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# Etymological and Non-etymological Spellings of FALCON and SOLDAN (SULTAN) in Caxton's *Paris and Vienne* and Some Related French Versions<sup>\*1)</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

The re-etymologising of the spelling of a large number of Romance lexical items following the Latin practice, e.g. *doubt* instead of Middle English *doute* and *adventure* instead of Middle English *aven-ture*, is a well-known phenomenon that characterises the Renaissance ambience. A number of Middle English lexical items borrowed from French were non-etymological in spelling, reflecting the French pronunciation of the period, but remodelled in accordance with the Latin etymology, usually with the insertion of letters as illustrated by <b> in *doubt* and <d> in *adventure*. Although this movement started in the Middle English period (cf. Nevalainen 1999: 366; Salmon 1999: 27-28), it is generally agreed that its peak was reached in the sixteenth century (Scragg 1974: 54), and for this reason major attention has been paid to the Early Modern English period in previous studies.

One of the recent trends in research of this field is to scrutinise further details of the etymologising process, and to this end a number of studies have directed their attention to Middle English, where the initial stage of the phenomenon is observable. It has been revealed in these studies that etymological spelling was more extensively employed in Middle English than traditionally expected and that different lexical items were affected by this movement at different times in the history of English. It has also been revealed by some of these studies that different language users reacted in different ways to this phenomenon even in contemporary settings. Furthermore, the need to consider the influence of the source text has been noted when translation is involved, particularly translation from French. The etymologising movement was observed in French as well, perhaps even earlier. According to Miller (2012: 211), it had started around the end of the fourteenth century in French.

Assuming that William Caxton's texts, particularly translations, are suitable for examining these details, and consequently for clarifying the process of the expansion of etymological spelling in English, we have been exploring Caxton's translations together with their possible source texts. In Iyeiri and Uchida (2021), we explored some relevant lexical items in *Paris and Vienne* (*Paris*, hereafter), a

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translation from French, which was published by Caxton in 1485, and compared and contrasted the results with those of *Reynard the Fox* (1481 or 1482), another text translated and published by the printer but based on a Dutch source text.<sup>2)</sup> The present study is the second publication of ours in this field and is a development of Iyeiri and Uchida (2021).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a brief survey of previous studies on etymological spelling in English, with some focus on recent ones, and defines the coverage of the present research more precisely than in this introductory section. Sections 3 and 4 delve into the spelling variants of FALCON and SOLDAN (SULTAN) quantitatively, comparing and contrasting their frequencies in different versions of *Paris* in English and French, while in Section 5 their distribution on manuscript and print pages is examined qualitatively. Section 6 briefly summarises the entire discussion of this study. Throughout this article, small capital forms are used as cover forms to represent lexemes which subsume all orthographic variants.

## 2. Some preliminaries and previous studies

The recent trends as described above in the field of etymological spelling may be an outcome of the establishment of various research traditions towards the end of the 20th century. *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin 1986) renewed our interest in orthography, especially its variation in Middle English. Also, the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, released in 1991, initiated the tradition of historical corpus linguistics in English, making the quantitative handling of a large number of examples more approachable and highlighting as a result the variability of language in many ways.

In line of this renewed research trend, Hotta's (2015) study on etymological spelling delves into wide-ranging sources: *Helsinki Corpus*, *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English Corpus*, *Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose*, *The Middle English Grammar Corpus* as well as various historical and etymological dictionaries.<sup>3)</sup> He gives an account of how extensively etymological spelling was used in Middle English, mentioning that some examples are available even from the thirteenth century (p. 54). He also comments on the notably extensive use of etymological spelling by John Gower, who was trilingual in English, French, and Latin, in the late Middle English period and argues that the influence of French needs to be taken into consideration along with the influence from Latin, the latter of which is most frequently singled out in previous studies. Hotta calls Gower "an early practitioner of etymological spelling" (p. 49). Overall, Hotta's study highlights different timings in terms of the etymologisation of spelling among different lexical items and among different authors.

The co-authored article, Hotta and Iyeiri (2022), is in a way a development of Hotta (2015). Its principal claim states that different lexical items were affected by the etymologising movement at different times. Although a major part of the dataset of this study is drawn from the Early Modern English period, it is still relevant to the present study, which is concerned with the etymologisation in Middle English. Using the term "lexical diffusion" and examining a large database that derives from

2) See Hellinga (2010: 17, 107) for the dating of this text.

