

THE EARLY RECEPTION OF PIERS PLOWMAN

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For S.W.

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## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations in quotations from MSS are expanded without notice, unless the expansion is in doubt. In this case a suspension mark ' indicates the omission. Square brackets are used in quotations from MSS to indicate areas of doubt. Words inside the brackets consist of conjectural completions, or explanations of the omission. The marks ^ on either side of a word indicate that the word has been inserted above or below the line. "&" stands for all forms of abbreviated "and" or "et". Bold face type is used for the A, B and C texts of Piers Plowman, and to distinguish the text Z from the MS Z(AC) in the discussion of Bodleian MS Bodley 851, following the practice of Rigg and Brewer. MSS are referred to by the sigils given in Donaldson, 227-9. These are listed in appendix-B.

Bale, <u>Index</u>	<u>Index Britanniae Scriptorum</u> ed. R. Lane Poole, (Oxford 1902)
Bale, <u>Summarium</u>	<u>Illustrium maioris Britanniae scriptorum summarium</u> (Ipswich, ie. Wesel 1548)
Bale, <u>Scriptorum</u>	<u>Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie quam nunc Angliam &amp; Scotiam uocant</u> (Basel, Ioannem Oporinum 1557)
<u>BJRL</u>	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
<u>BL</u>	<u>British Library</u>
<u>C</u>	<u>Cambridge</u>
<u>CCC</u>	<u>Corpus Christi College</u>
<u>Concilia</u>	D. Wilkins, (ed.), <u>Concilia Hiberniae</u> iii (1738)
<u>Corr.</u>	<u>corrected</u>
Coxe <u>Catalogus</u>	H.O. Coxe, <u>Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie adservantur</u> (ii vols.) (Oxford 1852)
<u>CR</u>	<u>The Chaucer Review</u>
<u>CT</u>	J.M. Manly, and E. Rickert (eds.), <u>The text of the Canterbury Tales</u> vols i and ii (London 1940)
<u>D</u>	<u>Dublin</u>
Donaldson	E.T. Donaldson, <u>The C-text and its poet</u> (Yale 1949)
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u> (lxiii vols.) (London 1888)
<u>EETS A</u>	W.W. Skeat, (ed.), <u>The Vision of Wiliam concerning Piers the Plowman by William Langland EETS OS xxviii</u> (1867)
<u>EETS B</u>	<u>The Vision of Wiliam concerning Piers the Plowman by William Langland EETS OS xxxviii</u> (1869)
<u>EETS C</u>	<u>The Vision of Wiliam concerning Piers the Plowman by William Langland EETS OS liv</u> (1873)
<u>ELN</u>	<u>English Language Notes</u>
<u>ES</u>	<u>English Studies</u>
<u>E&amp;S</u>	<u>Essays and Studies</u>
<u>Fol.</u>	<u>Folio</u>
<u>G&amp;CC</u>	<u>Gonville and Caius College</u>



Holub	R.C. Holub, <u>Reception theory: a critical introduction</u> (London 1984)
Illeg.	Illegible
IMEV	C. Brown and R.H. Robbins (eds.), <u>Index of Middle English Verse</u> (New York 1943)
Kane	G. Kane, (ed.), <u>Piers Plowman: the A Version: Will's visions of Piers Plowman and do-well</u> (London 1960)
Kane, <u>Authorship</u>	G. Kane, <u>Piers Plowman: the evidence for authorship</u> (London 1965)
K and D, Kane and Donaldson	G. Kane, and E.T. Donaldson (eds.), <u>Piers Plowman: the B-version: Will's visions of Piers Plowman, do-well, do-better and do-best</u> (University of London 1975)
Ker	N. Ker, <u>Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries</u> (iii vols.) (Oxford 1969, 1988, 1983)
MAE	Medium Aevum
<u>Medieval Learning</u>	<u>Medieval Learning and Literature: essays presented to R.W. Hunt ed. J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson</u> (Oxford 1976)
<u>Medieval Scribes</u>	<u>Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: essays presented to N.R. Ker ed. M.B. Parkes and A.G. Watson</u> (London 1978)
MLA	Modern Language Association
MLN	Modern Language Notes
MLR	Modern Language Review
MP	Modern Philology
MS/ MSS	Manuscript/s
NC	Newnham College
NLWJ	National Library of Wales Journal
NM	Neophilologische Mitteilungen
NQ	Notes and queries
O	Oxford
OC	Oriel College
Om.	Omitted
Pearsall	D.A. Pearsall, (ed.), <u>Piers Plowman by William Langland: an edition of the C-text</u> (York 1978)
PBA	Proceedings of the British Academy
<u>Piers, PP</u>	<u>Piers Plowman</u>
PMLA	Proceedings of the Modern Language Association
RS	Rolls series
SAC	Studies in the Age of Chaucer
SEL	Studies in English Literature
SCH	Studies in Church History
Schmidt	A.V.C. Schmidt, <u>The B-text</u> (London 1978)
Skeat, <u>Parallel Text</u>	W.W. Skeat (ed.) <u>The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman by in three parallel texts together with Richard the Redeles by William Langland</u> (ii vols.) (first published 1886, second edition Oxford 1924, reprinted 1961)
SL	Sterling Library (Senate House, University of London)

Summary Catalogue

STC

TCBS

TCAA

TE

TC

UC

UP

F. Madan and H.H.E. Craster, Summary catalogue of western manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (Oxford 1937)

A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, et al (eds.), A short title catalogue of books printed in England... 1475-1640 (London 1926)

Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society

Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts

Testamenta Eboracensia: a selection of wills printed from the registry at York v. Surtees Society (Durham 1902)

Tripiity College

University College

University Press

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### i. Background

The study of the reception of Piers Plowman is not untrodden ground. Critics from Skeat onwards have commented on how the poem was originally read, and considered the composition of that original audience.<sup>1</sup> The early readers themselves have ideas about the poem's audience, if fairly general and occasionally prescriptive ones; a sixteenth century reader of Digby MS 171, a partial C-text, concludes that "it is goode for a Christian minde" (fol. 62a), and this sense of an audience gaining moral credit through reading the text, enhanced by the difficulties of the language, is echoed by Crowley's Preface in the first printed editions (quoted on p.43).<sup>2</sup> Such readers' comments, and other evidence from the manuscripts, will be the main source of material for this study of the reception of the poem. In this respect it will differ from previous approaches, which have generally been based on the the historical circumstances of reception, (the exceptions are discussed in the theory section below), including the existence of contemporary and near contemporary political poems which are in a similar style to Piers Plowman, or which refer to the plowman, and on later comments. It is important to explore these approaches to the reception of the poem, and the assumptions about the early readings of the poem which arise from them, in order to examine



their basis and validity. It is certainly true that historical circumstances and contemporary writing are of considerable significance for the study of reception. The possibility exists however that, as Skeat suggests, "many of those who referred to it knew but little of the matter".<sup>3</sup> The reception of the poem itself may be at variance with its reputation.

The history of Piers Plowman has generally been viewed from a sixteenth century perspective, and the aims and reception of the work have been inferred from literary and historical associations. Several works, from the late fourteenth to the sixteenth century, testify to the appeal of the figure of Piers the plowman, and many of these were printed in the first half of the sixteenth century in the interests of Reformation propaganda (see Appendix A). Beyond the literary tradition, Hugh Latimer's "sermon of the plough" delivered in 1548, with its agricultural imagery, use of alliteration, and straightforward style may be seen as deliberately invoking association with Langland's Piers:

the hallowed image of Piers, a figure who speaks with the authority of the Bible as interpreted by the orthodox medieval pulpit, and who voices the legitimate social and religious ideals of England's rural yeoman class.<sup>4</sup>

Tradition has an obvious value for propagandists; the appeal of a new ideology is enhanced if its roots are shown to be fixed in the past. A poem like Piers is clearly of use in this kind of appeal, but in the event its influence in the early sixteenth century may well have been largely second-hand, through association with the figure of the plowman. It is possible that even this association is made more readily by the modern historian or literary critic than by the sixteenth century reader; the poem was not published (and thus was

not widely available) until 1550. Helen White argues convincingly for a "Piers Plowman tradition"<sup>5</sup> in the first half of the sixteenth century; although Crowley clearly recognises Piers Plowman as a fourteenth century Catholic poem, it is possible that to many readers the poem, when it appeared in print, may have been seen as part of this tradition rather than its originator.

Piers Plowman, a poem readily absorbed into the tradition of complaint literature, was not alone in being used as propagandist weaponry; Chaucer as well as Langland was invoked on the side of the reformists. The first and second Plowman's Tales (appearing between 1531 and 1541) and Jack Uplande (published c. 1540) were attributed to Chaucer. Individual authors were only important in providing that "auntient authorite"<sup>6</sup> sought by the reformists. The praier and complaynt of the plowman unto Christe (published c. 1531) claims falsely (it is sixteenth century) to have been written "nat longe after" 1300, and the preface advises the reader that through the tract:

thou mayst see playnly that it is no new thyng, but  
an old practyse of oure prelates lerned of their  
fathers the bisshops, pharyses and prestes of the  
olde law to defame the doctrine of Christ with the  
name of newe lernynge, and the techers thereof with  
the name of new maisters.

Here the concerns of the sixteenth century publishers are made explicit. The "Piers Plowman tradition" thus perhaps provides more information about the theory and practice of propaganda than about contemporary understanding of the poem itself.

Not all readers were influenced by the prevailing Protestantism in their reading of the poem. One reader, Sir Adrian Fortescue,<sup>8</sup> who transcribed his own copy of the poem, now Digby MS 145, K(AC),



interpreted the poem as orthodox Catholicism. Fortescue was a Catholic, and died as a martyr, executed for treason (see Appendix A). A later reader of his copy of the poem exercised religious censorship over some areas of the text.<sup>9</sup> Fortescue copied the poem in 1531-2, shortly before the powerful Henrician propagandist organisation reached its peak in the publishing world.<sup>10</sup> A later Catholic reader, Andrew Bostock, in notes written in 1613 on Crowley's second edition, rejected Crowley's glosses, commenting that the author was criticising abuses only, and not the institution of the Catholic church.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless reformed religious practices, as well as the now cheaply available printed dogmatic works, inevitably influenced interpretation. Crowley's three successive editions in 1550 provide an increasing volume of annotation, the tone and ideology of which appears in the comments of several later annotators of the MSS. Society of Antiquaries MS 687, in a late gloss, describes the poet as "Robert Langland a chiefe disciple of John Wickliffe" (p. 470), which may be compared with John Bale's entry in his Scriptorum: "Robertus Langlande:...fuisse ex primis Ioannis Uuicleui discipulis unum,"<sup>12</sup> and his attribution of "Petrus Agricolam" to Wyclif.<sup>13</sup> Whether non-conformist leanings to which these commentators were responding exist in the text is still a matter of debate.<sup>14</sup>

The evidence for a non-conformist or politically radical understanding of the poem in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries is not apparent, but the assumption that the sixteenth century reformers were justified in their appropriation of the text



has not always been avoided; the simple will of a fourteenth-century owner of the poem has been associated with Lollardy,<sup>15</sup> and J.N. King states that:

because of its associations with fifteenth century Lollard traditions...Piers Plowman fell under the prohibition on Wycliffite texts imposed by the 1408 Oxford Synod.<sup>16</sup>

The sixth constitution forbids the reading of any book by Wyclif, or any other written in his time, without previous examination. The seventh bans translation of scripture in any form from the time of Wyclif; Anne Hudson suggests that the all-inclusive wording of this clause could refer to the rendering of Biblical quotes in English.<sup>17</sup> These two constitutions, and possibly the third, which states that criticisms of the clergy should be confined to a clerical audience (but refers to preaching rather than writing), could apply to Piers Plowman. The sixth constitution could equally well refer to the Canterbury Tales. There is however no evidence that either poem was regarded as subject to these prohibitions; the assumption that Piers was connected with Lollardy perhaps rests on the connections between Lollardy and the English language, prompted by Wyclif's involvement with vernacular translation of scriptures and other religious works. Anne Hudson<sup>18</sup> examines the relationship between Lollardy and the vernacular, and concludes that the Lollard movement attached importance to the use of the vernacular,<sup>19</sup> but she also comments that books seemed to be merely incidental to heresy charges.<sup>20</sup> Many books are specifically named as heretical by the various Synods through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; Piers Plowman is not among them. Either it was considered orthodox and approved, or simply not regarded as important enough to warrant ecclesiastical examination.

The assumption that Piers Plowman was banned under the 1408 constitutions leads to the view that Caxton avoided printing this apparently popular work for political reasons. King pairs the poem with the Wycliffite Bible as the two most striking omissions from Caxton's printed works.<sup>21</sup> The pairing itself suggests a pre-disposition to associate the poem with Wyclif. Caxton's reasons for not printing the work may well have been more commercial; King notes that Caxton was "satisfying a demand rather than shaping his readers' tastes",<sup>22</sup> and Caxton's market has been shown to be for finely-finished copies of works in the currently fashionable "courtly style".<sup>23</sup> He tended to eliminate old fashioned alliteration in the works he printed, such as Malory's Morte D'Arthur, and would therefore have been unlikely to have chosen an entirely alliterative work. Early sixteenth century publishers also avoided the poem for political reasons, King believes. According to this analysis, the Act of Six Articles in 1547 finally released them from their suspense.<sup>24</sup> No account is taken here of the fact that sensitive or banned material was at this period commonly published abroad and then brought illegally to Britain.<sup>25</sup> Further, A. Wawn suggests that the king's own propagandist publishers, Thomas Bertelet and Thomas Godfray, sought to publish just such material as Piers Plowman is assumed to be by King, the works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which could be used to support Protestant ideology.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the reason for the late publication of the poem, it was a commercial success when published, running to three editions in one year. Here again, although Crowley's commitment to Protestantism is not in dispute, commercial judgement may well have influenced the date of publication. Without greater contemporary knowledge there is always a tendency to impose retrospective views of a work on its early readers. Concomitant with the "Lollard Piers Plowman" view is the assumption



that the original public accorded the poem the high literary status which it has today. There is evidence from the large number of MSS and the degree of comment and correction they contain that it was widely read and enjoyed, along with contemporary works which are now little remembered; but there is little evidence to suggest that it was prominent in the eyes of the fifteenth and sixteenth century legislators.

There is however some evidence to associate the poem with political and religious radicalism in the eyes of some of its readers. This is through "secondary reception" (my own definition), direct reaction to the poem through texts or other forms of response. This must be distinguished from more general response to the figure of the plowman discussed above. There is of course always some difficulty in establishing which responses are direct reactions. The earliest evidence is that of the letters of John Ball to the Essex commons during the peasants' revolt of 1381.<sup>27</sup> Piers the Plowman is mentioned by name, as well as several of the type-names which are common in the poem. Although even "Piers the Plowman" could be simply a type-name,<sup>28</sup> the references to Dowell and Dobet are more explicit. The content of the letter could however be seen as dismissive of the ploughman: "let Piers Plowman go to his work", which may suggest that the poem's injunction to patient poverty is understood but rejected. In this case, John Ball's rebels have more in common with the wastours than with Piers in this reading of the letters. The implication is that they will "do well and ay bettur..." without the help of the ploughman. Interpretation of the letters as response to the poem is therefore not necessarily straightforward.

Another direct response has been suggested by P.L. Heyworth,<sup>29</sup> who identifies a second author in the Rejoinder written in the margins of Friar Daw's reply to Jack Uplande, a Wycliffite tract. Heyworth suggests that the first interpolation represents a glossed or more explicit version of B X 257ff,<sup>30</sup> since it uses the same Biblical text, Matthew 7.5, and employs the unusual image of the "blynde boserde"<sup>31</sup> (B X 272). The argument for this to be a deliberate borrowing perhaps relies overmuch on the assumed "wide currency" of the poem,<sup>32</sup> and on a fairly detailed knowledge of the text among readers. The Matthew text is, as Heyworth comments, a commonplace. G.R. Owst has shown repeatedly the extent to which Langland himself is indebted to the complaint tradition of sermon literature,<sup>33</sup> and there is every reason to suppose that Langland and the interpolator could have drawn independently on this common tradition. This leaves the "blynde boserde". This only occurs in the B-text, and thus in only sixteen surviving MSS. Even given a much larger number of MSS in circulation in the fifteenth century, the chances of the interpolator picking this phrase from the poem, rather than from another source, are reduced. The majority of B MSS contain a line following X 272, deemed spurious by Kane and Donaldson, but there is minimal textual disturbance in the line itself; evidence from the surviving B MSS suggests that none of the many readers were struck by the image, and few by the passage as a whole. Only three comment: Laud Misc. 581, L(B), has a line by the text from B X 254-86, HM 114, Ht(B), has "nota" at B X 269, and Additional 35287, M(B), is slightly more explicit, commenting: "to abbotts and priours" next to the following, spurious, line, which reads: "Ffor Abbotes and for priours and for all manere prelatus" (spelling as M). This comment further highlights a difficulty for the argument: from both the comment and the spurious line it would seem that contemporary readers understood the passage as an attack on the



clergy in general rather than on friars in particular. There are many more explicitly anti-fraternal passages on which the interpolator could have drawn.

Finally, the evidence of versions of the poem in collections may point to a radical reading of the text. CUL MS Ll 4.14, C<sup>2</sup>(B), contains Richard the Redeless running directly on from Piers Plowman in the same hand. A late annotator seems to read the second poem as a continuation of the first. Digby MS 102, Y(C), contains several political poems<sup>34</sup> in the same hand as Piers, which Dr. Anna Baldwin believes may represent reactions to the political passages of the poem.<sup>35</sup> There is contrasting evidence from another collection, that contained in Cotton Vespasian B XVI, M(C), which has a poem against the Lollards and other political poems in one hand, dated fairly early, 1416 (fol. 5a).<sup>36</sup> Three other MSS may suggest that readers linked the poem with political works: the earliest are TCC MS 3.14, T(AC), where the inscription next to the frontispiece illustration reads: "god spede þe plouz & sende us korne Inow", and CCC MS 293, where a slip attached to the flyleaf has the same couplet, a possible reference to God spede the plough,<sup>37</sup> which uses the same rhyme as a refrain; a later example occurs in M(A), where a late hand adds, on a slip after the end of the Prick of Conscience, "a leafe wanting where in conclusion of all, are these 3 verses.

God save the king & speeden ye plough  
And senden the prelattes care ynough  
inough, inough, inough, inough ."  
(between pp. 558 and 559)

This politicised version of the T(AC) lines is in fact the last line of I playne Piers, a tract in verse and prose apparently known as "Piers Plowman".<sup>38</sup>

Some commentators on the reception of Piers Plowman have thus tended to accept the sixteenth century Protestant view of the poem together with an assumption of its literary importance which is not necessarily concordant with the assessment of its early readers. It is also assumed that the "Piers Plowman tradition", fixing largely on the figure of the ploughman as a focus of justified complaint, represents a direct response to the poem. Yet the tradition may have developed independently (the poem itself may have used a traditional figure), or from accepted assumptions about the poem by those who had not read it. Direct secondary response may well exist in some of the political poems of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but these are hard to identify. Perhaps only the response of John Ball makes sufficient reference to the specifics of the poem to be accepted as direct response. Primary reception may be identified as the response of readers through their their comments on MSS and textual changes. This provides more solid evidence for discussion, and a means of testing the conclusions of secondary evidence. This will be the main focus of the dissertation. The theoretical basis for both forms of reception is discussed below.

## ii. Theory

The basis of a reception theory is the acceptance of the role of both readers and historical context in the production of a literary work, a position arising from the rejection of the New Critical approach which focuses on the text alone, and thus implies a timeless and universal status for literature. These fairly modest premises are not necessarily straightforward to apply in critical practice; there



is no ready-made "reception theory" to be applied to the MSS of a fourteenth century poem. The basis of my approach is the recognition of the reader's response at the centre of the act of interpretation; this also involves some definition of a historical audience, especially in the case of a text for which there is only a limited current context for reception. This general approach is increasingly popular, but the critical tools and the historical evidence acceptable for such a study of a particular work remain to be defined by the individual critic. The MSS of the poem provide a wealth of response to the poem; each MS may be seen as an editorial version,<sup>39</sup> a commentary on the text, and each of these editorial versions as a fruitful interaction between text and reader. Modern criticism identifies the ways in which this interaction, involving changes in the communication as a whole, is present even in the reading of a printed text:

... in the space that separates eye from page or ear from mouth, there is a constant possibility of an interference, a misunderstanding, that ...<sup>40</sup> disrupts the presence of meaning" (Colin MacCabe)

Scribal transmission is particularly susceptible to this interaction. To regard this process as an essential part of the literary process, in other words to accept that a text becomes a work of literature only through interaction with its audience, is the basis of criticism through reception; which audience this applies to remains to be defined.

The value of historical readers' comments on medieval literature is increasingly recognised in recent work,<sup>41</sup> but the problems of this approach, generally referred to as reader-response criticism rather than reception theory,<sup>42</sup> are seldom tackled. There is little or no discussion of theoretical issues such as the value of individual and thus possibly idiosyncratic and decontextualised readings, and the

emphasis on readers ignores the possibility of other kinds of reception such as secondary reception in speech and writing, as discussed above. Two recent articles have commented on the value of this kind of reader response with reference to Piers Plowman in particular: R. Dwyer briefly discusses textual variation in Lincoln's Inn MS Hale 150 as a guide to contemporary literary appreciation,<sup>43</sup> and Professor G.H. Russell has considered the marginal guides and comments in some of the C-text MSS, seeing them as "designed to help reading and comprehension" rather than as "a critical commentary".<sup>44</sup> Referring to Chaucer's poetry, and using textual changes as evidence of a reading, B.A. Windeatt sees the scribes offering "line by line a contemporary response".<sup>45</sup> Like Dwyer he concentrates on aesthetic criticism rather than ideological comment or elucidation of original meanings, and assumes a consensus among these early literary critics which is certainly not analogous to literary criticism today. Some of the major problems of reader-response criticism are thus not confronted. Three main areas of difficulty may be highlighted: 1. Avoiding textual interpretation on the basis of early evidence by-passes a key issue of reader response criticism. The sense that literary interpretation is a process of increasing completeness is a pervasive one. Reader-response criticism must, at least theoretically, imply that this cannot be the case, either because each reading or interaction is of equal validity regardless of historical considerations, or because only those early readers with a historically appropriate context of reading are able to comprehend the text. 2. The associated theoretical question of whether text or context of reading is ultimately elucidated is not raised. 3. Finally, given that the value of individual readings is accepted, the assumption of consensus avoids the practical problem of preferring one reading to another; evidence from the Gower MSS has



shown that variety is more noticeable than community of interest:

precise information is to be gathered only from the acceptance of diversity and the explication of the minutiae of each individual case.<sup>46</sup>

Reader-response and reception theorists have responded in various ways to this last difficulty. H.R. Jauss rarely considers the historical reader or reading theoretically, apparently regarding them as a product of the "horizon of expectations" almost as much as the text,<sup>47</sup> and thus as much a construct as the readers of Fish and Iser below; this lack of interest in the individual reader or reading, whether historical or constructed theoretically, may be regarded as a rough distinction between reception theory and reader-response criticism. Jauss rightly feels the danger of regarding the reader only as an objective reading individual and not as part of a historical context. Stanley Fish creates an "ideal reader" whose responses can be measured;<sup>48</sup> Wolfgang Iser posits an "implied reader"<sup>49</sup> encoded in the text, and explicitly rejects what he terms "a history of readers comment."<sup>50</sup> While Jauss does not address the question of the individual reader, the other two approaches seem to me to run the risk of being no more than an elaborate rationalisation of a text-based approach. Paul Strohm warns aptly that "whatever the conceptual advantages of the implied reader, we should not expect it to serve as a "shortcut" in the interpretive process"<sup>51</sup>— These theorists offer a conservative version of a criticism which includes the reader, but will not disturb traditional approaches to a text. Acceptance of either of these two constructs, the implied or ideal reader, means a rejection of any kind of empirical reader-based criticism; this includes both the methodologically questionable practice of asking for readers' reactions,<sup>52</sup> and the use of unsolicited response. There is in addition little consideration of historical context by Iser or Fish.<sup>53</sup>

A completely different approach within reader-based criticism is that of Barthes, who states:

... the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text.<sup>54</sup>

Barthes' statement is prescriptive, implying that readers have not so far been producers of texts. He believes that classical texts allow the reader only limited creative scope. This position, in giving these texts partial autonomy, thus approaches that of Iser. If the statement is accepted as partially true of earlier texts, it provides an approach to the second difficulty raised above. If text is produced by the reader, then text and context are, if not synonymous, at least essentially inseparable. This is implied by another reader-response critic, L. Damrosch Jr., who considers reader-response criticism to be "founded on the phenomenological fact that texts exist only in being read",<sup>55</sup> and by Kate Harris, "meaning is, after all, usage".<sup>56</sup> The logical extreme of this kind of reader-based approach is the acceptance of a literary work which exists in multiple form only at the moment of reading; it can have no objective existence. Elucidation of such a work (the function of the literary critic, rather than literary theorist), either of text or reader, is by-definition impossible, or even meaningless. However, even a critic such as Maccabe, apparently rejecting a hierarchy of meanings, accepts that meaning is conditioned by "... the discourses and institutions of literary criticism",<sup>57</sup> and thus some framework of reference is required by, or imposed upon, the audience. In his Preface MacCabe states:

it is from my own [family] that I have learnt the configuration of exile guilt and mania which compose Irish Catholicism. Without them I would not have been able to read Joyce<sup>58</sup>



MacCabe's experience of the literary process seems to be at odds with his theoretical approach; some knowledge of the author's experience and hence context of writing is essential in order to "read" if not to interpret a literary work. A wholly reader-based approach must be, from a critical point of view, self-defeating. It is important to be aware that it is, of course, impossible to reconstruct a historical context of reception without a subjectivity informed to some extent by current understanding. This is accepted, but approached positively, by A.J. Mirnis:

while we cannot re-experience the past, we can recognise the integrity of past experience and apply the resultant information in evaluating our present position.

However, this problem may be partly avoided by looking directly at contemporary responses to the work. As C.S. Lewis has pointed out,

The stupidest contemporary, we may depend upon it, knew certain things about Chaucer's<sup>60</sup> poetry which modern scholarship will never know

This simple approach seems a long way from Maccabe's infinite interpretations, and from the theoretical complexities discussed above. The two critics demonstrate a characteristic contrast between approaches to audience-based criticism: on one side a straightforward approach suggesting simply a place for the contemporary reader as interpreter of the text, on the other the extreme emphasis on the reader as creator of infinite texts through divergent interpretation. These two critics are ideologically distanced by the desire of the first to reach back to a presumed single and inherent meaning, and of the second to acknowledge and welcome the multiple responses of a variety of readers. The only apparent connection between the two is the consideration of the audience. I have placed these two views together, illustrating the extremes of reader-based criticism, in

order to suggest that both may contribute to critical knowledge; some reciprocal consciousness of approach may be fruitful; a traditional approach is a constant check on theoretical extremes, and the theoretical acceptance of multiple readings needs some reference to context to avoid being self defeating. Even Maccabe, it has been shown, needs some context from which to read a text. The question must be not whether context is an essential component of meaning, but how to define the appropriate context, in other words which audience?<sup>61</sup>

The two approaches may be drawn together by using the possibility of multiple readings as a guide: multiple readings may be acceptable as desirable, but not all audiences will be able to make multiple readings of Piers Plowman, because the formative "institution" or context of reading/writing of the original work no longer exists. In S/Z Barthes' analysis of Balzac's Sarrasine<sup>62</sup> concludes that aspects of the referential code are no longer available to a reader. Their meaning is therefore fixed, and in this aspect the work is no longer a living text. The purpose of a reader based criticism should not be therefore to choose between readings and interpretations, to search for a single lost meaning, but to attempt to show the work at a time when all or most of its codes could generate responses in its readers, and thus to reactivate those codes for later readers. It thus provides not a single interpretation<sup>63</sup> based on the myth of a fixed sociological context, but the multiple responses which define a living text. In effect this is an attempt to show the work itself, not a re-constructed text, but the work produced and re-produced by readings and copyings.<sup>64</sup>



The question of what constitutes a contemporary response in practice remains. For example, a Reformation reading of Piers Plowman would certainly have regarded some aspects of the text as obsolete in terms of both language and reference. Yet some issues of the poem were clearly of immediate importance to some readers at least until the early seventeenth century (in practice a further difficulty arises in dating marginal comments accurately - see Chapter 1.iii below). Jauss rejects any continuity between historical periods, and rejects the idea that within a historical period a particular literary genre follows a diachronic development to fruition and decay. This is, at the least, convenient for the critic, given a division in periods between Medieval and Renaissance/ Reformation, as comments up to 100 years after the production of the work would be of equal validity with those written during the author's lifetime. Post-medieval comment would however be completely rejected if this is strictly applied. Jauss' dissatisfaction with modern criticism is also associated with the attitudes originating in the Renaissance, thus implying a complete divide between medieval and post medieval reception; current limitations in literary theory arise from:

the humanist over-emphasis on the written and printed tradition, a Platonic aesthetics according to which past literature can really be 'present' for us in a book at any moment, and the naively objectivist equation of philological interpretation with the experience of the original reader or hearer<sup>65</sup>

Thus this particular historical division represents, for Jauss, the separation of reader from writer, and the beginning of the autonomy of the text. Whilst sharing with Jauss the belief that the re-constructed text of a medieval work and the "philological interpretation" of it does not represent the work itself, I cannot

accept a rigid definition for the moment at which one literary/historical period gives way to another. Jauss' theory lacks comment on individual variations within society (although a non developmental model of change in literary forms implies constant possibility of variation), but it is individuals who constitute the audience of a literary work, and individuals will not suddenly lose an old context of reception or gain a new one. Clearly, post-Reformation reception of Piers Plowman is likely to differ from that of earlier audiences because of radically changed political circumstances in the area with which the poem is most concerned. This difference does not necessarily imply that the poem has become obsolete however, nor do later responses to the poem demonstrate that uniformity characterised by Barthes as a sign of obsolescence. Of course modern critics do not have uniform responses to the text, and thus for critics at least the poem could still be regarded as a living text. Any attempt at a rigid definition of the period in which responses are valuable thus runs the risk of being simply arbitrary. Yet some definition of a period is essential. Jauss' reference to the "written and printed tradition" may be of use; the printed tradition may be distinguished, since the ability to produce multiple identical copies of a text is almost certain to give a sense of fixity to the text itself which is lacking when copies can only be produced singly and by hand. If there is a cut-off point for reception after which the text is regarded as fixed, there are some grounds for making it the date of the printing of the poem, 1550, although readers of both MSS and the printed text continue to annotate the poem extensively until well after this date.

The reception theory of Jauss concentrates on the responses of works, or even genres, to one another rather than on individual responses to individual works. As stated above, I have distinguished



these two forms of reception as, respectively, secondary and primary reception, and commented that there cannot be the same certainty with Langland as with, for example, Chaucer,<sup>66</sup> that works have been written in direct imitation or response. Nonetheless there is no doubt that a close study of the poems listed in appendix A in relation to Piers Plowman would provide information on the specifics of the political reality (and thus of the context of reception) of the issues Langland addresses. Dr. Anna Baldwin sees a wider area of reception in the events of the fourteenth century itself.<sup>67</sup> Reception should not be seen as limited to the written primary critical or ideological responses of readers, or to the secondary literary responses present in other political works, which simply produces a reliance on another kind of "written ... tradition", that of response rather than text. Responses in terms of actions or speech (though this is seldom recorded, Hugh Latimer's sermon being a rare example) must be accorded equal validity. The only objections here must be the practical ones of identifying responses to Langland's political opinions in particular, and responses to his poem in others written in a similar complaint tradition. The few examples discussed above, not all of which are unchallengable, are the main reliable sources of secondary reception available for the poem.

A further theoretical aspect of reader based criticism warrants comment. Previous work on the audience of Piers Plowman has accorded some importance to the identification of individual early owners.<sup>68</sup> I have not followed this approach for both practical and theoretical reasons. Roughly speaking there can be two approaches to a criticism based on a real (historical) audience: the first is conjecturing a reading from a known reader's ideology and background; the second working back from a given reading to a conjectured individual and

background. Both have some validity; the sparse information of a single comment, probably intended for personal reference, needs some sense of a social context before it is comprehensible, which may be provided by knowing the identity of a reader; the conjectured reading obviously benefits from the corroboration of an actual reader's comment. However, ultimately the reading is of more importance than the reader. Conjecture therefore should preferably work from an actual reading towards a definition of context, which will in turn inform the understanding of further actual readings. To give an example, it is possible to conjecture from the interpolations in the prologue of MS S.L. V.88, the existence of a reader with Lollard sympathies and a considerable interest in the poem.<sup>69</sup> This gives more information about both poem and context than the knowledge that, for example, the first recorded owner of the poem was a Canon of York minster, although it is of some interest to know the poem had potential clerical readers. It is rare (in fact only in a few cases, that of John Ball and possibly John Wells, and later Adrian Fortescue and Stephen Batman) that both the identity of the reader and some indication of their reading are known. It might be possible to have a general idea of a known reader's overall reaction to the poem, but detailed response cannot be conjectured. There is no way of relating the many comments on MSS to one of the few known readers. Methodological problems for according value to known readers include the overwhelming availability of different individual readings compared to the few known readers, and, more significantly, the danger of bias in seeing those named readers as representative.<sup>70</sup> A list of recorded owners to 1550 is appended (appendix A), from which



it may be seen that a majority of these owners/readers appear in the DNB. This typifies the problem of identifying readers, suggesting nothing more than that these well-known readers are more likely to be traced than their less known but more numerous fellows.

The theoretical basis of this dissertation is informed by the seminal work of Jauss on the need for a non-teleological view of literary works, but moves away from him in concentrating on individual responses to a single work. Jauss' views on historical periods have also been modified. Barthes' suggestion that a work may be defined as a "living text"<sup>71</sup> while audiences respond with multiple interpretations provides some guidance for defining an audience with a valuable context of reception, but full acceptance of Barthesian aesthetics is rejected. The audience fulfilling Barthes' criteria is tentatively defined here as the readers and copyists of the poem in MS form, although the value of later responses is recognised. Inevitably, convenience plays a part in the choice of the date of printing as a terminal point, although there is some justification in this choice because of the comparative fixity of text in printing compared with MS production. Some degree of subjectivity in this and in the selection of which later responses are valuable must be recognised but accepted as an integral assumption of a reception theory. The conformity of early medieval commentary in some areas in the text poses a problem for a complete assimilation of Barthes' views. However, conformity of comment, which is, after all, not uncommon among readers of more recent literature, may serve as a useful pointer to material which is already familiar to readers, stimulating recognition, rather than a more questioning response. It is possible to conjecture a different expectation of literature from a medieval audience, so that the kind, though not the degree, of response may

differ from that of a modern audience's response to a current work. A criticism based on response may face objections for over-emphasis on the reader rather than the work, for failing to provide a single interpretation from a multitude of readings and thus failing to illuminate the text. This is a legacy from the New Critical approach which sees the text as autonomous and unchangeable, the only legitimate object of study. Even a modern text, fixed by accurate printing, is subject to editorial control and individual response. A medieval work is even more in the hands of its readers; scribal transmission means that readers literally create the text. A work of literature must be an interaction between audience and text. Thus the object of this study is an attempt to rediscover at least some aspects of Piers Plowman as a literary work through its original audience. In this process, aspects of the poem now dead to a modern audience may be revived.

### iii. Methodology

The evidence for this study comes from the fifty-four<sup>72</sup> MSS of Piers Plowman. There is only one surviving example of extraction from the poem,<sup>73</sup> and as this is a twenty-four line quotation only, lacking both context and comment, it gives little information about how the text was read. This source of reception of the poem, used in similar studies of other works,<sup>74</sup> is therefore not appropriate for Piers Plowman. The general susceptibility of hand-transmitted works to interference by copyists has already been discussed; a further susceptibility in Piers Plowman has been suggested by Professor Kane, because of the several authorial recensions of the poem encouraging scribal changes, and because of the direct link between the content of



the poem and the everyday concerns of the scribes.<sup>75</sup> Another reason suggested is the free verse form allowing fairly easy substitutions, although this is perhaps less persuasive: extensive interpolations appear in the Plowman's Tale, for example, in spite of its regular rhyme scheme, which is frequently ignored. Medieval scribes thus provide ample material for a study of reception, but create the problem of establishing the original text to which the variants respond. Similarly, annotations may respond to spurious rather than original material, resulting in a continuous creative process moving gradually away from the original text. Two forms of primary reception are thus indicated, textual change and annotation. A third form is partly non-verbal: that of layout, organisation, and decoration. A.I. Doyle and M.B. Parkes have argued convincingly for the importance of these factors for the understanding of a work.<sup>76</sup> This last has perhaps a greater initial impact on a reader than the text, since layout and organisation suggest to prospective readers the kind of text they are faced with. These three areas of reception form the main divisions of the study:

1. The activities of the book producer: layout and organisation
2. Annotation
3. Textual change.

Inevitably the division between these areas is at times a fine one. For example, scribal headings, which are sometimes expansive, and occasionally occur in the text, can be discussed as layout, annotation, or textual change. The status of the Latin quotations frequently raises questions of this kind: Latin is often placed in the margin in the MSS, although no consistent pattern for the practice is observable. Modern editorial practice invariably places all the Latin in the text, albeit italicised. In most cases

where it has been marginalised in the MSS however, it clearly acts as a subject heading or gloss rather than as part of the text. The definition of poverty (C XVI 119f) in F(C) exemplifies this process: The section has a marginal heading, "distinctio paupertatis" (fol. 116b), and the Latin text forming each definition is in the margin in identical format, standing beside the English text to which it refers. A large bracket marks off the whole "distinctio", making it clear that the Latin is intended as gloss rather than as text. Other Latin in this MS is generally in the text. Other MSS have Latin as marginal gloss here, notably E(C) (fol. 81a) where "distinctio paupertatis" is boxed in identical format to the usual Latin, but the effect is less marked here as the Latin in this MS is generally in the margin, and there is no mark separating the whole definition from the rest of the text. Skeat, in his C-text, it should be noted, gives "DISTINCTIO PAUPERATIS" as a heading in the text (Parallel Text 431, C-text only), along with other headings now taken as scribal by modern editors. Skeat also gives capitalised headings to the deadly sins, a practise abandoned by Kane and Donaldson, although a majority of the MSS (30) give some kind of heading to at least one of the Sins. Should passus headings be regarded as text? The Athlone text format gives consecutive numbers as passus headings, rather than following the overwhelmingly preferred practice in the MSS of naming passus according to visio and vitae.<sup>77</sup> A few B-text MSS have consecutively numbered headings, but even these almost invariably separate visio from vitae. If these passus headings are understood to be early editors' contributions, then they are an aspect (and an important one) of organisation. The more expansive of them act as rubrication; some are marginal, looking like as well as acting as a gloss. Finally, as comments on the text by a reader, they may be considered as annotation. If, following Skeat, the longer passus headings are



accepted, other headings are variants of an original, but undefined, text. Thus the categories defined above cannot be considered as absolute divisions, but merely as convenient tools for examining reception. Where a particular comment may be discussed under more than one area of reception, this is noted, and cross referenced with other relevant areas. Because such distinctions are not always clear-cut, and only a few examples may be quoted in discussion, it is important to provide evidence from the MSS as fully as possible. This is the function of appendices B-D, providing respectively descriptions of all the MSS; rubrication of all MSS which originated during production; and all readers' annotation from four MSS, Bodleian MS Digby 145 (A+C), BL MS Additional 35287 (B), Bodleian MS Douce 104 (C), and BL MS Additional 35157 (C), together with an annotator's word list from CUL MS <sup>LL</sup>4.14, and glossed words from TCD MS 212. Appendix D, unlike the other two appendices, does not contain evidence from all the MSS, since complete annotations from all the MSS would be an excessive amount of material. The examples selected are those with a particularly large amount of annotation. What constitutes a typical amount of annotation is discussed in Chapter 3.

The MSS are not divided chronologically, primarily for the theoretical reasons discussed above, but also because a chronological approach would pre-impose a structure on readers' evidence. A second, purely practical reason for this is that while dating of the MSS is unsure (see the variety of dates in the MSS descriptions, appendix B), dating of annotation is virtually impossible. The exceptions are some sixteenth century comments, where the hand is distinctly dateable as post-1500, and the three cases where a date is given by the annotator, in K(AC) (1531-2), K(C) (1531), and U(C) (1603). These dateable later (chiefly sixteenth century) ideological comments are quite

distinct from other ideological comments, fewer and presumably earlier (there is a risk here of dating by content and pre-judging the material). Aesthetic comment on the other hand is not so clearly divided into pre- and post-Reformation. Although the later comments are distinguished as such, their evidence is, I believe, still of importance as reception. Piers Plowman was clearly a living text as defined above to these readers in a way in which it is not today. The language was already becoming archaic by the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the date at which the work becomes of antiquarian interest only is determinable not by date but by individual readings. Modernisation appears in Piers Plowman as early as the mid-fifteenth century in Ht(B). Changing a text to make it more accessible to a particular readership must have been a natural process to readers who had no expectation of "standard English", and cannot be a clear indication that the text was regarded as archaic.

The number of readers and copyists involved in this study is over 100, counting all those involved in the original production as contributing at least one reading each. Some readings may well be interrelated: from MS inscriptions it can be determined that Ion Thynne owned at least one or two and read two MSS, Bm(B) and L(B), and from another inscription in L(B) it seems that the poem was passed around by at least one owner, and that comparisons between copies were probably made:

Raffe Coppynger. Memo yat I haue lent to Nicholas  
brigham the pers ploughman which I borrowed of M. Le  
of Addyngton (fol. 93a)

At least two MSS must be involved in this circulation, possibly more, since Nicholas Brigham is a recorded sixteenth century owner of the

two versions of the poem according to Bale<sup>78</sup> rather than a reader only. Further connections appear in O(B) and R(A) where scribes sign themselves respectively:

Nomen scriptoris Johannes Mallyng Plenus Amoris

and

Nomen scriptoris tilot Plenus Amoris.

This may simply be a common tag, but could suggest a relationship. MS U(C) seems to have been in the Aiscough family for some time, and K(AC) is annotated by both Adrian Fortescue and Anne Fortescue, the latter probably one of his two wives of the same name. This number of readers is too few for a statistical approach to the reception of the poem,<sup>79</sup> but enough to give some idea of contrast and consensus. The numbers are few enough to recognise the individual and unique contribution of each MS to the study of the reception of the poem.



## CHAPTER 2: THE BOOK PRODUCERS

...quadruplex est modus faciendi librum.  
Aliquis enim scribit alienam materiam nihil addendo  
vel mutando, & iste mere dicitur scriptor. Aliquis  
scribit aliena addendo sed non de suo, & iste  
compiler dicitur. Aliquis scribit & aliena &  
sua, sed aliena tanquam principalia, & sua tanquam  
annexa ad evidentiam, & iste dicitur commentator.  
Aliquis scribit & sua & aliena, sed sua tanquam  
principalia, aliena tanquam annexa<sup>1</sup> ad  
confirmationem & talis debet dici auctor.

Bonaventura's much-quoted explanation of the process of making a book implies equal contributions of author, scribe, and commentator. He refers to devotional writing in Latin, but the explanation applies to book production in a wider sense. The contribution of the book producers, layout and decoration and rubrication, constitute the first impression made by any work on a reader. Decoration, prior to literary and aesthetic considerations, nonetheless raises expectations which influence judgement, if only initially, and represents at one level an interpretation; the kinds of expectation raised may be divided for convenience into two main areas: considerations associated with expense and expertise of decoration and size of MS, such as the manner in which the poem was read and the status of its readers, and the role of decorative elements as punctuation, the latter more obviously an influence on interpretation. Rubrication, which involves both the wording at passus divisions and in some MSS additional glossation and guidance, represents a direct, and conscious, attempt by the book producers to use their professional skills in providing readers with the means to understand the text, in terms of both form and content.



For the purposes of reception, this kind of guidance provides the means of understanding the book producers' assessment of the kind of work they are presenting, and which elements are most important and interesting to them. Decoration and rubrication both represent an interpretation of the text, which may therefore have a claim to prior treatment. Because of the interrelation of variation to text and layout as forms of reception, and because of the inevitable, though rarely quantifiable, influence of both on subsequent readers, neither has an obvious claim to priority treatment. It is, however, necessary to describe the MSS, the primary material for reception, at the outset. The decision to begin with the book producers as organisers rests on this necessity.

#### i. Analysis of decoration

Before attempting to discuss the implications of decoration it is necessary to establish the kind and level of decoration in the MSS. There has been little detailed discussion of the decoration of the MSS of Piers Plowman, probably because for the most part it is unremarkable. With the exception of V(A) and possibly C(B), the best of them are clear legible copies with some coloured pen flourish at the head of the work, at passus divisions, and at the explicit. The least decorated lack title, passus headings and sometimes divisions, and are uncoloured. There is however considerable variation within these broad limits, which for the purposes of reception warrants closer examination.

The assessment of quality of decoration and other presentational elements risks being highly subjective. To minimise this, and to show as clearly as possible the basis for distinction between levels of

decoration, two methods of assessment have been used (tables 1 and 2). The first divides the MSS into 5 broad categories based on the number of colours used. Colour was chosen since it is an assessable element common to all the MSS, without necessitating consideration of quality, and is also readily comparable with the same element in other MSS. It is also a factor relating directly to cost of production. The table gives some idea of highest and lowest levels of decoration, indicates distribution of MSS between these limits, and lists the MSS in each group. The several footnotes to the table demonstrate the difficulty of this kind of categorisation, once again emphasising the individuality of each MS. The second table shows more precisely the relative distribution of the MSS taking into account all the elements of decoration listed in the MSS descriptions ( appendix B). These are:

1. Type and quality of hand, lines per page
2. Title: wording, size and colour of initial
3. Passus headings: colour, size, whether spaced from the text
4. Distinction of Latin and nouns in the text by colour, script, underlining, or marginal mark
5. Ruling
6. Scribal rubrication in addition to passus headings
7. Paragraphing, here taken to mean any marking of sections of the text by sign or space
8. Additional features, such as red in line initials, elaborate ascenders or descenders, elaboration of catchwords etc.
9. Number of colours
10. Explicit: wording, colour, size, whether spaced from text.

Points from 0-10 are assigned for each element, with some consideration for consistency and quality of execution.<sup>2</sup> This table, unlike the first, cannot give a clear idea of a level of decoration compared with other MSS, since all the elements except 9 are drawn specifically from the Piers Plowman MSS (although they are of course likely to occur in other contemporary MSS), and "quality of execution" is measured relatively only. No. 9 interrelates the two tables.



TABLE 1				
<u>No colour</u>	<u>1 colour</u>	<u>2 colours</u>	<u>3 colours</u>	<u>over 3</u>
E(A)	D(A)	A(A)	St(C)	V(A)
J(A)	H(A)	H <sup>2</sup> (AC)	U(C)	Ch(AC)
L(A)	H <sup>3</sup> (A)	N(AC)	V(C)	F(B) <sup>e</sup>
K(AC)	M(A)	W(AC) <sup>b</sup>		W(B)
S(B) <sup>b</sup>	R(A)	Z <sup>2</sup> (AC) <sup>c</sup>		D(C) <sup>e</sup>
E(C)	U <sup>1</sup> (A) <sup>c</sup>	Bm(B) <sup>d</sup>		I(C)
R(C)	U <sup>2</sup> (A) <sup>c</sup>	Bo(B)		Q(C)
	T(AC) <sup>e</sup>	C(B)		X(C)
	Z <sup>1</sup> (AC) <sup>c</sup>	Cot(B)		
	C <sup>2</sup> (B) <sup>a</sup>	Hm(B)		
	G(B)	Ht(B)		
	M(B)	L(B) <sup>d</sup>		
	O(B)	R(B)		
	G(C)	F(C)		
	K(C)	M(C) <sup>d</sup>		
	N(C)	P(C)		
	S(C)	P <sup>2</sup> (C) <sup>a</sup>		
		Y(C)		

- a. These MSS have an additional colour used once only.  
b. Available on microfilm only.  
c. U(A) and Z(AC) are each regarded as two MSS, since the second section of each MS has been copied at an entirely different time.  
d. An unusually elaborate initial for an MS of only two colours.  
e. These three MSS have an illustration.

Fragments are not included. A total of 54 MSS.

TABLE 2							
20	30.5	40.5	50.5	60.5	70.5	80.5	90.5
-30.5	-40	-50	-60	-70	-80	-90	-100
E(A)	M(A)	A(A)	H <sup>3</sup> (A)	Cot(B)	V(A)		
J(A)	H <sup>2</sup> (AC)	D(A)	R(A)	Ht(B)	Ch(AC)		
L(A)	K(AC)	H(A)	W(AC)	I(C)	C(B)		
S(B)	Z <sup>2</sup> (AC)	U <sup>1</sup> (A)	Bm(B)	P(C)	F(B)	—	
	G(B)	U <sup>2</sup> (A)	B <sub>2</sub> (B)		L(B)		
	E(C)	N(AC)	C <sup>2</sup> (B)		W(B)		
	G(C)	T(AC)	Hm(B)		Y(B)		
	R(C)	S(C)	M(B)		Q(C)		
		U(C)	O(B)		St(C)		
		Y(C)	R(B)		X(C)		
			D(C)				
			F(C)				
			K(C)				
			M(C)				
			N(C)				
			P <sup>2</sup> (C)				
			V(C)				

As in table 1, fragments are not included, and U(A) and Z(AC) are counted as two MSS, giving a total of 54 MSS.

The function of this kind of analysis is to provide some information on readings and readership; the MS characteristics noted, and hence the points system, concentrate on organisation rather than decoration. This is partly because the former is more apparent in Piers Plowman MSS. The majority of MSS in table 2, with a score of 50-60 points, contain the major organisational features, but with little additional decoration. Only the few between 70-80 have additional features of decoration, while those below 30 lack almost all organisational features and are barely, if at all, decorated. Among the high scoring MSS V(A), the "Vernon" MS, stands out visually as the most highly decorated MS, but it scores a low mark within the group, having few organisational features. It is perhaps unwise to make an absolute distinction between decoration and organisation, since their functions are frequently combined, but the lack of additional flourish to most of the organisational features does seem to suggest an emphasis on textual elucidation rather than display.

Size, a factor not taken into account in either table, also tends to suggest reading rather than display, and private rather than public reading: only three are of considerable size, St(C) and C(B) both very large at 36.5 x 25.5cm and 44 x 30cm respectively, and V(A) extremely large at 55 x 39cm, obviously too large to be moved easily or carried around. These MSS were originally all collections: St has now been split up, but C and V are in their original form, substantial collections of monastic origin. It is of course essential to note whether the poem is alone in the MS or part of a collection. Without taking this into account any judgements based solely on V for example would be extremely distorted. From considerations of size the remaining MSS are more likely to have been read privately in the



modern sense; five are very small, paperback size at between 18.5-21 x 12.5-14.5cm ( M(A), U(A), N(AC), D(C) and E(C) ), and the majority are fairly small and easy to handle, between 21-30 x 14.5-22cm. Two other MSS, L(A) and H<sup>3</sup>(A) are "holster" MSS, long and thin, c.30 x 15cm. Again this unusual shape seems suited to private reading. It is in fact an unsuitable shape for the long lines of the poem which are cramped in L(A), in which display is clearly irrelevant. The shape is possibly designed for easy carrying.

From the tables it can be seen that there is no particular relationship between an individual version (i.e. A, B or C) of the text and the level of decoration. Nor do MSS such as Ht(B) and some of the A+C texts which show editorial or scribal attention attract a particularly high standard of decoration. F(B) is interesting in this respect: one of the three MSS with an illustration, it is also remarkable for considerable textual variation, especially around passus divisions, which are eccentric. The decorational scheme as a whole is however highly erratic, with variation in colour and extent of flourish at passus heads. It is characterised by enthusiasm rather than professionalism. The decoration, especially the illustrated initial, which shows some attention to the text and is not merely formalised, seems to demonstrate an interest in the text at particular points rather than an intention to enhance the value of the book.

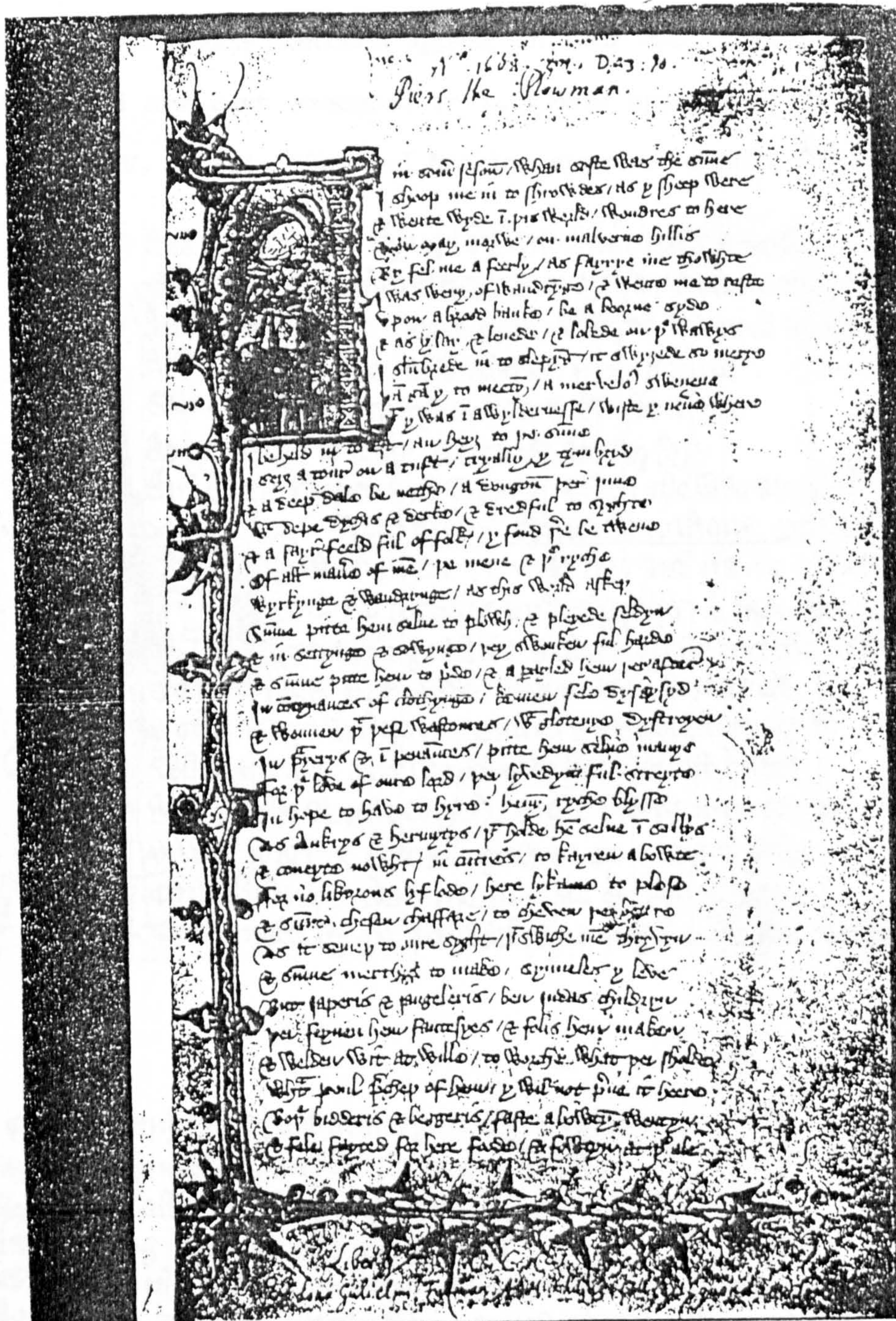
Deterioration in standard and consistency of decoration also suggests that the basics of organisation are more important than decoration. In nearly all of the MSS there is some tendency for decoration to be erratic, or the original scheme is incomplete, and in twenty-seven MSS the decoration is noticeably inconsistent, usually

declining through the book.<sup>3</sup> Completion of the decorational scheme of the MSS cannot have been a priority for book producers - an undecorated or incompletely decorated copy of Piers Plowman was clearly a saleable item. Incomplete schemes are quite common and may signify no more than a poorly organised book trade.

These characteristics of Piers Plowman texts - deterioration, inconsistency, and low level of decoration, are all common in the other works in collections in which the poem appears. There are a few cases however where Piers Plowman is less decorated than other works in the collection; in J(A) red ink and paraph signs are used in all other works, but Piers is uncoloured; in Z(AC) subject headings are frequent in other works but rare in Piers; and H<sup>3</sup>(A) has space for illustration (filled by an annotator with the same kind of attention to the text as a similar amateur illustrator of Piers in D(C)) but none in Piers. All the above are collections which have been compiled at one time, with the exception of the C-continuation in Z(AC). There are on the other hand no cases in which the poem is distinctly better decorated than others in the collection. Nonetheless the finer copies of the work are expertly finished, on high quality vellum, frequently with generous spacing, clear hand and fairly consistent rubrication and overall decorative scheme, although even these are not always complete.<sup>4</sup>

Only three MSS have any original illustration, T(AC), D(C),<sup>5</sup> and F(B). D(C) and F(B) both have an illustration of a sleeper in the first initial. T(AC) has a frontispiece illustration of a ploughman and a helper with a pair of oxen drawing a plough, and an inscription (see above, Chapter 1.iii).








Apart from this professional illumination, several MSS contain small informal sketches by the scribes and illuminators. Some are no more than elaborate doodles (examples of these may be seen in G(C), but several are distinct representations of events or characters in the text. They may perhaps be more readily compared with the amateur illustrations in D(C) than with the professional work in the above three MSS. Such sketches appear in four MSS: F(C), R(B), X(C), and V(C) and are best executed in X. Mede appears in the initial of passus IV, on fol. 10b, and Avarice appears on fol. 2b:

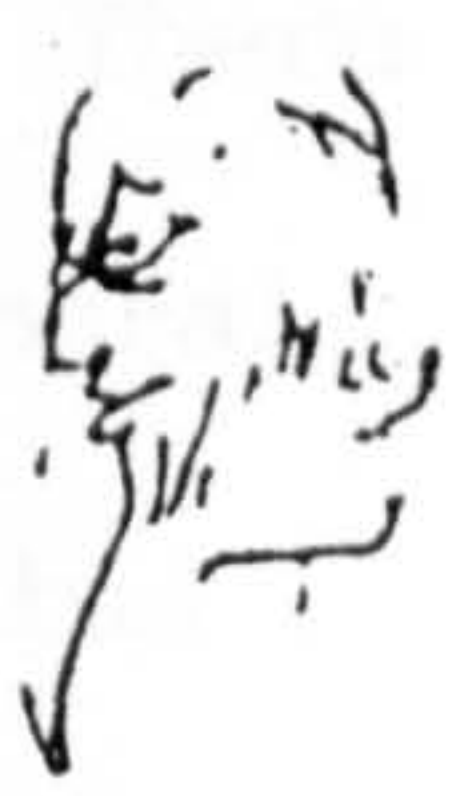
And sayde ope kyng / by qyt but delys amende  
of kyngdom thow heere coneynt / Wolout of kynde kynde  
And doth thynke thow hem / Eorth hymed for end  
alle flesch for sepe / and flouren in to genies  
Sane mede ye mayde / noma dnyte abyde  
do genliche to telle / atreynblede for sepe  
And bothe wepte and wyng / when othe was swynghed  
Passus' tunc de uisione arthur  
This is mede ye mayde / and namo of hem alle  
thow heere dede and wylful / y brouhte byfor ye kyng  
The kyng called a dyle / y can nat his name  
So the mede ye mayde / and maken heere at se  
by that aseye at heere my oune / and cotliche apore  
What man of this world / wat heere louest hader  
And yf othe wouche wyse / and by wyomen consayl  
y wol forgyne heere alle gultes / so me god helpe  
Cotliche ye atreynblede / as ye kyng hyste  
Wool mede by ye anydel / and mydeliche heere honte

[[ heere was mede  
confered



By coneynt sum tyme / and omm tyme by maystie  
y say by ye loueliche / and wouche heere neid as my  
When y was othe / and booz and hadde / ylope wat kynde  
y hadde keyng to bythe of lecherye tales  
Doe lord for thy lere / on lecherye hane in y  
thowme cam coneynt / y can hym nat bythe  
so Gynnygh and hader / one heere hymlede  
he was swelthowd and bawnysh / so rethorlede othe  
And as a lere / lere his othe

[[ heere cam coneynt  
to swelthowd





These scribal sketches, probably executed spontaneously, prove more decisively than the formalised miniatures at the head of the three illustrated MSS that the visual elements of the poem were appreciated by readers. Lack of illustration is not of course entirely distinct from the general low level of decoration of the work. But Piers Plowman shares this feature with Chaucer's works, some of which are fine copies: 79 out of 85 (the figure includes extracts) Canterbury Tales MSS were not intended for illustration, and 21/24 MSS of Troilus and Criseyde are unillustrated.<sup>6</sup> Possibly the formalised miniatures generally used as illustration were not suitable to the themes of Langland and Chaucer, leaving visual response to the varied images of the work to the spontaneous reactions of the scribes and other readers; acceptable purchase cost is, however, again perhaps the most likely reason for the lack of illustration.

Lack of illumination and of the more expensive forms of decoration does not necessarily imply carelessness of presentation. Bm(B) is an example of good use of limited resources. The first initial, blue with formal red flourish extending to top, left and bottom margins, is remarkable for size rather than skill. This is decoration at a level below that of MSS such as St(C) and V(A), but is an attempt to add as much distinction as possible to the work with available materials. Several features of the MS testify to care for presentation: the first letter of each line is touched with red throughout, only one passus heading is omitted (the initial is not omitted), pages are edged with gold, and there is a considerable amount of scribal glossation. There is also little decline in the decoration through the MS. In general, the less highly decorated, mid-range MSS seem to attract scribal rubrication more than their more elaborate counterparts. Detailed scribal rubrication is most pronounced in MSS such as D(A), H<sup>3</sup>(A),

Bm(B), Ht(B), O(B) and Y(B),\* all mid-range MSS - possibly because the more elaborate decorative schemes themselves act in the same way as a rubric, dividing the text, while less elaborate schemes provide more specific help with the text from the scribe. Annotation by readers is more marked among these less decorated MSS, possibly because of the deterrent effect on casual comment of a well laid out MS. On the other hand these copies may have been produced with this kind of readership in mind, readers who are likely to be concerned with the text (and thus likely to comment on it), and not with the level of decoration as long as the text is legible and clearly set out. Thus cause and effect are interwoven, and impossible to distinguish with any certainty.

An analysis of this kind which orders the MSS into a hierarchy according to standards of decoration runs the risk of associating the status of the text with that of the MS book. Clearly the more expensive productions would have had either monastic or fairly wealthy lay owners. Since these MSS are few, an assumption might be made that the poem was mainly owned by the middle classes, and that consequently it was not highly regarded. However it has been established that even wealthy book owners frequently owned cheap books,<sup>7</sup> often not listed by name in wills and probate inventories in which financial value is the primary consideration. It is impossible therefore to conjecture status of text (in terms of probable ownership) by reference to expense of production. The kind of decoration and its emphasis can, on the other hand, suggest some of the ways the poem was read, and

\* X(CC), heavily rubricated and at the upper end of the decorative range, is an exception.



what the book producers regarded as the most suitable manner of presentation of the work to the reader. From the above analysis the evidence of the decoration of the surviving MSS suggests that organisation and clarity were the priorities, in short that the MSS were designed not for display but to be read.

## ii. Passus divisions: incipits and explicits

The process of setting out a text possibly exerts a greater influence on future readings than the generally fairly minor changes to the text. Passus divisions and headings are of course a form of rubrication, occasionally including comment on the subject of the passus and, as such, cannot be seen in isolation from other rubrication in the MSS, but as a part of an editorial scheme for the whole text. However, passus divisions are a form of rubrication common to all the MSS (with a few exceptions); they are thus likely to represent comment on an established authorial pattern (whereas other rubrications may have arisen entirely independently), and are readily comparable with one another. Passus divisions are also distinct from other rubrication in that their placing, which is not always consistent, affects the text. Other rubrication, with the possible exception of some interlinear glosses, does not, usually being simply in the form of marginal subject headings. The text around passus divisions is subject to contamination, as editors or scribes attempt to make the divisions more distinct, to smooth some of the author's more abrupt transitions, or in some cases, to rationalise misplaced headings. Here, all three major forms of interpretation available for analysis of reception, annotation, textual change, and layout, are closely interrelated. Because of the distinct

characteristics of these main divisions of the text, they are discussed here separately from other rubrications; Passus headings, treated separately, also yield some information about the different kind of reception accorded to the three texts. All rubrication is, however, listed together in Appendix C, which provides the main reference material for this chapter. Passus divisions and headings are treated with a considerable degree of variation among the MSS; the importance of this kind of interpretation to readers is testified by the amount of supplementation to, or completion of, passus headings by annotators and correctors. This section will concentrate on the headings and placing of divisions originally in the MSS, rather than the additions of annotators; however, the process of naming and organisation is part of the issue of reception as a whole, and occasionally necessitates a broader frame of reference.

Incipits and explicits, framing the work, are obviously related; the kind of information each provides is, however, usually different. Many MSS have no incipit beyond a more or less elaborate first initial; explicits on the other hand are generally more informative, and frequently give a title to the work. This is a common feature of contemporary MSS, and may well be a natural result of scribal transmission: by the end of a substantial work, a scribe would be more able to give a description of the contents than at the beginning. This simple explanation does not, however, take into account the common procedure of MS production, where titles and other elements of organisation are added together, after the scribe has completed the main text. Passus headings, especially the first passus, also demonstrate this tendency to be named retrospectively (i.e. by "explicit" rather than "incipit"). Only one MS, R(A), names the first section as "prologus" at the head of the work. As this is an A-text



it is possible that "prologus" refers to the whole poem, anticipating the BC continuation. Skeat makes this suggestion,<sup>8</sup> which is given some weight by other indications of the anticipation of, or knowledge of, BC implied in A-text headings,<sup>9</sup> and in the explicit of this MS "explicit do well", when *dowel*, *dobet* and *dobest* are all mentioned at the visio/vitae division. However, the placing of the word "prologus" below the main part of the title, and the degree to which it is abbreviated (indicated here by underlining; the main title is not abbreviated), makes this somewhat conjectural. Two other MSS, K(AC) and G(B), give a name to the first passus. The remaining MSS, if passus are named at all, give an explicit or name the prologue by implication of the following passus heading. As a result of this retrospective naming, especially if it can be seen as a result of greater familiarity with the work, explicits are generally more important records of first hand reception than incipits. Nevertheless, the incipits that provide a title are valuable records of reception, possibly reflecting contemporary received opinion about the poem.

Of the fifty-four surviving MSS, ten are damaged at the beginning. Thirty of the remaining forty-five have only an initial to distinguish the start of the work; four have no distinguishing sign at all, and eleven have some form of wording, including two with a heading on the flyleaf. These are titles which are part of the original production; as with other features of layout, titles are frequently added by readers; nine MSS have had the title Piers Plowman (or close variant) added by a reader, either supplying a title where none existed, or once - in F(B) - replacing a faded original title. One of the added titles is worthy of notice: this is the descriptive title given by a reader to MS K(C):



This book is clepped: Sayewell, Doo well, Doo  
Better & Doo Best (flyleaf).

This corresponds to the kind of information usually available from passus headings or explicits rather than incipits. This is a defective text, consisting only of II 217 - XV 66, and bound in that form in 1531, with a preface by "S.B.", identified by Skeat as Stephen Batman of Trinity College Cambridge.<sup>10</sup> Because of the damaged state of the text it is possible that the owner had no idea of any original title of the poem. In spite of the large number of MSS, he may not have known of the poem in its complete form, as his final comment suggests:

I wolde this passus were not the laste  
Although the work be hard to finde  
Yet it is good for a Christian minde  
(fol. 62a)<sup>11</sup>

He may not have associated his MS with a poem he had only heard of rather than read. This title, unlike others, is thus a reader's attempt to express the contents of the poem, possibly without the influence of received opinion. It more closely reflects the precise concerns of the greater part of the poem than the usual title, Piers Plowman.<sup>12</sup> This is a considerable degree of conscious interpretation. The title page continues:

Soucht [sic] a booke, as diserveth the reding  
Bookes of Antiquiti are welbe stowed one those  
whose Sober staied mindes can abyde the reding but  
comonly ffranktik braines suche as are more readye  
to be pratlers than parformers seing this booke to  
be olde rather take it for papisticall then Else. &  
so many bookes com to confusion.  
Esaye 1531.

This is quite different from the rather perfunctory beginning of the majority of MSS, including the contemporary MS K(AC), which was copied 1531-2. It prefigures the kind of introductory remarks and guidance given in Crowley's editions, and is all the more interesting in having

a pre-printing date.<sup>13</sup>

The sense of difficulty with the language, but of the worth of the book and of exhortation to the reader, expressed in the title page and concluding comments of K(C) is similar to Crowley's prefatory comment in all three editions (here taken from the first edition, BL C.71 c.29):

The Englishe is according to the time it was written in, and the sence somewhat darcke, but not so harde, but that it may be understande of suche as will not sticke to breake the shell of the nutte for the Kernelles sake.

The expansive title of K(C), interestingly, does not refer to the dream vision form of the poem, a constant reference in passus divisions, especially in B and C texts. Among the eleven surviving original headings only two, St(C) and V(C)<sup>14</sup>, mention Will, giving the wording familiar from the visio/vitae division:

hic incipit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman,

and only two others mention the vision at all, G(B):

hic incipit petri pl[ ] de visione liber primus

and K(AC), which has a flyleaf title, Piers Plowman and a heading:

primus passus de visione petri plowghman.

The other headed MSS either have "Piers Plowman" with various spellings (three MSS + two on flyleaves), or a variant of

Hic incipit liber qui vocatur pers plowman  
(four MSS),

with only N(C) entirely in English:

Here byggyneb þe boke of Pyris plowman.

There seems to be no relationship between incipit and explicit of a particular MS. There are for example nine MSS which conclude with



explicit liber vocatus pers plowman

(or variant), but none of the MSS with a similar heading end with these words. In fact, of the eleven MSS with headings, only three, Ht(B), H<sup>3</sup>(A) and O(B), mention Piers Plowman in the explicit. Since both incipits and explicits can provide a name for the poem this lack of uniformity perhaps supports the suggestion that each represents a different range of knowledge about the text, or reaction to it, on the part of scribe or editor.

Headings thus provide a fairly small amount of information for the purposes of reception. The usual modern title, Piers Plowman, predominates, but surviving headings are represented by a very small proportion of the MSS; for the most part MS editors and scribes seem to have been content to mark off the beginning of the work by some distinguishing sign, by setting the work at the head of a new page where the poem is part of a larger compilation, or by having blank leaves surrounding the work, as in the case of M(A), which is one of only four MSS with no distinction at all at the head of the work. Distinction from following works at the end of the poem is also generally made by leaving blank at least the rest of the page on which the poem ends, or clearly marking the start of the new work. One notable exception is C<sup>2</sup>(B), in which Richard the Redeless follows Piers with no title (although on the following page, as Piers concludes at the foot of a page). Richard is in the same hand as Piers, has identical layout and ornament, and is divided into passus with an identical format. The conclusion of Piers is recognised by the scribe by a small "explicit", in the main ink but touched with red, following immediately on from the main text; Richard however has no heading. A close relationship between the poems is either assumed or deliberately implied by the scribe, especially as the other items in

the MS, all by the same scribe, are clearly distinguished from one another. The MS is fairly early, dated as belonging to the first half of the fifteenth century by Kane and Donaldson,<sup>15</sup> and thus represents an early link between Piers and the more explicitly political poems of the "Piers Plowman tradition". A sixteenth century commentator links the two poems by underlining words in both and including them together in a glossary later in the MS.<sup>16</sup>

Although most explicit demonstrate greater knowledge of the contents of the poem than headings, several MSS also indicate that scribes had little idea of the length of the poem. This does suggest that, even if headings are generally added in a later process (and this is not apparent in all cases), they may still be the result of immediate response to the poem rather than of a preconceived formula. The best example of this is E(C) which concludes:

Explicit passus secundus de dobest incipit passus  
tercius.

In this MS, headings are provided by the main scribe - space is left for initials but the second process of decoration was not carried out. The error can be explained in terms of the mechanical process of scribal copying, where the usual formula for the end of a passus is copied automatically. The scribe's exemplar may have concluded at the foot of a page, in which case it would not be immediately apparent that this was the end of the poem. This explanation does not however rule out the possibility that the scribe was responding to the text. There are at least two possible ways in which this response may be interpreted; firstly, the final lines may seem inconclusive: they initiate a search for Piers Plowman, and are not dissimilar to the last lines of passus XXI, which also ends with waking and writing. It is reasonable to suppose that the scribe might expect another passus



and another dream vision to complete the search for the ploughman. Secondly, the scribe may have been aware of the continuous revision of the poem, and may have expected that more material would be available from other sources. The seven A+C texts and other composite MSS such as Ht(B) testify to the wish of MS compilers to "complete" the poem with material from later revisions. Kane suggests that the fluid state of the text may be one reason why Piers is particularly subject to scribal intervention.<sup>17</sup> These might seem large conjectures from the evidence of a single MS; however, E(C) is simply the clearest example of a tendency apparent in ten MSS of the B- and C- texts, all of which conclude with some form of the words:

"explicit passus secundus de Dobest"

One other MS has this wording, with the addition of "et vltimus", which might refer to dobest, or to the poem as a whole. In L(B) the rubricator's guide has "ij<sup>us</sup> de dobest", which, as XX is named "primus de dobest", implies that, like the scribe of E(C), the guide assumes another passus is to follow. The rubricator however corrects the error, concluding with the usual B- text ending,

"Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman"

These two endings in one MS demonstrate the two possible processes of providing headings - the first working consecutively through the MS in the same way as a scribe would, probably indicating immediate response to content, the second more considered, based on knowledge of the length of the text as well as total content, and probably decided in advance. L(B) and R(B) are the only two B MSS with wording referring to passus II of Dobest. The passus numbering in R(B) is eccentric throughout, so that Dobest II could refer to a following or preceding passus. Thus, no A-texts and only a few B-texts are involved in confusion over the end of the poem. This possibly reflects awareness

of the incompleteness of the C-text revision, although the considerable conformity in the explicit of each text may also suggest that the explicits were transferred faithfully from the copy text.

The conclusive ending of the A-text in comparison to BC is reflected in the largely uniform recognition of an ending in the MSS. However, some A-text explicits imply knowledge of the BC continuation. The heading of R(A), discussed above, may refer to the whole of the A-text as a "prologue" to BC. The explicit to M(A) reads:

Explicit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest

with similar implications. The visio/vitae division is headed "...hic incipit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest", and there are no intervening passus headings. It is thus most likely that this refers to the whole "vitae" section of this text, once again implying a continuation to which this section is a prologue. J(A) names passus XII "passus tercius de dowele", whilst the visio/vitae division refers to Dowel, Dobet and Dobest as do all six of the A-text only MSS which include standard wording for the division, and all of the A+C MSS with the exception of the eccentric MS Z.

Not all explicits are informative. Some are as perfunctory as the beginning of the poem, three of them just "explicit", one "explicit hic", and three others with similar headings including the particularly uninformative "explicit hic opus hoc" (Cot). Two complete MSS have no explicit at all, while three MSS end imperfectly with no apparent reason (one of these, St(C) adds "amen" to the last line of the text, XXII 87). These MSS are in the minority however - only five MSS have no explicit or equivalent mark. In all cases some space is left before the start of the next work. This compares with



thirty-four MSS with no heading, four with no distinction at all, the remaining thirty with some mark, initial, or space for initial. As with incipits, the name "Piers Plowman" predominates in explicits, occurring in eighteen MSS (including the explicit to the A-text section of Z) - the largest group but not an overall majority of MSS. It is in fact the very consistent B-text explicits which form most of this group. Ten of the eighteen mention Piers, and eight of these use the formula:

explicit hic dialogus petri plowman

"Piers Plowman" as a title is not necessarily particularly informative; other "Piers Plowman tradition" works are also given this title (see above, Chapter 1.i, note 38); in one of the MSS, R(C), "Piers Plowman" heads Piers the Plowmans Crede. Nevertheless it is clearly the figure of Piers the Plowman which provided the key image of the poem for early readers. There are several names given to the work; it is variously "liber" (four MSS), "visio" (two MSS), "Tractatus" (two MSS), "opus" (one MSS) and "dialogus" (eight B-text MSS). "Opus" and "liber" are very general; "visio" needs little comment, merely suggesting an emphasis on the dream-vision form of the poem, and possibly a suggestion that it contains visionary prophecy. "Tractatus" (treatise), however, suggests that the work is discursive, contains an argument, a sense even more strongly suggested by "dialogus" with its implications of debate. From these two names can be inferred either the impact of particular parts of the text (since, for example, passus I, and B VIII-XVII might aptly be described as "dialogus"), or a sense of the position of the poem in fourteenth century polemic.

Consideration of explicit leads to the question of endings as a whole. Scribes and editors are not always content to confine their comments to the explicit itself, outside the framework of the poem, and occasionally register their responses to the poem through additions to the last lines. Two C MSS, St and V, which end imperfectly, are unusual in that no attempt has been made to complete them, either by the scribe or by later readers. Of the three texts of the poem the A-text is particularly susceptible to continuation, probably because of its short length, most obviously in the form of the addition of a C-conclusion, but also in several shorter contributions. The unusual A-text section of Z(AC) (henceforward referred to as Z) is either an ingenious remoulding of A-text material, or, as persuasively argued by Rigg and Brewer,<sup>18</sup> an early authorial version. This text is completed by a 99 line "conclusion" called "Q" by Rigg and Brewer followed by C X-XXII. This "conclusion" is close to A VIII 89-184 (82 om.), with two additional lines at the end, A 95-6 contracted to one line, Latin lines misplaced, and other minor variants. There are two noteworthy variants, the first at Q 156 (A 152); the line reads "And how the prest improued it to be pure resoun" (A-text "impugned"), and the complete change of meaning suggests considerable carelessness on the part of the scribe, although the variant could have arisen from some connection with BC, where the word reads "preued". The second major variant is at the end of the A-text section, before the two additional lines. The second half of Q 189 substitutes: "We dede as he vs bad and tawthe" for A 184 "we did as he hizte". This variant also occurs in J(A) where the whole line is altered. It is thus possible that the Q continuator copied this error from a corrupt source; Q could of course be the source



(probably indirectly) for the corruption in J(A). The two entirely spurious lines follow, common concluding remarks in the form of a couplet:

Q 190-1 And þat it so mote be to God preye we alle,  
To vs and alle cristin God leue it so befalle  
Amen  
Explicit vita et visio petri plowman.

The explicit is interesting, including similar wording to other MSS, including "vita et visio", but sufficiently aware of the contents of the A section of Z to make "vita" refer to Piers Plowman. This is more likely however to be an influence from other MSS than an independent assessment of the contents of the poem, since either an A-copy-text or close knowledge of A can be inferred by the continuation itself.

Among other, more conventional A-text MSS the desire to add personal comment to the end of the text can be seen in M(A), where six lines are added:

For þey I rede alle men þat on criste be leuyn  
Asken mercy of god for here misdedes  
And coueiten non clergiene catel on þis erþe  
But alwey to seruen god & hendyn in hise werkys  
And þat he graunte vs þe Ioie þat euere schal lastyn  
With pers þe plowman to wonyn in his blysse Amen  
Amen

Explicit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest.

The similarity of these lines to the spurious lines from Z, quoted above, is apparent; both use commonplace prayer elements such as the reference to Christians. The longer contribution from the scribe of M however pays closer attention to the form of the poem, using alliteration in the third and fourth lines, avoiding rhyme (unlike D(A) quoted below), referring to specific elements of the poem such as the covetousness of the clergy, drawing in Piers Plowman, appropriate





There is only one similar addition to a C-text MS, rather different from the A-text additions, consisting of six lines following the explicit of W(AC), a text which contains many variants. The last two lines are fairly general. The preceding four are a compilation of references from the poem:

And when I was wytterly awaked I wrote all thys dreame  
And theys metellys yat I met on Malverne hyllys  
In a seysoun of sommer as I softe nappyd  
How yat people after ther power would passen after dowell  
that ys treysure moost tryed and tryacle at neede  
Now god grawnt vs hys grace to make a good end  
And bryng vs al to ye blysse as he bowghte vs on ye roode

Most of the references are to the visio. The most obvious effect is to draw the sections of the poem together by echoing the first lines, which have been echoed by the first lines of the vitae, while the specific reference to place ("Malverne hyllys") brings the dreamer firmly back into the waking world, as does the repeated reference to awakening, with its qualifier, "wytterly awaked". These conclusions may be seen as expanded explicits; they are responses to the poem by scribes who, having become engaged with their work, wish to make some record of their involvement. Other scribes simply give their name and the date, and the scribe of D(A) is clearly more affected by the poem as labour than involved with the text, concluding:

Now of þis litel book y have makyd an ende  
Goddis blessing mote he have þat drink wil me sende.

Passus XII of the A-text deserves some attention here. The last nineteen lines are almost certainly spurious, but Kane believes the remaining 98 may be authorial:

wholly or partly authentic, representing wholly or partly an imperfect<sup>19</sup> or abortive continuation of the poem by the author.

Accepting this, the last nineteen lines, extant only in R(A), may be seen as a further example of the kind of conclusive material discussed





reference to the dreamer from the text. The suggestion mentioned by Kane that John But may have been in a position to know Langland, and thus to know of this death at first hand, "the author of a notable contemporary poem would...scarcely have been described as dead unless the fact of his death was known"<sup>22</sup> would be more convincing if the death of the dreamer (rather than the author) were not such a convenient way of "making an end", one which John But may even have borrowed from the final passus of BC as "deep drogh neiz" (B XX 200). Other differences between this and the other added conclusions are the open declaration that another writer "made his ende" (l.109), together with the name of this writer (l.106), and that of the king (l.113). This kind of information in the other MSS is more usually placed after the explicit. In this MS the scribe also signs a name after the explicit, "Tilot plenus amoris". The concluding prayer (ll.110-117), is common to all these endings and occurs variously before and after the explicit - in W(AC) all the additional material is after the explicit, and H<sup>3</sup>(A) has a prayer both before and after. These links between informal response and formal post-explicit information demonstrate the connection between these two forms of extended explicit.

## ii c. Authenticity

Incipits and explicits cannot be considered apart from other passus headings. In particular some of the A and C text explicits, together with A and C passus numberings, make more distinct in their wording the separate visio and vitae portions of the text than do most B-MSS, many of which employ simple consecutive numbering schemes, usually with the exception of the visio/vitae division itself. This too involves giving titles to the work, and indicates a divergence in

response to the different texts of the poem: it can be inferred that A- and C- texts were not considered as a single complete book in the same way as B-texts. The comparative uniformity of B-text explicits further suggests this distinction. The similarities in organization of A and C MSS explains the editorial decision to supplement seven A-texts with C-text, rather than B-text conclusions.

Because of these distinctions between the B system of rubrication and the systems of A, C, and A+C, the assumption that the traditional visio and vitae rubrics have any authorial basis has been challenged in a recent article by Robert Adams on the B-text rubrics.<sup>23</sup> It is clear from the more extended rubrics that some editorial intervention has taken place; in at least one MS, N(AC), this is apparent from a reference to the "author" in the third person. It is obviously essential for the purposes of reception to make some kind of decision about what constitutes the original organisation, in order to define responses to it. Adams cites the variation in practice among B-text MSS and five variational types are defined, implying confusion among the scribes about these divisions of the text. It is suggested that these rubrics are the result of gradual contamination through accretion, possibly originating from a single heavily rubricated B-version MS, and that this may even have resulted from the matching of the three so-called "vitae"<sup>24</sup> to "pairs of the poem's outer dreams".<sup>25</sup> This of course assumes the rubrication to have originated in a B-version MS. Six B-version MSS, defined as types 4 and 5, have little or no rubrication other than passus divisions: S and M divide at VII/VIII only (type 4) and O, C<sup>2</sup>, R and F have passus divisions only (type 5). Reference to Schmidt's stemma for the B-version MSS<sup>26</sup> shows that, whereas the other ten MSS are found only among the  $\alpha$  tradition, the six MSS occur on both  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  branches; the  $\beta$  branch,



considered the more reliable by Schmidt, consists only of R and F, both type 5 MSS. The divisions of these unrubricated MSS are therefore preferred.

There are good reasons for thinking that the present form at least of the rubrics is editorial rather than authorial. Perhaps the greatest is simply the increasingly widespread practice of ordinatio during the middle ages,<sup>27</sup> which point is not mentioned by Adams until his concluding paragraph. However there are some objections to Adams' approach: firstly, his scholarly appraisal of the likelihood of the rubrics being authorial is preceded by a critical decision about the usefulness of the rubrics for interpretation, which as Adams admits, may be equally applicable to the division into passus and dreams. There is the possibility here of pre-judging the evidence of the MSS. The main doubt about authorship seems to be based, firstly, on no more than the diversity among B-version rubrics; if diversity is grounds for rejection, much of the text must be rejected; and, secondly, the presence of the type 4 and 5 MSS on both branches of Schmidt's stemma. Presumably the widespread presence of the antecedents of these few MSS indicates that there is more likelihood of this format being original. Adams refers to "the theoretical objection that an ordinatio may have its own filiation apart from the text it divides"<sup>28</sup> only to dismiss it, even though it is central to another part of his argument, which explains the discrepancies between the guides and completed rubrics in MS L.<sup>29</sup> There are one or two other minor examples of the pre-disposition to prefer the type 4 and 5 rubrics, such as dismissing as "an anomaly"<sup>30</sup> the curious rubric at the end of MS R, "passus ius de dobest" (fol. 101b), and failing to observe the similar guide (not followed by the rubricator) in L(B), "ius de dobest". These explicits, implying a following passus, may

be compared with the ending of C MS E which concludes "Explicit passus secundus de dobest incipit passus tercius", and the A MS R which concludes "explicit dowel", having begun passus IX with a reference to Dobet and Dobest as well as Dowel. The reference to Crowley's summary of the poem which divides the poem by passus only further suggests predisposition to reject the rubrics; Crowley is thus assumed to be somehow a more informed editor than the original editors of the poem.<sup>31</sup> Adams' argument is based solely on the words of the rubrics; however, ornament, too, is highly significant in dividing the text; to a reader, extensive wording in plain ink may be less striking than a distinctive scheme of decoration or page layout. One B MS, Y, uses fairly elaborate ornament to distinguish each of the traditional four parts of the text, a gold initial with blue and red flourish, and an eagle with a monogram L at the foot of the page. Except for the wording at the divisions themselves, the rubrics make no reference to the parts of the text, passus numbers running consecutively. The editor, however, clearly considered these divisions significant - the overall effect of the MS scheme of decoration is of distinct division into the four parts. A similar practice of additional ornament for the divisions occurs in three C-texts MSS, D, F and N.

