CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF TEXTUAL VARIATION

This chapter explores the concept of textual variation and outlines the approach used in this research. In the first place I summarise some of the most influential scholarly views on textual variation and the different positions that scholars have sustained. I concentrate on how the ideas of editorial judgement and variant distribution shaped the theoretical aspects of textual variation prior to the developments introduced by the New Stemmatics. I describe the types of variants that I have found during the course of my research and their relative importance concerning the placement of ω in the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales*. Based on my own research and on the analysis of previous scholarship, I conclude that variant distribution and judgement go hand in hand when we come to examine the data produced by the collation.

1. SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONCEPT OF TEXTUAL VARIANT

1.1 Classic Approaches to Textual Variation

The importance of deciding which kinds of variant are considered significant and which are discarded as relatively unimportant or even meaningless cannot be stressed enough. However, the difficulties embedded in the process of making this decision are many and varied and for this reason I attempt only to clarify the criteria

used for the purposes of this particular research. Historically, several different views have shaped our perception of variants and their meanings. E. J. Kenney reported that the term 'variant' was introduced by Henri Quentin as a more neutral substitute for 'error' (1974, 135).[1] Since these very first attempts to clarify the concept, scholars have seen this concept as self-evident and few have felt the need of any further explanation. However, in 1949, Greg proposed a classification of variants that is still used today:

> [W]e need to draw the distinction between the significant, or as I shall call them 'substantive', readings of the text, those namely that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression, and others, such in general as spelling, punctuation, word-division, and the like, affecting mainly its formal presentation, which might be regarded as the accidents, or as I shall call them 'accidentals', of the text. (1966, 376)

Greg must have been aware of the shortcomings of this classification since, in a footnote, he attempted to clarify his position by saying that his was a practical distinction and that he accepted that some words could fall into an 'intermediate class' which could be treated differently. The basis suggested by Greg for this division is that scribes and compositors confronted each aspect in a different way, i.e., while both were concerned with transmitting the wording of the author, they did not take the same care with the spelling, punctuation and other formal aspects. Moreover, scribes and compositors often changed the 'accidentals' to "follow their own habits or inclination" (Greg 1966, 377). However, he also points out that: "…spelling is now

[1] Although Quentin did not coin the term variant, he gave it a connotation that implied a subtil alternative to other textual critical expresions.

recognized as an essential characteristic of an author, or at least of his time and locality" (1966, 376).

It is common for scholars from the Anglo-American editing school to follow Greg, so they do not feel compelled to offer an explanation about their concept of variant. In the introduction to the *Legend of Good Women,* edited by Janet Cowen and George Kane, we can see a strong influence from Greg's discussion of variants. Cowen and Kane claim to be "restoring" the text based on:

> …a principle of respect for readings, not numbers of sigils; we assess the strength of manuscript support in terms of what we think we have discovered about their genetic relation. (1995, viii)

In fact, they use Greg's terminology without further explanation (Cowen and Kane 1995, 20). This means that their book employs terms used by Greg in *The Calculus of Variants*, without any subsequent account of how they are being used. The only explanation the reader receives concerns which variants –but there is no definition of these—are considered:

> The following analysis includes all the substantive variants in the Legend… Spelling and morphological variants, though sometimes recorded in our apparatus, are excluded from the present discussion, as are most variant spellings of proper names except where scribal sophistication or mechanical error seem obvious. Also excluded here are final *e* variants and syllable variation in words of indeterminate syllabic value… (Cowen and Kane 1995, 43)

Because there is no explicit explanation or clarification of these concepts, one must assume that Greg's definitions are implied. Kane had already made clear in his edition

of the A text of *Piers Plowman* that he thought that a stemmatic approach could not be used with that text. He stated that the "creation of a hierarchy, with some copy elevated to a 'rôle of authority'" was not achievable because of the considerable amount of corruption exhibited by the A manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* (Kane 1988, 115):

> Therefore I welcomed the direction of my interest to the variant readings, and the results obtained by studying them. Since these made it possible to determine originality at a large number of points the need for a genealogy (evidently difficult or impossible to recover) ceased to be pressing… I would fix my text without using recension and, would treat genetic evidence as only one of a number of available indications of originality. (1988, 63)

Kane's interpretation of stemmatics --that original readings had to be established *a priori*-- led him to a position in which if he could judge the significance of the variants on their own, without the need of further stemmatic analysis, it was more economical to produce his text without the use of such a complicated method. The result of Kane's editorial position is that all decisions concerning variants in his edited text rely almost solely on editorial judgement.

Later, in the edition of the B version of *Piers Plowman*, Kane and Donaldson offer a discussion concerning which reading must be chosen over any other and they conclude that this choice requires "…familiarity with the content of the poem, and a historically correct understanding of its whole structure of meaning" (1975, 131). They seem to be conscious of the fact that editorial choice carries a huge responsibility with it:

> Instances where the criterion of appropriate meaning is paramount vary extremely in difficulty, and we are sensible of the grave responsibility in that our decisions about the more difficult ones may affect future interpretative criticism.… In practice the matter is not so simple, for the reading in question is a component of the whole meaning of the poem and the editor can judge its appropriateness only in terms of his notion of that whole meaning to which, if original, it contributes. The possibility of error in such arbitration is formidable, we are well aware. But our alternatives have been to face and accept this editorial hazard or to refrain from editing. (Kane and Donaldson 1975, 131)

After these statements, the reader must accept that the text presented is arbitrary and that it is so for an essential reason. In Kane and Donaldson's terms, variants --and principally those that appear in the final edited text--, are partly the result of the arbitrary decision of the editors of the text. This is not a very useful principle when one is attempting to establish what a variant is.

