

The Project's Lineation System

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The *Canterbury Tales* project, which has as its aim the computerisation of all the fifteenth-century witnesses of the poem so that the different versions may be compared, must have a lineation system which allows this to happen without prejudging what the textual development of the poem may have been. It needs to break the poem down into those elements which formed blocks in the poem's copying in the fifteenth century. At the same time it is helpful to keep any new lineation as close as possible to the ones which are now in use without being confused with them and which is also readily understandable by those who have to use it. The present systems include the Fragment numeration, available in either the letters A to I or the Roman numerals I to X, and the Section numeration which uses the Arabic numerals from 1 to 12.¹ These systems were designed for what editors assume may have been the original form of the poem and so are not suitable in themselves to record all the lines in all the different witnesses extant. It may not be possible to devise an alternative system which meets the aims outlined above, but we propose to use the following one which we hope goes some way towards doing so.

The poem will be divided into units consisting of the customary links and tales. Each of these will be treated as a separate unit for lineation purposes since this will allow for the various changes in structure which the poem underwent during its textual development to be charted without presupposition. In this respect the new system differs significantly from those now used. Each tale unit will include what is related by the teller of the tale together with what may be divided off in some manuscripts as the tale's prologue or epilogue provided, firstly, that the prologue or epilogue does not close or open another tale and, secondly, that it is attached to the tale with which it is associated in all extant witnesses which appear to be copying the complete poem. Thus the prologues to *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and *The Pardoner's Tale* and the conclusion to *The Pardoner's Tale* will be treated as part of their respective tales for lineation purposes; but the envoy to *The Clerk's Tale* will form a separate link since it is not attached to the tale in a few manuscripts. Even though the Friar and the Pardoner appear in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* and the Host in the epilogue *To the Pardoner's Tale*, this will not affect the way they are treated. Parts of the poem treated as tale units include *The General Prologue* and *The Retraction* since these are usually treated by scholars as having the same standing as tales, although they are strictly part of the pilgrimage frame and not narratives. The tale units will naturally include all tales added to the poem during the fifteenth century whether they are currently thought to be by Chaucer or not, for everything which is included in fifteenth-century witnesses of the poem has to be transcribed into computer form.² Naturally the complete textual history of

the poem can be determined only if all parts of the poem are included in the computer data. It is not appropriate to make assumptions about the textual development before all the evidence has been transcribed.

Each tale unit (i.e. the tale and any other elements taken as part of the tale for lineation purposes) will be abbreviated by two capital letters, usually the first two letters of the title of the pilgrim who tells that tale. Thus KN means the Knight and PL the Ploughman,³ and each indicates the tale ascribed to that pilgrim together with any further pieces taken together with the tale as part of the unit for lineation purposes. Where this system could lead to confusion because two pilgrims share the first two letters, e.g. Friar and Franklin, one will keep the first two letters and a different abbreviation will be found for the other. The choice of letters in these cases will normally reflect current abbreviation practice. Thus FR is used for the Friar and FK for the Franklin, PA for the Parson and PD for the Pardoner. A tale which is known by its title rather than by its pilgrim teller is abbreviated by T and the first letter of the tale title, thus TT is The Tale of Thopas, TG The Tale of Gamelyn, and TB The Tale of Beryn (which in this case also includes its prologue.) Where a pilgrim has a name which contains more than one word, as is true of the Wife of Bath, that pilgrim is abbreviated to two letters referring to the whole title so that WB means Wife of Bath and ML means Man of Law. Since the Second Nun is referred to in some manuscripts simply as the Nun, she is abbreviated as NU. It needs to be stressed that these abbreviations refer to what for lineation purposes is attributed to that pilgrim or tale in the poem; the actual extent of each tale unit is detailed in the list of abbreviations which is attached at the end of this article.

Each tale unit and link will be numbered from line 1, and this numbering follows whatever manuscript is chosen as the base of that particular unit. For many tale units and links this base will be the Hengwrt manuscript (Hg) which is both early and shorter than most other manuscripts. For other tales and links, what is an early version is chosen to be the base for lineation purposes; for example, Corpus Christi College Oxford MS 198 (Cp) will be chosen as the base for CY. Naturally the choice of manuscript as the base may be regarded as controversial, but it is meant to be pragmatic. The lineation system cannot be based on current systems since they do not contain all the text from all witnesses and since they may prejudice users of the computer data to a particular view of the text and its development. There appear to be two possible choices for the basic lineation. The first is to choose early texts (i.e. from manuscripts which have been dated early by palaeographers) which in almost all cases contain fewer lines and passages than the texts found in those manuscripts which can be dated later in the fifteenth century. Pieces not found in these early manuscripts have to have as a base whatever witness they are found in first from a chronological perspective or in some cases uniquely. For example, as the fifteenth-century version of PL is found only in Christ Church Oxford MS 152 (Ch), naturally it must use Ch as its base for its lineation system. The second is to gather all parts of the poem together and to arrive at a lineation system which reflects all lines found in all fifteenth-century witnesses of the poem. The second system is difficult to implement because it would entail