Comparisons with A and C text rubrics point up what is perhaps the strongest objection to Adams' approach; his concentration on the B-version MSS. Clearly, for Adams, in line with the predominant trend in university teaching, Piers Plowman and the B-version are synonymous. The other versions are only represented in a highly conjectural and unsupported suggestion in the notes that B-version rubrics developed before those of A. His article is invaluable in demonstrating clearly and effectively the difference between the



rubrication of the B-version and that of AC; the rubrics of these in turn can be distinguished from one another. Adams points out, interestingly, that the word "vita" does not appear in any B-version rubric, and that the term "visio" seems to refer to the whole poem. A more complete picture of the significance of this emerges from examination of the rubrics of A- and C-version MSS. The C-version rubrics are more consistent in their use of the Dowel, Dobet and Dobest theme, the only two areas of contention being, firstly, which passus is the first of Dobet: for six C only MSS, D, I, P<sup>2</sup>, U, X and Y, and five A+C MSS, Ch. H<sup>2</sup>, K, N and T, this is passus XVIII, and for the remaining ten<sup>32</sup> C and 2 A+C MSS this is passus XVII; and, secondly, whether to count the first passus of Dowel as a prologue, a standard A text practice with one exception only, the A+C MS K. The six C-text MSS which indicate a prologue to Dowel (D, I, P<sup>2</sup>, U, X, Y) begin Dobet at passus XVIII, thus ensuring that the last named passus of Dowel is septimus. Thus, consistency of passus numbering seems to be more important than matching the division to the structure of the poem itself. This is not so consistently borne out in the A+C MSS, but their evidence is necessarily confused by the meeting of A and C versions in this portion of the text. C-text rubrics, like those of B, make no mention of the word "vita". The word occurs only in eight A texts, A, D, R and J among A-text only MSS, and Ch, H<sup>2</sup>, K and T among A+C MSS.<sup>33</sup> It is curious that the word "vita", occurring only in A-version MSS, has exerted so strong an influence over readers and critics of the poem. Twelve of the seventeen A- and A+C-version MSS have the "visio/vitae" division at passus VIII/IX. Of the other five, all A-version only MSS, three have damaged or entirely missing text at this point (H, H<sup>3</sup>, E), while the remaining two (V and L) have no divisions whatsoever. Four A-text MSS, J, M, R and U, and four A+C text MSS, Ch, H<sup>2</sup>, K and T, call the first part of the poem

"visio". Among C-version MSS, however, the word "visio", as in B-version MSS, is applied to the whole poem, although in a different manner; unlike the rubrics of B-version MSS, those of C imply two visions, but make the connection explicit; the standard rubric for passus IX/X, existing in 15 out of 18 C-version MSS<sup>34</sup> runs thus:

Explicit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman  
hic incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de dowel

(or close variant). This rubric connects the two sections of the book not only by the continued use of the word "visio" as opposed to the A-text's "vita", but by calling these visions "de Willelmi" in both explicit and incipit at the division, and even more emphatically "de eiusdem Willelmi". Thus, although B-text rubrics are more erratic than C in their use of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, and in the use of simple consecutive numbering throughout imply a perception of the poem as a single work,<sup>35</sup> the C rubrics are perhaps more deliberately careful to link the two sections of the text. It is in fact only the A-text MSS in which the rubrics effect a complete split between the two parts of Piers Plowman. One A-version MS refers to passus X as "primus passus in secundo libro", while the extensive wording of N(AC) at passus VII/IX,

Passus nonus de visione & vltimus et hic desinit.  
Et de cetero tangit auctor de inquisitionibus de  
Dowel Dobettre & Dobest Sicut patebit speculantibus  
(p.56)

could imply that the text following is another work by the same author. In this MS the text following, C X ff, is in effect just that, and this may have been the reasoning of the first compiler of this A+C text. Unlike BC all the A MSS (including A+C MSS) rubrics name all three "vitae" at the passus VII/IX division; four A (R, U, D, J) and four A+C rubrics (Ch, H, K, T) add Wit and Reason, though it should be noted that four A MSS, A, J, R and U, name subsequent passus



with a reference to Dowel only. This extensive wording at the division is more similar to the title of a whole book than a passus division. The A-text practice of including a prologue, numbering passus from passus X, also suggests a new, separate work. B and C mention Dowel only, obviously referring either simply to the next passus or at most the next few passus. Given this uniquely emphatic way of dividing the text among A-version rubrics, it hardly seems likely that these could have developed from the rubrics of BC.

A further objection to Adams' approach is his assumption that his preference for passus divisions only has some kind of objective status which the decisions of the early editors of the text have not; the editorial decision to omit the rubrics is referred to as "caution"<sup>36</sup>, whereas it is in fact as significant an editorial decision for the reading of the poem as the decision to include them. The rubrics are characterised by Adams as "useless" and "the wrong-headed offspring of some medieval editor"<sup>37</sup> making explicit an attitude, implicit throughout, that the sophistication of modern criticism results in a far greater understanding of this fourteenth century text than that of its early, near-contemporary, readers and editors. Whatever our assessment of the value of the rubrics as critical tools for the interpretation of the text, their acceptance, and no doubt extension, by a majority of medieval editors should give them some kind of status for consideration of the poem, and perhaps raise the possibility that they at least originated from authorial guidance. It is unlikely, though possible, that these rubrics, so consistently used in A and C MSS, should have arisen entirely from the references in the text to Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, and from the editors' understanding of the change in direction of the text at what has come to be known as the visio/vitae division. If this were the case, considering the

consistency of the use of the rubrics in AC, it is even more unlikely that it could have risen independently among the different MSS, and if not authorial must have come from a single MS exercising an extremely powerful influence over the whole MS tradition.

The "visio", in form if not in name, is well-attested by MS evidence from all three texts, and reconfirmed by modern critics, as a clearly defined structural part of the poem. In all but the rubricated A-text MSS, the division into Dowel, Dobet and Dobest is less consistently defined. This lack of clarity may reflect the merging of themes of the poem, recognised by medieval editors as well as modern critics. If, however, the rubrics are seen as originating in the A-version, another possibility arises: the A-version heading for the second section of the poem, including all three "vitae", seems to refer to the whole of the remaining text (three or four passus); the B- and C-versions, taking their rubrics from A, may have expanded Dowell, Dobet and Dobest to fit, however loosely, into the larger structure. Thus the long headings of the "visio/vitae" division in A, rather than suggesting an editor's knowledge of BC, may be the basis for the more confused use of the headings in B, somewhat standardised in C (the Dowell-only headings of subsequent passus among some A-text MSS could be seen as evidence against this possibility). At the same time, the replacement of the word "vita" with "visio", or no general term at all, marks a considerable conceptual change appropriate to the development of the concrete personification allegory of A and the "visio" to the more abstract approach to the later passus of BC. Dowel, Dobet and Dobest are no longer "characters", with vitae like the lives of saints, but abstract qualities, as elusive to define for the rubricators as for the dreamer.



The B-version MSS are thus distinct from the other two versions in their somewhat inconsistent use of the rubrics, and it is important to assess this inconsistency for the light it can shed on early interpretation of the poem as well as for the authenticity of the traditionally accepted rubrication. Indeed, the distinctly different pattern of B-version rubrics probably led to the use of the C-version only as a supplement to A-versions. However, the evidence from B as well as that from individual eccentrically rubricated MSS<sup>38</sup> must be seen in the context of the poem as a whole; although patterns of rubrication can be defined for each text, the rubrics belong to the complete MS tradition. Although the present form of the rubrics may be editorial, it is possible that there is some authorial basis for them;<sup>39</sup> until a system as thorough as that for determining copy text is developed for assessing the authenticity of elements of rubrication, there must be doubt about use of the rubrics in modern editions. However, ignoring the rubrics without explanation<sup>40</sup> is the kind of arbitrary editing of which mediaeval editors are often accused, and risks the loss of authorial copy. Perhaps the benefit of the doubt should go to Langland's earliest editors.

## 2: (d) Misplaced divisions

The question of authenticity of each rubric must thus remain to some extent an open one. No such question arises about the placing of passus divisions, however puzzling their exact relationship to thematic structure of the poem may seem. Although the vast majority of MSS consistently follow these divisions, there are some exceptions. This, then, is another area of editorial intervention, possibly deliberately designed to reflect a particular interpretation of the

poem. There is, of course, the possibility that the omission of passus divisions, like the fairly frequent misnumbering or naming of passus - such as that seen in H<sup>2</sup>(AC) passus XV and XVI among others - arises from simple carelessness, or from the use of an imperfect exemplar. In the former case, the result is most likely to be the omission of a single passus division only, and will not be consistently executed. In the latter case, it would be impossible to distinguish the result from deliberate editorial alteration to existing divisions; both conjectural introduction of divisions and deliberate alteration would reflect a response to the text.

Occasional omission of passus divisions occurs in A-texts J and M, and C-texts S and N; in these cases, the wording of subsequent divisions is consistent with these omissions and thus is most likely to be the result of an oversight. The related B-text MSS Bm and Bo both omit the passus headings at VI, although they both have a passus initial, but subsequent numbering corrects the error. C<sup>2</sup>(B) and N(C), while not omitting passus divisions, have initials only in the visio section of the text. The addition in N of initials at III 215 and V 6 109, equivalent to B V 4, the beginning of the second dream, thus creates two "passus", although the usual number of passus is retained as N has a rubricator's cross only at passus VIII and omits IX altogether. These two MSS thus split the text into the traditional visio/vitae sections, even though little verbal reference to the division is made. Two other MSS, F(B) and H<sup>3</sup>(A) are more eccentric in their use of passus divisions. The two represent respectively intervention at passus divisions which includes the addition of spurious material, and what seems to be an attempt to divide the text according to plot rather than passus. In both these MSS a consistent scheme of textual division, and rubrication, is carried out. This



may reflect dissatisfaction with the authorial divisions, or be an attempt to improve a deficient exemplar. F contains a considerable amount of additional material (discussed below) as well as the spurious lines around the passus divisions. In an article on MSS R and F, Donaldson suggested that F may be an early version of the B-text.<sup>41</sup> While this may be a possible explanation to some of the anomalies in F, the character of the additional material around passus divisions seems to be editorial rather than authorial, as will be demonstrated in the following analysis. The divisions of F are complex to explain, and are thus quoted in full:

prologue - V as usual, with the addition of an initial at III 170 (the equivalent of C III 215, where N(C) has an extra initial) and an initial only at IV. Then:

- V Inc. Incipit passus quintus  
60 initial  
188 initial  
385 space for initial
- VI Inc. omitted  
Exp. omitted
- VII Inc. omitted  
Exp. explicit passus quintus
- VIII Inc. incipit passus sextus

Two spurious lines:

And wanne y awakid was y wondered were y were  
Tyl þat y bepowhte me what þyng y dremede

- IX Exp. omitted  
Inc. omitted  
Exp. explicit passus sextus
- X Inc. incipit passus septimus  
140 initial  
Exp. explicit passus septimus de dowel
- XI Inc. Incipit passus octauus

Six spurious lines follow XI 4, replacing XI 5:  
& of myn wynkyng y awook & wondred þanne  
Of all þe dremes þat y drempte so daungerous þei were  
& turned me on þe oper syde for to take myn eese  
And as y lay & lookede upon þe launde green  
I þouhte on þe Metelis hou merveylous þei were  
Tyl sodynly hevynesse on slepe brouht me þanne

320 is replaced by:

& þus y fel in þowhtis feelee flappyng in myn herte  
þat all myn spiritys weryn sore stoned & þerwith y wakned  
& as manye & feelee þowhtis felle flappyng in myn herte  
All myn spirytis weryn stoned & þerwith y awaked  
& ful sore syzhede þe syghte was so mervylous  
& streyhte me & turned me & to myselve y seid  
þis ys a mychil merveylye what menyng it menep  
& in þis þowht still y lay a long tyme after

Explicit passus octauus

As y lay & lokede forþ lowe vpon þe greene

- |      |                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| XI   | Exp. omitted                          |
| XII  | Inc. omitted                          |
|      | Exp. omitted                          |
| XIII | Inc. Incipit passus decimus           |
|      | Exp. omitted                          |
| XIV  | Inc. omitted                          |
|      | Exp. explicit passus x <sup>us</sup>  |
| XV   | Inc. incipit passus xj <sup>us</sup>  |
|      | Exp. explicit passus xj <sup>us</sup> |
| XVI  | Inc. incipit passus xij <sup>us</sup> |

Two spurious lines follow before XVI 1:

Ageyn y gan to sleepe softe & my syde y gan to turne  
& anoon y seyz as y seyz erst & spak to hym with mouþ

Inc. incipit passus xij<sup>us</sup>

After 167, three spurious lines:

& for y hadde so soore yslept sorry was y þanne  
& on þe dremynge y drempte every doyng y þowhte  
AND whan y hadde longe leyn y lawhte to me herte

Explicit passus xij<sup>us</sup>  
incipit passus xiiij<sup>us</sup>

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| XVI   | Exp. omitted                             |
| XVII  | Inc. omitted                             |
|       | Exp. explicit passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> |
| XVIII | Inc. incipit passus xiiij <sup>us</sup>  |
|       | Exp. explicit passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> |
| XIX   | Inc. incipit passus xv <sup>us</sup>     |
|       | Exp. explicit passus xv <sup>us</sup>    |
| XX    | Inc. incipit passus xvj <sup>us</sup>    |
|       | Exp. Explicit [twice]                    |

Unlike some other MSS which miss occasional headings or divisions, F's numbering of passus headings is internally coherent. The policy in F seems to have been, as far as possible, to match divisions with dreams. This is not carried out until the fifth passus, the prologue



and passus I-V being divided as usual, with the omission of the heading at IV. This omission might suggest the linking of the Mede, King and Court material in passus III-IV, but this possibility is not fully developed since the heading of V allows for the appropriate number<sup>ing</sup> of IV. After V the editorial changes are considerable. Additional material is inserted, manipulating the text around the divisions and creating new divisions. F divides the text into approximately nine dreams, and adds extra awakenings around VIII 1, XI 5, and XI 319, and an extra sleeping sequence around XVI 1. The B-text has ten dreams (including two internal dreams) of the B-text, the number approximate because of confusion about beginnings and endings of dreams.<sup>42</sup> B-text dreams are compared with those of F below:

<u>Piers Plowman B</u>		<u>Piers Plowman F</u>	
<u>Dream Sequence</u>		<u>Dream Sequence</u>	
<u>Sleep</u>	<u>Wake</u>	<u>Sleep</u>	<u>Wake</u>
prol.10	V.3	prol.10	V.3
V.8	VII 145	V.8	VII 145 c.VIII 1
VIII 67		VIII 67	c. XI 5
[XI 5	XI 406] XIII 1	c.XI 5	{ XI 319 XI 406 XIII 1
XIII 21	XIV 335	XIII 21	XIV 335
XV 11		XV 11	
[XVI 19	XVI 167] XVII 356	c.XVI 1 XVI 19	XVI 167 XVII 356
XVIII 5	XIX 556	XVIII 5	XIX 556
XIX 5	XIX 481	XIX 5	XIX 481
XX 51	XX 386	XX 51	XX 386

Passus V-VII, the second dream, is treated as one passus in F; the dreamer wakes at VII 145, but this does not fit with the editorial scheme. The awakening is therefore repeated, or at least reiterated, at the start of VIII with the two additional lines quoted above. The next division in F, VIII-X, is not, however, adjusted to contain a single dream. The internal dream, begun in the B-text at XI 5, is abandoned by the F editor and replaced, in six spurious lines, by a waking and sleeping sequence, cobbled together from phrases taken from original waking and sleeping sequences in the poem. This may well have been "correction" of what was perceived as an error by the author, or a rejection of the complexity involved in the internal dream, a complexity rejected by Langland himself in the C-text at some expense to the imaginative scheme of the poem. Langland's internal dream is consistently integrated, with a waking episode at XI 406; the F editor too attempts to be consistent, and provides another waking at XI 319; XI 320, which refers to the dream, is replaced by nine spurious lines, including a passus division, which are particularly derivative and repetitive. The short dream thus produced, XI 5-XI 319, is matched by a short passus. The original B-text internal awaking at XI 406 thus becomes a repeated "real" awakening in F. At this point the F editor loses control of the dream sequence, since the dreamer wakes again at XIII (the "real" awakening of the B-text). The F editor may not have noticed the end of the internal dream in the B-text at XI 406. The expansion of the lines about the dream at XI 320 suggest that this was regarded as the only reference to the dream in XI. This would be consistent with the belief that Langland's internal dream was an error - two sleeping episodes would follow one another. Such a construction of the editor's perception of the text is borne out by the division of the text here, where XI 319-XIII becomes "passus nonus"; this would be a



simple single dream if XI 406 is overlooked. This part of the B-text dream sequence actually looks like this, diagrammatically:

S	IS	IW	W
[	[	]	]
VIII 67	XI 5	XI 406	XIII 1

S= sleep, W= wake, IS= internal sleep, IW= internal waking

The F editor's perception of B may have been something like this:

S	S	W
[	[	]
VIII 67	XI 5	XI 406

which is duly "corrected" to:

S	WS	W	IW	W
[	][	]	]	]
VIII 67	XI 5	XI 320	XI 406	XIII 1

The next division in F, XIII-XV, "passus decimus", contains the next dream, with no need to alter the text. The next division, XV-XVI, however, provides further scope for the F editor's intervention; after sleeping at XV 11, the dreamer is made to sleep again, with the addition of two lines, inserted before the beginning of XVI 1. Again, this means that the passus in F is encompassed by two references to the dream, the awakening at the end of XIV and the added sleeping at the beginning of XVI, which precedes by only a few lines the beginning of Langland's second internal dream, starting at XVI 19. This would be consistent in this case with an editorial process of looking to the beginning and end of passus and adjusting the dream sequence accordingly. Here, the editor probably overlooked the sleeping episode shortly after the beginning of XV, at XV 11. In the case of the new division at XI 320, the editor must have scanned through the text for the next reference to the dream and, having found it, looked no further. After this, F's dreams follow Langland's, with the addition of extra lines at XVI 167, the awakening from the second internal dream in B. There is a passus break here,

consistently following the practice of dividing the text according to dream visions. The following passus thus created, XVI 167 - XVIII, "passus xij<sup>us</sup>" encompasses the vision from here to the next awakening at XVII 356, the "real" awakening of the B-text, this time not "corrected" by the F editor to avoid consecutive awakenings. The final passus follow Langland; the three original final passus each contain a dream so that the F editor has no need to make adjustments.

This process of enclosing dreams within passus is readily recognisable, and fairly consistently executed; the manner in which it is carried out is, however, less so. In two cases, XI 319 and XVI 167, divisions have been introduced to fit with either perceived, or actual, Langlandian waking/sleeping episodes; in other cases, original divisions are apparently used, selectively, where there is a reference to sleeping and/or waking at the division. Both of these processes could have arisen if the editor simply followed the dream sequence, either ignoring the other divisions or having no access to a text divided into the original passus. The addition of a sleeping sequence at the beginning of XVI, however, seems entirely unnecessary, given the B-text sleeping sequence at XVI 19, unless the editor was aware of a division here; if the editor had deliberately ignored any divisions elsewhere in the text which made no reference to the dream vision sequence there would be no need to include this one, especially since the additional material confuses, rather than simplifies, the dream vision sequence. It therefore seems likely that this editor, rather than deliberately introducing entirely new divisions, was working from a text which was only partially divided into passus. This would explain the inconsistency of including the original passus division at passus X - neither VIII-X, nor X-XI contain a complete vision - and the early passus, which are divided normally. Most of



the existing divisions of F do contain visions, and, if the editor's copy-text followed this pattern, the editor has added an extra sleeping sequence at the beginning of XVI in order to follow this scheme, as well as eradicating the internal dream in B XI, and supplying additional material at other points. What must have been an attempt at rationalisation (the consistent passus numbers emphasise this), a kind of silent "ordinatio", has resulted in greater confusion. As well as confusion over the first internal dream, resulting in three consecutive awakenings, the complexity of the second has been compounded, resulting this time in three consecutive sleeping episodes.

The other MS with eccentric divisions, the B+A MS H<sup>3</sup>, is unusual in the wording rather than the placing of the divisions. The MS contains B prol.- V 127 + A V 106-XI, with A VIII-IX 96 missing, the loss having occurred in another copy.<sup>43</sup> Divisions run thus:

	Prol.	Inc.	Perys plowman
		exp.	.....
B	I	Inc.	Thys is þe fryst part of þis book perys plowman
		exp.	....
	II	Inc.	þis is þe secunde part of þis bok. Perys Plowman
		exp.	....
	III	Inc.	Thys is þe thryede part of þis book ho þe Kyng concelyt mede to be maryid
		exp.	....
	IV	Inc.	....
		exp.	Here endyt þe ferd part of þis book plowman
	V	Inc.	....
A	V	Exp.	Here endyth þe V part of þis book pers plowman
A	VI	Inc.	....
		Exp.	....
	VII	Inc.	....
		Exp.	Here endyth þe sexte part of þis book pers plowman
	VIII	Inc.	.... [VIII 116-IX 96 om.]
	X	Inc.	....
		Exp.	Here endyth þe seveth part of þis book

XI	Inc.	....
	Exp.	Explicit tractatus de perys plowman quap herun. Qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uivit et regnat per omnia secula seculorum Amen.

As with F, which has fairly extensive additional text, the unusual passus headings are not the only striking feature of H<sup>3</sup>: the MS also contains fairly extensive glossation by the rubricator in the same format at these headings, providing consistent comment and guidance through the text. The function of division and glossation is combined in passus III where the subject of the passus is included in the heading. Here the division of the text joins III and IV to form a single passus. It has been suggested above that the omission of the passus heading at IV in F reflects a desire to link the closely connected subject matter in the two passus. In this MS this is more fully borne out by the reference to Mede, and by the explicit at the end of IV which implies that the passus are deliberately regarded as a single passus, or the "ferd" is <sup>passus</sup> ~~seen as the~~ fourth, since the subsequent passus is headed "V", and this numbering is taken up in the two following rubrics. The numbering "V" could, however, have been copied from the exemplar, since the passus is A V. The "sexe part of þis book" is A VI and VIII, containing the ploughing of the half acre, a logical enough division of the text following thematic considerations. The two further divisions consist of VIII-X and XI, with the omission in the first of these of VIII 116-IX 96. The loss of VIII 116-IX 96, containing the awakening from the second dream and the start of the search for Dowel, may well have proved puzzling to the original editor. The text restarts with Thought's definition of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, lacking any introduction to these concepts, and the passus division occurs after Wit adds his definitions to those of Thought. This passus in H<sup>3</sup> thus contains the pardon, an even more



abrupt than usual disappearance of Piers Plowman, followed by two definitions of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, given by two entirely new allegorical characters. As with F, it is probable that the H<sup>3</sup> editor's exemplar(s) contained at least some passus divisions; absence of some divisions in the visio has led to two divisions of the text along thematic lines, possibly with some judicious omission of existing headings to passus IV and VI on the part of the editor. Unable to identify a similar thematic divide from the defective text in the next section of the MS, the editor has presumably simply reproduced existing divisions from the exemplar, altering the wording to accord with the overall scheme of rubrication, and adjusting the numbering for internal consistency.

Consideration of the external further rubrication of H<sup>3</sup> gives a more complete picture of the editorial attitude to and interpretation of the text. In this MS, where the additional glossation has as great an impact on the text as the passus divisions, in N(C) where additional initials in the visio are indistinguishable from passus divisions which have no heading, and in F, where additional divisions are rubricated as passus divisions, an editorial process similar to glossation is taking place; text is being organised according to editorial, rather than authorial, concepts of the function of the passus divisions. Division into visio and vitae may be authorial, but the extensive wording referring to Dowel, Dobet and Dobest in the A and C-texts may well be an editorial response to the divisions, suggesting the importance to medieval readers of these personifications as both a thematic and formal element of the text. Apart from Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, although an individual MS with unusual divisions may reflect a particular interest, such as the

emphasis in F on the dream vision form, there is no obvious community of interest among MSS in particular areas of the text which can be identified from the passus divisions - with the possible exception of the interest in Lady Mede, testified by the heading of passus III in H, and the additional initial in both F(B) and N(C) at a passage which refers to Mede. The information yielded by passus headings relates more broadly to the perception of the text as a whole, providing the earliest responses to formal and thematic elements of the poem.

### iii. Ordinatio

Aliquis scribit & aliena & sua, sed aliena tanquam principalia, & sua tanquam annexa ad evidentiam, & iste mere dicitur commentator.<sup>44</sup>

From the discussion above, it can be seen that the editor (or commentator) can have considerable influence over the reading of the poem by adjusting the wording of passus headings, incipits and explicits, or by re-positioning passus divisions. Passus divisions, as rubrication of the poem, are basically authorial; some commentators go further in their contribution to the work by providing additional, sometimes extensive, rubrication, "...et sua...annexa ad evidentiam". M.B. Parkes, in his article on the development of ordinatio, points out that this kind of commentary is provided to meet with the reader's needs,<sup>45</sup> organisation and comment providing a structural framework within which a work can be understood. The lack of such a structure seems to be particularly relevant to the C-texts of Piers Plowman; G.H. Russell suggests that "the C-version began its circulation without having acquired an authoritative, formal, structure".<sup>46</sup> One of the C-text MSS in particular, MS X, provides



extensive commentary throughout the text.

Parkes points out that the development of ordinatio in the thirteenth century led to the realisation that different kinds of work require a different formula for organisation.<sup>47</sup> For a vernacular and non-devotional text, no such formula was standardised. The editors of Piers Plowman MSS thus had to decide on the degree and format of commentary required by such a text. Aside from considerations such as expense and speed of production, it is possible to infer attitudes towards the poem from the form of ordinatio chosen, information which the standard form of ordinatio in Latin devotional writing would not provide. With this background, it is not surprising that diversity is more apparent than consistency in rubrication among different MSS of the poem. Some individual MSS, however, demonstrate within themselves a very consistent system of rubrication. There is some additional rubrication in almost all the MSS: only two have no rubrication whatsoever (including no passus divisions) - these are L(A) and V(A) (the latter has one heading at the visio/vitae division). Six further MSS have passus headings only (R(A), Ch(AC), H<sup>2</sup>(AC), F(B), N(C), P<sup>2</sup>(C)). This leaves forty-four MSS with some rubrication in addition to passus headings. These can be roughly divided for convenience into three groups (I-III). Seventeen MSS have a fairly minimal amount of rubrication; twenty have rather more, sufficient to suggest some kind of editorial scheme, and a further seven have a considerable amount of rubrication:<sup>48</sup>

Group I:     A: AEHMU  
              AC: TWZ  
              B: BoCotRS  
              C: DIQSU

Group II:    A: DJ  
              AC: N  
              B: CHmGLMWY  
              C: EFGKMPSVY

Group III: A: H<sup>3</sup>  
 AC: K  
 B: EmC<sup>2</sup>HtO  
 C: X

The figures quoted can only take account of surviving rubrics; others may have been cropped or damaged, and evidence of this is apparent in some of the rubrics of I(C), which only partly survive. The MS. is damaged around the edges of leaves, and more rubrics have probably been lost here. Another form of rubrication not taken into account here is the practice of underlining nouns in the text, a regular practice in seventeen B and C MSS (B: Em,C,C<sup>2</sup>,F,Ht,L,W,Y; C: D,M,N,P,P<sup>2</sup>, Q,R,St,V) and an occasional practice in two MSS (N(AC) in passus XVI only and Z occasionally throughout the text). Three of these MSS have no other form of rubrication except passus headings (F(B),N(C),P<sup>2</sup>(C)). This is noted in appendix C.

It is impossible to identify a consistent pattern among group I MSS; here, it seems that subjects have been glossed as they caught the scribe's or decorator's attention, not as part of an overall scheme. For example, in E(A) a fairly long rubric notes at VII 71: "nota nomina vxor petri & filio & filia"; elsewhere the only commentary is a marginal "N" occurring three times, and (possibly) a note referring to the beggars of prologue 38; M(A) marks only two of the seven deadly sins, "Superbia" and "inuidia" at V 53 and 58; Cot(B) has mainly only marginal crosses, or "nota bene" except for three notes, the first at the beginning of passus V following line 3, partly illegible, refers to "petrus"; the second at VI 86 notes "testament" at Piers' will, and the third and final note is at XI 412 "nota quid est do wel". These three are typical of the MSS with only minimal rubrication. The importance of such occasional comment should not be minimised however. A single comment in an otherwise un-glossed



MS may indicate a passage particularly striking to the commentator. The single rubric in R(B), "Longe Wille" in red, at XV 152, suggests a particular interest in the name of the dreamer on the part of this editor; the interest is echoed by more heavily rubricated MSS. This kind of sporadic comment can thus give little clue to the general interests of the editor, being too brief and inconsistent, but the points at which comments occur are often those where more extensively glossed MSS will also comment. There is some indication, then, of general area of interest among readers which these sporadic comments may help to identify. Looking again at the three examples, the single comment in E(A) on Piers' family, is also noted by the commentator in MS X(C), and nine other MSS note the will of Piers Plowman which follows, including Cot, indicating a close attention to the text at this point. The final rubric in Cot, concerning Dowel, is part of a general interest in Dowel Dobet and Dobest to which passus headings as well as the additional rubrics testify. However, only one other MS, C(B), comments on Dowel at this particular point in the text, and only with "nota".

The additional rubrication in M(A), marking two of the deadly sins, is, however, part of a more widespread interest in the deadly sins at this point in the text; they are given some kind of heading in a majority (30) of MSS, and are fully rubricated in 21 MSS.<sup>49</sup> Several of the MSS include decorated initials to mark the sins, either in addition to a heading or in its place.<sup>50</sup> The sins form the most consistently rubricated part of the text with the exception of the passus headings, so much so that Skeat includes the headings for the sins in his text, adding "confessio" for the C-texts. Few MSS note the sins at other points in the text, where they occur as abstract qualities rather than personification. There are a few exceptions -

G(B) notes "avaricia" at I 197, for example- but these are rare. It is interesting to note that among the MSS with complete headings for the sins (eight MSS), the C-texts, with only one exception, have more extensive wording than other texts; if, as Professor Russell suggests,<sup>51</sup> the C-text was circulated without an authorial formal structure, this represents a consistent attempt on the part of those C-text editors with an interest in rubrication to draw attention to this area of the text. Six C-text MSS (E<sub>q</sub>PRStV) preface the name of the sin with "confessio" (occasionally omitted in V). In P, the glosses are interlinear, and repeated so as to take up the same amount of space as a single line of text. The physical incorporation of this kind of rubrication into the text is a more marked interference than the usual marginal gloss. The interest in the sins is reflected in the passus headings at passus VII: "Incipit passus octauus de confessione. confessio accidie". Again, glossation and authorial material (the passus division and heading) have become intermingled and indistinguishable. Attention to the details of the text is evident from the glossation at this point in G(C); Gluttony is noted at his first appearance at VI 350 with "nota Gula", but the "confessio" heading is correctly placed as Glutton actually confesses, at VI 425. Most other C MSS simply place "confessio Gula" at VI 350 with the exception of St, although this MS does not note Glutton's first appearance. The seventh C-text MS with extensive wording at the sins is MS X, which is exceptional in terms of rubrication throughout the text. Here, additional glossation about each confession is given, as well as the basic heading: "hyer gob Enuye to schryfte"; "Wrathe goth to schryfte" etc. Additional subject headings appear, such as "[R]lose þe regrater" at VI 232, "Walsh man" at VI 309, "Robert ryffler" at VI 316, and what is perhaps the most striking part of Glutton's confession, at VI 412, is glossed:



"Gloutoun cowede a caudel in Clementis lappe". It should be noted that the rubrication in X is in English. This is particularly noticeable at this point, since, although the sins are named in English in the text, the vast majority of MSS gloss them with their Latin names. The intention of the X rubricator is to guide the reader in the clearest possible way, not simply to produce (or reproduce) standardised headings which would give the text an appearance of scholarship.

Rubrication of the deadly sins is the basis on which MSS have been classified as group II (twenty MSS), eight containing a scheme of rubrication of some kind, but not providing extensive commentary, with four exceptions - D(A), Y(B) and K(C) - which have rubrics for some but not all of the sins - and M(C), which does not rubricate the sins at all, but has several rubrics elsewhere in the text. Generally, MSS which fully rubricate the sins have further rubrication elsewhere. Only four of these MSS (which are included in group II) have rubrics for the sins only. These are N(AC), Hm(B) and W(B). As with the MSS with only minimal additional rubrication, diversity is more noticeable between MSS than conformity, making cross-referencing and comparison difficult. However, some form of comparison among this large group of MSS may be attempted along the lines of areas of interest and form of rubric, with the four MSS above forming a small sub-group with interest only in the personified deadly sins in the visio.

In this group of MSS the predominant form of rubric is a simple subject heading signalling the start of a new topic or the point at which the main subject is introduced, thus providing a guide to the reader looking for information on a specific topic. The main

exception to this is D(A) which occasionally provides a fuller gloss, such as that at IV 34: "hic venit pax et facit bulla de iniuria", and at VII 78: "hic petrus plowman facit testamentum suum", giving a brief synopsis of the action. Elsewhere in the MS the more usual practice of providing a subject heading only is prevalent. The headings for passus II are:

II      57    Fauor  
          162f   Falsitas  
                Deceptura  
                Merces  
                Simonia  
                Mendax

There is no directly comparable A-text MS; the rubrics of the B-text MS O, one of the heavily rubricated MSS, read

II      74a carta  
          115 Theologia  
          174 Official  
          183 ffreris  
          213 how falsnesse flay to be freris  
          125 Marchautes  
          226 leches  
          228 spiceers  
          232 ffreris

The main noticeable difference in the type of gloss here is that all the glosses in D(A) have been given in Latin. The effect of this is to generalise the subject, taking it out of the immediate context of the poem so that the text acts as exemplum for these abstract qualities, whereas the glosses in O(B), lifted directly from the text, serve as a more specific guide to the events of the poem itself. D(A) is a little unusual in this; most subject guides are taken directly from the text, as for example, those in the B-text MS G at passus I, with some exceptions:

I            3 mater ecclesia  
              27 Iott  
              59 +  
              111 Lucifer  
              151 Moises  
              187a f. fidelia; caritas; caritas  
              197 Auaricia



Holy Church has been Latinised to "Mater ecclesia" - and the gloss anticipates the dreamer's question about her identity, which is not revealed explicitly in the text until I 75. Most of the other glosses spring directly from the text, with the Latin "fidelia" appropriate to a gloss on a Latin line. The cross at I 59 is another typical form of rubric, here marking the dreamer's question about the dungeon. Such marks and sometimes pointing hands or "notas" occasionally seem to be no more than regular marginal marks, appearing for example every few lines, or at the head of pages, apparently unrelated to the text; it is thus difficult to assess their importance as rubrication. Another form of rubric is the use of occasional additional decorated initials in the text. As with crosses, or other marks, this can be unhelpful as a guide to areas of interest - V(A) has many such initials throughout the text, several of which are highly elaborate, but their purpose seems to be decorative rather than functional. In other MSS, however, these are clearly rubrics - their use instead of a verbal rubric at the deadly sins has been mentioned, and they appear elsewhere in the text in MS W(B), the first at Prol. 209, marking the author or narrator's comment at the end of the episode of rats and mice: "What þis metels bemenep, ye men þat ben murye/ Deuyne ye, for I ne dar," (B Prol. 209-10), an important comment in the text from the point of view of reception, where the narrator places responsibility for interpretation on the reader; the MS has no heading, only an initial of the same kind as that at Prol. 209, which is thus particularly striking to the reader. Other initials in this MS appear at II 115, VII 14a, VIII 62, X 377, XVI 176, and XX 46, demonstrating a consistent use of this form of rubrication. Most of these indicate a change in speaker or subject, acting partly as a subject guide and partly simply as punctuation.

The initials at VII 149 and XX 46 are slightly oddly placed, the first in the middle of Piers' speech to the Wastours, and the second in the middle of the description of Need. Other MSS with initials as rubrics include F(B), where the importance of these initials is emphasised by the eccentric passus divisions, G(B), and N(C); here passus divisions in the visio are marked only by initials, and thus the two additional initials in this part of the text have particular importance, having the same value as a passus division to the reader. The first of these is at III 215, "Thenne mournede mede and menede her to þe kyng", an apt enough point for a passus division, and the C-text equivalent of the initial in F(B) at III 170, marking at least some community of interest among the MSS. The second of the extra initials in N(C) is at V 109, "And thenne mette me muche more then y byfore tolde", again an appropriate point for a passus division following the same kind of editorial system as that of F(B), of placing passus breaks at the beginning or end of dreams, and very close to the B-text passus division (the C-text equivalent is V 105), which occurs in the C-text after the addition of the new material concerning the dreamer's life. A further form of rubrication is the interlinear glosses of P(C), described above, and the similar, though rare, practice of placing a gloss at the beginning or end of a line of text. F(C) gives a marginal gloss, "carta" at II 78a, but also prefaces the line "incipit carta". St(C) also includes "Carta" in the line at II 78a. Rubrics are often in the same kind of script as the Latin, commonly an enlarged version of the main hand. It is difficult to distinguish rubrication at these points from textual variants - there are frequently minor variants within Latin lines, or identification of Latin quotations, which appear as part of the line rather than as glossation. P(C) also adds what appears to be a gloss to the end of VII 87: "as god wole" runs on from the line without a break, although



the words are underlined in red. Again, this may be seen as a textual variant rather than as the work of the commentator.

The forms of rubrication are thus not standard, although the single word subject heading predominates among the group II MSS. The areas of the text chosen for this form of comment are, however, even more diverse. It would seem likely that glossation might decline through the text, with the most extensive rubrication at the beginning of the poem. This is to an extent true with the seven heavily rubricated MSS, possibly suggesting that the commentary in these MSS is fairly spontaneous personal reaction rather than an editorial scheme. However, among the MSS with a medium amount of rubrication this does not seem to be the case; there is no strong emphasis on any one part of the poem. There are, however, themes within the poem which seem to be of general interest to the rubricators of these MSS, although they are noted at different points in the text in different MSS.

Professor Russell describes two main types of rubrication in C-texts, the identification of names personae and auctores, historical exempla, and Biblical texts and those of such structural devices such as legal documents, preaching and prophecy, the sins, the appearance of Piers, and the various other key episodes and structural elements of the poem.<sup>52</sup> This is a useful assessment of forms of rubrication. Professor Russell includes annotator's comments as well as initial rubrication of the MSS, and refers only to C-texts, but this assessment is of value in a consideration of all three texts, and forms the basis for the identification of the following areas of interest; for a more precise definition of the rubricators' interests, the two broad categories have been subdivided:

1. the noting of moral qualities and their personifications;
2. the general and individual personae of the poem;
3. an attention to structural elements of the poem associated with sermon literature;
4. noting of key incidents;
5. Piers the Plowman;
6. prophecy.

This is not, of course, a comprehensive list of the interests of rubricators, some of which are specific to a single MS. The first category includes the deadly sins, which have already been discussed at length. The three abstracts, Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, are given considerable attention in the passus headings; this attention is not sustained in the rubrics of these MSS; only two group II MSS note them: C(B) has "dobest" at VIII 96, but fails to mention Dowel or Dobet which precede Dobest in the same passage; and G(B) notes all three in the same passage, at VIII 78, 85 and 96. Cot(B), one of the MSS with only minimal rubrication, makes a more emphatic note, "Nota quid est do wel" as the dreamer wakes at XI 412 and attempts to make his own definition of Dowel at the request of Ymagynatyf. Yet this fairly small number of references, to what is a major element of the poem, represents a greater concordance of interest among MSS than in any other particular moral quality or personification, with the obvious exception of the sins, and with the exception of Charity which is also mentioned as a simple subject heading in three rubrics, by Y(C) at XVIII 204, G(B) at 187a, and R(C) at XVII 58, and once more as a gloss on Anima's definition of poverty at XVI 296-296a, "definitio caritatis" in V(C).



Other than this the interest in particular areas of the text can be inferred from the rubrics of individual MSS; in E(C) several of the chief allegorical aspects in passus XX and XXI are noted: "misericordia", "justicia" and "pax" at XX 119, 168 and 171 respectively (curiously "veritas" is missing, probably as a result of an oversight rather than a deliberate omission), and in passus XXI the four cardinal virtues, represented allegorically by Piers' seeds, are all noted. G(C) demonstrates an interest in the allegorical characters in passus IV, an aspect of the text which would seem most likely to attract rubrication because of the dramatic nature of these briefly sustained personifications. All the rubrics in G(C) are in English:

IV 7 Resoun; 31 Wryngelaw; 45 Pees; 46 Wrong.

These rubrics may be compared with those of D(A) in passus II, which, although in Latin, refer to the same kind of personification which is prevalent in the visio part of the text. One of the most striking personifications of the early part of the poem, Lady Mede, is barely mentioned in rubrics, except among the group III MSS. In the group I and II MSS only R(C) mentions Mede in rubrics, in passus II as a subject heading at 1.8, and at 78a "contra Mede". To conclude from this that Mede was not of interest to early readers, besides ignoring the interest of the group III MSS, would be to ignore other forms of reference to her, such as the additional initials in F(B) and N(C) at B III 170 and C II 215 respectively and the illustration of Mede in the passus IV initial of X(C), and the many references to Mede by readers including extensive illustration in D(C). The lack of verbal reference to Mede does, however, suggest that different aspects of the text induce different forms of response. The vivid visual image of

Mede finds apt expression in illustration rather than verbal commentary.

The "key personae" of the text identified by Russell as the earliest form of presentation of the text, involving the rubricator of classes of character, such as friars, prelates, and monks, which would seem obvious candidates for rubrication, in fact form only a small proportion of glosses among MSS of categories I and II. R(C) has the largest number of rubrics of this kind:

C Prol.	59	contra freres
	65	contra questores
	82	contra rectores
I	182a	sacerdotes
VII	92	ribalions
XIV	204	de traians [?]
XVII	68	contra prelates
	117	contra sacerdotes

A consistent interest in prelates and priests throughout the text can be identified here, and more attention to groups than individuals, although Troianus is mentioned. Troianus is also mentioned by F(C) at XII 73 "nota de troiano"; like Mede, Troianus is a subject for the illustrator of D(C), and attracts the notice of readers rather than the original rubricator. F(C) rubricates other individuals; Mahomet at XVII 169, the Samaritan at XIX 47, and the vicar at XXI 409, "nota vicarius". The rubrics of G(B) also demonstrate an interest in individuals listing four in passus I (listed above). Here, although the type of rubrication is similar, the area of text in which each rubricator is interested is widely separated, and a mutual interest in rubricating individual names can hardly be said to form a common thematic interest. Once again, individual MSS demonstrate quite separate interests.

The third area of interest indicated, Biblical and other religious



references, including exempla, is one which lends itself readily to the traditional form of rubrication associated with devotional writing. Some references to a single line are included in this category, such as the straightforward information "versus" given by C(B) at prol. 131a, 138 and V 269a, by M(C) at prol. 151 ("unde versus"), and by S(C) at prol. 152. For the most part, however, these rubrics define a passage of the poem and summarise the text, rather than simply taking a name directly from the text or giving a name from the text in Latin. This is the case in, for example, the heading at XX 22 in Y(C), "passio domini", which refers to the whole passus, and the heading "decem precepta" in five MSS, Y(C), G(C), R(C), St(C), V(C) ("x precepta" in Y(C), "decem mandata" in G(C)) which refers to the whole of the way to Truth, itself summarised by F(C) in the rubric at VII 205, "nota viam ad veritatem". R(C) in addition has a rubricator's guide at each commandment, possibly intended for additional rubrication. Two MSS, E(C) and F(C) note the definition of poverty at C XVI 120 with "distinctio paupertatis" the formal heading for a division of a sermon, while another C MS, D, numbers the nine points of the definition in the margin, again defining an area of the text rather than pointing out a line or phrase of particular interest; this kind of terminology, as with "definitio Caritatis" at XVI 296-296a in V(C), places the poem within the tradition of devotional and sermon literature, as do the rubrics noting "predicatio", C MSS G, K, St, and V around V 115, P(C) "sermo" at the same place, and P(C) "oratio" at VII 123. The sermon term "experimentum" is also used as a rubric, at XI 239 and XIX 165 in M(C), XV 163 in R(C) and by St(C) and V(C) at XV 155-164, set out alongside the text:

C XV	155	exper-
	159	-imen-
	164	-tum,

thus indicating the precise area of the text referred to. With the exception of C(B), which only notes "versus" in this type of rubrication, G(B) which only notes "similitudo" at VIII 27, and L(B) which, again, with only one note of this type, "saluacio" at XIII 152-3, all the MSS are C-texts (eleven MSS). In his article on the C-text MSS Professor Russell comments that, as far as formal structure is concerned, the testimony of the MSS is diverse.<sup>53</sup> Yet, in this aspect of formal organisation, the C-texts show a remarkable conformity, not only in sharing an interest in the kind of ordinatio associated with sermon literature, in itself implying a very precise form of reception of the poem, but frequently using this kind of rubrication at precisely the same points in the text. The C-MSS St and V, which are related, having the same or a similar hand and a very similar layout and format, also have nearly identical rubrication, the few exceptions suggesting a certain amount of freedom for the individual rubricator to make decisions about areas of interest. This is not necessarily surprising, if the MSS have been produced in the same place, or if one has acted as copy text for the other - but a similar situation in B-text MSS, involving MSS Bm and Bo, has not resulted in the same conformity of rubrication. Bm is heavily annotated; Bo makes only one attempt to follow Bm at prol. 56, copying the first rubric in Bm, which reads "hic vidit fratres to preche for copis", but this is the only rubric in Bo, with the exception of "nota" at VI 169. This mainly C-text interest in the sermon aspects of the poem gives a clear indication of one of the ways in which the poem was understood by its readers and producers. The interest of the book producers in this aspect of the text are echoed in the comments of many later readers - possibly influenced by the rubric. The attention to "experimenta" or "similitudes" in



particular is echoed by a similar attention in one of the annotators of MS U(C),<sup>54</sup> and is of particular interest as an area in which religious criticism - of the effectiveness of an exemplum - comes close to literary criticism of the effectiveness of a simile.

Rubrication of key events in the text (my group 4, p. 83 above) and interest in Piers (group 5) can be considered together, since Piers' activities seem to form the key incidents for many of the rubricators, with his first appearance noted by two MSS, St(C) and V(C), his testament noted by five MSS, D(A) Cot(B), E(C), St(C) and V(C), and his pardon by two MSS, L(B) and E(C). Interest is here shown by a variety of MSS of all three texts. Rubrication of events generally includes longer than usual rubrics such as those of D(A):

- A IV 34 hic venit pax et facit bulla de inuria
- V 11 hic consciencia predicauit
- 146 hic gulosus vadit ad ecclesiam
- VII 78 hic petrus plowman facit testamentum suum

"Bulla" also occurs as a single heading at C IV 45 in Y(C), while Piers' will attracts rubrication from three further MSS, E(C), St(C) and V(C). The other "events" rubricated in D(A) are of course areas of text which attract simple subject headings in other MSS, such as glutton's confession, rubricated simply as "Gula" in a majority of MSS.

It is, therefore, the way in which the passage is rubricated, rather than simply the presence of a rubric, which defines interest in an event; the rubric in D(A) at VII could simply be noted as "sermo", but is here recorded as a dramatic action, implying a response to the text as a narrative rather than as a series of exempla, which is the implication of the mainly C-text practice of rubricating the text as

an extended sermon. These key incidents are included by Professor Russell among structural devices;<sup>55</sup> he thus links attention to events of the text with the interest in sermon aspects of the poem purely as structural devices. Physical events, such as the drawing up of the charter of Mede's marriage, noted by four MSS, H(A), F(C), G(C) and St(C) may be associated with the more abstract aspects of the poem, definitions of moral qualities and states of being. Yet there are considerable differences between these kinds of "structural device". Rubrication of physical events is largely confined to the visio,<sup>56</sup> as is all rubrication of the activities of Piers; Piers' reappearance in the vitae is only glossed by two MSS including the <sup>fairly</sup> heavily annotated MSS, C(B), with the name "Piers" only at XV 196 and 212. The visio/vitae division wording of most MSS, "Explicit visio Willelmi de petro plowman" implies that Piers' part in the action is concluded. But dramatic events are not confined to the visio in the poem. These two kinds of rubrication suggest a different response to the two parts of the poem. If the generally accepted division of the poem into two parts is the result of an editorial, rather than an authorial, sense of the shape of the poem, this kind of rubrication is part of the editor's range of devices to bring about this end.

Prophecy, another of Professor Russell's "structural devices" is an area of interest confined to C-text MSS with two exceptions, G(B) and Ht, which is a composite MS with a text formed from all three versions of the poem. MSS Ht and X, both group III MSS, are included here because of their attention to prophecy, an aspect of the text noted by eleven MSS. All except one, E(C), rubricate prophecy at more than one point in the text, demonstrating a continuing interest.



Points in the text rubricated are:

B prologue	147	: be profycy of be Catt G(B)
B III	303	: Ht
B III	325-6	: G(B)
C III	476-7	: Ht; C MSS: K,P,R,St,V,X
C III	436	: St(C)
B IV	116	: G(B)
B VI	325-6	: G(B)
C VIII	343-50	: C MSS P,St,V
B X	315-6	: profecy of [r]elygyon G(B)
B X	336	: Ht(B)
C V	177-8	: C MSS E,G,K,St,V
B XV	357	: Ht(B)
B XV	457	: Ht(B)
C XVII	88	: M(C)
C XVII	213-5	: C MSS P,R,St,V
B XIX	465	: G(B)

(wording is only given where it consists of more than the single word "prophecy", with various spellings).

The well-known "prophecies" of the poem are fairly consistently rubricated, such as the "sixe sonnes and a ship and half a shef of arwes" at B III 326/ C III 478, and C V 165-78 referring to the "Abbot of Engelonde", with its B-text equivalent, X 315-6, noted by G(B), and X 336, the end of the passage, by Ht. C XVII 214-5, a warning about the effect of covetousness on the church:

Riht so, ze clerkes, zoure coueytise, ar come auht longe  
Shal dampne dos ecclesia and depose zow for zoure pruyde

attracts comment in several C-MSS, but not in either of the two B-MSS although there is a B equivalent to these lines. G(B), unusual among B-texts in rubricating prophecy, is also unusual in the choice of points to note. The two more explicit comments, at prol. 147 and X 315-6, suggest a particular interest in prophecy on the part of the rubricator, borne out by the extent of such rubrication; Reason's speech rejecting leniency towards Wrong, B IV 113-148, is labelled as prophecy. G(B) also rubricates as prophecy the appearance of the King at XIX 465, a rather different kind of prophecy, where the King

in the poem represents a direct image of the future. The rubric indicates that events seen in the present in the text, as well as the warnings and cryptic prophecies of the text, foretell real, if, as in this case, eschatological, events. The "profecy of þe catt" implies a similar understanding in political rather than religious terms, of the fable in the prologue. At this point the text is dealing with a political reality and an earthly ruler. G(B) obviously understands the references to a fourteenth-century-political reality as an image of future bad government. At this point, it becomes clear that the date of this MS, in the first part of the sixteenth century, is significant. The specific political reference in the poem<sup>57</sup> can have no relevance to a sixteenth century rubricator, and is thus re-formulated by the rubric into a general political prophecy. The late date of this B-text MS links it with the C-text MSS, for which some of the political references of the poem would already no longer have immediate relevance. Certainly by the time G(B) was produced, at least part of the poem's value was its antiquity, rather than topical reference, and antiquity confers status on prophecy. This is especially true of a vernacular work, given the rise in status of the vernacular literary tradition through the sixteenth century. It is possible that as early as the production of the C-text, the poem was already gaining the kind of status associated with antiquity and its attendant interest in prophecy. The C-text references to prophecy, and the tendency to rubricate the text as sermon literature are both characteristic of annotators of all three texts, by definition later readers of the poem than the book producers. An annotator of G(B), clearly responding to the interest of the producers of this MS, gives the poem the title "the prophecies of piers plowman", and this is at least partly how the poem was regarded by some of the fifteenth



century producers of the C-text as well as by sixteenth century readers and copyists. Crowley's rejection of the prophetic interpretation of the poem demonstrates the diversity of readings among later as well as earlier readers (discussed below, 3.iii, in greater detail).

The seven MSS in group III are not entirely distinct in their areas of interest and forms of rubrication of the poem, but are treated here separately because of the significant difference in degree of interpretation and guidance to a reader of these MSS in comparison with MSS of groups I and II. MS K(AC) is an exception in this group; the scribe, Sir Adrian Fortescue, produced the copy for his personal use, and it is difficult to distinguish here between annotation and formal rubrication; inclusion of the annotations of K(AC) as rubrics would involve a rather arbitrary division into rubrication and comment, both of which are by the same person - and while rubricators offer comment, annotators frequently supply the equivalent of rubrication. Therefore, although the date of this MS, 1531-2, makes it interesting for comparison with the production of contemporary late MSS, such as G(B), this discussion is confined to professional rubrication, and the annotation of K(AC) is discussed with other readers' comments below.<sup>58</sup> Of the remaining six MSS, the kind of rubrication occurring in the four B-text MSS is fairly similar, and that of H<sup>3</sup>(A) is comparable, although the unusual passus headings of this MS set it somewhat apart. X(C) differs from other MSS in the amount of rubrication, with extensive full commentary throughout the MSS; the closest comparison is with the late annotation (late sixteenth to early seventeenth century) of MS U(C), rather than with any other rubrication added at the production stage. The kind of commentary in X is, however, not entirely distinct from

that of other MSS. Russell refers to X as "in every sense...the most important and interesting of the C-version manuscripts in terms of its medieval supply,"<sup>59</sup> and it is in fact the most important and interesting of all Piers Plowman MSS in terms of original rubrication if this is measured in quantity. It is perhaps too large a claim to call X "unique among the C-manuscripts" in supplying "at least the beginnings of a formal presentation of the text of some elaboration",<sup>60</sup> since, although this is the only C MS with extensive rubrication, several of the C-MSS discussed above also demonstrate the beginnings of such organisation. The linking of most comments with paraphs dividing the text into sense units is, however, possibly a more advanced form of organisation than that demonstrated in other MSS; Russell suggests that the double stroke // which precedes most comments is a sign for the addition of further paraphs at the beginning of each rubric, which would give even greater status to these comments. He also identifies a different function for each margin in the commentary, the left being used for identification of major themes and personae and the right for a brief note of the progress of the argument, although this is inconsistently carried out.<sup>61</sup> Both of these suggestions are reasonable, the first from widespread use of such signs as rubricator's guides, the second from the evidence of the manuscript.

Russell also notes the appearance at fol. 98a of:

The first of a succession of erasures of the names Piers and plouhman...both in the main text and the commentary. Clearly the ink of the text was to be replaced by the red of the rubricator, and alongside the first erasure appear the words Hyer bygynnez; these would seem to be an instruction, not to the reader, but to the rubricator that this is where his work begins.<sup>62</sup>

This has a little support from the practice in O(B) at VI 86, where



the last word of the gloss "testamentum petri plowman" is in red, and the gloss at VII 101f, "þe pardoun of peris plowman" is entirely in red, whilst other rubrics in the MS are in the main ink. In Bm(B), at prol. 128, the gloss originally read: "bihold here of peters power" but "peters" has been erased - and, although it is possible that this was for the reason suggested above, another explanation is possible here and in X; the words may have been erased by a later reader because of the association of the name Peter/Piers with the Pope. "Pope" is cancelled or erased in five MSS including Bm,<sup>63</sup> and the practice of erasure of unacceptable material is fairly widespread in the MSS.<sup>64</sup> This possibility apart, it should be noted that the practice of erasure in X begins considerably earlier than fol.98a; the name is erased fairly consistently from fol. 32a, the first occurrence being at VII 182.

The subject of glossation in X and the other MSS includes the same kind of material as in the less highly rubricated MSS. The rubrication of the prologue is extensive in these MSS, with the exception of C<sup>2</sup>(B), and tends to concentrate on the various characters and classes of profession introduced in the prologue, together with some key events. For the most part, glosses take the form of single word subject headings.. Those of Ht are typical:

B prol.	14	tour
	20	plowmen
	28	ancres
	31	marchauntes
	33	mynstrales
	40	beggars
	46	pilgrimes
	58	freres
	68	pardoner
	83	parsones & vicares
	100	pope
	101	cardinals
	112	kyng
	123	lunatyk

B prol.	143	communitas
cont.	146	conceil of ratons
	158	a raton
	182	a mous
	211	men of lawe
	217	Barons & ober

These are words taken directly from the text; the practice is not dissimilar to the practice in the MSS where nouns in the text are in red ink. As with these MSS the amount of this kind of rubrication declines from this very close attention to the text to more infrequent subject headings in Ht. Other heavily rubricated MSS, however, sustain this, or a similar level of activity, if not in every passus, at least providing this kind of attention to the text at different points throughout the poem. X is the only MS which comes close to having this level of comment in every passus. Of the other group III MSS, H<sup>3</sup>(A) and O(B) have a similar amount and type of comment in the prologue and elsewhere, C<sup>2</sup>(B) has the same kind of annotation but only has three comments in the prologue; elsewhere comments are similarly densely distributed (V, VI), and generally of this type. Bm(B) and X note the same kinds of point, but in a different manner. The commentary in Bm falls off after passus VI, but as far as it goes, it is very similar to that of X. Their commentaries in the prologue may be compared:

Bm B prol. 56 hic vidit fratres to preche for copis  
66 there prechid a pardoner wip a bulle  
81 here preden parsons & parische  
prests of leue to dwele at London  
95 here conscience accused him parsone  
& prest etc.  
128 bihold here of ["peters" erased] power  
144 kynde wyt & þe comune contraueden a  
plough etc.  
166 conseil of ratons and of mees etc.

X C prol. 50-1 hermytis wente to Walsyngham  
56-7 hyer preches frerys  
81 hyer parsones & parsche prests  
playned to þe bychop  
95 concyence acusede prelats  
143 þe commune & Kynde Wit ordeyned a plow  
164 nota men of lawe



C prol. 169-70 hyer made ratonyes a parlement  
 cont. 196 hyer spekyb a mous of renoun

There is a quite remarkable conformity here in the points chosen for glossation, the rubrics in the MSS for prol. 81 and 95 being almost identical, and, with the exception of the comment in Bm at l.128, and in X at l.164, the following glosses are also extremely similar. These comments, far more expansive than the single word subject headings of the other four group III MSS, act as a brief synopsis of the actions of the text, at times almost a paraphrase or explanation of the action. At times the expansiveness of the glosses in X is almost conversational, as at III 38 "a confessour as a frere comforted mede & sayde as ye may rede." This gloss also has the effect of focussing attention on the text rather than on the commentary. Other of the glosses in X at passus headings summarise freely quite large areas of the text and are important aspects of organisation. The heading at XI 1, "Witts wyf chidd Wit for he sche [sic] sed so muche un stodied" summarises freely a long speech by Studie, XI 5-83, and thus introduces the main subject of the first half of the passus. This may be compared with the passus headings in H<sup>3</sup>(A) at passus III: "This is þe thryede part of þis book ho þe kyng concelyt mede to be maryid", defining the material of the whole passus. Another striking guide to the reader at the head of a passus in X is the gloss at XV 1: "hyer ze may se schortly rehersed þe visione to fore sayd", signalling the summary of some of the themes of the preceding dream at this point in the text. Russell refers to this comment as "atypical" in referring to the overall structure of the poem,<sup>65</sup> but while this is a reasonable assessment, passus headings do, of course, signal structural elements of the poem and should be seen as part of the system of rubrication; in addition, the commentator makes two further references to the visions, one at V 105, simply noting Will falling

asleep, and one at XXI 4-5, "hyer is a newe metel how he say pers al bloody." These longer explanatory glosses in X are interspersed with the single word subject headings which most frequently appear in other group III MSS, especially towards the end of the text.

So far I have concentrated on the kinds of organisation effected by the extensive rubrications in these MSS. Two further questions arise: is it possible to identify areas of interest in these MSS, either individually or collectively, and can these rubrics be said to act in any sense as a critical commentary? On the first point, there are interests in common among all three groups of MSS, with some exceptions - there is little interest among group III MSS in prophecy (Ht is the exception) - even X, with extensive comments on almost every major theme in the poem, only notes prophecy twice, and there is little structural organisation of the text along the lines of sermon literature; both these two areas seem to be of interest to a discrete group of (mainly) C-text MSS, in which rubricators are content to mark a few points in the text to suggest its general character rather than to provide a consistent reader's guide. The form of rubrication which is most prevalent, the single word subject heading, mostly refers to the personae of the text, including classes of character as well as individuals; the amount of these headings is proportionally greater among group III than group II MSS. Other than this, it is difficult to identify particular areas of interest among these MSS without running the risk of unsupported speculation. However, there does seem to be some concentration on friars in X; the activities of friars, specifically, are glossed fifteen times, compared with thirteen glosses for all other classes of clergy, including the general term "religiosi". It is possible to see this concentration



on friars as critical comment; two comments suggest antagonism towards friars; the first at XVI 230, "lo how freres prechen fallas" is acceptable as a summary of the text, but the second - the last comment in the MS - is more personal. XXII 340, where the friar gives his name as "Sire Penetrans domos" is glossed "a general name for a friar." Such personal comment is unique, however; compared with the comments of annotators, many of which are extreme in condemnation or praise of characters and events, the rubrics of all the MSS demonstrate a scholarly detachment. The extent and consistency of rubrication among group III MSS in particular, suggests that guidance to readers, and thus an attempt at objective attention to all main subjects of the poem, is the intention of the rubricator. The more sporadic comment of other MSS is perhaps a better guide to both interest and critical comment. Critical commentary on the work as literature is equally difficult to detect. However, organisation of material, if sporadically or consistently carried out, can affect - even determine - future readings. In this sense the organisation of the material through rubrication is indirect literary criticism, which at the least, strongly influences readers' perceptions of the kind of book they are reading.

The way in which rubrication may become a part of a work is demonstrated by the correlation of the rubrics of different MSS. The similarity of rubrics in the prologue of Bm and X noticed above shows that the rubrics of different texts of the poem may stem from a single tradition. Closer relationships may be observed in C-text MSS St and V, with the almost identical rubrics discussed above, while the single rubric of Bo(B) is probably copied directly from Bm, or from their common ancestor. These two pairs of MSS were probably closely connected at the production stage. The rubrication of O(B) and C<sup>2</sup>(B)

is virtually identical for passus V-XIII and similar in XV.

O and C<sup>2</sup>, as

might be expected, like Bm and Bo and V and St, are from the same textual tradition. Kane and Donaldson propose an exclusive common ancestor for the two MSS.<sup>66</sup> That the features of rubrication as well as those of the text of this common ancestor should be transmitted, suggests an authoritative status for the rubrics in the eyes of copyists, equivalent to that of the text. The main difference in rubrication is that C<sup>2</sup> has very little comment where it does not follow O.

One further, entirely distinct, form of ordinatio is the use of tabula,<sup>67</sup> listing contents of MS collections, or listing the main subjects in a single work. Piers Plowman is listed in simple tables of contents in two MSS, V(A) and C(B), both large collections of monastic origin. More interesting in this respect, however, is the B-text MS G, written in the first half of the sixteenth century; following the text of Piers Plowman in the hand of the main scribe is a detailed list of the contents of the poem headed "ye table off pyers plowman":

By the main scribe:

fol. 101b      here ynsuethe ye table off pyers plowman

pilgrims	ye furst passe off ye vysyone conteynethe iij	)	
	chapters ye furst chapter treatethe what he sawe	)	fo 1
	yn mydle yerthe amongst ye lered & ye lewde	)	
pardons & prestes	ye second chapter declarethe ye deceat of the pre)		
	lates off holycherche & off pardoners	)	fo 1
profecy a profecy	ye thyrd chapter declarethe ye profycye off ye	)	
	catt ye ratt & ye mysse/ all this marke	)	fo 3



mater ecclesia	ye iiij chapter declaryth how money ovght to be bestowed & to whom yit belongeth & off ye borowys) yat the church receyvd off vs at our baptyme	) fo 4
fides spes caritas	ye v chapter declarethe what fayth hope & charyte ) ys & love toward god & for what cawse lucifer ) fell from heyven	fo 5
how mede shuld haue byne marridd	the vj chapter declareth how mede shold haue bynne) maryed to false & what feoffment was made hyr ) byne marridd	fo 8
mede	ye viij declarethe how mede through hyr gyftes ) stopped men off lawys mouthes & prestes )	fo 10
a profecy of ye day of dome	ye viij declarethe ye profecy off ye dome to come ) & what trewth shall reynng among peple & yat ) all courtes shall on haue but on ruler )	fo 13
how reason wold dele	ye [i cancelled]x chapter declareth yat reason ) wold not meynpryse mede tyll pernelles purfulles ) were auoydyd & ye gates to rome & seynte james )	fo 15
reason preferith trethe bifore pilgrimages	ye [i added]x chapter declareth how reason wold haue trewth sought & repentance & not go to rome ne to seynt james	
fol. 102a		
ye repentance of pernell	ye xi[i added] chapter declareth ye repentance off) pernell pryde & lechery & envy )	fo 17
ira	ye xij[j added] chapter declareth how wrathe cam ) to shryft & declareth how he reyned in relygyon )	fo 18
auaritia	ye xiiij chapter declarethe off avaryce ) & how he ought to make restytvtyon )	fo 20
	ye xiiij[j added] chapter declarethe how glotony ) cam to shryft & repentance	fo 21
accidia	ye xv[j added] chapter declareth how sloght ) repented & how yat repentance sought ) mercy off god for slothe	fo 23
ye way to trewthes house	ye xvj[j added] chapter declareth how ye pylgrymes) desyred pyers plowman to shew them ye ) way to trewthes dwellyng place )	fo 24
ye erryng of ye half acre	ye xvij[j added] chapter declareth how pers ) plowman erryed hys halffe acre )	fo 27

ye	ye xviiiij[j added] chapter declareth the profecy	)	
profyce	off derthe yat shall come yff yat wastours be not	)	fo 29
off derthe	reformed & corrected	)	
pers	ye [x cancelled]ix chapter declareth what pardone	)	
pardons	was graunted to pers plowman & to all	)	fo 30
	true dealers & laborers by trewthe	)	
off Do	ye xx[i added] chapter declareth how ye prest red	)	
well &	ye pardon yat was graunted to pyers	)	fo 31
haue well	ploman wych was do well & haue well	)	

{Explicit tabula de visione}

f 102b

hic incipit tabula de dowell

similitude	ye fyrst chapter declareth how thoght taggt	)	
off ye	ye way to do well dobett, & dobest, & how ye	)	
bott to a	frere shoyd ye fallyng off justicia in a	)	fo 33
just man.	similitude to bot on ye water	)	
anima &	ye ij chapter declareth ye castell off care wher	)	
hyr castell	yn ye lady anima ys. & how ye spyrytualte	)	fo 35
	be bownden to helpe yem selffe	)	
archa noy	ye iij chapter declareth ye cause off ye mak yng	)	
& how men	off archa noy, & how wedlock was ordened	)	fo 36
shuld mary	& how ytt shold be used	)	
ye whyes	ye iiij chapter declareth yt no man ought	)	
wt ye	to reason ye whyes off god, & also yit	)	fo 42
profycy of	declareth ye profycy off rylygyon	)	
religion		)	
ye trewthe	ye v chapter declareth no trust to be in fortune	)	
off	& ye trewth off troianus & ye fawte off ye	)	fo 48
troianus	byssshops in mak yng vnlearned prestes	)	
of	ye vi chapter declareth how imagynatyue	)	
imagynatyue	porsueth man/ & off ye strenght of charyte & yat	)	fo 53
charyte &	ye whyes off ye worke off god ar not	)	
ye wyes	to be spoken off	)	
off god		)	
off actiua	ye vij <sup>th</sup> chapter declarethe ye dynner of	)	
vita & ye	conscyence pacyence & clergy with a doctor off ye	)	fo 58
doctor off	frers to know what dowell dobett' & dobest was &	)	
ye freres	also yt declareth ye demonstratyon off ye actyue	)	
exami-	lyve	)	
nayyon		)	



ye	ye viij <sup>th</sup> chapter declareth how haukyn ye actyve )	
repentance	man pourged hys cote with contrytyon confessyon )	fo 63
of ye	& satysfaction / & also off ye puer lyve off )	
active man	perfytt pouerte )	
& ye		
perfectyon		
off pouerte		

Explicit tabula de dowell

fol. 103a

hic incipit tabula de dogett

ye lady	ye furst chapter declareth ye discryptyon off ye )	
anima ye	lady anima & how yat by constaantynes gyft poyson )	fo 68
gyft of	cam in to ye churche / ye & how prestes shold )	WH a
constantyne	lyve & how they are bownden to go throgh theyr )	propecie
	dyocys & not for fere off lyffe stoppe to show )	of
		Byschoppes
		fol 72
		[Another
		hand]

ye tree	ye ij <sup>d</sup> chapter declareth ye thre pyles yat grow )	
of grace &	in goodnece beyryng & supportyng ye tre of grace )	fo 75
ye fayth	wheryn ys charyte assysted ageynst ye world ye )	
of abraham	flesshe and ye devell & all tentatyons / ye & off )	
	ye lokyng off abraham & lazar for ye passyon )	
	cryste )	

ye synne	ye iij <sup>d</sup> chapter declareth ye symjlytude off the )	
agayst ye	trinite to a hoole fyst / & ye synne agaynst )	fo 80
holy gost	ye holy gost / & off ye greyate mercy of god )	

how dethe	ye iiij <sup>th</sup> chapter declareth howe cryst by hys )	
fordyd ye	passyon fordyd dome dethe & ye deuell & ye )	fo 86
deuell &	reasonyng of ye foure cardynall vertues at ye )	
dethe	lyght yat hanged ouer hell after ye passyon of )	
	cryst & how cryste hys soles chosen owte off hell )	

a profecy	ye v <sup>th</sup> chapter declareth how ye thre kynges )	
of a kyng	offerred to god: sence/reason: gold/ryghtyousness )	fo 93
	& ruthe/myrre wych ys properly called mercy or )	
	pytye/ & off ye resurrectyon off cryst & off hys )	
	aperyng to hys apo stelles & to mary magdeleyn / )	
	and off ye teame yat was gyuen to pers plowman )	
	by grace/ & howe we shold make a depe mote aboute )	
	holy churche & also what a kyng may do by justece )	

Explicit tabula de dogett

hic incipit tabula de dobest

ye	ye fyrst chapter declarethe yat nede hathe no	)	
resortte	lawe & ys a hygh vertewe/ & howe in all our	)	fo 98
holy church	aduersytyes we shold resort to ye holy church &	)	
& how	beleue in yit/ & of ye couetyousness of prestes	)	
freres	& how yat men shraue yem at ye freres & not att	)	
hyndred	ye parsons & curates for sake off penance	)	
contytyon			

Explicit dialagus tabule petri plowman

The poem is divided into "chapters" by the table, not as stated by Kane and Donaldson,<sup>68</sup> into passus. The first section describes "ye furst passe" as being divided into three chapters, but passus are not subsequently mentioned, although some "chapters" correspond to passus. The folio number of each chapter is noted to the right of the short synopsis and to the left the content is summarised further with a brief heading similar to the MS rubrics. The brief descriptions of the "chapters" may be compared with some of the more expansive rubrics, some of which also summarise sections of the text; this table can be seen as a logical extension of this form of rubrication, resulting in a coherent analysis of the structure of the poem without the interference of intermediate commentary on the details of the action. The summary divides the poem primarily into four distinct sections, the "visione", "dowell", "dobett" and "dobest" along traditional lines, although these divisions, like the interest in prophecy in the rubrics of this MS, are of course associated more usually with the A- and C-texts than with the B-text. The table reiterates the interest of the rubrics in prophecy; as in the text this is emphasised by the signs in the margin. Apart from attention to these fairly common aspects of organisation, the table demonstrates a close attention to the text and a shrewd ability to classify the material. The division of the prologue into three chapters is an intelligent assessment of the three major elements, the vision of



middle earth, the description of prelates and pardoners, and the cat and mouse fable. Passus I is similarly intelligently sub-divided into the dreamer's question about the ownership of money, and to Holy Church's discourse. This division according to material rather than passus and the linking of this with folio numbers is some indication of the care with which this table has been prepared, and of the analytical way in which the text has been assessed. There is a little more detail in the "tabula de visione" than in the "tabulae" de dowel dobet and dobest, but all the major events are included, with a slight emphasis on the anti-clerical satire in the poem. There is perhaps a Puritanical tone in the type of emphasis on prophecy; the episode of the wasters seems to be taken to heart as a comment on contemporary society

ye xviiiij chapter declareth the profecy off derthe  
yat shall come yff yat wastours be not reformed &  
corrected

and the work ethic further stressed by the rewards due to more worthy workers:

ye xix chapter declareth what pardone was graunted  
to pers plowman & to all true dealers & laborers by  
trewthe

On the whole, however, the table is an accurate and reasonably objective account of the events of the poem.

Parkes notes that late medieval MSS are closer to early printed books than earlier MSS.<sup>69</sup> Marginal rubrications in the MSS are comparable to those of Crowley's editions, though Crowley's comments are a little less objective, taking into account the contemporary situation.<sup>70</sup> This table in particular is a close precursor of the summary of contents included by Crowley in the second and third editions of the poem printed in 1550, which also refers to the main

text by folio numbers, although Crowley's "breve summe of all the principal matters spoken of in the boke" (BL C.122.d.9, title page) is divided into passus. This MS, like those of the C-text with the emphasis on prophecy, and the rubrication of the MS as sermon literature, seem to anticipate and possibly inform the interests of the latter annotators and of Crowley.

To sum up: the activities of the book producers, determining layout and decoration, passus rubrics and placing of divisions, and additional rubrication present the reader with an interpretation of the text. A reader of A-text MS L, with no rubrication or decoration whatsoever, will have a different sense of the poem from a reader of H<sup>3</sup>(A) with its extensive rubrication and well laid-out text. An even greater contrast would be that with a well laid-out and highly decorated B- or C- text such as Bm(B) or X(C). Passus headings, incipits and explicits, are the most consistently used organisation of the poem and provide a name for the poem, as well as determining the division into a quadripartite structure of visio and three vitae. From examination of passus names it can be seen that B-texts differ from those of A and C both in the use of this structure and in the naming of the poem; B-texts fairly consistently call the poem "dialogus petri plowman", with the implication of philosophical debate, a term not used by any other text. This consistency, and sense of the book as a coherent whole, perhaps reflects completeness of the B-version in comparison with the other two texts. The unusually placed passus divisions of H<sup>3</sup>(A) and F(B), perhaps resulting from a defective exemplar, are a response to the sometimes puzzling placing of passus divisions by the author. In F(B) there is also a strong sense of the poem as dream vision, enhanced by the additional text around original and introduced passus headings. The confusion



of dreams which results from some of these alterations in itself suggests some difficulty in following Langland's far from straightforward dream sequence, which is especially complex in the B-version, with internal dreams in passus XI and XVI. Similar difficulties are experienced by the compiler of Ht(B); here there are problems with the introduction of the autobiographical material from C V, and the subsequent dislocation of the dream at the beginning of B v.<sup>71</sup>

As well as being a response to the subject of the poem, the reorganisation of F(B) reflects a desire to impose a coherent, easily recognisable structure on the poem. This is the function of the additional rubrication in the MSS, carried out in varying degrees by the different book producers. This kind of organisation ranges from "notas" at regular intervals in the text, more a decorative than an organisational feature, to single comments on a point of interest, to the fairly thorough schemes of the group III MSS. Single comments may indicate particular interest, or simply represent a single survival of the copying process. The single long rubric in Bo(B) is clearly the latter, a survival from Bo's common ancestor <sup>which has</sup> become part of the poem, absorbed into the tradition of MS copying along with the text; MSS with a common tradition of rubrication can be identified. This is an indication of the importance of additional rubrication to the reception of the poem; it both represents an initial reception, and influences reception. To some extent this influence may be tested by examination of the evidence of reader's comments. The main functions of additional rubrication seem to be twofold: rubrication acting as a subject guide, usually a single word, either taken directly from the text or a Latin version of a name or other word from the text; or synopsis of the action or structure

by marginal explanation, again sometimes in Latin, and in G(B) by a table following the text. From these, it is possible to gather some idea of areas of interest in the text, although the subject guides seem to be fairly evenly distributed through the text.

Both forms of rubrication seem to be designed primarily to facilitate reading rather than to comment on the text; different kinds of reader, or reading, may be posited for each form of rubrication: the first would be useful to a reader dipping into the poem for exempla and moral "sentence" - and this kind of reading seems to be that suggested by interest, chiefly of C-text rubrication, in identifying sermons and their distinctiones. This, and the predominantly C-text interest in prophecy, compared to the interest in these features shown by later annotators, later copies of the poem, and Crowley, suggests a different form of understanding of the poem in its latest form which accords with later reception of all three versions. The second main form of rubrication suggests that the text is read consecutively, or at least as a narrative, with the synopses acting as brief guides to the plot. The rubricator of X seems to be aware of the possibility of these glosses being read instead of the text - hence the gloss at III 38 directing the reader back to the text. The tabula of G(B) can readily be used as a reference guide to the poem as a narrative, since folio numbers are given beside each summary.

These kinds of reading are not, of course, mutually exclusive, and most of the group III MS include both forms of rubrication, just as the tabula of G(B) includes references to the moral instruction in the poem. Diverse MSS diversely rubricate particular subjects, but there is a common desire to organise and point out the themes and



characters seen to be the most important to the poem. Some comment, usually on the subject rather than the poem as literature, is implicit in some subject headings; there is a general sense of approval of the anti-clerical passages. More explicit comment, however, seems to be left to the readers.

### CHAPTER 3 : ANNOTATION

#### "In the hands of the Receivers"<sup>1</sup>

Scribes, rubricators, and other functionaries of the book production process are all readers of the poem. But their reading is directed towards passing the poem on to further readers, and is, in that sense, concerned with the poem in a specialised way. This concern with a future public reception distinguishes the commentary of a rubricator involved with producing the book from the essentially private commentary of a member of the reading public. Stemming from this initial difference in approach is the difference between the schematic approach of the book producer to rubrication and the more haphazard process of readers' annotation, which is often casual and intermittent. Readers often comment at different times, obviously noting different aspects of the poem which strike them on subsequent readings (this is apparent from distinct differences in ink among comments by the same hand). This leisurely process of comment and re-appraisal is markedly different from the kind of pre-conceived scheme of rubrication which characterises most of the MSS. The kind of systematic identification of structural elements of the poem such as sermons, distinctiones, quotations and so on which has been identified among C-text rubrics occurs among annotations<sup>2</sup> - readers seem to be interested in both subject matter and the structure of the text - but is less common than in rubrication. This raises questions about different kinds of reading; it is possible that the "professionals", the book producers, are interested more in the process of putting together a book than in the details of the subject matter. This may be a product of selective reading, developed to



pick out key elements for rubrication with the interests of the future reader in mind. The differences between the two forms of commentary have of course been simplified; rubricators do occasionally go beyond their specialised concern and comment directly on the issues of the poem, while readers frequently provide some form of guide similar to that of the rubricators; schemes of rubrication, like readers' comments, are often incomplete; and there is a relationship between the two forms of commentary in terms of mutual influence. Annotators respond to the type of book they are presented with as well as to the text and rubrics. They respond to incomplete schemes of rubrication by completing them; conversely, the level of response to heavily rubricated MSS is low. This may simply be coincidence, since there is a limited number of heavily-rubricated MSS, but may be a reflection of the readers' sense that the work has been sufficiently interpreted, which thus inhibits further reaction. Response to existing comment on the text is not, however, confined to reactions to the rubrics. One of the most interesting aspects of the annotation of the MSS is the response of commentators to one another - like the book producers, or like modern critics, commentators can influence responses to the poem, or provoke a reaction against their interpretation. Because readers' comments, unlike rubrics added before the book is sold, extend over a period of time, it is possible to see the sometimes opposing reactions of readers responding to the poem from the perspective of different social contexts. This kind of annotation, where it occurs, is one of the clearest demonstrations of the effect of altering perspectives on interpretation, a basic precept of reception theory.

Not all MSS provide all these forms of commentary. Some have no annotation at all. The amount of annotation in the MSS has been

cited as an indicator of the popularity of the poem and the interest with which it was read.<sup>3</sup> While this interest is evident in some MSS, it is not universal; of fifty-two complete MS, eighteen have either no annotation or very little. Seven of these have none at all or any other indication of readership such as signs or sketches.<sup>4</sup> The range of MSS with little or no annotation varies from the poorest quality MSS, such as J(A) and E(C) to the best MSS, such as V(A) and C(B) (see table 2, chapter 2.i), and with the exception of A+C texts (which are, in any case, few in number), there is, roughly, parity in numbers of unannotated MSS among the different texts of the poem. The presence of comment thus seems to depend on which readers have access to the poem, rather than on which version of the text, or which kind of book, they are reading. This highlights a problem for reception theory, since response is only available from a certain type of reader. There are, however, possible reasons for lack of written response to some of these MSS. X(C) has no annotation at all, but, as suggested above, its extensive rubrication may have proved inhibiting to further annotation, possibly simply for reasons of space in the margins. V(A) and C(B), with no annotation and only one annotation<sup>5</sup> respectively, are the two largest MSS, of monastic origin; conditions of reading such texts would not have been that of the private reading of personally owned books and, again, this seems likely to be inhibiting to any spontaneous response to the poem in the form of annotation.

The level of response among the remaining MSS varies from a few casual comments to extensive commentary throughout the text. Although extensive commentary may, at first sight, seem to be of the greater value as response to the text, the evidence of single or few comments should not be undervalued; they may reflect a particular personal interest in the poem rather than a broader assessment of its



literary value, or of the issues of the poem, but such responses are part of the reception of the poem. MS A(A), for example, has only one annotation, but it is a pointed one, at VII 146f "maykyn ys a fole for sofering so myche of hys chylderne." Such single comments suggest an involvement with the issues of the text no less than more extensive commentaries. In the following discussion, MSS with more frequent comments will inevitably be prominent; but their evidence of response, if it is to be seen as part of a wider reception of the poem, must be seen in the context of those MSS - the majority - with only a few comments. It should also be noted that many comments are no more than a simple "nota" or "mark", and can provide little evidence of the kind of reading of the text which provoked the response. With this in mind, for the purpose of drawing together the evidence of all the MSS, the discussion will focus on the different kinds of annotation found in a single MS, K(AC).<sup>6</sup> It must be stressed that this MS is atypical in many respects, not least for having an identifiable scribe/annotator and a definite date, 1531-2; the scribe, Sir Adrian Fortescue, copied out the poem for himself and not as part of the book trade. He thus combines the functions of scribe/ editor and rubricator with that of reader/ commentator. His copy is annotated extensively throughout, in itself atypical. But the MS has the advantage of displaying most aspects of the reader/ commentator's role in the reception of the poem.

### i: the reader as editor

Adrian Fortescue's role as scribe means that some, at least, of his commentary may be seen as rubrication. Some of the distinctions between rubrication by the book producer and commentary by a reader

have been pointed out above; here, however, the distinctions are blurred. Fortescue's commentary was not discussed as rubrication in the last chapter, chiefly because of the essentially private nature of his copy of the text, as opposed to the public concerns of the book trade. Yet the function of some of his annotations is the same as that of the rubrication provided by professionally produced MSS. Fortescue's MS demonstrates one aspect of annotation which is apparent among most of the annotated MSS.. The reader, acting as editor, provides subject headings, and guides to some of the structural elements of the poem. There appear to have been two stages in the process of annotating the MS: an initial scheme providing subject guides, and the later addition of longer comments, probably added over a period of time. The initial scheme, providing subject guides, seems from the ink to have been added at the same time as the word "finis" (flourished), appended to the end of each passus, with "finis totaliter" acting as the explicit. This, in turn, is a different process from the writing of the text and the passus headings. The two main inks, a light brown ink used for the "editing" function and a darker brown used for longer commentary, may be compared on fol. 36a.

From passus XVIII-XX nearly all annotations are underlined, with a flourish, clearly acting as subject guides rather than commentary. The headings for the deadly sins in N(C) are similarly set apart and boxed. This is not a consistent practice in K(AC). Many other headings in the MS act as subject guides in the same way, and headings in the prologue, signalling the introduction of each major set of characters, such as beggars, pilgrims and hermits, may be compared to the rubrication of several of the more extensively rubricated MSS. The single word subject headings of K(AC) in the prologue and passus XVIII-XX are common among other annotated MSS. Twenty-three of them



have some subject guides of this form while other commentators, such as those in K(C) and F(B), more economically simply underline key words in the text. The commentator in F(B) adds pointing hands in the margin to signal these underlinings. This process follows that of the rubricators of some of the MSS which includes distinguishing words in the text by underlining or by colour.

Fortescue's function as an editor is particularly in evidence in passus II-III, where there seems to be some attempt to use different margins for different forms of comment; single word subject guides appear to the left, while longer explanations are on the right,<sup>7</sup> such as at III 34: "frere" (left) "the fryer to mede" (right), and II 196: "mede" (left) "mede attached" (right). Further "editorial" interventions at this point in the text include the sectioning off by lines of Mede's "properties" at III 135ff following the heading "nota. Medes properties accused by Conscience", and the structuring of the debate between Mede and Conscience by heading questions and responses:

A	III 163	Medes answer to the King & against Conscience	17a
	185	What Medes answer aganst Consciens annser	17b
	210	Mede against Consciens	18a
		. . .	
	216	replicatio	
	217	consciens [one word, illeg.] replie	
		. . .	
	233a	Replicacioun of conscience	18b
		. . .	
	258	Replicatio	19a

Lady Mede attracts comment from many readers, including those who make little or no comment elsewhere. P<sup>2</sup>(C), for example, which is generally annotated with single or two-word subject headings, has four explanatory headings concerning Mede, including two which, like K(AC) above, signal answers in the debate between Mede and Conscience:

C	III 155	consciens replyeth agaynst mede before the Kynge	12b
	215	mede maketh her answer against consciens before pe Kyng	14b

The question and answer sequence between Mede and Conscience is also signalled in M(B). Other structural elements noted by annotators are similar to those noted by (mainly C-text) rubricators - quotations are identified in the C-text MSS M, N and V, while in R(B) an annotator underlines quotations along with aphoristic statements in the text. "Similitudes" are noticed in B-text MSS C<sup>2</sup> and M and C-text MSS F and U, while "experimenta" and "distinctiones" are noted in C-text MSS U and V. The fullest example of this is the "diffynicion of povertye" in U(C) at XVI 115-154, a definition which is noted by several C-text rubricators:

C XVI 115-6	A diffynicion of povertye*	fol. 83a
116	describid in .9. partes & declared by	
	pacience to ye pacient pore	
117	A grett comfort to ye pacient pore	
120	pryde hateth pouertie*	
121	the firste pointe .1.	
123	pouertye is seldom put in auctorite*	
124-5	the second pointe .2.	
127	without consciens stained .3.	
128	pouertie getts	
130f	his goods with good conscience ye .4.	
	pointe	
134	pouertie addorneth the soule ye .5. pointe	
138	pouertie ys the pathe of pees ye .6. pointe	
143f	pouertie is A well of wisdome ye .7. pointe	83b
147f	pouertie is A conscience to deserue well ye	
	.8. pointe	
153	pouertie a blessed life*	
154	[to left:] swetter then sugare absque timere	
	sollicitudine felicitas ye .9. pointe	
	[to right:] ye meane estait moste blesshed	

On fol. 83a points 1-6 are marked in the left margin.

The definition is completed by two hands, the first that of Francis Aiscough, and the second marked \*.

Most annotated MSS note Piers' testament, and prophecy is noted in C<sup>2</sup>(B) and N(C). Several hands in N(C) provide headings for the deadly sins, some of which are boxed like the flourished underlined headings of K(AC). This has the effect of setting these annotations apart as rubrication. This kind of annotation of structural elements of the poem could be for personal reference in reading the text, but



it is possible that these readers, like the original rubricators, foresaw future readers who would benefit from such guidance. A comment in U(C) at III 57, "Reade this syde" (fol. 18b) does seem to be addressed to future readers, as does Adrian Fortescue's comment "surplus" at A VI 121-2 (fol. 33a) referring the reader either to the addition of C VII 292-306, or to an additional line at the foot of the page. Correction of the text is another editorial task performed by readers. Occasional words in the text are corrected by an annotator in  $H^2$ (AC), Bm(B), F(B), M(B) and  $P^2$ (C) among other MSS, and some readers, aware of the existence of other texts of the poem, "correct" the text to conform to another version of the poem, either by alteration or by addition of material. The text of Adrian Fortescue's MS is an example of this process. The A-text section of the poem is heavily contaminated from C. There is additional material in the prologue (C prol. 85-212 follows A prol. 83), in passus III (lines like B III 52-4 + 56-8, or C III 55/6-8 + 60-2 follow A III 45), in passus V (C VI 423-VII 62 follows A V 219, with some omissions, and C VII 70-154 follows A V 250, with omissions), and Kane states that passus VI could be treated as "C-text with collation from A"<sup>8</sup> It is not, of course, possible to ascertain with any certainty whether the contamination in K was the result of Fortescue's own compilation, or originated in his copy text. However, the character of the text resembles Kane's description of the probable product of amateur, rather than professional, compilation,<sup>9</sup> reinforcing the possibility that this version of the text originated with Fortescue. If this is the case, regarding Fortescue as closer to the reader/annotators than the professional scribes and editors, this represents an extreme version of a process carried out by several readers of the poem.  $P^2$ (C) is the best example of this; a reader acting as "corrector" supplies several lines from the B-text in the margins;

this occurs near C prol.5, where B prol. 6-10 is added in the margin (fol. 2a, legible by ultra-violet light) then near C II 177, where B II 164-6 is added. These added lines, although including features such as the river in the first addition which is left out of the C-version, are not dissimilar in sense from the C-text version of the same lines. Their inclusion thus signals close attention to the text at these points. T(AC) has a similar addition at A VII 307, signalled by the comment "here is left oute v versis which is in the olde coppi & ar set be neth" (fol.20b). At the foot of the page is copied B VI 327-331 (the C-version of these lines is rejected as unoriginal by Crowley in his Preface to all three editions). The annotator's comment expresses precisely the reader's desire to have a "complete" version of the text suggested by Kane: "its [the poem's] content held the liveliest interest for readers, who would thus be jealous for the completeness of their copies".<sup>10</sup> Kane refers to completeness brought about by altering the text, as in K(AC); the process is also carried out through marginal comment and addition. It is clear from the T(AC) annotator's comment that, although there is an awareness of other versions - in this case of a known copy - there is no more detailed knowledge of other versions. There are, of course, many other "lefte oute...versis" from the A portion of the text, if B is seen as the complete poem, but the AC version is probably not differentiated from the B-text except where a reader is struck by a detail of particular interest. In this case it is the addition of further mystical prophecy in B which has caught the attention of the annotator, probably as a result of the intriguing nature of the material. Other annotators supply details from other versions of the text; an annotator of D(A), for example, supplies the Latin from B I 118a or C I 110a at A I III, and there are several other minor additions of this kind, suggesting a fairly widespread



knowledge and reading of other versions of the text, as well as another similarity in response to the poem among book producers and readers. Further editing functions quite common among readers include the supply of omitted lines, usually correctly,<sup>11</sup> again suggesting a knowledge of the text, close reading, and a high degree of concern for the completeness of the copy; correction of individual words or phrases; alteration of passus headings and glossation of difficult words. Glossation is fairly widespread, and as a response to a particular aspect of the text, the language is discussed separately below.

