A History of Contact between *Piers Plowman* and *The Prick of Conscience*

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Abstract:
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This thesis examines the historical relationship between *Piers Plowman* and *The Prick of Conscience*, two of the most successful verse texts produced in late-medieval England. It offers for the first time a full account of how these important fourteenth-century texts were related, from the composition of *Piers* between the 1360s and 1380s, through their shared reception history to the middle of the fifteenth century. By combining approaches drawn from literary criticism, textual criticism, and manuscript studies, it revises our view of the relative status of these two texts in the literary culture of the period. It adds to our understanding of the status of Latin, the nature of Middle-English book production, and the reading practices of vernacular audiences, and reflects on the methods we employ in studying medieval texts.

The remarkable popularity of both poems and the previously-unexamined evidence for a significant overlap in their production form the impetus for this study. Both are among the most well-attested verse texts surviving from medieval England: *The Prick* is recorded in more copies than any other poem in Middle English, while *Piers* is third after *The Canterbury Tales*, and six scribes are known to have copied both. Yet *Piers* has been a major research area for over a century, while *The Prick* has been mostly neglected. This stark difference in modern interest has left a gap in our view of the early reception of *Piers*, which shared a readership with *The Prick*. The overlap between them suggests a range of new audiences and forms of reading we have yet to identify, and raises significant questions: what kinds of book producers had access to both, and for whom did they make copies? *Piers* is a narrative text, an allegorical dream vision, while *The Prick* is didactic, instructing its readers in the pursuit of salvation, so how were they read together given these differences? Shared reception history leads, in reverse chronological order, to a prior question: was their composition connected? *The Prick* was written before *Piers*, so did the earlier poem influence the later? In response, the thesis presents a combined study of the compositional relationship between the two poems and the history of their readership as a pair.

The first chapter shows for the first time that *Piers* drew on the language and structure of *The Prick* alongside other widely-circulated instructional texts. It argues that the earliest form of the poem, the A text, borrows from these works in a critique of the psychological models they promote, and explores how this influence developed in later revisions.

The second chapter turns to the joint reception of the two poems in the hands of scribes and readers. It studies the transmission networks which enabled the copying of *Piers* and *The Prick* together, asking which individuals and institutions were responsible for their shared production. In tracing the provenance of forty-five manuscripts of both poems, it gives a new account of their production stressing the role of ecclesiastical institutions in transmitting them, and identifies for the first time a manuscript of *The Prick* containing insertions of new material influenced by *Piers*.

The third chapter moves from questions of audience to questions of use. It looks at the three surviving manuscripts which contain both poems, offering a new account of their production. It

challenges previous views of the use of the two poems in pastoral, practical contexts, suggesting instead that the two were probably produced together for private reading.

The fourth chapter considers in closer detail what this private reading may have looked like. It offers the first study of the manuscript presentation of *Piers* and *The Prick* in relation to one another, surveying features across almost all surviving copies of both. It argues that their scribes were highly concerned to authorise both poems through presentation models which were traditional and normative.

The final chapter focuses on two revised texts of *The Prick*, both of which had a relationship with *Piers*. It offers the first account of the textual history of the Eight-Part Version, a major revision of the poem, and discusses in more detail the insertions in the revised text identified in the second chapter. In comparing these two, this chapter identifies up to four possible readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* together, and argues that all engaged with the two poems as repositories of Latin quotations, mostly ignoring their English verse.

The conclusion reflects on the evidence that readers of both poems read them selectively and focused on their Latin quotations, and how their composition in English might have been justified in a culture where Latin was valued far more highly. It explores how both poems reflect restrictions on the access to written texts in late-medieval England, and the approaches we should take in studying a period marked by a widespread interest in maintaining unequal structures of power.

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Short forms, conventions, and abbreviations

Short forms

Editions and other works cited frequently in the text of the thesis are named with the following short forms:

Hanna-Wood	*Richard Morris's Prick of Conscience: A Corrected and Amplified Reading Text*, ed. by Ralph Hanna and Sarah Wood, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 342 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
Kane	*Piers Plowman: The A Version*, ed. by George Kane, rev. edn (London: Athlone, 1988)
Kane-Donaldson	*Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (London: Athlone, 1975)
LALME	Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, 4 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986)
Lewis-McIntosh	Robert E. Lewis and Angus McIntosh, *A Descriptive Guide to the Manuscripts of the Prick of Conscience* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Mediæval Languages and Literature, 1982)
Russell-Kane	*Piers Plowman: The C Version*, ed. by George Russell and George Kane (London: Athlone, 1997)
Schmidt	William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A, B, C and Z Versions*, ed. by A. V. C. Schmidt, 3 vols, rev. edn (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011)

Conventions

In the main text, manuscript shelfmarks are cited for the first time without the location of their repository: for example, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 137, or Huntington Library, MS Hm 114. Where repositories have the same name, but are distinguished by their location, their location is included: for example, Trinity College Cambridge, MS R. 3. 2. Shelfmarks in tables, appendices, and the bibliography are given in full.

Italic text in transcriptions from manuscripts and archival sources represents expanded abbreviations, and bold text is used to mark palaeographical discussion of letterforms (for example, 'the shape of **d**').

Abbreviations

CE	Common Era
ed.	edited
edn.	edition
EETS	Early English Text Society
ES	Extra Series
f.	folio
ff.	folios
l.	line
ll.	lines
mm	millimetre
OS	Original Series
p.	page
pp.	pages
rev.	revised
SS	Saints
trans.	translated
YLS	*The Yearbook of Langland Studies*

Introduction

> "There be two kinds of poets: and one dwelleth in monastery and maketh long tales of saints, or it may be he furbisheth old matter of history. But this is not my place. And another sort abideth in a king's palace; he is a jongleur, and deviseth merry tales of love, and adventure to war, to please the ladies in hall. But I am not of these neither."[1]

Florence Converse's 1903 novel, *Long Will: A Romance*, opens by imagining one of medieval England's most celebrated poets, William Langland, falling asleep on a sunny day in the Malvern Hills. A heady brew of spurious biographical detail, literary borrowing, and romantic invention sees the young Langland dream of meeting with a boy attached to the Prince's court, lost in pursuit of the hunt. The child's praise of metropolitan, francophone love poetry is rebuffed by the truculent Langland, and after an exchange in which Langland's 'long slow measures' are set against 'verses the French way, with rhyme' (p. 8), Langland sends the young Geoffrey Chaucer off towards the nearby monastery, where the hunt will dine and rest for the night. This will not be the only poet Langland encounters in the course of the novel: Malvern Abbey, for example, turns out to be the home of the *Pearl* poet, here imagined as a former knight turned monk and scribe who long ago lost his infant daughter. Converse sets Langland among an array of late-medieval literary talent, yet Langland feels himself separate and distinct. He is neither a poet of the cloister nor the court, the two categories into which *Long Will* divides literary production in late-medieval England.

While many elements of this scene have been discarded in the century since it was published, a sense of this exceptionalism has remained. We no longer see Langland in the role of itinerant preacher imagined by Converse and an older generation of scholarship, and writing in

[1] Florence Converse, *Long Will: A Romance* (London, 1908), p. 13.

Middle English is seen in a much wider view, more geographically varied and dispersed. But *Piers Plowman*, the allegorical dream vision associated with Langland's name, remains for some modern readers in a category of its own, 'uniquely brilliant' where other materials are 'dull'.[2] Famously described as a 'commentary on an unknown text', the poem maintains for some a pervading sense of mystery and indeterminacy.[3] This view raises important questions about the field of Langland studies: why do we continue to see *Piers Plowman* as so distinctive? What was its status in the middle ages, and if less distinctive than modern readers have thought, have we failed to see clearly its relationship with the textual culture of the period?

Research on Langland's sources has reconstructed his engagement with a huge range of genres, forms, and discourses. The poem has been seen in relation to biblical, theological, academic, legal, and literary texts, principally in Latin.[4] Recent work has illuminated *Piers*'s debts to French writing, but there remains a significant blind spot in our understanding of how the poem was produced and read in relation to major trends in literary culture.[5] In response, this thesis positions *Piers* in relation to another kind of literary production, one which has had very low visibility in Langland studies, and to some extent in Middle English studies more broadly. This is the culture of vernacular instructional writing, and specifically its most successful manifestation in Middle English: *The Prick of Conscience*.

