Notes on the Caxton *Canterbury Tales* Editions and their Place in the Textual Tradition of the *Tales*

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My research on the manuscript source of Cx2 allowed me to investigate aspects of this book that had hitherto been overlooked and to study these using different techniques. In these notes I include my findings about what I consider important bibliographical and textual matters related to this edition. The following notes do not attempt to be comprehensive about Caxton's workshop or about his editions of the *Canterbury Tales* . Instead, I offer some preliminary results of ongoing research and other pointers for those interested in textual and bibliographical matters. Some of the material included here has been published fully elsewhere or will be published in more detail in the near future. Most of it (and the data that supports it) can be found in my De Montfort University doctoral thesis.

The Collation of Cx2

Dan Mosser states that there are fifteen extant copies of Cx2, two of which remain untraced.[1] Unlike Cx1, the surviving copies of Cx2 are relatively complete. Of these extant copies of Cx2, there is one that has been consistently reported as 'perfect.' This allegedly 'perfect' copy is the one held at the St John's College Library, in Oxford.[2] However, my research on this copy showed that it is missing the first and last leaves, and led me to a revision of the collational formula for this edition. The revised collational formula of the St John's College copy is:

fol.: $a^{(8-1)}$ b-t^{8} v^{6} aa-hh^{8} ii^{6} A-K^{8} $L^{(6-1)}$, 312 leaves (f. 312 blank).

Since this was the only copy of Cx2 thought to be complete, this leads to the conclusion that, although the St John's College copy is textually complete, there are no bibliographically complete copies of Cx2. The revised collational formula for an ideal copy of Cx2 is:

fol.: a-t^{8} v^{6} aa-hh^{8} ii^{6} A-K^{8} L^{6}, 314 leaves.[3]

Collations of Cx1 and Cx2 can be found in De Ricci (1909), Mosser (1996; 2000), Needham (1986). Collations of the Royal copy of Cx1 and the Grenville copy of Cx2 and some further bibliographical

description can be found in Mosser (1996; 2000).

Blades also produced brief descriptions of both Cx1 (1863, 45-7) and Cx2 (1863, 162-4). A newly revised collation for both Caxton editions by Lotte Hellinga will appear in *Catalogue of Books printed in the XVth Century now in the British Museum (Library)* (Forthcoming). For a detailed physical description and bibliographical analysis of the St John's College copy of Cx2 see Bordalejo (2002, 35 and ff.). My revised collation of Cx2 with comments will appear in *American Notes and Queries*.

The Process of Composition of Caxton's *Canterbury Tales*

The number of compositors in Caxton's workshop has been a subject of scholarly debate. Lotte Hellinga, in her book *Caxton in Focus*, suggests that the work of "at least two compositors" can be distinguished in Caxton's first edition by the type distribution of the double compartment 'a' (1982, 61). The description of the workshop as a fast growing business is followed by the statement: "At first this consisted of one press, with one compositor working on it, using one typeface; soon one, possibly even two larger presses were added, (working concurrently on the two halves of the *Canterbury Tales*) ..." (1982, 84). However, in a later article she suggested that two compositors only worked on the Caxton second edition (1983).

Satoko Tokunaga, in a paper delivered at the New Chaucer Society Conference in 2002 and following Hellinga's method of assessing type usage, suggested that it was possible that indeed at least two compositors were working on Cx1. This research, however, is still in progress and no definitive proof has been offered on this matter.

Following Hellinga's model, I carried out research into the type distribution of Cx2; this, in conjunction with evidence drawn from the signatures and running titles, provided evidence of three different patterns of composition, each corresponding to a set of signatures (Bordalejo 2002, 51-62).

The Three Sets of Signatures and the Number of Compositors

There are several features that distinguish the work carried out by Caxton's workshop for Cx1 and Cx2. Although there are some similarities between the books (both printed in paper in folio format), there are many more elements in which they differ. This could be because Caxton had become more skilled in publishing (see Blake 2000, 140) or because Cx1 was produced to a much more constrained schedule. Cx2 has features which were not present in Cx1: woodcuts, signatures and running titles. In the first instance,

the fact that Cx2 has three sets of signatures appears to indicate, as Blake has suggested, the work of three compositors:

> Since the compositors of the second edition were working from the first printed edition and since the text was a poetic one which could easily be broken down into the requisite pages of type, the most reasonable explanation of the collation of the second edition is that there were three presses working on it at the same time. Each press with its own compositors was given a section of text and a different kind of signature letter to use. (1976, 63)

Indeed, the tripartite division of the text and the fact that each part has been independently signed show that the text was printed in three separate acts of composition. The position of the three quires of six folios, all of them at the end of a particular group of signatures, is perhaps a sign that there was no more text to set since it had been already been assigned, and had been set by another compositor. The last page of the Summoner's (SU) ends the last quire with the first set of signatures (v), and has only two lines of verse, and three that are the final rubric. After the second double lower case signatures, we have 'The Wordes of the hoost' that actually finish in [i6]^{r}, leaving more than a page and a half of blank space. [L5] sis blank, as pointed out before, which suggests that it is likely that [L6] was also blank. The fact that the last two pages were not printed with the text of the *Canterbury Tales* suggests, once more, that the person supervising the book and the compositors were allowing for extra pages to print the text if these were needed.

