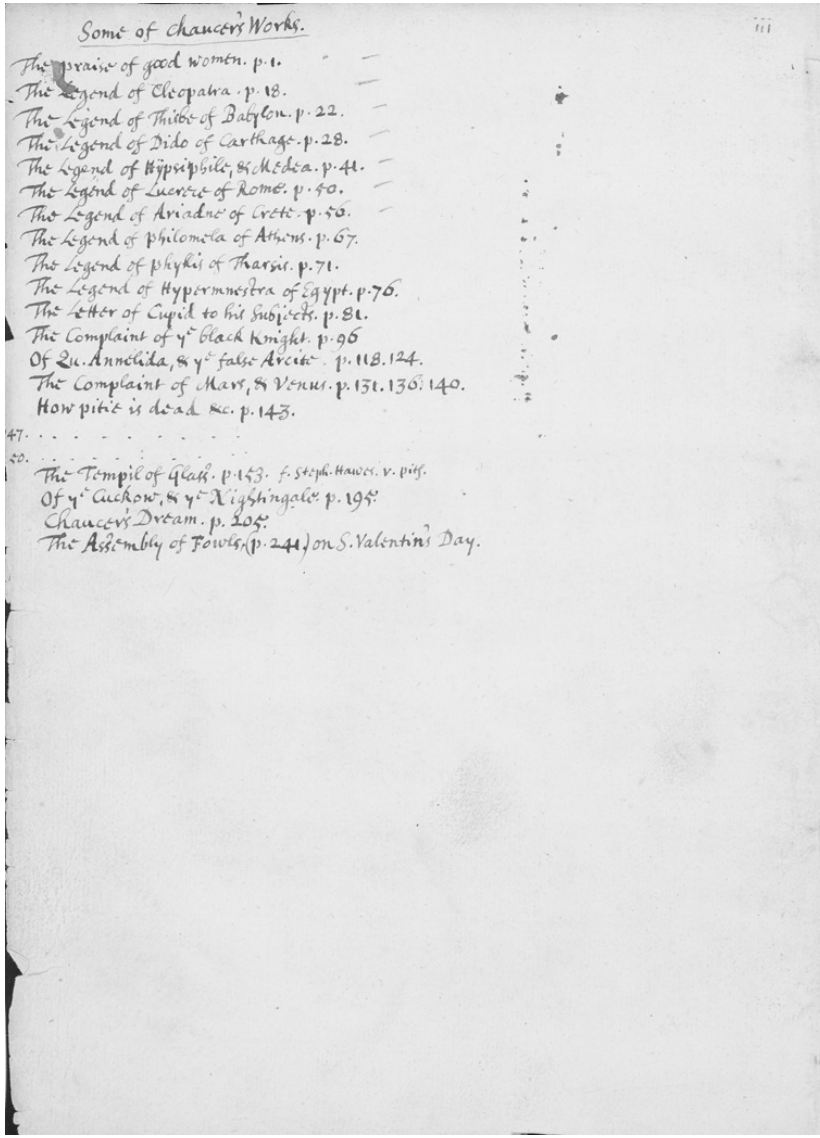
Although there is no direct evidence that Sancroft read the text closely, it is clear that he paid sustained attention to the nature and arrangement of the book's contents. He added to the Tanner manuscript a paper leaf with the heading 'Some of Chaucer's Works', on which he listed all of the volume's texts by title and keyed them to page numbers in the manuscript (see Figure 4.3).[78] The ambiguous heading chosen by Sancroft for his table of contents is worth pausing over. It may indicate that Sancroft believed all of the manuscript's contents to be Chaucer's, or alternatively (if more improbably), that just 'some' of those listed were his. It has been observed by Robinson and others that the titles Sancroft assigned to the Tanner texts match those in Thynne's edition.[79] If (as seems likely) Sancroft turned to Thynne or a later sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Chaucer folio to identify

[75] On Sancroft, see Helen Carron, 'William Sancroft (1617–93): A Seventeenth-Century Collector and His Library', *The Library*, 1.3 (2000), 290–307; and R. A. P. J. Beddard, 'Sancroft, William (1617–1693), archbishop of Canterbury and nonjuror', *ODNB*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24610; Robinson, *Tanner 346*, p. xxvii.

[76] *Legend of Good Women*, ll. 4–6. [77] Robinson, *Tanner 346*, pp. xxi, xxii.

[78] His table (on fol. iii[r]) further atomised Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* by dividing it into an introductory text he called 'The praise of good women' and the individual legends, in almost all of which he included information about the heroines' places of origin – for example, 'The Legend of Hypermnestra of Egypt'. In this, Sancroft was following a pattern which appears sporadically in the incipits of the manuscript and the printed editions, but he also added information he discerned from his own reading, as in the case of Hypermnestra, who is not identified as 'of Egypt' in either Tanner or the prints.

[79] Robinson, *Tanner 346*, p. xxiii; Seymour, *Catalogue*, 1, p. 85. It is also possible that the titles were transcribed from a later edition influenced by Thynne.


Some of Chaucers Works.

The praise of good women. p. 1.
The Legend of Cleopatra. p. 18.
The Legend of Thisbe of Babylon. p. 22.
The Legend of Dido of Carthage. p. 28.
The Legend of Hypsiphile, & Medea. p. 41.
The Legend of Lucrece of Rome. p. 50.
The Legend of Ariadne of Crete. p. 55.
The Legend of philomela of Athens. p. 67.
The Legend of phyllis of Thrace. p. 71.
The Legend of Hypermnestra of Egypt. p. 76.
The Letter of Cupid to his Subjects. p. 81.
The Complaint of y^e^ black Knight. p. 96
Of Qu. Annelida, & y^e^ false Arcite. p. 118. 124.
The Complaint of Mars, & Venus. p. 131. 136. 140.
How pitie is dead &c. p. 143.
47. . . . . .
50. . . . . .
The Tempil of Glass. p. 153. f. Steph. Hawes. v. pies.
Of y^e^ Cuckow, & y^e^ Nightingale p. 195.
Chaucers Dream. p. 205.
The Assembly of Fowls (p. 241) on S. Valentins Day.

Figure 4.3 William Sancroft's list of 'Some of Chaucer's Works'. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Tanner 346, fol. iii[r].

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the contents of his manuscript, he would have found works such as *The Letter of Cupid* (*IMEV* 828), *The Complaint of the Black Knight* (*IMEV* 1507), *The Temple of Glass* (*IMEV* 851), and *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* (*IMEV* 3361) assigned not to Hoccleve, Lydgate, or Clanvowe as they generally are today, but clustered without attribution alongside Chaucer's most famous works. As Forni has argued, the version of Chaucer readers encountered in the editions of Thynne and his successors was 'fundamentally different from the earlier manifestations of Chaucer's canon by virtue of the technology of print'. Print, she contends, aimed to present a 'fixed, identifiable, and duplicable body of works' for the poet.[80] Annotations like those of Sancroft show what early modern readers made of those 'fundamentally different' manuscripts in the face of the definitiveness promised by print.

Sancroft's consultation of Thynne (or a later edition) in parallel with Tanner accounts for his conviction that nearly all the works in the manuscript were '*Chaucer's* Works' (emphasis added). Sancroft's conception of the 'Works' is itself indebted to a presentation of Chaucer which was particular to print, for it was in Thynne's 1532 edition that this distinction – to be the author of 'works' alongside Virgil or Homer – was first awarded to anyone who wrote in English.[81] While this was not a term used by the compilers of this or any other Chaucerian manuscript, it was one which Sancroft thought appropriate for such a manuscript by the late seventeenth century. Simultaneously, his use of 'some' conveys a perception of the manuscript's incompleteness in relation to the more expansive Chaucer canon which he had encountered in a printed volume. Both halves of Sancroft's formulation 'Some of Chaucer's Works' therefore owe something to a version of the canon which circulated widely in print.

Sancroft's method of improving this manuscript by superimposing a new order in the form of titles adopted from print may be usefully contextualised by his dealings with other medieval books and by the makeup of Tanner itself. During his archiepiscopal tenure, he is known to have overseen the colossal task of disbinding, combining, and reordering the medieval manuscripts in the library at Lambeth Palace.[82] Ker surmises

[80] Forni, *Chaucerian Apocrypha,* pp. 5–6.

[81] On Sancroft's broader interest in matters of authorship and canonicity, and his reading of printed collections of English drama, including Jonson's 1616 *Workes*, see Laura Estill, *Dramatic Extracts in Seventeenth-Century English Manuscripts: Watching, Reading, Changing Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2015), pp. 182–92.

[82] N. R. Ker, 'Archbishop Sancroft's Rearrangement of the Manuscripts of Lambeth Palace', in *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in Lambeth Palace Library. MSS. 1222–1860: With a Supplement to M. R. James's 'Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace' by N. R. Ker*, ed. by E. G. W. Bill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 1–51 (p. 1).

that one of Sancroft's aims in this work was organisational: 'to eliminate the thinner volumes by binding them up with one another, and to make homogeneous volumes by moving pieces from one volume to another, so that like came to be with like'.[83] The newly reconfigured volumes were listed in a catalogue prepared by Sancroft himself, and he recorded the contents of these manuscripts on their flyleaves.[84] The same urge towards ordering the book is evident in the creation of the Tanner contents list. In this case, Sancroft recognised the volume's Chaucerian content and went so far as to redefine it in terms of 'Chaucer's Works'. At the same time, Sancroft's annotations register his response to Tanner's particularities. As Robinson has noted, the palaeographical and codicological evidence in Tanner suggests a 'lack of coordination among the scribes', 'that each was working independently of the others', but 'no evidence that anyone assumed over-all responsibility for the volume'.[85] She singles out the patchy provision of headings in the manuscript as symptomatic of this lack of overall coherence; only three of the book's fourteen items were assigned headings by the scribes.[86] Given this inconsistency in the manuscript's *ordinatio*, Sancroft's provision of a table of contents and individual titles in Tanner may reflect his intention to lend order to books in which he believed organisation was lacking.

