Notes on Word Forms in Chaucer's English

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0. Introduction

In Present-day English, we often find the marked discrepancy between word forms and their pronunciations. Some of these differences may be caused by elision, i.e. the leaving out of a sound in some part of a word : e.g. "know"(the loss of initial sound /k/, which is called aphaeresis), "walk" or "shepherd"(the loss of medial sound /l/ or /h/, which is called syncope), and "climb"(the loss of final sound /b/, which is called apocope). On the other hand, it seems that word forms coincide with their pronunciations in Middle English. We may easily recognize the actual circumstances of variant word forms, when we investigate them both in Middle English generally and in Chaucer's English specifically, reading the extant manuscripts carefully. The word forms in Chaucer's English would reflect the sounds Chaucer was likely to have heard — or the sounds scribes might have heard.[1] That is probably why some texts have a medial -e and others do not. Quite simply, some who were writing down the material might have heard the medial -e and others might not. This paper will attempt to study some general phenomena of variant word forms in Chaucer's texts, to illustrate some textual differences of word forms in *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, and to examine some realities of word forms in Chaucer's English. Finally, this paper will also note which forms have passed into Modern English. In *The Canterbury Tales*, we deal with Blake's, Benson's, and Robinson's editions (hereafter abbreviated as BL, BN, and RB) and in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Benson's, Robinson's, Root's, and Windeatt's editions (the last two henceforward denoted by

RT and WN). This paper examines the differences among the word forms by the respective editors, who have chosen variant forms, partly in the result of using different manuscripts, partly for metrical consistency, and partly to normalize word forms to assist modern readers.

Now let us turn to the examples which show the general features of word forms in Chaucer's English (0.1. the initial letter loss, 0.2. the medial letter loss, and 0.3. the final letter loss). Chaucer's own spelling may be established by the close examination of variant word forms in the texts or the manuscripts. The consideration of the iambic pentameter metrical lines and rhyme words is beyond the scope of this paper. A later study could analyze the relationship between the iambic pentameter or rhyme words and the spelling differences which reflect the differing emphasis placed upon various words as the lines are scanned or rhymed.

0.1. The initial letter loss

The following are some instances of the initial letter loss : hit - it ; was, were - nas, nere ; bifallen - fallen ; biginnen - ginnen ; yfynde - fynde ; yknowe - knowe ; ysee - see ; yclad - clad ; yclothed - clothed ; yfallen - fallen ; apothecarie - potecarie ; epistle - pistel ; escapen - scapen ; esquieer - squieer ; honour - onour ; historie - istorie, storie ; dispenden - spenden ; espace - space. (Ten Brink : 179)

In the section 1, we deal with "yfynde - fynde" and "yknowe - knowe".

0.2. The medial letter loss

The following are some instances of the medial letter loss : bileven - bleven ; erande - ernde ; parisshe - parsshe ; vanisshe - vansshe ; perilous - perlous ; posityf - postyf ; amorously - amrously ; naturally - natrally ; coroune - croune ; heved - heed ; maked (e) - made ; maked - maad ; kythed - kid ; clothed - clad ; have(n) - han ; whether - wer ; outher - or ; ever - eer ; never - neer ; aventure - aunter ; benedicite - bencite. (Ten Brink : 176-77)

In the section 1, we deal with "maked(e) - made ; maked - maad" and "have(n) - han".

0.3. The final letter loss

The following are some instances of the final letter loss : blake - blak ; oon - oo ; an - a ; myn - my ; cometh - come ; taketh - take, taak ; cheeseth - chees ; helpeth - help ; telleth - tel ; Achates - Achatee ; Achilles - Achille ; Antonius - Antonie, Antony ; Grisildis - Grisilde, Grisild ; Cleopataras - Cleopatra, Cleopatre ; Arcitas - Arcyte. (Ten Brink : 178)

In the section 1, we deal with "from - fro" and "Pandarus - Pandare".

1. Word Forms in Benson's Edition of Chaucer's Works

First, we examine some general characteristics of word forms in Chaucer's English, based on Benson's edition of Chaucer's works.