3) For details of these corpora, see the following pages of the *Corpus Resources Database (CoRD)*: *Helsinki Corpus* <<https://varieng.helsinki.fi/CoRD/corpora/HelsinkiCorpus/>>; *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English Corpus*, <<https://varieng.helsinki.fi/CoRD/corpora/LAEME/>>; *Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose*, <<https://varieng.helsinki.fi/CoRD/corpora/ICoMEP/>>; and *Middle English Grammar Corpus*, <<https://varieng.helsinki.fi/CoRD/corpora/MEG-C/>>.

*Early English Books Online*,<sup>4)</sup> Hotta and Iyeiri (2022) demonstrate explicitly how different lexical items underwent different processes in etymologisation. As the chronology given in this research and cited below demonstrates, the establishment of the etymological spelling forms of some items goes back to the 1490s. The criterion for the establishment in this study is their “two-third share” in “two consecutive decades” (Hotta and Iyeiri 2022: 156), referring hence to a further advanced stage than simple attestations.

1. -1490s: ADMONISH
2. 1500s-1520s: CAPTIVE
3. 1530s-1540s: CAULDRON
4. 1550s-1570s: APOTHECARY, COGNIZANCE, FALCON
5. 1580s-1600s: LETHARGY ‘dullness’, ORTHOGRAPHY, PHANTOM, SALMON, VERDICT
6. 1610s-: AMETHYST, LETHARGY ‘lead’, PHANTASM, PHEASANT

(Hotta and Iyeiri 2022: 156)

Since Hotta and Iyeiri (2022) deal only with fifteen lexical items, there is much room for further research in this area, and, different chronological frames for different lexical items are a premise of the present study as well.

Finally, differences due to different authors or language users have also been extensively discussed in recent years, particularly in relation to Middle English texts, where spelling in general was still variable and far from having been fixed. Rutkowska (2003-2004), for example, explores the use or non-use of etymological spelling in different versions of the *Book of Good Maners* (1487-1507), focusing on differences due to different printers. More specifically, she probes into the following five versions of the text: Caxton (1487), Pynson (1494), de Worde (1498), Pynson (1500), and de Worde (1507). DEFAULT, for example, appears with etymological <l> in the first two, but not in the rest, according to her. Obviously, this may in some measure be a matter of textual transmission or the influence of the exemplar instead of different language users. It still merits attention, since differences among texts may, though not always, derive from different attitudes towards etymological spelling among different language users.

The discussion in one of our earlier publications, i.e., Iyeiri and Uchida (2021), is in a way based upon the updated tradition exemplified by the above-mentioned studies. It tackles Caxton’s translation of *Paris* (1485) and *Reynard the Fox* (1481 or 1482), discussing: relatively early attestation of some etymological spellings; differences due to different lexical items; and the printer’s reaction, namely Caxton’s reaction to the exemplar or the source text. Among these issues, differences due to different lexical items have in fact opened further research possibilities. As mentioned in the Introduction, this is an area where further examination is in need. We have shown that the influence of French, which is expected from *Paris* as it is a translation from French, seems to have taken place rather inconsistently. ADVENTURE, for example, illustrates an unequivocal influence of French <d>, whereas the correspondence between French and English is less transparent when the spellings of DEFAULT, FAULT, and FALCON are concerned. We have also noted that this seems to be in part related to the rather erratic pres-

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4) A large part of *Early English Books Online* has been transcribed by the Text Creation Partnership (TCP) project and provided through various online services as corpora. Among them, Hotta and Iyeiri (2022) utilise the corpus released by Mark Davies at <<https://www.english-corpora.org/eebo/>>. It includes Phase I of the TCP transcription.

ence and absence of etymological <l> in the French version examined. Hence, the whole issue should perhaps be viewed from a further detailed but wider perspective encompassing the textual tradition of different French versions. While we formerly discussed Caxton's *Paris* in relation to Le Roy's text in French (c1480) only, which is considered to be the source text of translation (Hellinga 2010: 74), we will explore additional versions in French along with Caxton's *Paris* in the present study. On the other hand, we need to set a realistic scope for analysis as research of this kind tends to be intricate. In the following, we will discuss the etymological and non-etymological spelling forms of FALCON (re-visit) and SOLDAN (SULTAN), which we assume will merit further examination.

