

LINGUISTICS

SCRIBAL INTRUSION IN THE TEXTS OF *GAMELYN*

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ABSTRACT

One of most important steps in the process of editing a manuscript is the identification and correction of the mistakes made by the scribe or scribes involved in its copying process in order to obtain the best text. In some cases, the changes introduced by the scribe, or by the editor who was supervising his work, can easily be noticed because we find out “physical” elements throughout the folio, such as dots under a word as a sign of expunction or carets indicating that a missing word is being added. However, there are many instances of scribal intrusion where only a detailed analysis of the text itself, or even the comparison of different manuscripts, can lead us to the identification of a modified reading. For instance, orthographical changes due to the dialectal provenance of the copyist, or altered lines with a regular aspect. The purpose of this article is to analyse the scribal amendments that appear in some of the earliest copies of *The tale of Gamelyn*: Corpus Christi College Oxford MS 198 (Cp), Christ Church Oxford MS 152 (Ch), Fitzwilliam Museum McClean 181 (Fi), British Library MS Harley 7334 (Ha4), Bodleian Library MS Hatton Donat. 1 (Ht), British Library MS Lansdowne 851 (La), Lichfield Cathedral MS 29 (Lc), Cambridge University Library Mm.2.5 (Mm), Petworth House MS 7 (Pw) and British Library MS Royal 18 C.II (Ry2).

0. Introduction

When editing any Middle English material, one of the main drawbacks for the editor is the identification and correction of the mistakes made by the scribes responsible for the manuscript/s involved in the process. Scribal intrusion is very often responsible for some odd readings in thorough editions. Besides, when analysing this type of material in linguistic change and grammaticalization studies, an unaware scholar can end up obtaining altered results if she/he does not take into account what part of her/his text is the result, for instance, of

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the absentmindedness of a certain monk in a certain monastery or of the negligence of a specific scribe in a professional copying office.

In most cases, it is almost impossible to ascertain up to what extent the text we are facing has been “corrupted” by its scribe, especially when the author is anonymous and we cannot trace her/his original dialect or style. However, it is desirable and advisable to detect and correct as many mistakes as possible in order to obtain the best results.

When we have several exemplars for the same work, it is easier to achieve a “good” text by comparing all the readings in the different exemplars and, subsequently, determining which of them show the least contaminated readings. The final decision for the editor will be, then, to choose among those readings the best for her/his own edition.

In my edition of the *Tale of Gamelyn*,² I chose Corpus Christi College Oxford MS 198 as base text and then selected nine other manuscripts to be collated against the first one: Christ Church Oxford MS 152 (Ch), Fitzwilliam Museum McClean 181 (Fi), British Library MS Harley 7334 (Ha⁴), Bodleian Library MS Hatton Donat. 1 (Ht), British Library MS Lansdowne 851 (La), Lichfield Cathedral MS 29 (Lc), Cambridge University Library Mm.2.5 (Mm), Petworth House MS 7 (Pw), British Library MS Royal 18 C.II (Ry²). The output I obtained is a satisfactory text without missing parts and with the best readings available for this particular tale.

Among the most common mistakes a scribe may make in his process of copying a manuscript, we can mention missing words or lines mainly due to eyeskip, changes in the word order of different elements in a sentence and the introduction of wrong letters and words. Hereafter, I will present some of the errors of these types which appear in the different texts of the *Tale of Gamelyn* I used in my edition, paying special attention to the devices used by the scribe or some later editor in order to amend those mistakes, such as deletions, additions and so on.

1. Christ Church Oxford MS 152 (Ch)

This manuscript includes a mutilated copy of the *Canterbury Tales* and two works by Lydgate. Chaucer’s work occupies folios 2r to 276v with *Gamelyn* starting in the middle of folio 58v, after a line introducing the *Cokys Tale*. Three different scribes worked in the elaboration of Christ Church MS. In the following lines, we will focus on the first one, responsible for the copying of the *Canterbury Tales* and *The siege of Thebes*, whose calligraphy shows a neat cursive hand with many flourished letters.

² See Vázquez (2009) for a detailed description of these manuscripts.

We observe many instances of deletion and addition here. This does not mean, however, that the work was less carefully done than in other manuscripts, but it may be an indication of the original intention of the editor and the scribe when preparing the volume. As a general rule, the luxurious and extremely careful copies were intended for important people who wanted to own a particular work and who treated the volume as one more jewel in her/his collection of precious objects. A second type of manuscript is that in which the work itself is what matters.³ This is the case of Christ Church MS, since the Winchester College motto appears twice in the volume. The primary purpose of this type of manuscript is to study the text of its author. Thus, the scribe is more worried about the correctness of the lines than about the more or less tidy aspect of the pages of the manuscript.

