

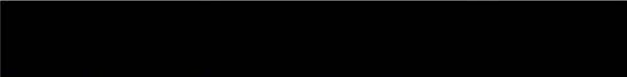
FROM CREATION TO DESECRATION: The Marginal Annotations
of *Piers Plowman* C Text HM 143

by


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B.F.A., University of Victoria, 1989

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Carl James Grindley

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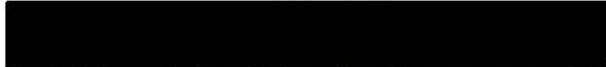
ABSTRACT

This is the first complete transcription of the San Marino, California, Huntington Library's manuscript HM 143's marginalia and represents the first complete edition of any *Piers Plowman* manuscript annotations. The annotations are listed according to where they appear in the text; the lineation used is that of Derek Pearsall's 1978 edition of the C-text. The transcription is designed to present the annotations in a way that is clear and accessible, and useful to both *Piers Plowman* and medieval studies scholars. The manuscript has been examined first-hand, and the annotations have been determined to be either contemporary or nearly contemporary with the text, which was created sometime between the close of the fourteenth century and middle of the fifteenth century.


This thesis includes introductory sections on some of the features of HM 143 and its creation, including a detailed study of its scribes, and the copying and correction process they employed. Also included in the introductory sections is a transcription of a previously undocumented and unpublished 4-line fragmentary C-text of *Piers Plowman*.

Following the transcription, HM 143's annotations are discussed and categorized in relation to similar annotations found in other medieval vernacular and Latin manuscripts. There is also a section discussing the manuscript's infrequent pen drawings. Following the discussion of the pen drawings, the manuscript's curious expunction of the names 'Piers' and 'Plowman' is discussed, and attributed to the actions of an early Protestant owner. The conclusion of this thesis discusses the concept of *ordinatio*, and provides a discussion of the annotations to a single passus of *Piers Plowman*, in order to demonstrate the annotator's reading of the passus, which shows an interest in Langland's use of allegory and dream vision.

Examiners:


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INTRODUCTION

Although many medieval manuscripts contain marginalia contemporary to their creation, very little research has been conducted on their content. In particular, it seems that the marginalia of *Piers Plowman* texts have been somewhat neglected.¹ Several *Piers Plowman* manuscripts, for example, show ample evidence of early reader response, but although incomplete transcriptions have been made, no complete edition of any one manuscript's marginalia has been published.

In order to rectify this situation, and to provide a resource for scholars interested in the early reception of *Piers Plowman*, I have transcribed the annotations from one of the more important *Piers Plowman* manuscripts, San Marino, California, Huntington Library's manuscript HM 143. HM 143 is an early copy of the third version, or the C-text, of *Piers Plowman*, and contains well over 200 annotations. Since the annotations appeared to be an extremely early addition to the manuscript—in the first section of this thesis, it will be argued they were written soon after manuscript correction—it was decided that not only the annotations, but the manuscript itself would have to be examined in some detail. The process of annotation can not be removed from the other aspects of HM 143's creation. For example, the correction

¹ Articles are indeed few and far between. For general discussions of annotations see: George Russell, "As They Read It": Some Notes on Early Responses to the C-Version of *Piers Plowman*," *Leeds Studies in English*, New Series XX, 1989; and Wendy Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anti-clericalism*, (Cambridge, 1989). For a more detailed discussion of a single manuscript see: Kathleen Scott, 'The Illustrations of *Piers Plowman* in Bodleian Library MS. Douce 104,' *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, Volume 4, 1990. Only one article offers a selection of transcribed marginalia: George Russell, in 'Some Early Responses to the C-Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Viator*, 1984. Professor Russell transcribed extracts from three *Piers Plowman* C-texts: Bodleian Library manuscript Douce 104, British Library manuscript Additional 35157, and Huntington Library manuscript HM 143.

There are slightly more resources available regarding the study of Chaucer manuscript annotations. For a list of articles see Susan Schibanoff's study 'The New Reader and Female Textuality in Two Early Commentaries on Chaucer,' *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Volume 10, 1988, 71. Recently, an edition of all annotations to *Troilus* has been published: see C. David Benson and Barry A. Windeatt, 'The Manuscript Glosses to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*,' *The Chaucer Review*, Volume 25, Number 1, 1990.

process seemed to be connected with the annotation process (as will be discussed in first section of this thesis, the corrections and the annotations were the work of the same scribe).

As far as a working methodology is concerned, HM 143 was examined, first from facsimile, then from microfilm, and then the manuscript itself was consulted. Information on its collation and ink overlays was assembled from a variety of sources,² and from first-hand observation. This resulting transcription was then itself analyzed with regard to the types and density of marginal comment. The basic types of annotation recognized in HM 143 were then compared with annotations from other medieval manuscripts, in the hopes that some types of annotation found in HM 143 would be found to exist elsewhere. This proved to be the case, and the annotations of HM 143 were further categorized to conform (as closely as possible) to other observed patterns of annotation in both Latin and other vernacular texts.

Following transcription and categorization of HM 143's annotations, it was decided that a more detailed reading from one particular part of the poem might aid in placing the annotations in context. In the concluding section of this thesis, the annotations which accompany Passus V were examined for overall consistency, and an attempt to reconstruct the interests of their author was made.

Within the body of this thesis, all quotations from *Piers Plowman* are transcribed directly from HM 143 because there were significant differences between the text in HM 143 and Professor Pearsall's edition (which is emended, on average, once every seven or so lines).

During the study of HM 143, several other features of its *Piers* text which were not related to its annotations were observed, and it was felt that these other features were important enough to be discussed at length. In particular, the four-line fragment of *Piers Plowman* on folio 108 is discussed in the first section

² In particular, C.W. Dutschke, *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, (Huntington, 1989) 195-7, and R.W. Chambers, *Piers Plowman: The Huntington Manuscript (HM 143) Reproduced in Photostat*, With an Introduction by R.W. Chambers and Technical Examination by R.B. Haselden and H.C. Schulz, (Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1936).

of this thesis, and the curious erasure of the names 'Piers' and 'plowman' is discussed in the second to last section.

The scope of this thesis, and the conclusions reached, are limited to HM 143. Since there is as yet no evidence of an authorial tradition of annotation in *Piers* manuscripts, (as there is for Gower and possibly Chaucer³) the annotations are best seen as their scribe's personal reaction to *Piers Plowman*. Although several other *Piers Plowman* manuscripts were examined in microfilm, no attempts to compare and contrast the various annotations, or to suggest that there were traditional annotation patterns connected to *Piers Plowman* were made. It is hoped, however, that such comparisons will be possible, and such traditions (if they exist) will be recognized, when all annotations from all *Piers Plowman* manuscripts are made available.

³ Schibanoff, 91.

HUNTINGTON LIBRARY MS HM 143

The Manuscript

San Marino, California's, Huntington Library came into possession of manuscript HM 143 following a 1924 sale at Sotheby's. HM 143 proved to contain a previously unknown copy of the C-text of the alliterative Middle English poem, *Piers Plowman*, and was the twenty-sixth such text to be found. It has since been designated by the siglum 'X' and has recently moved to the forefront of C-text studies, as the basis of Derek Pearsall's 1978 edition of the poem, which was the first modern edition of the C-text since Skeat's 1886 edition (of a manuscript that was later to become HM 137). Additionally, George Russell has indicated that HM 143 shall form the basis for the Athlone Press critical edition of the C-text. A partial description of HM 143 is as follows:⁴

Parchment (trimmed), ff. i (early modern paper, not foliated) + iii (contemporary parchment of which the first was a pastedown) + 108 + i (early modern paper); 253 x 189 (196-199 x 141) mm. 1-13⁸ 14⁴ (4 was pastedown); in quire 8 the inner bifolium has been reversed, transposing ff. 60 and 61. Catchwords, that on f. 64v underlined in red. Quire signatures in the center of first leaf recto in lead, in red ink, or in both; leaf signatures in Arabic numerals, in letters or in vertical or horizontal slashes. Many of the signatures are no longer visible in the manuscript, but may be seen in the 1936 photostat. 36 lines of verse, ruled in lead with double bounding lines; slash pricking visible in outer margins. Written in anglicana formata.

Opening initial, f. 1, 9-line, in stipled gold infilled with white-highlighted blue and pink vines and leaves on a gold ground; C-shape bar and foliage border. Competent 5-, 4- and 3-line blue initials with red flourishing; occasionally faces have been drawn into the loops of the flourishes (e.g. ff. 10v, 17v, 23, 87v) or within the letter (e.g. f. 10v). On f. 26, free-standing in the margin, a profile head of a bearded man, in the ink of the text. Alternating red and blue paragraph marks; rubrics, lemmata and Latin quotations underlined in red or brown. Running headlines (in the hand of the corrector?) irregularly in red or brown ink, or in the 2 juxtaposed across the opening. Corrector's marks usually

⁴ Dutschke, 195-7.

in the lower outer margin as 'cor.,' but on f. 27 as 'leg.' Frequent erasures throughout the text, particularly of the names 'peres' and 'plouhman,' possibly with the intention of rewriting them in red ink.

Bound, s. XVIII, in tan calf by Thomas Elliott, blind tooled in a panel pattern with a carnation at each corner of the panel....Stains from the turn-ins of a previous binding are visible on ff. i and 108; rust holes from 2 former clasps extend through the front flyleaves and several text leaves. Folios ii-iii verso (leaves 2 and 7 of a gathering of 8 leaves of a lost manuscript) with 20 stanzas of Chaucer's *Troilus*, England, s. XVth, 253 x 189 (210 x 70-85) mm. 5 7-line stanzas per page, with a blank line between stanzas. Ruled in lead. Written in an anglicana formata script with secretary features. Exaggerated ascenders on the top line, and pen flourishes on the descenders of the bottom line.

Written at the end of the fourteenth century in England, and localizable by its dialect to southwestern Worcestershire (Malvern Wells or Upton area). A fifteenth-century owner recopied the first 4 lines of the poem on f.108; another wrote on f.107v: 'ihesu ihesu ihesu for thyn holy name to be me ihesus.' 'Dan Jhon redbery,' s. XV/XVI, signed his name on f.108; another early owner, s.XVI or XVII, John Russell signs his name with a monogram flourish on f.i verso and f.107v. Belonged to the Sotheby family by the late seventeenth century.

The first item in HM 143 is a partial text of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, which begins on folio ii and ends on folio iii verso, and, according to Professor Dutschke, comprises leaves 2 and 7 of a gathering of 8 leaves of a lost manuscript⁵ (stanzas 11 to 20 and 61 to 70 of *Troilus*).⁶ This fragmentary *Troilus* is not in the same hand or ink as the manuscript's *Piers Plowman* C-text, but, judging from the appearance of John Russell's signature on both folio i verso and 107v, it was an early addition to HM 143, and was incorporated into the manuscript no later than the early 17th century. Since the *Troilus* fragment was obviously not an original feature of HM 143, it will not be discussed or commented on in any detail, and the implications of its presence will not be discussed in this thesis. The second item in HM 143 is a C-text of *Piers Plowman* which begins on folio 1 and ends on folio 106v. Folios 107 to 108v display contemporary lead rules, but, except for early ownership evidence, were left blank.

Individual hands, use of regional dialect, spelling conventions, ink overlays, and work

⁵ Dutschke, 195-7.

⁶ Chambers, 3.

methodologies indicates that HM 143 was created by more than one scribe, and was, most likely, the product of three or four scribes working more or less sequentially.

After the folios were provided with lead rules and double bounding lines the first scribe, for convenience hereafter referred to as scribe A, wrote the main text from start to finish. Writing in a light purple ink, scribe A used an extremely clear, well-spaced and even *bastarda anglicana media* with some documentary features⁷. Scribe A sporadically corrected his work by either scraping or crossing-out material. As near as can be determined—by ink and letter form identification, which will be discussed in some depth—scribe A never made interlinear corrections to his text.

After scribe A was finished copying the body of the poem, a second scribe, scribe R, rubricated the manuscript, adding the red underlining, red and blue paragraph marks, and those red running heads which occur in quires 5 and 7. On the basis of letter form identification—the two hands are identical—scribe R also was responsible for the brown running heads that occur everywhere else in the manuscript except in quires 8 and 9. Scribe R also made one correction on folio 50v, one punctuation mark on folio 57, and one annotation on folio 48. It is quite possible that scribe R also provided the manuscript's 3-, 4- and 5-line pen-flourished initials, many of which display rectilinear frames, foliate infills and rubricated embellishments. In any event, as evidenced on folio 48v, where an annotation is written over the flourishing on an initial, the initials must have been in place prior to the manuscript's annotation—at least in quire 6. Additionally, the rubrication process in general, as evidenced by corrections to rubricated passages on folio 37v of quire 5, and folio 46v of quire 6, was complete prior to secondary correction.

⁷ The terminology used is from Michelle Brown, *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts From Antiquity to 1600*, (Toronto, 1990), 80-1. Professor Dutschke identifies this script as *anglicana formata* with some secretary features. I believe, however, that Professor Brown's terminology provides a more precise description of the types of features seen in a secretary hand (such as angular 'points', clubbing of ascenders, and horns on certain letter forms, for example, 'a,' 'e,' 'g,' 'q,' and 'p'), and it may be seen that no such features are found in scribe A's hand.

The secondary corrections were the responsibility of a third scribe, scribe B, who worked in a purple ink which was noticeably darker than scribe A's ink. Scribe B was responsible for almost all of the manuscript's corrections. The majority of scribe B's corrections take the form of inter and extra-linear inserts, although, infrequently, scribe B scraped and replaced words or at times entire lines (for example, Prologue:204). Scribe B also touched up the text and certified the corrected pages with his own mark. It must be noted, however, that there is no internal evidence to suggest that scribes A and B worked in the same shop, or even in the same city or time. For example, scribe B's work never appears under any other ink layer. However, it is my opinion, unsubstantiated by direct evidence but supported by standard book-shop production practices, that HM 143's scribes did work as a team.

Scribe B's hand differs considerably from scribe A's, and can best be described as a documentary hand with some book hand features.⁸ In particular, scribe B used an angular 'w' with a left-leaning elongated central loop, while scribe A used a much less spacious character, quite rounded, and which leans to the right. Additionally, there are major differences between the letters 'h,' 'k,' 's,' and '3.' On the basis of these, and other, letter forms, and ink colour, it is easy to identify scribe B as being responsible for the manuscript's generous supply of annotations.⁹ Additionally, further evidence of the distinctness of scribes A and B is provided by their use of regional dialect. For example, scribe A, at times, seemed to favour the 'he' form for the third person feminine singular, whereas scribe B exclusively used the 'sche' form. The use of 'he,' according to M.L. Samuels¹⁰, indicates that scribe A used a dialect usually found in the south-west of England, whereas the use of 'sche' indicates that scribe B used a Midland's dialect.

It is also possible that scribes R and B were one and the same. Professor Dutschke suggests that

⁸ For a particularly cursive annotation, see folio 27v.

⁹ Please refer to Appendix 1 for a facsimile of scribal handwriting.

¹⁰ M.L. Samuels, 'Langland's Dialect,' *Medium Aevum*, Volume LIV, Number 2, 1985, 235,

the annotating/correcting scribe was responsible for the running heads, and from the meagre evidence displayed in the single red correction on folio 50v, the punctuation mark on folio 57 and the annotation on folio 48,¹¹ a case can be made that the two scribes were, in fact, the same person.

George Russell supports this postulate, and writes:¹²

[Scribe B] corrected a number of the scribe's errors; he added a simple *ordinatio* of the text; he supplied running titles and marginal notes; he attended to the rubrication and inserted guides for the rubricator.

Regardless of whether or not scribes R and B were the same person, and whether or not scribe R also provided the rubricated initials, it is clear that HM 143 is not an amateur production or a private anthology—the product of a single hand—like the Findern or Thornton manuscripts. Professor Russell agrees with this supposition, saying of HM 143: 'It is not a cheap manuscript; it is not a reader's self-copy; it has an evidently professional appearance.'¹³ Indeed, HM 143 displays a remarkably consistent production value, and although it is a relatively unassuming manuscript, free from elaborate illustration and illumination, HM 143 is not a utilitarian creation, nor does it display overt attention to all possible economies.

