

### Three Collaborative Scribes of Chaucer, Hoccleve and Romance

Beyond the skilled scribes who made books for money as they also made documents professionally—those of the earliest copies of Chaucer's, Langland's, Gower's and Hoccleve's poems, for instance—one distinctive feature of fifteenth-century literary history is the enthusiastic copying of literary works by people for their own delight. Such user-producers form a telling register of the energy and intelligence of people as copyists and, in the process, as readers of English poetry.

Two such manuscripts are the main subject of this essay. The first is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 163, one of sixteen copies (excluding fragments) of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, followed by a unique copy of the poem 'To Rosemounde', seemingly ascribed to Chaucer with what looks like a colophon 'tregentil—chaucer', a phrase also used in the colophon of *Troilus and Criseyde*.<sup>1</sup> The second is Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 137, one of forty-four copies (again excluding fragments) of Thomas Hoccleve's *The Regiment of Princes*, prefaced here by a collection of forty-three Latin sayings, entitled 'Tabula' in the manuscript, gathered from the so-called glosses that accompany the majority of copies of Hoccleve's poem.<sup>2</sup> Each manuscript postdates its poems' or poem's composition by many decades and—though a late date is not always a correlative of a text differing from the author's—sits far down the stemmata created by editors of *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Regiment of Princes*.<sup>3</sup> Each does, however, confirm interest in copying the poems late in the fifteenth century among (we shall suggest later) people collaborating on copies for their own use, for these manuscripts have three scribes in common. The three copyists of *The Regiment of Princes* and its 'Tabula' (MS Garrett 137) recur in the copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* and 'To Rosemounde' (MS Rawl. poet. 163), there alongside two other scribes. In addition, one of the three recurring scribes then reappears in a further manuscript, now split into two parts, where he copies a romance, *Amis and Amiloun*, and a verse hagiography of St Margaret. This article merely sets out this recurrence—though that takes space, with five people and three manuscripts to describe. At the end we suggest that the three scribes collaborate repeatedly in ways that suggest they are copying more for their own or their close associates' interest

rather than for profit. The range of interests of one of these scribes, from two English poets already then esteemed to a much older romance and a religious poem, is also diverse. The recurrence of three scribes together places these varied works in the same milieu, and the expertise in copying and interests in reading in that milieu will repay future investigation.

Previous accounts of the scribal stints in MS Garrett 137 differ from each other and from ours,<sup>4</sup> but we distinguish three scribes as follows:

- Scribe A: ff. 1r–2v ('Tabula' of Latin glosses); f. 27v, lines 7–33 starting with 'Noman bette nexte hys fadyroure lord Rege' (on which line see below), and ff. 28r–54v = *Regiment*, lines 1835–3730; catchwords in his own stint on ff. 28v, 38v, 46v, 54v; and glosses added to scribe C's stint on ff. 68v–69v, 71r, 73v, 74v. (See Figure 1, where scribe A takes over at line 7.)
- Scribe B: ff. 3r–12v, and f. 13r, line 1 and the first two words of line 2 ending with 'O fykell wordle allas thi variaunce | How many' = *Regiment*, lines 1–870; a catchword in his own stint on f. 12v; and glosses in his own stint on ff. 3v–4r (both corrected by scribe C), 9v. (See Figure 2 of f. 4r.)
- Scribe C: f. 13r, starting from the third word of line 2 with 'a gentylman maye men nowe see', and then lines 3–30, and ff. 13v–27r, and f. 27v, lines 1–6 ending with 'he may be salue vn to thyn indigence' = *Regiment*, lines 870–1834; ff. 55r–83v = *Regiment*, lines 3731–5439, 5445–5461; catchwords in his own stint on ff. 66v and 76v and in scribe A's stint on f. 30v; glosses in his display script in his own stint on ff. 14v–15r, 18r, 19r, 26r, 55r–56v, 59v–60v, 62v, 65v, 66v–68r, 70v, 71v, and added to scribe A's stint on ff. 28v–29r, 48r, 49r, 51v–54v; corrections to glosses to scribe B's stint on ff. 3v–4r; snippets of text, including corrections, throughout the stints of scribes A and B; and in his display script a heading to the poem on f. 3r and colophons to the prologue on f. 30v and to the poem and an envoy on f. 83r–v. (See Figure 3 of f. 13r, where scribe C takes over during line 2.)

(There are additional marks of 'nota' and similar throughout the manuscript, some of which might be by one or other of these scribes.) These three scribes reappear in MS Rawl. poet.

163. There they are joined a fourth scribe, D, and by a fifth scribe, E. Scribe E does look like

scribe B and has formerly been identified with him, but we identify him as this separate figure (for reasons we explain below).<sup>5</sup> The scribes copy as follows:

- Scribe A: ff. 1r–9v = *Troilus*, lines I.1–700; f. 16r, lines 34–37 starting with ‘To byd *and* Reden holy seintes lyues’, and ff. 16v–19v = *Troilus*, lines II.118–433; f. 29r–v = *Troilus*, lines II.1044–1113; f. 59r, lines 29–30, starting with ‘Lord trowen ye that a Couetys wrecche’, and ff. 59v–113v = *Troilus*, lines III.1373–V.1869; f. 114r = the poem ‘To Rosemounde’; catchwords throughout his own stints, on f. 31v in scribe D’s stint and on f. 52v in scribe C’s stint; an annotation ‘Auctor’ on f. 23r. (See Figure 4 of f. 9v.)
- Scribe B: ff. 10r–15v and 16r, lines 1–33 ending with ‘It sat to me well bet ay in a Caue’ = *Troilus*, lines I.701–II.117; and annotations on his stint. (See Figure 5 of f. 10r.)
- Scribe D: ff. 20r–28v = *Troilus*, lines II.434–1043; ff. 30r–42v = *Troilus*, lines II.1114–III.305; and a catchword on his stint on f. 42v; and annotations throughout his stint. (See Figure 6 of f. 35r.)
- Scribe E: ff. 43r–51r and f. 51v, lines 1–9 ending with ‘And his *commyng* vnwist to euery wight’ = *Troilus*, lines III.306–912; and annotations on his stint. (See Figure 7 of f. 43r.)
- Scribe C: f. 51v, lines 10–33 starting with ‘And parde harme / may there noon be ne synne’, ff. 52r–58v, and f. 59r, lines 1–28 ending with ‘Crisseide hym yaffe *and* stake it atte his herte’ = *Troilus*, lines III.913–1372; and annotations on his stint. (See Figure 8 of f. 51v, where scribe C takes over at line 10.)

