

THE FRENCH MANUSCRIPTS CAXTON USED FOR HIS ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *LE RECOEIL DES HISTOIRES DE TROYES* AND HIS FRENCH EDITION

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Posterity has been generous in preserving the name of Caxton as the first English printer. As we all know, he is responsible for having introduced the printing press with moveable types in England in the year 1476. Most histories of the English language echo this fact. However, historians of other European languages are not so ready to include the names of their first printers. The truth is that printing pioneers have, more often than not, been ignored. On an earlier occasion,¹ I argued that Caxton should be remembered, not so much for being the *first English printer*, but because he had actively contributed to the emerging standard in the second half of the 15th-century. In his shop in Westminster, *at the sign of the red pale*, he published many works in the vernacular, thus actively promoting that type of language. Many of the works sold in his shop were, as we know, his own translations from Latin, French and Dutch.

In this article I should like to give an account of my conclusions as to which manuscript(s) Caxton would have used for his first translation in English, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, published while he was on the Continent. This is the result of research carried out on Caxton as a translator of Lefèvre's *Recoeil*.² William Caxton states that he began translating *Le recoiel des histoires de Troyes* into English 'in Brugis in the Countee of Flaundres the fyrst day of marche the yere of the Incarnation of our said Lord God a thousand foure honderd, sixty and eyghte / And ended and fynnysshid in the holy cyte of Colen the .xix. day of septembre the yere of our sayd lord god a thousand foure honderd, sixty and eleuen.' It is unusual for Caxton to be so specific about the dates of his translations. The prologue of *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, from which this quotation has been taken, does not mention when the book was printed. As for the date when the translation was started, it was then customary to reckon years from Easter, therefore one should understand 1469, and not 1468 given by Caxton as the date when his English translation was started.³

Caxton's translation contains three books and is based on a version of Raoul Lefèvre's *Le recoeil des histoires de Troyes* which had added an extra third volume to Lefèvre's two. If we are to trust Caxton's words in the prologue, Raoul Lefèvre fin-

ished his work in the year 1464. But, at that time, *Le recueil*, which could well be represented by ms. 9261 in the Royal Library in Brussels, only contained the first book of Trojan stories. This manuscript was commissioned by Philip the Good, and it was very likely copied by the author himself. The second book of Trojan stories, which could have constituted a separate manuscript, must have been copied a little later, and finished before 1467.⁴ After his translation was published between 1472 and 1473 and some time before he abandoned Bruges to set up his printing presses in Westminster in the year 1476, Caxton also published a French version in three books of *Le recueil*, as a joint enterprise with Colard Mansion. Curiously enough, even though the English version of this work had enjoyed greater popularity than any other book translated by Caxton –16 editions are known–,⁵ very little scholarly attention has been paid to either Caxton's translation or his French edition. No recent edition of these two works has yet been made. The most modern edition of *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* is that of H. Oskar Sommer, which was published in 1894⁶ but thanks to Marc Aeschbach's quite recent critical edition of Lefèvre's *Le recueil*, it is now possible to say more precisely which manuscripts Caxton used for his translation and his edition of the French text.

It may be helpful if I begin with a survey of what is known of Raoul Lefèvre as a necessary background for understanding the ways in which Caxton used his works. In the first place, as modern editors of the work of Lefèvre have observed, little or nothing is known about his biography, and the little we know is closely linked with the two works attributed to him: *L'histoire de Jason* and *Le recueil des histoires de Troyes*.⁷ Almost all of the 25 extant mss of *Le recueil* attribute the authorship to Lefèvre, including the oldest, ms. 9261 in the Royal Library of Brussels, which contains only the first volume of these Trojan stories. Its owners were, initially, Duke Philip the Good, and later Duke Charles the Bold. The prologue begins:

Prologue du premier liure du Recueil des histoires de troye compile par Raoul le Feure pbre au commandement de tres noble et tres vertueux prince Philippe, par la grace de Dieu duc de Bourgogne & c vi^e de ce nom.⁸