Shearle Furnish, in her study of manuscript HM 149 of Love's *The Mirror of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, was able to identify several trademarks of manuscript economy:¹⁴

In broad and general outline, two features of HM 149 bespeak the economy with which it was planned and produced. One is the systematic subordination of all decorative effects to

¹¹ The annotation, placed in the right-hand margin of the page, beside X:286-7, simply reads 'verso.' At first glance the hand looks different from scribe B's, but that could be attributable to the difference in writing implements used in rubrication and correction. The correction on folio 51 appears to be in scribe B's hand, but from only one example, it would be irresponsible to draw any absolute conclusions.

¹² George Russell, "'As They Read It,'" 179.

¹³ Russell, "'As They Read It,'" 179.

¹⁴ Shearle Furnish, 'The *Ordinatio* of Huntington Library, MS HM 149: An East Anglian Manuscript of Nicholas Love's *Mirroure*,' *Manuscripta*, Vol. 34, No.1, 62.

principles of utility: there is no significant decorative effect in the book which is not also functional. The second feature is the designer's attitude toward the use of parchment. Lines are ruled closely and filled entirely; holes, while not patched, are also not allowed to disrupt the copy for any more than the minimum necessary; and parchment within the copying space is never left blank even to enhance the decorative or useful functioning of capitals or incipits. No addenda or memoranda of types which appear in other copies of the *Mirror* appear in HM 149—not even a contents list. In its present state HM 149 does not have spacious margins for a medieval book. Even originally, HM 149 probably did not have spacious margins, because subsequent trimming has destroyed all evidence of original quire signatures, removed almost all sign of several of the boxed catchwords, and nicked many of the running titles and marginal glosses. If the original margins were larger than I am suggesting, trimming should have caused less damage than is now apparent. Finally, what must have been useable blank sheets at the end of the extant final quire have been neatly removed.

Professor Furnish also notes that HM 149 was re-ruled twice, to increase the number of lines per folio from 37 to 39, and then from 39 to 42, and suggests that the manuscript's many economies, coupled with its unique textual organization,¹⁵ indicates that it was created for lay devotion.

On the whole, HM 143 is entirely unlike HM 149. For example, HM 143 was provided with generous margins, which, even after trimming, and until quite recently,¹⁶ displayed evidence of the original signature marks. Also, HM 143's large rubricated initials take up varying amounts of room, in some cases up to five lines, displaying a certain disregard of direct economies of space. Additionally, HM 143's scribes provided the manuscript with less lines per page than the scribes of HM 149, and entirely dismissed the economy of material, by allowing several blank folios to remain in the manuscript—following the end of the text in the final quire. Of course, it could be argued that the blank folios were a result of poor scribal computation of total poem length—these final folios were most probably ruled at the same time as the rest of HM 143—which would indicate a line miscalculation of approximately 144 lines of text.

¹⁵ Furnish, 51.

¹⁶ Dutschke, 195-7.

Corrections

Clearly HM 143 was a thoroughly professional creation, one that Professor Russell calls the product of 'a shop or a scriptorium.'¹⁷ But regardless of its place of origin, HM 143 was the object of an involved, if not convoluted correction process, which contributed greatly to the manuscript's relative freedom from error. One of the most interesting facets of HM 143's quality control are its extensive corrections. Consider, for example, the chart below which details the overall density of manuscript corrections.

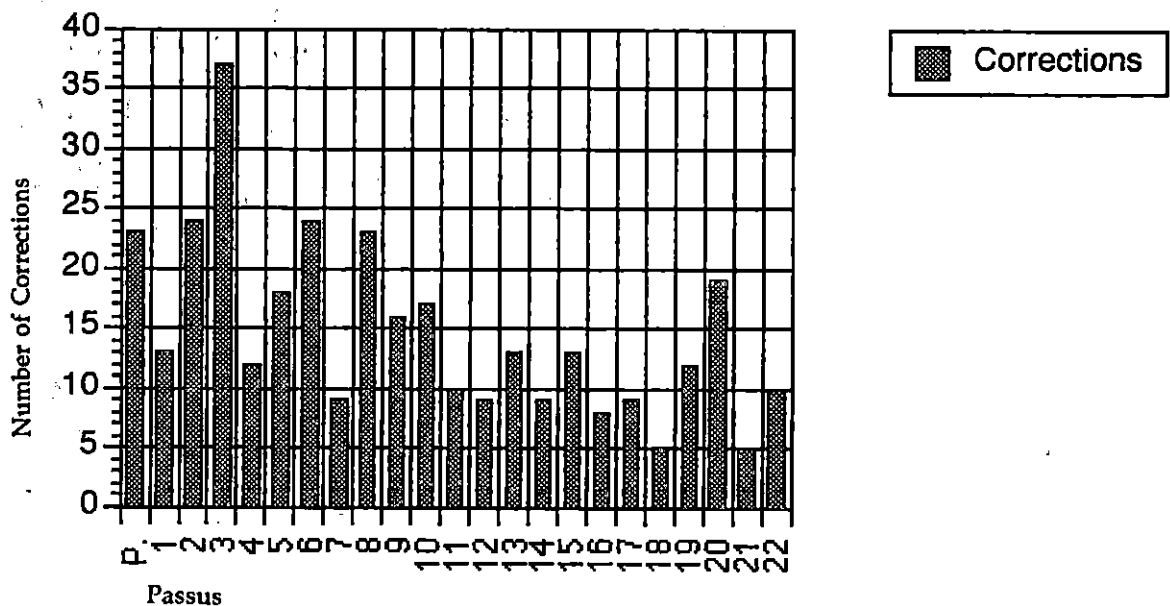


Figure 1.0 Total Corrections by Passus

From the chart, it can be ascertained that considerable correction activity occurred during the production of HM 143, with its two main scribes paying particular attention to Passus III. The extensive

¹⁷ Russell, "As They Read It," 178.

and somewhat anomalous number of corrections to Passus III can probably be attributed to the Passus' extreme length, nearly 500 lines, and Langland's sometimes confusing *Mede/Mercede* definition.

The corrections, of course, were not the responsibility of a single scribe, and, as outlined in the preceding section of this thesis, were the work of two individuals. There are a few basic differences between scribe A's and scribe B's work. Scribe B often inserted material, whereas scribe A either crossed out or erased erroneous passages. Using this information, it is possible to create a possible breakdown of scribal responsibility for manuscript correction.¹⁸

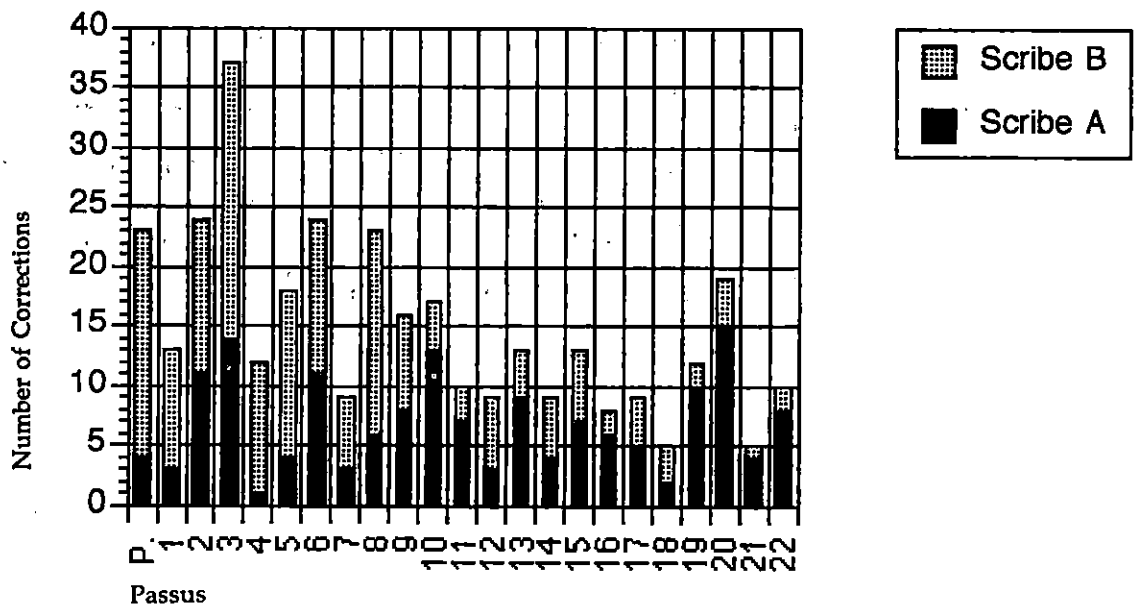


Figure 1.1 Total Corrections by Scribe and Passus

From figures 1.0 and 1.1, it may be thought that correction activity seen within this manuscript dropped off sharply following the *Visio* section of *Piers Plowman*. Of this apparent phenomenon,

¹⁸ For much of the evidence regarding ink colours and overlays in the manuscript's corrections, I am indebted to R.B. Haselden's and H.C. Schulz's microscopic and ultraviolet examination of the manuscript, to be found in the Chambers facsimile of HM 143.

Professor Russell writes that:¹⁹

The designated scribe was not the only near-contemporary reader of the poem represented in HM 143...He had a supervisor who reviewed his work and left evidence of his activity...But, for some reason, the corrector did not finish his task. His supervising activity perceptibly slows down as the poem nears its end, and the last folios bear a distinctly unfinished appearance, as being both written with apparent haste and lacking supervising attention. Why, we obviously cannot know.

The issue of correction density is probably far more complex and unknowable than Professor Russell has suggested. First of all, correction density in regard to the major divisions of *Piers* does seem to drop.²⁰ The Visio has an average of 20 corrections per passus, while the Vita only has 11. To break it down further, Dowel has an average of 11 corrections per passus, Dobet, 12, and Dobest, only 8. Since correction-per-passus does not take into consideration the relative length of each section of the poem, it is necessary to break down the data further. On a per-line basis, therefore, correction activity in the Visio occurs approximately once every 15 lines, while in the Vita, it occurs approximately only once every 31 lines. To break it down further, Dowel has one correction every 26 lines, Dobet, one every 31 lines, and Dobest, one every 58 lines. With this dramatic drop in correction activity, which is noticeable from both the perspective of poetic division and passus length, one would expect a corresponding decrease in the accuracy of the manuscript (as evidenced in minor mis-reading problems, overt spelling mistakes, and misplaced lines). However, this is not the case. Judging from Professor Pearsall's emendations to HM 143, the manuscript's overall accuracy²¹ (at least from a minor technical viewpoint) remains static. On average, Professor Pearsall made one emendation every eight lines in the Visio, one every six lines in

¹⁹ Russell, "As They Read It," 179.

²⁰ The following statistics are based on Professor Pearsall's line counts for the various passus. They have been rounded to the nearest integer. In view of these two considerations, their value is limited, and at best should be regarded as an indication of one possible interpretation of a describable phenomenon.

²¹ It is, of course, impossible to know the condition of scribe A's exemplar, so as modern scholars, we can judge 'accuracy' only from a limited perspective.

Dowel, one every seven lines in Dobet, and one every seven lines in Dobest.

The following graph illustrates the relationship between scribal correction density and Professor Pearsall's emendations, both considered from a correction-per-line basis.

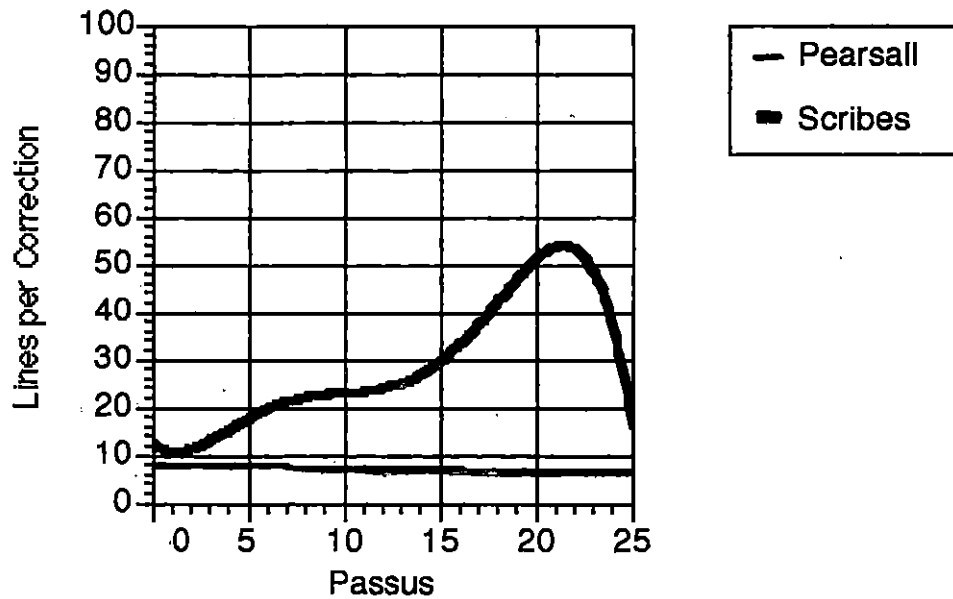


Figure 1.2 Correction and Emendation Activity

Although no statistic is entirely trustworthy, I would suggest that the seeming drop in correction activity in HM 143 is not due to a drop in scribal interest, but due in an increase in either scribe A's competency, or an increase in the base accuracy of scribe A's exemplar. The more likely of the two possible explanations, that of an increase in scribe A's competency, could be attributed to scribe A becoming more familiar with the hand, alliterative diction and regional dialect of his exemplar.

Regardless of the nearly unanswerable questions of manuscript correction density and completeness, it is clear that both scribes contributed greatly to HM 143's quality. Indeed, both scribes were responsible for important corrections to the manuscript, some of which display an understanding of the

text which goes beyond simple copying and correcting and into the more important realms of editorial and thematic consistency.

For example, consider the work of scribe A in correcting Prologue:138 (f2v l.20):

contre plede hit nocht *quod* consience / for ~~men of~~ holichirche sake²²

First of all, it is important to note that scribe A has not only indicated expunction by using expunction points beneath ‘men of’ but he has also struck out the text, which displays a certain attention to detail. Scribe A’s expunction of ‘men of’ can be viewed as either an editorial or a corrective emendation. If simply corrective, then scribe A miscopied the passage, then noticed his own error and changed the corresponding reading. Due to the lack of any ‘men of’ readings in nearby lines, simple dittography can be ruled out. In a way, this implies that scribe A’s copy manuscript was somehow defective—which is quite interesting, considering the uniformity of readings from the other i-family manuscripts of the C-text (including Additional 35157, which Professor Pearsall used to emend this line). The i-family manuscripts, and indeed most other C-text manuscripts—at least those with extant Prologues—agree with a ‘for holichurche sake’ reading. In any event, with scribe A’s alteration, the difference in content becomes quite startling, with the original reading delivering an entirely different message from its correction. Scribe A, I think, correctly assumed that the C-poet would sooner be discussing an allegorical figure, one which plays an important role in the poem, than the earthly, and to Langland, distrusted agents of that heavenly institution’s corporeal counterpart.

Scribe A’s work, of course, was not always of this calibre, and his assessor, scribe B, also

²² Professor Pearsall used Additional 35157’s reading for this line, which—if scribe A’s correction were taken into consideration—agrees with HM 143. Professor Pearsall’s text at Prologue:138 (page 36) reads: ‘Contreplede it nocht,’ quod Consience, ‘for holi chirche sake.’

contributed to the correction process. Consider Passus II:34-7 (f7v ll.10ff):

That what man me louyeth / and my wille foleweth
 Shal haue grace to good ynow and a good ende
 And what ^{man} mede loueth / my lyf y dar wedde
 He shal lese for here loue / a{nd} lippe of trewe charite

In this case, scribe B has either compared scribe A's work to the original, or determined by sense (both grammatical and through the recurring poetic construction) that the emendation 'man' is necessary. Although it is impossible to determine which scribe erased the 'nd' in line 37, it too shows an attention to the text which can only be called detailed.

