

## Orthography, Codicology, and Textual Studies: The Cambridge University Library, Gg.4.27 “Canterbury Tales”<sup>1</sup>

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### SUMMARY

An analysis of the distribution of orthographic variants in the Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.27 copy of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* suggests that longer tranches of the source text were together, and partially ordered, already when it reached the scribe. The evidence of this manuscript’s quiring, inks, miniatures, and ordinatio supports this finding. Studying linguistic and (other) codicological aspects of manuscripts may thus be of use to textual scholars and editors.

**Key words:** Chaucer – *Canterbury Tales* – manuscript studies – Middle English – scribes – illumination – dialectology – graphemic and orthographic variation – textual studies

### RESUMEN

El análisis de la distribución de las variantes gráficas en la copia de los *Cuentos de Canterbury* de Chaucer en Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.27 sugiere que fragmentos largos del texto ya estaban juntos y parcialmente ordenados cuando éste llegó al escriba. Esta idea también se sustenta en evidencias paleográficas en el manuscrito, como las tintas, las miniaturas, los cuadernos, y la disposición en la página. El estudio de los aspectos lingüísticos y codicológicos de los manuscritos pueden serle útiles a editores y críticos textuales.

**Palabras clave:** Chaucer, *Cuentos de Canterbury*, manuscritos, inglés medio, escribas, iluminación, dialectología, variación gráfica y ortográfica, estudios textuales

### INTRODUCTION

The dialectologist Angus McIntosh has noted that one type of exemplar influence has the interesting characteristic that “it tends to assert itself less and less as the scribe proceeds with his work” (1975 [1989: 44 n. 10]). He distin-

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guishes graphetic variants from those graphemic ones which imply no phonological difference (“written-language ones”), and the latter in turn from those graphemic ones which do (“spoken-language ones”), though noting that clear boundaries cannot be set along this cline. The type is that which makes itself felt toward the former pole of the cline. Gradual change may be observed at the opposite pole too, and has more often been so in the literature since we tend to record the various spellings of whole words in our profiles and treat them as the unit of variation. Drawing on the electronic transcripts made available by the Canterbury Tales Project, two of its researchers, Norman Blake and Jacob Thaisen (2004), traced variations at all three levels during the complete text of two manuscripts of that Chaucer poem with early content, London, British Library, MS Harley 7334 and Oxford, Christ Church MS 152. We concluded that these variations in a scribe’s orthographic practices can signal how many exemplars were used in the production of a manuscript and thus can be of use in textual studies, and our conclusion was supported by the evidence of these manuscripts’ codicology. In what follows, I discuss another scribal copy of the poem, that found in Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.27, part 1, considering first its linguistic aspects and then its codicological ones before discussing the evidence they provide.

Part I of the manuscript today consists of 43 vellum quires totalling 516 folios, and it contains all Chaucer’s longer poetical works and many of his shorter items in addition to Lydgate’s *Temple of Glas*. The shorter items fill quire 1, which constitutes an independent unit (Elanor Hammond 1908: 190; Malcolm Parkes and Richard Beadle 1979-80, 3: 2; Daniel Mosser 1996), and the non-Chaucerian text come last. *Canterbury Tales* [Gg], which sits between *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Legend of Good Women*, now begins imperfectly at A37 on the verso of quire 11’s twelfth folio and ends with the explicit to the Parson’s Tale on quire 37’s first verso; the next folio, which presumably contained Chaucer’s Retraction, is no longer present. The poem is arranged in the same order as is found in the San Marino, California, Huntington Library, MS EI.26.C.9 copy of it. [Ellesmere] and includes only material which is also present there except as individual lines naturally became slightly modified during their scribal transmission. Textual scholars and editors have long agreed that Gg and the other Chaucerian texts all are high in authority, and some have given the manuscript special attention because it includes many unique readings. For example, *Legend of Good Women* has a unique prologue which scholars generally accept as being genuinely Chaucerian<sup>2</sup>, and the manuscript may be the earliest extant witness to

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<sup>2</sup> What one critic correctly described as “entertaining speculations” (Schmidt 1975: 391) led F.W. Bateson (1975) to suggest that the best extant witness to Chaucer’s own spelling is the later version of the prologue to *Legend of Good Women* which survives uniquely in Gg. The logic of Bateson’s argument is hard to follow. It appears to be that because Manly and E. Rickert held that the Gg scribe had “access to special sources” (1940, 1: 179) close to the *Canterbury Tales* archetype and because the poet intended his poem to

“Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan”. A facsimile of both parts of the manuscript was edited by Parkes and Beadle (1979-80). In their commentary, which is included in the third volume, they confirm the customary production date of c. 1420 for part 1, although they note that certain features of the anglicana formata scribal hand and of the illumination are slightly old-fashioned for that date<sup>3</sup>; they suggest that the illumination is based on an early model (1979-80, 3: 6-7, 60; cf. Hammond 1908: 189; Michael Seymour 1997: 51).

