Developing a Protocol for Interpreting Medieval and Modern Orthography in the Hoccleve Archive’s Collaborative Transcription Project

Elon Lang
Dylan McKibban
University of Texas
The Hoccleve Archive hocclevearchive.org

Home to numerous digital, paper, and microfilm resources originating or derived from a defunct editorial project in the 1980s-90s to edit works of 15th-century London poet and Chaucer enthusiast, Thomas Hoccleve.

Including ~6,000 physical pages of Variant Collation Tables for the book-length poem The Regiment of Princes that have been digitized and stored in the Texas ScholarWorks repository.
Collaborative Transcription of the Variant tables

[Image of a page with handwritten notes and a screenshot of a digital transcription tool]


Begin transcribing:
1. Change the “Title” of the page to the number of the corresponding line of the poem if it hasn’t been done already. In the first set of tables (lines 1–12) the line number usually appears just to the left of the first word in the first typewritten line transcription. In the remaining tables, the line number usually appears in handwriting in the top right corner of each collation table page.

2. Navigate in your browser to the tab or window where you have opened the Transcription Template or Glosses Template.

3. Copy the entire contents of the appropriate template (Ctrl + A or Command + A, then Ctrl + C or Command + C). If you are transcribing a line of the poem, you will use the standard Transcription Template. If you are transcribing a gloss, use the Glosses Template.

4. Navigate in your browser back to the tab or window where you have opened the From the Page transcription workspace. Paste the template contents into the transcription area (Ctrl + V or Command + V).

5. Once this is done, you can begin to transcribe the document. Every word must be between two vertical bars (or “pipes”) with a space between each, such as:
   | Hocecle  | is  | a  | friend  | of  | Chaucer |

   c. Use forslashes (/) to indicate line breaks when necessary.
   d. When collator only writes ‘nothing’ or ‘out’ for a MS line, leave the spaces between the pipes on the template for that MS blank.
   e. As usual, for illegible words or letter groups, transcribe your best guess in single square brackets [].
   f. Some of the gloss collation pages may only reflect a portion of the collated manuscripts. If this is the case, delete lines pasted from the template that don’t correspond to any MSs described on the corresponding page image. (The remaining MSs will likely be described on another page.)

Example Gloss Transcription for Line 2017, MS Hα1, Hα2, and Hα3:

Image:

Transcription:
Hα1 | F36R | [top rubric: “Hic incipit prologus de principiu reginim” + initil]
Hα2 | [ ]
Improving Protocol and Structure

Keeping the role of the educators and students who will be using this protocol in mind, proposed changes for manuscript-based projects include:

- Addition of material on manuscript abbreviations in this time period or for known scribes as reference.
- Reevaluating steps in protocol that allow for idiosyncrasies within the transcription to occur. See step 15 on the possible inclusion of non-linguistic symbols.
● Restructuring format of templates for two columns
● Moving from a “line across all mss” template approach to a manuscript leaf model.

Arundel Ms. 38 left f.65, right f.52v, British Library