

Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, and John Lydgate, poems

2° f<sup>o</sup>: in alle his lyfe

Paper, folded in folio. There are five watermarks:

A: Cloche: not in Briquet, although as John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, 8 vols (Chicago, 1940) state (1:85), no. 3984 (Italy and Bruges, 1435 x 1468, most uses 1435 x 1443) is the published mark most nearly resembling this one: excepting the two central bifolia of quire 12, universal in quires 1-3, 5-12, 106 full sheets, fol. 41 a watermarked half-sheet, fol. 101 one without watermark.

B: Monts/Dreiberg: cf. Manly-Rickert's identification with Briquet no. 11845 (Genoa, 1441-42): the stock of the intruded quire 4, five full sheets.

C: Ciseaux: most closely resembles Piccard 9 (*Werkzeug*) iii, no. 668 (London, 1450): the second inmost bifolium of quire 12, fols 220+223.

D: Tête de bœuf/Ochsenkopf: not in Piccard or Briquet, generally of the type Piccard 2 (*Ochsenkopf*) v: the central bifolium of quire 12, fols 221+222.

E: Monts/Dreiberg: generally of the type Piccard 16 (*Dreiberg*) iv, nos 1151-1223, Italian papers of 1430 x 1450: universal in quires 13-18, 50 full sheets; fols 244, 275, and 284 half-sheets with watermark; fols 274, 276, 279, 283 and 299 unwatermarked half-sheets.

Fols: iii (numbered fols i-ii, 1) + 334 (currently numbered fols 2-342) + ii (unnumbered). All flyleaves paper (first and last marbled), apart from last at front (fol. 1), which is medieval parchment. There are several different foliations, including, in early portions, bits of an early modern one. The foliation followed here is that imposed by the last binder, which assigns folio numbers to the missing 22, 102, 239, 272-73, and 300. Overall: 290mm x 210mm; writing area: 205mm x 138mm (to the bounds, not the line ends). In long lines, about 40 lines to the page (varies, up to 55 lines in the final quire). Occasional signs of single prick-hole at outer top corner of text block; bounded in stylus, no rules. Written in anglicana, originally a single hand for the main text items 1 and 5, with separate hands for each of the three remaining items. Punctuation in the verse by occasional point at mid-line, occasional virgula and comma at line ends, and punctus interrogativus; in the prose, by point, virgula, and double virgula (these last perhaps unfulfilled instructions for paraphs).

The manuscript is now discussed on Linne Mooney and Simon Horobin's Late Medieval English Scribes website: they note two hands, and tentatively suggest that responsible for fol. 228<sup>v</sup> (l. 12)-231, 277-281<sup>v</sup> is the 'Morganus Scribe', responsible for BodL, MS Ashmole 45.

## CONTENTS

Fol. 1<sup>r</sup>: originally blank (see PROVENANCE).

Fol. 1<sup>v</sup>: table of contents, added in the hand of item 3.

1. Fols 2-276<sup>v</sup>: *Incipit tractatus Galfredi Chaucer de Gestis Peregrinorum versus Cantuariam*  
Whan that Auerell with his shoures soote | The droght of Marche hath perced --- wole  
ware that thow ne be nat oute of charite This holy orison . . .

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, *The Canterbury Tales* (IMEV 4019; DIMEV 6414-12), basically complete but disordered, ed. Larry D. Benson et al., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston, MA, 1987), 23-326, breaking off in 'The Parson's Tale' 1044. The text also lacks 'The Knight's Tale' 1554-1634, 'The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue' 627-719, and 'The Parson's Tale' 886-944, owing to missing leaves; in addition, fol. 24<sup>v</sup> is blank, but with no text loss.

Items 2 and 3 are intercalated into Chaucer's text, each at the end of a production unit.