1.1. As some examples of the initial letter loss, the forms with or without the prefix "y-" have been investigated. The following pairs of words are co-existent in Benson's edition : yfynde - fynde ; yknowe - knowe ; ysee - see ; yclad - clad ; yclothed - clothed ; yfallen - fallen. We will show the ratio of frequency "yfynde - fynde" and "yknowe - knowe" in the tables 1 and 2. The abbreviation of the names of tales follows L. Y. Baird-Lang and H. Schnuttgen's bibliography : *A Bibliography of Chaucer 1974-1985*(D. S. Brewer : 1988).

Table 1 Frequency of "finde" and its related words

	CT	BD	HF	Anel	PF	Bo	TC	LGW	ShT	ASTR	Rom
finde	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0
fond	12	5	6	1	3	0	17	8	3	17	11
fonden	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
foond	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
found	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
founde	15	5	1	0	1	4	9	8	3	4	15

founden	9	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	1	6
fownde	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
fownden	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
fynd	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
fynde	76	4	8	2	8	7	44	21	6	3	27
fynden	9	0	0	0	0	3	7	1	0	2	2
ifounde	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
yfounde	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
yfynde	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

N. B. 1 The form "yfynde" is the infinitive and the forms "ifounde" and "yfounde" are the past participle.

N. B. 2 The form "founde" excludes both the verb meaning "try" or "seek" and the verb meaning "build" or "erect", and the form "founden" excludes the past participle of the verb meaning "try" or "seek".

e.g.

fynde :　For, quyk or deed, right there ye shal me fynde. (FranT1336)

yfynde :　And herbes shal I right ynowe yfynde (SqT470)

founde :　He looketh up and doun til he hath founde (RvT4059)

yfounde :　And whan that she hir fader hath yfounde (MLT1152)

Table 2 Frequency of "know" and its related words

	CT	BD	HF	Anel	PF	Bo	TC	LGW	ShT	ASTR	Rom
iknowe	0	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
know	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	7	0
knowe	83	5	8	2	4	34	31	10	5	58	21
knowen	40	1	6	0	0	49	12	4	2	2	12
yknowe	5	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
yknowen	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

e.g.

iknowe :   every wyght hath iknowe, thei wenen that tho (Bo5 pr4.133)

knowen :   hymself yif so be that he hath knowen me or now ; (Bo1 pr2.24)

    Generally speaking, the prefix "y-" or "i-" tends to be dropped in Chaucer's English, but it is sometimes found in Chaucer's prose, as Higuchi (382-96) states. The form "ifounde" occurs twice and "iknowe" 8 times in *Boece*.

1.2. As some examples of the medial letter loss, the following pairs of forms "maked (e) - made ; maked - maad" and "have(n) - han" have been investigated in the tables 3 and 4.

<div align="center">Table 3 Frequency of "made" and its related words</div>

	CT	BD	HF	Anel	PF	Bo	TC	LGW	ShT	ASTR	Rom
maad	44	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	1	0	17
maade	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
made	125	12	13	4	3	5	46	29	10	1	38
maden	9	0	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	2
madest	3	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0
maked	37	1	1	0	0	23	2	8	1	0	1
makeden	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
makedest	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
makid	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	2
makyd	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

e.g.

maad :   But er that he hadde maad al his array (MilT3630)

made :   On which he made a-nyghtes melodie (MilT3214)

maked :   The joye that is maked in the place (KnT1873)

    84 of the total occurrences (125) of "made" precede the words beginning with a vowel. 23 of the total occurrences (74) of "maked" and 18 of the total occurrences (20) of "makid" are found in *Boece*. *Boece* does not prefer the form "made" and its related forms.