making a choice among the different versions of a single line which are found in various manuscripts. It would also entail transcribing all the witnesses before one could start to devise a lineation system to make sure that one had included everything found in all the witnesses. On the other hand, it is relatively easy to choose an early manuscript and to record its lines as a lineation system, because the early manuscripts have been studied and edited most often. Following this procedure, a lineation system can be devised from the beginning of the transcription process. Furthermore, it is usually clearer to indicate lines which are additional to the base rather than those omitted from it, because scholars will not have to puzzle whether something has been omitted from the transcription in error. Consequently, there are advantages in having a shorter text such as that found in Hg as the base for most of the text. However, although Hg is normally followed scrupulously as far as the lineation process is concerned, there are a few instances where it has not been reproduced exactly. Where the scribe of Hg has left a gap in his copying for whatever reason and the gap has been filled, even if by a later hand, then the lineation system will include the missing line or lines. This happens in ME at what are 5:61-2 and 5:986 in the Section numeration (or E1305-6 and E2230 in the Fragment numeration), where gaps have been left by the scribe of Hg and these have been filled later. Instances of this happening are rare. Where the rhyme scheme or even the source suggests that something may have been omitted in Hg, there is no line number provided if there is no gap in Hg. This occurs, for instance, in TT at 10:805 in the Section numeration (B2/1995 in the Fragment numeration), where a line of the text may be missing because of the rhyme and stanza scheme. But not only is there no indication of a missing line in Hg, many other early manuscripts do not include a line here. It would be wrong to indicate a missing line here through the numeration, even though that is one possible solution, since the unanimity of the early manuscripts suggests that there was no line at this point in the archetype—something which may have been done deliberately by Chaucer as part of the telling of TT. The prose naturally causes more problems since there is no easy way to break up the lines. As it happens, the traditional line numbering of the prose texts produces lines which are a little too long for most computer screens to handle as single lines. Despite this small technical disadvantage, we have decided to replicate the traditional prose lineation in our computer version, adjusted to the principles already outlined above. Where passages are missing in the prose in Hg, the line numbers reflect this, for what have been interpreted in the past as missing lines receive no numbers in our lineation. Where Hg or the base manuscript contains part of the line, but not necessarily the complete line, in the traditional lineation, we have given the remaining words the appropriate line number, even though the result is a truncated line or lines. This happens, for example, in TM at what in the Section lineation is 10:1335-6 (Fragment lineation B2/2525-6.) Our intention has been to follow what is considered under current ideas to be the chronology of the extant witnesses: the base for any unit is normally the manuscript in which that unit occurs for the first time in the transmission process according to the dating of the manuscripts by palaeographers. Not unnaturally, palaeographers are not always agreed as to dates, but the general

lines are clear enough. We accept Hg as the earliest manuscript, even though some have suggested that Cp may be earlier.

Line 1 will always be the first line of the English of the tale unit or link. If there is a heading for that unit it will receive the line number 0 even though it may in some instances extend over more than one line. We transcribe as part of the normal lineation process only those parts of the witness which are within the main body of the text. Thus we transcribe a Latin quotation, such as that which occurs within the text at the beginning of KN and the subheadings which indicate a section of a unit, but we do not transcribe as part of the substantive text glosses written over the line or in the margin, or subheadings or titles written in the margin; they will be transcribed separately. The headings indicating the various sections of KN are transcribed, but not the names of the pilgrims in the margin of GP or the glosses in whatever language written in the margin of any tale. But the glosses and other marginalia will be numbered in accordance with the system outlined here as they are transcribed separately. The Latin quotations and section headings within the main body of the text in a unit do not receive a number in the line sequence since they are treated as though they are additions. Additions are signalled by a slash and numbering starting with 1 added to the number of the line which the addition follows. Thus the Latin quotation at the beginning of KN will be numbered KN0/1 etc. The subheadings indicating a subsection of the text are numbered in the same way. For example, in CL the introductory heading 'The prohemie of the clerkys tale of Oxenford' is numbered CL0; the next heading 'Here bigynneth the tale' is numbered CL56/1; and the first section break is numbered CL196/1 for 'Explicit prima pars' and CL196/2 for 'Incipit pars secunda.' This allows KN1 to be the first line of the Knight's Tale unit and is equivalent to A859 (Fragment numeration) and 1:861 (Section numeration.) A variant of a line is signalled by a slash and lower-case letters starting with **a** immediately after the line number to which it is a variant. It is not anticipated that this type of variation will occur frequently. Glosses and other marginalia are indicated by **gl** without a slash added to the line number against which the gloss or marginalia is added. If there should be more than one gloss to a given line, the line-number plus **gl** will be followed by a slash and numbers starting at 1.