Fortescue's MS includes more expansive glossation as well as marking structural elements and giving single word subject guides. Several other MSS also have these longer subject guides, occasionally acting as synopses of the action. These MSS form two groups, those which have some kind of scheme of commentary executed by a single hand (there may of course be additional comment by other readers on these MSS), and those in which the annotation is more haphazard, either carried out by several readers or in informal manner by a single reader. The latter form of annotation may be the result of a single reading, with comments added freely as the reader's interest is caught, or of several readings, so that a commentary on the poem is built up gradually. Adrian Fortescue's MS, which at first sight may appear to belong to the first group of MSS, for the most part falls into the second group.

Comparing the distribution of the two main forms of comment in Fortescue's MS, it is noticeable that there is least additional comment where the subject guides are most frequent and most clearly designated as headings by underlining and neatness of hand, chiefly in

passus XVIII-XXI. Some of the later annotations are single word subject guides, supplementing the original scheme. Many of them are, however, consciously critical and interpretative comments, which go beyond the usual function of an editor. Other MSS with this kind of annotation are M(B) and U(C) (all annotations of M(B) and U(C) are listed in Appendix D). Both of these differ from K(AC) in that they are annotated by several readers, M(B) by up to five readers and U(C) by at least three. In M(B) there is no single dominant annotator, but two commentators are slightly more prominent than the others, one writing in English, the other in Latin. A reader's commentary in Latin is fairly unusual, although it has a precedent in the Latin rubrics of D(A). In U(C) there are two distinctly predominant commentators (conceivably the same hand annotating at a wide interval of time), one of whom identifies himself as Frances Aiscough of Cottam in Nottinghamshire. This is a late commentary, dated 1603, on fol. 26a, but the interest shown in the poem is far from being simply antiquarian. In both MSS, as in K(AC), there are some simple subject guides, but in addition several explanatory and critical comments. The commentary of M is less explicit than that of U, and explanatory notes tend to be fairly straightforward, usually a brief synopsis of the text as at II 193-225 to III 35:

II 193-4	quomodo Rex jurat Punire malefactores	fol. 9b
II 208-9	drede stant ad hostium & audient mandatum Reg[is]	10b
224-5	pardon ffor pens & pound mele	
III 35	the frere and mede in shryft	11a

Here, the two main annotators' comments can be seen side by side, the presence of the first set of comments possibly initiating the second. The Latin annotator keeps the name "drede" in English from the text, and this is, on the whole, the usual practice. "Rex" in the quoted passage may be seen as an exception, although it is not a name in the text in the same way as "Drede" or later "conscience". Possibly the



error "stant" (plural) for singular "stat" arises from a confusion of Latin and English. The commentary in U includes some similar subject guides, but in addition a considerable amount of critical comment on the issues of the poem.

There are three MSS which have something approaching a formal scheme of commentary, which is carried out by a single commentator in each MS. These are Ch(AC), and C-text MSS D and Y (the annotation of D is listed in full in Appendix D as an example of this type of annotation). F(C) is also fairly heavily annotated, but for the most part with single word subject headings. It is perhaps significant that such commentaries appear in the longer texts, and mainly in C-texts. No A-texts are heavily annotated, and it is only M among B-text MSS which attracts a large amount of annotation. The kinds of commentary in these three MSS is very similar, consisting generally of the kind of short synopsis of the action quoted above from M(B), but with different emphasis in each MS. Mede as usual attracts a fairly large amount of comment, and thus the annotations for passus II are a useful point of comparison:

Ch(AC):

A	II	4 to know where fals dwelleth	page 9
		10 decked and reichely arayed	
		16 howe uain was mede the mayd	
		20 A companey a [twixe?] med & wrong	
		22 the marriag of wrong & med	10
		33 gestes beden to the maryag	
		54 medes ffefment	11
		72 wyttynessethes	
		79 duvynete grevad with that maryag	
		86 wold truth shuld haue hade her	12
		89 excepcions a gyanst wrong	
		100 [cropped] brough the [mlater befor [Klyngg at Westminster	
		108 Sivell was Jusst with money	
		132 preparation to Ryde to the law	13
		149 gyle there gyd[e]	
		150 Southines posted [t]o the Court [&] told consyens	14
		165 [h]lou falshod [&] wrong had worde Liflie	
		172 he fled to the frears [for felre	

II		
cont.	195-6 med was tached	15

D(C):

C	II	4 de falset	fol.	7b
		19 nota de med þe mayd		
		41 nota de med yis marryag		8a
		53 nota de what men was preyn to þe brydall		
		80 nota de godys þat fals shall hawe [from?]		
		mede		8b
		116 nota red [ ]		9a
		145f nota how med myzt kys þe kyng as for his		
		kynys woman		9b
		177f nota de med is horsing to goo Wyrshup		10a
		hyr Wedyng		
		200 nota de soþnes y saw han all		
		217 nota how dred stod at þe dor		10b
		229 nota de pardoners		

Y(C) [starts at II]:

C	II	157 Gyle	fol.	1a
		169 Law		
		176f Mede ridith on a shiref		
		182 provisors shall serue prelates		
		200 sothnesse		1b
		203 Concyens		
		105-6 Rex [one word, illeg.] attaching ffalshode		
		& al		
		220f falshode to the frerys & gile to merchantes		
		227 lyer to pardoners		
		230-2 pardon for pens		2a
		233 leches		
		249-40 lyar to ffreres		
		245 nota de regno		

The annotator of Ch (dated as sixteenth century by Ker<sup>12</sup>) indicates an interest in Mede's appearance in two comments, at II 10 and 16. The first is a fairly free summary of the passage, which does not simply use the words of the poem, and the second, next to the line "þat is mede þe maide, hap noyed me wel ofte" (line as Ch), is not a subject guide but a comment on action, as is the comment on Civil at 108. Other comments, such as the note on False at line 4 and the wedding guests at line 33 are also noted by the annotator of D(C), and all three MSS have a comment on the ride to Westminster. Here, interestingly, each MS has a different emphasis and even a difference of opinion; the Ch commentator states, correctly, that the company is



preparing to ride "to the law", to force the judgement of the King at Westminster. This follows the text - A II 99: "Ledip her to lundoun pere lawe is Ihanded" (text as Ch) - but represents to some extent an interpretation, as the court in London is seen as the law rather than its personified attribute Civil. The commentator in D(C), however, states that Mede is riding to "go Wyrshup hyr weddyng", obviously more sanguine about her chances of success at the court. The comment in Y(C) concentrates on the unusual mounts of Mede and her company rather than the end of the journey, and, although these two notes are taken directly from the text, they focus the annotator's interest in the satire at this point. The interest is more apparent as most of the other comments here are far shorter. Although D(C) makes no verbal reference to Mede's "horse", there is an amateur illustration here of Mede carried by a sheriff. The illustrations of D(C), like the commentary, form a consistent scheme of response to the text, fairly thoroughly executed. They may have been carried out later than the commentary, which is occasionally obscured by the drawings, and the illustrator could have been following the guidelines of the commentary in the choice of subject. In some ways, the illustrations perform a very similar function to the commentary, and can be regarded as another example of this form of consistent synopsis of subject. Some aspects of interpretation by visual means are, however, particular to that medium and detailed discussion of the illustrations of D(C) is reserved for consideration together with illustration in the MSS in general. From the comparison of commentary at one point in the text, it can be seen that, although general areas of interest and a certain style of comment may be identified, the approach and specific interests of each commentator are individual. Interest in Mede is apparent in all three MSS, but this interest is seen to be sustained by a fairly large amount of

annotation in passus III in MSS D and Y; Ch has only two comments in passus III, but interest - or at least comment - revives at passus IV. D and Y have a roughly even amount of commentary throughout the text; but in Ch annotation declines quite abruptly after the end of passus XVI. From XVII to the end of the poem the commentary is reduced to simple one- or two-word subject guides. Although there is some inconsistency in terms of amount of comment through the poem, the Ch annotator generally comments more fully than the annotators of the other two MSS, providing clear and competent glosses, although these seldom refer beyond the immediate context or see the poem in broader structural terms. Sometimes this almost amounts to paraphrase or translation, as at VII 284: "When honger was gone & harvest come wasters Began to wax wilfull agean" (p.50). This kind of commentary is more readily comparable to the extensive rubrication of X(C) than to other annotations. Like the X rubricator the Ch annotator rarely comments critically on the text (the reference to Mede's vanity is an exception), although occasional moral injunctions are inferred from the text and stated directly, presumably as recommendations such as at V 39: "Leave seking of halowes & [selak trewthe" (p.29) and VIII 165: "Synn not in trust of pardons" (p.56). Like X, Ch occasionally refers potential readers back to the text, rather than simply providing a synopsis, as at III 113 "what thyng is done by medes means" (p.19), comparable to the rubric in X at III 38, "a confessor as a frere comforted Mede & sayde as ye may rede" (fol. 11a). The commentaries in Ch in particular, but also those in D and Y, thus perform a similar function to the extended rubrics in MSS such as X. Like X, they form part of the tradition of shaping a work through marginal commentary to which Crowley's printed texts belong.



## ii: interpretation, explanation and illustration

Some annotations are more explicit than subject headings or extended synopses, and provide interpretative explanations of the plot, of details of the text, or of the issues and arguments raised. Such commentary is fairly rare, and of course every synopsis, involving selection, is in effect an interpretation, so that division of annotations into separate categories along these lines is a process open to question. The criterion applied here to separate extended glossation from interpretation is whether the commentator seems to be consciously providing an explanation or interpretation, attempting an objective rendering of the text. A conscious interpretation or explanation will probably not use the words of the text directly, a characteristic of subject guides. To give a straightforward example, the little sketch of a castle by C III 140 in N(C) (fol.14b) is a non-verbal subject guide; the annotation at the same point in K(C) "In Dorset Shyre be yonde poole 5 miles" (fol.5b) is, however, an explanation. The drawing of the castle at this point in the poem is clearly no different from a single word subject heading. The sketch merely represents a typical castle; no description of Corfe Castle is given in the text. Other illustrations in the MSS of the poem are more precisely related to the text, and thus act as an interpretation. Any detailed drawing responding to elements of description in the text must be an interpretation, since the events of the poem are translated into a different medium. Illustration is particularly important as a form of interpretation with a strong impact on future readers, and is of interest in the MSS of Piers Plowman in that almost all illustration is amateur.

It is also possible to separate explanation from interpretation. The late annotator of U(C) has several fairly ponderous explanations of the text, some possibly as a result of problems with the language, such as the comment at III 411, at the foot of fol. 24a: "Dauid caulled a Knave becausse he was Sauls man not that he was one butt by cause he was a Shepperid." Another comment in the MS demonstrates the commentator's desire to explain the message of the text through a simile of his own: at I 146 the comment reads: "as Trecale or Medridat, expielseth poinson in ye body/ so loue, and godly charitie, expiilseth from in the ["Body" cancelled] spirte" (fol. 12b). Several of the comments in this MS on Mede can be described as explanations rather than subject guides, including one which suggests a limited understanding of the text at II c.130, "Mede Shulde be married to Truth and reason or consience but Refusheth them all to take crafte" (fol.20a). Another form of explanation occurs in M(C) at VIII 90a, where the Latin line reads "Omnia que dicunt facite et seruare" (Matt. 23: 2-3), and the comment summarises and completes the text in English, "do as ye precher techyth but nott as he dothe" (fol. 36a). Summaries may be regarded as subject guides in some MSS, such as the summary of XV 125-7 in Y(C), "do well is as doctors precheth do bette is to preche & doo beste is to doo as he prechethe" (fol. 56a), which follows the text fairly closely, and is barely shorter. The annotator of M(C), however, characteristically provides summaries which verge on interpretation. The comments on Mede at III 391, "Meyd carythe not for his clyantes so sche may haue ye mony" (fol. 19a), on Wrong at IV 66 "wronge makith all the fryndes he can" (fol. 21b) and on Avarice at VI 263, "gett & carenott howe" (fol. 29a), are succinct summaries of the text whilst providing an assessment of the characters described. Unlike other summaries, these do not, on the whole, make use of the words of the text, and are thus distinctly



personal statements. This kind of interpretation tends to refer to the characters in the poem rather than themes. Mede is variously summed up by annotators in three MSS including M:

K(C)	III	166 Meede or reward is by euel waige the	fol. 6a
		autor of ill	
M(C)	II	24 mede is notid to be a basted	11b
U(C)	II	11 Ye Purpill whore of Rome	14a
		Meed & Favill Antichrist	
		19-20 Meede or Reward enemye to truth	
		25-6 Meede a Basterd is doughter to favell	
III	157	Mede is fauls of faith and ficle of tonge	20a
		169 Meed a common Strumpitt	20b
		183-8 [right:] Meed ye Pops Darlinge and the	
		Prestes Baude	
		[left:] wo to that realme where Meed	
		mastereth	
		210-11 ye clergie with Meed are turned into gyle	21a

[comment at II 130 quoted above]

Another, more curious description of a character, Gyle, is given in H<sup>3</sup>(A) at B II 188: "he climes wher nothing hanges and gro [sic]" (fol. 99a). There are several interesting features of these comments. The first is that they are rare - quoted above are almost all the MS annotations which can be said with certainty to represent a personal opinion on a character in the text. Those of M(C) at II and of U(C) at II 25-6 and III 157 could be said to be simply subject headings, coming directly from the text; opinion is inferred from these because of the selection of material and because of the more-direct surrounding commentary. Mede attracts a considerable amount of attention in other MSS, from annotators and to an extent rubricators, but this is usually in the form of silent comment such as pointing hands, crosses, or "notas", or subject guides taken directly from the text. Secondly the characters - Gyle, Mede, Wrong, Avarice- which evoke this response are either partly or wholly evil - and in the case of Mede, whose character is equivocal, her worse aspects are selected for comment. This is probably a result of the common tendency for evil characters in literature to be more striking to readers than

their worthier counterparts. Finally, of the three commentators who make this kind of comment, two can be definitely dated as late readers: the K(C) reader is "S.B." who bought the book in 1531 (flyleaf), and the U(C) commentator is Francis Aiscough, who gives a date of 1603 on fol. 26a. The annotation of the third MS, M(C), also appears from the hand to be sixteenth century. It is possible that these later readers felt more need of definition of a difficult text, and hence more readily record their reactions, although the lack of such annotation by Fortescue demonstrates the difficulty of making generalisations with this kind of material. There is some evidence of the unfamiliarity of the language in the comments of K(C) at II 166 and U(C) II 19-20, which both begin "Meede or Reward", the equivalent of a gloss on vocabulary. Similarly, limited understanding of the text is apparent in the comment in U(C) at II 130.

A late date for the U(C) might have been inferred from the identification of Mede with the Pope. Criticism of the Pope is intensified by Aiscough's reference to the Whore of Babylon from Apo. 17: 1-5, which he gathers from the text despite the abbreviation of the descriptive material in the text at this point in the C revision. The identification is not sustained; the comment at II 183-8 demonstrates this. The strength of the characterisation in the texts works against too abstract an identification of Mede. By II 169 the "purpill whore of Rome" has been demoted to "a common Strumpitt".

The function of the comment "Meede or Reward" seems to be to explain the allegory, although other comments, especially the later ones on Mede in U(C), suggest that the annotators have become more involved with Mede as a character than as an allegorical figure.



Explaining the allegory is a form of interpretation practised by several annotators. Adrian Fortescue's definition of "the properties of Mede" has been described above as part of his function as organiser or editor of his text. The terminology ("properties") can also be seen as interpretation, since it is appropriate to an abstract quality and not to an individual. The same kind of interpretation occurs in Fortescue's commentary on Piers Plowman at A VII 52-3. The lines read:

'And I shal apparaille me,' quap perkyn, 'in pilgrym[ys] wyse  
And wende wip zow þe wey til we fynde treup.'

Fortescue takes these lines to refer to an allegorical rather than a literal pilgrimage, through the ploughman's daily labour, commenting here

pers woll sowe the half acre (fol. 34b)

This interpretation is reiterated at vii 94, with the comment "pers pilgrimage" (fol. 35b), in this case more directly related to the text,

And ben his pilgrym at þe plouz for pore mennis sake.

This is the opposite process to that taking place in his comments on Mede, where he points out the underlying meaning (Mede as an abstract quality) of the literal events of the plot. In passus VII the underlying meaning, the pilgrimage to Truth, is expressed directly in the text, leaving Fortescue to point out its literal embodiment, the ploughing of the half acre. At this point in the text Piers declares his intention to go on a pilgrimage after the sowing of the half acre:

A VII 58: For I wile sowe it myself, & sippe wile I wende.

The interpretation is thus personal, not simply echoing the text, and, further, implies a previous reading of the poem. K(AC) is the only MS to comment on the connection between the pilgrimage and the half acre,

with the possible exception of M(C), where an annotator notes "pyrs pylgarmage" near VIII 63-4 (fol. 35b). If the comment refers to VIII 64, "to pilgrimages, as palmeres doen, pardon to wyne", it could be no more than a subject guide, picking up "pilgrimages" from the line. It could however refer to VII 65, "My plough pote shal be my pyk-staff and pyche a-to be rotes". In this case the annotator is perhaps interpreting the ploughing as either part or the whole of the pilgrimage. The text is ambiguous here too, as Piers' ploughing clothes are compared with the clothes of a pilgrim, and the connection between his "plough pote" and the "pyk-staff" directly associates ploughing and pilgrimage. The "rotes" that he will drive through and the furrows he will "clanse" invite an allegorical reading.

Another, related form of interpretation by Fortescue is the identification of abstracts. The following examples are widely separated, and indicate a consistent interest:

A	I	12	truth is god	fol. 6a
	X	26	kynd is god	46b
C	XV	64	plowman	73a

[the line refers to Patience]

XVII 125 holy church is charite 88a

The first of these is a straightforward interpretation of the meaning of the tower, since Holy Church, in her definition of the tower, states that Truth dwells in it (I 11). The second comes even more directly from the text several lines before the annotation, at C XV 33-4:

And there cam Pacience as a pore thyng and preyede mete  
pur charite  
 Ilyk Peres the ploghman, as he a palmere were.

Fortescue notes this with "plowman" (fol. 72a), and clearly remembers



this annotation the next time Patience is mentioned, once again indicating his careful reading of the poem. Piers suddenly appears in C XV at 138. The annotator's complete identification of Piers with Patience may arise from a wish to preface this appearance, making it less abrupt, although the re-appearance itself is noted in the MS. Other identifications among annotators are generally mistaken associations between Piers and the dreamer. Fortescue confuses the two at VIII 165, where he comments "pers counsell" (fol. 43a); this is the dreamer's summary of the pardon episode, and his advice to "riche renkes". An annotator of N(C) consciously associates Piers and the dreamer; V 140-66 is underlined, and annotated "William & PP" (fol. 26a) , while on fol. 26b, a line is drawn next to V 167-79 and "PP" written above, presumably here identifying the king that "shal come... and confesse zow alle" (V 168) with Piers Plowman.

Illustrations too provide interpretations of the text. The most highly illustrated MS, C-text MS D, contains around sixty-four coloured and finished illustrations, six line drawings, and several smaller sketches. These are described in appendix D. However, other MSS too have illustrations in the text. With the exception of the three professional illustrations, in MSS T(AC), F(B), and D(C), contributions from the book producers can be seen in the same light as annotators' sketches, spontaneous reactions to the text - possibly more spontaneous than most readers', since the reader would have more time to re-read and re-assess the poem. Several MSS have sketches, some possibly mere decoration, such as the sketches of animals in G(C) (fols. 62a, 63a, 86a, 92b). F(B) has a sketch of a woman's head and a beast's head at III c.220 (fol. 11a) (the woman may be Mede), and at XVIII 46 there are sketches of a jester, a man and a woman, and an animal (fol. 76b). It is difficult to see any connection between these

sketches and the text. Other sketches in the MSS could be related to the text; Q(C) has a face in the heading at passus XV, in red decorator's ink, possibly a representation of the dreamer; V(C) has a female face at III 135 (fol. 11b), possibly a representation of Mede; H(A) has sketches of a naked woman at III 229f (fol. 10b) and V 73f (fol. 14a), and the first of these is possibly Mede. The sketches of Mede in X(C), pictured above (chapter 2.i), of Mede in the initial of passus II, a crown in the margin near V 168, and a face of Avarice at VI 196, are possibly the best examples of this kind of sketch, and were probably drawn by the main rubricator. Like the rubrications, they appear, precisely placed, beside the text they illustrate; from the face of Mede in the initial it may be inferred that she is the main subject of the passus in the opinion of the illustrator, making this a visual equivalent to the rubric at passus III in H<sup>3</sup>(A): "Thys is þe thryede part of þis book ho þe kyng conceylyt mede to be maryid". The crown at V 168 ("Ac þer shal come a kyng...") is, like the little castle in N(C) mentioned above, no more than a subject heading, in this case even less of a visual representation of the text than the castle, since the crown is symbolic. The sketch of the face of Avarice, however, follows some of the directions in the text, being "bitelbrowed and baburlipped" (VI 198). This is just a small sketch, and not an appropriate subject for too great a depth of analysis, but it does demonstrate some of the differences between visual descriptions in writing and illustration. The statement at the start of the description, "y can hym nat descreue" (VI 196) is refuted even before it is read by the presence of the sketch, while the cumulative effect of the listing of Avarice's physical characteristics, each with a moral implication, is destroyed by the immediacy of a single visual image. The moral implications of the physical attributes of the sins are of greater importance to the poem than a coherent visual image.



Where physical characteristics in the text are contradictory, an illustrator must choose a single image, thus losing some of the quality of the text. In the case of an allegorical text, illustration is particularly problematic; the written text can sustain several levels of meaning simultaneously, whereas an illustrator must choose whether to depict the literal or the allegorical sense of the text. This problem (probably not perceived as such) is faced by the illustrator of D(C).

The illustrations of D(C), though amateur, are executed with some skill, and with close attention to the details of the text. Piers Plowman is not unique among contemporary MSS in attracting such illustrations; other works in three A-text MSS, for example, have similar drawings; MS D has a two colour sketch of the abbey at the conclusion of The Abbey of the Holy Ghost (fol. 159b), L has an illustration of Merlin (fol. 17b), and H<sup>3</sup> has many illustrations in Mandeville's Travels, close in style and attention to detail to those of D(C). The illustrations in D(C) are distributed fairly evenly through the text, but the more striking depictions occur in the visio, where more detailed physical descriptions are given in the text to concrete personifications, although some vitae characters are given particular attention; Activa Vita, for example, is represented by a lively illustration at XV 190 (fol. 69a, see photograph 1). Unlike some of the sketches in the visio, the description of Activa Vita in the text gives little physical detail, and the portrait in D, of a poorly clad man with shoes splitting to show his bare feet, is an imaginative rendering of a single line reference to his physical appearance in C, XV 202: "... fewe robes Y fonge or forrede gounes." The C-text lacks the detail of B, where Haukyn's tattered clothes represent his spiritual condition (B XIII 1f), a theme which is

sustained to the end of his appearance in B, where Haukyn's repentance includes reference to his clothes:

'I were nozt worpi, woot god' quod haukyn 'to werien  
any clopes,  
Ne neiper sherte ne shoon, saue for shame one  
To couere my careyne'... B.XIV 332-4.

The importance of the physical description of Haukyn in B, largely omitted in C, is to an extent revived in the illustration. Possibly this suggests knowledge of the B-text on the part of the illustrator, given the paucity of physical detail in the C-text and the tendency of this illustrator to follow textual detail precisely. Other drawings in the vitae seem to be simply formulaic, typical representations, such as Fortune with her wheel at XI 167f (fol. 53a), Mercy at XX 149, a woman in a white robe (fol. 94a), and at XX 275, Lucifer, horned and with cloven feet (fol. 94a).

Close attention to the text is most readily seen in the drawing of the Palmer, VII 160f, on fol. 33a. The Palmer carries a bell in the illustration (see photograph 2), which follows a textual error in the MS at VII 164, where "bel" is substituted for "bolle". The illustration includes as many details as possible from the text; the Palmer carries the staff described in VII 162, and has "ampoules on his hat sette" (VII 165). Most characters drawn in D(C) look into the text - the layout of the illustrations on the page encloses the text, and the figures are occasionally represented as if addressing the text, giving the impression of careful and deliberate arrangement. An exception to the rule of characters looking towards the text occurs in the drawing of the Bishop on fol. 44a; he looks away with his eyes closed, both of these details representing visually his dereliction of duty described in IX 264. This kind of attention to the details of the text may be compared with the line-by-line reading of rubricators



selecting headings from the text as subject guides. There are differences - the single impact of a visual image is distinct from the gradual building-up of an image from a written text; the transition from one medium to another represents an interpretation in a way which the selection of subject headings from the text does not; and in this MS in particular the idiosyncrasies of facial expression in most of the major illustrations suggest an imaginative personal response even where other details correspond directly to the text. The portrait of Activa Vita, however, represents a different form of comment, requiring a greater degree of imaginative response to the whole of the character's participation in the text, rather than to a specific physical description. This is closer to the rare comments by the X rubricator which summarise whole areas of the text.

The physical details of the Palmer's dress and equipment are not symbolic like Haukyn's coat, but typical. There is therefore no loss of textual subtlety in the pictorial representation of this type of character. The descriptions of the sins however do pose some problems for an illustrator, although the degree of physical description, as well as the impact of the confessions in the creation of credible personifications, makes them obvious subjects for illustration. All the sins are depicted, if the picture of a minstrel at VI c.10 (fol. 24a) represents Pride. The portrait of Envy at VI c.63 (fol. 25a) focuses on one aspect of the C-text description: C VI 66 "A wroth his fust vppon Wrath...", and attempts to convey the anger through the fist and facial expression (see photograph 3). The illustrator makes no attempt to realise visually the figurative elements of the description: "His clothes were of corsed men and of kene wordes" (VI 65). Here, as with Haukyn/ Activa Vita, the C-text lends itself less readily to illustration than the B-text. Eight

lines of physical description of Envy (B V 77-84) are reduced to the one line quoted above. The clenched fist, which remains, is the detail which focuses most directly on the underlying meaning behind the physical description, Envy's spiritual state. While the illustration goes some way towards suggesting this spiritual state, through a skilful representation, Envy's various attributes tend to be reduced by the illustration to a single one, jealous anger.

The C revision also reduces physical description of Mede, who nonetheless is the most pictured character in D, with four illustrations from fols. 8a-11b. Perhaps the most interesting of them is Mede riding the Sheriff at II 177f (fol. 10a, see photograph 4). Here, no physical description is given, but the illustrator selects details from the surrounding text and represents them symbolically. Mede wears a crown, a reference to II 146, which is annotated in this MS "nota how med myzt kys þe kyng as for his kynys woman" (fol. 9b), and carries a large gold cup, presumably symbolising her wealth. The illustration exemplifies the difficulties of illustrating allegory; a picture of a sheriff carrying a woman directs the reader to the literal level of the poem, which thus predominates.<sup>13</sup>

Several kinds of response to the text can thus be identified in these illustrations - stock representations of figures such as Fortune; depiction of physical characteristics taken directly from the text, together with an attempt to convey emotion through facial expression; imaginative response to broader descriptions in the text; and literal renderings of allegory with symbolic elements indicating specific but non-visual references in the text. These illustrations are interpretation, to some extent explanation, and act as a reader's guide. In spite of the difficulties of illustrating an allegorical



work, many of the illustrations are successful in suggesting the character of a passage. The even spread of illustration through the MS, with only a slightly larger amount of attention to the visio, suggests a fairly schematic approach; this and the thoroughness of execution in terms of completion of the drawings imply a considerable and sustained interest in the poem, further testified in the MS by the extensive commentary. This reader clearly found the poem visually compelling, and found the literal events of the plot more striking than their allegorical meaning. In spite of the tendency of the C revision to eradicate physical description in B, the illustrations emphasise visually the literal and physical level of the poem. As a form of literary criticism, the illustrations of MS D seem to commend Langland's poem for elements which he has particularly attempted to suppress.

### iii: Literary criticism: the reader as critic

Annotations so far discussed have been either explanatory or interpretative, or have been intended as subject guides. These kinds of comments are by far the most common. Approval of some areas of the text may be inferred from the degree of interest generated among annotators, but there is very little more explicit comment. Literary criticism, in terms of comment on the form, style, and structure of the poem may be more readily ascertained from the reactions of the scribes; involved in a mechanical sense with the construction of the work, they necessarily pay attention to the structure of the text, perhaps more so than to elements of the plot, because of the kind of line-by-line reading required by the scribal process. The passus divisions of F(B) are the clearest examples of literary criticism so

far discussed, where alterations to the original divisions imply dissatisfaction with Langland's structure. Readers do not have the same opportunity to re-structure the poem; although there are a few alterations to the text by readers such as the supply of material from other versions of the poem as described above, small scale corrections, and the cancellation of some words,<sup>14</sup> these are comparatively minor. But there are two kinds of comment which may be described as literary criticism. The first is clearly literary criticism, consisting of remarks such as "exemplum bonum", which evaluate the choice of material rather than the argument. Only a small number of annotators provide this sort of information. The second consists of criticism of the argument of the poem, and involves some fairly detailed comment on the issues with which the poem deals. This form of commentary can be used to discover which the early readers consider to be the main issues of the poem, as well as indicating their views on these issues.

An annotator of M(C) provides several comments of the first type; the first occurs at III 323-31, where Reason uses the example of Solomon's riches, taken away from him for apostasy in old age, to point out the vanity of earthly reward. This is "a goodly ensampell" (fol. 18b). Two other MSS use this form of commendation at other points in the text; M(B) at X 138 comments "bene loquitur" (fol. 42b), and O(B) comments "exemplum bonum" at XI 171 (fol. 44b). It is impossible to be sure what exactly is commended by the M(B) annotator here - the remark could refer to the line only, or to the whole of Study's speech which ends shortly after the comment, at X 139, but probably commends ll. 137-9 which provide an epigrammatic summary of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest and the relationship between them. The object of comment in O(B) is also not as easily established as that of M(C).



The text here concerns the problem of the salvation of virtuous pagans. The "exemplum" could be Troianus himself, or it could be his statement that law without love is worthless, or a combination of the two. There is thus a problem of identifying the precise significance of such brief commendations. The concern of the M(C) annotator with how issues are discussed can be seen again at VII 208, where the comment reads "how he noteth the x commandements" (fol. 33b), although here there is no evaluation of the author's method, and from comment on the sins, at VI 189, on Lechery: "showrte & swett" (fol. 28a), which may be associated with the comment on Pride at VI 14, "ffirst pride makith a long confession" (fol. 25b), and at VI 196: "Avaricia .v. nota how it is discribed" (fol. 28a). M(B) also comments on how Avarice is described, this time with approval: "apta [possibly "optima"] descriptio Avaricia" (fol. 21a). Another form of comment which may possibly reflect a literary judgement is the cancellation of "dep" at XX 34 in H<sup>2</sup>(AC), but this could just be because of a belief that mentioning death is unlucky, possibly the reason for a similar change to the text in W(AC) at C XVII 293, where "dedly" is omitted. The cancellation of the word means that the sense of the line is inverted. Other comments of this sort are more general, such as that in G(C) at VI 223, "this ys a very good boke and a swette" (fol. 24b), and the comments at the beginning and end of K(C) by "S.B." These few examples, generally either in praise of the poem or neutral, comprise all the comments which can reasonably securely be identified as criticism of the poetry. Negative criticism takes the form of comment on the issues of the poem rather than their expression.

Readers' interest in the issues is referred to by Kane and others,<sup>15</sup> and is amply testified by direct response to these issues by annotators. Even more indicative of personal involvement with the

poem is the tendency of some annotators to link aspects of the text with contemporary events. Comments, often including the words "now" and "nowadays", relate the poem to the readers' experiences. In some cases comments signify a sense of the distance between the conditions at the time of the poem's composition and their own. This is the case with the comment by Francis Aiscough in U(C) at XVIII 134f, "a wench ought to be A virgine butt hardly in this wickett age" (fol. 94b). Most often commentators assume that the poem refers to their own time. This is seen in the comment in C<sup>2</sup>(B) at X 19, "who is nowadaies called to counsaile" (fol. 42a), and in Y(C) at XVII 105, "science is not had nowe parfitly" (fol. 65b). This remark in Y(C) follows a comment about "science" at XVI 222, "connyng to know science pute Eue oute of paradyse" (fol. 61b), suggesting an interest in the subject on the part of the annotator. Many other comments which are in the present tense suggest identification of the time of the poem with that of the reader, such as the comment in the same MS, Y(C), at XVII 69, "clerkes kepe cristes tresore that pore men shold have" (fol. 65a), and though this remark could refer to the present tense of the text. The Y(C) annotator also comments in the future tense at XVII 92, "if men doo well all thyng shalbe plente" (fol. 65a). Again this could refer to the conditional future tense of the poem: XVII 92-3 "... dede we so also/ There sholde be plente and pees perpetual euere". However, it follows the pattern of several comments which take such moral advice and warnings of the text to heart, and is part of a response to the text as prophecy, understood literally and taken to refer to events to take place at a specific time. One of the C<sup>2</sup>(B) annotators notes prophecy at X 322 and XV 547, and the main annotator of G(B) entitles the poem "the prophecies of Piers Plowman", probably a response to the interest of the scribe in prophecy. Francis Aiscough is most precise in the identification of prophetic happenings. Unlike most of the



commentators, he perceives most of the prophecies to have been fulfilled, noting at the foot of fol. 26a, after IV 36a:

nota. Thus farr of prophises yet to come  
all the reste followinge are past  
Hauing the fall of ye lawe and  
bishoppes nowe at hande.

this is appropriate given the late date of the annotation, 1603. the complete acceptance of the "prophecies" having been fulfilled implies a considerable respect for the prophetic powers of the author - and the tendency of prophecy to shape itself to fit particular circumstances, often as a result of a reader's desire to identify events and meanings in the poem. The immediate relevance of the poem to this reader is apparent from the conclusion to the above comment, despite the late date of the reading. The sense of the immediacy of the "prophecies" in the early part of the text for this reader is implied by the similar comment at prol. 223-4, "evne nowe at hande", which seems to reply to the question in the same hand at prol. 217-20, "will the catt ye kinge and the kittines destroye" (fol. 10a). This annotator's difficulty with understanding the poem appears again here with this rather confused interpretation of the cat and rat fable. It is possible that the difficulties with the language and the resultant sense of antiquity provide the same kind of intriguing obscurity as the enigmatic prophecies in the poem, thus perhaps explaining the tendency of some later readers to view the poem in this light.

Aiscough specifically identifies some of the prophecies: at prol. c.64 his annotation reads "famous kinge Henry viij fulfilled in his time" (fol. 7b). The previous lines complain of the friars' practice of citing scripture to support their begging, and of making money out of confessions;

And but holi chirche and charite choppe adoun suche  
shryuars  
The moste meschief on molde mounteth vp faste  
(prol. 64-5).

For a late sixteenth - early seventeenth century annotator the Dissolution of the Monasteries may well seem to be the required "chopping down" of such corrupt clergy (it is interesting to note that these lines fall within the section of the text where prophecies are "yet to come"). An annotator of I(C) also identifies a king in the text with a historical king, commenting "henry is hys name" (fol. 28a), next to V 166, "Ac þer shal come a kyng and confesse zow alle". Historical identification of characters is however the particular preoccupation of Francis Aiscough and other annotators of U(C). Piers attracts several comments which attempt to identify him, as a private individual rather than as a public figure. The first, on the original flyleaf, establishes Piers as the author and dates the text:

This book was written and daited the 10th of th'Ides  
~of~ March in þe seconde yere of kinge John of faimous  
memorie by Peers Plowman Pensionare ~or rather servant~  
to ye saide king as John Gower recordethe.

The detail of this reference, though fictional, is authoritative; but the annotator is inconsistent: at III 241-8 he notes that "Peers liued in Henri the Sixt his daiþ" (fol. 21b). Piers is again referred to as the author at VII 200 (fol. 41b), and further detail about his life includes the information that "Pers was a pecks man" (X 303f, fol. 48a), and "pers ploughmans man a waferer", by the second annotator (XV 196-201, fol. 79a), and with a particularly inept interpretation of the text, "Pers dwelled in Cornewell with his frind Christofo his wyf Catte in there beds had a vision" (V 2, fol. 28b). Conscience too is identified, more specifically than Piers:



This conscience is nowe supposed to be Kinge James Ye  
Sixt to punish the couitousnes of the clergie of  
Brittaine (prol. 95, fol. 8a).

and James is also associated with Truth, with the note "the Kinge of  
Skootes" at IX 1 (fol. 49a). The identifications, as with those of  
Piers, are not consistent. After the last line of the MS Aiscough  
concludes "conscience is a sleppe till he come in againe", and follows  
this with the comment

Conscience will not come into this Lande till the proude  
Prelats and couitous Lawyeres be swepe awaie which will  
not be longe to Amen so be it  
(fol. 124a, compare the annotation at fol. 26a, quoted above).

It might be possible that this comment pre-dates the one associating  
Conscience with James; but the note on fol. 26a which includes almost  
identical suggestions about the future gives the date 1603, the year  
of James' coronation. The comment on Henry VI at II 241-8 (see above)  
prefaces an understandable historical identification of the references  
in passus III with Henry V and VI in the French wars. The comment  
continues "...Henri the Sixt... who lost his heritage in fraunce which  
his father had wonne" (fol. 21b), and this is embellished by a note  
at the foot of the page:

Kinge henri the 6 was a simpell Religious man which was  
the loose of his father heritage in Fraunce.

This view of Henry VI is the result of Lancastrian propaganda  
encouraged by Henry VII.<sup>16</sup> Mede's criticism of this king is broadly  
accepted in this comment, which links the king's reliance on  
Conscience, seen as weakness by Mede, with his religious leanings,  
which are inappropriate to strong government. Aiscough makes three  
further identifications, two apparently personal, "Doctor Robinson  
Doctor Barefoul of Lincoln" next to XV 66, "For a doctour pat at pe

hey deys dranke wyn faste" (fol. 77a), and "Ye vicare of Bindbrocke" next to XXII 177 (fol. 120b). The other such comment links XV 77-8 concerning false friars with Bishop Bonner (fol. 77a), Bishop of London 1539-1549, and 1553-59. Bonner held his see in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth I, monarchs with considerable diversity of religious policy.<sup>17</sup> The lack of moral integrity which can be inferred from this survival may have prompted an association with "falsis fratribus" (XV 76a), although it is also possible that Bonner's skill in self-preservation is seen as an enactment of XV 77, "Holy writ byt men be waer and wysly hem kepe". These identifications all tend towards an interpretation of the poem as a historical allegory, slightly confused by the parallel preoccupation of the annotator with prophecy. Although other MSS annotations give some support to the prophetic view of the poem, as do some of the rubrications, these are not generally so specifically related to particular historical events and characters. The U(C) annotations are unique in the detail with which identification of events and characters is carried out, and by the more marked attention to social than spiritual references. Where spiritual references are noted by the annotator, they are recorded as moral advice which pertains to the smooth running of a social system (see for example the comments on the Wasters in passus VI), rather than objective spiritual absolutes. Despite this uniqueness among MS commentaries, some comments in U(C) suggest a community of interpretation; the most obvious is the reference to Conscience, "nowe supposed" to be James. A comment on Mede at III 215, "Meeds famed Answere to the kinge" (fol. 21a) further suggests a community of readers. The James reference may have been influenced by the publication of other "prophecies" supposed to refer to the king, The whole prophesie of Scotland, England and some part of France, Denmark etc., one of the



prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune, published in 1603, was taken to foretell the accession of James to the English throne, and the subsequent uniting of the two kingdoms.<sup>18</sup> No evidence has come to light to support the annotator's implications of wide currency of the poem; Mede's "famed Answere" may have no more significance than the formula "famous Kinge Henry viij" (fol. 7b). The similarity of the words used here exemplifies a confusion in the commentary between real and fictional characters. Perhaps the suggestions of a community of interpretation, like the date and reference to "John Gower" on the flyleaf, are a fiction, designed to give authority to the annotator's own idiosyncratic interpretations.

The U(C) annotator's precise identifications, and other MSS' more general associations of the message of the text with their own period, establish the relevance of the issues of the text even to quite late readers. One of the main issues of interest to annotators is the church establishment and the state; there are a few comments on the moral arguments in the poem, but for the most part the liveliest and most diverse comment is usually in response to temporal aspects of the church. The exception is comment on doctrinal issues, which theoretically should be purely concerned with theology, but in effect are one of the practical concerns of the church establishment, and an important area of political polemic, especially in the sixteenth century. The comments in U(C), as might be expected, show a marked interest in the state and society, with notes such as "Englands careles securite" (fol. 106a), relating XX 237-8

For woet no wiht what werre is þer as pees regneth  
Ne what is witterliche wele til wel-a-way hym teche

rather inappropriately to the contemporary situation. At VIII 173f the annotator comments "nota Brittainne shalbe bitten with hungere when

the plouth shalbe neclected by inclosers" (fol. 46a), and this interest in the state as well as the generally pragmatic reading in purely material terms prompts the comment at VIII 158f, "wasters and rioters make things deare" (fol. 46a), a mistaken reading of VIII 158 "dere", harm. More interesting as literary criticism is the author's articulation of the Biblical text underlying most of Hunger's statements,<sup>19</sup> "he that will not laboure ys not worthy to eate" (VIII 239-40, fol. 46a), a version of 2 Thess. 3:10. This text, in Latin, "qui non laborat non manducet", appears in three other MSS: at B prol. 39 as a marginal rubrication in OC<sup>2</sup>, and as a comment by Adrian Fortescue at A prol. 38. All three commentators express a sense of the extremity of Langland's views by the addition of this severe text. Fortescue's articulation of underlying meaning elsewhere in the text has been discussed above. The U(C) commentator also understands some of the discussion about bishops in terms of state rather than religion; the subject guide at prol 89-94 "bisshopps Tellers and officers in ye exchecare" (fol. 8a) signals his interest at an early stage, and this is followed up by a comment at IX 261, "Dispergentur oues, þe dogge dare nat berke", "Bisshopes dare not barck against the offences of oure Staite" (fol. 53a).

Brief reaction to details of the moral passages of the poem appears in M(C); the annotator approves of Reason's advice at V 123, "Reson gyvith excelent good cownseyll" (fol. 24b), and of Repentance's suggestion at VI 345f that usurers should entrust bishops with the distribution of repayments in restitution, "nota good cownsayll" (fol. 30a). The U(C) commentator registers approval of the warning at prol. 64, which is annotated "ye light of ye truthe" (fol. 7b). Much reaction to the issues of the poem focuses more specifically on criticism of the church hierarchy, and takes the form of explicit



comment, generally in favour of Langland's attacks on corruption among the clergy. Satire directed at the clergy in general is noted by some annotators; in C<sup>2</sup>(B) a comment at X 311 reads "the Abusions of ye Religious" (fol. 46b), although this is perhaps more of a subject guide than a comment on the argument; Fortescue also comments on the clergy in general, providing a greater contribution to the argument by summarising C XVI 258f as "the common lief of our clergie" (fol. 83a), a remark which is comparable to the X rubricator's statement that "Sire penetrans-domos" is "a general name for a frere" (C XXII 340, fol. 106a). The M(C) commentator notes Reason's objections to secular endowment of the church at V 165 with approval, registering general criticism of the clergy with a sympathetic response to the argument, "hit ys pyty ye shulde yn herytt ylalt cannott rule hitt" (fol. 25a); the same commentator attacks friars in particular at VII 26, where Sloth explains that one of his measures of repentance is to pay friars to remember him in their prayers. This is "a bade remedy for ye folle" (fol. 31a). Both these comments focus the argument on the clergy at points where the main subject of attack in the text lies elsewhere (secular lords, Sloth). The commentator thus reads the argument selectively, and notes particular interests. A further comment on friars appears at VIII 73, where Piers lists the exceptions to those for whom he will find food. These are characterised as "... friers & such lyke lewterers" (fol. 36a); friars seem to be the standard for immoral behaviour for this annotator. An annotator of H<sup>3</sup>(A) may be making a comment on friars with the erasure of "freres & faitours" at XI 58 (fol. 120a). If so, it is still impossible to establish whether the motive for the erasure is sympathy (averting the criticism) or antipathy (removing an unpopular subject) to the friars. The M(C) annotator is also unsympathetic to hermits; the comments again show considerable engagement with and contribution to the

argument. At V 12ff Reason questions the dreamer about his occupational skills. At the first occupation,

'Can thow seruen,' he sayde, 'or syngen in a church,'  
(V 12),

the annotator dismisses the suggestion, "eremytes wer neuer bowne prentysys to yis occupacion" (fol. 23a). The possibility that this is simply a point of fact rather than a criticism is reduced by a second, more pointed comment which follows shortly; the dreamer justifies his wandering life by stating that he lives by the work he knows best (V 42f), to which the annotator responds "disceytt ys ye eremytes best craft" (fol. 23b). An annotator of F(C) points out the destructive power of the sins to bring about the downfall of the clergy at V 168f, "superbia et auaritia ruina monasteriorum" (fol. 70b), for once a criticism not directed at individual clergy. This does not arise directly from the text at this point, and is a considered critical comment which contributes to Langland's argument.

There are one or two comments on Lollards:

He þat lolleth is lame or his leg out of ioynthe  
Or ymaymed in som membre, for to meschief hit souneth  
C IX 215-6

is annotated "lollardes" (fol. 33a) in Y(C), the annotator possibly influenced by the scribal heading "lollard" in red at IX 107 (fol. 31b). The comment represents an extremely critical view of this religious group. The U(C) annotator comments on "lowlars" customs, V 30 "lowlars regarded not fridaies fast" (fol. 29a), and identifies two other religious groups, "pueritans" at III 380-3 (fol. 23b), and Protestants at V 4-6, "Pers became a Protestant and loued his lyke" (fol. 29a). The identification of Puritans, "hipocreticall pueritans are Indirecte" (fol. 23b) has no justification in the text and seems to be purely personal invective. Piers as a Protestant is



particularly odd in terms of chronology, given the annotator's two early dates for his life (in the reigns of King John and Henry VI). The inappropriateness of the two annotations is however useful in highlighting an aspect of reception relevant to the earlier response to religious issues, the effect of the changing context of religious orthodoxy in the 150 or so years after the poem's first appearance. This manifests itself in an increasing volume of criticism against the Pope - although it must be stressed that this kind of criticism need not imply a post-Reformation date; Langland himself criticises the Pope - and response to doctrinal issues which have been subject to change. C<sup>2</sup>(B) notes one of Langland's criticisms of the Pope at XIX 442 (fol. 101a); the annotator of U(C) is more expansive on the subject, with many criticisms on the Pope including the singularly acerbic identification of the Pope with Mede quoted above, and a more detailed comment on Langland's argument at IX 282, commending it as "a prittie interogation with a secret discoverie of the Pope's game of all bulles" (fol. 53b). The note "Antichrist ye/ pope" at XXI 221-4 (fol. 113b) is written by two annotators, the second finishing the comment. The same point is made by a second annotator of Fortescue's MS at XXII 53 and 58 (fol. 123b) and by an annotator of G(B) at XX 53, where "ipsa papa" appears above the word "antecrist" (fol. 96b). In H<sup>3</sup>(A) erasure is once again used as a form of comment; "pope" is cancelled and replaced with "busshop" at XI 204 (fol. 119b). The line reads "Gregory þe grete clerk, a good pope in his tyme", and the alteration suggests that Gregory's position as Pope is unacceptable in a commendatory statement. Cancellation or erasure of the word "pope" occurs in four MSS, B-text MSS Bm (which includes the erasure of "Peter" at C prol. 128), Ht and R, and St(C). A series of anti-papal comments appear in the last two passus of K(AC) by a new annotator

(the two quoted from G(B) above are also by a new hand which only appears towards the end of the MS):

C XXI	428	O lewde pupe	fol. 121b
	442	ye pope	
	445	ô very Antichrist	
XXII	66	Religion of falsse stat	123b
	64	puppera	124a
	101	alias puppyes	124b.

These aggressive interjections suggest that the annotator's attitude towards the Pope interferes with a more constructive engagement with the poem's fundamental issues, in this case the means of the spread of evil through corrupt religious practitioners. The author attacks "abuse onely" as Andrew Bostock points out in 1613.<sup>20</sup>

Comments which reflect changes in religious doctrine include some which simply reject the Catholicism of the text. These occur in U(C) at three points in passus VII, at 149, 155-6, and 241-2, concerning references to the Virgin Mary, penances, and prayers to saints. At XIV 153a there is a comment acknowledging the Catholicism of the poem, "a little taste of poprie" (fol. 75a). The comment is in the second main hand. The same annotator comments earlier in XIV at 135f, "of the theefe yat was saved on good frydaye a rare opynyon" (fol. 74b). Aiscough makes several further comments relating to doctrine in passus XX. The first, at 67, "nota A dombe speche of deade bodis" (fol. 103b) suggests a change in received doctrine on this point; he backs up his comment: "the Author varieth some what from ye word of god". Aiscough queries Langland's statement at XX 310-13, "vij yere was Adam in Hell ... contrary to Elias computacione" (fol. 107b), and the second annotator rejects the last part of the passus, 472-8, as "Idolatrie" (fol. 110a). Aiscough comments on communion at XXI 385, "gods body under ye elliment of brede not transsubstanciacone" (fol. 116a); here it is impossible to be certain whether the reader is



"correcting" Langland's Catholicism, or if this is an interpretation of the text, which could bear either reading. Aiscough interprets Truth's words at XX 150-1 as an argument against purgatory: "Truth is directly against purgatory and limbo patrum" (fol. 105a), a fairly free reading of Truth's words,

That thyng þat ones is in helle out cometh hit neuere  
XX 151.

This and the comment on transubstantiation possibly arise from a desire on the part of the reader to find the poem doctrinally acceptable. This is part of the purpose of the K(C) preface, which remonstrates with readers who regard the poem as "papisticall" (flyleaf). "S.B.", author of this preface, apparently feels the need to justify his enjoyment of the poem by denying its Catholicism (though the preface could conceivably be a precaution in case the book was found to be subversive in a climate of religious intolerance). Aiscough and the second annotator clearly recognise and to an extent accept the book's Catholicism, but their comments tend to concentrate on those aspects of the text which criticise the church, and which are therefore more acceptable to Protestant readers. Two areas of doctrinal criticism in U(C) are noted in other MSS; the first is reference to purgatory, and the second relates to Thomas of Canterbury.<sup>21</sup> The second annotator in U remarks that XVII 274-80 concerning Thomas is "an vnsownd opynion" (fol. 91b). Objections to the concept of purgatory are signalled by cancellation in N(AC), where "Purgatories peynes" is cancelled at C XI 33 (p. 65); by erasure in R(B) at several points;<sup>22</sup> and by alteration in H<sup>2</sup>(AC) where "pargatorie" is altered to "theos" at C XII 66 (fol. 41a); and lines concerning Thomas of Canterbury are erased or cancelled in C MSS K(AC), XVII 274-280; W(AC), in which the name "Thomas of Canterbury"

only is cancelled at XVII 274; R, 274-6 cancelled, and St, VII 202 "seynt Thomas" cancelled and XVII 274-80 cancelled. Only one annotator other than the second of U(C) comments on the lines, and this is Adrian Fortescue, who comments at A VI 44-5 "Chanctory [?] long after Becket" (fol. 31a) and at C XVII 274 gives a subject guide, "seint thomas of canterbury" (fol. 91a), which has been heavily cancelled by the second annotator.

Censorship in the form of cancellation, erasure, or alteration is the most extreme form an annotator's response can take, since it deprives a future reader of the possibility of judging the material. it suggests a high level of concern with these aspects of the poem. the censor of K(AC) goes on to read the rest of the poem with considerable attention, if with limited understanding. The two annotators of K(AC) exemplify a process of interaction between readers. The tone of the second commentator's commentary contrasts noticeably with that of Fortescue. It points out chiefly the negative aspects of the text in an exclamatory style. Comments on the Pope, quoted above, form a significant proportion of the comments made by this annotator. In addition, the annotator responds to at least two of Fortescue's comments by supplying their negative counterpart; at XXII 138 Fortescue notes "matrimony"; the second annotator follows this with "Dyourse" (fol. 125a); the second occasion is one of the best examples of this kind of interaction, again on the subject of marriage. Fortescue notes at XXII 193 "my wife had ruthe nota þe wyfe", to which the second annotator replies "ye but nota for what cause/ the wief is wo but why" (fol. 126a-b). Three of the main annotators in U(C) also respond to one another, in this case throughout the MS (the second annotator in K(AC) appears only at the end of the MS). Several examples have been quoted above, one of the



best of which is the "diffynicion of povertye" at XVI 115f (fol. 83a), quoted above. This collaboration contrasts with the disagreement between the two annotators in K(AC). Small instances of collaboration occur throughout the MS, such as the addition of the word "Pope" to Aiscough's heading at XXI 221-4 by the second hand (fol. 113b). Aiscough occasionally qualifies the statements of the other annotators, as at XVI 64-6:

The pore is euer redye to please ye Riche  
(second annotator)  
but ye rich hateth ye poore  
(Aiscough) fol. 82a.

and at XXI 467-79a:

The Kinge is above his lawe (second annotator)  
yet ounder ye rigore of ye lawe by reprehension as  
Nathan rebuked David (Aiscough) fol. 117b.

and XXII 61-3:

but fooles will rather dye (second annotator)  
as marters. christians gods ffoles in this world  
(Aiscough) fol. 118b.

A third annotator also responds to annotations, for example at XX 258:

Symonds sons (second annotator)  
which were in hell (third annotator) fol. 106b.

This kind of fairly amicable interchange between annotators seems to be more common than disagreement. Some annotators may be influenced by the scribal rubrication of the poem. The rubrication can influence annotation in specific instances, such as the Y(C) annotator's heading "Lollards", noted above, and the C<sup>2</sup>(B) annotator's more detailed reference at prol. 83, following the scribal subject guide "curatis" with the information "curati non residentes" (fol. 2a). Annotators may also be influenced by the original rubrication scheme as a whole; the C<sup>2</sup> annotator supplements scribal rubrication at other points, supplying headings for Thought and Wit in passus IX (ll. 75 and 119) to complete a scribal scheme of headings including Dowel, Dobet and

Dobest (ll. 78, 85 and 96, fol. 38a-b), and in V(C), where the original scheme consists of identification of Biblical quotations, and headings for preaching and exempla, an annotator regularly adds to this scheme, supplying Biblical texts for passages as a whole as well as for individual Latin quotations. This occurs extensively in passus III,<sup>23</sup> and regularly throughout the text. Other MSS have several annotators, but with no obvious interaction, although it is possible that the presence of annotation stimulates further comment in the same form.

#### iv: Changing contexts

Several of the annotators' criticisms, especially those relating to religious doctrine, testify to the changing context of the poem's reception. The anachronistic references by Aiscough to Protestants and Puritans demonstrate the poem's adaptability to different circumstances. Censorship suggests that some readers could not accommodate all aspects of the poem. Political as well as religious events sensitise areas of the text; B prol. 195a "Ve terre vbi puer Rex est" seems to have caused problems for Crowley which relate directly to the historical circumstances of reception, at a time when the king, Edward VI, was a child. Crowley retains the line, but with considerable caution explains it twice, once in the synopsis at the beginning of the second and third editions, "here in it lamenteth the state of that realme, wherein the King is childishe, & so euerye wycked man getteth rule under hym" (fol 3a), and again at the line itself, which is marked with an asterisk and provided with a long marginal gloss:



omnium doctissimorum suffragio, dicuntur, hec de  
lassuis, fatuis, aut ineptis principibus, non de  
etate tenellis. Quasi dicat, vbi rex puerilis est  
(fol. iiib).

This gloss is copied out by an annotator of U(C) (fol. 10a).

Crowley's caution is matched by censorship in G(C), where the line (C prol. 205a) is erased after "ve". Crowley's attitude to prophecy is another aspect of his reading of the poem which reflects the political context of his reception. In the Preface to all three editions, Crowley comments on prophecy in the poem, including the prophecy at the end of passus VI. This, he says, because it appears in different forms in different copies,

is lyke to be a thinge added of some other man than  
the fyrste autour.

Having dismissed this as inauthentic, Crowley moves on to other "prophecies" in the poem:

Nowe for that whiche is written in the 1 leafe,  
concerning the suppression of Abbaies: the  
scripture there alledged, declareth it to be  
gathered of the iuste iudgement of god, whoe wyll  
not suffer abomination to raigne unpunished. Loke  
not vpon this boke therfore, to talke of wonders  
paste or to come, but to amende thyne owne misse  
...

These comments reflect Crowley's support of the Dissolution; rejecting prophecy in the poem moves what Crowley sees as unequivocally a recommendation for dissolution<sup>24</sup> out of the realm of mysticism into practical reality, justified by logical argument. Crowley's insistence on this point is apparent from his note at II 284 "this is no prophecy, but a reasonable gatherig [sic]".<sup>25</sup>

In addition to political and religious changes, the language of the poem and its alliterative form were gradually becoming archaic by

the time of the poem's publication in 1550. Difficulties with the language can be seen in the several obvious misunderstandings of Francis Aiscough, which include the common error of confusing Piers and the dreamer, mentioned above in U and N(C). Further evidence of the increasing difficulties with the language appears from the glossation of vocabulary in several MSS. Difficulties with language do not necessarily imply archaism; the text was freely "modernised" by scribes from at least 1450 (see the text of Ht, discussed below, chapter 4). However, glossation of vocabulary does not appear among annotators until the sixteenth century, where it is fairly widespread, possibly as a result of the upsurge of interest in an English, as opposed to Classical, literary tradition, which led to the investigations of Bale and Leland into ancient English writers, to the publication of various editions of Chaucer,<sup>26</sup> and at least in part to the publication and popularity of Piers Plowman itself.

There are two kinds of glossation of vocabulary in the MSS; occasional glosses of single words, and deliberate schemes. The first occurs in K(AC) at C prol. 185, where "hals" is glossed "a neck", and at A I 108, where "buxum" is glossed "obedyence" (fols. 5a, 8a); F(B), "walkene" at XVIII 238 is glossed "heven or elemen[t]" (fol. 79a); and L(B), "heved" glossed "hedd" at V 379 (fol. 18b). The second kind occurs in two MSS only, C<sup>2</sup>(B) and V(C). V(C) has glosses in the margin and above words in the text (see appendix D for a full list of the glosses), and the first and last parts of the MS, fols. 1a - 4a and fol. 88, are heavily and systematically glossed. The rest of the text has occasional vocabulary glosses only. This seems to be a scheme intended for the whole poem which for some reason was not completed. Most of the glosses are accurate, but there are a few errors, the most obvious at prol. 11, where "wyterly y sauh" is



glossed "aduisedly i sawe witout of wyt"; at prol. 22 "pleyden"<sup>27</sup> glossed "went to lawe"; and at I 29, "cheorlis" glossed "cheerlis, without chere" (fols. 1a and 4a).

The scheme of glossation in this MS is a more complete form of the occasional marginal glosses found in other MSS. C<sup>2</sup>(B) has a more ambitious scheme, which includes a list of words and glosses in the poem later in the MS (fols. 169b-170b). This "glossary" is printed by Skeat,<sup>28</sup> and <sup>u</sup>quoted in appendix D from the MS. It consists of ninety-five words of which sixty-nine have definitions; some words have more than one definition. Gaps are left in the list, presumably where no definition could be found. As with V(C), some of the definitions are incorrect (see words 11, 16, 18, first two definitions of 19, 20, 35, 39, 47, 92, 94). "Witterly" (word 70), glossed incorrectly in V(C) is glossed, roughly correctly, "well" in this wordlist. Skeat lists some of the occurrences of the words in the text and suggests that the order in which they occur in the list is the result of three successive readings. He concludes his analysis with the suggestion that this annotator may have been Crowley. Words which appear in the list are generally underlined in the text, occasionally with an interlinear gloss. From these, the glossarist's interest seems to focus on X, XIV, XVII and XVIII, with some interest in the prologue and I, a little in VI-VIII, and minimal interest in II-V. Skeat identifies the process of three readings by matching the underlined words with the order in which they occur in the list and suggests five groups: 1: words from passus XVII-XX; 2: from the prologue and passus I; 3: the latter part of VII; 4: the last five passus; 5: the prologue and passus I. From analysis of Skeat's groupings<sup>29</sup>, several inaccuracies and doubtful attributions appear - in many cases words <sup>are</sup> identified as coming from a specific area of the

text when they are commonly underlined throughout the text. Skeat further fails to notice that the annotator takes some words from Richard the Redeless which follows Piers without a break in the same hand, and which the annotator may have believed to be the same poem. The second word, "Endaunte" (Skeat's word no.95), which Skeat fails to identify, comes from Richard. Groups are less clearly defined than Skeat states - he seems to be attempting to identify a systematic approach whereas the process is more arbitrary - although more than one examination of the text may be inferred. This may be less formal than three distinct readings of the poem, and could have resulted from an interest on Skeat's part in identifying this annotator with Crowley, whose approach to glossation of a text for editorial purposes would need to be systematic. Objections to identification with Crowley include the extent to which Crowley retained "difficult" vocabulary in the text, in keeping with his introductory comments,

The Englishe is according to the time it was written in, and the sence somewhat darcke, but not so harde, but that it may be understande of suche as will not sticke to breake the shell of the nutte for the kernelles sake.<sup>30</sup>

Crowley's title page to the second edition states that he has added "certain notes and notations in the margyne, geuyng light to the Reader", and it is these which he uses to explain the text rather than glossation of vocabulary. Crowley neither "modernises" the text where C<sup>2</sup> is glossed, nor is there significant correspondence between his marginal notes and areas of interest of the C<sup>2</sup> glossator, or the other marginal notes in C<sup>2</sup> such as scribal rubrication. However there is, clearly, some similarity in response to the text between Crowley and the C<sup>2</sup> glossator, who like Crowley finds "the sence somewhat darcke". The difference lies in the means used to give "light to the Reader".



Glossation of vocabulary seems at first sight to be an indication of the archaic nature of the text. This is, of course, to an extent true; although glossation of vocabulary by annotators and changes to vocabulary by scribes occur early in the MS history of the poem, the scale of the process is far greater in the sixteenth century, and the degree of conformity in words found to be difficult to understand suggests a general difficulty with the whole of the text rather than the kind of problem with regional variation which cause lack of understanding among earlier readers. However, Crowley's decision to leave the text largely alone suggests that linguistic archaism was not over-problematic for his readers - it may even have given the poem a certain appeal, given the popularity of ancient English writers in the sixteenth century. His decision was endorsed by the success of the publication, although not by at least one contemporary copyist of the poem in MS form; the vocabulary of S(B), copied in 1550, the year of publication, is extensively altered along similar lines to the glosses in C<sup>2</sup>(B). It is perhaps this MS, dismissed for editorial purposes by Kane and Donaldson,<sup>31</sup> which should be compared with C<sup>2</sup>(B), rather than Crowley's editions, once again signalling the difficulties of splitting response into discrete areas. The text of S(B), with other variant texts and textual variants, is discussed in the next chapter.

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#### CHAPTER 4: TEXTUAL VARIANTS

Aliquis enim scribit alienam materiam nihil addendo vel mutando & iste mere dicitur scriptor<sup>1</sup>

Piers Plowman was especially subject to variation as a living text with a content of direct concern to its scribes. Its relevance to contemporary circumstances would not merely distract them from the passive state of mind ideal for exact copying, but actually induce them, whether consciously or unconsciously, to make substitutions.

Bonaventura's theoretical description of the activity of a scribe, varies considerably from Kane's comments on the reality of scribal practice in the MSS of Piers Plowman. His description also suggests that interest in the text is a reason for the particularly high level of variation in the poem. The critical editions of the A and B texts edited by Kane and Donaldson provide full information on such variants, as well as listing lines deemed spurious. The full apparatus<sup>2</sup> of these editions enables the reader to judge the editorial process, and to compare variants line by line with their equivalents in other MSS; in the absences of this information for the C-text, discussion of variation in C-text MSS is to some extent selective. Here as elsewhere in his study, the text of the C-text edition by Professor Pearsall is accepted, for convenience, as authorial;<sup>3</sup> variants are thus identified by divergence from this text. However it is important to bear in mind that this C-text is not a full critical edition; it uses X as the base MS with corrections from only four other MSS, and only occasional variant readings are recorded; later editors, using evidence from all the MSS, may accept as original material discussed here as unoriginal variation. It is of course also possible in individual cases to apply the method of editing set out by Kane,<sup>4</sup>



which recommends consideration of each variant separately, with the editorial decision based on the likelihood of one reading arising from another. Kane suggests that the direction of variation is characteristically from a complex to a more simple reading; this is deduced from the recurrence of a situation where a single MS supports the easier variant; where the situation occurs once, probability is in favour of this being a single substitution, but the possibility exists that the easier reading is original; as the situation recurs, this becomes increasingly unlikely.<sup>5</sup> This kind of evidence, based on all the variants, is unavailable for the C-text; I have, however, assumed that the scribal process evidenced by AB MSS is unlikely to be substantially different in the MSS of C. It should be noted that any procedure for the recovery of original readings cannot guarantee accuracy. The editor's critical judgement inevitably plays a part in the selection of readings, in consideration of both form and content. Professor Kane describes one reason for variants, as scribes

through carelessness, ignorance or lack of intelligence, ...  
evidently often mistook the author's meaning.<sup>6</sup>

This is a dismissive view of the scribes' contribution - although understandable because of the needs of an editor. The attitude behind it is a dangerous one, the implication being that the modern editor has a more direct access to the author's meaning than the scribes. C.S. Lewis' caveat concerning an author's contemporaries quoted above, (1.ii) should be recalled here, and the possibility raised that a reading judged to be poetically "better"<sup>7</sup> by an editor need not necessarily be original.<sup>8</sup>

These considerations must be raised, if only theoretically, since there can be no certain method of identifying such readings which work against the usual trend. In general however, Kane's analysis of

scribal procedure, given its initial basis in statistical probability (discussed above) rather than critical judgement, should be accepted. To summarise his analysis, changes to the text fall into two main groups, of unconscious or conscious variation, with small changes of meaning, dialect, verse, word order, small omissions and so forth in a grey area between the two. Unconscious, mechanical errors include repeats and omissions, misspellings, visual errors and anticipations. There are six forms of conscious error: minority variants making the line more explicit; misunderstanding producing a substituted expression; substitution of proper names and types due to involvement with the poem's events; censorship; alteration for emphasis; change of form through "smoothing" of lines, increasing alliteration or altering syntax.<sup>9</sup> Kane also mentions the distinction between alteration for the sake of future readers or for personal satisfaction, the broad distinction used above to discriminate between scribal rubrication and reader's annotation, concluding that the changes are probably for personal satisfaction. This is, of course, conjecture; scribal changes could arise out of a sense of responsibility to the author to produce the best possible copy, with emendation if necessary. A final important point to note from Kane's analysis is that although substitutions follow a pattern, they are not systematic. Scribes offer a response to each line of the text, with a limited sense of the whole. In this, they are closer to readers than to rubricators, whose task involves at least some sense of the larger structure of the poem, although even rubrication is most frequently not carried out systematically, with the exception of passus headings. It is perhaps this lack of system which leads to the difference between MSS. Like other forms of reception so far considered, there is only limited evidence of areas of interest shared between the MSS, although some types of material tend to attract variation.



There are two additions to this list of forms of scribal variation: longer deliberate changes involving supply of a considerable amount of new material; and composite MSS, where a text is supplemented by one or both of the other two texts, most obviously seen in the A+C MSS. Both these forms can be regarded as editorial changes, for the purposes of distinguishing them from other scribal variation, although changes may originate with a scribe acting in an editorial capacity. This may be particularly the case with amateur copyists such as Adrian Fortescue, where the choice of the poem in itself reflects a particular interest on the part of the scribe.. Although other surviving MSS are not obviously amateur copies, intervening MSS in the process of transmission may well have been.<sup>10</sup>

The variants will be examined as reception, with evidence drawn from various MSS, and thus, on the whole,<sup>11</sup> individual MSS will not be discussed separately. It is therefore useful to give some idea of how the amount of corruption is distributed among the MSS. The main composite MSS are the A and C MSS H<sup>2</sup>, K, N, T, W and Z; K, N and W have additional B or C contamination in the A-text section of the MS, B+A MS H<sup>3</sup>, C+A+B MSS BmBo and Cot, and Ht, a composite of all three texts. Contamination from other texts occurs locally in several other MSS however, and may be compared with some readers' desire to complete or "correct" their copies with such material. Large scale deliberate changes are seen in MSS Ht and S(B), in the prologue of I(C), and possibly in the A-text section of Z. Rigg and Brewer's argument<sup>12</sup> that this is an early authorial version is discussed below. Passus XII of the A-text extract in MSS R, J and U may also be regarded in this light. Frequent changes of various kinds are observable in the C-text section of W(AC), and persistent minor variations occur in MSS

L(A), V(A) and P(C). Naturally all MSS have variants of some form, and most MSS include additional lines; H(A) and F(B) have a considerable number of these. In the two MSS with large scale variation (with the exception of Z) the changes are chiefly directed to a particular end, such as modernisation in S(B), and creation of a composite BC text in Ht. These MSS also include several of the other forms of variation, much of it no doubt the result of several stages of copying during the transmission process, but some of it perhaps originating from the editor who first compiled the existing unusual version, who, bent on altering the text for one purpose, would probably have been more likely to make additional alterations in the name of further "improvement". In the following discussion of textual variation, variants have been divided into three main groups: composite MSS, testifying both to awareness of other versions and a desire for completeness on the part of the scribe/ editor; literary criticism of both form and content, and simplification and modernisation. With composite MSS the whole question of versions of the poem arises; Kane suggests that knowledge of the three versions may have led to greater freedom of treatment of the text;<sup>13</sup> it may even have led to the creation of an alternative version of the A-text, extant only in the A-text version of MS Z. The question of the authenticity of Z is thus discussed in the section dealing with composite MSS.



## i: Versions of the poem

### a. authorial versions: Bodley 851

"photographs that caught a static image of a living organism".<sup>14</sup>

The existence of three distinct versions of Piers Plowman is too well established to warrant further discussion here.<sup>15</sup> The suggestion that some form of interim revision may have existed seems reasonable, given that the poem was subject to such extensive revision by the author during his lifetime. The suggestion that these MSS represent an early version of the B-tradition has been raised by Donaldson. The suggestion was made in part as a response to Skeat's suggestion that the MSS represent a transitional stage between B and C.<sup>16</sup> The A-text section of Bodley 851 is dismissed out of hand by Skeat,<sup>17</sup> and ignored by Kane in his edition of the A-text, the only discussion of the MS in an edition of the poem being a footnote in Kane and Donaldson, where it is described:

[it] contains many lines not relatable to any version, presumably spurious ... The significant features of the text are the extremely uneven quality of the text ... The large amount of omission, the frequent disordering of lines and the circumstance that some of the groups of "new" lines occur where approximate multiples of 20 or 40 lines are wanting (i.e. the presumptive contents of sides or leaves).<sup>18</sup>

This, suggests Kane, is the result of an intelligent copyist with knowledge of all three versions of the poem emending a very imperfect copy; or simply of memorial reconstruction. Kane characterises a producer of this text as "someone acquainted with all versions of the poem, literate and able to write tolerable long lines". It is apparent that the possibility of this "someone" being the author has not arisen. Kane considers this possibility, and examines the text of this MS in more detail, in a review of Rigg and Brewer's edition of

the MS, in which the authors suggest that the MS contains the text of a pre-A version of the poem.<sup>19</sup> Kane reiterates in this review some of his earlier arguments for rejection of the MS, such as the reasonable suggestion that because some groups of new lines occur where groups of twenty or forty lines occur in other MSS, the new material may be the result of an attempt to smooth the loss of leaves or sides; but another construction is possible here (apart from coincidence, which Kane himself implies in his second suggestion of an origin for this text); there is a tendency for B-C versions to follow areas of revision from A-B; areas with which the author was unsatisfied, or perhaps particularly interested in, would naturally be the focus of his attention throughout the life of the poem. An example of text subject to this process, the confessions of the sins, is cited by Rigg and Brewer to support their view. The "Z-text" is concluded by a later hand, which then adds C X-XXII,<sup>20</sup> thus distinguishing Z from other A+C MSS in which the C-text ending is added at the time of the original copying, or in the case of K(AC) by the original scribe at a later date, or occurred in an antecedent copy. It is suggested that the text of Z found in Bodley 851 shows evidence of scribal sophistication, which suggests that some of the sophistication noticed previously by Kane may be the result of interference through scribal transmission rather than intrinsic to the character of Z.

Rigg and Brewer's case rests quite heavily on their dating of the MS, between 1376 (or earlier) and 1388.<sup>21</sup> A very early date obviously contradicts the suggestion that the text is the result of a reader with knowledge of all three versions of the text; the presence of lines or variants like B or C are considerably more likely to originate with the author than to be merely fortuitous. Unfortunately, the identifying of the scribe John Wells with the John Wells who was a



prominent opponent of Wyclif<sup>22</sup> cannot be certain, as Rigg and Brewer admit. As Kane points out,<sup>23</sup> there is not even sufficient paleographic evidence to be certain that the hand on fol. 6b, which notes "Iste liber constat ffratri Johanni de WELLIS monachio Ramseye", is the same as that of most of the MS, including the Z part of Piers Plowman. Accepting 1376-1388 as the date of the MS does not rule out the possibility of C-text influence on a reviser who is not the author; Donaldson suggests a date "before 1387" as the earliest date of the C-revision, and states that he has been unable to "corroborate or disprove any date between 1377 and 1399".<sup>24</sup> Conjecture about the date of the MS cannot thus be conclusive. Examination of the kind of additions and omissions in Z, with reference to Kane's analysis of scribal practice, may shed more light on the argument.<sup>25</sup> Differences from A observable in Z are summarised (for convenience, differences are described as changes from A): 1. embellishment in the form of regularisation of lines by addition or omission of minor words, occasionally resulting in enhanced alliteration; 2. transposition or minor displacement of lines, with minor alterations to fit the line into its different context; 3. similarities with the B and C texts; 4. expansions, some of a few lines only; these emphasise the previous lines and occasionally explain; 4. longer insertions. These occasionally occur where there is an expansion, or other disturbance, in the later texts; 5. omissions. The first type of difference, typical of scribal practice as identified by Kane, occurs fairly often in the prologue and occasionally elsewhere. Details are discussed below, 4.iii. It seems unlikely that a writer would demonstrate a preference for strongly alliterative, smooth lines in a first draft, and then systematically remove them in subsequent revisions, although this is of course possible. What makes this more unlikely to be authorial is the commonness of this practice among scribes. Rigg and

Brewer identify what they regard as scribal variants to the original Z text, but none of the above lines are so identified. If they were to argue for a more systematic scribal revision (perhaps carried out by John Wells?), objections to the "sophistication" of the Z text might be more securely answered.

Transposition within a line and displacement of lines, or to put it more neutrally, different positioning of lines and phrases in Z, is an area of difference from A which can shed no light on the question of authorship. The differences could have arisen from scribal error:

when they caught themselves jumping a line they sometimes copied the omitted line after the one which they should properly have followed it, or as soon as the omission was remarked,<sup>26</sup>

or deliberate scribal tinkering, but could be explained equally well as the result of authorial revision of the kind evidenced in BC. Where such small differences occur between Z and A there is no obvious loss of sense in Z which would point to scribal error; if lines have been smoothed to fit into a different context, the process has been carried out efficiently. Inclusion of material like BC<sup>27</sup> is similarly open to two interpretations - early ideas by the author, rejected for A but later revived, or contamination through memorial reconstruction. The above differences between A and Z are common to many MSS; it is the last two types of difference, additions and omissions, which form Z's distinctive character and raise the question of authenticity. Omissions, of which the most noticeable are the omissions of some of the sins, can be interpreted in several ways, either as the result of erroneous memory or a defective exemplar as suggested by Kane, as deliberate suppression of material, or not as "omissions" but as areas of the text not yet completed. There seems no obvious reason why the "omitted" areas of the A-text in Z should have been deliberately



suppressed; if this is omission therefore, it contributes little to the study of the reception of the poem, being the result of error. If the memorial reconstruction theory is accepted one might infer that these areas of the text are less memorable than others; but it seems unlikely that some of the deadly sins would be forgotten. The additions, therefore, provide more scope for argument for the question of originality.

Some of Z's shorter additions can be compared with the scribal practice of emphasising material which is interesting to the scribe, and of clarifying difficult copy. The first of these occurs at Z prol. 89-90, after A prol. 100. Z adds two lines:

myllares ant mynstrales and masones somme  
of alle libbynge labores lopen forth there.

The first of these lines changes the occupations of A and adds a third, and the second adds emphasis and explanation with "alle libbyng labores", more explicit than A "manye oper craftis" (compare B prol. 223 and B VI 62). The additional line in Z following A II 38,

Nayther logge ne lawnde ne lesewe so brode  
(Z II 47)

functions as a list, emphasising the sense of the A text line,

per nas halle ne hous to herberwe þe peple,

and a similar kind of addition occurs after A II 60 (Z II 70-2):

Ant alle the counte of couetyse ynowen aboute  
as usury, in auaryse, in other cheuysawnses  
(compare B II 86-7, C II 90-1).

Other examples of additions to "lists" occur after A V 40 with the addition of one line (Z V 70), and one line after A VII 59 (Z VII 59), the first adding further pilgrims' shrines, the second another farming task. All these are the kind of addition characteristic of a scribe

involved with the material; but it is of course possible that they are the work of the author, who, in revision, decided that the additional examples were redundant. Two longer additions in passus II "explain" the poem, recapitulating the action. The first three lines of passus II offer a brief resume of passus I and an indication of the content of passus II:

Now have I told yow of trewthe, that no tresor ys bettre  
Yf ye wyl weten of wrong, Y wyl yow fayre shewe  
Bothe of Fauel ant falsede that muche folk apeyreth  
(Z II 1-3)

This is similar to the opening lines of passus I - the second half of line 2 is almost identical to the second half of I 2 in all three versions of the poem. This seems very likely to be the result of memorial reconstruction, with the compiler remembering the opening of passus I, suitably adjusting the sense to refer to passus I and II. Z also includes an eight-line recapitulation of the action after A II 153 (Z II 163-70). Both these additions act as guides to the reader which are similar to the occasional synopses in the margin of heavily annotated MSS, X(C) in particular; but MSS glosses do not on the whole provide resumés of large areas of the text, tending to summarise the immediate passage. Perhaps the closest comparison, especially for the second addition, is with Langland's summary of the preceding dream at B XIII 4-20/ C XV 4-24. Two of the above examples occur, suggestively, at points in the text where there is expansion in the BC revisions; the wording of the additions bears some relation to the new material in BC. The first large interpolation in Z, of six lines about bishops and other clergy, occurs at a point in the prologue where there is considerable disturbance in the text among A MSS, near a point of BC expansion. Between A prol. 54-5 E inserts four lines, two of which appear in R at the same point.<sup>28</sup> The lines concern vicars and parsons, and may be compared with A XI 212/ B X 312. At



the same point H<sup>2</sup> inserts two lines which are a distorted version of C IX 66 and 67+8, while I(C) places here C IX 75-162, 188-254. I(C) has a much-interpolated A prologue, discussed below. The lines in Z resemble C IX 13-21. The interpolations extend the criticism of friars and pardoners in A to include other religious offices, particularly bishops. Z and I both omit A prol. 77-9, lines which slightly lessen the criticism of bishops in A prol. 75-6. Z also expands the criticism of parish priests with two extra lines after A prol. 82. (Z prol. 64-5, cf. A prol. 84-5), an addition at an equivalent point to I's interpolation after A prol. 83. E interpolates at this point, with two lines from B prol. 112, or C prol. 139, as does K, with C-prol. 85-223. The point also marks a BC expansion; B prologue has here ll. 87-210, postponing A prol. 84-9 until after B prol. 210. This area of the A prologue is thus particularly susceptible to alteration, which occurs in the form of material similar or identical to later passages in the B and C texts. The existence of a pre-A version, in which such material appears, while obviously not being the sole reason behind such deliberate interpolations as those of I(C), may have encouraged freedom of treatment of this area of the text, although interest in criticisms of the clergy may have been sufficient reason. Additions at the point of BC revisions may reflect knowledge of the expansion, but may also simply demonstrate that Langland's interests were those of his readers. One of the larger passages which appears only in Z emphasises the role of the south west wind in passus V. This seems at first sight an obvious area for scribal emphasis, but only one MS, W(AC), provides an example, replacing A V 14 "on satirday at eve" with "pat so lowde blewe". Z gives additional emphasis to the whole passage, stressing the warning element in an additional line after A V 17, and adding to the list of trees after A V 16. The longer passage

takes the position of A V 16 (which occurs later):

For word ys but wynd and so my wyt telleth  
Ac wel Y wot that holy wryt wot much bettre  
Ant wytnesseth that Godus word ys worthylokest of alle  
Hit maketh the messe ant the masse that men vnderfongeth  
For Godus body and ys blod, buyrnes to saue;  
Helle yatus hit tobarst and hadde out Adam;  
Wyth wynd of ys word al this world made

The passage is, as Rigg and Brewer suggest, digressive,<sup>29</sup> but is well written, justifying Kane's assertion that the presumed compiler could write "tolerable long lines".<sup>30</sup> "Word ys but wynd" is proverbial in sound, and as such is the kind of commonplace addition that might occur to a copyist, arising from association. But it is hardly an addition from memory of one of the other texts. Further, the length and coherence of the whole addition are different in kind from simple scribal enhancement. It is clearly a conscious addition. The first line is interesting as a self-referential statement, made ambivalent by the described power of the real wind and by the introduction of the omnipotent "wynd" of God's word at the end of the passage. Whatever the origin of these lines, they provide thoughtful comment on the imagery of the poem.

Other fairly long passages which occur in Z only are similarly well written; generally they fit well, if not better, into the context of the poem than the south west wind passage, being usually additional information rather than digression. The powers surrounding Truth and his castle are extended with a five line addition after A VI 80 (Z VI 68-72):

A may se in the mone wat alle men thenketh  
Wyth the lest word that a wil, the wynd ys aredy  
To blow or to be stille or to brethy softe,  
Ant alle the water of thys wolde in his gloue  
He hath fuyr withouten flint ys foes to brenne.

(Z VI 66-70), which adds a mystical dimension to Truth not present in



the A-text description (further interest in the wind is apparent here). After this passage, one line from A VI 81 is followed by a seven-line passage, (Z VI 74-80), praising the workmanship of the tower, finishing with two lines reminiscent of BC (cf. B V 592-3/ C VII 240-1). These two passages, and the additional five lines criticising doctors (Z VII 260-4) in place of A VII 251-8, seem to add no more than emphasis to the poem, the first two perhaps reflecting a desire to stress the greatness of Truth, and the second a dislike of doctors. Except for the length and quality of the additions, these are characteristic scribal forms of enhancement of the text.

These last two provisos, length and quality, are not negligible objections to the assumption that Z is a scribal compilation. Only the additional lines at the end of texts, such as the six lines at the end of M(A), possibly the whole of A passus XII in RUE, and certainly the "John But" lines in R, approach the length of passages unique to Z. Whereas in other MSS these lines occur once only in an MS and specifically at the end of the text, an area which may be regarded as an exception (see above, 2.ii), such extra material occurs throughout Z. The vexed question of quality has to be faced in an analysis of Rigg and Brewer's argument. There is no question but that the additional lines in Z show some expertise, and at times poetic quality. I have stressed above that "quality" need not be the sole prerogative of the author; it is not therefore necessary to dismiss the lines in Z as "tolerable", only in order to promote the argument that they are unoriginal. However, a poet's individual quality may

be more confidently recognised. Kane describes this as

an analyzable and describable compound of the effect of its detail, a product of the writer's minute craftsmanship, of those particulars by which an author builds his text, of what differentiates a poet's usus scribendi from those of his scribes, or for that matter of his imitators"<sup>31</sup>

and describes the similarities between the style of the additional lines in Z and that of Langland as the result of "aural mimicry"<sup>32</sup> only. But interventions seen to be scribal by other means than judgement of quality tend to be commonplace. Compilations that are clearly editorial, such as Ht, and the alterations to the dreams in F(B), often add material clumsily, making nonsense of the surrounding text or producing repetition. Such "errors" do occur in Z; a passage of nine lines appears twice in Z, at IV 122-30 and V 1-9; at the beginning of passus V the king and Reason are still present, although the dreamer stated at the end of IV that he "saw them no more"; Favel is mentioned at the end of passus II, but Mede is alone in the next line, at the beginning of passus III; the dungeon is not mentioned at prol. 17, but is referred to by Holy Church at Prol. 100. These inconsistencies are variously explained by Rigg and Brewer. Kane gives an extensive and apparently damning list of such narrative inconsistencies in his review.<sup>33</sup> In general, however, if Z is an altered A-text, the alterations have been made with exceptional attention to, and understanding of, the text. Smaller differences, such as smoothing, enhanced alliteration, and some of the shorter additions, can be explained in terms of common scribal practice. Rigg and Brewer's argument is not inconsistent with this being the case, if their identification of alterations made during the copying process were extended a little. While some of the longer additions seem similar to an extended version of scribal emphasis, there is no reason to suppose that Langland would not be subject to the same



tendency as the scribes, with the advantage of a later revision to cancel extraneous material. Some of the C-text revisions in particular cancel descriptive material, such as the passage describing the first appearance of Mede, and physical descriptions of the Sins. In the absence of more precise dating of the MS, the argument for Z as a pre-A text relies overmuch on the quality and consistency of the additional material. These are exceptional, but could be the work of an unusually able reader of the poem. Perhaps the most interesting result of Rigg and Brewer's investigation is in raising again the possibility of intermediate versions of the poem. Kane raises the possibility of a shorter version, visio only, of the text, only to dismiss it, when discussing the MSS EH and L, which break off in VII and VIII respectively. The three MSS are defective at the end, and thus Kane concludes that the MSS are simply defective versions of the complete A-text. If Z is accepted as a pre-A-text, its length gives slight support to the possibility that other MSS may have concluded at this "organic point of division"<sup>34</sup> as first drafts of the A-text.

#### ii (b) Composite Manuscripts

Professor Kane believes conflation to be "mainly a record of the availability of the MSS at various times and places."<sup>35</sup> This is almost certainly the only reason for the conjoint MSS H<sup>3</sup> (B+A), BmBoCot (C+B+A) and I (A prologue+C). Conflation in other MSS obviously depended upon availability of copy; but the presence of further copies of the poem would not necessarily inspire a scribe or editor to compare the text in the different MSS and augment one version accordingly. This process implies a desire for completeness<sup>36</sup> on the part of the MS compiler, possibly arising from a sense of responsibility to the future reader to produce as finished a text as

possible. Whether composite texts are the result of a deliberate search for more "complete" MSS in the knowledge of different versions of the text,<sup>37</sup> or the more random process of a conscientious editor consulting as many available copies as possible,<sup>38</sup> they bear witness to close attention to the text on the part of copyists, especially where conflation takes the form of small-scale insertion of material. The addition of C-text conclusions to seven MSS suggests that some deliberate selection is taking place. The suitability of C- rather than B-texts as conclusions for A-texts, and the similarity of A- and C-text rubrics, indicating contemporary awareness of structural connections between the texts, has been discussed above. In a random consultation of available MSS it seems likely that B MSS would have presented themselves as possible A-text conclusions as often as C MSS. Apart from H<sup>3</sup>(A) mentioned above, however, only Ht among composite MSS makes use of B-text material, and not as completion of an A-text but as an attempt to produce a version of all three texts. Conflation, therefore, may be a record of copyists' knowledge of the poem and sense of the different versions.