Scribe B's work was not without fault. At times, his corrections get in the way of accurate readings. Take, for example, the unnecessary emendation of Passus I:3 (f4v ll.16ff) and compare it to Professor Pearsall's reading of the same passage:²³

HM 143

A louely lady of glorie in lynnene in clothed
 Cam down fro þe castel / and calde me by name

PEARSALL

A louely lady of lere in lynnene yclothed
 Cam down fro þe castel and calde me by name

In this situation, and judging from Langland's regular use of near standard alliterative meter, HM 143 is clearly in error.²⁴ It is even conceivable that scribe B's erasure and insertion could have destroyed and replaced the correct reading of this passage, (most certainly the one Professor Pearsall used, 'lere,' which, for example, is the reading found in all B-texts of *Piers*), and which would have fit in the space used by

²³ Pearsall, C-text, 42.

²⁴ For more information on Langland's meter, please refer to Hoyt Duggan's two articles, 'Alliterative Patterning as a Basis for Emendation in Middle English', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, volume 8, 1986, pp.73-107, and 'Notes toward a Theory of Langland's Meter', *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, volume 1, 1987, pp.41-71.

'glorie.' In a way, it is understandable that scribe B was willing to sacrifice Langland's alliteration in order to describe Holy Church as 'glorious' rather than 'beautiful.' And, interestingly, like scribe A's correction to Prologue: 138, this correction must be viewed as an editorial comment by scribe B, one which indirectly implies that scribe B might not have been familiar with some standard dream vision conventions (the misidentified and physically beautiful authority figure, as in *Pearl*, or the *Consolation of Philosophy*). However, this is the only example of scribe B making this type of error, so it is impossible to make any assumptions regarding his familiarity with the dream vision genre.

The Fragmentary Text

HM 143 was the last complete text of *Piers Plowman* to be discovered and this remarkable manuscript still reveals some surprises. One of the most astonishing and, quite interestingly, unnoticed features of HM 143, can be found on folio 108, where there appears to be a four-line section of the Prologue. The Huntington Library Catalogue explains the presence of this fragmentary text by postulating that, 'A fifteenth-century owner recopied the first four lines of the poem on f.108.'²⁵ Rather bafflingly, Professor Russell has also written on the topic:²⁶

To this [list of manuscripts], as a brief coda, we might add the four lines of *Piers Plowman* copied in a fifteenth-century hand on a blank folio at the front of HM 143. These are the opening lines of the B-version of the poem, and so we know that one of the early readers of HM 143 had access to a B-manuscript.

There are a few inaccuracies in Professor Russell's observation. Firstly, as noted, the fragment is located at the back of HM 143, on folio 108, not at the front of the manuscript as Professor Russell suggests. Secondly, as I will show, it is clearly not from the B-text tradition, but is a fragmentary C-text. In fact, I would suggest that there are enough differences between it and the main text of HM 143, that it must represent an incomplete quotation from a lost or yet-undiscovered manuscript, the sixth such fragment to come to light.²⁷

For convenience, I have transcribed both the fragment from folio 108 and the same four lines from the Prologue on folio 1.²⁸

²⁵ Dutschke, 197.

²⁶ Russell, "'As They Read It,'" 184.

²⁷ The other manuscripts and fragments, excluding the recently discovered Holloway fragment, are discussed in E. Talbot Donaldson's *The C-Text and its Poet*, (New Haven, 1966), 228-31.

²⁸ A facsimile of the fragmentary text may be found in Appendix 2.

Fragment

In a somer sesoun whan softe was þe sunne
 y schop me to a schrobbe as y a schep were
 in habite of an ermyte vnholy of werkes
 wente forth in þe world wondres

X

In a somur sesoun whan softe was þe sonne
 Y shope me into shroudes as y a shep were
 In abite as an heremite / vnholy of werkes
 Wente forth in þe world / wondres to here

Differences in abbreviation aside, there are several very important variants between the two texts. To start, there are minor spelling differences in 'sunne,' 'schop,' 'habite,' and 'ermyte.' Although these spelling differences seem to be unimportant textual variants, they indicate that the fragment and the main text have divergent linguistic/dialectical heritages.

Secondly, the sense of the fragment's second line is entirely different from that of the main text. After all, 'schrobbe' is not a spelling variant of 'shroudes,' but is, according to the *Middle English Dictionary*, a distinct word defined as being: 'A low-growing bush, shrub; pl. shrubs, bushes; also, shrubland [quot. c1400(?a1387)].'²⁹ The same may be said of 'schep,' which is usually defined as 'sheep,' as compared with 'shap,' which is usually defined as 'shepherd.' The fragment, therefore, may be paraphrased to mean, 'I moved to a bush as if I were a sheep,' whereas the main text clearly reads, 'I dressed in robes as if I were a shepherd.'

Thirdly, there are major grammatical differences between the main text and the fragment in line 3. The 'of an' construction differs considerably from the main text's 'as an' construction, and implies that the speaker *is* a hermit, rather than only appears to be one.

Perhaps the most powerful argument for the fragment's independent textual existence rests on its genetic resemblance to certain members of the p-group of *Piers Plowman* C-text manuscripts.³⁰ In

²⁹ *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Sherman M. Kuhn et al. (Ann Arbor, 1954-), 790.

³⁰ The fragment, with its 'wente forth' construction, is clearly not a member of the major A- or B-texts, which, without fail, use 'wente wide' in line 4.

particular, the reading 'schrobbe' in line 2 is attested in manuscripts B, E, F, M, P, and S.³¹ Of these manuscripts, B, E, M, and P use 'shrobbis,' while F and S use 'schrubbes.' Additionally, the 'of an' construction in line 3 is shared with manuscript M.³²

As noted earlier, the fragment is quite clearly the work of a later but nearly contemporary hand. The hand clearly differs from both the main text and the annotations, and, if one can trust ink colours, is most probably the work of Dan Jhon redbery, (hereafter John Redbery) who signed his name above the fragment. Redbery's religious background—the Dan in his signature, a variation of Dom, indicates that he was a priest—might have accounted for his exposure to additional manuscripts of the C-text.³³

Unfortunately, preliminary efforts to identify Redbery have been unsuccessful. Redbery was not and is not a common name in England, and does not appear in any of the standard biographical registries or reference works on genealogy. The search is additionally constrained by the vast number of ordanants named 'John,' which, according to preliminary studies,³⁴ accounted for approximately 30% of clerical names in Redbery's time period.³⁵ Additionally, Redbery's name does not appear in the records of Oxford or Cambridge³⁶.

³¹ B = Bodleian Library, Bodley 814; E = Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 656; F = Cambridge University Library, Ff 5 35; M = British Library, Cotton Vespasian B XVI; P = Huntington Library, HM 137; S = Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 293.

³² Time and space, unfortunately, do not permit a detailed and proper examination of the various C-texts, which would, one presumes, help identify the exact genetic relationship between this fragment and the p-group of manuscripts.

³³ Clerical ownership of *Piers Plowman* manuscripts has been documented by Robert A. Wood in his article, 'A Fourteenth-Century London Owner of *Piers Plowman*,' *Medium Aevum*, Volume LIII, Number 1, 1984.

³⁴ Virginia Davis, 'Medieval Clergy Database,' *History and Computing*, Volume 2, Number 2, 1990, 75-87.

³⁵ Judging from his hand, Redbery must have owned HM 143 quite early in its history—between 1400 and 1500. There is the distinct possibility that Redbery was not only the manuscript's first owner, but its patron.

³⁶ The standard published records of degrees awarded at Oxford and Cambridge were consulted.

Since it is clear that the fragment is indeed from another manuscript, and was, most likely, the work of John Redbery, the question must be asked: why? Professor Russell³⁷ asks the same question:³⁸

One wonders why he wrote out the lines. Simply as a pen trial? To register a variant form known to him? Unfortunately we have no way of knowing. What we do know is that he made no attempt to harmonize his B-version with the C-text of HM 143. And this observation serves to open the question of how engaged with the poem and how aware of the issues were the early readers of the poem.

Although both Professors Dutschke and Russell postulate that the fragment might have been a simple pen-test, I believe that its somewhat formal presentation argues against that scenario. For example, the fragment does not occur on a pastedown or on a flyleaf, but on an unused folio which is part of the main text—the second to last folio of quire 14, on the recto—with adequate, if not generous, margins. Redbery very carefully wrote down the four lines within the already-ruled textual boundaries of the blank folio (the folio was blank, not due to omission of material, but as previously mentioned was left blank due to a scribal miscalculation of passus length). Redbery also used an elaborate capital for the first letter of ‘in.’

As Professor Russell noted, one possible explanation of the fragment’s presence would be that Redbery wished to preserve a reading from an variant form of *Piers*. I agree with this alternate reading hypothesis, and suggest that Redbery’s eagerness to preserve an alternate reading indicates that he had great respect not only for the poem, but—as evidenced by the the vast differences between the main text’s and the fragment’s second and third lines—also for its textual integrity.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that this fragment will ever be of any use to scholars, as it is

³⁷ Professor Russell operates under the mistaken assumption that the fragment is from a B-text, which it clearly is not.

³⁸ Russell, “‘As They Read It,’” 184.

extremely brief and witnesses what is now considered to an 'inferior group'³⁹ of manuscripts. The only importance of this fragment rests in its existence as yet another witness to the *Piers Plowman* textual heritage.

³⁹ Chambers, 7.

THE ANNOTATIONS OF HM 143

A Note on the Text

What follows is a complete transcription of HM 143's marginalia. The text has been transcribed from the Chambers facsimile of the manuscript, and checked against both a microfilm⁴⁰ and the manuscript itself. The folio numbering used is based on the Huntington Library's collation by R.W. Chambers.⁴¹ The passus and line numbering used is based on Derek Pearsall's 1978 edition of the C text⁴², which, according to Professor Pearsall's introduction, conforms somewhat to the forthcoming Athlone Press edition by Professor Russell.⁴³ Without exception the spelling and capitalization of the manuscript has been reproduced. The distinctions between u and v, and i and j have been preserved. No emendations have been made except where the manuscript has been damaged and there is little doubt as to the original content.⁴⁴ Although the correcting/annotating scribe did not use punctuation in the marginalia, his system of brackets and underlines have been preserved as closely as possible. English and Latin words split by lineation have been silently restored. All expanded abbreviations of English words have been printed in italics. Terminal hooks on double ls and other final consonants have been presented as '~'. Because of their stable orthography, Latin words have been expanded silently.

⁴⁰ *Piers Plowman: The Huntington Manuscript (HM143) Master Negative Microfilm*. (Huntington Library, 1975).

⁴¹ Chambers, 1-3.

⁴² Pearsall, C-text, 11.

⁴³ George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, *Piers Plowman: The B Version. Will's Visions of Piers Plowman, Do-Well, Do-Better and Do-Best*, (University of London, Athlone Press, 1975), 78.

⁴⁴ In the case of the periodic erasures of the various forms of the name 'Piers Plowman', I am deeply indebted to the work of R. B. Haselden and H.C. Schulz in recovering readings for the defaced sections.

Apparatus

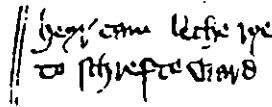
The format followed for the transcription closely adheres to that proposed by M.B. Parkes⁴⁵, from whom I have adopted the following conventions:

□ enclose words and letters which have been deleted by the scribe by means of crossing out, erasure or expunctuation.

{ } enclose letters which have been supplied in the transcription where the manuscript is deficient through damage, or where letters have been hidden by the binding.

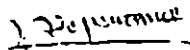
() enclose brief descriptions of major manuscript illustrations, or my comments.

|| indicates the presence of double virgules, appearing in the manuscript as:



|| *beginning of the
to the first of the*

┌_ indicates the presence of a combination bracket and underline, appearing in the manuscript as:



┌_ *the first of the*

⁴⁵ M.B. Parkes, *English Cursive Hands 1250-1500* (Berkeley, 1980), xxviii-xxx.

PrologueFolio Line # Content

1v	51	hermytis wente to walsyngham
1v	56	hyer preched frerys
2	81	hyer parsones & parische prestes playned to þe bischop
2	95	Concyence acusede prelates
2v	139	þe commune & kynde wit ordayned a plow
3	164	notate men of lawe
3	169	hyer made ratonys a parlement
3v	196	hyer spekyth a mous of renown

Passus IFolio Line # Content

4v	27	lo how loot lay be his dou3tres
5	69	hyer askyd wille who was þat woman þat spak to hym
5v	112	lo fend is fille for pride
6	129	loke be neþe for iii vers ben mys set
6	132	war
6	145	notate þat loue is plante of pes

Passus I continuedFolio Line # Content

6v	175	notate 3e ryche
6v	187	notate hic vnkynde prestes

Passus IIFolio Line # Content

7	5	heyre prayde will he moste fals knawe
7	9	_ Mede
7	9	(pointing hand)
7v	30	_ holicherche
7v	55	be hold þe houshold of mede
8	78	the feffement a tuxe mede & falsnesse
8v	109	witnessis of þe feffement afayreþeþ
8v	116	hyer teologi chidde euile & symonye
9v	178	Red hyer a blissed companye per contrarium
10	220	for drede falsnesse fley3 to þe freris
10v	239	3it freris fette hom lyere wyt hem to dwelle

Passus IIIFolio Line # Content

10v	9	hyere was mede conforted
11	26	notate 3e lewed auanced
11	38	a confessour as a frere conforted mede & sayde as 3e may rede
11v	77	hyer prayde mede for veteylers & opere mo to þe mair
12	108	nota
12v	149	hyer was concience cald to haue weddid mede
13	189	I_ notate prestes gurles
13v	215	hyere muornede mede for concience acusede here
14v	283	hyere holdeth þe kyng wyt mede
15	311	I_ notate presbiteri
16v	409	Regum
16v	435	he pat sayth trewpe schal be schent
17	454	lo how iewe schull conuerte for ioye
17	476	I_ prophetia petri

Passus IVFolio Line # Content

18	19	Il hyer rayson bad sadele his hors <i>pat</i> hyzte suffre
19	108	Il lo what resoun sayde
19v	148	Il lo mede bad men of lawe stoppe resoun
20	160	Il hyere murned mede for sche was clepid hore

Passus VFolio Line # Content

20v	8	Il hyer concience & raysoun a ratyd wille for his lollynge
21	35	Il hyer wille answerid to rayson
22	104	Il hyer wente wille to churche & ful azen a sclepe
22	115	Il hyer raysoun <i>prechede</i>
22v	146	l_ notate Religiosi
22v	165	prophetia petri
22v	168	(crown)

Passus VIFolio Line # Content

23v	14	Il <i>pride</i> scryueþ hym hyere
24	61	Il hyer goþ Envye to scryfte
24v	91	l_ Repentance
24v	105	Il wrathe goth to schryfte
25	118	Il freris ben wrothe
25v	145	l_ notate wyues
25v	145	Il hyer was letise at stile y schent for sche tok halibred to rathe
25v	164	l_ Repentance
25v	170	Il hyer cam lecherye to schrefte ward
26	196	Il hyere cam couetyse to schrefte ward
26	196	(male face)
26v	233	{l_r}ose þe regrater
27	254	Il l_ notate diuites
27	284	leger
27v	309	l_ walsche man
27v	316	Il Robert ryfflere

Passus VI continuedFolio Line # Content

28	350	Glotonyze goþ to schryfte
29	412	Glotow; cowede a caudel in clementis lappe

Passus VIIFolio Line # Content

29	1	schouthe cam to schryfte
30	30	notate lewede prestes
32	157	hyer askyd þe puple a palmere after treupe
33v	262	wrathe naȝt

Passus VIIIFolio Line # Content

34	6	hyer bad [pyers] ladies & oþer wymmen worche
34v	25	hyer [pyers] ȝif knyȝtes leue to hunte & haueke & kepe hym & hise
35	79	loke hyer what [pers] wyf hyȝte & his sone & his doȝter
35v	96	hyer makyþ [pers] his testament