Their various styles of handwriting can be identified by aspect and ductus and checked by various diagnostic letterforms.

The two simplest to identify are scribes A and C. Scribe A has a style of handwriting comparable in aspect and ductus to dated and datable specimens from the 1460s or 1470s to the 1490s.<sup>6</sup> He has a repertoire of letterforms drawn most often from the variety of cursive known, when used in England, as secretary script, but his execution is not of the calligraphic variety of secretary. Although like other scribes late in the 1400s he sometimes exaggerates the broken strokes typical of secretary (for instance in **a** and **d**),<sup>7</sup> elsewhere that tendency is in tension with a more rounded ductus typical of *anglicana* (for instance in looped ascenders, especially on **h**, and tails, as on **y**). His handwriting is slightly variable in

formality, whether because less well-trained or simply faster, and is on occasion very current; minims can become indistinct zigzags.<sup>8</sup> On the unruled pages, the baseline of his writing slopes downwards from left to right, sometimes pronouncedly. The upright strokes slope forwards, perhaps from the currency of writing which leads the pen slightly towards a horizontal 'onward' movement. To identify scribe A across the two manuscripts, there are also a few distinctive graphs: the ascender of **d** is more often unlooped, in many cases with a slight curl up and rightwards at its tip; the tail of **g** often is straight but in many instances ends in a flick to the right;<sup>9</sup> the stem of **t** is often as tall above the crossbar as below with a tendency to lean rightwards as others letters' ascenders do (as would become common in secretary in the 1500s); and in **w**, which is the simpler form like double **vv** typical of secretary, the bottom of the second **v** protrudes lower than the first. As well as the usual sporadic variant forms, there is a consistent difference in scribe A's work between the two manuscripts. In MS Garrett 137 he usually forms word-initial **p** with a descender followed by a separate bowl, like a backwards **c**, to the right; in MS Rawl. poet. 163 he usually forms it with one curving stroke, as a short anticlockwise loop for the bowl which then curves down to form the descender (a ductus that was spreading in the later 1400s).<sup>10</sup> But otherwise, the aspect and letterforms are readily recognized in both books.

Scribe C also writes currently, but not in a fluent way. Ligatures which would speed the flow between letters are not used consistently, being most common on **ch** or **th** and on the connection between minims in **m**, **n** and **u** and the following letter; other letters, even those with loops on ascenders which historically originated in ligatures, are often disconnected, as are large and frequent letters such as sigmoid **s** and **w**. The spacing of letters often gives the impression (to speak subjectively) of them being set down one by one erratically. There is variability between an upright treatment of vertical strokes and a sloped treatment. Without ruling, his writing has an uneven baseline and variable size.

Handwriting of such informality can be found in books dated or datable from the 1460s and 1470s.<sup>11</sup> The writing is largely modelled on anglicana, both in its continually rounded ductus and in its repertoire of graphs. There are exceptions to the anglicana repertoire. Like many scribes, scribe C prefers the simpler one-compartment **a** more customary in secretary. He tends to reserve two-compartment **a** for specific environments: word-initially, including on

the indefinite article *a* or *an*—where it should not be transcribed as a majuscule or capital letter—and adjacent to letters **m**, **n** or **u** formed from minims, especially in words ending –**auce**, perhaps for visual clarity.<sup>12</sup> Other features that help to identify scribe C across the two manuscripts are: in **v** and in the second **v**-shape of letter **w**, the looped approach stroke above is wider to the right than the **v** or **v**-shape below, and in **w** usually taller than that on the first **v**-shape; in current or ‘backwards’ **e**, the upper loop likewise extends to the right. The roundedness of such strokes contributes to the overall rounded aspect. Conversely on sigmoid **s**, typical of anglicana in word-final position and here used in many positions, the move from the circular lobe to the horizontal splay is often jerky, almost forming a point. Again, one letterform differs between the books: in MS Garrett 137 only, scribe C also uses the short form of **r**, again more customary of secretary, which further lessens his fluency by less easily forming ligatures compared to an anglicana long **r**.<sup>13</sup> He uses short **r** mostly, though not exclusively, in limited environments, notably in the combinations **ry** and **yr** and **ur**.<sup>14</sup> This even overrules the tendency of scribes to use anglicana long **r** penultimately before final **e** or its curled abbreviation. Short **r** might avoid visual confusion from putting long **r** adjacent to the zig-zag minims of **u** or **y** trailing below the baseline. (For instance, when scribe C does follow **u** with a long **r** in ‘burydd’, in MS Garrett 137, f. 13r, line 14, he has to leave a gap between the graphs.)

For scribe B, previous descriptions have identified him writing two stints in MS Rawl. poet. 163; we, however, allot the other stint to another scribe, whom we call E.<sup>15</sup> Scribes B and E do write similar kinds of handwriting, found also in other books of the late 1400s, but it is understandable that two scribes who collaborate closely could have been trained in the same style of handwriting, perhaps in the same institution. Scribes B and E have the same basic ductus—the general repertoire of letterforms and overall handling of the pen—for the script and the rough period; they need to be distinguished by their personal ductus—their subtly different realization of that shared script.<sup>16</sup> Such scribes are easy to conflate but can be distinguished.<sup>17</sup> While it offends the rule of Ockham’s razor to proliferate scribes, MS Rawl. poet. 163 definitely has at least four scribes in interlocked stints (A, B, C and D), so the presence of a fifth is not in itself unlikely.

Scribe B models his handwriting entirely on *anglicana*. It is very current; in some places the strokes are disconnected from others within the same letter, whereas in other places ligatures connect letters. Typical of *anglicana* in the final few decades of the 1400s are the proportions and splay. In proportions, the strokes which extend below the baseline (on descenders, on tails and on the limb of **h**, which loops far below and returns to join the following letter) are much longer than those in the main body of the letters. And there is extensive horizontal splay, often resulting in ambiguous strokes at the end of words which are best considered otiose when transcribing. Both features might reflect great currency, as the pen moves quickly across the page, but also become features of style. Within these trends typical of the time, a few features help to identify scribe B's stints. In an age of disproportionately long descenders, those of scribe B are very long indeed, often two or three times as deep as the body of letters is tall, and they often taper in a spindly fashion, which gives scribe B's handwriting a slightly sharpened air not shared by other specimens. The distinctive ductus of other letterforms adds more of that sharpness. In current or 'backwards' **e**, as the pen approaches from the previous letter, the bottom loop is formed by the merest upward spike, which then curls to form the upper loop but does not connect with that upper loop, leaving a pointed appearance in this usually rounded graph. A slight point is formed at the top of the body of **g**. A few other strokes add to the impression of rangey, almost flamboyant movements, even though the body of letters is small and tightly coiled. The **w** is highly elaborate in a style no longer standard, even for *anglicana* in the second half of the 1400s. The tail of **y** curves far below the preceding letter with a notably heavy pressure on the pen, thickening the stroke on the page, on the bottom-left diagonal curve of the tail. These features contribute to the counterpoint of sharp vertical movements and exuberant curves which distinguish scribe B's handwriting.