The versions of *Paris* investigated in the following, in comparison to Caxton's, are: two French texts from earlier Lyonnaise editions (Le Roy c1480 and Huss c1485-1487), one French text from a slightly later Flemish edition (Leeu 1487), and an even newer English text (1492) from the same Flemish printer, which is extremely close to Caxton's edition. Table 1 summarises the six versions under consideration. They will be referred to as the name of the printer and the year combined. In addition, a French text from a manuscript in a fifteenth-century hand, transcribed, edited, and published as Babbi (1992) is to be examined, when necessary.

**Table 1** Texts under consideration

Year ( <i>circa</i> )	Printer	Place	Language	Reference number
15th century	— (Manuscript)	—	French	fr. 20044 (BNF)
1480	Le Roy	Lyon	French	ISTC ip00112500
1485-1487	Huss, Mathias	Lyon	French	ISTC ip00112600
1485	Caxton	London	English	ISTC ip00113500
1487	Leeu	Antwerp	French	ISTC ip00112800
1492	Leeu	Antwerp	English	ISTC ip00113600

While Hellinga (2010) refers to Le Roy (c1480) as the source for Caxton, Leeu (1487) was considered to be the earliest existing French print of *Paris* (cf. Brown-Grant 2010, Babbi 2009). Huss (1485-1487), meanwhile, appears to have had little presence in the literature to date.<sup>5)</sup>

### 3. Spelling of FALCON and FAUCON

Iyeiri and Uchida (2021) show, in addition to an examination of some other lexical items, how Caxton's spelling of FALCON and FALCONER varies as to whether it includes the etymological <l>, whereas Le Roy (c1480), which Hellinga (2010) refers to as the source for Caxton's translation, consistently avoids it in the spelling of FAUCON and FAUCONNIER. According to the data collected from *Frantext*, a large database of the French language, the etymological <l> began to appear in the spelling of FAUCON in the fourteenth century, flourished up to about 50% of the instances in the fifteenth, and over the following two centuries gradually weakened and finally went out of use (cf. Iyeiri and Uchida 2021).<sup>6)</sup>

5) Pairet (2021) and Bruijn (2019) refer to this “undated” edition with the year 1485 (Bruijn), c1485 (Pairet pp. 118, 126, and 134), or c1486 (Pairet p. 127).

6) For *Frantext*, consult its website <<http://www.frantext.fr>>. The etymologising movement observed in this lexical item is indeed earlier than the general tendency reported as to the English language (cf. Introduction).

When we look at the four French versions of *Paris* at hand, all of which are supposed to have come from the fifteenth century, the presence of etymological <l> in FAUCON and FAUCONNIER is as shown in Table 2. For the sake of simple comparison, Caxton’s English text shows about 60% (eleven out of eighteen cases) and Leeu’s English text 80% (fifteen out of eighteen) with <l>.

**Table 2** Etymological spelling of FAUCON and FAUCONNIER in the four French versions

	MS. (Babbi)	Le Roy c1480	Huss 1485-1487	Leeu 1487
Number of instances	11	17	17	19
Cases with the etymological <l>	2	0	17	19
Etymological spelling (%)	18	0	100	100

None of the French versions seems to have exercised any direct influence upon Caxton’s choice of the etymological and non-etymological spelling of FALCON and FALCONER. While the French manuscript shows moderate variation (18%), each of the three printed texts is consistent in its choice: 0%, 100% and 100%, respectively. Caxton’s, and its exceptionally close successor Leeu’s apparently erratic use and non-use of the etymological spelling in English might be attributed to ambivalent individual choices made by the translator or the compositor(s) in charge at the time. It might also be probable that the translator was referring to, and therefore unconsciously influenced by, the word forms found in more than one French edition or exemplar copy of the story on his desk, although we have to admit the extreme difficulty in trying to test this intriguing speculation solely through inevitably sporadic textual analyses.

#### 4. Spelling of SOLDAN (SULTAN) and SOUDAN

It appears that the word *sultan* entered the English language twice. *Oxford English Dictionary* has two separate entries for the doublets: SOLDAN and SULTAN. The former, described as “Now archaic or Historical” came from “Old French *soudan*, *sodan*, *souldan*, *soldan* (also *-ain*, *-ant*), = Provençal *sou-dan*...”; the latter from “French *sultan* (from 16th cent.) or < medieval Latin *sultānus*, < Arabic *sultān*...”. Similarly in French, *Trésor de la langue française informatisé* has two entries: SOUDAN, of which the earliest example is from the twelfth century, and SULTAN, with its earliest from the sixteenth century. In the following discussion, obviously, it is the first pair, i.e., SOLDAN and SOUDAN that will be sought in the English and French texts of *Paris*.