However, these three acts of composition do not have to imply, by definition, three different compositors, as Blake argued in 1976. More recently, he has changed his mind about this interpretation of the three sets of signatures. His counter argument, in which he dismisses the possibility of three compositors, is as follows:

> Although I have previously suggested that the three sets of signatures probably indicate three separate compositors, we now know that Caxton had only two compositors to start with during his early years at Westminster. Cx^{1} was set up by two compositors working on two presses. There is nothing to suggest that this workshop staffing had changed by the time Cx^{2} was printed. Consequently we need to look more closely at the question of the number of compositors used in Cx^{2}. (2000, 143)

Blake cites Hellinga's *Caxton in Focus* in support of the assertion that Caxton had only two compositors in his workshop when setting Cx1. In fact, Hellinga does not state this certainly of Caxton's first edition in this book, arguing on the basis of the use and distribution of the double and single compartment 'a,' that the work of "at least two compositors" can be distinguished in Cx1 (1982, 61). This retains the possibility of a third compositor working on a third press (1982, 84). However, in a later paper at the Warburg Institute she did suggest that only two compositors worked on Cx2 (1983, 7).

Blake's arguments can be explained as follows: in 1976, his interpretation of the three sets of signatures was literal: he thought it meant that three presses and three separate groups of compositors were working simultaneously on the production of the second edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. Later, he seems to have thought that it had been shown that there were two compositors only and set himself the task of showing this. To develop this line of argument, Blake took into account information about other aspects of the book, namely the rubrics and the running titles. In his reassessment of the evidence Blake observes that the parts corresponding to the first set of signatures (a to v) and to the second and third sets (aa to ii and A to L) appear almost evenly split (2000, 143). He also appears to have identified a pattern in the development of the placement of the rubrics and woodcuts:

> To start with the woodcuts are crammed in. On folio c5v, which ends the General Prologue and opens the Knight's Tale, eighteen lines from the end of the General Prologue are included. These are followed without any gap by the rubric 'Here begynneth the knyghtis tale' which is in turn followed without a gap by the woodcut of the Knight, which extends one line below the bottom of what was the normal page of type. (2000, 143)

Blake also explains that, as the text progresses a change can be seen. After the Merchant's Prologue, the rubrics seem to move to a position after the woodcuts. In the pages corresponding to the second set of signatures, Blake observes, the rubric for the end of a prologue appears separated by a woodcut from the one indicating the beginning of the tale. The third set of signatures is a mixture of the two systems:

> ...the end of one narrative item and the start of the next are run into one rubric, but gradually the rubric is split into its two parts and, finally, the second of the two parts may be put before or after the woodcut where it occurs. (Blake 2000, 145)

Because of the lack of continuity between the position of the rubric in the second and third set of

signatures, Blake deduces that the third set of signatures is likely to have been set up before the second set. Therefore, it is possible that the third and second set of signatures were set up consecutively, not concurrently, and so they could have been set up by the same compositor. Blake realises, however, that it is necessary to go beyond the signatures and the rubrics and presents a thorough discussion of the running titles.

The Running Titles

The way in which the titles are arranged, as Blake points out (2000, 146), might indicate which of the compositors was at work. For example, in the single lower case signatures the running titles are long and read, for example, 'The marchauntes prologe,' as opposed to just 'The Prologue' (or, 'prologue') as in the other two sets of signatures (Blake 2000, 146).[4] In the first set of signatures, containing only the General Prologue, the word prologue is spelt with a 'u.' On every other occasion we find it spelt 'prologe'.[5] In the double lower case signatures (aa-ii) the spelling is always 'Prologue' and the running titles in the different prologues are not specific to the tale. In other words, in the double lower case signatures, all the prologues have running titles that read 'prologue'. The same happens in the upper case signatures (A-L). This seems to indicate that the person that set up the first set of signatures usually spelled 'prologe', while the compositor or compositors of the second and third sets spelt the word as 'prologue'. The different spelling in the General Prologue (in the first set of signatures) could be the result of someone, perhaps Caxton himself,[6] showing the first compositor how to set the text. The running titles for this part of the book (the General Prologue) were not altered. This was not necessary because the running titles did not need resetting each time the forme changed. Instead, they were altered only when it was required because the text was that of a different tale. Once the compositor reached 'The Miller's Prologue' he changed the spelling to what then became his standard one: 'prologe.'

The changes in the structure in the running titles in combination with the changes in the position of the woodcuts with reference to the rubrics led Blake to the conclusion that the same person set up the second and third parts of the book, and that there were only two compositors working on Cx2. However, there are other factors at work in the running titles which may make these an unstable basis for an argument relating to the number of compositors. My own analysis of the variants in the running titles shows that the compositors were not resetting them when they reset the rest of the text. Once a particular forme had been

printed, the types (corresponding to Blades' type 4*) were taken out from the forme, but the running titles (in Blades' type 2*) were not changed unless there was a change of tale. This behaviour can be partly explained because it is more convenient to reset only the parts of the text that change, but it was also the result of a practical working attitude, since in this way the two different types would have been less likely to be mixed up. This explains the appearance of 'The Myllers tale' in i4^{r}, a page that should read 'The Reues Tale', and that of 'The Reues Tale' in [i6]^{v}, which should have read 'The Cokis Tale'. Further, several sets of running titles might be in existence at the one time, as the different compositors worked on different sections of text.

A good example of the compositors using the same running title for different folios can be found in quires m and n. In these there is a mistake that occurs in the verso of the first half of both quires, the word 'marchauutes.' From this we know that the compositors kept the running titles in type when they were composing the text, and also that the same forme (with the same running head) was used to print a successive sequence of inner formes. This fact is not so evident in any other place of the book. In quire A the running title in the inner forme reads 'The Tale of Chawcer' in A2^{v} A3^{v} A4^{v} [A5]^{a} [A6]^{a} [A7]^{r}, but this was corrected in quires B and C, and we do not have any way of knowing if the inner formes on the three quires were printed successively.