Tables of contents were by no means particular to print.[87] However, they are generally rare in Middle English vernacular manuscripts, and there is evidence of both medieval and later book users having supplied them in order to enhance the navigability of such codices.[88] Sancroft, a seventeenth-century

[83] Ker, 'Archbishop Sancroft', p. 1.

[84] Robinson, *Tanner 346*, p. xxvii; Lambeth Palace Library, 'Research Guide – Library Records 1610–1785, Part B', p. 19, https://lambethpalacelibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2021/06/Research-Guide-Library-Records-1610-1785-part-B.pdf.

[85] This evidence includes the book's arrangement into booklets, the suggestion of simultaneous copying, and the fact that each scribe corrected only their own copy; see Robinson, *Tanner 346*, pp. xxv–xxvi.

[86] Robinson, *Tanner 346*, p. xx. On other inconsistencies in copying, see Robinson, *Tanner 346*, pp. xxv–xxvi.

[87] On tables of contents in late Middle English manuscripts, see Wendy Scase, '"Looke This Calender and Then Proced": Tables of Contents in Medieval English Manuscripts', in Pratt and others, pp. 287–306; Daniel Sawyer, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript c. 1350–c. 1500* (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 60–4. Tables of contents were added to some manuscript copies of the *Canterbury Tales* – e.g. Oxford, Christ Church, MS 152, fol. 1^{v} and HEHL, MS EL 26 C 9 (Ellesmere), fol. vii^{v} – during the fifteenth century. On Ellesmere's table of contents, see Sawyer, *Reading English Verse*, pp. 79–80. On tables of contents as part of an authorial strategy, see Connolly, 'Devotional Compilations', p. 138.

[88] For examples, see Siân Echard, 'Pre-Texts: Tables of Contents and the Reading of John Gower's "Confessio Amantis"', *Medium Ævum*, 66.2 (1997), 270–87 (271); Sawyer, *Reading English Verse*, pp. 62–4; Scase, '"Looke this calender"', pp. 297–300.

reader, belongs to this latter group but what makes him noteworthy in the present context is his use of a print authority to assign titles to works and to compose a table of contents for a medieval manuscript. A reader lacking a comparison copy might have generated titles from their own reading, but Sancroft's reliance on titles found in Thynne suggests the appeal of print's seeming standardisation to an early modern reader and its role in his appraisal of the manuscript's quality. His replication in Tanner of the printed titles furnishes direct evidence of an edition's influence on the early modern conception and framing of Chaucer's works, and demonstrates the authority that readers attached to the paratextual presentation of his texts in print. For Sancroft, the printed table was the benchmark by which he organised his manuscript, and the printed book served as the definitive record of Chaucer's authorship and canon by extension.

As we have seen, the secure attribution implied by their inclusion and arrangement in the *Workes* was, for texts such as *Complaint to his Purse*, a fiction. The stability of the titles attached to particular texts in those volumes was equally attractive, but just as illusory. Forni's research into the dubious basis on which certain titles were assigned to items in the *Workes* in manuscript and early print has exposed the 'shifting titles, attributions, and texts' which are 'often the product of oversight and carelessness but sometimes simply the result of confusion'.[89] In one instance, Sancroft's practice of titling exemplifies the trail of confusion engendered by the vagaries of early editorial choices. In a meticulously documented essay, Forni shows that the poem now called *The Isle of Ladies* was once called *Chaucer's Dreame*, which caused it to be conflated with the *Book of the Duchess*, which was titled *The Dreame of Chaucer* from Thynne onward. The muddling of these two works in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century print undoubtedly account for Sancroft having titled the *Book of the Duchess* as 'Chaucer's Dreame' in Tanner.[90] Such shifts and discrepancies from one edition to the next shatter any assumption of print's stability in relation to manuscript; on the contrary, they emphasise that the absence or inconsistency of titles and attributions in medieval manuscript witnesses had longstanding repercussions for the transmission of such works in print,

[89] Kathleen Forni, '"Chaucer's Dreame": A Bibliographer's Nightmare', *HLQ*, 64.1/2 (2001), 139–50 (148). On the nineteenth-century tendency to retitle, see Victoria Gibbons, 'The Manuscript Titles of Truth: Titology and the Medieval Gap', *JEBS*, 11 (2008), 198–206.

[90] Bodl. MS Tanner 346, table of contents (fol. iii^{r}) but also on fol. 102^{r}. Speght had muddled matters further by titling the *Book of the Duchess* 'Chaucer's Dreame' in 1602. Forni, '"Chaucer's Dreame"', 146–8 traces the process by which the two works were also mixed up with a third, Lydgate's *The Temple of Glass* (*IMEV* 851).

and that the early editors introduced their share of perplexing variants into a canon with an already complicated textual history.

While readers such as Sancroft could be led astray by printed accounts of the makeup of Chaucer's canon, the discernment of some readers in the face of competing and superseded print authorities should not be underestimated. The Glasgow manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* (Gl, previously discussed in relation to its unusually large number of scribal gaps) was later owned by the Norfolk collector and antiquary Thomas Martin (1697–1771), who signed his name in the book and professed it was 'Given me Mr John White of Ipswich Surgeon'.[91] Martin's hand, which is markedly larger and more embellished than the annotator who filled in the gaps, features prominently not inside the book itself but on a supplementary paper flyleaf (see Figure 4.4). Here, Martin has drawn up a table headed 'The order of the prologues, & Tales, in this book, (which is Imperfect,) at beginning only. / And beginneth at the 355th Line, as printed in Mr Urrey's Edition being the Frankelyn &c his table &c'.[92] During this comparative exercise, Martin observed some of manuscript's more eccentric features, such as the scribes' splicing of two copytexts which, remarkably, caused two tales to be duplicated or 'Enter'd twice' in this copy, as Martin notes in his list of contents.[93] A committed scholar of Chaucer, Martin also owned copies of Thynne's 1542 and Stow's 1561 editions,[94] but it was Urry's much disparaged 1721 edition that he trusted to make his collations with the manuscript.[95] Martin's engagement with Chaucer thus involved both reading the printed text and evaluating the manuscript book itself. His attention to tale order in the manuscript, his identification of the copying error made by the Spirlengs, and his precise identification of the missing opening lines which made the manuscript 'Imperfect' all show the influence of his having read Chaucer in print. Despite his awareness of the manuscript's textual shortcomings, his appreciation of its age is suggested by his notes beneath the contents list, which observe that the manuscript was 'Written an*n*o 1470' and that 'Chaucer dyed .1400. 25 Octo*be*r'. These

[91] Glasgow MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1), i, fol. 2v. [92] i, fol. 3r.

[93] *The Shipman's Tale* and *The Prioress's Tale* were copied twice in Gl, while the *Clerk's Tale* and *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* were copied after the *Retraction* and *St Patrick's Purgatory*. For a detailed study of Gl and its scribe, see Richard Beadle, 'Geoffrey Spirleng (*c.* 1426–*c.* 1494): A Scribe of the *Canterbury Tales* in His Time', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Readers. Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. by Rivkah Zim and Pamela Robinson (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), pp. 116–46.

[94] Johnston, 'Readers' Memorials', 50–3. Martin also owned a copy of the 1606 edition of the *Plowman's Tale* (Glasgow, Co.3.20; *STC* 5101), which he believed to be by Chaucer.

[95] Dane, *Tomb*, pp. 116–21.