Some examples of deletion in the manuscript are:

- *he* crossed by a single line (line 39)
- *my bone* (line 149)

Additions are marked using an inverted angle:

- *it is* <no> *nay* (line 34)
- *Than saide* <Gamelyn> *the* (line 105)
- <to me> *and graunt* (line 149)
- *out of* <his> *care* (line 200)
- *but* <if> *god* (line 204)
- *stode* <anoon> *alone* (line 348)
- *worth* <the> *too* (line 432)
- *he was* <full> *glade* (line 690)

There is also an addition, made by a later hand, on the right margin next to line 378, that reads *caret*, probably to indicate that some lines of the text were missing.

In line 736, two parallel vertical strokes are used to indicate that a word has been located in a wrong place. Thus, the reading changes from *shall we be never more* to *shall we never be more*.

This version of the *Tale of Gamelyn* lacks lines 121,⁴ 375-377, 601, 602, 813, 814 and 856-857. The first missing line (line 121) can be explained as a result of an eyeskip, for the previous line ends with the words *he seigh hem*

³ A third possibility is that of really careless copies that may be the output of training scribal work. However, none of the manuscripts containing the *Canterbury Tales* belongs to this third type.

⁴ In the case of line 121 and lines 375-377, the word *caret* appears in the margin, introduced by a different hand to indicate that some lines of the text were missing.

comen and the same words occur in line 121. A similar explanation can be used for lines 601-602, because line 601 and line 603 start with *Adam seid*. Although the same justification might be suitable for the other cases, we could also think of a deliberate omission on the part of the scribe or his supervisor in order to avoid repetition:

- Line 374 ends with *bothe hand and foote* and line 377 would end the same way if it were included.
- Line 812 reads *Sire Otte stant fetered in the moot hall* and the omitted line 814 is identical.
- Line 855 ends with *the Iustices sete* and line 857 should end exactly the same.

This hypothesis is further reinforced by the fact that lines 375-376 and 813-814 are also missing in Fi, Ht, Lc, Mm, Pw and Ry² and line 377 is missing in Fi₂, Lc, Mm and Ry². Be that as it may, the recurrent omission of certain couplets⁵ related to repeated or “too similar” endings compels us to think of a more satisfactory explanation. This must, however, be left for further research.

Finally, two particular lines written by a later hand deserve special consideration. The first of them is found at the beginning of folio 59v. Someone who had access to the volume tried to imitate the writing and copied the first line. Then it was crossed by a horizontal line. The second case is even more intriguing. The line, written in a different and probably later hand, has been erased, making it impossible to be read. The only thing which is discernible is a reference to the Cook.

2. Corpus Christi College Oxford MS 198 (Cp)

The Corpus Christi College manuscript offers one of the most beautiful and careful copies of *Gamelyn* that have come down to us. The text is arranged into single columns and occupies folios 62r to 73v, all of them containing 36 lines. We witness a delicate and clear book hand, that of the so-called Scribe D, also responsible for the copying of manuscript Harley 7334.

On the whole, the writing of the scribe seems to be in accordance with the general aspect of the manuscript, neat and tidy, the output of a thoughtful and trained professional. The high degree of commitment of this particular scribe is evinced by the fact that, in the writing of the whole *Tale of Gamelyn*, we witness just the following mistakes:

⁵ In addition to these couplets, lines 281-282 are also left out in a large number of manuscripts.

- one mistake with names (in line 817 he writes *seyde Gamelyn* instead of *seyde Adam*, as a result of an eye skip, for those two words occur a couple of lines before and also after line 817)
- two additions (*it* in line 154 and a letter <r> in line 422)
- one repetition (*stille* in line 423)
- one missing word (*blood* in line 663, added on the left margin next to the line by a modern hand)
- only one missing line (line 264). Line 263 reads *Gamelyn in the place stood stille as a stoon*. The following line should therefore match the *stoon* rhyme to form a couplet, as in other manuscripts, though we find instead the next couplet with the rhyme *more/sore*: *Ther was non with Gamelyn wolde wresle more/For he handled the Campion so wonderliche sore*.