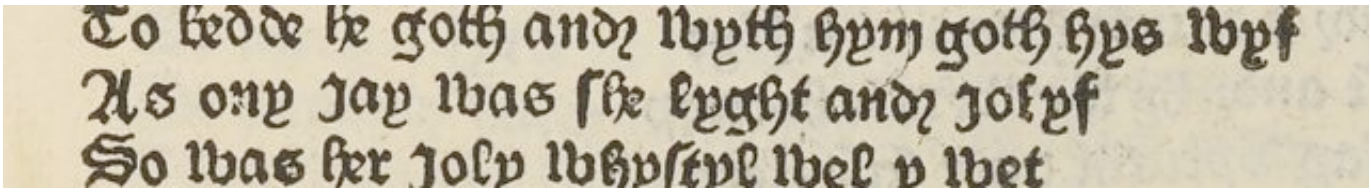
These factors suggest that special conditions apply to the setting of the running titles. As a result, conclusions based on the running titles may not be relevant to the setting of the rest of the text. Indeed, even if the running titles in the leaves signed with double lower case and their counterparts in the single upper case signatures are consistent with each other, this does not have to be interpreted as one person having set both of them. Instead, this similarity might suggest that two compositors had a similar style or that one of them was imitating the other.

The Type Distribution

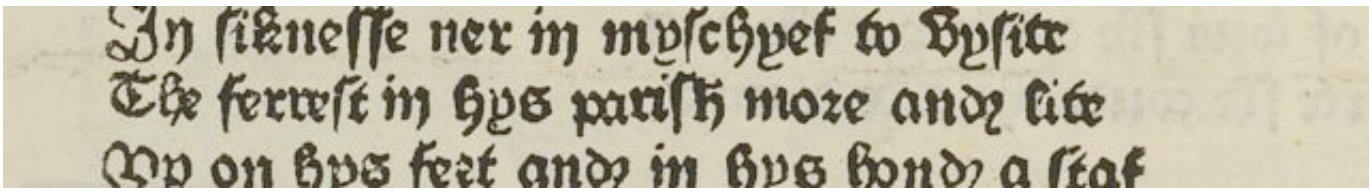
Although the pattern in the running titles might be taken to suggest that only two compositors were involved in the setting up of Cx2, with the second compositor setting the double lower case signatures and the single upper case signatures, research into the distribution of individual types suggests otherwise. Research modelled on Hellinga's and based on the type distribution of the 'sh' ligature and the 'd' at the end of the initial word 'And,' shows a different pattern of composition emerging in Cx2.

The ‘sh’ Ligature

The compositor of the single lower case signatures, from **a** to **v** (whom I will refer to here as the first compositor), most commonly uses two separate characters for the letters ‘s’ and ‘h’ when they appear in a cluster — for example, in words such as ‘she’ or ‘shall’ (e.g. in line 28, i2^{r})[7] — even though he has available a single character with a ligature for ‘sh.’ This character can be distinguished by the bar in the crossed ‘h’ which is attached to the long ‘s.’ An example of the use by the first compositor of two separate characters (‘s’ and ‘h’) for the ‘sh’ cluster can be seen towards the middle of line 6 of i2^{r}:

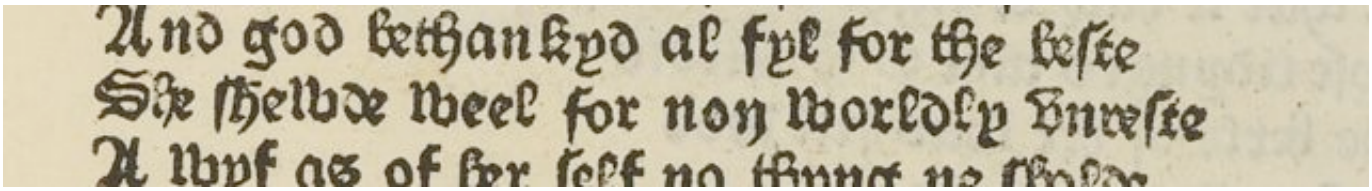


This example clearly shows two separate characters, but even in cases in which the first compositor is using the barred ‘h’ it is possible to distinguish two different characters. The following example is from [b6]^{v}, line 14:

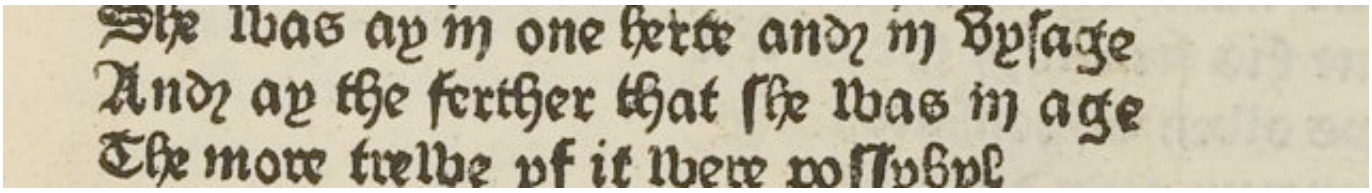


The word ‘parish’ shows two distinct characters used for the long ‘s’ and the crossed ‘h.’ The bar of the ‘h’ is at a completely different height from that in the typeface with the ‘sh’ ligature. The first compositor of the single lower case signatures regularly uses two separate characters for the ‘sh’ cluster and uses a ligature very rarely: perhaps fifty instances of the two separate characters to every one of the ligature, according to my experimental count given below.