Scribe E has a very similar style of handwriting to scribe B: a very current *anglicana* of the last few decades of the 1400s. However, in tiny details of the personal ductus in realizing those letterforms and in spelling, scribes B and E differ. While some could be explicable as changes between one scribe's stints at different times, these changes are so small and seem so habitual that it is hard to imagine what would prompt one person to vary thus consistently and consciously. Both scribes have a loop on the limb of **h** large in

proportion to the body of letters, typical of this period, but scribe B's loop is consistently larger than scribe E's and strays far to the left, as scribe B's does not. In long *r* scribe B's downward and upwards strokes diverge from the very bottom in a *v*-shape, with the left-hand, rising stroke curving away from the right-hand descending one in a branching shape; scribe E's two strokes in this letter are joined for most of their length below the baseline and split apart higher up with a curve like half of an arch. In word-final sigmoid *s*, scribe B closes the lobe with a jerk to the left, before the horizontal splay to the right, and this jerky ductus produces a sort of second 'point' left above the leftward curve of the main lobe below; scribe E moves from the lobe to the splay more smoothly without any obtrusive point. Both favour an elaborate word-initial *w*, but the two highest loops are even larger in scribe E's ductus than in scribe B's. In the Tironian mark for *and*, both scribes make a long otiose curl to the left, but scribe B also places a further arched curl above, which scribe E usually does not.<sup>18</sup> Finally, scribe B has a striking form of *i* 'dotted' (so to speak) with an arch or sometimes in word-final position with an elaborate loop that curls back to the letter, especially on 'thi', 'thei', 'whi' and 'sei', as he spells *thy*, *they*, *why* and *say*.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, Scribe E does not 'dot' *i* with elaborate curls, and indeed he consistently spells these words differently as 'thy', and 'they' and 'sey'.<sup>20</sup> When scribe E does, less often, 'dot' *i*, he does it with a mark like a tick.<sup>21</sup> This is similar to the dotting of *i* by Scribe B, but not exactly so; and the spellings differ too. That suggests two scribes close in training but not identical.<sup>22</sup>

As well as differences in script, it might be noted that scribes B and E differ in features of page design. As such features could reflect a conscious change in policy, they cannot themselves identify a scribe; but alongside the small, potentially unconscious features of script and spelling, these differences add circumstantial evidence to the distinction of scribes B and E.<sup>23</sup> More commonly, scribe E extends the strokes upwards on top lines and downwards on bottom lines (e.g. the top lines of ff. 44r–46r). This is a common feature, found in other manuscripts in similar kinds of current *anglicana* of the late 1400s.<sup>24</sup> On bottom lines, scribe E does this sometimes with straighter lines or just elongated curls,<sup>25</sup> and at other times in a back-and-forth swirling pattern, with 'cross-hatching', perhaps imitating the calligraphically ambitious scribe D (described below), whose stint precedes his, who might himself imitate this feature in manuscripts of John Shirley or his followers.<sup>26</sup> Such

self-conscious and changeable features of design are not a trustworthy proof of which scribe is at work, but it is notable that, by contrast, scribe B has almost no elaboration of strokes on the top and bottom lines. Likewise, scribes B and E differ in their handling of annotations on Chaucer's poem. Both B and E, like the other scribes, copied some plot summaries in English, mostly beginning with *How* (*How X happened*) and a couple of instances of 'Nota auctore' or similar. But scribe B also has seven Latin annotations of a kind unparalleled in the stints of the other scribes, including scribe E. These notes are not found in other manuscripts at these points and direct readers to look at works by Boethius, Statius and Ovid (usually with 'Require in').<sup>27</sup> By contrast, scribe E only supplies the English annotations summarizing the plot, and he does them in a large display script modelled on bastard *anglicana*, sometimes rubricated,<sup>28</sup> perhaps again modelled on the high grade, if not the exact letterforms, of the glosses in the preceding stint by scribe D.

Scribe D is the other scribe in MS Rawl. poet. 163 who does not recur in MS Garrett 137. He follows the letterforms of secretary script with consistency, without the admixture of elements of *anglicana*. Like scribe A, with whose style his has some similarity (e.g. secretary **g** with separate crossbar and often a rightwards curving descender), there is often a slope to the ductus and some roundedness in places, in a style typical of the new cursive book script which Jane Roberts identifies in the late fifteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Ascenders of **b** and **h** are looped, but **d** is unlooped, with occasional variation.<sup>30</sup> This is found in other specimens of secretary script used for copying English in the third quarter of the 1400s.<sup>31</sup> But in general his handwriting suggests more control, consistency and even calligraphic effort than that of the other scribes, evident from comparing the otherwise similar scribe A. (See Figure 6.) As well as dressy features of page design, such as red braces, flourishes to the first letter of many lines and cadels, sometimes rubricated, for the initials of many pages, at the less conscious level of the strokes there are many extra curves (e.g. on the end of the tail of **g** or the first stroke of **w**), horns from separate strokes (e.g. on the top of **e** and sigmoid word-final **s**) and broken strokes (e.g. on the top of **a** and long **s**); each required an extra movement of the pen, however slight.

Despite the involvement of the confident scribe D in one of the books, in most respects the two manuscripts of Hoccleve's and Chaucer's poems are unlike the productions

