

CHAPTER VI: CODICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TALE-ORDER PROBLEM

This chapter focuses on the codicological aspects of the early manuscripts (Hg El Cp Ha4 Gg Dd Ad3) and of some later witnesses, such as Ch, which have been posited as of primary importance based on their texts. The aim of this part of the research is to try to cast some light on the results yielded by the phylogenetic software, especially with reference to the differences between the tale-order and word-variant stemmata, and to show the codicological features which might help us to understand the development of the tale-order in the studied manuscripts.

Some of the physical features of these manuscripts, such as rubrication, quiring and layout, are especially important because they may help decipher the early textual history of the *Canterbury Tales* and the development of the different tale-orders. One of the main questions to be answered is whether or not it is possible that the order in these manuscripts might be the result of editorial or scribal intervention rather than transmission from the original. If two or more manuscripts have been used as a source for another, then the order of the resulting manuscript is presumably the result of conflation. If the order of a manuscript is suspected of being conflated, there is little point in including this order in any phylogenetic analysis. However, there might be cases in which the order of the exemplar of a manuscript can be inferred using codicological

evidence. In these cases a re-assessment of the data used for the phylogenetic analysis might be necessary.

In this chapter the manuscripts are discussed separately, except for El Gg and Dd. These are discussed in a single section and analyzed consecutively because, according to the Manly and Rickert table, they present very similar tale orders.¹ The similarities between the orders of these manuscripts are likely to be the result of an ultimate common ancestor although the different affiliations of their word-variants show that they belong to different subgroups.

1. CODICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

1.1 Hg: Peniarth 392D, National Library of Wales²

In their tale order table, Manly and Rickert give two different orders for Hg. The first one is the re-bound order while the second one is that which was originally intended for this manuscript.³ From the beginning of my research on tale-order it seemed that including both orders (especially one that is the result of misbinding) in the phylogenetic analysis might create problems with the data.⁴ After a careful codicological analysis of the manuscript, Stubbs points out that there are five structural sections in Hg (all of them based on the re-bound order).

Structural section 1 includes GP, KT, L1, MI, L2, RE, L3 and CO (quires 1 to 8. Stubbs points out that MI which was written in two irregular quires and has a different ink color from the rest of this structural section⁵) Structural section 2 includes WB, L10, FR, L11 and SU, written in quires 9 to 12 with some blank pages at the end of quire 12.

Stubbs observes that the ink used for this structural section is the same as is used for the gloss after CO, indicating that Chaucer never finished the tale. Structural section 3 includes L29, MO, L30, NP, L36 and part of MA, and is written in quires 13 to 15.⁶ Structural section 4 includes L7, ML, SQ, L20, ME, L17, FK, NU, CL, L13, L14, PH, L21, PD, SH, L24, PR, L25, TT, L28 and TM. It is written in quires 16 to 29 and it is by far the longest section in the manuscript. There are three irregular quires in this section (quire 21, 22, and 29) and one of them includes a singleton leaf (folio 154). Stubbs distinguishes three different inks used in this section, and one of them (the 'yellowish' ink) is used for L20, L17 and the beginning of FK. Structural section 5 includes L37 and PA, and is written in quires 30 and 31.

Although the structural sections, as presented by Stubbs, are useful for understanding the structure of the manuscript and its process of composition they are not very helpful from a tale-order perspective, since they try to explain the present state of the manuscript and do not deal with the original order which Manly and Rickert had suggested. In fact, based on the evidence provided by the current state of the manuscript Stubbs concludes that Hg:

came together over a period of time, the last tales composed for it were perhaps copied years after the first were completed. It is clear too that the order of tales in Hg is not the latest order devised for *the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury* but was arrived at in effect by default. The order of tales in the first part of Section IV (ML, SQ, ME, FK, NU, CL), suggests an early attempt to join tales together without linking passages in an order which may later have

been superseded. . . . The position of Section II (WB, FR, SU), is probably the result of being copied late in the assembly of the tales, and coincides with the point when, for some reason, supervision of the manuscript appears to have ceased.

Stubbs also suggests that because the ink used for the CO gloss is the same as the one used for WB, L10, FR, L11 and SU, this must have been written while the “scribe was copying or had just copied” that group of tales. She also suggests, although it is not clear how she reached this conclusion, that up to the end of SU, the manuscript was being supervised and that at that point supervision stopped.⁷

Stubbs’ structural section IV presents some of the most interesting tale-order features in Hg. The way in which L17 and L20 were added, out of place and modified to fit the order in which the scribe had already copied the tales, makes it evident that he did not receive the whole text at the same time. On folio 137v we can see the different ink color used for L20 after the two last lines of ME. The text of L20 fits in the space left by the scribe, but, it is apparent that there is insufficient space to include the blank lines which usually precede and follow the rubrication.⁸ Indeed, a comparison of the spacing in 137v and 138r shows that the scribe made an effort to include the whole text of L20 (including the rubrics) in the space he had available.

Even though the scribe managed to include L20 with relatively little impact on the layout of the manuscript, L17 presented more complex difficulties. At this point in the text, evidently, something did not go according to the original plan. The text of ME on

152v ends in the middle of the page, leaving sufficient space for the twelve lines of the beginning of FK and for the rubric to indicate the new tale. Apparently, the scribe was waiting for these lines only and started copying FK 13 in what was at that time the subsequent folio. However, not only did the twelve lines with the beginning of FK arrive, but also 30 lines of L17.⁹ This posed a problem since the scribe had not left enough space for the amount of text he later received. In these circumstances he decided to add the only singleton leaf in the manuscript. This singleton leaf (folio 153) has most of the text of L17 on the recto and four lines on the verso together with the rubrics and the twelve lines of the beginning of FK. The use of the space on this folio suggests that the scribe was attempting to cover the excess space caused by the insertion of the singleton (Manly and Rickert 1:272); that is, the scribe did not have enough text to fill the page so padded out what he had. Further confirmation of this is provided by the textual evidence in the links where the lines in Hg become hypermetrical.¹⁰ This evidence leads to the conclusion that the scribe had to modify the links in order to use them with the order which he had mistakenly created. Immediately after folio 153 a stub can be seen. The reason for this might be that folio 153 was originally inserted as a bifolium, and part of the second folio was left so that it could be bound correctly and securely. All the evidence appears to support the idea that the scribe adapted L17 and L20 after having copied the tales which these links were meant to unite in the wrong order. This alteration of tale order is the result of a simple mistake which the scribe attempted to cover in the best way he could, at the same time making the best possible use of the vellum on which he had already copied the tales.

There are other instances in which changes in the manuscript are so subtle that, at first sight, they seem impossible to explain, for example, in folio 235r, where in the first line of L37 the word ‘Manciple’ has been written over an erasure, and about which Manly and Rickert say:

What was written originally and erased in line 1 cannot be ascertained even by ultra-violet light, but both the photostat and the photograph made with ultra-violet light seem to show three facts about the erased name: 1) its initial letter extended below the line; 2) it was slightly longer than “Manciple”; 3) a letter near the end of the name extended as much above the line as the **I** of “Manciple”. The only Pilgrim name possible for the erased word is “Frankeleyne”, which might have been written in full or with contraction marks for the **n**’s. “Frankeleyne”, of course, could hardly have been intended by Chaucer if PsT was to close the outward series of tales, but could if PsT was to be the last tale of the homeward series. “Manciple” is the reading of all the MSS that contain PsP except four that are badly disarranged, but Chaucer cannot have intended this, for the brief tale of the Manciple (248 lines) was told in the morning (cf. H 16), whereas the tale preceding Ps has just finished at four o’clock (I 5), when the sun was fast sinking (I 70). (1:276-7)

Manly and Rickert found a very precise place where the word variants might be of great significance for the tale-order problem, but did not see this as determinant in any way. In fact, they dismiss the manuscripts which have variant readings at this point as ‘badly

disarranged.’ But the variant distribution indicates that the manuscripts present three alternative readings in place of ‘Maunciple.’