It is widely believed that this manuscript was the very one Raoul Lefèvre offered to Duke Philip the Good, and that, in all probability, it is related to ms. 5067 of *L'histoire de Jason*, in whose prologue it is said that the French author of this text also wrote *Le recueil des histoires de Troyes*. Like the majority of later manuscripts of *Le recueil*, Caxton's translation mentions Raoul Lefèvre as the author of the French version. However, according to Alphonse Bayot, the testimony of Caxton alone would be of limited value, since he only repeats the doubtful information contained in later mss. of *Le recueil*.⁹ A common feature of all these later manuscripts is a third book of Trojan stories, a book which, according to Alphonse Bayot, is apocryphal, since it was appended to the original work of Raoul Lefèvre between 1467 and 1469. This third volume was probably incorporated with the two earlier ones after Lefèvre had died. It consisted of a French version, widespread in that period, of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae*.¹⁰ Consequently, Caxton's translation of *Le recueil des histoires de Troyes* (1471), which includes this third book, follows a later copy, rather than the original composed by Lefèvre himself.

It should be emphasized, however, that Lefèvre seems to have been inconsistent in his own original project. According to the prologue to the authograph ms. 9261, he

had envisaged writing four books of Trojan stories. The first two books would deal with the fables of the pagan gods and finish by telling of the two destructions of Troy as labours of Hercules; the third book would relate the destruction of Troy as a result of the abduction of Helen; and, finally, the fourth book, would relate the ultimate destruction of Troy, brought to its end by the Roman consul Fimbria. This ambitious project was never realized. Lefèvre only managed to complete the first two books. The failure of the original plan may have been caused by his supposed death, sometime in 1467, or even by the impossibility of finding material to complete two further books. The divergence between the stated aim and the final product may have caused later copyists to seek alternatives in order to complete the project.

What seems evident is that the prologue was written prior to the start of his work. In fact, ms. 9261 contains only one volume of *Le recoeil*. The most complete version of Lefèvre is found in ms. 9263, in the Royal Library in Brussels, which contains an account of the two destructions of Troy carried out by Hercules. It is possible to conjecture that at this point in his narrative, having finished the labours of Hercules and recounted the second destruction of Troy, Lefèvre may have decided not to complete the work. After all, the third destruction of Troy was too well known from the numerous French translations of Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* circulating at the time. As for the fourth book, he may not have had at his disposal enough material to complete it.

If William Caxton began his translation in the year 1469, he must have had in his hands a very early version of *Le recoeil* in three books, since Lefèvre's version in two books was finished in the year 1464. Caxton seems to have noticed the existence of a narrative gap between the first two volumes and the third. For this reason, he may have believed it necessary to justify the inclusion of the third volume and incorporated an extensive epilogue which does not correspond with anything in the extant French manuscripts. In the epilogue to the second book of this three volume translation he cites, perhaps disingenuously, Raoul Lefèvre's work as his only source. But a careful reading of his prologues reveals that Caxton knew that Lefèvre was the author of a two volume work, yet he allowed an ambiguous attribution of authorship to cover the fact that he was also making use of an 'apocryphal' third volume in French to complete his own three volume translation of *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* as it has come down to us. William Caxton is, however, inconsistent in joining the second and third volumes. At the end of the second book, he gives a conclusion similar to that of the manuscript he is copying –the correspondence can be seen in the French ms. 9262, in the Royal Library in Brussels. Caxton concludes:

... Besechyng her that is cause of this translacion out of frenshe in to this simple and rude englishsh / thatis to wete my right redoubtyd lady Margrete by the grace of god master of my souerayn lord the kyng of englond and of ffrance & c Duchesse of bourgoygne and of Brabvnt & c that she wole resseyue my Rude labour in thanke and in gree.¹¹

The only difference is that whereas Lefèvre dedicates his work to Duke Philip the Good, Caxton directs his brief concluding dedication to the Duchess. But, whether addressed to the Duke or the Duchess, such words would have been more appropriate at the end of the complete work, after the last volume, and not in the middle of the narrative. Of course, Caxton was clearly following his manuscript copy very closely,

and it contained a similar dedication. After this apparent conclusion, Caxton added on the following page an epilogue to the second volume, which helped him to justify the inclusion of the third volume. As we shall see in a short quotation from this epilogue, Caxton does not clearly state that Lefèvre is the author of the third volume of Trojan stories:

Thus endeth the seconde book of the recule of the histories of Troyes / Whiche bookes were late translated in to frenshe out of latyn / byt the labour of the venerable persone raoul le feure preest as a fore is said/ ...And as for the thirde booke whiche treteth of the generall & last destruccion of Troye Hit nedeth not to translate hit in to englissh ffor as moche as that worsshypfull & religyous man dan John lidgate monke of Burye dide translate hit but late /after whos werke I fere to take vpon me that am not worthy to bere his penner & ynke horne after hym ... And also paraventure / he translated after some other Auctor than this is.¹²

Although in the initial prologue, modelled on one of Lefèvre's later versions, Caxton had referred to the writing of three books, he still thought it necessary to include an epilogue to the second volume in order to justify the introduction of a third volume. According to this epilogue, that third volume of Trojan stories had been translated or composed in French by an 'auctor' whom Caxton does not identify for the reader. As may be deduced by an attentive reading of this epilogue, Caxton says that Lefèvre is the author of the first and second volumes, without attempting to identify the author of the third. This could indicate that, although Caxton knows he is translating an apocryphal text, he is reluctant to deviate from the project already set down by later copyists of Lefèvre's work. A careful reading of this prologue shows that Caxton knew, at least partially, the genesis of the work and that Lefèvre was neither the author nor the translator of this third volume of Trojan legends.

Thus, it is clear that William Caxton used for his translation a later French manuscript, and not the one originally composed by Lefèvre. In fact, our research has led us to believe that Caxton would have used a manuscript close to ms. 9254, in the Royal Library in Brussels, a version in three books. It has many features duplicated in Caxton but not found in the other mss. But before showing the steps leading to this conclusion, I will give a brief description of the 25 extant French manuscripts of *Le recueil* found by Marc Aeschbach –I have preserved the initials used by M. Aeschbach in order to identify each of these mss.¹³

CONTENTS 1 BOOK:

- B2. Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles, ms. 9261. Between 1464 and 1467. Vellum, 215 + I ff., 385 x 270 (245 x 170) mm., 26 lines. J. Barrois inventory (1830), n. 1603. Contains 22 miniatures executed by Loyset Liedet. Only the first volume. Earliest owners: Philip the Good and Charles the Bold.
- B3. Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles, ms. 9262. Finished between 1464 and 1467. Vellum, 147 + II + II (paper) ff., 384 x 270 (245 x 170) mm., 26 lines. J. Barrois

inventory (1830), n. 893. Contains 13 miniatures from Antoine de Bourgogne's workshop. The second book of *Le recueil*. Earliest owners: Philip the Good and Charles the Bold.

CONTENTS 2 BOOKS:

- A. Bibliothèque municipale de Arras, ms. 1075 (G.g. 55; 267). Later than 1464. Paper, I + 310 + II ff., 265 x 197 (187 x 117) mm., 28 lines. Ch.-Briquet (1907), n. 3623. Two coloured drawings. Contains the first two books. Earliest known owner: Gauvain Quieret.
- B4. Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles, ms. 9263. Finished between 1464 and 1467. Vellum, 189 + III ff. 395 x 270 (275 x 200) mm., 2 columns, 38 lines. J. Barrois n. 884. Three miniatures. Contains the first two books. Earliest owners: Philip the Good and Charles the Bold.
- NH. Yale University Library, New Haven, ms. 216 (Phillipps 8385). 15th century. Paper 264 ff., 280 x 200 (190 x 135) mm., 31 lines. Without miniatures. The first two books. Earliest owners known: 'Sir Thomas Phillipps acquired the ms. from Saunders at a sale on 13th April 1818.'
- P2. Bibliothèque Mazarine, Paris, ms. 1562 (530), Bibliothèque de l'Institut, ms. 312. Second half 15th century. Paper, XVII + 459 ff., 380 x 275 (280 x 200) mm., 2 columns, 46/7 lines. Briquet 6648 etc. With drawings, some of them never executed. Contains *La Fleur de les Histoires*. Owners unknown.
- P7. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 697 (Bibl. Bethune 236; Reg. 7138). Finished at the end of the 15th century. Vellum, II + 146 + III ff., 320 x 240 (240 x 170) mm., 2 columns, 38 lines. Two miniatures foreseen, but never executed. The first two books. Earliest known owner: Françoise d'Alençon, Rene's daughter, Duke of Alençon, died in 1492.
- P10. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, new acquisitions ms. fr. 13263. 15th century. Vellum, 229 ff., 240 x 170 (150 x 95) mm., 32 lines. Contains 86 miniatures and the first two books. Earliest known owner: Charles Germain don de M. Giraud-Badin (17th century).
- V1. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, ms. 2586 (Eugene f. 131). Finished between 1472-1476 (W.A. Bulst). Vellum, 112 ff., 315 x 225 (196 x 150) mm., 2 columns, 31 lines. There are 41 drawings by J. d'Armagnac's master. Contains two incomplete books. Its earliest owner was Jacques d'Armagnac, Duke of Nemours, who died in 1477.