The scribe also wrote Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS c Musaeo 116, part 1 (*Treatise on the Astrolabe, Mandeville's Travels*, and a treatise on arboriculture), and Columbia, University of Missouri, Fragmenta Manuscripta 150 (one folio of Chaucer's *Boece*). Parkes and Beadle propose that he was commissioned to produce Gg.4.27, part 1 in an East Anglian country house or vicarage (1979-80, 3: 56, 63-64). The illumination supports a place of production in this part of the country, for Kathleen Scott considers it to be a precursor of what is found in the later London, British Library, MS Harley 2778 and San Marino, Huntington Library, MS 268, both of which are Lydgate manuscripts associated with Bury St Edmunds (1996, 2: 145; cf. Parkes and Beadle 1979-80, 3: 60). Parkes and Beadle conclude from their study of three longer dittographies, two of which occur within Gg, that the scribe generally adapted the usage of what was before him into his own dialect as he transferred it to his copy (1979-80, 3: 56). Further support for the placing comes from this and other linguistic evidence, for the manuscript and e Musaeo 116, part 1 both contain far-eastern features, and the former was localised to Cambridgeshire by *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* [LALME] (McIntosh et al. 1986, 1: 67). This revised an earlier, unpublished, localisation to the borders of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire by Michael Samuels (Andrew Doyle and George Pace 1968, 25 n. 25), who additionally noted the presence of London-Westminster features also found in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D [Hengwrt] and Ellesmere and of a scatter of western spellings<sup>4</sup>. He suggested from this that a copy of the poem akin to those two manuscripts passed through at least one stage of copying before it reached the Gg scribe (1983 [1988: 31]). The presence of eastern spellings is a characteristic of other copies of *Canterbury Tales* with the same, or a related, order of tales (John Manly and Edith Rickert 1940, 1: 555; Simon Horobin 2003: 64-70), including the London-Westminster Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.4.24 and Ellesmere itself<sup>5</sup>. That the Gg scribe may thus alternatively have had his work-

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be read aloud, the unusual spellings found in Gg are phonetic ones that go back to Chaucer himself. For another dismissive criticism of this view, see Samuels (1983 [1988: 36 n. 27]).

<sup>3</sup> The hand includes occasional secretary features such as single-compartment *a*.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the western spellings (e.g., *byth*, *hegh*, *hure*), some northern ones (e.g., *agayns*, *ayr*) are scattered in Gg.

<sup>5</sup> For the linguistic evidence for this placing of the Cambridge Dd manuscript, see Thaisen and Da Rold (in press).

place in the metropolitan area is suggested by Blake (1985: 76) from the known availability of exemplars for the manuscript's various Chaucer texts there earlier in the fifteenth century<sup>6</sup>.

The scribe did not work alone, for Gg.4.27, part 1 is the product of a team. A supervisor marked corrections by supplying a cross or an omitted word in the margin, and some of his directions for rubrics and catchwords survive. A second scribe is responsible for fols. 508<sup>r</sup>-510<sup>v</sup> and 514 recto and verso in the final quire, which contains the Lydgate item. Fols. 508 and 515 are conjugate as are 509 and 514 but 510 is a singleton, for its conjugate, fol. 513, is no longer present. This means that the two scribes appear together on one bifolium, indicating that they collaborated (Parkes and Beadle 1979-80, 3: 44). This second scribe is ignored in the present discussion unless otherwise stated. Lastly, one or more artists contributed decorative initials with leaf borders, miniatures of the *Canterbury Tales* pilgrims, and sets of the Vices and Virtues, the latter as illustrations to the Parson's Tale. Most of these decorations are lost through the excision of folios. Part 2, of 35 folios, contains passages copied from Thomas Speght's 1598-edition of Chaucer's works to repair this extensive mutilation and was bound in with the mediaeval text until the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>6</sup> The language of Gg has received far greater scholarly attention than what is here recounted. Manly and E. Rickert's assistant Dean, who is responsible for the commentaries on dialect and spelling included in their edition, described the Gg dialect as "East Midland, with sufficient traces of Northern to suggest Norfolk", noting its resemblance to that found in the Paston letters (Manly and E. Rickert 1940, 1: 176-77). Samuels (1983 [1988: 31]) applies the label "very pronounced East Anglian". In addition, the presence of the unusual spellings along with the many corrections and the three longer repeated passages have led some past scholars to suggest that the scribe was a foreigner who perhaps had a limited understanding of what he was copying. For example, Skeat (1899-1902) held that he was influenced by Anglo-French usage, while Dean (Manly and E. Rickert 1940, 1: 177-78) suggested he possibly was Flemish or Dutch. Furnivall had previously assigned the manuscript to the borders of the Midlands and the North (1868: 59), which might have meant a location nearer the Humber in his days though mediaeval East Anglian dialect contained northern features. Caldwell (1944) found resemblances between the spelling of certain lemmata in Gg and their Dutch cognates and argued, unconvincingly, for a natively Dutch-speaking scribe on this basis. The manuscript contains examples of *sch-* in words like ESCAPE, SCHOOL, and SHIPE (see further p. 385 below), of what might be described as an epenthetic vowel in the unstressed final syllable in, for example, *resonabele* and *vn stabele*, of *be* for *BY*, and of a plosive rather than a fricative in spellings of THITHER and WHETIHER (*pedyr*: *wtedy*). Caldwell based his argument on these and certain other features that Gg also contains being common in Middle Dutch, although he noted that "parallels... can be found in other English texts from the first half of the fifteenth century, notably certain of the Paston letters and various pieces from the East Anglian area" (1944: 34). More recent scholarship has favoured this scribe being no foreigner. For example, Seymour first proposed and later rejected that Gg.4.27, part 1 (and e. Musaeo 116) are the work of an Englishman who had lived in Holland for a long time (1968), now suggesting that a west Suffolk scribe wrote it in Cambridge, probably on the basis of the findings of dialectologists (1997, 51). Ramsey (1994: 359-77) suggested this scribe was an Englishman who was trained to copy Latin and therefore unfamiliar with seeing the vernacular in writing. Parkes and Beadle (1979-80, 3: 46, 54) conclude from his handwriting that he was no foreigner and from a comparative study of the spelling found in the three repeated passages within the manuscript that he "was a reasonably careful and conscientious copyist [who] understood what he was copying [but was] prone to marked lapses of concentration, perhaps because of infirmity or old age". Cf. also Hammond (1908: 191).