The conclusion of the arguments put forward by Kane and Donaldson is that, because classical stemmatics --the Lachmann method-- relies on 'common errors' to determine the affiliation of the different manuscripts in a tradition, its application implies previous knowledge about the originality of the variants, i.e. the editor needs to know *a priori* which variants are original and which are mistakes introduced by the scribes. In this way, the whole text is determined beforehand and it is pointless to reconstruct stemmatic relationships. Moreover, since the originality of variants can be established without the need of stemmatics, there is no point in assessing their distribution among the different texts. Kane's method clearly privileges editorial

judgement over variant distribution. A good example of these ideas can be found in E. Talbot Donaldson's essay "*Canterbury Tales*, D117: A Critical Edition" in which he analyses the variants found in WBP 117 and explains his own editorial perspective. He suggests that even though the reading 'wrighte' appears only in three witnesses which are not considered reliable texts, these witnesses should be taken into consideration when editing the text:

> [W]hen we say 'good' and 'bad' we seem inevitably to connote moral values, and many editors refer to MSS as though they were good or bad citizens. Yet a MS has no moral nature: in any one line it is merely a tool which is helpful or not helpful. Since poems consist of a series of single lines, the degree of any MS's helpfulness may vary widely, and in line D117 three normally 'bad' MSS are uniquely helpful. Nor need an editor worry that a MS may have got its helpful reading dishonestly. We don't have to write character references for MSS: we just have to use them. (Donaldson 1970, 128-9)

Donaldson defends the use of editorial judgement and he attacks Manly and Rickert for their overall assessment of the text of certain manuscripts (Ld2 and Ry2 in this example). However, Donaldson seems to lose sight of the difficulty of the task of recovering Chaucer's text:

> [W]e must remember that when Manly and Rickert say 'authority', they mean the authority of O^1, that corrupt, or at least imperfect, archetype that was not Chaucer's autograph but was presumably the ancestor of all extant MSS. They might well argue here that the three MSS came by the word *wrighte* dishonestly --that it was introduced by correction at a late stage in

> the transmission, and hence of no authority on determining O^1. Nor would I necessarily argue against such a hypothesis; but I will argue for the right and the responsibility of an editor who is trying to reconstruct Chaucer's text --not merely O^1 -- to let all MSS help him, not just the respectable ones. (1970, 128)

In the quest for the reconstruction of an authorial original, Donaldson suggests that all variants found in any manuscript should be deemed helpful. He does not explain what would happen in the conceivable case that no manuscript reading supported the authorial reading. For this reason, one has to infer that in such a case, editorial judgement would alone be enough to establish the 'authorial' reading.

A good example of an attempt to classify textual variants in an objective way is the one made by Eugene Vinaver, in his article "Principles of Textual Emendation" (1976), in which he suggests that variants should be classified according to the way in which they originated. Vinaver's approach attempts to suggest a method to help the emendation of texts, so it is designed to face and deal with the problems presented by it. Some of the variants classified by Vinaver deal with problems such as eyeskip or memorial copying and because they are distinctly centred on the problems generated by scribal copying they are not very useful for the purposes of my research. All of Vinaver's variants are related to scribal behaviour, and they are divided into four groups, according to the movement in which the variant has its origin. Movement *a* is the reading of the text; movement *b* is the passing from the original to the copy; movement *c* is the copying of the text; and movement *d* is the passage from the text that is being copied to the text that the scribe is copying from. However, even if the variants had been classified with printed texts in mind they might still prove not to be

useful for my research, i.e. they might work with a printed edition that was set directly from a manuscript --such as Cx1-- but it would be more difficult for these to be useful in the study of the conflated text of Cx2.

What Vinaver does with his classification is to divide the variants neatly. He assumes that all of them are errors, and that they appeared at different stages of the copying process. Vinaver uses editorial judgement to classify the errors in different types and also in order to produce this classification. In Vinaver's idea of judgement, this is fallible and has to rely on a series of predetermined rules if it is to achieve its objective. This is in contrast with Kane's concept of editorial judgements, which, although it is admittedly fallible, carries most of the weight of his editorial work. From Kane's perspective, editorial judgement is the only tool on which an editor can depend while producing a reading text.

1.2 The Neo-Lachmannian Approach and the New Stemmatics

Analysis of previous research shows that, although there have been many approaches to the division and treatment of variants, none of these is completely satisfactory for the present research. What is needed to advance this work is a classification which can successfully confront all the different issues presented by Cx2. The problem of choosing a particular approach is that one might then neglect other approaches. For example, in the first place, ω is likely to have presented the same problems that Vinaver suggested, since this copy was produced by a scribe. Secondly, Caxton's compositors are likely to have made mistakes, in Cx1 as well as in Cx2, and they might also have corrected some of those introduced in Cx1 when setting up Cx2. Caxton himself could have made mistakes while making the

annotations of the corrected readings from the new manuscript to his first edition. For these reasons, the best way to analyse the variants between Cx1 and Cx2, in the light of this research, is to focus on the main objective of this work. In order to try to establish the textual affiliations of the exemplar used by Caxton to correct his first edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, the significant variants will be, by definition, among those readings in which Cx2 differs from Cx1. This is a necessary condition of all significant variants. There could be an interesting reading shared by Cx1 and Cx2 but this would not be of any help in tracing the position of ω.