The importance of this usage resides in the fact that the compositor of the double lower case signatures (from **aa** to **ii**, whom I refer to as the second compositor), uses a much higher proportion of the ligature relative to the two separate characters ‘s’ and ‘h’. The ligature can be distinguished because it has a crossed ‘h’ and this letter and the long ‘s’ appear interlocked. An example of this can be found in line 24 of bb4^{r}:

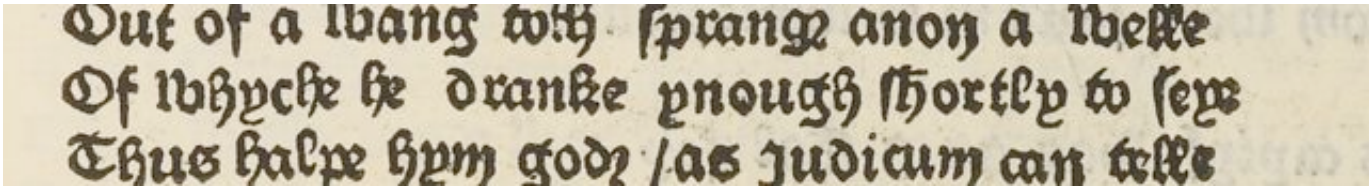


In this example, the single type for the ‘sh’ ligature is evident. The bar of the ‘h’ runs from the long ‘s’ uniting both characters: a single type has been used in the word ‘shewde.’ In line 18 of the same folio we can find the word ‘she’ for which the compositor has used two separate characters, and a normal ‘h’ instead of barred h.



It seems clear that the second compositor, like the first compositor, uses the separate characters ‘s’ and ‘h’ more often than he uses the ‘sh’ ligature. However, he appears to use a considerably higher proportion of the ligature than does the first compositor: perhaps one instance of the ligature to every three of the separate characters, according to my experimental count given below, compared to around one to fifty for the first compositor.

In the single upper case signatures — from **A** to **L** — the compositor uses most commonly the ‘sh’ ligature. The following example can be found in line 5 of [C7]^{r}:



Once more, the ligature is clearly visible. Moreover, in this particular folio all instances of these letters appearing as a cluster have been set up using the ligature.[8] Unlike the first two compositors, the compositor of the third set of signatures appears to show a marked preference for the ‘sh’ ligature over the two separate characters. My experimental count given below suggests that this compositor may use the ligature considerably more frequently than he uses the separate characters, reversing the tendency of both the first two compositors to use the separate characters rather than the ligature.

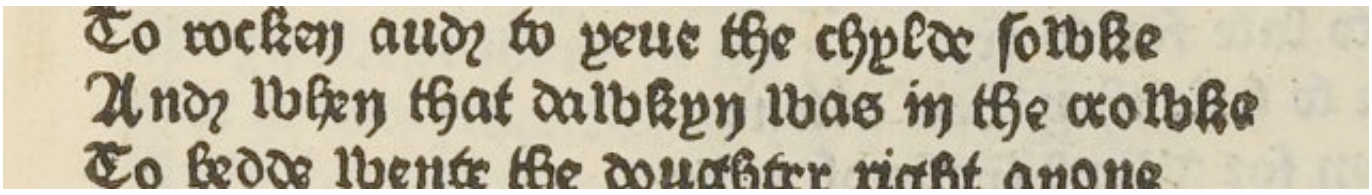
The following table shows the results of an experimental search I carried out on three separate sections of text, one from each set of signatures: for the Knight's Tale (single lower case signatures); Clerk's Tale (double lower case signatures) and Monk's Tale (single upper case signatures):

	's' and crossed 'h' (both separate characters and ligature)	's' and 'h' (separate characters)
KT (2244 ll.) a-v	4	236
CL (1176 ll.) aa-ii	59	144
MO (680 ll.) A-L	92	19

This search must be regarded as experimental only. Firstly, there are limitations imposed by the font used by the Canterbury Tales Project. This font has separate characters for 's' 'h' and 'crossed h'. It lacks a separate character for the ligature 'sh' and so all these were transcribed as the two characters 's crossed-h'. Therefore, the searches carried out only differentiate the 's' follow by crossed 'h' (representing both the ligature and the separate characters 's crossed-h') and regular 'h.' Thus, the count of 's' and crossed 'h' given in this table include all cases where 's' is followed by crossed 'h,' and so will overstate the occurrences of the ligatured character. As well as searching across the whole text, a more extended analysis would rectify this by having a separate character for the ligature, would also take account of position in the word, and consider too the effects of the different types of text (the dominance of prose in the third set of signatures, for example) and the different distribution of characters forme by forme. However, even making every allowance (and allowing too for the different lengths of text in each sample), this table suggests that there is a marked difference in the treatment of the 's' and 'h' combination. One could use these data as the starting point of further research, based on a finer distinction of the characters than is allowed by the Canterbury Tales font.[9]

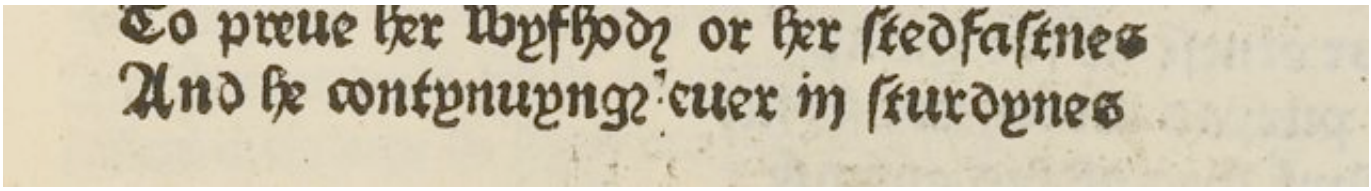
The 'd' at the End of the Word 'And' in Initial Position