3. Fitzwilliam Museum McClean 181 (Fi)

In this manuscript one single hand is found throughout, cursive though very variable, ranging from well-rounded letters in neat straight lines on some folios to irregular untidy writing on others. The first lines on all folios are remarkably highlighted by means of towering strokes, often vastly decorated.

Taking into account the general appearance of the manuscript and the particular aspects of its handwriting, we can portray the scribe of Fi as belonging to an intermediate sector, neither extremely neat and thoughtful, as was the case of the scribe of Cp, nor a reckless uncaring amateur. As seen above, his writing is sometimes inconsistent, ranging from careful to somewhat untidy. Besides, on many occasions we observe that he runs out of ink and then he resumes his work. This fact, together with the occurrence of some words with an unusual spelling, such as *broder* and *rigtze*, among others, may indicate that, at least at some point, the tale could have been dictated by one person and copied by another. This would explain some of the aforementioned changes in spelling and would also account for the rushing style of copying of the scribe.

The negative aspects just mentioned are somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that, at other times, the scribe shows himself to be a careful copyist who is really concerned about achieving a coherent text. Thus, although up to a total of one hundred and four lines are altered in Fi,⁶ one could read the version it offers as if it were complete. In most cases a couplet is missing; on other occasions,

⁶ It has been suggested (Manly – Rickert 1940, vol. I: 163) that this manuscript was written following different exemplars, and that one or more of them could contain authorial changes and additions. It also seems to contain early versions of some other tales. Thus, the unique readings shown in Fi, in *Gamelyn* in particular, could be considered the result of a revised version. However, as no evidence in favour of this hypothesis can be provided, we will not take it into further consideration.

two lines of different couplets are lacking. However, in such cases, the rhyme of the lines that do not match is changed to form a new couplet. Moreover, the scribe adds two couplets that are not found elsewhere.⁷

Another piece of evidence that proves that the scribe of the Fi MS was, at times, a good professional is the almost total lack of emendations (deletions and additions). Some exceptions are:

- one mistake with names. A line crosses the name *Gamelyn* and *Adam* is written above it (line 521)
- one mistake with the order of two words (line 365). The same as in the previous example, the mistake is corrected by the same scribe (the word *broder* is crossed with a line and it is added again after *body*)
- the placing of the verb *seid* in a different position and the addition of the preposition *to* to avoid an erroneous interpretation of the meaning of the sentence (line 293). Therefore, instead of *Than seid the porter Gamelyn undo the gate* (where it is no clear who is speaking, the Porter or Gamelyn), the line reads *Than to the porter Gamelyn seid undo the gate* (where it is made clear that it is Gamelyn who is talking to the Porter).

As a conclusion, we can say that, in the case of Fi, we are facing the work of a professional scribe and/or supervisor who makes an effort to offer the future reader a good reading of the particular tale which he is copying and who is less worried about the appearance of the manuscript.

4. British Library MS Harley 7334 (Ha⁴)

This manuscript is closely related to Cp. Both share scribe and type of illumination and belong to the group of earliest manuscripts containing the *Canterbury Tales*. This particular tale is inserted in the manuscript following the directions of a supervisor, who, at the end of folio 58v, writes *Icy commencera le fable de Gamelyn*. The *fable* fills folio 59 to folio 70, where it ends some lines to the foot of the page. As in the case of Cp, the scribe, known as Scribe D of the *Canterbury Tales*, also displays his superb craft, offering a neat book hand. However, in contrast to Cp, here no emendations are appreciated though some examples of scribal additions can be mentioned:

⁷ The lines that are missing are given below in regular type, those with an altered rhyme appear in italics and those that are totally new appear in bold type: 19 to 54, 181, *183*, 184, *185*, 225, 227, 235, 236, 253 to 256, 261 to 264, 281, 282, *283*, 289, 290, 341 to 344, 375, 376, *377*, 388 to 393, **395 to 398**, *399*, 423, 424, *425*, 441, 442, 487, 488, 551, 552, *561*, 562, 563, 633, 634, 691, 692, 703, 704, 731, *732*, *733*, 769, 770, 813, 814, 833, 834, 857, 858. (total of missing lines: 92; total of lines with altered rhyme: 8; total of new lines: 4).

If we examine the additions in lines 260 and 267 in Ha⁴, we see that the rhythm of the lines is altered.

L 260

Cp And sayde if ther be moo lat he come to werke
Ha⁴ And sayde if ther be *eny* mo lat hem come to werk

L 267

Cp Tuo gentil men yemed the place
Ha⁴ Two gentil men *ther were that* yemed the place

The rhythm is also damaged after the change in word order in line 232 (Ha⁴ is the only manuscript showing this reverse word order arrangement).

