BIBLIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY VERSUS BIBLIOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE: THE PLOWMAN’S TALE AND EARLY CHAUCER EDITIONS

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This note examines the history of bibliographical confusion regarding the relation of the Plowman’s Tale to early Chaucer editions. I focus in particular on the association of the Plowman’s Tale with what is known as the Pilgrim’s Tale, and the relations of both texts to the 1532 and 1542 editions of Chaucer by William Thynne (STC 5068 and 5069/5070). The material bibliographical evidence is clear and simple. The Plowman’s Tale was first printed as an independent text by Godfray (c. 1535, STC 5099.5), and it was this print that served as copytext when the Plowman’s Tale was added to the Canterbury Tales in the 1542 edition of Chaucer. The Plowman’s Tale was subsequently included in Chaucer editions (however wrongly) for some 200 years, finally omitted in Tyrwhitt’s 1775 edition. The bibliographical association of the Pilgrim’s Tale with Chaucer, by contrast, is entirely speculative, based in part on Bale’s 1548 list of Chaucer’s works and more important on Francis Thynne’s account of his father’s editorial efforts in his Animadversions of 1598.

My examination of this material should also eliminate some related and still persistent bibliographical ghosts: an edition of the Plowman’s Tale by Powell (not recognized by STC); a single-column edition of Chaucer said to have been once used to complete a double-column Chaucer; a similar single-column edition of the Pilgrim’s Tale; and a manuscript version of the Plowman’s Tale earlier than all printed copies. The first part of this note discusses the narratives of

2 Bale’s list includes: ‘De curia Veneris, li, I. In Maio cum viscerent, &c.’; and ‘Narrationes diversorum, trac. I. In comitatu Lycolniensi’; the second incipit is a Latin version of the first line of the Pilgrim’s Tale, the first is to another poem in a similar collection (STC 24650.5; see below, n. 9). For text, see Eleanor Prescott Hammond, Chaucer: a bibliographical manual (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 8–9.
the early history of the Plowman’s Tale; the second part considers the conflicting evidence provided by material evidence and formats.

The modern version of the early publication history of the Plowman’s Tale is based on the *Animadversions* of Francis Thynne (1598). Thynne’s *Animadversions* are directed against Thomas Speght’s edition of 1598. Thynne’s story is readily available and has often been summarized; my particular concerns in this re-examination of Thynne are with the physical and material objects that could be at the origin of Thynne’s polemic.

Thynne claims that an early edition of Chaucer exists which Speght has not seen. Water gathers corruption as it runs from its source; thus the earliest edition of Chaucer is the best:

To endue me and all others to judge his editione (whiche I thynke you neuer sawe wholye to-gethre, beinge fyrst printed but in one coolume in a page, whereof I will speake hereafter) was the perfectest. (6)

I too will speak hereafter of this one-column Chaucer, as well as the phrase ‘wholly together’. The most important statements follow:

In whiche his editione, beinge printed but with one coolume in a syde, there was the pilgrymes tale, a thinge moore odious to the Clergye, then the speche of the plowmanne; that pilgrimes tale begynnynge in this sorte;

‘In Lincolneshyre fast by a fenne,
Standes a reliugious howse who dothe yt kenne,’ &c.

In this tale did Chaucer most bitterlye enveye against the pride, state, couetousnes, and extorcione of the Bysshoppes ... This tale, when kinge henrye the eighte had rede, he called my father unto hym, sayinge, ‘Williame Thynne! I dobe this will not be allowed.’ ... All whiche not withstandinge, my father was called in questione by the Byshoppes, and heaved at by cardinall Wolseye, his olde enyme ... The Cardinall caused the kinge so muche to myslyke of that tale, that chaucer must be newe printed, and that discoure of the pilgrymes tale lefte ote; and so beinge printed agayne, some thynges were forsed to be omitted, and the plowmans tale (supposed, but vntrulye, to be made by olde Sir Thomas Wyat, father to hym which was executed in the firste yere of Quene Marye, and not by Chaucer) with muche ado permitted to passe with the reste. (7–10)


4 Thynne’s motivation, which has not been noted, is to claim for his father all the additions made to the Chaucer canon. Thus here Thynne is given credit for printing both the Pilgrim’s Tale and the Plowman’s Tale. He is also given credit for later additions to the canon more properly due to Stow and Speght himself (11–12): Thynne ‘speaks of his father’s dispersed collection of manuscripts, which he claims may have come into Speght’s hands. Cf. the characterization of William Thynne by R. F. Yeager, ‘Literary theory at the close of the Middle Ages: William Caxton and William Thynne’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 6 (1984), 135–64.
Thus, Thynne claims that the Pilgrim’s Tale (a text he knows) was questioned and caused to be left out of an early, one-column edition of Chaucer. The Plowman’s Tale, missing not only from this (non-existent?) first edition, but missing also from the extant 1532 edition, was then permitted to be included in the subsequent edition (it appears first in the 1542 Chaucer and in all subsequent editions until Tyrwhitt’s).