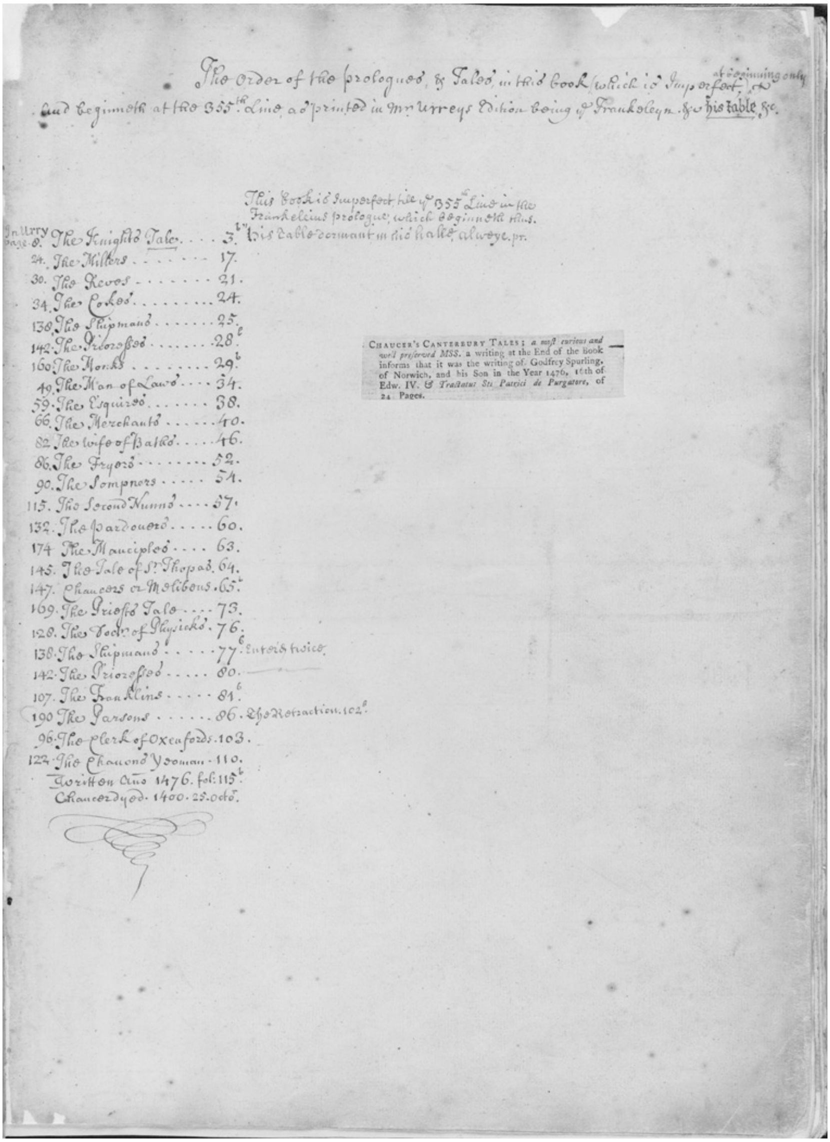

Figure 4.4 Thomas Martin's table of contents. University of Glasgow Archives and Special Collections, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1), i, fol. 3r.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

facts anchor the manuscript within a sequence of historical time whose starting point is the end of the author's lifetime. For Martin, assessing the book's authority involved declaring its proximity to (or distance from) a time when Chaucer himself had lived.

The forms of paratextual authority supplied in medieval manuscripts by Martin, Sancroft, Davenport, and other readers – attributions, tables of contents, titles of works, and even biographical details – overlap in their fundamental focus on authorship and canonicity. The annotations described here witness not only a burgeoning early modern interest in the print-published medieval author, but also demonstrate readers' use of print to situate medieval manuscripts and their texts within a larger, author-centric literary history. Just as printed editions attempted to furnish standardised titles, to create canons in the form of tables of contents, and to name their authors, Stow and other readers with similar interests in literary history were doing the same for the manuscripts that came into their hands. This phenomenon of inverted textual transmission from print to manuscript, and from new books to old ones, has been described in a comment by Forni: 'commercial titles and attributions are later added to manuscripts and appear to establish authority for the print attributions from which they were derived'.[96] Such an assessment demonstrates some of the tenuous textual foundations on which Chaucer's canon was first built. This evidence confirms the widespread role of early modern printed volumes in shaping the bibliographic expectations which readers brought to medieval manuscripts, and print's contribution to the continued currency of the older books. This chapter has so far been concerned with the relatively small and discreet paratexts which readers often adapted from print and applied to manuscripts with the aim of lending them greater authority. But alongside these relatively inconspicuous signs of print's influence were bolder, more striking additions made to old books by readers who shared the goal of authorising their Chaucers.

4.3 'True Portraiture'

Arguably, the most arresting feature of the early modern editions – and their most visible marker of authorial presence – was a genealogical portrait of Chaucer (see Figure 4.5). In order to understand the uses to which readers put the portrait, its role as an authorising paratext should first be established. To those who first laid eyes on it, the intricate intaglio

[96] Forni, '"Chaucer's Dreame"', 148.

Figure 4.5 John Speed's engraved Chaucer portrait in Speght's first edition of the poet's *Workes* (1598). Fondation Martin Bodmer copy [without shelfmark]. Digitised and reproduced courtesy of the Bodmer Lab, University of Geneva.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

engraving made by John Speed would have been striking in its novelty. Speed's copperplate Chaucer portrait, made for Speght's first edition of the poet's *Workes* (1598), was advertised prominently on that book's title page, at the head of a list of the new edition's vendible features: 'His Portraiture and Progenie shewed'.[97] While woodcut images had held a monopoly in England until around 1545, the latter part of the century saw the immigration of talented metal engravers from the Continent and the growth of a market for specialist prints.[98] Images printed from cut woodblocks would remain ubiquitous in sixteenth-century England, in bound volumes, and in broadsides, chapbooks, and decorations pasted onto domestic interiors.[99] However, the newly fashionable form of metal plate engraving was ideally suited to transmitting minute, individualised details, and was especially sought for prints of maps and portraits. By the final decade of the sixteenth century, John Harington could still write of the brass-cut engravings in his translation of *Orlando Furioso* (1591) that 'I haue not seene anie made in England better, nor (in deede) anie of this kinde, in any booke, except it were in a treatise'.[100] At the turn of the century, engravings were a desirable print commodity to the book-buying public, as much for their beauty as for their curiosity.

But it was not only its technological newness that made the printed Chaucer portrait remarkable in its own time. For all its novelty, Speed's image is everywhere marked by iconographic and textual statements of Chaucer's historical and cultural authority. The image is titled 'The Progenie of Geffrey Chaucer'. That heading is a misleading one, however, for Chaucer is flanked here by a series of medallions which trace not only the names of his descendants, but also his links back to England's noble and royal families via his marriage to Philippa Roet. It is her father, 'Payne Roet Knight', who appears atop the genealogy as its symbolic figurehead. The base of the image depicts the tomb of Thomas Chaucer and his wife, Maud Burghersh, in the parish church at Ewelme. Speed's engraving of the tomb reproduces its twenty-four shields representing the family's illustrious pedigree. In framing Chaucer, claimed here as the first and 'famous' national poet, this heraldic iconography celebrates incipient Englishness itself.

[97] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]2^{r}.
[98] Antony Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain, 1603–1689* (London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, 1998), pp. 13–14; Sarah Howe, 'The Authority of Presence: The Development of the English Author Portrait, 1500–1640', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 102.4 (2008), 465–99 (470).
[99] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 1–3.
[100] John Harington, *Orlando furioso in English heroical verse* (London: Richard Field, 1591; *STC* 746), sig. A1^{r}.

To this work, as to his magnum opus *The History of Great Britaine under the Conquests of the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans* and its accompanying maps, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611–12), Speed brought the genealogist's enthusiasm for order and the antiquary's diligence.[101] His pains to endow the picture with credibility are evident on the printed page. The medallions that cluster authoritatively around the figure of Chaucer confer historicity, and visually sidestep the fact that all of the poet's noble relations were acquired by marriage rather than by a distinguished lineage that was his own. The finely wrought depiction of the tomb is likewise presented as a faithful representation of the monument at St Mary's Church in Ewelme, Oxfordshire. Elsewhere in the *Workes*, Speght writes of the portrait that 'M. Spede . . . hath annexed thereto all such cotes of Armes, as any way concerne the Chaucers, as hee found them (travailing for that purpose) at Ewelme and at Wickham'.[102]

Most telling, though, are Speght and Speed's efforts to authorise the portrait by conveying the verisimilitude of Chaucer's printed likeness itself. The central panel of Speed's engraving features a full-length depiction of Chaucer, standing and holding a rosary.[103] An object that is perhaps a penner (pen-case) hangs from his neck, signifying his status as a man of letters, and connecting the text printed in Speght's edition to its written manifestation as a product of Chaucer's hand.[104] A panel of text positioned underneath the figure of Chaucer announces its provenance:

> *The true portraiture of GEFFREY CHAUCER /*
> *the famous English poet, as by THOMAS /*
> *OCCLEVE is described who liued in his /*
> *time, and was his Scholar. /*

The caption is unambiguous in its staging of the image's authenticity: this is a 'true' representation of Chaucer's likeness, as reported by the poet and clerk Thomas Hoccleve, who knew him well. Speght confirms the image's Hocclevean origins when he notes elsewhere in the edition that

[101] Driver, 'Mapping Chaucer', 241–5. [102] *Workes* (1598), sig. c1[r].

[103] According to Arthur M. Hind, *Engraving in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Descriptive Catalogue with Introductions. Part 1, The Tudor Period* (Cambridge University Press, 1952), 1, pp. 286–9, Speed may be identified only as the designer, rather than its engraver, who remains anonymous. On the different states of the engraving, see Driver, 'Mapping Chaucer', 246, n. 6. Because my subject is the afterlife of the image first conceived and attributed to John Speed, I refer to this visual tradition as Speed's throughout, while recognising that different and anonymous artisans were responsible for its later material instantiations.

[104] The pendant has also been proposed to be a penknife or a vial of holy blood; see R. Evan Davis, 'The Pendant in the Chaucer Portraits', *ChR*, 17.2 (1982), 193–5.