The A+C MSS can be divided into two groups, the first being those with a complete separation between A and C material, TChH<sup>2</sup> which have C XI-XXII after the end of A XI, and Z which has C X-XXII, which appropriately follows Z's version of A VIII, given a sketchy conclusion by the scribe of the C portion of the MS. Z's C-conclusion is totally separate from its A-text, having been added much later. The C-text of K(AC), one of the second group of A+C MSS, was also probably added later, although by the same scribe, since the A explicit, "amen. finis do dowl" has been partly cancelled and partly erased before the continuation, C XI 299f. The second group of A+C texts consists of those MSS in which the A-portions contain conflation



from B or C. These are WN and K.<sup>39</sup> Conflation may have been introduced into the A-text in K in an antecedent copy, since it seems curious that the scribe would insert C-material into an A-text but then not add the C-conclusion immediately. Fortescue may have been involved in the conflation however. Kane notes the addition of C I 31 (or B I 32) squeezed in between A I 31-2, and suggests this indicates that he was consulting another copy<sup>40</sup> - although this "addition" is perhaps simply an omission, corrected from the copy text. Fortescue omits lines elsewhere, signalling this with "surplus" (fol. 33a), and placing the missing lines at the foot of the page. Kane examines these conflated A-texts in detail,<sup>41</sup> and a brief summary of this examination is sufficient here. K has by far the largest amount of C conflation in the A-text, so that passus VI is as much C-text as A-text. The additional material is predominantly in passus V, indicating an interest in the sins, with some in the early part of the poem, and practically none after passus VI, where the A-version differs considerably from BC and thus presumably supplementation became too complex. Interestingly, although scribes pay sufficient attention to the text to note additional material locally in C, their view of the whole text is often too limited to notice that the same material may appear elsewhere in A, resulting in repetition. An example of this process seemingly at its most obvious, occurs in N, where the MS reads C II 65-6 (or B II 64-5) after A II 45. The first of these is a revised form of A II 49; the N-compiler fails to notice this and copies the line after the insertion.<sup>42</sup> This selective attention to the text, where material is added but the addition not compensated for by omission or restructuring elsewhere, is normal in conflated MSS, and is apparent to some extent even where conflation seems to be the result of special interest on the part of a reader or editor such as in the prologue of

I(C) - the material from C IX, added to the prologue, occurs again in its usual place in the C-text; Ht is another example, although Ht often demonstrates unusual editorial care. The scribe's line-by-line view of copy however influences even deliberate editorial policy.

Ht (Huntington MS HM 114) is the longest of the highly corrupt MSS, and, like Z, has been rejected for editorial purposes by Kane and Donaldson.<sup>43</sup> The character of the MS is described in an article by G. Russell and V. Nathan:

A carefully edited version of the poem by one who had before him all three texts of the poem and who sought to produce from their conflation a composite version which would incorporate what he regarded as the best material from all three.<sup>44</sup>

The spectre of alternative authorial versions is again raised, only to be immediately dismissed;<sup>45</sup> in this case, unlike that of Z, there can be little question that the MS is an editorial construct. Two points of particular interest are raised in the above description; the first is the deliberateness of the editorial process which may be inferred, contrasting with the memorial construction theory proposed with reference to Z, and with suggestions made about other composite MSS, that their form depends on chance and the availability of copies only. a partial explanation for the consistent completion of A with C-texts. That apart, the process of adding a C-text conclusion, and even the limited conflation of some of the A portion with C material, is far more straightforward than the editorial process of Ht, proving only slightly awkward for compilers at the junction of the two texts. The second point raised is the selection of material. If the editor's intention is to produce a "complete" poem, then any material left out



is likely to have been deliberately rejected; similarly, areas of the text paid particular attention may be valuable guides to specific areas of interest. Russell and Nathan provide a brief description of the distribution of A and C material in Ht,<sup>46</sup> and there is no need to repeat their description in detail. To summarise, conflation begins in passus I; I-III, V, VI, IX-XI, and XV have large scale borrowings, while the remaining passus have few or none. The MS also contains about fifty unique lines, not usually, as might have been expected, to smooth the addition of extra material, but apparently signalling particular interest in the text. Ht is discussed here in its capacity as a conjoint MS; the interests of the of the Ht compiler in the events and form of the poem, and the practice of modernisation of language, will be discussed in further detail below, but should be noted here as part of a comprehensive and consistent editorial policy.

Ht is notable for the care with which alterations are made, although, as with Z, some identifiable errors (as opposed to awkwardnesses) occur. Perhaps the most obvious C addition is the "autobiographical" passage, C passus V. The easiest method of insertion is chosen, with the new C material given its own passus after the end of B IV. The compiler avoids problems with the numbering of passus here (but not later) by simply giving two consecutive passus the same number. The C V insertion ends at C V 103 and is followed by C IV 195-6. This is a misplaced addition, since these two lines were introduced in C to ease the transition to the new C V material, moving the awakening back a few lines from B V 3 to the passus division. Without suppression of the awakening in B V, the dreamer would in any case awake twice in succession with the insertion of C V 1-103; with the moved lines from C IV he wakes three times in succession in Ht. Thus the Ht editor is caught out by the same

problem as the reviser of F(B), the difficulty of rearranging material around the juncture of dream and waking. In passus VI the compiler faces the problem of considerable additional material in C including some moved from B X and XIII, and the change in order of the sins from B-C. Ht retains the order of B for the sins, but is not entirely successful in re-ordering the material. After B V 70 Ht adds C VI 12-62, the expanded confession of Pride, some of which originated in B XIII;<sup>47</sup> the insertion ends with an introduction to the appearance of Envy:

Quod Repentaunce riht with þat, and thenne aroos Envye  
but then returns to B V with Lechery's confession, B V 71-74. The rubricator here, as with the passus divisions surrounding the C V insertion, avoids compounding the confusion by providing the marginal heading for Lechery only. There are two further awkward inclusions in passus VI, both of a single line; both cases involve inclusion of the B line and its revised C equivalent. The first occurs in Envy's confession; C VI 100-102 is inserted after B V 133 then followed by B V 134, the equivalent of C VI 102. The second occurs in the confession of Wrath; after B V 161, C VI 137-8 is inserted, followed by B V 162-3, where B V 163 is the equivalent of C VI 138. In the first of these, some care is evident in the omission of C VI 99, new in C, which refers to the preceding line in C but would not make sense with its B equivalent, B V 133. Similar care is taken elsewhere in this passus; C VI 171-195 on Lechery is added after B V 71-4, with the omission of C VI 173-4 which occur above as B V 75-100, with the omission of 94-6, whose place is taken by C VI 69 three lines after B V 100. This kind of care suggests that the intended result is not inclusiveness at the expense of sense; the compiler is prepared to exclude some material (C VI 99, B V 95-6) in the interests of producing a coherent text. The concurrence of this repetitious or



awkward material with the junction of texts, and the limited length, at most two lines, of awkwardly placed lines, suggests that the error may be due to unclear marking of the scribal exemplar rather than an error of attention on the part of the compiler. The presence of such errors tends to confirm Russell and Nathan's suggestion that the scribe is working from copies of all three versions, rather than partial or damaged texts.

In spite of attention to local detail, larger scale repetition does occur in the MS, notably with the repetition of B XIII material, which is moved into B V from its revised placing in C VI and then repeated in its original B position. Almost all B XIII material in C VI-VII is included in Ht's B passus V. The exceptions are C VI 85, equivalent to B XIII 341, C VI 430, equivalent to B XIII 403, and C VII 80-105, equivalent to B XIII 419-44. The two single lines may be the result of copying errors, having been intended for insertion; the first is at the end of a C insertion and the second a single B XIII line occurring in C VI. The omission of longer passages is less easy to account for. The length of the omission, c.27 lines, is about the right number to be on a single side in the exemplar, which could have been overlooked - or the compiler could simply have found the material uninteresting. It seems unlikely that the compiler could have noticed selectively that material recurred in B XIII, especially as these lines immediately follow a short passage from B XIII via C VII which is included in Ht (C VII 70-9). The B X material that occurs in C VII<sup>48</sup> is not however included in Ht. Instead, the passage is "replaced" into passus X in its revised form. Passus X provides a good example of the complexity of the editor's method:

B X 223 is followed by:

And þus shalt þow wyte what it is to mene  
A XI 165 I bekenne þee crist quod she y can þee teche no  
bette  
B 224/ A 166 I seyð graunte mercy ma dame & mekely her þonkyd  
B 225/ A 167 Til y come to clergye coupe y neuer stynt  
B 227 I grete þe good man wele as dame styðye me lerid

B X 228-229 as normal

B 230 Was neuere man on moold sep þe world was ymade  
231 ffairer ywelcomyd ne bettir made at ese  
232 þan me self sopely as sone as he wist  
233 þat y was of wyttis hows & his wyves dame  
236 I seid to hem sopely þat sent was y thider  
237 Do wele & do bettir and do beste to lere  
234 Curteisly clergie callid me and kussid  
235 Axid me how wyt ferde & his wyf dame  
A 182 It is a lele lif quod he among þe lewde peple

A XI 184-4 follow as normal

A 185 Alle kyn crafty men þat by her craft lyvyn  
186 Wip eny trauaile tilye for her lyflode

A XI 187 as normal

A 188 To breke beggers brede cumfort hem wip cloþes

A XI 189-193a as A, with the variant: berip witness/ witnessip at

like A 195-6 God wote do better sire do best hap a benefice  
So is he best worthy by þat god in þe gospel  
graunteþ  
A 198 Prins ouere goddes peple to preche & to teche  
199 Dobetter dop ful wele & do wele is good also

A XI 200 as normal

A 201 ffor to meyntein men fro myschef þo men were endowyd

A XI 202-3 as normal

A 204/ B 297 Gregory þe grete a good pope forsothe  
A 205 Of þe religious reule he rehersith in his morals  
206 Seip it in ensauple þat men shold do þe bettre

A XI 207-214 follows with variants:

209 roileþ/ roteth  
211 Ac/ but  
212 a lond biggere/ of þe lond a beggere

B X 314-6 follows; 316 reads:

He lowrip on hym & askep who taught hym curtesye



A XI 217-29 follows, 217-9 as normal

A 220                Were do wele and do bette þan ouir hem alle

A XI 221 as normal

A 222 with the variant: þis tale/ þes talis

223 Super cathedram moyses sederunt principes & dicunt facite

A XI 224 as normal

A XI 225 cf B X 337

A XI 226 cf B X 338

A XI 227 cf B X 339; variant: one/ þe

A 228/ B 340    Rialte ne rent ne rialte of lordes

A XI 229 or B X 341 follow as normal

B X 342-6 follow, 342-342a as normal

B 343                And Catoun kennith vs to coueite but as vs nedith

B X 343a-346 as normal

B 347+8/            þat pore men haue heritage in hevene & riche men none

A 230+1

B X 349/ A XI 232, B X 350/ A XI 233 follow as normal, then A XI 234.

B X 251 is omitted, as A.

B X 352/ A XI 235 as normal

B X 353/ A XI 236 with variant: mowen/ þei may

B X 354/ A XI 237 om.

A XI 238-243 follow:

A 238                tyneþ/ levith

239                Haue þe heritage as meny man cristen

240                Ac/ A

A XI 241-2 as normal

A 243                Boþe our frend and our foo and no veniance take

B X 374/ A XI 255 and B X 375/ A XI 256 follow as normal

B X 358-359a follow as normal, 360 om.

B 361                þat is loue þi lord god aboue all thinges

362                Aftir alle cristen creatures as wele as þi self

363                þis longith to lyf þat lovith to be sauid

B X 364 as normal

B 365                Hit shal fit us to sorow þe siluir þat we kepe

366                And our clothes motthe etyn & our neibours go nakid

B X 367 om., 368 as normal, followed by 377 as normal, 378 with  
variant:            derkliche/ dernliche

followed by C XI 142-147 with variants:

C 143            synne/ dedly synne  
145            on/ in to  
146            Bycome a man here with out mannys kynd

followed by B X 238-295, with variants:

B X 238 cf. A XI 182 above; variant: lyf/ thing

B 240            þat is to trowe trewly boþe lerid and lewed  
245 om.  
248            man and his make/ mankynd; boþe/ als  
249            olde/ old man  
250            bileue/ our faip  
251            alle om.  
252            cleped/ called; scripture/ gospell  
254            bileue/ our faip  
255            þe faip/ our faip  
256            myzte it ben/ if hit might be by reson  
259 om.  
264            þan is do best to be bysy to blame þat is wurpi  
265            syþenes/ þan  
266            Ac/ but  
267            grymly/ gretely  
268            All þat blameþ eny body be not blameles hym self  
269            Why beholdest þou a mote in þi brotheris eye  
after 270a       Put out þe balk ferst out of þi owne eye  
272            do boote/ do betir  
an additional line in the majority of B MSS follows  
277            euere/ oþer  
279            Ac/ but  
B 280            wis/ lerid  
283            festu/ mote  
284            mansed/ cursed  
285            barnes/ fōlk  
286            Dere boght þe trespas of too bad prestes  
287            coueitise/ prowde hert  
290            mowe ye manly/ may ze savely  
293            carpe not as þei do now calle as dounge houndis  
295            preire/ biddynge  
296            ye þis/ zow  
                in herte/ in her herte

B X 309-11 follows, with variants:

B 309            þere is/ is a  
310            loweþ hym to/ louith other  
311            by stretes/ aboute  
cf. A 211 above

C V 147- 175 follows, cf. A XI 204/ B X 298 above, followed by B X 328f.



After B X 223 the text is a construct of A XI and B X, with some additional lines here. The AB equivalent of the C V passage in Ht probably originates from an A text; most readings are closer to A than B, and eleven B-text MSS omit the passage.<sup>49</sup> Because of the complexity of joining the A text to the much reorganised B-text, with A XI 182-203 taking the place of the lines preceding the passage in the B-text, B X 238-297, there are about 125 lines between the two similar passages which possibly explains the compiler's decision to include both; conceivably the alteration to the passage in C may have seemed sufficiently fundamental to warrant re-inclusion, but this seems unlikely. The degree of editorial expertise in <sup>passus</sup> X is thus somewhat variable; recognition that the C V material originated in B X (or A XI) suggests a close reading of the texts, and some of the conjoint AB passages bear this out, with the insertion of short B passages in A material, such as B X 224-37 following A XI 165, and B X 315-6 following A XI 204-16, and of C XI 142-8 after B X 379 demonstrating careful selection of additional material. (B X 238-297 follows this C insertion, indicating the degree of reworking of B necessary to achieve a composite text). On the other hand, the Gregory passage from C V is not the only repetitious material, since the editor includes both A XI 182-203 and its revised B equivalent, X 238-97; again the passages are not identical to one another, but similar. Inevitably, although the editor has placed material on similar subjects together, the development of the argument of the passus is lost in the revision process.

Ht has special features which make it unique among Piers Plowman MSS, not least simply the amount of editorial intervention required to produce this text. These features include as the addition of lines, the highly variant nature of its original lines, and modernisation.

Yet primarily Ht, as a response to the poem, is a member of the group of conjoint MSS, a logical editorial process involved in producing the A+C MSS.

## ii. Literary Criticism: the scribe as critic.

### a. Criticism of style

Scribes have considerable scope for literary criticism, since their preferences can be demonstrated directly through alterations, which may be unconscious, made to the text they are copying. The discussion of scribes as critics follows the same pattern as that of annotators as critics, covering criticism of formal and structural elements and also criticism of the argument of the poem.

The value of scribes as critics of Chaucer's poetry is discussed in an article by B.A. Windeatt and the value of scribal contribution in a range of MSS in an article by R.A. Dwyer.<sup>50</sup> Both criticise the view that such participation in the transmission of the text is unwarranted tinkering.<sup>51</sup> The types of scribal change noted by Windeatt from the Chaucer MSS correspond to those noticed by Kane in Piers Plowman MSS:<sup>52</sup> figurative or unusual language in the original is often either replaced by an easier substitute, or (unlike Piers MSS) glossed by the scribe; cliché is used frequently, generally to make the meaning of the text clearer and occasionally to make a statement more emphatic. Substitutions and additions of intensifiers also tend to increase the emphasis of statements.<sup>53</sup> There cannot, of course, be a direct comparison between scribal reaction to Chaucer's style and that of Langland since they are so different; yet the scribes' tendency in some Chaucer MSS to make the lines regular in length or to produce complete syntactical units, apparently finding



his frequent use of enjambement and omission of pronouns unclear, and possibly irregular in rhythm,<sup>54</sup> may be compared to similar smoothing in Piers Plowman MSS. Thus scribes in general seem to wish to produce a text which is easy to understand, emphatic in statement, and with regular lines. The last form of variant may be unconscious, with scribes automatically producing the kind of line they are familiar with rather than consciously preferring regularity. This very conservative "criticism" may seem at first sight to make little contribution to the understanding of the text. Windeatt points out however, that from these variants it is possible to infer the qualities of Chaucer's writing which distinguish him from his contemporaries, since unusual style or imagery is also likely to prove difficult for scribes.<sup>55</sup> It is also possible to identify from the increase of emphasis an interest in the subject matter, although there may also be a stylistic criticism here, a dislike of understatement, which may be construed as lack of clarity.

Langland's alliterative verse, perhaps because it is more familiar than Chaucer's rhymed iambic pentameter, occasionally draws an enthusiastic response from scribes. Examples of the enhancement of alliteration among A-text MSS are given by Kane, with the largest number of them occurring in L(A).<sup>56</sup> This is a common form of variant occurring occasionally in MSS of all three texts including MS Z, for example at Z II 159 (A II 150) where "&" is missed in Z, emphasising the alliteration. Alliteration is more pronounced than in A throughout Z, in phrases such as "in lecherie lybbeth", compare A prol. 74 "leccherie haunten", "wyth notaryes nysotes" (Z II 99), compare "ze & þe notaries" (A II 91), and the addition of "transgressores" to "trespassours" at Z I 42 (A I 94). Some of this kind of occasional variant may be unconscious. H substitutes "he

callyd" for "tolde" in II 152,

And come to þe Kinges court & conscience tolde.

The simple alliterative variant may be a product of the unconscious influence of the original alliteration in the line. In other cases where the variant is more striking, the practice is probably deliberate. The substitution of "Connyng" for "sawis" by A-text MSS V and A at IV 144,

þe king accordite, be crist, to resonis sawis,

suggests deliberate alteration for the purposes of embellishment of the text. P(C), Skeat's base MS, sometimes increases alliteration, occasionally at the expense of the sense of the line. C III 73,

Forthy, leue lordes, leueth suche writynges  
is altered in P to

For thy leue lordes loue leueth suche wrytinges.

Possibly the conventional sense of the line as it appears in P seems more easy to understand than the vocative of the C-text. In most MSS however, there is no consistent scheme of this kind of change; scribes seem to be reacting independently of editorial control to individual lines that attract their attention, in many cases probably because an alliterative synonym for the original word is easy to find. In the text of L(C) the practice is more widespread and seems to be the result of a deliberate policy. Dwyer briefly mentions the scribal practice in L, and implies that the enhancement of the alliteration may be to match Piers Plowman with the four alliterative romances with which it is bound in this MS<sup>57</sup> (Libeaus Desconus, Arthour and Merlin, Kyng Alisaunder, and The Seege or Batayle of Troye). One of the best examples in L occurs at prol. 18. The A-text line reads:

Of alle maner of men, þe mene, & þe riche.

This is altered in L to:

Of alle maner of mester men makid vppon molde



Here, as well as substitution, the scribe introduces additional words to enhance the alliteration. The following line is altered by the substitution of "wilneþ" for the A-text "askip", producing a five-stave line followed by a four-stave line from an original pattern of two three-stave lines. Two variant lines from V(A) follow the same practice, although elsewhere this is not particularly characteristic of the V scribe. These are VIII 143, which reads:

And Iosep mette merueillously how þe mone & þe sonne,  
altered with the substitution of "Metels ful Meruילים" for  
"merueillously", and X 207,

þat iche man have a make in [marriage] of wedlak,  
where "Matrimoyne IMedlet togedere" is substituted for "of wedlak".  
The scribe seems particularly fond of alliteration using the letter M.  
An interesting example of enhanced alliteration occurs in G(B) at B  
XII 145, with the substitution of "fyue fyngers" for "fyue  
shillynges". The extra alliterative word produces a four-stave line,  
but in addition strengthens Imaginatyf's statement, which reads in B:

If any frere were founde þere I zyue þee fyue shillynges.  
"Fyngers" is obviously suggested as a substitute by both the  
alliteration and the appropriate number. The resultant emphasis makes  
this an example of attention to form and involvement with the content  
of the poem.

Scribal reaction to the alliteration is not always so enthusiastic  
however. Kane lists examples of variants which destroy  
alliteration,<sup>58</sup> the majority of them substituting an easier synonym  
for the original alliterating word. Comparing A-texts (for ease of  
reference, using Kane's two lists and excluding L throughout), it may  
be seen that both enhancement and destruction of alliteration often

occur in the same MS.<sup>59</sup> H for example has among the largest number of examples in both categories (19 examples of enhanced alliteration, 34 of decreased alliteration). W has the highest number of examples of enhanced alliteration after L (24), but also has a fairly large number of examples of reduced alliteration in the A-text portion (18) and several more in the C-text. The majority of A MSS seem to include about the same number of each kind of variant. However, where MSS include a considerable amount of substitutions which destroy alliteration, the number of substitutions is greater than the largest number of substitutions enhancing alliteration, as with H above. M for example has at least forty-three examples of substitution of an easier synonym or explanatory word which reduces or destroys alliteration, almost as many as examples of increased alliteration in L. M also has a fairly high number of substitutions increasing alliteration (15), compared with this practice in other MSS; but it may be seen from these figures that although appreciation of alliteration is occasionally demonstrated by most scribes (the particular consistent preference of the L(A) scribe being an exception), substitution of words making the sense clearer is more important to them than preserving the form. The number of such substitutions in M(A) represents, if not a conscious policy, at least a clear preference on the part of the scribe. Two other MSS, in which modernisation of language is clearly an editorial policy, frequently destroy alliteration. These are S(B) and Ht. Occasions of loss of alliteration through substitution in these MSS are too numerous to list. A particularly frequent occurrence in Ht is the loss of alliteration through the substitution of "pray" for "bidde" as at B V 502, "Bidde and biseche, if it be pi wille". The same substitution also occurs in S, with the same result as at XVII 101 with the common substitution in this MS, "we/ man".



Criticism of the form of the poem may be inferred in MS F(B) from the alteration to passus divisions discussed above. Other variants which reflect on the form of the poem are those substitutions which regularise lines or normalise syntax. This process has been described as a reason for the rejection of Z as authorial. Examples occur in Z prol. 23-26, 28, 74-77, where judicious addition or omission of single words results in a regularisation of the form of the lines. In Z ll 22, 25 and 26, "and", "of", "and" from A prol. 21, 24, 25, read "in", balancing "in" at the beginning of each line. Similarly Z prol. 28 (A prol. 27) echoes the "all for" of the preceding line (replacing "in"). In Z prol. 77 (A prol. 68) "and" is omitted, emphasising the three times repeated "of". All these differences suggest a preference on the part of the compiler of Z for a smooth line, where a sense of rhythm is achieved by exact repetitions within the line structure. This kind of embellishment or smoothing is particularly in evidence in the prologue, but does occur throughout Z. Ht, with editorial intervention in this area as well as many others, provides examples of this form of editorial change. A typical example occurs at B V 82. The B-text line reads:

So loked he wip lene chekes, lourynge foule. —

This is altered in Ht to

So lokyd he wip lene chekys so lowrid he foule.

Here the repetition, resulting in a rhetorical balance in the line, produces an effect very similar to the editorial interventions in Z. This kind of interference in the text in P(C), Skeat's base MS, and other MSS of the 'p' group<sup>60</sup> may be one of the reasons for modern critics' unenthusiastic reactions to the C-text.<sup>61</sup> Some of the changes enhance alliteration, as stated above; many of them seem

designed to clarify or even simplify the sense of the original; a few produce the balanced repetitive lines seen in Z and Ht, such as the alterations to C V 44, which in P reads

And ich lyue in Londone and on Londone bothe.

As with most alterations in P, the change affects the sense as well as the form of the text, in a manner which demonstrates an intelligent attention to the meaning to the poem.

Clarification of the sense of the poem, through substitution of either synonyms or simple words close in sound to the original, the latter called "homoeographs" by Kane,<sup>62</sup> has been mentioned with reference to the alliterative form of the poem. These kinds of change are also a form of literary criticism in their own right, indicating words which are difficult for scribes and thus highlighting the more unusual areas of Langland's poetry. Clarification is taken further in some MSS, in which figurative elements of the poem are "explained" by substitutions, and supposed emendations are made which simplify, and often change, the meaning of the text. Substitution of synonyms may be seen as a different form of response to this more fundamental alteration to the text; but both proceed from the wish to produce as intelligible a text as possible. A distinction can be made between changes which result in the substitution of a common or conventional word, and modernisation of language which is no longer current. Modernisation is of course a form of clarification; but it is sufficiently distinct from other forms of clarification to warrant separate discussion.<sup>63</sup> Single word substitutions of easier, near-synonymous variants may be compared with rubricators' or readers' glosses. Windeatt cites two examples from Troilus where such glosses are provided by the scribe, written above the word rather than as an



alteration to the text.<sup>64</sup> Scribes of Piers Plowman seem to have less respect for their exemplar. Kane lists examples of this kind of substitution in the A-text,<sup>65</sup> and examples are readily found in B- and C-text MSS, with a particularly large number occurring in F(B). "Homoeographs", the second form of substitution, generally of single words, may arise through misunderstanding or through unconscious error. This kind of substitution occurs for example at B XIII 43 in Bo, with the substitution "cause" for "sauce", and at B XIII 113, where "preynte" is altered in five MSS: "prentede" R; "prynkid" BmBoCot; "plukkid" F. Some A and B MSS indicate problems at prol. 10, with the word "swizede/ sweyed", with ten A variants from thirteen MSS and four B variants from ten MSS. "Slomerid", in the same line in A but not B produces ten highly variant spellings from thirteen MSS. The line is omitted from the C-revision, possibly in recognition of these difficulties. The following is a list of examples of words which attract several such variants. There is a fairly high instance of omission of these words from the C revision.

Full variants from C are not available. The number of MSS is given only where this differs from the number of variants.

A I 160 "fait" (three variants, five MSS), equivalent to B I 186 "feet" (three variants, nine MSS) and C I 182; A II 11 "frettid" (four variants), equivalent to B II 11 "fretted" (one variant, three MSS), not in C; A II 66 "signiure" (four variants, five MSS), not in BC; A II 94 "melis", cf. A XI 94 "mele" with variant "speke" in AMH<sup>3</sup>, and a similar variant in H (twelve variants, thirteen MSS), equivalent to B III 105 (five variants), not in C; A III 13 "somme" (ten variants, fourteen MSS), equivalent to B III 13 (six variants, thirteen MSS) and C III 14; A IV 19 "wytful" (six variants, ten MSS), equivalent to B IV 21 "witful gerpes", with the variant "witty wordes" in most MSS, not in C; A V 17 "segges" (four variants, eight MSS), equivalent to B V 17, several variants which all preserve the word "segge" or "segges", and C V 119, with the variant "to syggen ous" in P; A V 49 "affaiten" (three variants, four MSS), equivalent to B V 66 (three variants, five MSS) and C VI 7; A V 214 "be veil" (five variants, six MSS, om. in DWM), equivalent to B V 442 (one variant), and C VII 57; A VI 67 "berwe" (ten variants, twelve MSS, om. in A), equivalent to B V 575 "bowes" (one minor variant, "bowe" Hm, entire line variant in F), the line altered in C;

A VII 7 "schleire" (eight variants, eleven MSS), equivalent to B VI 7 "scleyre", no variants, and C VIII V; A VII 223 "nam" (six variants, eight MSS), equivalent to B VI 241 (one variant in G, as M(A)), not in C; A VIII 57 "prowe" (eight variants, eleven MSS), not in BC; A VII 108 "payn eet" (three variants, four MSS), equivalent to B VII 126, no variants, not in C; A XI 70 "motifs" (seven variants), equivalent to B X 117 (two variants), not in C; A XI 156 "gynful" (five variants, seven MSS), equivalent to B X 213 (three variants, seven MSS), not in C. Three A MSS, AChW, have the same variant, "synful", as four B MSS, C<sup>2</sup>BmBoCot ("synfull"); B XI 60 "yarn" (four variants, seven MSS), equivalent to C XII 12; B XI 77 "catecumelynges" (four variants, eleven MSS), not in C; B XII 5 "fernyeres" (three variants, om. in F), not in C; B XIII 339 "shordych" (three variants, five MSS), not in C; B XIV 141 "heberwyng" (seven variants, sixteen MSS, mostly variants of "here beryng" or "here beyng", entire line variant in F), not in C; B XX 123 "hungriliche" (four variants), equivalent to C XXII 123.

The listed examples indicate other problems with the text than simple unfamiliarity with language; the variants for "somme" at A II 13 (etc.) suggest that the simplicity of the word in this context has puzzled the scribes, who seem to be looking for a more pointed statement. The substitution thus arises not from ignorance or laziness but is a genuine form of literary criticism. The F(B) variant here, "manye", is straightforward exaggeration for emphasis. In A VI 67 "berwe" causes considerable problems for scribes. Its B form, "bowes" is however apparently readily recognised. The possibility that the authorial revisions took account of such areas of difficulty is given support by the omission of areas of difficulty in the B or C revisions; "signiure", causing problems in A II 66, is not retained in BC, several words causing problems in AB are not retained in C, even in areas of text which are not much altered, and some of the problematic words new in B disappear in C, such as the unusual "catecumelynges" (XI 77), and "heberwyng" (XIV 141), not difficult in itself, but unusual in context. The C-text of W(AC) includes several of these kinds of variants, most of which seem to arise from error rather than deliberate substitution. A particularly unusual one



occurs at C XIII 217; the line reads:

And there was ther a wyhte, what he was y neste.

The scribe obviously misunderstands "neste",<sup>66</sup> and alters the whole line to accommodate this misunderstanding:

And þan frayned I at a byrde as he sat in his nest.

This curious variant influences the surrounding text; to maintain consistency, "wyhte" in XIII 218 is altered to "byrde", and further ahead, at the end of the passus, "walke" is altered to "flyght" at XIII 244. It is even possible that the omission of the waking episode in XIII 213, replaced with

And abashet me anon right and a brayd þens & was sory,  
has been deliberately introduced to explain the absurd episode of speaking to a bird, hardly possible in waking life. This alteration too is smoothed consistently into the text with the variant at 216, "wakyng/ romyng". W(AC) also demonstrates this kind of consistency with other variants. Two examples occur in passus XIV, where "kynde wit" is eradicated from the text by variants at 30, 33, 34, 36:

kynde wit of/ of kynde of  
kynde wit a/ kynde sight of  
kynde wittes/ kynde mynde  
kinde witte/ lewednesse,

and the river Thames is similarly removed by the variant

and in Temese cast hem/ in tempest & cast hem in watre

at 104, made consistent by the failure to mention the Thames at 104. Both of these, but particularly the second, may be the result of dealing with unfamiliar material. The variant at 1.36 probably arises simply from the negative attitude of the line toward ungoverned knowledge, but may represent a particular rejection of "kynde wit" by the scribe. The care with which these variants have been smoothed into the text suggests that at least some of these variants represent

an attempt to produce the best possible sense from the poem. Of course, the greater the care that is taken to rationalise such variants, the further the text moves away from the original.

Both these last two forms of variant, substitution of synonyms and "homoeographs" provide similar information about scribes' reactions, even though they arise from opposite positions, of understanding and misunderstanding. They point out which words are difficult in the text, or more importantly in context, the latter pointing more surely to the unusual aspects of Langland's poetic technique. The substitution of synonyms indicates a sense of responsibility to the reader, and possibly the author, to produce intelligible copy. The integration of the error quoted in W(AC) into the surrounding text suggests that this responsibility extends beyond the single line of copy. However, identifying areas of difficulty, or particularly difficult words or lines, from these substitutions is not necessarily straightforward. The examples listed are confined to words which are sufficiently unusual to produce at least three variants. There are also many words which produce a single variant only, suggesting that one scribe only had problems with the word or context. Referring to Kane's lists of examples for these types of variants in A MSS,<sup>67</sup> thirty-eight words which produce "homoeographs" produce less than three variants, while twenty-four produce three or more variants; of words which produce synonyms, forty-nine have only one variant, six have two, and one has three. The majority of such variants therefore, in the A text at least, occur among only a small number of MSS.

Another scribal practice affecting style, again apparently designed to produce a clearer text, involves the addition of words and occasional alteration of syntax, generally producing a greater



precision of reference. Such alterations are described by Kane, and A-text examples listed.<sup>68</sup> This is one of the most characteristic practices of Skeat's base MS, P(C), and the other p group MSS. An obvious example occurs at prol. 49, with the substitution of "vnwyse" for "wyse", destroying the irony of the text. The substitution in F(B) of "his myssacrifyse" at B XII 116 is a similar alteration. Several scribes have problems with A VII 108,

þe prophet his p[al]yn e[le]t in penaunce & in wepyng,  
with four variants including the sweeping simplification in H for the first half of the line, "þer is profyt in peyne". Here the figurative sense of the lines is unclear to the scribes, who duly provide a variety of more direct substitutes. Another characteristic form of variant in P(C) is the addition of words identifying a speaker (a common scribal practice in general), as at II 19, where P adds "quap hue" to the C-text line. This is comparable with a similar practice noted by Windeatt in some MSS of Troilus.<sup>69</sup> It also occurs frequently in other Piers Plowman MSS, for example at A II 5 with the addition of "quod sche" (or variant) in MSS H<sup>2</sup>WVHJU, and at A II 94 in H, where the line is altered from

To mede þe maide melis þise wordis  
to the simpler

seyde to mede.

The change from "þe frek" at A IV 13 to "consciens" in JM is a similar kind of alteration, this time not just determining direct speech but also identifying the speaker. In this case the variant results in repetition, with Conscience named two lines above, although elsewhere in the poem the speaker is not always so readily identifiable. The second of two additional lines in K(AC) after C prol. 169,

And kuld hem al that as hym self lysted  
Then stepte a mouse softly forth & to the kourte said

creates a speaker for the following lines. This is similar to some rubricators' or annotators' use of the names of the characters as marginal subject headings, often placed where the character begins to speak. In some MSS, which are divided into paragraphs in sense units, the beginning of a new speech is marked by a paraph. The practice is a fairly standard one; its very frequent occurrence in MSS of Piers may be a response to the difficulty of identifying the many characters of the poem. Some variants suggest a dislike of Langland's fairly common practice of using adjectives as nouns;<sup>70</sup> at B XII 157 "lettrede" is replaced by "lettred men" in MF (this could have been suggested by "lewed men" earlier in the line). A similar example occurs at B XII 247, with the substitution "þe riche/ ryche man" in F. Changes to grammatical forms are fairly common. The variant in G(B) at XII 79, "Giltier/ more gyltye" may reflect the opinion that the single word comparative is unclear. The variant "Gilty" in BoCot confirms some difficulty with this word. Some substitutions in P(C) seem designed to make more straightforward sense in context than the original lines. The substitution "conuent/ couetyse" at VI 39 indicates intelligent attention to the text; at this point in the confession of Pride, covetousness may well seem more appropriate than "convent", introduced abruptly at this point. At A VII 134 the substitution "flesch and blood/ fresshe blod" is an imaginative additional detail to the eating imagery which underlies the passage, while the variant in the next line, VII 135, "lup/ lemed" is a more mundane substitution of a common meaning, appropriate in context, which perhaps fortuitously maintains the alliteration. B XI 49, a seemingly simple line, is subject to considerable variation as scribes attempt to produce a definitive meaning. The line reads:

I hadde no likyng, leue me, [þe leste] of hem to knowe,



and attracts seven variants from thirteen MSS, most of them understanding "leste" as "list" (to like). With this meaning, the word makes no sense in context, and thus words are added:

if þe leste L; if þe lest M; if þee list<sup>23</sup> W; zif thu  
list Hm; if ye list Cr; ne no luste Cr<sup>23</sup> GYCBmBoCot;  
ne luste C<sup>20</sup>O.

This is similar to the reaction to A III 13 "somme", discussed above, where it seems as if the simplicity of the line has confused the scribes.

To sum up, scribal reaction to style takes several forms; alliteration is enhanced, in particular in MS L(A), and decreased, usually in favour of a simpler variant. With the exception of L, no MSS seem to have a consistent policy of enhancement of alliteration, although this kind of embellishment of the style occurs occasionally in most MSS; equally, except for Ht(B) and S(B), which modernise the text, and possibly M(A), consistent substitution of easier words is not apparent in MSS, although the amount of this kind of substitution which occasionally destroys alliteration is greater than that which increases it. The production of intelligible poetry therefore seems to be of a higher priority for most scribes than embellishment by alliteration. Scribes also occasionally smooth the text by regularising lines, often by repetition of phrases, or by omission of small words, to produce a balanced line or series of lines. Again this occurs at times in most MSS, but is a consistent practice in none. Words found difficult in themselves or in context by scribes can be identified by the substitution of synonyms or other words, in the latter case demonstrating that the text has been misunderstood or misread. Where this occurs, the text is sometimes adjusted so that the scribal version makes some kind of sense. Finally, small changes

are made to the grammar and syntax of lines, or words are added signalling direct speech or identifying speakers. All these changes tend to explain the text; again this is sometimes at the expense of the form of the poem, since metre can be destroyed by this kind of variant. Clarity takes precedence over the scribes' attempts to produce regular lines. Preference is shown among scribes for a repetitive but explicit style, and irony or figurative language may be altered where scribes perceive that meaning may be obscured. Some variants show a preference for definitive or emphatic statement, and this may be seen as another aspect of criticism of style. It is predominantly, however, an indicator of interest in a particular part of the text, and as such is discussed below. With the exception of some difficult words, many of which disappear in the C-text, there is no observable pattern among MSS in the selection of words for variation. Most must have originated as an impulse (or unconscious error) on the part of individual scribes throughout the history of the text preserved in each MS. Scribes may have been reacting to a single line of copy only, with little sense of the poem as a whole, and the kind of smoothing of errors which occurs in W(AC) may have taken place subsequently. Although similarities can be detected in the kinds of variants, providing some guidance to scribal reaction to style, areas of difficulty with language or meaning are particular to each MS. The chief impression of scribes as readers of the MSS is one of diversity.



## b. Areas of interest

Many of the variants which affect style reflect an interest in the issues of the poem, but the addition of lines and particularly emphatic smaller changes mark a difference in degree in reaction to the issues sufficient to warrant separate discussion. As with all the forms of reception so far discussed, reactions of this form are diverse. There are, however, recognisable subjects in the poem which arouse interest, which generally correspond to those particularly noted by annotators, as well as special interests which can be inferred from additions in individual MSS. In addition to these patterns of interest, a few specific areas of the text attract interest in several MSS. MSS vary in the number of variant <sup>(ie unoriginal)</sup> lines they possess. Among A-text MSS H has the largest amount of additional lines, followed by L and H<sup>2</sup>, with AH<sup>3</sup>MJE containing several variant lines and RWUVN with only one or two. Among B-texts, F has the largest number of variant lines, and in addition alters many of the original B-lines; most other B-text MSS have only a few variant lines. In the absence of a critical edition of the C-text, identification of variant lines in C is difficult, but Professor Russell, editor of the forthcoming critical edition of the C-text, suggests that the most interesting variants may be found in MSS DIFMPP<sup>2,71</sup> and the C-text portion of A+C MSS N and W. D contains variant lines which considerably alter the sense of the original. The most interesting variants in I are the interpolations of C material into the prologue, which is essentially an A-text prologue, indicating particular interest in the criticism of clerics (among other subjects, such as poverty) in the prologue.<sup>72</sup> P is Skeat's base text, and the character of its variants has been discussed above; F and M are both related in

character to this MS, and F contains additional lines demonstrating particular interest in passus VI.  $p^2$  contains B-text conflation (discussed above), and also contains a passage which seems to be abbreviated, or reconstructed from memory.<sup>73</sup> N is notable for C-text conflation in the A portion of the MS (discussed above), and W has several unusual variants, some of which, like that at XII 217, quoted above, demonstrate poor understanding of the text, while others suggest particular interest in various issues. Ht also contains several additional lines, some of which smooth the introduced material from A and C into the B-text, while others demonstrate interest in areas of the text.

As may have been expected, clerical satire and social problems attract the interest of scribes. Interest in clerics can be seen in the additional line after X 272 in the majority of B-text MSS, including Ht,

For Abbotes and for priours and for alle manere prelates  
extending the original reference to parsons and parish priests to include the majority of clerics. Ht adds a line to the description of Wrath in passus V which extends the clerical satire; C VI 105-118, inserted after B V 152, is followed by an entirely spurious line, a highly variant line; and another spurious (or unrecognisably variant) line:

Monkes & monyals & meny manere peple [cf. C V 170]  
Prestes & parsons prelates of holy cherge  
[version of C VI 119?]  
In here wones in þis world moost lyvip wrappe.

The prologue of I(C) is heavily interpolated with material from C IX, adding in two large interpolations material on beggars and hermits, and on bishops. The interpolations are discussed in detail



by Professor Pearsall, who concludes that the compiler of the prologue was concerned to stress material which seemed of particular import, the problem of beggars and hermits, and the blame attached to high ranking churchmen. This was duly moved to a more prominent position in the text.<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, it was not cancelled in its original position later in the text and thus occurs twice, another example of the limited view of scribes, who sometimes confine their alterations to the immediate passage. In this case the added material in the prologue, which includes conflation from the C prologue, comes from several places in the text, which at first sight might suggest a broader perception of the text. However, the fairly extensive variants in the interpolated material suggest the possibility of memorial reconstruction, in which case the scribe may not have recognised the material in its usual place in the C-text. An interesting aspect of the revision is the failure of the compiler (who clearly had access to a C-text) to include the new BC material concerning the cat and mouse fable. The fable refers to a specific parliamentary situation, and the omission of this material, perhaps more than the interpolations, suggests that this scribe's perception of the poem is as a social document of current relevance rather than a work of literature.

The fairly widespread disruption to the A-text around prol. 54-5<sup>75</sup> has been noted with reference to MS Z. This occurs in EH<sup>2</sup> and R as well as I and Z, with the E and R lines, on parsons and vicars, echoing the I compiler's interest in clerical satire. The additional lines in H<sup>2</sup> are not concerned with friars, but with almsgiving:

Who so zeueth for godes loue wyl nat zeue his þonkis  
But þere his mede may be most and most merytore,

lines like C IX 66-8. Once again, interest in the subject seems to

have instigated the introduction of C IX material into the A prologue, although these particular lines are missed in I, possibly because, as Professor Pearsall suggests,<sup>76</sup> the motives of almsgivers are not particularly relevant to the prologue. For the H<sup>2</sup> editor, however, they must have seemed sufficiently appropriate. A version of these lines also appears in Ht, after B VI 160:

zeve zow oght quod Pers hold yt not my þonkis  
But þer my mede be moost and moost meritorie.

The introduction of Piers and the consequent change into the first person in the lines is necessary to fit them into their new context; the sense of the lines however is inappropriate to this context, and does not match any C expansion at this point. Interest in this theme is thus suggested quite positively here; the editor of Ht wished to include these lines in their C form somewhere in the text, while at the same time preserving their B form at B VII 71-2. Further interest in the reference to friars at A prol. 55 may be seen in the interpolation of a similar line,

& for þe flaterynge freeris alle þe foure orders,

in two A MSS, H and H<sup>2</sup> after II 45 and 44 respectively (quoted as H). W also adds a line after II 44,

For beggers for borwers & for many oper. —

F(B) interpolates at the equivalent point in B, with the addition after B II 61 of the line:

& manye oper myster men mo þan ben in myznde.

All of these increase the numbers of "þe route þat ran aboute Mede" (B II 62, not in A), and occur at a point in which expansion occurs in the authorial revisions. These interpolations are examples of a fairly common scribal tendency to add to lists. A+C MSS W and N both have a



C interpolation here, of C II 60-4 and 60-6 respectively, which add to the witnesses to Mede's wedding. The list of lands which will form Mede's wedding settlement is expanded by W and N, with the addition at A II 65 of C II 84-7, 89, 92 and 98-100, 102-4 respectively, and the list of names of witnesses attracts a spurious line from HH<sup>2</sup> after A II 75,

Taperes & tomblers & tapesters fele  
and

Taylours tapsters & tauerners many,

while E adds four lines after 76:

Sym þe semer out of sumud [sic] sete  
And haukyn þe hunter of holdernes  
And hudde þe hulour of holand aswa  
Milners & michers for þai er all fals.

The addition of B V 321/ C VI 378 after A V 162 in MSS VHEANMH<sup>2</sup>, in spite of the inclusion of this line at A V 170, seems to be another example of this tendency. The four parts of the poem drawn together by these scribal cross-references, A prologue, A II 45f, A V 162/ B V 321/ C VI 378, and B VII 62f/ C IX 58f all contain lists of occupations (compare the Z variant "alle libbynge laborers" at prol. 90<sup>77</sup>). As well as interest in friars and hermits in the prologue, the disturbance in this area of the text may thus be connected with a scribal sense of the links between parts of the poem, reflecting their appreciation of the poem's attempt to represent all mankind, or more simply, perhaps a desire to emphasise and expand the subject at hand. The choice of some scribes to expand it with material from other texts implies that some early readers see Piers Plowman as a single text rather than as three separate poems; the possibility of memorial construction in some of these interpolations suggests that it was widely copied and hence familiar to scribes. The linking of material from different areas of the poem also suggests this kind of

familiarity, and possibly a scribal sense of the shape of the poem.

The many interpolations in passus II suggest interest among scribes in Lady Mede. Apart from the interpolations quoted above, other lines are added, including alterations to her finery in H, which replaces A II 12-13 with

Of reed gold so ryche redilyche Idyzte  
Wip precyouse stones so stoute stondynge þer ynne.

There is also some disturbance to the text around A III 90, as the king speaks to Mede. Before the king calls Mede (after A II 89) H adds four lines, a warning to masters of law and by implication to the king and his council, to choose the best course, presumably to avoid the appeal of Mede:

Now bep ze war if ze wole ze maysturs of þe lawe  
For þe soþe shale be souzte of zoure soules so me god helpe  
þe suffraunce þat ze suffre suche wrongus to be wrouzt  
While þe chaunce is in zoure choyse cheose ze þe best.

This interpolation reflects considerable involvement in the poem, with the scribe feeling inspired to warn either the characters in the poem or the potential readers. Another additional line in H in passus III reads like a comment to readers on the text, an explanation of the action. This is after III 64a, and reads:

Here forsoþe þei fongen her mede forþwip.

H also changes the end of 92, "wip blisse & wip ioye" to "þere þe king was ynne", obviously concerned to make the sense as clear as possible. HH<sup>2</sup> then both insert lines,

wip myrþe & wip mynstralsye þei pleseden hir ychoone (H)  
and

In to þe priuyest place þe prince hadde euere (H<sup>2</sup>)



(H seems to be interested in entertainers, note the variant after II 75 quoted above). L substitutes two lines in place of 93:

And on hire kneos heo kneoled when heo þe kyng sygh  
But he hire tok vp by þe hond & hailed wel faire,

providing additional details to the meeting between the king and Mede which suggest an imaginative participation in the events. The variants in III 95 suggest this kind of participation; the majority are examples of the kind of exaggerated emphasis which is a common indicator of interest, while the H<sup>2</sup> variant supplies a comment on the character of Mede:

vnwittily/ certis vnwittily H; Ful wyckedly Iwis  
H<sup>2</sup>; vnwittily ywys T  
ofte/ wel ofte RD; wol ofte UA; full ofte E;  
right ofte K; many tyme and ofte W

There is some expansion in the area of the text concerning Mede in C, but B follows A fairly closely. Thus variation here is unlikely to reflect awareness of BC changes. The deadly sins, however, attract both scribal variation and authorial revision (see the argument for originality in Z concerning this point, above). Among A-text MSS conflation from B or C is understandably common in passus V, and there are in addition several spurious lines. L interpolates five lines in all at various points in Gluttony's confession,<sup>78</sup> producing one of L's most heavily alliterative lines with the last two extra lines, after 205:

And for to leden suche lif þat leosed wel monye  
And made heom haue heore home in helle for euer.

A also adds to Gluttony's confession, with a single line adding to the dramatic effect after 156:

Ha ha quot Gloton gowe in and drynk.

Gluttony also attracts a curious additional line in N, the only

entirely spurious line in the A portion of the MS:

& made endentures of the brode world,

and demonstrates further interest in Gluttony by an intensifying variant at A V 202, where Gluttony sleeps, not just "satirday & sonneday" but "al a somer he slepe". Shortly after this, after 198, UEMH<sup>3</sup> insert B or C material (B V 358 and 360-3/ C VI 416-21). H<sup>2</sup> includes a fairly long insertion on lechery, four lines after 55:

And chastite to seke as a chylde clene  
The lust of his likam to leten for euere  
And fle fro felyschipe there folie may a rise  
For that makith many man mysdo ful ofte,

an addition to the moral sentence of the passage with the same kind of doctrine as the Parson's Tale:

Another remedie agayns Leccherie is that a man or a  
woman eschue the compaignie of hem, by whiche he  
douteth to be tempted (Parst 954).<sup>79</sup>

Among B-text MSS only F has any additional lines in passus V which refer specifically to the sins, four lines on Avarice after V 296,<sup>80</sup> and one line on Envy after V 111, the latter adding to the physical expression of Envy's bitterness,

þerfore y brende betterly þat myn brestboon gan krake.

The Ht editor has a difficult task in passus V, drawing together the three texts at a point at which they are considerably different from one another. Interest in the text is indicated both by the thoroughness with which this has been attempted, and by the addition of extra or extremely variant lines. This is well demonstrated in the Ht version of the confession of Envy. Ht retains the order of confessions of the B-text, with Envy following Lechery, in this case after C VI 171-195, additional material in the C-text. B V 75-100 is fairly close to the original B reading, with some smoothing at V 82



(quoted above), and 94-6 omitted. This is followed by two spurious lines:

Wip envye & wykkyd speche entysyng to fight  
Lying and laghyng and lede tonge to chyde,

and then a version of C VI 71, generalised by the omission of the names in the original line:

All þat y wist wykked by eny man to tell it.

C VI 69 follows, having been prepared for by the omission of B V 94, the B equivalent of the same line. A version of C VI 70-5 follows, so that C VI 71 follows two lines after the Ht version of the same line, indicating some problems with the material here. The variants at C 72, 73 and 75 are interesting as reaction to the text; 72 reads:

And made of frendes foes thorw my fals tonge,

in which the variant "fikel and/ my" personalises the text. The variants in 73 and 75 are

73 sleythes/ strengþe  
75 myn euen-cristene/ men and cursen,

the latter variant probably more in keeping with the Ht editor's view of Envy than the milder original. C VI 76 is omitted, and the next two lines are spurious (or too variant to recognise):

Yet is no man þat y love lastyng eny while  
ffor talis þat y tell no man trusteþ me,

followed by C VI 77-84, with the variant at 84

suche is his grace/ & of shordiche dame Emme,

which is the version of the line that occurs in B XIII 339, altered in its new position in C VI, suggesting that the editor recognised the origin of the new C material here, and selectively chose B or C readings. The preference indicated by the inclusion of Dame Emme is

another example of the tendency, discussed above, to add names to lists. B V 101-133 (om. 113-6) followed by C VI 100-102 then B V 134 conclude the confession of Envy. B V 134 repeats C VI 102 immediately before.

The careful putting together of the two texts (with one or two errors) and the spurious lines and variants confirm interest in the text here, concentrated on the aggressive characteristics of Envy (compare with the illustration of Envy in D(C), photograph 3). The extra lines in Ht concerning Wrath have been discussed above, and indicate an interest in clerical satire rather than in Wrath in the abstract. However, other interesting variants occur in the confession of Wrath in the MS, including one which lessens the impact of the original, with a substitution at C VI 149 (C VI 147-50 is inserted after B V 163):

on with the clawes/ tare eche oper clopes.

The scribe was perhaps puzzled by the statement, and replaced it with a guess at its probable meaning. One of the C text MSS, F, similarly reduces the violence here, with the variant

bloody here chekes/ cast of here hoods.

Only a few lines further on in Ht the variant

B V 163 hitte/ spet & hit

increases the violence of the quarrel, while another exaggerative variant at 179 increases the length of time Wrath suffers "a flux of a foule moup" from five to nine days (compare the variant at A V 202 in N, quoted above). In the description of Avarice a small variant

B V 190 baberlipped/ & ek baberlipped

emphasises the physical description, and as with the confession of



Envy a carefully constructed text follows, with several spurious lines, or lines too variant to identify:

after B V 198:

More to good þan to god y me love caste.  
[neat compression and smoothing of C VI 284-5]  
And ymagynyð how y might hit have  
[var. of C VI 264]  
Wiþ fals mesures & mette & wiþ fals witness  
[var. of C VI 258]  
Lovyd for þe loue of þe wed & loþ to do truþe  
[var. of C VI 243]  
And awaytid þurgh which y might begile  
[var. of C VI 259?]

C VI 260-6 follows, then:

And by night or by day about was y euer  
þurgh gile to gadre þe good þat y haue  
[var. of C VI 259?]

C VI 267-71 follows, then:

& who þat chepid my chaffare chide wt hym y wolde  
[var. of C VI 252?]  
But he profryd me to pay a peny oþer two  
More þan it was worþe and zet wold y swere  
[var. of C VI 244?]  
þat hit coste me muche more swore meny oþes.

The sense is slightly simplified from the BC original, with the last four lines suggesting an angry Avarice similar to the image of Envy produced by Ht variants.

Other sins in Ht are treated with similar handling of the complex task of marrying disparate material, but with fewer extreme variants. One variant in the description of Gluttony is noteworthy, the addition of a line after B V 336:

For sauour þat þei felyd of his foundement flowen.

The variant in B V 336 "lourynge/ sweryng" is yet another instance of the introduction of swearing into the text in Ht. F(C) also demonstrates interest in the sins. The variant softening the line at C VI 150 has been mentioned above; like Ht, F goes on to emphasise the

effects of Wrath shortly afterwards, in lines which add to the connection between eating and evil words. After VI 153 F reads:

Withoute loue or leaute & lye on hem with tal  
& make hem euer flesch for eche of hem ete oper  
[cf. 49]  
þe wikkednesse þat I wiste by any of þe route  
[var. of 162]  
I cowhed it vp in our cloistre þat al þe conuent wist it  
[163]  
& ȝit I spak no speche it swal to my brest  
[cf. F(B) after V III]  
þat I chewed it as a cowe þat code chewd ofte  
156f follows.

The sins in passus V (C VI-VII) attract most attention from scribes, but one MS, Y(C), adds material to complete the list of sins against which poverty is a defence in passus XVI (B XIV). The sins described in BC are Pride, Wrath, Gluttony, Covetousness, Avarice,<sup>81</sup> Lechery, and Sloth, seven sins since Covetousness and Avarice are counted separately, but Envy does not appear. In Y, the following lines are inserted at the bottom of the page, marked to follow XVI 90:

And þouz þe pore wolde holde eneuye in his hert  
He may not greue no gost so gretly as hym sulue  
ffor his eneuye may do non harm to hyz ne to low  
Bote his owen carfil corse he crouneth neyh to deþe  
Wher for pore pacient may no puyre enuye haue  
Bote enuye mot fle hym fro for his pacient herte.

The format follows that of the other sins at this point in the text, and the lines fit neatly into context. They are glossed "pacyence is withoute enuy" (fol. 59b).

Lady Mede and the deadly sins are thus subjects of particular interest in a variety of MSS of all three texts. Other interests demonstrated in the MSS are particular to a single MS, or only a few MSS. The alteration around passus headings in F(B) for example suggests a particular interest in the dream form of the poem, as well as in its structure. In H(A) spurious lines in passus II all concern



faithlessness: after II 112:

For where falsenes is oft founden þere feip faylep

after II 129:

For falseness azeyn þe feip sisoures he defouleþ  
þoruz comburance of coueytyse clymben azeyn truþe  
þat þe feip is defouled & falsly defamed  
& falsenes is a lord Iwox & lyueþ as hym lykeþ

after II 130:

For feire speche þat is feiples is falsnes broþer  
& þus sysoures ben sompned þe false to serue  
& feire speche fauel þat moche folke desceyueth.

Sisours too come in for criticism in these lines, which occur close together, indicating a conscious desire to emphasise this aspect of the text. The variant in most B MSS at VI 273, "mo lieres/ murþeris" may reflect a particular dislike of doctors, but could easily be a visual error only. This of course affects the reception of the text. nonetheless; the line is glossed "leches are murderers" in C<sup>2</sup>(B) (fol. 32b). A similar case occurs in D(C) at XVII 42, with the variant "sholde reseue/ shold refuse", again considerably altering the sense, but possibly arising simply from visual error. Antifeminism is apparent from a variant in R(C) after III 80. The lines read:

For these women on this mowlde that moste harme worketh  
To the poore people that parcell meale bughe —  
For they poyson þe people prively and ofte.

The lines are like B III 80-2, with the variant "men/ women" directing the lines, which concern retailers, specifically against women. R(C) is joined in antifeminism by several annotators, and possibly by the rubricator of X, with the error in the rubric at XI 1: "Witts wyf chidd Wit for he sche sed so muche unstodied", where the common criticism against women of saying too much may have occasioned the error, and also by the scribe of W(AC), in which XIII 188 reads:

I se wymmen mysdo in werk and in speche bothe.

Later at XIV 44 the variant "man/ woman" changes a general comment into one against women in particular. In the C-text portion of W the particular obsession of the scribe seems to be with food and drink, suggested by variants in passus XII-XXI. These variants are:

- XII 55 brouke/ drynk
- XIII 94 wil/ desire at mete
- XIV 184 rychesse in his shoppes/ licour in his coppe
- XV 256 ondyng/ etyng
- XVI 322 food/ liflode
- XXI 284 [reads:] Ne studyng ne delicious metes out of skyl bryng.

The variants speak for themselves as testimonies to the scribe's priority, with the variant at XVI 322 perhaps summing up his attitude to the subject. The variants arise from references in the text, except perhaps the variant at XV 256, although this may arise through association of smell and taste, and thus are expansions of existing material rather than baseless projected wishes - but the extent of expansion in the last of these variants is considerable, originating in a single mention of eating in XXI 282 and "mete" in 283. This apparently superficial interest is one of the most sustained sequences of alteration on one subject in a single MS; as with other variants in this MS (discussed above), the approach is consistent, although eccentric. In this interest in food the scribe, probably unintentionally, focuses on one of the most sustained metaphors in the poem.<sup>82</sup> One late MS, S(B), has two variants suggesting anti-Catholicism, the only MS in which this is evident in the text. These are the variant

XV 557 holy kirke/ the churche of Rome

and the spurious line after XIX 413, the two lines together reading

I knew neuere cardynal þat he ne cam fro þe pope  
And few vertues be there, or elles none.



The only marginal comment in the poem is the word "popery", in the hand of the scribe at XV 444. This is an unusual attitude to be displayed in the text of an MS, though common enough among late annotators; it is possibly a personal reaction from the scribe to the poem rather than part of the editorial policy. This is a factor which sets this MS apart from the others, along with its most consistent form of variation, modernisation of language.

### iii. Modernisation

Two MSS modernise the text with any degree of consistency, Ht and S(B). S(B) is a paper MS, a contemporary of Crowley's editions, dated c.1550 by Kane and Donaldson.<sup>83</sup> Modernisation is fairly extensive in both MSS, but is more so in S, which often paraphrases whole lines, not adding comment on the text in altering it, but attempting to produce a simplified version, even a translation. Ht on the other hand generally confines modernisation to single word variants, with a few exception such as the variant

C VI<sup>308</sup> arste/ for al her wikkyd wirkes,

in effect a gloss on the line. Both MSS demonstrate an extreme version of a common tendency among MSS, the substitution of a commonplace expression or an unspecific phrase where the scribes have clearly not understood the exemplar, of which the commonest form is substitutions for the many words for "man" (renk, gome, wye, leode etc.) which are often omitted or replaced by "he", or by the name of the character. There are three main forms of modernisation in the MSS:

1. modernisation of simple words and of spellings such as ac/ but;  
 but/ oonless (S only), both/ also; siker/ sure; sipen/ pan; 2.  
 meaningless or non-specific substitutes as described above; 3.  
 glossation or paraphrase. The last form of variant is more common in  
 S than Ht, and results in substitutions such as

VII 154 sauour in songwarie/ trust in dreames  
 XIII 227 robes I fonge/ clothes I gett  
 386 likames giltes/ my bodies fautes  
 XV 107 chaffered/ bought or sold  
 XV 589 selcoupe sores/ sundrie and strange  
 diseases  
 XVII 165 nedeþ no man trowe noon ooper/  
 that no man think the contrary

Alteration in the MS extends to details such as the variant at IX 39,  
 "parchmyn/ paper". The S editor's handling of the text is best  
 demonstrated by quotation from the MS. Two extracts follow, the first  
 from B XVII 22f:

22 No saithe truthe said this heraulde  
 Lo here in my lappe that trusted to that charme  
 [microfilm blurred] and Judithe and Judas Macabeus  
 [ ] and sixtie thousand more that ben of sene here  
 26 [Your] [worlde]s are wonderfull quod I which of you is truest  
 And trustiest to trust to for lyfe and for soule  
 29-31 as B; 31 hir/their

32 He can not tell howe many yet some are in his lappe

33-6 as B; 35 as majority variant.

37 To beleue and loue in our lorde allmygztie  
 And then euen as my self to loue all the people  
 The man that gothe wth one staf he semeth in better helth  
 Then he that gothe wth ij staues to fight of vs all  
 41 And euen so by the roode Reason me shewethe  
 42-6 as B

47 Then for to loue and beleue as wel foes as frendes

48-51 as B, with modernised spelling

52 Ryding well hastily the right waye we went

53 as B

54 To a Justice in Jherusalem he rode awaie fast



55-7 as B, with modernised spelling.

58 Nor helpe himself trulie for semyviue he semed

59 as B

60 Ffeyth had fyrst sight of him but he fled asyde  
And wold not come nere him by nyne londe length

59-61 as B with modernised spelling

62 But when he had sight him aside he did him drawe  
Dredfully by this daye as malard from fawcon  
But so sone as this Samaritan had sight of this man  
He light doune of Lyarde and led him in his hand.

The second extract is from is from B XVIII 169f:

169 Loue hathe coueted hir long I think non other  
But he sent his sone letter what this light meneth  
What ouerhoveth helle thus she shall vs telle  
When peace thus apparailled approched nere them tweyne

173-4 as B

175 And in hyr gaye garments whome she thought to greet  
My wille is to go quod she and welcome them all  
That many day might not se for darknesse of synne

178-180 as B, 179 as majority reading

181 Ffor Jhesus justed wel joy begyneth to spring

181a-183 as B

184 And that god hath forgyen & graunted peace & mercie  
And mane to saue for euer after

186-8 as B 187 dure/ endure

189 Thinkest thou that yonder light may unlouke helle  
And saue mannes soule suster think it neuer

191-4 as B 193 after/ euer; 194 trees on.

195 Adam after that contrarie to the comandement  
Ete of that frute and forsoke as it were  
The loue of the lorde and his lore bothe.

The first two lines of the first extract contain simple modernisation of single words, "Soop/ truthe", "leued/ trusted", and similar examples occur throughout the two extracts, "wende/ go" at XVIII 176,

"frete/ ete" at XVIII 196, and the replacement of a complex word at XVIII 185 with the variant "To be mannes meynpernour/ and mane to saue". The variant "nozt/ of" in XVII 25 may be confusion about the replaced word, resulting in a non-specific variant which makes little sense in context. A good example of replacement of unusual readings with non-specific variants occurs at XVIII 172, where "in Pacience ycloped" is replaced with "thus apparailed", the figurative sense of the line obviously considered too difficult, or simply not understood, by the scribe. The variants in XVII 27 show the scribe/editor's preference for the word "trust" (cf. line 23), and here alliteration is preserved (though not in the same letter) in spite of the substitution. In XVII 47 alliteration is again preserved, but this time at the expense of accurate paraphrase; "foes as frendes" replaces the original "lorels as lele". Preservation of alliteration is not consistent, as may be seen by the variant in XVII 32, in which the first half of the line replaces "He kan nozt siggen þe somme"; and may occasionally be fortuitous. Variant such as "sippe rizt/ then euen" and "rizt/ euen" in ll. 38 and 41 are typical of the minor variants in the MS; nearly all such words are systematically replaced. The variant "doke/ malard" at 63 is of a fairly unusual type in S, since it replaces a general word with one which is more specific. The emphasis gained may be designed to make the meaning clearer. In any case, like most of the variants here, it demonstrates that the line is understood by the scribe, and possibly arises from an interest in the simile. The variant at XVIII 170 is most likely to have arisen from this kind of association with the subject matter together with a straightforward visual error. "Sightte/ fight" at XVII 42 and possibly the variant at XVIII 177 may also have arisen in this way. These kinds of variants, at about this level of frequency, are characteristic of the MS as a whole. With the exception of the



additional line against the pope (quoted above), which suggests the scribe is inimical to this area of the poem, several of the variants, usually errors; suggest a reading in which the scribe pays close attention to the events of the poem. Some "translations" suggest that the scribe misunderstood the original; in some cases a simple variation (as that at XVII 47 which is alliterative) may have been used for convenience, even when the scribe was aware of the imprecision of the substitution. The alteration of figurative language may reflect misunderstanding on the scribe's part, or a desire to put across the meaning of the poem in the simplest possible language for the benefit of future readers. The same applies to the replacement of the many alliterative words for "man", which would have become unfamiliar to readers by the mid-sixteenth century. Variation in the direction of modernisation in Ht follows the same pattern, on a smaller scale, with substitution usually confined to a single word. Listed below for comparison are the variants from passus V which modernise the language. Although some of the words are the same as those changed in S, the amount of modernisation from the whole passus is less than that quoted in two short extracts from S.

- B V 229 bidde/ pray [also 502]
- C VI 269 nymen/ take
- 271 sese/ take
- 275 lycames/ my body
- 277 leuede/ trowyd
- B V 204 hizte/ bad
- 226 so thee ik/ be my fey
- 262 bisette/ spende [also 263, 291]
- 272 sipen/ þan
- 283 gleede/ fyre brond
- 325 rape/ haast
- 334 rapest/ sonnest
- 360 yede/ went
- 446 bidde/ aske
- 515 leode/ man
- 334 gome/ palmer
- 543 suwed/ folowid

The changes in both these MSS may be compared to the wordlist appearing at the end of C<sup>2</sup>. S alters the majority of words in C<sup>2</sup>, including those not in the glossary, but which are underlined in the texts of Piers and Richard the Redeless. The producer of this MS is at least as likely as Crowley to have been the glossator of C<sup>2</sup>.<sup>84</sup> The dates of these two MSS make the similarities between them particularly interesting; Ht is dated 1450 by the Huntington Library, and even earlier by Russell and Nathan, around 1425.<sup>85</sup> There is thus 100 years or more between the two MSS. Modernisation in S must not therefore be assumed automatically to be an indication of the obsolescence of the poem. S also provides an interesting comparison with Crowley's contemporary editions, the two versions of the poem demonstrating different approaches to the problem of bridging the gap between text and reader. S, unlike Crowley, does not stop short of changing the text to fit with contemporary religious views, and includes two anti-papist variants. Although Crowley's commitment to Protestantism cannot be questioned, his interpretation of the text is confined to marginal comment, both for comment on the issues and explanation of difficult passages. However, Crowley and the S editor, in spite of their different approaches to their task, both have the same objective: to present an intelligible version to readers of a text which was seen to be of contemporary relevance. Their different methods of achieving this end each follow a branch of the MS tradition of the poem since its first appearance; S takes to an extreme the scribal tendency to substitute easy variants, and to alter vocabulary, occurring in the fifteenth century in Ht; Crowley follows the traditional form of comment of the rubricators and other annotators of the poem, controlling interpretation from the margins.



## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Traditional approaches to medieval texts have tended to be polarised into text based criticisms, or reconstructions of historical circumstances. Readers and producers of the manuscripts of the poem act as intermediaries between the text and its modern readers, occupying a middle ground between these two extremes. The historical context of reception can, of course, never be reproduced; evidence of the reception of the poem from these early readers must be analysed selectively and from a modern perspective, without the benefit of additional intermediaries. Recognition of this limitation is an essential part of reception theory, which rejects the idea of an entirely objective language, while respecting the limitations of any individual reader's perception of the text. This approach cannot therefore interpret Piers Plowman for twentieth century readers, or provide a "correct" meaning for difficult areas of the text. Essential to the theory is the rejection of a single meaning of a text, which is subject to varying interpretations according to the circumstances of reception. Yet all interpretations are not of equal value; those reading a text as close contemporaries of the author are more likely to comprehend the codes operating within the text than later readers. These readers will still not produce a single interpretation; even readers contemporary with one another will not necessarily read within the same context of reception; age, education, and even particular circumstances in the life of an individual will affect reading; among the MSS of Piers Plowman particular interests are apparent. Thus, apart from the theoretical objection to the use of early <sup>s</sup>response to provide an interpretation of the poem is the

practical objection, that there is no single medieval voice. I would like to suggest that the study of response to this poem provides a sense of what the poem represented to its early readers, what they found difficult, and what they considered important, thus providing a fuller context for a modern reading. It has also been possible to gauge the readers' knowledge of the poem and of its different forms. The responses, in the text and the margins, make the poem a "living text" in a distinctive sense as it developed in the hands of its readers as well as its author; the contribution of readers to this process has been constantly underestimated by editors, who are naturally inimical to the intervention of readers in what is traditionally regarded as the "real" poem, the author's original words. Editors' (and other commentators') comments on such intervention characteristically describe scribes with the use of adjectives such as "stupid" "ignorant" "meddling" and "interfering", as well as "stubborn" and frequently "lazy".<sup>1</sup> These negative reactions consistently reject material which provides an insight into the development of the reception of the poem (and thus of the poem itself as a literary work) in its earliest stages; the scribes and readers are part of the process of producing a poem of which the author is the key, but not the only contributor.

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Some methodological problems with the study of reception can be identified through the study of response in manuscripts. One is a general problem with reception studies; the material used here, from book producers, readers and scribes, is confined to a particular kind of reader - the professional reader concerned with producing a book, and <sup>the</sup> individual reader with a special interest in an area of the poem; and only some readers will annotate. Another problem, arising from



the use of MSS as records of reception in particular, is the difficulty of interpretations of comments and of the organisation of the text. A marginal cross may be an indication of interest in the text, or a sign for insertion, or a meaningless mark; "n" next to a line may be an abbreviation for "nota", or a rubricator's mark for a paraph, not all of which occur at regular intervals. There are many more examples of this type of difficulty, as well as an even more common problem specific to annotators' comments, of identifying the line to which the comment refers. This is often made easier by the content of the comment, which may use words from a specific line or passage; but there is occasionally a real difficulty in interpretation, as with the ambiguously placed comment "pyrs pylgarmage" in MS M(C), referring either to VII 64 or 65. It is even less easy to locate the text referred to by any more general comments; a large "nota" in the margin cannot easily be taken to refer to a particular section of the text, and for the most part their value for reception is as a very general sign of interest. In some MSS they seem merely to be an indication that the reader felt the need to make some kind of comment at regular intervals. Selecting evidence of the poem's reception thus repeatedly involves subjective critical decisions about the value and import of all the signs of early readership. Inevitably this will involve rejection of some material which other critics may have found valuable. A way to amend this, partially at least, is by supplying the evidence as far as possible unselectively, and this is the purpose of the four appendices (inclusion of all the annotations would involve an impractically large amount of material; Appendix D therefore includes complete annotations from a selection of MSS). It is important to recognise these difficulties in order to point out that reception theory, like text-based criticism, can make no claim to be entirely

objective.

So much for problems. In spite of all these difficulties, there remains ample evidence of early response to the text which is clear enough in meaning to provide comment on the text. The sum of this response yields a considerable amount of information of different kinds on the early reading of the poem. The three areas into which I have divided response, the book producers, the reading public, and the scribes, often produce different forms of reception in a manner which suggests that the reading is the same or similar. Textual changes which identify speakers, for example, are echoed by annotators and rubricators, who place subject headings or paraph marks at similar points. Clarification (or simplification) in general is a concern of all three types of reader, manifesting itself in substitutions by scribes, subject headings by rubricators and annotators, and in the schemes of layout and decoration in some of the more carefully produced MSS, such as C(B), P(C) and X(C). There is also some overlap in terms of type of response - Adrian Fortescue, who is scribe, rubricator and annotator of his MS, is an obvious example - as annotators occasionally alter the text, censor areas of the text by cancellation or erasure, add lines from other versions, and provide interlinear glosses, as well as providing schemes of layout similar to those of the rubricators. The fundamental differences between the three types of response remain: rubricators' schemes of organisation tend to be more systematic than those of annotators; readers, who comment primarily for their own private reading, are often terse, but have more freedom to comment on the ideology of the poem than the book producers; and scribes, involved intimately with the details of the text, have the best opportunity to respond to style and form. Differences between earlier and later



readers are not as pronounced as might have been expected, although there is possibly a greater emphasis on the poem as prophecy, with Crowley's vehement rejection of the idea of prophecy in the poem a reminder of the diversity of readings among late as well as earlier readers. Changes in the religious climate naturally produce differing reactions to the doctrine of the poem and provoke the censorship which occurs in some MSS, but these responses, though differing in matter from those of some of the earlier readers, represent the same kind of interested response and identification with the issues of the poem. There is no clear difference in form of response to the text between earlier and later readers; modernisation in S(B) is predated by at least 100 years by the same process in Ht. Crowley, printing his edition at the same time as S was copied, chose to leave the text largely alone, using the margins like many other readers for his commentary. Francis Aiscough and the other late annotators of U(C) also confine their comments to the margin. Though objecting to some of the Catholic doctrine of the poem they refrain from the kind of censorship which appears in other MSS. Changes to the text and marginal comment are thus comparable as forms of response, and are both carried out throughout the life of the poem in MS form. Translation (or modernisation) may be compared with clarification - both are designed to make the text clearer to a particular audience. There are however differences; changes which clarify the text often involve fairly straightforward vocabulary, altered because of the context, sometimes because the language is figurative, and sometimes apparently because the line is too simple or unemphatic. Modernisation applies more straightforwardly to vocabulary only. The diversity in types of response throughout the pre-printing period and to an extent beyond demonstrate clearly the multiple responses through which a "living text" was defined (above 1.ii), justifying the

inclusion of later responses alongside earlier ones.

In every area of response there are indications of awareness of different versions of the poem, sometimes as an impression of these versions as separate works, and sometimes as more complete versions of the same poem. Here again there is no consensus. Occasionally this awareness manifests itself in composite versions of the text such as the A+C versions, and in the composite Ht. Awareness of BC is apparent from contamination in A, including the A section of A+C texts, and from some of the A-text rubrics. The completion of A with C rather than B-texts, and the similarity of A and C rubrics, suggests that some readers made a distinction between the texts. The usually consecutive passus numbering and consistent explicits of B-texts seem to imply that this text, of the three, was regarded in general as the most complete, and this possibly explains Crowley's choice of a B-text, even though he had access to a C-text MS.<sup>2</sup> Crowley's comments demonstrate that he was not aware of three distinct versions in the modern sense, as he regarded the differences between the texts which he noticed as evidence that one of the versions was unoriginal. Evidence from some annotations shows the same belief that there is one "correct" version, and several variations. Scribes and annotators both supply material from other versions, presumably in the belief that it was an omission in their copy. One of them, T(AC), supplies the same kind of material that Crowley rejected as inauthentic, adding the B revision (B VI 327-331) to the prophecy at the end of A VII, with a comment explicitly referring to these lines as being "left oute" (fol. 20b). Other responses seem to indicate an awareness of versions as distinct from one another, or at least a different form of reaction to the versions. C-texts seem to attract the highest level of annotation, and this is characteristically in the form of



identification of sermons, exempla, prophecy, and other structural aspects of the text as moral instruction. In addition, large scale censorship, usually concerning Thomas of Canterbury, by erasure or cancellation occurs only <sup>in</sup> C-text MSS, or the C section of A+C-texts. Annotation and rubrication of prophecy in the text is almost exclusively confined to C-texts, with the exception of the late MS G(B) and the composite Ht. These distinctive characteristics of response to the C-text reflect some of the BC changes, the moves toward greater concentration on ideological discussion, in which some of the local detail of B is lost. Awareness of the versions thus takes two main forms, acceptance that different versions exist (the N(AC) rubric between A and C suggests that the C-text is a different work by the same author), and belief that there is a single, much corrupted original, <sup>s</sup>possibly represented in no single MS. This concept of an amorphous poem favours the possibility raised by Skeat and Rigg and Brewer, and raised and later rejected by Donaldson,<sup>3</sup> of the possibility of intermediate versions. Rigg and Brewer's attractive argument in favour of Z as an early A-text cannot be conclusive, but derives some support from the early readers' view; it is apparent that this view does not arise from ignorance - they were aware of alternative versions - or stupidity - comments reflect understanding and attention to the text; this should therefore be recognised as a valid critical comment on the text. However, if there is a consensus among the early readers of the poem, it is that the importance of Piers Plowman is its message rather than its form; a preference for a compound form, which is taken to an extreme in Ht, may reflect this interest rather than an interest in critical judgement of the text.

The precedence of ideological over aesthetic interest in the poem

is demonstrated in the sections on literary criticism in chapters 3 and 4. In the case of annotation, practically no identifiable comment is made on the aesthetics of the poem, and what there is takes the form of assessment of the effectiveness of the communication of the ideology. Scribes are a little more interested in form and style, sometimes smoothing lines, enhancing alliteration, and "correcting" grammar and syntax. However, the interest in this aspect of the text is superseded by a wish for clarity-- so that where an alliterative word seems obscure, clarification takes precedence over alliteration. The rubricators are interested in structure, with the rubrics of A and C-text MSS showing a particular interest in Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, although the sections of the text referring to these "characters" are not the same in each MS, the differences between rubricators representing early readers' reaction to the intermingling of the three abstracts in the visio. F(B)'s passus divisions suggest an interest in dreams (it is one of the two MSS with an illustration of the dreamer at the head of the work) with a preference for a division into dreams rather than the original passus. F's divisions, following the majority of B-text MSS, make no mention of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest, employing consecutive numbering (up to passus XVI, because of alterations).

Interest in dreams is apparent in other MSS. The illustration of the dreamer in D(C) suggests an interest, and may have inspired the amateur illustrator of the MS, who provides additional illustrations of him. Like F, Ht has problems with the beginning and end of dreams when the text is altered, particularly in passus V. Annotators confuse Piers and the dreamer, understandably, since Piers, in spite of giving the poem its title, does not appear until passus V (B), VI (A), or VII (C). Piers is obviously of interest to rubricators and



annotators, and is particularly important to an annotator of N(C), who indicates that the king at C V 167-9 is Piers Plowman. This interest could be seen as some evidence for an early "Piers Plowman" tradition, but could of course arise from the poem only. The other main subjects of consistent interest are Mede and the sins. Lady Mede attracts every form of response; rubrication; illustration; annotator's comments; and textual interference. Rubricators are less informative than annotators about Mede, usually supplying subject headings only, or "notas" or crosses. Annotators are a little more expansive, sometimes adding personal comments. But the largest amount of attention received by Mede is "silent" comment; pointing hands, and the largest amount of illustration of all kinds for any subject in the poem. Mede is the only subject to attract illustration from rubricators and more than one annotator. This raises the possibility that certain subjects are susceptible to a particular kind of comment. The sins inspire more expansive verbal comment, as well as the usual subject headings on their appearance, which, after passus headings, are the most frequently provided rubrics. In X(C) the subject headings are themselves expansive. In this area of the text conflation is common, as might have been expected since the text is altered here in each revision. This and other coincidences of interest and of difficulty with the author's alterations suggest the interesting possibility that Langland reacted to his readers' interests in his revisions, or at least that his reactions to his own poem were similar to those of his contemporaries. Mede and the sins are the only specific parts of the text which attract general interest, although there is considerable textual disturbance in the prologue, most of it with reference to the lists of occupations and the clerical characters. Contamination here links this section of the text to others which provide lists of occupations, demonstrating an

awareness of structural units other than dreams, passus, or visio/vitae. Clerical criticism is noted with a degree of enthusiasm in all three areas of response, although readers respond to different areas of the text. Anti-Catholic criticism by later readers is not widespread, in spite of some censorship. Possibly many of Langland's readers, like Fortescue, were Catholics or Catholic sympathisers, a rather different audience from that implied by the "Protestant Piers Plowman" tradition developing from similar works published in the sixteenth century. Comments against Catholicism in the text suggest that readers were well aware of the Catholic origins of the poem, and would be unlikely to regard it simplistically as an early Protestant document, although naturally the criticisms of the church would be of interest. As with the evidence from ownership, there is no evidence from reception of a Lollard readership of the poem; the one or two comments on Lollards are antagonistic towards them. Many responses to clerical criticism consist of intelligent participation in Langland's argument, rather than blanket approval or condemnation, on the whole a far more constructive criticism than that of the censors. Generally, readers seem to approve Langland's criticisms, with later readers applying them to the contemporary situation as readily as earlier ones. A few comments suggest a more critical attitude than Langland's, especially those of M(C) on hermits in C V.

Fortescue's criticisms sometimes provide a subtle interpretation of the poem, particularly<sup>l</sup> in his explanation of the allegory of the pilgrimage and the ploughing. His response suggests that the allegory presents no problems for him. Some of his comments on Mede indicate that she is seen primarily in terms of her allegorical nature, whereas most responses concentrate on the literal level of her character. Allegory is often explained by annotators; The simple allegory of the



ten commandments is very commonly pointed out by a subject heading. Attention to Dowel, Dobet and Dobest seems to suggest an interest in them as personifications, enhanced in the A-text by the use of vita, although this is dropped from BC. The illustrations of D(C) offer an interesting reaction to the allegory, since an illustrator must choose whether to depict the literal or the underlying meaning of the text. In D(C) the easier path is chosen, of depicting the literal, with the result that the emphasis on visual aspects of the text lost to an extent in the BC revision is revived in this MS through the illustrations.

Many responses seem to be to aspects of the poem which are familiar to readers. The practice of both rubricators and annotators, predominantly C-text, of identifying quotations is comparable to the identification of Biblical texts which underlie Langland's arguments, with the inclusion of a line from 2 Thess. 3:10 in MSS OC<sup>2</sup>(B) at prol. 39, at A prol. 39 in K(AC) as an annotation by Fortescue, and in U(C) at VIII 239-40 as an annotation by Aiscough. W(AC) adds the Vulgate versions of lines in passus XVIII after their English equivalents, in place of XVIII 158 and after 161 (Matt. 21: 12-13, and 26:61). This, for the purposes of reception, yields information in <sup>what</sup> could be described as a negative manner - passages not noted may be those that are particularly unusual, just as areas of scribal variation are often "normalisation" of unusual aspects of style, use of language, or content. It also provides information on reading patterns; the search for novelty is not an important priority for a medieval reader. The desire to recognise the familiar in the poem is probably behind the historical identifications of characters in the poem particularly evident among the annotators of U(C). These kinds of identification, which include broad associations with the readers' contemporary

society, indicate the engagement of even late readers with the poem, which is seen to be of immediate relevance, rather than of antiquarian value. This shows both the readiness of readers to find their own relevance in the poem, and the adaptability of Piers Plowman itself. Some of its historical appropriateness seems particularly fortuitous, although a keen political awareness may have made some of Langland's predictions "reasonable gatherings"<sup>4</sup>. The argument between Mede and Conscience about the French wars in passus III is readily associated with Henry V and VI, and the warnings to the clergy are likely to be seen by post-Dissolution readers as predictions of that event. Aiscough's interpretation of C prol. 64-5:

But holi chirche and charite choppe adoun suche shryuars  
The moste meschief on molde mounteth vp faste

"famous kinge Henry viij fulfilled in his time" (fol. 7b) presents an interesting difference in interpretation from the original meaning, since the "chopping down" carried out by Henry is more likely to be Langland's "moste mischief" than its cure. The psychological and spiritual issues of the poem have a less politically orientated relevance; but interest in these aspects of the poem is likely to be enhanced if direct associations can be made with the contemporary situation.

Scribes' readings in particular, and rubricators' and annotators' comments by implication, have been seen as responding to the poem "line-by-line",<sup>5</sup> the description implying a reading limited to the immediate context, with little concept of the poem as a whole. This is true of the many small changes to the text, and probably true of single word subject guides, both of which provide a valuable guide to reception. But this is only one form of response; the careful



smoothing of errors over large passages and once over a whole passus in W(AC), the consistency of purpose in the alterations to passus divisions in F(B), the scheme of modernisation in S(B) and the very complex compilation in Ht all demonstrate knowledge of the poem's form and structure as well as local content. The assumption that scribes and editors are lazy as well as stupid is overwhelmingly refuted by the evidence of their careful and intelligent participation in the production of the poem. While scribes and commentators make some mistakes, they also often provide insights into the form and meaning of the poem. The three areas of reception are mutually influential: text, reproduced with varying degrees of accuracy by scribes, influences format and rubrication, which in turn influences future readers. As the poem is copied again, these comments no doubt influence the next scribe. As well as this immediate influence of commentary and text on one another, the context of reception - political circumstances, but also knowledge of the poem - influences reading. Clearly the poem was known fairly widely, from the evidence of knowledge of its various versions. Langland's own revisions often take place at points of interest among readers, where he expands the text, and points of difficulty, where later revisions simplify. Perhaps Langland was influenced directly by readers' comments, or was responding indirectly to the climate of reception of the poem. Whatever the reason for these coincidences of interest, they suggest that Langland and his early readers had a similar approach to the text. This in itself is sufficient reason to regard these early readers' responses as valuable and informed criticisms of the poem.

## APPENDIX A

- i. Select list of works of the "Piers Plowman tradition",
- ii. List of early names associated with the poem

### i. works of the "Piers Plowman tradition".

Modern editions only given if the work was not printed in the 15th-16th C.

"Richard the Redeless" 1399 (date inferred from references in the poem)

Printed under this title by Skeat, who believed the poem to be by Langland, EETS C, 469-521, and as "A poem on the deposition of Richard II" in T. Wright (ed.), Political poems and songs RS i (1859), 368-417

"Mum and the Sothsegger" c. 1402-1406 (date inferred as above)

Printed with "Richard" as Mum and the Sothsegger, ed. M. Day and R. Steele, EETS OS cxc (1936), as the two fragments (found in, respectively, CUL MS Ll 4.14 and BL Additional 41666) were believed to be parts of the same poem. This view is refuted by D. Embree, "'Richard the Redeless' and 'Mum and the Sothsegger': a case of mistaken identity", NQ ccxx (1975), 4-12. The title "Mum and the Sothsegger" originates in a reference in Bale's Index, 479, based on a note by Nicholas Brigham (see below, early owners).

Jack Uplande mid 15thC?

STC 5099: [London, John Gough c.1540?] as Chaucer's work.

The Plowman's Tale 15thC.

The second spurious tale attributed to Chaucer's plowman (the first is Hoccleve's poem on the miracle of the virgin and the sleeveless garment).

STC 5068: printed as part of the Canterbury Tales ed. Thynne [Thomas Godfray, c.1532]; STC 5101: printed alone [William Hill 1545?]

How the Plowman lerned his Pater Noster late 15thC.

STC 20043: [Wynkyn de Worde 1510].

Pierce the Ploughman's Crede end of 14thC.

STC 19904: [London, Reynold Wolfe 1553].

God spede the plough c.1500.

Printed W.W. Skeat (ed.), EETS OS 30 (1867) from Lansdowne 762.

A Godly Dyalogue and Dysputacyon betwene Pyers Plowman, and a Popysh Preest concernyng the Supper of the Lorde

STC 19903: [W. Copland c. 1550].

The Praier and Complaynte of the Plowman unto Christe

STC 20036: [Antwerp, 1531?]

STC 20036.5 [Godfrey 1532].

States falsely in the preface that it is written "nat long after 1300".



I Playne Piers 16thC.

STC 19903a: [N. Hyll? 1550?].

Called Piers Plowman by Skeat EETS iv 865, and Piers Plowman in prose by Andrew Maunsell in his Catalogue of English printed books (John Vvindet, London 1595, reprinted 1965, London, The Gregg Press). The work contains as prose extensive sections of The Plowmans Tale.

Pyers Plowmans Exhortation, unto the Lordes, Knightes and Burgoysse  
of the Parlyamenthouse.

STC 19905: [London, Anthony Scoloker 1550?].

ii: List of early names associated with Piers Plowman

Names listed are those for whom either some biographical information or full name and date are available.