The Prick is a 9,600-line poem of rhyming couplets composed in northern England, probably Yorkshire, in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.[6] It had a huge audience, surviving in

[2] Andrew Cole and Andrew Galloway, 'Christian philosophy in *Piers Plowman*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. by Andrew Cole and Andrew Galloway (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 136-59 (142, 150).
[3] Morton W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, 1962), p. 32.
[4] See Anne Middleton's bibliography of scholarship on the poem's sources in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, ed. by J. Burke Severs and others, 11 vols (New Haven, 1967-2005), VII, pp. 2431-3.
[5] See the cluster of essays on 'Langland and the French Tradition' in *YLS*, 30 (2016).
[6] Hanna-Wood, pp. xxxiv-xxxix.

more manuscript copies than any other Middle English verse text, and some of this audience was shared with *Piers*.[7] Six scribes produced copies of both poems, three in single manuscripts and three in separate books:

London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a.1 (the Vernon manuscript)
San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128

London, British Library, Additional MS 34779/Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 90
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 137/Oxford, University College, MS 142[8]
Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 201/Durham, Ushaw College, MS 50[9]

One further scribe of *The Prick* had access to a now-lost copy of *Piers*, which he used to compose unique revisions to the text of *The Prick* surviving in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139, as will be shown in later chapters. These seven medieval individuals represent the largest overlap in production between *Piers* and another text, indicating that they shared a significant audience in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The overlap in their production raises a prior question, whether *The Prick* had an influence on the composition of *Piers*.

These questions have not been investigated in previous accounts of either poem. Although hugely popular in the late middle ages, *The Prick* has largely been neglected in modern scholarship, meaning that its relationship with *Piers* has not been studied. Clearly, however, they were circulated and read together, and this connection in their copying suggests a range of new audiences and forms of reception we have yet to identify. This thesis examines their relationship, from the composition

[7] Hanna-Wood, pp. 378-83.
[8] This scribal overlap is identified in Simon Horobin, 'The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry 137 and the Copying and Circulation of *Piers Plowman*', *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 19 (2005), 3-26.
[9] Identified in A. I. Doyle, 'Ushaw College, Durham, MS 50: Fragments of the *Prick of Conscience*, by the same Scribe as Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 201, of the B Text of *Piers Plowman*', in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards and others (London, 2000), pp. 43-9

of *Piers* to their production in the hands of the same scribes together, as a history of contact between them.

Background

Piers Plowman is a narrative poem recounting a series of dream visions from the perspective of a narrator with several shifting identities. Its plot is broadly organised in three parts: the early visions are a political and social satire describing corruption in the court and a scene of mass confession and pilgrimage; the middle section depicts encounters between the dreamer and various allegorical representations of faculties of the human mind; and the later visions represent the passion narrative, the founding of a new church, and its collapse in a final apocalypse. The narrator is both a person, Will, and at other points a representation of the psychological faculty of the will.[10]

The poem was produced in several stages of revision over about two decades in the late fourteenth century. Three authorial versions survive: the A, B, and C texts, written in that order. The A text is shorter than the others, recounting the first two visions and part of the third and running to around 2,500 lines. It was probably composed in the early 1370s.[11] The B text is a rewriting and expansion of A into the eight-vision, 7,300-line form accepted as complete, thought to have been produced at the end of that decade. The C text is a partial rewriting of B from the late 1380s,

[10] References to the name 'Will' are identified in George Kane, *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship* (London, 1965), pp. 58-65.

[11] Evidence for the dating of the three versions is presented in Ralph Hanna, *William Langland* (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 11-17, and Schmidt, II, pp. 278-81.

apparently unfinished. Other authorial versions have been proposed based on surviving manuscript evidence, but none are widely accepted.[12]

Piers is associated with the name William Langland, but very little is known about its authorship or who Langland may have been. Recent work has shown that medieval readers of the B text associated the poem's authorship with the name 'Long Will', but this 'conflated author-narrator persona' has an equally uncertain relationship with the historical circumstances of the poem's production.[13] Langland, as he remains in modern scholarship, was apparently from the south-west Midlands, but it now seems likely that he spent much of his career in London and that the B and C texts were disseminated from there (though the geographical origins of the A text remain unclear).[14] An older tradition of criticism saw Langland as an itinerant preacher and poet, drawing in part on a passage in the C text purporting to describe the life of the poet,[15] but his links to London and

[12] The most ambitious proposal is that the text in Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 851 represents a version of the poem anterior to the A text – the Z text. See *Piers Plowman: The Z Version*, ed. by A. G. Rigg and Charlotte Brewer (Toronto, 1983). The status of the Z text is disputed in Ralph Hanna, 'MS. Bodley 851 and the Dissemination of *Piers Plowman*', in *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 195-202. See also Wendy Scase, 'Two *Piers Plowman* C-Text Interpolations: Evidence for a Second Textual Tradition', *Notes and Queries*, 34 (1987), 456-63; and Charlotte Brewer, *Editing Piers Plowman: The evolution of the text* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 386-91 (where she suggests that variant readings might be evidence of authorial revision).

[13] Sebastian Sobecki, 'Hares, Rabbits, Pheasants: *Piers Plowman* and William Longewille, a Norfolk Rebel in 1381', *Review of English Studies*, 69 (2018), 216-36 (219).

[14] Langland's origin in the south-west Midlands is inferred from dialect evidence in the poem: see M. L. Samuels, 'Langland's Dialect', *Medium Ævum*, 54 (1985), 232-47. Evidence that Langland spent much of his life in London is suggested by the dissemination of the B and C texts from the city. Trinity College Cambridge, MS B. 15. 17, thought to be the most textually authoritative copy of the B text, was produced in London: Kane-Donaldson, p. 13, n. 91, suggest the book is similar to other London productions, and its hand has been identified with the scribe of the Hengwrt manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* in Simon Horobin and Linne R. Mooney, 'A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript by the Hengwrt/Ellesmere Scribe and Its Implications for London Standard English', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 26 (2004), 65-112 (this point is discussed in the second chapter of the present thesis). On the origin of the C text in London, see Simon Horobin, 'In London and Opelond: The Dialect and Circulation of the C Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Medium Ævum*, 74 (2005), 248-69. For an account of the representation of London in the poem, see Derek Pearsall, 'Langland's London', in *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, ed. by Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 185-207.

[15] See, for example, Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman*, p. 19: 'He is William Langland of Malvern and London, a clerk in minor orders who has high hopes but who is mostly a failure'.

familiarity with the city's bureaucracy and legal institutions, evident from the poem, as well as manuscript evidence, makes it much more likely that Langland was a member of the gentry.[16]

The Prick of Conscience was produced some decades earlier than *Piers* in the North of England. *The Prick* is two things: seven 'books' of varying length describing the place of humanity within creation and biblical history, extending to judgment day in the future, with an emphasis on wretchedness, suffering, and pain both in life and death; and an initial Prologue framing how these books are intended to be read. The Prologue explains that the horrors of its later content are intended to 'prikke þair conscience withyn', so 'of that drede may a lofe bygyn' (ll. 344-5). Fear inspired by the seven books dealing with man's wretchedness, the world, death, purgatory, judgment day, the pains of hell, and the joys of heaven should, according to the poem, create desire for God and for the improvement of the self.

The poem is indebted to many textual traditions. Much of it is translated from French and Latin sources, and it incorporates many direct quotations from Latin. The poet appears to have depended most heavily on an Anglo-French text, *Les Peines de Purgatorie*, but material from *Les Peines* is distributed across various books of the poem.[17] It is not a direct translation of any whole original, rather a compilation of borrowings and sources joined together with original verse. It is also related to a northern tradition of long-form couplet composition, preceded by *Cursor Mundi*, a versified history of the world, and *The Northern Homily Cycle*, and followed by *Speculum Vitae*, a 16,000-line explication of the Pater Noster. These were all composed in rhyming couplets, and all begin with a prologue focused in part on the significance of writing in Middle English.[18]

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[16] Documentary evidence for Langland's authorship of the poem is surveyed in Kane, *Evidence for Authorship*, pp. 26-51, and Hanna, *Langland*, pp. 1-6.

[17] Hanna-Wood, pp. lii-liv.

[18] Nicholas Watson discusses the prologue to *Cursor Mundi* in these terms: 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Exeter, 1999), pp. 331-52 (334-5).