Maunciple] Ad3 Cp Cx1 Cx2 Ds El En1 Gg Ha4 Ht Hg La Ry1

Marchaunt] Gl Ra3

Franklein] Tc1

yeman] Ch

out Ad2 Bo2 Bw Dd Ha5 Hk Ld2 Mc Ph3 Ps Ra1 Sl1 Sl2¹¹

Manly and Rickert thought that the original reading in Hg was likely to have been ‘Frankleyn,’ and that this was later replaced by the word ‘Maunciple,’ but do not explain how the reading happened to occur in Hg (before the correction). Blake has suggested a different reading:

Attempts have been made to read under ultra-violet light what was erased in the first line of PsP [L37]. The attempts have not yielded much that is concrete, though what is visible has not usually led scholars to suggest that the reading was originally ‘Somnour’ or one of its other spelling variants. Despite this, no other teller from the material available in Hg could so readily have occupied this position originally. (*Textual* 62)

With the inclusion of ‘Somnour’ as a possible reading, we have at least two distinct alternative readings. What seems unclear is why Blake constrains himself to the ‘material

available in Hg,' when it is possible that the lack of material might have been the cause of such a correction.

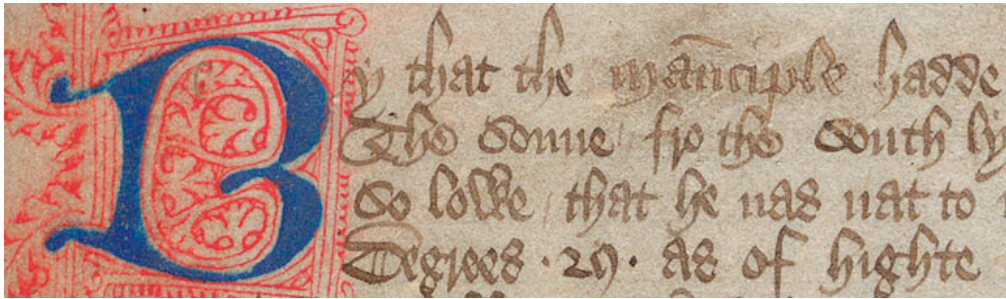


Figure 5. The first lines of L37 in Hg

The manuscript shows no clear signs of scraping where the word 'Manciple' now stands; instead an ink blotch can be seen in the space underneath the writing. If it were not for the ink blotch, it would be difficult to detect there had been an erasure. The quill that wrote the word 'Manciple,' however, is clearly different from that used on the rest of the page. In the letters 'm,' 'c,' and 'e' there is clear evidence that the quill was cut in a different way from that used for the rest of the page. In fact, both the ink color and the cut of the quill are similar to those used on L20, L17, and other texts in the 'yellowish' ink. These are the same as the ones used in part of quire 14 and the whole of quire 15 for the final rubric of MO (98v) L30, NP, L36 and MA. About the ink used for these passages, Stubbs writes:

The Nun's Priest's Prologue and Tale and the Manciple's Tale are both copied in an ink which is a distinctly different yellowish colour. This ink appears to be the same as that used to write the heading for the whole work, the Link and

first 12 lines of the Franklin's Prologue on the inserted leaf fol. 153, and the Link between the Squire and the Merchant. The final rubric to the Monk's Tale on fol. 98v was also written in the yellowish ink as the scribe began his copying of the Nun's Priest's Tale. The material in the yellow ink was the last part of the Hg manuscript to be copied, since it seems to include certain 'finishing' features. However there are other possibilities and a definitive order of copying is impossible to establish at the present time.

This suggestion that the ink used in the links, MA, the main title in 2r, and in the correction on L37 1 might have been the last ink used when the manuscript was being copied supports the idea that the change was a last minute one, and likely to have occurred because an alteration in the order of the tales was required.

It has been suggested (Blake, *Textual* 62; Manly and Rickert 1:276-7) that there might be traces of the word that was present before. For example, a very faded stroke above the letters 'ip' looks like a hook. Beyond the textual variants, the tale-order table 2 shows three manuscripts which have FK immediately before L37: Gl Ra3 and Tc1.¹² Ad3 and Ch have CY before L37.¹³ Mc has a sequence other than MA-L37, since this manuscript has MA immediately before NU-L33-CY. Although it is not possible to tell which was the order of Mc, since the manuscript is incomplete, either CY or FK could have been before L37, but so could have ME or PH-L21-PD, all of which are missing from it.

In Hg it is possible to see that the scribe had to rearrange L17 and L20 so these could serve as ME-SQ and SQ-FK as in E1, so it is very unlikely that ‘Merchaunt’ or ‘Frankleyn’ was the reading in L37. Blake’s argument about the possibility of the reading ‘Somnour’ is based on the material available in Hg. However, a stronger case can be made that the original reading in Hg was ‘yeoman’, the reading that appears in Ch. Both Ch and Ad3, manuscripts which appear to be close to the archetype of the tradition, have the order CY-L37. If this had been the proposed order of the tales found in Hg’s exemplar, there would be a very good reason for the last-minute correction: the Hg scribe did not include CY (possibly because he never received it), so he decided to delete the reference to a character who was not named in the *Canterbury Tales* as he had copied it.¹⁴ This explains the need for a change in the reading in Hg, as well as the word-variant in Ch and the Ch Ad3 tale-orders, since these manuscripts have texts which are often seen in agreement with the archetype of the tradition (Bordalejo 364 and ff.).

In general, however, the tale order in Hg has been considered to be a very old one, which at least one scholar insists was supervised by Chaucer himself (See Stubbs). Skeat, on the other hand, suggested that the Hg order was a provisional one, closely derived from the archetype:

I propose to show, before hand, that we actually possess one MS. Which may be fairly regarded as approaching to the idea of an archetype; a MS., namely, in which the Groups of tales appear, at first sight, to take quite a casual order; a MS. in which they may have been committed to writing with a view to future re-arrangement. By such re-arrangement we must, of course, construct a

scheme that is necessarily the *oldest* of the four more orderly schemes, from which also, in turn, each of the later schemes can be naturally developed, in regular succession. The MS. to which I refer is the Hengwrt MS., which must, in any case, be considered, since it is generally agreed that it is, with one exception, the best we possess, at any rate as regards the grammatical forms.

(Evolution 6-7)

From Skeat's perspective, Hg preserves the oldest tale-order, perhaps even a Chaucerian one. To agree with Skeat, one would have to accept that Hg is indeed the oldest extant manuscript; although this is possible and, indeed, very likely to be true, it cannot be used to argue say that its order is authorial. It is very improbable that the changes in L17 and L20 were authorized by Chaucer since these imply an alteration of the meter which breaks the rhythm of the poem. Instead, it is more likely that this scribal misplacement might have originated the uncertainty about the relative position of CL FK ME and SQ in a large part of manuscript tradition (Manly and Rickert 1:275). It seems plausible, then, that the order of Hg was one of the first attempts to arrange the tales left by Chaucer; although it does not seem likely that the making of this manuscript was supervised by Chaucer as suggested by Skeat and Stubbs. Evidently, if Hg had been supervised by Chaucer the positions of L17 and L20 would not have been confused and the uncertainties about other parts of the text (such as the unfinished CO) would no have existed.

1.2 Cp: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198¹⁵

Cp is considered the earliest manuscript of the **c** group; although, its date in the overall consideration of the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* remains a matter of disagreement. The debate is centred on the fact that the scribe of this manuscript, identified by Doyle and Parkes as ‘hand d,’ also copied Ha4. Blake has clearly stated that he thinks that Cp is earlier than Ha4:

[T]he evidence supports the contention that Ha7334 does follow Corpus in the hierarchy, for many of the features in Ha7334 are explicable only on the assumption that Corpus came earlier. Although the fact that both exhibit different methods of organization could be taken to suggest that either manuscript has precedence, the way in which the chapter arrangement gives way to the link-tale arrangement within Corpus confirms that it must have preceded Ha7334 in which the different method of organization is more fully carried out as though it was developing what had started in Corpus. (*Textual* 119)

Blake’s argument rests on his opinion that “many of the features in Ha7334 are explicable only on the assumption that Corpus came earlier.” However, he does not explain all these features. Instead, he reduces the whole problem to a single argument: because Cp changes from an order in chapters to one of tale-link-tale, and Ha4 is arranged from the beginning in tale-link-tale order, Cp must have been copied first. This argument is not substantial enough to offer a solid theory about which manuscript was

copied first.¹⁶ The opposite view, that Ha4 is earlier than Cp, has also been proposed. For example, Seymour explains: “[t]he priority of copy is not certain, but linguistic textual [*sic*], decorative and editorial comparisons suggest that MS. Harley 7334 is earlier” (13). Once more, there are no specific examples of the features which appear to be so relevant for the chronology of the manuscripts. Apparently it is left to the individual scholar to make up her mind and decide (if at all possible) which of these manuscripts should take chronological precedence over the other. Perhaps more telling than the uncertain date of copying are the characteristics shared by these manuscripts, as described by Seymour:

They [Cp and Ha4] have certain features in common (e.g. the inclusion of *Gamelyn*, the insertion of the Modern Instances in the middle of the Monk’s Tale, and the expansion of the Nun’s Priest’s Prologue) which argue some linking of their lost ancestors, but overall there is no close textual correspondence between them. (14)

In fact, Cp has the short version of L30 (the Nun’s Priest’s Prologue), while Ha4 has the long version. This inclusion of the long version of L30 depends on the assumption that a different copy text was used.¹⁷ The inclusion of TG and the Modern Instances also occurs in other manuscripts that are not necessarily related to Ha4 or Cp.