The compositor of the first set of signatures (a-v) uses a tailed 'd' at the end of the word 'And' when this word is at the beginning of the line in the vast majority of the cases. An example of this can be seen at the beginning of line 10 in folio i2^{r}:



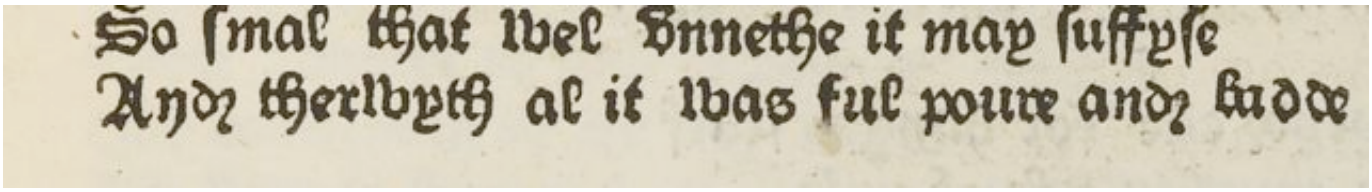
This is the most common type choice for this word in initial position in the single lower case signatures. The proportion of the use of the tailed ‘d’ is overwhelming: according to the experimental count given below, there are around twenty times as many instances of ‘And’ with tailed ‘d’ as with the untailed character. Clearly this compositor has a strong preference for the use of tailed ‘d’ in initial ‘And.’

The compositor of the second set of signatures (aa-ii), given the same conditions, uses the ‘d’, without the tail. An example of this can be found in bb4^{r}, line 6:



It appears that in this second set of signatures, there are around the same number of ‘And’ with tailed ‘d’ as with the untailed character. In the experimental count given below, the two forms are quite evenly divided. The different behaviour from that found in the single lower case signatures suggests, once more, that this part of the text might have been set up by a different compositor.

However, the compositor of the third set of signatures (A-L) appears to prefer the tailed ‘d’ in ‘And’ in initial position, though not to the same degree as does the compositor of the first set of signatures. The following example has been taken from line 20 of D4^{r}:



In the experimental count, there are around five times as many instances of tailed ‘d’ in ‘And’ as there are of untailed ‘d.’ in this section.

The following table shows the result of an experimental search I performed on the same three separate sections of text, one from each set of ligatures, used above. Note that each of the three is a verse section: initial ‘And’ in verse would be subject to different factors than for prose:

	‘And’	‘And’ with tailed d

KT (2244 ll.) a-v	15	411
CL (1176 ll.) aa-ii	95	77
MO (680 ll.) A-L	26	115

Again, this search must be regarded as experimental only. Although in this case the two characters (tailed ‘d’ and untailed ‘d’) are clearly distinguished, the other factors noted above as needing to be considered for an extended search apply here as above.

How Many Compositors?

The combination of these two elements — the final ‘d’ in the word ‘And’ in initial position, and the ‘sh’ sequence — suggests that there are three different idiosyncrasies in the composition of Cx2. The following table shows the frequency of different forms of these in the same parts of the text.

	‘s’ and crossed ‘h’ (both separate characters and ligature)	‘s’ and ‘h’ (separate characters)	‘And’	‘And’ with tailed d
KT (2244 ll.) a-v	4	236	15	411
CL (1176 ll.) aa-ii	59	144	95	77
MO (680 ll.) A-L	92	19	26	115

It seems that there are three different compositorial patterns in Cx2, corresponding to three different compositors. The first compositor appears consistently to use ‘s’ and ‘h’ in the ‘sh’ cluster and he uses a much higher proportion of ‘d’ with tail in the initial word ‘And.’ The second compositor uses a higher proportion of the crossed ‘h’, and a much more even proportion of ‘d’ and ‘d’ with a tail at the end of ‘And.’ The third compositor uses more frequently the combination of ‘s’ and crossed ‘h’ and also gives preference to the ‘d’ with a tail at the end of ‘And.’ It is unlikely that any compositor might have changed his habits from one part of the book to the next. For this reason we have to be open to the possibility of Cx2 having had three different compositors. However, further study of the type distribution is needed in order to confirm this hypothesis.

The Text of Cx1 and Cx2

The Source for the Setting of Cx2

Dunn put forward the idea that Caxton had written corrections on a copy of Cx1 from which Cx2 was later set up (Dunn, 1939, 74). This view was supported by Blake when he wrote:

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

The lines to which Blake refers in the above quotation are MI 113[10] and L21 30, and these two are not enough (on their own) to support Dunn's statement. However, I have found a substantial number of archetypal variants in Cx2 in incorrect positions within the lines of the verse texts of the *Tales*. This indicates that even though the compositors had a source for a archetypal readings (in the vast majority of the cases, superior to those of Cx1), each of them was noted in such a way (for example, by being written in the margin, besides the line, rather than over the position in the line where it should appear) that it was easily possible for the compositors to place it in an incorrect location. This is a very different process from transposition, where scribes might copy the exemplar's words but reshuffle their order, in a way that does not damage sense ('hadde he' for 'he hadde'): here the archetypal reading is added into the text in such a way as to alter meaning markedly. While analysing individual variants I became convinced that Dunn had been correct in his assessment that the copy text used for Cx2 was a copy of Cx1 to which corrections from a manuscript had been added, presumably in the margin. For example, in the Second Nun's Tale, NU 301 we find:

> Cx1: That angelis face whiche thy brothir tolde
>
> Cx2: The aungelis face whiche thy brother of tolde

El: The Angeles face , of which thy brother tolde

Hg: The Aungeles face , of which thy brother tolde

of which thy brother] Ad3 Bo2 Ch Cp Dd Ds El En1 Gg Ha4 Hg Ht La Ra3

which thy brother] Cx1

whiche thy brother of] Cx2

Both the examples of lines MI 113 and NU 301 show an incorrect placement of the text very likely to be due to misinterpretation of Caxton's indications. Some particular cases seem to indicate that Caxton's notes might have been, at best, confusing. Thus, there are some points of the text in which the scribes seem to have had problems, as here in the Knight's Tale, KT 2001:

Cx1: And leet anon to hacke and to hewe

Cx2: And comanded anon to hacke and to hewe

El: And leet comande anon , to hakke and hewe

Hg: And leet anoon comaunde , to hakke and hewe

And leet anoon comaunde] Ch Dd Hg

And leet comande anon] El

And comanded anon] Cx2

And anon comaunde] Ad3 Gg

He leet anon comaunde] Cp La

And leet anon] Cx1

And leet comaunde] Ha4

It appears, that in this occasion, the compositor interpreted Caxton's mark as indicating a substitution of the word 'leet' by the word 'comanded,' rather than just the inclusion of 'comanded,' as was probably the case. The rate of variation in this phrase is also witness to the problems the scribes had in interpreting and copying it accurately. Other examples of this kind of misplacement can be found in lines: KT 260, ML 42, ML 734, ML 1002, ME 439, ME 718, PH 71, NP 72, etc. Indeed, examples supporting Dunn's idea can be found in the whole of the verse text of the *Tales*, suggesting that this practice of writing variants as single words beside the line, rather than directly where the word should appear, was followed throughout the verse. Significant revisions, at a rate of around one substantive alteration every six lines, can be found

without exception in every one of the twenty-five verse texts (and accompanying links) present in both Cx2 and Cx1. One can see this by looking at any page of any verse text in the collation view on this CD-ROM. In contrast the prose was seldom altered, with the notable exception of an addition to The Retraction.

The Source for the Corrections in Cx2

The textual relationship between Cx1 and Cx2 has interested researchers involved in analytical bibliography, the history of the book and textual criticism. In the prologue to Cx2, Caxton explains that it had been brought to his attention that the text of Cx1 "was not accordyng in many places vnto the book that Gefferey chaucer had made, To whom I answerd that I had made it accordyng to my copye , and by me was nothyng added ne mynusshyd" (Caxton c. 1482, a2r). Caxton assures the reader that at the request of a gentleman he produced his second edition from a better manuscript which was in the possession of the gentleman's father. Independently of whether Caxton was telling the truth about the existence of this 'gentleman,' he indeed produced a second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* for which he used a different manuscript. However, Caxton did not set up the text of his new edition directly from the new manuscript; instead, he wrote corrections from this manuscript into a copy of this first edition, as explained above. Later, Caxton's compositors set Cx2 from this conflated version of the text.

Although Dunn managed to provide answers to some of the questions surrounding the nature of Cx2 and its process of composition, his argument about the affiliations of the manuscript source for the corrections in Cx2 is not convincing (74 and ff.). He limits the analysis to those manuscripts that share most lines in common and most omitted passages with Cx2 (the manuscripts Dunn selected for his study are Ad3 Ch Dd El En1 and En3). Dunn finally concluded that the source of Cx2 was a 'good text' (76), and that no extant witness could have been a source for it. In Dunn's opinion, Ch is the extant manuscript that is closest to the source of Cx2.

Manly and Rickert established that the text of Cx1 is related to their **b** group manuscripts,[11] a recension which is not very close to the archetype of the tradition (1940, 1: 80). The affiliations of Cx2 are less clear than those of Cx1. However, the readings in which both editions differ make evident that the manuscript used to correct Cx1 had a good text.[12] Recent developments in studies of the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales* have made it increasingly evident that the manuscript source for Cx2 is likely to have been an important witness to the text. During the course of my doctoral research, I analysed around three

thousand variants in which Cx2 differs from Cx1 (approximately one in every six lines of the verse). Some of these appeared helpful to trace the affiliations of the lost manuscript, but others were of interest because they offer information about the relationships of important manuscripts in the textual tradition. Although the affiliations of the manuscript source of Cx2 remain far from clear, there is persistent agreement with manuscripts such as Ad3, El, Ch, Ha4 and Hg (see Bordalejo 2002). These are exactly the manuscripts (termed by Robinson the **O** manuscripts) which the Canterbury Tales Project's research has shown as nearest to the archetype (see Robinson 1997). The vast majority of the readings in which Cx2 differs from Cx1 are very likely to have been present in the archetype, as can be seen in MI 35, MI 65, MI 144, MI 178, MI 380, NP 477 and NP 624, for example. These readings are either supported by very early witnesses independently descended from O (the archetype of the tradition) or distributed across the textual tradition in such way that it is possible to judge which variant is most likely to be archetypal. An example of this can be seen in the Miller's Tale, MI 65, where Hg and El disagree:

> Cx1: Tarselid with grene and perlid with laton
>
> Cx2: Tarselyd wyth sylk and perlyd wyth laton
>
> Hg: Tasseled with silk , and perled with latoun
>
> El: Tasseled with grene , and &pbar;led wt latoun
>
> silk] Ad1 Ad2 Bo1 Bw Ch Cn Cp Cx2 Dd Ds En1 En2 En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2 Ha3 Ha4 Ha5 Hg Hk Ii La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mg Mm Ph2 Pn Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Sl1 Sl2 Tc1 Wy
>
> grene] Cx1 Dl El He Ht Ne Se Tc2

The variant distribution of the word 'silk,' which can be found in the majority of the witnesses here, suggests that this is likely to be the archetypal reading. In this case, Caxton replaced the Cx1 reading with one much more likely to have been present in the ancestor of all witnesses. Cx1 has 'grene' instead, a reading shared also by other **b** witnesses (He Ne and Tc2). What is peculiar about the reading 'grene' is its presence in El, since this manuscript often preserves archetypal readings, and agreement in error between El and the **b** group manuscripts is rather rare. This example shows that in those occasions in which Hg and El disagree, it might be possible to use the Cx2 readings as an aid in determining which of them is archetypal.

Occasionally, when Hg and El agree in error, the readings from the manuscript source for Cx2 might preserve the archetypal reading. For example, we find in the Reeve's Tale, RE 9:

Out: Ad3

Cx1: And by his belt he baar a long pauade

Cx2: Ay by hys belt he baar a long pauade

Hg: And by his belt he baar a long Panade

El: And by his belt he baar a long panade

And] Ch Cx1 El Hg

Ay] Cx2 Cp Dd Gg Ha4 La

In RE 9, Hg and El agree with Cx1 and Ch in what clearly is the trivialisation of a *lectio difficilior*. Because the reading 'Ay' is preserved in manuscripts that appear close to the archetype and because these manuscripts are otherwise unrelated, one may infer that 'Ay' is very likely to have been the reading present in the archetype. The trivialisation in the other witnesses could have occurred independently in some of them and in a shared hyparchetype in some others.

A similar example can be found in the Clerk's Tale, CL 1067:

Cx1: Shal be myn heir as I haue disposid

Cx2: Shal be myn heyr as I haue purposyd

Hg: Shal be myn heir , as I haue ay supposed

El: Shal be myn heir , as I haue ay supposed

supposed] Bo2 El Gg Hg

disposid] Cx1 Dd Ds1 En1

purposed] Ad3 Ch Cp Cx2 Ht La Ra3

Here we have the substitution of the Cx1 reading, 'disposid,' with one that is more widely distributed in the textual tradition, 'purposed.' Because some of the witnesses that agree with Cx2 in the reading are not directly related to one another (as is the case of Ad3 and Cp, for example), it can be assumed that the reading must have stood in the archetype. The reading in Hg and El (also in Bo2 and Gg) is an agreement in error, when the scribe copied the rhyme word of line CL 1065 in CL 1067. The reading 'disposid,' on the other hand, is a trivialisation of 'purposed.'

Other readings, however, show that one cannot simply identify what might have been the hyparchetypal

reading by a simple judgement of which reading is correct and which an error. A good example of this can be found in the Wife of Bath's Prologue 484:

Cx1: I made hym of the same wode a croce

Cx2: I made hym of the same wode a troce

Hg: I made hym of the same wode a troce

El I made hym of the same wode a croce

troce] Cx2 Hg Ad3 Ch Ad1 Hk Pn Wy

croce] Bo1 Bo2 Bw Cn Cp Cx1 Dd Ds Dl El En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2 Ha4 Ha5 He Ht Ii La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mg Mm Ne Nl Ph2 Ph3 Ps Py Ry1 Ry2 Si Se Tc1 Tc2 To

hood] Mc Ra1

groce] Ra3

cote] Ra2

In this line, the reading 'troce' is clearly nonsensical; the reading 'croce' is widely distributed in the textual tradition. However, of the witnesses which support the reading 'troce' (Cx2 Hg Ad3 Ch Ad1 Hk Pn Wy) five belong to Robinson's **O** manuscripts, while the other three are the incunabula (Pn and Wy derived this reading from Cx2). Robinson suggests that this reading, nonsense though it is, was the reading of the archetype (1997, 103). This reading was transmitted to very early witnesses, some of which might have copied it directly from the archetype. The wide distribution of 'croce' can be explained because this reading is relatively easy to arrive at through conjecture; it is likely that many scribes realised the mistake and corrected it. However, Caxton decided to restore it to the text, even though he must have realised that the reading was meaningless, or perhaps because he was unsure of its meaning. He did exactly the opposite in KT 1179, where he replaced the nonsensical reading 'serelis' in Cx1 (Hg, El 'Sertres'/ 'Certres'; similar readings in the other **O** manuscripts Dd Gg, as well as Cp, suggesting that here as in WBP 484 the archetype contained an error) with a reading 'sterris' that fitted the meaning of the line.[13]

These variants exemplify the character of the textual changes from Cx1 to Cx2: these are, in their vast majority of cases, improvements on the text of Cx1. However, examples such as those found in WBP 484 and KT 1179 show that the affiliations of the manuscript source of Cx2 are sometimes very difficult to determine. This is especially so since the agreements with Cx2 are normally dominated by manuscripts

such as Ad3 Ch El Ha4 and Hg, all of which appear to be very close to the archetype of the tradition. In case after case, we find Cx2 agreeing with a varying selection of these manuscripts, according to which of them happen to preserve the reading of the archetype. Occasionally, one cannot distinguish if a reading comes directly from the archetype or if it has been introduced at some later point of the tradition; this presents a challenge when attempting to elucidate the affiliations of the lost manuscript.