## THE EVIDENCE OF GG'S LANGUAGE

The present research is based upon an electronic transcript of Gg prepared by the Canterbury Tales Project. An index of this transcript was semi-automatically compiled by me from the forms registered in the published Spelling Database for all fifteenth-century witnesses to the Miller's Tale (Peter Robinson 2004). A comprehensive spelling profile for Gg was extracted from this index, answering to the questionnaire used for LALME. This profile gives the distribution of the variant spellings of each questionnaire item in separate tales and the Wife of Bath's Prologue, but not other links because of their brevity; the Cook's Tale is absent from the data set because the text of the tale is lost due to the mutilation to the manuscript.

The methodology I have employed for the analysis of the linguistic aspect of Gg is that described by Blake and Thaisen (2004). It focuses on the variations in the relative usage of functional equivalents at all three levels defined above during the course of the text. A scribal copy written throughout in a single hand will contain some random variation at these levels. This is because the orthography of a scribe is variable in itself in addition to being subject to many and varied influences, prominent among which are the number of exemplars and the order of copying. The criterion for claiming that a non-random pattern is present in the movements in the relative use of diverse forms of a single lemma during the course of a given text must consequently be that other forms for other lemmata are found to show coincident movements. Alternatively, the movements in the use of a single form relative to the length of each text unit must be paralleled in other, unrelated forms. Some individual forms and even lemmata will be too rarely attested to produce a clear pattern. It is a reasonable expectation that the variable feature in those forms will be found to be similarly distributed in related forms containing it, since the context is stable. If similar variation was found in the representation of the initial consonant in the forms recorded for, say, the items YOU, YOUR, and YOUNG in the Gg spelling profile, the distributions of those spellings were therefore conflated so as to increase the reliability of the pattern. This procedure amounted to positing the representation of that consonant as a lemma in itself. The profile derived from the original profile through the application of this procedure thus came to lean more toward the graphetic/"written-language" pole of the cline than the original one did, the unit of variation being smaller than the word in many cases. To illustrate the findings I have selected those forms which most clearly show the pattern that I see in the data.

My research indicates that Gg contains two co-ordinate usages, their boundary falling at the junction of the tales of the Summoner and the Clerk. The two usages can be distinguished because, for a number of unrelated lemmata, the greatest shift in the relative use of one form to another between any two consecutive tales consistently occurs at this point. Especially prominent

among the spellings which differ significantly in their proportions between the two usages are those with *þ* and those with *eCe/oCe* characteristic of the tales that come before this junction, against those with *th* and those with *eeC/ooC* characteristic of the tales that come after it. This finding may be illustrated by the variation in the occurrence of *þ* and *ee/oo* in the following table:

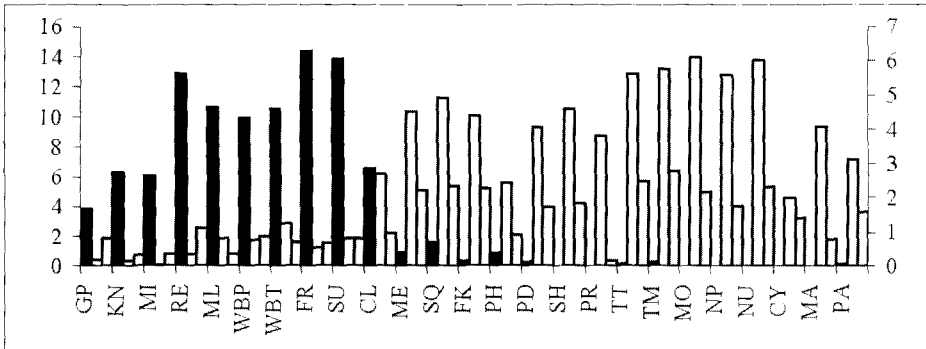


Table 1.

Occurrence, by tale, of *ee* (white: 2,677 occurrences), *oo* (grey: 1,327 occurrences), and *þ* (black: 3,263 occurrences) in Gg (per thousand characters). *ee* and *oo* plot on the right vertical axis

**Note.** All links except for the Wife of Bath's Prologue are omitted. The Cook's Tale is lost through mutilation to Gg

The tales up to the junction, which coincides with a quire boundary, account for around the first third of the Gg text, and where it is possible for the spellings of a given lexical item to exhibit this variation, they invariably do. Of the total of 155 examples of *þ<sup>e</sup>* as many as 120 are thus found in this third, along with 576 out of the 647 examples of *þ<sup>e</sup>*. The figures for *þ<sup>u</sup>*, *þow*, and *þu* collectively are 238 in the first third of the Gg text but just 29 in its final two-thirds, against *thou*, *thow*, or *thu* with 73 and 422 respective examples, reversing the proportions. The corresponding figures for OTHER are 75 and 8 for forms with *þ* but 26 and 186 for forms with *th*. For *theer(e)* they are none and 83, for *wheer(e)* none and 29, for *weer(e)* none and 74, and for *been* 24 and 536. These forms may be compared with *ther(e)*, *wher(e)*, and *were* being evenly distributed in the text and with there being 181 examples of *ben* in the Gg first third against 536 in its final two-thirds. Among other functional equivalents that are used in significantly different proportions between the two usages and so confirm their existence are *be-* in lexical items such as BEFORE and BETWEEN, *her(e)*, *hey(e)*, *let(e)*, and *sen(e)/sens* preferred in the first usage, against *bi-/by-*, *hir(e)/hyr(e)*, *high(e)/hygh(e)*, *lat(e)*, and *sith-/syth-* preferred in the second. Their occurrence is given in the following table:

Lemma	Spelling	Occurrence		Lemma	Spelling	Occurrence	
		Quires 11-20	Quires 21-37			Quires 11-20	Quires 21-37
BEFORE	<i>be-</i>	30	30	NOT	<i>nat</i>	42	261
	<i>bi-/by-</i>	15	57		<i>not</i>	271	377
BETWEEN	<i>be-</i>	18	17	PEOPLE	<i>peple/peplis</i>	4	62
	<i>bi-/by-</i>	—	17		<i>puple/puplis</i>	8	15
BUSY	<i>besi/besy(e)</i>	7	7	SINCE	<i>sen(e)/sens</i>	39	8
	<i>bisy/bysy</i>	—	5		<i>sith-/syth-</i>	29	47
	<i>busy</i>	—	2	SUCH	<i>sweche</i>	4	53
HER/HIR	<i>her(e)</i>	423	295		<i>'swich/swych'</i>	92	191
	<i>hir(e)/hyr(e)</i>	201	581	WILL	<i>wil</i>	12	67
HIGH	<i>hey(e)</i>	23	19		<i>wol</i>	11	14
	<i>high(e)/hygh(e)</i>	11	45	WITII	<i>with/wyth</i>	272	453
LET	<i>lat(e)</i>	25	57		<i>w<sup>t</sup></i>	189	211
	<i>let(e)</i>	46	35				

Table 2. Absolute occurrence, by selected groups of quires, of selected spellings in Gg

Note. All links except for the Wife of Bath's Prologue are omitted. The Cook's Tale is lost through mutilation to Gg

In addition, Gg contains a number of unusual minor spellings which have received considerable scholarly attention<sup>7</sup>. Frederick Furnivall was the first to note their presence (1869-77: 6-7, 51-59), and it is these spellings that are especially diagnostic of East Anglian dialect. They are not among the scatter of easternisms that regularly crop up in metropolitan varieties of English at this date. A preliminary investigation into those among them like *schastite* and *scherche* which have *sch*—where one would expect to find *ch*—reveals that they are evenly distributed in the text<sup>8</sup>. They also occur in the other texts included in Gg.4.27, part 1 as well as in e Musaeo 116 (Seymour 1968: 169).