> Occleve for the love he bare to his maister, caused his picture to bee truly drawne in his booke *De Regimine Principis*, dedicated to Henry the fift: the which I have seene, and according to the which this in the beginning of this booke was done by M. Spede (sig. c1[r])

The avowal that Speed used a *Regement* exemplar for his Chaucer engraving is unverified, and unverifiable based on the current evidence.[105] Despite this lack of direct material proof, I do not believe there is good reason to distrust the Hocclevean provenance claimed by Speght, who had the fastidious John Stow and, later, Francis Thynne looking over his shoulder as he produced the editions.[106]

Most importantly, and whatever the model of the 1598 Chaucer engraving, it is clear that Speed and Speght had good reason to align their project with that of Hoccleve. In the *Regement*, a literary petition for the patronage of Prince Henry of Monmouth (and later Henry V) written in 1411, Hoccleve proves his close relationship with the now-dead Chaucer in pictorial form:

> That to putte other men in remembraunce
> Of his persone, I have heere his liknesse
> Do make, to this ende, in soothfastnesse,
> That they that han of him lost thoght and mynde
> By this peynture may ageyn him fynde.[107]

As David Carlson has suggested, Hoccleve supervised the production of presentation copies of the work and the success of his bid to Henry relied on the portrait's 'lyknesse' to Chaucer.[108] Hoccleve's desire is to make not simply an effigial mnemonic aid, but a realistic mimetic portrait of Chaucer's 'lyknesse'. There is novelty here since individualised faces were rarely employed in medieval portaiture when iconography or arms alone could identify a figure. Alongside a few continental examples, Chaucer is therefore regarded as one of the first European vernacular authors to have a portrait attested in copies of his works.[109] As a visual invocation of the

[105] For a discussion which considers (and rejects) BL, Cotton MS Otho A.XVIII and BL, Additional MS 5141 as candidates for Speed's exemplar, see Devani Singh, 'The Progeny of Print: Manuscript Adaptations of John Speed's Chaucer Engraving', *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures*, 9.2 (2020), 177–98 (180–1).

[106] See Pearsall, 'John Stow and Thomas Speght'; Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 130–62.

[107] Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. by Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), ll. 4994–8.

[108] David R. Carlson, 'Thomas Hoccleve and the Chaucer Portrait', *HLQ*, 54.4 (1991), 283–300 (287).

[109] These authors include Dante, Petrarch, Guillaume de Machaut, and Christine de Pizan. For more on these portraits, see Jeanne E. Krochalis, 'Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait', *ChR*, 21.2 (1986), 234–45 (237); Alan T. Gaylord, 'Portrait of a Poet', in *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. by Martin Stevens and D. H. Woodward (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1995), pp. 121–38 (pp.

poet's near-forgotten likeness, the Harley image has been most frequently interpreted as an attempt to produce an authentic, individualised portrait of Chaucer.[110]

In this context, Hoccleve's manuscript image of Chaucer recollected 'in sothfastnesse' was the ideal exemplar for a new mode of depicting the poet's 'true portraiture' in print. Where Hoccleve may have reasoned that close affiliation with and instruction under Chaucer would aid his plea for Henry's patronage, Speed relies on the putative intimacy between Chaucer and the clerk to authorise his engraving. And the editor, too, assures the reader that the portrait appears in a book by 'Chaucers Scoller' Hoccleve, testifying to 'hav[ing] seen' it before. Speed and Speght thus vouch for the accuracy of their representation of the Chaucerian 'cotes of Armes' and portrait respectively; like that of Hoccleve, these claims are supported by eyewitness accounts that serve as authenticating credentials for the artefacts they describe. In its printed incarnation, the image echoes Hoccleve's pledge of the portrait's authenticity – and deftly manages to appropriate it. The antiquaries' claim that the printed image is Chaucer's 'true portraiture' is conveniently tethered to the authority of Hoccleve and his book, even as it ventures forth in the fashionable form of metal engraving. In its ability to pivot between exploiting its novelty *and* its antiquity, the image recalls the polychronicity theorised by Gil Harris as a feature of early modern matter. 'English Renaissance writers' (including Stow), he observes, 'repeatedly recognize the polychronic dimensions of matter – the many shaping hands, artisanal and textual, that introduce into it multiple traces of different times, rendering the supposedly singular thing plural, both physically and temporally'.[111] The Chaucer portrait – simultaneously medieval and early modern, hand-drawn and graven, the work of both Hoccleve and Speed – is rendered doubly authoritative by this polychronicity.

As it appeared in 1598 (and in the later edition of 1602 and its 1687 reprint), Speed's portrait of Chaucer was a printed surrogate of a manuscript original – a representation of another, older image that was itself ultimately a 'remembraunce' of Chaucer the man. With each new iteration of his likeness, the poet receded further from both historical view and living memory, but those who reproduced it took care to transfer its authenticating hallmarks and to emphasise their contribution to its continued transmission.

130–3); Derek Pearsall, 'Appendix 1: The Chaucer Portraits', in *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 285–305 (p. 288). I am grateful to Charlotte Cooper for discussing Machaut's and de Pizan's early portraits with me.

[110] Carlson, 'Thomas Hoccleve', 294; Pearsall, 'The Chaucer Portraits', p. 288.

[111] Harris, *Untimely Matter*, pp. 19–20.

This narrative is a familiar one in studies of Chaucer's reception, and one that has already been treated in this book's attention to early modern narratives around the comprehensibility and accuracy of his language and the completeness of his canon. As James Simpson has argued, Chaucer's perceived absence provides the linchpin upon which turned the machinery of his early modern prominence, as the dead poet's corpus was recast as a textual monument to be recovered through archaeological and philological work.[112] What was true for the early philological investigations into Chaucer's works and his books also applied to his first engraved portrait, as the recuperation of his physical likeness became a worthwhile antiquarian mission akin to the unearthing and assembly of his Life.[113]

The 1598 likeness of Chaucer is an early and influential example of the engraved author portrait in an English book.[114] In this period, published works of poetry and prose were unlikely to contain portraits of their authors.[115] The portraits of most contemporary poets living and writing at the time, including John Donne, Edmund Spenser, and Sir Philip Sidney, would reach print much later – and posthumously.[116] Before the 1630s, in fact, most poets would only receive a portrait in print if they were dead, a trend which Leah Marcus reads as motivated by an impulse to 'preserve the illusion of human presence within a medium that was vastly expanding the physical distance between writers and prospective readers'.[117] For long-dead *auctores* like Chaucer and Homer, whose works predated print itself, that gulf was wider still. In such cases, the presence conjured by a portrait served

[112] Simpson, 'Diachronic History', pp. 17–30; James Simpson, 'Chaucer's Presence and Absence, 1400–1550', in *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by Piero Boitani and Jill Mann, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 251–69 (pp. 261–7); see also Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, pp. 109–43.

[113] The association between the related genres of biography and portraiture had become explicit in the late sixteenth century, and both paid increasing attention to authenticity; see Peter Burke, 'Reflections on the Frontispiece Portrait in the Renaissance', in *Bildnis und Image: Das Portrait Zwischen Intention und Rezeption*, ed. by Andreas Kostler and Ernst Seidl (Köln: Böhlau, 1998), pp. 150–62 (p. 157). On the relationship between Chaucer's textual corpus and his physical remains, see Thomas Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body: From Corpse to Corpus* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 37–43; Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 44–72.

[114] The early seventeenth century is generally accepted as the point at which author portraits began to more regularly appear in books printed in English; see David Alexander, 'Faithorne, Loggan, Vandrebanc and White: The Engraved Portrait in Late Seventeeth-Century Britain', in *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. by Michael Hunter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 297–316 (p. 298).

[115] Tarnya Cooper and Andrew Hadfield, 'Edmund Spenser and Elizabethan Portraiture', *Renaissance Studies*, 27.3 (2013), 407–34 (411), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-4658.2012.00819.x.

[116] Stephen Orgel, 'Not on His Picture but His Book', *Times Literary Supplement*, 2003, 9–10; Cooper and Hadfield, 'Edmund Spenser', 408.

[117] Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 199.

to recall, rather than to bridge, the temporal chasm between author and reader and made way for the author's philological recovery in print. Accordingly, some of the earliest English books to contain printed author portraits are translations: Harington's Ariosto (1591), Florio's Montaigne (1613), and Chapman's Homer (1616).[118] These books bear portraits of their contemporary translators instead of (or in the case of Homer, in addition to) images of their original authors. The translator portrait is a reminder of reading as a mediated experience, and one made possible by the translator's efforts. Although the *Workes* was not a translation, Speght is implicitly framed as an 'interpretour' akin to contemporary translators of classical poets and of du Bartas, Petrarch, and Ariosto, by virtue of the editor having 'made old words, which were unknown of many, / So plaine, that now they may be known of any'.[119] The visual rhetoric of Speed's Chaucer portrait, like that of contemporary translations, thereby reinscribes a sense of the work's inaccessibility, save for the editor's or translator's intervention. The stylised portrait could confer a formality befitting its distant subject and foreground the labours of those responsible for its recovery – in this case, Hoccleve, Speed, and Speght. In these early years of the market for engraved portraits, Chaucer was the ideal subject and Speght's edition was a suitable medium for its transmission.

In printed form, Speed's Chaucer portrait vastly exceeded the reach initially anticipated by Hoccleve when he commissioned multiple manuscripts containing the poet's likeness. With this wider distribution and the ability to achieve new levels of realism in portraiture, Speed's engraved portrait could eventually unseat Hoccleve's as the definitive representation of how Chaucer looked. In its claim of a Hocclevean provenance, the printed image also takes on the authority of the older manuscript tradition, and it summons the hallmarks of manuscript authenticity – what Siân Echard has called 'the mark of the medieval' – to do so.[120] As the following discussion illustrates, later generations responded enthusiastically to this printed image of Chaucer, which, alongside its technical novelty, could nonetheless claim to be 'true'. With this dual layer of authority, the Speed Chaucer portrait enjoyed the status of a vendible and prized paratext not only in Speght's editions, but in a wide and revealing range of Chaucerian books. The remainder of this chapter traces the extraordinary reception of Chaucer's printed portrait and argues that Speght's editions introduced

[118] Respectively, *STC* 746, 18042, and 13624.
[119] *Workes* (1598), sig. [a]5^{v}; [a]6^{v}. See Chapter 1, p. 52.
[120] Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages*, pp. vii–xvi.

new readers to a compellingly simple idea that would later spread through the seventeenth-century English book trade: that books needed pictures of their authors. These copies supply evidence of the transmission of an iconographic tradition from manuscript into print and back again. More broadly, they show the role of newer printed volumes of Chaucer in determining the conventions by which older books, both manuscripts and prints, would be measured and even perfected.