In *Frantext*, varied forms of SOUDAN are lemmatised in inconsistent manners, which means simple search relying on lemmas does not retrieve all the relevant examples. Instead, the data from 1100 to 1799 were searched with regular expressions that match the expected or predictable forms listed in dictionaries; screening with the part-of-speech tag “N” (Noun) shortened the list; percentages of etymological spelling were chronologically tracked. Figure 1 summarises the results.

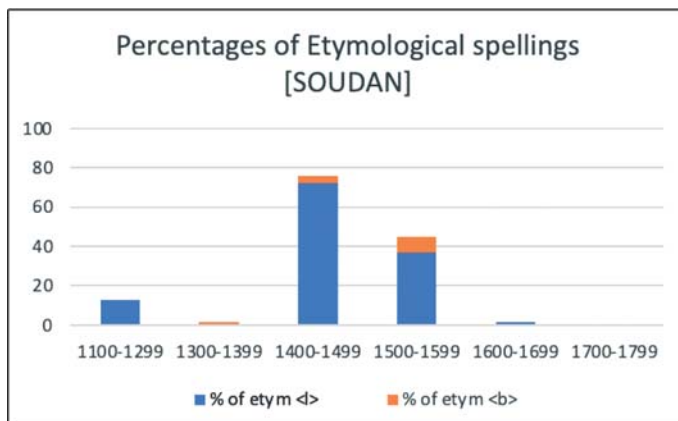


Figure 1 Percentages of etymological spelling of SOUDAN (Noun) in *Frantext*

This lexical item shows variation involving two patterns of “etymological” forms. The majority of examples are of the type with <l>, whilst fewer instances are accompanied by <b>. As with the case of FAUCON, the peak of etymological spelling is seen in the fifteenth century, and then the percentage drops in the subsequent two centuries. It is also noticeable that the pattern with <b> started to be detected later than the one with <l>.

The apparently puzzling existence of <b> in the forms of SOUDAN deserves some consideration here. Dictionaries do not provide etymological background that is directly related to this letter. One possible explanation could be drawn from the variation that the totally unrelated, but phonologically proximate, word SOUDAIN ‘sudden, suddenly’ shows in its forms. This French word has its source in Latin *subitānus*, with a <b>, came to be used as an adjective in the twelfth century, and as an adverb in the late fifteenth century.<sup>7)</sup> Forms of SOUDAIN (Adjective and Adverb) in *Frantext* vary as shown in Figure 2.

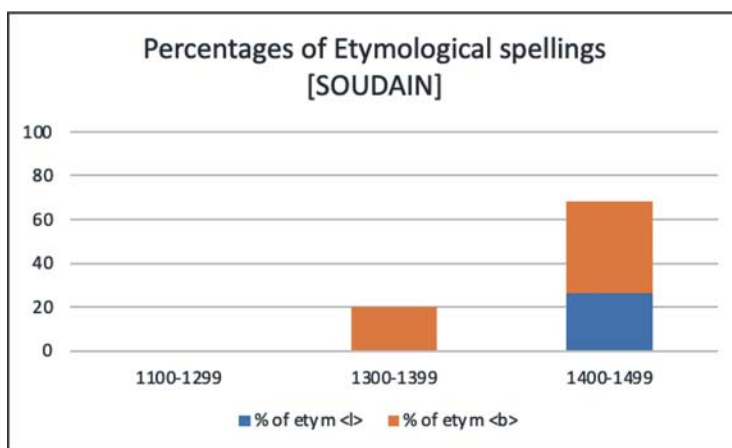


Figure 2 Etymological spelling of SOUDAIN (Adjective and Adverb) in *Frantext*

7) Cf. *Trésor de la langue française informatisé*.