<sup>7</sup> See fn. 6 above.

<sup>8</sup> The forms and distributions considered as evidence for the unusual *sch-* spellings being found throughout Gg are: *schungede* (F370), *schanou[n]* (G573), *scharge* (I363), *schastite* (A2055), *schau[m]byr* (A4143), *schau[n]ge* (C734, B<sup>2</sup>2246, B<sup>2</sup>2453, B<sup>2</sup>4264, I368), *schau[n]ged* (A1400), *schau[n]gede* (A2809), *schau[n]tith* (A3367), *schau[n]sel* (A3656), *schauy[n]ge* (G1239), *scheke* (D433), *schekes* (A633), *scherche* (A2760, A3429), and *schide* (I632).

## THE EVIDENCE OF GG'S CODICOLOGY

Scholars have noted that, except for the independent quire 1, the bulk of Gg.4.27, part 1 appears to be consecutively copied, for most new items begin in the middle of a quire (Mosser 1996); but coincident textual and quire boundaries occur within Gg. The Cook's Prologue, the Man of Law's Tale, and the Clerk's Tale are thus marked in the quiring, inks, and ruling, and seem each to signal the beginning of a stint of copying. This can be inferred from the following features, some of which I have developed from the commentary by Parkes and Beadle (1978-79). (1) Before the manuscript was mutilated, the Man of Law's Tale began on the first verso of quire 17, and the Clerk's Tale commenced on the last folio of quire 20<sup>9</sup>. (2) Quire 11, on whose eleventh folio the General Prologue began before the mutilation, is signed *a* with the folio sequence indicated in Arabic numerals. Signatures in this format, be they contemporary with the scribal work or not (Mosser 1996; Parkes and Beadle 1979-80, 3: 62; cf. Manly and E. Rickert 1940, 1: 170; Seymour 1997: 47), continue up to *I* in quire 20, although quire 16 is signed *k I* between the quire 15 *e* and the quire 17 *f*. Some spacing separates the two letters in the three surviving quire 16 signatures, which appear on fols. 183<sup>r</sup>, 184<sup>r</sup>, and 186<sup>r</sup> respectively. Of these, the numeral that follows the letters is easily missed in the case of the latter two because the relevant folios are worn at the outer edge. It may be this that led Parkes and Beadle to read the signature as *k* followed by a Roman numeral "1" although *I* here has the emphatic form of the letter. All signatures after quire 20, if present at all, consist of an arbitrary symbol followed by a Roman numeral. (3) The ink has changed from a lighter to a darker shade of brown by the Cook's Prologue towards the end of quire 16 (Manly and E. Rickert 1940, 1: 173). (4) Quires 11-16 are ruled to receive 36 lines to the page, while quires 17-37 are ruled for 38 or 39 lines; quire 37 concludes the poem. (5) Of these, quires 17-19 and 21-23 were each ruled as a batch, the latter twice because the original ink flaked off (Parkes and Beadle 1979-80, 3: 39-40). Scholars have attributed the new ruling of 38/39 lines to the page to the requirements of the ordinatio, for the rime royal Man of Law's Tale is the first stanzaic tale in the Gg tale order, which, as has been mentioned, is the *a*-Ellesmere one (Parkes and Beadle 1979-80, 3: 42). Five seven-line stanzas separated by a blank line are accommodated on every page (5x7 lines+4x1 line=39 lines). This may mean either that the Gg makers had not yet received this tale when they copied the tranche ending at the Cook's Prologue, or that they copied that tranche without looking ahead to the Man of Law's Tale in planning the ordinatio.

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<sup>9</sup> Two additional link/tale boundaries in Gg coincide, probably accidentally, with a quire boundary. These are the Prioress's Tale which began on the now-lost first folio of quire 27 (fol. 319<sup>r</sup>) and the Mangle's Tale which begins on the first recto of quire 33 (fol. 395<sup>r</sup>).