In order to establish the textual affiliations of ω, some variants will have to be discarded in favour of others. By the same token, we would not want to make any presumptions beforehand about the nature of these variants. The central core of this research is to build a historical account of part of the textual tradition of the *Tales* based on the variant distribution in the different fifteenth-century witnesses of the text.

The next issue, once we have determined which variants are significant, is to decide which of the significant variants in Cx2 are helpful when trying to locate the place of ω in the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales*. This is important because, even though variants might be significant, not all of them will be useful for the purposes of this particular research. About the classification of significant variants, Ben Salemans has made a notable contribution:

> Text genealogists will often use textual differences, 'variants', as the tools by which the kinship of text versions can be discovered. The inexhaustible computer can help to detect all variants quickly. Yet, not all variants are *genealogical*, in the sense that they possess relationship-revealing powers.

> An editor of a text-critical edition will be interested in all variants, but text genealogists will mainly be interested in variants that reveal something about the kinship of the text versions. (1996: 6)

Salemans calls any variant that has the potential of indicating stemmatic relationships a genetically significant variant. In fact, he goes on to divide different kinds of variants in distinct categories –such as parallelistic or non-parallelistic– and based on these he created rules to help in "text-genealogical" analysis. Salemans also makes use of some of Greg's terminology and he is particularly interested in what he calls 'type 2' variants, which are those that occur in at least two sets of two or more witnesses.

Although, in principle, I agree with Salemans about the need to distinguish different kinds of variants, and about the need for a more specific distinction of 'genetically significant variants,' I do not agree with the idea that rules can be formulated --even if it this is done in a very general way-- to help and analyse them, neither can I agree with his attempt completely to remove editorial judgement.[2] For these reasons, it seems appropriate to coin my own term so that the concept used throughout this work does not give rise to confusion with Salemans' ideas. When a variant is not only significant but, after careful analysis, seems to reveal the relationships among texts, I have called it a stemmatically significant variant. These are the ones analysed in depth and which might be able to point out the place of ω in the textual tradition.

After establishing which variants are to be considered for the purposes of this research and why these stemmatically significant variants are the ones that are going

to be taken into account, some attention has to be directed to the attempts to apply genetic methods to the study of the *Canterbury Tales*. The first scholars to explain and apply genetic methods systematically to the *Tales* were Manly and Rickert, who set themselves the task of defining various concepts some of which might be useful for my own research. In the following chapters, for example, Manly and Rickert's concept of 'genetic group:' a group of witnesses whose sigils appear together 'persistently and consistently' (1940, 1:20), is widely used. In the same way, their concept of 'agreement by coincidence' which is opposed to the 'genetic group' and might be the result of chance, appears often in the next three chapters. Agreement by coincidence creates a non-genetic group of manuscripts, that is, it makes witnesses which are not genetically related appear as if they were a group.

The analysis of variants in the next sections was not based on the notion of 'error' as in the traditional Lachmann method, but by grouping the witnesses "…according to their readings without reference to whether they are correct or incorrect" (1940, 1:20), as suggested by Manly and Rickert. This means that one does not have to make a decision *a priori* about which variants are archetypal and which are the result of an alteration of the text. This new perspective responds to the need to improve the technique used by the traditional Lachmannian method. The latter has often given raise to very strong, not completely unjustified, criticism:

> In appearance the above quotation from Manly and Rickert seems to suggest that they had decided to leave editorial judgement aside -- although it is my interpretation that they were just postponing it for a later stage of the editorial process-- this, at least in part, originated the strong

[1] In fact, Salemans clearly states in his dissertation, "Building Stemmas with the Computer in a Cladistic, Neo-Lachmannian, way", that he would carry out only the *recensio* of the text, and that he

> criticism from later scholars. In fact, since the Lachmann method fell into discredit, many critics --such as Kane-- have pointed out that its biggest weakness has to do with the fact that the method relies on the agreements of errors among the manuscripts.[3] (Hanna 1996, 85)

Hanna's statement responds to a misunderstanding of the method employed by Manly and Rickert, who clearly established that they were not relying just on errors. However, since Manly and Rickert there have been profound developments in the application of stemmatic analysis to the study of texts. For example, the New Stemmatics does not rely on errors to determine textual affiliations, as new technologies have facilitated the process by making it unnecessary to establish *a priori* which and if any readings are 'correct' or likely to have been present in the archetype (Robinson and O'Hara 1993, 65). These new perspectives in stemmatics have brought Manly and Rickert's ideas back into the critical arena since they suggested that one should take into account all variants.

This new angle that we now take into account --as suggested by Manly and Rickert-- that not only errors or corrections made to the text, but also the variant distribution of all readings, is probably one of the most important advances in the latest development of the genetic methods. Robinson, in his D.Phil thesis, states:

> It is not the reading itself --whether correct or incorrect, whether this type of error or that-- but just what MSS it appears in, what MSS it does not. A reading has no evidential value if it appears in all the MSS, for then it

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would leave aside the *emendatio* (Salemans 2000).