The Prick was read very widely in late-medieval England. It survives in over 120 witnesses, including extracts in a stained-glass window in the church of All Saints, North Street, in the city of York, and its many manuscripts reflect many different versions.[19] The standard form of the poem, known as the 'Main Version', was rewritten several times; the most successful of these is the 'Southern Recension', a careful line-by-line revision of the original, but other revisers variously shortened the poem, turned it into prose, and translated it into Latin.[20] It was so widespread that the Southern Recension, surviving in nineteen manuscripts, enjoyed a substantial circulation by the standards of Middle English quite apart from the Main Version.[21]

It contains elements of instructional writing, in that it was written to assist its readers in living virtuously, but is different to texts written for specific pastoral or ritual purposes such as confession manuals or model sermons. It also lacks the discussion of basic theological concepts characteristic of catechetical manuals. In its own words,

> ...þis buke es on Ynglese drawen
> Of sere maters þat er unknawen
> Til laude men þat er unkunnand,
> Þat can na Latyn understand,
> To mak þam þamself first to knaw
> And fra syn and vanytese þam draw,
> And for to stir þam til right drede,
> When þai þis tretisce here or rede. (ll. 336-43)

The poem anticipates its own reading by individuals who seek to better their understanding of salvation. It does not assume the access of laypeople through an intermediary such as a priest, so

[19] For a complete list of manuscripts of *The Prick* (and witnesses to the poem in other forms), see Hanna-Wood, pp. 378-83. On the York window, see Ellen K. Rentz, *Imagining the Parish in Late Medieval England* (Columbus, 2015), pp. 122-48.
[20] Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 10-13.
[21] On the scale of manuscript circulation for Middle English texts, see Michael G. Sargent, 'What Do the Numbers Mean? A Textual Critic's Observations on Some Patterns of Middle English Manuscript Transmission', in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York, 2008), pp. 205-44.

characterisations of the poem as 'a handbook for real priests seeking to guide their flock' may not be strictly accurate.[22] The poem was written for the use of literate but non-Latinate readers, assumed able to access the poem. I describe it as 'instructional', a term which captures the practical forms of use to which the poem imagined it would be put without assuming specific contexts and forms of reading for that use.

The overlapping production of *Piers* and *The Prick* in the hands of six scribes has not been studied in detail, but raises significant questions about their reception history separately and as a pair. They have different origins: *The Prick* in a monastic Yorkshire context, *Piers* at least partly in London. Accounts of *Piers*'s reception have stressed a mixed audience of clerics and laypeople, while *The Prick* has often been envisaged in the hands of parish priests.[23] Yet they came to be copied by the same people, so what was the nature of this shared production context and audience? *The Prick* is more directly instructional than *Piers*, concerned with how its readers could redirect their lives towards salvation, so their copying together in three books might suggest that they were put together for the same purposes. Was *Piers* read for instruction, or *The Prick* for reflection? Both poems contain extensive Latin quotations, though these are presented differently: *The Prick* sets its quotations off from the English verse, introduced with source identifications, while *Piers* is more likely to embed its quotations in the English verse and only rarely indicates their origin.[24] Scribes frequently copied the quotations in both poems in Latin or display script, and they might have been a significant point of similarity between the two poems. Yet they also indicate, particularly given

[22] Andrew Galloway, 'Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the *Prick of Conscience*, and the History of the Latin Gloss in Early English Literature', in *John Gower: Manuscripts, Readers, Contexts*, ed. by Malte Urban (Turnhout:, 2009), pp. 39-70 (42).
[23] Anne Middleton, 'The Audience and Public of Piers Plowman', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 101-23. Jonathan Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', in *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England*, ed. by David M. Smith (York, 1991), pp. 87-163 (105).
[24] See John A. Alford, *Piers Plowman: A Guide to the Quotations* (Binghamton, 1992), pp. 3-9.

their presentation, the higher status of Latin compared to Middle English. What was the value of these quotations, and what was the value of the Middle English verse surrounding them? Two copies of *Piers* were written by scribes who also copied revised texts of *The Prick*, raising further questions about audience, readership, and use in these new textual forms.

Their similarities raise the possibility that *The Prick* may have influenced *Piers*. In what ways might the form or content of the earlier poem have been of interest to Langland? His engagement with other instructional texts has been documented, but *The Prick* has not been seriously considered as a source for *Piers*.[25] Exploring their compositional relationship suggests new areas of Langland's reading, potentially engaged with the discourses of vernacular religious instruction in ways not previously understood.

Reading these two texts together also opens critical and disciplinary questions. *Piers* and *The Prick* represent two extremes of modern taste, both in and out of the academy. *Piers* has been a major research area since early editorial endeavours in the late nineteenth century and has been re-edited many times since. Since Walter Skeat's pioneering efforts, at least eleven scholarly editions of all or some of the poem have been published in single- and parallel-text versions.[26] It has been the subject of many academic books, articles, and conference papers, and continues to animate an entire organisation dedicated to its study, the International *Piers Plowman* Society. The Society publishes a journal focused on it, *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, an honour placing it on par with

[25] David Lawton, 'The Subject of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 1 (1987), 1-30; Ralph Hanna, '*Speculum Vitae* and the Form of *Piers Plowman*', in *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England*, ed. by Frank Grady and Andrew Galloway (Columbus, 2013), pp. 121-39; and Robert Worth Frank, *Piers Plowman and the Scheme of Salvation: An Interpretation of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest* (New Haven, 1957), p. 52, n. 3, p. 63, n. 2, p. 64, n. 4.

[26] Brewer, *Editing Piers Plowman*, presents a comprehensive list of published editions up to the mid 1990s (pp. 434-35). Since then, two further editions (to my knowledge) have appeared: *Piers Plowman: The A Version*, ed. by Míċeál F. Vaughan (Baltimore, 2011), and *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive, IX: The B-Version Archetype*, ed. by John Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Raleigh, 2018), available online at <http://piers.chass.ncsu.edu/texts/Bx> [accessed 3 January 2020].

the work of Chaucer. *Piers* has also found fame outside centres of academic research: in 2014, the writer Ian Sansom brought a group of students, academics, and actors to a tower in Antrim to discuss the poem, and recorded the experience for BBC Radio Ulster.[27] In 2017, arts company Penned in the Margins developed a series of live performances based on the poem called *Fair Field*, staged in Malvern and London.[28]

The Prick, meanwhile, has long since faded from mainstream literary culture. Leaving aside a brief and apparently unsuccessful appearance in early print,[29] for almost 150 years the poem was available to modern readers only in Richard Morris's 1863 edition.[30] In the last decade, three new texts have appeared: a single-manuscript version edited for the TEAMS Middle English Texts Series in 2012;[31] one based on Morris's original, incorporating readings from a larger corpus of manuscripts, for the Early English Text Society in 2013 (Hanna-Wood); and a single-text edition of the Southern Recension.[32] These have emerged at a moment of increasing interest in manuscripts of the poem: in addition to the present thesis, recent doctoral dissertations have examined aspects of its circulation and readership, and book-length studies are forthcoming.[33] Manuscripts of the poem have also been a major resource for dialectologists because of their almost comprehensive geographical spread.

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[27] 'Piers the Plowman Revisited', *Stories in Sound* (BBC Radio Ulster) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04dh39k> [accessed 22 June 2019].

[28] *Fair Field*, <thisfairfield.com> [accessed 22 June 2019].

[29] Jean F. Preston, '*The Pricke of Conscience* (Parts I-III) and its First Appearance in Print', *The Library*, 6th series, 7 (1985), 303-14. *The Prick* was printed in two sections by Robert Wyer, as *Here begynneth a lytell boke, that speketh of purgatorye* ([London], [?1534]), STC 3360, and *Here begynneth a newe treatyse deuyded in thre parties* ([London], [?1542]), STC 24228.

[30] *The Pricke of Conscience* (*Stimulus Conscientiae*)*: A Northumbrian Poem*, ed. by Richard Morris (Berlin, 1863).

[31] *Prik of Conscience*, ed. by James H. Morey (Kalamazoo, 2012). Also available online at <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/morey-prik-of-conscience> [accessed 22 June 2019].

[32] *The Pricke of Conscience: An Annotated Edition of the Southern Recension*, ed. by Jean E. Jost (Jefferson, 2019).

[33] Daniel Sawyer, 'Codicological Evidence of Reading in Late Medieval England, with Particular Reference to Practical Pastoral Verse' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016); Daniel Sawyer, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript, c.1350-c.1500* (forthcoming); Helen Marshall, 'Literary Codicologies: The Conditions of Middle English Literary Production, c. 1280-1415' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2014); Michael Johnston, *The Reading Nation in the Age of Chaucer: Copying and Reading Middle English Books, 1350-1500* (forthcoming).