There are a number of anomalies here, as many scholars have noted: Wolsey was impeached in 1529, and the first Thynne edition is 1532; the Plowman’s Tale appears first in the second edition, the edition of 1542. Here I am concerned only with specifically bibliographical issues: what material and textual evidence does Francis Thynne have available to him? Clearly, he has a 1542 edition of Chaucer, one with William Thynne’s preface, and the Plowman’s Tale printed after the Parson’s Tale. He also has a text of the Pilgrim’s Tale in some form, and probably some form of Leland. Along with this evidence, he has a story of a one-column edition, or perhaps some physical evidence of one. Although Thynne has a generally sound, if somewhat vague, idea of the early printing history of Chaucer (see 70–1), there is no indication here that Thynne has a 1532 edition of Chaucer at hand. And Thynne does nothing to answer still persistent questions concerning Leland’s statement of an early Thynne edition by Berthelet, rather than by Godfray.

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6 ‘And because my father colde not see by anye prologues of thee other tales... where to place the plowmans tale, he putt yt after the persons tale, whiche, by Chaucers owne woordes, was the laste tale... So that the plowmans tale must be sett in some other place before the manciple and persons tale, and not as yt ys in the last editione’ (Animadversions, 69). The only edition that this description could apply to is that of 1542. The 1550 edition and the 1561 edition had placed the tale before the Parson’s Tale, and Speght merely follows them.

7 The notion that the 1532 edition of Chaucer was somehow the second Thynne edition was repeated in the Preface to the 1721 edition of Urry (this part of the preface was drafted by William Thomas): ‘I cannot determine whether this be the first Edition put out by William Thynne, printed (as Leland says) by Berthelet, to which Brian Tucca added an elaborate and elegant Preface; or the second, increased by Mr. Stow; and printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532’; The works of Geoffrey Chaucer, compared with the former editions, ed. John Urry (London: Lintot, 1721), Preface. (Thomas’s reference to Stow, to make any sense at all, must mean ‘later increased by Mr. Stow’.) Leland’s statement, as printed in 1709 by Wood, is as follows: ‘Vicit tamen Caxodunicam editionem Berthoktus noster opera Gulielmi Thynni, qui, multo labore, sedulitate, ac cura usus in perquirendis vetustis exemplaribus, multa primae adjecit editioni. Sed nee in hac parte caruit Brianus Tucca, mihi familiaritate conjunctissimus, & Anglicae linguae eloquentia mirificus, sua gloria, edita in postremam impressionem praefatione elimata, luculenta, elegant’. (423; rpt. Hammond, Bibliographical manual, 4). Thomas must be writing this from notes, or has misread a statement concerning Leland included in the very testimonies of the Urry edition; see ‘Testimonies’, sig. g2r, on a quotation from Leland’s Encomia illustrium virorum, 5:141: ‘This was written by Leland, at the request of Thomas Berthelet, a diligent and learned Printer, who first printed Chaucer’s Works, put out by Mr. Thynne’. Thomas’s own handwritten notes in the British Library copy of Urry show that he at least attempted to correct some of these confusions.
By far the most important notes on the Pilgrim's Tale and the Plowman's Tale are by Bradshaw and Furnivall in the 1875 edition of Thynne's *Animadversions*. Bradshaw dismissed the supposed cancelled edition by William Thynne as a 'fiction' (75; Furnivall says he dismissed it as a 'flam', xlii), and repeated Tyrwhitt's arguments that the Pilgrim's Tale could not have been written before 1536. But he accepted a number of elements of Thynne's story, in particular, the intertwining of the early histories of the Pilgrim's Tale and the Plowman's Tale. And with his citation of a mythical edition of the Plowman's Tale by Powell, he contributed as well to an already surplus stock of bibliographical ghosts.