The links are treated separately and will be indicated quite arbitrarily through a capital **L** and a number, to give L1, L2, L3 etc. A link is a part of the poem in which the Host appears and which normally closes one tale and opens another. If a part of the pilgrimage frame simply opens or closes a single tale and is always linked with that tale in all manuscripts (i.e. it is not treated by the scribes as a detachable unit), it is regarded as part of that tale unit for lineation purposes, as already indicated. Many links are allocated to different pilgrims as the order of the tales changed. Where this happens all versions of a link will be regarded as a single link no matter with which pilgrims it is associated; and this is one reason why the links are given arbitrary numbers like L1 and L2. What is the SQ-ME link in some manuscripts is the SQ-FK link in others, but both are treated as the same link which has an arbitrary number, in this case L20. Links which are divided in the manuscripts into an endlink for one tale and a headlink for another tale are treated as a single link if the manuscripts always keep them

together whenever they occur. Links which unite the same two tales, but which are quite different links, as is true of some forms of the CO-TG link, are treated as separate links for lineation purposes. The number a link is given will reflect the order found in many manuscripts and will allow for different links uniting the same two tales to have consecutive numbers. Each link will be numbered from 1 onwards in accordance with the base text, which will be either Hg or some early or only manuscript in which it occurs in accordance with the procedure outlined for the tale units. Thus L_{1:1} will be the first line of Link 1 which will in fact be the KN-MI link; it is equivalent to A₃₁₀₉ (Fragment numeration) and 1:3105 (Section numeration.)

The above procedures can be illustrated as follows. Additions to the base text are indicated by adding a slash followed by 1, 2, 3 etc after the line number of the base text which the addition follows. Thus KN_{100/1} means the first line of an addition after KN₁₀₀, KN_{100/2} the second line of that addition, and so on. If a line is a variant of a line in the base text rather than an addition and needs to be signalled as such, it will be indicated by using a lower-case letter rather than a number after the slash. Thus KN_{100a} means a variant to the line which appears in the base text as KN₁₀₀ and KN_{100b} would be a second variant line to KN₁₀₀. Equally KN_{100/1a} indicates a variant of line KN_{100/1}. Where lines which are found in the base text are omitted in a witness, this will be indicated through the lineation system which will omit these numbers. If KN₁₀₅ and KN₁₀₆ are omitted in one manuscript, the line numbering will in that transcription go from KN₁₀₄ to KN₁₀₇. Equally KN_{100/2} followed immediately by KN_{100/5} would mean that the additional couplet KN_{100/3-4} was not found in that particular witness. A gloss which occurred opposite or above a word in KN₁₀₀ would be represented as KN_{100gl}. If there were two glosses to KN₁₀₀, one would be numbered KN_{100gl/1} and the second KN_{100gl/2}.

It is hoped that this system will prevent confusion with existing lineation systems which use either a single capital letter, capital Roman numeral or Arabic numerals alone and with the sigla of various manuscript witnesses which take the form of a capital and a lower-case letter. It is assumed that FK for Franklin is sufficiently distinctive not to be confused with F for Fragment F or with Fi for the Fitzwilliam manuscript. Since the division of the poem into fragments with their single capital letters only extends as far as the letter I, there should be no confusion with L which indicates a link.

The project team is anxious to hear of reactions to this lineation scheme from other scholars who are invited to pass on any views they might have to the author.