It is worth noting that SOUDAIN, not only shows variation with the etymological <b> but also with <l>, which is non-existent in its Latin source. A comparative examination of the two charts above reveals that the cross-adoption of “etymological” spelling occurred in both directions between SOUDAN and SOUDAIN in the time when our texts of *Paris* were copied and printed.<sup>8)</sup>

In Caxton’s English text, etymological forms of SOLDAN with <l> appear 23 times, whilst those without <l> five: the percentage of the former is about 82%. Leeu’s English version adds two cases of <l> and drops one, resulting in 86%. Table 3 shows the distribution observed in the four French texts.

**Table 3** Etymological spelling of SOUDAN in the four French versions

	MS. (Babbi) <sup>9)</sup>	Le Roy c1480	Huss 1485-1487	Leeu 1487
Number of instances	22	26	29	29
Cases with the etymological <l>	16	0	0	29
Cases with the ‘etymological’ <b>	0	26	29	0
Etymological spelling (%)	73	100	100	100

What we see here, interestingly, is similar to the tendencies we observed in Table 2: The manuscript shows some variation, whilst printed editions are perfectly consistent within themselves. Two English printers’ indeterminacy resembles that found in the manuscript, and as is the case with the manuscript, the “pseudo” etymological insertion of <b> is employed by neither of them.<sup>10)</sup> It is also noteworthy that Le Roy (c1480), which invariably uses non-etymological spelling of FAUCON, chooses the “pseudo” etymological form *soubdan* for SOUDAN. Indeed, different lexical items show different tendencies, and different language users reacted in different ways even in contemporary settings.

## 5. Spatial distribution on pages: whose choice?

The two lexical items whose spelling is examined above tend to occur in the same contexts in the story of *Paris*. The sultan owns falcons and has them taken care of by falconers. Paris, the hero, succeeds in gaining favours from the sultan by helping one of his falconers treat sickness of his exceptionally favourite falcon. In Caxton’s printed edition, Paris’ encounter with the falconer, giving advice about how to treat the raptor’s malady, and receiving recognition from the sultan, all occur on a single side of a leaf (diii v). In the French manuscript, most of the same portion of the story is located on

8) In addition, the preposition *sous* ‘under’ (< Lat. *subtus*), were spelled with the etymological <b>. A simple search using *Frantext* (based on its lemmatisation information) gives the following percentages: 5% in 1100-1299, 60% in 1300-1399, 100% in 1400-1499, 50% in 1500-1599, 10% in 1600-1699, and 0% in 1700-1799. It is probable that the spelling of SOUDAN was also affected by the use of this fairly common word, because of the accidental match in the initial sound.

9) The texts of the manuscript and those of the printed editions are not always close enough to allow us to determine textual parallelism and identify corresponding expressions. Hence, in retrieval of the numbers of instances here, only those that have counterparts in Caxton’s English edition were counted. The instances in Huss’ and Leeu’s French versions include an additional case where the two English editions use the pronoun *his*, hence 29 in all.

10) It appears that the use of <b> did not make its way into English. In the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, as well as in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the entry form is *soldan*, with <l>, and lists several alternative forms, none of which including <b>.



one side of a leaf.

In this section, we will first focus on this segment of the story and illustrate how wildly and effortlessly spelling alters in limited physical spaces, not only on handwritten leaves, but also on printed pages. Figure 3 represents the transcription of Caxton's printed page (diii v), while Figure 4 that of the relevant portion in the manuscript (42v-43r). In the figures, for the sake of visual representation of the distances among instances of FALCON / FAUCON and SOLDAN / SOUDAN, the forms in question are shown with letters in black colour, with others in grey. Occurrences with etymological <I> is underlined, with the / in boldface.<sup>11)</sup> In the left column of Caxton's page (Figure 3), there is a portion