A partial text of the Pilgrim's Tale had been printed in what is known as the Douce fragment (STC 24650), and Bale's references in 1548 (noted above) are probably to this book. Again, I should emphasize that there is no material evidence whatsoever that this text was ever actually included in an edition of Chaucer or ever attributed in a printed book to Chaucer. Bradshaw notes, however:

It is clear that the book, of which the Douce fragment is a part, must have contained Chaucer's name on the title-page, and was probably printed shortly before 1540 (when Bale was exiled) or Bale would not have included among Chaucer's Works *De cura Veneris*, lib. 1, 'In Maio cum virescerent', &c.; and *Narrationes diversorum*, tract. 1, 'In comitatu Lyncolniensi', &c. (*Animadversions*, 75)

Bradshaw thus claims that the attribution of the Pilgrim's Tale to Chaucer occurs in the early sixteenth century, that a book existed with Chaucer's name on the title page and that this was seen by Bale. As Bradshaw's brief note proceeds, he qualifies his initial certainty about the hypothetical title-page, but positively identifies Francis Thynne's 'one-column Chaucer' as the extant Douce fragment, which he now places in Bale's hands:

Bale must have seen the book, or he could not have given us the *incipits*. It must (I think) have borne Chaucer's name on the title-page, or Bale would not have put it among Chaucer's works. It must have been printed after 1536 (see Tyrwhitt) and before 1540 (when [Bale's] exile took place); and so it may be possible that Thynne thought of including it in his 1542 edition, but was prevented through Bonner's or

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8 Among other evidence, Tyrwhitt showed that the text of the Pilgrim's Tale in the Douce fragment refers to a particular page of the 1532 printed edition of *Romaunt of the rose*, Furnivall reprints Tyrwhitt's note in full in his own note on *Animadversions*, 8-9.

9 In the Douce fragment, 'the Pylgrymes Tale' begins on fol. xxxi and follows a section with running heads 'The court of | Venus', which consists of short lyrics. Similar texts appear in two other fragments: the Folger fragment (STC 24650.5) (8 fos), and the Stark fragment (STC 26053.5) (2 leaves) (running heads 'A Boke | of Balettes'), which contains the first and second ballads also contained in the Folger fragment. The most extensive discussion of these three books is by Russell A. Fraser, ed., *The court of Venus* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1955), (diplomatic edition on 81–128); Fraser throughout implies that these are different editions of the same collection.
Gardiner's influence, not Wolsey's, which would put the matter into a wholly different period. ... The result is, that I am convinced that the one-column edition of Chaucer with the *Pilgrim's Tale* can only mean the 4to *Court of Venus*, &c., printed between 1536 and 1540, which Bale saw. (76)

A note by Furnivall to these comments supports Bradshaw:

This Bright fragment [now the Folger fragment, STC 24650.5] is at Britwell, and Mr W. Christie-Miller has been good enough to inform me that the first poem in it begins with

In the moneth of may, when the new tender grene
Hath smothly couered the ground that was bare

as Mr Bradshaw expected. Mr W. Christie-Miller adds: 'Chaucer's name I do not see upon the sheet, nor any trace of the name of the author'. But see Chaucer's name in the Douce fragment of the book, p. 98, l. 740, below. (76)

In other words, although Chaucer's name does not appear on an extant title-page of the Folger fragment as Bradshaw speculated, it does appear in the text of the Pilgrim's Tale in the Douce fragment. Therefore, Bradshaw is somehow right. (No wonder Bale was confused.)

Furnivall thus seems to conclude that the Douce fragment (containing the Pilgrim's Tale, with running heads 'The court | of Venus') and Folger fragment (with similar running heads but no textual affinities) are versions of the same work. Furthermore, that the Pilgrim's Tale from the Douce fragment refers to Chaucer in its text (line 740: 'whiche be chaucers awn hand wark' referring here to lines from the printed edition of the *Romaunt of the rose*) is tantamount to the appearance of Chaucer's name on a title page of a different book. The hypothetical Chaucerian title-page, although qualified even in its first utterance, is a very persistent fiction, with consequences later.

As for the separate edition of Chaucer suggested by Thynne, both Bradshaw and Furnivall regard this as a fiction, but they take seriously Thynne's reference to a one-column edition of something. Furnivall:

Mr Bradshaw ... looks on this cancelld edition as 'a flam' ... No scrap of this cancelld edition is known to have come down to our times, though Mr. W. C. Hazlitt once told me he recollected seeing at a sale at Sotheby's (Sir Wm Tite's) some leaves of a one-column black-letter edition of Chaucer, put-in to make up a 2-column edition (see p. xliii). If so, these leaves may perhaps prove to be a bit of William Thynne's first book. (xliii)

10 STC lists the Folger fragment as 'another edition' with a cross-reference only to the 1549 Stark fragment (STC 26053.5). Some of the rhetoric associated with the speculative history of the Pilgrim's Tale in relation to Chaucer editions seems to have intruded into the STC description of its relation to these quite different collections: see at STC 24650: 'The pseudo-Chaucerian Pilgrim's Tale was presumably omitted from later eds.'
If we follow Furnivall's own reference to the following page, we find a slightly different set of facts:

And lastly, Mr W. C. Hazlitt, and Mr F. S. Ellis (the well-known antiquarian bookseller and publisher, of the firm Ellis and White), told me some time since, and Mr Hazlitt has lately repeated his conviction, that they saw at Sotheby's salerooms at 13 Wellington St., W.C., within the last 2 or 3 years, a 2-columnd folio of Chaucer's Works that had its wanting leaves supplied from some one-columnd edition. Still, at present Wm Thynne's 1-columnd cancelld edition must be held the 'flam' or 'fiction' that Mr. Bradshaw has calld it. (xliii)

Bradshaw's own note printed on page xlii should have provided the evidence to solve this problem: 'we find a separate edition of the Plowmans Tale, the same type and size as Thynne's first edition of 1532, which looks as if he had intended to include it in that, and was overborne for some reason. He did include it in his second edition'. Bradshaw's suggestion is clearly on point: any talk about a one-column Chaucer print contemporary with the 1532 Godfray Chaucer (STC 5068) obviously is connected with the Godfray folio print of the Plowman's Tale (STC 5099.5). And that is clearly the implication of Bradshaw's other note at page 101:

The Plowmans Tale was first printed separately by Thomas Godfray in folio, without date, but about 1532–35, probably under W. Thynne's care. Why it was omitted from the edition of 1532 does not appear. ... From this separate edition (of which the only remaining copy, formerly Askew's Farmer's, and Heber's, is now at Britwell) it was reprinted in W. Thynne's second edition of Chaucer's works in 1542, and separately in octavo by W. Powell, about 1547–8. Nonetheless, on page xliii Furnivall ignores the obvious implications of Bradshaw's statements in favor of Bradshaw's conflicting notion that the 'one-column Chaucer' is to be associated with the Douce fragment containing the Pilgrim's Tale. And this is the version that is the basis of all later discussion: (1) that Thynne's inaccurate references to the one-column Chaucer edition are indirectly related to extant editions of the Pilgrim's Tale; (2) that Thynne's story of Pilgrim's Tale refers more accurately to the Plowman's Tale.

Later scholars modify these conclusions. Lounsbury's survey of Chaucer reception appeared in 1892 and repeated the story as told by Furnivall and Bradshaw. Lounsbury denied Thynne's statement that the Pilgrim's Tale was intended to be included in any Chaucer

11 Bradshaw is referring to the type used in the Prologue of the 1532 Chaucer, not the type used in the text, and thus his comments are misleading. Anything 'intended to be included' among the 1532 texts would have been printed in batard. See further below, n. 27, and examples of the types in fig. 2. Photos are courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

12 The Powell edition is probably a ghost version of what is in fact the Hyll edition of 1547–48. See below, n. 29.
edition and denied as well the cancelled edition containing the
Plowman’s Tale:

This disposes effectually of Thynne’s story that the ‘Pilgrim’s Tale’ could have been
included in the first edition that his father projected. His words indeed, convey the
further impression that in the first edition which his father actually published, the
‘Plowman’s Tale’ was included. This no one now needs to be told, was an error.

Lounsbury proceeds, repeating from Bradshaw the speculation
concerning the Chaucerian title-page on a book containing the
Pilgrim’s Tale:

The Pilgrim’s Tale, with other pieces, had been printed before the middle of the
sixteenth century in the volume already described as having been discovered by
Tyrwhitt. This either bore Chaucer’s name on its title-page, or its contents came
speedily to be attributed to him. The later fact we know from the additional list of
the poet’s writings which Bale, in his account of English writers, published in 1548,
appended to Leland’s original catalogue.

As for the one-column Chaucer, Lounsbury applies the now
familiar critical logic of repression and suppression:

No fragment of a sixteenth-century edition of Chaucer with one column to a
page has indeed ever been seen. But this would not be in the least strange in the
case of a volume suppressed before publication; in fact, in the case of such a
volume printed so long ago, it would be strange if any fragment of it had been
preserved to our time. But we can concede the statement about the one-column
book to have been an error, without losing confidence in the main fact which the
words of Thynne bring to light. This is that the first projected edition of
Chaucer’s works set out to include a poem which was so offensive to the
adherents of the Roman Catholic faith that measures were taken to prevent its
publication. (467)

Lounsbury then concludes that the ‘suppressed tale’ was not the
Pilgrim’s Tale, but the Plowman’s Tale:

If, then, the substantial truth of Thynne’s story be assumed, what could have been
the poem that was either suppressed beforehand or was not allowed to be printed in
the edition of 1532. There can be but one answer to this question. It must have
been the ‘Plowman’s Tale’. This fulfills all the essential conditions which are
required by Thynne’s account. It is far more offensive in its tone than the ‘Pilgrim’s
Tale’, or at least that fragment of the later which has been preserved. (467)

Lounsbury was only concerned with texts and editions, not
typographical formats, and he had no reason to combine the two
central motifs of Thynne’s story: the suppression of a tale and the

one-column print. He simply followed (rightly) what the succession of editions clearly suggested about an anticlerical tale whose position in the canon was insecure. The Plowman's Tale was missing from the first edition, added in the second, and finally secured in its position before the Parson's Tale in the third. Francis Thynne's story is simply a version of what the succession of editions shows.

