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Caxton and His Readers: Histories of Book Use in a Copy of *The Canterbury Tales* (c. 1483)

DEVANI SINGH

At the Fondation Martin Bodmer in Cologne, Switzerland, is a little-known annotated copy of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the first illustrated edition published by Caxton around 1483.¹ This copy, Inc. B. 70, bears the physical marks of a long history of use, and this essay accounts for what is known of the book's provenance between its origins in Westminster and its arrival in Switzerland in the early 1940s. Its marginalia, damages, repairs, signatures, and binding are the signs of the individuals and institutions that read, revered, rejected, and coveted it, and are rewarding subjects for the history of reading. From this copy's history it is also possible to deduce the shifting cultural value of incunabula and specifically of the Caxton imprimatur during the intervening centuries since publication. A book like the Bodmer Caxton reaffirms the ways in which early books were used as well as read, and permits consideration of how historical users variously determined the utility and value attached to old books—as texts for reading, blank spaces for writing, and objects for collecting.²

“moral tale[s] vertuous”

The earliest evidence for the reception of this copy of *The Canterbury Tales* is a set of annotations likely written in the sixteenth century. These notes are clustered in two of the tales regarded as Chaucer's most sententious. Throughout *The Tale of Melibee* and in the first part of *The Parson's Tale* (“prima pars penitencie”), this reader has marked the margins with

annotations in coarse red pencil. His marginalia, with their abbreviated Latin and frequent *Nota* symbols, suggest a certain economy in the reading and recording process. Despite their reticence, however, these annotations shed some light on the reader's engagement with the *Tales*. While they occasionally highlight important plot points, such as Melibee's confrontation of his enemies near the tale's conclusion, the annotations chiefly reflect an interest in each text's religious and moral maxims. In reading *Melibee*, the red-pencil reader is most interested in Dame Prudence's counsel, marking *sententiae* such as "For the Poete sayth / That we oughten pacyently to taken the trybulacions that comen to vs" with a gloss, "paciencia," or her advice to "alleway haue thre thynges in your herte" with the marginal gloss "Nota iii."³ This reader's choice to add marginal notes exclusively beside the two prose tales suggests a selective reading of the collection. The enthusiasm of Renaissance readers for *Melibee* is witnessed by the comparatively higher volume of marginal glosses in copies of the *Tales*, as Alison Wiggins has documented.⁴ The evidence from the Bodmer Caxton affirms not only that tale's attractiveness as a site for marginal commentary, but also demonstrates that certain readers judiciously gravitated towards both of Chaucer's "moral tale[s] vertuous" in prose.⁵

A second, probably later, annotator of *The Parson's Tale* wrote in black ink, leaving systematic finding notes that record his reading. On one representative page, a series of marginalia tracks the Parson's catalogue of sin: "discorde," "betreyinge tru[st]," "Id[le] words," "Jangleinge," "geast[er]s," "ye remedy against ire."⁶ Both of these annotators identified and extracted moral guidance from the text, engaging with the book as a source of instruction and a site of Chaucer's own *auctoritas*. This is a literary appraisal that they might share with Caxton himself, whose Prohyme to the second edition names Chaucer as "that noble & grete philosopher Gefferey Chaucer," author of "many a noble historye as wel in metre as in ryme and prose."⁷ Chaucer was hailed as an "Antient and Learned English Poet" on title pages of his works around the turn of the sixteenth century, but the surviving marginalia suggest that some of his most vocal early annotators—those who read with pen or pencil in hand—were commonplacing consumers of his prose tales who extracted *sententiae* as they read.⁸

Names in the Margins

The most striking evidence of the Bodmer Caxton's reception is the total of thirty-one premodern names and signatures preserved in its margins.⁹ As in other annotated books, the handwritten traces left in this copy can appear inscrutable, revealing less about readers' engagement with Chaucer than about the varied and idiosyncratic forms of book use that exist alongside and beyond reading. Precisely because of their incidental nature—their

engagement with the book *qua* book—such annotations signal, too, the type of value and utility a Caxton volume held for its later owners.

The Bodmer Caxton came into the possession of an annotator named John Loskey around the middle of the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Developing a rudimentary system of secret writing, Loskey marked the book in six places with ciphered words and messages. He appears to have practiced encoding his own name—“J4hS 64sk2y”—inscribing it into the margins of the book at three points.¹¹ In one case, he copied both the ciphered name and, directly underneath, its decoded counterpart, “John Loskey” (Fig. 1).¹² The persistent declarations of his name elsewhere in the volume cast doubt on the notion that he wished to mask his identity.¹³ Instead, the copy of Chaucer seems to have been a place for him to elaborate and refine a skill that he could also use for playful or practical purposes beyond the book.