L 232

Cp Now I am oldere woxe thou schalt *fynd me* a more
Ha⁴ Now I am older woxe thou schalt me fynd a more

5. Bodleian Library MS Hatton Donat. 1 (Ht)

As in other manuscripts, the tale is introduced by a couplet: *But her of I will passe as nowe / And of yong Gamelyne I will tell yowe*. Besides, the word *gamelyne* appears placed to the right of this couplet pointing out the start of the tale.

This manuscript shows a peculiarity in the reading of its lines. It lacks lines 281, 282, 375, 376, 813 and 814, just as Fi, Lc, Mm, Pw and Ry²,⁸ but lines 209, 397 and 731 and the group 259-261 is also left out. As regards the degree of supervision and correction in the manuscript, there are ten cases of deletion in the Ht version of the *Tale of Gamelyn*. They all seem corrected by the same hand that was copying the manuscript, using a horizontal line to cross the wrong word/letter. This means that no supervisor was responsible for the corrections. This idea is further reinforced by the fact that no instances of addition by a contemporaneous hand are found.⁹ Illustrative examples of deletion are given below:

- deleted item, one letter: <r> (line 33), <w> (line 197), <f> (line 382)
- deleted item, part of a word: *dres* as part of *dresse* (line 848)

⁸ The discussion on the first group of missing lines appears below when describing Pw manuscript. Ry², Mm, Lc and Fi also lack line 377. Ch has lines 281-282 but lacks 375-377 and the couplet 813-814.

⁹ There is a strange addition by a much later hand that reads *testm (testamentum) milites* above line 58.

- deleted item, one word: *on* (line 288), *hadde* (line 417), *and* (line 890), *god* (line 902)
- deleted item, two words: *good strokes* (line 500), *by sent* (line 619)

Sometimes we find horizontal strokes which separate words that have been written together and should be written as independent elements: e.g. *l/pe*.

Several mistakes are, however, left uncorrected. Some of them have to do with errors when drawing the letters, e.g. *which*, where an otiose mark intended for a different letter (probably the final <h>) can be seen. Some others are mistakes due to the lack of attention of the scribe, e.g. *loker* for *loked* in line 192 (possibly because the previous word is *brother*), *I will not* instead of *evil mot* (line 448) and a mistake with names in line 426 where the scribe writes *Adam* instead of *Gamelyn*.¹⁰

However, some other mistakes can be seen as a problem of miscopying due to “mishearing” rather than to “misreading” the text. The hypothesis of the manuscript having been copied under dictation not only seems sensible but would also explain a large number of errors of this kind found in this particular manuscript and in many others,¹¹ among them the following:

- *where* instead of *were* (line 87)
- *harneþs* instead of *armes* (line 98)
- *reueb* instead of *reved* (line 111)
- *ought* instead of *out* (line 401)
- *feders* instead of *fetters* (line 454)
- *puthed* instead of *putte* (line 718)
- and many instances of final <ʒ> used to represent a voiced sibilant in plural endings: e.g. *stedeʒ*.¹²

6. British Library MS Lansdowne 851 (La)

This copy of the *Canterbury Tales* is written in a single clear book hand throughout, with a characteristic descending coil after most final letters, mainly final <e>, <f>, <s> and <t>. Examples of this feature are also found, though less frequently, in final <r> and occasionally in <l> and <k>.

¹⁰ This mistake also appears in Mm and Ry² thus suggesting that the three manuscripts are textually affiliated.

¹¹ Cf. description of Fi above and La and Mm below.

¹² The spelling <ʒ> for a voiced sibilant was frequent in the North-West Midland dialect, the same as in the Northern dialect and Scots (Mossé 1952: 8).

Another feature of the scribe of the La MS is that, at times, he joins two or more independent words: *awhile*, *alittlenere*. Sometimes a horizontal stroke separating two words which are written together is introduced:¹³ *thou|reede* (line 797).

Other examples of correction in the manuscript are:

- seven additions: in lines 14 (*he*), 33 (*he*), 132 (*ginne*), 144 (*me*), 512 (*he*), 563 (*be*) and 779 (*hadde*)
- one case of underdotting: *pi-n*¹⁴ - *name* (line 100)
- introduction of A and B marks at a certain place in the manuscript indicating misplaced order of two consecutive lines (555 and 556)
- The introduction of two parallel horizontal strokes to indicate wrong order of some words. Thus, the wrong sequence *cam inne* is changed into *inne cam* (line 215).