In 1955, Fraser returned to this question in a detailed editorial and bibliographical study of the Pilgrim's Tale, amplifying and on some points correcting the version of Lounsbury. Fraser never saw the folio version of the Plowman's Tale by Godfray (the unique copy is at the Huntington Library) and the extent to which it differs from the books he was studying made no impression. As Francis Thynne before him, he combines the histories of the Pilgrim's Tale and Plowman's Tale, and confusion is evident in his conclusion on page 20:

May we credit Francis Thynne's story in any way, even after our modification of its details to fit the known facts? I think we may, if we bear in mind that Gybson's printing of The Court of Venus and The Pilgrim's Tale was concurrent with William Thynne's work on the contemplated second edition. It is logical to assume that Gybson's book bore Chaucer's name on the title page; why else would Bale have put the contents among Chaucer's works? If this assumption is true, it might follow that the anti-Romanist William Thynne was desirous of including the Tale in his second edition, took steps to do so, but was prevented by the clergy. It is important to remember that the Thynne editions of 1532 and 1542 were in double columns and that the only single-column "Chaucer" known is the apocryphal Pilgrim's Tale, which is probably the work of which Francis Thynne had some confused and secondhand intelligence. Finally, since The Pilgrim's Tale alludes to the Lincolnshire rebellion of 1536 ...

At first glance, it seems that Fraser has simply made a typing error here: for 'the apocryphal Pilgrim's Tale' read 'the apocryphal Plowman's Tale'. But this does not finally seem to be the case. Fraser has solidified earlier speculation: now the book in which the Pilgrim's Tale appears (the Douce fragment) has a title page with Chaucer's name on it, not because there is any bibliographical evidence of that but because it is 'logical' (Bradshaw's and Lounsbury's qualms have been overcome). And further, based on this non-existent title page, it is now the 'only single column "Chaucer" known' (whatever this marvellously ambiguous phrase might mean).

The most recent serious commentator is Andrew Wawn, who included discussion of the Plowman's Tale in three excellent

14 Fraser, Court of Venus, 15–22.
15 There are of course many single-column Chaucers not only known but actually extant in the early sixteenth century, not to mention the single-column Plowman's Tale of Godfray.
articles. Wawn’s research focused on two issues: the origins of the Plowman’s Tale and its reception, specifically, the revival of fourteenth-century texts in the interests of sixteenth-century propaganda. In his 1973 article, Wawn confirmed with further bibliographical evidence the close association of Berthelet and Godfray, claiming they actually ‘pooled their equipment’. Wawn emphasized the political context for this association. Both Godfray and Berthelet were engaged in official propaganda. This included large format editions as the 1532 Gower (by Berthelet) and the 1532 Chaucer (by Godfray), as well as such smaller pamphlets as Godfray’s The praier and complaynt of the plowman unto Christe (1530, STC 20036.5), and later pamphlets I playme Piers (1550, STC 19903a), which incorporates extensive sections of the Plowman’s Tale, and O read me for I am of great antiquitie (1589, STC 19903a.5). The Plowman’s Tale, to Wawn, was thus part of ‘the many-sided nature of Renaissance propaganda’. Far from being condemned, the Plowman’s Tale was ‘exactly the sort of work which one could imagine receiving official encouragement and sponsorship’.

The material evidence bearing on the relation of the Plowman’s Tale and the Pilgrim’s Tale to Chaucer editions includes the following: Pynson’s double-column Chaucer of 1526, made-up from three independent sections (STC 5086, 5088, 5096); the series of Chaucer double-column folio editions, all related, beginning with Thynne in 1532; the single-column folio edition of the Plowman’s Tale printed by Godfray (STC 5099.5); a smaller edition, printed by Hyll in the late 1540s (STC 5099.5).
5100); the small-format collections of various pieces (including the Pilgrim's Tale) edited by Fraser; and the various propagandistic texts examined by Wawn, also printed in smaller formats.

The Plowman's Tale is printed by Godfray in what for the early sixteenth century was an extremely rare format in London printing: a large folio in 6s. The large folio in 6s was a relatively late creation in English printing: it required a large platen, and assumes the use of full sheets in printing.