In Cp, TG starts four lines from the bottom in folio 62r in the second half of quire 8 (Plate 38). There is no discernable hesitation on the part of the scribe in copying this tale and no instructions from the supervisor can be found on the page. In fact, the only

rubric reads 'Incipit Fabula' with no further indication as to who the teller of the story might be, or how it related to the rest of the pilgrimage. Probably these have to do with the chapter arrangement. Blake interprets the appearance of TG in Cp as follows:

It is often suggested that it [TG] was found among Chaucer's papers and therefore included in the poem. This may be so, but since the number of possibilities is so large it is perhaps wiser not to speculate. It may have been included after CkT because a conclusion had been expected for that tale by the Hg scribe, and when one failed to materialize it was necessary to adopt a different solution to the problem. (*Textual* 104)

This hypothesis appears to imply that the Cp scribe (hand d) knew the Hg scribe (hand b) or that he knew Hg or about the gloss at the end of CO. In other manuscripts, for example Ha4, TG is clearly filling in for the incomplete tale by using running heads making it explicit that this is also the Cook's tale. It is not possible to discern whether this might be one of the Blake's "unnamed features," suggesting that Cp was produced earlier than Ha4. However, at a point at which the text of Ha4 required an indication, the text of Cp seems to flow without any apparent vacillation. In fact, of the three manuscripts analysed in this section that have TG, only Cp introduces it without any signs that might allow further analysis, so that, it would appear that Cp was being copied with the idea of having TG at this point. If this assumption is correct, it is an indication that very early in the textual tradition of the *Canterbury Tales* it was assumed that TG was part of the text and was assigned to the Cook.

As in some witnesses of the **b** and **d** groups, Cp uses L8 as the prologue to SQ. Once more, this differs from Ha4, which has L17 (as in El) to introduce SQ. L15, often used as a prologue to ME and not present in Hg, is also absent from Cp while present in Ha4.¹⁸ L20, as in all manuscripts of the **b** group, was not included in Cp (a peculiarity also shared by some anomalous witnesses, such as Ch Hk and To). The scribe did not feel the need to complete SQ as he had done with CO. Blake observes:

With respect to Gamelyn we may note that the Squire was never provided with another tale in the way that the Cook was. This we may attribute to the way the scribe of Hg set up the text. He allowed for a link to end the incomplete SqT and when that was written it effectively prevented any different solution to the incompleteness of SqT being proposed. (*Textual* 104)

Once more, we find that Blake links a feature in Cp to the copying of Hg and, although his idea remains possible, it is more likely that the different treatment of SQ in Cp from that of CO had more to do with length than with any of the characteristics of Hg. Other reasons might have concerned the availability of texts (perhaps TG was the only ‘floating tale’) or with pressure to finish the work.

An important group of tales, formed by NU L33 and CY, also appears in Cp in what today is considered to be a peculiar position. Following the order of Hg, Cp has the sequence FK-NU, but the latter is followed by L33 and CY as in El and other **a** manuscripts. Blake remarks that even in such an early manuscript there seems to be very little doubt as to which position this tale and link should occupy (*Textual* 98).¹⁹ The **a**

manuscripts include NU-L33-CY just before L36-MA, but here Cp follows the order of both Hg and Ha4, which might indicate a closer link to these manuscripts than to others.

Cp might be a very early manuscript, and, if Blake is correct in his assessment, it might be the earliest manuscript except for Hg. However, this is not proof that its order or its text is better than that of other witnesses. It remains possible that, when copying Cp, the scribe and his supervisor were trying to make sense of the poem as best as they could, but that the results were not as accurate or reliable as they might have been. Only when a complete collation of the text of Cp and the other witnesses has been made might we be able to reach a decision about the text in this manuscript.

1.3 Ha4: British Library, MS Harleian 7334²⁰

Originally, Ha4 had 38 quires (today quire 21 is missing). These are quires of 8, except for quires 9 and 19, with only six folios, and quire 38 with two.²¹ The order in this manuscript is very similar to the **a** order.²² The only exceptions are the presence of L8, which is not present in manuscripts with the **a** order, the inclusion of TG, which has a note in French to indicate the position it should occupy, and the position of NU-L33-CY, a group that appears before PH-L21-PD SH-L24-PR-L25-TT-L28-TM-L29-MO-L30-NP, rather than after as in the **a** order. These similarities with the **a** order suggest a there might be a relationship between them and raise the possibility that a manuscript very close to Ha4 may have been the origin of the **a** order. Skeat suggested that Ha4 might contain the latest order as devised by Chaucer himself:

I shall proceed to show that the chronological order of the types of the seven chief MSS., with reference, that is to say, to their contents and arrangement, but without regard to the actual dates when these individual MSS. were written, is as follows: --Hengwrt, an archetype; Petworth, showing the first scheme of arrangement; Corpus and Landsowne, the second, Harleian, the third; Ellesmere and Cambridge, the fourth and last. In the first three schemes, we find Chaucer himself, at work, making various experiments. In the last scheme, we find the work of a careful editor. It follows that the authoritative type, the only one which arranges the Tales as Chaucer at last left them, is the Harleian. It is anything but final, and even some obvious mistakes remain. But we have *no authority* for proceeding further. (*Evolution* 9-10)

Although Skeat's suggestion of the order of development of these texts is plausible, the idea that Chaucer supervised the composition of their orders has been questioned. Blake has expressed his doubts about Skeat's hypothesis as follows:

If Ha7334 has Chaucer's final order, why does it have such a bad text? If Chaucer made these various orders at the end of his life when the poem as we have it was substantially complete, they must have been executed very quickly one after the other. If this is the case, it is not clear why Chaucer had these varying orders written out in manuscripts, since that would have been costly, or why these orders should have been 'published' so that further copies of them could be made. Skeat rejects Gamelyn from the Chaucer canon, although it occurs in Ha7334 which contains his most authoritative order. How did an

authoritative manuscript come to contain a tale which was not genuine?

(*Textual* 30)

Blake's observations on Skeat's position appear just since one cannot find answers to these objections in Skeat, but Blake does not acknowledge that some of Skeat's statements might still be sustained. It seems clear that Chaucer did not supervise Hg, or he might have found a better solution than the alteration of L17 and L20 to fit the new, incorrect, sequence SQ ME FK. This fact seems to weigh against the possibility of Chaucer having supervised the Hg order and, since this manuscript is considered to be a very early one, makes it much more unlikely that he supervised Ha4. Although Skeat's hypothesis that Chaucer supervised the production of some of the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* has been defended on several occasions (see Stubbs), scholarly consensus still weighs heavily against this possibility. Skeat, however, is essentially right when he affirms that none of these orders is totally satisfactory, and that the one which has been considered the most authoritative by editors in the twentieth century (the one of E1), is likely to have been the result of decisions by a scribe and his supervisor.

The main argument against Skeat's view that Ha4 was the result of Chaucer's latest order is Blake's important objection about the inclusion of TG. The inclusion of TG in Ha4 can be explained by analyzing the quiring in Ha4. TG begins in the first of the two quires of six in Ha4. This tale starts at the top of folio 59r, but at the bottom of 58v there is a note of the supervisor, "Icy comēcera le fable de Gamelyn."