Table 4 Frequency of "have" and its related words

	CT	BD	HF	Anel	PF	Bo	TC	LGW	ShT	ASTR	Rom
han	445	1	33	0	10	162	146	54	8	6	30
have	597	63	45	10	16	99	223	85	54	26	273
haven	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	3	1	1	1
haveth	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

e.g.

han :　　　This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo ; (CIT 1039)

have :　　　But I desire, as I have doon bifore, (CIT 486)

　　The collocations "ye han" and "I have" are often found. Present-day English does not use the form "han", but in Chaucer's English the preference for "han" and "have" tends to depend on the preceding subject such as personal pronouns "ye" and "I". For example, in *The Canterbury Tales* there are 101 instances of "ye han" and 231 instances of "I have. "

1.3. As some examples of the final letter loss, the forms "from - fro"[2] and "Pandarus - Pandare" have been investigated in the tables 5 and 6.

Table 5 Frequency of "from" and its related words

	CT	BD	HF	Anel	PF	Bo	TC	LGW	ShT	ASTR	Rom
fra	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
fram	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
fro	217	9	19	1	5	117	93	25	12	122	65
from	96	1	7	4	6	22	61	29	10	26	33
froo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

e.g.

fro :　　　As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme, (SqT44)

from :　　　From yeer to yeer, ful prively his rente (KnT1443)

　　The form "from" tends to precede the words with an initial vowel, as Blake indicates : "In Hg there was a distinction between *fro* and *from*, with the former being

used in front of consonants and the latter before vowels and <h> + a vowel. " (1998 : 211) In Chaucer's English, the form "fro" is more prevalent than "from".

Table 6 Frequency of "Pandarus" and "Pandare"

	CT	BD	HF	Anel	PF	Bo	TC	LGW	ShT	ASTR	Rom
Pandare	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	0	0	0	0
Pandarus	0	0	0	0	0	0	113	0	0	0	0

e.g.

Pandare : II 67 Pandare abedde, half in a slomberynge

Pandarus : I 1058 This Pandarus, tho desirous to serve

The collocation "this Pandare" occurs 7 times, three of which are found in the initial position of a line. "Pandare" occurs 15 times in the initial position of a line and 14 times at the end of a line. The form "Pandare" tends to precede the words with an initial vowel. The collocation "this Pandarus" occurs 11 times, eight of which are found in the initial position of a line. "Pandarus" never occurs at the beginning of a line, but 20 times at the end of a line. (Cf. It is noticeable that the spelling variant among the four editions of *Troilus and Criseyde* occurs in the middle of a line as is shown in the following (the symbol # indicates that we did not find the corresponding words or punctuations in the line) :

BN : IV 638 "Whi, so mene I, " quod Pandare,   "al this day.

RB   Pandarus

RT   #

WN   #

BN : I 939 "Thou seist wel, " quod Pandare,   "and now I hope

RB

RT   Pandarus

WN

BN : II 1252 To paleis-ward ; and Pandare   hym aspide,

RB   Pandarus

RT   Pandarus

WN

BN : V 1709 "O Pandarus, that is dremes for to triste

RB

RT   Pandare

WN   Pandare   forto   )

2. Some Notes on Word Forms in Several Editions of Chaucer's Works

This section aims to investigate the actual states of word forms in Chaucer's several editions. First, we will consider the word forms among the three editions of *The Canterbury Tales* : Blake's, Benson's, and Robinson's editions, and second, the word forms among the four editions of *Troilus and Criseyde* : Benson's, Robinson's, Root's, and Windeatt's editions. The number in the round brackets after the instances shows the frequency.

2.1. *The Canterbury Tales*

We have checked the frequency of the different forms: the first shows the word found in BL, the second in BN, and the third in RB.

2.1.1. The initial letter loss

BL uses the form without the prefix "y-" 25 times where BN and RB use the form with the prefix "y-". On the other hand, BL uses the form with the prefix "y-" 16 times where BN and RB use the form without the prefix "y-". The instances consist of the two groups. The first shows that BL has the initial letter loss, while BN and RB do not. The second shows that BN and RB have the initial letter loss, while BL does not.