The format was used primarily for Bibles, commissioned legal work (e.g., Statutes), and scientific work. There are very few literary works in this large-folio format in the first half of the sixteenth century; but these include such monumental printing ventures as Pynson's 1526 Chaucer, the Berthelet Gower (1532) and most important the Godfray Chaucer (1532) – all double-column. Pynson, Godfray, and Berthelet all produced works in this format, as did De Worde. The most prolific printer in this format is William Rastell (1530–34), whose productions in large-folio format include Caesar's Commentaries, several works by More, and a series of large folios of dramatic works of Heywood and Medwall, these last printed in single-column and gathered in 4s.

Obviously, purely textual categories of genre do not apply to such productions, nor would the implications of such a format be the same in the 1520s and 1530s as they might be later in the century.

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20 How rare this is can be easily seen by glancing through E. G. Duff, W. W. Greg, et al., Hand-lists of books printed by London printers, 1501–1556 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1913). I am concerned here with full size folios. What passes for a 'small folio' in bibliographical catalogues are books printed and constructed as folios but similar in size to what was later to become a standard quarto. These 'small folios' are similar in size to incunable folios or to more modern quartos. Their existence is sometimes masked in the bibliographical description '4to in sixes'. See e.g., Curt F. Bühler, 'Chainlines versus imposition in incunabula', Studies in Bibliography, 23 (1970), 141–5.

21 The ordinary quiring of folios by Caxton is in 4s and 8s. A few of De Worde's folios are in 6s; but for Pynson, the folio in 6s is common; the evidence is readily available in E. Gordon Duff, Fifteenth-century English books (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1917).

22 Pynson produced most of these, including the following: (all are double-column, with type page dimensions over 150 x 210 mm): Boccaccio, Fall of princes (1527, STC 3176); Froissart, Chronicles (1525, STC 11396; 11397); Sallust, tr. Barclay (1525, STC 21627) (the double column here is formed of an English text with Latin text in the margin). De Worde's folios include Voragine, Golden legend (1527, STC 24880) (the last in a series of De Worde editions). Godfray's include Constantine's Treatise (1534, STC 5641) (single-column fol. in 6s). Double-column folios by Treveris include Grote herbal (1525, STC 13176) (in 6s), and Hieronymus von Braunschweig, Surgery (1525, STC 13434). Only a small fraction of Berthelet's works are in this format, none besides the Statutes is before 1532; these include the 1532 Gower, Bartholomeaus, De proprietatis rerum (1535, STC 1537), and, later, a series of editions of Elyot's Dictionary (1532, STC 7659; 1542, STC 7659.5; 1545, STC 7600; et seq.).

23 E.g., More, Dialog (1530, STC 18085) (in 6s), Caesar, Commentaries (1530, STC 4337) (Latin text in margin); Heywood, A merry play betweene the pardonner and the fre (1533, STC 13299), A merry play between lohan lohan the husande, Tyb his wyfe, & syr jhan the preest (1533, STC 13298), Play of the wether (1533, STC 13305), A play of love (1534, STC 13303); Henry Medwall, A goodly interlude of nature (1530–34, STC 17779).
But with the possible exception of the items printed by Rastell, each example of this format represents a serious investment by the printer, one on which he expected either subsidy or significant returns. For our purposes, what is most noteworthy is that there is no place whatsoever for a work such as those studied in detail by Wawn—the Reformist pamphlets such as *I playne Piers*, etc. – the genre into which he places (quite rightly) the Plowman’s Tale and Pilgrim’s Tale. Folio works that could be characterized as reformist were propagandistic only in an indirect sense, representing something monumental about English culture or national literature. A reformist satire, thus, would only appear in folio if part of such a monumental collection, in this case, a collection such as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

The typographical evidence is also of importance here. First, it confirms the affinity of the 1532 Chaucer with the 1532 Gower. The type used for the text of the 1532 Chaucer is a bâtarde, used in no other Chaucer edition but occasionally used by Godfray and in some of the secular folios by William Rastell. Both the 1532 Chaucer and the 1532 Gower employ an ‘exotic’ typeface: the bâtarde used by Godfray was so new that conventions for its use were worked out while the Chaucer was at press; the large and distinctive rotunda (87R) used in the 1532 Gower was a typeface Berthelet used later in many editions of another highly promoted author – Thomas Elyot.

Even more important, the typographical evidence further links the Plowman’s Tale with the 1532 Chaucer (figs 1 and 2). It was noted by Bradshaw that the one-column Plowman’s Tale printed by Godfray was in a type ‘resembling’ that used in the 1532 Chaucer. This statement should be made more emphatically. The type used in Godfray’s Plowman’s Tale is the same type used in the 1532 Chaucer, but the type in question here is the textura type of the Preface (a 94T), not the bâtarde type of the text (a 94B) (both are shown in fig. 2). Godfray set up the Plowman’s Tale in single-column, but otherwise in the same material format as the 1532

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24 Rastell is one of the few printers, besides Godfray, to use a bâtarde typeface, and does so in some of the folio works listed above (STC 4337, 13298, 13299, 17779, where the type is a 102B). Frank Isaac, *English and Scottish printing types, 1501-35, 1536-41* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1930), fig. 74 (of STC 4337). The use of bâtarde type by Berthelet is also noted by A. J. Johnson in *Type designs: their history and development* (1934) third edition (Norwich: Andre Deutsch, 1966), 23.