The *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, a seminal research tool for Middle English dialect studies, incorporated the earlier work of Robert E. Lewis and Angus McIntosh's catalogue of *Prick* manuscripts (Lewis-McIntosh). Yet despite burgeoning interest in the poem's reception history, and the historic value of its dialectal evidence, literary critical research on *The Prick* has been sparse. No book-length studies have focused on the poem, and only a few articles have examined its form, language, and relationship to other texts and traditions.[34]

The reasons for this difference in modern reception are to some extent obvious: *The Prick* fits modern tastes poorly, with its extensive didacticism and extreme pessimism about human nature, where *Piers*'s complex narrative structure and mix of competing discourses make it a better fit in our present moment.[35] But these reasons are not necessarily good indicators of how medieval people may have responded to the two poems. In some visible ways, this pattern in their modern reception sits uncomfortably with evidence of their status in the middle ages. *The Prick* survives in more manuscripts than *Piers* by a considerable distance – *Piers* is recorded today in fifty-three copies and a handful of additional fragments and extracts.[36]

The stark difference in their modern reception might be explained by how the two poems fit modern categories of literariness. Despite significant shifts in the field of English studies in recent decades and increased interest in non-literary texts and documents, literary texts continue to dominate. This bias is expressed, for example, in the scale of academic conferences dedicated to Chaucer: The New Chaucer Society's 2018 Congress in Toronto featured 100 sessions over four days.[37]

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[34] Howell Chickering, 'Rhetorical *Stimulus* in the *Prick of Conscience*', in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honour of Jeremy Duquesnay Adams*, ed. by Stephanie Hayes-Healy, 2 vols (New York, 2005), I, pp. 191-230; Andrew Galloway, 'Gower's *Confessio Amantis*'.

[35] See, similarly, Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300-1380* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 153-54.

[36] Schmidt, II, pp. 2-9.

[37] See the conference programme for the conference: 'New Chaucer Society Biennial Congress University of Toronto, 10-15 July 2018' < http://newchaucersociety.org/assets-documents/NCS_2018_Program.pdf> [accessed 27 December 2019].

Langland's literariness has been constructed through his status as one of the 'Ricardian Poets', along with Chaucer, Gower, and the *Pearl*-poet.[38] *Piers*'s visible reception process, in its three surviving authorial forms, makes its composition and revision unusually accessible to us, and the lack of other texts associated with Langland's name have led to characterisations of the poem's production as a 'life's work'.[39] The poem is perceived in these terms as an immense labour and long-term intellectual project, a 'work of art' produced by a 'craftsman'.[40] Crucially, the poem is seen in terms which set it apart from its historical and cultural moment, a text which emerged enigmatically from its circumstances and came to shape its surroundings in new ways.[41] When presented as 'a commentary on an unknown text', its relationship to its cultural moment is made to seem oblique, indirect, and transformative. Evidence of its appropriation by the rebels of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt expresses for modern readers the poem's almost dangerous power to provoke.[42] Compare the characterisation of *The Prick*, which is seen as emerging fully-formed from a set of historical circumstances, always a product of its culture: it 'stands squarely in the world of real confession that constituted so central a cultural concern in late medieval England'.[43] Descriptions of *The Prick* as a 'manual' underline its practical ambitions: not a work of reflection, but of pragmatism.[44]

These categories of literariness and non-literariness applied to *Piers* and *The Prick* fail to explain the visible facts of their reception: that *The Prick* was much more widely copied than *Piers* and that the two had a large shared audience. Looking afresh at their relationship in the context of

[38] J. A. Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry: Chaucer, Gower, Langland and the Gawain poet* (London, 1971).
[39] Spencer Strub, 'Learning from Shame', *YLS*, 32 (2018), 37-75 (41).
[40] Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman*, pp. 3, 7.
[41] See, for example, Anne Middleton's comments in 'Acts of vagrancy: The C Version "Autobiography" and the Statute of 1388', in *Written Work*, ed. by Justice and Kerby-Fulton, pp. 208-317, where the poem is said to possess a 'specifically literary self-awareness' (p. 209).
[42] Stephen Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkeley, 1994), p. 106; Sebastian Sobecki, 'Hares, Rabbits, Pheasants', 234.
[43] Galloway, 'Gower's *Confessio Amantis*', p. 43.
[44] Hughes, 'Administration of Confession', p. 105.

disciplinary bias in favour of *Piers* suggests that we may still need to dismantle assumptions about literary quality and status, if we are to respond sensitively to the medieval past.

Methodology

This thesis studies the historical relationship between *Piers* and *The Prick* from the composition of the former in the 1380s to their production by the same scribes up to roughly the middle of the fifteenth century. This structure combines approaches associated with the study of literary composition and reception history, subdisciplines traditionally held to ask different questions: what was in the mind of a writer in the process of writing? And what in the mind of readers in the process of reading?

From a different perspective, these two acts have much in common and might even be inseparable. In the process of writing, writers might read what has just been written and make changes based on that reading in a continuous process of revision which eventually generates a finished work. Langland himself demonstrates this on a larger scale, as he wrote and rewrote his poem for many years. This symbiotic view of writing and reading was held by some in the middle ages: Lydgate has been shown to represent influence between authors, sources, and the patrons of verse texts in 'horizontal' ways, moving back and forth between previous works, his patrons' reading, and his own rewriting.[45] A history of textual composition is therefore always a history of reading as much as writing, and when readers leave traces of their reading, reading turns again into writing. Studies of manuscript marginalia have explored the responses of medieval people to the

[45] R. D. Perry, 'Lydgate's Virtual Coteries: Chaucer's Family and Gower's Pacifism in the Fifteenth Century', *Speculum*, 93 (2018), 669-98 (671).

texts they read,[46] and accounts of scribal revision have illuminated the efforts of readers to improve, from their perspective, older works, or to repurpose them for new ends.[47]

This approach faces a problem, in that writing was not necessarily influenced by reading, and reading not necessarily influenced by writing. The two acts can be separable when they represent stages in a lifespan of a text – once they pass from an author to readers who may be far away in space and time, texts might not be read in the way they were intended to be. Chronologically, writing and reading are separate and potentially disconnected, but the response of readers in the period of a text's reception history might reflect cultural conditions which operated at the time of its composition and affected its production. Reception history might be read back into composition history, helping to reconstruct the context in which writing happened or suggesting the patterns of response an author might have anticipated. At the core of this thesis, for example, is an apparent misalignment between the evidence that readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* viewed these texts as Latin works, and had only minimal interest in their Middle English verse, and the fact of their composition in Middle English. Why write in English, if your readers would only be interested in the Latin you quoted? The conclusion will read these responses from readers of the two poems

[46] George Russell, "'As They Read It': Some Notes on Early Responses to the C-Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Leeds Studies in English*, 20 (1989), 173-89; George Russell, 'Some Early Responses to the C-Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Viator*, 15 (1984), 275-304; Tanya Schaap, 'From Professional to Private Reader: A Discussion and Transcription of the Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Marginalia in *Piers Plowman* C-Text, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102', in *The Medieval Reader: Reception and Cultural History in the Late Medieval Manuscript*, ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (= *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3rd series, 1 (2001)), pp. 81-116. Visual marginalia has been seen in the same terms: see Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London, 1992); and on a manuscript of *Piers*, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise Despres, *Iconography and the Professional Reader: The Politics of Book Production in the Douce Piers Plowman* (Minneapolis and London, 1999); and Kathleen Scott, 'The Illustrations of *Piers Plowman* in Bodleian Library MS Douce 104', *YLS*, 4 (1990), 1-86.

[47] Consider the prose manual for women religious, *Ancrene Wisse*, repeatedly adapted for new audiences: A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Early English Manuscripts and Early Readers of *Ancrene Wisse*', in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Yoko Wada (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 103-12. See Sawyer, 'Codicological Evidence', pp. 234-91, on the Southern Recension of *The Prick*. On medieval scribes as readers, see Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge, 2014).

back into their composition, suggesting that Middle English authors may have seen English literary composition in terms far more utilitarian than we now do.

This approach also suggests some of the stakes in a history of reading. The conceptualisation of readerly behaviour shapes our view of people's response to their culture. Readers might be resistant to the dominant structures operating in their historical moment, or compliant with them. The rebellious reader has dominated histories and theories of reading in many periods, exemplified by Roger Chartier's view that 'reading, by definition, is rebellious and vagabond. Readers use infinite numbers of subterfuges to procure prohibited books, to read between the lines, and to subvert the lessons imposed on them'.[48] This may not always have been the case: some readers sought to reproduce existing social and cultural forms, and even if mistaken, saw their own reading as traditional or conventional, in line with the expectations of their texts. This seems to have been the experience of many medieval scribes: a study of mistakes in copying has demonstrated that most scribes were highly accurate, and shown their enormous concern to maintain this high standard.[49] Histories of reading must be sensitive to both possibilities, or run the risk of privileging views which reflect political bias in favour of resistance to power or affirmation of stability.