There are, however, some cases of mistakes and repetitions that are not corrected, such as *Te* (without <h>), *Me þe þinkeþ*, *for for*, *broþer broþer*, *turet turet*.

In the 22 folios of this version of *Gamelyn* certain features seem to suggest that at least some parts of the manuscript were copied while someone was dictating the exemplar. Evidence in favour of this hypothesis is found in the occurrence of words in which a certain consonant is added or replaced by one that is pronounced in a similar way:¹⁵

- *housez* for *houses*; here /z/ is represented by the scribe as <ʒ> instead of the standard spelling <s> (line 74).¹⁶
- *tiþinge* instead of *tiding*; <þ>, which normally represents the dental fricative, is used in this word instead of the dental plosive, represented by <d> (line 690).
- non-etymological <h> is sometimes inserted, while in other cases an etymological <h> is deleted: *sir <h>ote* vs. *eire* ‘heir’ (line 759).

¹³ Although in most cases it is impossible to ascertain whether some correction has been made by the scribe himself or by a person that supervised his work, in this particular case, it seems that the corrections were made by the scribe. That would explain why some repeated words are not deleted and why some signs indicating misplaced order are apparently written in the same hand.

¹⁴ Only the first downstroke of the letter is written and underdotted.

¹⁵ Cf. *broder* in Fi and *stedeʒ* in Ht. A detailed study of these and similar occurrences in medieval manuscripts should be carried out in order to achieve a suitable explanation.

¹⁶ Cf. footnote 12 above.

The case of line 384, *And sent affeter fetters to fetterne him fast*, where *after* is miswritten (*affeter*), could be explained on similar grounds. However, we are more inclined to describe it as a visual mistake, probably because of the vicinity of *fetters* and *fetterne*.

It is remarkable in this manuscript the use of decorated capitals. I mention it here because it can be considered a different way of intrusion. In addition to the usual “emphatic” capitals, the scribe in La uses vastly ornamented letters. Examples of “moderate” capitals are found in f. 62v for <H> and in f. 63r for <W>. Others are somewhat more “decorated”, e.g. <W> in f. 61v. However, the most impressive items are those found at the beginning of folios 59v and 60v for the letter <A>, as in *And* and *Abbot*. Although no definite explanation can be offered for the occurrence of these extremely ornamented letters, it seems plausible to think of an exceptional case in which the scribe could have been trained also as an illustrator and wanted to show off his expertise.¹⁷

As regards omissions, only three lines are missing in this manuscript. This deletion can, however, easily be explained after examining the rhymes: line 262 ends in *more* and line 265 ends in *sore*. Errors skipping one or more lines were, in fact, common when identical rhymes occurred nearby.

Finally, a few words seem in order concerning the introductory link. As seen in the analyses of previous manuscripts, the *Tale of Gamelyn* is introduced, most of the times, through the couplet: *But hereof I wol passe as now / And of yong Gamelyn I wol telle you*. Nevertheless, the scribe of La writes a unique four-line link: *Fye þer one it is so foule I wil nowe tell no forþere / For schame of þe harlotrie þat seweth after / A velany it were þare of more to spell / Bot of a knyhte and his sones my tale I will forþe tell*.

It is rather pretentious on his part to feign that he will omit the rest of the *Cook's Tale* because of the *harlotrie* and *velany*, and that he will tell a story about a knight instead. Yet, we have to admit that, through these four lines, the scribe makes an effort to endow the text of the *Canterbury Tales* with greater coherence.¹⁸

¹⁷ The fact that <A> appears in both examples could be taken as an indication on the part of the scribe to highlight that particular capital, maybe because it was his own initial. Sometimes, the illustrator or the scribe left signs or marks in the manuscript that only he and those who had been trained in the same shop/church could recognise as a kind of personal signature. A detailed analysis of this type of marks should be carried out in order to discover whether this particular case exemplifies this practice. Such study is, however, far from the aim of this dissertation and must, therefore, be left for future research.

¹⁸ This scribe is also responsible for the unique eight-line ending of the fragmentary SqT, in which the Squire excuses himself for stopping the tale saying that the day passes by rapidly and that he prefers to let the other characters tell their tale. With the addition of these two groups of links, the incompleteness of both tales (CkT and SqT) in the *Canterbury Tales* is justified.