In addition, the placing of the miniatures upon the page indicates that the scribe had already completed certain parts of his work when the Gg makers decided to include them. The extant miniatures, which, like those found in Ellesmere, are of pilgrims on horseback (Margaret Rickert 1940: 590-604; Parkes and Beadle 1979-80, 3: 59-60), are those of the Reeve (fol. 186<sup>r</sup>), Cook (fol. 192<sup>v</sup>), Wife of Bath (fol. 222<sup>r</sup>), Pardoner (fol. 306<sup>r</sup>), Monk (fol. 352<sup>r</sup>), and Manciple (fol. 395<sup>r</sup>). Parts of a penwork border surrounding what was that of the Miller survive on fol. 174<sup>v</sup>, and the tail of a horse is visible on the stub of fol. 243<sup>r</sup> which carried that of the Clerk before line 57 of his tale where its narrative part begins. Every miniature with its border is aligned with the text and slightly exceeds half the ruled area in size, occasionally extending slightly beyond that area in the vertical dimension. The regular placing of one is within that area either on the same page as, and immediately before, the beginning of the tale to which it relates or of this tale's narrative part, or on the page preceding the start of that tale so as to fill it, for the Gg makers were always reluctant to start a new link or tale on the bottom half of a page and so regularly left a blank there. The miniatures of the Monk, Clerk, and Canon's Yeoman illustrate these respective placings. The presence of both miniature and decorative initial on the same page always resulted in the omission of those parts of the miniature penwork border which were to occupy the same space as the 3/4 leaf border growing out of the initial. The penwork borders are therefore most probably later than both the initials and the miniatures. If they are in the hand of the scribe, as Parkes and Beadle suggest (1979-80, 3: 42-43, 59-60), this means that he returned to Gg.4.27, part 1 after it had been decorated.

However, exceptions to this pattern are found within the consecutive tranche of the text containing the General Prologue and the prologues and tales of the Knight, Miller, and Reeve, as follows. The text missing from the absent fols. 142-144 is A757-858 (=101 lines), and a rubric followed by the Latin *Thebaid* epigraph to the Knight's Tale plus A859-964 (=2+106 lines). Since these six pages were almost certainly intended to receive a total of 216 lines of text given that 36 lines to the page is the standard ruling in this section of the manuscript, a space of just seven lines was available for receiving the lost miniature of the Knight after the concluding lines to the General Prologue on fol. 143<sup>r</sup>. It must thus have extended to the very bottom edge of that page, far exceeding the ruled area. The miniature of the Miller, the next one in the tranche, is unexpectedly supplied before his prologue, on fol. 174<sup>v</sup>. This is because a space of sixteen ruled lines was available there after the Knight's Tale due to the makers' regular practice of leaving the bottom half of the page blank after a tale. The space between the Miller's Prologue and Tale on fol. 176<sup>r</sup>—the expected placing—was of an insufficient size for taking the miniature as they are separated by just one line. The last miniature in the tranche, that of the Reeve, survives and extends to the very bottom edge of the page,

like that of the Knight. This page, fol. 186<sup>r</sup>, which is ruled for the usual 36 lines, additionally contains the concluding 30 lines of the Reeve's Prologue, and cropping has caused the loss of parts of the lower penwork border associated with the miniature. These three exceptions indicate that the conflict between miniature and initial ultimately arose because the Gg makers modified the *ordinatio* to set aside space for taking the former only when the tranche of the text up to the Cook's Prologue was already copied. In addition, a rubric in red ink, written in the regular hand of the scribe, is cramped into the one-line space between the Miller's Prologue and Tale touching the text above as well as below, and an unfilled three-line space appears before the Cook's Prologue on fol. 192<sup>r</sup> in quire 16; no rubric introduces this link. The Gg scribe adopts a more formal script indicated by the more upright slant and the absence of a lobe on the ascender of the *b* and *h* graphs for most other rubrics except for those occurring next to a miniature, though not that of the Wife. So not only the change of ink and the lack of planning for the incorporation of the miniatures, but also irregularities in the rubrication show that there occurred some interruption to the scribal and decorative procedures at the junction of the Reeve's Tale and the Cook's Prologue.

Reconstruction strongly suggests that the first nine lines of the Man of Law's Prologue [B<sup>1</sup>1-9] were accommodated in the space after the last 21 lines of the Cook's Tale [A4401-22] on the lost fol. 193<sup>v</sup>. This arrangement of the text, which can be calculated with confidence from the surviving fols. 192 and 194, ran counter to the normal practice of the Gg makers since it involved the starting of a link on the bottom half of a page. It also produced a gap between tale and link that is of an unusual size for Gg, and it made it the sole early *Canterbury Tales* copy which both excludes the Tale of Gamelyn and has no gap to the end of the page or, more usually, quire after the incomplete Cook's Tale. A possible account runs as follows: the Gg makers abandoned the copying of quire 16 at the Cook's Prologue because this link and his tale would fail to fill this quire, or there may have been uncertainty about what was to follow next. So they started the Man of Law's Tale on what is now quire 17 in the new, darker ink and left the first recto of that quire, fol. 195<sup>r</sup>, now lost, blank to permit this tale to be joined to whatever would eventually precede it. When it later became clear that no conclusion to the Cook's Tale was forthcoming and that the Man of Law's Tale would be the next tale after it, the team resumed quire 16, now in the new ink, by writing the Cook's Prologue and Tale in and linking them to the already started Man of Law's Tale through the Man of Law's Prologue. They had already taken the decision to include the miniatures at this time, for they were able to arrange the text so that those of these two pilgrims fitted exactly within the ruled area on their respective pages. This account gives the possibility that the irregular *k I* signature signals that quire 16 was completed last, or just possibly penultimately, in the series

of alphabetically signed quires, for the present quire 20 is signed *I* and follows the batch-ruled quires 17-19 as we have seen<sup>10</sup>. In other words, the progress of the Gg scribe's copying was (1) the General Prologue to the Reeve's Tale; (2) the Man of Law's Tale to the Summoner's Tale; (3) the Cook's Prologue and Tale, and the Man of Law's Prologue; and (4) the Clerk's Tale to the Parson's Tale, with the proviso that the third stint may have been started before the second was completed.

## CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The analysis of the linguistic evidence indicated that co-ordinate usages exist within Gg. The first usage is characteristic of those tales which come before the junction of the tales of the Summoner and the Clerk and the second usage is characteristic of those tales which come after it. The existence of the two usages indicates, I feel, that a change of exemplar took place at this junction, for they show the Gg scribe adopting features from what lay before him to copy from. That *p* peters out gradually after the Summoner's Tale reveals him abandoning the policy of transcription he had followed hitherto in favour of one of translation, by which he sought to continue the previous usage with respect to the graphemic representation of the dental fricative. He soon abandoned this new policy due to the new exemplar increasingly activating the functional equivalent *th* in him. The distribution of *eeC* and *ooC* shows them likewise becoming increasingly activated in the scribe only after the Summoner's Tale, at the expense of *eCe* and *oCe* which had been dominant up until this point. This means that the Gg scribe fluctuated between adopting and adapting exemplar features during their transfer to his copy. This characterisation of him calls for an affirmation of his dialectal consistency given the inclusion of Gg.4.27, part 1 as a survey point in LALME.

Among the features signalling the two usages, the pairs *p:th* and *eeC/ooC:eCe/oCe* are almost certainly phonologically identical but graphemically distinct as are *with/wyth:w<sup>t</sup>*, whereas other pairs such as *be:bi-/by-*, *nat:not*, and *wil:wol* differ both phonologically and graphemically (and dialectally). Still other pairs such as *schau[n]ge:chau[n]ge* may have been phonologically identical to the Gg scribe but phonologically distinct to most contemporary readers, at least at first sight. Mid-fourteenth century northern and

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<sup>10</sup> The Cook's Prologue and Tale do not follow the Reeve's Tale in the pair London, British Library, MSS Additional 35286 and Harley 7335. If this was the case also in the Gg exemplars, there seems to be no reason why the rest of the quire would be left blank after the Reeve's Tale. Nor is it likely that the Gg makers originally planned on omitting the Cook's Prologue and Tale altogether or allocating them a position later in the poem, for the same reason.

southern scribes may similarly have disagreed about whether an adjectival final *-e* was a feature of spoken or written language, and about whether a *y*-like *figura* used in both *þ* and *y* contexts represented one or two *litterae*. It appears from the present evidence that the Gg scribe adapted what he encountered in his exemplars to his own graphemic system as a process separate from that of him adapting it to his own phonological system, and that the rules governing these processes themselves evolved as his copying progressed. Both processes can be described in the familiar terms of “transcription” or “translation” of exemplar features introduced by McIntosh (1963: 28); but because the graphemic and phonological systems of scribes and the relationship of these systems to one another differ, there will be a fresh answer to what constitutes movement along which of the two clines for every scribe and exemplar<sup>11</sup>.

From the narrative part of the Gg Clerk’s Tale starting on the first recto of quire 21, the first in a series of batch-ruled quires, and from the alphabetical series of signatures ending in the immediately preceding quire, it may be surmised that a stint of copying starts at the junction of the Summoner’s Tale and this tale. This congruence of spelling with quiring, ruling, and textual arrangement strengthens the hypothesis that the scribe began copying from a second exemplar there. The use of *th* to represent the dental fricative and of *eeC/ooC* to represent a long or lengthened vowel characterises the usage found in the earlier Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of *Canterbury Tales* as does the spelling *nat* for the negation, which likewise increases after the Gg Summoner’s Tale. Manly and E. Rickert (1940, 1: 175-76) found the Gg text to be independent of the other major manuscripts up to and including that tale but related to those two manuscripts as far as the remaining tales are concerned<sup>12</sup>. The Gg rubrics resemble those present in Ellesmere (Blake 1985: 77-78; Seymour 1997: 51), and the Gg miniatures may be associated with “the idea or debased copying” of those found in that manuscript (Seymour 1997: 51)<sup>13</sup>. In other words, the second exemplar was likely a manuscript akin to Ellesmere or was perhaps this manuscript itself. Unlike that of *nat*, the distribution of other forms typical of Hengwrt and Ellesmere, ‘swich/swych’, ‘yeue-’, and *wol*, conflicts with this inference since none of these forms exhibits the expected increase after the Summoner’s Tale, and still other forms typical of them such as ‘muche(l)’, ‘sholde’, and ‘thurgh’ are practically absent. But it is distinctly possible that all six were present also in the Gg first exemplar given its likely London-Westminster origin that follows from its

<sup>11</sup> These taxonomical issues are further discussed by McIntosh (1974, 1975) and Laing (1999).