CONTENTS 3 BOOKS:

- B1. Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles, ms. 9254. Various dates of execution suggested: after 1464; Briquet 1741: '1468-82'; Briquet 4846: '1465-66, fabrication italienne'. Paper (vellum those ff. with miniatures), I + 197 + IV ff., 383 x 280 (250 x 180) mm., 2 columns, 45 lines. Contains 3 miniatures. Earliest known owner: Margaret of Austria.

- G. Bibliothèque publique et universitaire de Geneve (Comites Latentes de S. Segre-Amar), ms. 190. Probably finished in 1470 (Sotheby Catalogue), or 1475 (Lacaze). Vellum, 247 ff. (3 of them missing after f. 6), 370 x 265 (230 x 155) mm., 2 columns ff. 1 to 6, after 1 column, 28 lines. Contains 44 miniatures, from Loyset Liedet's workshop. Owners unknown.
- LH. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, ms. 78 D 48 (Y 406). Finished by 1470. Paper, VIII + 233 ff., 382 x 270 (265 x 180) mm., 39 lines. There are 62 miniatures, modelled on Loyset Liedet, from the Low Countries. Earliest known owner: Philippe de Cleves. Prince d'Orange collections.
- L. British Library, London, ms. Royal 17.E.II. Around 1476 (Sommer, 1894), between 1470-80 (Bayot, 1908). Vellum, VII + 368 ff., 410 x 290 (255 x 170) mm., 2 columns, 30 lines. It has 65 miniatures. Earliest owner: Edward IV.
- P1. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, ms. 3692 (99 H.F.). Finished in 1468. Vellum, 242 f. (+f. 195 bis), 355 x 260 (240 x 180) mm., 2 columns, 35 lines. It has 32 miniatures. Earliest owner: Perceval de Dreux, Governor of Lense and Comde.
- P3. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 59 (246; reg. 6737). Finished before 1492. Vellum, XV + 329 + I ff. (4 appended after f. 25), 440 x 310 (270 x 185) mm., 32 lines. Contains 46 miniatures. Earliest owner: Louis de Bruges.
- P4. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 252 (122; Reg. 6896). Finished at the beginning of the 16th century. Vellum, III + 231 + III ff., 390 x 275 (270 x 175) mm., 32 lines. Contains 4 miniatures by Robinet Testard. Most probable earliest owner: Louis of Savoy or his children.
- P5. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 253 (245; Reg. 6897). By the end of the 15th century. Vellum, 221 ff., 380 x 270 (230 x 170) mm., 2 columns, 35 lines. Foreseen miniatures, but never executed. According to P. Paris (1836-48) it belonged to Louis de Bruges, but L. Delisle disagrees.
- P6. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 255 (347; Reg. 6897). During the 15th century. Paper, V + 225 (ff. 12 and 162 vellum) ffl, 370 x 270 (260 x 170) mm., 2 columns, 40 to 42 lines. One miniature. Owners unknown.
- P8. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 6361 (supplement fr. 73). Finished by 1482, according to Briquet 388. Paper, 516 ff., 395 x 275 (270 x 185) mm., 2 columns, 44-8 lines. Only one drawing executed, although there were some more foreseen. Contains *La Fleur des Histoires*, *Le Recueil*, *Histoire ancienne*, and *L'Histoire de Jason*. Owners unknown.
- P9. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. fr. 22552 (La Valliere 16; Cat. n. 40867). Finished in 1495. Vellum, III + 292 ff. (3 ff. without number at the end of first book, 4 ff. at the end of second book), 380 x 270 (255 x 180) mm., 2 columns, 36 lines. Contains 122 miniatures. Unidentified earliest owners.
- R. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, ms. Palat. lat. 1962 (Montfaucon 6737). During the 15th century. Its calligraphy is similar to that of V2. Paper, 309 ff., 367 x 275 (240 x 180) mm., 2 columns, 34 lines. Contains 5 miniatures. Owners unknown.
- T. Biblioteca Nazionale, Torino, ms. L-I-10 (R 1623). Dated 15th century. Vellum, 247 ff., 2 columns, 41 lines. Contains 47 miniatures. Earliest owner: Louis of Bruges.
- V2. Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, ms. 3298 (Eugene f. 175). Finished by 1470. Vellum and paper, 254 ff., 360 x 240 (220 x 170) mm., 2 columns, 29-32 lines. Contains 5 miniatures. Earliest owners unknown.