7. Lichfield Cathedral MS 29 (Lc)

This vellum manuscript, which contains a mutilated copy of the *Canterbury Tales*, is written, margined and ruled in brown ink. The title is inserted just after the introductory link. This initial couplet is the same as in most other manuscripts. However, Lc offers a unique ending. In line 898 of the text, we are told that Gamelyn marries a *ful fayre wyf*, but no further mention of her is made in the other manuscripts. Yet, here the final couplet is modified and reads as follows: *And so was [buried] his wife and shall we / God bring us to the joy that ever shall be* instead of *And so shall we all [be buried] may there no man flee / God bring us to the joy that ever shall be*.

Also interesting is the mistake appreciated in the opening line of the tale, where the first word reads *Sitheth* and not *Litheth*. Illustrators and scribes did not work simultaneously. In some cases, the illustrator started off once the volume was copied, while, in others, the scribe passed him the pages as he was completing certain units. Be that as it may, this error can be interpreted as a mistake on the part of the person who wrote the minuscule guiding letter left for the illuminator, for the ornamental capital drawn is <S> and not <L>. This is further proof that most scribes and illuminators devoted their attention to their “main” task, that is the aspect of their output, and did not care much about the meaning of what they were transcribing.

The same as with illustrators, this manuscript offers the work of two different scribes. One of them copied the first one hundred and ninety-six folios and the second one went on up to the end. In what follows, attention will be paid to the former, because he is the one responsible for the *Tale of Gamelyn*. This scribe proves to be a careful professional. The writing is quite regular throughout the eight hundred and ninety-five lines that contain the tale, though sometimes it seems to have been difficult for him to write flawless straight lines. Besides, we also witness some variations in the size of the letters within the same page.

This manuscript contains just two instances of addition and one of deletion:

- added letter: <r> (line 406)
- added word: *bad* (line 286)
- deleted letter: <d> (line 660)

As for missing lines in the manuscript, Lc, the same as Fi, Ht, Mm and Ry², lacks lines 281, 282, 375, 376, 377, 813 and 814, and it also incorporates a variant of line 283 to avoid the repetition of *the Ram and the Ring*.

8. Cambridge University Library Mm.2.5 (Mm)

The most outstanding feature of the general aspect of this manuscript is that all couplets appear joined in twos by red brackets. Perhaps this was a device used by the scribe to avoid forgetting one of the lines of the couplet. In spite of this, he cannot help making some mistakes. Throughout the pages containing the *Tale of Gamelyn*, we find an error in line 136, which is forgotten and has to be added on the right margin.

The hand of the scribe responsible for the Mm manuscript is neat and regular. It shows the typical problems of keeping to the ruling lines. But perhaps his most noticeable feature is that he seems to be “saving” ink, for he goes on writing till the end of the line in spite of being running out of it. This mixture of light and dark portions of lines gives the manuscript an untidy aspect.

After the preliminary link, we find the title of the tale: The tale of yonge gamelyn and it finishes with the regular couplet And so shall we all may there no man flee / God bring us to the joy that ever shall be.

This manuscript is certainly a supervised work. On folio 51v, a different but contemporaneous hand adds <N> for *Nota*, just before line 284, and writes *Hit deficit versus in copia*, explaining that the exemplar from which this tale is being copied lacks certain lines.¹⁹ At the end of the folio, a later hand adds <A> for *Addenda*, and writes the three verses that appear in other copies of *Gamelyn*. Next to line 374, there is another note saying *Deficit versus in copia*, but this time no addition with the missing lines 375-377 is provided.

A clear scribal mistake appears in line 463. After the word *brother* in this line, the scribe moves to the second part of line 465 after the same word. Thus, the second part of line 463, the whole 464 and the first part of 465 are missing. Besides the aforementioned examples of scribal absentmindedness, only one instance of deletion and one of addition appear in this version of *Gamelyn*:

- deleted word *be* (line 606)
- added <d> between *an* and *by* (line 198)

Some singular cases cannot be explained as proper scribal mistakes. On one occasion, the word *us* appears written with non-etymological <h> (line 662). In turn, this same manuscript shows a unique reading *eritage* without <h> in line 58. These examples seem to support the hypothesis mentioned above that dictation was sometimes used in the copying process. It is reasonable to believe that such a practice was a time-saving device in the shops where more than one scribe worked together. Moreover, the hypothesis is also supported by other scribal mistakes that can only be explained on the grounds of oral work.

¹⁹ Besides lines 281-283, this manuscript omits lines 375-377, 813 and 814.