Passus VIII continuedFolio Line # Content

36	136	Il hyere <i>pryde</i> faytours for [pers]
36	151	Il hyer wastour chydde [pers]
36	157	Il hyer playned [pers] to pe knyzt
36v	171	Il hyer <i>hunger</i> fazt wyt pe wastour & wyt pe bretoner
37	206	Il hyer [pers] bad <i>hunger</i> go azen
39	349	prophecia

Pass IXFolio Line # Content

40v	92	Il coterelis feste
40v	106	Il Lunatyk lollares
41	140	Il <i>propure</i> lollares
41v	169	Il byhold hyer of lollaren children
42	203	Il notate 3e lewede ermytes
42v	246	Il hyere mette wille wyt lollaer to pe mete ward

Passus IX ContinuedFolio Line # Content

43	262	└ notate episcopi
43	282	┌ hyer a prest askyd persis bull to rede
43v	305	┌ a sample of swenenys
44	335	┌ notate de indulgemces & pardones & trional~

Passus XFolio Line # Content

44	5	┌ hyer wille so3te dowel & mete wyt ii freris
44v	17	┌ lo what a frere sayde of dowel
44v	30	┌ nota how pe ry3twise falleþ vii sypis in pe day & 3if standith safly
45	56	┌ hyere departid will & pe freris
45	70	┌ hyer wille wyt þo3t
46	122	└ hyere spekyþ wit
46v	164	└ notate hic aliqui
48	286	verso

Passus XIFolio Line # Content

48v	1	wittes wyf chidde wit for he sche wed so muche un studied
49	28	harlottes are sonnest holpe
49v	52	hyer he tell~ of <i>preching</i> e at paulis
49v	71	tobi ta ³ te his sone dele
50	86	_ studie
50	96	_ scrypture
50	105	Where clergie dwellith
50	114	lettygge to come to clergie
50v	122	sapience
50v	150	_ austyn
51	167	hyere fortune raueschid will & schewed <i>hym</i> a myroure <i>pat</i> hy ³ te myddy ³ gerd
52	239	hyer hard sentence for techeres 3if <i>pay</i> leue no ³ t wel
52	249	_ Culorum
53	312	hyer 3ougthe sette at no ³ t al pis

Passus XIIFolio Line # Content

53v	18	l_ notate hic freris
54v	73	ll hyer cam a trogian & sayde baw for bokes
54v	97	ll notate hyer how 3e schull make festes

Passus XIIIFolio Line # Content

58v	99	ll where of seruen tithes <i>pat prestes</i> han
58v	124	l_ beth war bischoppus
59	182	l_ Raysoun
59	165	Raysoun
59v	182	l_ Question
59v	193	l_ Responcio
61	212	ll hyer caw3te will colour
61	217	l_ ymaginatyf

Passus XIV

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line #</u>	<u>Content</u>
60	28	Grace wyt oute grace is no3t
60v	72	_ astronomy3e
60v	89	Frer
62v	129	_ notate theuis
63	166	_ ymagenynge
63v	202	_ ymagytyf

Passus XV

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line #</u>	<u>Content</u>
63v	3	hyer 3e may se schortly rehersed þe visionis to foresayd
64	30	_ notate fratres
65	77	frer
65	103	frer
66v	183	hyer wente consience & pacience
66v	194	actiua vita pers plowmanis prentys

Passus XVIFolio Line # Content

68v	9	notate 3e ryche men
69v	104	nota
69v	107	l_ notate bene
70	117	hyere 3e may se it is god to be pouere
70v	156	what is <i>liberum arbitrium</i>
71v	229	lo how frers prechen fallas & cetera
71v	233	l_ nota bene
72	242	notate de wikkyde techeres
72	253	l_ notate image
72v	273	beth war of pis lered & lewed
72v	284	l_ Charyte
73v	353	Charyte was wyth freres

Passus XVIIFolio Line # Content

74v	35	l_ notate relegiosi
74v	41	l_ Thobi
74v	52	l_Jop contra relegiosi
75	58	ll takep kepe hyer of lewed peple tak clerkes to whom 3e schull first do
76	142	ll notate bene de amor
76v	165	l_ notate de Macometh
76v	188	ll be hold se lo what prelates scholde do
77	200	ll pe croys is coueytyd
77	212	l_ notate hic aliqui
77	254	ll i Credo in deum patrem

Passus XVIIIFolio Line # Content

78v	1	ll <i>liberum arbitrium</i>
80v	133	l_ Maria
80v	152	Ihesu crist
81	166	l_ Judas

Passus XVIII continued

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line #</u>	<u>Content</u>
81	183	_ Abraham
81v	191	_ Of the trinite
82v	274	_ Fayth

Passus XIX

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line #</u>	<u>Content</u>
82v	1	_ spes
83	13	_ mandata dei
83	21	_ fayth
83v	47	_ samaritanus
84	81	_ samarita
84	94	A question to the samaritan
84v	109	_ Of pe trinite
85v	175	_ trinite
86	226	_ notate
86v	269	_ veniance

Passus XIX continuedFolio Line # Content

86v	274	nota
87	294	_ notate hic bene

Passus XXFolio Line # Content

87v	13	_ fayth
88	21	_ Ihesu crist
88	35	_ Pilatus
88v	81	_ longys
89	96	_ fayth reproued iewes
89	107	nota
89	112	_ Daniel
89	119	_ Mercy
89v	123	_ truthe
89v	132	_ Maria concepta
89v	152	_ Jop

Passus XX ContinuedFolio Line # Content

90	168	_ Ryhtwisenesse
90	171	_ pes clothed in <i>patienc{e}</i>
90	184	nota
90v	207	_ pees
91	240	_ boek
91v	274	{not}a Satan
91v	295	_ lucefer
92	313	_ notate bene
93	370	_ lord
93	397	nota
93v	409	_ Crist
94	441	_ nota hic bene

Passus XXIFolio Line # Content

94v	4	ll hyer is a newe metel~ how he say pers al bloody
94v	19	Ihesu crist
95v	83	war
97v	219	_ Antecrist
98	261	ll hyer bygynn3 {pers plow}
98	265	Iohames

Passus XXIIFolio Line # Content

101v	4	ll hyere he mette wyt nede
106	340	ll a general name for a frere

UNDERSTANDING THE ANNOTATIONS

Introduction

There are a total of 217 marginal comments in HM 143, of these, nine are illustrations, and 208 are written comments. The 208 written comments appear with the frequency indicated in the chart below:

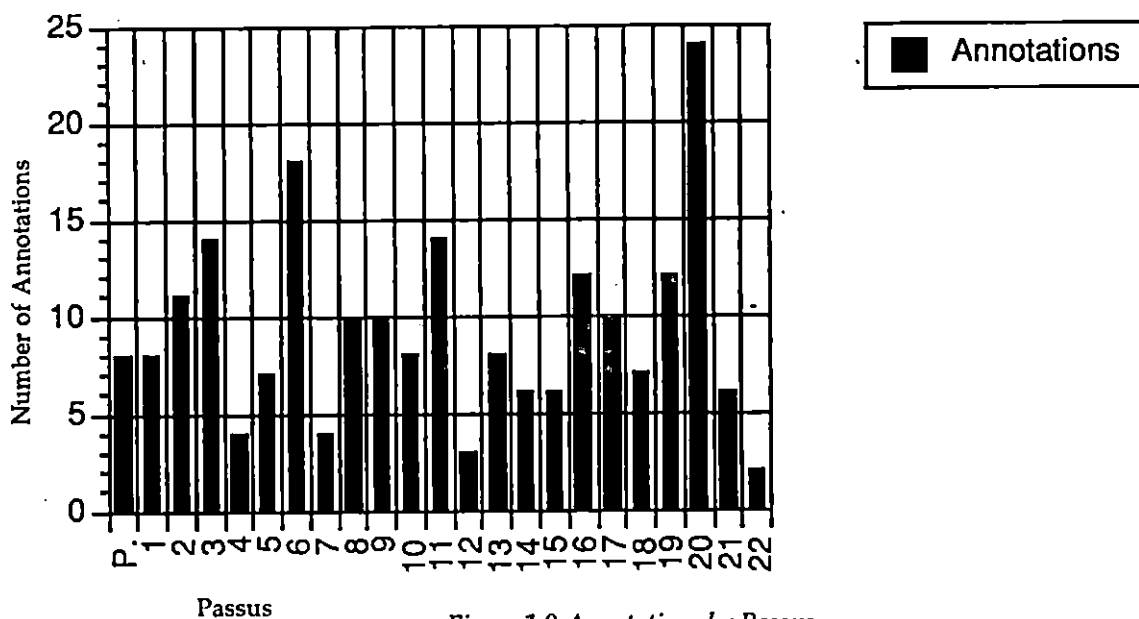


Figure 1.0 Annotations by Passus

When the annotations are compared and contrasted against the text they accompany, it becomes evident that some form of thematic organization—that is, a definable methodology of order, one which implies a coherent relationship of annotation to text (from both a stylistic and mechanical point of view)—is not only possible, but must have been an intentional aspect of HM 143's construction.

While it is acknowledged that every modern reader would interpret the content of these annotations

differently, some results, both from quantifiable and associative data, point toward a categoric structure for marginal comment. In particular, there appear to be several different types of annotation, which were used according to the changing requirements of the text.

As near as can be determined, the majority of these categories exist in other manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* in particular, and in the annotations to other medieval manuscripts in general. Unfortunately, there has been very little research conducted on marginal annotation, and nothing has been written on the topic of establishing a standard technique of categorizing manuscript glosses.

I have identified five basic types of annotation in HM 143: the Reading Aid annotation; the Summation annotation; the Comment annotation; the Address annotation; and the Illustration. With the exclusion of Illustrations, the four verbal annotation types appear in approximately equal numbers throughout the text. In order to preserve space and reduce later confusion, in this introductory section, I have deliberately refrained from providing a definition of these annotation types, a list the manuscripts—other than HM 143—in which they may be found, and the academic traditions from which they probably arose.

Reading Aid Annotations

The first type of annotation, and perhaps the easiest to describe, is the Reading Aid annotation. Out of the 208 non-illustrative marginal entries in HM 143, close to 25% can be placed within this category, which may be defined as encompassing annotations that identify sources, label the appearances of the poem's various *dramatis personae*, and delineate formal arguments. Like all other annotations, Reading Aids are in the annotator's dark ink and careful hand, but unlike other types of marginalia, which are marked with skeleton paragraph marks, Reading Aids are accompanied by a combination underline and single bracket (see note on Apparatus, page 24, for example). They appear, quite randomly, in either the left-hand or right-hand margin of the manuscript, seemingly according to available margin space and proximity to glossed subject material. Although George Russell⁴⁶ argues that the annotator used the left-hand margin for the identification of the poem's *personae* and devices, statistics show that of the 52 Reading Aid annotations, 28 occur in the left-hand margin and 24 occur in the right-hand margin. I would attribute the inaccuracy of Professor Russell's observation to his chosen sample, which was taken from the annotations found in Passus XI-XV, where Reading Aid annotations do occur more frequently in the left-hand margin.

The first sub-type of Reading Aid annotation, is the Authority annotation, that is, an annotation in either Middle English or Latin that provides simple source identification. This sub-type holds some kinship with the type of annotation found in other vernacular texts, like Chaucer's the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, and in more formal Latin texts, such as Peter Lombard's commentaries on the scriptures. The annotations to Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue* were described by Manly and Rickert as the work of 'an

⁴⁶ Russell, 'Some Early Responses,' 277.

intelligent person who was certainly not Chaucer.⁴⁷ According to Susan Schibanoff⁴⁸, these annotations take three basic forms: they cite the title of an analogue or source; quote the analogue or source without providing any indication of title; or provide both the title and text of an analogue or source. Graham Caie⁴⁹ suggests that these annotations were designed to temper and control interpretation of the Wife's false logic, while Professor Pearsall⁵⁰ argues that they were simply citations of well-known authorities. The debate on the glosses to the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* continues and grows more complex, with Professor Schibanoff arguing that:⁵¹

More often, however, the glosses on *The Canterbury Tales* do not offer us such straightforward commentary, and as modern readers we find ourselves in the ironic position of having to gloss the glosses, that is, of having to explicate their meaning or significance.

To return to HM 143, the Authority sub-type of Reading Aid annotation would lend support to Professor Pearsall's hypothesis, as they simply identify Langland's source material and influences, and refrain not only from drawing comparisons between the text and the source, but also from directly identifying specific passages in, and in some cases works of, the quoted authority. However, it can also be argued that a form of this sub-type of annotation conforms to the type of annotation seen in the Latin commentaries of Peter Lombard on the Psalter and the epistles of St Paul, as described by M.B. Parkes:⁵²

⁴⁷ John Matthews Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, (Chicago, 1940), I, 150.

⁴⁸ Schibanoff, 73.

⁴⁹ Graham Caie, 'The Significance of the Early Chaucer Manuscript Glosses (with Special Reference to the Wife of Bath's Prologue)', *Chaucer Review*, 10 (1975-6), 350-360.

⁵⁰ Derek Pearsall, 'Gower's Latin in the *Confessio Amantis*', *Latin & Vernacular*, ed. by A. J. Minnis, (D.S. Brewer, 1991), 13-15.

⁵¹ Schibanoff, 72.

⁵² M.B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to R.W. Hart*, ed. J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson, (Oxford, 1976), 116-7.

In the commentary itself the *lemmata* were underlined in red. Each of the *auctores* quoted in the commentary was identified by name in the margin, again in red, and the extent of the quotation was also marked. As the final refinement each of the *auctores* was given a symbol consisting of dots or lines and dots which was placed both against the name in the margin, and against the beginning of the *auctoritas* or quotation in the body of the commentary.

Although the HM 143 Authority annotations are nowhere near as semiotically elaborate as the ones in the Peter Lombard manuscript (omitting, for example the dots or lines in the margin near the quoted material), neither are they complete citations like the Chaucer annotations. Consider, for example, the following annotation, in Passus III:409 (f16v ll.1ff), which is typical of this sub-type:

Regum	Ac ho so rat of <u>regum</u> / rede me may of mede how he absoloum / to hanyngre brouhte And seche for sauel / saued akying fo' mede Agaynes godes comandement / god tok such a vengeannce That saul for þat synne / and his sone deyde And 3af the kyndom to his knaue / þat kept shep and lambren As me ret in <i>regum</i> after Ruth of Kynges
-------	--

In this instance, the importance of *Regum* is further indicated by an elaborate capital 'R,' which agrees with the capitals used in the main text's reference to 'Ruth' and 'Kynges.' The text, from 406-431, summarizes, in particular, 2 Kings 14-18, and, in general, the first book of Kings.

Another example of the Authority sub-type of Reading Aid annotation can be found in Passus XI:150 (f50v ll.30ff):

) <u>Austyn</u>	Austyn þe olde herof made bokes Ho was his autor and hym of god tauhte Patriarkes and prophetes / apostles and angelis And þe trewe trinite / to Austyn apperede
-----------------	---

As Professor Pearsall points out in a footnote to this section,⁵³ Langland did not seem to have in mind any particular quote from St Augustine's writings, but this lack of direct context did not have any

⁵³ Pearsall, C-text, 200.

impact on scribe B, whose annotations never identify particular passages, but merely serve to flag the presence of individual authorities.

The second sub-type of Reading Aid annotation, the Personae sub-type, only serves to identify the poem's various characters. This sort of annotation is very common in Middle English poetry, and, for example, comprises the majority of the annotations to Chaucer's *Troilus*.⁵⁴ In *Piers Plowman*, a typical example of the Personae annotation can be found in Passus VI:91 (f24v ll.20ff):

Repentance ¶ 3us redily *quod* repentaunce / and thow be ryht sory
For thy synnes souereynly / and biseke god of mercy

Here, although it is spelled differently, Repentance's name has simply been pulled from the main text, with the annotation directly beside its immediate context. Although this is not Repentance's first speech in Passus VI, it is his first appearance following the confession of Envy.