The manuscript has been described at Manly and Rickert, 1:85-91. The text of *The Canterbury Tales* is disordered. Fragment A and 'Gamelyn' (text 2) appear in the first production unit, followed (at the head of a new quire) by Fragment D, 'The Clerk's Tale', Fragments C, B<sup>2</sup>, H, and 'The Franklin's Tale'. This production unit concludes with 'The Man of Law's Tale', 'Merchant's Tale', and 'Squire's Tale', with the added text 3. The final production unit contains Fragments G and I and ends with text 4. For full particulars, see Sir William McCormick and Janet E. Heseltine, *The Manuscripts of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: A Critical Description of their Contents* (Oxford, 1933), 77-84. On the quality of the text, drawn from very good older archetypes collected from diverse sources, see Charles A. Owen Jr., *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge, 1991), 77-79. Owen suggests (117) that the same archetypes may underlie the two prose tales in Cambridge: Magdalene College, MS. Pepys 2006.

2. Fols 58<sup>v</sup>-71<sup>v</sup>: 'Here begynnnyth the Cokys tale etc. Lithen and lystenyth and herkenyth aright | And ye shul heren --- may there no man flee | God brynge vs to the Ioye that euer shall be'.

'The Tale of Gamelyn' (IMEV 1913; DIMVE 3090-7), ed. Walter W. Skeat, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 6 vols (Oxford, 1894), 4:645-67. Added on blank leaves (and in an added quire) in a slightly later anglicana. Fol. 71<sup>v</sup> is about one-third blank.

3. Fols 228<sup>v</sup>-31: '*The prologue of the Ploughman* As the Pylgrymys Forth ded ryde | Owr' ^host^ began to loke aboute . . . [fol. 229] *Here begynnnyth the Ploughmannys tale of ovr' lady* There was whilom as that seyth the scripture | In Fraunce a ryche man --- cherly fort to stonde | Her' psalter' for to sey let vs fonde Amen *Here endyth the Ploughmanys tale*'.

In fact, THOMAS HOCLEVE, 'The story of the monk who clad the Virgin' (IMEV 4122; DIMEV 6603-1), ed. I. Gollancz, EETS es 73 (1925), 16-19, here with an added prologue (not in IMEV; DIMEV 681-1), the ensemble most recently ed. John M. Bowers, *The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions* (Kalamazoo MI, 1992), 26-30. Added in anglicana, c. 1480, on blank leaves by a hand which wrote the contents table and corrects readings elsewhere; there are only four lines on fol. 231, and the verso is blank.

4. Fols 278, 277, 279-81<sup>v</sup>: '<.>olemes of lyknes and fygyrys | Whyche proved been fruttuus --- vndyr correccion | With supportacion of your' benyngnyte *Here endyth the tale of the Churle and hys bryd*'.

JOHN LYDGATE, 'The churl and the bird' (IMEV 2784; DIMEV 4420-2), ed. Henry N. MacCracken, *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part II Secular Poems*, EETS, 192 (1934), 468-85. The text is disarranged and lacks lines 274-341, owing to a missing leaf. In a slightly later anglicana, also responsible for the inserted reference to the text in the MS table of contents.

5. Fols 282-342<sup>v</sup>: '*The sege of Thebes* Whan Phebus passed was the Ram | Midde of Aprile --- [fol. 342] whan we shull hens wende | And of my tale thus I make an ende'.

JOHN LYDGATE, *The Siege of Thebes* (IMEV 3928; DIMEV 6276-6), ed. Axel Erdmann, EETS, es 108 (1911). The scribe apparently missed a page in his exemplar and skipped from line 4653 to 4696, which heads fol. 342. The omitted lines 4654-95 appear on fol. 342<sup>v</sup>, in mixed anglicana/secretary (with secretary **g**), s. xv<sup>3/4</sup>.

A. S. G. Edwards, 'Fifteenth Century Middle English Verse Author Collections', Griffiths FS, 101-12, at 103 and 110 n19, discusses manuscripts which join Chaucer and Lydgate. Only four other manuscripts follow Lydgate's direction and offer *The Siege of Thebes* as a pendant to *The Canterbury Tales*: BL, MSS Additional 5140 and Egerton 2864; Longleat House: Marquess of Bath, MS. 257; and University of Texas Library, MS. 143 (olim Delamare).