[3] Those who have been too disappointed by stemmatics to follow its latest developments --what Robinson calls the New Stemmatics, and Salemans refers to as a Neo-Lachmannian approach-- still criticise the same aspects. For example, Ralph Hanna wrote: "To construct a stemma in order to carry on 'scientific editing,' the researcher must be able to recognise at least some range of 'palpable errors,'

> must be archetypal and tells us nothing of relations within the MSS. It has no evidential value if it appears in only one MS, for then it tells us nothing of the relation of that MSS [*sic*] to others. It has no evidential value if it occurs scattered at random across the MSS, for then it might only be the result of coincidence --or it might be archetypal, descended variously into otherwise unrelated groups. It is the pattern of distributions, and especially the tendency of particular patterns of distribution to recur "persistently and consistently", which matters. (1991: 156)

Only if we take the variant distribution into account, regardless of whether variants have their origin in an error or come directly from the archetype, can we reach an adequate knowledge that might allow us to confirm relationships between the texts.[4] However, this is not the only issue that must be taken into account. One has also to decide about the likelihood of a variant being the result of a scribal mistake or of a misinterpretation and then whether this mistake belongs to the origin of the tradition or was introduced at a later stage. If a variant belongs to the origin of the tradition Robinson calls it an archetypal reading --the term used in the present work. An archetypal reading is present in the majority of the witnesses either because it was present in the origin of the tradition, that is, the archetype; or because of its distribution among various, otherwise diverse, genetic groups, it can be deduced to have been present in the origin of the tradition. An example of such a variant in the *Canterbury Tales* is:

GP 473

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for in stemmatic theory only agreement in such corruption can demonstrate that any two manuscripts share a common corrupt exemplar " (Hanna 1996: 85).

[4] Since 1991, Robinson has softened his position. Although he still supports the idea of the great importance of variant distribution, he now thinks that editorial judgement also plays a crucial role in determining the importance and significance of a particular variant.

Base As brood as is , a Bokeler , or a Targe
Cx1 As brood as it were a bokeler or a targe
Cx2 As brood at it were a bokeler or a targe
Hg As brood as is , a Bokeler , or a Targe
El As brood , as is a bokeler , or a targe

as] Ad1 Ad3 Bo1 Bo2 Ch Cp Cx1 Dd Dl Ds1 El En1 En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2 Ha3 Ha4 Hg Ht Ii La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mg Mm Nl Ph2 Pn Ps Pw Py Ra2 Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Se Sl2 Tc1 Tc2 To1 Wy
at] Cn Cx2

The reading 'at' is shared only by Cn and Cx2, whereas all the other witnesses have 'as.' Clearly, the reading 'at' must be a mistake. This can be assessed by putting together several aspects of the character of the variant. First, the variant 'at' is present in only two witnesses which, if analysed in the wider context of other variants, do not elsewhere appear together consistently; second, we can see, from a grammatical point of view, that the text requires the conjunction 'as,' not the preposition 'at;' third, because the only witness in agreement with Cx2 is Cn and since this agreement is not consistently found throughout the text, one could infer that this variant could easily have been a compositorial mistake in Cx2, i.e. there is no certainty that it might have been in ω. This agreement of Cx2 and Cn is likely to be the result of a coincidence. However, we must not discard the possibility of a genetic relationship between them since there are parts of the text --especially MO-- in which these witnesses seem to agree together with other **a** group manuscripts.

In order to interpret correctly whether a variant is an archetypal reading one has to evaluate the character of the variant. It is possible that a variant might be the result of the process of 'trivialization,' i.e. the substitution of the *lectio difficilior* by a simpler, more common, reading (Maas 1958, 13). According to Paul Maas, this is consistent with scribal behaviour, since scribes had the tendency to simplify readings

that were unusual or difficult to understand. This can usually be confirmed by looking at the **O** manuscripts.[5] In some cases the **O** manuscripts are in agreement with one or more genetic groups. Far from being surprising, this is quite natural: the **O** manuscripts, representing independent lines of descent from O, have preserved the archetypal reading in the same way as it could have been preserved in one or more of the hyparchetypes of the other genetic groups. So when we find a variant shared by the **O** manuscripts and one or more other genetic groups, and if the character of this variant is consistent with an archetypal origin, we are in the presence of a variant that is likely to have been present in O. The **O** manuscripts have often been misunderstood and have been treated and referred to as if they were a genetic group.[6] However, these manuscripts seem to represent different --and independent-- lines of descent from the origin of the tradition. In other words, we have lost the copies that stood between the **O** manuscripts and O. If we accept that these manuscripts represent independent lines of descent from O, a reading attested by all or most of these witnesses is likely to have been in O itself, i.e. to be archetypal to the tradition. An example of this can be found in RE 9:

RE 9
Out: Ad3
Base And by his belt he baar a long Panade
Cx1 Andꝯ by his belt he baar a longꝛ pauade
Cx2 Ay by hys belt he baar a longꝛ pauade
Hg And by his beltꝛ he baar a long Panade
El And by his beltꝛ he baar a long panade

And] Ch Cn Cx1 El Hg Ii Ld2 Ma Py Sl2 Tc2
Ay] Ad1 Bo2 Cx2 Cp Dd En1 Gg Ha4 Ha5 La Ln To1
Euer] Hk

[5] See also the Introduction to this work. The **O** manuscripts are four pairs --Ad1/ En3, Ad3/Ha5, Ra3/Tc1, Bo2/Ht-- and two singletons --Hg and Ch.
[6] See for example Blake (2000).