- V3. Osterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, ms. 3439 (Eugene f. 68). Dated 15th century. Paper, 287 ff., 265 x 180 (200 x 120) mm., 33 long lines. Without miniatures. Its earliest owner, Nicolas du Cheux, might have also been the copyist.
- W. Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, ms. A. 1 Aug. 2. Dated 15th century. Vellum, 309 ff., 483 (360 x 260) mm., 33 lines. Contains 62 miniatures by the master of Vienna. Earliest known owner: Hendric Serwoutiz.

Manuscript B2, which contains the first book of *Le Recoeil* was in all probability copied by Lefèvre himself and delivered to Philip the Good, at that time Duke of Burgundy. This is what is implied in the detailed analysis that Marc Aeschbach has offered in his critical edition of *Le Recoeil*. William Caxton did not use this manuscript, either for his English translation or for his later edition in French. Caxton's translation, like the rest of the later mss, shows identical variants that can be traced back to a common source. This common manuscript, which served as the basis for later copies, has not survived. Marc Aeschbach conjectures that perhaps it could be the famous manuscript lost in the time of Charles the Bold, and which appears in the inventory of Barrois as ms. n. 894. This lost ms. would have contained only the first volume of *Le Recoeil*, and could have served as a partner of the second volume represented by ms. B3, also in the possession of the Dukes of Burgundy:

La juxtaposition des deux textes dans la bibliothèques est interessante, leur description l'est bien plus encore, car leur aspect est identique: 'parchemin, ais noirs', une présentation qui est rarissime.¹⁴

Ms B4 appears in the inventories made during the year 1467, and it was finished later than B2 and B3. This manuscript happens to be the first to gather the two volumes of *Le Recoeil*.

As to the filiation of these manuscripts, through a comparison of titles, prologues and internal readings, Aeschbach has established relationships amongst them. Caxton's edition of the French text (Cx.Ed.) has also been included in the comparison. The first part of A, G, LH, L, and also P1, P2, P5, P7, P8, R, V2 and W would belong to one main group of manuscripts. Cx.Ed. shares many readings with the other main group of manuscripts, which includes B1, P4, P9, and V3. Within the latter group of manuscripts, there seem to exist two subgroups: P4, P9, V3, and Cx.Ed., on one hand, and B1 on the other. Aeschbach explains the impossibility of going beyond this point, since none of the mss has served as a direct copy for the other. Several mss. which could have shown closer links have been lost and there is always the possibility that in certain cases simultaneous copying from common lost manuscripts could have occurred.¹⁵