Another example can be found in Passus II:9 (f7 ll.20ff):

Y lokede vpon my luft half / as þe lady me tauhte
and a womman as hit were / wonderly yclothed Mede

This annotation is interesting because, unlike the previous example, the character's name is not mentioned in the text for another 10 lines, which shows that scribe B either knew the poem's content, or had read the entire passage before commencing the annotations. I would suggest that scribe B probably read each quire—or at least each passus—before annotation. The previously mentioned 'Regum' annotation partially attests to this supposition, for, although scribe B would have known the material came from Kings, the name 'Regum' occurs on the folio preceding the annotation. Of course, it is quite possible that scribe B was a bit of a *Piers* expert. Perhaps he was very familiar with the poem, remembered it well, and was able to annotate as he read. Perhaps, even, scribe B made notes prior to annotating *Piers*. There is, however, no

⁵⁴ David C. Benson and Barry A. Windeatt, 'The Manuscript Glosses to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*,' *The Chaucer Review*, Volume 25, Number 1, 1990.

evidence to support this theory.

The third sub-type of Reading Aid annotation, which outlines grammatical or logical processes, is quite rare in this manuscript, occurring only three times in the text. Interestingly, this type of Reading Aid annotation is the most common type in Skeat's base C-text, HM 137. Although the *ordinatio* of HM 137 is unstudied, a cursory study of the manuscript suggests that a great many of its annotations easily fit into this category. Like the first sub-type of Reading Aid annotation, its description fits in with M.B. Parkes' comments on Peter Lombard's marginal annotations to the *Sentences*:⁵⁵

Rubrics at the beginning of each chapter define the topic under discussion, but in this early copy there are also other rubrics placed in the margin at certain points, sub-headings like 'prima causa', 'secunda', 'tercia', 'obiectio', 'responsio', which serve to identify stages in the argument within the chapter.

The first example of this sort of annotation in HM 143 occurs in Passus XI:249 (f52 ll.28ff):

For archa noe nymeth hede / ys no more to mene
 Bote holy churche her borw / to alle þat ben y blessed
 The culorum of this clause / curatores is to mene
 That carpentares vnder Crist / holy kirke to make
 For lewed folk goddes foles / and his fre bestes

)} Culorum

The two other examples of this sub-type can be found in Passus XIII, the first at 182 (f59v ll.14ff):

)} Question Thenne y resonede resoun / and ryht til hym y sayde
 Y haue wonder in my wit / so wys as thow art holden
 Wherefore and why / as wyde as thow regneste
 That thow ne reuledest rather renkes then other bestes

the second at 193 (f59v ll.25ff):

)} Responcio And resoun aresonnede me / and sayde rethe þe neuere
 Why y soffre or nat soffre certes he sayde
 Vch a segge for hym sulue salamon vs techeth
 } de re que te non molestat noli te certare

⁵⁵ Parkes, 116-7.

Unlike the first example, these two final Reading Aid annotations are not direct textual gleanings, but instead are inferred from the text, and indicate a scholastic progression. Perhaps scribe B's attention was triggered by the parallels in language and verse construction between line 182 and 193, or perhaps scribe B was trained in scholastic methodologies. In any event, these annotations are of an interpretive nature, showing scribe B making a deliberate attempt to delineate the process of argument from a scholarly perspective. Although the text presented scribe B with other opportunities to highlight logical progressions, such as in Will's 'contra' reply to the friars in Passus X:20, there are no other examples of this type of annotation. This, perhaps, could be due to scribe B preferring to gloss scholastic passages which themselves are not part of ironic dialogue, but which indicate direct moral lessons.

In terms of sheer numbers, Reading Aid annotations of all three types can be found in the following Passus:

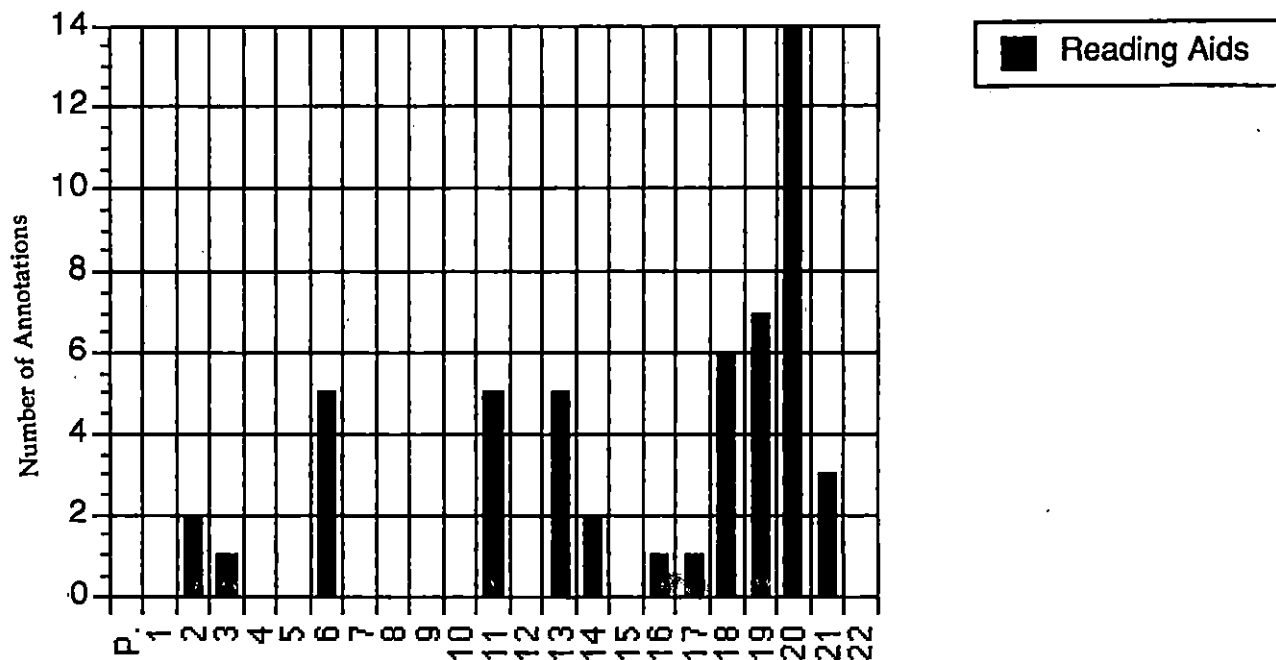


Figure 1.1 Reading Aid Annotation by Passus

Several interesting observations may be made from this chart. Reading Aid annotations, which are fairly rare in the Visio, become the most frequently occurring type of annotation in Dowel, Dobet and Dobest. When the actual numbers are compared, this effect is quite startling. In the Visio, out of a total of 94 annotations, only eight are Reading Aids, whereas in the Vita, out of the remaining 118 annotations, 44 are Reading Aids. According to both form and content, and by definition, Reading Aid annotations are terse, which, when coupled with the knowledge that they form the majority of comment after the Visio, could lead one to the conclusion that scribe B's work on the annotations 'dropped off' toward the end of the poem. At first glance, this effect could be attributed to scribe B losing interest in *Piers Plowman* following the Visio, or due to scribe B adapting his technique to fit the poem's changing content, or due to him simply running out of time on a commissioned work. Most likely, the change of annotation type is due to the changing nature of *Piers*. The Visio would have been a thematically unfamiliar work to scribe B, and would have been seen as being a work which introduced new allegorical characters and placed them in strange settings. The Vita, on the other hand, although a more challenging read to modern audiences, would have been closer to the sorts of material that scribe B, as an obviously educated literate reader, would have found more comfortable. With its more straightforward Biblical content, the Vita, particularly the later passus, would have been familiar ground to scribe B, who, as noted, would have been more comfortable dealing with religious rather than secular concerns.

Summation Annotations

The second major category of annotation is the Summation annotation, which assumes three basic sub-types: Marginal Rubrication; Condensed Overview; and Textual Extrapolation. Of these, there are two distinct sub-sub-types of Marginal Rubrication annotations, the Textually-Gleaned Marginal Rubrication, and the Paraphrased Marginal Rubrication. Unlike Reading Aid annotations, Summation annotations do not function as simple announcements of poetic personae, nor do they cite church authorities or philosophers, nor do they reveal scholastic progressions and the poem's logical construction. Instead, Summation annotations act as textual anchors, or, as it were, bookmarks, making direct reference, not only to the poem's personae but also to their actions, and sometimes also to the motivations behind and causes of those actions:

Inherently, Summation annotations differ from Reading Aid annotations in their derivation and purpose. Certain Reading Aid annotations, it is to be recalled, held some affinity to the scholarly world of Peter Lombard's scriptural commentaries, and treated *Piers Plowman* as a formal argument, dividing the text into logical stages, citations of authorities, while others announced the arrival and departure of *dramatis personae*. Conversely, whereas Reading Aid annotations delineated formal process, Summation annotations reveal purpose and direct textual content; they are less concerned with matters of academic formalities and logical structure and are more concerned with the overall plot of the poem. On the whole, Summation annotations exhibit less of a 'hard-core' scholarly approach and, by allowing the scribe to work the text by paraphrasing and summarizing it, indicate a more obviously personal reading.

In general, Summation annotations function as extra-linear and, quite obviously, non-authorial rubrics. In this regard, they can be seen to bear some resemblance to the sort of comments Lucy Freeman Sandler identified with James le Palmer's work in the extravagant fourteenth-century compilation, the *Omne*

bonum:⁵⁶

The rubrics themselves vary in the quantity and kind of information they provide, as well as in their physical format. The most elaborate and detailed tend to be written across the full measure of the text column. They name the topic, give some hint of the range of contents, the method or conclusions, and refer to the main and subsidiary sources.

While very few of HM 143's Summation annotations embody all of the qualities that Professor Sandler observed in Palmer's compendium, one of the sub-types of Summation annotation, the Marginal Rubrication, usually displays at least two of her description's attributes, that of citing a passage's general topic and listing its contents in summarized form. Mostly, Marginal Rubrication Summation annotations can be divided into two distinct forms: those that quote the text directly, and those that roughly paraphrase it. One of the earliest and most typical of a Textually-Gleaned Marginal Rubrication Summation annotation can be found in the Prologue at line 81 (f2 ll.9ff):

¶ Persones and parscheprestis / pleynded to þe bischop,
That here parsches were pore / sithe þis pestelence tyme
To haue alicence and aleue / in Londoun to dwelle
And synge þer for symonye / while seluer is so swete

//hyer parsones & parische prestes
playned to þe bischop

In this case, the annotation has been directly taken from the text, with only slight differences in spelling and abbreviation. The annotation begins at the start of what could be called a new sentence, and within one line of a paragraph marker.

It seems that many, if not the majority, of Summation annotations occur within five lines of paragraph markers. Some scholars, such as George Russell hold the view that the annotations are somehow

⁵⁶ Lucy Freeman Sandler, 'Omne bonum: *Compilatio* and *Ordinatio* in an English Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Fourteenth Century,' *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. Linda Brownrigg, (Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), 184.

tied to the paragraph markers:⁵⁷

And, in fact, the individual units of the commentary are more or less exactly keyed into the apparatus of the parasigns, and the units themselves bear the familiar prefixed double stroke indicating that they, in turn, are to be marked with parasigns.

This apparent effect is both statistically incorrect and easily explainable. Out of the 208 written annotations in HM 143, 147 occur on folios that have been provided with paragraph marks. On those folios which are so supplied, there are, on average, three paragraph marks. As previously noted, HM 143 utilizes a standard 36-line page, and if the paragraph marks are evenly distributed on the page, which is usually the case, they are a maximum of 12 lines apart.⁵⁸ This means—even if an annotation is placed midway between paragraph marks—the furthest it can be removed from any paragraph mark is six lines. Now, of those 147 annotations that occur in the presence of paragraph marks, the average distance to the nearest paragraph mark is four lines, which, considering the typical page layout of HM 143, is far from being ‘more or less exactly keyed into the apparatus of the parasigns.’ In fact, the annotations are either noticeably removed from the nearest paragraph mark, or, to some degree, can be seen to ignore them. Upon reflection, it is clear that it would be fairly difficult for HM 143’s marginalia to be far removed from any of the baser elements of the manuscript’s *mise-en-page*.⁵⁹

Perhaps Professor Russell neglected the general presentation of HM 143’s marginalia, or assumed that such a presentation would have utilized an editorial process as elaborate as that witnessed in the Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales* by Professor Doyle and Professor Parkes, who observed that the Ellesmere’s

⁵⁷ Russell, 277.

⁵⁸ This would be: the first paragraph mark at line six, the second at line 18 and the last at line 30.

⁵⁹ For more on the physical process of writing and rubricating HM 143, please refer to the first section of this thesis.

scribe:⁶⁰

[c]learly anticipated the apparatus of headings and glosses, since [the scribe] added a frame ruling in the outer margins to receive it, and all the apparatus—headings as well as glosses—is placed within this ruling.

However, the scribes of HM 143 did not follow this process. HM 143's annotations are not bound by lead rules, and, other than periodic double virgules and underlines, do not show overt signs of formal presentation. The annotations do not follow consistent margins or utilize initial capitalization. Additionally, they are not accorded the same importance as the body text, and appear in a significantly smaller hand, which, being a documentary hand, is less formal and more personal than the main text's book hand. They do not even utilize a presentation space which could be ruled to the same proportions as the body text. In fact, at times they do not appear directly beside the text upon which they offer comment.

Another example of a Textually-Gleaned Marginal Rubrication Summation annotation can be found in *Passus VI:350 (f28 ll.33ff)*:

¶ Now bygynneþ gloton / for to go to shryfte
And kayres hym to kyrkeward / his coupte to shewe

// Glotony_{3e} goþ
to schryfte

Scribe B has taken this annotation almost directly from the poem's text, but has made one important change: he had shifted Langland's dramatic allegory of Glutton the character to the more abstract personification of gluttony the sin. This minor grammatical change reveals a certain degree of comfort that scribe B must have felt with Langland's many transitions between the realms of allegory and realism, which Professors Pearsall and Salter call 'controlled' and 'instinctive.'⁶¹

⁶⁰ A.I. Doyle and M.B. Parkes, 'The production of copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the early fifteenth century,' *Medieval Scribes, Mss to Libraries: Essays Presented to N.R. Ker*, ed. by M.B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson, (Scolar, 1978), 187.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall, *Piers Plowman*, (Arnold, 1969), 13.

The second sub-sub-type of Marginal Rubrication annotation is identified by its use of paraphrase, which usually takes the form of an inter or intra-linear contraction. The annotation at Passus VIII:205 (f37 ll.12ff) is an excellent example:

Tho hadde [Peres] pitee vppon alle pore peple	// hyer [pers] bad
And bade hunger in haste / hie hym out of contraye	hunger go aȝen
Hoem to his owene ȝerd / and halde hym þere euere	

Scribe B simply condensed the action across two lines, slightly changing the language. Another example of a Paraphrased Marginal Rubrication Summation annotation can be found in the Prologue at line 169 (f3 ll.20ff):

¶ Than ran þer a route of ratones / as hit were	
And smale myys with hem / mo then a thousand	
Comen til a conseyl / for here comune profyt	
For a cat of a court / cam whan hym likede	
And ouerlep hem lightliche / and laghte hem alle at wille	
And playde with somme perilously / and potte hem þer hym lykede	// hyer made ratonyes a parlement

Scribe B turns Langland's 'conseyl for here comune profyt' into a 'parlement,' which shows an excellent understanding of Langland's term, which, according to Professor Pearsall, may be defined as:⁶²

'The good of the commonwealth', a term often significantly used in the political writing of the period.

Also, by using 'parlement' for 'conseyl for here comune profyt,' scribe B may have been indicating that he was familiar with the identities of the mouse, rats and cat, who were probably intended to be associated with the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and John of Gaunt, respectively.⁶³

⁶² Pearsall, C-text, 38.

⁶³ Pearsall, C-text, 38.