In this line, Hg and El read: "And by his belt he baar a long Panade."[7] Of the other collated witnesses Cx2 Cp Dd Gg Ha4 and La have the reading 'Ay' while Ch Hg and El agree with Cx1. Judgement leads to the assumption that Hg and El agree in error. It appears as though the more difficult reading was the one present in the origin of the tradition, and that this was changed by some manuscripts including those that we normally consider to be very reliable, i.e. Hg and El.

Not all cases are as clear as those above. On occasions it is difficult to tell what has really happened in the totality of the tradition:

KT 1179
Base As is depeynted / in the Sertres aboue
Cx1 As it is depaynted in the serelis aboue
Cx2 As it is depaynted in the sterris aboue
Hg As is depeynted / in the Sertres aboue
El As is depeynted / in the Certres aboue

Sertres] Cp Dd El Hg Gg La
sterres] Ad3 Ch Cx2 Ha4
serelis] Cx1

In KT 1179, the sense of the phrase calls for the reading 'sterres,' as in Ad3 Ch Cx2 and Ha4. Clearly the reading in Hg El and the rest of the collated witnesses is nonsensical; what is not so clear is at which point these variants might have been introduced.[8]

Occasionally, one can find a cluster of manuscripts, that are not genetically related, agreeing in a particular reading. This becomes apparent because the grouping of manuscripts does not occur consistently but, instead, seems the result of chance. Usually, the kind of variant that links otherwise unrelated manuscripts might be the

[7] This is the Hg version of the line.
[8] For a discussion of the variants in KT 1179 see chapter VI.

kind that arises by chance, such as 'in'/'on', 'the'/'a', etc. We can recognise a cluster of unrelated manuscripts because they are grouped randomly, i.e. the manuscripts that form it do not usually appear together, and their variants could be easily explained as being the result of a scribal mistake. If a group of manuscripts show up together very infrequently, one has to consider the possibility that not only could the variant have appeared due to coincident variation, but that this might also have been the result of contamination.

2. THE PROCESS OF COLLATION

2.1 Discerning Stemmatically Significant Variants

In order to produce the following sections –in which I analyse the gathered data --I ran a complete collation[9] of Cx2 against Cx1 for each of the sets[10] of the *Canterbury Tales*. These collations produced a vast amount of material which had to be checked and separated. Some of the variants produced by this first collation represent alternative spellings of the same word. Examples of this are:

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SQ 364 hir] hyr
       mirrour] myrrour
       hadde] hadꝺ
       visioñ] vision
ΠP 9   fonꝺ] fonde Cx2
       eek] eke Cx2
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After analysing all of these, I concluded that not all the differences between Cx1 and Cx2 are significant variants, some of them are just different spellings of the

[9] This first collation, run using Collate, uses Cx1 as the base text and Cx2 was then compared with it.

same word. In my previous discussion of the theoretical aspects of textual variation I explained the reasons for having to select the variants that should be taken into account for this research. I have retained all variants that convey information about the genetic relationships among the texts. I have discarded those variants that are --as in the above examples-- spelling differences since they are not stemmatically significant variants.[11] The differences in spelling, in the case of Cx1 and Cx2, might have more to do with the compositors of the books than with ω. Some variants, however, are borderline in the sense that the difference in their spelling is such that they become substantive variants. In these cases, a single letter changes the meaning of the word. Examples of these are:

WBP 484 croce] troce
WBP 535 lost] cost

These, even if looked at on their own, show a clear-cut difference. In contrast, some other variants have to be observed and analysed in the wider context of the general pattern of variation and their distribution among the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales.*

In principle, I have considered as significant all additions, deletions and substitutions, all the changes in word-order, all substantive variants,[12] and all variants that could have had an effect on the metre of the line.[13] I also discuss those variants that could have their origin in Caxton's lost exemplar as well as in the hands of

[10] See the explanation of the division of the text later in this chapter.
[11] All the variants that the collation of Cx1 and Cx2 yielded have been preserved in the electronic appendix a of this work.
[12] As opposed to Greg's accidental variants.
[13] Metrical aspects of Cx2 are not taken into consideration since this is a conflated text. Metrical regularity --or irregularity-- in Cx2 might be the result of sheer coincidence and not proof of a metrically regular --or irregular-- exemplar. It has been shown by Dunn that Caxton did not alter the context of a line when he introduced a new variant and, for this reason, it would be pointless to attempt any kind of metrical analysis in Cx2 (Cf. Dunn 1939, 16 and ff.).

clumsy typesetters. In other words, some variants might have originated due to carelessness, but if they show coherence with the *Canterbury Tales* textual tradition, I will set them apart to be analysed. As stated above, variants are more meaningful if looked at in the wider context of their manuscript distribution.

2.2 Classification of Variants

There are several types of variants that can be detected without having to analyse them in depth, and which I have grouped and named to facilitate reference -- see the list of variants below. Their common element is that, as stated before, they spring from a variant reading between Cx1 and Cx2. All the variants isolated in the preliminary collation of Cx2 against Cx1 were also analysed in the context of the other manuscripts and incunabula. The reason for this is that, although a variant might seem just a peculiar reading when analysed on its own, its relative significance becomes evident if seen in the context of a whole textual tradition, as for example in the case of RE 9 --'And' for 'Ay.'

I have divided the significant variants as follows:

1. Cx2-O: these represent a change in the text that makes Cx2 either agree with the majority of the manuscripts or with the **O** manuscripts.[14]

2. Cx2-Unique: these, in the present collation,[15] are unique to Cx2.

[14] See my previous discussion of the nature of the **O** manuscripts.