Loskey jotted down a partial key to his ciphers within the volume, and on the same page tested his system by enciphering some of the Middle English from “The Man of Law’s Tale.” This sample text appears on the same page as the key and comes from the first three lines of one stanza. When deciphered, it reads: “The fame anone thorough rome / how as a king shal come a pilg[...] / By herbengers.”¹⁴ In Loskey’s hands, the leaves of the Bodmer Caxton appear to have been a site for rehearsing a practice whose utility would extend beyond the covers of the book itself.¹⁵

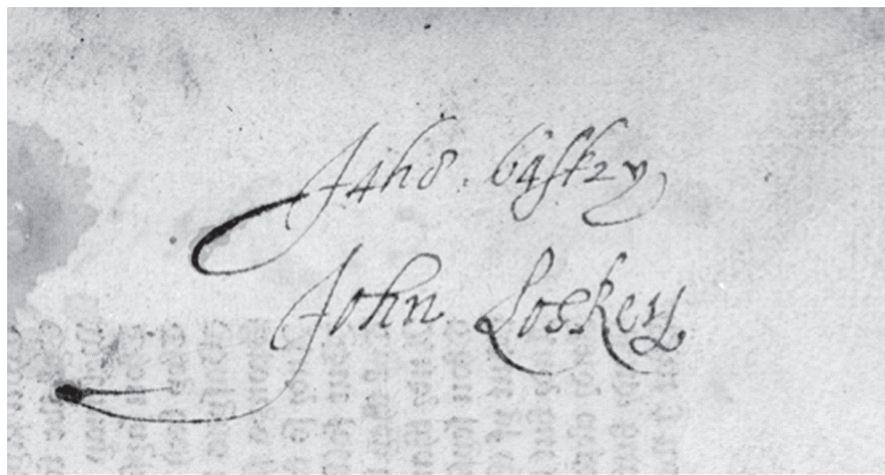


Figure 1. John Loskey’s signature, ciphered and regular (sig. r.2r, detail).

Another substantial set of Loskey's ciphers transliterates not into English, but into an imperfect Latin (Fig. 2, lines 1–4):

est liber iste meus possum promutere [sic]
 si furatur Johannes sic nominatur [sic]
 qui scripsit scripsita dextra siua sit benedicti [sic]
 qui scripsit carmen Loskeus est sibi nomen¹⁶

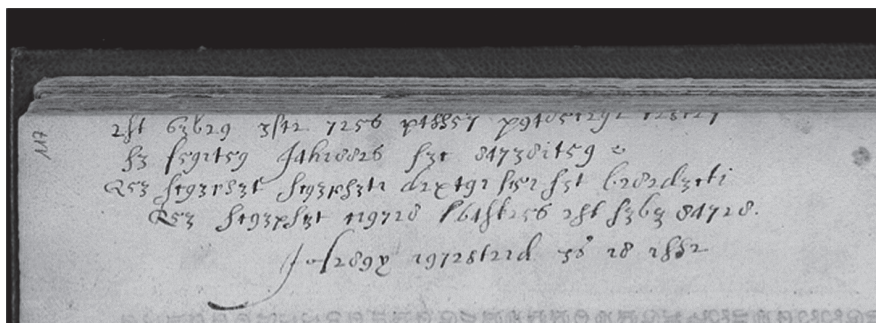


Figure 2. John Loskey's ciphered ownership note (lines 1–4) and insult "Josenry armestead is an asse" (line 5) (sig. p.5r, detail).

In its deciphered state, this inscription shares an important characteristic with some of the medieval ownership notes in manuscripts described by Daniel Wakelin, who proposes that "the very fact of addressing other readers of these books suggest[s] a rather public conception of private property."¹⁷ As Nadine Akkerman has illustrated, the exchange of ciphered communication in the early modern period not only facilitated the passage of secret information but also forged social and political bonds within coteries of writers and recipients.¹⁸ While we cannot know whether Loskey's cryptography in his Chaucer represents the wholly secret practice of an individual, what is certain is his wariness of circumstances and people who could undermine his assertion that the book was his personal property. In imagining a future in which his book is stolen ("si furatur"), Loskey resembles Wakelin's medieval annotators who "express some dislike of a world where the ownership of books is mobile and fragile."¹⁹