<p>for hys Infortune / And also he had grete desplaysyr whan he sawe other tryumphe and wexe lordes / Now it happed on a day that parys wente to playe and dysporte hym out of the toun in the felde / and there mette with the <u>fawconners</u> of the soudan / whyche came fro hawkyng / and emonge them was one fawcon moche seke / and that fawcon the sowdan loued beste of alle the other / Thenne demaunded Parys of the fawconner what sekenesse the fawcon had / And the fawconner sayd to hym that he wist not / Thenne sayd paris truly yf he contynue in the ma= ladye that he hath he shall not lyue thre dayes / but yf ye doo that I shal say to you / and yf he be not hole therwyth he shal ne= uer be hole / Thenne sayd þe <u>fawconner</u> to hym / I praye you that ye wyl telle me what I shal do for I ensure you faythfully / that yf ye may make hym hole / it shal mowe auaylle you and me also and that I promyse you / for the <u>souldan</u> had leuer lose the beste cyte that he hath than this faw= con / Thenne Parys wente and sought certayn herbes / and gaf them to the <u>fawconner</u> and bad hym to bynde them to the feet of the fawcon / and so he dyd / and sone after the <u>fawcon</u> amended and became as hole as euer he had be tofore / wherof þe <u>souldan</u> was</p>	<p>moche Ioyous / and for loue of thys <u>fawcon</u> / the <u>souldan</u> made the <u>fawconner</u> a grete lord in hys courte / Thenne the <u>fawcon=ner</u> seyng that by the moyen of parys he had gotten thys lord=shyp / he dyd to hym moche play syr / &amp; shewed to hym as grete amytye and frendshyp as he had ben hys brother / &amp; brought hym in the grace of the <u>souldan</u> / and was receyued in to hys courte / &amp; the <u>souldan</u> loued hym soo wel / that he gaf to hym grete offyce/ and mayntened hym in grete honour / ye shal vnderstonde that in thys tyme regned a moche holy pope / the whych was named Innocent / and was a moche holy persone &amp; deuoute / And it pleased soo hym that he gaf oute a croysee / ayenst the fals myscre=auntes &amp; hethen men / to the ende that the name of our lord Ihesu cryst were more sayntefyed and enhaunced thurgh out al crystyente / And therefore was maad a grete councyl emonge the cardynals and prelates / &amp; was concluded by theyr parliament that thys croysee shold be wry=ton to the kyng of fraunce / and to other kynges crysten / dukes / Erles and other grete lordes / and so was it doon /</p> <p>¶ How the doulphyn came to=ward the kyng of Fraunce /</p>
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Figure 3 Spatial distribution of forms of FALCON and SOLDAN in Caxton (1485) (diii v)

where non-etymological spelling is dominant (ll. 8-16), while the etymological spelling is favoured thereafter. When we compare the two images, we can hardly detect any word-to-word influence from the manuscript over the individual choices of forms employed in the English print.

Another segment in Caxton (1485) where several instances of FALCON and SOLDAN are observed together follows on the fourth page (dv v) after the one we examined above. Here Paris asks the Sultan's falconer(s) to help him acquire a letter of order that authorises his trip to Alexandria. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 show their distribution on Caxton's pages, and Figure 6 that on the leaves of the manuscript. While the forms in the manuscript vary to about the same extent as we saw in Figure 4 (about 70% etymological), those in the English print are perfectly consistent: with all instances accompanied by etymological <I>. The difference between the two segments of text is striking: about 60% in the first and 100% in the second.

Here again, the question "Why?" is unanswerable. One possible explanation could be that the translator grew more and more conscious about his etymological spelling of FALCON and SOLDAN as he continued his work. This tendency was already observable in the latter half of the first citation (Fig. 3). In addition, the second citation (Figures 5-1 and 5-2) includes etymologically spelled forms of other lexical items: e.g., DOUBT, DOLPHIN, ADVENTURE, SUBJECT, and ADMIRAL, all of which Caxton spells consistently with etymological letters. This contextual condition might have prompted him to spell FALCON and SOLDAN with <I> when he was working on this passage.