(The first group)

Blessed : Yblessed : Yblessed (1); born : yborn : yborn (1); broght : ybroght : ybroght (1); clepid : ycleped : ycleped (1); comen : ycome : ycome (1);

comen : ycomen : ycomen (1) ; dight : ydight : ydight (1) ; drawe : ydrawe : ydrawe (1) ; foreseyd : aforeseyd : aforeseyd (1) ; fynde : yfynde : yfynde (1) ; gilt : agilt : agilt (1) ; graunted : ygraunted : ygraunted (1) ; holden : yholden : yholden (1) ; knowe : yknowe : yknowe (1) ; knowen : yknowen : yknowen (1) ; maad : ymaad : ymaad (1) ; oost : hoost : hoost (5) ; proeued : ypreved : ypreved (1) ; scapen : escapen : escapen (1) ; shadowed : yshadwed : yshad-wed (1) ; shapen : yshapen : yshapen (1) ; shaue : yshave : yshave (1) ; slawe : yslawe : yslawe (1) ; spirituel : espirflueel : espiritueel (1) ; stynt : ystynt : ystynt (1) ; taken : ytaken : ytaken (1) ; thogh : althogh : althogh (2) ; thonked : ythanked : ythanked (1) ; wedded : ywedded : ywedded (1) ; wroght : ywroght : ywroght (2)

(The second group)

Yblessed : blessed : blessed (1) ; ybom : bom : bom (1) ; yclothed : clothed : clothed (1) ; ydeled : deled : deled (1) ; ygeten : geten : geten (1) ; ygraunted : graunted : graunted (1) ; yholde : holde : holde (1) ; ylost : lost : lost (1) ; ypayd : apayed : apayed (1) ; ysayd : sayd : ysayd (2) ; yshaue : shave : shave (1) ; ytake : take : take (1) ; ytold : toold : toold (1) ; ywedded : wedded : wedded (1) ; ywriten : writen ; writen (1) ; cf. ypayd : apayed : apayd (1)

2.1.2. The medial letter loss

BL uses the spellings such as "corps", "subtil", "swote", "nat", "poore", "somne", and "wisdom". The words "corps", "subtil", and "swote" keep a medial letter. It is noticeable that the words "nat", "poore", "somne", and "wisdom" showing the loss of medial letter(s) are often used in BL, as in "Nat : Naught : Naught (1) ; Nat : Noght : Noght (5) ; nat : noght : noght (31) ; poore : povere : povere (1) ; poore : povre : povre (7) ; poure : povere : povere (2) ; somne : sompne : sompne (3) ; somnest : sompnest : sompnest (1) ; wisdom : wisedom : wise-dom (3) ; Wisdom : Wisedoom : Wisedom (1) ; wisdom : wisedoom : wisedoom

(1) ; wisly : wisely : wisely (1) ; wysly : wysely : wisely (8)."

Judging from Samuels's statement that the "evidence points, with varying degrees of cogency, to the following eight forms as authorial or, at least, archetypal : *swich* (*e*), *agayn(s)/ageyn(s)*, *yit*, *biforn/bifore*, *nat*, *wirke*(vb.)'work', *say*, *saw* (past tense) 'saw'" (Smith(1988 : 27)), the spelling "nat" found in BL may show Chaucer's own spelling. The instances consist of the two groups. The first shows that BL has the medial letter loss, while BL and RB do not. The second shows that BN and RB have the medial letter loss, while BL does not.

(The first group)

destrer : dextrer : dextrer (1) ; maad : make : make (1) ; maad : maked : maked (1) ; made : maked : maked (1) ; moot : moste : moste (2)[3)] ; mote : moste : moste (2) ; Nat : Naught : Naught (1) ; Nat : Noght : Noght (5) ; nat : noght : noght (31) ; poore : povere : povere (1) ; poore : povre : povre (7) ; poure : povere : povere (2) ; somne : sompne : sompne (3) ; somnest : sompnest : sompnest (1) ; tath : taketh : taketh (1) ; wakned : wakened : wakened (1) ; wisdom : wisedom : wisedom (3) ; Wisdom : Wisedoom : Wisedom (1) ; wisdom : wisedoom : wisedoom (1) ; wisly : wisely : wisely (1) ; wysly : wysely : wisely (8)