- John Ball: Rebel, one of leaders of 1381 rising. Priest, probably attached to St. Mary's Abbey, York.  
d. 1381 Refers to Piers Plowman in letters to the  
DNB iii, 73 Essex Commons. See R.B. Dobson, The Peasants' Revolt (London 1970), 381-2.
- Thomas Usk: Author of The Testament of Love, in which lines like C VI 24-5 appear (Testament III, 7, 10). Usk was executed for his part in the murder of the Duke of Gloucester. See Donaldson, 19 n. 4.  
executed 1388  
DNB lviii 60-2
- John Wells: Benedictine monk of Ramsey, and outspoken opponent of Wyclif. His name appears on fol. 6b of MS Bodley 851, of which he was possibly the copyist. See A.G. Rigg and C. Brewer, Piers Plowman: the Z version (Toronto 1983), 3-5. There is some doubt about the identification of John Wells of the signature with the John Wells described; it is also possible that the hand of the note on fol. 6b is not that of the copyist. See G. Kane, "The 'Z version' of Piers Plowman" Speculum lx (1985), 910-930.  
d. 1388  
DNB lx, 228-9
- Walter de Brugge: Canon of York. Bequeathed a copy of the poem to Johann' Wormington. See TE i, 209.  
Will probated 1395
- William Palmer: Rector of St. Alphage's, Cripplegate, London. Bequeathed a copy of the poem to Agnes Eggesfield. See R.A. Wood, "A fourteenth Century Owner of Piers Plowman" MAE lii (1984), 83-90.  
Will probated 1400
- The Hoo family, Sir William Hoo: Sir William Hoo, an officer of Richard II. Crests of the family in MS Harley 6041, on fols. 1a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, and 96b. That on fol. 1b was of Sir William Hoo.  
d. between 1412 and 1415.
- John Wyndhill: Rector of Arncliffe, Yorkshire. Bequeathed a copy of the poem to John Kendale. See TE ii, 32.  
Will drawn 1431  
Probated 1433/4
- Thomas Roos: Warden of the Mercers' Company 1401-2, and 1410-11. Bequeathed a copy of the poem to his son Guy. See F.J. Furnivall (ed) The fifty earliest English wills EETS OS lxxviii, 2.  
Will drawn 1437
- Roger Sambrok: Note of a bequest to William Rogger 19 Sept. 17 Henry VI (1437). Inscription on OCO MS 79 fol. 89b.  
Note of Will dated 1437



- John Cok:  
Copied an extract  
of Piers c. 1456  
b. 1397, d.c. 1470
- John Shirley:  
1366?-1456  
DNB lii, 133-4
- Thomas Stotvyle:  
Inventory 1459/60  
Will drawn 1466.
- Sir Thomas Charleton:  
d.1465
- William Holyngbourne:  
1510-39
- Sir Adrian Fortescue:  
Autograph MS 1531-2  
d. 1539. DNB xx, 36-7
- Stephen Batman:  
Preface dated 1531  
d.1584.  
DNB iii, 414
- Raffe Coppynger:  
d.1551
- Richard Johnson:  
(c. 1466-1525  
Robert Johnson)
- Sir John Thynne:  
d. 1580  
DNB lvi, 365-6
- Scribe of CCC MS 669, which includes a  
fragment of Piers Plowman. An active  
professional scribe, who copied the MS ~~owned~~ by  
John Shirley. See A.I. Doyle, "More light on  
John Shirley" MAE xxx (1961), 98-9.
- Translator and transcriber of the works of  
Chaucer, Lydgate etc. Connected with Piers  
through the MS copied by John Cok, cited  
above.
- See CT i, 610.
- Speaker of the House of Commons. Piers Plowman  
listed in inventory. See K.B. Macfarlane,  
The Nobility of Later Medieval England  
(Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1973) 238.
- A senior member of the community of Black  
Monks of St. Augustine's without Canterbury  
during the dissolution. A signatory to the  
instrument of surrender. Name appears on fol.  
96b of Harley 6041. The monks may have  
possessed the book from an earlier date:
- Knight of St. John, executed for treason, and  
consequently made a Catholic martyr. His  
autograph copy is now Digby MS 145. One of his  
two wives, both named Anne, annotated his  
copy.
- Protestant minister and book collector, member  
of TCC. Writes a preface to Digby MS 171.  
urging readers to overcome the difficulties of  
language and to avoid assuming the book is  
"Papisticall".
- Possibly related to Edmund Coppynger, d.1551?  
extremist Protestant, DNB xii, 193.  
Inscription on fol. 93a of MS Laud Misc 581.
- Associated in K. and D. with Robert Johnson,  
Cambridge B.A. and book collector  
A.I. Doyle, NQ cxcvii (1952), 293-4.  
Inscription on MS Laud Misc 581.
- Zealous Protestant. Arrested for treason d.  
1549, 1551. Built Longleat. Purchased BL Add.  
10574, note of purchase in 1642, and owned or  
read Laud Misc 581. Inscriptions on fols. 92a,  
93a.

Nicholas Brigham:  
d. 1558  
DNB vi, 330-1

Latin scholar and antiquarian. Mentioned by Bale as an owner of two copies (Index 382, 509), and in an inscription on MS Laud Misc 581: "Memorandum that I haue lente to Nicholas brigham the pers ploughman which I borrowed of Mr Le of Addyngton." Note that Add. 10574 and Laud Misc 581 are connected by John Thynne's name on both; and to Bale by the reference to Brigham. Brigham's own copy is probably not the one referred to in the memorandum, which was probably used for comparison, which may also have been the motive for the original loan by the writer of the inscription.

John Bale:  
1495-1563  
DNB iii, 41-2

Antiquarian. Includes Piers Plowman in his various lists of great English works, but may not have been a reader.

Robert Crowley:  
1518?-1588  
DNB xiii, 241-3

Committed Protestant publisher, produced three editions of the poem in 1550, from several MSS.



## APPENDIX B

### Descriptions of the Manuscripts.

The MSS are described in order of sigil, from Donaldson 225-9, in the order A, A+C, B, C. H<sup>3</sup>, containing a B+A text, is listed as an A MS, and Ht, containing text from all three versions, but predominantly B, as a B text MS.

#### A-Texts

A	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1468
D	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 323
E	Dublin, Trinity College MS 213
H <sub>3</sub>	London, British Library MS Harley 875
H <sup>3</sup>	London, British Library MS Harley 3954
J	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M818
L	London, Lincoln's Inn Library MS Hale 150
M	London, Society of Antiquaries Library MS 687
Pem	Cambridge, in the University Library, Pembroke College fragment S312 C6
R	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson poetry 137
U	Oxford, University College MS 45 (held in the Bodleian)
V	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. Poetry a 1

#### A+C texts

Ch	Liverpool, the University Library (Sidney Jones Library)
	Chaderton MS F 4.8
H <sup>2</sup>	London, British Library MS Harley 6041
K	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 145
N	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 733B
T	Cambridge, Trinity College MS R 3.14
W	In private hands; formerly the Duke of Westminster's MS, present whereabouts unknown.
Z	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 851

#### B-texts

Bm	London, British Library MS Additional 10574
Bo	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 814
C <sub>2</sub>	Cambridge University Library MS Dd 1.17
C <sup>2</sup>	Cambridge University Library MS Ll 4.14
Cot	London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula AXI
F	Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201
G	Cambridge University Library MS Gg 4.31
Hm	San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 128
Ht	San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 114
L	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 581
M	London, British Library MS Additional 35287
O	Oxford, Oriel College MS 79 (in the Bodleian)
R	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson Poetry 38
S	In private hands; formerly Sion College MS Arc L 40 2/E, now Takamiya
W	Cambridge, Trinity College MS B 15.17
Y	Cambridge, Newnham College Yates Thompson MS

## C-texts

D	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 104
E	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 656
F	Cambridge University Library MS Ff 5.35
G	Cambridge University Library MS Dd 3.13
H	Cambridge, a fragment in the possession of Professor J. Holloway
I	London, University of London Sterling Library MS V 88
K	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 171
M	London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian B XVI
N	London, British Library MS Harley 2376
P <sub>1</sub>	San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 137
P <sub>2</sub>	London, British Library MS Additional 34779
Q	Cambridge University Library MS Additional 4325
R	London, British Library MS Royal <sup>18</sup> B XVII
S	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 293
St	London, University of London Sterling Library V 17
U	London, British Library MS Additional 35157
V	Dublin, Trinity College MS 212
X	San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 143
Y	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 102
-	Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 669, fol. 210a

All MSS have been examined at first hand except the two in TCD, E(A) and V(C), and the two now in private hands, S(B) and W(AC).

## Piers Plowman

Description of the Piers Plowman section of the MSS includes the following points:

1. Type and quality of hand, lines per page
2. Title: wording, size and colour of initial
3. Passus headings: colour, size, whether spaced from the text
4. Distinction of Latin and nouns in the text by colour, script, underlining, or marginal mark
5. Ruling
6. Scribal rubrication in addition to passus headings
7. Paragraphing, here taken to mean any marking of sections of the text by sign or space
8. Additional features, such as red in line initials, elaborate ascenders or descenders, elaboration of catchwords etc.
9. Number of colours
10. Explicit: wording, colour, size, whether spaced from text.

Annotation by readers is not included in the descriptions, except for names of possible readers of the poem. Where annotation is exceptional, however, this is noted at the end of the description of the Piers Plowman section of the MS. Names in the MS are dated; where dating is difficult the date is followed by "?". The bibliography at the end of each description is selective.

## Other Contents

The descriptions concentrate on the Piers Plowman section of the MSS; however, a brief comparison of other contents with Piers is included. All other contents are listed, except where the MS is a late (ie post-sixteenth century) compilation. Latin verse and prose is



identified as such, English verse which is not readily recognisable by title is identified by the IMEV number. Recent editions from the MS are given in the bibliography at the end of each description.

#### A-Text MSS

##### 1. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Ashmole 1468.

A

Paper, 29 x 20cm. PP is the third part of a 17thC compilation, 36 leaves numbered 307-78

Date: "Of no very early date" Skeat; third quarter of the 15th C (Kane)

History: on fol. 105b a name, "George Duketh" (15thC?)

Collation: Piers Plowman section of MS only: 1 impossible to determine; four leaves; 2<sup>12</sup> (lacks 1, 12); 3<sup>12</sup> (lacks 5, 7); 4<sup>12</sup> (lacks 5, 7). Some signatures for 2 and 3 survive.

Contents: Three distinct MSS put together in the 17th Century. In the third, Piers Plowman A I 142-XI 313.

1) Hand: plain legible . . . anglicana hand, regular. Average 23-5 lines per page. 2) No title; starts imperfectly. 3) Passus headings red, larger hand. Initials blue, 2-4 lines, with red pen ornament. 4) Latin red, larger hand, and ruled (as passus headings), names not distinguished. 5) Frame ruling only, with the addition of line ruling at Latin and passus headings. 6) Minimal additional glossation or rubrication: Gluttony marked for insertion. 7) Paragraphs indicated by braces (red) on p. 341 only. 8) Touched with red in first letter of each line throughout PP. 9) Two colours used. 10) Explicit: "Amen, Amen", followed by 12 lines, mostly illegible, one of which reads: "primus passus de visione passus secundus de dowell".

#### Bibliography

Kane 1-2; Skeat EETS A xxi-xxii; Catalogue of the Ashmolean Manuscripts (Oxford 1845), 1275-1278; Summary Catalogue No.7004.

##### 2. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 323

D

Paper, 28 x 21 cm. 167 leaves, numbered 1-167.

Date: "about 1480?" (Skeat); Late fifteenth century (Kane).

History: Early provenance uncertain, but possible association with the eastern counties (Kane).

Collation: i+1-8<sup>12</sup>; 9<sup>14</sup>; 10<sup>12</sup>; 11-12<sup>16</sup>; 13<sup>14</sup>. Catchwords and most signatures survive.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-10b The Brut of England. 2. fols. 102a-140a Piers Plowman A prologue-XI. 3. fols. 140b-159b The Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost. 4. fols. 160a-167b Ipotis, IMEV 220 (imperfect at end).

#### Piers Plowman

1. One scribe, cursive hand, some variation but always legible; average 29 lines per page. 2) No title. Red initial, c. 7 lines; first line has elaborate ascenders, touched with red. 3) Passus headings in red, marginal. Plain red initials, 7 lines, at passus IX, X and XI only. At XI the passus heading is omitted. Passus X is headed "Primus passus in secundo libro". 4) Latin generally underlined red; names undistinguished. 5) Frame ruling only. 6) A fairly large amount of Latin marginal rubrication in red. 7) Unparagraphed. 8) Occasional red rubricator's marks. Catchwords boxed in main ink, occasionally with red decoration. 9) One colour used.

10) Explicit: "Explicit liber petri plouman", red and black, 3-4 lines. Preceded by a small griffin.

#### Other contents

Item 1: prose, plain red first initial, red paraps mark paragraphs. Frame and line ruling. Item 3: similar to PP (same hand) with the addition of 3-4 line red plain initials. Concluded with an illustration of the Abbey in red and black, inexpert. Item 4: as 3, with the addition of red braces marking rhyming couplets.

#### Bibliography

Kane 3; Skeat EETS A xxi; Summary Catalogue No. 21897.

3. Dublin, Trinity College MS 213  
Formerly TCD 4.12

E.

Paper, 21.5 x 14.5cm. 72 leaves, numbered 1-72.

Date: 1475-1500 (Kane).

History: Various names in the MS indicate its presence in Durham Priory around 1500 (Kane).

Collation: 1<sup>26</sup>; 2 missing; 3<sup>12</sup>; 4 indeterminate, twelve leaves; 5 indeterminate, thirteen leaves; + vi paper leaves.

Contents: i. a page of monastic accounts; 1. fols 1a- 26b Piers Plowman A prologue - VI I44 and VII 70-213a. VII 70-213a is misplaced, on fols. 6a-8b after I 182, followed by I 180-2 repeated (fol. 8b). PP is defective at the end. 2. fols. 27a-66b The Wars of Alexander (starts imperfectly). 3. fol. 67 a page of accounts. 4. fol. 68b Latin exemplum (imperfect). 5. fols. 70b-72a a prose life of Alexander.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Free anglicana, legible but irregular. 27-34 lines per page. 2) No title, space left for first initial, 2 lines. 3) Headings in a larger hand. Space of 3 lines left for initials, first line of new passus usually enlarged. 4) Latin in larger hand, names undistinguished. 5) Left and lower margins only ruled. 6) Little additional rubrication - mostly N only; some of deadly sins marked by enlarged half line on their first appearance. 9) No colour used. 10) Ends imperfectly, damaged.

#### Other contents:

Items 2 as PP with the addition of elaborate ascenders and some elaboration of the first letter of each line. As PP, divided into passus, same hand. Items 4 and 5 plain and undistinguished. Items 1 and 3 freehand accounts.

#### Bibliography

Abbot, T.K., Catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Trinity College Dublin (London 1900), No. 213; Doyle, A.I., Review of Kane, ES xliii (1962), 58; Kane 4-5; Skeat, EETS OS lxxxi IV, Section II, 836; St. John Brooks, E., "The Piers Plowman manuscripts in Trinity College Dublin" The Library 5th series vi (1951), 141-4.

Additional information received from Stuart Ó Seanair, Assistant Librarian, Manuscript Department, Trinity College Library.

The MSS of TCD are currently being catalogued by Professor John Scattergood, Department of English, TCD.



#### 4. London, British Library MS Harley 875

H

Good quality vellum, 25.5 x 16.5cm. 22 leaves, numbered 1-22.

Date: About 1400 (Skeat); 1450-75 (Kane); between the first and second quarter of the fifteenth century (Doyle).

Collation: 1-2<sup>8</sup>; 3<sup>8</sup> (lacks outer fold, 1 and 8, supplied in modern paper); a modern paper supply of eleven leaves follows PP. Catchwords survive; no signatures.

Contents: fols. 1a-22b Piers Plowman A prologue - VIII 142. VI 48-VII 2 is missing (first leaf of the third quire). Presumably the missing last leaf of the third quire contained the remainder of VIII.

1) Two hands, one in the first quire, fols. 1-16; one in the second and third, fols. 17-22; the first is legible but variable anglicana; second also anglicana, more regular. 2) No title; First initial red, 12 lines, with main ink decoration. 3) Passus headings red, except VI which is underlined in larger hand. Passus I no heading, plain 2-line red initial, rest 2-3 line initials with main ink ornament. 4) Latin larger script, underlined in red, inconsistently. Names undistinguished. 5) Frame ruling throughout, but line ruling declines. 6) Minimal additional rubrication. 7) Infrequent red paraphs mark paragraphs. Occasional marks for the insertion of these; first letter of lines touched with red every 3-4 lines; acts as paragraph marker fols. 1a-2a only. 8) Catchwords boxed red. 9) One colour. 10) Ends imperfectly, damaged.

#### Bibliography

Doyle, A.I., Review of Kane, ES xliii (1962), 55f; Kane 5-6; Skeat EETS A xvii; A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum, (London 1808) i, 466.

#### 5. London, British Library MS Harley 3954

H<sup>3</sup>

Fair quality vellum, 29 x 14.5cm: a "holster" book, cf. Lincolns Inn MS Hale 150, L(A). 126 leaves, numbered 1-126.

Date: about 1420 (Skeat); third quarter of the fifteenth century (Kane); first-second quarter of the fifteenth century (Doyle)

Collation: 1-6<sup>8</sup>; 7-8<sup>10</sup>; fol. 69 an extra leaf; 9-10<sup>8</sup>; 11<sup>8</sup>; 12-15<sup>8</sup>.

Nearly all catchwords and signatures survive.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-69b The Travels of John Mandeville 2. fols. 70a-74a The Childhood of the Saviour. 3. fols. 74a-76a The Merit of hearing Mass 4. fols. 76a-78a The Virtue of the Mass. 5. fols. 78b-81a The Seven Works of Mercy. 7. fols. 82b-85b The Seven Sacraments. 8. fols. 85b-86b The Seven Principal Virtues. 9. fols. 87a-88a An A.B.C. Poem on the Passion; 2 blank sheets. 10. fols. 90a-91b Filius Regis Mortuus Est. 11. fols. 92a-123b Piers Plowman B prologue-V 127 + A V 106-XI.

#### Piers Plowman

1) A distinctive hand with secretary influence. Sloping, Regular. Usually 40 lines per page. 2) Title: Perys Plowman in reddish ink as headline; initial in similar ink, 10-11 lines. 3) Unusually worded passus headings in red, same size as main text. Plain red initials, 2 lines. 4) Latin in red, as passus headings; names undistinguished. 5) Frame and line ruling throughout. 6) A large amount of additional rubrication throughout the text; the unusual passus headings may be seen as part of this process of glossation. 8) A headline once: "Perys" in red on fol. 92b, 2nd page of work; generous margin spacing.

9) One colour. 10) "Explicit tractus de perys plowman quap herun" (red) "Qui cum patre et Spiritu Sancto uiuit and reguat per omnia secula seculorum Amen" (main ink). Not spaced from text.

#### Other contents

Item 1: Prose; use of colour as PP, with the addition of many illustrations in spaces left for the purpose but filled by an amateur. Cf. MS Douce 104, D(C). Item 2: heading in red, double column verse with couplets marked by braces. Items 3-9 as 2; Item 10: single column, different hand. Latin red. Red or main ink braces mark couplets.

#### Bibliography

Doyle, A.I., Review of Kane, ES xliii 58; Kane 7-8; Skeat EETS A xviii-xxiv; A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum (London 1808) iii, 98.

6. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M 818

J

Paper, 22 x 14.6cm. 54 leaves, 1-54 (subsidiary numbering from fol.15a). Date: 1450 (Pierpont Morgan Library Catalogue); mid-fifteenth century (Kane); Not earlier than mid-fifteenth century (Skeat).

History: There is no certain information about the early ownership of this MS; however, some names appear in the MS, such as "Robert Whytell filius Thomas Whetell", who states he is from Leicestershire (fol. 19b, 16th C?). The name also occurs on fol. 20b. On fol. 1a a monogram of the letters "MR"

Collation: 1<sup>6</sup>; 2<sup>9</sup>; 3 a single leaf; 4-6<sup>12</sup>; 7<sup>2</sup>. Vellum guards surround each quire; two guards surround the single leaf.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-5a The pistill of Susan. 2. fols. 5b-15b The Form of Perfect Living. 3. fols. 16a-54b Piers Plowman A prologue-XII 88.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Extremely variable informal cursive hand. Possibly several scribes. Average 26 lines per page, some variation. 2) No title, or initial. Text starts very close to head of page. 3) Passus headings in plain ink, larger hand. No initials. V, VI, VII and XI are omitted, I, II, III and VII are in the margin. 4) Latin is occasionally in a larger hand - but the general irregularity of the hand makes this difficult to ascertain. Latin is occasionally added by corrector in a darker ink, occasionally in the margin, and occasionally rather clumsily underlined. The last is the most common distinction and occurs throughout the text. Names are not distinguished. 5) Left margin only ruled. 6) Additional rubrication includes headings for the sins and a few other headings. 9) No colour used (red is used elsewhere in the collection). 10) Ends imperfectly with one line, A XII 88, at the head of fol. 54b. No explicit.

#### Other contents

Items 1 and 2: As PP, minimal decoration, although some red is used.

#### Bibliography

Fowler, Piers the Plowman (1952); Kane 8-9; Skeat Indexes 5-11, EETS OS xxviii (1885), 856-9; Pierpont Morgan Library Catalogue of MSS, unpublished. Collation supplied by W. Voekle, Curator of Medieval and Renaissance MSS, The Pierpont Morgan Library.



Fair quality vellum, 30 x 13.5cm; a "holster" book, cf MS Harley 3954, H(A). 125 leaves, + one front and one back flyleaf, numbered 1-125.  
 Date: second half of the fourteenth century (Ker); first quarter of the fifteenth century (Kane); about 1450? (Skeat).  
 Collation: 1-2<sup>12</sup> now imperfect; 3-11<sup>12</sup>; + four leaves; signatures and catchwords survive.

Contents: 1. fols. 1, 4-12b Libeaus Desconus, imperfect. 2. fols. 2, 3, 13, 14a-17b Arthour and Merlin, imperfect. 3. fols. 28a-90a Kyng Alisaunder. 4. fols. 90b-108b The Seege or battayle of Troye. 5. fols. 109a-125b Piers Plowman A Prologue - VIII 155; missing text possibly originally contained in missing leaves from last quire, if this was, like the others, a 12.

#### Piers Plowman

1) cursive hand, not ornate but clear and legible. 48-55 lines per page. 2) Title: "Plowman Piers", black ink. Space of one line left for first initial. 3) No passus headings or initials. I marked //, others with an insertion mark. 4) Latin in larger script, consistent. Names not distinguished. 5) Frame ruling only. 6) No additional rubrication. 7) Marks for insertion of paragraph signs. 8) Minimal space in top and bottom margins; long lines of Piers cramped, with a tendency to slope upwards. 9) No colour used. 10) Unfinished, damaged.

#### Other contents:

Item 1: No colour, one space for initial. Frame ruling. Item 2: headed with plain green initial. Otherwise plain. Concludes with amateur illustration of Merlin. Item 3: Space for initials at start and through text, or marked // for insertion. Item 4: space for first and other initials. Frame ruling.

#### Bibliography:

Kane 10-11; Ker i 135; Macrae-Gibson, O.D. (ed.), Arthour and Merlin EETS OS cclxviii (1973) (from Hale 150 and Auchinleck); Skeat EETS A xxii-xxiii; Hunter, J., A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. (London, 1838), 143-6.

Paper, 21.5 x 14cm. 279 leaves, numbered pp. 1-562 from second leaf of quire 2.

Date: First half of the 15thC (Lewis and McIntosh); beginning of the fifteenth century (Ker); c.1425 (Kane).

History: The Prick of Conscience is "probably N. Norfolk ... possibly E. Lincolnshire". Other hands in the MS are identified as coming from E. Anglia (Lewis and McIntosh).

Collation: ii modern paper; 1<sup>4</sup> (lacks 1 and 2, supplied); 2<sup>2</sup>; a single leaf; 3-5<sup>10</sup>; 6<sup>10</sup> + 2 leaves; 7<sup>10</sup>; 8<sup>14</sup>; 9-15<sup>10</sup>, all + 2 leaves at the end of the gathering; 16<sup>10</sup>; 17<sup>4</sup> + 1 leaf; 18<sup>6</sup>; 2 leaves; 19<sup>10</sup>; 20<sup>14</sup>; 21<sup>10</sup>; 22<sup>14</sup>; 23<sup>6</sup>; 24<sup>14</sup>; 25<sup>12</sup>; 26<sup>2</sup>; 27<sup>12</sup>; 7 leaves + iii modern paper. Catchwords and some signatures survive, but are placed so as to be of little use in collating the MS.



Contents: 1. p. 3 English Paternoster and Creed; p. 4 blank. 2. pp. 5-358 The Prick of Conscience, Latin and English, an expanded text. 3. pp. 359-381 manual of confession, prose, English (also in Bodleian MS Douce 60); p. 382 blank. 4. pp. 383-411 Richard Lavynham's treatise on The Seven Deadly Sins, prose, English, followed by a treatise on excommunication. 5. pp. 412-430 The Ten Commandments, prose, English. 6. pp. 431-468 Speculum Sacerdotis Secundum Visionem Sancti Edwardi Regis et Confessoris; p. 469 blank. p. 470 used by late reader as title page for PP. 7. pp. 471-549 Piers Plowman A prologue - XI; p. 550 3 lines of PP; p. 551 blank. 8. pp. 552-8, in a new hand, instructions to the clergy about ecclesiastical censure, English prose. 9. pp. 559-562 notes on medieval history in a seventeenth century hand. Heading: "Ex libro vetusto legem et consuet: Angl: in archivis Dmi de Heling".

### Piers Plowman

1) Freehand, tending to cursive hand. Very irregular. Kane states this is a single scribe - but two different systems are used for metrical divide. 28-35 lines per page. 2) No original title; a late annotator supplies a title: "Piers Plougman's vision. The author Robert Langland a chiefe disciple of John Wickliffe" (on facing page). Cf. entries in Bale and Leland for Petrum Agricolam. No initial. 3) Passus headings either main ink or red. I & II marked for insertion but omitted; III as a headline; VIII, X, XI pencil // only (Kane incorrectly states that the marks at VIII are in the main ink); no initials. 4) Latin usually red, or marked with an insertion mark; occasionally in the margin. Names undistinguished. 5) Frame ruling only; lines consequently uneven. 6) Additional rubrication: two sins headed, 2 pointing hands, one of each in red. 8) Two forms of metrical stop; at first ? then //. Occasionally, very irregularly, touched with red in first letter of each line. 9) One colour, not used until p.494. 10) "Explicit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest", in red, underlined twice.

### Other contents:

Item 1: Title in red, red in first letter of each line. Item 2: Red first initial, red in 1st letter of each line, red ascenders. Verse marked with braces. Item 3: irregularly written prose; some blanks for the insertion of initials. Latin in red. Item 4: unruléd prose, alternate sections in red, explicit red. Item 5: each commandment headed in red; some red touches in first letter of line. Item 6: No colour; space for first initial. Items 1-7 are in the same hand, assuming PP to be in a single hand. Item 8: Plain undistinguished prose. Item 9: another new, later, hand. Plain undistinguished prose.

### Bibliography

Kane, 12-13; Ker i 314; Lewis, R.E., and McIntosh, A., A Descriptive Guide to the manuscripts of the Prick of Conscience (Oxford 1982), 84-5.

9. Cambridge University Library, Pembroke College fragment S312 C6

Fair quality vellum, 20.5 x 29cm.

A single fold, discovered in a binding in Pembroke College Library.

Contents: A IV 106-V, 29 om.; IV 112-214, 139-40, 146-7. V 5 and 6 are merged, V 10 om.; VI 184-93, 86 om.; VII 213a; 213-282 follow immediately, 223 expanded to 2 lines, 225-6 om., 233 om., 251 om., 256 om. 7 om. (damage), 260 om., 267-8 reversed, 269-70 om., 272 om., 278 om.

Described in Kane, 13.



Fair quality vellum, 24 x 15cm. 41 leaves, numbered 1-41.

Date: Early fifteenth century (Skeat); mid-fifteenth century (Kane)

History: the scribe signs: "Nomen scriptoris tilot plenus amoris"; cf. Oriel MS 79, O(B).

Collation: 1<sup>10</sup> (lacks 5, 6); 2-4<sup>8</sup>; a stub; 5<sup>8</sup> +i. Catchwords survive, no signatures.

Contents: fols. 1a-41b Piers Plowman A prologue-XII.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Bastard anglicana hand, neat and consistent, 30-34 lines per page. 2) Title: "hic incipit liber qui vocatur pers plowman. prologus". (red). First initial, 5 lines, main ink with some pen ornament in the same ink. 3) Passus headings red, initials where they occur are red, one line; frequently omitted. 4) Latin red or underlined in red; names not distinguished. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Rubrication at Gluttony and Sloth only - red initials. 7) Paragraphing: see below. 8) Initials of lines touched with red to fol. 2a, then initial of every few lines, with slightly enlarged letter; could be a form of paragraphing. Some catchwords underlined in red. 9) One colour. 10) "Explicit dowel. Nomen scriptoris tilot plenus amoris".

Part of passus XII includes 12 spurious lines added by "Johan But".

#### Bibliography:

Kane 14; Skeat EETS A 142\*-4\*; Summary Catalogue No. 14631.

11. Oxford, University College MS 45 (in the Bodleian)

U

Vellum and paper, 20.5 x 14.5cm, 36 leaves numbered 1-2, 4-32, 32, 33-6

Date: early fifteenth century (Skeat); 2 hands of different dates, on vellum and paper portions respectively. 1: fols. 1-32: first quarter of the fifteenth century; 2: fols. 32-36: second quarter of the fifteenth century (foliation 1, 2, 4-32, 32, 33-6).

Collation: Vellum: 1<sup>8</sup> (lacks 3); 2-4<sup>8</sup>. Catchwords on 1 and 4 only; paper: 5<sup>8</sup> (lacks 1, 7, and 8).

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-36a Piers Plowman A prologue-XII 19a. Other contents (4 items) entirely distinct from one another and from Piers Plowman, bound together at a late date.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Hand 1 anglicana, irregular, 30-38 lines per page; hand 2 bastard anglicana, regular, usually 28 lines per page. 2) No title, small red initial, and following letter touched with red. 3) Passus headings red, no initials except at visio/vitae division; 4-line plain red initials. Elsewhere insertion mark for initials but no space. 4) Latin red, as passus headings; names not distinguished. 5) Frame and line ruling throughout. 6) Some "notas" in red, some insertion marks, with red marks for some of the sins. 7) Paragraphed by space in the paper portion. 8) Touched with red in first letter of each line, stops shortly before paper portion. 9) One colour. 10) Ends imperfectly, damage.

#### Bibliography

Kane 16; Skeat EETS A xix-xx; Coxe, Catalogus i 13-14.



Good quality vellum, 55 x 39cm, 341 leaves, numbered in roman top left verso, with errors, and with a subsidiary numbering in arabic starting after cccx, top right.

Date: 1370-1380 (Skeat); 1380-1400 Serjeantson; c.1400 (Kane).

History: Associated with Staffordshire from dialect study of the index (Serjeantson); in the hands of the Vernon family by 1583 (Quinn, 133).

Collation: The size of the MS prohibits discussion of collation; PP is begins on the fourth leaf of a quire of eight; three more leaves follow, with the rest of the quire missing. Some catchwords and signatures survive.

Contents: a large monastic collection containing Piers Plowman A prologue - XI 183 on fols. cccxciiij-cccxcxj, toward the end of the collection. For a full list of the contents see Serjeantson. The manuscript is associated with the "Simeon" manuscript, BL Add. 22283; the extant contents are identical, and a missing portion at the end of the MS would have been of an appropriate size to contain PP.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Expert anglicana. Double column, 80 lines per column. 2) No title, although listed in index as "Petrus Plowmon". First initial gold, c.14 lines, boxed and quartered in red and blue with white internal pen ornament. Cf. the initials of W(B), I(C), and D(C). 2) No passus headings except for passus IX, in red. One line left blank at passus divisions, presumably intended for rubrication. Initials of varying sizes, 2-3 lines, with passus initials c.19-20 lines, occur throughout the texts; they are similar to the first initial described above. 4) Latin and names are not distinguished. 5) Frame and line ruling in double column. 6) No additional rubrication. 7) Blue and red paraps mark paragraphs, as do additional ornamental initials. 8) Central margin (on fol. cccxcvi only) decorated with blue and red columns, ornamented with leaves in silver and gold; flourished at the top and bottom to form upper and lower margins. 9) At least four colours. 10) Ends damaged.

#### Other contents

Although the MS contains various hands and styles of ornament, the high standard of decoration is uniform. There are a few illustrations. PP is not noticeably distinct. PP starts 2/3 down the second column of fol. cccxciiij, immediately after the preceding work, with a few blank lines between.

#### Bibliography

Doyle, A.I., "English books in and out of court from Edward III to Henry VIII" in English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages ed. V.S. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (London 1983), 187; Doyle, A.I., "The shaping of the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts" in Chaucer and Middle English Studies in honour of Rossell Hope Robbins ed. B. Rowland (London 1974), 328-41; Furnivall, F.J. (ed.), The Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript part II EETS OS cxvii (1901); Horstmann, C. (ed.) The Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript part I EETS OS lxxxviii (1892); Kane 17; Pacht, O., and Alexander, J.J.G., Illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library (Oxford 1966) iii, 61-2; Quinn, J. (Rev.), "Earlier owners of the Vernon Manuscript," Bodleian Library Record iv (1952-3), 133ff; Serjeantson, M., "The Index of the Vernon manuscript" MLR xxxii (1937), 222-61; Skeat EETS A xv; Summary Catalogue No. 3938-42.



13. Liverpool University Sidney Jones Library Chaderton MS F.4.8 Ch

Vellum, 26.5 x 20cm. 103 leaves numbered pp. 1-202, 203-6 not numbered. Date: the beginning of the fifteenth century (Ker); c.1425 (Kane). History: connection with Oxfordshire in the sixteenth century (Kane). Names and inscriptions include: "Isabell poniell" p. 11 (16th C); "Walt Stonehouse precium 10s" (Fellow of Magdalen Oxford 1617-29); "Nicholas Wilshire" p.104; "Mr. John Denman oweth this boucke god graunt hyme longe lyf with muche encrease of wyrshype" p.208 (16th C). Collation: 1-12<sup>8</sup>; 13<sup>8</sup> (lacks 7). Signatures survive.

Contents: pp. 1-202, Piers Plowman A prologue - XI + C XI 299-XXII.

Piers Plowman

1) Expert anglicana, legible but hurried. 30-36 lines per page. 2) No title. Gold initial with violet pen ornament, 3 lines. 3) Passus headings red; initials blue with red pen ornament, 3 lines. In addition to the usual rubrics the text is divided by Roman numerals at the tops of pages into four parts corresponding to Visio, Dowel, Dobet and Dobest: i A Prol.-VIII; ij A IX-C XVII; iij C XVIII-xx; iiij C XXI-XXII. Ker identifies this as the work of the main annotator. 4) Latin in red, names not distinguished. 5) Frame and line ruling throughout. 6) No additional rubrication. 7) Red and blue paraps mark paragraphs. 8) Occasional red touches in top lines and some elaborate top line ascenders. 9) At least three colours. 10) "Explicit liber Willelmi de petro le plouzman", red.

Bibliography

Kane, 2-3; Ker, iii 308; Grattan, J.H.G., and Hunt, R.W., "The text of Piers Plowman; a newly discovered manuscript and its affinities" MLR xlii (1947), 1-8.

14. London, British Library MS Harley 6041

H<sup>2</sup>

Paper, 22.5 x 14.2cm. 102 leaves, numbered 1-102. Date: Scarcely earlier than 1450 (Skeat); soon after 1425 (Kane). History: From crests on fols. 1a, 16, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b and 96b, the original owner was a member of the Bedfordshire family of Hoo (Kane); the following inscription appears on fol. 96b: "this boke pertynet to my dame William Holyngbourne"; he was a monk of St. Augustine's without Canterbury 1510-39, and the MS may have been in the possession of these monks from an earlier date. Collation: Difficult to determine since the MS has been repaired by pasting the inner edges of the leaves to modern paper. From catchwords and some signatures: 1-3<sup>12</sup>; 4<sup>4</sup>; 5<sup>8</sup>; 6<sup>12</sup>; 7-9<sup>12</sup>; 8 seven leaves.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-96a, Piers Plowman A prologue - XI + C XI 299-XXII; 96b blank. 2. fols. 97a-102b, a manual of confession.

Piers Plowman

1) Informal anglicana, untidy but legible. Some scribal corrections. 31 lines per page. 2) No original title. Later, "Pearse Plowmanne" in brown ink. First initial red, 3 lines. 3) Passus headings main ink, occasionally red 'P', larger hand. Initials red 1-3 lines, occasionally with clumsy pen ornament in the main ink. Headings of I, XIII in margin. 4) Latin in larger script, occasionally with red initial, 2-3 lines, early in the text declining to 1 line, sometimes with blue or main ink line decoration (declines from fol. 29b). Names not distinguished.



### Bibliography

Kane, 6-7; Skeat, EETS A xx-xxi; C xxxviii; A catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum (London 1808), iii, 313.

15. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 145

K

Paper, 29 x 19.5cm. 180 leaves, numbered by the scribe i-iii then 1-159, nine leaves unnumbered, then 160-70, lower right recto pages.

Date: 1531-2, dated by the scribe.

History: Scribe was Sir Adrian Fortescue, DNB vii 476-7.

Collation: 1<sup>2</sup>; 2<sup>32</sup>; 3<sup>30</sup>; 5<sup>20</sup> + five extra leaves at the beginning of the quire; 6<sup>28</sup> + two extra leaves at the beginning of the quire; 7<sup>16</sup>; 8: four single leaves; 9: indeterminable, eleven leaves; 10<sup>12</sup> (lacks 11, 12). No catchwords or signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 2a-130a Piers Plowman A prologue - XI + C XI 299-XXII; fols. 130b-132b blank; 2. fols. 133a-159a The dyfference betweene Dominium Regale et Dominium Politicum & Regale by Sir John Fortescue.

### Piers Plowman

1) A practised, free secretary hand, legible and even. 24-28 lines per page. 2) Title on flyleaf, "Piers Plowman", in main ink. Work headed: "Primus passus de visione petri plowghman", main ink. Enlarged first letter, main ink. 3) Passus headings in larger script, main ink. Initials enlarged, main ink. Passus conclude "finis", with "finis de dowell" occurring at the A-C division. 4) Latin in slightly larger script, names undistinguished. 5) No apparent ruling but lines generally straight. 6) There is a considerable amount of both glossation and comment by the scribe. 8) There are running headings throughout the text. 9) No colour used. 10) Explicit: "finis totaliter".

### Other contents

Prose, otherwise identical format to PP. Five blank sides separate the works.

### Bibliography

Coxe, Catalogus ix 143; Kane; DNB vii 476-7; King, English Reformation Literature 326; Skeat EETS A xxiv, C xxxviii; Summary Catalogue No. 1746; see appendix A, list of early names associated with the poem.

16. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 733B

N

Vellum, 18.5 x 13cm. 88 leaves, numbered pp. 1-176.

Date: c.1425 (Kane); Mid-fifteenth century (Ker).

History: no information. The names Thomas and Johannes Staptun (?) appear on fols. 4a and 137a respectively (15thC?).

Collation: 1-11. No signatures; catchwords survive.

Contents: pp. 1-176 Piers Plowman A I 76-VIII 184 + C X-XXI 450.

### Piers Plowman

1) Hand irregular. Some corrections by main scribe. 29-35 lines per page. 2) Starts imperfectly, damaged. 3) Passus headings main ink, boxed in red, larger script. Initials blue c.3 lines with red pen ornament. 4) Latin boxed in red, or in margin; names not distinguished except in XVI. 5) Frame and line ruling throughout. 6) Headings for the Sins boxed, in margin, "luxuria" and "invidia" with red marks. Also a red cross. Names in XVI act as subject guides. 8) Several omissions in XX supplied by an early corrector in the margin. Catchwords in a scroll.



9) Two colours used. 10) Ends damaged.

### Bibliography

Kane 11-12; Chambers, R.W., NLWJ ii 42-3; Ker ii 22.

17. Cambridge, Trinity College MS R 3.14

T

Good quality vellum, 29 x 17cm. 74 leaves, numbered 1-74; in addition early roman numbering, top left verso, beginning on fol. 1b as xxiiij, correct to fol. 67b, then incorrectly altered.

Date: c.1400 (Kane)

History: given to Trinity by Thomas Nevile, Master from 1593-1615. No indication of earlier ownership.

Collation: a bifolium, with a single sheet inserted; 1-2<sup>12</sup>; 3<sup>12</sup> missing, stubs remain; 4-5<sup>12</sup>; 6<sup>12</sup> missing, stubs remain; 7<sup>12</sup>; 8<sup>12</sup> missing, stubs remain; 9<sup>12</sup>; 10<sup>12</sup> missing, stubs remain; +i and 1 stub. Most catchwords cropped. No signatures.

Contents: fols. 2a-74b Piers Plowman A prologue-XI+ C XI 299-XXII. Possibly originally other contents (Kane).

### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, clear and even throughout. 41-6 lines per page. 2) No title. On fol. 1b a plowman and helper with two oxen. Above in red: "God spede the plouz & sende vs korne ynow". Colours used are violet, yellow, red and brown. There is also a pencil sketch of same subject, fol. iib. First initial red, 8 lines, with red pen ornament; first line ascenders. 3) Passus headings main ink, boxed or underlined in red, first letter touched with red. Initials from C XIII, where the passus heading is omitted, red, 2 lines, omitted at XXI which is in the main ink. 4) Latin generally boxed in red, and from fol. 24b the first letter occasionally touched with red. Names not distinguished. 5) Lines ruled, no frame. 6) Extra rubric, "tale of mede þe maide" at II5. 8) One of only 3 MSS with an original illustration. Others are F(B) and D(C). Pages of this MS are edged in red. 9) One colour used. 10) Concludes: "Explicit", red, large letters, underlined in red.

### Bibliography

Ivy, G.S., "The make-up of Middle English verse manuscripts", University of London PhD Thesis 1953; James, M.R., The Western MSS in the Library of Trinity College Cambridge (Cambridge 1901), ii, 64-5. Kane, 15; Pearsall includes variants from this MS; Skeat, EETS A xxiii-xix; C xxxviii.

18. Privately owned, present whereabouts unknown, formerly the Duke of Westminster's MS

W

Sold Sotheby's Auctioneers, 34, New Bond St. London W1, 11 July 1966, lot no. 233.

Vellum, 27.5 x 19cm. 78 leaves, numbered in roman (original) i-lxxvj, and arabic 1-78.

Date: first half of the fifteenth century (Skeat); 1450-75 or later (Kane).

History: appears connected with Chester 1600 (Kane). The name "Margrett Littler" (16th C?) appears on fol. 17b.

Collation: 1-9<sup>8</sup>; + iv (probably half a quire of 8). From catchwords only.

Contents: fols. 1a-76a Piers Plowman A prologue-XI + C XII 1-XXII



### Piers Plowman

1) Small, regular book hand, 40-42 lines per page. 2) No title. Illegible phrase at head of page. Large initial, 12 lines, possibly coloured. 3) Passus headings in larger script. Initials are plain enlarged letters, 3 lines, possibly coloured. In addition to the usual rubrics, passus (including the prologue) are marked as "capitulo primo" to "capitulo xxiiij and vltimo". In the C-text part of the MS, the rubrics are not completed, and a blank line is left. The guides survive. A blank line marks the division between A and C-texts. 4) Latin is occasionally underlined, frequently in the margin. 5) Ruling is not apparent from the microfilm, though neatness suggests both frame and line ruling. 6) There are a few marginal scribal comments, and additional Latin in XVIII in place of 158, and following 161 (Matt. 21: 12-13; Matt. 26: 61). 7) Paragraphs marked by paraps and by line fillers. 8) Some elaborate descenders. 9) At least one colour. 10) "Explicit. tractatus iii piers plowman nominatus". The scribe<sup>(?)</sup> adds seven lines after the explicit, and signs "R [?] H".

### Bibliography

Kane 18; Skeat EETS OS lxxxi, IV sect. II 853-6, EETS C 1.  
A microfilm of the MS is held in the Special Collection of the Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool.

19. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 851

Z

Vellum, 24 x 17.7cm. 208 leaves, numbered 1-208.

Date: 1376 or earlier - 1388, supplemented with the C-version in the 15thC (Rigg and Brewer); late 14th-early 15thC (Kane).

History: Scribe possibly John Wells, a monk of Ramsey, who gives his name on fol. 6b; see appendix B, early owners, and Rigg and Brewer 3-5.

Collation: The book was originally in three parts, fols. 7-77, 78-123, 124-139, bound together in the 15thC, possibly at the time of the addition of the C-continuation of PP. The C continuation of PP was started on fol. 139, and the remaining quires added.

A bifolio, left side pasted to cover; a bifolio + 1 leaf;  $i_{12}^+$  2 stubs;  $1-9_{12}^{10}$ ;  $10_{10}^{10}$ ;  $11-12_{16}^{10}$  [PP - 13-18 added for continuation];  $13_{12}^{12}$ ;  $14_6^{10}$ ;  $15_8^{10}$ ;  $16_{10}^{10}$ ;  $17-18_{16}^{10}$ ; + iii pasted in, third pasted to back cover. Catchwords up to 10, none in PP; some signatures in continuation of PP.

Contents: 1. fols. 7a-77b Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium. 2. fols. 78a-123a Latin poems; longest is Speculum Stultorum. 3. fols. 124a-139a Piers Plowman "Z" version. 4. fols. 140b-208a Piers Plowman C X-XXII.

### Piers Plowman

1) 2 scribes: i: fols. 124a-139a, anglicana with secretary features, neat; ii: fols. 139a-208b, anglicana, hurried. In Z portion, c.50 lines per page; in remainder, 30-35 lines per page. 2) No title. Initial blue, 16 lines, with red pen ornament, extending along left, top and bottom margins. 3) Passus headings as main text in both parts of the MS. In A-text portion, spaced from text and usually underlined; blue initials, c.3 lines, with red pen ornament; in C-text portion red initials, c.2 lines. 4) Latin and names generally undistinguished in "Z" text, once only underlined in the main ink. In the continuation, both occasionally underlined in red, inconsistent. 5) In A-portion frame and line ruling; in the continuation, frame ruling only, lines uneven. 6) In continuation only, a few red subject headings. Where they are distinguished (rare), names act as subject guides.



8) First letters of lines touched with red in continuation from fol. 140a, and a few lines similarly touched with red in "Z" on fol. 132a. A few rubricator's marks, possibly for the insertion of paraphs in "Z". Metrical stop in red in continuation from fols. 140a-189b. Also in continuation, "n" at initial of first line of each page. 9) Two colours in A-text, one in C-text. 10) A-text ends: "explicit vita et visio petri plowman", roughly underlined in red; C-text ends: "Explicit passus secundus de dobest", not distinguished from text.

#### Other contents

Decoration of other contents is consistent with that of the A-text portion of PP. The works preceding PP are in double column. PP follows a blank page.

#### Bibliography

Kane, G. "The 'Z version' of Piers Plowman" Speculum lx (1985), 910-30; K. and D., 14-15n; Rigg, A.C. and C. Brewer, Piers Plowman: The Z version (Toronto 1983); Rigg, A.C., "Medieval poetic anthologies (II)" Mediaeval Studies xl (1978), 387-407; Skeat, EETS C xxx-xxxiii; Summary Catalogue No. 3041.

## B-text MSS

20. London, British Library MS Additional 10574

Bm

Good quality vellum, 25 x 17cm. 91 leaves, numbered 1-91.

Date: Turn of the fourteenth century (K. and D.)

History: On fols. 91b, "bought from Kelsey xxvj<sup>o</sup> Octobir anno xxxiiij Rh viij<sup>l</sup> [1542] per me Ion Thynne; cf. Laud Misc. 581, L(B).

Collation: 1-3<sup>12</sup>; 4<sup>4</sup>; 5-8<sup>12</sup>; 9: three leaves. Catchwords and some signatures survive.

Contents: fols. 1a-91b Piers Plowman C prologue-II 131, A II 90-222, B III I-XX 354.

### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana formata, variations in size of letters. Average 40 lines per side. 2) No title; blue first initial, 12 lines, pen ornament in red runs along top left and bottom margins, which are bordered in blue. 3) Passus headings usually boxed or underlined in red, occasional red in the margin. Initials blue, 4 lines, with red pen ornament. 4) Latin underlined red, as passus headings, or red; a few names underlined. 5) Line ruling, and left margin. 6) A large amount of additional scribal rubrication in the form of subject headings or glosses, some boxed and some underlined in red. In addition, underlined names in the text act as subject guides. 7) Red paraphs mark paragraphs; occasionally marks for their insertion. 8) Pages edged with gold; line initials touched red; a few top line ascenders, touched red. 9) Two colours. 10) Ends imperfectly, damaged.

### Bibliography

K. and D. 1; Catalogue of Additions (British Library 1901), vi 40; Skeat EETS B xxvi-xxvii, C xxxix.

21. Oxford Bodleian Library MS Bodley 814

Bo

Good quality vellum, 25 x 17cm. 94 leaves, numbered 1-93.

Date: turn of the fourteenth century (K. and D.)

History: on fol. 93a: "This booke apartanithe vnto : Thomas Hobsun"; "John Thomas London"; "John Thomas of Tichefilde"; Henrye Theighte".

Collation: iii + 1-3<sup>12</sup>; 4<sup>4</sup>; 5-8<sup>12</sup>; 9<sup>6</sup> (foliation stops at fol. 93) + iv. Catchwords and some signatures survive.

Contents: fols. 1a-92a Piers Plowman C prologue-II 131, A II 90-212, + B III-XX.

### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana formata, 2 hands: second on fols. 37-40 and fols. 65ff., both regular. 2) No title; red first initial, c.12 lines, with blue line ornament extending along left margin and part of upper margin. 3) Passus headings in main ink, underlined in red; initials blue ink, 2-3 lines, with red pen ornament. 4) Latin underlined in red, marked by alternate red and blue paraphs. 5) Left and lower margin, and line ruling throughout. 6) The only additional rubrication is the heading at prol. 56. 7) Alternate red or blue paraphs mark paragraphs. 9) Two colours. 10) "Explicit hic", boxed in red.

### Bibliography

K. and D. 2; Skeat EETS C xxxviii-xxxix; Summary Catalogue No. 2683.



Good quality vellum, 44 x 30.5cm. 420 leaves, three consecutive systems of foliation; PP is in the third, numbered 1-87.

Date: Turn of the fourteenth century (K. and D.)

History: on fols. 34a, 44b, 63a and 96b (3rd series of foliation), the names: "Robert Morys", "Roberte", "Jane Staford" or "Stafford" (15thC?)

Collation: i + 1<sup>12</sup> (lacks 1); 2-5<sup>12</sup>; 6<sup>12</sup> (lacks 7); 7, 8<sup>12</sup>; 9<sup>12</sup> (lacks 2-12); 10<sup>12</sup> (lacks 1, 2); 11<sup>12</sup>; 12<sup>12</sup> (lacks 6-7); 13-21<sup>12</sup>; 22<sup>10</sup> (lacks 19); 23 lost; 24<sup>12</sup>; 25<sup>12</sup> (plus an insertion); 26-29<sup>12</sup>; 30<sup>12</sup> (lacks 8-10); 31<sup>12</sup> (lacks 10-12); 32-4<sup>12</sup>; 35<sup>12</sup> (lacks 1); 36-8<sup>12</sup>; 39<sup>8</sup> (lacks 4-8) + i.

Contents: 1. fols. 2a-110a Higden, Polychronicon. 2. fols. 111a-121b Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Britanorum. 3. fol. 121a "Letter of Henry of Huntington to King Henry". 4. fols. 122b-128b Jean Turpin, De Vita Caroli Magni. 5. fols. 129a-158b Martin Polonus, Chronica. 6. fols. 159a-160a "A brief chronicle of the Kings of England". 7. fols. 160b-203a Guido delle Colonne, Historia Troiana. 8. fol. 203b "Prophecy of John of Lignano". 9. fols. 204a-230b Jaques de Vitri, Historia Hierosolimitana. 10. fols. 231a -261b Jacobus de Theramo, Consolatio Peccatorum. 11. fols. 1a-5b Testamentum Patriarchorum. 12-13. fol. 6a a Latin prayer, and a compilation of Henry of Huntington, Simeon of Durham, and Florence of Worcester. 14. fols. 38b-55b Marco Polo, De Statu et Consuetudinibus Orientalium Regionum. 15. fols. 56a-70b Friar Hayton, Flos ystoriarum terrae orientis. 16. fol. 71a De Fide Saracenorum. 17. fols. 71a-73a Gesta Machometi. 18. fols. 74b-78b William of Tripoli, De Statu Saracenorum. 19. fols. 79a-82b Ortus et processus Machometi. 20. fols. 83a-93b Gildas, De Excidio Britanniae. 21. fols. 1a-30b Piers Plowman B prologue - XX. 22. fols. 31a-32a "Visiting the sick". 23. fols. 32b-53b Mandeville, Journey to the Holy Land. 24. fols. 54a-63a The Seven Sages of Rome. 25. fols. 63b-87b Clement of Lanthony, Concordia Evangelistarum.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana formata, regular. 60-61 lines per page. 2) No title; large finely-drawn first initial, 26 lines, in red and blue with leaf and flower decoration, and additional pen decoration in red. Left margin of first page formed by alternate red or blue paraps. 3) Passus headings underlined or boxed in red, spaced from the text and in a larger script. Initials blue, 3 lines, with red pen ornament. 4) Latin boxed in red, larger script, as passus headings. Names boxed in red, with other important words. 5) Double column frame and line ruling throughout. 6) Some subject headings, including the sins, boxed in red in the margin. Boxed names and other words in the text act as subject guides. 7) Alternate red and blue paraps mark paragraphs. 8) Running heading "pers plowman" boxed in red; in index, "factura petri plowman"; occasional elaborated top line ascenders; generous margins and spacing between passus; catchwords in scroll. 9) Two colours. 10) "Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman".

#### Other contents:

A single scribe; ornament uniform throughout the MS. Items 23 and 24 have alternate red and blue paraps as PP; blue capitals with red pen decoration throughout, various sizes.

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of manuscripts, University Library Cambridge (Cambridge 1861), i 15-26; K. and D. 2-3; Skeat EETS B xxiii-xxv.



Paper, 21 x 29cm. 160 leaves, + five flyleaves, numbered top centre recto 1-119, by the original glossator, and 1-119, 126-48, 153-9, 161-7, 169, 174.

Date: First half of the fifteenth century (K. and D.).

History: On a slip at the front of the MS a reference to "on Knappe farmer of Whitchurche in the cunte of Oxon" (16thC).

Collation: iii<sup>12</sup> + 1-8<sup>14</sup>; 9<sup>14</sup> (lacks 8-13); 10<sup>16</sup>; 11<sup>10</sup> (lacks 7-10); 12<sup>8</sup> (lacks 8); 13<sup>12</sup> (lacks 8,11,12); 14<sup>2</sup> + ii.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-107a Piers Plowman B prologue - XX. 2. fols. 107b-19b Richard the Redeless. 3. fols. 127a-48b a treatise on arithmetic in English (prose). 4. fols. 153a-6b "the wyse boke of philosophie and astronomye". 5. fols. 156b-9b "pe booke of phisonomye"; 6. fols. 161a-3a arguments of the Psalms, Latin. 7. fols. 164a-7a sayings of the Latin Fathers and verse translations, IMEV 4128, fols. 167b-169a blank. 8. fols. 169b-70b glosses to words in Piers Plowman. 9. fols. 173a-4b "a doctrine of Fisshing and Foulying", IMEV 71. 10. fol. 174b, a 4-line prayer, IMEV 1686

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana; small, regular. 32-6 lines per page. 2) Plain red initial, 3 lines. 3) Passus headings underlined in red, usually in the margin, initials plain red, once blue, 2 lines. 4) Latin and names underlined in red throughout. 5) Ruling is not apparent, but lines and frame are neat. 6) Major headings - sins and a few extra comments. In addition, names underlined in red in the text act as subject guides. 9) One colour used (and one other, once only). 10) "Explicit hic Diolagus [corr. Dialogus] petri plowman", underlined in red, red in first letter of each word.

#### Other contents

Item 2: as PP; Richard Redeless starts immediately after the end of PP on the following page; Items 3-5 prose, decorated as 1 and 2. Items 1-5 are in the same hand, Items 6, 9 a second hand, 6 plain, 9 with a red title, Item 7 a third hand, plain, Item 8 plain 16thC secretary hand by an annotator of PP, Item 10 a quatrain, couplets joined by braces.

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of manuscripts, University Library Cambridge (Cambridge 1861), iv, 66-8; Embree, D., "'Richard the Redeless' and 'Mum and the Sothsegger': a case of mistaken identity", NQ ccxx (1975), 4-12; Day, M., and R. Steele (eds.), Mum and the Sothsegger EETS OS cxc (1936); K. and D. 4; Skeat EETS B xx-xxi and C 469-521 (Richard Redeless); Wright, T. (ed.), Political poems and songs, RS i (1859), 368-417 (Richard Redeless).

#### 24. London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A XI

Cot

Vellum, 22 x 15.5cm. Cot is the second of three distinct MSS probably bound together by Cotton. 113 leaves, numbered 170-286.

Date: first half of 15thC (K. and D.); 1410-30 (Doyle for K. and D.)

Collation: probably eights throughout (rebinding obscures evidence).

Some catchwords and some signatures for quires 9-11 survive.

History: fol. 269a the name John Godere or Godeve.

Contents: II: fols. 170a - 286b Piers Plowman C Prologue-II 131, A II 90-212 and B III I-XX 386.



### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, with secretary influence, considerable variation in size; average 32 lines per side. 2) No original title, "Pierce Ploughman" added later; blue initial, 11 lines, with red pen ornament reaching to top and left margins. 3) Passus headings main ink; initials blue, 2-3 lines, with red pen ornament, either at passus heading or start of passus. 4) Latin marked either for the original insertion or for decoration; names undistinguished. 5) Frame and line ruling throughout. 6) A few subject headings and several crosses. 7) Text paragraphed by blue paraps. 8) Generous margins. 9) Two colours used. 10) "Explicit hic opus hoc", same size as main text, with a blue paraph, separated by a blank line.

### Bibliography

Catalogue of the Cotton Manuscripts (BL 1802), i 45; K. and D. 5; Skeat EETS B xxvii, EETS C xxxix.

25. Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201

F

Good quality vellum, 24.9 x 17.5cm. 93 leaves, numbered 1-93.

Date: first half of the fifteenth century (K. and D.)

Collation: ii + 1<sup>10</sup> (3 and 8 single sheets); 2<sup>10</sup> (3 and 8 single sheets); 3<sup>10</sup> (4 and 7 single sheets); 4<sup>10</sup> (3 and 8 single sheets); 5<sup>10</sup> (4 and 7 single sheets); 6<sup>8</sup> (5 and 7 single sheets); 7<sup>10</sup> (3 and 8 single sheets); 8<sup>8</sup> (3 and 6 single sheets); 9<sup>10</sup> (4 and 7 single sheets); 10<sup>10</sup> (lacks 8-10)

Contents: fols. 1a-93b Piers Plowman B prologue - XX.

### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, some variation; average 43 lines per page. 2) "Incipit pers þe plowman", faded and replaced later with "Piers the Plowman". Illuminated 11-line capital with an illustration of the dreamer (reproduced in Chapter 2), initial blue, gold background with white pen ornament in the initial. Red surrounds the initial with internal silver pen ornament. A column with leaf decoration runs along the left margin, gold and red. 3) Passus headings as text; initials at first green, then green and red, then blue and red, 2-3 lines. Blue and red initials have pen ornament in the main ink. Initials vary in elaboration and expertise. 4) Latin and names in larger hand, red, touched with red, or underlined in red; Latin occasionally has green initials. 5) Frame ruling only. 6) Sins have initials (green) or a space for initials; there are occasional other initials in the text. In addition, names distinguished in the text act as subject guides. 7) Paragraphed by alternate red and green, then from fol. 68b red and blue, paraps. 8) Touched with red in first letters of lines. 9) More than four colours used. 10) "Explicit", red, followed by "explicit", black (large hand). Below, a crane with a scroll around its neck.

### Bibliography

Coxe, Catalogus ii 80; K. and D. 8; Skeat EETS A xxvii-xxx;

26. Cambridge University Library MS Gg 4.31

G

Paper, 17 x 21.2cm. 106 leaves, numbered 1-101, main scribe, top recto.

Date: first half of the sixteenth century (K. and D.)

Collation: i + 1<sup>12</sup> (lacks 1) 2<sup>8</sup> 3<sup>16</sup> 4-8<sup>12</sup> 9<sup>12</sup> (lacks 12) + i.



Contents: 1. fols. 1a-101a Piers Plowman B prologue - XX. 2. fols. 101b-3a "pe table of pyers plowman", a table of contents. 3. fols. 104a-5b a short prayer, IMEV 532.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Secretary hand, irregular; 33-45 lines per page. 2) "hic incipit petru p [ ] de visione liber primus". On flyleaf, an early annotator: "The prophecies of piers plowman". No initial. 3) Red passus headings, initials black. 4) Latin red, occasionally in margin. 5) Frame ruling only. 6) Headings for sins and a few other subjects in red. 9) One colour. 10) "Explicit hic dialagus [sic] petri plowman", red.

#### Other contents:

Item 2: same hand as PP, plain prose. Refers to parts of PP by folio number; Item 3: a short prayer, plain.

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of Manuscripts, University Library Cambridge (Cambridge 1858), iii 177; K. and D. 8; Skeat EETS B xxiii.

27. San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 128  
(formerly Ashburnham cxxx)

Hm and Hm<sup>2</sup>

Good quality vellum, 17 x 24.4cm. 219 leaves + two flyleaves, one at each end; three series of foliation: i) 1-120 from the first flyleaf; ii) 1-219, lower right recto; iii) 1-10, then every five leaves, then 112, 113, then every five leaves to 219.

Date: the beginning of the fifteenth century (K. and D.; Lewis and McIntosh)

History: Names on the MS include: fol. i "Richard" (twice), 16thC; fol. 101a "Alleksander London", 15th-16thC; fol. 144b "Cysley", 15thC; fol. 149a "betoun brygges", fol. 153a "Maude" - last two in same hand, 15thC. Back flyleaf: "John Sarum". Haselden (see bibliography) states that this copy was seen by Bale. The MS contains two inscriptions (front flyleaf) concerning the authorship of the poem, the second by Bale. The dialect of the Prick of Conscience is associated with S.W. Warwickshire (Lewis and McIntosh).

Collation: i + 1-26<sup>8</sup>; 27<sup>6</sup> + one leaf; 28<sup>4</sup> + i. No catchwords or signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-94a The Prick of Conscience. 2. fol. 95a Piers Plowman B III 50-72a, fol. 96b Piers Plowman B II 209 - III 49 (these fragments are Hm<sup>2</sup>). 3. fols. 97a-112b commentaries on sequences for Sundays and Feastdays, Sarum use. 4. fols. 113a-205a Piers Plowman B prologue-XX. 5. fols. 205a-216a The Siege of Jerusalem IMEV 1583. 6. fols. 216b-19a How the Good Wife Taught her Daughter IMEV 671, with an introduction.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Both Hm and Hm<sup>2</sup> anglicana, both in several hands, at least five. Average 40 lines per side in both texts. 2) Hm: no title; bold initial, 12 lines, decorated with solid red and blue blocks of colour, line ornament formed by unfilled spaces. Pen ornament in red on one side, blue on the other, all surrounded by further pen ornament in red, extending along upper and left margins. 3) Hm: passus headings red, same size as main text and spaced from text; initials blue, 2 lines, with red pen ornament. Hm<sup>2</sup> (one only) heading in larger hand, main ink, spaced from text. Blue initial, 3 lines, with red pen ornament; some additional pen ornament in initial.



4) Hm: Latin inconsistently distinguished by different (textura) script; Hm<sup>2</sup> Latin in textura. 5) Hm: line ruling and left margin ruled throughout. Hm<sup>2</sup>: left margin only ruled. 6) Hm: Sins: headings in margin, main ink, boxed. 7) Hm: red and blue paraps throughout. 9) Two colours. 10) Hm: "Explicit visio petri ploughman". Main ink, in same hand as text, not spaced from text, but centred.

Other contents: Other contents less ornamented than PP; only red used in other works.

#### Bibliography

Chambers, R.W., "The manuscripts of Piers Plowman in the Huntington Library" HLB viii (1935), 1-27; Haselden R.B and Schultz H.C., "Note on the inscription in HM 128" HLB viii (1935), 26-7; Haselden, R.B., "The fragment of Piers Plowman in Ashburnham No cxxx" MP xxix (1932), 391-4 (includes plates of fols. 96 and 121); Huntington Library Catalogue notes (unpublished); Kane The Evidence for authorship (London 1965), 37-42; K. and D. 9-10; Lewis, R.E., and A. McIntosh, A Descriptive Guide to the Manuscripts of the Prick of Conscience (Oxford 1982), 146-7; Skeat, EETS B xxi-xxiii.

28. San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 114

Ht

Vellum and paper: vellum outer and centre bifolia in each quire. 14-15.3 x 21.2-22cm. 324 leaves, numbered 1-324.

Date: 1450 (Huntington Library Catalogue); 1430 (Bennett); first quarter of the 15thC (Russell and Nathan).

History: Names in the MS: fol. 299b and verso side of back flyleaf ii: "Thomas Browne" (c.1550); back flyleaves: "Richard", 16th C.

Collation: 1-6<sup>16</sup>; 7<sup>18</sup>; 8<sup>16</sup>; 9<sup>16</sup> (lacks 7, 10); 10-16<sup>16</sup>; 17<sup>16</sup> (+ one leaf inserted between 5 and 6); 18<sup>16</sup> (+ two leaves inserted between 8 and 9); 19<sup>16</sup>; 20<sup>18</sup> (lacks 2, + one leaf inserted between 8 and 9).

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-130b Piers Plowman, mainly B-text, heavily contaminated from C and possibly A; contains 21 passus. 2. fols. 131a-184a Mandeville's Travels. 3. fols. 184b-190b Susanne and Daniel, IMEV. 3553. 4. fols. 190b-192b The legend of the Three Kings: excerpt of the translation of "Historia Trium Regum" of John of Hildesheim. 5. fols. 193a-318b Troilus and Criseyde. 6. fols. 319a-324b Lucifer: translation of Peter Ceffons, Epistola Luciferi ad Cleros.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, variable. Scribe is the same as hand 1 of BL Harley 3943 and possibly of Lambeth Palace MS 491. 34-5 lines per page. 2) "Piers Ploughman", red; blue initial, 5 lines, red pen ornament extending along part of upper and left margins. 3) Passus headings red, in larger script. In addition red running headlines in prol.-I and passus named "V-XXI". Initials usually blue, 4 lines, with red pen ornament. Initials of XVI, XVII, XVIII much smaller than usual, 2 lines; XIX plain red initial, 2 lines. 4) Latin and names in red - Latin throughout, names progressively less. 5) Frame ruling only. 6) Some additional rubrication: sins, prophecy, several notas: red, or with red dot or infill. Names distinguished in the text act as subject guides. 7) Red paraps, frequent in early part of MS, declining after IX, then more frequent in last two leaves (fols. 129-30). 8) Passus names given as headlines. 9) Two colours. 10) "Explicit pers ploughman", red, 5 lines (remainder of page).

#### Other Contents:

Same hand as PP, with identical or very similar decoration.



### Bibliography

Bennett, J.A.W. "a new collation of a Piers Plowman manuscript" MAE xvii (1948), 21-31; Chambers, R.W. "The manuscripts of Piers Plowman in the Huntington Library and their value for fixing the text of the poem" HLB vii (1935), 18; Huntington Library Catalogue (unpublished); K. and D. 14-15; Russell, G. and Nathan, V: "A Piers Plowman manuscript in the Huntington Library" HLO xxvi (1963), 119-30; Seymour, M.C., "The scribe of Huntington Library MS HM 114" MAE xliii (1974), 139-43; Skeat EETS OS liv (1873), xix-xx footnote; Windeatt, B.A., Geoffrey Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde (London and New York 1984), 73; Whitaker, T.D., Visio Willelmi de Petro Plouhman (London 1813), preface xxxii; Collation provided by A.I. Doyle, from the draft Huntington catalogue.

29. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 581

L

Good quality vellum, 26.8 x 18.5cm. 93 leaves, numbered 1-93, lower and upper right recto.

Date: 1377-1410 (Skeat); beginning of the fifteenth century (K. and D.); "one of the earliest surviving Piers Plowman MSS" (Kane, Speculum)

History: Several names, and a note of the author's name: fol. 1a "Robert Langlande borne by Malborne hilles", 16th C; fol. 92a "Liber Ricardi Johnson" and "T. Long of Dorchester", the latter 17th C; fols. 92a, 93a "Ion Thynne" (the name also appears in Bm); fol. 93a "Raffe Coppenger" and "Memorandum þat I have lent to Nicholas Brigham the pers ploughman which I borrowed of Mr Le of Addyngton". See appendix A, list of early owners.

Collation: i + 1-11<sup>8</sup>; 12<sup>6</sup> (lacks 6). Catchwords survive.

Contents: fols. 1a-91b Piers Plowman B prologue - XX; fols. 92-3 blank..

### Piers Plowman

1) One regular anglicana. Usually 48 lines per page. 2) "Incipit Liber de petro plouman", red. Initial red and blue, 10 lines, with pen ornament running along left and part of lower margin. Lines 1-10 boxed in red. 3) Passus headings red, spaced from the text. Blue initials, 5-9 lines, with blue pen ornament, well executed. 4) Latin boxed in red; some names and other key words underlined or boxed in red. 5) Line and frame ruling. 6) Subject headings such as sins, and some others, boxed in red; several notas and crosses, red or boxed in red. Names distinguished in text act as subject guides. 7) Text paragraphed by space, and by blue paraphs. 8) Catchwords boxed red; rubricator occasionally corrects main text in red. 9) Two colours used. 10) "Explicit hic dialogus petri plouman", boxed red. The rubricator's guide has "ijus de dobest", in red.

### Bibliography

Bennett, J.A.W., "A new collation of a Piers Plowman manuscript" MAE xvii (1948), 22; Coxe, H.O., Bodleian Library quarto catalogue (Oxford 1973, reprinted and corrected from 1858-85 edition), ii, 415; Kane, G., "The 'Z version' of Piers Plowman" Speculum (1985), 913; K. and D. 10; Skeat EETS B vi-x; Summary Catalogue No. 987.

30. London, British Library MS Additional 35287  
(formerly Ashburnham cxxix)

M

Good quality vellum, 30 x 19.5cm. 104 leaves, numbered 1-104.

Date: First half of the fifteenth century (K. and D.)

History: On fol. 104b a monogram, "D.E.N.", dated 1545.

Collation: 1-13<sup>8</sup>

Contents: fols. 1a-104a Piers Plowman B prologue - XX.



### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, with considerable variation in size. Usually 41 lines per page. 2) No title. An illegible phrase, Latin, boxed in red, heads the first page. Initial red, 10 lines, about one third of a line wide. 3) Passus headings red, separated by space from the text. Red initials, 4 lines. 4) Latin red or boxed in red. 5) Line ruling and double frame ruling. 6) Some marginal titles, such as sins, underlined in red. 7) Paragraphed by space. There are occasional marks for the insertion of paraps, though these may be by an annotator. 8) Running headlines on recto pages give passus number, occasionally replacing "passus" with "liber". 9) One colour. 10) "Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman", main scribe and ink, spaced from text, touched with red in first letter. Two further explicits are added by annotators: "Penna precor siste/ quoniam liber explicit iste"; "Explicit iste liber qui obsedit<sup>71</sup> transeat liber".

### Bibliography

K. and D. 11; Skeat EETS B xv-xvi; Catalogue of Additions (British Library 1901) xviA 234.

31. Oxford, Oriel College MS 79, in the Bodleian Library

0

Vellum, 21.6 x 15.7cm. 88 leaves, numbered 1-88 (18thC). PP is the first part of an MS bound together in the 18thC.

Date: First half of the fifteenth century (K. and D.)

History: fol. 88b (legible by u.v. light only) "William Rogger", twice (15th C), and in another hand a note of bequest by him to Roger Sambrok before John at Style and other witnesses, 19 September 17 Henry VI. On the same page : "nomen scriptoris Johannes Mallyng Plenus Amoris" (cf. R(A)), also: "W. Smethwick" (16th C.), and "Joseph Ames" (18thC antiquary).

Collation: xvi + 1<sup>8</sup> (lacks 1-4); 2-9<sup>8</sup>; 10<sup>8</sup> (lacks 5-7); 11<sup>8</sup>; 12<sup>8</sup> (lacks 1). Catchwords survive; following this twenty-one paper leaves and fifteen flyleaves.

Contents: I: 1. fol. 1a final 8 lines of a Latin poem: inc. "Et sine verborum sonitu fit doctor eorum"; exp. "Hoc tibi det munus qui regnat trinus et unus". 2. fols. 1a-88a Piers Plowman B prologue - XVII 98, XVII 347-XIX 280, XIX 359-XX 386. 3. fol. 88b a Latin quatrain, inc. "Sunt tria vere que faciunt me dolere"; exp. "Pro tergo flebo quia nescio quo remanebo". 4. fol. 88b the Latin and Greek refrain of the Impropria with an English version.

### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, small and consistent. Average 39 lines per page. 2) Space left for title, after Latin verse. Headline "Piers Plowman", touched with red. First initial red, 6 lines. 3) Passus headings red or underlined in red, all in margin, IV omitted. Initials red, 3 lines. 4) Latin underlined red, frequently in the margin. 5) Frame ruling. 6) A large number of marginal subject headings, underlined red (once red). 7) Insertion marks for paraps. 8) Initials of lines touched with red; catchwords boxed black. 9) One colour. 10) "Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman", larger script, touched with red, followed by: "Lauderis<sup>71</sup> christi quia finit liber iste"

### Other contents:

Vellum MS only: Item 1 in same hand as PP, plain; Item 3 in textura, plain, Item 4 in another (anglicana) hand, plain.



### Bibliography

Coxe, Catalogus i 27-8; K. and D. 11-12; Skeat EETS B xvi-xx.

32. Oxford Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson poetry 38

R

Four leaves are British Library MS Lansdowne 398 fols. 77-80.

Good quality vellum, 28.8 x 20.7cm. 105 leaves, numbered 1-101.

Date: beginning of the fifteenth century (K. and D.)

History: Names in the MS: front flyleaf, "Thomas Hearne Sept. 29 1732"; fol. 2a "Robart Bente you shalbe with vs at Budworthe and there to testify youre knowlegh in a mater"; fol. 3a "John Naylle"; fol. 47a "david" (twice), "Rondull wyly"; fol. 84a "John Sympson Smithe John"; 101a "William Butte" 15th-16thC; fol. 101b "John Walton", "James Simpson", "John Freman", "Thomas", "Bennett", "Thomas Wryght", all 16thC.

Collation: 1<sup>8</sup> (Lansdowne. Lacks 1, 2, 7, 8); (Rawlinson) i + 2-8<sup>8</sup>; 9<sup>7</sup> (4 a single); 10-13<sup>8</sup>; 14<sup>8</sup> (lost); 15<sup>6</sup> + i. Catchwords and signatures survive.

Contents: Lansdowne: fols. 77a-80b Piers Plowman B prologue 125 - I 140; Rawlinson: fols. 1a-101b Piers Plowman B II 41-XVIII 410, XX 27-386.

### Piers Plowman

1) Bastard anglicana. 36-38 lines per page. 3) Passus headings red, spaced from text, initials either blue with red pen ornament or red with main ink ornament, 5 lines. Faces in some initials. 4) Latin boxed in red. 5) Line and double frame (line initials spaced off) ruling. 6) 2 original glosses, "nota" at XIV 134-9 and "Longe Wille" at XV 152 in red. 7) Paragraphed by space, to fol. 4a alternating red and blue paraps, then red only, then marked for insertion. 8) Catchwords boxed. 9) Two colours. 10) "passus ihus de dobest".

### Bibliography

K. and D. 12-13; Skeat EETS B xi-xiii; Summary Catalogue No. 15563.

33. Formerly London, Sion College MS Arc L 40<sup>2</sup>/E

S

Now Takamiya

Paper, 26 x 20cm. 93 leaves, not numbered.

Date: 1550 (K. and D.)

History: on fol. 68b "Mr Thomas howlot; fol. 92b "Mr Thomas hewit".

Collation: from signatures only: 1<sup>4</sup> (lacks 1); 2-8<sup>4</sup>; 9<sup>2</sup>; 10-23<sup>4</sup>; 24<sup>4</sup> (lacks 3 and 4)

Contents: fols. 1a-92b Piers Plowman B prologue 73-XX 285.

### Piers Plowman

1) Regular secretary hand. 40-44 lines per page. 3) Passus headings in larger script, at first spaced from text, later not. First word of new passus usually enlarged. From passus IV, space left for some initials, c.3-4 lines. 4) Latin in larger textura script. 5) Ruling not apparent, but lines are regular. 6) Once only, "popery" at XV 444. 9) No colour seems to be used, but the MS is available on microfilm only. 10) Ends at penultimate line, rest of final quire missing.

### Bibliography

K. and D. 15



Good quality vellum, 28.7 x 19cm. 147 leaves, numbered 1-147.

Date: c.1400 (Schmidt); turn of the fourteenth century (K. and D.)

History: Some pen trials on fols. 1a, 87a, and back flyleaf include the name "Stratford"; fol. 77b next to XIII. 269 "1350", both in a hand "very like John Stow's" (Doyle, for K. and D.)

Collation: ii + 1-16<sup>8</sup>; 17<sup>2</sup>; 18<sup>8</sup>; 19 indeterminable (nine leaves) + ii.  
From catchwords only.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-130b Piers Plowman B prologue - XX. 2. fols. 131a-47a Rolle's Form of Living. 3. fols. 147ab Christ made to man a fair present, IMEV 611.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana formata, one hand. 33-5 lines per page. 2) No heading. Large fairly elaborate initial capital, 10 lines; initial red, with internal white/silver pen ornament. On either side blue and red formalised leaves on a gold background. Gold, red and blue columns run along upper left, and lower margin, decorated with leaves and some formalised daisies. Cf. the decoration of U(C), D(C), I(C) and V(A). 3) Passus headings red and boxed red, spaced from text by one line either side. Initials blue, 4 lines with red pen ornament. 4) Latin and names in larger script, boxed red. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Marginal headings for sins, boxed and touched with red; eight extra decorated initials. Names distinguished in the text act as subject guides. 7) Paragraphed by space and by alternate red and blue paraps, in sense units rather than regular blocks of text. 8) Top lines have elaborate ascenders, some touched with red; catchwords boxed red and touched with red. 9) At least four colours. 10) "Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman", boxed red, elaborate ascenders and descenders touched with red. Takes up last seven lines of page.

#### Other contents:

Items 2 and 3 are in the same hand as PP; Item 2 is decorated as PP, Item 3 plain.

#### Bibliography

James, M.R., The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Cambridge (Cambridge 1900), 480-1; K. and D. 13-14; Schmidt uses this MS as his base text; Skeat EETS B xiii-xiv.

#### 35. Cambridge, Newnham College, Yates-Thompson MS

Good quality vellum, 29.5 x 18.5cm. 109 leaves, numbered 1-109.

Date: c.1420 (Newnham Library notes in MS); first half of the fifteenth century (K. and D.)

Collation: ii + 1-13<sup>8</sup>; 14<sup>5</sup> (5 a single) + ii. Most catchwords and signatures survive.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-104a Piers Plowman B prologue - XX. 2. fols. 104b-9b The Lay Folks' Mass book. 3. fol. 109b a grace, IMEV 620.

#### Piers Plowman

1) 2 anglicana formata hands, the first varying in size. Usually 40 lines per page. 2) No title. First page entirely bordered with gold and blue columns, decorated with formalised leaves and pen ornament in red, blue and gold. Blue initial, 7 lines, boxed in gold with white/silver internal pen ornament.

3) Passus headings red, well spaced from text, usually marked with a red or blue paraph. Blue initials, 4-5 lines, with red pen ornament; at Dowel (fol.35a) Dobet (fol.68b) and Dobest (fol. 98b) initials are gilded; at the foot of these pages and on fol. 1a an eagle with the letter L in red on its breast, on a green ground. 4) Latin, names and other key words are red or boxed red. 5) frame and line ruling. 6) A few "notas" in main ink; deadly sins given marginal headings in red, Envy and Avarice omitted; red names in text act as subject guides.. 7) Paragraphed by generous spacing and blue and red alternating paraphs. 8) Initials of lines touched with red; some ascenders with decoration in the main ink, including faces, animals etc. 9) At least four colours. 10) "Explicit hic dialagus [sic] petri plowman", in red.

#### Other contents

Items 2 and 3 in a large formal anglicana hand. Item 2 has red only as decoration; some of the text is in red, and couplets are marked with braces in red and the main ink; Item 3 is undistinguished verse.

#### Bibliography

K. and D. 14; Skeat EETS B xiv-xv.



## C-text MSS

### 36. Oxford Bodleian Library MS Douce 104

D

Vellum, 14.5 x 21cm. 112 leaves, numbered 1-112.

Date: 1427 (dated by scribe, fol. 112b)

Collation: 1-3<sup>8</sup>; 4-5<sup>10</sup>; 6-10<sup>8</sup>; 11<sup>10</sup>; 12-13<sup>8</sup>; 14<sup>2</sup>. Most catchwords survive, no signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-112b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII. 2. "Tutivillus þe devyl of hell", a 12-line poem in Latin and English, quoted in Appendix D.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Irregular anglicana, 32-6 lines per page. 2) No title. Professional illustration of the sleeper as a hermit, fol. 1a (cf. F(B)), brown habit, blue, gold and green surround. Pen ornament extends along upper left and lower margins. 3) Passus headings inconsistently underlined in red, occasionally with red paraphs. Passus initials blue, 3-4 lines, with red pen ornament, except those at Dowel (fol. 45b), Dobet (fol. 82a) and Dobest (fol. 99a), where initials are gold, 4 lines, quartered in red and blue, with white/silver internal pen decoration. Formalised leaves, gold blue and red surround initial. 4) Latin underlined in red; names occasionally underlined in red or boxed red. Some have a red paraph. 5) Left and lower margin ruled. 6) Only two red subject headings, but names distinguished in the text act as subject headings. 7) Text paragraphed by occasional red paraphs and signs for insertion of paraphs. 8) Pages edged in red. 9) More than four colours used. 10) "Explicit liber de petro ploughman Anno regni Henrici sexti sexto Et fir'jouis ante festum Michaelis incept' <sup>transung[is]</sup> underlined red, spaced from text, and in a larger hand. The MS contains many amateur illustrations by a reader.

#### Bibliography

Donaldson 228; Skeat EETS C xlv-xlvi; Summary Catalogue No. 21678.

### 37. Oxford Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc 656

E

Poor quality vellum, 21 x 14.5cm. 131 leaves + two flyleaves, one at each end, numbered 1-131.

Date: Beginning of the fifteenth century (Bodleian Catalogue)

Collation: i + 1<sup>14</sup>; 2-8<sup>12</sup>; 9 indeterminate, nine leaves; 10-11<sup>12</sup>; +i.

Catchwords survive, but no signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 1b-19a The Warres of þe Jewes. 2. fols. 19b-114a Piers Plowman C prologue-XXII; fols. 114b-116b blank. 3. fols. 117a-125b An Exposition upon þe creed and x commandments; fols. 126a-131b blank, with a few pen practices.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, regular, c.38-40 lines per page. 2) No original heading; Archbishop Laud has added: "Incipit Piers Plowman". Space left for first initial, 4 lines. 3) Passus headings in main hand and ink. Some space between passus. Space left for initials, 3 lines. 4) Latin marked, possibly for insertion of paraphs; later Latin frequently in the margin. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Prophecy and sins given marginal headings. 8) Headline gives passus numbers in Dowel, Dobet and Dobest section of text from fol. 64b. 9) No colour used. 10) "Explicit passus secundus de dobest incipit passus tercius".

#### Other contents

Item 1: red rubrication. Item 3: initials of lines touched in red.

#### Bibliography

Coxe, H.O., Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogue (Oxford 1973, reprinted and corrected from 1858-85 edition), ii, 477; Donaldson 229; Skeat EETS C xxiv-xxx; Summary Catalogue No. 1059.

Cambridge University Library MS Ff 5.35

F

Good quality vellum, 24 x 17cm. 112 leaves + two flyleaves, numbered 1-152, taking account of losses.

Date: Beginning of the fifteenth century (Skeat)

History: fol. 152a the name "Thomas Jakes", and the inscription "Johannes Malverne ex sociis collegiꝝ orialensis apvd Oxon. Visionē Petri Aratoris hoc anno i.e. 1342 finiuit. Stow Chron."

Collation: i (a sheet of music) + i (a paper flyleaf); 1<sup>8</sup>; 2 missing; 3-9<sup>8</sup>; 10 missing; 11-14<sup>8</sup>; 15<sup>6</sup>; 16-17<sup>8</sup>; 18<sup>10</sup>. Catchwords survive, but no signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-49a Mandeville's Travels. 2) fol. 49b-152a Piers Plowman C prologue-XXII. Bound with two leaves of music.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Textura, one scribe, regular and expert. 37 lines per page. 2) No title; blue first initial, 14 lines, red pen ornament; prologue headed "passus primus" by rubricator's guide. 3) Passus headings in main ink, larger hand; initials blue, 2 lines, with red pen ornament. Passus division omitted at I; initial omitted at XX; a blue paraph at Dowel (fol. 91a) and Dobest (fol. 140a). 4) Latin occasionally marked with a double stroke, possibly for decoration; occasionally in the margin. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Several "notas" and subject headings, sometimes distinguished by a blue paraph. 8) Running headlines; catchwords in scroll; scribe occasionally adds decorative descenders. 9) Two colours. 10) "Explicit passus secundus de dobest", main ink, as main text.

#### Other contents

Item 1: decorated as PP and in the same hand.

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of manuscripts, University Library Cambridge (Cambridge 1861), ii, 495-6; Donaldson 229; Skeat, EETS C xl-xli.

40. Cambridge University Library MS Dd 3.13

G

Good quality vellum, 18 x 29cm. 95 original leaves, + nine modern leaves, two at the beginning, seven at the end, numbered 1-99 from first (modern) leaf.

Date: close to 1400 (Skeat)

Collation: 1<sup>8</sup> (lacks 1,2, supplied); 2-7<sup>8</sup>; 8<sup>8</sup> (lacks 1,8); 9-12<sup>8</sup>; 13<sup>8</sup> (lacks 4-8, supplied); 14<sup>2</sup> (missing, supplied). No catchwords or signatures. Sewing visible.

Contents: fols. 3a-99b Piers Plowman C prologue 155 - XXII 39.



### Piers Plowman

1) Considerable variation in size and slope of hand; 35-7 lines per page. 3) Passus headings in main ink, larger, occasionally elaborated, hand, spaced from text; space left for initials throughout, 4 lines. 4) Latin in larger hand, red, underlined, sometimes spaced from text. 5) Left margin ruled. 6) Many subject headings including the sins, some touched with red. 7) Paragraphs marked with red, possibly for further decoration, and text sectioned with braces, resulting in a cluttered effect. 8) Frequent scribal elaborations such as faces and animal heads in passus headings and other available space. 9) One colour. 10) Ends imperfectly, damaged.

### Bibliography

Catalogue of manuscripts, University Library Cambridge (Cambridge 1861), i, 75-6; Donaldson 229; Skeat EETS C.xlii-xliii.

41. Cambridge, a fragment in the possession of Professor J. Holloway H  
Microfilm in CUL, MS 7499

Paper (owner's conjecture; the fragment is encased in glass, making this difficult to ascertain), 16 x 23.5cm. A bifolium.

Date: First half of the fifteenth century (dated by Cambridge University Library on discovery)

History: discovered under floorboards.

Contents: Piers Plowman C I 205-II, and III

Hand, anglicana, variable, 27 lines per page. One passus heading survives, red, blue initial 2 lines, red pen ornament. Latin in red, with a line beside it. Frame and line ruling. Scribal lines by text occasionally. Two colours.

### Bibliography

Mentioned in: Russell, G., "Some early responses to the C-version of Piers Plowman" Viator xv (1984), 276.

42. University of London, Senate House, Sterling Library MS V 88. I

Good quality vellum, 16 x 23.4cm. 84 leaves, + three modern vellum flyleaves, numbered 1-126 from first original vellum leaf.