9. Petworth House MS 7 (Pw)

The hand in this volume is clear and consistent and the style is sober and unadorned. The *Tale of Yonge Gamelyne*, as entitled here, is preceded by the usual two-line link *But hereof I wil pas as nowe / And of yonge Gamelyn I wil telle you.*

As far as the *Tale of Gamelyn* is concerned, the most outstanding feature of the Pw manuscript is related to the apparent “editorial” job undertaken by the scribe or by the supervisor of the manuscript.²⁰ Besides minor variants in some lines, shared by other manuscripts, the text of the *Tale* is significantly changed on three occasions:

- 1) After line 280 (Come and brought Gamelyn the Ram and the Ringe), lines 281 (And sayde haue gamelyn the Ring and the Ram) and 282 (For the beste wrastelere that euer here cam) are left out, and line 283 appears as And Gamelyn bithought him it was a faire thinge, instead of Thus wan Gamely the Ram and the Rynge as in other manuscripts.
- 2) After line 374 (That thu shuldest be bounde bothe honed and fote), lines 375 (Therefore I the beseche brother Gamelyn) and 376 (Lat me nought be forsworne brother artow myn) are missing, and, once again, the following line is changed. Thus, line 377 reads This most be fulfilled my men to dote, rather than Lat me bynde the bothe hand and foote.
- 3) After line 812 (Sir Ote stont fetered in the mote hal), lines 813 (Yonge men sayde gamelyn this they heeren alle) and 814 (Sire Ote stant fetered in the moot hal) are lacking in this manuscript.

A detailed analysis of these three variants reveals that they have something in common. The scribe/supervisor is trying to avoid repetition and, for that reason, he leaves a couplet out (third case) or leaves a couplet out and changes the first line of the following couplet (cases one and two). As a result, apparently the text sounds less repetitive.²¹

Besides, this manuscript offers very few emendations:

- two deletions marked with a line crossing the word:
 - crossed word *thre* (line 251)
 - crossed word *falsenesse* (line 884)

²⁰ It is impossible to make out who was responsible for the decision of excluding certain lines in the text. However, it must be borne in mind that the new readings offered by this scribe are unique and do not appear in other manuscripts. Therefore, it is not at all unlikely that these readings were authorial.

²¹ These amendments are used by some scholars, such as Stephen Knight (personal communication) to argue that the Pw manuscript offers the best text for *Gamelyn*.

- four deletions marked by means of underdotting the letters:
 - wrong letter <k> (line 368)
 - wrong letter <u> (line 739)
 - wrong symbol ampersand (line 335)
 - wrong word *they* (line 130)
- two additions included in superscript:
 - added word *he* (line 130)
 - added word *that* (line 267)

Sometimes, the scribe notices that there is/are a/some missing line/s in the exemplar he is using and tries to amend the lack of text either by looking for a different source (as in the example seen above with the *N.* for *Nota* and the *A.* for *Addenda*) or by making up a new line. When lines 281-283 of *Gamelyn* are analysed in several witnesses, it can be seen that they appear in Ch, Cp, Ha⁴ and La, whereas Pw, among others, lacks them, obviously because they were not included in the text from which they were copied. The scribes of Ht, Mm and Ry² decided not to interfere,²² whereas the Pw scribe added a whole line as a new line 283. In manuscripts Fi and Lc, where these lines are missing as well, the scribes also added a new line 283, but none of these two manuscripts agrees with Pw.

	<i>L 283</i>
<i>Cp</i>	Thus wan Gamely the Ram and the Ryng
<i>Ch</i>	Thus wan Gamelyn the Ram & the Ryng
<i>Fi</i>	And Gamelyn that was so ginge
<i>Ha⁴</i>	Thus wan Gamelyn the Ram & the Ryng
<i>Ht</i>	[* * * * *]
<i>La</i>	Thus wanne Gamelin the rame & the Ringe
<i>Lc</i>	Saunt mercy seide Gamelyn anon withoute lettyng
<i>Mm</i>	[* * * * *]
<i>Pw</i>	And Gamelyn bithought him it was a faire thinge
<i>Ry²</i>	[* * * * *]

A similar example is found in line 377, where Pw offers a reading different from that in the group Cp, Ha⁴ and La, and also different from that in Fi:

²² These lines are lacking in Mm. However, there is one *N.* for *Nota* on the left margin and an annotation on the right margin of line 284, saying *Hic deficit versus in copia*. At the end of the folio there is one *A.* for *Addenda* on the left margin, where a later hand adds the three missing lines, in agreement with the readings in Cp, Ch, Ha⁴ and La.