[15] The Canterbury Tales Project's transcriptions have not yet been finished. For this reason I have only had access to a limited number of complete sets of transcriptions. However, the **O** manuscripts have been almost completely transcribed and they can be used in the collation. I would not want to assume that the fact that the present collation shows certain results, makes it possible to extend them to all the manuscripts. Until we have a complete transcription of all the manuscripts I must rely on previous manual collations to clarify the results of this research.

3. Cx2-Hg/El: when Hg and El disagree and Cx2 agrees with one of them against the other.

4. Cx2-not-Hg/El: these occur when Hg and El agree, but Cx2 agrees with other manuscripts against both Hg and El.

The first two kinds, although they may be significant in other respects, are likely to be of no use in helping to point out the affiliations of ω. As in the quotation from Robinson above, both these kinds of variants are of 'no evidential value' for the purposes of this research. These are not stemmatically significant variants.

2.2.1 Cx2-O Variants

Cx2-O are by far the most common type of variant and, although they confirm the excellence of ω, they do not help to illuminate its genetic relationships. These confirm that ω was a very good manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* --at least, in relation to the extant witnesses. Each of these variants represents an 'improvement' over the text of Cx1, since it either adds or restores seemingly archetypal readings. For example, in line WBP 9 we find:

WBP 9
Base But me was told certeyn noght longe agon is
Cx1 But onys me was told not longe a go I wys
Cx2 But me was told not long a go ywys

me] Cx2 Cx1 Hg El Ad3 Bw Ch Cp Dd Dl Ds Ad1 Bo1 Bo2 Cn Ha4 Ht La Ra3 Wy En3 Fi Gl Ha2 He Hk Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mc Mg Mm Ne Nl Ph2 Ph3 Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra2 Ry1 Ry2 Se Si Sl2 Tc1 Tc2 To
onys me] Cx1 He Ii Ne Tc2

The variant in Cx1 --a suppressed adverb-- does not have a major impact on the meaning of the line. Its importance, if any, might be on the line's metre. However, the fact that most manuscripts agree in not having onys --Cx2 Hg El Ad3 Bw Ch Cp Dd Ds Ad1 Bo1 Bo2 Cn Ha4 Ht La Ra3 Wy En3 Fi Gl Ha2 Hk Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mc Mg Mm Nl Ph2 Ph3 Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra2 Ry1 Ry2 Se Si Sl2 Tc1 To-- seems to indicate that the reading was added at a later point in the tradition. In fact, this reading is present only in Cx1, He, Ne and Tc2 --Ii has 'oone'. In other words, it is clearly a reading that is characteristic of the **b** group.

WBP 10
Out: Cp Gg En2 Ha5

Base That sith that Crist ne wente neuere but onys
Cx1 That crist wente neuyr but onys
Cx2 That sith cryst wente neuer but onys

That sith that Crist] Ad3 Bo1 Bo2 Ch Dl El Hk Hg Ht Lc Ld2 Mc Mg Mm Ne Nl Ph3 Pw Py Ra1 Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Si Tc1
That sith Crist] Ad1 Bo1 Cx2 Dd En3 Fi Gl Ha2 La Ld1 Mm Nl Ph3 Pw Ra2 Wy
That Crist] Bw Cx1 Ds He Ii Ld2 Ln Ma Ne Se Sl2 Tc2
That synnes Crist] Ha4
That seith that] Bo2
That sith that] Ph2
That sith god] Ps
But sith Crist] To

In this line Cx2 adds a word that was missing in Cx1: 'sith'. There are other manuscripts that agree with Cx1 in suppressing it: Bw, Ds, Cn, He, Ii, Ld2, Ln, Ma, Ne, Ry1, Ry2, Se, Tc2. However, in adding 'sith', Cx2 agrees with Hg El Ad3 Ch and Ha4; this indicates that it is probably an archetypal reading, that is, not only Hg and El are in agreement with Cx2, but also that three manuscripts have the most consistent

agreement with ω. There is a further agreement between witnesses of the α group -- Ad1 En3-- in the phrase 'That sith Crist' with Cx2.

WBP 24 and 30 show instances of substitutions that result in an agreement with the majority of the manuscripts.

WBP 24
Base Yet herde I neuere tellen in myn age
Cx1 But herde y neuer tellyn in myn age
Cx2 Yet herd I neuer tellyn in myn age

Yet] Ad1 Ad3 Bo1 Bw Ch Cp Cx2 Dd Dl El En2 En3 Fi Gl Ha2 Ha4 Hg Hk Ht La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Mc Mg Mm Ph2 Ph3 Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Se Si Tc1 To Wy
It] Bo2
But] Cn Cx1 Ds He Ii Ne Tc2
But yet] Ma
[unr]xxx[/unr]] Nl
That] Ra2
And] Sl2

WBP 30
Out: Gg Ha 5
Base ¢ Eek wel I woot he seyde that myn housbonde
Cx1 For wel y woot that myn husbonde
Cx2 Eke wel I woot he sayde that myn husbonde

Eek] Ad1 Ad3 Bo1 Bo2 Ch Cp Cx2 Dd El En2 En3 Fi Gl Ha2 Ha4 Hg Hk Ht La Lc Ld1 Mc Mg Mm Nl Ph2 Ph3 Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra2 Ra3 Ry1 Si Sl1 Sl2 Tc1 To1 Wy
For] Cn Cx1 Ds1 En1 He Ii Ma Ne Se Tc2
Also] Dl
The] Pn
Not present] Bw Ld2 Ln

These are examples of word replacement. Mainly they show what the additions and deletions suggest. In the substitution of 'Yet' by 'But', Cx1 is accompanied by Cn, Ds, He, Ii, Ma, Ne, Tc2, that is, Cx2 has replaced a word that is not archetypal for one

that it is. The same happens with line 30 in which the manuscripts that agree with Cx1 in the replacement of the reading 'Eke' by 'For' are Cn, Ds, He, Ii, Ma, Ne, Se, Tc2. These examples show substitutions that do not affect the metre of the line, but in both cases the reading in Cx2 can be considered to be archetypal if we base our observations on variant distribution.