Date: Turn of the fourteenth century (Ker).

History: Scribe identified by Doyle and Parkes as active from 1390s-c.1426.

Collation: iii (modern vellum); three leaves (damaged quire); 1-2<sup>4</sup>; 3: five single leaves; 4-14<sup>4</sup>; 15<sup>4</sup> (lacks 3, supplied modern vellum); 16-19<sup>4</sup>; 20-21<sup>4</sup> (missing, supplied modern vellum); 2<sup>4</sup>; 23<sup>4</sup> (lacks 3, supplied modern vellum); 24-27<sup>4</sup>; 28-9<sup>4</sup> (missing, supplied modern vellum); 30<sup>4</sup>; 31<sup>4</sup>, (lacks 3 and 4, supplied modern vellum). A few catchwords survive, but no signatures.

Contents: fols. 1a-126a Piers Plowman A prologue (with C interpolations) + C I - XXII, damaged.

### Piers Plowman

1) Clear regular anglicana, 31 lines per page. 2) Title damaged; continuous frame ornament on first page, gold, blue and red. 3) Passus headings generally red, same size and script as main text; initials gold, 2 lines, surrounded with formalised leaf decoration in red, blue and gold, boxed in black (cf. the decoration of V(A), W(B), D(C), and U(C)), usually with formalised daisies. 4) Latin red. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Some red subject headings, including some sins.

8) Alternate red and blue paraphs act as metrical dividers. 9) At least four colours. 10) At explicit, a Latin phrase in red, of which only "sit benes" is legible. There is considerable damage here.

#### Bibliography

Donaldson 229; Doyle, A.I. and M.B. Parkes, "The production of copies of The Canterbury Tales and The Confessio Amantis in the early fifteenth century" in Medieval Scribes, manuscripts and libraries ed. M.B. Parkes and A.C. Watson, (London 1978), 163-210; Ker i 377-8; Pearsall, D.A. "The Ilchester manuscript of Piers Plowman" NM lxxxii (1981), 181-93; Skeat EETS C xxxiii-xxxviii.

43. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 171

K

Good quality vellum, 17.5 x 26cm. 60 original leaves, + four front flyleaves, supplied in the 16thC, numbered 1-62 from front flyleaves.

Date: Turn of the fourteenth century (Bodleian catalogue).

History: Skeat identifies "S.B.", who rebound the book in 1531, as Stephen Batman, member of Trinity College, Cambridge (see appendix A, list of early owners).

Collation: ii modern vellum, iv paper supplied by "S. B.", 16thC; 1-7<sup>8</sup>; 8: four leaves, probably half a quire of eight; + ii modern vellum. All catchwords and some signatures survive.

Contents: fols. 3a-62a Piers Plowman C II 217-XV 66

1) Large bastard anglicana, 32-4 lines per page. 2) 1531 title: "This book is clepped: Sayewell, Doowell, Doo Better & Doo Best". 3) Passus headings red, in larger untidy script; space left blank for initials, 3 lines; occasionally inexpertly filled, red with red pen ornament. The visio/vitae division is distinguished by a larger hand, 2 lines per word, spaced from the text. 4) Latin in red. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) "Prophecy", "predicatio", occasional "notas" and sins as red subject headings in margin. 7) Paragraphs marked, possibly for the insertion of paraphs. 9) One colour. 10) "S.B." adds 3 extra lines (the first rhymes with the last line of the text):

I wolde this passus were not ye laste  
Though this booke is harde to finde  
Yet it is good for a Xtian minde

#### Bibliography

Catalogi Bodleianae ix 179; Donaldson 229; Skeat EETS C xliiii-xlv; Summary Catalogue No. 1772.

38. London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian B XVI

M

Good quality vellum, 25.5 x 18cm. 95 leaves, numbered 1-95.

Date: pre-1400 (Skeat), but see item 2.

Collation: five leaves, probably originally part of a quire of 8; 1-7<sup>8</sup>; 8<sup>6</sup>; 9<sup>8</sup> (lacks 8); 10-11<sup>8</sup>; 12<sup>8</sup> (lacks 6-8).



Contents: 1. fol. 1a Incipit: "But kaym his sone had he no mo", explicit: "as his fader he bede þt he hit sholde bryn/ the a mist" [sic], verse. 2. fols. 1a-2b The Death of the Duke of Suffolk, 1450. 3. fols. 2b-3b Defende vs all fro Lollardie. 4. fol. 3b (remainder) Incipit: "In pactum est in vigilia matutina", explicit: "ait ille mulier". 5. fols. 4a-4b On the visit to St. Paul's by Henry VI, IMEV 3929. 6. fol. 5a, prose, Incipit: "To alle you I sende gretynge. Wot ye þat I am kyng of all", explicit: "written in þe yere of youre gret god my cosyn MCCC XVI yere".

Contents cont. 6. fol. 5b, prose, Incipit: "In the brede & lengthe of an acre of land as folweth" (land details). 7. fols. 6a-95b Piers Plowman C prologue-XXII. 8. fol. 95b Latin prose.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, one scribe, regular and expert. 41 lines per page. 2) No title. First page with upper and left border of red and blue; first initial 10 lines. 3) Passus headings red, blue initials, 4 lines, with fine red pen ornament. 4) Latin generally red, occasionally with red lines above and below. Names occasionally underlined. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Some subject headings in red; once a blue pointing hand; "notas"; sins have no headings; some subject headings interlinear, in red, and where they occur, underlined names in the text act as subject guides. 7) Alternate red and blue paraphs throughout. 8) Large red dot as metrical stop; red line filler completes shorter lines. 9) Two colours. 10) "Explicit secundus passus de dobest", in red.

#### Other contents

Items 1-5 in the same hand; also item 8.

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of the Cotton manuscripts (BL 1802), 441; Donaldson 229; two of the political poems printed in Robbins, R.H., Historical Poems of the XIV and XVth Centuries (New York 1959), poems 64 and 76; Skeat EETS C xxxix-xl.

44. London, British Library MS Harley 2376

N

Vellum, 22.5 x 14cm. 48 leaves, numbered 1-44.

Date: 1440 or earlier (Skeat)

History: fol. 83a a date, 1544

Collation: 1-6<sup>8</sup> + 4 leaves. All catchwords and signatures survive.

Contents: fols. 1a-48b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, 31 lines per page. 2) "Here bygynnep þe boke of Pyris plowman", larger than main text, in red, with some red formal leaf decoration. Initial red, 3 lines, with plain ink pen ornament. 2) No passus headings in the visio, initials only, c.2 lines, red with violet pen ornament. In the vitae, passus headings in black textura, touched with red, and boxed in red; initials as above; divisions for Dowel (fol. 51a) Dobet (fol. 85b) and Dobest (fol. 110a) have headings boxed in a scroll. Division omitted at VIII and IX. Extra initials identical to passus divisions occur in the visio at III 215, and V 109 (the latter equivalent to B V 1), and the vitae at XVIII 180. 4) Latin boxed in red at first, declines towards end of text; some names and other nouns boxed red, very frequent at the beginning of the text, fols. 1a-4b. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Extra initials - see above. Boxed names in text act as subject headings. Only one sin, sloth, which is at the start of a passus.



8) Line initials touched with red; where passus headings are two lines long the second is marked by a red paraph; on last page (fol. 124a) a space of 6 lines is left between XXII 374 and 375. 9) One colour. 10) "hic explicit passus secundus de dobest", in black, in a scroll, touched with red.

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts (British Library 1808), ii, 673; Donaldson 229; Skeat EETS C xlvii-xlviii.

45. San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 137  
Formerly Phillips 8231

P

Good quality vellum, 18.7-18.8 x 28.7cm. 89 leaves, 1-89.

Date: Turn of the fourteenth century (Huntington Catalogue notes); before 1400 (Skeat).

History: On fol. 89b Johannes Meade me possedet precium iiij iiij d; scribe signs himself Thomas Dankastre, fol. 89b.

Collation: 1-10<sup>8</sup>; 11<sup>8</sup> (one leaf inserted after 8).

Contents: fols. 1a-89b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII

1) Anglicana formata, c.42 lines per page. 2) "hic incipit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman", in red, textura. First initial blue, 10 lines, with red pen ornament. 3) Passus headings red, in larger textura. At first, headings have two one-line initials in red and blue; this declines to one colour only, or one initial only, to red only. Passus initials blue, 3 lines with red pen ornament at first, declining to red only, several omitted in latter part of text. 4) Latin and names of most Biblical and other main characters in red textura script throughout; on first few pages Latin has a one-line initial, blue with red pen ornament; declines to blue only once, then disappears. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Red interlinear subject headings, prophecy, sins, "sermo" etc., repeated to take up a whole line; red names in text act as subject guides. 8) Begins elaborately, with top line ascenders, touched red, and line initials touched red; this starts to decline in passus XI and disappears by XII. 9) Two colours. 10) "hic explicit passus secundus de dobest"; red textura, followed by "Explicit peeres plouhman scriptum per Thomas Dankastre".

#### Bibliography

Bennett, J.A.W., "a new collation of a Piers Plowman manuscript, HM 137" MAE xvii (1948), 21-31; Chambers, R.W., "The manuscripts of Piers Plowman in the Huntington Library" HLB viii (1935), 1-27; Donaldson 229; Skeat, EETS C xix-xxiv; Whitaker, T.D., (ed) Visio Willelmi de petro plouhman (London 1813) (base text). Collation provided by A.I. Doyle, from the draft Huntington Catalogue.

46. London, British Library MS Additional 34779

p<sup>2</sup>

Vellum, 19 x 30cm. 92 leaves, numbered 2-93.

Date: early fifteenth century (BL Additional Catalogue).

History: two names on fol. 32a: "Lawrence ball", and "Robert" (twice)

Collation: impossible to determine. From surviving signatures, 13 quires. Catchwords irregular and no visible sewing.

Contents: fols. 2a-93b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII 344.



### Piers Plowman

1) Regular anglicana, 40-42 lines per page. 2) No heading; blue/green initial, c.12 lines long. 3) Passus headings red, once green, larger hand, well spaced from text, c.3 lines each side, with c.2 lines between the lines of the heading; initials green, 2-3 lines, once blue; a corrector has attempted to change the passus numbering. 4) Latin and some names in red. 5) Lines ruled, and double frame ruling (initials of lines marked off). 6) Names in red act as subject guides. 7) Some paragraphs marked off with a red underline. 9) Two colours, three once. 10) Damaged at end; a corrector adds XXII 345-50 at the foot of the page.

### Bibliography

Catalogue of Additions (British Library 1901), xviA, 83; Donaldson 229.

47. Cambridge University Library MS Additional 4325

Q

Vellum, 17 x 27cm. 80 leaves + three flyleaves, numbered 1-83.

Date: Turn of the fourteenth century (catalogue notes in MS).

History: fol. 2a a note on the contents is signed T.T. 1758; fol. 84b.

"Iste liber partenth ad magyster Thome Louell" 16thC.

Collation: ii+ 1-4<sup>12</sup>; 5<sup>10</sup>; 6<sup>12</sup>; 7<sup>12</sup> (lacks 11,12); +i. Catchwords survive, no signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 3a-80b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII

### Piers Plowman

1) Small regular book hand; 47 lines per page; many careful corrections by the scribe. 2) "piers plowman", twice; first page with continuous frame ornament, c.2cm wide, in green, blue, red and gold, incorporating first initial. 3) Passus headings generally main hand and ink, occasionally touched with red; initials blue, 4-7 lines with red pen ornament; some red underlining; faces occasionally in initials; occasional red or blue paraphs. 4) Latin underlined in red; longer Latin quotations marked with double red strokes in the margin. First letters of Latin lines, some others, and some names, touched with red. Names occasionally underlined in red. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Names distinguished in text act as subject guides. 8) Some line initials touched red; metrical stop a red dot in passus XII; catchwords boxed in red. Some corrections in red. 9) four colours. 10) "Explicit passus secundus de dobest", underlined in red.

### Bibliography

Donaldson 229.

48. London, British Library MS Royal 18 B XVII

R

Vellum, 22 x 28.5cm. 124 leaves, numbered 1-123 from the second leaf.

Date: First quarter of the sixteenth century (BL Royal and Kings Catalogue).

Collation: 1<sup>10</sup> (lacks 10); 2-15<sup>8</sup> + three leaves. No signatures or catchwords.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-13b Piers the Plouman's Creed. 2. fols. 14a-122b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII; fol. 123ab blank.

### Piers Plowman

1) irregular secretary hand; 32-36 lines per page. 1) No title; an annotator heads Piers the Plouman's Creed (fol. 1a) with "Piers Plouman"; plain, slightly enlarged initial, c.3 lines high; first word enlarged.

3) Passus headings main ink, underlined, and centred; first word of new passus enlarged; heading omitted at I, marked for insertion. 4) Latin and some names slightly larger script and underlined. 5) Roughly marked out frame ruling. 6) Several subject headings, including the sins. Where names are enlarged or underlined, they act as subject guides. 7) Rubricator's marks appear throughout, increasing in number from fol. 41a, possibly for insertion of paraps. 8) At passus XIII lower margin is abruptly enlarged; scribe fills space with elaborate descenders. 9) No colour. 10) "Explicit passus secundus de dobeste"; same hand as main text, separated by c.3 lines space, underlined.

Other Contents : Item 1: In the same hand and format as PP

#### Bibliography

Catalogue of Royal and King's Manuscripts in the British Library (British Library 1921), 293-4; Donaldson 229; Skeat EETS C xlviii- xlix.

49. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 293

S

Vellum, 16 x 24.5cm. 65 leaves + one flyleaf. Paged 1-128, with no account taken of losses.

Date: c.1400 (Skeat)

Collation: slip pasted to flyleaf (reads: "God spede the plowgh/ and send vs corne ynowgh") 1-3<sup>8</sup> (5 cancelled); 4-7<sup>8</sup>; 8<sup>10</sup> (lacks 1). Some catchwords survive, but no original signatures

Contents: pp. 1-128 Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII, with the omission of VIII 267-X94; XVI-XX; XXI 3-322.

#### Piers Plowman

1) 2 irregular hands; 34 lines per page. 2) No title; red initial, 11 lines. 3) Passus headings red over main ink, red initials, 2-3 lines. 4) Latin in red, over plain ink, or touched with red, the latter occasionally omitted. The Latin is also occasionally in the margin, and sometimes has a rubricator's mark, touched with red. This is frequent from p. 85. Red paraps mark Latin at pp. 103 and 126, where the Latin is marginal. 5) Frame and line ruling. 6) Three subject headings survive, in margin, red; cropping may have destroyed others. 8) Lines completed by red line filler; early in the MS the first few letters or first word of lines are touched with red, later initial letters of lines only; bottom lines occasionally have elaborate descenders; catchwords are generally boxed and touched with red. 9) One colour used. 10) "Explicit secundus & ultimus de dobett", as passus headings.

#### Bibliography

James, M.R., A descriptive catalogue of the western manuscripts of Caius College Cambridge (Cambridge 1908), ii, 70; Donaldson 229; Skeat EETS C xli-xlii.

University of London, Senate House, Sterling Library MS V 17

St

Good quality vellum, 25.5 x 36.5cm. 114 leaves (originally 248 leaves), numbered 1-114.

Date: Beginning of the fifteenth century (Ker); c.1420 (Sterling Catalogue)



History: originally a larger collection, consisting of: I: Robert Mannyng's Handlyng Synne and meditations in verse. II: Mandeville's Travels. III: Piers Plowman etc. The three parts of the MS are now dispersed. Names: fol. 4a "Richard hodyson", 16thC; fol. 107a "thys ys george langgamys rytenge [twige] iste liber pertennett ad" (16thC). Collation: 1 six leaves; 2-14<sup>8</sup>; 15 two leaves; 16 two leaves.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-97b Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII 87. 2. fols. 98a-111b a Gospel history. 3. fols. 112a-114b the assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary.

#### Piers Plowman

1) Anglicana, very regular; 37 lines per page. 2) "hic incipit visio Willelmi de petro ploughman", red; gold initial, 5 lines, with red and blue formalised leaf decoration with shading; left margin a double column, extending along part of lower margin; expertly drawn. 3) Passus headings red, initials blue, 2-4 lines, with red pen ornament. 4) Names and Latin in red. 5) Frame and line ruling throughout. 6) Subject headings in margin, red. Red names in text act as subject guides. 8) Generous margin spacing; script widely spaced, as the MS is designed for double rather than single column works. 9) Three colours. 10) "Amen", after XXII 87. This MS has the same amount of text as V(C), and is similarly rubricated.

#### Other contents

Items 2 and 3 in the same hand as PP both double column, undecorated; item 2 has blanks, presumably for illustration; item 3 is imperfect at the beginning and end.

#### Bibliography

Donaldson 229; Ker i 376-7; The Sterling Library: a catalogue of the printed books and literary manuscripts (London 1954), 544-5.

51. London, British Library MS Additional 35157

U

Vellum, 15 x 22cm. 119 leaves, numbered 1-125 from 18thC supply of six leaves.

Date: The end of the fourteenth century (BL Additional Catalogue).

History: The scribe's name, "Preston", is given at the end of the work (fol. 124a); the MS belonged to Francis Aiscough(e) of Cottam (Notts.), whose name appears several times (fols. 1a, 121a, 124b), and who once dates an annotation "1603" (fol. 26a); on fol. 124a William Ail[ ]; the name "Nicholas Dawideson" appears on fol. 59b; a later owner was Maurice Johnson of Ayscoughfee Hall, Spalding, 1735 (front flyleaves). Other names connect the MS with Lincolnshire, such as "Doctor Barefoul, Lincoln" (fol. 77a). Also on fol. 77a "Dr. Robinson". Two cures on the back flyleaves, written by Francis Aiscough(e), suggest an interest in medicine.

Collation: six leaves, added in the 18thC, on the first of which is pasted the original flyleaf; 1-9<sup>8</sup>; 10<sup>8</sup> + an extra leaf between 3 and 4; 11<sup>6</sup>; 12-14<sup>8</sup>; 15<sup>8</sup> (lacks 8). Some catchwords and signatures survive in the early part of the MS.

Contents: fols. 7a-124a Piers Plowman C prologue - XXII.



### Piers Plowman

1) Irregular anglicana; 32 lines per page. 2) No original title; Maurice Johnson entitles the poem "An auntient English Poem, very satyrical. This is called The Vision of Pierce the Plow Man. 1728 M. Johnson"; gold initial, c.5 lines high, 2.5cm wide, surrounded by quarters of blue and red with silver/white internal pen ornament, with gold formalised leaves projecting from this on black stalks - cf. decoration of D(C), W(B), I(C) and V(A). 3) Passus headings main ink, in larger script, underlined in red, and first letter touched with red; red passus initials, 2-3 lines, with blue pen ornament. 4) Latin in larger script, underlined in red or marked by rubricator in red, either for underlining, for the original insertion, or for paraphs. 5) Left margin only ruled. 6) Two red "notas" and an additional initial in passus I. 7) Blue and red paraphs mark paragraphs, with occasional additional insertion marks in red. 9) Three colours. 10) "Explicit liber vocatus-pers ploghman", larger script, with flourishes; boxed in red and touched in red; separated by 3-4 lines from text; followed by name of scribe, "Preston", in red and boxed in red, after a 2-line space.

The MS is exceptionally heavily annotated by Francis Aiscough and others.

### Bibliography

Allen, B.F., London University MA dissertation 1923; Donaldson 228; Catalogue of additions (British Library 1901), xviA, 192-3; Pearsall 21; Russell, G., "Some early responses to the C-version of Piers Plowman" Viator xv (1984), 276.

52. Dublin, Trinity College MS 212  
Formerly TCD 4.1

V

Vellum, 19 x 29cm. 89 leaves, numbered 1-89.

Date: 15thC (Skeat, TCD catalogue); first half of the 1380s (M.B. Parkes, for Kane, Speculum)

History: Contains an inscription naming the author

Collation: from catchwords: 1-2<sup>8</sup>; 3<sup>8</sup> (no catchword); 4<sup>7</sup>; 5-6<sup>8</sup>; 7<sup>7</sup>; 8-11<sup>8</sup>; +iii. No signatures.

Contents: fols. 1a-89a Pier's Plowman C prologue - XXII 87 (cf. St(C))

### Piers Plowman

1) Regular anglicana; c.30 lines per page. 2) "Hic Incipit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman", red; frame decoration on first page, red and green; initial red and green, 6 lines. 3) Passus headings: one with a paraph; initials blue, 6-7 lines. 4) Latin red, textura, names sometimes red or boxed in red. 5) Left margin ruled. 6) Subject headings in green, including the sins; names act as subject guides where they are distinguished. 7) Red and blue paraphs on fols. 1b-2b only. 8) Some elaborate ascenders; catchwords boxed. 9) Three colours. 10) No explicit, ends at XXII 87, rest of page blank, cf. St(C).

### Bibliography

Donaldson 229; Kane Authorship 26ff; Kane, G. "The 'Z version' of Piers Plowman" Speculum (1985), 912; Skeat EETS C xlviii. Additional information not available from microfilm from Stuart O'Seanoir, Assistant Librarian, TCD. Professor J. Scattergood, Department of English, TCD, is currently recataloguing the English MSS of TCD.



53. San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 143  
Formerly Phillips 9056

X

Good quality vellum, 19 x 25.1cm. 108 leaves, + three flyleaves, numbered 1-108.

Date: End of the fourteenth century (Huntington Library notes in MS).

History: Early owners' names: fol. 108a "Dan John Redbery", Monk, 15th-16thC; flyleaf "John Russell" 16th-17thC.

Collation: 1-13<sup>8</sup>; 14<sup>4</sup>; the last leaf formerly pasted to the inside back cover; in quire 8 the inner bifolium has been reversed, transposing fols. 60 and 61. Catchwords and some signatures survive.

Contents: 1. fols. iia-iiib: a fragment of Troilus. 2. fols. 1a-106b Piers Plowman C prologue-XXII.

#### Piers Plowman

1) One scribe, regular anglicana formata; 36 lines per page. 2) No title, fairly elaborate initial, gold, 9 lines, with blue and red formalised leaves, white/silver detail, extends along upper left, and most of lower margin, gold, silver, blue and red used throughout. 3) Passus headings in the main ink, larger hand, underlined in red; blue initials, once quartered red and blue, 3 and 4 lines, with red pen ornament. 4) Latin underlined in red or in the main ink, with a paraph. 5) Line ruling and double frame ruling. 6) Russell identifies most annotation as that of a corrector involved with the original production process; this represents a considerable amount of guidance and correction. These rubrics are underlined in red or brown ink. 7) Blue and red paraphs, none in last few pages. 8) gold edged pages; running passus headlines, red or supplied in black by corrector; marginal sketches, possibly by corrector: faces in fols. 22b, 26a; Mede in initial of passus III. 9) Four colours. 10) No explicit; c.9 lines of page left blank.

#### Bibliography

Chambers, R.W. "The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman in the Huntington Library" HLB viii (1935), 1-27; also Piers Plowman: the Huntington Library MS (HM 143) reproduced in photostat with an introduction by R.W. Chambers and technical examination by R.B. Haselden and H.C. Schultz, (Huntington Library 1936); Donaldson 228; Pearsall, 21; Russell, G., "Some early responses to the C-version of Piers Plowman" Viator xv (1984), 276; Skeat EETS C xlix-1; Windeatt, B.A., Geoffrey Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde (London and New York 1984), 75.

54. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 102

Y

Vellum, 15 x 22cm. 142 leaves, numbered 1-141, with 98 repeated, and subsequent misnumbering.

Date: mid-fifteenth century (Skeat)

Collation: ii (modern) + ii; 1-4<sup>8</sup>; 5: three leaves; 6-12<sup>8</sup>; 13<sup>8</sup> (lacks 8); 14-18<sup>8</sup>; 19<sup>8</sup> (lacks 5-8). Catchwords survive, but no signatures.

Contents: 1. fols. 1a-97b Piers Plowman C II 150-XXII. 2. fols. 98a-127b, twenty-four poems, printed Kail, EETS 128. 3. fols. 128a-135b, a metrical paraphrase of the seven penitential psalms by Richard of Maydestone. 4. fols. 136a-138b debate of the body and soul; fols. 140-1 blank.

### Piers Plowman

1) Very small cramped book hand, variable; c. 35 lines per page. 3) Passus headings red, occasionally partially in margin, following text; one with a blue paraph; initials blue, 2-3 lines, with extensive red pen ornament, omitted once only at XIV. 4) Latin usually slightly larger script, underlined in red. 5) Frame and line ruling; text occasionally overruns. 6) red "notas". 8) End of lines of poem marked off with a red (sometimes blue) stroke; the lines of the text are not otherwise set out as verse; metrical stop is in red; catchwords roughly boxed, and cancelled. 9) Two colours. 10) "Explicit etc.", in red, with a monogram of the letters "RNE".

Other contents All in the same hand and format as PP, poems written as prose.

### Bibliography

Baldwin, A., The Theme of Government in Piers Plowman (Cambridge 1981), 6-7; Catalogi Bodleianae ix 116-7; Donaldson 229; Kail, J., (ed.) Twenty-six political and other poems from Bodleian MS Digby 102 EETS OS cxxiv (1904); Robbins, R.H., Historical poems of the XIV and XV centuries (New York 1959), poems 13-15; Skeat EETS C xlvi-xlvii; Summary Catalogue No. 1703.

55. Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 669, fol. 210a

A 24 line extract, containing C XVI 182 - end of Latin after XVI 20i, 183om. The name of the scribe is given, "Johannes Cok" (1392-c.1470). This is one of the MSS belonging to John Shirley.

### Other contents:

1. fol. iva Pater Noster with explanations in English, signed by Johannes Cok. 2. fols. 1a-75a "Here bygnneth a good tretys þt Cardynalle Bonaventure made of crystes passyone". 3. fol. 75a "Here bigynne þe twelve chapyters of Ric. hampole turnyd into englysch". 4. fols. 75b-209a "Here bigynneþ anoper good tretys of Richarde of hampole hermit [?]."

### Bibliography

Doyle, A.I., "More light on John Shirley" MAE xxx (1961), 98-9; James, M.R., A descriptive catalogue of the western manuscripts of Caius College Cambridge (Cambridge 1908), ii, 666-7.



## APPENDIX C

### Rubrication

This appendix is a list of all original rubrication in the MSS, where "original" means provided by the scribe or rubricator rather than by readers. "Rubrication" includes passus headings and all additional glossation; marks such as crosses are included selectively, where it is possible to ascertain their function as a pointer to a passage in the text. Round brackets indicate words which act as rubricator's guides.

The rubrication of MS K(AC) is not included, as the MS is a personal copy, and the annotation is therefore not of the "professional" kind of the other MSS listed here. Annotation of K(AC) is, however, listed in full in appendix D.

i=incipit  
e=explicit

The text of the MS is given at the left hand side of each page.

A		Ashmole 1468: A	Douce 323: D
Prol.	i.	[no text]	[initial only]
	e.	.....	.....
I	i.	[no text] text begins 142	primus passus de visione 169 ffabula curatores
	e.	.....	.....
II	i.	passus secundus de visione	passus secundus de visione 57 ffauor 162f. ffalsitas Deceptura Merces Simonia Mendax
	e.	.....	.....
III	i.	passus tercius de visione	passus tercius de visione
	e.	.....	.....
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione	passus IV 34 hic venit pax et facit bulla de inuria
	e.	.....	.....
V	i.	passus quintus de visione	passus quintus de visione 11 hic consciencia predicauit 24 deuastator 43 penitencia 54 luxuria 58 Inuidia confessione querit 107 hic venit Auaricia 146 hic gulosus vadit ad ecclesiam
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione	passus VI 104 septem sorores in veritate continent 115 scissor bursarorum
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione	passus VII 78 hic petrus plowman facit testamentum suum
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	passus octauus de visione	passus VIII
	e.	.....	.....
IX	i.	hic incipit vita de dowel dobet & dobest	vita de dowel dobet and dobest secundum wit & resoun
	e.	.....	.....
X	i.	primus passus de dowel	primus passus in secundo libro
	e.	.....	.....
XI	i.	passus secundus de dowel	[initial only]
	e.	Amen Amen	explicit liber petri plouman



Prol.	i.	[space for initial] 38 b[eggars?]	[initial only]
	e.	.....	.....
I	i.	primus passus de visione 124 N 182 N	[initial only]
	e.	.....	.....
II	i.	passus secundus de visione	tercius passus de visione (passus 3us) 57 carta
	e.	.....	.....
III	i.	passus tercius de visione	passus tercius de visione (passus tercius de visione)
	e.	.....	.....
IV	i.	Quartus passus de visione  34 "panne come pes" enlarged, n	passus quartus de visione (passus 4us)
	e.	.....	.....
V	i.	passus quintus de visione	passus quintus de visione (passus 5us)
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	sextus passus de visione	passus sextus de visione (passus 6us)
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	septimus passus de visione  71 nota nomina vxor petri & filio & filii text ends, damaged, at VII 213a	passus septimus de visione (passus 7us) 78 In dei nomine [in English in text] 97 marked for rubric
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	(passus octauus)	passus octauus de visione  text ends, damaged, at VIII 142.

Prol.	i.	Perys plowman	.....
	B 14	þis is þe werld & þe condicioun of it	
		40 Beggeris; 58 freris	
		68 pardoners; 83 parsonys	
		87 Bishoppys bachelerys maysterys & doctoris	
		112 a kyng; 146 conseyl of ratons and of smale mys	
	Exp.	.....	.....
I	i.	thys is þe fryst part of þis book perys plowman	primus passus [margin]
	B 59	þe dongion	
		74 holy church	
		172 exemplum	96 nota de milites
	e.	.....	.....
II	i.	þis is þe secunde part of þis book. Perys plowman	passus secundus de visione
			57 nota de carta
	e.	.....	.....
III	i.	thys is þe thryede part of þis book ho þe kyng concelyt mede to be maryid	passus quartus de visione [margin] 127 jaylers
	e.	.....	.....
IV	i.	.....	passus quartus de visione 35 nota de pace
	e.	.....	.....
V	i.	.....	.....
		V 127 end of B text A V 106ff follows	44 nota de superbia 53 de luxuria 107 nota de cupiditate 146 nota de gula 212 nota de accidia 232 nota de [veritate?]
	e.	Here endyt þe ferd part of þis book plowman	.....
VI	i.	[initial only]	.....
			25 nota de petri-plowman
	e.	Here endyth þe v part of þis book pers plowman	.....
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	.....	.....
	e.	Here endyth þe sexte part of þis book pers plowman	.....
VIII	i.	[initial only] 66 Beggerys 82 olde men	passus octauus de visione [margin]
	e.	[text missing VIII-IX 96 the loss originating in another copy]	Explicit visio de Willelmi de Petro Plowman
IX	i.		incipit vita de dowele dobet & dobest secundum wit & resoun 97 syre dowel
		117 dobet	
	e.	.....	.....



A	Harley 3954: H <sup>3</sup>	Pierpont Morgan M 818: J
X	i. .... 76 dowel is a deuk 106 relygyoun; 132 wedlac 148 kaym is namyd; 165 Noe 186 Vnkende couplys 199 weddyng for catel 210 ffondelynges e. here endyth þe seueth part off þis book	primus passus de dowele         .....
XI	i. .... 97 Will lokyd on stodye 110 þe weyze to stody & to clergyze 125 þe techyng of wytt 158 sorcery; 177 clergyze 184 Actyf lyf 188 contemplatyf lyf 204 Gregory of rome useth of relygioun 226 kynghod & knythod 235 þe saluacyon of sarazenys 265 Salomoun; 270 aristotyl 279 dismas þe theff 303 austyne e. Explicit tractus de perys plowman quap herun Qui cum patre & spiritu sancto uiuit & regnat per omnia secula seculorum. Amen	.....                     .....
XII	i.   e.	passus tercius de dowele 12 tunc vidit scriptura ends XII 88

A Soc. of Antiquaries 687: M			Rawlinson poetry 137: R	
Prol.	i.	.....	hic incipit liber qui vocatur pers plowman. prologus	
	e.	.....	.....	
I	i.	[paraph mark only]	passus primus de visione	
	e.	.....	.....	
II	i.	[paraph mark only] 86a, 87, 150 marked for rubric	passus secundus de visione	
	e.	.....	.....	
III	i.	.....	passus tercius de visione	
	e.	.....	.....	
IV	i.	passus quintus de visione	passus quartus de visione	
	e.	.....	.....	
V	i.	Quintus passus 53 Superbia 58 inuidia	passus quintus de visione	
			158 red initial [Glutton] 220 " " [Sloth]	
	e.	.....	.....	
VI	i.	passus vjus	passus sextus de visione	
	e.	.....	.....	
VII	i.	.....	passus septimus de visione	
	e.	.....	.....	
VIII	i.	[pencil mark //]	passus octauus de visione	
	e.	Explicit visio de petro plouthman	Explicit hic visio Willelmi de petro etc.	
IX	i.	hic incipit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest	Et hic incipit vita de dowel dobet & dobest secundum wit & resoun	
	e.	.....	.....	
X	i.	[pencil mark //]	passus primus de dowel	
	e.	.....	.....	
XI	i.	[pencil mark //]	.....	
	e.	Explicit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest	.....	
XII	i.	.....	passus tercius de dowel	
	e.	Explicit prologus de dowel dobet & dobest	Explicit dowel	



A		University College 45: U	Eng. poetry a 1: V, and Lincoln's Inn Hale 150: L
Prol.	i.	[initial only]	V has only one rubric, at VIII/IX: Incipit hic Dowel. Dobet. and Dobest. All passus divisions are marked by initials (as are many points in the text), and by a blank line, presumably for future rubrication.
	e.	.....	
I	i.	passus primus de visione	
	e.	.....	L has no rubrics. Passus are distinguished by marks: u at passus I and // passus II-VIII
II	i.	passus secundus de visione 172 nota	
	e.	.....	
III	i.	passus tercius de visione	
	e.	.....	
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione 64 nota	
	e.	.....	
V	i.	passus quintus de visione 213[paraph: Sloth] 233 "	
	e.	.....	
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione 25 nota	
	e.	.....	
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione 23[paraph]	
	e.	.....	
VIII	i.	passus octauus de visione	
	e.	Explicit hic uisio Willelmi de Petro plowman	
IX	i.	Et hic incipit dowel dobet & dobest secundum wit & resoun 69[paraph]	
	e.	.....	
X	i.	primus passus de dowel	
	e.	.....	
XI	i.	.....	
	e.	.....	
XII	i.	passus tercius de dowel etc.	
	e.	ends imperfectly, damaged, at XII 19a	

A+C		Liverpool U.L. F 4.8: Ch	Harley 6041: H <sup>2</sup>
Prol.	i.	[initial only] (i)	[initial only]
	e.	.....	.....
I	i.	primus passus de visione	passus primus
	e.	.....	.....
II	i.	passus secundus de visione	passus secundus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
III	i.	passus tercius de visione	passus tercius de visione
	e.	.....	.....
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione	passus quartus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
V	i.	passus quintus de visione	passus quintus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione	passus sextus de visione vt prius
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione vt prius	passus septimus de visione vt prius
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	passus octauus de visione vt prius	passus octauus de visione vt prius
	e.	Explicit visio Willelmi de petro le plouzman	Explicit hic visio Willelmi de petro the plouzman
IX	i.	Eciam incipit vita de (ii) dowel dobet et dobest secundum witte & Resoun	Eciam incipit vita de dowel dobet and dobest secundum wit & reson
X	i.	passus primus de Dowelle	passus primus de dowel etc.
	e.	.....	.....
XI	i.	passus secundus de Dowelle	passus secundus de dowel etc.
	e.	[C XI 299ff follows A XI]	[at end of A XI:] passus tercius de dowel Breuis oracio penetrat celum [followed by:] C XI 299ff [at end of C XI:] (primus passus deficit hic) [margin]
XII	i.	.....	.....
	e.	.....	.....
XIII	i.	.....	passus quartus [margin]
	e.	.....	.....
XIV	i.	passus quartus de Dowel	passus quintus de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XV	i.	passus quintus de Dowel	passus primus de dobet
	e.	.....	.....
XVI	i.	passus sextus de Dowel vt supra	passus primus de dobet
	e.	.....	.....
XVII	i.	passus septimus de Dowelle et explicit. Incipit Dobet	passus octauus hic finitur de dowel Incipit primus passus de dobetere
	e.	.....	.....
XVIII	i.	passus primus de dobet (iii)	passus primus de do bet
	e.	.....	.....
XIX	i.	passus secundus de dobet	passus secundus de do bet
	e.	.....	.....
XX	i.	passus tercius de dobet	passus tercius de do bet
	e.	Explicit dobet	Explicit de dobet



A+C      Liverpool U.L. F 4.8: Ch

Harley 6041: H<sup>2</sup>

XXI      i.    Et incipit de dobest (iv)

Incipit primus passus de  
do best. do best

e.    .....

.....

XXII    i.    passus secundus de Dobest

secundus passus de do best

e.    Explicit liber Willelmi de  
petro le plouzman

.....

[scribal annotation not listed here, as this is the scribe's personal copy rather than a professionally rubricated MS. It is listed in full in Appendix D]

[In XVI only, words here distinguished in text act as subject guides in addition to listed rubrics]

Prol.	i. primus passus de visione Petri plowghman	[no text]
	e. finis	[no text]
I	i. passus secundus de visione	[no text] text starts I 76
	e. finis	.....
II	i. passus tercius de visione	passus secundus de visione vt supra
	e. finis	.....
III	i. passus quartus de visione	passus tercius de visione vt prius
	e. finis	.....
IV	i. passus quintus de visione	passus quartus de visione vt prius
	e. finis	.....
V	i. passus sextus de visione	passus quintus de visione vt prius 45 Superbia 54 Luxuria 58 Invidia 107 Auaricia 146 Gula 212 Accidia
	e. finis	.....
VI	i. passus septimus de visione	passus sextus de visione vt prius
	e. finis	.....
VII	i. passus octauus de visione	passus septimus de visione vt prius
	e. finis	.....
VIII	i. passus nonus de visione	passus octauus de visione vt prius
	e. explicit visio	.....
IX	i. Hic incipit vita de dowell dobett & dobest secundum witte & Reson	A text ends at VIII 184
	e. finis	
X	i. secundus passus de dowel	passus nonus de visione & vltimus et hic desinit. Et de cetero tangit auctor de inquisicionibus de Dowel Dobettre & Dobest sicut patebit speculantibus. [C Xff follows] inquisicio prima
	e. finis	.....
XI	i. passus tercius de dowell [after A XI 313:] Amen, finis de dowel [cancelled by main hand. C XI 299ff follows]	primus passus de Dobet
	e. finis	.....



XII	i.	passus quartus de dowell	passus secundus de dowell
	e.	finis	.....
XIII	i.	passus quintus de dowell	passus tercius de dowell
	e.	finis	.....
XIV	i.	passus sextus de dowell	passus quartus de dowell
	e.	finis	.....
XV	i.	passus septimus de dowell	passus quintus de dowell
	e.	finis	.....
XVI	i.	passus octauus de dowell	passus sextus de dowell
	e.	finis	.....
XVII	i.	passus nonus de dowell	passus septimus de Dowell et hic desinit. Et hic incipit Inquisicio prima de Dobet
	e.	finis	.....
XVIII	i.	passus primus de dobett	passus primus de dobet
	e.	finis	.....
XIX	i.	passus secundus de dobett	secundus passus de Dowell
	e.	finis	.....
XX	i.	passus tercius de dobett	tercius passus de Dobet
	e.	finis	.....
XXI	i.	primus passus de dobest	Quartus passus de dobet et hic desinit & incipit dobest
	e.	finis	[ends imperfectly, damaged, at XX1 450]
XXII	i.	passus secundus de dobest	
	e.	finis totaliter	

A+C		TCC R 3.14: T	"Westminster" MS: W
Prol.	i.	[initial only]	[initial only]
	e.	.....	.....
I	i.	primus passus de visione	primus passus de visione (capitulo ij)
	e.	.....	.....
II	i.	passus secundus de visione	secundus de visione (capitulo iij)
		5 tale of Mede þe maide	
	e.	.....	.....
III	i.	passus tercius de visione	passus tercius de visione (capitulo iiij)
	e.	.....	.....
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione	quartus passus de visione (capitulo v)
	e.	.....	.....
V	i.	passus quintus de visione	passus quintus de visione (capitulo vj)
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione vt prius	sextus passus de visione (capitulo vj) [altered from vij]
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione vt prius	septimus passus de visione (capitulo vij) [altered from viij]
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	passus octauus de visione vt prius	passus octauus de visione (capitulo viij)
	e.	Explicit hic visio Willelmi de petro de Plouzman	.....
IX	i.	Eciam incipit vita de do wel do bet & do best secundum wyt & resoun	Sequitur prologus de dowel dobett & dobest (capitulo ix)
	e.	.....	.....
X	i.	passus primus de dowel etc.	primus passus de dowel (capitulo x)
	e.	.....	.....
XI	i.	passus secundus de dowel etc.	passus secundus de dowel (capitulo xj) [altered from xij]
	e.	[at end of A XI:] passus tercius de dowel. Breuis oracio penetrat celum [C XI 299ff follows]	[at end of A XI:] (passus iiij de dowel) [then a blank line, followed by C XIIfff]
XII	i.	passus secundus de dobet	(capitulo xiiij)
	e.	.....	.....
XIII	i.	[initial only]	[a blank line] (v <sup>us</sup> de dowell capitulo xv)
	e.	.....	.....
XIV	i.	passus quartus de dowel	[blank line] (passus vj de dowel capitulo xvj)
	e.	.....	.....
XV	i.	passus quintus de visione vt supra	[blank line] (vijus passus de dowel capitulo xvij)
	e.	.....	.....



XVI	i.	passus sextus de dowel	[blank line] (viijus & vltimus passus de dowel capitulo xviiij)
	e.	.....	[blank line] (Explicit vltimus passus de dowel)
XVII	i.	passus septimus de dowel et explicit	& incipit primus passus de dobet capitulo xix)
	e.	.....	.....
XVIII	i.	passus primus de dobet	[blank line] (ij passus de dobet capitulo xx)
	e.	.....	.....
XIX	i.	passus secundus de dobet	[blank line] (iiij passus de dobet capitulo xxi)
	e.	.....	.....
XX	i.	passus tercius de dobet	[blank line] (iiij passus de dobet capitulo xxii)
	e.	Explicit de dobet	[blank line] (Explicit vltimus passus de dobet
XXI	i.	Et incipit de dobest	& incipit primus de dobest capitulo xxxiiij)
			385 nota de corpore note þis well
	e.	.....	.....
XXII	i.	secundus passus de dobest	[blank line] (ij passus de dobest capitulo xxiiiij & vltimo)
	e.	Explicit	Explicit tractatus iij Piers plowman nominatus

[The few underlined names in Z  
act as subject guides in addition  
to the listed rubrics]

- Prol. i. [initial only]  
55 nota
- I e. ....  
i. passus primus  
83 nota  
125 nota
- II e. ....  
i. passus secundus  
49 nota  
79 nota [pointing hand]  
131 n.
- III e. ....  
i. passus tercius  
90 n.  
103 n.  
165 n., +
- IV e. ....  
i. passus quartus  
91 n.  
141 n.
- V e. ....  
i. passus quintus  
43 n.
- VI e. ....  
i. passus sextus  
1 n.  
43 n.
- VII e. ....  
i. passus septimus  
23 n. +  
97 n. +  
139 n.  
259 n.
- VIII e. ....  
i. passus octauus  
45 n.
- e. explicit vita. et visio  
petri plowman
- X i. [C Xff follows, initial only]  
e. Explicit passus secundus
- XI i. incipit tercius de dowel  
e. Explicit passus tercius
- XII i. incipit quartus de dowel  
e. Explicit passus quartus
- XIII i. incipit quintus de dowel  
e. Explicit passus quintus
- XIV i. incipit sextus de dowel  
e. Explicit passus sextus
- XV i. incipit septimus de dowel  
e. Explicit passus septimus
- XVI i. Incipit octauus de dowel  
235 nota distinctio  
e. hic explicit passus vijus &  
vltimus de Dowel



- XVII i. Iam incipit passus primus de  
Dobet  
132 nota  
219 nota  
e. explicit passus primus
- XVIII i. incipit passus secundus de Dobet  
218-9 [pointing hand]  
e. Explicit passus secundus
- XIX i. incipit passus tercius de Dobet  
e. Explicit passus tercius
- XX i. incipit passus quartus de dobet  
e. Explicit quartus & vltimus  
passus de dobet
- XXI i. Incipit lus de Dobest  
384 nota  
e. ....
- XXII i. Incipit passus 2us de Dobest  
e. Explicit passus secundus de dobest

[Underlined names in Bm act as  
subject guides in addition to the  
listed rubrics]

Prol. i. [initial only]

56 hic vidit fratres to  
preche for copis  
66 there prechid a pard-  
oner wip a bulle  
81 here preden parsons &  
parische prests of  
leue to dwele at  
London  
95 here conscience accused  
hem parsons & prest etc.  
128 bihold here of ["peters"  
erased] power  
144 kynde wyt & þe comune  
contreuaden a plough etc.  
166 conseil of ratons and  
of mees etc.

I e. ....  
i. passus primus de visione  
petri le ploughman  
3 here tolde holi church  
to Wille mony witty  
þyngis  
90 kynges & knyghtes shulden  
kepe holicherche etc.  
102 nota of kyngis  
125 of fendis fallyng etc.  
174a encumbred with synne

II e. ....  
i. passus secundus de visione  
ubi prius  
40a þe weddyng of mede etc.  
54 biddying to þe bridale  
of mede a fair company  
62 Bihold here nota  
114 explicit carta de mede

III e. ....  
i. passus tercius de visione  
55 [hand pointing]  
283 " "  
324a " "

IV e. ....  
i. passus quartus de visione  
145 [pointing hand]  
e. ....

[initial only]

56 [h]ic vidit fratres [t]o  
preche for copes

.....  
passus primus de visione  
petri le ploughman

.....  
passus secundus de visione  
ubi prius

.....  
passus tercius de visione

.....  
passus quartus de visione

.....



B		Add. 10574: Bm	Bodley 814: Bo
V	i.	passus quintus de visione etc. 62 superbia 71 luxuria 76 Inuidia 188 cupiditas 296 gula 328 til robyn þe ropere aros bi þe soupe 385 Accidia	passus quintus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	..... 86 testamentum petri ploughman	(passus sextus)
		259, 324 [pointing hand]	159 nota
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione vt supra etc.	passus septimus de visione vt supra etc.
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	passus octauus de visione vt supra Et hic incipit primus de dowel etc.	passus octauus de visione vt supra Et hic incipit primus de dowel etc.
	e.	.....	.....
IX	i.	(passus nonus de visione et ihus de dowel) 63, 82 [pointing hand]	passus nonus de visione et secundus de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
X	i.	passus decimus et tercius de dowel 151 nota 152 [pointing hand] 185 " " 311 " "	passus decimus et tercius de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XI	i.	passus undecimus et quartus de dowel	passus undecimus et quartus de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XII	i.	passus duodecimus et quintus de dowel	passus duodecimus et quintus de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XIII	i.	passus terciodecimus et sextus de dowel 430 [pointing hand]	passus terciodecimus et sextus de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XIV	i	passus quartodecimus et vijus de dowel	passus quartodecimus et vijus de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XV	i.	passus xvus de dowel Et incipit primus de dobet 322, 562 [pointing hand]	passus xvus de dowel Et incipit primus de dobet
	e.	.....	.....
XVI	i.	passus sextodecimus et secundus de dobet	passus sextodecimus et secundus de dobet
	e.	.....	.....
XVII	i.	passus decimus septimus et tercius de dobet	passus decimus septimus et tercius de dobet
	e.	.....	.....

B

Add. 10574: Bm

Bodley 814: Bo

XVIII i. passus decimus octauus  
et quartus de dobet  
e. ....  
XIX i. passus decimus nonus  
et quintus de dobet  
459 [hand pointing]  
e. ....  
XX i. passus vicesimus et  
primus de dobest  
58, 184 [pointing hand]  
e. ....

passus decimus octauus  
et quartus de dobet  
.....  
passus decimus nonus  
et quintus de dobet  
.....  
passus vicesimus et  
primus de dobest  
Explicit hic



[Boxed names in C act as subject guides in addition to the listed rubrics]

[Underlined names in C<sup>2</sup> act as subject guides in addition to the listed rubrics]

Prol. i. [initial only]  
131a versus

[initial only]

38 [Text reads: "Qui non laborat non manducet" underlined in red]

138 "

68 pardoner  
83 curatis

I e. ....  
i. passus primus de visione ~  
188-9 contn [?]

.....  
[initial only]

II e. ....  
i. passus secundus de visione  
vt supra  
113 nota

.....  
[initial only]

III e. ....  
i. passus tercius de visione  
2-3, 33, nota  
51, 95a, 110 nota bene  
110, 169, 259, 299, 311  
338 nota

.....  
[initial only]

IV e. ....  
i. passus quartus de visione  
21, 28, 98, 113, 150 nota

.....  
[initial only]

V e. ....  
i. passus quintus de visione  
14 nota  
28 nota bene

.....  
[initial only]  
9 why pestelence  
23 A sermon of Reson  
59 Amen

62 superbia  
71 luxuria  
75 invidia  
83, 92 nota

62 superbia  
71 luxuria  
75 Envie

135 ira  
137 nota  
188 auaricia  
255, 265 nota  
269a versus

135 Ira  
136 ffrers  
142 pointing hand  
188 Auaricia  
264 nota

274 nota  
296 gula  
385 accidia  
418, 532, 589, 212 nota

296 Gula  
385 accidia  
510 [paraph]  
560 nota  
560f how þou shalt go on a pilgrimage  
562 ten comaundements  
630 a cutpurse  
639 a pardoner  
641 a common woman

e. ....

.....

VI i. passus sextus de visione  
etc.

[initial only]

3 quod Perkyn the plowman  
14 nota  
26 þe leuyng of true  
knyztis  
57 how pcers gooþe on  
pilgrimage  
61 .1. a seed leep  
86 Testamentum petri plowman  
128 of ydell beggers  
144 of heremytes  
164 a plez  
167 wastoure  
189 how beggars and wastouris  
ben schasticed  
212 Bolde beggers  
254 leche craft

VII e. ....  
i. passus septimus de visione  
vt supra

84, 121, 147, 166, 180  
nota

e. ....

.....  
[initial only]  
[later hand: "passus octauus  
de visione"]

18 marchundis  
26 how þou shalt do þin  
almes

73 Caton of almes dedis  
84 ffalse beggers

[later hand: "Explicit visio  
Willelmi de petro plowman et  
sequitur vita de dowel Dobett  
et Do beste secundum wytt &  
reson"]

VIII i. passus octauus de visione  
vt supra

8, 24, 62 nota  
74 thouzt

96 Dobest  
112, 127 nota

IX e. ....  
i. passus nonus de visione

passus octauus

20 contra  
78 Do well  
85 Do bett  
96 Do beste

.....  
passus nonus  
18 inwytte  
19-22 see well, say well,  
Here well, werke well  
Goo well  
23 what is kynde  
55 anima  
82-3 nota  
157 nota of wedlock

X e. ....  
i. passus decimus vt supra  
65, 74, 253, 286, 311,  
331, 348, 368, 392, 405  
447, 473 nota

.....  
passus decimus  
32 nota how good carpinge is  
not loued  
39 of mynstralles  
160 nota to lerne holi wrzte  
475 Exemplum bonum

e. ....

.....



XI	i.	passus undecimus et supra 68, 140, 154, 171, 233, 283, 369, 395 nota	passus xjus 54 ffreris 63 ffrere 141 troianus 148-9 nota 150 be ground of trentales 171 Exemplum bonum 276 war monks & channonys
	e.	.....	.....
XII	i.	passus duodecimus 43 nota bene 67, 72, 97, 214, 240, 259, 269 nota	passus duodecimus  237-8 tokenes of Riche men
	e.	.....	.....
XIII	i.	passus terciodecimus 43, 69, 91, 118, 151, 195, 409 nota 433 nota bene	passus terciodecimus 7 ffreris 11 curatis vnlernd 39a at be table 65 ffreris 74 nota, [pointing hand] 90 Doctouris of ffreris 265-6 nota
	e.	.....	.....
XIV	i.	passus quartodecimus de visione vt supra 61a nota 64 nota bene 69, 76, 106, 127, 180a, nota	passus quartodecimus  141-2 nota
	e.	.....	.....
XV	i.	passus xvus Explicit de do wel et incipit primus de do best 47, 55, 74, 91, 112 nota 115 faier wordes . 140 nyzt 196 piers 201 nota 212 piers 240, 263, 276, 306, 313, 399 nota 436 bancour 443, 489, 539, 560, 531, 583 nota	passus quintodecimus  77 pride of ffreris 82 ffreris 90 curatours 124 prestis nota 321 of ziftis into religious  399 Makomede with his dowue
	e.	.....	.....
XVI	i.	passus sextodecimus etc. 11, 143, 216 nota	passus xvjus
	e.	.....	.....
XVII	i.	passus septimus decimus 283, 303 nota	passus xvijus
	e.	.....	.....
XVIII	i.	passus decimus octauus 286, 292, 342 nota 408-9 versus	passus xvijj
	e.	.....	.....
XIX	i.	passus decimus nonus	passus xix 262 pers plowman
	e.	.....	.....

B CUL Dd 1.17: C

CUL Ll 4.14: C<sup>2</sup>

- XX i. passus xxus et primus de  
do best  
223 nota  
e. Explicit hic dialagus [sic]  
petri plowman

passus xxus et primus  
Explicit hic Dialogus  
petri plowman



[Names in F which are distinguished act as subject guides in addition to listed rubrication]

- Prol i. [initial only, "Pierce Ploughman" added later]  
C 41 [mark for rubric]  
47 " " "  
181 +
- I e. ....  
i. passus primus de visione  
C 82 +  
114 nota bene  
e. ....
- II i. passus secundus de visione  
eius vt prius  
C 26, 37, 39a +  
e. ....
- III i. passus tercius de visione  
petri le ploughman  
B 160 +  
e. ....
- IV i. passus quartus de visione  
e. ....
- V i. passus quintus de visione  
3f hic [2 words, illeg.]  
petrus
- VI i. passus sextus de visione  
petri le ploughman  
86 testament  
241, 311 +  
e. ....
- VII i. passus septimus de visione  
vt supra  
154 +  
e. ....
- VIII i. passus octauus de visione  
vt supra. & hic incipit  
e. ....
- IX i. passus nonus de visione  
& secundus de dowell  
e. ....
- X i. passus tercius de dowl  
135, 339-40, 437, 445, 464  
+  
e. ....

Incipit pers pe plowman  
["Piers the Plowman" added later]

Explicit passus primus  
Incipit passus secundus

Explicit passus secundus de  
visione Petri Plouhman  
Incipit passus tercius

Explicit passus tercius  
Incipit passus quartus

170 [extra initial]  
228 " "

.....  
.....  
Explicit passus quartus  
Incipit passus quintus

60 [initial]  
188 " [avarice]  
296 " [glutton]  
385 [space for initial,  
sloth]

.....  
.....

.....  
.....

Explicit passus quintus  
Incipit passus sextus

.....  
.....

Explicit passus sextus  
Incipit passus septimus  
140 [initial]

Explicit passus septimus de  
dowel

B	Cotton Caligula A XI: Cot		CCCC 201: F
XI	i.	passus undecimus & quartus do wel 412 nota quid est do wel	Incipit passus octauus
	e.	.....	[before XI 321:] Explicit passus octauus incipit passus nonus
XII	i.	passus duodecimus de visione & quintus de do wel 26, 36 +	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit passus nonus
XIII	i.	passus terciusdecimus de visione & sextus de do wel 202 [insertion mark for paraph] 231, 330, 339, 342 +	Incipit passus decimus
	e.	.....	.....
XIV	i.	passus quartusdecimus de visione & vij <sup>us</sup> de do wel primus de dowell etc. 186 +	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit passus xv <sup>us</sup>
XV	i.	passus xv <sup>us</sup> de visione vltimus de do wel & primus de do bett 138, 252, 274, 311 600 +	Incipit passus xj <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	Explicit passus xj <sup>us</sup>
XVI	i.	passus sextus decimus & secundus de do bett 42-3, 92, 180, 236 +	Incipit passus xij <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	[before XVI 168:] Explicit passus xij <sup>us</sup> Incipit passus xiijs
XVII	i.	passus septimusdecimus & tercius de do bett 58, 140 + 210 [insertion mark for rubric]	[see above]
	e.	.....	Explicit passus xiijs
XVIII	i.	passus decimus octauus & quartus de do bett	Incipit passus xiiij <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	Explicit passus xiiij <sup>us</sup>
XIX	i.	passus decimus nonus & quintus de do bett	Incipit passus xv <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	Explicit passus xv <sup>us</sup>
XX	i.	passus vicesimus & primus de do best	Incipit passus xvj <sup>us</sup>
	e.	Explicit hic opus hoc	Explicit



Prol.	i.	Hic incipit petrus plowman [on a flyleaf, by an early annotator: "The prophecies of piers plowman"] 58 [insertion mark for rubric] 112 [initial] 147 þe profycy off þe catt 150 S	[initial only]
	e.	Explicit primus passus de visione	.....
I	i.	..... 3 mater ecclesia 27 Lott 59 + 111 Lucifer 151 Moises 187af fidelia; caritas; caritas 197 auaricia	passus primus de visione
	e.	Explicit secundus de visione	.....
III	i.	..... 58 [initial]	passus secundus de visione
	e.	Explicit tercius passus de visione	.....
III	i.	..... 101 [initial] 260 suale 320 [scribal sign] 325-6 profyce	passus tercius de visione
	e.	Explicit quartus passus de visione	.....
IV	i.	..... 116 a profecy	passus quartus de visione
	e.	Explicit quintus passus de visione	.....
V	i.	..... 62 superbia [initial in text] 71 Luxuria 75 inuidia 135 Ira [initial in text] 188 [a]uaricia [initial in text] 296 gula [initial in text] 385 accidia " " " 556 [initial]	passus quintus de visione 62 Superbia 71 luxuria 71 inuidia 135 Ira 188 Cupiditas 296 Gula 385 Accidia
	e.	Explicit sextus passus de visione	.....
VI	i.	..... 253 [initial] 325-6 a profecy 327-8 [scribal sign]	passus sextus de visione
	e.	Explicit septimus passus de visione	.....

VII	i.	..... 107 [initial]	passus septimus de visione
	e.	Explicit octauus passus de visione	.....
VIII	i.	hic incipit primus passus de dowell 27 similitudo 78 dowell [non-scribal?] 85 dobettre " 96 dobest "	passus octauus de visione & primus de do weel
	e.	Explicit primus passus de dowell	.....
IX	i.	.....	passus nonus de visione & secundus de do weel
	e.	Explicit secundus passus de dowell	.....
X	i.	..... 23 Job 118 [scribal? mark] 315-6 profycy of [r]elgyon 317-8 [sign, poss. scribal]	passus x <sup>us</sup> de visione & iij <sup>us</sup> de do weel
	e.	Explicit tercius passus de dowell	.....
XI	i.	.....	passus xj <sup>us</sup> de visione & iiij <sup>us</sup> de do weel
	e.	Explicit quartus passus de dowell	.....
XII	i.	.....	passus xj <sup>us</sup> de visione & v <sup>us</sup> de do weel
	e.	Explicit quintus passus de dowell	.....
XIII	i.	.....	passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> de visione & vj <sup>us</sup> de do weel
	e.	Explicit sextus passus de dowell	.....
XIV	i.	.....	passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> de visione & vij <sup>us</sup> de do weel
	e.	Explicit septimus & vltimus passus de dowell	.....
XV	i.	Incipit primus passus de dobett	passus xv <sup>us</sup> finis de do weel Incipit hic de do bet
	e.	Explicit primus passus de dobett	.....
XVI	i.	.....	passus ii <sup>us</sup> de do bet
	e.	Explicit passus tercius de doobett	.....
XVII	i.	.....	passus iij <sup>us</sup> de do bet
	e.	Explicit quartus passus de dobett	.....
XVIII	i.	..... 30 argument off lyf & dethe	passus iiij <sup>us</sup> de do bet
	e.	Explicit quartus passus de dobett	.....



XIX i. ....

passus v<sup>us</sup> & vltimus de dobet  
Hic incipit passus jus de  
do best

465 a profecy  
466f [scribal? sign]

e. Explicit quintus & vltimus  
passus de dobett

.....

XX i. Incipit primus passus de  
dobest

passus ij<sup>us</sup> & ultimus de  
do best

23 spiritus

e. Explicit hic diolagus [sic]  
petri plowman

Explicit visio petri  
ploughman

[Names in red in Ht act as subject guides in addition to listed rubrics. Line numbers for Ht are approximate.]

- Prol. i. Piers Ploghman  
 14 tour; 20 plowmen  
 28 ancras; 31 marchauntes  
 33 mynstrales; 40 beggars  
 46 pilgrimes; 58 freres  
 68 pardoner; 83 parsones  
 & vicares; 100 pope  
 101 cardinals; 112 kyng  
 123 lunatyk; 143 communitas [?]  
 146 counceil of ratons  
 158 a raton; 182 a mous;  
 211 men of lawe; 217 Barons &  
 oper
- e. ....
- I i. passus primus de visione  
 3 a lady  
 21-2 pinges in comune
- e. ....
- II i. passus secundus de visione  
 75 Chartre  
 158 ffalsnes & ffavell  
 189 sothness
- e. ....
- III i. passus tercius de visione  
 303 prophesia  
 325 prophesia
- e. ....
- IV i. passus quartus  
 152 nota
- e. ....
- C V i. (passus v<sup>us</sup>)  
 70 nota
- e. ....
- B V i. [initial only]  
 B 62 pryde; 75 envye;  
 135 wrathe;  
 C VI 145-6 nota  
 B 188 covetise  
 296 Gula; 385 Slouthe
- e. ....
- VI i. [initial, running heading  
 "passus...sextus"]
- e. ....
- VII i. passus septimus
- e. ....
- VIII i. passus octauus
- e. ....
- IX i. passus nonus  
 77, 87 nota
- e. ....



B HL HM 114: Ht

B X/ i. passus decimus

C XI

[C V 173-5 follows B X 327a]

C V 174 prophesia

B 269 nota

C V 156-7 nota

B X 336 prophesia

A XI 276/ B X 392 nota

B X 420 nota

B X 429 nota

e. ....

B XI i. passus xi<sup>us</sup> & secundus de  
dowele

C XII 25 nota

e. ....

B XII/

C XIV i. passus xii<sup>us</sup> & tercius de  
do well

e. ....

B XIII/

C XV i. passus xiii<sup>us</sup>

B XIII 297, 348, 371, 381,  
422 nota

e. ....

B XIII 215/ C XV c. 183-4

i. passus xiiij<sup>us</sup>

e. ....

B XIII 457

i. passus xv<sup>us</sup> & quintus de  
Dobet

B XIV 129, 135, 199-200

222 nota

e. ....

B XV i. passus xvi<sup>us</sup> [altered to xvii<sup>us</sup>]  
& vi<sup>us</sup> de Dowele

B 81, 94, 133-4, 207, 335 nota

C XVII 42, 59-60 nota

B 342, 349, 361, 431, 539, 566  
nota

357 prophesia

e. ....

B XVI i. passus xvii<sup>us</sup> & ii<sup>us</sup> de do  
betir

e. ....

B XVII/ C XIX

i. passus xviii<sup>us</sup> & iiij de do betir  
306, 326, 332 nota

e. ....

B XVIII/ C XX

i. passus xix<sup>us</sup> & iiij<sup>us</sup> de do bet  
99, 127, 303, 348, 357 nota

e. ....

B XIX/ C XXI

i. passus xxi<sup>us</sup> & primus de do  
beste

156, 162 nota

e. ....

B

HL HM 114: Ht

B XX/ C XXII

- i. passus xxi<sup>us</sup> & ii<sup>us</sup> de dobest  
71, 80, 127, 135, 141, 147,  
154-5, 162, 183, 192, 198, 219,  
225, 236, 252, 266, 289 nota
- e. Explicit pers ploughman



[Names boxed in red in L act as  
subject guides in addition to  
listed rubrication]

Prol.	i.	Incipit liber de petro plowman 146 nota	[initial only]
	e.	.....	.....
I	i.	passus primus de visione	passus primus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
II	i.	passus secundus de visione ut supra 117, 230 +	passus secundus de visione ut supra
	e.	.....	.....
III	i.	passus iij <sup>us</sup> (de visione ut supra) 327 [pointing hand, red]	passus iij <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	.....
IV	i.	passus iiij <sup>us</sup> (de visione ut supra)	passus quartus de visione ut supra
	e.	.....	.....
V	i.	passus v <sup>us</sup> de visione (ut supra) 64 superbia [boxed in red] 71 luxuria " " 76 inuidia " " 135 Ira " " 139 nota [red] ["limitours & listres" underlined in red] 188 auaricia [boxed in red] 296 Gula " " 385 Accidia " " 561 nota [red]	passus quintus de visione 62 superbia [underlined in red] 71 luxuria " " 75 invidia " " 135 Ira " " 185 Avaricia " " 295 Gula " " 384 Accidia " "
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	passus vj <sup>us</sup> (de visione ut supra)	passus sextus de visione ut supra
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	passus vij <sup>us</sup> (de visione ut supra) 127a Indulgencia petri [red] 327 [pointing hand]	passus septimus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	passus octauus de visione & primus de dowel (et hic explicit et incipit inquisicio prima de dowel)	passus octauus de visione Et incipit inquisicio prima de dowell
	e.	.....	.....
IX	i.	passus nonus (de visione et[?] de[?] [rest illeg.])	passus nonus de visione
	e.	.....	.....
X	i.	passus x <sup>us</sup> (de visione et ii <sup>us</sup> dowel)	passus decimus de visione et ij <sup>us</sup> de dowel
	e.	.....	.....
XI	i.	passus xj <sup>us</sup> 320 nota	passus xj <sup>us</sup> de visione
	e.	.....	.....

B		Laud Misc. 581: L	Additional 35287: M
XII	i.	passus duodecimus	passus duodecimus
	e.	.....	.....
XIII	i.	passus terciodecimus 152-54 [marked off in red] saluacio [red] 270 nota [red]	passus xiiij <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	.....
XIV	i.	passus xiiij <sup>us</sup>	passus xiiij <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	.....
XV	i.	passus xv <sup>us</sup> Finit dowel et incipit dobet	passus xv  83-4 nota de fratribus [underlined in red] 148 quid est caritas [underlined in red]
		557 nota 562 n.	
	e.	.....	.....
XVI	i.	passus xvj <sup>us</sup> et primus de dobet	passus xvj <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	.....
XVII	i.	passus xvij <sup>us</sup> (et secundus de dobet)	passus xvij <sup>us</sup> 55 l. x pc [possibly "Xpi"]
	e.	.....	.....
XVIII	i.	passus xviiij <sup>us</sup> (et tercius de dobet)	passus xviiij <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	.....
XIX	i.	passus xix <sup>us</sup> (et explicit dobet et incipit dobest)	passus xix <sup>us</sup>
	e.	.....	.....
XX	i.	passus xx <sup>us</sup> et primus de dobest 315 nota [red]	passus xx <sup>us</sup>
	e.	Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman (ij <sup>us</sup> de dobest)	Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman



[all rubrics  
in O underlined in red  
except those marked \*]

Prol. i.	["Piers Plowman" heads page; at head of work initial only] 33 mynystrilis 38 qui non laborat non manducet 47 pilgrimys; 55 heremytis 57 ffreris; 64 charitas * 68 perdonneris; 83 curatis 131a versus*; 140a, 145 versus; 146 Ratounes 179 n*; 182 myce; 226 cookes	[starts imperfectly]
I	e. .... i. primus passus  75 holi chirche 95 knyȝthod	..... passus primus de visione petri plowman
II	e. .... i. secundus passus 74a carta; 115 theologia 174 official; 183 ffreris 213 how falsnesse flay to be freris 215 marchauntes 222 pardonneres; 226 leches 228 spiceers; 232 ffreris	..... [text missing]
III	e. .... i. passus tercius (de visione)  11 murpe*; 26 clerkis 35 confessours 37 how freris schryue folk 87 meyres; 120 conscience 297 lordis* [could be reader] 313 huntynge curatis	..... passus tercius de visione petri plowman ut supra etc.
IV	e. .... i. [initial] (passus iiij <sup>us</sup> )  126 pylgrimage e. ....	..... passus quartus de visione petri plowman ut supra  .....

B		Oriel College MS 79: O	Rawlinson poetry 38: R
V	i.	passus quintus	passus quintus de visione petri plowman ut supra
		9 why pestilence	
		24 nota sermo 25 quomodo	
		ratio predicat 56 pyl-	
		grimes; 63 superbia	
		71 luxuria; 76 Envie;	
		82 [illeg]*; 135 Ira	
		136 ffreris; 181 make knowe*	
		188 Auaricia; 296 Gula;	
		385 accidia; 560 nota	
		561-2 how þou schalt goo on	
		pilgrymage; 563 þe ten.	
		comaundements;	
		630 a cutpurs	
		639 a pardoner	
		641 a comune woman	
	e.	.....	.....
VI	i.	passus sextus	passus sextus de visione ut supra
		15 nota	
		27 þe lyuyng of trewe	
		knyztis	
		57 how peers goop on	
		pilgrimage	
		61 a seed leep	
		86 testamentum petri	
		plowman [last word red]	
		129 of ydel beggers	
		144 of heremytes; 164 miles	
		167 wastour; nota*	
		191 how beggers & wastouris	
		been chastised	
		212 bolde beggers	
	e.	.....	.....
VII	i.	passus 7 <sup>us</sup>	passus septimus de visione ut supra
		18 marchauntis	
		26 how þou shalt do þin	
		almes	
		73 catoun of almes dedis	
		101f þe pardoun of peris	
		plowman [red]	
		187 now haþ p[liers?]	
		p[ardon?]	
	e.	.....	.....
VIII	i.	passus octauus	passus octauus (de visione petri plowman incipit dowel dobet & dobest)
		20 contra	
		90 Do best	
	e.	.....	.....
IX	i.	passus nonus	passus nonus de visione ut supra
		55 anima	
		82 nota	
		158 nota of wedlok	
	e.	.....	.....



B	Oriel College MS 79: O	Rawlinson poetry 38: R
X	i. passus decimus  32 nota how good carping is not loued 39 of mynystralis 89a de elemosina [red]* 160 nota to lerne holi writ 311 religioun 475 Exemplum bonum	passus decimus de visione ut supra
XI	e. .... i. passus xj <sup>us</sup>  54, 62, 70 ffreris 72 exemplum; 143 troianus 150 nota þe ground of trentalis 276 war munkes & chanouns 278 nota; 283 of annuelerie prestis	..... passus x <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra
XII	e. .... i. passus duodecimus  210 [scribal sign]	..... passus xj <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra
XIII	e. .... i. passus terciodecimus  7 ffreris; 11 curatis 65 ffreris; 70 nota 73a nota* [red] 90 Dottors of freris 91 [scribal sign] 434 lo lordis & prelati	..... passus duodecimus de visione ut supra
XIV	e. .... i. passus quartodecimus  76 of sodom & gomor.* [red] 98 where is charite	..... passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra
XV	e. .... i. passus quinto decimus  23 Anima; 77 pride of ffreris; 82 ffreris 90 curatis; 119 prestis 149 charite 152 longe wille 165 Charite; 239 consistorie 313 Dietyng of religious 321 of ziftis into religious 323 nota; 329 deridendo 340 quod est dare impiis [red] 341 of munkys; 399 machomede wip his dowue 414 nota; 551 war  e. ....	..... passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra  134-9 nota  ..... passus xiiij <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra  152 Longe Wille [red]  .....

B	Oriel College MS 79: O	Rawlinson poetry 38: R
XVI	i. passus xvj <sup>us</sup>	passus xv <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra
	e. ....	.....
XVII	i. passus decimoseptimus	passus xvj <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra
	e. ....	.....
XVIII	i. passus decimus octauus	passus xvij <sup>us</sup> de visione ut supra
	125 veritas	
	127 misericordia	
	165 Justicia	
	168 Pax	
	205 [scribal sign]	
	301 of a dreem*	
	e. ....	.....
XIX	i. passus decimus nonus	[text missing]
	253 [scribal sign]	
	275 quatuor virtutes cardinales	
	409 of cardinales	
	428 De papa	
	479 De pietate regis	
	e. ....	[text missing]
XX	i. passus vicesimus	[text missing]
	7 necessitas	
	53 anticrist	
	53ff Johannes dixit illud	
	Dan. 12 versus 9	
	[exp'tat] & pervenit	
	usque ad dies 1339.	
	versus inquit qui iter	
	facto anno x <sup>o</sup> dies super	
	numerus perfinium xii	
	p'stolat quibus & dus	
	Saluator in sua	
	magestate venturus est	
	58 ffreres; 241 ffreris	
	286 Westmynyster	
	301 ypocrisie; 306 schrifte	
	315 ffrere flaterer	
	338 ffrere leche	
	362 ffrere confessour	
	e. Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman. Lauderis christi quiafinit liber iste	passus ii <sup>us</sup> de dobest



[Names boxed in red in W act  
as subject guides in addition  
to listed rubrics]

Prol. i. [starts imperfectly]

[initial only]  
209 [extra initial]

I e. ....  
i. passus primus de visione

.....  
passus primus de visione

II e. ....  
i. passus secundus

.....  
passus secundus de visione  
ut supra  
115 [extra initial]

III e. ....  
i. passus tercius de visione

.....  
passus tercius de visione  
ut supra

IV e. ....  
i. passus quartus de visione

.....  
passus quartus de visione  
ut supra

V e. ....  
i. passus quintus de visione

.....  
passus quintus de visione  
ut supra

63 superbia; 71 luxuria  
76 inuidia; 135 Ira  
188 auaricia; 296 Gula  
385 accidia [all boxed in  
red and touched with red]

VI e. ....  
i. passus sextus de visione

.....  
passus sextus de visione  
ut supra

VII e. ....  
i. passus septimus de visione

.....  
passus vii<sup>us</sup> de visione  
ut supra  
149 [extra initial]

VIII e. ....  
i. passus octauus de visione  
et hic incipit prima  
inquisicio de dowell

.....  
passus viij<sup>us</sup> de visione  
et primus de dowel  
  
62 [extra initial]

IX e. ....  
i. passus nonus de visione  
& primus de dowell

.....  
passus ix<sup>us</sup> de visione

X e. ....  
i. passus decimus

.....  
passus x<sup>us</sup> de visione &  
ii<sup>us</sup> de dowel  
377 [extra initial]

XI e. ....  
i. passus undecimus de  
visione

.....  
passus undecimus

XII e. ....  
i. passus duodecimus

.....  
passus xij<sup>us</sup>

XIII e. ....  
i. passus xiiij<sup>us</sup> de visione

.....  
passus xiiij<sup>us</sup> etc.

XIV e. ....  
i. passus xiiij<sup>us</sup>

.....  
passus xiiij<sup>us</sup> etc.

XV e. ....  
i. passus xv<sup>us</sup>  
444 popery

.....  
passus xv<sup>us</sup> etc. finit  
dowel & incipit dobet

e. ....

.....

B		Sion College Arc L 40 <sup>2</sup> /E: S	TCC B 15.17: W
XVI	i.	passus xvj <sup>us</sup>	passus xvj <sup>us</sup> etc. & primus de dobet 176 [extra initial]
	e.	.....	.....
XVII	i.	passus xvij <sup>us</sup>	passus xvij <sup>us</sup> etc. & ij <sup>us</sup> de dobet
	e.	.....	.....
XVIII	i.	passus xviiij <sup>us</sup>	passus xviiij <sup>us</sup> etc. et iiij <sup>us</sup> de dobet
	e.	.....	.....
XIX	i.	passus xix <sup>us</sup>	passus xix <sup>us</sup> & explicit dobet & incipit dobest
	e.	.....	.....
XX	i.	passus xx <sup>us</sup> & ultimus	passus xx <sup>us</sup> de visione & primus de dobest 46 [extra initial]
	e.	[text missing, damaged]	Explicit hic dialogus petri plowman



[Words in red in Y act as subject guides in addition to listed rubrics]

- Prol. i. [initial only]  
 e. ....
- I i. passus primus de visione  
 e. ....
- II i. passus secundus de visione  
 e. ....
- III i. passus tercius de visione  
 ut supra  
 e. ....
- IV i. passus quartus de visione  
 ut supra  
 e. ....
- V i. passus quintus de visione  
 etc.  
 62 superbia; 71 luxuria  
 135 Ira; 296 Glotton  
 385 accidia [twice]  
 e. ....
- VI i. passus sextus etc.  
 e. ....
- VII i. passus septimus  
 e. ....
- VIII i. passus octauus de visione  
 & primus passus de dowel  
 e. ....
- IX i. passus nonus etc.  
 e. ....
- X i. passus decimus etc.  
 e. ....
- XI i. passus undecimus  
 e. ....
- XII i. passus duodecimus etc.  
 e. ....
- XIII i. passus terciodecimus etc.  
 e. ....
- XIV i. passus quartus decimus  
 e. ....
- XV i. passus xv<sup>us</sup> finit de  
 do wel & incipit do bet  
 e. ....
- XVI i. passus sextodecimus  
 e. ....
- XVII i. passus decimus septimus  
 324 nota  
 e. ....
- XVIII i. passus decimus octauus  
 e. ....
- XIX i. passus decimus nonus  
 188 n  
 e. ....
- XX i. passus xx<sup>us</sup> & primus  
 de do best  
 e. Explicit hic dialagus [sic]  
 petri plowman

[Underlined or boxed words in D  
act as subject guides in addition  
to listed rubrics]

Prol.	i.	[illustration of sleeper]	[space for initial]
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus primus
I	i.	passus primus de visione petri ploughman	incipit passus secundus
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus secundus
II	i.	passus secundus de visione ubi prius	incipit passus tercius
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus tercius
III	i.	passus tercius de visione ut prius 195 proverb	incipit passus quartus
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus quartus
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione ubi prius	incipit passus quintus
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus quintus
V	i.	passus quintus de visione ubi prius 169 bibil [red] 178 croned [red]	incipit passus sextus  146, 160-1 // 172, 177-177a prophecie
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus sextus
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione ubi prius	incipit passus septimus
			63 confessio invidie 103 confessio Ire 170 confessio luxurie 196 confessio avaricie 350 confessio gule [all boxed, with a space for an initial]
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus septimus
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione	incipit passus octauus 1 confessio accidie [as above] 95 Testamentum petri plowman [boxed]
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus octauus
VIII	i.	passus octauus ut prius	incipit passus nonus
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus nonus
IX	i.	(passus nonus ut prius)	incipit passus decimus 278 nota bene 291 Indulgencia concessa petrus plowman [boxed]
	e.	Explicit visio Willelmi W. de petro ploughman	Explicit visio Willelmi de petro plowman
X	i.	Et hic incipit visio eiusdem de do well	Incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de do wel 220 penitentibus me fecissa hominem [boxed]
	e.	.....	explicit passus primus de dowel



C	Douce 104: D	Laud Misc. 656: E
XI	i. passus primus de visione de do well e. ....	incipit passus secundus  explicit passus secundus de dowel
XII	i. passus secundus de do well e. ....	incipit passus tercius explicit passus tercius de dowel
XIII	i. (passus tercius de do wel) e. ....	incipit passus quartus explicit passus quartus de dowell
XIV	i. passus quartus de do well ut prius e. ....	incipit passus quintus  explicit passus quintus de dowell
XV	i. passus quintus de visione ut supra e. ....	incipit passus sextus  explicit passus sextus de dowell
XVI	i. passus sextus de do well 119f [points of the description of poverty marked] 1-9 e. ....	incipit passus septimus 119 distinctio paupertatis [boxed]  explicit passus ultimus de dowel
XVII	i. passus septimus de do wel & explicit e. ....	incipit primus de dobet  explicit passus primus de Dobet
XVIII	i. passus primus de do bette e. ....	incipit passus secundus explicit passus secundus
XIX	i. passus secundus de dobet e. ....	incipit passus tercius explicit passus tercius de Dobet
XX	i. passus tercius de do bett  e. explicit do bett	incipit passus quartus 119 misericordia 168 Justicia 171 pax [all boxed] explicit passus quartus & ultimus
XXI	i. incipit do beste  e. ....	incipit passus primus de dobest 276 Prudencia 280 temperancia 289 fortitudo 297 Justicia [all boxed] explicit passus primus de dobest
XXII	i. passus secundus de do beste  e. Explicit liber de petro ploughman .	incipit passus secundus 22 Alarne Explicit passus secundus de dobest incipit passus tercius

Prol.	i.	(passus primus)	[no text]
	e.	explicit passus primus	explicit passus primus de visione
I	i.	incipit passus secundus 33, 81, 135 nota	..... 67, 163 nota
	e.	explicit passus secundus	explicit passus secundus
II	i.	incipit passus tercius  78a Carta [also interlinear gloss:] incipit carta 219 nota	..... 53 nota 78a Carta [touched with red]  116, 171 nota [touched with red]
	e.	explicit passus tercius	explicit passus tercius
III	i.	incipit quartus passus	..... 55, 149, 215, 283, 340, 406, 436 nota [touched red]
	e.	explicit passus quartus	hic explicit passus quartus
IV	i.	incipit passus quintus 87, 143 nota [with red paraph]	incipit passus quintus 7 Resoun; 31 wryngelaw [except * boxed and touched red]; 42 nota*; 45 Pees 46 Wrong; 88, 108, 166 nota
	e.	explicit passus quintus	hic explicit passus quintus
V	i.	incipit sextus passus 173, 177 nota [with red paraph]	incipit passus sextus 48, 109 nota 114 predicatio [touched red] 142 mundus [boxed, touched red] 168 prophecia nota 177a prophecia
	e.	explicit passus sextus	hic explicit passus sextus
VI	i.	incipit septimus passus 14 superbia [red paraph] 62 invidia 103 Ira 170 Luxuria 196 Avarica 350 Gula	incipit passus septimus 14 confessio superbie 62 confessio Invidie 103 confessio Ire 170 confessio Luxurie 196 confessio Avarice 350 nota Gula 425 confessio Gule
	e.	explicit passus septimus	hic explicit passus septimus
VII	i.	incipit octauus passus 1 Sloth [blue initial]  205 nota viam ad veritatem	incipit passus octauus 6 confessio accidie 11, 28, 62, 70, 155, 182, 205 nota 206 Decem mandata 260a-261, 287 nota
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus octauus
VIII	i.	[no text]	incipit passus nonus 95, 112, 167, 223, 264, 297, nota; 303 +
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus nonus



IX	i.	[no text]	incipit passus decimus 44, 105, 188 nota 255 nota [+ pointing hand] 282 [pointing hand] 334 nota
	e.	Explicit visio Willelmi de petro plowman	hic explicit visio de petro ploughman
X	i.	Incipit visio eiusdem de dowel	hic incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de dowel 30, 76, 127 nota 138-9 nota de .v. filii 180 nota [+ hand] 243, 285a, 301 nota
	e.	explicit passus primus dowel	explicit passus primus de visione Willelmi de dowel
XI	i.	incipit secundus 111 nota 257 [blue paraph]	..... 31, 54, 93, 137, 167, 236, 239, 241, 276 nota
	e.	explicit passus secundus	hic explicit passus secundus
XII	i.	incipit tercius  35-8 nota 73 nota de troiano 137 nota de pauperie	incipit passus tercius De dowel 39, 70, 88, 118, 139, 152, 218 nota
	e.	explicit passus tercius de dowel	hic explicit passus tercius
XIII	i.	incipit quartus	incipit passus quartus De dowel 30, 32, 99, 128, 193 nota
	e.	explicit passus quartus de dowel	hic explicit passus quartus
XIV	i.	incipit quintus	incipit passus quintus de dowel 43, 99, 131 nota
	e.	explicit passus quintus de dowel	hic explicit passus quintus
XV	i.	incipit sextus	incipit passus sextus de dowel 26, 52, 81, 153, 178, 186, 233, 274, 279 nota
	e.	explicit passus sextus de dowel	[no text]
XVI	i.	incipit septimus 120-1 distinctio paupertatis 143-5 sapientie temperatrix	[no text] 114, 157, 241, 251, 272 nota
	e.	explicit passus septimus et ultimus de dowel	hic explicit passus septimus & ultimus de dowel
XVII	i.	incipit passus primus de dobet 169 nota de makamoto	incipit primus passus de dobet 41, 55, 68, 128, 150, 187, 204, 227, 283 nota
	e.	explicit passus primus de dobet	hic explicit passus primus
XVIII	i.	incipit secundus passus	incipit passus secundus de dobet 182, 204 nota
	e.	explicit secundus passus de dobet	hic explicit passus secundus

- |      |    |   |                                      |
|------|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| XIX  | i. | incipit tercius                               | incipit passus tercius de<br>dobet   |
|      |    | 47 nota de samaritano<br>parcellum            | 47, 228, 297 nota                    |
|      | e. | explicit tercius passus<br>de dobet           | hic explicit passus tercius          |
| XX   | i. | incipit quartus                               | incipit passus quartus de<br>dobet   |
|      |    | 436 nota                                      | 114 nota<br>327 +                    |
|      | e. | explicit passus quartus<br>& ultimus de dobet | hic explicit de Dobet                |
| XXI  | i. | incipit passus primus de<br>dobest            | Incipit de dobest                    |
|      |    | 409 nota vicarius [with<br>blue paraph]       | 41, 199, 262, 336 nota               |
|      | e. | .....   | hic explicit primus passus           |
| XXII | i. | .....   | incipit secundus passus de<br>dobest |
|      | e. | Explicit passus secundus<br>de dobest         | [no text]                            |



[Damage to this MS may obscure  
additional rubrication]

[All rubrication in  
red]

Prol.	i.	[damaged]	[no text]
	e.	explicit primus passus de visione	[no text]
I	i.	.....	[no text]
	e.	.....	[no text]
II	i.	passus secundus de visione ubi prius	[no text]
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus tercius incipit passus quartus
III	e.	passus tercius de visione ut prius	
	e.	.....	476 prophesia explicit passus quartus incipit passus quintus
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione ut prius	
	e.	.....	explicit passus quintus incipit passus sextus 115 predicatio 126 nota 168, 177a prophesia
V	i.	passus quintus de visione	explicit passus sextus incipit passus septimus
	e.	.....	
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione etc.	15-16 confessio superbia 103-4 confessio Ire 170-1 confessio luxurie 206-8 confessio avaricia explicit passus septimus Incipit passus octauus
	e.	.....	explicit passus octauus incipit passus nonus
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione 1 Accidia [red]	
	e.	.....	
VIII	i.	[passus octauus ut prius [damaged] 45 nota 350 a wi[ damage]	
	e.	.....	explicit passus nonus incipit passus decimus hic explicit visio de petro plouhzman
IX	i.	passus nonus ut prius	hic incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de dowel
	e.	Explicit visio Willelmi W. de petro le plowman	143 nota de .v. filii explicit passus primus de visione Willelmi de dowel
X	i.	Et hic incipit visio eiusdem de dowel	.....
	e.	.....	
XI	i.	passus primus de visione Dowel etc.	
	e.	.....	Explicit passus secundus incipit passus tercius de dowel
XII	i.	[damaged]	explicit passus tercius incipit passus quartus de dowel
	e.	.....	
XIII	i.	passus tercius de Dowel	explicit passus quartus
	e.	.....	

- |       |    |   |  |
|-------|----|---|--|
| XIV   | i. | passus quartus de dowel                       | incipit passus quintus de<br>dowel                           |
|       | e. | .....   | 200 nota   |
| XV    | i. | passus quintus de visione<br>ut supra         | explicit passus quintus<br>incipit passus sextus de<br>dowel |
|       | e. | .....   | [text ends, damaged, at<br>XV 66]                            |
| XVI   | i. | [damage]                                      |  |
|       | e. | "   |  |
| XVII  | i. | [damage]                                      |  |
|       | e. | .....   |  |
| XVIII | i. | passus primus de Dobet                        |  |
|       | e. | .....   |  |
| XIX   | i. | passus secundus de Dobet                      |  |
|       | e. | .....   |  |
| XX    | i. | passus tercius de dobet                       |  |
|       | e. | Explicit                                      |  |
| XXI   | i. | Et incipit Dobest<br>80a de nativitate domini |  |
|       | e. | [damage]                                      |  |
| XXII  | i. | "   |  |
|       | e. | [illegible]                                   |  |



[Underlined words in the text in M  
act as subject guides in addition to  
listed rubrics]

[Red or boxed words in N act  
as subject guides in addition to  
to listed rubrics]

Prol. i. [initial]

Here bygynneþ þe boke of  
Pyris plowman

95 [pointing hand, blue]  
151 unde versus [red]

I e. ....  
i. Hic incipit secundus passus  
de visione Willelmi de  
petro plouhman

.....  
[initial]

II e. ....  
i. hic incipit tercius passus  
de visione

.....  
[initial]

III e. ....  
i. Hic incipit quartus passus  
de visione

.....  
[initial]

215 [extra initial]

IV e. ....  
i. Hic incipit quintus passus  
de visione

.....  
[initial]

V e. ....  
i. hic incipit passus sextus

.....  
[initial]  
109 [extra initial]

VI e. ....  
i. hic incipit passus septimus  
de visione

.....  
[initial]

VII e. ....  
i. Hic incipit passus octauus

.....  
[initial]

VIII e. ....  
i. Hic incipit passus nonus  
223 nota [red, large]

.....  
+ [guide]

IX e. ....  
i. hic incipit passus decimus  
e. Explicit visio Willelmi  
de petro plouhman

.....  
.....  
hic explicit visio Willelmi  
de petro plowman

X i. hic incipit visio eiusdem  
Willelmi de dowel

hic incipit visio predicti  
Willelmi de do wel

e. ....

