

Middle English Texts Guidelines for Editors

The Individual Volumes

MET volumes, which are normally 150–200 pages in length, commonly conform to the pattern of: Preliminary pages, Introduction, Text, Apparatus, Commentary, Glossary, Bibliography. They have a textual bias. The Introduction will include a description of the manuscript(s), their relationships, the editorial policies adopted for the edition, as well as discussion of other relevant aspects of the text (content, sources, provenance, language, etc.) The Text will be accompanied by a critical apparatus. Editors have the choice of setting the apparatus at the foot of the page or in a separate section following the edited text, headed Apparatus. Increasingly we have found that it is more efficient to set the apparatus following the edited text. Where the edited text is a translation and the source text is to be included, we prefer setting the source text on the facing page even if this means that some pages must be left blank. The Commentary will discuss matters both of text and content and provide evidence and arguments for emendations. Editorial policy will vary according to the needs of the text and the interests of the editor.

Preparation of the Volumes

A MET volume is first accepted for publication ‘in principle’, and negotiations between the editor and the general editors remain informal. A contract is not normally issued, but we provide a letter setting out the terms and conditions for publication. When agreement is reached on the final form of the volume, it is the editor’s responsibility to prepare, or have prepared, a camera-ready copy for the use of the publisher. The general editors will give advice on producing this copy. The sophistication of current software means that it is possible to produce pages of a high standard. This has meant that the general editors have become more closely involved in the design of the pages. Much of the remainder of these notes is taken up with matters of detail on this subject.

It is clearly helpful if drafts of a volume, especially of the Text, can be prepared in MET format at an early stage. When the edition is ready for the publisher, the editor should first send a complete copy to the general editor who has been assigned to oversee the volume, that is, the ‘supervising general editor’. At the next stage, the other general editors will give their comments on the volume. Editors will then receive instructions for final submission. It has become customary for the supervising general editor to submit the completed volume in camera-ready copy (hard copy) to the publisher and to highlight any special instructions for the ordering and presentation of the edition. Publication will normally follow within a few months. No royalties are paid, but the volume editor will receive 15 copies of the book, free of charge.

The Style and Presentation of MET Volumes

Because the editor is to some extent responsible also for the formatting and presentation of the volume, it is helpful to consult recent volumes in the series. At the same time, as the policies and practices for the design of the volumes have evolved over the history of the series, there are variations among the editions. We have included with these guidelines some facsimile reproductions of pages from MET volumes that illustrate particular points of formatting and style. The general editors are always prepared to discuss and resolve any uncertainties that arise.

All parts of a volume must be prepared within a frame 150–160 mm wide and 245 mm high, but page numbering and running heads (where they are used) will appear in the top margin, and line numbering for prose texts will appear in the left margin. These are default functions in most word-processing or publishing software. For the frame, it is best to err on the side of caution and have wider left and right margins; hence we advise setting the frame with the width of 150 mm. MET has adopted Times New Roman as its standard font. The main parts of the Introduction and Text should be set in 14-point with single spacing; 12-point should be used for footnotes, Textual Apparatus, Commentary, Glossary, and Bibliography. A source text set in parallel on facing pages or at the foot of the pages should also be set in 12-point. Prose texts must be justified left and right. Words may be broken in accepted ways using hyphens in order to prevent stretched lines.

In the Introduction and Commentary, italics should be used for titles and for quotations of texts in Middle English, Medieval French, and Latin that are set in continuous prose. Quotations from post-Medieval sources set within the line should be in single quotation marks. Round brackets should be used to enclose translation equivalents. In the Commentary, longer quotations should be indented left and right but not set in italics nor enclosed in quotation marks. The same practice applies for the Introduction, but extended quotations that are set apart and indented should be set in a reduced font size, 13-point. The same font size, 13-point, should be used for other indented materials: lists (as in contents of manuscripts), linguistic profiles, etc. In both the Introduction and Commentary, indented matter should be separated from the main text, top and bottom, by 1.5 spacing. In Word the code for this is accessed through ‘Layout’ / ‘Paragraph’ / ‘Line spacing’ / ‘1.5 lines’. Set the code at the hard return at the point where the indented matter is to be introduced. In effect this means that after the main text there is additional vertical spacing of a half-line before the quotation, and after the quotation there is additional vertical spacing of a half-line before the main text. Remember to remove the code at the point of the next hard return in order to restore single spacing at the next paragraph break. See below the sample page from the Introduction to MET volume 52.