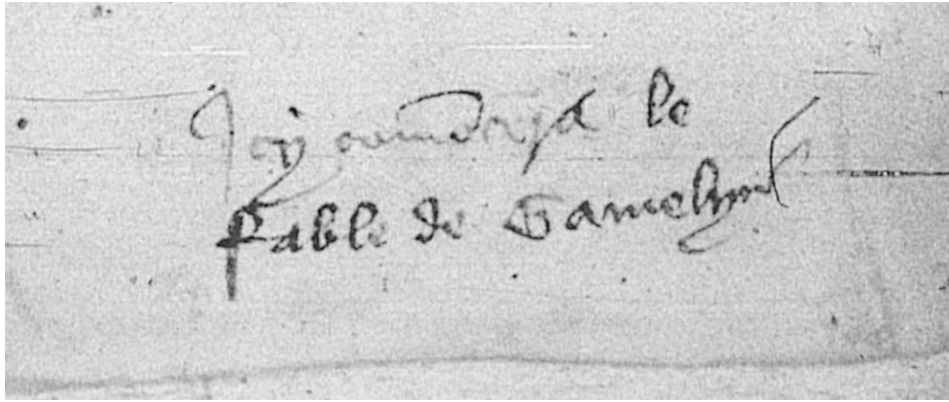


Figure 6. Gloss in folio 58v of Ha4

If we follow Mosser's collation (which appears to be correct if one takes into account the catchwords in the manuscript) 59r is in the middle of quire 8, which ends in f. 64. The ink color does not change and the *ordinatio* remains as at the beginning of previous tales. If it were not for the supervisor's indication, there would not be any evidence that TG was unavailable when the scribe was writing the section. Indeed, Blake thinks that the marginal note was prompted by motives other than the absence of the text:

When the manuscript [Ha4] was copied, Gamelyn was held back in order that a linking passage with CkT could be provided. It may be that it was going to be allocated to a different pilgrim or it may have been intended to link it in some way to the unfinished CkT as part of the Cook's story. The scribe simply arranged his quires in such way that he could include Gamelyn when the link was ready. (*Textual* 110)

There are two questions which remain unanswered. Firstly, if the scribe was told to wait for a link which was being prepared and had to be included before TG, why was this never included? Blake might have been thinking of what he now calls L6 (which links

CO and TG in La) or L5 (found in the **d** witnesses).²³ There is an inconsistency here since it appears that Ha4 has very different textual affiliations from those of the **c** group, while Cp and La are clearly related; why would the link have been prepared for Ha4 and not for Cp? Second (and Blake might not have been aware of this, since he did not analyze it), at least one other manuscript, Ch, presents the same uncertainty in quiring and a definite change of ink (among other characteristics), which suggest that TG was added after the rest of the text had been copied.²⁴ If we take a different view from that of Blake (that TG was held back when Ha4 was being copied), we might need to reconsider the dating of Cp and Ha4, and the possibility that the latter might be earlier than the former. It would be difficult to contest the paleographical or linguistic evidence in one way or another, and, for this reason, I cannot make a judgement about which of these two hypotheses might be correct. However, the textual evidence I gathered for my work on Cx2 indicates that the variants in Ha4 have the tendency to be archetypal; that is, independently of its date of production, the text of this manuscript seems to be older than that of Cp.²⁵

Another indication that TG might be a later addition is that the second half of the tale and its ending are in quire 9, which has six folios instead of the normal eight. If it is the later, then one must conclude that TG was not present in the exemplar from which hand **d** was copying. This would explain the need to add an indication of where to introduce the text. It would also account for the quire of six where TG ends, which would have been added after the rest of the manuscript was copied and when the tale had been found. If TG indeed comes from a different source from that of the rest of the manuscript, then it would be justified to suppress it from the tale-order analysis.

If TG was not in the manuscript from which Ha4 was copied, the order found in this manuscript would be virtually the same as that in Wy.²⁶ It seems plausible that there might be a relationship between Ha4 and the corrections in Wy. Although the textual affiliations of the base texts of the two witnesses are different, a collation of the corrections made in Wy would allow us to test this hypothesis.²⁷

Quire 19 is the other quire of six in Ha4. This quire contains the ending of ME, L17 and SQ. The text of ME ends on 148v, where the last line of the last couplet is placed. On the same page we have L17 and a rubric that indicates the end of L17 and the beginning of SQ. The text is continuous here, and, if it were not for the changes present in Hg in L17 and L20, there would be no other evident explanation for hesitation at this point of the text.

1.4 The Order of the a Manuscripts (Gg: Cambridge, University Library, Gg.4.27,²⁸ Dd: Cambridge, University Library, Dd.4.24,²⁹ El: San Marino, California, Huntington Library, MS 26.C.9)

The order of the manuscripts belonging to Manly and Rickert's **a** group is by far the best-known one. It is featured in all editions based on El, most notably in Robinson's edition and in the very commonly used *Riverside Chaucer*.³⁰ Manly and Rickert placed 15 manuscripts within their tale-order **a** group. Of these only one seems to have exactly the same order as El: the manuscript in question is Gg, which lacks many pages. Manly and Rickert's analysis led them to conclude that the order in Gg would have been the same as that in El, if the manuscript had not lost any pages. Seven other manuscripts (Dd

En1 Ds Cn Ma En3 and Ad1) appear to have an order that is very similar to that of E1, but include minor additions such as L31 and L32.

Although there are similarities with other manuscripts which Manly and Rickert included in this group (Ad3 Ha5 Ad2 Bo1 and Ph2), these are not enough (or there is not enough evidence) to classify them as **a**. Bo2 is too incomplete and has a significant change in the position of MA and NU, perhaps suggesting that this manuscript had placed CY before L37. Ad3, discussed below, has placed L3-CO towards the end of the book, has L33-CY immediately before L37, and NU in the same position as does Hg. Ha5 is too incomplete to judge, but might have had the same or a very similar order to that of Ad3. Ad2 is too incomplete, and only a few fragments remain.³¹ Bo1 and Ph2 definitely represent a different edition of the *Tales*. They both lack CO, ME, SQ and the links which normally surround these and CL and FK. They also include L22 and L34 to link PD-SH and CY-PH respectively. Word-variant analysis of Bo1 and Ph2 places them with Robinson's E group.

1.4.1 Dd: Cambridge, University Library, Dd.4.24

Dd was an overlooked manuscript for many years. It was considered to have been copied by an amateurish scribe and to have an unreliable text with a great number of alterations (Manly and Rickert 1:101). Blake analysed it as part of his study in *The Textual Tradition of the Canterbury Tales*, where he points out:

After section 1 Dd 4.24 has section 3, as had now become standard. Instead of having ML endlink after MLT, Dd 4.24 has WBP. It thus exhibits the same

decision arrived at in Ha7334 but without any of the indecision found in that manuscript. Ha7334 had included the ML endlink in a truncated form and adapted it into a false SuP. This was clearly an impromptu decision which was quite unsatisfactory, and the scribe of Dd 4.24 adopted the sensible solution of simply omitting the ML endlink. (125)

According to Blake, the Dd scribe ‘omitted’ TG in a similar way to that described in the above quotation for the omission of L8. Blake also suggests that the Dd scribe is less hesitant than the scribe of Ha4.³² The reason for this could be that the Dd scribe might have been copying the order from a previously copied exemplar. However, such a hypothesis would enter in direct conflict with the conclusions of the most important study carried out about this manuscript. Recently, with the support of the Canterbury Tales Project and under the supervision of Blake and Robinson, Orietta Da Rold completed a doctoral dissertation on the manuscript.³³ The thesis focuses heavily on codicological matters, so that its raw data is particularly useful for the purposes of this research.

In general, Da Rold insists on two main points: the Dd scribe was a professional, and the manuscript was produced earlier than believed hitherto. The first point has very little impact on the current work, since professional scribes are as likely as amateurish ones to introduce changes in the tale order. The second point could be relevant if it were convincingly shown with the support of codicological evidence, in view of the importance of establishing which of the manuscripts with this order was copied before the other **a** manuscripts. Da Rold’s main argument about the date of the manuscript is based on paper evidence. She investigates the watermarks about which she states:

The watermarks of the paper in Dd offer a very interesting issue, which can be reiterated as follows:

1. The watermarks of the paper of quires 1-8 do not have exact matches, but the closest ones are dated 1392-4.
2. The watermark of the paper of quire 9 has an absolute parallel found only in Briquet Archive 1416.