This Latin claim to ownership of the book is Loskey's most insistent, yet it is nearly impossible to work out without the key, making his encrypted self-naming ("Johannes," "Loskeus") an illuminating exception to what Wakelin has summarized as the "public role and address [...] implicit in their mere existence."²⁰ Rather than a potentially public record, Loskey's encoded ownership note is like a textual booby trap, hidden in plain sight, and only

requiring deciphering if the book should be stolen.²¹ Impossible to understand without the key and almost playful in its execution in the form of ciphers, the concealed ownership note seems to be created as much for the writer himself as for any future readers. This note serves more than the practical functions performed by conventional claims of ownership, and it shares its enigmatic quality with other historical practices of customizing one's books. Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) and Henry Yates Thomson (1838–1928), for instance, both developed coded systems to record the details of their book buying, while Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) customized the relevant page signatures in many of his books so that they would spell out his initials.²² Writing of medieval manuscripts, Wakelin similarly invokes the “knowing and playful comment” invited by more symbolic visual marks of ownership, such as coats of arms and rebuses.²³ Like Loskey, another early modern book owner wrote his ciphered ownership note—“Thomas Ma[r?]k / his Book (1710)” —on the title page of his copy of Webster's *The principles of arithmetic* (1634).²⁴ Such means of personalizing one's library do more than protect its contents; these symbols of ownership also seek to implicate owner and viewer alike in a discreet game of concealment and recognition. The paradoxically secretive nature of Loskey's ownership note in his Caxton is reinforced by another enciphered line underneath it, which, when decoded, reads “Josenry armestead is an asse” (Fig. 2, line 5). The name “Armestead” is familiar from elsewhere in the volume, where another early modern annotation claims ownership for someone else: “Anthonie Armistead / Est verus possessor huius Libri.”²⁵ Directly underneath it is a competing charge in Loskey's familiar hand: “John Loskey Booke.”

For all its engagement with people and purposes outside the book, however, Loskey's marginalia is noticeably bookish, concerned with his relation to the volume itself and with his status as owner, if not reader, of this copy of *The Canterbury Tales*. This bookishness is evident not only in Loskey's rebuttal of Anthony Armistead's claim to the volume, or in the fear of theft that his ciphers betray, but also in the persistent signatures, ciphered or not, that he inscribed in ten places throughout the copy. He used the space of the Caxton volume to cultivate a readerly persona, and it is precisely through the praxis of writing (“*qui scripsit*”) that he articulates this identity. As Wakelin observes of notes of ownership, “The people learning to read and write are also learning to write about themselves as readers or owners of books.”²⁶ Similarly, Adam Smyth has argued that marginalia composed of “reiterated signatures” might best be understood as a form of work in progress—of “an identity in the process of being made, reformed, practised, tried out.”²⁷ This is demonstrably the case with Loskey where his ownership note—“John Loskey Booke”—appears twice on the same page, not in a display hand nor in a prominent place in the book, but tucked into a space in the lower left

margin of a verso leaf, where it is penned in very small letters.²⁸ This occurs as well on another leaf, where he wrote only “John Loskey B,” before he trailed off into a series of six attempts at fashioning a majuscule B.²⁹

Despite the significant absence of any textual or literary engagement with Chaucer, Loskey’s marginalia must be understood alongside his relation to this book (“*liber iste*”) which he insisted he owned, and inside which he marked out spaces for practicing both secret and conventional methods of writing.³⁰ In this way, the printed page appears to be a neutral and personal place, shielded from the demands and rigor of public life, in which a young gentleman could safely hone the arts of writing. Yet Loskey’s marginal notes also suggest that the annotator’s intimacy with the page is threatened by a more public arena of other readers and claimants, like the Armisteads. His ciphers thus attempt to circumscribe and delimit the public space of the page while betraying an inevitable anxiety towards the book’s future readers.

Such readers were evidently numerous. On a series of six rectos between “The Franklin’s Tale” and “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” an annotator contemporary with Loskey has inscribed the names of different women in the margins, using the same large letters and brown ink: “Elizabeth Metcalfe,” “Margaret Pulleyne” and “Elleanor Metcalfe,” “Elizabeth Barrett,” “Beatrice Mau,” “Margery Trewman,” and “Beatrice Mauleverer,” with the names of Elizabeth Metcalfe and Beatrice Mauleverer also accompanied by their anagrams.³¹ The hand’s letter forms are regular, although significant blotting suggests haste or inexperience in writing. This succession of women’s names—one echoing the Thomas and George Mauleverer whose names appear elsewhere in the copy³²—may have collectively formed a type of *album amicorum* that gathered and preserved the names of those worthy of inclusion.³³ The anonymous annotator could have been a reader of Chaucer or may simply have been looking for a place to write, and like Loskey, found that place in the blank paper of this Caxton. Either way, the recording of these six names is an act invested with social and symbolic meaning, and the choice of this volume as a ready *album* in which to collect them demonstrates the versatility of the book as object.