Caxton's English translation (Cx.Tr.) was certainly based on a copy text common to the main group where Cx.Ed. belongs. We know that Cx.Ed. was printed shortly before or during 1476. Only mss. B1 and V3 could have been copied earlier than 1476, although we cannot be certain about the dates when both manuscripts would have been finished. All we know about ms. V3 is that it was copied during the 15th century. The dates suggested for the copying of ms. V3 are divergent. According to *Catalogue desmanuscrits français de la Bibliothèque Royale*,¹⁶ it was finished around 1470. Bayot places it less precisely in the last third of the 15th century, and Briquet at first suggests a date between 1468 and 1482, but later he places it between 1465 and

1466. In terms of documentary evidence, as Bayot says, Caxton's English translation is the first edition known of *Le Recueil des histoires de Troyes* in three volumes.

To this type of evidence, an analysis of the rubrics, omissions, additions and textual changes of the relevant texts in the same family as Cx.Tr. has been added. Cx.Ed. contains the following reading in chapter 3.6.:

Cest a dire en sepulture au jour que tu partiras de cestui monde et Joyra de ton
royaulme comme ton fils et heritier

Besides Cx.Ed., mss P4, P9 and V3 share this reading, but ms. B1 and Cx.Tr. have left it out. Like Cx.Ed., V3 has omitted the following important reading from chapter 3.3., cited by Aeschbach:

engendrez en la racyne de melancolye

which, however, can be found in B1 and Cx.Tr. And also, in Cx.Tr. and B1 one can read in chapter 42.1.:

Il monta en mer, acompaignie des rois dessusdis et de dix mil combatans. (also
in B2 f. 208r)

Whereas in Cx.Ed. and V3, we find the following:

Et monta en mer acompaignie des roys dessusdis a tout dix mile combatans.

Although Cx.Tr. also possesses unique readings, certain conclusions can be reached: P4, P9, V3 and Cx.Ed. form a subgroup of mss, on one hand. On the other, the notable similarities between B1 and the English translation point toward the existence of another subgroup. That is to say, Caxton must have used a ms. rather close to B1. The differences between these two subfamilies can be made evident in a comparison between the ending of the second volume of these Trojan stories and the opening of the third volume. In the prologue to the third volume, Cx.Tr. provides an ending similar to ms. B1:

Es deux liures precedens nous a laide de dieu auons traictie des deux pre-
mieres destructions de troyes auèques ce des nobles fais du fort et puissant
hercules qui tant fist de merueilles que lengin humain de tout homme sen
dout esmerueiller et aussi comment Il occist le roy laomedon abaty et mist a
ruine la cite de troyes Maintenant en ce tiers et derrenier liure dieu deuant
nous dirons comment la ditte cite fut par priamus fils de icelui roy laomedon
Rediffiee et repaire plus fort et plus puissante que par auant nauoit estee Et
puis comment pour le raiissement de dame helaine femme du roy menelaus
de grece elle par les gregois fut totalement destrouitte / priamus hector et
tous ses fils occis queques noblesse sans nombre Comme Il appera ou proces
des chappittres. B1. f. 142r

Let us compare this prologue with that in Cx.Ed.:

Es deux liures precedens par laide de dieu le tout puissant Jay traictie et demonstre les deux constructions dicelle auctorite / les occasions et causes pourquoy et aussi par qui ce a este fait / Et sy ay touchie daucuns grans fais du fort et puissant Hercules qui sont bien dignes de memoire Maintenant par la grace di cellui Je commenceray le tiers et derrenier liure ouquel Je determineray et traicteray de la tierce construction dicelle Troye qui fut la principalle de toutes les precedentes faictes et ediffiees par priamus fils du roy Laomedon negaires ou second liure Je mettray la generally destruction et totale ruyne dicelle mort et occis par hercules troyes faicte par Agamenon et les gregois pour le rauissement de dame helaine comme Jay promis ou prologue du premier liure / Et non obstant que ceste histoire de laquelle Je traicte sont plus commune que les precedentes et que plusieurs layent en diuerses manieres / Toutefois si la traiteray Je et mettray au long ainsi comme Jen ay peu trouuer en diuers volumes au moins mal que possible me sera.