COLLATION 1<sup>20</sup> 2<sup>20</sup> (lacking first, assigned fol. 22) 3<sup>20</sup> 4<sup>10</sup> [fol. 71, the end of a production unit] | 5<sup>20</sup> 6<sup>20</sup> (lacking eleventh, a cancel, with no text loss, assigned fol. 102) 7-12<sup>20</sup> [fol. 231, the end of a production unit] | 13<sup>20</sup> (lacking eighth, assigned fol. 239) 14<sup>20</sup> 15<sup>20</sup> (lacking first and second, assigned fols 272 and 273; lacking sixth, seventh, twelfth and all

from fourteenth to last, with eleventh [fol. 277] bound in before eighth [fol. 278]) [fol. 281, the end of a production unit] | 16<sup>20</sup> (lacking nineteenth, assigned fol. 300, the stub of a cancelled leaf; but with one inserted as its replacement, the text continuous at lines 1355-56) 17-18<sup>20</sup>. No catchwords; all leaves in the first half of each quire assigned a letter and arabic numeral, the letter signatures in the upper right corners and typically cut away or obscured by later paginations.

TEXTUAL PRESENTATION AND DECORATION Headings in red. At the openings of the texts, three- and four-line lombards, all except four of them red; the exceptions, in blue, include that at the opening of ‘Gamelyn’ (fol. 58<sup>v</sup>, and a number of one- and two-line examples dividing that text, a presentation unique in the MS), fols 261<sup>v</sup> and 270<sup>v</sup> (in ‘The Parson’s Tale’), and the opening of Lydgate’s *Thebes* (fol. 282).

BINDING Plain tan leather over millboards, with punches, s. xx. A note on fol. i<sup>v</sup>: ‘reewn and rebound 1975 (by A. B. R. Fairclough of Burford) and papers preserved from previous early 19 cent. binding’. Sewn on five thongs. ‘Chaucer’ in gilt in the top spine compartment. Pastedowns and endleaves modern marbled paper, a ChCh bookplate on the front pastedown.

In a previous binding that preceded the foliation now affixed in an early modern hand, the leaves of two quires, the 2nd and 10th, were misbound. They bear s. xv notes with *signes de renvoi* to direct a reader through the text, e.g. ‘turne over v. lefes to thys sygne [a diamond]’ (fol. 21<sup>v</sup>). (Given the rebinding, the answering signs now appear on the immediately following rectos.) In quire 2, the five inner sheets were bound on the outside, and in quire 10, the two pairs of inmost sheets exchanged positions. See further Manly-Rickert, 1:88.

PROVENANCE There is reasonably extensive evidence for production and early ownership in the mid-south and near southwest: (a) ‘Thomas vause’ (fol. 72), perhaps the scribe, whom Manly-Rickert identify (1:90) with an attorney for Winchester College, s. xv<sup>2/2</sup>. (b) ‘Grace and good manners maketh mann’, s. xv/xvi, completed as a distich, s. xvi<sup>2/2</sup>, ‘but who Louethe him that no good cand’ (IMEV Sup. 1009.3). The first line expands on a motto associated with Winchester College (fol. 1; the expanded Winchester motto appears again at fol. 151<sup>v</sup>); (c) ‘Toh: Long [? Yong] liber’ (fol. 342, s. xvii). Late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century probate evidence suggests this was a common surname across a broad band of Wiltshire and Somerset, and nowhere else. Early in the seventeenth century, a ‘T. Long of Dorchester’, probably related to the widow of the early sixteenth-century antiquary Ralph Coppinger, owned BodL, MS. Laud misc. 581 (*Piers Plowman*, B Version).

Donated by John Verney, as revealed by a note entered by Edward Smallwell at fol. 1: ‘D. D. Praenobilis Vir Iohannis Peyto Verney Baro Willoughby de Broke, A.D. 1769’ (fol. 1); cf. the 1769 entry in the Donors’ Register, MS LR 1, p. 252<sup>a</sup>, recording the gift as ‘Librum MS Chauceri opera, Lidgate et aliorum complectentem’. Manly-Rickert document (1:91) the Verney family’s connection with Winchester College. Verney matriculated at Christ Church in 1755, but took no degree. He was elected MA in 1758, DCL in 1759, and died in 1816, aged 77 (*AOmod*, 1469). The New Library shelfmark ‘C.6’ appears, in Edward Smallwell’s hand at fol. 1, and in another script at the centre of fol. ii (see Appendix IV).

Version date: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2013