There is evidence of connections between two families named Mauleverer and Metcalfe in the parish of Ingleby Arncliffe, North Yorkshire, in the mid-seventeenth century. James Mauleverer (1590/1–1664) had a wife called Beatrice (*née* Hutton, 1596–c.1640), as well as a daughter (b. 1624) and also a granddaughter (1651/2–1691) of that name. A son of James and Beatrice Mauleverer, Timothy (1627–1686/7), married a woman born Elizabeth Metcalfe (1625–1674), the daughter of George Metcalfe of nearby Northallerton.³⁴ Another Mauleverer, Thomas, of Allerton Mauleverer (d. 1687), had his will witnessed by one Christopher Metcalfe.³⁵ That these are the Yorkshire families among whom the book circulated during the

seventeenth century is further suggested by a deed from December 25, 1627. James Mauleverer is the named lessor, and one Edmond Troutbecke of Bramham is the lessee, while a “Mr. Loskey, gent.” is also mentioned in the deed as a landlord whose grounds Troutbecke also had “in his tenure.”³⁶ From the late sixteenth century, the Mauleverer family seat was the manor called Arncliffe Hall, which the family owned until the early twentieth century.³⁷ The large number of early modern names in this volume indicates the book’s centrality within the larger household but also suggests its mobility beyond the Mauleverer family.

The women’s names and Loskey’s signatures and ciphers collectively refine the narrative of how the book was conceived by its annotators in the seventeenth century. First, all of these notes underscore the conventionality of readers’ marginal comments and marks, most recently classified by William H. Sherman and Heidi Brayman Hackel, who enumerate various categories that could be said to comprise early modern marginalia.³⁸ The conventional quality of these early modern notes, however, resides not only in their textual burden—names, anagrams, maxims, ownership notes, pen trials—but also in their relative location within the book’s margins. When these individual readers chose to scribble, sign their names, or test a pen in the Bodmer Caxton, they authorized and reaffirmed the book’s pages (and especially its rectos) as a place for exactly these types of uses.³⁹ By the late seventeenth century, Chaucer was being read in the classically styled folio volumes edited by Thomas Speght, which included not only *The Canterbury Tales*, but both genuine and spurious texts that purported to represent all of his “Workes,” as well as features like a “Life” and a glossary of hard words, intended to aid the reader in understanding Chaucer’s biography and his language.⁴⁰ Alongside such editions, which advertised their “newly Printed” status, older volumes like the Bodmer Caxton could conceivably be seen by some users as less valuable or useful for the reading of Chaucer than their more recent counterparts.

Caxton on the Market

The copy’s value, both cultural and economic, was more prominently evaluated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sometime after its association with Loskey and the Mauleverers around the middle of the seventeenth century, the book entered the collections of the Royal Society, whose modern binding it still bears. It may have entered the library with the founding bequest made by Henry Howard, Duke of Norfolk in 1667; if it ever bore a stamp or inscription marking such a provenance, this has since been lost.⁴¹ In the early 1920s, the Council of the Royal Society contemplated selling off the remaining non-scientific books from the collection.

The decision had been brewing for some decades, as an article published in *The Times* on December 1, 1880, relates:

In regard to the library, a question has arisen as to how far purely literary works, which occupy much space, should be retained. Among them there are, doubtless, some which add neither to the utility nor to the importance of the library, but there are also some early printed books, bibliographical treasures, which are worthy of a place in any collection. It is proposed to have these carefully put in order, and to place them in a case by themselves. Among these, there may be mentioned: "Caxton's Chaucer," 1480, "Pynson's Chaucer," 1492, "Speght's Folio Chaucer," 1598.⁴²

Having already sold or exchanged its non-scientific manuscripts for scientific books with the British Museum in 1829, the Society finally decided to dispose of the remainder of its non-scientific (or "miscellaneous") printed books, including those from Norfolk's founding bequest, around 1923.⁴³ The announcement triggered a debate in the *Times* letters pages surrounding the legal and moral rights of the Society to dispose of a collection entrusted to it over 250 years prior. The Royal Society's President, C.S. Sherrington (1857–1952), wrote in defense of the ruling on March 26, 1925: "These volumes, it has been decided, after careful deliberation, to sell because they have no scientific interest or are duplicate copies."⁴⁴ A riposte by R. T. Gunther (1869–1940), later founder of Oxford's Museum of the History of Science, cautioned that any "scientific interest and value" of future acquisitions could not be compared to the more laudable "value [of] general culture" esteemed by the founding members of the Royal Society when they established their Library.⁴⁵

Our copy featured prominently in discussions of the sale. It is once again listed in *The Times*, in an article of March 26, 1925, announcing the Sotheby's auction, and the details of its sale also appear in the newspaper's account of the auction published on May 5: "two early editions of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,' one of Caxton's second edition, 1484, with 283 leaves (there should be 312 [sic])—£660, and the other printed by R. Pynson, 1490, 321 leaves (wanting three leaves, one of which is a blank)—£560 (both bought by Quaritch) [sic]."⁴⁶ The Royal Society's Caxton and Pynson were listed in the Sotheby's catalogue as "Exceedingly Rare" and "Extremely Rare," with the further notes that thirteen and three copies of each edition survive, respectively. Beside the Pynson's greater degree of rarity, its better condition, and its "old calf" binding, the Caxton's higher selling price in this sale is noteworthy.