<p>demourant ainsy, Paris s'en alloit tousjours esbastre hors de la cité ou avoit moult de beaulx jardins et de belles prairies, es quelles venoyent souvent chasser le gens du <u>souldan</u> et d'autres grans seigneurs pour prendre plaisir et joye. Et advint ung jour que ung des <u>faucuns</u> du <u>soudain</u>, celluy qu'il aymoit le mieulx, fust mallade, et Paris, voyant le <u>faucun</u>, dist a celluy qui le portoyt: -- Quelle maladie a se <u>faucun</u>? -- Dist qu'il ne scavoit vraiment. Dist Paris: -- Selon la maladie qu'il a il ne vivra pas .iii. jours se vous ne luy faictes se que je vous diray et, ce par cecy ne guerist, jamais ne guerira --. Et le <u>faulconnier</u> luy dist: -- Je vous prie, sire, que vous le me deüssés que luy pourray faire, car, en verité, bien vous dy que, se vous le pavez guerir, il pourroit valloir a vous encore et a moy car le <u>soudain</u> aymeroit mieulx perdre une cité que le <u>faucun</u>! -- Et lors Paris cueillit des herbes qui luy faisoient mestier et les bailla au <u>faulconnier</u> qu'il luy en donnast a menger et il le fist: pour quoy en peu de temps le <u>faucun</u> fust guerir et sain comme se jamais n'avoit eu mal. Et, pour ce, le <u>faulconnier</u> que, pour l'amour de Paris, avoit eu tant de bien, eust grant amitié avec Paris comme s'il feust son frere et luy firent les <u>faulconniers</u> beaucoup de plaisir et service, et le mirent en la grace et amy</p>	<p>tié du <u>souldain</u>, tant qu'il fust receu a son service. Du Dauphin qui s'en alla espier les infeaulx sarrasins et fust prins En celuy temps regnoit pape Innocent, lequel estoit saint homme et moult devost; et luy vint en voullenté qu'il donast la croisee contre les infeaulx pour ce que le nom de Dieu fust loué et saintifié et sainte esglise exaussee. De cecy il tint grant conseil avec les cardinaulx et aultres prelas et, tenu leur parlement, donnerent par conseil que de cecy escripissent au roy de France et aultres roys crestiens et ainsy le firent. Quant le roy de France eust receu les lettres du pape, incontinant va mander au Dauphin de Vienne qu'il vint parler a luy. Le quel vint incontinant a son commandement; le roy luy dist telles parolles: Mon seigneur Gaude froy, nous vous avons fait venir car vous estes ung des saiges de nostre court et lignaige. Vueillés scavoir que nostre Saint Pere le pape nous a escript qu'il veult donner la croisee contre les mescreans et nous, par honneur et reverence de Dieu, y actendons a passer. Toutesfoys nous avons advisé que vous alissiez vers celle partie pour adviser la terre avec les crestiens qui y sont. Et, pour ce, vous prions que vous y aillez par honneur et reverance de Dieu et pour l'amour de nous. Si dist le Dauphin: -- Sire, je</p>
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**Figure 4** Spatial distribution of forms of FAUCON and SOUDAN in the manuscript (42v-43r)

- 11) The exemplar on which Figures 3, 5-1, and 5-2 are based is owned by the British Library (C.10.b.10 = IB.55092; Accessible online). The manuscript Figures 4 and 6 refer to is owned by Bibliothèque nationale de France (MS Français 20044). The transcribed text data therein are those from Leach (1957) and Babbi (1992), unless otherwise stated.

<p>hym / &amp; yf ye wyl come with me I promyse you by my lawe / that I shal make you good chere / &amp; doubte ye nothyng / and thenne whan the freres herde hym thus speke they wyst not what to an= suer / they had so grete fere / Ne uertheles they trustyng in the mercy of god / they promysed hym / that they shold goo wyth hym / though they shold deye / &amp; prayden god in theyr courage that he wold graunte grace that he myght come oute of pryson / Thenne Parys had grete play= syr of the ansuer of the freres &amp; wende neuer to see þe houre / that he myght be wyth the doulphyn for to see the ende of his aduen= ture / and so departed fro the fre= res / and wente straye to the <u>faulconner</u> of the <u>souldan</u> wyth whom he had grete knowleche / &amp; sayd to hym / Seynour I thanke you of the grete honour / curto= sye &amp; gentylnes that ye haue do to me / &amp; playse it you to wyte that I wyl departe fro hens in to alysandrye / and I promyse to you that for your loue I shall not tarye longe / but that I shal retorne hyther ageyn / And by cause I am there vnknowen / and that I neuer was there / I praye you ryght humbly / that I myȝt haue a maundement of the <u>soul</u> <u>dan</u> / that he commaunde to the gouernours that I may goo tho rough alle hys londe surely / For</p>	<p>ye knowe wel that one may not kepe hym ouer wel fro euyl pe= ple / Therfore I praye you and requyre that ye wyl gete me suche a maundement / and also that ye wyl commaunde me hum bly to the good grace of my lord the <u>souldan</u> / and forthwyth the <u>faulconner</u> wente to the <u>souldan</u> and made hys requeste for Pa= rys / &amp; Incontynent the <u>souldan</u> graunted hym al hys desyre / say eng that it moche displayed hym / of the departyng of parys &amp; yf he wold abyde &amp; dwelle in hys courte he wold make hym a grete lord / Thenne the <u>faul</u>= <u>conner</u> sayd / Dere syr he hath promysed me / that in short tyme he shal retorne / Thenne the <u>soul</u>= <u>dan</u> dyd do make the maunde= ment lyke as he wold deuyse / charyng al his lordes offycers &amp; subgettes of townes cytees &amp; castellys of his londe that they shold do to hym grete honour / &amp; that they shold gyue &amp; delyuer to hym al that shold be necessa= rye to hym wythout takyng any money or any other thyng of hym / And also the <u>souldan</u> gaf to Parys many ryche clothes &amp; vestymentes of cloth of gold and of sylke / and also he gaf to hym grete tresour / prayeng hym that he shold not longe tarye / but has tely retorne ageyn / &amp; promysed hym that he shold make hym a grete lord / and delyuerd hys</p>
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Figure 5-1 Spatial distribution of forms of FALCON and SOLDAN in Caxton (1485) (dv v)