The gap between 1392-4 and 1416 is too large to suggest that the manuscript was written more or less at the same time. There are two possible solutions to the situation:

1. Quires 1-8 paper-stock was around for more than twenty years or later absolute matches are found for quires 1-8. So far no evidence has been found to support this thesis.
2. The second paper-stock existed earlier than 1416. (Da Rold 68)

Although Da Rold's work is very thorough, it is difficult to understand the conclusions she reaches based on the paper data. She relies on close matches for the early dating (1392-4) of the first paper stock but rejects the evidence of exact matches for the later (1416). It is conceivable and, indeed, very likely that the second paper stock existed before 1416, as Da Rold points out, but it is unlikely that this paper was closer to the 1392-4 than to that of dated documents which use this paper and which are dated 1416. It seems much more probable that the date of the paper in Dd and, therefore, the date of the

copying of the manuscript, is more likely to be closer to that of the watermark-matched dated paper stock. However, Da Rold concludes:

Dd could be an earlier manuscript than previously considered and could have been produced at the very beginning of the fifteenth century. A later date could match with the second stock of paper, but it would be too late for the stock of paper used in quires 1-8. (70)

The problem with this statement is that it seems to be based on an absolute watermark match for the first paper stock, which Da Rold admits she could not find. For this reason, the conclusion would have been more true to the actual data had it been more focused on the accurately, but not definitively dated, firmly matched second paper stock. It might still be argued that the second paper stock in Dd could have been much earlier than the date assigned to it.³⁴ It is also possible that the dated document which Briquet used to assign the date used this paper many years after it was produced.

Early in her work, Da Rold appears to conclude that the manuscript was not copied from the beginning to the end (Da Rold 86), very much like Hg. Indeed, ink color is one of the factors she names as supporting evidence of discontinuous copying (Da Rold 93). The assumption is that the scribe did not receive the complete text of the *Canterbury Tales* and, like hand b, had to copy the sections of the text that were available at the time these arrived. Da Rold puts forward a very convincing piece of evidence which she describes as follows:

On the right top margin of f. 105v, just below the ruling frame next to the gutter, there is a transfer of paraph in red. There must have been an opposite page that had a paraph mark in red that had not dried completely when the original two sheets were pressed together. Folio 106r does not have the red paraph mark, which indicates that this leaf was replaced. No extant leaf could have produced the transfer though many leaves are missing. . . .

The transfer on f. 105v is probably a consequence of the scribe re-arranging the ordinatio either of L15 or ME or both. . . . (80)

She goes on to describe how L15 starts on a new folded leaf with no space left for the initial rubric. The rubric is peculiar in that it was written in two languages. Da Rold states that “[t]he rubric seems to have been written in two different stages; I suspect that the reference to the Merchant was added later, using a different pen, shade of ink and language” (Da Rold, 80). If Da Rold were right, the gathered evidence would support her hypothesis of the rearrangement of the tales. However, even if the Dd scribe rearranged parts of the manuscript, it is unlikely that the **a** order was first used in this manuscript. The fact that the tales are copied across quire boundaries (that is, they contain part of a tale which continues in the next quire [Da Rold 90]) suggests that the scribe was probably copying a known order. It also indicates, if we follow Da Rold’s argument, that the Dd scribe (or his supervisor) is likely to have been familiar with the text of the *Tales* since, while copying, he was able to leave the necessary amount of space for tales and links he had not yet received. Indeed, the text was copied in such a way as to leave gaps at the end of CO and SQ:

The gaps after CO, SU, SQ and between PH-L21 and PD-SH can also be found in Hg. Some of these gaps coincide with the fragments that traditionally scholars have thought may reflect stages in the circulation of the poem by Chaucer. A recent theory has been put forward, which suggests that the gap after CO and SQ may be Chaucerian. . . . [I]t seems that in Dd the gaps are related to the ordering of the different parts. (91)

Dd, together with Hg Ch Cp El and Ad3,³⁵ has left a gap at this stage of the text. Even if these manuscripts have a space after SQ, this does not mean that the space is ‘Chaucerian.’ To assume that it is so gives rise to several problems, such as the understanding that medieval scribes and readers might have had of such a gap, and the way in which it was transmitted (since there is no evidence to support that the space should have been kept as part of the text). In all likelihood, the scribes thought that it was possible that the last part of the tale would eventually appear, and they provided for such a possibility. In fact, Hg and Ch show that it was possible to add further text and in a seemingly fitting manner.

The evidence does not point towards Dd as being the first manuscript with the a order, nor does it imply, as suggested by Da Rold (although it is conceivable that this could have been the case) that the “scribe was in with other scribes, who were working towards the compilation and organisation of the *Canterbury Tales*” (95). This manuscript, however, includes L31 (not present in El) and has some corrections (see especially those found in the ‘additional passages’ of WBP) which indicate that a different manuscript was used to introduce some changes. The relationship between the manuscript used for

the corrections, which has affiliations that have not been identified, and the order of Dd remain to be investigated.

1.4.2 El: San Marino, California, Huntington Library, MS 26.C.9

Scholars commonly agree on three things about El: it is a luxurious object likely to have been produced for a wealthy patron, its construction is regular and its text is of very good quality probably close to the archetype of the tradition. Parkes describes the physical aspects of the manuscript as follows:

The construction of the Ellesmere manuscript is straightforward, and like that most commonly found in English fifteenth-century books. The manuscript consists of twenty-nine quires of eight leaves (thirty, with the original endleaves), and, apart from the originally blank leaf (fol. 48) that follows the incomplete Cook's Tale at the end of quire 6, the text was copied across the quire boundaries. ("Planning" 41)

El exhibits no hesitation in its copying process so that it seems likely that its order was to be found in its exemplar. The El order is the same as that of Dd, but without the hesitation found in that manuscript. The question here is not whether El is related to the **a** manuscripts, but how closely it is related to them. Hanna, for example, greets with skepticism a possible link between El and Dd (Hanna, "Editing" 232). Hanna's suggestion about the El copytext is also interesting:

It is nevertheless abundantly clear that the El team had full access to a range of archetypes before copying began: these would have led them to see Hg as inadequate, on the grossest possible scale, in its presentation of the whole *CT* as it was known in the contemporary London book trade: the team would have been put off by such features of Hg as missing and misplaced links (for example, MchtPro and Sq-Fk Link, respectively), the absence of CYT, and the "short form" of NPro. These features would have suggested to them that a fuller consecutive text could be assembled for copying. ("Editing" 235)

It is difficult to imagine, however, that hand b, responsible for copying Hg, had not realized before copying El the problems with the order of the former. In all likelihood, he was responsible for the changes in L17 and L20, and might have been compensating for the absence of CY when he changed the name of the pilgrim in L37. It seems unlikely that hand b might have been surprised by the irregularities in the Hg order (especially those which he is likely to have created). This need to attribute special qualities to the El order appears to be a reflection of the general interest which the manuscript has generated. After all, even Hanna has accepted that El is a "slightly less accurate" version than that of Hg ("Editing" 236). Thus, we cannot be sure whether the canonization of the El order has to do with the fact that it is better, or Chaucerian, or just the order of the commonly "preferred" manuscript.³⁶

Pamela Robinson's remarks about the tale-order of El are of little help, in the sense that they present a series of questions and give hardly any answers. For example, she poses the questions of whether Chaucer decided a final order (245), whether the El

scribe presents a correct (Chaucerian) and final order of the tales, whether the El order came from its exemplar or exemplars or if it was an invention of his scribe (P. Robinson, “Order” 246). Her concrete conclusions about El are two: that L17 and L20 in El represent unaltered versions in comparison with the same links in Hg (P. Robinson, “Order” 250-2) and that any analysis of the manuscript is unlikely to offer an answer to whether the order on it is Chaucerian.

As stated above, the lack of hesitation in the copying of this manuscript and the fact that the manuscript was mostly copied across quire boundaries seem to suggest that the scribe might have been working from a pre-established order. In contrast with the copying of Hg, he must have had most of (or all) the text.