The first line of each paragraph should be indented to 0.2" (5 mm) from the left margin. The first line, however, of the first paragraph of a section or sub-section should not be indented. (This is the practice of UK publishers and Continental publishers that have close links to the UK; it is the opposite of the practice of publishers in the US and Canada.) There should be only one space following a full stop (period). Editors should use the ‘widow-orphan protect’ code in their software to prevent single lines at the top of a page before the beginning of a new paragraph.

Notes to the Introduction should be in the form of footnotes, not endnotes, and should be numbered continuously. Normally there should be no separator line between the text and footnotes. The matter of the footnotes should be fully indented (0.2"/ 5 mm) after the footnote number. There should be no spacing between successive footnotes.

Photographic facsimiles of manuscript folios and illustrations from manuscripts may be included in the book. The publisher prefers to access these electronically through digital file transfer (e.g. JPEG). It is best to arrange access to these electronic files well in advance of publication, and it is essential that they should be of a standard for publication. They can be transferred to the publishers before and separately from the submission of the camera-ready copy.

Diagrams and maps should be of good quality for camera-ready copy. These can be created within a text file and embedded in the camera-ready copy.

The text of the book should be continuous, normally with no blank pages, but major sections (e.g., Contents, Acknowledgements, Abbreviations, Introduction, Text, Commentary, Glossary, Bibliography) should begin on a fresh page. The first page of the Introduction and

the first page of the edited text must begin on a recto page even if this means that the facing verso page has to be left blank. Where the edited text is set with a facing-page source text, the edited text will appear on the recto and the source text on the facing verso page. In these instances we introduce an internal title-page for the text on the first recto page following the Introduction, even if this means that the facing verso has to be left blank.

Each of the major sections will have a heading, set in 14-point, in bold capitals and centred. Each heading needs to be ‘dropped’; that is, the heading is set on the fourth line within the frame, leaving three blank lines between the top margin and the heading. This space is what is referred to as the ‘drop’ and is a standard feature of page design. See the facsimile of the first page of the Introduction to MET volume 51.

Although earlier MET volumes used continuous pagination, the current policy is for each volume to have two sequences of pagination, small Roman numerals for the preliminary pages and the Introduction, and Arabic numerals beginning with the edited text. The first four pages (including the title-page) are for the publisher. The Contents page is p. v. Facsimiles etc. should be included in the pagination. The edited text then begins with the Arabic numeral 1. This way of numbering the pages is especially helpful for editions of prose texts where internal references or cross-references to the edited text take the form of page/line references.

Editors have the choice whether to use running heads. If the editor decides not to use running heads, page numbers should be set in centre-top position. For an example of this usage see the facsimile of page xvii of MET 51. If the editor decides to introduce running heads, page numbers should be set in alternating-top positions. For an example of this usage see the facsimile of page xix of MET 51.

MET follows the practice of suppressing page numbers and running heads on pages where a major part of the book begins and there is a major heading (Contents, Acknowledgements, Abbreviations, Introduction, the first page of the edited text, Apparatus, Commentary, Glossary, Bibliography).

References involving folios and pages should take the form f. 21^r, ff. 1^r–2^v, p. 1, pp. 1–21; that is, leave one space after f. ff. p. pp., and use superscript r for recto and superscript v for verso in folio references. The page or folios ranges are linked with n-dashes as above, not hyphens. In Word see ‘Insert’ / ‘Symbols’ / ‘More Symbols’.

When using personal names, use the same spacing between initials as between initials and name (e.g. D. A. Pearsall).

Bibliographical references should be given in full only in the Bibliography. Within the body of the book references should be given in short-form, either in footnotes or incorporated into the text, in both cases using the ‘author-year: page’ method (e.g. Woolf 1968: 52, with a space after the colon). In some instances, however, it is helpful to use abbreviated titles. Frequently cited works may be referred to using abbreviations, listed in an Abbreviations page at the beginning of the volume.

For entries in the Bibliography, MET uses the conventions set out in the *Modern Humanities Research Association Style Book (MHRA)*. Editors should use this also as a guide for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, numbers, and dates.

For books of the Bible, please use the full title in Modern English form. Chapter numbers should be in lower case Roman numerals, and verse numbers in Arabic; the two should be separated by a full stop (period) with no spacing: Matthew xxi.14.

Preliminary Pages

As stated earlier, the first four pages of each volume are set by the publisher and are usually referred to as the publisher’s pages. These include the title page which is page iii. Page iv contains bibliographical data, the ISBN number, and year of publication. If editors wish to

include a dedication, this is set on page iv. Page v is the Contents page. Here the titles of the main parts of the volume should be set in upper-case throughout, with the initial page number for each part or section set flush to the right margin. The headings for sub-sections of the Introduction should be set with initial letters in upper-case and page numbers set flush to the right margin.