Through examination of Caxton's etymological and non-etymological spelling of FALCON and SOLDAN in *Paris*, in comparison with three French printed editions of the same text, we have shown the instability or inconsistency particular to Caxton's choices. Some examination of spatial distances on a page from Caxton (1485) showed that varied forms coexist in close proximity, in quite random manners, as is the case with the manuscript. In some other part, the lexical items under consideration are consistently spelled etymologically. Caxton's instability or inconsistency in spelling could be attributed to the general instability of spelling in English at the time, the environmental background of translation where the translator may have been referring to more than one French exemplar, the hasty-



**Figure 5-2** Spatial distribution of forms of FALCON and SOLDAN in Caxton (1485) (dvi r)

ness in which the merchant translator was working for pursuit of financial success, or simply to manual or linguistic habits of individual compositors who typeset the pages in question.

## 6. Conclusion

In line with the current research trend in etymological spelling, the above sections have explored some possible correspondence between Caxton's translation of *Paris* and its original French versions, with a focus on the two lexical items FALCON and SOLDAN (SULTAN). It has been shown that critical analyses



of various versions in the source language are necessary to understand the process of the introduction and establishment of etymological spelling in English. Although the base French text of Caxton's *Paris* is now considered to be Le Roy (c1480), the correspondence between the two is not as transparent as expected when the choice between etymological and non-etymological forms of FALCON and SOLDAN (SULTAN) is concerned. This opens up the possibility that other factors were probably relevant to the choice of forms: Caxton may have consulted multiple versions in French while translating the text; his choice of forms may have been influenced by the spelling of other lexical items on the same page; and he may have selected forms more consciously in some parts of the text than in others. Bottom-up analyses as illustrated by this case study can possibly make a small but important contribution to the clarification of the etymologising process of English spelling. As the timing of the shift from non-etymological to etymological spelling is known to have differed significantly depending upon the lexical item, further research of this kind is much in need.

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# Etymological and Non-etymological Spellings of FALCON and SOLDAN(SULTAN) in Caxton's *Paris and Vienne* and Some Related French Versions

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## ABSTRACT

This study scrutinises how William Caxton, who had spent dozens of years on the continent as a Latin-, French-, English-, and Flemish-using multilingual merchant, employed etymological spelling in his translation of a romance from French to English. The time was around the end of the fifteenth century, when etymological spelling was prevalent in French, and across the Channel, parallel phenomenon was already in motion. A substantial number of examples of etymological spelling in English are reported to have existed long before this, notably written by multilingual authors. Recent studies in this field state that, unlike in the traditional view where etymological spelling in English is discussed predominantly in relation to Latin, more attention to the influence exercised by French is called for. In this context, it is worthwhile to examine whether Caxton's translation reflects spelling conventions of the original texts. Quantitative and qualitative examination of Caxton's etymological and non-etymological spelling of FALCON and SOLDAN (SULTAN), in contrast with that of FAUCON and SOUDAN in the closely related manuscript and printed editions in French, pointed to peculiar inconsistency in Caxton's choice of etymological forms. It is inconsistent not only in the sense that the forms vary, but also in the sense that the variation is not in accordance with any of the French versions. The results support the idea that in the process of introduction and stabilisation or standardisation of etymological spelling, different lexical items show different tendencies, and different language users reacted in different ways even in contemporary settings, and even when they were dealing with the same text.

**Key Words:** spelling, etymological, translation, William Caxton