26 ‘We find a separate edition of the *Plowmans Tale*, the same type and size as Thynne’s first edition of 1532, which looks as if he had intended to include it in that, and was overborne for some reason’ (Bradshaw, *Animadversions*, xlii).

27 Bradshaw’s statement seriously misled Irvine in 1932: ‘furthermore, the type [of Godfray’s Plowman’s Tale] is quite different from that of the 1532 edition of Chaucer but almost identical with that of the 1542 edition’. Annie S. Irvine, ‘A manuscript copy of the Plowman’s Tale’, *University of Texas, Studies in English*, 12 (1932), 37. Irvine apparently took Bradshaw’s comment as referring to the text (not the preface) of some early Chaucer. But even so, the textura used in Godfray’s Plowman’s Tale and in the preface to the 1532 edition is quite unlike that used in the 1542 edition.
The first parte

C With pride poynted the pooze
And some they sustayned with tale
Of holy churche maketh an hoze
And sylyth her wombe with wyne and ale
With money sylyth many a male
And chastren churche when they fall
And telleth the people a leuede tale
Suche false faytours soule hem fall

In eithera

lyra et tipaz-
um et libas/
et vinum in
exuiaus Vef-
eris : et opus
domini non
repicid / nec
opera manu-
um cius con-
siderat
Isai. d.

C With chaunge of many maner metes
With songe and solace syppyng longe
And sylyth her wombe / and falt frestes
And frome the mete to the songe
And after mete with harde and longe
And eche man mote hem lozdes call
And hote syppes ever amonge
Suche false faytours soule hem fall

C And myters mo than one oz two
Iperled as the queues hedde
A Naife of golde / and pyreape lo
As hem as it were made of hedde
With clothe of golde both newe and redde
With gylterande golde as grene as gall
By dome woll dampe men to dedde
All suche faytours soule hem fall

C And Christes people proudly curse
With bloode bokes / and bypring bell
To putte penmps in her purs
They woll tell bothe keypn and hell
And in her sentence and thou wyke dwell
They wyllen gelle in her gap hall
And though the clothe thou of hem tell
In great curlyng shake thou fall

Figure 1
Plowman’s Tale (STC 5099.5), sig. A3v (top)
(By permission of the Librarian of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California)
The preface

The Canterbury tales

The Romant of the Rose

Tropilus and Creseide

The Testament of Cresseide

The Legende of good women, in a balade

Boetius de Consolacione philosophie

The dreame of Chaucer, with a balade

The assembly of Fowles

The flour of Curteis, with a balade

Howe pple is deed a berped in a geryll herit

La bele dame sauis mercy

Anencyda and falsse Arctple

The assembly of Ladys

The conclusion of the Astrologpe

The complainct of the blacke kynght

A pynynge of women

The hous of fame

The testament of Lome

The lamentation of Mary Magdalene

The Remeby of lour

The cpyplant of Mars and Venus

The complainct of Mars alone

The complainct of Venus alone

Figure 2

Chaucer, Works (1532) (STC 5068), sig. A3r (middle)
(By permission of the Librarian of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California)
Chaucer (a folio in 6s), and with the identical type used in the Preface.28

Among the ghosts, fictions, and flams that have arisen and disappeared in the history of the Plowman's Tale are the following: an early edition of Chaucer by Berthelet, distinct from that of Godfray in 1532; an early one-column edition of Chaucer, suppressed; a copy of the 1532 Chaucer interleaved with this edition; an edition of the Plowman's Tale by William Powell in 1547-48; and an extant manuscript version of the Plowman's Tale preceding all printed texts.

Most Chaucerians agree that references to an early edition by Berthelet refer (whether accurately or not) to the 1532 Godfray edition. STC has already rejected another bibliographical ghost: the edition of the Plowman's Tale by William Powell, referred to by Bradshaw and reappearing in Hammond. This can only be the edition by 'Wyllyam Hyll' (STC 5100) referred to as early as 1810 by Todd. The mythical edition by Powell has never turned up, and I imagine it is a result of Bradshaw's mistranscription of his own notes concerning an edition of the same date by Hyll.29

As for the manuscript version of the Plowman's Tale in the 1532 edition, pace Irvine, I see no convincing evidence that this is not simply copied from a readily available 1542 version and used to complete a 1532 edition.30 Such additions were made in much the same spirit that additional manuscript quires and even material

28 I have neither will nor competence to study the paper evidence in detail, but it may be of interest that the paper used in the Plowman's Tale, although different from that used in the 1532 Chaucer, is not uniform, even in this relatively short book. For what it is worth, Godfrey's Plowman's Tale bears evidence of being initially set up as a major text (folio), but printed cheaply. Such material evidence might well support the argument that this was a text 'cancelled' early in production.