1.4.3 Gg: Cambridge, University Library, Gg.4.27

In contrast with the other manuscripts studied for this work, Gg is an anthology. It contains not only the *Canterbury Tales*, but also *Troilus and Criseyde*, the *Legend of Good Women*, the *Parliament of Fowles* and Lydgate’s *Temple of Glass*, among other texts.³⁷

Some of the leaves containing the text of the *Canterbury Tales* have been removed; that is, the manuscript has been mutilated, in all likelihood, to steal miniatures, illuminated capitals and ornamented borders (Manly and Rickert 1:173). There are some changes in the ink, but these are progressive, as in Ch, not sudden, as in Hg. This suggests that the scribe was probably working from beginning to end, rather than by fragments. Manly and Rickert state that the vast number of corrections suggest that the

scribe was working under supervision. But corrections introduced by the scribe himself are also interesting:

It seems worthy of note that almost always omitted lines are supplied not in the side margin but at the foot of the page as part of the regular allowance for the page. This suggests that before completing his page the scribe proof-read what he had written. The place where the omitted line belongs is marked with a sign and a letter corresponding to those attached to the omitted line. In view of the care exercised in this matter we may perhaps infer that omitted lines not supplied at the foot of the page were lacking in Gg's exemplar. (Manly and Rickert 1:174)

It is remarkable that both the Gg scribe and his supervisor took so much care about the accuracy of the text (although collations including Gg show that its text has many non-archetypal readings (See Bordalejo). The order of this manuscript is almost impossible to interpret, since it lacks many of the links and the beginnings of the tales. As Blake has put it: "Gg 4.27 is a difficult manuscript to analyse because many of its pages have been torn out. . . . Hence it is not easy to calculate what may have been found on a leaf no longer extant" (*Textual* 136). There is very little point in speculating about the tale-order in this manuscript. However, Blake thinks that the fact that Gg has the additional passages in WBP suggests that it might be later than Dd (*Textual* 136). My analysis of some the variants in Gg points in the same direction (since they appear to have been introduced late in the tradition [Bordalejo 206 and ff.]), but the passages in WBP do not appear to be a firm proof for a manuscript chronology.

1.5 Ad3: British Library, MS Additional 35286

This manuscript has 34 quires and has lost a few leaves. Quires 3 and 8 are missing, along with four folios of quire 1, the second folio of quire 7, the first folio of quire 17, the last folio of quire 24, the seventh folio of quire 33, the fifth, sixth and eight folios of quire 34 (Manly and Rickert, 1:41; Mosser).³⁸ All the quires are of eight folios (although some of them are incomplete, as already pointed out), with only the exception of quire 20, which is a singleton.

The order of Ad3 is unique, and there are no signs of hesitation in the copying process.³⁹ A clear change in the color of the ink can be seen in quire 11 (WBP 624), and some corrections have been made in darker ink. Simon Horobin, in his doctoral thesis affirms:

With regard to the content of this manuscript [Ad3] sticks rigidly to what we now consider to be the accepted *Canterbury Tales* canon, and there are none of the spurious additions that occur in other manuscripts. The scribe does not attempt to conceal any incompleteness or inconsistency by adding extra tales, such as TG, or by composing new links. The material missing from this text is due to subsequent loss rather than to scribal incompetence or problems concerning the availability of exemplars. (63)

Although the scribe “does not attempt to conceal any incompleteness or inconsistency by adding extra tales,” he does modify aspects of the text as he sees fit (see, for example, the suppression of the first two lines of L33 which removes the reference to NU).

This manuscript has L3 and CO in a very peculiar position, after MA. Mosser explains this as follows: “this positioning is unique, but logical in that it connects the Host-Cook-Manciple exchange in MancPro with CkT” (Mosser).⁴⁰ Horobin observes:

However, this extremely regular and controlled organisation of this first group of tales [GP to RE] is disturbed by the removal of CO from this constant group. Yet the manuscript itself shows no signs of such a radical disturbance, and the change is implemented with cool conviction. (58)

What Horobin appears to suggest is that there is no indication of doubt in the scribe’s plan. In his opinion, this manuscript also follows the pattern prologue-tale rather than tale-link.⁴¹ The change in position of the incomplete CO, however, is not as interesting as the fact that this tale is followed by L33 and CY. In the first folio of quire 31 (folio 211r) we find the ending of L36 (the Manciple’s Prologue), from line 89 to 104 (*Riverside* 89 to 104), and the beginning of MA up to line 22. The last line of MA is in 24v, and L3 starts in the same folio. L3 ends in 215r, where CO starts. In 215v we find the ending of what we have of CO immediately followed by L33 and then CY, which starts in 218r (the last page of the quire). The fact that no tale or link in this section of Ad3 starts at some point within this or the previous quires suggests that the scribe was copying this order directly from the exemplar in front of him, rather than composing it while he copied.

The misplacement of CkP and T and CYP and T in Ad3 cannot have been due to misbinding as the heading of MLP follows ReT, the heading of CkP follows the ending of McT, and the heading of CYP follows A 4422 --all within the

pages. Since Ha5 also lacks these tales in their usual positions, the misplacement probably occurred in $\sqrt{\text{Ad3}}$. (Manly and Rickert 1:44)

Table 2 clearly shows that Ha5 is missing L3-CO from its normal position after RE, which suggests that the scribe of this manuscript probably had located it in some place in the later part of the tales (presumably the same as in Ad3). NU in both Ad3 and Ha5 appears before CL, which is the same position in that these tales have in Hg. However, Ha5 is wanting after PD, and therefore we cannot be sure if L3-CO and L33-CY had been immediately before L37-PA, but the evidence is strong that L3-CO appeared in a different place in the ancestor of these manuscripts, as suggested by Manly and Rickert. The common link in the position of NU, which they share with Hg, strongly suggests that the ancestor of Ha5 and Ad3 was one of the first attempts to put together the *Canterbury Tales* with the inclusion of L33-CY. We should note that the association of CO and CY in Ad3 has been suggested to be a “late attempt at conflation to recover a missing copy and add it at the last possible place.” (Seymour 103) The problem with Seymour’s interpretation of the data is that it fails to account for the textual variant which names the Yeoman as the speaker who precedes PA and for the erasure in Hg below the reading ‘Manciple.’ Horobin is guilty of a similar fault and that of mainly taking into account Hg and El as reference points. His conclusion, “[t]hus the evidence of the ordering of Ad³ presents a unique blend of features relating to both the already-established *a* tradition, with close associations with El, and also earlier influences, particularly that of Hg (Horobin 76),” shows that he could not escape the enormous influence of Hg and El to realize the possibility that the exemplar from which Ad3 was copied might have belonged

to an independent line of descent and might have been very close to the archetype of the tradition, as seems to be suggested by the order of L33-CY-L37-PA.

1.6 Ch: Oxford, Christ Church College, MS 152⁴²

Ch has been dated c. 1460, but its text is considered to be an early one and, according to Manly and Rickert, some of the spellings found in it show a relationship to manuscripts such as Hg or El (1:88). They also state that:

The order of the tales shows that the MS was made up from various sources. In particular, Gam occupies the last 3 folios of Q3 (originally left vacant for the continuing CkT) and a complete quire of 10 leaves of paper with a different WM, the whole written in a different ink (also marked by blue paragraph marks not used elsewhere in CT portion except twice). It is, therefore, probable that the insertion of Gam was made after the writing of WBP, which begins the first leaf of Q5. (Manly and Rickert 1:88-9)

Codicological analysis of the manuscript confirms all the statements Manly and Rickert made about it. Seymour (201) and Mosser have also made reference to the different color of the capitals and paraph marks in TG. Seymour interprets this fact as a sign of the text having been included at a later stage in the copying process: “[b]lue initials in the later insertions of *Gamelyn* and at the beginning of *Thebes* suggest that these items were added after the ms. had been rubricated” (Seymour 201). The other two occurrences of blue capitals are in PA (Mosser), and are clearly the result of corrections of position of the original red ones.⁴³ The explanation for the occurrence of these letters might be that after

the blue capitals had been finished in TG, two mistakes became evident in PA, both of which were corrected by using the same blue color found in the other tale. Seymour appears to be correct about the later insertion of TG into this manuscript. However, more precision about how much later TG was added would be useful. A hypothesis concerning this date can be drawn if we take into account all the features discussed above. The fact that the ink color changes progressively suggests that the manuscript was successively copied from the beginning to the end (a fact also suggested by the position of L36-MA).

The manuscript was originally organized in quires of 10 bifolia, so that quire 4 (which contains most of TG) is an oddity, and suggests, once more, that the tale was a later addition (as might have been the case with Ha4). The quality of the paper changes in quire 4, and the watermark found on it is Mont, Briquet 11845 (Manly and Rickert 1:85). This watermarked paper is the same as that found at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*, starting in quire 13, folio 232, where NU begins. From this point on, the paper is of a more flexible kind with the same watermark found in the quire containing TG (quire 4). This indicates that the last paper used in the manuscript might be the same as is used for TG, that the manuscript was copied sequentially, and that TG was at the end of the sequence.⁴⁴ Further proof of this is that TG is written in a dark grey ink, which is also found at the end of the text. There is a smooth transition between the ink used at the beginning (golden brown) and that used at the end (dark grey).⁴⁵ However, because TG has been placed within the first part of the *Canterbury Tales*, the color of the ink appears strikingly different. By establishing that TG was copied after the rest of the book had been finished, in the light of the gloss found in Ha4, we can infer that its text was not

present in the exemplar from which the scribe was originally copying. If TG had been present, there would have been no need to leave it until the end to copy and insert. It would have been sufficient just to include it as part of one of the normal quires of 20 and proceed with the continuous copying of the text. As with Ha4, the scribe or his supervisor apparently knew about the existence of TG and also that this tale had already been used to complete CO. For these reasons, someone actively looked for the text of TG so that it could be included.