(The second group)

bihoues : boes : boes (1) ; corps : cors : cors (1) ; dampned : damned : damned (1) ; heued : heed : heed (1) ; maked : maad : maad (1) ; maked : made : made (1) ; moste : moote : moote (1) ; subtil : sotil : sotil (1) ; subtil : soutil : soutil (2) ; subtile : sotile : sotile (1) ; subtilly : sotilly : sotilly (1) ; swote : soote : soote (3)

cf. made : make : made (3) ; ymaked : ymaad : ymaked (1)

2.1.3. The final letter loss

As for "a : an", "o : of", "o : on", BL prefers the loss of a final letter. As for "be

: been" and "han : have", BL also prefers the loss of a final letter. The endings "-t" or "-te" showing the preterite and "-t" showing the 3rd person singular are often found in BL. However, "feelyd" and "spended" are often used in BN and RB. The final -e will be investigated in our further study. The examples consist of the two groups. The first shows that BL has the final letter loss, while BN and RB do not. The second shows that BN and RB have the final letter loss, while BL does not.

(The first group)

a : an : an (2); a : on : on (2); a : oon : oon (2); Be : Been : Been (1); be : been : been (49); be : ben : ben (4); fro : fram : fram (1); Fro : From : From (2); fro : from : from (8); halt : holdeth : holdeth (1); han : have : have (33); I : ik : ik (1); O : of : of (1); o : of : of (1); O : On : On (1); o : on : on (1); o : oon : oon (1); stant : standeth : standeth (1); stynt : stynted : stynted (1);

(The second group)

an : a : a (1); been : be : be (18); ben : be : be (14); feelyd : felt : felt (1); From : Fro : Fro (1); from : fro : fro (9); haue : han : han (28); ik : I : I (2); lepte : leep : leep (1); on : a : a (1); oon : o : o (1); spended : spent : spent (1); wydewe : wydwe : wydwe (3)

Cf. shalt : shal : shalt (1); slepte : sleep : slepte (1)

2.2. *Troilus and Criseyde*

We have checked the frequency of the different forms: the first shows the word found in BN, the second in RB, the third in RT, and the fourth in WN.

2.2.1. The initial letter loss

As is shown in the following list, RT prefers the words without initial letter(s).

although : although : though : al-though (2); aright : aright : right : aright (1); a-temple : a-temple : temple : temple (1); ha : ha : a : ha (1); ymad

: ymad : made : ymad (1) ; ysee : ysee : se : y-see (1) ; yse : yse : se : yse (1) ; ythe : ythe : the : y-the (1)

Cf. anon : oon : oon : oon (1) ; hit : hit : it : it (1)

The following show that BN, RB, and WN prefer the words without initial letter(s).

falle : falle : ifalle : falle (1) ; gan : gan : bygan : gan (1) ; it : it : hit : it (1) ; rent : rent : irent : rent (1) ; though : though : although : though (1)

Cf. Hercules : Hercules : Herculues : Ercules (1) ; ilost : loste : ilost : i-loste (1) ; pace : pace : space : space (1)

2.2.2. The medial letter loss

As is shown in the following list, RT prefers the words without the medial -*e* or medial letter(s). Those instances are as follows.

cometh : cometh : comth : cometh (2) ; folowen : folowen : folwen : folowen (1) ; Folowen : Folowen : Folwen : ffolowen (1) ; foloweth : foloweth : folweth : foloweth (1) ; lepte : lepte : lepe : lepte (1) ; lowely : lowely : lowly : lowely (1) ; lowely : lowely : lowly : lowly (1) ; Nought : Nought : Nat : Nought (2) ; nought : nought : nat : nought (92) ; nought : nought : nat : nowt (1) ; shadewed : shadewed : shadwed : shadewed (1) ; sorowful : sorowful : sorwful : sorowful (1) ; swetenesse : swetenesse : swetnesse : swetenesse (1) ;

Cf. folowe : folowe : folwe : folwe (1) ; preyede : preyede : preyde : preyde (1) ; sorowful : sorowful : sorwful : sorwful (1) ; sothfast : sothefast : sothfast : sothfast (1)