of well-trained scribes making books for others for money. Several features of their production process are shared across the two manuscripts which add circumstantial corroboration to the identification of the three shared scribes. The books are as good as identical in size, at least as they survive: MS Garrett 137 is now 290 mm. x 207 mm.; MS Rawl. poet. 163 is 288–291 mm. x 206 mm.<sup>32</sup> Each contains six stocks of paper distinguishable by their watermarks, and two of each manuscript's six appear in common: a bull's head with eyes and nostrils above a star consisting of one line, without further additional motifs;<sup>33</sup> and a column above a trefoil motif.<sup>34</sup> (The dates of known use of the shared watermarks and other watermarks ranges from the late 1450s to 1480s.)<sup>35</sup> MS Garrett 137 and MS Rawl. poet. 163 are also comparable in their irregular quires, which range from two to twelve folios with little consistency, and only once, at the beginning of the 'Regiment Proper' in *The Regiment*, follow textual divisions.<sup>36</sup> Nor do scribal stints in either book often align with quire divisions nor with breaks in pages, stanzas or even lines. Scribes A, B and C begin stints several lines into a page, sometimes even mid-line. Finally, there is evidence that these manuscripts travelled together for a long time. They at least passed through the same hands as early as the mid sixteenth century, when somebody with handwriting of that date doodled, as pen trials or writing practice, all or part of the phrase 'o lord god the father of heauen hau mercy vpo<n>', into both manuscripts.<sup>37</sup> Later both belonged to Thomas Rawlinson (1681–1725).<sup>38</sup> After Thomas's death, his brother Richard (1690–1755) was unable to keep the collection together and was obliged, for complex legal reasons, to sell the collection of 1,020 manuscripts over eleven nights in March 1734; he was entitled to pay for those he wanted for his own collection and he bought about a third of them; he later donated those to the Bodleian Library.<sup>39</sup> Evidently, Richard acquired MS Rawl. poet. 163 from his brother's collection—picking out Chaucer but not Hoccleve, interestingly—as it ended up among his donations to the Bodleian, but we cannot identify exactly when. By contrast, MS Garrett 137 was sold, according to a note on the flyleaf facing the text, on 13 March 1734 and passed along a chain of other eighteenth-century antiquaries.<sup>40</sup> Despite their divergent destinations, the two manuscripts evidently started their lives in the same milieu.

This recurrent collaboration of three scribes and the mode of their collaboration together prompt suggestions about that milieu and the conditions in which they undertook

this copying. The number of stints and the collaborative nature of the division of labour are suggestive of a group of people working closely together. Moreover, when combined with the chaotic quiring, these features suggest that the process of production was what J. P. Gumbert calls 'homogenous' or what Jaakko Tahkokallio calls 'continuous'. In such scenarios, each scribe picked up where the previous scribe left off, and some of those scribes returned to the task on more than one occasion.<sup>41</sup> They must have worked together close in time and place. Yet the nature of these stints—which do not follow divisions in the text or quiring or likely breaks in an exemplar—is suggestive of a lack of organization of that process.<sup>42</sup> They contain features of what Michael Johnston calls a 'Streamlined Book', with the irregularities that, he posits, occur in specimens made close to their users, and also of what he calls an 'Evolving Book' made by people for themselves, except that each largely contains one text.<sup>43</sup> There was a muddle in at least one handover, when scribe C finished a stint in MS Garrett 137: he left a prompt for himself or his colleague of the next line 'Noman bettere next', but in an awkward place, aligned to the right, and when scribe A took over, he had to fit his copying round it. (Scribe A also misread his exemplar here as 'Noman bette nexte hys fadyr our lord Rege', where 'Rege' is a mistake for Present Day English *liege*.)<sup>44</sup> (See Figure 1.) There were errors in or omissions of catchwords, sometimes supplied or corrected by another scribe (as the list of stints above records) and many often untidy corrections to each other's work. Likewise, there are stark differences in the scribes' layout, decoration and modes of glossing, including the choice of script, bracing and underlining for marginal glosses, which all suggests that there was little concern or coordination for visual cohesion between stints, though each scribe is fairly consistent within his own stint.

They collaborated closely and enthusiastically, but in a way that suggests less skill in the production of literary books in particular. This is not like work overseen by a stationer or well-trained scribe organizing colleagues on a commission, in which exemplars or stints could be divided among people working simultaneously. Such arrangements could go astray—as indeed in the famous 'Trinity Gower' where, as A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes showed, one scribe accidentally drew too few rulings and ended his stint a few lines too soon—but the errors were offset—and in that case corrected—by the organized nature of the project overall.<sup>45</sup> By contrast, in these two collaborations, there is little organization. The

back-and-forth exchange of these scribes, with the visible disruptions which result, does not look like a book that they could have offered for pay or to patrons external to their immediate circle. It looks more like a book made by people for their own use, perhaps within some institution such as a household, a monastic house, a college or an alms-house where several literate people lived side-by-side. These might also count as ‘DIY Books’, in Johnston’s terms, again despite their unified textual contents.<sup>46</sup> A comparison might be the collaboration, albeit with far more frequent swapping of stints, on copying one of John Capgrave’s poems by William Gybbe and fellow clergy living and working together over time, with exemplar and copy set up for intermittent work in ‘perhaps some such place as the vestry’, as Peter J. Lucas put it.<sup>47</sup> If they were not user-produced books, then these look unlikely to be produced for anybody more lofty than the head of the household or relatively humble institution of which they are part, who might tolerate less orderly work if made by close associates.

Finally, a full explanation of the origins of these manuscripts (beyond the scope of this short piece) would need to consider whether the handwriting of any of these scribes recurs elsewhere. One line of enquiry can be opened, another proves less fruitful.

Scribe B appears in what was formerly one other manuscript, now split into two, where he collaborates with a different group of other scribes: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326, ff. 1r–13v, copying the romance *Amis and Amiloun*, and MS Rawl. poet. 34, ff. 1r–4r, copying a verse life of St Margaret.<sup>48</sup> (See Figure 9 of MS Rawl. poet. 34, f. 1r.) These two manuscripts were clearly once one: they are almost identical in size (MS Rawl. poet. 34: 290 x 208 mm.; MS Douce 326: 285 x 204 mm., being slightly cropped), contain one stock of paper in common (with watermark of a crossbow consisting one line);<sup>49</sup> and, as well as our scribe B, the same additional scribe adds further texts in each.<sup>50</sup> The pages have two columns, and there are more lines per column than on the pages of MS Garrett 137 or MS Rawl. poet. 163; as a result, scribe B’s handwriting appears a little smaller in module, especially for his ascenders, descenders and tails and his flourish over word-final *i* (discussed above). But his personal ductus is identifiable in his treatment of particular letterforms—the angle of the otiose flourish on word-final *n*, the split descending strokes on long *r*, the jerk in word-final sigmoid *s*. Identifiable too are the spellings preferred by scribe B, for instance <thei>, <thi>

and <whi> and initial <sch> for Present Day English <sh>.<sup>51</sup> And despite the different page layout in this other book (as the two parts once were), a few other tics look like the habits of scribe B. In his stint in *Troilus and Criseyde* in MS Rawl. poet. 163 (f. 10r) and in the life of St Margaret in MS Rawl. poet. 34 (f. 1r), scribe B uses pointed triangular stanza braces on only the first page, before turning to simpler methods of dividing stanzas. (See Figures 5 and 9.) In *Amis and Amiloun*, the saint's life and *Troilus* he forms his leaf signatures with a tiny superscript **o** or **to** after the roman numerals ('a j<sup>o</sup>', 'a vj<sup>to</sup>', and so on);<sup>52</sup> in *Amis and Amiloun*, the saint's life and *The Regiment*, he positions the signatures unusually close to the gutter, rather than near the fore-edge as most scribes do.<sup>53</sup>