Acknowledgements follow the Contents and should be kept to a single page.

Abbreviations follow the Acknowledgements and should contain full references for works and texts cited frequently in the edition. The standard headnote for the Abbreviations page is:

This volume uses the conventional abbreviations for the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, *Middle English Dictionary (MED)*, Early English Text Society, original series, extra series, supplementary series (EETS OS, ES, SS), and Middle English Texts (MET). The following abbreviations and short titles are also employed.

A section headed ‘Manuscript Sigla’ normally follows the Abbreviations. The entries should be arranged alphabetically by sigla, not by the city in which the repository is located.

Finally, there follows a section headed ‘List of Figures’ or ‘Tables and Plates’ or ‘Plates’.

Introduction

The Introduction should contain sub-sections that are signalled by sub-headings. The main sub-sections of the Introduction form the first level of sub-division (e.g. The Text, Manuscripts, Language and Localization, Sources, Editorial Policy). For these, the sub-headings are set in bold capitals (14-point) throughout, flush to the left margin. Further sub-divisions within the Introduction are not always necessary, but if so, for the next level of sub-division the sub-headings are set in bold but with only initial capitals (14-point), flush to the left margin. For a further level of sub-division, the sub-heading is set in italics throughout with initial capitals, flush to the left margin. For examples, see the Introduction in MET 48 which uses the full range of sub-headings.

Sub-headings should be separated from main headings and/or from preceding text by two lines of vertical spacing, that is, two blank lines, in effect two hard returns. Sub-headings should be separated from following text by one line of vertical spacing, that is, one blank line that is, one hard return. The rule of thumb is a ratio of 2:1 between vertical spacing that precedes a heading and vertical spacing that follows a heading. See the facsimile of p. xvii of the Introduction to MET volume 51. Please avoid having sub-headings that occur low on the page so that there is no room for following text. In these instances, it is preferable to leave blank space at the bottom of the page and move the sub-heading to the top of the next page.

The Text

The practice for MET editions is to introduce modern capitalization, punctuation and word division, and to expand contractions and abbreviations silently (with the exception of **&** which is normally left unaltered). The letters **þ**, **ȝ**, and also **ð** and **æ**, are retained, and editors should ensure that their software can produce them. The general editors can provide advice on

how to locate these letters. In Word see under ‘Insert’ / ‘Symbols’ / ‘More Symbols’. The usage in the manuscripts of **u** and **v** is preserved, but long and short **i** are both transcribed as **i**, which is then capitalized according to modern usage: e.g. *iwis*, *soiourn*, *Iohannes*, *I*, *ich*.

The text is normally given according to the scribe’s final intention; scribal corrections, deletions, and insertions are noted in the critical apparatus. Scribal insertions are enclosed between prime marks, ` ` . Paragraph marks and large initials are not normally reproduced in the text, but may similarly be noted in the apparatus, where marginalia are also recorded. The beginnings of new pages in the base manuscript are indicated in the text in the form [**f. 45^v**], set in the margin if verse and within the text if prose.

Editorial emendations involving the insertion or substitution of words or letters should be enclosed within square brackets, [], and made to conform to the orthography of the base manuscript. Editorial omission of words is indicated by a raised ‘plus’ sign or an obelisk: + †. Where only part of a word is omitted, the corrected reading, that is, the whole word, is enclosed in square brackets and the original reading is given in the apparatus; in these instances there is no need for a plus sign or obelisk.

Lineation of verse texts should be continuous, normally at intervals of five lines, and set to the right-hand side inside the frame. With prose, the numbering at intervals of five lines normally starts afresh on each page (but need not), and is set in the margin at the left-hand side.

A source text, printed on the facing verso page or at the bottom of the page, may or may not be edited according to the same principles. In some cases a simple transcription may be sufficient; in others, the editor may wish to introduce emendations and a textual apparatus.

Textual Apparatus

The textual apparatus, also referred to as the critical apparatus, will commonly include notes on the scribe’s treatment of the text in the base manuscript, details of other significant palaeographical features, the variant readings of the other manuscripts, and the readings of the base manuscript not adopted by the editor.