The second sub-type of Summation annotation is slightly harder to define and is, perhaps, simply a broader, more ambitious Paraphrased Marginal Rubrication. This sub-type is the Condensed Overview. To distinguish it from both species of Marginal Rubrication, I have placed an arbitrary limit on its reach. If an annotation paraphrases across four or more lines of text, it can be considered a Condensed Overview. For example, consider the annotation accompanying Passus II:217-221 (f10 ll.16ff):

Drede stod at þe dore / and þe dene herde	
What was þe kynges wille / and wyghtliche wente	
And bad falsnesse to fle / and his feres alle	
¶ Falsnesse for fere tho / fleyh to þe freres	// for drede falsnesse
and gyle doth hym to gone / agaste for to deye	fley3 to þe frers

Scribe B incorporated elements from several lines, unifying the entire passage to create this annotation, thereby drawing attention to the cause and outcome of the action. In the process, scribe B cleverly picked up on one of Langland's many punning dichotomies, returning Drede from the allegorical realm back to simple language.

Another example can be found in Passus V:104 (f22 ll.8ff):

And to þe kyrke y gan go / god to honoure	
Byfore þe cross on my knees knocked y my brest	// hyer wente wille to churche
Sy3ing for my synnes / seggyng my pater noster	to churche & fell a
Wepyng and wylyng / til y was aslepe	3en aslepe

In this instance, scribe B, like many modern readers, shows keen interest in keeping the various inter-related dreams within *Piers* distinct. This is not scribe B's only annotation to the many levels of dream vision in the poem, as an annotation to Passus XV attests: 'hyer 3e may se schortly rehersed þe visionis to foresayd.' Later at Passus XXI scribe B writes: 'hyer is a newe meteles how he say pers al bloody.'

Perhaps the most important example of the Condensed Overview sub-type of Summation Annotation can be seen at the start of Dowel, where scribe B condensed the content of some nine lines into

one terse comment (f44 ll.25ff):

<p>T hus y robed in russet / y romede aboute Alle a somur seson / for to seke Dowel, And fraynede ful ofte / of folke þat y mette Yf eny wiht wiste / where Dowel was at ynne And what man amyhte be / of mony men y askede Was neuere wihte in þis worlde / þat me wisse couthe Where this leode longed / lasse ne more Til hit biful in fryday / two frers y mette Maystres of þe menores / men of gret witte</p>	<p>// hyer wille soʒte dowel & mete wyt ii freris</p>
--	--

Scribe B's words have an almost ironical touch, and, considering his earlier punning on the Drede/drede relationship, it is quite possible that he had a good sense of humor. This annotation seems to be an example of scribe B not only contracting as much text as he could into one simple sentence, but also making a good pun.

The rarest sub-type of Summation annotation, and perhaps one of HM 143's most interesting marginal comments, is the manuscript's single Textual Extrapolation annotation, which occurs in Passus XIV:72 (f60v ll.15ff).

<p><u>astronomy3e</u></p>	<p>Kynde wittede men han a clergie by hem sulue Of cloudes and of costumes / they contreude mony thynges And markede hit in here manere and mused per on to knowe And of the selcouthes þat þei sye / here sones per of þei tauhten For they helden hit for an hey science here sotiltees to knowe Ac thorw here science sothly / was neuere soule ysaued Ne brouhte by here bokes / to blisse ne to ioeye</p>
---------------------------	--

At first glance, the Textual Extrapolation sub-type of Summation annotation seems to bear some resemblance to one or more sub-types of the Reading Aid annotation, particularly those annotations that identified grammatical progressions, but this is not the case. 'Astronomy3e,' clearly not a stage in formal argument, neither cites an authority nor introduces a speaker, and its content is neither entirely arbitrary, nor

directly gleaned from the text. Earlier in this Passus, from lines 30-32, Imaginatif begins to deliver a lengthy lecture on the sometimes conflicting nature of learning and grace, utilizing allusions to ‘sterres’ (XIV:30) and their ‘constillacioun’ (XIV:31). So later, when scribe B encountered both ‘hey science’ (XIV:76) and ‘*Pastores loquebantur ad inuicem,*’ (XIV:87) he recognized Langland’s subtle use of shared imagery, which draws attention to both God’s use of the Heavens in the shepherds’ annunciation, and Imaginatif’s rambling and diverse invective. This point was not missed by other early *Piers* commentators, for example, the enigmatic 16th century annotator of British Library Additional Manuscript 35157, who, at XIV:73, commented: ‘Ayenst Astronomers.’

It may also be noted that scribe B’s simple annotation to XIV:72 implies that he read at least half of the Passus before making the annotation about astronomy. This observation supports the earlier hypothesis that scribe B worked either passus by passus or quire by quire on the marginalia.

Summation annotations, in their many guises, account for 30% of HM 143’s annotations, but over 63% are found in the Visio. Their breakdown across the various passus is as follows:

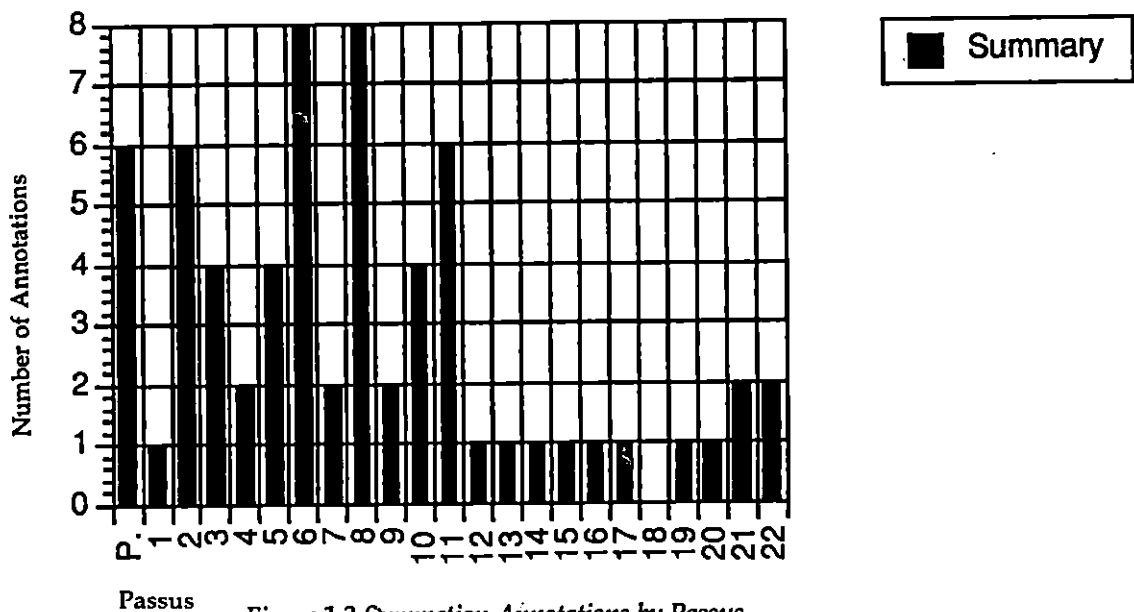


Figure 1.2 Summation Annotations by Passus

In the Vita, particularly after the close of Dowel, Summation annotations become exceedingly rare, which, like the increased presence of the much-simpler Reading Aid annotation, points towards scribe B changing his annotation technique to suit the changing needs of the poem, which, in the Visio is more narrative and inherently summarizable than the Vita. It must be remembered that the Vita's biblical narratives would require no summarizing for a learned or semi-learned audience.

Comment Annotations

The third type of annotation is the Comment annotation. Comment annotations account for nearly 29% of HM 143's marginal supply. Comment annotations may be negatively defined as annotations that do not summarize the text, delineate major thematic structures, inform the reader of textual problems or directly address the reader via pronoun. Comment annotations may be positively defined as being any indication or textual evidence of a personal reading of a particular passage. Professor Sandler encountered notes which fit this limited criteria to these in the *Omne bonum*.⁶⁴

A still stronger expression of James le Palmer's individuality is found in the prolific marginal annotations of the *Omne bonum*. In these, James rose to the level of commentator, the third in St. Bonaventura's hierarchy of scribe, compiler, commentator, and author... Many of the notes were written at the same time as the rubrics, the paragraph markers, and the marginal titles, subtitles, and summaries. Some evaluate the text qualitatively: 'Note here a good question;' some comment approvingly or disapprovingly on the subject of the example... or despairingly, 'Note here hard and truly difficult words to understand about seraphin.'

There are two sub-types of Comment annotation in HM 143, the Simple Note and the Complex Note. Simple Notes may be defined as being Latin comments under four words in length, which are either unannounced, or framed by a simple bracket. The most common Simple Note reads 'nota.' Out of the 62 Comment annotations in HM 143, 21 may be called Simple Notes. Of these 21 Simple Notes, eight read 'nota,' four read either 'nota bene,' or 'nota hic bene,' two read 'nota hic aliqui,' and an additional seven contain 'nota' and another Latin word.

A typical example of this kind of annotation may be found at Passus III:108 (f12 ll.16ff):

⁶⁴ Sandler, 188.

function of these glosses:⁶⁶

The function of the glosses was threefold: to serve as notes for the delivery of oral *lecturae*; as materials for the composition of systematic text-books (*summae*); as commentaries for the benefit of future readers of the text.

Out of these three functions, it is unlikely that scribe B used Complex Notes in either the oral sense or in aid of future text-books on *Piers*. But it is likely that scribe B made notes for future readers. A typical example of this sub-type may be found at Passus III:189 (f13 ll.24ff):

He <i>prouendreth</i> <i>persones</i> and <i>prestes</i> he maynteneth	
To holde lemmanes and lotebyes / al here lyf dayes	
And bringeth forth barnes / a ₃ enes forbodene lawes	
¶ <u>Sunt infelices quia matres sunt meretrices</u>	// } <u>notate prestes gurles</u>

In this instance, scribe B has picked up on only one of Mede's crimes, that of the 'sanctioning of concubinage among the priesthood,'⁶⁷ and placed the annotation beside the Latin quotation concerning the sons of prostitutes.

Another example of this sub-type of Comment annotation may be found at Passus VII:262 (f33v l.7):

} <u>wrathe na₃te</u>	Ac be war thenne of wrath nat / þat wikkede shrewe
----------------------------------	--

In this instance, scribe B has either summarized the line, gleaned from its content that wrath is wrong, or is introducing 'wrathe nat,' apparently scribe A's mistake, as a new character. Judging from other annotations of this type, the former is more likely the case.

⁶⁶ Hermann Kantorowicz, 'Note on the Development of the Gloss to the Justinian and the Canon Law,' *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, ed. Beryl Smalley, (Notre Dame, 1964), 53.

⁶⁷ Pearsall, C-text, 73.

In terms of numbers, Comment annotations may be found in the following passus:

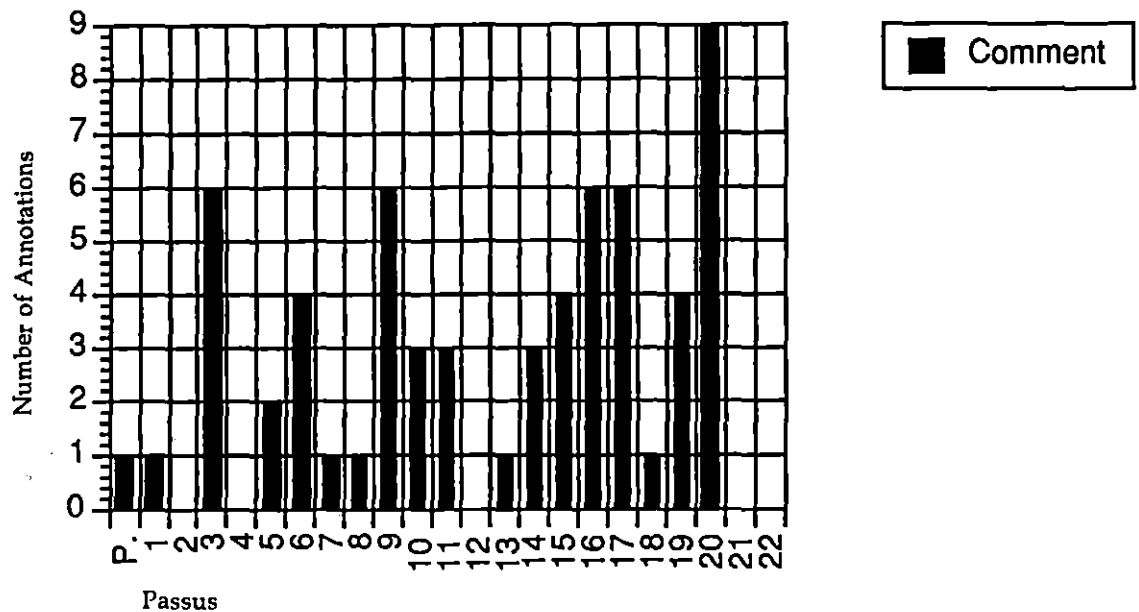


Figure 2.3 Comment Annotations by Passus

From the above chart, it may be noted that Comment annotations occur sporadically in the Visio, but are disproportionately represented in the Vita, in particular in Passus XX, which is substantially longer than most other passus, and where the majority of manuscript annotations are not only Comment annotations, but Simple Notes. As previously noted, this change in annotation style directly reflects the change in the content of *Piers*, which becomes more coherent to the educated audience that scribe B, and indeed all literate peoples of the middle ages represented.

Address Annotations

The fourth type of annotation, and perhaps the most entertaining and psychologically revealing of their creator, scribe B, are HM 143's many Address annotations. These are the annotations that directly address the reader, delineating textual problems, marking interesting reading, or attacking various groups. Out of the 208 non-illustrative marginal entries in HM 143, there are 26 Address annotations, which accounts for only 12% of the total marginal commentary. Professor Sandler describes similar annotations in the *Omne bonum*:⁶⁸

Finally, there are marginal notes that address the reader directly. A number provide evidence for the date and origin of the *Omne bonum*, since they address by name fellow officers in the Exchequer...: 'Note here that hunting is forbidden to clerks and this goes against W. de Hanley'...Often they are marked by a moralizing tone, for example, 'Note you mendicant friar-sycophants, daily consorting with women, how gravely you sin by such scandalous behavior'...This is the true voice of James....

Unlike the *Omne bonum*, which only has two types of reader-addressed comment, there are three distinct sub-types of Address annotation in HM 143, these being the Textual Alert; the Personal Note; and the Personal Admonition.

Textual Alert Address annotations are designed to draw the reader's attention to specific textual problems, such as misplaced lines, major deletions or other substantive errors. They are either introduced by 'War' or by 'loke,' and are without either bracketing or underlining, which, along with scribe B's use of brackets for notes and double virgules for summaries, points to his development of a coherent system of categorizing annotation types.

The first and most personal of these Textual Alert Address annotations occurs at Passus I:129 (f6 ll.3ff):

⁶⁸ Sandler, 189.

	And alle þat worchen þat wikked is, wenden thei sholle	
	Eft ward til heuene / euere to abyde	
War	there treuthe is þe to ^a that trinite ynne sitteth	loke be neþe for
§	Lere hit thus lewed men / for lettred hit knoweth	iii verse been mys set
	Than treuthe and trelouwe / is no tresor bettre	
	By what wey at weyeth and wheder out of my menynges	

Passus I:129-137 should read:⁶⁹

And alle þat worchen þat wikked is, wenden thei sholle
 Aftur here deth-day and dwelle ther Wrong is,
 And alle þat han wel ywroughte, wende þey sholle
 Estward til heuene, euere to abyde
 There Treuthe is, þe tour that trinite ynne sitteth
 Lere it thus lewed men, for lettred hit knoweth
 Than treuthe and trewe loue is no tresor bettre.
 'I haue no kynde knowyng,' quod y, '3ut mot 3e kenne me bettere
 By what wey it wexeth and wheder out of my menynges.'

In this situation, scribe A has omitted lines 130-131 and line 136. He flagged the errors with two distinct sigla and included the text at the bottom of the page. Later, when scribe B annotated the passus, he must have felt that the omission, even with scribe A's careful correction, was serious enough to warrant a direct address to the future readers of HM 143. By using an annotation to warn readers, scribe B may be indicating that the text was not intended for a scholarly audience, one who would certainly be familiar with scribe A's conventional correction. Scribe B may in fact be said to demonstrate a certain 'paranoia' or 'fear' of allowing a misinterpretation of Langland's allegory. In any event, it is easy to see the potential dangers of the text, which had it gone uncorrected, would have left a major symbol unidentified (the tower to the east where Truth dwells) and would have indicated that evil doings are rewarded with Heavenly grace.