4.4 Chaucer's Absence, Chaucer's Presence

Speed's plate furnished an archetypal image of Chaucer and successfully co-opted Hoccleve's narrative in order to promulgate it in the printed editions of 1598, 1602, and 1687. However, the starting point for my work on the Chaucer portrait was the observation that several of the copies I have examined are missing their Progenie leaves.[121] Like the holes left in places where illuminated initials have been excised from manuscripts, the absence of the portrait in some copies of Speght could signal its high cultural value for enthusiasts and collectors who envisaged other uses for it. Even when intact within copies of Speght, the plate may survive in a range of positions. In copies I have seen, it is most frequently positioned facing the poetic dialogue 'The Reader to Geffrey Chaucer' by the anonymous 'H.B.'. This placement is especially apt in the 1602 edition, where the portrait would directly precede the verses titled 'Vpon the picture of Chaucer', composed by Francis Thynne for the updated publication.[122] Inserted plates generally seem to have had a standard position within books and in his editions, Speght refers to Speed's plate as being in the 'beginning of this booke'.[123] But the plate often appears elsewhere within Speght, too, and even in copies with early bindings.[124]

[121] For example, BL, 641.m.19 (1602 Speght); TCD, R.bb.24 (1602 Speght); TCC, v1.3.65 (1598 Speght); TCC, v1.3.66 (1598 Speght); TCC, v1.5.17 (1602 Speght); TCC, Munby a.2 (1602 Speght); Cambridge, King's College, L.1.39 (1602 Speght); Oxford, St John's College, HB4/Folios.5.5.13 (1598 Speght). The discussion of individual copies that follows is indebted to the insights and invaluable help of the following archivists and librarians: Sarah Anderson, Gareth Burgess, Helen Carron, Sarah Cox, Michael Edwards, Tim Eggington, Petra Hofmann, Lucille Munoz, Sandy Paul, Christopher Skelton-Foord, Mark Statham, and Stephen Tabor.

[122] Thynne, who had been preparing his own edition of Chaucer when Speght's was published in 1598, had an active role in the 1602 edition. See Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 143–62.

[123] Roger Gaskell, 'Printing House and Engraving Shop: A Mysterious Collaboration', *The Book Collector*, 53 (2004), 213–51 (227–8).

[124] In one copy of the 1598 edition (Oxford, Balliol College, Fragments 525 b 9), the portrait serves as a frontispiece to the book, and faces a *Canterbury Tales* title-page border (normally found later in the same edition) which has been repurposed as the volume's main title leaf, where the original is wanting. In copies of the 1602 edition at The Queen's College in Oxford (Sel.b.202) and at the

In this respect, the Speed plate exemplifies some of the characteristics of what Remmert has called the 'itinerant frontispiece', a term that demonstrates the material separateness of this paratext.[125] Far from being confined to their original bibliographical contexts, such plates travelled from book to book, and out of books and into new contexts. As we shall see, this travel radiates outward in several directions where Chaucer's portrait is concerned: movement of the plate and imitations of it to different locations within individual copies of Speght's works; back in time, into medieval manuscripts and prior editions like those of Caxton, Thynne, and Stow; and forward in time too, as they were rendered anew by later collectors in the medium of manuscript. Both within and beyond copies of Speght, such survivals of the portrait and its copies in varied positions prove it to have been a highly mobile artefact whose popularity as an authorising paratext is amply attested by its reception at the hands of early modern and later readers. The portrait's appearance in new contexts therefore shows the success of Speght's *Workes* in creating new visual standards for the authority of the Chaucerian book.

The antiquary and amateur herald Joseph Holland is the architect of perhaps the best-known appropriation of Speed's Chaucer portrait. To CUL, MS Gg.4.27, the fifteenth-century manuscript containing many of Chaucer's collected works which was repaired and supplemented by Holland around 1600, he also added a copy of Speed's plate. The details of the whole page – including the background, individual medallions bearing the names of Chaucer's relatives, the poet's smock, and, importantly, the shields of those depicted in the genealogy and on the later Chaucers' tomb – were enlivened with careful illumination, with the arms gilded and tinctured. The effect of the image is a memorialising one, for Holland paired it with several passages (on the facing page) about Hoccleve's portrayal and remembrance of Chaucer, themselves derived

Bodleian Library (Bodl. A. 2.5 Art. Seld), the Progenie leaf appears between leaves [a]2 and [a]3; that is, between the title page and the dedication to Sir Robert Cecil. A 1602 copy at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge (L.17.45) in a contemporary binding has the portrait between leaves b1 and b2, facing the page titled 'The Life of our Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer' while another 1602 copy at HEHL, #99594, contains an inlaid plate (which appears to be a later imitation of Speed's original) between leaves c6 and b1, facing Francis Thynne's verses on Chaucer's picture.

[125] Volker R. Remmert, '"Docet Parva Pictura, Quod Multae Scripturae Non Dicunt." Frontispieces, Their Functions, and Their Audiences in Seventeenth-Century Mathematical Sciences', in *Transmitting Knowledge: Words, Images, and Instruments in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sachiko Kusukawa and Ian Maclean (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 239–70 (p. 268); Luisa Calè, 'Frontispieces', in Duncan and Smyth, pp. 25–38 (pp. 28–9).

from Speght's Life, which quotes the *Regement* in turn.[126] This treatment of the poet is in keeping with other authorising paratexts that Holland added to his medieval copy of Chaucer's works following Speght. These include a series of stirring panegyric addresses: from Lydgate's praise of Chaucer to the praise of 'divers lerned men', such as Ascham, Spenser, Camden, and Sidney, who 'of late tyme haue written in commendation of Chaucer'.[127] Holland also supplemented the manuscript book with a cluster of short texts in the poet's voice: the *Retraction*, 'Chaucer to his emptie purse', and 'Chaucers words to his Scrivener'. This triad of works performs the textual equivalent of what the freshly embellished and tinctured portrait does visually: they superimpose a unifying authorial frame onto a book which, to its early modern owner, appeared to need one.[128] In this way, Holland's supplements collectively recognise and amplify the Chaucerian character of the manuscript, with the effect of signalling the importance of the author, the book, and even its heraldically learned owner.

As Johnston has documented, the plate intended for Speght's edition was also added into other Chaucerian books, and survives in copies of John Stow's 1561 Chaucer edition in at least three cases.[129] The portrait leaf also appears as a frontispiece to a seventeenth-century manuscript of Sir Francis Kynaston's complete Latin translation of the five books of *Troilus and Criseyde*.[130] Like that used to embellish Gg, the copies of the plate added to no fewer than three copies of Stow's edition reflect a retroactive attempt to imbue these older books of Chaucer's works with an authorial presence. In Kynaston's fair copy of the Latin *Troilus*, meanwhile, the inserted plate forges an iconographic link between the new translation and the medieval author who first penned it. In purely chronological and technological terms, the medieval manuscript Gg, Stow's edition, and Kynaston's contemporary manuscript might seem to occupy divergent poles within the history of the Chaucerian book, but these copies are united by the desire of readers to authorise them. In each case, Chaucer's portrait, along with the

[126] The *Regement* lines are quoted in Speght in the order 4992–8, 1958–74, 2077–93, 2101–7 (*Workes,* 1598, sig. $c1^{v}$–$c2^{r}$); they appear in Gg.4.27(1), fol. 2^{v}, in the order 4992–8, 2077–9, 1958–66. For a transcription and further discussion, see Cook, *Poet and the Antiquaries*, pp. 170–4.

[127] Holland's selection of contemporary commendations condenses Speght's one and a half folio pages (sig. $c3^{r-v}$) into twelve lines.

[128] This trio of texts is also discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 138–40, 166–72.

[129] The copies are CUL, Keynes S.7.9, HEHL, #84667, and New York Public Library (*KC + 1561). Johnston, 'Readers' Memorials', 66 finds more than a dozen cases of versions of Chaucer's portrait by Speed as well as later artists used to extra-illustrate early editions of Chaucer's works.

[130] Bodl. MS Additional C.287.

authority and historicity that it represents, assumes a visible place within these new bibliographical contexts.

Just as the material paper leaf bearing Speed's engraved portrait could be enlisted to authorise printed and written copies (as well as a manuscript translation) of Chaucer's works, so too were manuscript representations of the same image. Skilled replicas of Chaucer's portrait, strongly suggestive of Speed's and made in the early modern period and beyond, appear as an authorising image in a number of Chaucerian volumes. A nearly perfect copy of Caxton's first edition of the *Canterbury Tales* held at the British Library now has as its frontispiece an eighteenth-century painted portrait of Chaucer, in the same orientation and style as Speed's, and surrounded by a coloured and gilded foliate border evocative of the illuminations found in fifteenth-century English manuscripts.[131] An edition of Thynne's 1542 *Workes* now at Columbia University likewise has a later watercolour rendition of the portrait inserted as a frontispiece.[132] This version, however, also features Chaucer's arms, which are borne on a shield resting on a rock in the image's background. In Takamiya, MS 32, formerly known as the Delamere manuscript, appears another modern variant, this time with Chaucer's arms displayed in the top left-hand corner of the leaf. A final example of a Speed-style manuscript portrait appearing in a printed copy of Chaucer's *Workes* comes in an edition of Speght (1602) at Trinity College in Cambridge, where the Progenie leaf is missing but where a facsimile tracing has been inserted in its place, complete with the genealogy, heraldic shields, and familial tomb as originally rendered by Speed (see Figure 4.6).[133] In all but the lattermost case, it is impossible to prove that these manuscript portraits were based on Speed's Progenie page rather than on another exemplar. What is indisputable is that all of these manuscript imitations cater to a desire to locate the author's image in printed and manuscript copies of his works. As Hoccleve's *Regement* makes clear, this is a phenomenon older than print, but I am arguing that in Chaucer's case, Speght's editions both popularised the portrait and facilitated its further spread.