By 1941, the book was in the possession of the Philadelphia collector A. S. W. Rosenbach (1876–1952), who had advertised it at a price of \$32,500.⁴⁷ Its buyer was Martin Bodmer (1899–1971), a Swiss philanthropist and bibliophile, who acquired it for his ambitious collection of world literature by engineering a deal with Rosenbach.⁴⁸ Also interested in the first edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609) listed at \$78,500 in the catalogue, Bodmer offered to pay the significantly lower sum of \$60,000 for the pair. His proposal, made during a period of wartime austerity, was accepted by Rosenbach, and the books were kept in storage in New York until the end of the war permitted their safe passage to Switzerland.⁴⁹ The pair of books remains at the Fondation Martin Bodmer in Cologne, Geneva, where they number among a collection of 174 English books printed before 1700, representing one arm of Bodmer's vast library of world literature.⁵⁰ For Bodmer, the Caxton acquisition formed a key addition to his Chaucer collection, which includes a fifteenth-century manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*⁵¹ (formerly Phillipps MS 8136 and now Bodmer Cod. 48); Richard Pynson's trilogy of *The Canterbury Tales*, *The House of Fame*, and *Troilus* (all c. 1526); and editions of the *Workes* by William Thynne (1532, and two copies of the c. 1550 edition) and Thomas Spenght (1598, 1602).⁵² In total, there remain nine printed Chaucer volumes at the Bodmer, several of which were also purchased during the 1940s. Apart from these, the archives indicate that the library once owned a single leaf of Caxton's first edition of the *Tales*. The c. 1483 edition of the *Tales*, however, is the only English incunable still at the Fondation Bodmer.

A "very poor copy"?

The Bodmer Caxton lacks thirty-one leaves, and already had several leaves damaged and torn in its premodern history. An early owner made a series of extensive repairs to these leaves, patching many tears and holes, furnishing partially torn leaves with new paper, and recopying the sections of missing text back into the book on the fresh paper at five points (Figs. 3 [a] and [b]).⁵³ One of the newly added leaves retains its watermark, a large fleur-de-lis in a shield with the initials "WR" at the base, tentatively suggesting a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century date for the repairs.⁵⁴ Similarities between the supplied text and Richard Pynson's c. 1492 edition (STC 5084) indicate that Pynson was the repairer's source text.⁵⁵ The physical and textual mending of this copy by a premodern user illuminate certain bibliographic expectations about the early printed book. First, the likely use of a Pynson incunable over more recent editions available by the end of the seventeenth century might reflect the repairer's view of a Caxton not as a superseded edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, but as an old and valuable book worth preserving for its own sake. In addition, the new scribe supplied the missing text in

a stylized script that approximates the black letter in which Chaucer would be printed in all editions until the eighteenth century. Significantly, this scribe also reproduced extraneous physical details from the printed edition no longer 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 (Fig. 3b).⁵⁶ Here is a copyist who not only sought to restore the textual integrity of this copy of Caxton, but who deliberately imitated the conventions of the early printed page while doing so.

This impulse to perfect and preserve incunabula is also evident in another copy of Caxton's second edition of the *Tales* formerly owned by Thomas Grenville (1755–1846), and now in the British Library. Slips in Grenville's hand recount their owner's 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

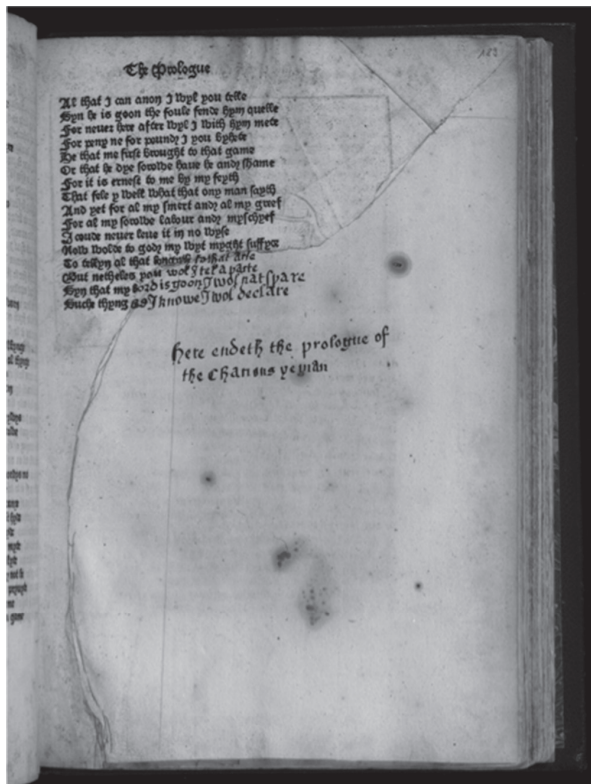


Figure 3a. Leaf from CYP/CYT showing premodern repairs.