In medieval studies, this divide is reflected in the conceptualisation of scribal behaviour. Their work has been seen as equivalent to 'literary criticism', worthy of attention in its own right as a creative process; others have found it derivative and determined, and chastised attempts to find

[48] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, 1994), p. viii. See also the introduction to *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 1-36 (particularly 1-5), and Michel de Certeau, 'Reading as Poaching', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 165-76.
[49] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, pp. 128-56.

value in it.[50] Views of scribal and readerly creativity have come to be prized in many accounts of the medieval past, casting the rebellious reader as equally inventive and surprising.[51]

The rise of the rebellious and creative reader poses problems. Celebrating medieval reading as creative risks straying into classism, as almost all surviving evidence of medieval reading is to some extent the product of an elite culture. Although many people may have possessed basic forms of literacy, very few relative to the population as a whole were able to produce written texts.[52] Might we be marginalising other classes and cultural forms in seeing these literate individuals in the terms we now privilege? Like the emphasis on Langland's literariness explored above, this might again reflect the influence of modern priorities on our view of the past.

Much of the evidence presented here for the responses of early readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* suggests an alternative account of medieval reading, which seems to have lacked creativity and interpretative openness. Instead, *Piers* and *The Prick* were seen in terms which oriented the poems towards authoritative Latin writing, emphasising tradition and continuity with established discourses.

The position of reading at the centre of this study also carries risks. Although the act of reading runs through all parts of my account, not all historical readers have the same status. Those we now call authors are more highly valued because the texts they wrote have come to be widely

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[50] B. A. Windeatt, 'The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 1 (1979), 119-41 (120); compare George Kane, '"Good" and "Bad" Manuscripts: Texts and Critics', in *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches* (London, 1989), pp. 206-13 (208).

[51] Langland himself has been subject to claims of this kind: see Sarah Wilma Watson, 'Grace Holds the 'Clicket' to the Heavenly 'Wicket': *Piers Plowman*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the Poetics of Penetration', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 207-26 (particularly 223: Langland does not simply 'lift' words and themes from the French tradition but carefully adapts them to his own purposes […] Langland did not just 'know' French texts in a superficial sense but was in fact a careful and critical reader of works such as Deguilleville's *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and perhaps even Machaut's *Remède de Fortune*').

[52] M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande, 1991), pp. 275-97. For an older view of medieval literacy, see James Westfall Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1939), pp. 166-95, and Carlo M. Cipolla, *Literacy and Development in the West* (Harmondsworth, 1969).

read, therefore holding cultural weight and meaning now or in the past.[53] Some accounts of textual production in the middle ages have seen all historical readers of medieval texts as of equal status, positioning modern scholarly reading on a par with the responses of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century individuals.[54] This approach might write a history of reception stretching to the present day, but the responses of modern people are not of historical value in reconstructing the cultural meaning of medieval texts in the period of their composition and earliest reception. In response, I maintain distinctions between different categories of readers – authors, revisers, interpolators, reflected in the language used throughout this thesis.

The materials on which this study is based reflect its joint interest in literary criticism and reception history. The first chapter, which studies *The Prick* as a source for *Piers*, is based on edited texts, while the subsequent four chapters draw on manuscript and documentary evidence. Specific methodological approaches are discussed in individual chapters, but some of the problems associated with the nature of these materials are examined here.

All literary criticism is based on texts, but some texts are more easily accessible than others. Most medieval works survive in manuscripts produced at some distance from their authors, giving rise to the tasks of editing and textual criticism. The first chapter draws on the best available edition of *The Prick*, Hanna-Wood, and the three Athlone editions of *Piers* (Kane, Kane-Donaldson, and Russell-Kane), alongside editions of the other texts it considers. The Athlone B text, in particular, has come under criticism for its editorial policies, but as the chapter studies the A text most closely

[53] This view is influenced by Michel Foucault's account of the 'classificatory function' of the names of authors: 'The author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture', 'What is an Author?' in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (London, 1991), pp. 101-20 (107).
[54] Arthur Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (Chicago and London, 2013), pp. 3, 11.

these have little impact here.[55] The editions make varying claims about their status: the Athlone editions, under the editorship of George Kane, present themselves as reconstructions of the common ancestor of all surviving manuscripts,[56] while Ralph Hanna's edition of *Speculum Vitae* is more humbly offered as a 'reading edition' based on a single manuscript.[57] Ultimately, no edition can claim to reconstruct what an author intended to be read, if such a simple set of authorial conditions even existed, so all are treated here as imperfect tools by which a reasonable view of the influence between *The Prick* and *Piers* can nonetheless be reached.

At the centre of the reception history charted in the latter four chapters are the books produced by the seven individuals who had access to both poems. These include six scribes who copied both, and the seventh reviser who inserted passages borrowing from *Piers* in a text of *The Prick*. These individuals were almost certainly unrelated, as they were dispersed geographically and temporally across southern England and the decades on either side of the turn of the fifteenth century. There are some overlaps between them: the text of *The Prick* in Rawlinson poetry 139 is related to that in the Vernon manuscript, and Rylands English 90 and Antiquaries 687 contain texts of the same revised version of *The Prick*. Yet neither of these pairs were produced in the same context, and so are likely to represent only textual and not personal or institutional relationships.

This corpus is a potentially rich source of evidence for responses to the two poems, reflecting different geographical contexts and textual forms. But although these seven individuals represent a overlap in the production of the two poems, they may not necessarily represent more

[55] Schmidt, II, pp. 47-60; Robert Adams, 'The Kane-Donaldson Edition of *Piers Plowman*: Eclecticism's Ultima Thule', *Text*, 16 (2006), 131-41.
[56] Kane, pp. 147-9.
[57] *Speculum Vitae: A Reading Edition*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, EETS, OS 331 and 332, 2 vols (Oxford, 2008).

than that. Particularly in the three cases where scribes produced the texts in separate manuscripts, their audience may not have been the same.

Their overlapping production does, however, represent an overlap in the transmission networks which facilitated their copying. Textual transmission took a number of forms, facilitated by ecclesiastical institutions, private households, and possibly book markets.[58] The six individuals who made copies of both might have occupied the intersection of different networks, or indicate that both poems were transmitted in the same way. This is the subject of the second chapter, which studies the provenance of a large sample of manuscripts of both poems to chart how they came into the hands of the same people.

On this basis, further inferences can be drawn from the jointly-produced copies. The three manuscripts which compile *Piers* and *The Prick* are more likely to indicate overlapping interest and readership, though this again cannot be assumed: compilation might have also have resulted from accidents of exemplar availability or convenience. The third chapter examines the production of these books through the evidence of their structure, script and decoration to suggest what they might say about the poems' joint reception.

Evidence of similar production might suggest further links not apparent from the simple fact of overlapping scribal hands, so manuscript presentation is explored in the fourth chapter. This

[58] On ecclesiastical production, see Rodney M. Thomson, 'Monastic and cathedral book production', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume II, 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel Moran and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 136-67; and A. I. Doyle, 'Publication by Members of the Religious Orders', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 109-23. On urban production, see M. A. Michael, 'Urban production of manuscript books and the role of the university towns', in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Moran and Thomson, pp. 168-94; C. Paul Christianson, 'Evidence for the Study of London's Late Medieval Manuscript Book-Trade', in *Book Production and Publishing*, ed. by Griffiths and Pearsall, pp. 87-108; and Erik Kwakkel, 'Commercial organization and economic innovation', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 173-91. On the household as a site of book production, see Michael Johnston, 'The Household and Literary Production in England, 1350-1500', in *The Elite Household in England, 1100-1550: Proceedings of the 2016 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Christopher M. Woolgar, (Donington, 2018), pp. 93-109.

expands its view beyond the jointly-produced copies to set these manuscripts among a much larger survey of books containing *Piers*, *The Prick*, and other texts. The text of Rawlinson poetry 139, with its interpolations influenced by *Piers*, suggest how rewriting brought the two poems into contact; the final chapter examines this manuscript and the revised version of *The Prick* surviving in Rylands English 90 and Antiquaries 687, presenting further evidence of contact between *Piers* and the reviser who produced this second text. Together, the latter four chapters draw on material approaches (codicology, palaeography) and textual criticism to examine the joint reception of *Piers* and *The Prick* manifested in the work of the seven individuals who had access to them.