To these Speed-style manuscript portraits in copies of Chaucer may be added two iconographically similar items in contexts outside of Chaucer's books: an undated manuscript fragment at Stanford University and a drawing of Chaucer used as an example of medieval clothing in the antiquary John Aubrey's *Chronologia Vestiaria* (see Figure 4.7).[134] The Stanford fragment is on

[131] The copy is BL, 167.c.26; see Seymour de Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons* (Bibliographical Society at Oxford University Press, 1909), no. 22:1.
[132] New York, Columbia University, Phoenix P017.En1 B64 1542C. [133] TCC, Munby a.2.
[134] California, Stanford University, MSS Codex M0453; Bodl. MS Top.Gen.c.25.

Figure 4.6 A facsimile inserted in place of Speed's engraved portrait in a copy of Speght (1602), Munby.a.2. The Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

vellum and features a coloured miniature of Chaucer in the pose and configuration that Speed made famous. It is damaged and difficult to date, but appears older and less skilfully executed than the painted portraits in copies of his works described previously, and has been suggested to be a copy of Speed's plate.[135] The portrait in Aubrey's history of costume, by contrast, is clearly derived from Speed and dates from the 1670s, when the *Chronologia Vestiaria* is estimated to have been written.[136] Here, Chaucer's portrait shares a page with other figures drawn from English church monuments – for example, Sir Thomas de Littleton, who, Aubrey carefully notes, 'is pourtrayed in this Habit in his Monument in the Cathedral church at Worcester: in brasse: he was a Judge. / Lived in the reigne of Edw. 4'.[137] Aubrey's Chaucer appears at the foot of the same page but is rotated ninety degrees to the left in order to fit. The image might be a tracing from Speed and, in Aubrey's characteristic mode, appears crammed in to save space on the page. Aubrey has also transcribed from Speed's plate the caption concerning Hoccleve's status as Chaucer's Scholar. Sometime later, perhaps, he added to it a further short note about Chaucer's dates of birth and death, which appears in a different ink. It is striking that Aubrey treats Speed's portrait with the same reliability as the church monuments he documents elsewhere on the page. Its credibility might have rested on a putative memorial description in an unspecified copy of Hoccleve's *Regement*, rather than on tangible evidence carved in stone or brass, but Aubrey's faithful recording of Speed's portrait and its caption alongside other graven monuments suggests that he took its truth-claim seriously.

Thus stand two intertwined traditions of Chaucer portraiture, in print and in manuscript. Apart from Aubrey's drawing, the origins and motivations behind most of these Speed-style manuscript portraits are shrouded in obscurity. These hazy origins, together with the uncertainty surrounding Speed's exemplar, make the exact relationships between the engraving and its hand-drawn counterparts speculative. It is possible that an image like the Stanford fragment might be a (now lost) copy of another early Chaucer portrait, an early modern copy of Speed's plate, or could even have served as Speed's exemplar. If there is no compelling candidate for Speed's exemplar currently known, as was suggested earlier in this chapter, it is also the case that the models for most of the surviving manuscript renditions are equally hard to pinpoint with certainty. Nonetheless, the

[135] David A. Jordan, 'An Object Lesson in Collecting: Stanford's Inscrutable Portrait of Chaucer', *ReMix*, 15 December 2011, http://hosted-po.vresp.com/260487/835711a532/ARCHIVE.

[136] Kate Bennett, 'Shakespeare's Monument at Stratford: A New Seventeenth-Century Account', *Notes and Queries*, 47.4 (2000), 464, https://doi.org/10.1093/nq/47-4-464a.

[137] Bodl. MS Top.Gen.c.25., fol. 202^{r}.

Figure 4.7 A drawing of Chaucer from Speght used as an example of medieval clothing in John Aubrey's *Chronologia Vestiaria.* The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Bodl. MS Top.Gen.c.25, fol. 202[r].

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009231121 Published online by Cambridge University Press

existence of these pictures proves that this particular version of Chaucer's likeness – the full-length portrait, with Chaucer standing and holding rosary and penner – enjoyed an atypical mobility and multiplicity in the seventeenth century and beyond. The dizzying range of later lookalikes of Speed's Chaucer, the tendency of readers to affix the image to all sorts of Chaucerian books, and the image's accelerated and unprecedented circulation in print, all suggest the strong likelihood that the manuscript portraits are copies of the plate originally intended for Speght's Chaucer.

It has been argued by Siân Echard that the print reception of medieval texts is characterised by an 'impulse to facsimile', a desire by later cultures to replicate the physical forms and material details of the medieval book.[138] The evidence surveyed here confirms that medieval images, and author portraits in particular, prove to be attractive candidates for this type of replication, in manuscript as well as in print. In Echard's analysis, such images and their analogues might be regenerative, and in their new incarnations, they 'participate in a process by which an image comes to stand in for a text, a tradition, and sometimes both'.[139] Speed's plate, itself a copy of a medieval image, amplified that impulse for subsequent generations of readers, who multiplied the portrait for a range of new and unforetold uses. Adorning these new works and in these new contexts outside of Speght, Chaucer's portrait took on the role of an authorising image. In its depiction of the venerable medieval poet, the many incarnations of the portrait came to stand in not only for Chaucer the man, but also for all the cultural baggage that came with him: his status as an author, his canon of works, the broader history of English literature, and of historic England itself.

Like Speed's Progenie plate of Chaucer, which relies on Hoccleve having 'lived in his time', many of the manuscript images invoke the poet's ancient status, even if all but one of them (the Trinity tracing) exclude the genealogical tree and the later Chaucers' tombs. Yet these manuscript portraits take care to inscribe Chaucer's historical stature in other ways. To the portrait in the Takamiya manuscript someone has added the word 'Chaucer' and the date '1400' in black ink on either side of the figure's feet, in a script imitative of black letter. The Stanford miniature, although not securely dated, has text on its verso which reads 'Chaucer's portrait – S. xiv', which is written in faded red pencil, and BL, Additional MS 5141, the fragment sometimes posited as Speght's exemplar, dates from the early

[138] Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages*, pp. xi, xv, 6–20, 198–216.
[139] Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages*, p. 19.

modern period but bears the year 1402. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these objects has medieval origins. Still, each announces its ancient associations with Chaucer and 'his time'. While they do not explicitly pose as medieval artefacts, their manuscript form and their foregrounding of a storied past allow them to obscure their own histories and instead to embody an authority which Speed's portrait could only ever claim to represent imperfectly in the medium of print.[140]

It was early modern print culture in general and Speght's edition in particular that created the conditions for the remarkable spread of these images across a range of media and into new contexts. By the middle of the seventeenth century, advances in technology enabled engravers to produce larger quantities of prints from a single metal sheet, and eventually spawned a trade in collecting so-called 'portrait heads' intended to be bound with similar images in one volume.[141] Later in the century, a vibrant trade in printing, recycling, and collecting images gave rise to the 'itinerant frontispieces' previously discussed: some images were reprinted from existing plates made for other volumes; other prints were produced to be inserted into books that had already been published, or in anticipation of future editions, some of which might never see publication; and others still were printed to serve as the frontispieces to books, but might be sold separately as a single print.[142] Around 1700, Samuel Pepys compiled such engravings into a set of three albums, in which Speed's plate also makes an appearance amongst a group of 'Poets, Comedians, & Musicians'.[143] Already by 1700, and like numerous other plates published

[140] This ambiguity – about whether the dates refer simply to Chaucer's time or to the age of the artefacts – has fuelled the speculation that BL, Additional MS 5141 is a medieval leaf removed from the Cotton manuscript; it also contributed to the inflated value of the Stanford fragment in the 1930s, when that university successfully bid $450 for it in the midst of the Great Depression; see Jordan, 'An Object Lesson in Collecting'.

[141] Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 142; Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain*, p. 21.

[142] Alexander, 'Faithorne', p. 299. During the eighteenth century, the consumer-driven practice of extra-illustration was increasingly commercialised. Bespoke illustrated copies of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* (1702) and its later reissues were produced by printsellers and publishers, and in 1760, much to the delight of zealous collectors, James Granger published *A Biographical History of England, from Egbert the Great to the Revolution*, combining images with prose accounts of the lives of notable English figures, spread over four quarto volumes. See Lucy Peltz, 'Facing the Text: The Amateur and Commercial Histories of Extra-Illustration, *c.* 1770–1840', in *Owners, Annotators, and the Signs of Reading*, ed. by Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote, Publishing Pathways (New Castle, DE; London: Oak Knoll; British Library, 2005), pp. 91–135 (pp. 97, 109).