29 Todd, Illustrations, xxxix: 'a very curious edition ... imprinted at London in Paules churche yarde at the sygne of the Hyll by Wyllyam Hyll'. Cf. Bradshaw, in Animadversionis, 101, n. 1: 'The Plowmans Tale was first printed separately by Thomas Godfray in folio, without date, but about 1532-35, probably under W. Thynne's care. ... From this separate edition ... it was reprinted in W. Thynne's second edition of Chaucer's works in 1542, and separately in octavo by W. Powell, about 1547-8'. Hammond, Bibliographical manual, 444, cites both Todd and Bradshaw as evidence of two separate editions. The colophon of Hyll's edition is itself copied from the conclusion of the 1542 Plowman's Tale; Hammond's tentative suggestion that Hyll issued more of the Canterbury Tales in this format is clearly erroneous (445).

30 See Irvine, 'A manuscript copy', 27-56, on a copy of the 1532 Chaucer in the Univ of Texas, which contains the Plowman's Tale in manuscript bound in after the Parson's Tale (the position it occupied only in the 1542 edition). The text of the MS differs from both the 1542 edition and the Godfray edition (from which the 1542 edition is clearly copied). Irvine argues that the correct readings of the MS are not due to either printed edition and thus the MS is earlier than either of them. I have looked over all her evidence and do not find anything incompatible with the idea that MS is copied from the 1542 edition, and copied less accurately than, say, 1542 copied from 1535. See, e.g., Irvine's statement that additional words in the MS 'in most cases improve the sense or the meter of the lines in which they occur' (47). Irvine assumes that this suggests that the MS is early; but to most textual critics, this would be evidence that the MS is late and sophisticated. See also: 'when we consider that the MS. differs from the 1535 edition in 48 of these passages and from the 1542 edition in
from the 1598 Speght edition of Chaucer were added to complete Cambridge MS Gg 4.27. A similar made-up edition based on Thynne’s 1532 print is referred to at second-hand by Furnivall (Animadversions, xlii–xliii). When Francis Thynne speaks of an edition of Chaucer ‘wholly together’, he may well have editions of this kind in mind.31

The most persistent of these bibliographical fictions involve the hypothetical one-column edition of Chaucer. All references to this should be connected directly with Godfray’s extant print of the Plowman’s Tale (STC 5099.5). This, like the 1532 Chaucer, is printed as a folio in 6s and is surely the origin of Francis Thynne’s story of a one-column Chaucer supervised by William Thynne. The fact that the Pilgrim’s Tale also appears in one-column format in the much-cited Douce fragment (STC 24650) is a red herring. All books of this octavo size are one-column. What distinguishes a book like the Douce fragment from the 1532 Chaucer is first and foremost size, not column format.

By concentrating on texts rather than physical books, commentators have perpetuated many of Francis Thynne’s mistakes concerning the early editorial history of Chaucer, in particular, the notion that William Thynne intended to include the Pilgrim’s Tale with Chaucer’s works. The extant books alone, showing the history of the Chaucer canon in sixteenth-century editions, belie ‘Thynne’s history. There is no evidence that a printer ever tried to pass off the Pilgrim’s Tale as Chaucer’s during this period; Chaucer’s association with the Pilgrim’s Tale was entirely a fantasy of bibliographers, not an act of zealous editors. Only the Plowman’s Tale was consistently in the hands of Chaucer’s printers during the sixteenth century, and only the Plowman’s Tale has a bibliographical history that could be transformed into Thynne’s story of a tale initially suppressed but later permitted to ‘pass with the rest’. To explain Thynne’s bibliographical narrative, no appeal need be made to any bibliographical entity that is no longer extant.

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49, whereas the two printed editions differ from each other in only 9, we are forced to conclude that these differences furnish very strong evidence that the MS. was not copied from either of the printed versions’ (51). This is patently false: if I were to make a copy from either of the printed versions today, the same results would undoubtedly obtain.

31 On the make-up of MS Gg, see M. B. Parkes and Richard Beadle, Geoffrey Chaucer: poetical works, a facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg. 4.27 (Norman, Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1980), ‘Commentary’, 1–6. The additions were made by Joseph Holland shortly after 1600.