There are hints at a shared history too. MS Rawl. poet. 34 of the poem on St Margaret and MS Rawl. poet. 163 of *Troilus* have sewing guards made from recycled parchment Latin accounts (with shillings and pence, 'Summa' and 'sol', and English names), and in MS Rawl. poet. 163 also from legal documents, in very similar anglicana handwriting of the first half of the fifteenth century, though it is difficult to confirm the identity of any scribe in such tiny binding fragments.<sup>54</sup> In theory they could have been added at later dates, but the positioning of the sewing stations and residue of animal glue used to adhere the sewing supports to their gutters suggests that they were already in-situ when the manuscripts were rebound in the early eighteenth century. Other clues suggest that MS Rawl. poet. 34 and MS Rawl. poet. 163 had similar bindings before Thomas Rawlinson rebound them. As well as the same number and distribution of sewing stations, both also retain scraps of their former dark leather binding, which was attached to the text block with thick tackets, which can be seen in fragments adhered to the outer quire fold in MS Rawl. poet. 34 and the old spine cover in MS Rawl. poet. 163 (now detached from the manuscript). It is harder to observe these features with confidence in MS Douce 326, but the sewing stations there line up too. MS Douce 326 was also formerly in Thomas Rawlinson's collection, whence it was sold in the same auction of 13 March 1734 as MS Garrett 137, according to a note in identical handwriting, placement and wording in each book.<sup>55</sup> Besides the scribe B, much evidence links all these manuscripts early in their history.

Scribe B, then, seems to have collaborated with at least one other person in copying English poetry and of diverse kinds. His handwriting and that of the similar scribe E bear

some resemblance to that of a scribe who names himself John Brode, who signs, once playfully backwards ('Edorb'), one manuscript containing Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and another containing further of his works as well as one of Hoccleve's shorter poems. It has been suggested by Simon Horobin that Brode was perhaps an Augustinian canon from Devon—and some small community similar to a house of canons would suit the production of MS Garrett 137 and MS Rawl. poet. 163.<sup>56</sup> Brode's handwriting has been described by Daniel W. Mosser as a compact yet irregular anglicana and dated to the last quarter of the 1400s.<sup>57</sup> In our manuscripts, a few details of ductus are close to Brode's: for instance, Brode treats the descending strokes of long **r** and the detached arch and dot above the Tironian mark just as scribe B does (as explained above), in ways which differs from scribe E. But other details belie the identification of scribe B or E as Brode. Brode alternates, seemingly at random, between two-compartment anglicana **a**, which is significantly larger than other minims, and single-compartment secretary **a**.<sup>58</sup> Scribes B and E, by contrast, are consistent in their use of the tall two-compartment **a**. Brode alternates between looped and un-looped **d**.<sup>59</sup> Scribes B and E use only looped **d** with a distinctive left-leaning ascender that often curls above the preceding character. Brode has a different approach stroke on word-initial **v**, curving from below, rather the looping above, like the loops on ascenders, as scribes B and E do. He also almost always uses a simplified **w** like pointed **vv** shapes, unlike the complex and, by the late 1400s, old-fashioned anglicana **w** used by scribes B and E, or their rounded variant. He only uses the anglicana **w** perhaps once a page.<sup>60</sup> Brode tends to have an angled or broken stroke leading rightwards at the foot of the ascender in **h** and **l**, whereas scribe B has a curve at the foot of these letters. There are different preferences in spelling too: Brode largely eschews the spellings <thi>, <thei> and <whi> preferred by scribe B (as noted above) in favour of <thy>, <they> and <why>, for instance—though these are also the preferences of scribe E.<sup>61</sup> He avoids other habits of spelling typical of scribe B, using <sh> for the initial consonantal cluster where scribe B uses <sch>, and has habits of his own, such as using thorn in <þou>, which scribe B seldom does, and even yogh, which scribe B never does (as in <ʒhit> sometimes for *yet*, whereas scribe B has <yet>).<sup>62</sup> Overall, rather than identify either scribe B or E as John Brode, we think that all these scribes—and another hitherto compared

to Brode—share a style of handwriting typical of the second half of the 1400s, especially in the final few decades.<sup>63</sup>

We do, though, believe that these copies of *Amis and Amiloun* and the life of St Margaret are also by scribe B of *The Regiment of Princes* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. As such, the milieu in which we can place these scribes expands a little. We can see scribe B participating in overlapping collaborations with at least five people with the skills for and interest in copying English literary works. This scribe and his colleagues come to seem like enthusiastic copyists of English poetry, writing at considerable length across diverse genres, and engaged idiosyncratically with the glosses of Hoccleve's poem and their own annotations to Chaucer's. How they worked and thought about poetry could be explored in some depth from their errors, corrections and handling of annotations. Who they were remains to be discovered. At the end of the life of St Margaret in MS Rawl. poet. 34, scribe B adds a colophon with a flourish like a notarial mark and what seem to be initials 'W' and 'F'. This might be a clue to his identity.<sup>64</sup> For now, though, rather than a mere name, what is more readily observed is their energy and engagement, for their own pleasure or that of their close associates, as scribes of poetry.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 163 (hereafter in notes 'RP163'). The seeming colophon to 'To Rosemounde' on f. 114r is in handwriting modelled on a different script (textura quadrata, except for **g** from secretary) from the colophon to *Troilus* on f. 113v and lacks the slope from left to right of the baseline of writing, typical of scribe A, who copies the poem here.

<sup>2</sup> Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 137 (hereafter in notes 'Garrett'), with the 'Tabula' on ff. 1r–2v. Garrett has an early modern foliation in ink, prominent on the microfilm digitized on the library's website, which ignores the 'Tabula' and begins with the English poem (our f. 3r). M. C. Seymour, 'The Manuscripts of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*, 4.vii (1974), 255–97 (291–2), follows that older foliation. But a newer pencil foliation does include the 'Tabula', and recent descriptions by Don C. Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Princeton University Library*, 2

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vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 2013), i, 315–17, and Linne Mooney, Simon Horobin and Estelle Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, <www.medievalscribes.com>, ISBN 978-0-9557876-6-9 [consulted 24/03/2024], s.n. Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 137, follow that; for comparability, and to encompass the whole MS, so do we.