The recording of variant readings is normally restricted to substantive variants. The term ‘substantive variant’ needs clarification. One understanding of ‘substantive variant’ is that it is any variant reading that affects meaning. Understood in this way, the presence or absence of a negative is a substantive variant. Another, additional, way of understanding ‘substantive variant’ is that it refers to variants that have separate origins and etymologies. A test for variation of this kind is to ask if the English words are found under different headwords in the *OED* and *MED*. On one hand this seems a straightforward way of understanding substantive variation, but variants such as the verbs ‘bidde’, ‘praye’, ‘ask’ raise the question of whether the variation affects meaning. The three words have different origins and are found under different headwords in the *OED* and *MED*, but essentially they have the same meaning; that is, they are synonyms. Thus, in the light of one understanding of substantive variation – differences in meaning – they do not qualify. This type of variant reading, in context, is referred to as a lexical variant, that is, variants in the lexis or lexicon or vocabulary used for what is understood as the same meaning. For some purposes, variants like this can be left unrecorded in the textual apparatus. At the same time, there is an argument for recording these variants, not on grounds of meaning but for the evidence that they might provide for relationships among different witnesses of a text or different textual traditions or dialect, although the last is a special matter discussed below. If the editor decides that it is helpful to record variants of this kind, it is necessary to make this clear in the statement of editorial policy.

The following is an example of substantive variation, from the Middle English poem known as *The Devils' Parliament* which survives in two versions. In line 305 of the A-version, Christ addresses the Devil with *Who but thysylfe was thy cownsayle*; the counterpart for this line in the B-version reads *Who was cheef of bi counsell*. The A-version's reading *cownsayle* has the sense 'one who gives advice, counsellor' (*OED* *counsel sb*) whereas B's reading *counsell* has the sense of 'body of advisers' or 'council' (*OED* *council sb*). These two readings have different meanings and are found under different headwords in the *OED* and *MED*. The closeness of the forms and senses of the two words suggest that the variation was generated through the mistaking of one word for the other. The effect of this misunderstanding is to generate substantive variants. Which word is the source of the variation is open to debate.

Another type of variation is in orthography. This is normally understood as variation in the form of words. Because the Middle English lexis is characterized by extensive regional variations in orthography as well as variation within the work of a single scribe, orthographic variation is extensive. Orthographic variants that are relevant to localizing the work of a scribe form a sub-class referred to as dialectal variants which are one type of evidence at the basis of the dialectal project behind the *LALME*. Another type of dialectal variant is found among lexical variants that, in context, are essentially synonyms. Not all lexical variants are dialectal variants but only those that have been shown to have a dialectal significance, for example, *went / zede*. The policy of MET is normally not to record in the apparatus lexical variants, orthographic variants, morphological variants, and variants in word order. Dialectal variants of whatever kind are recorded in the linguistic profiles used to localize manuscripts and the work of scribes. Exceptions to this policy are permitted where a case for including dialectal variants in the textual apparatus can be made. This would need to be highlighted in the statement of editorial policy. If a reading in the base manuscript is rejected, the readings in the other manuscripts must always be given, normally as support for an emendation. The apparatus should be laid out in the form and with the spacing shown in the following examples:

566 bidde] praye BD, ask F; louers] seruaunts BDF. 568 cownsayle] counsell BDF

that is, lemmas and variants occurring within the same line should be separated by a semicolon and two spaces, lemmas and variants on different lines by a full stop and three spaces.

Manuscripts supporting a variant should normally be cited according to a fixed sequence of sigla (also referred to as 'sigils'), with the proviso that the signum (sigil) that stands first must have the form of spelling quoted. Variants should be listed in order of closeness to the base text, or to the adopted reading in the case of an emendation. If a line contains two or more identical words, (1) (2) etc. should be inserted in the apparatus to indicate the one referred to. All explanatory matter in the apparatus should be italicized and normally abbreviated, e.g: *om.* (omitted), *del.* (deleted by scribe), *interlined*. Ellipses should be three dots, preceded by one blank space and followed by one blank space. *N* or $\rightarrow N$, enclosed in round brackets, can be used to refer to fuller discussion in the Commentary.

Commentary

The Commentary should contain arguments and evidence to justify emendations that are not obvious. It may contain discussion of particular details concerning sources, relationships between versions of a text, and explanations for difficult passages. Headings for individual notes should be in bold, and will include references to the text: for verse these will be line numbers; for prose they will include page number(s) as well as line number(s). The heading

may include words or phrases to be discussed. The heading should be followed by two spaces. The Commentary should be set in 12-points. Individual notes should be separated using a hard return set at 1.5 ('Paragraph' / 'Line spacing' / '1.5 lines') which produces a half-line of vertical spacing.