Quire 13, in which the paper changes to be the same as that of TG, contains the sequence NU-L33-CY, but the group could not have been moved independently because it contains the beginning of L37, which has the reading “yeman.”

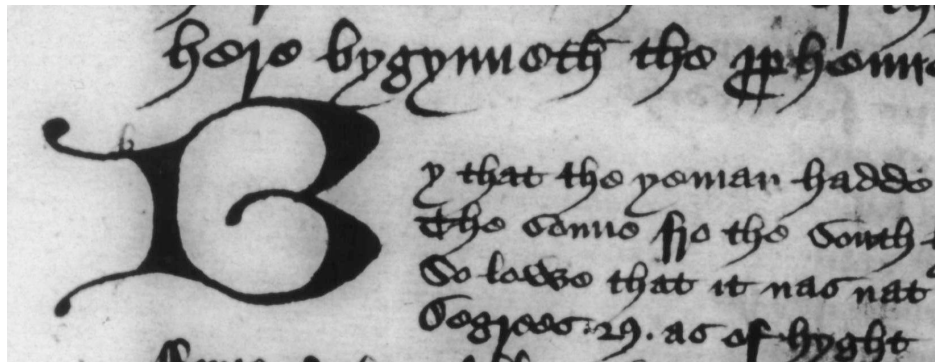


Figure 7. The first lines of L37 in Ch

Moreover, even if quire 13 had been considered an independent, movable unit to be placed in the most convenient (or in any random) position, L36 and MA were already locked into position in quire 10, a quire with a text starting at the end of NP which is then followed by L31, L36, MA and FK. In turn, FK is in a fixed place because it starts in quire 10 and finishes in quire 11, where it is followed by L7 and ML. The distribution of

these tales in the quires means that even if NU-L33-CY had been independent, MA could not have been restored to the place it usually occupies in manuscripts of the **a** group. This makes Seymour's remark about its order ("basically Group A, Ellesmere, with a unique displacement of tales of Franklin, Man of Law, Merchant, Squire" [Seymour 201]) unsatisfactory. Although Ch obviously shares some of the features of the **a** order, the evidence suggests that its order is likely to be previous to that of **a**. In other words, because of the positions of NU-L33-CY and L36-MA in Ch, it is difficult to justify its order as a derivative of **a**. This is especially true with relation to the absence of L20, a link which is present in Manly and Rickert's **a** manuscripts as the SQ-FK link. The only exceptions to this rule are manuscripts with lost leaves and Bo1 and Ph2, which have the sequence CL FK NU-L33-CY.⁴⁶ In Ch, the first twenty lines of FK are used as the prologue because of the absence of L20. Another feature that has been interpreted as relating Ch to the **a** group is L31, about which I have written:

This text [L31] is present in only 11 witnesses--Ad1 Ch Cn Cx2 Dd Ds1 En1 En3 Ma Ry1 and Wy. Wy was probably set from Cx2 and, for this reason, it is not surprising to find that their texts share many variants. Most of the witnesses that include L31 are manuscripts of the **a** group--En1 Cn Ma. However, the text is also present in Ch, a manuscript, as I have said before, whose text is likely to be genetically related to that of ω . Ry1 probably acquired the text through contamination. (330)

In this connection, we must also consider Ad1 and En3, both of which belong to Robinson's alpha group and might suggest a relationship between Ch and alpha.⁴⁷ Manly

and Rickert have suggested that L31 is genuine, but that it was cancelled by Chaucer after he had written a similar passage for the Monk. According to them "[o]nly the a ancestor failed to note the cancellation of the rejected lines" (Manly and Rickert 4:517). From this perspective, the only witnesses that had the link would have to have been a distant ancestor of the **a** group (perhaps the alpha exemplar) and the archetype of the tradition. This leaves open the possibility of Ch having descended directly from O, through a different branch from that of the **a** group, and might also explain other common features with the **a** group, such as the sequence L15-ME-L17-SQ (the same as that of the **a** order).

That Ch is the only witness of the *Canterbury Tales* to contain PL is a well known fact: "SqT breaks off (line 672) on f.228b, and the remainder of the quire, which was left blank to continue the tale, is now nearly filled with the spurious PIT, inserted later" (Manly and Rickert 1:89). The fact that the hand in PL is a later one (Manly and Rickert 1:86) indicates that PL is a later addition. This, together with the common scholarly opinion about the status of PL as non-Chaucerian, presents a problem for the analysis of tale-order. This tale is clearly a later addition by a different hand, and so it does not make much sense to include it as part of the data for phylogenetic analysis. The fact that this tale is not found in any other witness and, therefore, has the same stemmatic status as that of a singleton variant, i.e. it is not informative from a genealogical perspective, is another reason to omit PL from the analyses is that.

The codicological information from Ch gives rise to an interesting problem since a very late manuscript such as this still presents signs of uncertainty about the text of the *Canterbury Tales*. The fact that the scribe left space for the continuation of CO and SQ

suggests that he was not aware that the tales were incomplete or that he thought that the rest of the tales could still be found. Further research clearly shows that TG was the only piece which used after CO (at least by some scribes) and the blank pages after SQ were never filled by the original scribe. Only much later was the spurious PL added by a different hand seemingly to complete the *Tales*. Thus, as late as 1460, the text of the *Canterbury Tales* remained a puzzle to those who were dealing with its order and incomplete state.

2. A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE CONCERNING THE ORDER IN KEY MANUSCRIPTS

Phylogenetic software cannot predict the degree of scribal intervention found in manuscripts such as Ha4 and Ch, so that the software's interpretation of these data is unlikely to be completely accurate. This is also true of manual analyses of tale-order since a researcher would find the same obstacles for interpretation. To recreate a genetic relationship between the different tale-orders, both where an order comes from and where it leads should be considered. In the best interest of this specific work, to attempt to clarify the relationships between the order of the early manuscripts it is necessary to identify those aspects of a particular order which are likely to have been copied from its exemplar and those which were probably modified by scribes and supervisors.

To overcome problems generated by human intervention, late additions such as PL (clearly by a different hand and at a different time) should not be taken into account for the analysis of tale order.⁴⁸ Other additions such as TG, which I have shown is likely

to have been copied from a different exemplar from that of the rest of the text, might better be left out of the overall tale-order analysis, at least concerning early manuscripts that have indications of hesitation at this point of the text. In the next chapter, I offer an analysis of stemmata built by omitting TG from Ha4 and Ch. Stemmata based on altered data might should produce different results from those analyzed hitherto. If such results show more consistency with the word-variant stemmata then we could produce a new hypothesis about the order in these manuscripts and how they relate to other extant witnesses.

¹ It is possible that the only differences between these manuscripts might be due to accidents such as loss of leaves.

² This manuscript was dated 1400-10 by Manly and Rickert (1:47). Blake writes about it: “Hg represents an attempt to arrange Chaucer’s fragments into a cohesive poem--an attempt which encouraged the compiler to complete those gaps in the poem which his arrangements created. While Hg was being prepared, certain details came to light which indicated that a different order was desirable. Hg has, therefore, what might be called a dynamic order: it was modified as the manuscript was written. This factor is important in assessing Hg’s age and reliability. Paleographers are not agreed whether Hg is the oldest extant manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*. As it contains the best text and as it embodies what can be understood only as a first attempt to arrange the tales in an intelligent order, modern editors may accept it was the earliest manuscript whose text and order they should follow” (Blake, *Canterbury Tales* 9).

³ Rebound order: GP-KT-L1-MI-L2-RE-L3-CO WB-L10-FR-L11-SU L29-MO-L30-NP L36-MA L7-ML SQ-L20-ME-L17-FK NU CL-L13-L14 PH-L21-PD SH-L24-PR-L25-TT-L28-TM L37-PA
Original order: GP-KT-L1-MI-L2-RE-L3-CO WB-L10-FR-L11-SU L7-ML SQ-L20-ME-L17-FK NU CL-L13-L14 PH-L21-PD SH-L24-PR-L25-TT-L28-TM-L29-MO-L30-NP L36-MA L37-PA
As I have pointed out before, for all the analyses the original order of Hg was the only one used.