<sup>3</sup> *Troilus and Criseyde: The Book of Troilus by Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. B. A. Windeatt (London: Routledge, 1991), 68–76; and the stemma of the gloss-tradition of Hoccleve's *Regiment* in Marcia Smith Marzec, 'The Latin Marginalia of the *Regiment of Princes* as an Aid to Stemmatic Analysis', *Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 3 (1987): 269–84 (279); D. C. Greetham, 'Challenges of Theory and Practice in the Editing of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', *Manuscripts and Texts: Essays from the 1985 Conference at the University of York*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1987), 60–86 (66–7); D. C. Greetham, 'Normalisation of Accidentals in Middle English Texts: The Paradox of Thomas Hoccleve', *Studies in Bibliography* 38 (1985): 121–50 (123–4, n. 5). For an edition, see Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Seymour, 'Manuscripts of Hoccleve's *Regiment*', 291, identifies only two scribes, combining scribes B and C and locating the handover on f. 27v, line 6, at a page break (f. 25v by the foliation which he follows). Mooney, Horobin and Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, s.n. Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 137, apportion part of scribe A's stint, ff. 31v–40r, to a fourth scribe, whom they label D; but we consider one scribe, A, to copy everything from f. 27v, line 7, to f. 54v, apart from some corrections, catchwords and glosses.

<sup>5</sup> Scribes B and E are treated as one scribe in previous descriptions: Mooney, Horobin and Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, s.n. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawl. poet. 163; B. A. Windeatt, *Oxford Guides to Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 27; Windeatt, ed., *Troilus and Criseyde*, 73–4; M. C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), i, 65–6; Robert K. Root, *The Manuscripts of Chaucer's Troilus* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1914), 38–42.

<sup>6</sup> Datable samples of handwriting comparable in model, aspect and ductus, if not always in the exact repertoire of letterforms, are illustrated in P. R. Robinson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c.737-1600 in Cambridge Libraries*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988), pl.

278 (between 1459 and 1471, in fact most likely 1460–1), pl. 292 (1465–75), and though it is a more ‘set’ than current, pl. 340 (1492); and P. R. Robinson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c.888-1600 in London Libraries*, 2 vols. (London: British Library, 2003), pl. 188 (between 1472 and 1484).

<sup>7</sup> M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250–1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. xxi.

<sup>8</sup> An instructive contrast is with Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, pl. 12(ii), which has a similar repertoire of graphs, on which Parkes comments helpfully, but a more careful execution than our scribe A.

<sup>9</sup> He does also, as a variant, sometimes use a form of **g** with a more conventional descender, curling to the left (e.g. RP163, f. 2r, line 3 ‘grekes’, line 35 ‘scornyng’).

<sup>10</sup> This form of **p** is noted by Mooney, Horobin and Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, s.n. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 163, as an oddity of this scribe.

<sup>11</sup> There are no closely comparable dated or datable examples in codices, but different tendencies of scribe C’s handwriting, some of ductus and aspect, some of admixtures of letterforms, are found in different manuscripts in Andrew G. Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c.435-1600 in Oxford Libraries*, 2 vols. (London: British Library, 1984), pl. 565 (dated 1459); *Dated and Datable . . . Cambridge*, pl. 283 (1461), 290 (1465); *Dated and Datable . . . London*, pl. 163 (between c. 1462 and 1470), pl. 165 (1463); Andrew G. Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c.700-1600 in the British Library*, 2 vols. (London: British Library, 1979), pl. 764 (1473), pl. 802 (1477).

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Garrett ‘trauoulous’, f. 15r, line 22; ‘contenuaunce’, ‘varyaunce’, f. 15r, lines 7, 8).

There are a few occurrences of two-compartment **a** in other places, perhaps once per page: e.g. ‘taryyng’ (f. 16v, line 22), the first **a** but not the second in ‘habundaunce’ (f. 16v, line 28), ‘was’ (f. 17r, line 7).

<sup>13</sup> Some scribes of this period adopt short **r** in handwriting into less cursive, higher grades of *anglicana formata*: see e.g. *Dated and Datable . . . London*, pl. 210 (dated 1483) or *Dated and Datable . . . Oxford*, pl. 605 (between 1462 and 1475).

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Garrett, ‘fauoure’, ‘laboure’, f. 13r, lines 8, 10; ‘foryete’, f. 13r, line 10; the first **r** in ‘weryoure’, f. 14v, line 26; ‘fadyr’, f. 14r, lines 3, 24; ‘aftyre’, f. 14v, line 2. For exceptions to

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these combinations, even in Garrett, see e.g. short r in ‘or’ (f. 13r, line 28) and ‘rote’ (f. 14r, line 13), and conversely long r in ‘slepyrnesse’ (f. 14r, line 12).

<sup>15</sup> See n. 6 above.

<sup>16</sup> For this distinction between basic and personal ductus, see M. B. Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 59–60, and the Glossary, 149, 153.

<sup>17</sup> On such likenesses of time and training, see Lawrence Warner, *Chaucer’s Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384–1432* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 46–7.

<sup>18</sup> Respectively, types 93 and 94 according to Jan Tschichold, *Formenwandlungen der &-Zeichen* (Frankfurt: D. Stempel, Frankfurt am Main, 1953).

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Garrett, f. 6r, lines 18, 21; and on ‘sei’ on RP163, f. 13r, line 15.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. ‘thy’ on RP163, f. 43v, lines 1, 25, 26, f. 44r, line 28; ‘they’ on RP163, f. 45v, line 33; ‘seye’ on RP163, f. 43v, line 17, f. 46v, line 12, and ‘sey’ on f. 45v, line 29. But see also ‘seie’ by scribe E on f. 43v, line 27.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. ‘ioy’ or ‘ioie’ on RP163, f. 43v, line 6, f. 45r, line 30, f. 48r, line 4. That tick is slightly larger on lines which are at the top of pages or extend beyond the line above, where space allows: compare e.g. ‘ioye’ and ‘transitorie’ (RP163, f. 50v, line 1) with ‘in’ (f. 50v, line 3) and ‘aspie’ (f. 50v, line 9) or the lack of one on ‘ioye’ (f. 50v, line 7) and ‘Ielousie’ (f. 50v, line 11).

<sup>22</sup> A comparison would be the subtle differences, espied by Lawrence Warner, ‘Scribes, Misattributed: Hoccleve and Pinkhurst’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 37 (2015): 55–100, and Warner, *Chaucer’s Scribes*, 117–20, between Hoccleve’s handwriting and that of a scribe of *The Regiment* in London, British Library, Royal MS 17 D.xviii. The Royal scribe seems to imitate the resulting letterform of Hoccleve’s elaborate curl on y but does so with a different ductus.