facsimilist'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 [Oxford]—it is now quite perfect."⁵⁷ Agents like the prolific facsimilist John Harris (1791–1873), those who hired him to perfect their works, and the early repairer of the Bodmer Caxton all shared an antiquarian sensibility toward ancient works and a desire for their completeness and authenticity. The cachet that the first printed books could hold for later readers is most dramatically illustrated by another volume, Cambridge University Library, Syn.5.53.1. This is a fragment of William Thynne's 1532 edition (STC 5068), which was furnished with a spurious title page claiming a new provenance: "Westmestre, enprynted Wyllyam Caxton, MCCCCXXXI [1481]."⁵⁸

Where the Grenville copy has been professionally perfected and is lauded for its beauty, the Bodmer Caxton is imperfect, with missing leaves and roughly repatched areas. It was labelled a "very poor copy" by De Ricci

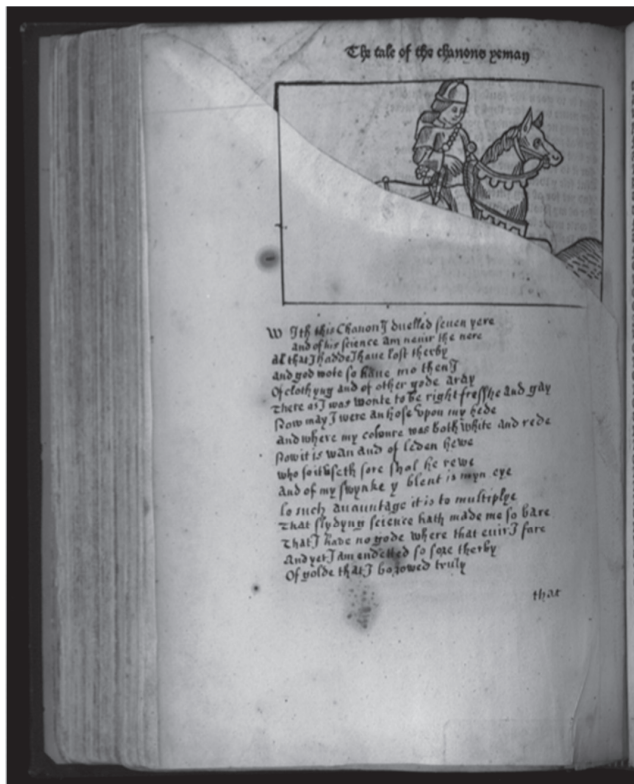


Figure 3b. Imitation blackletter script, offset initial, and catchword (sigs. 2d7r and 2d7v).

owing to these missing leaves, although the Sotheby's sale catalogue professed, "apart from the defects mentioned this copy is in very fair condition with good margins."⁵⁹ But the "good margins" that made this particular copy a desirable collector's item by the late nineteenth century were also an object of the bibliophile's disdain, encapsulated in William Blades's assessment of the then-Royal Society copy as bearing "manuscript disfigurements."⁶⁰ The physical feature that rendered the book a convenient place for early modern scribbling no doubt impacted nineteenth-century assessments of the copy's worth and collectibility.

The fortunes of the Bodmer copy thus track shifting attitudes to Caxtons between the book's publication and the present day. Events like the publication of Blades's two-volume biography of the printer (published from 1861 to 1863) and the South Kensington Quadricentennial exhibition (1877) saw the Caxton brand reach a new zenith during the mid- to late nineteenth century.⁶¹ The concomitant appetite of collectors for England's earliest printed books was served by professional pen- and type-facsimilists like Harris whose business was the completion, restoration, and making good of old books. The repairs in the Bodmer Caxton, too, show that the anxiety over bibliographic completeness had its precedent in early modern repairs to damaged old books.⁶² But where more immaculate copies had many of their marginal notes zealously cropped or washed by their collectors, the Bodmer Caxton's heavily annotated state suggests a relative neglect that results, ironically, in its significant interest to today's historians of reading. From its attentive, commonplacing readers to its use as a writing surface for ciphers and signatures, and ultimately to its pairing with a coveted Shakespeare edition in the sale to Bodmer, this copy's provenance demonstrates some of the hallmarks of Chaucerian reading alongside the lesser-studied histories of writing, rejection, and desire that also characterize the reception of England's earliest printed books.