Explicit passus primus de  
visio de do wel

XI i. hic incipit secundus passus  
de dowel  
239 experimentum [?exemplum]  
242 contra prelatos [both  
red]

.....

e. ....

Explicit passus secundus  
de dowel

XII i. hic incipit tercius passus  
de dowel

.....

e. ....

explicit passus tercius de  
dowel

XIII i. hic incipit quartus passus  
de dowel

.....

e. ....

Explicit passus quartus de  
dowel

C		Cotton Vesp. B XVI: M	Harley 2376: N
XIV	i.	hic incipit quintus passus de dowel	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit passus quintus de do wel
XV	i.	hic incipit sextus passus de dowel	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit passus sextus de do wel
XVI	i.	hic incipit passus septimus	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit passus vij & ultimus de do wel
XVII	i.	hic incipit primus passus de dobet 88 def.[?] prophecia [red]	Incipit passus primus de dobet
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus primus de dobet
XVIII	i.	hic incipit passus secundus de dobet 186 det'uit[?] [red]	Incipit passus secundus de dobet 180 [extra initial]
	e.	.....	Explicit passus secundus de dobet
XIX	i.	..... 165 experimentum [red] 285a de disperacione [red] 293a de tribus inimicis	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit passus tercius de dobet
XX	i.	hic incipit quartus passus de dobet	.....
	e.	.....	Explicit de dobet
XXI	i.	hic incipit primus passus de dobest 199 de in[ter]missione spiritu sancti 218 de antichristo	Incipit de dobest
	e.	.....	Explicit passus primus de dobest
XXII	i.	hic incipit secundus passus de dobest	Incipit passus secundus de dobest
	e.	Explicit passus secundus de dobest	hic explicit passus secundus de do best



[Words in red in the text in P act as subject guides in addition to the listed rubrics]

[Words in red in the text in P<sup>2</sup> act as subject headings in addition to listed rubrics. Material in round brackets ( ) is added by a corrector]

Prol.	i.	hic incipit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman	[initial]
	e.	Explicit passus primus	passus primus de visione petri plouzman (incipit secundus de visione)
I	i.	Incipit passus secundus	.....
	e.	Explicit passus secundus	.....
II	i.	Incipit passus tertius	passus de ij <sup>us</sup> de etc. (passus tertius sequitur)
	e.	Explicit passus tertius	.....
III	i.	Incipit passus quartus	passus iii <sup>us</sup> pp (explicit. Quartus sequitur)
		436 prophecie [red]	.....
	e.	Explicit passus quartus	.....
IV	i.	Incipit passus quintus	Passus quartus de visione (explicit. quintus sequitur)
	e.	Explicit passus quintus	.....
V	i.	Incipit passus sextus	Passus [ ] de visione ut prius (Incipit sextus)
		114 sermo	.....
	e.	Explicit passus sextus	.....
VI	i.	Incipit passus septimus	(explicit) Passus sextus ubi prius
		13-14 confessio Superbia 62-3 confessio Invidia 102-3 confessio Ira 169-70 confessio Luxuria 195-6 confessio Avaricia 349-50 confessio Gula [all interlinear, taking the space of a line, written twice to fill the line. All in red]	
	e.	hic explicit passus septimus	.....
VII	i.	Incipit passus octauus de confessione. confessio accidie	(explicit) Passus vij <sup>us</sup> de visione
		87 As god wole [underlined in red, runs on from line]	
		123 oratio [red]	
	e.	hic explicit passus octauus	.....
VIII	i.	Incipit passus nonus	passus viii <sup>us</sup> ubi prius (nonus sequitur)
		350 prophecie [red]	
	e.	hic explicit passus nonus	.....
IX	i.	Incipit passus decimus	Passus ix <sup>us</sup> ubi supra
	e.	hic explicit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman	.....

C	HM 137: P	Additional 34779: p <sup>2</sup>
X	i. Incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de dowel	passus x <sup>us</sup>
	e. hic explicit passus primus de do wel	.....
XI	i. Incipit passus secundus 179 X [red]	passus .1. de dowel
	e. hic explicit passus secundus de dowel	.....
XII	i. incipit passus tertius	Passus ii de dowel
	e. hic explicit passus tertius	.....
XIII	i. Incipit passus quartus	Passus iii de dowel
	e. hic explicit passus quartus de dowel	.....
XIV	i. Incipit passus quintus	Passus iiij de dowel
	e. hic explicit passus quintus	.....
XV	i. Incipit passus sextus de dowel	Passus quintus ut supra
	e. hic explicit passus sextus	.....
XVI	i. Incipit passus septimus de Dowel	passus vj <sup>us</sup> de dowel
	e. hic explicit passus septimus & ultimus de dowel	.....
XVII	i. Incipit passus primus de dobet 208 nota [with red <] 215 prophecie [red textural]	passus vij <sup>us</sup> de dowel Et explicit
	e. hic explicit passus primus	.....
XVIII	i. Incipit passus secundus de dobet. dobet 175a nota [red textural] 183 abraham de trinitate [red textural]	passus primus de dobet
	e. hic explicit passus secundus	.....
XIX	i. Incipit passus tercius de dobet	Passus ii <sup>us</sup> de dobet
	e. hic explicit passus tercius	.....
XX	i. Incipit passus quartus de dobest 142 + [red]	Passus tercius de dobet [heading in margin]
	e. hic explicit passus quartus & ultimus de dobet	.....
XXI	i. Incipit passus primus de dobest	Explicit dobet
	e. hic explicit passus primus de dobest	.....
XXII	i. Incipit passus secundus de dobest	[initial only]
	e. hic explicit passus secundus de dobest Explicit peeres plouheman	[ends at XXII 344]



[Words touched with red in the text  
in Q act as subject guides in  
addition to the listed rubrics]

[Words underlined in the text  
act as subject guides in  
addition to the listed  
rubrics]

Prol. i. P. plowman [twice]

[initial]

59 contra freres

82 contra rectores

65 contra questores

I e. explicit passus primus  
i. Incipit secundus

.....

[guide mark only]

151 de amore

183a 2<sup>o</sup> sacerdotes

II e. explicit passus secundus  
i. incipit tercius

.....

hic incipit passus tercius

8 Mede

78a contra Mede

III e. explicit passus tercius  
i. incipit quartus

.....

hic incipit passus quartus

97 murrty

477 prophecia

IV e. explicit passus quartus  
i. incipit quintus

.....

hic incipit passus quintus

V e. explicit passus quintus  
i. incipit sextus

.....

hic incipit passus sextus

120 predicatio [boxed]

167 prophecia "

VI e. explicit passus sextus  
i. Incipit septimus

.....

hic incipit passus septimus

12 confessio superbie

60 confessio invidie

103 confessio ire

170 confessio luxurie

201 confessio auarice

350 confessio gule

[all boxed]

VII e. explicit passus septimus  
i. Incipit passus octauus

.....

hic incipit passus octauus

92 ribalions

182 hic p[illeg.] petru

plouman [both of above boxed]

209 de decem precepta

[each commandment marked by a  
rubricator]

VIII e. explicit passus octauus  
i. incipit nonus

.....

hic incipit passus nonus

IX e. explicit passus nonus

.....

i. incipit decimus

hic incipit passus decimus

282 nota

X e. explicit passus decimus

Explicit visio Willelmi de

petro plouzman

i. incipit undecimus

Incipit visio

eiusdem Willelmi de dowell

XI e. Explicit passus primus

.....

i. Incipit passus secundus  
de dowell

Incipit passus secundus de

dowell

e. Explicit passus secundus

.....

C	CUL Additional 4325: Q	Royal 18 B XVII: R
XII	i. incipit tercius de dowell	Incipit passus tercius de dowel
	e. explicit passus tercius	.....
XIII	i. incipit quartus	Incipit passus quartus de dowel
	e. explicit passus quartus de dowel	.....
XIV	i. incipit quintus	Incipit passus quintus de dowel 155 nota 204 de traians
	e. Explicit passus quintus	.....
XV	i. Incipit passus sextus	Incipit passus sextus de dowel 163 experimentum [underlined] 280 nota
	e. Explicit passus sextus de dowel	.....
XVI	i. Incipit septimus	Incipit passus septimus de dowel
	132 fortuna +	
	e. Explicit passus septimus & vltimus de dowel	.....
XVII	i. Incipit primus de dobett	Incipit passus primus de dobet 58 de caritate 68 contra prelates 117 contra sacerdotes 214 prophecias
	e. explicit passus primus de dobet	.....
XVIII	i. Incipit secundus	Incipit passus secundus de dobet
	e. Explicit passus secundus de dobett	.....
XIX	i. Incipit tercius	Incipit passus tercius de dobet 215, 226 nota
	e. explicit passus tercius de dobett	.....
XX	i. Incipit quartus	Incipit passus quartus de dobett
	e. Explicit passus Quartus & vltimus de dobett	.....
XXI	i. Incipit primus de dobest	Incipit passus primus de dobest
	e. Explicit passus primus	.....
XXII	i. Incipit secundus de dobest	Incipit passus secundus de dobest 300 ypocrisyes [underlined]
	e. Explicit passus secundus de dobest	Explicit passus secundus de dobeste



[ Words in red in the text in  
St act as subject headings  
in addition to the listed  
rubrics]

Prol.	i.	[initial]	hic incipit visio Willelmi de petro ploughman
		152 versus [red]	
	e.	Explicit passus primus	Explicit primus passus
I	i.	incipit secundus	Incipit secundus
	e.	explicit passus secundus	explicit secundus passus
II	i.	incipit tercius	Incipit tercius
			78a carta [part of line]
	e.	explicit passus tercius	Explicit tercius passus
III	i.	incipit quartus	Incipit quartus
			226, 362 n
			436 prophecia [red]
	e.	explicit passus quartus	Explicit quartus passus
IV	i.	incipit quintus	Incipit quintus
	e.	explicit passus quintus	Explicit quintus passus
V	i.	incipit sextus	Incipit sextus
			115-6 predicatio [red]
			168, 178 prophecie
	e.	explicit passus sextus	Explicit sextus passus
VI	i.	incipit septimus	Incipit septimus
			14 confessio superbie
			63 confessio Ire
			171 confessio luxurie
			206 confessio auarice
			423 confessio gule
			[all red]
	e.	[no text]	explicit septimus passus
VII	i.	[no text]	Incipit octauus
		1 sleupe [red]	1 confessio accidie
			181-2 hic primo comparet petrus plouhman
			209 decem precepta
			[all above red]
	e.	Explicit passus octauus	Explicit octauus passus
VIII	i.	Incipit nonus	Incipit nonus
			95 testament petri plouhman
			343 prophecie
			[both above red]
	e.	[no text]	Explicit nonus passus
IX	i.	[no text]	Incipit decimus
	e.	[no text]	Explicit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman
X	i.	[no text]	hic incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de dowel
	e.	Explicit passus primus de dowel	hic explicit passus primus
XI	i.	Incipit tercius de eodem	Incipit passus secundus de dowel
	e.	Explicit passus secundus de dowel	hic explicit passus secundus

XII	i.	Incipit tercius	Incipit tercius passus de dowel
	e.	Explicit passus tercius de dowel	hic explicit passus tercius
XIII	i.	Incipit quartus	Incipit quartus de dowel
	e.	Explicit passus quartus	hic explicit passus quartus
XIV	i.	Incipit quintus de dowel	Incipit quintus de dowel
	e.	Explicit passus quintus	Hic explicit passus quintus
XV	i.	Incipit sextus de dowel	Incipit sextus de dowel
			155 exper-
			159 -imen-
			164 -tum
			[red]
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus sextus
XVI	i.	[no text]	Incipit septimus de dowel
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus septimus & vltimus de dowel
XVII	i.	[no text]	hic incipit passus primus de dobet
			213 prophecie [red]
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus primus
XVIII	i.	[no text]	Incipit secundus de dobet
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus secundus
XIX	i.	[no text]	Incipit passus tercius de dobet
	e.	[no text]	hic explicit passus tercius
XX	i.	[no text]	hic incipit passus quartus de dobet
	e.	Explicit passus sextus	Explicit passus & vltimus de dobet [sic]
XXI	i.	Incipit passus septimus de dowel	Incipit primus passus de dobet
	e.	Explicit passus primus de dobet	Explicit passus primus de dobet
XXII	i.	Incipit secundus de eodem	Incipit passus secundus
	e.	Explicit secundus & vltimus de dobet	[ends imperfectly, unfinished, with "Amen" after XXII 87]



[Words in red or boxed in red in the text in V act as subject guides in addition to the listed rubrics]

Prol.	i.	[initial]	Hic incipit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman
	e.	.....	Explicit primus passus
I	i.	Passus primus de vis[ione] [petri ploughman 41 [extra initial]	Incipit passus secundus
	e.	.....	Explicit secundus passus
II	i.	passus secundus de visione vbi prius 63 nota [red]	Incipit passus tercius
	e.	.....	Explicit tercius passus
III	i.	passus tercius de visione ut prius 56 nota [red]	Incipit passus quartus
	e.	.....	436 prophecie
IV	i.	passus quartus de visione vt prius	Explicit passus quartus Incipit quintus passus
	e.	.....	141 impunitum [boxed]
V	i.	passus quintus de visione vbi prius	Explicit quintus passus Incipit passus sextus
	e.	.....	115 predicatio [red] 168, 178 prophecie [red]
VI	i.	passus sextus de visione etc.	Explicit sextus passus Incipit passus septimus 14 confessio superbie 63 confessio invidie 104 Ire 170 luxurie 206 avaricie [all red] 350. (gula) [possibly an annotator] confessio gule
	e.	.....	Explicit septimus passus
VII	i.	passus septimus de visione etc.	Incipit passus octauus
	e.	.....	1-2 accidie [in a pointing hand] 182 hic primo comparet petrus plouhman [red] 208 decem precepta
VIII	i.	Passus octauus vt prius  330 laborers [underlined in red]	Explicit octauus passus Incipit passus nonus 95 testamentum petri plouhman [red] 343, 347 prophecie [red]
	e.	.....	Explicit nonus passus
IX	i.	Passus nonus vt prius	Incipit passus decimus
	e.	Explicit visio Willelmi de petro le ploughman	hic explicit visio Willelmi de petro plouhman

X	i.	Et hic incipit visio eiusdem de dowel	Incipit visio eiusdem Willelmi de dowel
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus primus
XI	i.	Passus primus de visione de dowel	Incipit secundus de dowel
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus secundus
XII	i.	passus secundus de Dowel	Incipit tercius
	e.	.....	Explicit passus tercius
XIII	i.	Passus tercius de Dowel 196 nota [red]	Incipit quartus de dowel
	e.	.....	Explicit passus quartus
XIV	i.	Passus quartus de dowel vbi prius	Incipit quintus de Dowel
	e.	.....	Explicit passus quintus
XV	i.	Passus quintus de visione vt supra	Incipit sextus de dowel
			155 exper-
			158 -imen-
			165 -tum
			[red]
	e.	.....	Explicit passus sextus
XVI	i.	Passus sextus de Dowel	Incipit septimus de dowel
			296-296a definitio caritatis
			[red]
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus septimus & vltimus de dowel
XVII	i.	Passus vii de dowel et explicit 220 nota	hic incipit passus primus de dobet
	e.	.....	214 prophecie [red]
			hic explicit passus primus
XVIII	i.	Passus primus de Dobet	Incipit passus secundus de dobet
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus secundus
XIX	i.	Passus secundus de dobet	Incipit passus tercius de dobet
	e.	.....	hic explicit passus tercius
XX	i.	Passus tercius de dobet	hic incipit passus quartus de dobest [sic]
		78 nota [red]	
	e.	Explicit dobet	Explicit passus quartus et vltimus de dobet
XXI	i.	et incipit dobest	Incipit primus de dobest
	e.	.....	Explicit passus primus
XXII	i.	Passus secundus de dobest	Incipit secundus de dobest
	e.	Explicit liber vocatus pers ploghman	[imperfect, unfinished. Ends at XXII 87.]



[The MS is exceptionally extensively  
rubricated by a hand identified by  
Prof. G. Russell as that of the  
original corrector. Most comments  
are placed next to a paraph mark.  
Comments are preceded by // ]

[all rubrication in red]

Prol. i. [initial]

[no text]

50-1 hermytis wente to  
Walsyngham

56-7 hyer preches frerys

81 hyer parsones & parsche  
prests playned to þe  
bychop

95 concyence acusede  
prelats

143 þe commune & kynde Wit  
ordeyned a plow

164 note men of lawe

169-70 hyer made ratonyes  
a parlement

196 hyer spekyþ a mous of  
renoun

e. ....

[no text]

I i. passus primus de visione  
27 lo how loot lay be his  
dorteres

[no text]

69 hyer askyd Wille who  
was þat woman þat  
spak to hym

112 lo fendis fille for[?]  
pride

145-6 nota þat loue is  
plante of pes

175-6 note de ryche

187-8 nota hic unkynde  
prests

e. ....

[no text]

II i. Passus secundus de visione  
vbi prius

[no text]

5 heyr [sic] prayde Will  
he muste fals knawe

9 [pointing hand, "rayede"  
underlined in text]

54-5 be hold þe houshold  
of mede

79 the feffement a tuxe  
mede & falsnesse

109 Witnessis of þe  
feffement a fayr hep

II cont.	116 hyer teologi chidde ciuile & Symonye 178 Red hyer a blissed companye per [con... rest an indecipherible abbreviation] 220 for drede falsnesse fleyth to þe freryis 240 the freris fette home lyere wyth them to dwelle	219 nota
III	e. .... i. passus tercius de visione vbi prius [face of Mede in initial] 9 hyer was mede confortd 27 note þe lewed auanced 38 a confessour as a frere comforded mede & sayde as ye may rede 77 hyer prayed mede for vetaylers & oper mo to þe mair 149 hyer was conscience cald to haue weddid mede 189a note prests gurles 215 hyer mourned mede for conscience acusede her 283 hyer holdeth þe kyng wyth mede 311 mercede presbiteri [underlined] 409 Regum 435 he sayþ trewþ'shal be shent 454 low how Iewe shull - conuerte[?] for ioie 477 prophesia petri	[no text] passus tercius de visione vt prius        88 nota        243-4 nota    405 nota
IV	e. .... i. passus quartus de visione vbi prius 20 hyer rayson bad sadele his hors þat hytte suffre 108-9 lo what reson sayde 148 lo mede bad men of lawe stoppe resoun 160 hyer murned mede for sche was clepid hore	.... passus quartus de visione vt prius  45 bulla  120 nota
V	e. .... i. Passus quintus de visione vbi prius 7ff hyer conscience arated[?] Wille for his lollynge 35 hyer Wille answers to rayson	.... Passus quintus de visione vt prius



V cont.	105 hyer wente Wille to churche & ful a zen a slepe	
	115 note Religiosi	151 nota
	165f prophesia petri	158 monachorum
	168 [sketch of crown]	
	200 thus ended Resoun	
	e. ....	.....
VI	i. Passus sextus de visione vbi prius	Passus sextus de visione vt prius
	14 pryde[?] seryueþ him hyer paciencel[?]	14 superbia
	61 hyer gob Enuye to. scryfte	62 inuidia
	90 Repentaunce	
	102 Wrathe goth to schryfte	103 Ira
	118 freris ben wrothe	120 (luxuria) [cancelled]
		121 luxuria
	145 hyer was letise at stile y schent for sche tok hali bred to rathe	145 nota bene
	164 Repentaunce [underlined]	
	170 heyr cam lecherye to schreftward	
	196 heyr cam couetyse to screftward [sketch of face of covetise]	
	232 [R]lose þe regrater [underlined]	240 auaricia
	253 note diuites	298 nota bene [boxed red]
	309 Walsh man [underlined]	
	316 Robert ryffler	
	350 Glotonyze gob to schrifte	350 gula
		374-5 nota
	412 Glotoun cowede a caudel in clements lappe	
	e. ....	.....
VII	i. passus septimus de visione vbi prius	passus septimus de visione
	1 sclouthe cam to schryfte	
	30 nota [left] nota lewede prestes [right, underlined]	
		69 nota
	158 hyer askyd þe puple a pat wiel[?] after treuþe	152 spes
		182 nota
	261 Wrathe [illeg.] [underlined]	222 x precepta
	e. ....	.....
VIII	i. passus octauus de visione vt prius	passus octauus de visione vt prius
	6f hyer bad ladies oper wymmin worche	

VIII cont. 25 hyer ["pyers" erased]  
 zif knytes leue to  
 hunte & hauke & kepe  
 hym & hise  
 79f loke hyer what ["Pers"  
 erased] Wyf hizte & his  
 sone & his dozter  
 96 hyer makyp ["pers"  
 erased] his testament  
 136 hyer prayde faytours  
 ffor ["pers" erased]  
 151 hyer Wastour chydde  
 ["pers" erased]  
 157 hyer playned ["pers"  
 erased] to þe knyzt  
 171 hyer hunger fazt wyth  
 þe wastour & wyth þe  
 bretoner  
 206 hyer ["pers" erased]  
 bad hunger go a zen

IX e. ....  
 i. passus nonus de visione  
 vt prius  
 92 coterelis feste  
 [underlined]  
 106 lunatyk lolleres  
 141 [illeg.] lollares  
 169f by hold hyer of  
 lolleres children  
 203 note ze lewede eremytes  
 246 hyer mette Wille wyth  
 lollares to þe meteward  
 262 note christi  
 282 hyer a prest askyd  
 persis bull to rede  
 305 nota a somple of wenenys  
 [sic]  
 335f note de indulgences &  
 pardones & trionales  
 e. Explicit visio. Willelmi W.  
 de petro le plouhman  
 X i. Et hic incipit visio  
 eiusdem de dowel  
 6 hyer Will sorte dowel &  
 mette wyth .ij. freris  
 19 lo what a frere sayde of  
 do wel  
 30f note how þe ryztwise  
 falleþ vij sybis in þe  
 day & [2 words, illeg.]  
 safly  
 56 hyer de proud Will & þe  
 frere

.....  
 passus nonus de visione  
 vt prius  
 44 nota  
 107 lollard  
 127a, 215, 248, 310 nota  
 Explicit visio Willelmi W.  
 de petro le plouhman  
 Et incipit visio eiusdem  
 de dowel





XIV	i.	passus quartus de dowel	passus quartus de dowel vt prius
		28 grace wit oute grace is nozt	
		72 Astronomyze	
		89 ffreres	
		129 note theves	
		166 ymagenynge	
		202 ymaginatyf	203 nota
	e.	.....	.....
XV	i.	passus quintus de visione vt supra	passus quintus de visione vt supra
		1 hyer ze may se schortly rehersed þe visiones to fore sayd	
		30 note fratres	32, 92 nota
		77-8 frer	
		104 frer	154 nota [boxed red]
		182-3 hyer wente conscience & pacience	179 nota
		194-5 activa vita pers plowmans prentys	
	e.	.....	.....
XVI	i.	passus sextus de dowel	passus vij <sup>us</sup> de dowel
		8 note ze riche men	47, 115a nota
		104 note	
		107 note bene	
		117 hyer ze may se it is god to be pouer	127a paupertas
		156 what is liberum arbitrium	201a anima
		230 lo how freres prechen fallas etc.	203 nota
		233 nota bene	
		241-2 note de wikkyde techeres	
		253 note [illeg.]	
		272f beth war of þis lerner & lewed	
		284 Charyte	
		353 Charyte was wyth freres	
	e.	.....	.....
XVII	i.	passus vij <sup>us</sup> de dowel & explicit	passus septimus de dowel Et explicit
		35 note religiosi	19 nota
		40a Thobi	46 nota
		52a Jop quod religiosi	
		59f takeþ kepe hyer of lewed peple & ek of clerkes to whom ze schull Ryzt do	110 nota
		143-4 note bene de amor	
		165 note de macometh	
		187 be hold se lo what prelates scholde do	
		203 þe croys is coueytyd	



XVII cont.	211 note hic aliqui 253. .2. credo in decem patrem	213 nota
e.	.....	285 nota
XVIII i.	passus primus de dobet 1 liberum arbitrium	..... passus primus de dobet
	134a Maria 152 Jhesu 166 Judas 182 Abraham 197 of the trinite 274 ffayth	75 nota 121 Annunciatio
XIX	e. .... i. passus secundus de dobet 1 spes [underlined] 13-13a mandata dei 21 fayth 47 Samaritanus 81 Samaritan 94 a question to the samaritan 109 of pe trinite 175 trinite 269 veniance 274 nota 294 note hic bene	..... Passus secundus de dobet
	e. ....	82 nota
XX	i. passus tercius de dobet [face in initial] 13 fayth [underlined] 21 Jhesu 35 Pilatus 81 longys [underlined] 96 fayth reproued iewes 112 Daniel [underlined] 119 Mercy [underlined] 123 Truthe [underlined] 132 Maria " 152 Jop ." 168 Ryztwisnesse " 171 pes clothed in patience [underlined] 208 pees [underlined] 239 boek " 274 Satan " 295 Lucefer " 313 note bene 370 Lord " 409 Crist " e. Explicit dobet	..... passus tercius de dobet
		22 passio domini
		144 nota
		205 nota
		273 nota
		Explicit dobet

XXI i. & incipit dobest  
 4-5 hyer is a newe metel  
 how he say pers al  
 bloody  
 19 Jhesu  
 219 Antecrist [underlined]  
 261 hyer bygynnez  
 265 John

Et incipit dobest

41, 52 nota

347, 409 nota

e. ....  
 XXII i. Passus secundus de dobest  
 4-5 hyer he mette wyth  
 nede

.....

Passus secundus de dobest

84, 198 nota

227, 256a nota [boxed red]

282, 330 nota

340 a general name for a  
 frere

e. ....

Explicit



## APPENDIX D

### Annotations and glossation of vocabulary

Included are:

#### 1. Annotation

- i. All annotations from Bodleian MS Digby 145, K(AC)
- ii. All annotations from BL MS Additional 35287, M(B)
- iii. All annotations, including descriptions of the illustrations, from Bodleian MS Douce 104, D(C)
- iv. All annotations from BL MS Additional 35157, U(C)

#### 2. Glossation of vocabulary

- i. Wordlist from CUL MS Ll 4.14, C<sup>2</sup>(B), fols. 169b-170b,
- ii. List of glossed words from TCD MS 212, V(C), fols. 1a-4a and fol. 88.

#### 1. Annotation

##### i. Annotations of Digby 145: K(AC)

Annotations are by Adrian or Anne Fortescue unless marked \*.

	Fol.
Iste liber pertinet Adriano ffortescu militi sua manu propria scriptum.	2b
Anno domini 1532 [corrected from 1531]	
A.D. King Henry VIII xxiiij	

Approx. line number

A prol.	28	parfit ankers & hermits	2b
	38	Qui non laborat non manducet	
	40	-beggars	
	46	pilgrims	
	50	heremits	
	55	fferes	3a
	65	a pardoner	
	80	curatts	3b
C prol.	85	Bisshoppes	
	96	Idolatrye	
	105	nota bene	
	128	mark well [cancelled]	4a
	135	the pope	
	138	a kyng [heads page]	4b
	160	lerved men of lawe	
	165-6	councelle of the lawe	

C prol.	168-9	ye glrealt mynisters [heads page]	5a
		a kyng	
	176	þe raton	
	180	A bell	
	185	a neck [glosses "hals"]	
	196	A mouse	
	206	nota bene	5b
	212	mischeff	
A I	3	holichurch	6a
	12	truth is god	
	20	iiij common thyngs [left]	6b
		virtus et vestutus [right]	
	27	loth	
	50-1	nota bene	7a
	61	wrong	
	83	truth	7b
	96	knights	8a
	102	[pointing hand, to "apostata", underlined]	
	108	obedyence ["buxum" underlined in text]	
	123-6	truth	8b
	136	love	
	152	charite	9a
	153	nota	
	160-3	nota faith & charite [left]	
		fides surrexibus mortum [right]	
	164-8	an example in the clergie [right]	
	169-73	currattores	
II	8	Meede and fals	9b
	16	Mede [+ pointing hand]	10a
	23	the marriage of mede [left]	
		[hand pointing right] Meede	
	34	Geasts bidden to the marriage	
	41f	tents pight up to harborow the wittnesses	
	57	Ita parta	
	67	heuen[?]	10b
	69	Reddens[?]	
	71	hijs testibus	
	76	dat'	
	78	dyvynite [left]	11a
		theologye to Cyvile for the lewde marege [right]	
	89-90	Cyvile & Symony & [word cancelled]	11b
		shenden holy church	
	97	mede might Kysse a King if her wold	
	108	Rewardes [left]	
		ffavell [two words, illeg.] to Gyle [right]	
	118	mede to be joynede in mariage and by Law	12a
	126	nota bene	
	128	the horses to cary them London	
	140	Cyvile [one word, illeg.]	12b
	149	Gyle and sothenes	
	151	Truthe passus them all in [conscience?]	
	153	consyens þe Kyng	



II	159	the Kynges Edicts	
	160	the Kinges mandement for mede to com to him	
	169	Drede goeth & warneth ffalss	13a
	172	frers	
	173	gyle	
	172f	falshod fled to the freres, & then to merchants Shops [right]	
	177	lyar	
	181	pardoners helps[?] to lyar	
	184	and thes	
	184-5	Cy[lilleg.] freris	
	186	hypothycarys	
	188	mynstrelles	
	189	messingers	
	191	fryers [left] freris [right]	
	192	Lyar copid as a frere	13b
	196	Mede [left] Mede attached [right]	
III	1-2	Mede brought to the king	
	10	Med cherished by men of law	
	12	Men of lawe [with pointing hand]	
	15	Mede corrupted by the judg son	14a
	23-4	corrupted also by the clergy	
	25	clerkes	
	30	her reward	
	34	frere [left] the fryer to mede [right]	
	40	a frere a bawde for Mede	
	41	Mede shryven of a ffrere	
	44	her reward to the ffere	14b
C III	54-5	[pointing hand]	
C III	62/ A 46	absolution	
A III	49	penance	15a
	66	officers	
	76	Mede to the mayour	
	82	against Brybes	15b
	93	the kyng to mede	
	100	mede offered to be maryed to Conscience	
	103	consyens	
	109	Conscience doth Refuse Mede	16a
	111	the properties of mede	
	113	the properties of mede	
	135	nota medes properties accused by Conscience [Mede's "properties" sectioned off by lines in the text]	
	157	Mede [left] In plains[?] by Mede [right] In x laws                               " Jury laws by Mede                       "	
	163	Medes answer to the King & against Conscience	17a

III	185	What Medes answer aganst Consciens annser [hand pointing]	17b
	210	Mede against Consciens	18a
	214	Mede is omnia [?] [one word, illeg.]	
	216	Replicatio	
	217	Consciens [one word, illeg.] replie	
	219	then Distincion of Mede	
	225	Mede mesureles that maisters desyren	
	226	the evill mede mesureles	
	232	Masse mony	
	233a	Replicacioun of Conscience	18b
	247	nota medle not with mede conscience said	
	258	Replicatio	19a
	266	the m[laister] of therthe	
	267	[one word, illeg.] ssothe quod conscience	
	268	trespasith treuth	
	272	Mede dothe for mysdoers & lawyers	
	273	Lawe is a lofte but	
	275-6	Law shalbe a laborer	
IV	4	consyence	
	16	Reason	19b
	24	wisdome & wytt	
	34	Peace	20a
	49	Wronge	
	60	nota bene	20b
	63	tok mede [glosses "nommen with hem repeutaunce"]	
	79-80	nota	
	91	ye kyng	21a
	134	nota	22a
V	11	nota bena valde	22b
	13	the sermon	
	14	punyschement of Synne	
	23	consyens to wastours	
	28	what the sermoun of contiense	23a
	34	prelates	
	41	sekith saynt truthe/ sechethe saint truthe	
	43	Repentaunce	
	45	pride	
	54	lechery	23b
	55-7	opus	
	58	Envye	
	66	Wrathe	
	107	couetise	24b
	146	glotonye	25a
C VII	1	Scloth	27a
	60	nota bene valde	28a
	101a	[hand pointing]	29a
	103	iiij mynstrells	29b
	120	Repentaunce prayer	
	139a	magna misericordia dei	30a



A VI	4	the palmer knew not truthe*	
	22	nota bene [pointing hand]	31a
	25-6	peres knewe truthe	
	44-5	[Chanctory?] long after Becket	
C VII	207	the tenne comandments	31b
A VI	95	wrath	32b
	104	vij susters	
	120	mercy	33a
	121-2	surplus [refers to C VII 292-306 added after the end of A VI]	
		after C VII 295 [an illeg. annotation]	
A VII	23	knight	34a
	38-9	Mark pers counsell	34b
	52-3	pers woll sowe the half acre	
	64-9	no tithes	35a
	70-5	nota bene	
	78	[pelrs testament	
	94	pers pilgrimage	35b
	107	Idilness	36a
	122	pers	
	130	charite	
	135-8	mete for Religious	36b
	139	wastour	
	146	the knight	
	156	hunger	
	188	nota	37b
	198	nota bene	
	237	lehecrafft	38b
	253	phisike	
	262	hunger will dyne	39a
	283-4	plenty & glotony	
	302-7	hunger	39b
VIII	3-4	A pardone	40a
	20	merchauntes	
	45	lawyers	40b
	55	nota merchynges	41a
	67	beggars	
	89	a preste	41b
	96	pers pardonne	
	118	pe preste & pers	42a
	133	dremys	42b
	143	Josephes drene	
	165	pers counsell	43a
	179	mercy	43b
IX	8	ij frers	
	22	nota bene valde	44a
	61	thought	44b
	87-8	pe bysshopes croyse	45a
	109	wytt	45b

X	19	fyve wittes	46a
	26	kynd is god	46b
	131	wedlock	48b
	139	nota bastardye	
	177	nota bene	49b
	186	nota mariage	
A XI	2	nota dame studye	50b
	13	possessions	
	19	desyrtes	
	24	clergye	
	35	mynstrelles	51a
	45	be pore	
	58	ffreres	51b
	87	nota bene	52a
	93-4	[hand pointing] .1532. manu sua Anne fortescue	
	105	clergye	52b
	114	nota bene	
	115	clergys lesson	
	137	dyvynite	53a
	155	nota	53b
	160	nota	
	182	dowell	54a
	187	dobett	
	194	Dobest	
	197	Bysshopes	54b
	200	Religio[n or s]	
	204-5	Mark Saynt gregore sayyng	
	229-30	Riches [left]	55a
		pouertie [right]	
	265	Salomon [left]	55b
		aristotle [right]	
	276	nota bene	56a
C XII	5-6	ffreres	57a
	15	ffreres	57b
	39	Scripture	58a
	44	[pointing hand]	
	58	nota	58b
	60	a bondman	
	68	nota bene	
	70	nota bene	
	73	nota bene	
		troianus	
	86-7	mark well for justice	59a
	101	festes	
	118	love	59b
	143	nota a walnot	60a
	152-3	wylfull pouertie	60b
	170-5	nota bene	
	172-3	paciens in adversite	61a
	209	couetise	61b
	224	nota clergy	



XII	232-3	plenty makyth pryde	62a
	239	nota couetises Reward	
	245-6	purchasesoures	
XIII	1	pouerties	62b
	32	nota bene [left]	63a
		a merchaunt & a mesenger [right]	
	64	nota bene	63b
	94	beggars	64a
	99	prestes	
	101	prestes	64b
	107-10	knight	
	112	prestes tithe	
	123	bisshoppes	
	128	nota	65a
	130	kynde	
	142-3	Reason is beste	
	152-3	man	
	194	Reason	66a
	199	suffraunce	
	202-3	nota bene	66b
	218	nota to losye oper inconsityve[?]	
	233	dronkynnes	
	242	schame	67a
XIV	13	nota	67b
	19	nota bene valde	
	23	Grace	
	30	Clergye	68a
	51	nota bene valde	
	61	nota	
	65	for clergie	68b
	72	nota	
	104	nota bene	69a
	128	nota	69b
	149	trayanus	70a
	172	the pecok	70b
	185	the lark	71a
	203-4	nota bene vix	
	209	truth	71b
XV	9	freres	
	15-16	curats	72a
	21-3	nota bene vix	
	26	conscience	
	30	ffrere	
	33-4	plowman	
	39	the maister frere	72b
	64	plowman	73a
	69	dottour	
	77	nota freres	
	85-6	a gredy gloton	73b
	103	nota freres	
	111	nota bene dowell	74a

XV	120	consciens	
	123-7	dowell	
		dobett	
		dobest	
	128-9	clergye	
	137-8	pers plowman	74b
	141	nota bene	
	150-1	pers plowman	
	153	pacyens	
	171	dydo	75a
	175	conscience	
	177-84	nota bene valde	
	185	nota paciens	75b
	194	nota bene actyve	
	238	nota bene valde	76b
	279	nota	77a
	290	byrds	77b
	301	dyves	
XVI	25-8	nota bene	78a
	31a-41	nota bene valde	78b
	42	pride & pouertie	
	43	& þe vii dedly synnys	
	102-5	nota bene mariage	79b
	120	nota bene	80a
	157	nota bene	81a
	172-3	the properties of liberum arbitrium	
	181	[pointing hand]	81b
	201a	nota bene	
	211-2	noli altum sapere	82a
	219	wyse men	
	221	[pointing hand] vertere verba in opera	
	230	ffrerres	82b
	241-2	nota bene. presthode	
	255	prestes [left]	83a
		abuses [cancelled, right]	
	258	the common lief of our clergie	
	263-4	Ipocrasye	
	264	parietes dealbatur. presthode	
	273	curatts	83b
	284	charitie vbi	
	290-2	[pointing hand]	
	300	Caritas	84a
	309	Caritas	
	321	nota pilgrimage	84b
	322	[illeg. annotation]	
	324	Charith few	
	330	[illeg. annotation]	
	323a	" " [pointing hand]	
	339	" "	
	340	Caritas	85a
	349	beggars	
	350	nota [one word, illeg.]	
	351	[pointing hand]	



XVI	352	frere	
	356	Caritas	
	359	Caritas in court	
	361	Rara aueris <sup>en</sup> in consistory	
	363	[pointing hand]	85b
XVII	15	freres Avsteyns [left]	86a
		freres Augseyns foundes [right]	
	17	Paule a basket makes	
	18	etc.	
	20-1	[pointing hand]	
	41	offerynges	86b
	52	monks	
	53	mortmayn	
	61	charite in Kynn	87a
	68	nota bene [left]	
		the goodes of the churche [right]	
	72	nota [pointing hand]	
	82	nota	
	114	a quodlibet	88a.
	117-18	prestes	
	125	holy church is charite	
	137-8	nota	
	139	charite	
	141	nota bene	
	159	Makomett	
	171	nota	89a
	188	prelates	
	199	nobilles	89b
	209	prestes & the templers	
	214	nota bene	
	217	byschopp	90a
	220	nota bene	
	227	nota bene	
	250	prestes	90b
	274	seint Thomas of Canterbury [heavily cancelled]	91a
	319	prelates	92a
XVIII [all in this passus underlined subject headings]			
	2-3	here liberum arbitrium is made a precher	
	14	charite	
	26	be trinite	92b
	31	the world	
	35	the flesche	
	43	the devill	93a
	106	Age	94a
	125	Annunciato diuinitate	94b
	133a	&tc.	
	142	the marvelles of cryste	
	172	kyllyng of Judas	95a
	182-3	Abraham of be trinyte	
	224	multiplicacioun	96a

XVIII	266	An harawd at armys	96b
	271	lyke patern	97a
XIX		[all in this passus underlined subject headings]	
	63	þe samarytan	98b
	167	þe trinyte	100a
	206-7	nota bene	101b
	215	vnkyndnes	
	229	dyves	
	263	murdure	102b
	296	iiij thinges þat druyyn [one word, illeg.]	103a
XX		[most annotation underlined subject headings]	
	2-3	Passyoun of our Lord folowyth	104a
	51	Crist crusyfydd	104b
	81	longenus	105b
	96	faith	
	103	nota bene	106a
	112-13	nota danyell	
	118-9	Mercy	
	121-2	truth	
	132	our lady	106b
	137	passio Xpi	
	156	nota bene	107a
	166	gyle & grace	
	168	Rightwisnes	107b
	171	Peace	
	193	Rightwisnes	
	241	the blasynge starr	108b
	274	Sathan	109a
	295	Lucyfer	109b
	312	Sathan	110a
	361	Christi	111a
	416	mercy	112a
	423-4	nota mercy in a kyng	
XXI	6	pers	113b
	13	Cryst	
	15-16	nota Jhesu & Cristi	
	27	nota bene	
	38-40	frankleyns & free gentilmen ~through~ Crist [another word heavily cancelled]	114a
	49-50	thus the conqueror	
	63	nota bene valde	114b
	75	iiij kynges of soleyne	
	86	Reason	115a
	88	Righwysnes [sic]	
	92	Mercy	
	86-9	Rex in moro deus [three words, illeg. all on right]	
	100	Cristes myracles	



XXI	109	[three words, illeg.]	115b
	119	that his mother shuld boleue [sic]	
	128-9	thus caught him the name dobett	
	136	fili David	116a
	137	of Nazareth	
	138	to be kayser	
	144	kepyn at from	
	150	Xpi Resurecto	
	158	Maudeleyn	
	162	Nota [pointing hand]	116b
	169	pax vobis	
	172	Thomas	
	182	dobest	
	183-4	the pope & holy church	
	184-5	petras pardon	
	186	contricio	117a
	187	satisfaccion	
	188	Data est ille [one word, illeg.] petras	
	192	Det	
	197-8	domysdais reward	
	199	cousyns	
	201	the holy goste [left]	
		Spiritus Sanctus [right]	
	212	Spiritus sanctus	117b
	213	grace	
	219	Antecriste	
	218-22	Nota de Antechristo [to right, with mark at each line]	
	222f	then pryde be the pope & cardenalles	
	223-4	nota clergy [right]	
	228	the Riitwyes	
	229-30	dyvysyon of graces	
	239	Dyuers gifts	118a
	250	in charite	
	256-7	Conscience kyng	
		Crafte stuard	
	259	Piers Auditor Reve and all	
	263-4	pers iiij plowe oxen iiij Euangeliste[s]	118b
	267-8	iiij stotts	
		- Doctors	
	273	ij harowys	
	274	the iiij cardynall vertues	
	276	Prudence	
	281	attemperance	
	289	Strength	119a
	297	Justice	
	305	Justicia spareth non	
	322	tymber for pers barme	119b
	323	the crosse xv	
	327	the barme vnitye	
	331	pers carte [glosses "cristendome"]	
	332	prestehode heyward	
	336-7	pride & his oste	
	339	pride and his ministeres	120a

XXI	344	to sowe sedis on	
	347-8	by sophistrie [left]	
		sleighte of the devil [right]	
	356-7	^then quod constience^ (sic; left)	
		conscience [right]	
	365	a bulle work against pride	120b
	370	that was Refusall of Synne	
	375-6	stet	
	379-80	nota bene [pointing hand]	
	385	the sacrament	
	395	baw quod a Bruer	121a
	404	we must lyve aftur spiritus justicie	
	409	a lewd vicory	
	413-18	nota cardinalles [pointing hand, left]	
		Oh ca'rema[? right]	
	428	O lewde pupe*	121b
	434-5	caritas*	
	442	Ye pope*	
		[pointing hand]	
	445	ô very Antichrist*	
	446	[pointing hand]	122a
	455	Gyle for spiritus among the lewd*	
	459	A lord	
	465	a king	
	477	consyens	122b
	479a	[pointing hand]	
XXII	3-4	Necessitie [hand points a finger to each line]	
	4	Neede	
	9	take that is nede & no more*	
	12	mete	
	17	clothe	123a
	19-20	Drinke	
	23-32	[marked off {}] nota bene valde	
	33	[pointing hand]	
	40-1	1532 manu sue Anne ffortescue	123b
	53	Antecrist*	
	58-61	Antichrist*	
		Religyon*	
	66	Religion of falsse Stat*	
	67	[pointing hand*]	
	63	nota .	
	64	puppera*	124a
	69	pride baaner berer to Antichrist	
	74-5	Conscience & his company [left]	
		Conscience uersus Antichrist* [right]	
	82	Diseases sent forth by kynde*	
	92	Alarme*	124b
	94	Deth comes*	
	95	Age	
	99-100	kynd & deth	
	101	alias puppyes*	
	106	curteysye	



XXI	110-12	fortune the fals & his company. lechery*	
	120-1	couetyse*	125a
	126	symonye [left] symony* [right]	
	130	[pointing hand]	
	133-5	Rewardes to juges by Symony	
	138	matrimony	
	139	Dyuorse*	
	140	conscience [left] couetise is a lewd knyght [right]	
	143	lyffe [pointing hand]	125b
	152	nota bene	
	158	Sclewth	
	160	wanhope*	
	162	Thom ij tonge*	
	165	Consciens & Elde	
	167	Schrift	
	168	Life fleeth to phisik*	126a
	170	Phisik	
	173	Elde alias Tempus*	
	176	but the phisician was also strykyng*	
	181-2	Revell & Riott	
	184-5	nota age & his gifts	
	193	my wife had ruthe nota þe wyfe. ye but nota for what cause/ the wief is wo but why*	126a/126b
	199	ages complaynt	126b
	203	Tempus*	
	208	Love	
	215	vij geaunts	
	218	preestys*	
	221-2	Irish prestes	127a
	228	Clergye [left] Conscience rullith after Clergie imperfect* [right]	
	230	ffreres	
	232	Nede	
	242-3	Consiens lawghed [left] Conscience to the ffreers* [right]	
	246-7	Conciens [con]solith freres	127b
	254	mesure	
	262	Brybours & .o[ther]	
	267	freres haue no nombers	
	273	Envye	128a
	300	Ipocrosye	128b
	305	Schryfte	
	315	frere flatterers	
	324	frere confessour	129a
	361	the frere	129b
	366-7	the fals frere	

ii. Annotation of BL MS Additional 35287: M(B).

Much of the annotation of this MS is heavily abbreviated Latin. I have attempted to expand this where possible, but if in doubt have left a suspension mark '. Conjectural expansions are noted as such, or are in square brackets. Some of the annotations are too heavily abbreviated to be decipherable. In the decipherment of such annotation there is great room for possible error, and I can make no claim to 100% accuracy.

In addition to the listed annotations, an annotator frequently adds marks like those used for the insertion of paraps. A Latin annotator gives running passus headings at the top right of recto pages.

			Fol.
		Gloss at head of work: assrt[?] principio sanctu ^filius^ maria[?] [faded]	1a
prol.	39a	[Latin corrected:] ^loquitur^ & sepi' diaboli [added to line]	1b
	59	n. Glosers euangel	
	67	[pointing hand] Proverb ["wel faste" corrected to "vpwards ffast"]	
	72	[contra] pardoners	
	85	" [one word, illegible] & curates	2a
	106	mistici loquitur	
	132-48	[text marked {}] vox angeli	2b
	146	the route off ratons	
	213-4	arening of men off law ffor mone	3b
I	8-9	off though yat will non other heven but the [ends here]	4a
	20	iij things in comon	
	85	truth is the best	5a
	101	ffasting on ffryday	
	105	nota	5b
	110-11	the fall off luceffer	
	144	dye rather then do dedly syn	6a
	183-4	no[ta] off malkyns maydenhed	6b
	190-1	nota de chast chapeleyns	
II	8	prima apparitio [ ] mede	7a
	41	maritage medis	
	56	th'assemble at medis mariage	8a
	75	medis ffeffment	
	115	crastebatur theologus	8b
	140	notate verba	9a
	193-4	quomodo Rex jurat punire malefactores	9b
	208-9	drede stant ad hostium & audient mandatum Reg[is]	10a
	224-5	pardon ffor pens & pound mele	
III	35	the frere and mede in shryft	11a
	110-11	[one word, illeg.] med vult maritage ad consciens	12a
	120-1	consciens contradictat matrimoniam et accusat med	



III	189-94	nota [text marked {} ]	
	227-8	Rex est ex p[ar]t[em] med	13b
	228	Replicatio consciens	
	252	nota	14a
	259	"	
	280	# the culore	14b
	299	lex laborabat	
	305	# prophetiam	
	313-4	parsons to lefe there benefys ffor hunting	15a
	325-6	prophetiam de vj sums [sic] & a ship	
	331	Responsio med ad replicationem	
IV	6	Rex mandant [sic] consciens ad quaerere rationem	15b
	17	[line by text]	
	44	Rex ob[?]man[er]at cu[m] rat[il]one	16a
	47	conquestio[?] est pax con[tra] injuriam	
	53	The borrowing off Bayerd	
	67	wyt & warnd wisdom	16b
	91-3	nota	17a
	94-7	"	
	104	"	
	106	B[e]n[e] judicial[re?] est Rex	
	114-24	[marked #, {} ]	
	114	optime dicit Ratio	
	146-8	lex laborabat & lede Affelde dong	17b
	166	yat mede is callyd A hore	18a
V	13	per peccatores est causa vindicti	18b
	21-2	quomodo predicabat Ratio	
	30	yat watts wyf was to blame	19a
	42	notate predicatoribus	
	49	bene dicit	
	53	quomodo laudatur veritas	
	58	finem sermonis	19b
	80-1	the frers ffore slevis	
	101	descriptio [ ] invidie	20a
	137-43	nota [text marked with line]	20b
	144	the cause off grugge betwen curats & freris	
	179	the flux off the ffoule mouth	21a
	190	- opt[im]la [possibly "apta"] descriptio Avaricia	
	230-1	questiones repentionis	21b
	236	nota	22a
	274-5	mi[ra]lcabile[?] di[xit?]	22b
	280	qu' misericordia eius super omnia opera	
	306-18	[line by text]	23a
	341	[line by text]	23b
	350-5	[ " " " ]	
	355	take hede good gossip	
	415-16	de presbiter & venator	24b
	444	q' misericordia superest ad iniquitatem	25a
	460	de Robert the robber	
	461	nota	
	477-8	the prayer of Repentance	25b
	480	nota bene	

V	484	de necessitatem peccatorum	
	489	nota bene	
	497	Sinffull mare...nota	26a
	499	optime dicitur	
	506	de sope [sic]	
	532	questio vbi veritas moratur	26b
	534	nota bene	
	537	nota	
	538-9	q' dicit pe[trus] ploughman optime cognoscere v[er]lit[as]	
	552-3	quomodo decet viam viam [sic] ad veritatem	
	556-60	nota [lines marked /, # {} ]	
	561	primum mandatum	27a
	602	Appylls unrost	27b
	618-19	Septem sorores que seruiunt ad veritas	
	630	cutpurse	28a
	635	q' misericordia super omnia	
VI	23	quomodo miles [optulat?] sequi[?] ad arat[or] [possibly "aratus"]	28b
	25-7	the cuvenant by-twene the knyght & the plowman	
	37	p[er]s[?] bene dicitur	
	45	the knyghtis Bondsman	
	48-9	nota	
	53	the devils dysours	29a
	70-2	q' oblat[er?]es n[on] debent recepi de hiis [quorum] deleant[ur] etc.	
	86	the testament of piers	29b
	94-5	to pay preestly is nothing for they be all receywers [conjectural expansion of recey' <sup>w</sup> ]	
	120	the devill haue yat Recchach	30a
	121-2	quomodo truffatores [sic] ffin[?] so ffore mitulat' [sic] & coci [or "toci"?]	
	133	contra wastors	
	143-51	[marked {}] heresi	
	144	qui parcit virgo p[er]ldit [or "prodit"?] filium	
	151	[contra] freres [or "confreres"]	
	159-60	quomodo querit piers ad militem	30b
	171	the hopyng after hunger	
	175	- q' fframes venit ad punir' vastor	
	193	that was bake for bayard	31a
	212	concilium fframe contra Auaricios medicos	
	258	[contra?] nanging to moch	32a
	271	contra medicos	
	326	nota	32b
VII	18-20	contra mercatores in [two words, illeg.] a pena & culpa & in [two words, illeg.]	33a
	32	[marked with line]	
	40	de leges p'itis[?] minime de indulgens recipiunt	33b
	55-6	q' deus creant [sic] quattuor in admonitorum coe[lum?]	



VII	71	.q' remandat elimo[sina?] in mana donec videns cui dea s' [?] iij Caton [surrounded {} and by the word:] optima	34a
	76	Reo' [?] Et tamen vide Gregor	
	78	salu[alt(i)lo [?]	
	91-3	q' mendicantes operantur tangere vestie [cu'nege?]	
	107	nota	34b
	109-10	Bulls petri ploughman	
	156	[contra] opera de Sompner	35a
	175	q' dowell superest Indulgens	35b
	195-6	de indulgencijs	
VIII	6-7	the question askyn of ffreris of Dowell	36a
	44-5	q' caritas maxime ad[ lat conta peccatum	36b
	70-1	quomodo thought primo apparuit in sompno	37a
	78-9	nota descriptio de dowell	
	96-7	descriptio de dobest ad epliscopuls pertinet	
	101-2	on to be kyng & rule All	37b
	117-18	quomodo will & thought primo obmanerunt ad witt	
	129	will	
IX	1-2	nota bene	
	12	descriptio de dowell	38a
	18-19	q' Inwitt [one word, illeg.] quinque ffillios [two abbreviations, illeg.]	
	26	pler?] nat[ur]la [or "nativitate"?] est creator omni Rex	
	31-2	dixit & facta sunt/ mandant & creati sunt	
	34-5	q' in salu[atio?] verbo [sue?] opere facta sunt	38b
	50-1	the making off man with the sowle	
	61-2	de hijs quor[um?] deus verit[as?] est	
	66	q' potent' potat'	
	69	nota bene	
	70-1	that holy church ssuld holp ffolis	
	77	ad compadres	39a
	80	what belongyth to the litle Barns	
	83	ad prelates	
	87-8	manere caritate in judeis contra in cristianis	
	92	contra truffatores	
	93	nota	
	97	descriptio de dowell	
	110	" " "	39b
	121-3	q' hos qui concipiuntur absque matrimonia	
	131-3	that voend [sic] And caymes kynd shuld not cople	
	145	nota	40a
	165	" contra matrimonia inordinat	
	170	nota	
	173	Bacon off durmow	
	187	nota de p[recipitas?] coitus in matrimonia	40b
	202	" descriptio de dowell	
X	7-8	q' perlis non debent ajutere coram porces	41a
	24-5	q' re impii bene [one word, illeg.]	
	41	q' ribaldus	41b

X	52	q' ad laud[em?] di[s]p[utan]t dec[et] in [one word, cancelled] conviviis	
	69	teribile	
	72	fratres	42a
	94	freres	
	98-102	[passage marked / ]	
	98	quomodo laudat hospitalitatum	
	115	why men perissh ffor Adams sin	42b
	127	nota	
		non sunt omni [ca <sup>c</sup> queuende?]	
	129	q' talibus vellet oculum in [ane?]	
	138	bene loquitur	
	154	notate ad scriptur	43a
	162	nota de patiens	
	166-7	qui clarical[iter?] velit neque demerijt neque luxuriis frequenter	
	185	nota	43b
	185-93	[text marked distinctly]	
		q' verbi Amor ibi theologia	
	197	q' in [saluatio?] amicis [ ] eclesia inimicis [one word, illeg.] operentur	
	209	q' amor maxime [one word, illeg.] ad salu[al]t[io] [?]	
		[one word, illeg.]	
	212	contra Astronomiar[es]	44a
	216	ffybicchis	
	239	de trinitate	
	253-4	de ffide autem noli disputandi	44b
	255	descriptio de dowell	
	272	to abbotts and priours	
	284	contra mansid prests	45a
	286	offny and ffynes	
	309	contra religios extravagat[?]	
	315-16	q' kneling off the knavs	
	331	thabbot of Abyndon	45b
	338	kynghod helpith not to heuenward	
	349	nota	
	354	q' inffidel in casu pat Baptizare inffedell[s]	46a
	388-9	epis' quomodo salomon et Aristotill da[m]p[nantur	
	408	m'cham Noe	46b
	419-20	ffelon on Good Ffriday	
	447	nemo bonus	47a
XI	34	recheles	48a
	47	q' fratribus	
	47-52	nota	
	66-7	q' vbi baptizus ibi sepelus d[ixit?]	
	72-3	nota	
	80-1	q' magis conuenit Baptism quam sepultus	
	111	multi sunt vocati	49a
	114	pauci vero electi	
	127-11	Rusticibus n[on] d[ebet?] seip[?] in manu mist[ic?]le absque licenc' domine sui	49b
	138	q' misericordia super omnia opera	
	140	Baw ffor bookes	



XI	141	Troianus	
	154	q' velet[?] [one word, illeg.] veritas	
	158	q' iustici eorum m[agisteri?] in sc[ollam] scli[?]	50a
	171	.mag[ister] ppt[?] amore q' pecunie prip'[?]	
	185-6	q' in similitudine paupertatis visus erat Ihesus	
	203-4	No vileyns butt by syn	50b
	209-10	q' jocund est [fitais?] ffreres in Sin[?]	
	218	q' p[ler] ffidem salutatus est peccatrix	
	222-3	nota loquitur	
	237	q' in fractore panis cognoscerunt	51a
	253	nota	
		quomodo laudatur paupertas	
	257	pouerte ffor the best	
	292	nota	
	295	presbitors	51b
	296	a careffull knyght	
	307	contra jdiotes prestres	52a
	329	ffor wurmys & ffowlis &c.	
	347	pye nest	52b
	357	conceptio[?] Byl [Byrd?]	
	396-7	[eight words, illeg.]	53a
	412	descriptio de dowell	53b
	426	dronkyn daffe	
XII	10	emendeing dum tempus hem[rest illeg.]	54a
	29	descriptio de dowell	
	47-8	Rosamonds Beaute	54b
	64-5	nota	
	68	de adventu Gracie	
	76	adulterium muliores	55a
	83-4	sciencia scriptura conffortett bonos// malos autem condempnat	
	92	sciencia delige	
	115-7	q' in vostri testamentum licit erat presbiteri procreatare ffilios	55b
	145	q' freres molestus est [sic]	
	146	q' n[on] natus erat [Christ] in diuersorio	
	160	de 2 natatoribus	56a
	173	q' contra delit pleccatorum	
	186	scolares optime b[ene?]	
	200-1	de lat[ronis] peniten[tia] / Ad passionem domine	56b
	226	q[ui?] naturale sciunt	57a
	233-5	Why Adam couered his licam rather than his mouth	
	253	q' Aueros & cupid	
	268-9	q' de Aristotile dubitur vix [viii?]/saluatur	57b
	283	troianus saluatur ppt[?] iustus	
	287	nota bene	
XIII	6	nota bene [contra] freres	58a
	9-10	q' n[on] def [here becomes too faded to read] curati intrit[?] plu[?]nit	
	27	convenit conscience	
	44	In a morter post mortem	58b
	44a	teribile valde	

XIII	50	[one word, illeg.] sicut cibo' ad conscience	
	74-5	jocose loquitur & verba quod dicit	59a
	86	wynkyng of paciens	
	104	q' descriptio de dowell	59b
	116	" " "	
	120	nota bene	
	149	" "	60a
	154	mistici	
	198-200	how consciens conged the ffrere	60b
	206-8	that paciens must be pryffe born[?] with clergie	61a
	216-19	vitayles off paciens sobriete & soft spech	
	230	q' fferters and fithellers	
	246-7	pardonner with ij polles	61b
	252	q' dubit'	
XIII	264-5	quando cartis off Strafford	
	333-4	nota	62b
	336-7	q' contradictione wich craftis	
	344	nota	
	345	q' luxuria	
	358	q' Avaricia	63a
	409	Branches off Slewth	
	422	q' sage ffolis	
XIV	12-13	q' difficile est sane vivere	64a
	17a-18	descriptio de dowell	
	29	primo paciens	64b
	36-7	vitells off paciens	
	47	fiat voluntas	
	60a	et it'is [?]	65a
	69	de septem dormientes	
	83	q' contricio delit peccato A mortale in veniale	
	86	bene	65b
	92-5	q' per conffescione occidentur peccata s[ed] per contr[icione] delentur in veniale	
	103	questio	
	106	teribile hoc	
	122-3	notabile bonus [pauper?] qui pacienter sufffert paupertatem	66a
	131	- [periculum?] in divicijs	
	143	bene	
	151	a cote above his couenant	66b
	168	q' orat p[ro] diuitibus	
	191	nota bene	67a
	204	q' diuicias [two words, illeg.]	
	213-13a	Audaciam paupertas with A pak at hs rugge	
	223-4	Duxom & bost be euer at werre	67b
	224-5	layke bytwen long & short	
	252	stewes syde	
	266	q' puella dimittit patrem & matrem per vivo suo	
	276a	discriptio paupertatem	68a
	325-6	difficile est sine peccato viuere	68b
XV	23	descriptio Anime	69a



XV	66-7	non plus sapere quam oportet	70a
	90	curats loquitur	
	99	de prelats & curats	70b
	109	curatts	
	117a	Nota	
	120-1	prests Basclardis	
	138	curats chiares	71a
	152	longe will	
	166	quomodo laudatur caritas	71b
	176	" de caritas	
	213	caritas omnia libenter sufert	72a
	227	nota de mendicantibus	72b
	231	Audi fiat	
	240	loquitur doctor'	
	259	inquit[?] erat [one word, illeg.] [Christi]	
	270-1	de paupertate & paciens	73a
	288-9	q[uo?]d conqueris[?]	
	308-9	q' rapacitat[em?] [domini?] tenentes	73b
	310	fraters	
	320	q' most man	
	326a	Optime dicit & verum	
	344-55	[marked / ]	74a
	344	[Se.. rest indecipherable] omnia caritas	
	349	lussheborowes	
	359	ffaculit Astrologore	
	363	fallas figure p[re]l[er]itores & ffutores	
	370-4	[marked / ]	
	371	New Gramer	
	377	Gyle & fflatere	74b
	382	Responsio ad cond'	
	388	festum corporis Xpi	
	390	nota	
	397	Machamit	
	410	discriptio Machamit	
	415	Englissh clerks ffede couetise	75a
	420	de rebus male al ] nata [two words, illeg.] elemosina	
	434	notate qu' curates hetes [hertes?]	
	452	nota bene	75b
	454	SSullyng	
	458	deficit	
	539	the red noble	76a
	553	[contra?] possessiones ecclesie	
	559	Lucifer [above "an angil"] quar[er]le verit[as]	76b
	562-3	Malicia procedens ex cupiditate absque caritate	
	572	nota bene	
	605	["prelett" cancelled]	77a
	606	de n[on] [one or two words, illeg.] prelettor in articulis ffides	
XVI	4	declaratio caritatis	77b
	13	nota bene	
	23-4	the pylis off charite	
	82-3	nota nobile	78b

XVI	114	resurrecto lazaris	79a
	128	ffuga[tores?] Iudeos de templo	
	151-2	quomodo judas [proldit Christus[?]	79b
	177	de ffide	
	181-2	de fide / de trinitate	80a
	213	N	
	224	Abraham	80b
XVII	27	[illeg. abbreviation]	81b
	28-9	tres videt [one word, illeg.] aderint	
	139-40	extende manum que de[o] assimulat ad manum	83a
	176-7	discriptio trinitate ad similitudinem manum	83b
	199-200	de peccato contra Spiritu Sanctu	
	205-6	Aliarii discriptio trinitate ad similitudinem candeli	84a
	245	de [con]cal[r]n[atio?] Xpi bene loquitur	84b
	254-5	de Ing[r]altitudi[n]e bene loquitur	
	269-70	notate divites	
	285	nota dyn[?] bene	85a
	299-300	questiones de peccato [contra] Spiritu Sancti	
	315	teribile	
	321	A wikkyd wyff	85b
	344-5	q' hijs qui male possit pati[?]	
XVIII	1	de passione Xpi	86a
	203	nota bene	88b
	230	de juram[en]t[?] Boke	89a
	337-8	deceptio demonis in fforma lizard	90b
	396	iusticia in [one word, illeg.] veritate	91a
	422	iusticia & pax osculati sunt	91b
XIX	15-16	quar[er]le [Christus] mag[ister] q[ua]lm Jhesus	92a
	67-8	qu' necesse est penitencia agere	92b
	86	bene loquitur	
	89	descriptio t[ri]um muneris	93a
	117	bene	
	121-2	dixit & facta sunt	
	162	women kepe no counsell	94a
	228a	Gyftis off grace	94b
	247	ffoleiles lawes	95a
	261-2	A new plouh	
	273a	virtutes cardinal	95b
	289	M. John Spisyd	
	330	Peers sheves	96a
	348	nota	96b
	409	lewed vicare	97b
	442	[contra?] the papa	
	465	nota	98a
XX	138	the mantell off mynever	100b
	162	Tom twotong	
	163	mordon	
	174	[contra?] phisicos	101a
	221-2	the prest off Irland	101b
	230	bene[?] vales consciencia	



XX        280-8. [marked lightly / ]  
          311     Syr leff to live in lecherye  
          320     papa

102b  
103a

The text ends on 103a; 104b has many notes and scribbles, among them a monogram of the letters DEN and the date 1545, and a verse:

with this mare be he smete  
that al the worlde may it wite  
the geuyth a way hys own thynges  
And goth hymselff a beggyng

This is a form of IMEV 4202.

iii. Annotations and illustrations of Bodleian MS Douce 104: D(C)

This MS contains c.64 coloured and finished illustrations, six line drawings, and some lesser sketches. All are executed with some skill, but they are clearly not the work of a professional illustrator.

The main pictures are numbered 1-52.

			Fol.
		[Professional initial. Bearded sleeper, dressed in black habit.]	1a
prol.	35	de mynstralys	1b
	41	nota de beggers	
	56	ye iiij orders of frers prechyng	
	66	nota pardoners	2a
	81	nota de parsones & prechers	
	98	[unltrewe sacrifice [damp damage]	2b
	146	nota de knyghthod	
	158	nota de men of law	3a
	168	nota de cat	3b
	176	nota de ratoun	
	176	nota de mous	
	219-20	nota de alman'[?] craftys	4a
I	23	is fode	4b
	27	ye syn of droncnys	
	42	nota de lepers of money	5a
		right hand margin: faint line drawing, of upright animal figure	
	71-2	de holy church	5b
	97	nota ye perfeccion of knyghod	
	146	nota de loue	6b
	176	nota for por[le] pep[le]	
	184	nota de prestys	7a
II	4	de falset	7b
	19	nota de med þe mayd	
	41	nota de med yis marryag	8a
	53	nota de what men was preyn to þe brydall	
1.		Picture of Mede, crowned.	
	80	nota de godys þat fals shall hawe [another word?] Mede	8b
	116	nota red [obscured by drawing]	9a
2.		Picture of man, probably Theology. Facing left, profile, as if addressing audience in text to left.	
	145ff	nota how med myzt kys þe kyng as for his kynys woman	9b
	177ff	nota de med is horsing to goo Wyrshup hyr Wodyng	10a



3. Picture of Mede carried by a sheriff, carrying a cup, and wearing a crown. Both figures are in semi-profile looking into text left (see photograph 4).

200	nota de sopnes y saw han all [through drawing]	
217	nota how dred stod at þe dor	10b
229	nota de pardoners	

III	13	houu med came to Westmynster	11a
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4. Mede in profile looking into text left. No crown.

37	nota de frerys þat beþe confessors	11b
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5. Mede kneeling to confessor. He in brown friar's habit, right hand on Mede's head, facing right. She in half profile to left.

76	nota de med how sche prayt to merys & scherrewys & all þat kepyth þe law.	12a
81	nota [daued?]	
116	nota de all fals sillers	12b
149	nota howe ye kyng de-syret contiens to wed med	13a
191	nota wher' med ys be lowyt with ony lord	13b
202	tewer	14a
215	nota houu med mowrayt recoll þe kyng	

6.	Picture of man, probably Conscience, in top half of page. Half profile to right, hand raised (right) as if preaching.	15a
----	---	-----

300	nota de harlotys hors & all wasth [sic] leches	
323	houu god yaw Salamon grac & tok hit fro hym ayayn	15b
377	nota houu þe comuyn claymep iij þyngles of þe kyng	16b
413	houu Saul brak god is comondment	17a
451	kyne low schall turne & consiens togedyer	17b
462	de prestis & parsonnys	

IV		18a
----	--	-----

7. King holding sceptre, seated on throne, half profile facing into text.

6	houu conciens mest [sic] for reyson to þe kyng [through drawing]	
45	houu pes come to þe p[ar]liament	18b

8.	Seated man, probably Peace.	19a
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82-3	nota de pees	19b
125	houu syluer & gold schall nozt goo ouer see	20a
166	þe kyng callit to consaill consiens & reysoun	20b

V	9	I had no wyll to do gode	21a
	61	nota de clerkys	22a
	78	houu pore gentill bep refusit	
	112	nota de pestelens cumyb for syne	22b

9. Tom Stoue with two staves. Half profile to left, right hand raised with stave.

V	140	houu prechowrs schold do as þey prechyth [through Tom Stoue's feet]	23a
	181	houu þe kyng scholde lowe his comynys	
VI	1	nota de repentans	24a
10. Jester, in red and blue, as Pride.			
	63	nota de envye	25a
11. Envy, represented by a well executed picture of a man in workman's clothes punching upwards with left hand (see photograph 3).			
	103	nota de Wrath	25b
12. Figure in blue and red with sword in to left, and dagger in right hand.			
	151	nota de monis [obscured by foot]	
	170	nota de lechury	26b
13. Lechery represented as a man apparently sinking in purple mud.			
	196	nota de covetys	
14. Avarice as an evil looking man walking into text, half profile.			
	221	nota de w[e]lbbsters [over illustration]	
	225	nota de brewesters [over illustration]	
	307	nota de eslores	28b
	350	nota de gloteny	29a
15. Gluttony as a fat man eating melon in semi kneeling position, facing into text.			
	376	nota de new feyrs	29b
VII	1	nota de sleuth	30b
	30	nota de lewynt prests	
16. Sleeping man (the dreamer).			
	70	nota de branches þat bryngyþ manne to sleyp	31b
	83	nota for ham þat fedyn fflatres & lyers	
	102	nota de riche men what þey festis mak	32a
	146	nota de synfulmen	32b
17. The Palmer, facing into text, holding a staff and leaning inwards. Semi profile. Bell hangs from left hand, which also holds a staff, right hand gesticulates as if talking. In his hat are "ampoules" (see photograph 2).			
	161	nota de pylgrymys [through illustration]	
	182	nota ploughman	
	109	nota where trewþ wonyþ	33b
18. Pink tower (Truth's castle) with red pointed roofs and pinnacles.			
			34a



VII	270	nota de vij sostris	34b
	283	nota de cutpors	
		Surprised looking face, facing left and downwards.	35a
VIII			
19.		Figure of man, half profile, facing into text.	
	9	nota de [ ] what pay [ ] do [over drawing]	
		Outline drawing of draped figure.	35b
	22-3	nota de knyztod [over sketch]	
	57	nota houu plelres went apylgrimag	36a
	94	pers plowghman is testament	36b
	124	houu pers spak to faytors	37a
	149	nota de Wastor	
20.		Man, probably Wastour, facing into text, right.	37b
	167	nota de hongyr to wreke pers upon Wasters	
21.		Seated figure, Hunger, barefoot, faces into text.	
	205	houu pers bad hongyr go home	38a
	223	nota de bold beggers	38b
	248	nota of þe men þat lenyth his godys to iij maner of men	
22.		Man digging facing into text.	39a
	267	nota de fessyk	
	295	nota de leches	39b
	323	houu hongyr was fed dentesly	40a
	345ff	sketch of small yellow boat in waves	
IX	4	- nota de pers is pardoun	40b
	43	nota de men of lawe	41a
23.		Man [of Law?] behind red pulpit[?] with architectural markings.	
	61	nota de beggers & bidders bep nought in þe bill	
	84	nota de woo of pore pepill þat wonyth in por howsyn & hap childyr	41b
24.		Picture of emaciated old man covered with ragged brown cloth.	42a
	166	nota de begers þat hath lemonys	42b
25.		Devout looking pilgrim[?].	43a
	203	nota de hermytes þat wonyth be þe hey wey	43b
	223	nota de lewynt men & lordis	
26.		Three drawings:	44a

(i) Nun in white [or not yet coloured] habit facing into text and hand raised in blessing.

264 .nota de molle pastor

(ii) A bishop, eyes closed [close echo of text] facing out of text. This too suggests his dereliction of pastoral duty [almost all other figures face text]. Behind him:

(iii) Yellow wolf bites neck of white sheep. Streams of red blood pour out.

27. Tonsured priest faces text holding letter with large blue seal, green ribbons. 44b

304 nota de sevenys

313 crafyt

314 crafzyt

321 nota de do well

45a

x 3 nota houu pey sought dowell 45b

28. Friar in cowl and habit with cord belt and bare feet looks into text, mouth open, hands gesticulating, in earnest speech. 46a

37ff nota houu seuen sypps in þe wey synnp þe rytfol  
[faint]

72 nota de þoꝛt

46b

29. Friar in pulpit, arms folded and leaning on its edge. 47a

114 nota de wyt

121 nota what was dowell from do bett & do best  
from hem bop

143 nota de Inwytte

208 nota de men þat bene gatten out of matrimony

47b

48b

30. Man facing into text, head in hands, standing.

31. Two animals, a sheep with horns and a pink pig[?] 49a

248 nota de marry as is wt [worthy?] in degree--

278 maydys wed. maydis & wodous wed wodous

49b

XI 16 wo can dysseyw & be gyle schall be callitte to  
consayll 50b

42 nota de pore & nakite

51a

32. Man with staff, faces front, looks to his right and down, into text towards staff, held by right hand.

54 nota de freres & faytowrs

94 nota de clergy

51b

33. Seated figure, probably Study, with right hand raised, holding a bundle of reeds over a figure draped over her knee. Rather awkwardly drawn. 52a

128 nota de þlelology

160 nota de beleve trowyth & low

52b



34. Seated young man, facing half out of page, looking at a large sheet of paper and writing on it with both hands at once.

35. Lady Fortune, with a wheel, drawn from waist up. 53a

180 nota de youth

196 nota de rechles [at same point as picture of Recklessness, which is on opposite side of page]

36. Recklessness, facing into page, and snapping the fingers of his right hand, hand and arm raised. His left hand clutches a small club.

213 nota de Saloman

53b

235a nota seld is hit sey clerkis dew as þey techyn 54a

Small sketch, head and shoulders of clerk.

205 nota of þe þefe þat heng on þe cros by o[ur] lord

295 nota ploghmen & herds[men?] & þor comyns 54b

XIII 1 nota de elde & holynys 55a

37. The Dreamer as a kneeling man in brown habit sleeping with head on right hand.

19 nota de wiwer

55b

38a nota houu scryptor [sic] prechyte

Sketch: head with feathered headdress faces into text with tongue stuck out, probably Troianus saying "baw for bokes". 56a

78 nota de troianus þe trew men þou a pagan

56b

100 nota de men þat makyth festys

118 þe lawe of lowe

57a

139 pouerte is best yef pacienns hit folouu

57b

210 nota of rich man

58b

225 nota de rich lordis

XIII 9 nota houu abraham is wif war tak fro him

59a

14 nota de Job

32 nota de marchan[ts] & messenger[s]

59b

98 nota de prestys

60b

Small full length picture of priest pointing into text.

128 nota kynd [wit?] come clergie to help

61a

152 Hand clutching grapes [damage from damp]

178-9 nota de reyson yat fellep all best fide [sic] man 61b

219 what is do well

62a

224 nota de adam why he was put out paradys

62b

XIV 3 nota de ymagynatif

38. Seated man leaning into text, head on right hand. 63a

29 nota de Spiritu

88 nota of þe byrp of o[ur] lord

64a

101 nota de lewytt men and conyng men

64b

135 nota de þef þat went to he[ven]

65a

XIV	140af	Man's head and shoulders.	
	186	nota de Salamon & þe phylossofars	65b
	202	nota de Imaglynatyf	66a
	205	nota of iiij follyny[s]	
XV	5	nota de fortune hou[ul] hyt falyth	
	26	nota de [con]siens & clergy	66b
	39.	Monk with grim expression seated at table, facing out of text.	67a
	50	nota de sowr lof	
	40.	Monk in full habit walking towards text, hands raised in prayer, head thrown back, eyes closed. Face upward with devout expression.	67b
	78	[through picture] be war of fals freris	
	138	nota de paciens	68b
	190	nota de activa vita	69a
	41.	Activa vita, walking into text, looking up with a slightly anxious or suspicious expression. His back is a little bent under the weight of a black club[?] held in his right hand over his right shoulder (see photograph 1).	
	42.	Man facing inwards with long reddish staff in right hand. He is fairly old, bearded. Profile.	70a
	245a	nota de pater noster	
	281	nota de ryghtfull rich	70b
XVI			71a
	43.	[Next to passus heading] Skeleton with arms raised, looking into text.	
	25	do Well is contricion	
	65	nota de buxumnes and bost ar ever mor at werk	72a
	44.	Small picture [next to c. II. 67-71] of seated young man.	
	120	nota what pride most hatyth	73a
	157	nota fre Will	73b
	182	nota de corpus	
	45.	Liberum Arbitrium, facing front, slightly turned to text.	74a
	201	nota de houu mony names a byshop hath	
	212	nota luscifer	
	217	nota þe man þat ettyth moch hony	74b
	251	nota parsonnes & prestes	75a
	264	nota de epocrysy	
	284	[hand pointing to text] charyte	75b
XVII	6	nota of holy hermyts	77a



XVII	42	of men of holy church lordys men of law & marchanys	77b
	94	nota of schepmen	78b
	46.	A hanging man, hands tied behind back. The rope is looped over a bar and held taut.	79a
	142	nota de maden	
	163	[pointing hand]	79b
	199	nota houu rede nobill is wyrschuput	80a
	219f	Outline of kneeling angel, mouth open, facing outwards	80b
XVIII	1	nota de liberum arbitrium	82a
	61	nota de appyl tre	83a
	74	nota de contemplacion	
	86	nota de wedlok woddewot & maydenot	83b
	105	nota de elde	
	113	nota de Adam & þe profettys	
	124	nota gretyn of o[ur] lady	84a
	164	nota of þe treyson þat Judas dede	84b
		[small outline face]	85a
	188	nota of iij p[er]ls[o]lnes in trinite	
XIX	21	nota de fayth	87a
	48	nota de samaritan	
	98	nota to low god abow al þynge[s] & þi neghtbore[s]	88a
	112a	Hand holding sphere, representing the line visually.	
	161	nota who synnyþ in [the?] holy gost	89a
	223	nota rychmen	90a
	252	nota for þeves	90b
	282	nota þat þe kyng may nought pas dome	91a
	296	nota de þre þyngis þat puttyþ a man out of hys hous	
XX	21	nota how Ihesus schal jowst in pers is armis	92a
	28	nota de deth & lyf	
	79	nota þat þer was no man þat myzth tewch godes body	92b
	106	nota how Juys became bonmen	93a
	117	nota de mercy & trouþ	93b
	145	nota de trewþ	
	47.	Mercy, facing inwards to text, hands slightly forward.	94a
	152a	nota de mercy [in drawing]	
	168	nota de ryztwysnys	
	209	nota de well & wo	94b
	248	nota de stella comata	95b
	254	some ignorant person has substituted <u>his</u> for <u>hir</u> or <u>her</u> as it originally stood. D. [note on text by Douce]	
	272	nota how a Woys sayde to lossyfer	

48. Lucifer advancing toward the page with his tongue sticking out. He has horns and cloven feet, and is coloured orange with glaring red eyes. 96a

	275	nota de lussyf[er] [in middle of llustration]	
	323	nota gobblyn	96b
	346	nota lussyfer ys lessyngys	
	379	nota de gylors	97a
	386	nota de lyffe & deth	97b
	395	nota hou man was lost progh a tree	
	410	nota of day of dome	
	422	nota of a kyng ys power	98a
	455	amor	98b
XXI	21	nota de name of crist & ihesus	99a
	25	nota de knyzt kyng & conquerour	
	75	nota of þe iij kynges of Collyn what þey offyrt	100a
	86	nota de sens	
	88	nota de gold	
	92	nota de myrre	
	111	nota de wyne	100b
Head and shoulders of middle aged man looking into text. Caiaphas?			101a
	140	nota de Cayphas	
	157	nota de mari mavdelyn	
	183	nota de pers ploghman is pardon	101b
	201	nota de holy þersday	102a
	219	nota antecrist	102b
	229	nota de pchewrs [sic]	
	235	nota de craftymen & labore[r?]	

49. Man facing front and slightly inwards. A craftsman or labourer.

261f	Two small oxen, one red one yellow, two others indicated, in outline. Piers' team of the four Evangelists.	103a
263	nota de pers ys ploz bestys [through illustration]	
276	nota de iij sedys þat grac yaw to pers	
319	nota de pers ys hows	103b
330	nota de cart draw pers y[s] corne	104a
361	de kynd Wyt	104b
370	nota de quest mangers & soum[n]ers	
385	nota de god ys body in fowme of bred	
396	nota de brewesters	105a

Priest depicted from waist up, tonsured. Arms folded, looking inwards. By his head:

	408	nota de lewytt Wykerry	
XXII	10	de nede hath no lawe	106b
	35	nota de ned	107a
	52	nota de antecryst	

c. II. 53-6: head, bearded, looking inward.

69	nota de antecrist ys herrottis of armys	107b
----	---	------



XXII	91	nota de herrotis of armys þat destruye lordis	
	100	nota de dep	108a
	109	nota de fortune ys flatryng[e]	
	131	nota houu falce schold abid in kynges cowrt & all oper cowrt	108b

50. Small figure with whip, facing into text. Hands hold whip up, legs raised. Opposite:

157 nota de slezt

51. Two small drawings: 109a

1. head and shoulders of man

169 nota de fesyk

ii. head and shoulders of man. Expression of pain. Half turned into text.

183 nota de helde yed o[uer] men hedys  
199 how kynd passite 109b

Small lightly coloured picture of young priest, turned towards text, hands raised and together. Praying? Large sword or knife by right side, following text.

219 nota de prowte prests  
243 nota de conciens 110a  
257 nota de nowmbys [damp damage here] 110b  
283 nota of ham þat [bleþ a[bashed?]] be schrew[?]  
[damp damage]  
288 nota of ham þat [shryvel] to frerys 111a  
301 nota de ypocrysy  
314 nota de freres flatreres 111b

52. Friar looking upwards and inwards to text, right hand palm inwards, in beseeching gesture, left holds green money bag. In lower part of drawing is written:

346 nota how þat frer salwt our women

Text ends on 112a

explicit liber de petro ploughman/ anno ij henrici sexto 112b  
octobir  
honis<sup>71</sup> ante festum michael incept' [illeg.].

Then follows a verse with Latin comments, and insertions by the same hand:

Tutivillus þe devyl of hell  
he wryteþ thar names soþe to tel} ad missam garulantes  
Bett ^wer^ be at tome for ay \ sic vana famulantes  
þan her to sler]ue ^þe^ deuil to pay  
[þe?] women þat sitteþ þe church about  
þai bep al of þe deuelis rowte - diuina impediētes  
But þai be stil he wil ham quell - ad puteum aut[em] flentes  
wip kene chokes draw hem to hell  
ffor his loue þat zou der bozth  
Hold zou stil & jangel nozth sed partem deponentes  
Ye blis of heuen þan may ze wyn  
god bryng ^us^ al to his In. -amen amen dicentes



iv. Annotations of BL MS Additional 35157: U(C)

Most comments are by Francis Aiscough, who gives his name on the flyleaf and elsewhere. Comments by the second most frequent annotator are marked \*; this commentator uses ð for double s; this has been replaced by ss for convenience. Comments by other annotators are marked \$.

Rebound in 1728 and inscription on original flyleaf transcribed in 1735 by M. Johnson.

Inscription from original flyleaf:

This book was written and daited the -10th of th'Ides ^of^ March in þe seconde yere of Kinge John of faimous memorie of Peers Plowman Pensionare ^or rather servant^ to ye saide king as John Gower recordethe.