2.2.2 Cx2-Unique Variants

The Cx2-Unique variants, because they are unique, cannot help to determine affiliation. For this reason most of Cx2-O and Cx2-Unique are not included among the stemmatically significant variants. The Cx2-Unique variants are relatively few. Although some of these might come directly from ω, they are singletons and, therefore, mostly useless to determine its position in the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales*. However, some of the singleton variants might have their explanation in a misinterpretation of ω. When I have suspected that this might be the case I have isolated the variant and tried to explain it. An example of such a variant is in line WBP 44.

WBP 44
Base Blessed be god that I haue wedded fyue
Cx1 Blissid be god for I haue had fyue
Cx2 Ye blessyd be god that I haue had fyue
Hg Blessed be god that I haue wedded fyue
El Yblessed be god that I haue wedded fyue

Blessed] Ad1 Ad3 Bo1 Bo2 Bw Ch Cn Cp Cx1 Dd Dl Ds1 En1 En2 En3 Fi Gl Ha2 He Hg Hk Ht Ii La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mc Mg Mm Ne Nl Ph2 Ph3 Ps Pw Py Ra1 Ra2 Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Se Si Sl1 Sl2 Tc1 Tc2 To1

Ye blessed] Cx2 Pn Wy[16]
Yblessed] El Ha4

The vast majority of the witnesses have the reading 'Blessed' where Cx2 has 'Ye blessed.' As in the previous example, only two printed editions agree with Cx2, which suggests that this reading could have originated in a misinterpretation of ω or in a mistake on the part of the compositor in understanding Caxton's instructions. However, this view could be challenged on the evidence found in El and Ha4 --the only two manuscripts that add an extra syllable to the past participle 'Yblessed'. The fact that the spelling in El has a 'y' could explain the variant in Cx2. Perhaps the compositor tried to make sense of an annotation made by Caxton that was not as clear as it could have been. The variant in El and Ha4 suggest that ω might have had this reading.

WBP 81

Base	He	wolde	that	euery	wight	were	swich	as he
Cx1	He	wolde	wel	euery	wight	were		as he
Cx2	He	wolde		euery	wyght	were	suche	as he
Hg	He	wolde	that	euery	wightꝛ	were	swich	as he
El	He	wolde	þt	euꝰy	wigħt	were	swich	as he

that] Ad1 Ad3 Bo1 Bo2 Bw Ch Cn Cp Dd Ds El En2 En3 Fi Gg Gl Ha2 Ha4 Hk Hg Ii La Lc Ld1 Ld2 Ln Ma Mc Mg Mm Nl Ph2 Ph3 Pw Py Ra1 Ra2 Ra3 Ry1 Ry2 Se Si Tc1 To
wel] Cx1 Tc2
not] Ne Sl2
not present] Cx2 Dl Wy

[16] Technically, this variant is not a singleton because it is shared with other two witnesses. But given the fact that the other witnesses are printed editions based on Cx2, we can take this particular instance as a singleton variant.

In this line, Cx2 has suppressed a Cx1 variant that is shared only with Tc2. However, instead of replacing it with the most common variant --'ꝥat'--, nothing was added in its place. It is possible that the compositor was paying more attention to the fact that he had to add 'suche' at a later point in the line, and this could explain why 'wel' was not substituted by 'ꝥat.'

2.2.3 Cx2-Hg/El Variants and the Cx2-not-Hg/El Variants

Variants in which Cx2 agrees with Hg against El or vice versa --Cx2-Hg/El-- are important because previous research has suggested that ω was a good manuscript (Robinson 1997, 104 and ff. see), and these variants are of great significance to establish not only the affiliations of Cx2 but which readings, if any, are archetypal to the tradition. In the past, editors have had to choose between the Hg and El manuscripts when these have different readings. If Cx2 were to agree with one against the other and if this reading were supported by other **O** manuscripts, it would be possible to justify one variant as being archetypal to the tradition rather the other.[17] For example, it might happen that when Cx2 agrees with Hg the variant could just be archetypal to the tradition, whereas if it agrees with El one might see a different panorama. The Cx2-not-Hg/El variants, those variants in which Cx2 agrees with other witnesses against both Hg and El, could turn out to be even more important that the Cx2-Hg/El variants, since, even if they turned out not to be archetypal, they would be

[17] It is important to keep in mind that this method will not indicate which one is the correct reading, or which one the intended by Chaucer, it merely attempts to point out which reading is more likely to have been present in the archetype and how the variant readings might or might not indicate genetic relationships among the witnesses.

likely to provide more information about the affiliations of Cx2 with manuscripts other than Hg and El.