Outline

The first chapter examines the relationship between *The Prick* and the composition of *Piers* at its earliest stage, the A text. It shows for the first time that Langland knew *The Prick*, and drew on its language and structure alongside two other widely-circulated instructional texts, the French manual *Somme le roi* and its Middle English translation in *Speculum Vitae*. The A text borrows directly from these works and invokes the genre of which they were part in a critique of their instructional programme. The chapter begins by tracing the influence of *The Prick*, the *Somme*, and *Speculum* in two episodes in the A text: the way to Truth in passus 6 and the speech of Wit in passus 10. Links between these scenes are explored to demonstrate how the dreamer is represented as participating in the kind of psychological process imagined in *The Prick*. This implicit development reflects on the efficacy of instructional texts, coming to endorse the models they promote. The chapter then turns to the B and C texts to explore how these questions and the influence from *The Prick* and the other texts continue in later revisions.

The second chapter turns to the joint reception of the two poems in the hands of scribes and readers. It studies the transmission networks which enabled the copying of *The Prick* and *Piers* together, asking which individuals and institutions were responsible for their shared production. Drawing on codicological and palaeographical approaches including the study of book materials, watermarks, and scribal hands, underpinned with dialectal evidence, this chapter traces the provenance of forty-five manuscripts of both poems to illuminate the contexts in which they were produced. It focuses on three regions: the East of England, where both poems were copied in large numbers and from where one jointly-produced copy survives; Lichfield and the north-west Midlands, where scribes produced a large cluster of *Prick* manuscripts but where *Piers* appears to have been rare; and London, where, in contrast to the pattern seen elsewhere, *Piers* seems to have had a high status but *The Prick* was little read.

The second chapter offers a new account of the production of both poems, stressing the role of ecclesiastical institutions in their production. It identifies for the first time the unique interpolations in the text of *The Prick* in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139, which draw on a B-text manuscript of *Piers* and indicate the availability of that text in the north-west Midlands. It ends with the suggestion that the pattern of transmission in London, where *Piers* was transmitted together with the works of Chaucer, Gower, and Trevisa, reflects how the poem has come to be read today, but not how it was read elsewhere in late-medieval England.

The third chapter moves from questions of audience to questions of use. It looks at the three surviving manuscripts which contain both poems: the Vernon manuscript, Antiquaries 687, and Hm 128, offering a new account of the production of the latter two which challenges previous views of the use of the two poems in pastoral, practical contexts, suggesting instead that the two were probably produced together for private reading. The study of compilation is the chapter's first

subject, as it sets out an approach to multi-text manuscripts which emphasises close attention to production and abandons similarity between compiled texts as evidence of deliberate pairing. Two case studies follow, of Hm 128 and Antiquaries 687. The first reanalyses the production of Hm 128 to argue that it began as a copy of *The Prick* and *Piers* to which other materials were added later, and that it offers no evidence of the use of either poem in pastoral settings as has been previously argued. The second explores discontinuities in the production of Antiquaries 687 which indicate that its final form may not have been intended at the outset, and sets it in the context of a group of related books which indicate how texts written for public or ritual forms of reading could be appropriated for private consumption. The chapter ends with the suggestion that late-medieval books may have been conceptualised in terms more open-ended than we now recognise, open to a variety of dissimilar contents and augmentation over time.

The fourth chapter considers in closer detail what this private reading may have looked like. It offers the first account of the manuscript presentation of *Piers* and *The Prick* in relation to one another, surveying features across almost all surviving copies of both. It incorporates many more manuscripts than even the second chapter to study trends in production across the whole corpus, setting the joint productions in this wider context. It focuses on three presentational areas: the size and shape of books, presentation models derived from other texts, and the presentation of the Latin quotations in both poems. The first section draws on a survey of manuscript sizes which demonstrates that both poems were produced to a similar format. This matches production patterns seen in other texts and on the Continent. The second section explores the meaning of double-column layouts in Middle English copying, seen in a significant number of *Prick* manuscripts, suggesting that these reflect the presentation of Latin texts and therefore the interest of scribes in connecting *The Prick* to authoritative Latin writings. The final section explores the

relationship of the two poems with Latin further, examining the presentation of their Latin quotations to show how both poems were orientated towards authoritative textual traditions. The findings of this chapter together indicate that scribes of both poems were highly concerned to authorise both poems through presentation models which were traditional and normative.

The final chapter takes as its subject two revised texts of *The Prick*: the Eight-Part Version (8PV), surviving in five manuscripts including Rylands English 90 and Antiquaries 687; and the unique text in Rawlinson poetry 139. Both had a relationship with *Piers*, either through copying by the same scribes, in the case of the 8PV, or through the influence of *Piers* on its revisions, as in Rawlinson. This chapter extends the findings of the previous, examining how both revisions suggest an interest in the Latin of *Piers*, but not its English.

It begins with the first study of the textual relationships between the surviving manuscripts of the 8PV. Using a corpus of variants sampled from two areas of the text, I show that Rylands may represent a text close to the source of the revision. Evidence of alliteration in the corpus of variants suggests *Piers* may have been present at the composition of the 8PV, and the pairing of Rylands with a manuscript of the C text in the hands of the same scribe supports this possibility. The chapter then turns to Rawlinson, showing that this text represents a response to *Piers* as a repository of Latin where the Middle English verse was not of much interest. The conclusion to this chapter explores how we might respond to medieval readers who took a different view of literary quality than we now do, addressing one of the thesis's central concerns: how we should respond to reception history when misaligned with our own interests.

The conclusion to the thesis extends some of the questions posed in the preceding chapters. It reflects on the evidence that readers of both poems read them selectively and focused on their Latin quotations, and how their composition in English might have been justified given a culture in

which Latin was valued far more highly. I will suggest a new view of *Piers* and *The Prick* as more invested than previously thought in the secondary status of Middle English, and argue that both poems are structured to collect and store cultural materials and references to other texts in ways not previously recognised. Lastly, the conclusion will explore how both poems reflect the restriction of access to written texts in late-medieval England, and suggest how modern readers should respond to the medieval past on its own terms, even when these are misaligned with our own.

Chapter 1: Composition

Piers Plowman's description of the way to Truth, in passus 6 of the A text, comes at a moment of uncertainty. Following the confession of the sins in passus 5, the group of pilgrims who emerge out of the mass display of penance with which the passus ends are disappointed when the false pilgrim they meet at the opening of passus 6 cannot show them the way. Piers comes to the rescue, making his first appearance in the poem to offer a description of the journey:

> 3e mote go þoru3 meknesse, boþe men & wyues,
> Til 3e come into consience þat crist wyte þe soþe,
> Þat 3e loue hym leuere þanne þe lif in 3oure hertis… (A.6.48-50)

The initial stages of the journey are three emotions or states of mind: meekness, conscience, and the love of God. The journey continues through the ten commandments to the Court of Truth, guarded by Grace, in which live the seven virtues and where the pilgrim must demonstrate penance and avoid sin.

Later in the text comes an episode which has not usually been read in parallel with the way to Truth, but which shares a common term. The speech of Wit in passus 10 is an early stage of the 'inward journey', the sequence of encounters between the dreamer and allegorical figures representing the interior faculties of the human mind.[1] In the course of his speech, Wit offers several definitions of the Dowel triad, the group of three terms (Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest) whose mysterious identity animates the dreamer's questioning in this part of the poem. In the A text, these

[1] Joseph S. Wittig, '"Piers Plowman" B, Passus IX-XII: Elements in the Design of the Inward Journey', *Traditio*, 28 (1972), 211-80.

definitions repeatedly involve the states of dread and meekness: 'in dred liþ dowel' (10.118), Wit tells the dreamer, repeating later that 'of dred & his dede dobest arisiþ' (121). At the same time, 'dobest out of dobet & dowel gynneþ springe / among men of þis molde þat mek ben & kynde' (127-8).

The state of meekness, then, is present in both episodes, concatenated with a different set of terms in each. While these areas might not initially seem to have much in common, the set of terms they partially share (dread, meekness, love) are found together in two important and widely disseminated Middle English works of religious instruction: the first, of course, is *The Prick of Conscience*; the second is *Speculum Vitae*. As they appear in *Speculum*, these terms are translated from an earlier text, the French manual *Somme le roi*, also of very wide reach. Both *The Prick* and the *Somme/Speculum* use these terms in different ways to describe the relationship between sin, virtue, and salvation.