<sup>12</sup> Manly and E. Rickert describe many additional changes in textual affiliation during the course of Gg, none of them between altogether separate branches of their stemma.

<sup>13</sup> Beside Gg, only the earlier Ellesmere and four later extant witnesses to *Canterbury Tales* contain one or more miniatures of the pilgrims. M. Rickert (1940) does not suggest any link between Ellesmere and Gg in terms of their miniatures.

early date. The Gg scribe, then, perpetuated the former three from both exemplars ('yeue-' as '3eue-') but rejected the latter three in all but a few instances.

The Gg *ordinatio* appears to have been developed ad hoc due to the mode of reception of the two exemplars. The first was probably received as two batches of text, their boundary falling at the junction of the Cook's Tale and the Man of Law's Prologue, as for example indicated by the change in ruling at quire 17. That those two batches derive from the same source—and so constitute one exemplar as the term is here employed—is shown by the linguistic evidence. The tales from that of the Clerk up to and including that of the Parson, which concludes the poem, were copied from the second exemplar. This exemplar certainly contained the complete text of *Canterbury Tales* since it provided the model upon which all the Gg miniatures and some of its rubrics are based. Its coming to hand may have confirmed that no conclusion to the Cook's Tale was forthcoming, leading to the completion, in the new, darker ink, of the abandoned quire 16. This reception of the two exemplars along with the availability of other exemplars, likewise high in textual authority, for most of Chaucer's shorter and all his other longer works, the presence of the supplementary hand in one of those other texts, and the likely return of the Gg scribe to Gg.4.27, part 1 after it was illuminated combine to suggest a population centre as its place of production. The possibility arising from the handwriting and the illumination that the manuscript dates earlier than scholars have customarily conceded strengthens the suggestion of Blake that this centre was London-Westminster. This is because exemplars for *Canterbury Tales* in unbound form may have been available nowhere else in the years immediately following Chaucer's demise. But both Ellesmere and other *a* or *a*-related manuscripts have associations with East Anglia through their dialect and marks of early ownership or readership, and so the possibility can by no means be excluded that exemplars in bound or unbound form had disseminated to an urban locality there by the customary production date for Gg.4.27, part 1 of c. 1420 or even a decade earlier.

A temporal hiatus occurred at the junction of the tales of the Summoner and the Clerk during the copying of another manuscript of the poem with an *a*-related text and early content, Oxford, Christ Church MS 152, presumably because its scribe needed to devise an order for the remaining tales. The junction is there marked by an ink change and absent folio that is coincident with a shift in spelling preferences (Blake and Thaisen 2004). One border artist worked on the Ellesmere tranche containing the General Prologue and the prologues and tales of the Knight, Miller, Reeve, and Cook. This tranche terminates in a blank of two and a half pages to the end of this manuscript's quire 6 and has a separate style of paraphing. These tales make up the stable "fragment A" in the traditional lineation system that goes back to the nineteenth-century Chaucer Society prints of the poem. A second artist is singlehandedly respon-

sible for all borders found in that tranche of Ellesmere which contains the prologues and tales of the Man of Law, Wife of Bath, Friar, and Summoner; or Man of Law followed by the likewise stable “fragment D”. No such cohesion characterises the allocation of borders to the total of three artists in any other longer consecutive tranche of the Ellesmere text (Scott 1995: 92-94). It is, therefore, possible to argue that fragments A and D may have existed in separate booklets but nonetheless come to be transmitted together early in the manuscript tradition, as if Chaucer himself had finished the poem up to the end of the Summoner’s Tale with the exception of him conclusively solving the special problems surrounding the incomplete Cook’s Tale. It is even conceivable that the Gg first exemplar contained the complete text of the poem. If so it was ordered only up to the end of the Summoner’s Tale, leading to greater uncertainty about its completeness than what the Cook’s Tale had already prompted and so to its eventual rejection; for it is unlikely that the Gg makers would have initiated the copying of the poem at all if they had no realistic expectation of obtaining its entire text. Scholars have devoted much attention to the textual study of *Canterbury Tales*. But studying the linguistic and (other) codicological aspects of Gg and other manuscripts can help us to arrive at a more complete picture of their genetic relationships and of early stages in the poem’s composition and scribal transmission, for much recent scholarship in those areas suggests that other manuscripts than Hengwrt and Ellesmere bear testimony to those stages.

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