9th Fraun. Aiscoughe

			Fol. 7a
		[Much annotation on this folio is legible by ultra violet light only]	
Prol.	10-11	pers his [faded word] of all welth	
	13	Hierualem	
	14	["estward" underlined, text marked +; to left:] Heauen [to right:] Roma	
	16	[marked +, "westward" underlined; to left:] Hell [to right:] Turtio	
	19	[underlined; to left:] his urthly Tabernakell [to right:] + Middell earthe	
	22	plowghmen	
	23	laborers	
	27	[to left:] winstigteth[? faded annotation]	
	26-8	[to right:] Cloysteres mul[faded] and frieres	
	31-2	[marked / ] likame. ye epicurie [glosses "likame to plese"]	
	33-4	fidlers cannot Ryghtwiss can	7b
	36-40	[marked / ] ayanst mynstrels & countrefet[er]s*	
	40	bawdy pepill	
	42-6	[to left:] against [faded word] kings [faded word] Beggars [to right:] bagers mainten by abbiss and murries .	
	47-52	[marked { } pylgrymes* there ancrs	
	54	hermytes*	
	55-6	there Hores	
	60	& freares*	
	64	[pointing hand; to left:] ye light of ye truthe [to right:] famous kinge Henry viij fulfilled in his time	
	65-75	[marked {}]	8a
	70	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] Ayenst pardoners & wicked men lewed pardoners*	
	76	nota	
	77-9	[marked { } bysshops parsons and parsons clarkes* gitt thereby profitt	
	80	[underlined; to left:] ye pore robbed	

Prol.	89-94	[marked / ] bisshopps Tellers and officers in ye exchecare	
	90	nota	
	92	all offic[ ] in the Clergie	
	93-4	nota	
	95	This conscience is nowe supposed to be Kinge James Ye Sixt to punish the couitousnes of the clergie of Brittaine	
	96-104	[marked / ] Ayenst prelates & prestes*	8b
	111	Samuel 1 <sup>o</sup> cap. 4 <sup>o</sup> *	
	112-14	[marked ] ]	
	118-27	[marked ] ]	
	119	[underlined]	
	110-13	[left:] nota [right:] for Idolatrye God will take vengeaunce on prests chiefly*	
	128-35	[insert sewn in as repair\$]	
	139	[underlined; to left:] nota [right:] who maid many knightes his strength	
	161-9	[reverse of insert as repair\$]	9b
	167-9	ye talke [possibly "taile"] of ye cat & rotons\$	
	198-201	[small patch repair\$]	10a
	205a	[omnium] doctissimor[um] suffragio dicitur hec de lassuis fatuis aut i[n]leptis p[ri]ncipibus n[on] de etate tene[re] q[ua]lsic[um]q[ue] dic[at] vbi rex puerilis est\$ [this is a transcript of Crowley's note on the same line]	
	214-5	the insaysiablenes of ye lawyers	
	217-20	will the catt ye kinge and the kittines distroye	
	223-4	{evne nowe at hande}	
	229-32	[reverse of insert patch\$]	10b
I	7-9	[marked / ] The most people desyre worship	
	25	["loot" underlined] loot first alunted[?] grappes } genicis	
	30	[small insert patch\$]	11a
	33	Measure*	
	59-62	[insert patch\$]	
	60	[underlined] ye Devil	11b
	62	cayn\$	
	63	Judas\$	
	73-5	True religion & not ye Popp	
	80-86	[marked ] ]	
	83	Charytie*	
	90	ordor of knyghtes\$	12a
	118-20	[Lucyfers Fall in imo celi	12b
	126	Lucyfers Fall*	
	136-8	Treuth ye greatest treasur\$	
	146	["for treuthe" and "loue" underlined] Loves of carritas Pins [sic] [at bottom of page:] as Trecale or Medridat, expielseth [sic] poinson in ye body so loue, and godly charitie, expiilseth [sic] from in the ["Body" cancelled] ^Spirte^ [surrounded by a bracket:] } Simmily	
	148	Love*	13a
	176	Almesse*	
	180	[underlined] no meritt in any words	13b
	182	[underlined]	
	182-4	iustisiinge[? sic] faith only workinge	
	186-7	[underlined]	



I	186-95	[marked { ]	
	187-8	ye couuitous of ye clergie	
	191	uncharytable chaplaynes*	
	196-203	} love and truth*	
II	5-7	false & favell, fykell tonge & Lyar*	14a
	10-13	}	
	11	} ye Purpill whore of Rome	
		Meed & Favill Antichrist	
	19-20	Meede or Reward enemye to truth*	
	25-6	Meede a Basterd is doughter to favell*	
	28-9	} christs parable in Mathewe	
	41-3	Meede shalbe maryed to falsehod	14b
	54-6	theyr names yat wer bydden to ye mariage*	
	78-80	maritag in primum M[?] feoffmente in male feode [sic] de p'r'isa tenura	15a
	119	the kynred of Meede*	15b
	140-1	who is occacilon yat ye church is broght low? \$	16a
	165-8	Meede rydeth to London to be arvised[?] by law if she shall marry falshed*	16b
	178-80	what horses yalt had yrod wth mede \$	
	201-2	trewth maketh hast to ye k yng \$	17a
	216	dreyde maketh ye gyleye fle	
	220-2	falshod flyeth to the freres gyle is shut up in marchaunts shops	
	231	lyar is puld into pardoners house \$	17b
	234	Invelleth [sic] not physycions polyramyes [sic] mystrette messengers & is fetched into the ffreares	
III	9-11	} courtissaire inbrasheth Meed ye maid and setteth by hir	18a
	42-72	}	18b
	42	the freare shryyeth Mede	
	57	Reade this syde	
	59	[underlined; to left:] hit is but originall Sinne of frailtie sounne pardoned. Nota \$	
	62	[underlined] seuenne sinne drawne out of Adams limes	
	68	the deuosion of Supersticion	
	80	three Bees thatt stinge the poore & nedy	19a
	98-9	our lady a Mediator	
	110-14	Against vserers & Regraders ffrancheised	19b
	119a	Meed corrupteth all estaits	
	142-4	} Mede shulde be married to Truth and reason or consience but Refusheth them all to take crafte nota	20a
	149		
	157	[underlined] Mede is fauls of faith and ficle of tonge	
	164-7	}	20b
	167	Mede a common Strumpitt	
	183	[underlined]	
	183-8	}	
	187	[underlined; to right:] Meed ye Pops Darlinge and the Prestes Baude	
	190	[underlined; to right:] wo to that realme where Meed Mastereth	
	210-11	} [underlined] ye clergie with Meed are turned into gyle	21a

III	215	[underlined] Meeds famed Annswere to the Kinge	
	241-8	} Peers liued in Henri the Sixt his dais who lost his heritage in fraunce which his father had wonne	21b
	255-60	} nota [bottom of page:] Kinge henri the 6 was a simpell Religious man which was the loose of his fathers heritage in Fraunce	
	270	+ the Pope reneth by corruption of Meed	22a
	283-4	} Meed prefared by ye kinge before consience nota	
	310-11	Reward of masse prestes <sup>\$</sup>	22b
	323-27	}	23a
	328-9	Sallomons saluac[ilon dobteful	
	380-3	} hipocreticall pueritans are Indirecte	23b
	411-12	}	24a
		[at bottom of page] David caulled a knave becausse he was Sauls man not that he was one butt by cause he was a Shepperid	
	446-75	/ /	25a
	451ff	[left:] nota [right:] Love & Conscyence shall make Lawe a Laborer	
	454	[underlined] ye Jewes must be conuerted to the faith before this tyme	
	454-5	}	
	467	[underlined] the reformed clergie schall rule the kinge	
	472-3	} Sivill lawe taken clene away for sellinge of s[il]m[oln]ile	
	477	nota <sup>\$</sup>	25b
	478	a prophesi <sup>\$</sup>	
	479	[underlined]	
	480-1	[underlined] ye Jewes ye Sophic and the Eureka shalbe conuertet to ye faith	
IV	36a	[at bottom of page] nota / Thus farr of prophises yet to come all the reste followinge are past Hauing the fall of ye lawe and bishoppes nowe at hande / Script. 1603	26a
	67-8	} Lawyers vse handy Dandy	26b
	109	+	27b
	109-20	/ / Num quam in Anglia but in the lande of conqueste	
	118-19	} [to left:] nota [to right:] bishopes must be backers bruers and tailors	
	134	["shulde ... world" underlined]	28a
	139	+ Reson telleth wronge and Meed yat lawe for a bush shalbe come A laborour	
	144-5	} lawe shall not rul / nota but favoure by M[ede]	
	147	/ the abuse of lawe shall cause it to falle	
	158	[left:] nota [right:] who that is married [one or two words, illeg.] his goods, shalbe covunted <sup>\$</sup>	
	161-3	[underlined] } Meed a durtie com[on] strumpit both siuill laue and common	
	166-7	[underlined] pringes counsell should be ruled by Consens & Resoun <sup>\$</sup>	28b
	174-5	} loue and good lyff to be the lawe ["lewte" underlined]	



IV	182	["mercymment" underlined] Warres & sworde	
V	2	Pers dwelled in Cornewell with his frind Christofor his wyf Catte in there beds had a vision	
	4	["among ... London" underlined]	29a
	4-6	} Pers became a Protestant and loued his lyke	
	30	[underlined] lowlers regarded not fridaies fast	
	36-42	} [to left:] nota [right:] brought in a cloystere	29b
	44-56	[to left:] nota [to right:] Peres a beginge frier which was an easie lyfe	
	56	[underlined; to left:] Pastors of good parantage and chastly married [to right:] No basterds	
	65-6	} basterds fitt for slaverye	30a
	72-3	} merchantes, knightes, gentelmen there printices	
	111	[underlined] ye world	30b
	115	{ " } + fained hollynes for pride	
	128-9	+ .. + } pure hippocracy reproued	31a
	138-39a	{ } spare the rood and spill ye child	
	140-1	{ } pastors muste do as they teche	
	145	[underlined] prelaitts liue of decimes & lords take th[ere] livinges	
	146-61	}	
	151	[underlined] + againste non residence and pleasure and purchase in prelaitts [this note is further down the page since another hand annotates this line:] heaven & ease on earth is in cloyster	
	163	[pointing hand]	31b
	163-79	/ /	
	166-8	A prophecye trulye fulfilled by Kinge henrye the viij*	
	171	Ad pristinum statum*	
	197	+ Reason against pilgramage to Sanctus but to trueth	32a
VI	1	Prowde harte <sup>\$</sup>	
	13	[underlined] + Repentaunce biddeth pride become lowly meaninge ye clergie	
	33-43	[underlined; to left:] } A discription of fained hippocracy [to right:] nota	32b
	62	Envye <sup>\$</sup>	33a
	71-2	[underlined] } ye nature of Envye	
	103	wrath <sup>\$</sup>	33b
	118ff	collericke deuines unperfitt prechers	
	118-9	}	
	122-3	} emulatour[?] in all degres	
	129ff	/	34a
	131	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	138-40	A description of wrath at large	
	147	nota	
	159	[underlined] + causeth fluxes	34b
	160	["late at eue" underlined] fatt fole	
	167-8	[underlined] } wine Inne witt oute lecherye <sup>\$</sup>	
	171	[Aiscough adds:] in the clergie and others	
	180	[underlined] places of lechery	
	181-2	} ye fruites of friday fast and ste eunes[?]	
	189-90	[underlined] {} bawdy songes and bauds nurces of lecherye	

VI	191-2	{ lecherie had by sorcery or elles by Rapine	35a
		lecherie, desiers change	
	196	Covetyse <sup>\$</sup>	
	198-9	[underlined; on left:] Willm. Aiscough	
		[on right:] marks of covetise folikes	
	203	in a torne coote	
	207	["summe ... style" underlined] an vseror or	
		marchant	
	215	["drapes" underlined] Drapers drep[e] mens purses	
	227	decepto in ailewiues	35b
	235-6	she robbed hir gestes a slepe	
	241	[underlined] Lumbards crafte	
	285	filthy & bitinge Vsurie	36a
	300	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	304-8	[underlined] { vsure is compared to the Pops	36b
		stues repte	
	350	Glottenye <sup>\$</sup>	37a
	352	[underlined] Glottenye <sup>\$</sup>	
		wil faste on all ffridaye [added by Aiscough]	
	357-8	[underlined] } The nature of gluttony	37b
	361	[underlined] Drunkines & swering	
	361-75	[left:] { companions of the ale rood	
		[right:] + the sabothes in thos dais well keppte	
	373	[underlined] +	
	400-1	{ glottonnys horne his tale	38a
VII	1	Slewthe <sup>\$</sup>	38b
	30	[underlined] + [to left:] nota <sup>\$</sup>	39a
		[to right:] Slewthe the badge of the clergie	
	36-7	{ } A forsworne Cher [sic]	
	42-3	{ } ingratful	
	45	{ } bribery	
	45-9	{ } wast gods good bontie	
	59	{ } wanhope haith deceaued many A foully he youth	39b
	70-1	{ } the branches of Slewth is to live with oute	
		gods fere	
	76	vsury <sup>\$</sup>	
	82	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	83-4	/ against budy festers	
	97-8	{ } the good poore to be releued before minstrils	40a
	101a	dicit christus	
	102	[left:] nota <sup>\$</sup>	
		[right:] feastes banckite	
	104	[Aiscough "corrects" text:] ^may^ [inserted after	
		"the pore", "foul sage" cancelled, ^piper^ inserted]	
		[to right of text:] foullbage or bagpipe	
	124-5	{ } Adams fall	40b
	138	["seynte Marye" underlined; to right:] blyshed	
		Mary	
	144	{ } a secret of ye trinitie	41a
	149	ye corruption of yat time	
	155-6	{ } ye people were blindfolded by superstission	
	158-9	{ }	
	172	["in Bedlam" underlined] { } in Bethlem Juda	41b
	177	Nota	
	183-200	/	
	192	ye nature of truth	
	200	["ze leue Pers" underlined]	
		ye author / Tome[?] tell truth	
	201	the waye to truthe <sup>\$</sup>	42b



VII	241-2	{ } [to left:] ye error of yat time/ marke	
	243-4	{ } [to right:] praer to ste not ye way to truth	
	250a	[left:] nota + [right:] nay rather per Christum	
	269-70	vij systers that serve Truthe	43a
	272-4	/ / Abstinence 1 Humilitie 2 Charritie 3 Chastitie 4 pacience 5 pease & 6 largenesse 7	
	283	+	
	283-4	[left:] nota <sup>\$</sup> [right:] { } a Ceutpurshe and a Beastward have no truth at all <sup>\$</sup>	
	287-8	ye Author commends truth with mercye	
	291	+ duringe this pilgrimace [glosses "pou go bytymes"]	
	293-7	}	
	298	ye parrable of ye bidd to ye marriag	
VIII	8-9	{ menne and gentill wemen liue by ye plowghe	43b
	71-3	[left:] + ["same lacke" underlined] Idell roges shall wante brede [left:] + freres & there orders wiped out of gods booke	44b
	90a	we must not do as they do but as they saye the clergie techethe	45a
	95	the will of Pers plouth man	
	143ff	pers will releue the impotente poore but not Idell vacabonnds	45b
	152	["a brettener" underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] England harboreth more theves and beggars then any countrie	46a
	158ff	wasters and rioters make things deare	
	173ff	[to left:] nota [to right:] nota Brittainne shalbe bitten with hungere when the plouth shalbe neclected by inclosers	
	202	Sir hunger enimie to Idelnes ["sire hunger" underlined]	46b
	223	["and holde ... wysdom" underlined] hungers counsell	47a
	239-40	{ } he that will not laboure ys not worthy to eate	
	262	nota <sup>\$</sup>	47b
	272-6	{ Dyet <sup>\$</sup>	
	285	Almesse <sup>\$</sup>	48a
	287-96	/ / [to left:] Idelness causeth Sicknes "[ ] fat labor to phisissians [to right:] bewaire of dogge leches pictpurses	
	296	["as destyne ... wolde" underlined]	
	303ff	["grene cheses", "abake of otes" underlined; to right:] the poughmans diet grane chesses and potage or croudes and mileke [to left:] nota peres was a pecks man	
	309-10	A poore dyete	48b
	333ff	the poore are gluttons in harvest tyme	
	335	["elles wol he chide" underlined]	
	344	[to left: pointing hand]	49a
	344-50	[to right:] / / famyn through floode	
	350	nota beng <sup>\$</sup> prophesi <sup>\$</sup>	
IX	1	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] nota <sup>\$</sup> the kinge of Skootes [Aiscough]	

IX	1-8	/ /	
	8-10	[underlined] { nota	
	13	[underlined; to left:] nota	
		[to right:] butt not proud pralaite[sic]	
	17-18	{ } lordes lecherie abollyshede	
	24	merchaunte[s]	49b
	45	lawyers	
	51	nota A gauriat to laweyers	50a
	61	Beggars	
	75	the true nedye	
	91	the true nedye	50b
	97	["crokede ... blynde" underlined] feede the lame and the blinde	
	102ff	}	
	107	Madmen & Lunatyke beggers	
	114-15	{ } thes kinde of men sometimes p[rofliesie[?]] the truthe	51a
	128-35	} lewde mynstrells	
	136	gods mynstralls	
	137-62a	/ /	51b
	159	the false nedye	
	162a	nota	
	175-86	} the true nedye	52a
	188ff	}	
	188	lewde hermytts beggers	
	196	holly hermytts	
	207-23	}	52b
	212	lollers hermytts	
	240-9	} Lollers and lewde hermytts	53a
	245	[left:] nota [right:] Sovenday deriued of the vij day dominica domini	
	255	bene	
	255	["many beschoppes" underlined] bissopes the cause of ignorant pasters at this day	
	261	["the ... berke" underlined] Bisshopes dare not barck against the offences of oure Staite	
	264	[underlined] skabbed hirdings skabbed sheepe	
	265	as under a Durtie Dauber	
	266	["how herde" underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] { intericctio [sic] / pastor wantinge both currage and a barking Dogg	
	273	["wo .... thenne" underlined] A bluddy curssed [sic] was uppon careles pastors when they shalbe called to an accompte	
	275	["thyn huyre" underlined] A hire linge	53b
	280	no pardon holpeth	
	282	["pers ... tho" underlined] A prittie interogation with a secret discoverie of the popes game of all bulles	
	290-1	But Dowell & haue well	
	315-25	/ /	54a
	315	[underlined; to left:] nota [right:] Dowell is better then ye Popps bulles	
	330ff	/ dowell ys better then ye popes trionells	
	332	nota	
	341-8	/ pardons nota Indulgence will helpe	54b
X	20	nota	55a
	23	do well dwells not amongste friers allwaies	



X	28	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	76	Doowell <sup>\$</sup>	55b
	82	Doo Bett <sup>\$</sup>	
	90	nota <sup>\$</sup>	56a
	92	Doo Best <sup>\$</sup>	
	114	["with ... mete" underlined] A description of witt <sup>\$</sup>	56b
	127	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	133	the sowle of Man-kinde	
	134	The deuill	
	142	Inwitt haith five daughters	
	151	["kynde" underlined; to left:] god only [right:] and nature	57a
	156	[underlined; to left:] to Christe in his manhode [to right:] + of Animall reasson	
	158	+ A parable	
	180	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] wisdom & healthe two greate Blissings	57b
	191-2	[underlined] bisshopes should have no more lands then Christe hadd	
	207	Basterds <sup>\$</sup>	
	212	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] an vnregenerat father begettith a curssed sonne	58a
	218	kaytiffe of kayn <sup>\$</sup>	
	232	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	225-40	} nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	274	Donmowe bacon <sup>\$</sup>	59a
	275-85	/ / of maryage <sup>\$</sup> wedd there lieke	
	283-5	marriage fittest in youth	
	288-9	{ } [to left:] nota [to right:] a man maie offend with his wyfe binge in hir flowers	
XI	2	Wytte & Studie <sup>\$</sup>	59b
		[Aiscough adds:] his wife	
	14	covetyse <sup>\$</sup>	
	18	begyle truth <sup>\$</sup>	
	21	[underlined; to right:] nota [to left:] Nicholas Dawideson <sup>\$</sup>	
	22-4	all griping parsons <sup>\$</sup>	
	27	[underlined] nota - the riche are comonly the enimies to rigt and truthe	
	29-33	} the religious and godly person	60a
	48-51	} the rich gyveth his Almes theis mean men <sup>\$</sup>	
	52-3	} [to left:] nota [to right:] hipocrites of ye clergie and laitie	
	55-7	{ }	
	56	["and preching ... poules" underlined; to left:] conninge of the prelartes [to right:] nota	
	58	{ sterringe the Simple pepell to almes for there owne proffitt }	
	72-9	} gyve to the nedy in thy lyfe tyme <sup>\$</sup>	60b
	93-121	/ /	61a
	96	stodye techeth <sup>\$</sup>	
	99	the way to doo well is ... <sup>\$</sup>	
	104	to suffer woo ... <sup>\$</sup>	
	106	regard no hiches ... <sup>\$</sup>	
	111	flee women wyne Ire & Slewth <sup>\$</sup>	
	129-37	{	
	129ff	theologie is no scyence but a sothfast beleefe <sup>\$</sup>	61b

XI	133	and teacheth vs to Love <sup>\$</sup>	
	142-7	{ Doo Well <sup>\$</sup>	
	161-3	} beleefe, truth & Love <sup>\$</sup>	62a
	187	Age <sup>\$</sup>	62b
	205-10	}	
	205	nota yat the Elect are wrytten & ... <sup>\$</sup>	
	209	... the Reprobate vnwritten <sup>\$</sup>	
	217ff	Salomon and Aristotell in wysdom & works both good yet dyed evell <sup>\$</sup>	63a
	227-30	} neyther wyt nor coninge but gods grace <sup>\$</sup>	
	233-9	} the wysest men & lernest do seldom lyve as they teche <sup>\$</sup>	
	239	// nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	248-65	/ /	63b
	254-5	} [pointing hand]	
	285-6	not wytte but ye graçe of god <sup>\$</sup>	64a
	291-7	} none ravyshe soner from fayth then coning Clerkes and none soner saved then comon people <sup>\$</sup>	
	303	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
XII	28	nota <sup>\$</sup>	65a
	37-8	} Secrettes to be kept <sup>\$</sup>	
	58-61	{ nota of denyall of fayth <sup>\$</sup>	65b
	71-2	{ mercy above all godes works <sup>\$</sup>	
	73-80	} Troianes <sup>\$</sup>	66a
	81-6	/ [pointing hand]	
	101-9	} feasts ought to be made to the pore & not to the Riche <sup>\$</sup>	66b
	114	lend to the nedy <sup>\$</sup>	
	127-8	} to be lowe true & loving ech to other <sup>\$</sup>	67a
	140-2	} patyent povertie is greter blessing then Rychesse*	67b
	174-5	patyent povertie prynce of vertues*	
	178-200	/ /	
	179	A Comparason of Wheate*	
	201-31	/ /	68a
	222	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] some ripp some Rotten <sup>\$</sup>	
	225	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	232-41	/ /	68b
	240-1	the mischeves that much Riches brings*	
XIII	8	Abraham*	
	17	Job*	69a
	20-3	} patyence and povertie springeth*	
	32-3	Marchaunte & Messenger*	
	78	nota <sup>\$</sup>	69b
	92-7	{ the mede is as much to the poor for a Myte as to the riche for all his Money*	70a
	97	the pore & patient life is perfectest*	
	99	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	100-8	} ayenst byshops and prestes*	
	110	nota <sup>\$</sup>	70b
	110-39	{ }*	
	116	Ayenst prestes*	
	125	Ayenst bishops*	
	131ff	A vision of ye Creatures in ye Elements in the seea <sup>\$</sup> & on ye Earth*	
	140	nota <sup>\$</sup>	
	140-7	/ /	71a



XIII	146	males to males*	
	148-51	No beaste after Conception doth covet lust but ...*	
	152-3	... man & his make out of reason*	
	178	nota <sup>s</sup>	71b
	179-81	} Reson always ruleth in beast but not in Man*	
	184-92	}	
	187	for Man surfeteth in Meate, drynke in Women aparel and in Wordes*	
	198	Suffraunce*	
	216-17	} Doo Well seeth much and suffreth*	72a
	241-2	} Shame	72b
XIV	5-9	} the way to Doo Well*	
	17	nota <sup>s</sup>	
	18	[pointing hand]	
	19-22	} Covetos averice and vnkynde Biches dryve away doo well*	73a
	28-32a	}	
	30	wytte of sterres*	
	33-6	Grace Wytte and lerninge*	
	64-9	} lerninge to be reverensed*	73b
	73-9	} Ayenst Astronomers*	
	84-6	}	74a
	104-10	/ A comparason betwixt the lerned & unlerned*	
	135ff	of the theefe yat was saved on good frydaye. a rare opynyon*	74b
	146a	nota <sup>s</sup>	75a
	153a	[left: hand pointing; right:] a little taste of poprie*	
	157-60	} the answer to them that aske why and how*	
	171	A pretye & right semelye comparason betwene the rich man & ye peacok*	75b
	171-84	}	
	185-7	} the pore man & the Larke*	
	198	nota <sup>s</sup>	
	205	Troianes*	76a
	207-8	} thre Kyndes of cristyninge*	
	209-17	}	
	209	the true truth deserveth*	
	215	Love and gret Rewarde with a curtesie more then covenante*	
XV	4-8	} fortune at most nede & 'lewtye in age fayleth*	
	9-12	} freares followe after the riche [...] & regarde not the pore*	
	13-14	{ Covetyse ouercometh all sects*	76b
	15-16	{ Lewd Curates*	
	26-45a }		
	27	Conseyence & Clergie*	
	33	pacyence*	
	40	Reason*	
	43	Scripture*	
	51a	nota <sup>s</sup>	77a
	52	Conscyence causeth scripture to give bread to pacyence*	
	66-66a	{ }	
	66	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] Doctor Robinson Doctor Barefoul of Lincoln with my myrror	

XV	76	of the glotones freare*	77b
	77-8	Bonner Bushhoppe of London	
	100-2	}	
	107-14	/	78a
	111ff	The freare is apposed what is Doo Well*	
	127a	nota <sup>s</sup>	
	128-33	} pers ploughman all kynde conynge & crafts impugneth except such as be of Love Loyaltie & humilitie*	
	135-7	} All things are inperfyte but true Love & truthe*	
	141-7	} Lessons how to Doo Well*	78b
	154	true Love lytle Coveteth*	
	158-67	}	
	160	pacyence*	
	175	of the pope*	79a
	182	perfyte pacyence fyndeth perfytnesse*	
	196-201	} pers ploughmans man a waferer*	
	210ff	} the pore and rich praethe for pers the plough man	79b
	216-30	}	
	217	nota <sup>s</sup>	
	223	ayenst the pope*	
	238-40	} No life but hath lyfelode*	80a
	265-7	} men Lyved 40. yere & tyllid not ye erth*	80b
	270-1	men slept .60. yere without meate*	
	274-80	}	
	275-6	Mekenesse and Milde speche*	
	278-9	patyent pouertye better yen Riches*	
	281	nota <sup>s</sup>	
	282-92	/	
	284ff	Death is more dredeful to the riche, than to the pore*	
	303	[to left pointing hand; to right:] Many haue ther Joye in yis life*	81a
XVI	8-11	} the riche haue not two hevens*	
	19-24	} God might haue made all men of like Welthe & Witte*	81b
	36-40	{ contricion & confession & Satisfaccion*	
	46-7	{ ryches bringeth reuerence of ye poore*	
	48-55	} the riche is reuerensid the pore put bak though he be wiser*	82a
	58-9	} pryde regneth in the riche rather then in ye pore*	
	64-6	{ the pore is euer redye to please ye Riche* [to left:] nota [to right:] but ye rich hateth ye poore	
	66	{	
	74-5	{ ye dronken roge	
	82-3	Covetyes hath long handes and armes*	82b
	91-2	Lecherie loveth not the pore*	
	100-5	}{*	
	101-2	the patyent pore may clame heven*	
	103-5	But it is hard for him yat hath Londe Lordship & lykinge of bodye	
	106-9	{ A Comparason	
	115	[left: points marked 1-6]* A diffynicion of poertye	83a
	117-22	describid in .9. partes & declared by pacience to ye pacient pore	



XVI	120	pryde hateth pouertie*	
	121	the firste pointe .1.	
	123	pouertye is seldom put in auctorite*	
	124-5	the second pointe .2.	
	127	without consciens stained .3.	
	128	pouertie getts ...	
	130ff	... his goods with good conscience ye .4. pointe	
	134	pouertie addorneth the soule ye .5. pointe	
	138	pouertie ys the pathe of pees ye .6. pointe	
	143ff	pouertie is A well of wisdom ye .7. pointe	83b
	147ff	pouertie is A conscience to deserue well ye .8. pointe	
	153	pouertye a blessed life*	
	154	swetter then sugare absque timere sollicitudine felecitas ye .9. pointe	
		[to right:] ye meane estait moste blesshed	
	168	[foot of page] + In medeo concistit, virtus	
	173-6	the propertyes of liberum arbitrium	84a
	180	Liberum arbitrium*	
	182	Anima*	
	183	Animus*	
	184	Mens	
	185	Memoria*	
	187-8	Ratio / sence	
	191	Conscience gods Notory	
	193	liberum Arbitrium	
	195	Amor	
		or bell loue [Aiscough completes]	
	197	spiritus*	
	200a	} liberum Arbitrium qui declinat a malo ad bonum	84b
	201ff	Metropolitanus Doctor Sed pastor solus est*	
	225-6	subtyle scyences make men proude*	85a
	229	propertie bredeth singularitie & pride	
	230ff	} Ayenst freares*	
		Skornefull flatterers	
	240a	to haue no respecte of persons	
	241-5	} perfect presthod bringeth forth holynes	
		Imperfect presthod all euell*	
	247-56	} A Comparason*	
	257-71 -	} to preach & prove it not, is Ipocrisie*	85b
		pride in ye clergie	
	271a	Johannes Cristosomus*	
		aganste three bad pes	
	272-82	} Ayenst Imperfect prests & prechers*	
		Hirelings to improper acions [Aiscough]	
		[left:] whose goodes euel gotten are as euell spent*	
	281-2	[right:] } both Bishoppes and coufitous patrones	
	297-309	} Charytie*	86a
	308-9	} [at bottom of page: to left:] nota	
		[to right:] afflictions, persicutions, and sorrowes compared truly to heuenlye mussick to a regenerat man*	
	322-38	} charytie*	86b
	337	} nota	
		[at bottom of page:] { pers ye Ploughman perfitly knowethe Charitie	
	339	Charitie is known by workes	87a
	351	Charitie seldom sene in ye freres*	
	357-60	nor in ye kings courte except covetyse be absent*	

XVI	362ff	nor in Constorye courte nor with Bisshops*	
XVII	35-7	} freres & monkes lyvelode of lyther wyninge[s]*	88a
	41	nota	
	42-52	} If men of holye church wold do nought but right then, wold Lordes, Lawyers, and merchaunts, do lyke*	
	53	nota	
	53-7	} Ayenst Monkes and Chanons, freres prestes pardoners*	
	58-65	} Charitie is yat furst we helpe father & kynred & then, such as haue most nede before freres etc.*	88b
	68	nota	
	68-72	{ the pore haue right to a parte of christes treasure in prests hands*	
	72-3	[left:] Counterfett curates [right:] a bad body dothe shewe well	
	73	[underlined]	
	72-89	[left:] } A comparason betwixt a false Xtian & a bad penyē wyth a good prynte*	
	78ff	[right:] all cristians are not faithful	
	90-93	} if we did our dutie as all other creatures, then shold we haue peace & plentye*	89a
	108-11	} Gyle & flatterye master & vssher in all scyences & degrees*	
	117-18	} of Masse prests*	
	124-9	} holy church chere is Charytie*	89b
	133-5	} Jewes & Sarazins do both beleue in God the father	
	136-9	No lque vnlauffull is to be allowed*	
	159	nota	90a
	162-3	bewte without bountie kynde without curtosye*	
	165-7	} Macometh was crystened & wold haue ben pope*	
	171-81	} the decete of Macometh by a dove*	
	194	nota	90b
	197-8	holymen had no boke but Conscyence*	
	201-10	} Coyeytse shall ouertorne clerkes	
	214	bene	
	218-19	} Bisshops shall lose temporall landes & lyve of teuthes*	91a
	220	nota	
	221-2	} An Angell cryed yat ye church was poysoned*	
	225-35	} A Counsell for Kynge to take possessions from the pope, & all the clergie*	
	240-3	} Macometh & the pope compared*	
	249	presthod inperfyte*	91b
	274-80	} an vnsownd opynion / /*	
	282-5	[left:] nota [right:] } A Bisshops office*	92a
XVIII	3	liberum arbitrium*	92b
	5	cor hominis*	
	7	Imago Dei*	
	14	Charitas*	
	29-30	the World*	93a
	36	the fleshe*	
	83-9	} Matrimonye*	93b
		} Wydowhod*	
		} Vyrghinytie*	
	126	[underlined] Jhesus A carpenters sonne ye sonn of ye Judge of all Justices in this worlde	94b



XVIII	134ff	A wench ought to be A virgine butt hardly in this wickitt age	
	143	Marie Magdiline	
	151a	nota - The Sinn against ye holly goste	
	174	Judas*	95a
	188-92	Abrahams Armes thre proues ye holy & blished Trinitie	
	221	[underlined; to left:] nota Barrenes of the wome [to right:] Matrimony of the Bible which ye Pappistes and monks do allowe is here discommended	96a
	228-35	} A Symylitude betwixt the Trenytie & Adam Eve & Abell*	
	241	[underlined; to left:] nota	
	242aff	[to right:] Abraham sawe thre angells & worshiped before his tente dore which resemblid the Trinitie	
	256-60	[underlined] {} nota. ye faithfull seed of Abraham are not only promissed all temporall plassinges butt also all eternall	96b
	270-77	/ John Baptist bore in his boshum Christe in the simillitude of A layser before his comminge in the fleshe which layser represented all the faithfull-borne before Christe	
	278-92	/ [the following partly obscured by page fold] [N]lo pleges [lou oure [ti?]mnes [blutt the [Re?]atyes [ ] londe of Christe no not in the faitful [ le before his death & cominge [to right:] nota	97a
XIX	4	[underlined; to left:] nota	
	7	[to right:] } ye olde and the newe testamente ["which is crist" underlined] nota Christe is ye Seale of the testament	
	11	nota	
	13a	Moyes tabill wherein ye lawe was writt[ ]	
	19-20	{ fayth kepinge the Comaundements Saveth*	97b
	27-8	Abraham lawe ye .3. persons of ye. trenytie	
	44-6	{ the lawe lerned & lytle vsed	
	51	the Samarytan*	98a
	116-25	} A Symilitude of ye trenytie & ye hande*	99a
	162-6	} A Symilitude of the Synne ayenst the holy gost* to the palme of the hande [completion by Aiscough]	99b
	167-8	} A symyle of a torche*	
	169-99	} } peccatum contra spiritus sancti*	100a
	217-18	No pardon can dispens with vnykyndnes*	100b
	223f	ayenst vnykyndnes in riche men*	
	228	nota	
	230-45a	} of Diues ye riche man an argument a Maiore*	101a
	263-4	{ Murther ye wirst synne ayenst ye holye gost* Qulaer?lere	101b
	294-6	} sorowe of herte is satisfaccion to yem yat cannot paye*	102a
	298-319	} A wyked wyfe [...* ...] an house uncouered [...* ...] & the smoke are compared to [...* ...] the flesh [...* ...] syknesses*	
	321-2	covetyse and Vnkyndnes*	102b

XX	52	[underlined] A sponge of Vininger [sic]	103a
	65-8	[underlined; to left:] the Author varieth some what from ye worde of god	103b
	67	[right:] nota A dombe speche of deade bodis	
	106-8	}	104a
	117	["out ... west" underlined] heaune in ye west [cf. annotation of prol. 14, fol. 7a]	104b
	119	Mercye*	
	122	truthe*	
	132	Mary the Virgine	
	135ff	Christ was borne without a medwyfe in a manger	
	143-5	} [pointing hand]	
	150-1	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] truth is directly against purgatory and limbo patrum	105a
	158-9	} the venym of scorpions styngeth till deth*	
	166	Rightwysenes*	
	171-2	peace. patyence and Love*	
	175	pees bringeth plentie & pride	
	176	[underlined] nota	
	178	[below, at bottom of page:] Spalme Daud { Mercy and truth, are mett together / Rightwisenes, & pees haithe cished ech other	
	237	[left] nota*	106a
	237-9	[right] } Englands careles securitie	
	240	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] the Bibill Book	
	258	[underlined] Symonds sons* ... which were in hell	106b
	278-9	} nota a question where Lazarus was when Abraham was in Inferno	107a
	309	nota	107b
	310ff	vij M yere was Adam in Hell	
	313	contrary to Elias computacione	
	352-6	} ayenst lyers*	108a
	380-2	[underlined] {} ye serpinte aleged god cripture [sic] to Eue	108b
	386-7	{ } by ye frute of a tree dampned by ye death on tree Saued	109a
	411-12	The vayle of Josephat resurreccion*	
	419-20	} note this -* [line by text following]	
	421-6	}	
	427-38a	}	109b
	439-40	} Justyce in hell Mercye in heven*	
	449	} not all ransomed*	
	472-8	} Idolatrye*	110a
XXI	12	pers ploughman wereth ze cote armor of Christ	110b
	34-7	} Jewes vnder tribute*	
	61	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] Christ betokneth conqueror	
	66-70	}	
	66	without the cros no Crowne	
	70	Jhesus A Sumonre	
	82	nota	111b
	85-95	/ A definition of the offerings of the three wisemen [...] Reson .. Rightwsnes .. Truth	
	135	["pe burydes" underlined] ye Madens or burydes	112b
	148	nota	
	162	[underlined] women can kepe no counsell	
	183	["zaf pers" underlined] peter	113a



XXI	187	[underlined] ye ploughman sonnest pardoned for his sinnes than any other caulling	
	213	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] grace is 113b more acquainted with the ploughman then any other trad	
	219	[underlined] nota	
	221-4	[left:] { false prophets* Antichrist ye [Aiscough] pope* Covetyse*	
	223	[right:] nota shall sitt in gods sett and bost him selfe as god	
	229-33	} preachers prests and Lawyers lyve by labor of tonge*	114a
	258	[underlined; left:] nota [right:] The ploughman the worlds Stuarde	
	262	The Evangelistes*	114b
	266	[underlined] nota peers the deuins purines [?]	
	269	The Doctors*	
	277-80	{ prudence*	
	281-8	{ Temporance*	
	289-92	} fortytude*	
	293-96a	}	115a
	297-310	} Justyce*	
	324-29	{ [pointing hand] Vnytie*	115b
	336	pryde*	
	368-70	[left:] {} nota [right:] common hores & sumpners enemies to the churche	116a
	385	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right] gods body under ye elliment of brede not transsubstanciacon	
	366	["ye ... beware" underlined] A budy Bruer	116b
	409	[underlined; to left:] A vile vicare [to right:] nota	
	417-20	} Lecherie regneth wher Cardynalls dwell*	
	428-9	} the pope shold save*	117a
	442-6	} the popes vyces*	
	455	[underlined; to left:] prudence in oure dais is but gyle [to right] nota	117b
	465-79a	} the Kinge is above his lawe* yet ounder ye rigore of ye lawe by reprehension as Nathan rebuked Dauid	
XXII	10	Need hath no Lawe*	118a
	33	[underlined; to left:] Fauor dei is wisdome [to right:] nota	118b
	35	[underlined] nota	
	36ff	[left:] Neede meeketh a proud minde	
	38-9	[right:] } Diogines dissyre all vaine glory	
	41	Christ became need for vs ["philosophres" underlined]	
	44	Needye*	
	48	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] A greate comfort in necesytil[e]	
	53-61	freares folowe Antechriste*	
	57	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] Gile is ye grounde of Antechrist	
	61+2-63	{ [to left:] but fooles will rather dye* [to right:] as marters. christians gods ffooles in this world	
	68-73	{ Antechrists battayl ayenst Conscyence*	119a

XXII	75-8	{ } unite ye castell of christianitie of all gods fooles in the churche	
	81-93	{ } [to left:] A legion of angels Attend on Ante=Christ [to right:] pestilences and warres are sent of god to fight againste Antechrist and his angells old age bereth deathes standerd*	119b
	95-6		
	100-5	} Death killeth all estates*	
	109-19	[to left:] lecheryes battayll ayenst conscience*	
	114-5	[to right:] lecherie liuerye is continuall Idelnes with flatterie and decepte	
	120-4	[to left:] { covetyse also ayenst consciens* [to right:] covetysnes liuerie is ingarlines [sic] and wiles	
	125-51	} [* glosses down the right hand side of page:] 120a symonye causeth ye Pope to hold with Antechryste knocketh conscyence dryveth away fayth overthroweth wisdom of Westminster hall overturneth truth turneth Syvile in ye Arches & parteth Matrimonye by devorce [Aiscough adds a comment here, given ll.140, 143 below] conscyence accompted folye	
	140	[pointing hand, to left]	
	143	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] liuely loue clad in rome harlottry which holdeth religion a geste	
	148	[underlined; to left:] vaine folly of youthfull lyfe [to right:] nota	
	152-5	[left:] { } nota [to right:] lyf health and prid of harte regards not conscience nor deathe	
	156-63	{ } [to left:] nota [to right:] lyf and fortune begate in there Youth Sleuthe who marride in his boysage a Post knyghtes daughter in a vaine hope of youthe	120b
	177	ye vicare of Bindbrocke	
	180ff	no surgerye nor physik ayenst old age*	
	182-5	Age is bald before [rest obscured by damage]	
	190	[underlined; left:] nota [right:] ye ere yelds to elde ye teth and grinders decaeth ye leges are gouttie	121a
	197-8	{ } mariage and elde killeth lust of ye body	
	199	["Y ... passede" underlined] all men must paie there debt to Nature	
	210	[underlined; to left:] nota [to right:] ye godlie which loue god truly shall never lacke in this lyfe, nor in ye lyfe to come	
	218-48	} Ayenst prests & freres*	121b
	221-3	[left:] nota [right:] } little or no consience to be founde in the marches of Irelande	
	249-72	/ Conscyence will not give ought to ye freres. [Aiscough] they are so many & out of Nombre*	122a
	278-89	}	122b
	294	Envye fyndeth freres at Schole*	
	300ff	ypocrysie woundeth many prechares*	
	314-5	} freare flatterye a phisician & surgear*	123a



XXII	347	hippocreticall women friers with the salue of	123b
		loue	
	369	Contrition ys filled with hippocracy	
	371	[underlined; to left:] nota	124a
		[to right:] daubers with vntempered mortar	
	373	} sleuth & prid enimies to conscience	
	382	[underlined; to left:] conscience desiers ye	
		company of ye ploughman who ys moste voyde of	
		pride of all occupacens	
		[to right:] nota	

after last line: Conscience is a sleppe till he come in againe

[Followed by names and comments:]

William Ail ]  
Willm.

Preston [name of scribe in red, large, boxed]

{ Cussyn I hartly you pray to kepe this bouke bothe nyght & day  
(Arther Surteys)

per me Fraun. Aiscoughe de Cottam [Notts.]

Conscience will not come into this Lande till the proude Prelats and  
couitous Lawyeres be swepe awaie which will not be longe to Amen so be  
it.

[On this folio appear two remedies (original punctuation), 124b  
and more names:]

[the title of the first cure is illegible]

Take chekyns & dight yame. Yen take polipe dile & chope it small &  
take fenell fare & do yereto & put ya buth in the chekyns & seith thame  
well & yen take ye herbe & ye seides furth of ye chekins & cast away  
^them^. Yen take ych chekine & ye broth & make yereof a culese & dytt  
well yereoff, & ye seike shall find remedy.

probatum est 9th Fraun. Aiscoughe

To dissolve the Hernia Carnosa } in tyme

Take leade and drive the same smale, prik it full of holes, and lay the  
same in a truse, maid for yat purposse. Then, take ffyges brayed, putt  
there to thoyle of lyge, a quantitie of Sanguis Draconis, rosewater,  
and musterd seed alike quantitie and applye the same plasterwise to the  
member ix dayes, and it shall desolve the member, a fowr the parte in  
quantitie.

probatum est.

This is daungerously curred by insycion in a fatt boddy be the Surgion  
never so conninge

[Other comments include:]

Surstrus praes the noj[?] to kepe this boke to the A lone  
per Thomas thyrnbeke, clarke  
per me anthony / per me anthony [and further pen practises]  
125a contains a Latin line.

The flyleaf has several names, and further pen practices and flourishes.



## 2. Glossation of Vocabulary

i. Wordlist from CUL MS Ll. 4. 14: C<sup>2</sup>(B), fols. 169b-170b by one of the main annotators (16th C). Cf. Skeat EETS B 421-4.

			Fol.
	Rapely	quickly	169b
	Endaunte		
	ffreyne	aske	170a
	Rape	hie wente spedyly	
5	Lo		
	carpe	talke	
	clutche	scratche	
	preynte		
	Quaue	shake or tremble, quake	
10	thole	suffre	
	hoved	stode abode	
	cheve	thryve	
	tyne	loste	
	fordo	distroyeth	
15	wyn or wen	goo	
	frete	taste	
	tynde	light	
	louke	withdraw, lose	
	pole	open, entre, suffre	
20	besquatt	broke	
	Affrounte		
	Auntre	ventre	
	Rome	goo, passe	
	swynke	labour	
25	Rytte		
	lake	playe	
	courbe	knele downe	
	Appende	appertaigne	
	steke	shytt	
30	thyrle	perced	
	comsid	spake	
	ffonge	take	
	vnderfonge	vndertake	
	latch	catch or take	
35	nymme	take	
	wysse	tell or teache	
	Yeme	guyde or rule	
	worthe	is worthy. come happen or	
		befall to	
	lythe	here	
40	Byd	praye, aske	
	Bekenne		
	Broke		
	hote		
	hale	drawe	
45	pylte	thruste or caste	
	nempne	call or name	
	shende	blame	
	welde		
	segge	man	

50	Blasen mechell alther lollynge Rapeliche	bygnes elder  quickly
55	wightliche zeme lorell liode sparliche	heede lyers persone
60	stalworthe skyll loyall smache Glede	Reasone
65	Glowynge kyse merke smolder doel or doule	darknes smoke sorrow
70	Palcot Bale kene witterly ffelly	sorrow sharpe well
75	ferly leeme merkenes maynprenour Queyntyse	Mervaille brightnes darknes
80	Gobelyn Lusarde thralle crokke Yerne	crafte, soteltie deule  bonde pott
85	shene Gresly Boorne tofte Loby	bright, clere ferefyll Ryver water a hyll, mountayne
90	Renable Bie hals hoove lere	a coler or cheyne hele Robe coyfe countenaunce, chere
95	lewte	

170b



ii. TCD MS 212: V(C) fols. 1a-4a, 88.

		underlined in text/ margin	gloss	Fol.
prol.	3	abit	apparal	1a
	5	saih selcouthe	sawe selcouthe or vncom[mon] quasi seldom known or vnknowned she [rest trimmed]	
	6	Ac	but	
	7	by fulle fort	be fell, chaunced for	
	9	me mette	I drempt	
	11	wyterly y sauh	aduisedly i sawe quasi without of wit	
	12	trecherie, gyle	gyle or deceit	
	16	wyle	while	
	17	leoue	beleue	
	20	mene	commun folk	
	21	worchinge	working	
	22	pleyden selde	went to lawe in com tymes	
	23	swonken	labored	
	24	wonnen	wan gut	
	25	pruyde paraileden	pride did apparell	
	26	kynne gyse	manner kaiis	
	28	lyueden	did liue	
	29	heuenryche	heuenly	
	30	holdup hem here	kept them their	1b
	32	here licame	their pleasure, delight or appet[ite]	
	33	cheffare cheuesede	merchandise thryued. ill icheut ill thrift	
	34	sicht	h[ ] many tymes for gh as siht miht for sight might etc.	
	41	bidderes zeoden	went	
	43	fayting	counterfayting hy[m]	
		fode	meat	
	44	tho gomes	those fellowes	
	46	suweþ	followyth	
	47	plyhten	gat	
	49	heore	theyr	
	52	heore	theyr	
	60	mendinants	begging	
	61	marchen	go foorth	
	63	ferlys	also farlyes. straunye thying	
	64	don	cast doun	
	65	mountep vp	groweth vp	
	70	lewede	lewed men, unloved	2a
		leuede	men beleued	

73	rauhte	gaf	
	rageman	rodes	
75	lenep	[L]end	
76	eren	eares	
78	boye	fellow	
79	parschepreost	parish preest	
83	leue	[beleue?]	
85	bachilers	of art	
86	crownynge	shaven crown	
87	tulye		
88	lel	lawefull	
89	leyen	lyk loigk	
	elles	oother tymes	
91	chauncellerie	chaunctrye	
94	demen	be indyt	
95	comune herde it	communalte hard it	
97	beon	be	
	yre	iron	
100	myzth nauzt	can not	
101	ac for	but bicause	
	porceward	toward your purse	
102	lyuen an dyen	lyue & dye	
103	wel	I can well beleue	
105	wat cheste and	what chastisment	
	meschaunce	& misch[ ]	
106	fful	foll	
	freo	free	
109	here	theyr syre	2b
	synegen	synne oftene	
110	molde	wode not	
111	as non	anon	
112	ylore	lore, loste	
115	beot	chastised, bet	
127	constorie	consistorie	
134	Ac	but	
	cauht	got	
137	inpunen y nelle	I will not iudge	
141	kynde wit	kynde wit, naturall [ ]	
144	contreouede	contriuyed, made	
146	lel	lawfull	3a
	wil	whyle	
148	kynde riche	it sholde be kingrich	
		that is kyngdom or kingly	
		& stal. ]	
149	lene	lende, graunte	
	leaute the loupe	right may lowe the	
159	houed, houes	clothed, in garments, clothes	
		crede	
160	hit semeden	thei semid	
163	bet	better	
	hulles	hilles	
164	mom	a mum a woorde	
165	ratones	rattes	
166	muis	mese	
168	wen	when he [ ]	
169	ouurlepped	ouerlept	
	lizchlyche	lightly	
	lauht	caught	
171	sallur	sorer [ ]	
172	cleos	clawes	



173	vs lopeþ	we ar wery of
174	wiþ sitte	with sit, withstand
175	of loft	a loft
178	byes	coller. bande
	brizt	bright
180	byze	
181	rowme	rumme crede
183	buggen	biggen. bye
191	wrathe	he be angry
	mowe	may
margin		to rome is to wander
		and how to get out of
		his way
	byze	a string a lace a bande
192	nas	ne was
197	strok	stept
	sturnely	stoutly
196	god cowþe	good colde
199	thauh	though
	culled	kyled
	zut	yet
200	ous	us
	þaw	tho
202	beo	
204	bout	but
204	elynge	feble, weke
209	ne carpen	I will not talke
	costed	coste
211	sugge	say
216	red	[reik] yor will desyer
	cowþe	coolde
	zow	your
217	meteles	dremes
	bymennþ	meanith
	murie	myrhy
218	ne dar	will not [nede]
	deere	dere
219	zut mette me	yet dremt I
223	walkenes	fullers
224	tyliares	tyllers
227	kokus	cookes
228	grys	fat
231	defye	digest
232	sauh	saw
	sithes	tymes

3b

I

3	lere	mann[er] chere
6	hou	how
8	wilnep	[wolatit?]
11	toft	hill
17	het	gat. appointid
18	forth	
21	aron	ar bin
	nempne	lo
24	ac	but
27	dight	he dressed, here he
		deflowered
29	gurles	wenches
	cheorles	cheerlis, without chere
32	for þi dred	thear fore feare

4a

XXII	4	neyhed...non	Almost noon	88a
	2	elyng	heavy, carefull	
	5	faitour	counterfeater	
	9	nome	took	
	12	weldep	vseth or upyith	
		werneb	blame. fort[ ]	
	13	borgh	suretie. pledge	
		wed	to lay	
	14	scleppe	gyle, inivst means	
	16	cheuyssaunce	shift	
	17	nymep	[T]aketh	
		maynprise	suretiship	
	27	bete ... bittere	[ ] to bytterly	
		to luyte	too lyttle.	
			soom, too mooch and soom	
			too li[t]tle	
	29	wol he nul he	will he, or will he not.	
	30	commune like	pleasing of the people	
	35	meokep	maketh meke	
	39	woueden		
		elyngliche	carefull, pensif	
	52	mette	[d]re[l]amed	88b
	57	gert	[ ] lised	
	59	religious receyede		
		hym		
	63	leute	a dealing	
	68	lewed	unlearned	
	72	gyour	gyler, defender	
	77	ous	us	
	79	bykere	fight	
	81	foreyours	[for]goers	



## NOTES

### NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. In chronological order:

Skeat, EETS OS lxxxi, 863-74 lists references to the poem from John Ball (1381) onwards; V.D. Scudder, Social ideals in English letters (Boston and New York 1898), 7-45, suggests Piers inspired the Peasants' Revolt; J.A. Burrow, "The audience of Piers Plowman", Anglia lxxv (1937), 373-84, discusses audience in general; P.L. Heyworth, "Jack Upland's Rejoinder, a Lollard interpolator, and Piers Plowman B X 249f" MAE xxxvi (1967), 242-8, suggests a Lollard audience; the poem's sixteenth century audience is discussed by H.C. White, Social criticism and popular literature in the sixteenth century, (New York 1965), chapter 1, 1-40, and by J.N. King, English reformation literature (Princeton University Press 1982), and "Robert Crowley's editions of Piers Plowman: a Tudor apocalypse" MP lxxiii (1975-6), 342-52 (King's references to a radical earlier reception are discussed below, see note 16); R.A. Wood, "A fourteenth century owner of Piers Plowman" MAE lii (1984) adds another reader to Burrows' list from a newly noticed London will.

2. Crowley, Preface to all three editions.

3. Skeat, Indexes 5-11 EETS OS 81, 863.
4. R.L. Kelly, "Hugh Latimer as Piers Plowman" SEL xvii (1977), 14.
5. H.C. White, Social criticism in popular religious literature of the sixteenth century (New York 1965), Chap. 1.
6. From The praier and complaynte of the plowman unto Christe (Preface) sig. A iii. See A. Wawn, "Chaucer, The Plowman's Tale and reformist propaganda: the testimonies of Thomas Godfray and I playne Piers" BJRL lvi (1973/4), 191.
7. Ibid.
8. See DNB vii, 476-7.
9. See below, chapter 3.iii
10. Wawn, op.cit., 176-7.
11. A. Bostock, annotating Douce L. 205, fourth flyleaf.
12. Bale, Scriptorum (first published 1557), 474.



13. Bale, Summarium (first published 1548) fol. 157a. This could refer to another "PP tradition" work.  
See also Index (published post 1546), 383, 509, 510:  
PP is referred to as "Visionem Petri Aratoris", "Peers Ploughman", and "Uisio Petri Ploughman" respectively.
14. See eg. P. Gradon, "Langland and the ideology of dissent" PBA (1982 for 1980), 179-205.
15. R. Wood, "A fourteenth century London owner of Piers Plowman" MAE liii (1984), 84. The statement is slightly qualified on p. 85.
16. J.N. King, English Reformation literature (Princeton 1982), 37.
17. A. Hudson, "Lollardy: the English heresy?" SCH xviii (1982), 268. The constitutions are listed in full in D. Wilkins, (ed.) Concilia iii, 314-19.
18. A. Hudson, ibid., 261-3.
19. Ibid. 183.
20. Ibid. 282.
21. King, op. cit., 37.
22. Ibid.

23. N.F. Blake, "Caxton and courtly style" E&S 1968, 29-45.
24. King, op. cit., 85.
25. An obvious example is the first printed English Bible, Tyndale's version, printed at Cologne and Worms in 1525, and introduced into Britian in 1526 (M. Deanesly, The Lollard Bible (Cambridge 1920), 2-3. A significant proportion of the books listed in STC were published abroad for the same reason.
26. See Wawn, op. cit.
27. Quoted in full in R.B. Dobson (ed.), The Peasants' Revolt (London 1970), 381-2.
28. See Skeat, EETS OS 81, 864-5, references 10 and 13, quoting the names "Piers Plewman", "Johan the Reve", "Laurens Laborer", "Thomlyn Tailyor" and "Hobbe of the Hille".
29. P.L. Heyworth, "Jack Upland's Rejoinder, a Lollard-interpolator, and Piers Plowman B X 249f" MAE xxxvi (1967), 242-8.
30. Texts referred to throughout, unless otherwise stated, are:  
A text: Kane.  
B text: Kane and Donaldson.  
C text: Pearsall.  
(See list of abbreviations for full details).



31. Heyworth, op. cit., 245-7.
32. Ibid. 248.
33. G.R. Owst, Literature and pulpit in medieval England (Cambridge 1933), esp. Chap. V: for fourteenth century poets' debt to the pulpit, 228; on PP in particular, 249ff, 278f, 288, etc.
34. See J. Kail (ed.), Twenty-six political and other poems from Bodleian MS Digby 102, EETS OS cxxiv (1904).
35. A. Baldwin, The theme of government in Piers Plowman (Cambridge 1981), 6-7.
36. See R.H. Robbins (ed.), Historical poems of the XIVth and XVth centuries (New York, 1959), poems 64 and 79.
37. IMEV 363; the phrase is also used in IMEV 3434, suggesting that it may be merely a familiar tag, with obvious appropriateness to the title page of Piers Plowman.

38. Mentioned by Skeat, EETS iv, 865, as "Piers Plowman", and by Andrew Maunsell, as "Pierce Plowman in prose" in Catalogue of English printed books (First printed by John Vvindet, London 1595, reprinted by the Gregg Press, London 1965), 80-1. BL Royal MS 18 B XVII heads Piers the Plowman's Crede "Piers Plowman", further demonstrating the tendency of the works of the "Piers Plowman tradition" to become confused with the poem itself.
39. The difficulties for the modern editor of this approach are addressed by D.A. Pearsall in "Editing Medieval Texts", in Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation, ed. J.J. McGann (Chicago 1985), 92-106, especially p.105, and "Texts, textual criticism, and fifteenth century manuscript production" in Fifteenth Century Studies ed. R.F. Yeager (Connecticut 1984), 121-136. The edition of Troilus and Criseyde by B.A. Windeatt (London and New York 1984) accepts the value of disparate versions of the texts and presents an editorial approach to the problem in practice.
40. C. MacCabe, James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word (London 1978), 15.



41. See e.g. Kate Harris, "John Gower's Confessio Amantis: the virtues of bad texts" in MSS and Readers, 27-40;  
J.M. Bowers, "The Tale of Beryn and the Siege of Thebes: Alternative ideas of the Canterbury Tales";  
and  
C.C. Morse "The exemplary Griselda",  
both in SAC vii (1985), 23-50, 51-86, and see below, notes 43-5.
42. A brief distinction of the two is given in Holub, preface xi-xiv.
43. R.A. Dwyer, "The appreciation of hand made literature" CR viii (1974), 224-5.
44. G.H. Russell, "Some early responses to the C-version of Piers Plowman" Viator xv (1984), 277.
45. B.A. Windeatt, "The scribes as Chaucer's earliest critics" SAC i, (1979), 121. This is further discussed in the Introduction to his edition of Troilus (see note 39 above), 25-35.
46. Kate Harris, op. cit., 34.
47. H. R. Jauss, Toward an aesthetic of reception, translated by T. Bahti (Minnesota 1982), and Holub, especially 129-30.
48. S. Fish, Is there a text in this class? (Mass. 1980) Introduction, 15.

49. W. Iser, The implied reader (Baltimore 1974),  
and see The act of reading (Baltimore 1978).
50. Iser, Act of reading, x.
51. P. Strohm, CR xviii (1982), 140.
52. See eg. the experiments of J. Learhardt,  
"toward a sociology of reading" in S. Sulieman and  
I. Crossman (eds), The reader in the text (Princeton 1980),  
205-224, and see Holub, 134-46.
53. Iser however makes some concession to historical context:  
"...I have not sought to shape the essays into a distilled  
history of the novel, but have dipped into the history  
at those points where it seems to me that something new and  
significant took place." Implied Reader, xii.
54. R. Barthes, S/Z translated by R. Miller, (London 1975), 4.
55. L. Damrosch Jr., "Johnson and reader response", The  
eighteenth century xxi No. 2 (1980), 91.
56. Kate Harris, op. cit., 27.
57. MacCabe, op. cit., 3-4.  
Cf. Fish, op. cit.; the subtitle is "The authority of  
interpretive communities".



58. MacCabe, ibid., Preface.
59. A.J. Minnis, The Medieval theory of authorship (london 1984), 7, and see Holub, 134: "...the central problem we have observed with Jauss' concept of the horizon of expectations is that there is no way to "objectify" it in social or historical terms without contradicting the inherent relativising principles he adopts from Gadamer's hermeneutics".
60. C.S. Lewis, The allegory of love (Oxford 1936), 163.
61. See Paul Strohm, op. cit., 7: "even the critic who has already resolved to become more "audience centred" in approach must still determine which of the many possible conceptions of the audience will be operative in his or her critical program, and which sources of evidence will be employed to determine this audience's composition and views."
62. See above, note 54.
63. "...interpretation, that act that discovers in a poem a meaning that transcends both the words in which it is expressed and the historical context of its enunciation". L. Patterson, The logic of textual criticism and the way of genius" in J.J. McGann (ed.) Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation (Chicago 1985), 76.

64. Cf. B.A. Windeatt (ed.) Troilus and Criseyde (London and New York 1984), Preface, viii:  
"To see Chaucer's poetry placed as it were between its origins and the responses of its medieval copyists is ... to suggest the fuller manner of existence of a medieval literary work by comparison with the very different fixedness of form implied by a modern editor"
65. Jauss, op. cit., 99-100,  
cf. Pearsall, Old English and Middle English Poetry,  
Introduction p. xi: "this historical understanding is as necessary to an informed appreciation of the poetry as is a proper reading of the language."
66. The additional "Canterbury Tales" discussed in the article cited in note 41 above are examples of this imitation of Chaucer.
67. Anna Baldwin, The theme of government in Piers Plowman (Cambridge 1983), 7.
68. See J.A. Burrow, "The audience of Piers Plowman", Anglia lxxv (1937), 373-84.
69. See D.A. Pearsall, "The Ilchester MS of Piers Plowman in the University of London library with particular reference to the prologue", NM lxxxii (1981), especially 193.



70. See Strohm, op. cit., 142: "Chaucer's actual or historical readers check in slowly and unreliably. When they do appear on record, they are likely to tell us more about their own perspectives than about Chaucer".
71. See Kane, 136.
72. This figure includes all fragments separately, with the exception of G&CCC MS 201, which is, as stated by Skeat, a transcript of the 1561 edition by Owen Rogers, and G&CCC MS 669, a single side quotation of 24 lines headed "nota bene de libero arbitero festum Augustinum & Ysodorum". The lines are C XVI 181-200a, 182 om.
73. G&CCC MS 669, see above.
74. See Kate Harris, op. cit., 28.
75. Kane, 115.
76. A.I. Doyle and M.B. Parkes, "The production of copies of the Canterbury Tales and the Confessio Amantis in the early fifteenth century" in Medieval scribes, 186; M.B. Parkes, "The influence of the concepts of Ordinatio and Compilatio on the development of the book" in Medieval learning, 138.

77. A recent article discusses the authenticity of the visio/vitae divisions in the B text: R. Adams, "The reliability of the rubrics in the B-text of Piers Plowman" MAE 1985 No. 2, 208-231. This is discussed below, chapter 2.iic.
78. Brigham is mentioned as an owner by Bale, Index, 383, 509.
79. P. Mann, From author to reader (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley 1982), 150, warns of the dangers of sub-analysis of small numbers.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Bonaventura, In primum librum sententiarum, prologus, quaest. iv, 15-16, printed Opera ed. S. Brullifer (Lugduni 1515), discussed by M.B. Parkes, "The influence of the concepts of ordinatio and compilatio on the development of the book" in Medieval Learning, 115-44, and by A.J. Minnis, The Medieval theory of authorship (London 1984), 94-103.

### 2. Points system for table 2

The numbers 1-10 refer to the elements described in appendix B.

Points are assigned to MSS as follows, with a maximum of 10 marks in each category:

#### 1. Quality of hand:

Expert 10 points

Even 5 "

Untidy 0 "

+ or - 1 for variability or deterioration.

#### 2.

For 2 and 3:

Numbers indicate number of colours (0=main ink)

Points are calculated from the mid point of each limit, + or - 0.2 for additional characteristics within the limits.

<u>initial</u>	<u>title</u>	<u>points limit</u>
2	1	9-10
-	dec.	9-10
1	1	8-9
2+	-	8-9
2	-	8-9
2	0	8-9
1	0	7-8
0	1	7-8
-	1	6-7
1	-	6-7
-	0	5-6
0	-	5-6
0	0	4-5
-	-	0
mark or space only		1
imperfect		5

- |    |                    |                |                     |
|----|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 3. | <u>initial</u>     | <u>heading</u> | <u>points limit</u> |
|    | 2, 2+              | 1              | 9-10                |
|    | 2+                 | -              | 8-9                 |
|    | 2                  | 0              | 8-9                 |
|    | 1                  | 1              | 8-9                 |
|    | 2                  | -              | 7-8                 |
|    | 1                  | 0              | 7-8                 |
|    | 0                  | 1              | 7-8                 |
|    | 0                  | 0              | 6-7                 |
|    | -                  | 1              | 6-7                 |
|    | -                  | 0              | 5-6                 |
|    | 1                  | -              | 4-5                 |
|    | 0                  | -              | 3-4                 |
|    | -                  | -              | 0                   |
|    | mark or space only |                | 1                   |
4. Latin distinguished 5 points  
Other words " 5 "  
Less 1 (or more if extreme) for deterioration.
5. Frame and line ruling 10 points  
One of these only, 5 points  
Margins 3  
Less 1 for deterioration,  
+ 1 for occasional ruling or frame
6. Scribal glossation:  
Extensive: 10 points  
Major headings: 5 points  
One or two only: 2 points
7. Paragraphing: throughout, with paraps: 10  
Some form of paragraphing: 5  
+ or - 1 for deterioration or improvement.
8. Additional features:  
2 points for each up to 10.
- |    |                          |               |
|----|--------------------------|---------------|
| 9. | <u>Number of colours</u> | <u>points</u> |
|    | 3+                       | 10            |
|    | 3                        | 7             |
|    | 2                        | 5             |
|    | 1                        | 3             |
|    | 0                        | 0             |
10. Explicit:  
Distinguished by colour, space and hand: 10 points  
Space and hand only: 8  
Hand only: 6  
As text: 5  
Mark only: 1  
None: 0  
Imperfect: 5  
+ or - 1 for additional features.



3. MSS with a decline in decoration:

A: H

B: O,R,S,Y

C: N,P,S,X

MSS with other inconsistencies in decoration:

A: A,D,J,L,M,R,U,V

A+C: Ch,H<sup>2</sup>,W

B: Bm,Ht,M,O

C: E,G,K.

4. V(A), one of the most highly decorated MSS, has space left for passus headings throughout, with the exception of the visio/vitae division.

5. D(C) also has many illustrations by a reader, discussed below, chapter 3.ii.

6. J. Krochalis, "The unadorned word" Manuscripta xxv part I (1981), 8.

7. S.H. Cavanaugh, "A study of books privately owned in England 1300-1450", University of Pennsylvania PhD thesis 1980, 12-13.

8. Skeat EETS OS lxvii (1884), xix.

9. Discussed more fully below, p.47.

10. Skeat, EETS C, xliii-xlv.

11. This forms two rhyming couplets with the last line of the text.
12. Cf. the full titles given to the editions of Kane and Kane and Donaldson.
13. This incomplete copy was obviously acceptable even to a post-printing reader, as a note on the flyleaf records:

Bowghrt this book anno 1573 of  
Harvey in Grac Street this 14th  
October precium xvid.
14. These two MSS are closely related.
15. Kane and Donaldson, 4.
16. Discussed below, Chapter 3.iv.
17. Kane, 115.
18. A.G. Rigg and C. Brewer, Piers Plowman : The Z version (Toronto 1983), discussed further below, Chapter 4.i(a).
19. Kane, 51.



20. John But: See Kane, Authorship, 33-4; Kane A XII 106 (431); H. Bradley, "Who was John Butt?" MLR viii (1913-14), 88-9; E. Rickert, "John But, messenger and marker" MP xi (1913-14), 107ff; S. Moore, "Studies in Piers Plowman" ii MP xii (1914-15), 30-3; O. Cargill, "The Langland Myth" PMLA i (1931), 39-40.
21. Kane, 33.
22. Ibid.
23. Robert Adams, "The reliability of the rubrics in the B-text of Piers Plowman", MAE lii (1985), 208-231.
24. Only the singular vita is used, and only in the A-text
25. Adams, op. cit. 209, note 7.
26. The Vision of Piers Plowman: a complete edition of the B-text ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London 1978), xxxvi.
27. See M.B. Parkes, "The influence of the concepts of ordinatio and compilatio on the development of the book" in Mediaeval Learning, 115-41.
28. Adams, op.cit., 212-3.
29. Ibid., 212.
30. Ibid., 211, note 11.

31. Ibid, 212, note 13. An example of a sixteenth century reader/editor not following this practice may be found in MS G(B); a detailed synopsis of the Piers Plowman by the scribe of the poem is included (fols. 101b-103a). The synopsis refers to the quadripartite division of the text by dividing the synopsis into four tabulae, "off pyers plowman" (concluding "de visione", "de dowell", "de dobett" and "de dobest").
32. Two C MSS, K and S, have no text at this point.
33. The A-text portion of the A+C MS Z concludes "explicit vita et visio petri plowman" (fol. 140a), but the MS is not included among A-texts because of the highly unusual nature of the text.
34. The remaining C-text MSS are P<sup>2</sup>, Q and S. S may be discounted since the text is missing here; P<sup>2</sup> and Q have no wording at the passus IX/X division, but have "passus .1. de dowel" (fol. 43b) and "explicit passus primus. incipit passus secundus de dowel" (fol. 38a) respectively at passus XI, indicating that a division around IX/X is assumed.
35. The nominative visio is not used in B-text rubrics, where passus n de visione is the usual formula, implying a single continuous vision in contrast to the C-text rubrics' two separate but connected visions.
36. Adams, 210.



37. Ibid., 209.
38. For example H<sup>3</sup>(A). Other MSS of interest include those which ignore some or all passus divisions, eg. N(C) (initials only up to passus X), L(A) and M(A), erratically headed.
39. See Schmidt, op.cit., xxi.
40. As is the case in Kane and Kane and Donaldson, although the rubrics are acknowledged in the titles.
41. E.T. Donaldson, "MSS R and F in the B-tradition of Piers Plowman" TCAA xxxix (1955), 177-212.
42. See R.W. Frank Jr., "The number of visions in Piers Plowman" MLN (1951), 309-12.
43. See Kane, 6 n.4.
44. Bonaventura, In primum librum sententiarum, prologus, quaest. iv, 15-16, printed, Opera, ed. S. Brullifer (Lugduni 1515).
45. Parkes, op. cit., 121.
46. G.H. Russell, "Some early responses to the C-version of Piers Plowman" Viator xv (1984), 275.
47. Parkes, op.cit., 120.

48. All the rubrics are listed in appendix C.
49. This includes three MSS where one sin is omitted: B MSS Bm,Ht and C MS E, and one MS where two sins are omitted, J(A).
50. A: D,J  
A+C: N  
B: C,G,Hm,L,M,W,Y  
C: E,F,G,K,M,P,R,St,V,Y.
51. Russell, 276.
52. Ibid., 275-6.
53. Ibid., 275.
54. The annotator notes similitudes and exempla as well as definitions at several points, eg. C XI 179 (fol.75a), C XVI 115-6 (fol. 83a) etc. The annotations of U(C) are listed in appendix D, and discussed in chapter 3.
55. Russell, op.cit, 276.
56. There are two rubrics among group I and II MSS referring to events in the vitae:  
G(B) XVIII 30 argument off lyf & dethe  
E(C) XXII 22 Alarne



57. Cf. the omission of the cat and mouse fable from the C interpolations in the A prologue of I(C), discussed in chapter 4.ii b.
58. Discussed below, chapter 3.
59. Russell, 276.
60. Ibid., 277.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., 278.
63. The others are R(A), N(AC), Ht(B), and St(C).
64. Discussed in more detail below, chapter 3.ii.
65. Russell, 278.
66. Kane and Donaldson, 53.
67. See Parkes, op.cit., 131.
68. Kane and Donaldson, 8.
69. Parkes, op.cit., 135.
70. Some of Crowley's comments are discussed below, chapter 3.iv.

71. Discussed below, chapter 4.i(b).



1. Tony Harrison, "Your speech is in the hands of the Receivers." From "Them & [uz]" in Continuous, (London 1982).
2. For a discussion of the extent of this see Chapter 2.i
3. See above, Chapter 1.i.
4. A-texts: A,H,J,M,U\*,V\*  
A+C-texts: W  
B-texts: C,Hm,S\*,W,Y  
C-texts: E,G,P\*,Q,S\*,X\*  
\* denotes no annotation whatsoever.
5. At X 331, "thabbott of Abingdon" fol. 13b.
6. All annotation of K(AC) together with that of M(B), D(C) and U(C) is listed in Appendix D.
7. Cf. Professor Russell's similar suggestion about the rubrics of X(C), "Some early responses to the C-version...", 277.
8. Kane, 31.
9. Ibid., 38.
10. Ibid.

11. Eg. P<sup>2</sup>(C): an annotator supplies C prol. 48-9, XVI 314, XVIII 223a, XX 300-1, C XXII 345-50 and other lines; N(AC): an annotator supplies part of I 55 and 56.
12. Ker, iii 303.
13. The necessity of a single definition of an allegory in illustration is discussed by R. Tuve, with reference to the Roman de la Rose, in Allegorical imagery (Princeton 1966), 278-9.
14. For discussion of these see below p.150f.
15. Kane, 115, 136ff; Kane and Donaldson, 166 concerning MS F(B); Windeatt op.cit. (by implication), 122; Dwyer op.cit., 224 etc.
16. Henry VII's historian Polydore Vergil forwarded the cult of Henry VI's tomb in his English History, with an account probably based on the "Blacman" tract, a "compilation of the meekness and good life of King Henry VI", probably commissioned by Henry VII. See Wolffe, B., Henry VI (London 1981), 5.
17. DNB v, 356-60.
18. See Murray, J.A.H., (ed.), The Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune, EETS OS lxi (1895), xxx, Appendix I, 48ff.



19. See Mann, J., "Eating and drinking in Piers Plowman" E&S 1979, 29-30.
  
20. Comment on Crowley; second edition, Douce L 205 (Bodleian Library Oxford) fol. 8b.
  
21. The shrine of Thomas of Canterbury was despoiled in 1538 under Henry VIII, after the Act for the Dissolution of Smaller Monasteries, 1536, but Thomas remains a Catholic martyr.
  
22. In Hm(B) "pardon" and "purgatory" are both erased in The Prick of Conscience, although not in Piers.
  
23. Eg. III 307a Levit. xix fol. 13b  
       323 ecc. ii capitulo  
       355 Johannis primo 14a  
       402a Johannis iiiij capitulo 14b  
       407 Regum xviiij capitulo  
       413 Regum xv capitulo  
       460a Ysaye ii capitulo 15a  
       476a Ysaye. secundo capitulo  
       etc.
  
24. Crowley's assumptions about the meaning of Reason's speech at the beginning of V, indicated in his synopsis of passus V, "that Abbaies shoulde be suppressed", fol. 4b, provokes Andrew Bostock's comment in Douce L 205.

25. Second edition, fol. xvi.
26. Chaucer's works and supposed works published in the sixteenth century:

STC 5089 Mars and Venus 1500[?]

5099 The maying or disport of Chaucer 1508

5095 Troilus and Criseyde 1517

5093 Parlement of fowles 1525

5086 Canterbury Tales 1526

5088 House of Fame 1526[?]

5092 Parlement of Fowles 1530

5068 Works 1532

5098 Jack Uplande 1540[?]

5069 Works 1542

5100 a later edition of the 1542 Works

including The Plowman's Tale 1545[?]

5075 Works 1561

5076 another issue

5077 Works, ed. Speght, with a glossary, 1598.

27. Curiously "plede" at prol. 161, which does have this meaning, is not glossed.

28. EETS B, 421-6.



29. Accuracy of Skeat's groupings:

Group 1 (from passus XVII-XX)

8/19 words may be correct.

4 words are not underlined in the text (Skeat's own criterion for identification)

1 word is only underlined in other passus .

1 word is underlined in these passus, but occurs frequently elsewhere

2 words are underlined in these passus, but occur occasionally elsewhere.

Group 2 (prol. and passus I)

3/7 words are not underlined in the text (unless word 23 is "hytte" for "highte", underlined in passus I)

All the words in this group are frequently underlined in the text. Thus only the last 4, 25-28, can really be said to form a group.

Group 3 (latter part of VII)

4/7 words are not underlined in this part of the text and occur frequently elsewhere in the text.

The three words which are underlined in this part of the text are 37, 39, and 43, and thus do not run consecutively.

Word 38, which Skeat notes "occurs often" in fact is underlined only twice in the MS, and not at all in passus VIII.

Group 4 (last 5 passus)

11/38 are incorrect or possibly incorrect.

The grouping is therefore largely correct, but is a very inclusive grouping. The first word of the group, 47, is frequently underlined; and thus the group should start at 48.

Group 5 (prol. and I)

3/8 words are not underlined in the text, but these are rare words, likely to come from this area of the text. This is the only grouping I can fully support.

Skeat is also incorrect on words 29\*, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 45\*, 95, 1 (numbers are those used by Skeat).

The two marked \* are not underlined where Skeat states, and others occur frequently, or at least twice elsewhere.

Word 95 comes from Richard Redeless which Skeat fails to notice.

40/95 are thus either wrongly located in the text, or the location is open to question. However, it is possible that some of the underlinings that Skeat noticed have faded, and that his attributions are not as inaccurate as they appear.

30. All three editions, Preface.
31. Kane and Donaldson, 15.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Bonaventura, loc.cit.
2. Kane, 115.
3. Whilst I recognise that Kane's warning about the inadvisability of choosing any particular type of variant as the evidence for classifying these MSS (p. 60) applies equally well to the selection of spurious material, a full breakdown of C-text variants is beyond the scope of this study. I have been guided to some extent in the choice of C-text MSS for closer study by the advice of Professor Russell, editor of the forthcoming critical edition of the C-text. I follow the procedure described in Donaldson 21, of using a readily available printed edition of the C-text in the absence of a critical edition.
4. Kane, 115f.
5. Ibid., 127.



6. Ibid., 130.
7. Ibid., 134: "the change is in the direction of flat statement, simplifying not only language but connotation ... It favours the obvious and the colourless, and rejects language pregnant, mannered, or fanciful. The results ... are a prosy utterance and loss of force in the communication of meaning, weakening of poetic tension, dilution of the archaic flavour of the style, and general loss of efficiency".
8. See Pearsall, C-text 21, n.23: "the activity of the scribe of P's exemplar ... is thoroughly reasonable and at times highly intelligent ..."  
and "Editing medieval texts" in Textual criticism and literary interpretation ed. J.J. McGann (Chicago 1985), 95: a modern editor may find readings "...that might even have been preferred by the poet himself if he had thought of them".
9. Kane, 116-149.
10. Ibid., 116 n.3.
11. Inevitably MSS with large scale variation will to some extent warrant individual discussion.
12. A.G. Rigg and C. Brewer, Piers Plowman: the Z version (Toronto 1983).

13. Kane, 115.
14. Donaldson, "MSS R and F in the B-tradition of Piers Plowman" TCAA xxxix (1955), 211.
15. See Kane, 19.
16. Donaldson, "MSS R and F", 211;  
Skeat, B-text xii.
17. Skeat EETS A: "mere rubbish written out from imperfect recollection", lxxi.
18. Kane and Donaldson, 14-15 n.95.
19. G. Kane, "The 'Z version' of Piers Plowman" Speculum lx (1985), 910-30; Rigg and Brewer, Ibid.
20. The C conclusion was added later, and is not relevant to the discussion of Z as an authorial version; the collation of the MS shows that extra leaves have been added to accommodate the C-continuation (see MSS descriptions, appendix B).
21. Rigg and Brewer, 5.
22. DNB lx 228-9; Rigg and Brewer, Ibid.
23. Kane, Speculum, 911.



24. Donaldson, 19.
25. Some of the following analysis of Z is taken from my MA dissertation for the University of York, 1982-3.
26. Kane, 126.
27. Rigg and Brewer give a list, 21-2.
28. All A-text spurious lines are quoted by Kane, 44-50; B-text spurious lines by Kane and Donaldson, 221-4.
29. Rigg and Brewer, 78.
30. Kane, 15 n.95.
31. Kane, Speculum, 920.
32. Ibid., 926.
33. Ibid., 918-9.
34. Kane, 27.
35. Ibid., 43.
36. Recognised by Kane, 38.
37. Such knowledge is suggested by Kane as one reason for the freedom with which scribes alter the text, 115.

38. A process Crowley professes to have undertaken, in his Preface. He must also have seen a C-text as he quotes the C-version of the "prophecy" at the end of C VIII in his Preface.
39. All BC lines interpolated in A listed, Kane 29-30.
40. Ibid., 36-7.
41. Ibid., 34-7.
42. For this and other examples in N see ibid., 35-6.
43. Kane and Donaldson, 14-15.
44. G. Russell and V. Nathan, "A Piers Plowman manuscript in the Huntington Library" HLO xxvi (1963), 119.
45. Ibid., 120.
46. Ibid., 121-6. Russell and Nathan use the lineation of Skeat's parallel text edition (Oxford 1886) for B and C.
47. B XIII 277-83, C VI 291-316a.
48. B X 298-334, C V 146-178.



49. Ht however includes the first line of the omitted passage, in its B form, B X 297, before the insertion of the revised material from C.
50. B.A. Windeatt, "The scribes as Chaucer's early critics" SAC i (1979), 119-41;  
R.A. Dwyer, "The appreciation of handmade literature" CR viii (1974), 221-40.
51. Windeatt 119-20; Dwyer 221-2.
52. See above, n.9.
53. Windeatt, 125f.
54. Ibid., 134-5.
55. Ibid., 132-3.
56. Kane, 142-3.
57. Dwyer, 224-5.
58. Kane, 135-6.
59. It is of course likely that this may be the result of several copying processes, with different types of variant introduced in each.
60. See Donaldson, 230-1.

61. Donaldson discusses the unpopularity of the C-text, 2-16; he notes some scribal interference in P, 32-3. Pearsall, 20-1 n.23 refers to this practice of the P scribe, and gives several examples, mostly of the kind which clarify or simplify the original text. .
62. Kane, 133.
63. See below, 4.iv.
64. Windeatt, op.cit., 126.
65. Kane, 133.
66. Cf. Troilus and Criseyde IV 305 "wo vnneste" altered to "woful nest" (H4R), B.A. Windeatt (ed.) Troilus and Criseyde (London and New York 1984), 30.
67. Kane, 132-3.
68. Ibid., 131.
69. Windeatt, "The scribes as Chaucer,s earliest critics", 134, and Troilus and Criseyde, 28.
70. For similar scribal reaction in Troilus and Criseyde see Windeatt, Troilus and Criseyde, 31 n.15.
71. In correspondence.



72. See D.A. Pearsall, "The Ilchester manuscript of Piers Plowman", NM lxxxii (1981), 181-93.

73. This occurs after X 61:

Til I met wip a man pouzt was his name  
Y asked him fair what was dowel fro dobet & dobest fro hem  
bope  
Sir wit quod pouzt hier can telle ye ful wel  
And saide sir dowel quod wit dwelleþ nouzt a daies journey  
hens

The passages replaces X 62-127.

74. Pearsall, "Ilchester", 183.

75. There is in addition some interpolation of the A prologue into B in Cr<sup>23</sup>, see Kane and Donaldson, 221.

76. Pearsall, "Ilchester", 184.

77. See above, 4.i.

78. See Kane, 47.

79. Quoted from Chaucer, Works, ed. Robinson.

80. Kane and Donaldson, 222.

81. For the separation from Covetousness here, see Pearsall, C-text l. 86n, 264.

82. See J. Mann, "Eating and drinking in Piers Plowman" E&S 1979, 26-43.
83. Kane and Donaldson, 15.
84. See Skeat's suggestion, EETS B, 426.
85. Huntington Library, unpublished catalogue;  
Russell and Nathan, 119.n.1.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Comments include:

"wrong-headed", "lax and froward" R. Adams, "The reliability of the rubrics of the B-text of Piers Plowman" MAE liv (1985), 209, 211.

"stubborn as well as unwary" Donaldson, 33

"indolent"; "lazy"; "carelessness, ignorance or lack of understanding" Kane, 125, 122, 130 etc.

2. Crowley quotes C VIII 350-1 in his Preface.

3. Skeat EETS B xii

Donaldson "MSS R and F in the B-tradition of Piers Plowman", 211.

4. Crowley, "this is no prophecy but a resonable gatherig [sic]" second edition, fol. xvi, note to B III 284.

5. "line-by-line": B.A. Windeatt, "The scribes as Chaucer's earliest critics" SAC i (1979), 120, 121.

G. Russell, "Some early responses to the C-version of Piers Plowman" Viator xv (1984), 278.

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hoies & iumentis saluabitis quemadmodum multiplicasti  
 I yowfaund of men po. Mungen to gydir  
 gied vplward to qist: and to his cleue medy  
 to haue gine to go to treuth: god leue pat we mote  
 be ye no liss no liss none so wyse: pat ye liss yed conye  
 but blosteyed for: as bestur: aney boches & hille  
 so liss liss mid long: pat yed a lede mett  
 appaynlet as a palmer: in pilgrym liss  
 he baye a boude bonide: Wy a brode liss  
 in a lissellond liss: Wyche at a bonte  
 a bel and a bug: he baye by his syde  
 an hondeyed of ampolles: on his hatt sete  
 signes of syse: and scheldes of galys  
 and many a goucha on his clobe: knyght of rounde  
 and he veynate be for: for men schuld knoll  
 and so by ye signes whom he souyth had  
 his folk frayned hym first: fro when? he come  
 from synay he saide: & fro ye sepulchre of our lord  
 in bethlem and babiloun: haue ben in daye  
 in ymorny in al sumidry: I haue bene eke  
 ye may se by my signes: pat sittyn on my capp  
 I haue gode seyntes: for my soules helthe  
 and walke ful wyde: in wete and in dry  
 knowest thou outh a corseynt: qd he y me callyn tyme  
 bondit liss vo ye liss: when tyme bouer  
 say so me god help: saide ye goue yam  
 I saugh nener palmer: Wy pike ne Wy scypp  
 ayen aftyr hym but noll: in his place  
 petre qd a ploughman: and put forye his hede  
 I know hym as byndely: as clerk do in boke  
 Consaule and kyndly: taught me to his place  
 and made me sicker sepe: to serue hym for eney  
 bope to solde and to sett ye while I liss my liss  
 and godden his sedio: and sue his bestur  
 Wy in and Wy out: to waten his pite





ye long and al ye continue & deyege to ye loute  
as for he lord and he ledey and loue as you techest  
me is a dore qd ye docto a dysfowse tube  
al ye blithe of ye worlde and wyth men steynght  
gounozth pforme a pees of ye pope and his curiye  
pfitable for bove ptiws. a put ye tode fro hym  
and toke consuetud and deyege to consail as hit were  
as consuetud I toke kepe conged san ye docto  
and sey he saide to deyege so pat hit heyd  
by crist qth consuetud deyege I wold not by  
ye wey leuey by our lord and I hve schuld  
hane paciens pfitely. pan half ye pat of boke  
letteye & long study lettey ful many  
pat ye knowey noth qd consuetud What is hyte paciens  
for ye qd consuetud crist y ye be tethe  
My paciens wil I pas pfitenesse to fynde  
and went fory on he way wyth gret wil y folowed  
pan had paciens as pylgryms hane in hez robes vntaile  
sobryte & symple spech and sovefast be tene  
to confort hym and consuetud zif yei come in place  
ye wil yndene and conetysyng thoury contrees bove  
and as ye went by ye way of ed wel can yei canpe as d. acm  
yei mette wy a mynstre as me so pat  
paciens apposed hym and pled he schuld tel  
What gyst pat he coupe and aytesty he saide  
am a mynstre qd ye ma my name is anna vta  
pees prentys ye ploughma al pepyl to confort  
What man mynstre my dey frend qd consuetud  
hastold used of hauntyd al ye hve tyme  
mynstre can I noth much but make men myny  
as a wyf wy wyfco and wel come god gystes  
of my laboure pertain they ye las and ye more  
ye poore and ye rich I please and payne fynde  
and fells jobys y foug or fynyed gounes





I praye god for his goodnes: gyve ye grace to amend  
 and repentance with wyse wit: and praye a/ose & mune  
 I praye. Wyse hery hery: asked after schyft  
 and quod mea culpa: cussynge al hys enemye  
 his cloys: they of cussynge and of kene wordys  
 he doo the hys fyst a you wythe: had wiffid at hys wil  
 schuld no lif lyue: put on his lond pyssed  
 chidinge in chalangenge: who his ches founelode  
 and blained me be hynd hee bane: & bid hem unschynne  
 and yat he wyse by wil to watkynd he told  
 and al yat he wyse by wat: told hit wil after  
 and mude of frendis foos: poyth fykel & fals tong  
 or poyth myrth of monye: or poyth man? seker the  
 wenge me fele tymer: or wenge my self wyse ju  
 like a shepiste: oche: and oche: and myn ene gisten  
 a zener ye counsaile of crist: deker fou in boke  
 Canto maladunone os plenitudo amantudine sub lingua  
 me labor & dolor ffily homa dutes cor myna & sagitte et  
 lingue cor gladius acutus  
 and I han may north hane ye wayst: such malecoly take  
 yat I cath ye camp: and cadyrte om tyne  
 or an auger in such an augre: & su tyne a fene  
 yat take me al ye troluonch: to yat I dispise  
 leygast of ony lorde: & leue on a wyche  
 and sig yat no flebe can: ne wylt as I leue  
 to ye poutt of souelbest: buth is his grace  
 for god ne godne wonder: ne no grace hap me uel  
 But praye a chayne had y chance: & my ches hele  
 myrth north ette arauy zell as a man ozth  
 for wyse: and yuel wyll: is enel to desy  
 way ne fukuy ne wete pyng: a swag: my pcollyng  
 pedydoyd dynde: dynded fro myn herte  
 perye schau ne schyft: but who schypp: my malle  
 zno radely of repentance: azo be wyth sojy  
 for y synner swerthly: and be seke god meye





So Wend Wy men to wey myghte  
 at harknes had yu none but harkeneyes to hye  
 yu gan gyle to bojolls hoyses: it wunw get maystays  
 and schoy wat a scheyf schold by mede no med is hofme  
 safely in sambye so safe to erse is go wysdum by  
 and fuls and fauel feyth forye safos bedynge  
 and yde for on hem & on reuer: yth fip by mede  
 Symony and synle seyde and oiborea  
 yat pster & pufos schuld plater seque  
 and y my silt synle and Symony my felell  
 Wol yde a pou seros & yth me anoutouo  
 and notayes and psones yat pminute oft  
 and pore pufos: and a peler i ye aydes  
 soupnos & soydeneos yat supsedias takey  
 on hem p loner techury: toyn up & ydy  
 on exectos and suth me couy soft afrey  
 and let cope ye tosayp he cost ethal he shall  
 and fetten ou vitayles: ou fornicatoo  
 and maken ou lyer a song cyt to lede al yor oy  
 re fablos and faytos yat ou her fete ynnuey  
 yun falso and fauel: ydy fory to gydey  
 and mede in ye myddis & al yor men afrey  
 I haue no toug to tel: ye tayl y ham fololbey  
 of many man me for mede is sake is sent aft  
 Gyle Wno forgoq to gydyn al yor pepil  
 for to Wio ham Wey: and Wip mede a byde  
 Soyneos saugh hem al: and said but litil  
 and pruked fory on padeno: & passed be all  
 and come to ye kynges couyt: & consueno told  
 and consueno to ye kyng: coupid hit afrey  
 roll be qst qd ye kyng: and y each myzt  
 fuls op fauel: or her falell they  
 Wolt be a Wyeke on yo Wyerches: & on her Weytes al  
 and do hem heng by ye halfe: & al y hem medyaney  
 Sihal ueney nun on yre molde maynpryse ye left