Previous readers of *Piers* have discussed the language of dread, meekness, and love in Wit's speech, but the presence of this same set of terms in the *Somme*, *Speculum*, and *The Prick* has not been recognised.[2] Readers have identified, in other areas of the poem, its engagement with the discourses of religious instruction of which *The Prick* was a part.[3] This work has shown that *Piers* was influenced by the *Somme*, both directly and through its Middle English translations including *Speculum*,[4] but *The Prick* has remained peripheral in studies of Langland's sources, merely a point

[2] Paul Megna, 'Dread, Love, and the Bodies of *Piers Plowman* A.10, B.9, and C.10', *YLS*, 29 (2015), 61-88; M. Teresa Tavormina, *Kindly Similitude: Marriage and Family in Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 72; Nicolette Zeeman, *Piers Plowman and the Medieval Discourse of Desire* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 108; Morton W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, 1962), p. 120.

[3] David Lawton, 'The Subject of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 1 (1987), 1-30; Ralph Hanna, '*Speculum Vitae* and the Form of *Piers Plowman*', in *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England*, ed. by Frank Grady and Andrew Galloway (Columbus, 2013), pp. 121-39; and Robert Worth Frank, *Piers Plowman and the Scheme of Salvation: An Interpretation of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest* (New Haven, 1957), p. 52, n. 3, p. 63, n. 2, p. 64, n. 4. A summary of early work in this area is presented by Anne Middleton in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, ed. by J. Burke Severs and others, 11 vols (New Haven, 1967-2005), VII, pp. 2229-30.

[4] Hanna, '*Speculum*', pp. 122-5.

of comparison rather than influence.[5] This has left a significant gap in our view of Langland's relationship to late fourteenth-century literary culture, a period in which *The Prick*, along with other instructional texts, was reaching the height of its popularity. Middle English sources for the poem have in general remained less visible than writings in Latin, and increasingly French,[6] and even while the poem has been seen in relation to other alliterative verse texts, few other Middle English works, alliterative or not, have been proposed as influences.[7] In response, this chapter adds new evidence for the influence of the *Somme* on *Piers*, both in its original form and through *Speculum*, and demonstrates for the first time Langland's engagement with *The Prick*.

Although my focus is on the relationship between *The Prick* and *Piers*, this chapter argues that, in looking at their compositional history, *The Prick* is inseparable from these other texts. I identify the influence of *The Prick*, the *Somme*, and *Speculum* separately in different episodes in the A text, but the language drawn from them overlaps and these episodes relate to one another in a larger response to the genre of instructional writing. As a moment in the early reception history of *The Prick*, the A text suggests that it was seen in close relation to its fellow Yorkshire production *Speculum* and the immensely influential *Somme*.

The A text is the earliest point at which the influence of *The Prick* is visible on *Piers*. Studies of Langland and instructional writing have been restricted to B, where the influence of the *Somme* was extensive, so the findings presented here relating to the A text suggest that this influence had a

[5] For example in Andrew Galloway, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman, Volume 1* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 71, 87-8, 193, 204.

[6] See in particular the recent issue of *YLS* partly focused on Langland and French: 30 (2016), and the earlier work of Dorothy L. Owen in *Piers Plowman: A Comparison with some Earlier and Contemporary French Allegories* (London, 1912).

[7] David A. Lawton, 'Alliterative Style', in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. by John A. Alford (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 223-49 (particularly 244-9); and Ian Cornelius, *Reconstructing Alliterative Verse: The Pursuit of a Medieval Meter* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 126-9. One exception is *Winnere and Wastour*, seen as a model for *Piers*: Stephen A. Barney, 'Allegorical Visions', in *Companion*, ed. by Alford, pp. 117-33 (130), and Ralph Hanna, 'On the Versions of *Piers Plowman*', in *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 203-43 (232).

longer history in the poem's compositional process than previously recognised. Its full extent is beyond the scope of this chapter, so the subsequent evolution of the influence identified in A will be discussed only briefly. However, in focusing on the A text, this chapter will propose a new status for this neglected version as engaged in a set of questions distinct from those of its later revisions and irreducible to an embryonic early draft of thoughts more fully developed in B and C.

The fraught question of source study in *Piers* is at issue in considering Langland's relationship with this group. Modern readers of the poem have often struggled to identify sources in the terms traditionally applied to medieval texts, for example through analysis of translation or parallels between narrative or structural elements, and instead have tended to discuss the poem in terms of its transformation of earlier material, or imagine its thought in terms of schools and traditions.[8] Some readers have even resisted attempts to link the poem directly to identifiable sources, warning that such efforts risk losing touch with the poem's distinctive 'texture'.[9] In one recent account, 'direct influence is not necessary to explain anything about *Piers Plowman*'.[10]

I disagree with this view, for even Langland's poetry emerged out of a particular cultural moment and is constituted in its terms. Not quite a 'tissue of quotations', *Piers* still drew on discourses, generic forms, and other texts to make itself intelligible to its immediate audience.[11] The most obvious of these are the many lines of Latin scattered throughout all three versions, but the

[8] See, for example, Anne Middleton's discussion of the poem's 'Sources and Literary Relationships', where she claims that 'its specific literary models, either in Latin or the vernaculars, have eluded identification, though several general traditions are apparent': *Manual*, ed. by Severs and others, VII, p. 2227; and Stephen Manning's argument locating *Piers* within 'a tradition of spiritual growth': 'Langland and the Tradition of Spiritual Growth', *YLS*, 7 (1993), 77-95.

[9] Sarah Wood, *Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman* (Oxford, 2012), p. 5: 'To seek in Langland's poem merely an English translation of Latin terminology from scholastic discussions of moral faculties is to lose, then, much of the texture of the poem, and therefore much of its meaning.'

[10] Curtis A. Gruenler, *Piers Plowman and the Poetics of Enigma* (Notre Dame, 2017), p. 175.

[11] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London, 1977), pp. 142-8 (146).

poem borrows in many other ways from its historical and literary context.[12] These have increasingly come to light, and commentators on the poem have in tandem become more comfortable in describing 'Langland's translation', distinct from his adaptation or reworking.[13] In the words of John Alford, 'his work remains stubbornly resistant to any approach that is not historically grounded in the realities of late fourteenth-century England.'[14]

Although the wholesale denial of direct influence might be unhelpful, the sometimes insoluble indeterminacy of Langland's relationship to his cultural context needs to be acknowledged. Langland often gestures towards texts or discourses apparently meant to be understood as conventional and familiar without being specific. This relationship to earlier texts has been characterised by some modern readers as assimilational and syncretic: in one such account, the French line inserted near the end of the Prologue ('*Dieu saue dame Emme*', A.P.103/B.P.225/C.P.229) represents 'a *synthetic everysong*, a lyric that recreates the essential sound of popular song-making in a vague and general way. Langland's song has no real world counterpart because it is meant to recall more than just one song; it is meant to recall *any popular song*' (author's emphasis).[15] So alongside direct borrowing or translation, Langland represented traditions of writing symbolically, engaging with generic forms abstracted from any single example.

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[12] John Alford argues that the poem's Latin quotations are key to understanding the poem's structure and meaning: 'The Role of the Quotations in *Piers Plowman*', *Speculum*, 52 (1997), 80-99. For an example of direct borrowing from a non-Latin source, see Sarah Wilma Watson, 'Grace Holds the 'Clicket' to the Heavenly 'Wicket': *Piers Plowman*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the Poetics of Penetration', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 207-26.

[13] Traugott Lawler, 'William Langland', in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: Volume 1 To 1550*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Oxford, 2008), pp. 149-59 (151). On the translation of Latin in *Piers*, see Erika Lindemann, 'Translation Techniques in William Langland's *Piers Plowman*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972).

[14] 'Langland's Learning', *YLS*, 9 (1995), 1-8 (8).

[15] Ryan Perry, 'Langland's French Song', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 277-96 (278). A similar point about Langland's relationship to French sources is made in Andrew Galloway, 'Madame Meed: *Fauvel*, Isabella, and the French Circumstances of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 227-52.

This view informs the approach to the study of *Piers*'s sources undertaken here. I begin by examining the language of the *Somme*, *Speculum*, and *The Prick* to show how the two latter texts developed a distinctive emotional vocabulary in Middle English. The following sections identify the influence of this language in the A text and show how it represents the salvational processes described in the three sources as part of the experience of the poem's narrator. The chapter turns finally to the ongoing influence of *The Prick* and the other two works in the B and C texts.