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Notes

1. See also De Ricci. Mosser describes forty copies of Cx1, seventeen of which are more or less complete, while

the others are mainly individual folios which have been bound into a facsimile. According to Mosser there are no bibliographically complete copies of Cx1 (2000).

2. See De Ricci (1909); Mosser (1996, 2000).

3. In a private communication, dated November 13th 2002 (after the submission of my DMU doctoral thesis), Dr Kristian Jensen informed me that Dr Lotte Hellinga had independently reached the same conclusions. Her research (including collations of both the Royal copy of Cx1 and the Grenville copy of Cx2) will be published in *Catalogue of Books printed in the XVth Century now in the British Museum (Library)* , vols. I-X and XII (London, 1908-1962) vol. xi forthcoming. I am grateful to Dr Hellinga for permitting me to see drafts of these descriptons.

For the term 'ideal copy' used (as here) of a bibliographically perfect copy, see Greg (1966, 303); Gaskell (1974); and especially Tanselle (1980). A succinct account of the concept is given by Bowers (1949, 113)

> 'Ideally perfect' has no relation to freedom from textual errors, misprints, variant uncorrected formes, or to the quality of the text in any way as a criticism of the printer's final result. Instead it applies only to the physical details of the books as reflected within the states of an issue, and specifically to the number and state of the leaves, including the order and completeness of the contents printed on these leaves. Thus an *ideal copy* is a book which is complete in all its leaves as it ultimately left the printer's shop in perfect condition and in the complete state that he considered to represent the final and most perfect state of the book. An *ideal copy* contains not only all the blank leaves intended to be issued as integral parts of its gatherings but also all excisions and all *cancellans* leaves or insertions which represent the most perfect state of the books as the printer or publisher finally intended to issue it in the issue described.

4. In the pages signed a to v, the spelling 'prologe' varies between upper and lower case 'p.' In the pages signed aa to ii and A to L, there is only one instance of the word prologue in lower case, in folio E2r. In the following I have ignored the difference between upper and lower case 'p' (unless the text in question is a direct quotation) and instead have concentrated on the presence or absence of 'u.'

5. Blake observes that there is another instance of the spelling 'prologue' in the rubric at the end of the 'Man of

Law's Prologue,' in folio [i7]^{r} (1976, 145).

6. It is important to remember that the first two pages carry Caxton's 'Prohemye,' and it is possible that Caxton set the text for this part of the book himself (as Blades 1863, 163 suggested), which might explain the different spellings found here.

7. The Canterbury font used for all of the Canterbury Tales Project's transcriptions does not allow the distinction of the single type 'sh' ligature from the separate types for 's' and crossed 'h.'

8. These can be found in lines 5, 21, 22, 25, 27 and 31.

9. The more elaborate type distribution system being developed at Keio University could allow us to refine this kind of research enormously. An electronic prototype was presented by Satoko Tokunaga and Tomohiro Kishida at the conference "New Technologies, Old Texts" (Leicester, July 2003).

As a further experiment, the searches carried out above on relatively short sections of each set of signatures were carried out by Peter Robinson over the whole of each set of signatures. The results were as follows:

	's' and crossed 'h' (both separate characters and ligature)	's' and 'h' (separate characters)	'And'	'And' with tailed d
a-v	49	1472	68	1698
aa-ii	245	380	442	275
A-L	863	312	185	812

If one presumed that the samples used for the earlier searches were aberrant, then one would expect the apparent differences showed by those searches to diminish over the larger amounts of data. This does not appear to have happened. However, one must repeat the cautionary note about the need for care in gathering and interpreting these figures.

10. The variant in MI 113 is as follows:

Cx1: A clerk hadde lowdly beset his whyle

Cx2: Lythyrly a clerk had beset hys whyle

El: A clerk hadde lutherly , biset his whyle

Hg: A clerc hadde lutherly , biset his while

A clerc hadde lutherly]

Lytherly a clerk hadde] Cx2 Wy

Lytherly a clerk hath] Pn

lutherly] Ad1 Ad3 Bo2 Ch Cn Cp Dd Dl Ds1 El En1 En2 En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2 Ha3 Ha4 Ha5 Hg Hk La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mg Ps Pw Py Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Se Sl1 Sl2 Tc1 To1

lyghtly] Ad2 Bw Ii Ra1

litle] Bo1

lowdly] Cx1 He Mm Ne Tc2

ful evel] Ht Nl

simply] Ph2

11. The witnesses included in this group, apart from Cx1, are He Ne Tc2 of which the last has the closest text to that of Cx1.

12. The collation view in this CD isolates the variants between Cx1 and Cx2 and permits further analysis of these differences. My own research was carried out using *Collate,* a program that helps the study of large textual traditions. In first instance, I ran a complete collation of Cx1 and Cx2 to determine the differences between the texts; later I analysed each variant to assess whether or not they were stemmatically significant. When the status of a variant had been established, its distribution within the textual tradition was assessed. The result of this series of collations was a very complete map of the affiliations of the witnesses in each instance.

13. The example of KT 1179 shows what has been interpreted as a misplaced abbreviation in the archetype (Skeat 1907, 37):

Cx1: As it is depaynted in the serelis aboue

Cx2: As it is depaynted in the sterris aboue

Hg: As is depeynted , in the Sertres aboue

El: As is depeynted , in the Certres aboue

Sertres] Cp Dd El Gg Hg La

sterres] Ad3 Ch Cx2 Ha4

serelis] Cx1