The only other example of this sort of warning occurs at Passus XXI:83 (f95v ll.27ff):

	Resoun and rihtfulnesse and reuthe thei offrede
War	Rihtwisness vnder reed gold resones felawe

⁶⁹ Pearsall, *C-text*, 49.

In this case, scribe A suffered a mild case of haplography, which was probably caused by the repetition of 'offrede' at the end of both lines 83 and 87, thereby creating a four-line omission. Upon discovering his error, scribe A flagged the passage and supplied the missing text, writing it vertically down the right side of the folio, at approximately the same textual location. Scribe B then reinforced the correction by adding the annotation.

The second sub-type of Address annotation is the Personal Note, which scribe B used to mark interesting or unusual passages. Although scribe B's Personal Notes are written in the second person, their intended audience is undefined, and the notes never take on a negative or pejorative air. Usually they are introduced by 'behold,' 'loke,' or 'lo,' although several are addressed to a non-specified '3e.' Without exception they are framed by double virgules. An example of this type of annotation may be found at Passus VIII:79 (f35 ll.28ff):

Dame worch when tyme is / [Pers] wyf hehte
 His douhter hihte do rihte so / or thy dame shal þe bete
 His sone hihte soffre thy souereynes haue her wille
 Deme hem nat yf thow doest / thow shalt hit dere abygge

// loke hyer what
 [Pers] wyf hi₃te & his
 sone & his do₃ter

In the above example, scribe B neither identifies content, nor summarizes action, and his comment may be taken as merely a note of interest, a personal reaction to the passage's content. It might be argued that scribe B was surprised by Langland's allegorical names. Considering scribe B's earlier interest in the Glutton/gluttony allegory, this interpretation would not conflict with scribe B's demonstrated sensibilities.

Another example of this sort of annotation may be found at Passus IX:169 (f41v ll.14ff):

// by hold hyer
 of lollaren children

For they lyue in no loue / ne no lawe holden
 Ne weddeth none wymmen / þat they with deleth
 Bringeth forth bastardus / beggares of kynde
 Or þe bak or som bon þey breke of he^{re} children
 And goen and fayten *with* here fauntes for euere more aftur

In this example, it is interesting to speculate on whether or not scribe B fully understood this passage. By scribe B's time, either the very late 1300s or the first few years of the 15th century, 'lollare' in Langland's sense of the word, which meant an 'idler,' or a 'vagabond,' was commonly confused with 'lollard,' which pejoratively indicated a follower of John Wyclif. It is possible that Langland's use of such a specialized and confusing term came as a surprise to scribe B, who displayed his surprise in the margin. Of course it is far more easily argued that scribe B *did* understand the content of the passage and was simply commenting on Langland's periodic interest in the children of the poor.

Another example of this sub-type of Address annotation may be found at Passus I:27 (f4v ll.2ff):

<p>¶ Loot in his lyve / thorw likerous drynke Wykkede wroghte / and wrathed god almyhty In his dronkenesse aday / his doughteres he dighte And lay by hem bothe / as þe boke telleth In his glotonye bygat / gurlles that were cherles And al he witte þe wyn / his wikkede dede</p>	<p>// lo how loot lay be his do3tres</p>
---	---

At this point in the text, Holy Church is instructing Will on proper conduct, and although this text is relevant to her speech, it is not an integral part, and can be considered an example of the effect of intemperance, or as one small stage in an argument. Scribe B made his marginal note, most probably because the overt incestuous content somehow piqued his interest. It is interesting to note also that scribe B picked up Langland's attribution of the incestuous incident to Lot and not to Lot's daughters.

The third and most interesting sub-type of Address annotation is the Personal Admonition, which occurs sporadically throughout HM 143, and takes the form of negative comments directed to three particular groups: lawyers, friars, and the rich. Additional attacks are directed at the ignorant, at hermits, at priests, and at bishops. Personal Admonitions are usually framed by double virgules and are introduced by 'notate.' In most cases, scribe B mixes English and Latin in Personal Admonition Address annotations. A

typical example of this sub-type may be found at Passus I:187 (f6v ll.27ff):

//	<i>notate hic un kynde prestis</i>	Mony chapeleyne ^s aren chaste / ac charite hem fayleth Aren none hardore ne hungriore then men of holychurche Auerous and euel willed / when þe ben avaunsed Vnkynde to here kyn / and to alle cristene Chewen here charite / and chiden aftur more And ben acombred <i>with</i> coueytise / thei can nouȝt crepe out So harde hap auaryce / y hapsed hem to gederes
----	--	---

Another example of this sub-type may be seen in one of scribe B's many attacks on the rich, which occurs at Passus XVI:9 (f68v ll.2ff):

//	<i>notate 3e ry che men</i>	So y sey by 3ow ryche hit semeth nat þat 3e sholle Haue two heuenes for 3oure here beyng
----	---------------------------------	---

As indicated by the strong use of second person discourse, scribe B singles out the wealthy for personal attack. Although the content of this passage is rather complex, dealing with Langland's insistence that payment before service is morally wrong, scribe B interpreted it correctly as an attack against acquired wealth.

A final example of scribe B's invective may be seen at Passus IX:203 (f42 ll.13ff), where his attack is directed against hermits:

Al they holy ermytes / were of heye kynne Forsoken lond and lordschipe / and all lykynges of body Ac these ermytes þat edifien thus by the heye weye Whilen were werkmen / webbes and taylours And carteres knaues / and clerkes with outen grace	// <i>notate 3e lewede ermytes</i>
---	--

In this example, scribe B does not paraphrase or in any way indicate the passage's content, but identifies and insults its victim, the uneducated hermit. Along with hermits and friars, no member of the religious

community escapes from scribe B, who—sometimes with the apparent glee demonstrated in the above quotation—criticizes priests, bishops and other high church officials with some frequency.

The density of Address annotations of all three sub-types seems to remain consistent throughout the manuscript, although the textual problems in Passus I (the omitted text between lines 129-137 draws two specific Address annotations) skew the numbers slightly. The chart following illustrates the breakdown of annotations in the various passus of the poem:

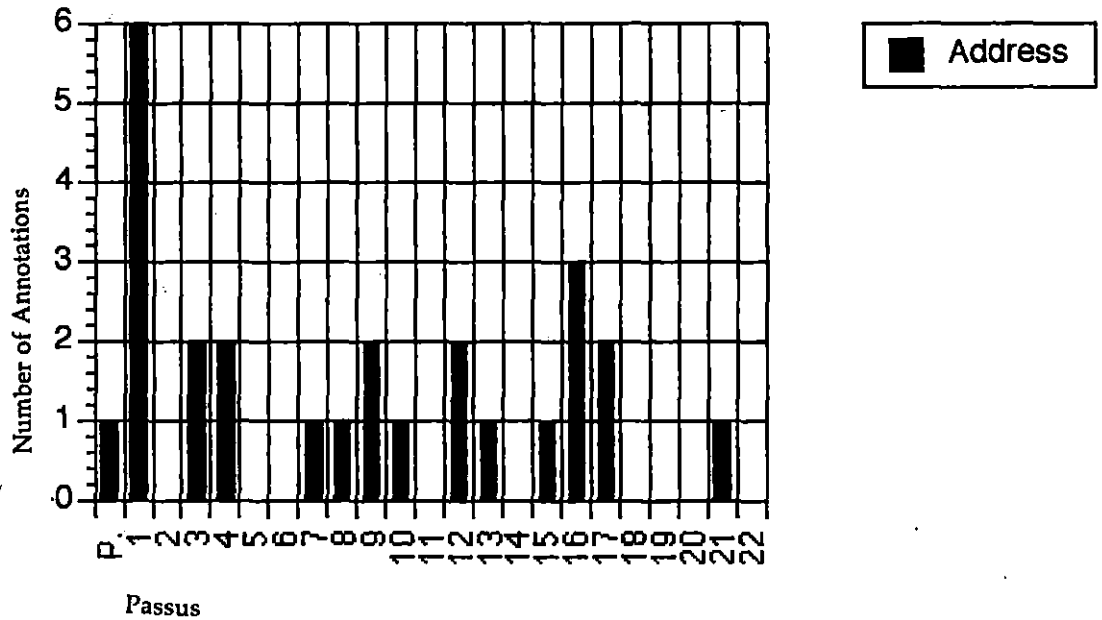


Figure 2.4 Address Annotations by Passus

Scribe B commented roughly once or twice every other passus, mostly on sections which do not have lasting narrative importance, those which struck him for their unusual or possibly confusing content, or in those situations where Langland directly attacked groups that scribe B also disliked.

Illustrations

The last type of annotation, and perhaps not even a true form of annotation, is the Annotative Illustration. Like the majority of *Piers Plowman* manuscripts⁷⁰, HM 143 is relatively free from decoration. There are, however, nine occurrences of some form of marginal 'doodling,' which may or may not have textual relevance. Of the nine 'doodles,' there appear to be two distinct forms: the Loop Doodle, and the Formal Illustration.

Loop Doodles may be defined as being artistically simple line drawings, usually human faces, which occur in or around the flourishes of the manuscript's 3-, 4-, or 5-line rubricated initials. They are clearly the work of the manuscript's decorator, and were created at the same time as the rubricated initials, which, if the ink evidence on folios 37v, 46v and 48v can be trusted, occurred after the main text, after rubrication, but before annotation and correction. The manuscript's six Loop Doodles may be found on folios 10v, 17v, 23, 87v. Loop Doodles themselves may be broken down into two distinct sub-types: 1) Non-committal Loop Doodles; and, 2) Context-oriented Loop Doodles.

Of the first sub-type of Loop Doodle, the Non-committal Loop Doodle, there are four examples, the most typical being on folio 23, at Passus V:195. This drawing takes the form of a simple rendition of a face, which looks away from the main text, and is located in the upper flourish of the letter 'R', which begins Passus VI. It is unclear whether the face is supposed to be human or a grotesque visage. Textually, although it occurs close to the end of Reason's sermon, it is impossible to say whether the face is Reason's, a King's, a common person's, Saint James', or that of any of the other 'seyntes of Rome.' So although the drawing is not directly appropriate to the accompanying text, neither can it be deemed entirely

⁷⁰ The only extant illustrated *Piers Plowman* manuscript is Douce 104, for information regarding its illuminations, see Kathleen Scott, 'The Illustrations of *Piers Plowman* in Bodleian Library MS. Douce 104,' *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, Volume 4, 1990.

inappropriate, and therefore may be categorized as being Ambiguous. The other three Ambiguous Loop Doodles may be found on folios 17v and 10v. The drawing on folio 17v occur at Passus III:495a, and takes the form of an ill-defined face looking away from the text. The drawings on folio 10v occur at Passus II:248, and take the form of two small, non-identifiable faces, one looking toward the text, and one away. The face looking away from the text is approximately half the size of the face looking toward the text.

The second sub-type of Loop-Doodle is the Context-oriented Loop Doodle. The first occurs on folio 10v, in the middle of the capital 'N' which begins Passus III. The drawing, a woman's face, appears to be well-finished. The artist gave the figure large, well-defined eyes, a pleasant if not slightly smug smile, a small nose and long hair. From the accompanying text, which concerns Lady Mede's interactions at Westminster, it is clear that the face is supposed to be hers. As far as functionality is concerned, the face may have been intended to act as a marker, a type of visual Reading Aid Annotation.

The second example of this sub-type occurs on folio 87v at Passus XIX:322. This drawing is of a well-defined male face, with a beard, thinning hair—although clearly not a tonsure—and what appears to be worry lines, all of which lend the figure a very unhappy air. At this point, the text is describing God's treatment of the damned, saying: 'And lihtliche oure lord at here lyues ende/Haeth mercy on suche men þat euele may soffre.'⁷¹

The three remaining drawings are not simple pen flourishes, but are free-standing Formal Illustrations, which appear in the manuscript's margins at textually appropriate locations. Unlike the Loop Doodles, they seem to be either the work of scribe A or scribe B. Although evidence from ink colour is inconclusive, I would agree with Professor Dutschke that they were created by scribe A. As far as categorizing them, the Formal Illustrations seem to assume two distinct forms: 1) the Persona Illustration; and 2) the Device Illustration.

⁷¹ C-text, XIX:320-1.

Of the two sub-types, Persona Illustration is the simpler. Take, for example, the free-standing male head on folio 26. The face is rough and angular, with a shaggy beard, unkempt hair and highly arched, pointed eyebrows. The figure's nose is large, and lips are pursed together. The drawing's eyes look directly at the start of a new section in the text, which begins the confession of Avarice (Passus VI:196-349), and, to some degree, seem to agree with Langland's description of Avarice at VI:196-201:

¶ Thenne cam couetyse / y can hym nat descreue
 So hungrily and holow / sire heruy hym lokede
 He was bitelbrowed and baburlippid *with* two blered eyes
 And as a lether no pors / lollede his chekes
 Wel syddore then his chyn / y cheueled for elde
 And as a bonde mannes bacon / his berd was y shaue

// hyer cam cauetysa
 to schreftward



Of all the confessions of the sins, Avarice's is the longest, a fact which was perhaps not lost on HM 143's scribes. Both of the manuscript's scribes added their own intertextual commentary, with scribe A providing the figure, and scribe B the marginal Summation Annotation, and, quite possibly, the paragraph sign.

The remaining two Formal Illustrations are Device Illustrations, and can be considered perhaps not so much as drawings, but as technical annotations. The first, occurring at the start of passus II:9, is a pointing hand, of the sort that occurs in all types of medieval manuscript. Lucy Freeman Sandler has described the use of pointing hands in the *Omne bonum*:⁷²

Still more personal than the verbal annotations are James' marginal notes in figural form. Many are pointing fingers drawn in red or brown ink, either with or without linear prolongations serving as brackets for the text singled out. Devices of this kind—manicules—are commonplaces of medieval academic texts.

Textually, the pointing hand in HM 143 is located at the start of the introduction of Lady Mede, who, it can be argued, is one of the Visio's most important characters. It is possible that scribe A recognized the

⁷² Sandler, 189.

importance of Mede, and added his own pointer, as it were, to her location.

The last Device Illustration takes the form of a carefully drawn crown and is found at Passus V:168, underneath the annotation: 'prophetia petri.' Textually, the passage is one of Langland's many prophecies, and scribe A seems to have picked up on the phrase 'Ac þer shal come a kyng and confesse 3ow alle.' As Professor Sandler noted regarding the academic use of manicules, it is quite possible that scribe A used the crown in a similar fashion, intending it to be a formal indication of prophecy.

The Erasure of Piers Plowman

As noted in the Huntington Catalogue, the names 'peres' and 'plouhman' have been erased from the manuscript. Professor Dutschke and Professor Russell attribute this phenomenon to incomplete rubrication, with Professor Russell noting:⁷³

The third [object of this paper] is to draw attention to the interesting phenomenon that appears at folio 98. At this point in the text appears the first of a succession of erasures of the names *Piers* and *plouhman* in their various combinations, both in the main text and the commentator. Clearly the ink of the text was to be replaced by the red of the rubricator and alongside the first erasure appear in the margin the words *Hyer bygynne*₃; these would seem to be an instruction, not to the reader but to the rubricator that this is the place at which his work begins.

This may in fact not be the case.

To begin, there are a few inaccuracies in Professor Russell's observations. First of all, the earliest erasure of 'Peres' and/or 'plouhman' occurs in the rubricated *incipit* of Passus I on folio 4, and the last erasure occurs on folio 106v, the last page of the poem. Secondly, Professor Russell has seemingly ignored the text which accompanies the annotation on folio 98—Passus XXI:262—which indicates that Piers is about to 'bygynne₃' plowing. Thirdly, Professor Russell has ignored the editorial process behind both the construction of HM 143 and other medieval manuscripts.