Glossary

Glossaries in MET volumes are selective and should be restricted to words likely to cause difficulty in their contexts. It is assumed that the reader has some familiarity with Middle English. It is recommended that the order of entries should follow normal modern practice, that is, **i** as a consonant [dʒ] follows **i/y** as a vowel, **u/v** as a consonant [v] follows **u/v** as a vowel, **p/ð** follows **t**, **ʒ** follows **g**.

Headwords are not normalized, but an infinitive form of a verb (or the singular of a noun) will normally be made the headword if one occurs in the text. Present-tense forms will normally be placed before past, singular before plural. Otherwise, the first occurring spelling and sense of a word should be the headword. A limited number of cross-references may be given from forms whose spelling would place them some distance away from that of the headword.

The lay-out of the entry is **headword** (in bold, lowercase), *part of speech* (italicized), meaning (in the context in question), line reference(s). An asterisk should be placed after a form and/or occurrence to indicate an emendation. Etymologies are not given. (*N*) or (*→N*) can be used to refer to discussion in the Commentary. Different spellings of the same sense of the word may follow after a comma, different senses or parts of speech after a semi-colon. At most three occurrences of each spelling or sense are given. Parts of speech are abbreviated in standard fashion: *n.* (noun), *adj.* (adjective), *adv.* (adverb), *pron.* (pronoun), *prep.* (preposition), *conj.* (conjunction), *inf.* (infinitive), *pr.* (present), *pa.* (past), *pp.* (past participle), *subj.* (subjunctive), *imp.* (imperative), *sg.* (singular), *comp.* (comparative), etc.

See facsimiles pages from MET 51 and MET 54.

Bibliography

The Bibliography should include full references to every printed work cited in the volume, with the exception of those fully cited in the Abbreviations and major reference works and series like the *OED* and *EETS* referred to in the headnote of the Abbreviations. Manuscripts consulted for the book will be listed by sigla in the page(s) headed Manuscript Sigla in the preliminary matter. The entries in the Bibliography should be listed in a single alphabetical sequence. If desired, the Bibliography may be divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' material. Entries should be separated by 2 points of vertical spacing. This function is found in Word under 'Layout' / 'Paragraph' / 'Spacing' / 'After'; manually enter '2' in the box labelled 'After' to produce the instruction '2 pt' (= 2 point). Also, it is helpful to use the formatting that is usually referred to as 'hanging indentation'; for this see recent MET volumes. Entries should be by author, editor, or title, as appropriate, care being taken to ensure that primary works are treated consistently. One possible system is to enter all ME works under their modern editors, but Latin works (for which an editor's name is less useful) under their author or titles.

The form of entry should normally reflect the *MHRA Style Book*. We prefer editors to include the names of publishers. Names of authors and editors should appear as on the title page of their book or edition; first names are not necessarily abbreviated to the initials. Where

initials are used there should be the same spacing between initials as between initials and name (e.g. Blake, N. F.). Please do not set a full-stop (period) at the end of entries.

Books:

Woolf, Rosemary, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968)

Cowen, Janet, ed., *On Famous Women: The Middle English Translation of Boccaccio's 'De Mulieribus Claris'*, MET 52 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015)

Articles in Journals:

Bellis, Joanna, 'Rymes sette for a remembrance: memorialisation and mimetic language in the war poetry of the late Middle Ages', *Review of English Studies*, 64 (2013), 183–207

Contributions to collections of essays:

Wakelin, Daniel, 'Editing and Correcting', in *Probable Truth: Editing medieval texts from Britain in the twenty-first century*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Anne Hudson, Texts and Transitions, 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 241–59

Theses:

Robinson, Pamela, 'A Study of Some Aspects of the Transmission of English Verse Texts in Late Medieval Manuscripts' (unpublished B. Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1972)

Second and subsequent entries by the same author or editor should have his or her name replaced by _____. Two or more items published in one year by the same author or editor should be distinguished for short reference purposes by, for example, [2014a], [2014b], set after the entries.

Submission of the Camera-Ready Copy

The final version of a volume should be submitted on good-quality A4 size paper (100 gm – 140 gm) and printed using a high quality laser printer. Editors seeking advice on this matter should contact the general editors at an early stage. The publisher is not yet willing for the parts of the volume that are type-set to be submitted electronically; for images, however, they require electronic submission through one of the methods that allows for the transmission of digital images of a standard for publication. For printing, the publisher scans the camera-ready copy to create a PDF and the volume is printed from this and any digital images that are to be incorporated into the volume. For any difficulties with printing, editors should contact their supervising general editor. In some instances the supervising general editor has arranged for the printing of the camera-ready copy.