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Acknowledgments

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NOTES

1. STC 5083.
2. On book use, see William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
3. Sigs. B.5^r; B.7^v. My thanks are due to Katherine Hindley for help in transcribing the annotations of this reader.
4. See Alison Wiggins, "What Did Renaissance Readers Write in their Printed Copies of Chaucer?" *The Library* 9 (1) (2008): 16–17.
5. *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 216 (VII. 940).
6. Sig. I.5^r.
7. Sig. a.2^r. These leaves are wanting in the Bodmer copy and were consulted in the Grenville copy of the second edition (British Library, C.21.d), discussed below and viewable online at "Treasures in Full: Caxton's Chaucer," British Library, accessed 20 March 2017, <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/caxton/search.asp>.
8. On the commonplacing of Chaucer, see Wiggins, "Printed Copies of Chaucer," 17. The two editions were printed in 1598 (STC 5077, 5078, and 5079) and in 1602 (STC 5080 and 5081).
9. Compare Wiggins, "Printed Copies of Chaucer," 29, who records a total of seventy-six names in her census of fifty-four copies.
10. One of his signatures is dated: "John Loskey Booke 1641." Sig. r.5^r.
11. Sigs. k.2^r, r.2^r, 2a.3^r.
12. Sig. r.2^r.
13. Loskey wrote his name in standard characters at seven different places in the book.
14. Sig. I.5^r.
15. On the uses of ciphering, see James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512–1635* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 148; William H. Sherman, "Decoding the Renaissance: 500 Years of Codes and Ciphers," *Folgerpedia*, http://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Decoding_the_Renaissance:_500_Years_of_Codes_and_Ciphers [accessed January 9, 2017].
16. "This is my book I can swear / If it should be stolen John is named / He who wrote these words shall have his right hand blessed / He who wrote this poem, Loskey is his name." Sig. p.5^r. I thank Benjamin Cartlidge for advice on Loskey's Latin.

17. Daniel Wakelin, "'Thys ys my boke': Imagining the Owner in the Book," in *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 32.
18. Nadine Akkerman, "Enigmatic Cultures of Cryptology," in James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, eds., *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 69–84.
19. Wakelin, "'Thys ys my boke,'" 16.
20. *Ibid.*, 17.
21. A similar use of code to establish ownership—of ideas, rather than books—was employed by scientists including Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695), and Robert Hooke (1635–1703), who published their findings in anagrams so as to hide their discoveries while still safeguarding their claims to priority. See David Wootton, *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 94–95.
22. To do this, Jefferson prefixed a *T* to pages signed *I* (*J*) and added a *J* to pages with signature *T*. A similar practice was adopted by Oxford antiquary Philip Bliss (1787–1857). See David Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History* (London: British Library, 1994), 12–25; Margaret Nickson, "Sloane's Codes: The Solution to a Mystery," *Factotum* 7 (1979): 13–18; Christopher De Hamel, "Was Henry Yates Thomson a Gentleman?" in *Property of a Gentleman: The Formation, Organisation and Dispersal of the Private Library 1620–1920*, ed. R. Myers and M. Harris (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1991), 77–89; and E.M. Sowerby, *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1952), 1: xii.
23. Wakelin, "'Thys ys my boke,'" 19.
24. British Library, Ames III/1190. See Pearson, *Provenance Research*, 21.
25. "Anthonie Armistead is the true owner of this book." Sig. o.1^r.
26. Wakelin, "'Thys ys my boke,'" 23.
27. Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 136. See Jason Scott-Warren, "Reading Graffiti in the Early Modern Book," *HLQ* 73, 367, who notes that "John Finet" wrote his name not only on the title page and flyleaf of CUL Pet.F.3.12, his Latin prayer book, but also repeated his name or initials nearly fifty times throughout the volume.
28. Sig. i.4^v.
29. Sig. q.7r.
30. Another ciphered note on sig. 2a.3^r reads, "learne to redeme the precious time here sent thee / shune false allurements, and courts subtilitie. / resolve herein, of thine amisse repent thee; so maist thou vanquish

chance and debilitie. / Jo John Loskey." A Latin proverb and its English translation, in Loskey's italic and mixed secretary hands, also appear in the margins of sig. d.7^r: 'Fide sed ante fide qui fidet nec bene fidet / Faliter ergo fide ne capiare fide / He that trusts before he trie / May repent before he die.'