L 377

<i>Cp</i>	Lat me bynde the bothe hand and foote
<i>Ch</i>	[* * * * *]
<i>Fi</i>	And therefore y doo hit and other wey I not
<i>Ha</i> ⁴	Lat me bynde the now bothe hand and feet
<i>Ht</i>	[* * * * *]
<i>La</i>	Lat me bynde the bothe honde & foote
<i>Lc</i>	[* * * * *]
<i>Mm</i>	[* * * * *]
<i>Pw</i>	This most be fulfilled my men to dote
<i>Ry</i> ²	[* * * * *]

In line 246 we witness another intrusion of the Pw scribe, who replaced *oon arm* ‘one arm’ by *owne arme* ‘own arm’, in order to achieve a better reading (none of the other manuscripts shows that form).

Finally, in line 292, he first changes the word order of *was it* and then adds *strong* to repair the lost rhythm. Again Pw is the only manuscript that shows such a reading.

L 292

<i>Cp</i>	Than <i>was it</i> schett faste with a pyn
<i>Ha</i> ⁴	And thanne <i>was it</i> schet faste with a pyn
<i>Pw</i>	And <i>it was</i> shett fast with a <i>strong</i> pynne

The illustrative examples discussed so far prove that Cp is not as “unreliable” as Knight and Ohlgren (1997) suggest²³ and that “collation” does not always show Pw “to offer the best readings”, at least for this particular tale.

10. British Library MS Royal 18 C.II (Ry²)

This vellum volume containing the *Canterbury Tales* shows, as in other manuscripts, the work of two different scribes and illuminators.

As for the type of writing, only the work of the first scribe, the one responsible for copying *Gamelyn*, will be considered here. The most outstanding feature is his use of emphatic letters, especially <l> and <h>. This can be seen at the very beginning of *Gamelyn*, when the scribe writes the title of the tale, but also on many other occasions in some words occurring in the first line of all folios.

²³ They use Petworth for their edition for “editorial work on the *Canterbury Tales* has shown these two manuscripts [Corpus and Harley 7334] to be unreliable” and “collation shows it [Petworth] to offer the best readings ... in this version *Gamelyn* on a significant number of occasions seems a better poem” (Knight – Ohlgren 1997: 184).

Mistakes and corrections are scarce. No examples of deletion appear and only two cases of addition can be identified: *it* (line 368) and *to* (line 747). This proves that the scribe of Ry² was a trained professional. As regards missing lines, this manuscript lacks lines 281-283, 375-377, 731 and 813-814. All but one (731) coincide with those missing in Lc, Ht, Mm and Pw, and the possible explanations for their omission have been previously discussed. The case of 731 is different, and can be seen as a simple eyeskip mistake.

Finally, as regards the introductory and final links of the *Tale of Gamelyn*, this manuscript shares the common opening two-line link: *But here of I wil passe as now / And of Jong Gamelyne I will tell þow* and ends with the usual couplet: *And so shal we alle may ther no man fle / God bring us to the Ioye that euer shal be*, just before the Prologue of the Man of Law.

11. Conclusion

As we have seen, the most recurrent examples of scribal intrusion in the texts analysed are instances of deletion, either by cancellation or expunction. These are not “dangerous” for the process of editing, because we are already being told that something is wrong in the text and either the scribe or a possible editor who was supervising his work amends the text. On many occasions, additions are also used to restore the original reading and the omission of a word or a single line can be easily explained on the grounds of a momentary distraction of the scribe’s attention. Thus, we are left with two different types of let’s say “intriguing” alterations, the ones that seem to account for a theory of dictation in the copying process and the groups of lines that are consistently “left out” as if there were some kind of editorial work in some of the exemplars used by the scribes, resulting in a less repetitive text.

After finishing the process of editing the *Tale of Gamelyn*, I think I have fulfilled my main goal, that is to provide the reader with the best readings for this specific tale of the *Canterbury Tales* (once the mistakes are removed and the inconsistencies are eased), together with other tools which will help her/him understand it better. Now, my intention is to go further into the study of the latter amendments for I am sure that they will throw some light into the production process of Chaucer’s work as well of some other works of the same period. By looking for similar mishearing mistakes in other works we will be ready to prove that dictation was a frequent procedure in copying manuscripts in the Middle Ages, whereas by examining more carefully the missing lines in certain manuscripts of *Gamelyn* together with those in other tales of the same volumes, we will be able to establish a more coherent diagram of the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales*.

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