As noted earlier, both rubrication and annotation followed completion of the main text and the rubricated initials. As evidenced by erasures to rubricated sections, and to annotations, erasure of 'Peres' and 'plouhman' must have occurred some time following final manuscript editing. Even in manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* where the names of the poem's personae were embellished—in particular manuscript HM 137—no prior erasures took place, and rubrications were conducted on spaces purposely left blank. For the

⁷³ George Russell, 'Some Early Responses,' 278.

scribes of HM 143, who reserved erasures for the correction process, it would be unthinkable to expunctuate existing text and rewrite it in a different colour. Not only would the process have proven tedious, but the alterations would have been extremely noticeable, and the text would have been presented in an inconsistent fashion, with the names of other key characters, such as Reason and Holy Church, remaining unembellished.

There is, in fact, ample internal evidence to suggest that the erasures were not an intentional part of HM 143's design. Although the erasure of the various forms of 'Peres' and 'plouhman' was extensive, it was by no means systematic, orthographically sophisticated, or complete. For example, the erasures were not clean 'surgical strikes,' but at times either obliterated parts of nearby words or only partially erased the intended text. An example of partial erasure may be seen folio 43v, lines five and six, where both 'Peres' and 'plouhman' are still quite legible.

More surprises are revealed when a single passus is examined. Take, for example, Passus VIII, where there are 44 occurrences of the various forms of 'Peres' and seven occurrences of 'plouhman.' Of these, 'Peres' has been erased 35 times, and 'plouhman,' six times, giving an erasure rate of 80 per cent. Initially, a success rate of 80 per cent seems quite high, but, when the various forms of 'Peres' are examined, it becomes evident that the person responsible for the erasure (the Expunctuator) was not particularly methodical. For example, the name 'Perkyn' appears six times and has only been deleted twice, which may indicate that the Expunctuator was unfamiliar with the Middle English diminutive of the Latin form of Peter. Additionally, of the five times that the name 'Peres' appears at the end of a line, it has only been erased once, which may indicate that the Expunctuator was quickly scanning the body of the poem, and not reading every line through. Regardless of explanation, neither the omission of certain forms of 'Piers' nor the inattention to line ends points toward a 'professional' job.

Therefore, it is simple to dismiss Professor Russell's suggestions, and attribute the many erasures to an early owner. Since erasures do not leave any trademarks of authorship, they can be neither directly

attributed to single individual nor to any particular time. It can, however, be argued that the erasures occurred during the rule of Queen Mary. When Mary was on the throne, protestants were undergoing extensive persecution, and *Piers*, although not a Lollard work, was the subject of their imitation in *Piers the Plowman's Creed* and other works. Perhaps an early owner deleted the names 'Peres' and 'plouhman' from the text in order to avoid being associated with this group. With the name of the poem's principal character erased, it would be significantly harder for a cursory reader to correctly identify the work. A similar case may be argued for the erasures to have occurred during Elizabeth's reign, when there was a similar persecution of protestants. In any event, it is lamentable that none of the erasures have been overwritten, which might have provided some clues as to their origin.

CONCLUSIONS

Ordinatio is a confusing term and lately has been used to bridge the gulf between text and *mise-en-page*. But some scholars, M.B. Parkes for example, use the term both accurately and lucidly. Professor Parkes, of course, has written the definitive article on *ordinatio*, in which he defines it as being more of an organizational philosophy than a *physical* method of presentation:⁷⁴

With the recognition of the principle that different kinds of *ordo* were appropriate in different kinds of study, the organization of an individual work came under closer scrutiny. For the first time scholars formulated a definition which included the disposition of material within a text into books and chapters.

Of course, Professor Parkes concludes, and rightly so, that such an organizational philosophy must eventually manifest itself in manuscript design, and writes:⁷⁵

The structure of reasoning came to be reflected in the physical appearance of books. There was more ostensible 'packaging' of the text, and in copies of the works of thirteenth-century writers the *ordinatio* of the work was more clearly defined.

It has been supposed, therefore, that a researcher might be able to work backwards from an existing manuscript, in order to ascertain the process and indeed the philosophy behind its *ordinatio*. While the philosophical precepts of textual organization and packaging may be easy to trace when the development of a single homogeneous work, such as the bible, is considered, difficulties arise when texts are analyzed out of context, or when processes are attributed to their development and creation without adequate research. For example, it has been suggested that scribes applied stock *ordinationes* to texts, according to established methodologies. Such reasoning reaches its zenith when Professor Russell, writing of HM 143's scribe B,

⁷⁴ Parkes, 120.

⁷⁵ Parkes, 121.

suggests:⁷⁶

He added a simple *ordinatio* of the text; he supplied running titles and marginal notes; he attended to the rubrication and inserted guides for the rubricator.

For Professor Russell to dismiss scribe B's work on HM 143 as a 'simple *ordinatio*' is to do a grave disservice to *Piers Plowman* scholarship—particularly with regards to the burgeoning work on its reception by its early audiences—and to completely misunderstand and misapply the concept of *ordinatio*, which, one assumes, Professor Russell uses instead of *mise-en-page*.

In fact, scribe B's accomplishment should be of crucial interest to *Piers* scholars, since, outside the act of producing scribal copies, scribe B's annotations represent one of the earliest critical reactions to Langland's text. Scribe B, with his own easily definable psychological idiosyncrasies and overt indications of educational and political biases, presents his own highly readable text. The difficulty, of course, lies in establishing the methodology required to understand scribe B's overall purpose, and the most challenging task involves learning to read marginalia as if it were contemporary critical writing.

First of all, it is important to present scribe B's text, which, with the transcription, I have endeavored to do. Unfortunately, for reasons of space and time, scribe B's words must be presented out of context, separated from their base text; this cannot be helped. Secondly, a methodology must be developed in order to put scribe B's words in an understandable framework. The most readily available way to accomplish this task is through categorization, and I have already suggested that scribe B used four standard annotation types, which were either consciously or unconsciously applied to the text. A different and perhaps more rewarding methodology might be to study the annotations of a single passus, and place them back into their overall context. For the sake of argument, I shall now consider the annotations to passus V.

Passus V is a crucial part of *Piers Plowman*, and its text is responsible for almost all of the extant

⁷⁶ Russell, "'As They Read It,'" 179.

biographical data on William Langland. The 'autobiographical' passage begins on line 1 and ends on line 104. In brief, and to echo the passage's most common interpretation, Will wakes up in London, in the cottage he shares with his wife Kytte. At the time he is living an idle life, surrounded by the lowest sorts of people. Reason attacks Will for his lifestyle and asks why he does not serve in a church or work the land. Will replies that he is too tall for manual labour. Reason then asks if Will is rich, crippled, or if he is simply a dishonest beggar. Will replies that he began clerical training, but adds that his patrons died before he could be fully ordained. Will then continues, offering a critique of society, which he feels rewards wealth rather than ability or piety.

Professor Pearsall calls the passage, 'the only significant waking episode in the poem'⁷⁷ and suggests that it closely resembles an *apologia pro vita sua*. Although the autobiographical passage is extremely interesting to modern scholars, Langland probably included it in order to introduce the theme of confession, which is explored in the following two passus (VI and VII), where the Seven Deadly Sins go to confession.

Scribe B made two annotations to the 'autobiographical' passage, the first occurs at line 8 (f20v ll.12ff):

// hyer concience & raysoun a ratyd // wille for his lol // lynge	Thus y awakede woet god whan y wonede in comehull~ Kytte and y in a cote / y clothed as a lollare And lytel y let by / leueth me for sothe Amonges lollares of londone / and lewede ermytes For y made of thos men as resoun me tauhte For as y cam by consience / wt resoun y mette In a hot heruest whenne y hadde myn hele And lymes to labory wt / and louede wel fare and no dede to do / but to drynke and to slepe In hele and in in witt oen me apposedede Romynge in remembrance / thus resoun me aratede
--	--

and the second at line 35 (f21 ll.5ff):

when y zong zong was / many zer hennes

// hyer wille answerid

⁷⁷ Pearsall, *C-text*, 96.

My fader and my frendes / foende me to scole
 Tyl y wyste witterly / what holy writ menede
 And what is beste for the body / as the boek telleth
 And sykerost for þe soule / by so y wol contenne

// to rayson

It is interesting to note that scribe B has commented only on sections which contain references to Reason, the poem's allegorical representation of 'rational self-analysis'⁷⁸. Scribe B was likewise uninterested in Will's first defense, that of his abnormal stature, and seems more concerned with Will's education, although he does not comment on any specific events. In fact, scribe B's commentary seems more in line with his later work in Passus VI and VII, where he occasionally states which of the Seven Deadly Sins is confessing and then indicates when Reason begins to reply. As previously observed (see the discussion of scribe B's annotation to Passus VI:350 on page 55) Scribe B's comments argue for an allegory-centered reading of *Piers*. Additionally, scribe B allowed an error attributable to dittography to occur in line 35, which might indicate that he was not proof-reading this portion of the text very thoroughly.

HM 143's scribe B was not the only early *Piers* commentator who seemed disinterested in Will's autobiography. The annotating scribe of Douce 104 also refrained from commenting on any particulars of Will's life, but cleverly interpreted the passus opening by writing 'I had noo wyll to do gode.'

Scribe B's work on Passus V picks up following the end of the 'autobiographical' passage. In particular, and as previously noted, Scribe B was interested in the mechanical aspects of *Piers's* multi-layered dream-vision construction, as evidenced by his annotation to V:104 (f22 ll.8ff):

And to þe kyrke y gan go / god to honoure
 Byfore þe cross on my knees knocked y my brest
 Syzing for my synnes / seggyng my pater noster
 Wepynng and wylyng / til y was aslepe

// hyer wente wille to churche
 // to churche & fell a
 3en aslepe


⁷⁸ Pearsall, *C-text*, 98.

The remaining text of Passus V details a sermon preached by Reason. At line 114, scribe B indicates that Reason's sermon begins by noting 'hyer raysoun prechede.' For the most part, Reason's sermon is indirectly reported by Will, but occasionally Reason's words are allowed to stand on their own. Scribe B offers two final comments on the text, the first at line 146 (f22v ll.14ff):

<p><u>notate Religiosi</u></p>	<p>¶ Gregory þe grete clerk / gart wryte in bokes The reule of alle religious / rihtful and obedient Ryht as fysches in þe floed / whan hem fayleth water Dyen for drouthe / whenne they drye lygge Ryht so religioun roteth and sterueth That out of couent and of cloystre / coueyteth to dwelle For yf heuene be on this erthe or eny ese to þe soule Hit is in cloystre or in scole / by many skilles y fynde</p>
--------------------------------	--

The importance of this annotation hinges on the fact that scribe B refrained from commenting when Will expressed sentiments similar to those of Reason regarding the clergy (lines 70 to 89) and university life (lines 35 to 42). This might indicate that scribe B felt more comfortable with the text when it was attributed to a purely allegorical character, rather than one which was at least partially 'real.'

Scribe B's final comment occurs at line 168 (f22v ll.35ff):

<p>prophetia petri</p> 	<p>Ac þer shal come a kyng / and confesse 3ow alle</p>
--	--

At the same point in the text, scribe A has drawn a crown, which, as noted, was used to indicate the king. Curiously scribe B attributes the prophecy (one of Langland's reformist prophecies, and a common one of the day) to St Peter, for which there is no corresponding biblical text. Perhaps scribe B intended the reference to St Peter to indicate the combined Pope/King role that the future king would have. Finally, scribe R has rubricated the end of Reason's sermon (V:200) by adding a thin underline beneath the words 'thus endede resoun.'

Without considering the contributions of scribes A and R (that is, if scribe R was not actually scribe B), it is fairly easy to reconstruct scribe B's reading of Passus V. He was interested in the arrivals and departures of Reason and Conscience, almost completely uninterested in Will's life, he paid attention to

the start of the next dream, and was intrigued by Reason's sermon, during which he commented on one of Reason's attacks on the clergy and flagged the presence of a political prophecy. Scribe B's comments are almost entirely homogeneous, nearly all are introduced by 'hyer' and can be classified as Summation annotations. The remaining two annotations, the one regarding the place of the clergy and the one regarding prophecy are Comment annotations, both highly Latinate and specialized.

Scribe B read Passus V of *Piers* firstly as an allegorical text—half of his annotations directly refer to Reason. Secondly, he was interested in the place of education and monastic life, with two comments, one to flag Will's incomplete education and one to flag the proper setting for religious life. Interestingly, scribe B was either timid or conservative enough to comment in Latin on Reason's attack on the clergy. Likewise, he commented on Langland's prophecy in Latin and attributed it to St Peter, which, it could be argued, he did to provide the prophecy with an air of respectability. Finally, it can be argued that unlike today's critics, scribe B read Passus V as a 'warm-up' for the confessions which occur in Passus VI and VII.

Scribe B was an educated reader with his own interests and prejudices. He chose his annotations carefully, changing his annotation style to meet the changing demands of *Piers Plowman*. As previously noted, these changing annotation styles show that scribe B was more at ease when Langland discussed purely scriptural matters, and less at ease when Langland's material was entirely original. It must also be noted that although scribe B applied identifiable types of annotation to the text—all of which can be seen in other medieval texts, and so may be considered to be 'stock' types—he did so according to his own criteria, not one which was a previously established part of the textual heritage of the poem. His use of a 'casual' documentary influenced hand in part indicates that he considered his annotations to be a 'personal' reading of *Piers*, not a formal part of the poem's presentation. All in all, scribe B's annotations are not an *ordinatio*, but a critical and personal reaction to a difficult text.

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Amo

6

ut vniuers

*hwey was letise
at stile y other
for the tot hall
to pache*

Amonges wyues and wydder quon woude to alle
 y passioedes in pnes: the ylore in knoweth
 howe htel y longe: letys at re style
 for she had halydes as y my here gan change
 Astu mete astu wasd she and she chydde
 And y chyn was was: and was the on hem bothe
 y lamy chydde of hore sub on the clothes
 Til bothe here heder were by and blosy here theker
 Amonges monkes y mythe be. At mony tyme y pase.
 for there ayeu many felle ficles in yu a fieser to aspye
 what is pnd and supnd and omegate abbas
 And yf y telle emy tales they taken hem to gydeses
 And doen me faste fideses to bies and to wat
 que am y chaldged amonge chypitit hous as y a childe weye
 And bafaylles on ye bacesis and no biesh bntkane
 y hane no histe let me to longe amonges monkes
 For y etc more fyst then fyste theye and fible ale dymke.
 At other whyle when wyu cometh and when y bynke late at enen
 y hane affix of a fowl mouth wel fync danc ast
 And al pat y wite wylked by emy of omc conent
 y wite the hit op monye chydde quat alqe conent doct hie
 Noth repente of repentance and jehete nede
 couisyl pat thow knowest by continance ne by apete
 And dymke nat on desyrate and to dype neythe
 what thy wil nethy wat to wyecke mythe tyme
 Geto cobing he saide and assoued hym astu
 And bad hym bid to god be his helpe to auende
 Thenne seyde lachere also and to omc lady quede
 lady to thy leue soue: write for me nouthe
 That he hane pte on me yntou of his quyn andy
 wat pat y chaf of wat chydde sarbayer for thy modg tone
 dymke but et ye dole and dymc but ones
 y guilty in gost to god y me shyne
 do in litynge of lachere any lycames gultes
 qu word and m edes an chaynige of eyes
 for the mayde pat y mette ynsado here a signe

De penitencia

*hwey can lachere
to shynke chard*

In a former paper I have shown
that the fragments of the
manuscript are in the
order in which they were
found.

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APPENDIX 2: THE FRAGMENTARY TEXT

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PUBLICATIONS PENDING:

- The book-length poem *GMBH* will be published by Spectacular Diseases Press (UK) in 1992.
- 'After the Return' will appear in a future edition of *Descant*.
- 'The Anal Rape of Castor and Pollux' will appear in a future edition of *Rampike*.
- 'Nocturne' and 'Deconstructing the Morning' will appear in a future edition of *Toronto Life*.

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Title of Thesis: FROM CREATION TO DESECRATION: The Marginal Annotations of *Piers
Plowman C Text* HM 143

Author



NOVEMBER 31, 1991