⁴ In practice, when both of the Hg orders were included in the data to be processed by PAUP, these showed, not suprisingly, close together. The explanation of why two seemingly different tale-orders might appear so close probably has to do with the usual stability of fragment VII (which in the re-bound Hg order has been split in two sections) and L36-MA.

⁵ I have synthesized Stubbs structural sections here. See Stubbs’ analysis in *The Hengwrt Chaucer Digital Facsimile* for a complete discussion of her conclusions about the making of the manuscript. I have collated the manuscript and can confirm that the difference in the color of the ink which can be seen in the digital facsimile is clearly visible in the manuscript itself.

⁶ This section is misplaced in the current order of Hg.

⁷ WBP-WBT-L10-FR-L11-SU is a separate structural section. There is a blank folio after SU. See Stubbs, ed., *The Hengwrt Chaucer Digital Facsimile*.

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- ⁸ It is also clear that the initial rubric has been crammed by the scribe, and that the explicit runs at least one line below the normal text layout.
- ⁹ L17 links SQ and ME in Hg, but it links ME and FK in E1.
- ¹⁰ See the discussion of the variants in L17 and L20 in chapter IV.
- ¹¹ See the collation by Manly and Rickert (2:361).
- ¹² Of these manuscripts, G1 and Ra3 have the reading 'marchaunt,' while Tc1 reads 'Frankeleyn.'
- ¹³ In fact, Ch has also the variant "yeoman" in L37 as can be seen in the collation above. See the codicological analysis of Ch and Ad3 later in this chapter.
- ¹⁴ It is also conceivable that the scribe changed the reading more than once, so the possibility remains that at some point the reading was 'Frankeleyn' as suggested by Manly and Rickert and supported by Tc1, which has the sequence FK-L37-PA.
- ¹⁵ 1410-1420 (Manly and Rickert 2:46).
- ¹⁶ Mosser agrees with Blake in dating Cp earlier than Ha4, but he also points out that Smith (quoted by Owen, 1991) based on linguistic data, suggests that Ha4 might be earlier than Cp (Cf. Mosser, "Witness Descriptions). In fact, although linguistic features have been suggested as crucial in dating these two manuscripts, it is possible that these were copied directly from the exemplars of each of these manuscripts.
- ¹⁷ In my previous research, an incomplete collation of the *Canterbury Tales*, I found few links between the texts of Cp and Ha4. (See especially the electronic appendix of "The Manuscript Source of Caxton's Second Edition of the *Canterbury Tales* and its Place in the Textual Tradition of the *Tales*").
- ¹⁸ This is another suggestion of a different copy text for both manuscripts.
- ¹⁹ Blake thinks that Cp is the first manuscript to contain L33-CY (Blake, *Textual* 98 and ff.). However, the fact that these links and tale, together with NU, do change positions in other manuscripts, shows it is possible they were interpreted as belonging to a different part of the text.
- ²⁰ c. 1410 (Manly and Rickert 2:47).
- ²¹ The manuscript also has a flyleaf at the beginning and two at the end.
- ²² Ha⁴ GP-KT-L1-MI-L2-RE-L3-CO TG L7-ML-L8 WB-L10-FR-L11-SU CL-L13-L15-ME-L17-SQ...FK NU-L33-CY PH-L21-PD SH-L24-PR-L25-TT-L28-TM-L29-MO-L30-NP L36-MA L37-PA RT
- ²³ The new lineation system was developed for the *Canterbury Tales* Project, for this reason, it was not available when Blake wrote *The Textual Tradition of the Canterbury Tales*. It is not possible to know whether Blake was referring to L5, L6 or some other link.
- ²⁴ See below the discussion about Ch.
- ²⁵ About the affiliations of Ha4 and its closeness to O, see Bordalejo.
- ²⁶ Wy does not include L8 and has L31 after NP. The latter probably came from Cx2, but only a detailed collation of these two witnesses would prove this. Miss Satoko Tokunaga, Keio University, in cooperation with the *Canterbury Tales* Project is currently carrying out a study of the affiliations of the source of Wy.
- ²⁷ Thomas Garbáty has conducted a partial study of the textual affiliations of Wy (See Garbáty 57-67).
- ²⁸ 1420-40 (Manly and Rickert 2:46).
- ²⁹ 1400-20 (Manly and Rickert 2:46).
- ³⁰ Both of these also include some passages not found in E1.
- ³¹ I am not sure whether Manly and Rickert have based their guess of the position of these tales on codicological evidence (stints for example). It would be interesting to check the manuscript to clarify the reasons for this classification.
- ³² Blake also observes that both Dd and Ha4 arranged the text in a prologue-tale pattern rather than in a tale-link pattern. This created complications with links that could not be used as prologues (such as L8) and the scribes had to deal with this situation, perhaps by suppressing part of the material. (Blake, *Textual* 127).
- ³³ Because Da Rold's dissertation includes a very detailed codicological analysis of Dd, it was unnecessary for me to see this manuscript. I have relied on her analysis in conjunction with digital images of the manuscript.
- ³⁴ Briquet assigns dates based on those that appear in the studied manuscripts, which could have been copied relatively late in comparison with the original date of production of the paper. See Briquet.

³⁵ Hg and Ch have filled the space in different ways. Hg added the modified version of L20, with a compressed initial rubric and a final rubric that goes below the regular margins of the text. In a later hand, Ch has PL. Ha4 has lost the pages which originally contained the end of SQ and the beginning of FK, for this reason, it is impossible to know whether the scribe had left a space. Gg has also lost leaves at this point.

³⁶ As put by Parkes: “To the extent that Robinson’s editions of 1933 and 1957 were based on Skeat, and that the new *Riverside Chaucer* is based on Robinson, the Ellesmere text is *The Canterbury Tales*, since Robinson and now the *Riverside* have been and are the editions most extensively used for citation in critical books and articles” (Pearsall, *Life* 234).

³⁷ See Manly and Rickert 1:170.

³⁸ The quire numbers include the two missing quires.

³⁹ Ad³ GP-KT-L1-MI-L2-RE L7-ML WB-L10-FR-L11-SU NU CL-L13-L15-ME-L17-SQ-L20-FK PH-L21-PD SH.....PR-L25-TT-L28-TM-L29-MO-L30-NP L36-MA L3-CO L-33-CY L37-PA..

⁴⁰ In private conversation, Mr Jacob Thaisen has informed me that preliminary results of his research on the spelling patterns in Ad3 suggest that there is a link between L3-CO and the rest of fragment I (GP, KT, L1, MI, L2 and RE). Since there is no break in the copying process, for the time being, I have to assume that this consistency already existed in Ad3’s exemplar.

⁴¹ This is not surprising since Horobin’s thesis was supervised by Blake, who gives great importance to this distinction.

⁴² 1460-79 (Manly and Rickert 1:46).

⁴³ These can be found in 261v and 270v.

⁴⁴ When he started quire 13, the scribe had probably finished with all his other paper. Then he started a new batch which he used from this point to the end. When the scribe finished copying PA, he received (or acquired) a copy of TG, he started to copy it in quire 3, where he had left space for the rest of CO. It became clear that the whole of TG would require more space, and then is when he reached for the same batch of paper which he had used for the last quires of the *Canterbury Tales* and used it to make the extra quire of 5 bifolia (10 folios).

⁴⁵ At least, I have not been able to establish the place in which there is a definitive change in its composition.

⁴⁶ These two manuscripts belong to Robinson’s E group. Elsewhere, I have hypothesized a series of stemmata in which the E group and El are derivatives of a and α (Bordalejo 368-75).

⁴⁷ In the light of the variants analyzed in my other work (the differences between Cx1 and Cx2), I have not previously put forward this idea. It is possible that a complete analysis of the text of Ch might show that this manuscript had a close relationship with the alpha exemplar. The data from the three thousand variants analyzed in my De Montfort University PhD thesis suggests that the variants shared by Ad3 Ch Ha4 and Cx2 are likely to be archetypal (although some of these are difficult to classify), but this same data is too partial in reference to the manuscripts to present a reliable classification. Complete collations of these manuscripts against other witnesses of the text would be necessary to complete a classifying scheme based on both tale-order and word-variants.

⁴⁸ Because PL appears only in Ch it was left out from the tale-order analysis. However, TG was included in all analyses presented in chapters 4 and 5. For the analysis of the tale order without TG see chapter 7.