Lineation of the Tales in the Poem

Sigla Lines	Section Lineation	Fragment Lineation	Comment
GP 1-858	1:1-638	A1-252	Hg base unless
	1:639-40 om	A252ab om	otherwise stated
	1:641-860	A253-858	

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Sigla Lines	Section Lineation	Fragment Lineation	Comment
KN 1-2244	1:861-3104	A859-2680 A2671-2 om A2683-2778 A2779-82 om A2717-3108	
MI 1-666	1:3181-3846	A3187-3720 A3721-3722 om A3723-3854	
RE 1-404	1:3913-4316	A3921-4324	
CO 1-58	1:4357-4414	A4365-4422	Tale incomplete
WB 1-1238	2:1-1238	D1-44 D44a-f om D45-574 D575-584 om D585-608 D609-612 om D613-618 D619-626 om D627-716 D717-720 om D721-1264	Includes the prologue
FR 1-364	2:1275-1638	D1301-1664	
SU 1-586	2:1683-2268	D1709-2294	
ML 1-1064	3:99-1162	B1/99-1162	Headlink not in Hk, Ph2
SQ 1-664	4:1-664	F9-672	Tale incomplete
ME 1-1174	5:1-1174	E1245-2418	5:61-2, 986 incomplete in Hg
FK 1-908	6:1-908	F709-1454 F1455-1456 om F1457-1492 F1493-1498 om F1499-1624	Includes what is later prologue
NU 1-552	7:1-552	G1-552	Includes what is later prologue
CL 1-1169	8:1-1169	E1-1169	Includes the prologue; WB stanza not in 24 mss; Envoy not in B01, Ph2, Hk
PH 1-286	9:1-286	C1-286	
PD 1-640	9:327-966	C329-968	Includes prologue and endlink
SH 1-434	10:1-434	B2/1191-1624	
PR 1-238	10:453-690	B2/1643-1880	Includes what is later prologue
TT 1-206	10:712-804	B2/1902-1994	

New Lineation System

Sigla Lines	Section Lineation	Fragment Lineation	Comment
TM 1-918	10:967-1061 10:1062-3 om 10:1064-1432 10:1433-4 om 10:1453-1888	B2/2157-2251 B2/2252-3 om B2/2254-2262 B2/2623-4 om B2/2625-3078	
MO 1-768	10:1991-2758	B2/3181-3196 B2/3197-3204 om B2/3205-3956	Adam stanza not in Hg and other mss
NP 1-626	10:2793-3418	B2/4011-4636	Excludes endlink not in Hg and other mss
MA 1-258	11:105-362	H105-362	Headlink not in Bo2, D1 etc
PA 1-1006	12:75-551...	I75-1080	477-end missing in Hg; Ha4 as base for 477-end
RT 1-12	12:1081-1092	I1081-1092	RT missing in Hg and Cp; Ha4 as base
CY 1-762	Not in Hg	C720-1481	Cp as base
TG 1-902	Not in Hg	Not in El	Cp as base
TB 1-4024	Not in Hg	Not in El	Includes prologue; Nl as base (only CT witness)
PL 1-140	Not in Hg	Not in El	Includes prologue; Ch as base (only CT witness)

Links in the Tales and their Lineation

Sigla Lines	Section Lineation	Fragment Lineation	Tales linked & comments	Base ms
L1:1-76	1:3105-3180	A3109-3154 A3155-3156 om A3157-3186	KN-MI	Hg
L2:1-66	1:3847-3912	A3855-3920	MI-RE not in Ph2	Hg
L3:1-40	1:4317-56	A4325-64	RE-CO not in Bo1, Ha5, Hk, Ps or Ph2	Hg
L4:1-4	not in Hg	not in El	CO endlink (2 mss)	Ra1
L5:1-2	not in Hg	not in El	CO-TG (13 mss)	Pw
L6:1-4	not in Hg	not in El	CO-TG (1 ms)	La
L7:1-98	3:1-98	B1/1-98	ML headlink not in Hk and Ph2 Bo1 omits 57-96	Hg