The other instances are as follows.

bleve : bleve : beleve : bleve (1) ; comth : comth : cometh : comth (1) ; digression : digression : disgression : digression (1) ; herkned : herkned : herkened : herkned (1) ; herkne : herkne : herkeneth : herkne (1) ; humbly : humbly : humblely : humbly (1) ; mot : mot : moste : mot (1)[4] ; not : not : naught

: not (1) ; opned : opned : opened : opned (1) ; subtilte : subtilte : subtilite : subtilte (1)

Cf. oughte : oughte : oughte : owe (1)[5) ; sorwful : sorweful : sorweful : sorweful (1) ; kecche : krecche : crecche : cretche (1)

2.2.3. The final letter loss

As is shown in the following list, RT prefers the words without final letter(s) rather than BN, RB, and WN do. However, there is little difference between RT and BN, RB, WN in preference for the words without final letter(s). Those instances are as follows.

An : An : A : An (1) ; ben : ben : be : ben (7) ; beth : beth : be : beth (1) ; from : from : fro : from (1) ; hastiliche : hastiliche : hastely : hastiliche (1) ; have : have : han : haue (6) ; ich : ich : I : ich (4) ; lyven : lyven : lyve : lyuen (1) ; meneth : meneth : mene : meneth (1) ; more : more : mo : more (1) ; muchel : muchel : muche : muchel (1) ; noon : noon : no : noon (1) ; peynes : peynes: peyne : peynes (1) ; slepte : slepte : slep : slepte (1) ; tellen : tellen : telle : tellen (1)

Cf. a : an : a : a (1) ; be : be : be : ben (1) ; fro : fro : fro : from (1) ; holden : holde : holde : holde (1) ; liketh : like : like : liketh (1) ; mor : mo : mo : mor (1) ; muchel : muche : muche : muche (1) ; my : my : my : myn (1) ; outen : out : out : out (1) ; Pandarus : Pandarus : Pandare : Pandare (1) ; shalt : shalt : shalt : shall (1) ; unkouth : unkouth : unkouth : vnkouths (1)

The other instances are as follows.

be : be : ben : be (5) ; Fro : Fro : From : ffro (1) ; han : han : have : han (4) ; holde : holde : holden : holde (1) ; lite : lite : litel : lite (1) ; love : love : loveth : loue (1) ; make : make : maken : make (2) ; no : no : non : no (1) ; Pandare : Pandare : Pandarus : Pandare (1)

Cf. han : have : have : han (1) ; herte : hertes : hertes : hertes (3) ; hevene : hevenes : hevenes : heuenes (1) ; ich : I : ich : ich (1) ; Pandare : Pandarus : Pandarus : Pandare (1) ; shal : shal : shalt : shalt (1) ; stalke : stalke : stalkes : stalkes (1) ; telle : tellen : tellen : telle (1) ; weep : wepte : wepte : wepte (1) ; wep : wepte : wepte : wep (1)

3. Summary

In this paper, we have studied how word forms in Chaucer's English stand, checking scrupulously against the variants of editors' spellings, and have shown some general phenomena of variant word forms in Chaucer's texts. The prefix "y-" or "i-" tends to be dropped in Chaucer's English. However, the forms "ifounde" and "iknowe" occur in *Boece*. The forms with the medial letter "k" such as "maked" and "makid" are often found in *Boece*. *Boèce*, one of Chaucer's prose works, seems not to utilize the form "made" and its related forms. The collocation "ye han" and "I have" are often found. Present-day English does not use the form "han", but in Chaucer's English the preference for "han" and "have" tends to depend on the preceding subject such as personal pronouns "ye" and "I". The form "from" tends to precede the words with an initial vowel. In Chaucer's English, the form "fro" is more prevalent than "from". The collocation "this Pandarus" occurs more often than "this Pandare," especially in the initial position of a line. "Pandarus" never occurs at the beginning of a line, but often at the end of a line. "Pandare" tends to precede the words with an initial vowel.