This prologue in Cx.Ed. is very similar to the opening of mss. P3, P9 and V3, and must belong to the same subfamily. Evidence taken from chapter headings can also be provided, in order to show that Cx.Ed., P9 and V3 contain similar readings, as do B1 and Cx.Tr. As in chapter heading 12, from the first book (*italics are mine*):

Comment Jupiter et saturne se reconcilierent ensemble et comment Jupiter au commandement desaturne ala destruire le roy appollo de paphes. Et du medecin esclapius *qui par le cocq basilique aprint herbes a congnoistre.*

The italicised section of the heading, which is in Cx.Ed. and V3, has been omitted by Cx.Tr. and B1. Let us take another example from the second book (chapter 63):

Comment *le preu et vaillant* hercules poursuiuit *le tyrant* gerion et *comment* Il le vainquit et mist a mort au port de la courogne.

Again, the italicised section is included in Cx.Ed., V3 and P9, but excluded by Cx.Tr. and B1. Finally, a heading taken from the third book (chapter 81):

De la venue du duc palamides et comment les gregois se partirent du port de tenedon *par le conseil de dyomedes et vindrent* prendre terre deuant la *forte* cite de troyes et comment les troyens les receurent a bataille moult vigoureusement.

The italicised sections are similar in B1 and Cx.Tr., but are omitted in Cx.Ed. and V3, whereas P9 contains a different heading. This type of evidence, as has been frequently remarked, is not sufficient. Chapter headings may have been omitted by chance, therefore we need more textual evidence. Let us observe a few differences between Cx.Ed., on one hand, and Cx.Tr. and B1 on the other:

Cx.Ed.	Et dist apres plusieurs sospirs.
Cx.Tr.& B1	And after many <i>right sorrowful</i> syghes <i>engendrid in the roote of melancholie</i> said in this wise. (21/17-19) ¹⁷
Cx.Ed.	Comme celle damoisselle tesmoigne mon pere et ma mere sont <i>es dangiers de tytan.</i>

- Cx.Tr.& B1 As this damoisell witnesseth my fader and my moder ben *in the handes of their enemyes*. (72/4-6)
- Cx.Ed. Lendemain enuiron leure tierce.
- Cx.Tr.& B1 *This nyght passid ouer / anone after that the sonne clered & lyght the ayer / about the thirde hour of the day*. (98/6-8)
- Cx.Ed. Mes enfans nauez vous point en moire la seruitude de vostre ayeul et de vostre tante exionne que len tint durant nre viuant en maniere de putain.
- Cx.Tr.& B1 My sones ye haue well in your memorye the deth of your grandfader / the seruytude of your Aunte Exione, that me holdeth by your luyyng in manere of a comyn woman. (517/22-24)

Although we can recognise the correspondences between Cx.Tr. and B1, there are also significant differences between them which indicate that Caxton would not have used this particular ms. as the copy text for his translation. For example, in the third volume, Caxton's translation differs from Cx.Ed. and B1 in many of the names of the characters who take part in the Trojan War.

To sum up, it seems evident that Caxton used different copies for his translation and the French edition. His translation was based on a manuscript similar to ms. 9254, now in the Royal Library in Brussels, which contains three books, but with uncertain date of execution. Although one cannot be absolutely certain, it seems probable that Caxton used only one source with three books for his translation. This lost manuscript must have contained a prologue announcing that three books were to be written, and also a somewhat incoherent conclusion and epilogue between the second and third books, which, as has been seen, Caxton copied very closely from his source. Caxton may have obtained his manuscript during the year 1469. If we except ms. 9254, whose date is uncertain, none of the extant mss with three books seems to have been available at that time. Once his English translation was printed, between 1472 and 1473, Caxton must have disposed of his copy text.