2.3 Division of the Text

In order to facilitate the analysis of the variants in Cx2 I have divided the text into sets of elements or items. These sets are not to be confused with F. N. Robinson's fragments, Skeat's groups, or Blake's sections. With the first two I disagree in principle since they consider the CL and ME, and the SQ and FK, to be two groups -- group E, fragment IV; and group F, fragment V, respectively. Although Blake's sections are more accurate, they mainly apply to Hg. For these reasons I have divided the text into sets based on the ordering of Cx2 and on my own research on the tale-order in different manuscripts[18]. The sets, designed for the particularities of the present research, are as follows:[19]

1. GP-KT-L1-MI-L2-RE-L3-CO

2. L7-ML

3. L15

4. ME

5. L8

6. SQ

7. L20

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[18] The research on tale-order is being carried out under the supervision of Professors Mary Carruthers, David Hoover and Martha Rust, as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of PhD at New York University. The thesis carries the title: "The Phylogeny of the Order in the *Canterbury Tales*."

8. FK

9. WB-L10-FR-L11-SU

10. CL-L13-L14

11. NU-L33-CY

12. PH-L21-PD

13. SH-L24-PR-L25-TT-L28-TM-L29-MO-L30-NP-L31

14. L36-MA

15. L37-PA-RT

The idea behind this classification is to show the independence of certain parts of the text, as well as to establish clearly the particularities in the order of Cx2 and so facilitate reference to the book. The sets are not intended to make any statements about unity, just to point out that there is a certain regularity in some of them (that is, they appear more commonly together) with reference to the others. Major (including complete lines) and minor (at the word level) variants have been considered together since it would be pointless to have separated them in two different chapters that might, potentially, show the same results.

2.4 The Method of Collation and the Genetic Groups

For the first collation, Cx1 has been used as base text, since the objective was to isolate the differences between this and Cx2. For my lineated collation I have used

[19] I have used the same divisions for all the chapters on variants.

the Canterbury Tales Project's base, i.e., a 'lightly edited version of Hg' in which special symbols have been replaced by standard characters, abbreviations have been expanded, and lines not present in Hg have been added. The collations used in this work include all the manuscript transcriptions available to me when running the collation. I have always attempted to have the largest possible number of manuscripts presented in the most practical order. In each particular instance I will give details of which manuscripts were used for that collation.

2.4.1 Manly and Rickert's Groups

In the following sections I refer to the manuscript groups which were first suggested by Manly and Rickert in 1940 and later revised and modified by Robinson on the basis of his analysis of WBP and GP. Manly and Rickert proposed a classification of four groups and a set of manuscripts that they thought were unclassifiable. These 'unclassifiable' manuscripts are the ones which Manly and Rickert could not include in any of their groups. They found that these witnesses did not have clear textual affiliations between each other or with texts that could be fitted into groups. The other Manly and Rickert groups are:

Group **a**: Cn Dd En1 Ds Me

Group **b**: He Ne Cx1 Tc2

Group **c**: Cp La Sl2

Group **d**: En2 Ll1 Lc Mg Pw Mm Ph3 Ry2 Ld2 Dl Ha2 Sl1

Manly and Rickert also thought that some manuscripts, not belonging to any of these groups, form pairs. These are: Ad3 and Ha5, Bo1 and Ph2, En3 and Ad1, Mc and Ra1, Ps and Ha1, and Ra2 and Ht. Referring to GP, they also stated that:

> …of the 49 MSS, all but six –Hg, Ch, El, Gg, Do, To – are derived from the same common ancestor. Their relationships are obscured by the loss of intervening exemplars, by supply of lost leaves, and by much independent editing and contamination. (1940, 1: 78)

Manly and Rickert's ideas have been modified and refined by the work undertaken by Robinson in the Canterbury Tales Project.

2.4.2 Robinson's Groups

Robinson after his analysis of WBP and GP tuned the original groups proposed by Manly and Rickert. Since his work is not complete --he has analysed only two sections of the *Tales*--, it would be inappropriate to expect his groups to be valid for the work as a whole. However, Robinson's groups are a good basis for the present work. His groups, based on GP data, are as follows:

Alpha group: Ad1 Ad3 En3 Tc1

Group **a**: Cn Dd Ds1 En1 Ma

Group **b**: Cx1 Cx2[20] Ii Ld1 Ne Nl Pn Tc2 Wy

Group **ab**: Ht Py Ra2 Ry1

Group **cd**: Bw Cp Dl Fi[21] Gl Ha2 Ha3 La Lc Ld1[22] Ld2 Mg Mm Pw Ry2 Se Sl1 Sl2

[20] Robinson also points out **ab** and alpha affiliations. This result is a consequence of the conflation of the text.
[21] Robinson also suggests **α/ab** variants that he interprets as having their source in a manuscript used to correct the text of Fi.
[22] For Ld1, Robinson suggests that there is some contamination or shift of exemplar, and is the reason why this manuscript appears both in **b** and **cd**.

E Group: Bo1 Ph2

Non affiliation or uncertain: Bo2 Ch Do El Gg Ha4 Hg Ln Ra3 To1 (Robinson 2000b)

In his analysis of WBP, Robinson had suggested yet another group: the **F** group. This group was presumed to be related to **E**, and perhaps even have a common ancestor (1997: 90). The manuscripts that form the **EF** group for WBP are: Bo1 Gg Ph2 Si Bw Ln Ld2 and Ry2. Some of these --Gg and Ln--, were among the unclassifiable group in GP. Robinson's groups seem to be a more finely tuned version of those proposed by Manly and Rickert but, if the evidence forces me to question them I will explicitly state so while explaining my own position.