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Sigla Lines	Section Lineation	Fragment Lineation	Tales linked & comments	Base ms
L8:1-28	not in Hg	B1/1163-1190	ML endlink (35 mss) Links variously to WB, SQ, SH	Cp
L9:1-9	not in Hg	not in El	WB headlink (1 ms)	La
L10:1-36	2:1239-1274	D1265-1300	WB-FR ME-FR (Hk)	Hg
L11:1-44	2:1639-1682	D1665-1708	FR-SU	Hg
L12:1-4	not in Hg	not in El	SU endlink (9 mss)	Pw
L13:1-43	8:1170-1212	E1170-1212	WB stanza not in 24 mss; CL envoy not in Bo1, Ph3 and Hk	Hg
L14:1-7	8:1213-1219	E1212a-g	CL Host stanza (23 mss) can be linked with L13, L15 or L18	Hg
L15:1-32	not in Hg	E1213-1244	ME headlink not in 30 mss, replaced by L20 in 21 mss	Ha4
L16:1-16	not in Hg	not in El	ME-WB (Bw, Ld2, Ry2)	Ld2
L17:1-30	not in lineation added later in Hg	E2419-2440 F1-8	ME-FK (3 mss) ME-SQ (18 mss) CL-FK (2 mss) F1-8 occurs twice in To	Hg +
L18:1-14	not in Hg	not in El	CL-FK (10 mss) ME-FK (1 ms) adapted from L17 and often added to L14	Pw
L19:1-8	not in Hg	not in El	SQ endlink (1 ms)	La
L20:1-36	not in lineation added later in Hg	F673-708	SQ-FK (12 mss) SQ-ME (21 mss) TM-FK (Ph3)	Hg +
L21:1-40	9:287-326	C287-296 C297-298 om C299-328	PH-PD not in 5 mss Manly-Rickert claim two authorial versions	Hg
L22:1-12	not in Hg	not in El	PD-SH (14 mss) TG-SH (4 mss) CL-SH (1 ms)	Bo1
L23:1-6	not in Hg	not in El	SH headlink (1 ms)	La
L24:1-18	10:435-452	B2/1625-1642	SH-PR not in Ha3, He and Nl	Hg

New Lineation System

Sigla Lines	Section Lineation	Fragment Lineation	Tales linked & comments	Base ms
L25:1-21	10:691-711	B2/1881-1901	PR-TT PD-TT (Mm, Ph ₃ , Pw) PR-FK (Gl) ML-TT (To) not in Nl, Ra ₃ , Tc ₁	Hg
L26:1-4	not in Hg	not in El	TT headlink (1 ms)	Tc ₁
L27:1-4	not in Hg	not in El	TT endlink (Bo ₁ , Ph ₃) added to L29	Bo ₁
L28:1-48	10:919-966	B2/2109-2156	TT-TM TT-PD (Nl) TT-MA (Bo ₂) L28:48/1-2 in Tc ₁	Hg
L29:1-102	10:1889-1990	B2/3079-3180	TM-MO PR-MO (Gl, Mm, Ph ₃) not in Lc, Mg, Ra ₃	Hg
L30:1-34	10:2759-2792	B2/3957-3960 B2/3961-80 om B2/3981-4010	MO-NP (many mss add L30:4/1-20) SU-NP (Ad ₃) FK-NP (Mm) PD-NP (Tc ₁) not in Bo ₂ , Gl, Ra ₃	Hg
L31:1-26	not in Hg	B2/4637-4652	NP endlink (10 mss) Often adapted to introduce NU	Dd
L32:1-6	not in Hg	not in El	NU headlink (Ad ₁ , Cn, En ₃ , Ma) added to L31	En ₃
L33:1-166	not in Hg	G554-719	NU-CY (44 mss) CO-CY (Ad ₃) PD-CY (Nl) CL-CY (Gl) not in Bo ₂ , He, Hg, Ra ₃ , Sl ₂ or Tc ₂	Cp
L34:1-14	not in Hg	not in El	CY-PH (20 mss) FK-PH (Ha ₅ varies last six lines)	Pw [Ha ₅]
L35:1-16	not in Hg	not in El	CY-PH (1 ms)	La
L36:1-104	11:1-104	H1-104	MA headlink (45 mss) sometimes added to L31. Fi replaces 3-104 with 36:2/1-8	Hg
L37:1-74	12:1-74	I1-74	MA-PA (39 mss) CY-PA (Ch, Ad ₃) FK-PA (Gl, Ra ₃ , Tc ₁)	Hg

Notes

¹ The Fragment numeration is found in most editions of and writings about Chaucer, as in Larry D. Benson, *The Riverside Chaucer* (Benson 1987), whereas the Section numeration is found in N.F.Blake, *The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer* (Blake 1980.)

² However, additions made to the poem after ca 1500 are not included in the transcription even though they may have been written before 1500. Thus the version of the Ploughman's Tale which was added to the poem in Thynne's edition of 1542 is not included in the transcription since it is only in the sixteenth century that this tale was joined to *The Canterbury Tales*. It is usually accepted that it was written much earlier as an anti-fraternal tract, even though no manuscript from before 1500 is extant. This tale has been edited recently by James Dean in *Six Ecclesiastical Satires* (Dean 1991.)

³ As indicated below this refers to the version of the tale found in the Christ Church manuscript and not, as noted in the previous footnote, to the version added to Thynne's edition.

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