Then, after printing some other texts in Bruges, Colard Mansion and William Caxton decided to publish another version of *Le recoeil des histoires de Troie* in French. Unlike the English translation, the French version does not give any dates, but it was probably printed some time before or during 1476, prior to Caxton's setting in England. Again, the copy text used for his French edition is unknown. Of all the extant mss examined, ms. 3439, in the National Library (Vienna), is very close to the French edition. Prologues and epilogues in ms 3439 and Cx.Ed. seem to be more coherent than those in ms. 9254 and the English translation, especially the transition between books 2 and 3. We may surmise that, if Caxton had disposed of his French copy as soon as he had finished his English translation, he would have needed for the later French edition a new manuscript, which was not very different from that used for the earlier English translation. That new manuscript might have come from the same source from which the earlier manuscript(s) had been obtained a few years back.

Obtaining manuscripts would not have been a difficult task in a city like Bruges, where manuscript production was at that time a flourishing business. It is likely that Caxton did not need the help of an important patron in order to get either of the two copies he used for the English translation and the French edition, as several bookshops could have provided him with a suitable copy in three books of *Le recoeil des histoires de Troie*. If any help was needed from outside, his partner in the first printing press in

Bruges, Colard Mansion would have provided it. Colard Mansion was a well-known calligrapher in Bruges, and would have had many acquaintances in the trade.

Notes

1. A discussion of Caxton's contribution will be found in Miguel Fuster Márquez (1988) *William Caxton y la traducción inglesa del Recueil des histories de Troie de Raoul Lefevre*. Valencia: Universitat de Valencia, pp. 102-183. See also N.F. Blake (1991) *William Caxton and English Literary Culture*. London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press.
2. Miguel Fuster (1988), pp. 231-289.
3. See N.F. Blake (1969) *Caxton and His World*. London: Deutsch, 46, footnote 1.
4. A full analysis of the French texts can be found in Marc Aeschbach's introduction to (1987) *Raoul Lefevre – Le recueil des histories de Troyes*. Peter Lang: Berna-Frankfurt-New York-Paris.
5. Vid. Seymour de Ricci (1909) *A Census of Caxton's*. Bibliographical Society Illustrated Monographs 15, Oxford University Press, pp. 3-7.
6. H. Oskar Sommer Ed. (1894) *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*. London: David Nutt.
7. Even the authorship of these two works has been called into question, since two of the 25 extant mss. of *Le recueil* attribute it to a certain Guillaume de Fillastre. However, Fillastre's claim to *Le recueil* does not seem to have any firm basis. See Marc Aeschbach's edition; also Gert Pinkernell Ed. (1971) *L'histoire de Jason. Ein Roman aus dem 15. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag.
8. Marc Aeschbach Ed. (1987), p. 125.
9. Alphonse Bayot (1908) *La legende de Troie a la Cour de Bourgogne. Etudes d'histoire litteraire et de bibliographie*. Bruges: Societe d'emulation de Bruges, Melanges 1, pp. 31-32.
10. H. Oskar Sommer (ed.) (1894) states «A mere comparison of this table of contents (referring to Caxton's translated third volume) with the third book of *Le Recueil* clearly shows that both Guido and Lefèvre narrate the same incidents, and in exactly the same sequence.», p. CXXXV; again, Alphonse Bayot (1908), pp. 31-32. Vid. also Miguel Fuster (1988), pp. 209-216.
11. H. Oskar Sommer Ed. (1894), p. 501.
12. H. Oskar Sommer Ed. (1894), p. 502.
13. Marc Aeschbach (1987), pp. 24-67. Earlier works can be consulted, see J. Barrois (1830) *Bibliothèque prototypographique ou Libraries des fils du roi Jean, Charles V, Jean Berry, Philippe de Bourgogne et les siens*. Paris; Ch. M. Briquet (1907) *Les filigranes: dictionnaire historique des marques du papier des leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600 ...* (4 vols). Geneva; L. Delisle (1868) *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Imperiales (Nationale). Etude sur la formation de ce depot...* Paris, vol. I.
14. M. Aeschbach (1987), p. 72.
15. M. Aeschbach (1987), p. 93.
16. Vid A. Bayot (1953) *Catalogue des manuscrits français de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*. (Avec supplément par Mlle Brayer). Brussels.
17. References of pages and lines from H. Oskar Sommer's edition, *op. cit.*