We have then illustrated some textual differences of word forms in *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, and examined some actual occurrences of the initial, medial, and final letter loss in Chaucer's English. In *The Canterbury Tales*, BL seems to prefer the word forms Modern English adopts, such as the forms without the prefix "y-", "corps", "subtil", "nat", "poore", "somne", and "wisdom". The words "corps" and "subtil" keep a medial letter. It is noticeable that the words "nat",

"poore", "somne", and "wisdom" showing the loss of medial letter(s) are often used in BL. The word form "nat" often found in BL may show Chaucer's own spelling. BL prefers the loss of a final letter such as "a", "be", and "han". The final *-e* is not dealt with in this paper.

In *Troilus and Criseyde*, RT prefers the words without the initial and medial letters, compared with BN, RB, and WN. However, there is little difference between RT and BN, RB, WN in preference for the words without final letter(s).

Notes

1) As for the instance "*agayn(s)/ageyn(s) - ayeyn*," Benson notes that "the distinction between the spelling chosen as Chaucerian and the alternative is a matter of form rather than spelling — between, for example, the form *ay-n(s)* and the form *ag-n(s)*, with a phonetic contrast in the first consonant, rather than between *ageyns* and *agayns*, in which the contrast between *-eyn-* or *-ayn-* is most likely a matter of spelling rather than sound." (L.D. Benson, "Chaucer's Spelling Reconsidered," *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, Vol.3 (1992), 1-28, p.1.) Sandved states that "Spelling is to be used with great caution, because spelling soon becomes traditional and hence may be unphonemic.... Still, spelling is an important type of evidence. Certain features of the spelling may at least help us to form hypotheses, which may then be tested by means of additional evidence." (A.O. Sandved, *Introduction to Chaucerian English*, (Cambridge : D.S. Brewer, 1985), p.10.) One of the most recently published papers refers to the uncertainty of Chaucer's spelling, as "Despite recent advances in Middle English dialectology and palaeography, the question of Chaucer's spelling habits remains a matter of considerable uncertainty." (S.C.P. Horobin, "A New Approach to Chaucer's Spelling," *English Studies*, Vol.79, No.5 (1998), 415-24, p.415.)

2) Etymologically speaking, the form "fro" comes from Old Norse, according to the *OED*.

3) & 4) The form *mot* was Old English preterite-present verb and its preterite was *moste*.

5) Another preterite-present verb *agan* had the preterite *ahte*. The Old English forms *agan* and *ahte* became *owe* and *oughte*.

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Chaucerの英語における綴字管見

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　今日までChaucerの英語の綴字については様々な研究がなされてきたが、特定の刊本に基づいたものがほとんどであり、写本間の綴字の異同についても *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1979 —)には異綴りの語が指摘されているものの、使用される綴字の傾向性を示す計量的・体系的分析は行われていない。そこで、本論では最新の研究資料(Jimura et al.: 1995, 1996)を用いて、特定の刊本に限らず諸刊本を比較しながらChaucerの英語の綴字について調べた。本論は二部から構成されている。第1節ではL. D. Benson, ed. *The Riverside Chaucer* (1987)にみられる綴字の異同を、第2節では (1) *The Canterbury Tales* のBlake版、Benson 版、Robinson版の間にみられる綴字の異同を、(2) *Troilus and Criseyde* の Benson 版、Robinson 版、Root 版、Windeatt版の間にみられる綴字の異同を詳細に調査した。特定の刊本として取り上げたBenson版では、概して (1)接頭辞"y-""i-"や"maked" の語中にある "k"のように、Chaucerの英語でよく省略される語頭及び語中の文字は、散文作品である *Boece*で使用される傾向のあること、(2)語尾の文字は前後に使われる単語の影響、特に後続する母音の有無に左右されやすいことがわかった。*The Canterbury Tales* 諸刊本では、Benson 版やRobinson版よりも、Blake版において語頭、語中、語尾の文字が省略されやすいこと、*Troilus and Criseyde*諸刊本では、Benson版、 Robinson版、Windeatt 版よりもRoot版において語頭、語中の文字が省略されやすいことがわかった。ただし、final -*e*については、今回検討しなかった。