[143] *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Vol. III Part 2: Prints and Drawings Portraits*, compiled by Eric Chamberlain (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 2980/201. The version in Pepys's album is identified in Chamberlain's catalogue as a copy of Speed. In Pepys's copy of Speght's edition (1602; Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library 2365), the plate is intact.

for printed books, the Chaucer portrait first made by Speed for the *Workes* had become a collector's item.

As Gillespie has demonstrated, Chaucer's status as an author was an especially valuable commodity to the early English printers, and one actively constructed in the wares they made.[144] The subsequent volumes edited by Speght represent the apotheosis of that author-centric vision, and the evidence showing that readers imitated and adapted the conventions of print testifies to the venture's success. The copies gathered in this chapter show that the printed image of Chaucer made by Speed was included in and adapted not only for use in fifteenth-century manuscripts such as Gg and Takamiya, but also for printed books of Caxton, Thynne, Stow (and Speght too, when it was missing), for early modern manuscripts of Chaucer's works such as Kynaston's *Troilus*, and for other historical and creative uses which remain to be fully recovered.

4.5 Monuments to Chaucer

From the unmistakable adaptation of Chaucer's portrait to the unassuming addition of titles to his works, the additions made by these later readers converge on concerns about the author: his name, works, life, and likeness. Simpson has powerfully argued that the production of textual monuments in print from Caxton onward was enabled by conditions of authorial absence which permitted the philological recovery of Chaucer's works. This printed corpus aimed to eliminate 'false readings and spurious works',[145] the unauthorised Chaucerian texts that were promulgated both in manuscripts and earlier printed editions. Moving in tandem with this philological project was a biographical one. The humanist quest to recover and preserve Chaucer's works was accompanied from its outset by a critical attention to the author's life and death, which saw him entombed in the literary past so as to be venerated in the present. In Simpson's words, 'Biography, too, is the product of that textual monumentalization: the textual project's correlative is the reconstitution of the exceptional authorial life'.[146] That philological interest in the dead Chaucer, as Lerer has identified, was first marked in print with Caxton's publication of Stephano Surigone's epitaph to the poet in the 1478 *Boece*, and was subsequently elaborated in the folios of collected *Workes*.[147] Over time, and culminating

[144] Gillespie, *Print Culture*, pp. 104–43. [145] Simpson, 'Chaucer's Presence and Absence', p. 266.
[146] Simpson, 'Chaucer's Presence and Absence', p. 255.
[147] Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, pp. 147–75.

in Speght's editions, the printed Chaucerian book became a storehouse of information about the author as well as his works. The availability of these new textual authorities spurred those who owned and read older books to supply them with features which they perceived as wanting. Placed alongside the imposing folio volumes that declared Chaucer's name on a title page and a table of his works inside, old books, and manuscripts in particular, could be viewed as faulty, incomplete, or disordered representations of the corpus. Authorising paratexts adapted from print – the author's name, a list of contents, standardised titles, biographical details, or even portraits – lent the semblance of coherence and order to such books. The desirability of these stamps of authority in books which did not initially contain them signals the growing cultural importance of authorship, and the instrumental role of Chaucer editions in promoting the idea of the author within copies of vernacular literary works.

As this book draws to a close, it is worth noting that the monuments designed to commemorate Chaucer were material as well as textual and pictorial. The case of the Latin epitaph attached to Chaucer's marble tomb at Westminster in 1556 supplies an instructive case study of a text which circulated in competing forms and varied media during the early modern period. Its 'error-plagued' appearance in Speght's printed editions of 1598 and 1602 is only one of several variant versions known today, and its documented movement from stone to manuscript and then to print and again to manuscript should challenge any impression that the medium of print was the sole or ultimate authority on Chaucer in the period.[148] While this study has asserted the value of honing in on particular types of transmission from print – principally print to manuscript, and in this chapter, print-to-print too – as a means of measuring the unprecedented

[148] One pair of readers appears to have gone straight to the source at Westminster and copied the verses into a copy of Thynne (HEHL, RB #99584; *c.* 1550; *STC* 5072). Another reader of a Stow edition now at the Harry Ransom Centre, Texas, likewise copied verses relating to Chaucer's death into that book (Austin, Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Ad C393 C56L sa (sig. 3u8^{v}) – verses which Dane and Gillespie determine to be 'derived from a text circulating during the later sixteenth century, probably from the collections of John Stow', and in manuscript form. They suggest that Speght, too, may have relied on manuscript notes of a similar provenance for the making of his own edition. See Dane and Gillespie, 'Back at Chaucer's Tomb', 89, 94, 98; Dane, *Tomb*, p. 17. Additional research has so far turned up a total of thirteen early Chaucer editions into which the epitaph, or a text purporting to be his epitaph, has been transcribed; for these, see Johnston, 'Readers' Memorials', 47; Wiggins, 'Printed Copies of Chaucer', 17–20; Arnold Sanders, 'Writing Fame: Epitaph Transcriptions in Renaissance Chaucer Editions and the Construction of Chaucer's Poetic Reputation', *JEBS*, 14 (2011), 105–30; and Devani Singh, 'An Unreported Chaucer Epitaph in English', *Notes and Queries*, 68.1 (2021), 51–9. To these may be added an early modern repair in Glasgow, Dr.2.1, a copy of the 1542 Thynne *Workes* in which a printed epitaph has been patched and rewritten where torn (sig. 2T6^{r}).

cultural reach of the newer technology, it has also emphasised that print did not have the last word on Chaucer's early modern reception. The copies studied in this chapter show that readers were prone to reframe, question, and adapt the narratives and visual markers of authority promoted in copies of the poet's *Workes*. Readers used printed editions as a model for how a Chaucerian book should look and what it should contain, but they sometimes doubted the reliability of such authorising paratexts. Their critical engagement with the narratives about the author's life and works which they found in printed books – the authorship of the *Complaint to his Purse*, for instance, or the question of which works belonged in the Lydgate canon – are a testament to the early modern preoccupation with the questions of authority and canonicity which the prints raised but could not always resolve.

That readers of Chaucerian books admired, studied, and adapted the authorising paratexts they found in print reflects their investment in a literary genealogy that positioned Chaucer as the first and pre-eminent English author, and conveniently situated celebrated contemporary figures such as Spenser and Sidney at its end.[149] The literary authority enjoyed by Chaucer in the early modern period therefore legitimised his works and those of his successors who, like their poetic father, wrote in the English tongue. The printed books and their paratexts surveyed here, which foregrounded the life and works of the author himself, trumpeted this pre-eminent status. This chapter has argued that the full extent of their cultural impact emerges in the often unassuming marks of reading left behind in manuscripts and other old books: in titles and tables of contents appended to once anonymous or untitled texts, in laudatory and biographical snippets, and in portraits of the poet added to old books where they were thought to belong.

The central focus of *Chaucer's Early Modern Readers* has been on the readers of Chaucer's old manuscript books in an age of his print prominence. It has argued that the manuscripts preserve vital evidence of his reception in the period; that is, that acts of glossing, correcting, repairing, completing, supplementing, and authorising carried out by readers according to printed models show the early modern pursuit of correctness, comprehensibility, completeness, and authority in the Chaucerian book. These were ideals promoted by the printed books in which most early modern readers of Chaucer first encountered him. Such readers were keenly attentive to these characteristics within the poet's oeuvre, and

[149] On the discourse of literary paternity, see Cooper, 'Choosing Poetic Fathers', 29–50.

sought to close the gap between medieval manuscripts and the early modern printed copies which appeared to embody these bibliographical standards. Rather than hastening the obsolescence of the old volumes, the printed copies enabled readers to remake manuscripts according to the newly desirable features they found in print. The evidence gathered here attests to the belief of Chaucer's early modern readers that his medieval manuscript books could be perfected, and that they were worth the effort of that remaking.

Afterword
Perfecting Medieval Manuscripts

> In paper, many a Poet now suruiues
> Or else their lines had perish'd with their liues.[1]
>
> John Taylor, *The praise of hemp-seed* (1620)

When the poet Taylor sought to extol the merits of paper as a medium of preservation, he was able to invoke Shakespeare, Spenser, and Sidney, but also 'Old Chaucer' and Gower in the same breath. Taylor's verses confirm the key role played by print in Chaucer's afterlife, and this book has demonstrated the extent to which readers' knowledge and expectations about Chaucer in the early modern period were derived from the printed folio volumes to which Taylor's poem alludes. It has also shown that print's function in relation to manuscripts could be an enabling one, for the new editions sustained the manuscript culture in which Chaucer's works first circulated. Today, medieval manuscripts are at the heart of Chaucerian scholarship, and names such as Ellesmere and Hengwrt have become inseparable from the study of Chaucer. The varied trajectories of these and other medieval manuscripts through the centuries have seen growing scholarly attention, and this book has sought to foreground their vital place in medieval reception history.

Like the medieval manuscript book itself, perfecting has had a rich afterlife beyond the early modern era, though the most sustained discussions have been in relation to printed materials. In her study of the Shakespeare First Folio and the remarkable afterlives of individual copies, Emma Smith chronicles the emergence of a 'capacious and overlapping market for improved, facsimile or perfected copies' during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whether compiling extra-illustrated copies, making up one copy with leaves plucked from another, or creating facsimiles in pen or type, modern owners and collectors might have been inspired by anything from decoration to deceit.[2] As was noted,

[1] John Taylor, *The praise of hemp-seed* (London: [Edward Allde], 1620; *STC* 23788), sig. E3^{v}.
[2] Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 322.