31. Signatures p.4^r, p.8^r, r.3^r, r.4^r, s.3^r, s.4^r. The anagrams for Elizabeth Metcalfe and Beatrice Mauleverer are "Habet faciam Stelle" and "Let vertue imbrace 'er" respectively, on sigs. p.4^r, s.4^r.
32. The names of Thomas Mauleverer and George Mauleverer appear together twice, and in the same hand, on sigs. B.5^v, h.1^r.
33. See G.D. Hobson, "Et Amicorum," *The Library*, 5th ser., 4 (2) (1949): 87–99. See also Helen Smith, "'Rare poems ask rare friends': Popularity and Collecting in Elizabethan England," in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 84.
34. The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 16 (1902), 203. See also William Brown, *Ingleby Arncliffe and its Owners* (Leeds: John Whitehead and Son, 1901), 83–85.
35. "Will of Sir Thomas Mauleverer of Allerton Mauleverer, Yorkshire," The National Archives, accessed 12 January 2017, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D745575>.
36. William Brown, ed., *Yorkshire Deeds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 2: 115.
37. See Brown, *Ingleby Arncliffe*, 6, who records that it was "left untenanted" until this time despite Mauleverer ownership since the early fifteenth century.
38. Sherman, *Used Books*, 16–17; Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 138–139.
39. By my count, 75 percent of the book's incidental marginalia (all marks excluding finding notes and textual commentary, where the location of the note is predetermined) appear on rectos.
40. Derek Pearsall, "Thomas Speght (c. 1550–?), " in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, ed. Paul Ruggiers (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984), 71–92.
41. Marie Boas Hall, *The Library and Archives of the Royal Society 1660–1990* (London: The Royal Society, 1992), 3, notes that books from the founding bequest were stamped "ex dono Henrici Howard Norfolciensis".
42. "The Royal Society," *The Times*, December 1, 1880.
43. Boas Hall, *Library and Archives of the Royal Society*, 44–46.
44. C.S. Sherrington, letter to the editor, *The Times*, March 27, 1925.
45. R.T. Gunther, letter to the editor, *The Times*, March 28, 1925. Letters

condemning the decision were also published in *The Times* on April 1, April 30, and May 5 of that year.

46. In fact, the annotated catalogues at the Huntington and in the Quaritch archives both confirm the £660 sum for the Caxton, but disagree as to the buyer, naming "Quaritch" and "J.P." respectively. I am grateful to both institutions for providing me with copy-specific information from their annotated auction catalogues, *Catalogue of valuable printed books, sold by order of the President and Council of the Royal Society, which will be sold by auction ... on Monday, the 4th of May, 1925* (London: Sotheby, 1925), no. 40. The Royal Society Pynson was lot no. 41.
47. *English Poetry to 1700* (Philadelphia: The Rosenbach Company, 1941), no. 160.
48. Bodmer would go on to make a larger purchase from Rosenbach in 1951 to 1952 when he purchased his Shakespeare collection. See Edwin Wolf and John F. Fleming, *Rosenbach: A Biography* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1960), 579–586.
49. Wolf and Fleming, *Rosenbach*, 502. An article by A.S.G. Edwards, "What's it Worth?: Selling Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in the Twentieth Century," *Chaucer Review* 48 (2014), 239–250, misstates the \$60,000 figure as the price of the Caxton only.
50. See Lukas Erne and Devani Singh, *Shakespeare in Geneva: Early Modern English Books (1475–1700) at the Martin Bodmer Foundation* (forthcoming 2017).
51. This MS was bought from Rosenbach on another occasion for \$46,500, down from a catalogue price of \$85,000. See H.P. Kraus, *A Rare Book Saga: The Autobiography of H.P. Kraus* (New York: Putnam, 1978), 273.
52. STC 5086, 5088, 5096; 5068, 5073, 5074; 5078, 5080.
53. The leaves with substantial repairs and recopied text are sigs. c.5; p.2; 2d.7; 2f.1; E.2.
54. 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*, 2nd ed., ed. A. H. Stevenson (Amsterdam: The Paper Publications Society, 1968), 3; and Edward Heawood, *Watermarks, mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hilversum: The Paper Publications Society, 1950).
55. The details in the supplied manuscript text peculiar to Pynson 1492 are evident, for example, in the CYT where "white and rede" appears where all the other black letter editions have "fresshe and rede"; and the inversion of the lines "There as I was wont to be right fresshe and gay / Of clothyng and of other good aray" (sig. 2d.7^v).

56. 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.
57. British Library C.21.d, "Treasures in Full: Caxton's Chaucer," British Library, accessed 20 March 2017, <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/caxton/search.asp>.
58. Hope Johnston, "Readers' Memorials in Early Editions of Chaucer," *Studies in Bibliography* 59 (2015), 61.
59. *Catalogue of Valuable Printed Books*, 8. De Ricci measures the book at 273 x 197 cm in its modern binding, larger than nearly every other copy of this edition listed in his *Census*. Only the Pepys copy at Magdalene College, Cambridge is larger. Seymour De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons* (Oxford: Bibliographical Society, 1909), no. 23: 9.
60. William Blades, *The Life and Typography of William Caxton* (London: Trübner & Co, 1863), 2, no. 57: 6.
61. On Caxton's reputation at the time of the exhibition, see David McKittrick, *Old Books, New Technologies: The Representation, Conservation and Transformation of Books since 1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 159–182.
62. *Ibid.*, 37–56.