<sup>23</sup> The use of similar decorations, common in documentary practice of his period, to identify another scribe has proven risky: see the warnings of Warner, *Chaucer’s Scribes*, 34–5.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 39, where they are sometimes added as separate strokes as a design feature: see Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2017), 58–9 and pl. 27; and on this scribe, see n. 60 below.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. majuscule **I** on RP163, f. 43r, line 33; **f** in ‘Sauf only often’ on f. 45v, line 33; limb of **h** on ‘that she’ in f. 46v, line 35.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. in RP163 on **y** in ‘hym’ f. 43v, line 35, and in ‘deuyse’, on f. 45r, line 37; the limb of **h** in ‘he’ (probably to be understood as a majuscule; the forms are usually indistinguishable in this style of handwriting) on f. 47r, line 35; and **y** in ‘mercy’ on f. 47v, line 35.

<sup>27</sup> RP163, ff. 10r (on *Troilus*, I.701, I.708, I.714, I.731), 15v (II.64, II.77) and 16r (II.100). C. David Benson and Barry A. Windeatt, ‘The Manuscript Glosses to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*’, *Chaucer Review* 25 (1990): 33–53, list annotations in manuscripts of *Troilus*.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. RP163, ff. 44r, 46v.

<sup>29</sup> Jane Roberts, *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pl. 53–7.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. RP163, f. 21r, line 22, for both graphs of **d**.

<sup>31</sup> Similar styles are in *Dated and Datable . . . Cambridge*, pl. 257 (dated between 1450 and 1472), pl. 304 (between 1471 and 1483), pl. 340 (1492); *Dated and Datable . . . London*, pl. 140 (between 1451 and 1475), pl. 221 (1491); *Dated and Datable . . . British Library*, pl. 640 (1462).

<sup>32</sup> The trimming of MS Rawl. poet. 163 has been very light; only the very edge of the first letters—the edge of a letterform, under a millimetre, perhaps—has been lost from a few of the marginal glosses, on e.g. ff. 4v, 7v, 62v, 63v.

<sup>33</sup> Identified as Gerhard Piccard, *Piccard Online*, Baden-Württemberg State Archives, Stuttgart Main State Archives (J 340, No. 22966), <[www.piccard-online.de](http://www.piccard-online.de)>, [accessed 04/03/2024]; Piccard 74484: ‘bull’s head with eyes and nostrils, above star consisting of one line, without further additional motifs’ (Veldenz, 1457). Found in Garrett at ff. 15, 17, 25, 27, 28, 56, 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, 78, 79, 80; and RP163 at ff. 11, 12, 15, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Similar to Charles-Moise Briquet, *Briquet Online*, v. 2.1, <[www.briquet-online.at/](http://www.briquet-online.at/)>, [accessed 19/04/24], no. 4401: ‘column’ (Naples, 1456). Found in Garrett at ff. 18, 21, 22; and RP163 at ff. 20, 22, 26–28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 40, 42, 43, 45, 51.

<sup>35</sup> Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, i, 315, identifies datable comparanda for some watermarks.

<sup>36</sup> Collation of Garrett: 1<sup>2</sup>, 2<sup>10</sup>, 3–4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>2</sup>, 6–8<sup>8</sup>, 9<sup>12</sup>, 10<sup>10</sup>, 11<sup>8-1</sup> (leaf 8 cancelled without loss of text). Collation of RP163: 1<sup>10-1</sup> (wants 5th, with loss of text), 2<sup>10</sup> (8th damaged, with loss of text; 1st

2nd, 9th, 10th singletons), 3<sup>12</sup> (3rd, 10th] singletons), 4<sup>12-1</sup> (12th cancelled, without loss of text), 5<sup>10</sup>, 6–10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>8-2</sup> (wants 4th and 5th, with loss of text), 12<sup>8-1</sup> (2nd damaged), 13<sup>8+1</sup> (9th contemporary singleton addition). For RP163, we benefitted from the collation of Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield in the file Bodley Refs LVI.16 kept at the Library.

<sup>37</sup> Quoting its longest extent in RP163, f. 53r. See also RP163, ff. 2v, 114r, and Garrett, f. 31r.

<sup>38</sup> Seymour, *Catalogue of Chaucer*, i, 66, identifying Thomas Rawlinson's note of the number of folios on RF163, f. 1r; Skemer, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, i, 316. Both MSS are recorded in inventories of Thomas Rawlinson's collections, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. C. 928, f. 10r (Garrett as item 53 in a list of 'books in the Inner Study') and MS Rawl. C. 937, f. 13r (RP163 as item 192), f. 19r (Garrett as item 306).

<sup>39</sup> B. J. Enright, 'The Later Auction Sales of Thomas Rawlinson's Library, 1727–34', *The Library*, 5th series, 11 (1956): 23–40, 113–23 (27–8, 106, 108).

<sup>40</sup> Garrett, f. i<sup>v</sup>: 'E Cod. MSS. Biblioth. Rawlinson. 13 Mar. 1733' (i.e. 1734 in Old Style dating), which see n. 52 below. Recorded as item 671 in the catalogue of Thomas Rawlinson's books by Thomas Ballard, *Codicum Manuscriptorum, Bibliothecae Rawlinsonianae Catalogus; cum Appendice Impressorum; in omni fere Facultate et Lingua* (London: Ballard, 1734), 51, pasted into MS Rawl. C. 937.

<sup>41</sup> See respectively J. P. Gumbert, 'Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogenous Codex', *Segno e Testo* 2 (2004): 17–42; and Jaakko Tahkokallio, 'Counting Scribes: Quantifying the Secularization of Medieval Book Production', *Book History* 22 (2019): 1–42 (8–9).

<sup>42</sup> For the collations, see n. 36 above.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Johnston, *The Middle English Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 41–4 (terms), 89–92 (irregularity).

<sup>44</sup> Garrett 137, f. 27v, *Regiment*, line 1835. The variant 'Rege' does not appear in any other witness of *The Regiment* and thus is most likely to be scribal error; see Charles Blyth, David Greetham, et al, 'Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* Variant Collation Tables', *The Hoccleve Archive*, <[www.hocclevearchive.la.utexas.edu](http://www.hocclevearchive.la.utexas.edu)>, [consulted 26/03/2024]; with consultation of Leeds, Brotherton Library, MS 2286, which is not included in the collation tables. This was

scribe A's first stint in Garrett; although he copies the 'Tabula' on ff. 1r–2v, which is bound at the front in a separate bifolium and was likely copied after the poem.

<sup>45</sup> See 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, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, eds M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scholar Press, 1978), 163–210.