Sidney Lee's 1902 census of copies of the First Folio deployed a taxonomy for ranking individual exemplars according to their place in Class I (Perfect Copies); Class II (Imperfect); and Class III (Defective).[3] Like First Folios, incunabula were especially susceptible to the bibliophilic desire to preserve and perfect. Amongst the modern flyleaves in one copy of Caxton's second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* formerly owned by Thomas Grenville (1755–1846), attached slips in Grenville's hand recount his admiration of his book: 'the singular beauty of this Copy, induced me to incur a heavy expense in copying the defective leaves from that in St John's College Oxford'. Another note adds the artist's name: 'This beautiful Copy of mine wanting several leaves I had them supplied in facsimile by Harris from the Copy at St. John's – it is now quite perfect'.[4] The prolific John Harris (1791–1873) is today known as a facsimilist whose beguiling hand may be found in rare copies of printed books, but he had a reputation in his own time as 'a very ingenious man, who repairs manuscripts and imitates old books in a way quite surprising, so as to make it impossible to observe them from the original'.[5] Harris's contemporary reputation as an artificer of manuscripts reminds us that both printed and manuscript books could be subject to renovation and repair under the banner of perfecting in this period. The work undertaken by Eliza Denyer (b. *c.* 1765), Harris's predecessor and another artist who applied her skill to the perfecting of medieval manuscripts, reinforces this point and encourages us to trace still earlier examples of this practice back into the early modern period, where this study has located it.[6]

The early modern desire for complete and perfected medieval manuscripts may be traced forward in time too. The work of the Spanish Forger around the turn of the twentieth century tells of the desire for the medieval manuscript book and the modern market forces that supported it. The single leaves, cuttings, and whole manuscripts painted by the Forger – many depicting secular scenes rendered in idealising pastels – show this work to be informed by medievalism's nostalgic flavour.[7] In one case, the Forger illuminated an unfinished Book of Hours from the fifteenth century, filling in blank spaces with an invented cycle of images, some of which were drawn from a modern printed book generously illustrated with scenes of medieval and Renaissance life and culture.[8] Andrew Lang, the Scottish

[3] Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 296; see also Chapter 2, p. 123. [4] BL C.21.d.
[5] Qtd. in Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 324. [6] Drimmer, 'A Medieval Psalter "Perfected"', 2.
[7] Sandra Hindman and others, *Manuscript Illumination in the Modern Age: Recovery and Reconstruction* (Evanston, IL: Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 2001), p. 157.
[8] Described and pictured in Hindman and others, *Manuscript Illumination*, pp. 159–60. The printed book from which the images were copied is Paul Lacroix's edition of *Vie militaire et*

historian, was evidently already familiar with such practices by 1881. Lang warned collectors that 'a MS. which is not absolutely perfect, if it is in a genuine state, is of much more value than one which has been made perfect by the skill of a modern restorer' and asserted that the more convincing the forger's skill at fakery, 'the more worthless he renders the volume'.[9] Lang's condemnation of perfected manuscripts provides an early articulation of Walter Benjamin's belief that a greater value inhered in 'genuine' copies compared to those retroactively made perfect.[10] Not everyone would agree, however, and facsimilists, librarians, editors, bibliographers, collectors, and booksellers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries all had their own systems of value and incentive for appraising imperfect copies against perfected ones.[11] The collector who prized a certain aesthetic effect, the editor seeking to establish a historical text, and the artist responsible for retouching a medieval artwork all approached perfected books differently.[12] Of course, aesthetic and cultural value might vary not only in relation to different individuals or groups in a given time, but might evolve with time itself. As past practices of disbinding manuscripts, washing their leaves of marginalia, and treatment with chemical reagents attest, the techniques applied to artefacts in the hope of improving them by rendering them cleaner, more legible, more beautiful, or somehow truer to their imagined original forms are always submitted to the judgement of future generations.[13] To study the applications of this term and all its morally charged baggage is

religieuse au Moyen-Âge et à l'époque de la renaissance (1873). Such practices were not exclusively the domain of the Spanish Forger. In another Book of Hours (Pierpont Morgan MS M. 54) which was originally lacking its miniatures, an artist has added a cycle of illumination, again following a modern publication by Lacroix (1871). The illustrations were passed off as medieval and the book was sold in 1895; see *Manuscript Illumination*, p. 162.

[9] Andrew Lang, *The Library* (London: Macmillan, 1881), p. 83.

[10] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), pp. 217–51 (pp. 222–23).

[11] On conservation and its impingement on differing ideas of value, see David A. Scott, *Art: Authenticity, Restoration, Forgery* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2016), pp. 12–19.

[12] The ethical concerns surrounding the creation of facsimile inserts were neither straightforward nor easy to dispatch. Writing in 1927, the bibliographer R. B. McKerrow could see some merit in the practice: 'Where such insertion takes the form of an honest and unconcealed facsimile from another copy of the same edition, it is a clear gain, for none but the most uncompromising of bibliographical purists would prefer an imperfect copy of a book to one so made-up'. See R. B. McKerrow, *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927; repr. Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1994), p. 232.

[13] On reagents, see Oliver Bock, 'C. Maier's Use of a Reagent in the Vercelli Book', *The Library*, 16.3 (2015), 249–81. These matters are far from settled in the twenty-first century. Within the fields of restoration and conservation, the principle of minimal intervention continues to inspire debate and disagreement; see Scott, *Art*, pp. 4–5.

to recognise, with Smith, that 'the notion of bibliographic perfection is a highly subjective and historically contingent one'.[14]

While perfecting is not a new concept to historians of art, architecture, or the book, I have suggested that scholarship on past attempts at perfecting would benefit from a more accommodating, historically informed view of this phenomenon.[15] When techniques of perfecting are invoked today, they are often framed by scare quotes: thus a book or a painting has not been perfected but 'perfected'. That punctuation is usually intended to register distance between what it meant to perfect an object in the past and its more abstract, Platonic meaning today. There are good scholarly reasons for this signalling, which acknowledges that past methods may fall short of modern standards, and that techniques intended to improve historical artefacts may, to twenty-first-century eyes, seem harmful, invasive, or too interventionist. But the punctuation also registers, more implicitly, a sense of quiet disapproval at the work past readers undertook to improve their books. Without wishing to do away with the theoretical and practical strides that the fields of restoration and conservation have made in recent decades, this book has asked what might be gained from accepting the perfecting of manuscripts by early modern readers on their own terms and by observing the ends to which such improvements aspired.

With the emergence of new technologies for reproducing images and text, the desire for complete and perfected manuscripts has increasingly been displaced from medieval artefacts and onto their printed and digital surrogates, giving rise to a new manifestation of what Echard has identified as a centuries-old 'impulse to facsimile'.[16] When the Ordnance Survey began experiments with photo-zincography for the making of accurate and affordable facsimile prints around 1859, the new method was framed as an innovation capable of producing 'perfectly accurate copies of documents of any kind', but not before the nation's manuscripts were singled out: 'we can, if required, print any number of faithful copies of the ancient records of the kingdom, such as "Doomsday Book," the "Pipe Rolls," &c.'[17] With the ubiquity of the digital facsimile in these first decades of the twenty-first century, the quest for the medieval manuscript book in all its completeness

[14] Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 287.

[15] On the perfecting of buildings in the eighteenth century, see Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), pp. 277–307.

[16] See Chapter 4, p. 219.

[17] David McKitterick, *Old Books, New Technologies: The Representation, Conservation and Transformation of Books since 1700* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 123; Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*, p. 309.

is most clearly expressed in the remarkable efforts of scholars working in the field of fragmentology, many of which are emblematised in the Fragmentarium project.[18] Here, the establishment of open standards for sharing images (in particular, IIIF) alongside the development of shared canvas viewers (such as Mirador) have enabled the reunion of manuscript fragments and the reconstruction and identification of formerly dispersed books taken apart by binders and biblioclasts from the Middle Ages to the present day.

The scholarly and cultural value of such work is unimpeachable. In its mission to preserve and advance knowledge of the manuscript book through digital reconstruction, the goals of the Fragmentarium project may appear to be in opposition to those previous generations of collectors who reworked manuscripts according to their own tastes, or who dramatically remade and irreversibly customised them through the methods described in this study. At the time of writing, the Fragmentarium website styles itself as a 'Laboratory for Medieval Manuscript Fragments' and states its *raison d'etre* thus: 'Fragmentarium enables libraries, collectors, researchers and students to publish images of medieval manuscript fragments, allowing them to catalogue, describe, transcribe, assemble and re-use them'. The scholars involved in the Fragmentarium project might hesitate to align their platform with the more invasive and transformative types of bibliographical perfecting which had purchase until the nineteenth century. I would venture, though, that the project's stated aims – enabling cataloguing, description, transcription, assembly, and re-use – and the interest in the past that drives them intersect with historical practices of perfecting in meaningful ways. The early modern readers who perfected medieval manuscripts, their nineteenth-century successors, and today's digital fragmentologists may operate in divergent historical circumstances but their activities of collating, annotating, and reconfiguring old books share much common ground. In different ways, their activities extend the lives of medieval volumes by remaking them for their own age. The readers, scribes, and collectors who painstakingly copied, corrected, and completed copies of Chaucer's works would be amazed at the modern-day tools for reproducing images of the medieval manuscript book, but they would have recognised the fundamental and enduring desire that motivates their creation and use.

[18] The digital interface of the Fragmentarium project was launched in September 2017 and its journal, *Fragmentology*, was first published in 2018. See 'Fragmentarium: Laboratory for Medieval Manuscript Fragments', https://fragmentarium.ms.

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[1] The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. Individual copies cited are listed in the Index.

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