<sup>46</sup> Johnston, *Middle English Book*, 44–5.

<sup>47</sup> Peter J. Lucas, *From Author to Audience: John Capgrave and Medieval Publication* (Dublin, University College Dublin Press, 1997), 162–3.

<sup>48</sup> Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Middle English Romances* (Munich: Fink, 1976), 267–8, reports the connection of these two MSS, observed in P. R. Robinson, 'A Study of Some Aspects of the Transmission of English Verse Texts in Late Medieval Manuscripts' (BLitt. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1972), 220–3.

<sup>49</sup> The watermark throughout Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 34, recurs in MS Douce 326, ff. 2 and 14 (the two outermost bifolia). The latter manuscript also contains two additional watermarks: ff. 3, 11, a bull, similar to Piccard 86102; and ff. 16, 7, 10, grapes with tendrils, similar to Piccard 129526.

<sup>50</sup> The other scribe is on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326, ff. 14r–v, and MS Rawl. poet. 34, ff. 4v–17v.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326, f. 1r, col. b, lines 12, 15; MS Rawl. poet. 34, f. 4r, col. a, lines 11, 40.

<sup>52</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326, MS Rawl. poet. 34 and RP163, ff. 10r, 12r, 13r (though RP163, f. 11r, differs; it lacks the superscript **o**). By contrast, scribe E of RP163 uses 'fo' before or after leaf signatures and no quire lettering (ff. 43, 44r, 45r, 46r) though also once uses superscript **to** (f. 47r, 'fo v<sup>to</sup>').

<sup>53</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326, MS Rawl. poet. 34 and Garrett, ff. 3r, 4r, 5r, 6r. Garrett, f. 7r, is positioned closer to the fore-edge but has the superscript **to** ('a v<sup>to</sup>'); his approach stroke on **v** differs from that of scribe E in RP163, f. 47r (see prev. n.).

<sup>54</sup> In RP163, after ff. 24v, 37v, 56v, 64v, 72v, 80v, 88v, 101v, 109v; in MS Rawl. poet. 34, after ff. 6v, 17v. Compare e.g. **na** in MS Rawl. poet. 34, guard after f.6v, and RP163, after f. 37v; the

long limb curling underneath leftwards on **h**, the flourish on **R** and ductus of majuscule **S** in MS Rawl. poet. 34, after f. 6v, and MS RP163, after f. 14v; the unjoined-up lower body of **d** in e.g. MS Rawl. poet. 34, after f. 17v, and RP163, after f. 14v. The few names legible on the sewing guards (e.g. 'John Norton' on the guard after RP163, f. 109v) might be too common to suggest an origin. Similar recycled parchment guards, now used as mounts, are on Garrett, ff. 8v, 21v, 30v, 50v, but our notes do not permit us to compare the likeness; they are not visible on the microfilm.

<sup>55</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 326, f. vii<sup>v</sup>, 'Ex Cod. MSS. Biblioth. Rawlinson. 13 Mar. 1733.' differing only in using 'Ex' rather than 'E'), from Garrett, f. iv (in n. 41 above). MS Douce 326, f. vii<sup>v</sup>, also has notes of two further eighteenth-century sales, one in 1756 by Thomas Osborne (c. 1704–67) of Grey's Inn, London, to Samuel Pegge, and then in the sale of his books to J. Bruce.

<sup>56</sup> Simon Horobin, 'Manuscripts and Scribes', *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches*, eds Susanna Fein and David Raybin (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 67–82 (72–6).

<sup>57</sup> Identified in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 181, ff. 1r–53v, and perhaps f. 93v, and Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 113, by Daniel W. Mosser, 'The Scribe of Chaucer Manuscripts Rylands English 113 and Bodleian Digby 181', *Manuscripta*, 34 (1990): 129–47, and 'A New Collation for Bodleian Digby MS 181', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 82 (1988): 604–11 (606–7). For an image from and discussion of his handwriting in MS Digby 181, see Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, pl. 3(ii).

<sup>58</sup> E.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 181, f. 17r, lines 3 and 16.

<sup>59</sup> E.g. Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 113, f. 6r, lines 4 and 2.

<sup>60</sup> E.g. 'women' on MS Digby 181, f. 2v, line 20; 'swellyng' on MS Digby 181, f. 3r, line 8.

<sup>61</sup> There are exceptions: he has 'pei' occasionally, but with thorn which scribe B seldom uses (MS Digby 181, f. 2v, line 30, f. 7v, line 14). Michael Benskin, Margaret Laing, V. Karaiskos and Keith Williamson, *An Electronic Version of a Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2013), <[www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html](http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html)>, [consulted 07/04/24], has a profile only for the second, earlier scribe of MS Digby 181, ff. 54r–93r, and for none of the other MSS discussed here.

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<sup>62</sup> Contrast e.g. MS Digby 181, f. 1r, line, and f. 3v, line 8, and RP163, f. 10r, line 22, and f. 10v, line 2. Thorn is especially common on MS Digby 181, ff. 10v–30v, for a copy of Peter Idley’s *Instructions*. Scribe B uses thorn perhaps five times in 870 lines in Garrett (f. 4v, lines 10, 24, 28, f. 5r, line 41, f. 9v, line 26) and once in RP163 (f. 15v, line 18); he uses yogh only five times on the first page and once near the top of the second, as though ‘working in’, of the life of St Margaret in MS Rawl. poet. 34, f. 1r, column a, lines 34, 43, column b, lines 19, 20, 25, and f. 1v, column a, line 10, and never elsewhere.

<sup>63</sup> Mooney, Horobin and Stubbs, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, s.n. Brode, John, identify him also as the scribe of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 39 (see n. 24 above), but we think that this is another scribe of a similar date and training: see ‘MS Ashmole 39’, *Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries*, <[www.medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_338](http://www.medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_338)>, [consulted 17.04.2024] (which also disputes Brode’s identification). *Late Medieval English Scribes*, s.n. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 181, also suggests that it is debatable whether Brode might have copied the rest of that MS, ff. 54r–93r; to our view, this is a different scribe. But it is intriguing that a final two stanzas were added to that copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* on f. 93v by a scribe similar to Brode and perhaps even more so to scribe B of the collaborations discussed in this article, yet with a text completely different in substantive readings and in dialect from the same lines copied by our scribe B in RP163, f. 46r (*Troilus*, III.519–32).

<sup>64</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 34, f. 4r. The unusual vertical stroke in e in his bastard anglicana for this colophon ‘Amen’ recurs in the similar display script of ‘liber secundus’ in *Troilus* (RP163, ff. 15r, 15v).