The language of instruction

The Prick of Conscience, *Speculum Vitae*, and the *Somme le roi* were all related to a genre defined by its relationship to the increasing interest of the late-medieval Church in the pastoral care of laypeople. This interest was manifested in the programme of pastoral education promoted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and its English reflex, the 1281 Council of Lambeth.[16] Following these events, writers began to produce vernacular texts to instruct laypeople in the means to achieve salvation, a phenomenon widely discussed by literary historians.[17] Many of these texts were extremely popular, as *The Prick*, surviving in over 120 witnesses, itself attests.[18] Works written in this

[16] Norman Tanner, 'Pastoral Care: The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215', in *The Ages of Faith: Popular Religion in Late Medieval England and Western Europe* (London and New York, 2009), 19-31.

[17] Joseph Goering, 'Pastoralia: The Popular Literature of the Care of Souls', in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by Frank Anthony Carl Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington, D.C., 1996), 670-6; *Literary Echoes of the Fourth Lateran Council in England and France, 1215-1405*, ed. by Maureen B. M. Boulton (Toronto, 2019); Vincent Gillespie, '*Doctrina* and *Predicacio*: the Design and Function of some Pastoral Manuals', *Leeds Studies in English*, 11 (1980), 36-50, and 'Vernacular Books of Religion', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1989), 317-44 (317-18); Jonathan Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', in *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England*, ed. by David M. Smith (York, 1991), 87-163 (100, 105); Ellen K. Rentz, *Imagining the Parish in Late Medieval England* (Columbus, 2015), p. 4. The relationship between the *Somme* and pastoral writing is discussed in Frère Laurent, *La Somme le Roi*, ed. by Édith Brayer and Anne-Françoise Leurquin-Labie (Paris, 2008), p. 45.

[18] Hanna-Wood, pp. 378-83.

tradition have been labelled 'pastoral' by modern readers, a term which carries assumptions about how they might have been used – often claimed as aides to preaching or other encounters between clergy and laypeople.[19] Little direct evidence demonstrates the use of vernacular verse texts like *The Prick* and *Speculum* in these contexts, so I prefer the term 'instructional' here for its more neutral description of their educational ambitions without making claims for their use (a point discussed in more detail in the third chapter).[20]

The *Somme* was produced relatively early in this tradition, written in the late thirteenth century by Lorens of Orleans, Dominican friar and confessor to the French king, Phillippe IV. Surviving in sixty-seven complete manuscripts and over thirty extracts and fragments, it was evidently popular.[21] Its English circulation is implicit in the several Middle English translations and adaptations made from it: these include *Speculum*, *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, *The Ayenbite of Inwit*, the *Book for a Simple and Devout Woman*, *Adventure and Grace*, and, at the end of the fifteenth century, Caxton's *Royal Book*.[22] *Speculum* was the most successful of these before print: probably composed between 1350 and 1375, around a quarter of a century after *The Prick*, it came to be widely disseminated and survives in forty-five copies.[23] *Speculum* is not a direct translation, but rather a reorganisation of material from the *Somme* arranged as an explication of the Pater Noster.

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[19] See, for example, Michael Calabrese, 'HM 128 as a Medieval Book', in *Yee? Baw for Bokes: Essays on Medieval Manuscripts and Poetics in Honour of Hoyt N. Duggan*, ed. by Michael Calabrese and Stephen H. A. Shepherd (Los Angeles, 2013), 127-64; Andrew Galloway, 'Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the *Prick of Conscience*, and the History of the Latin Gloss in Early English Literature', in *John Gower: Manuscripts, Readers, Contexts*, ed. by Malte Urban (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 39-70 (42); and Hughes, 'Confession', p. 105.

[20] An argument against the assumption of 'pastoral' uses for *The Prick* based on internal evidence is made in Howell Chickering, 'Rhetorical *Stimulus* in the *Prick of Conscience*', in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honour of Jeremy Duquesnay Adams*, ed. by Stephanie Hayes-Healy, 2 vols (New York, 2005), I, 191-230 (219).

[21] Manuscripts are listed in *La Somme*, ed. by Brayer and Leurquin-Labie, pp. 483-523.

[22] These and others are listed by Robert R. Raymo in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, ed. by J. Burke Severs and others, 11 vols (New Haven: The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967-2005), VII, pp. 2258-62.

[23] An overview, including a list of manuscripts, is given in *Speculum*, ed. by Hanna, pp. xiii-xvi; its date is discussed at pp. lxii-lxiii. See also Ralph Hanna, 'The Yorkshire Circulation of *Speculum Vitae*', in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York, 2008), pp. 279-91.

The Prick, *Speculum* and the *Somme* are distinctive within this historical trend because of their shared vocabulary. The *Somme* developed terms for discussing the process through which sinners become aware of their state and move into virtue, brought into Middle English in the first half of the fourteenth century by *The Prick* and again a little later in *Speculum*'s translation. These were not new coinages: the terms *meknesse* and *drede* are both attested in early Middle English, before instructional texts began to be written, but they acquired specific technical meanings in relation to sin and salvation in this context, explored in more detail in a moment.[24]

The Prick and *Speculum* are also part of a formal and geographical group. Both are examples of long-form northern religious verse, a tradition which developed in the early fourteenth century and includes *Cursor Mundi* and *The Northern Homily Cycle*. Although each of these is different in content – *Cursor* is a history of the world, the *NHC* a series of verse sermons – each is composed in rhyming octosyllabic couplets and begins with a similar prologue. With the exception of *Cursor*, each of these prologues opens with a prayer invoking the Trinity, and all four discuss their composition in English rather than French or Latin.[25] Some surviving evidence indicates their recognition as a group by later scribes, in the cluster of textually authoritative manuscripts compiling the four in various combinations produced in Yorkshire near the end of the fourteenth

[24] The *Middle English Dictionary* cites uses of 'mēk' ('meek') in the *Orrmulum*, dated to the late twelfth century (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED27222/track?counter=1&search_id=1213120> [accessed 31 October 2019]); and of 'drēd(e' ('dread') in *Sawles Warde* from the early thirteenth century (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED12550/track?counter=1&search_id=1213120> [accessed 31 October 2019]).

[25] Hanna-Wood, ll. 1-8, 336-47; *Speculum Vitae: A Reading Edition*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, EETS, OS 331 and 332, 2 vols (Oxford, 2008), ll. 1-18, 61-90; *Cursor Mundi* (*The Cursur o the world*). *A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, OS 57, 59, and 66, 7 vols (London, 1874-93), ll. 232-48; *The Northern Homily Cycle*, ed. by Anne B. Thompson (Kalamazoo, 2008), Prologue, ll. 1-12, 61-80. For an account of the particular divergences between *Cursor Mundi* and other instructional works, see Sarah M. Horrall, '"For the commun at understand": *Cursor Mundi* and its Background', in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent (Cambridge, 1989), 97-107.

century, and the use made of *The Prick* and *Speculum* in *Piers*, discussed below, again suggests that they may have been seen collectively.[26]

The *Somme* is organised into five tracts, or 'traités', dealing with the ten commandments, the twelve articles of the faith, the vices, praise of virtue, and the virtues themselves. Each is similarly structured, explicating subjects through categorisation and listing, but the last is by some way the longest. It begins with an allegory of the 'garden of virtues' and a discussion of the Pater Noster before Lorens turns to the first virtue, 'humilité' ('humility'). This is said to be brought about by the first gift of the Holy Spirit, 'paour' ('dread'), and to replace the vice of 'orgueil' ('pride').[27] The state of dread is associated with divinity (called 'Sainte paour', or 'holy dread', p. 237), and has the power to drive all sins from the heart, stripping out the root of pride and planting humility in its place.

This description is extended at some length, as Lorens imagines a sinner asleep in the world, unaware of his actions and their consequences. When awoken by the Holy Ghost, it becomes clear that he will die and go to hell if he chooses not to reform his behaviour: 'quant li Sainz Esperiz le resveille, adont sent il et voit son peril et commence a avoir paour de soit meismes' (p. 238; 'when the Holy Spirit awakes him, then he feels and sees his peril and begins to have dread of himself'). Dread leads to humility by making the sinner aware of the extent of sin (p. 241), leading to a state in which the 'tree of humility' can grow:

> quant il voit dont et sent que il ne vaut nient, que il n'a nient, que il ne seit nient et que il ne puet nient, lors commence il a ester povres d'esperit. Enc es .IIII. pensees sont les .IIII. branches de la racine de l'arbre d'umilité. (p. 241)

[26] See Ralph Hanna, 'Some North Yorkshire Scribes and their Context', in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (Abingdon and New York, 2008), 167-91.
[27] *La Somme*, ed. by Brayer and Leurquin-Labie, p. 237; further quotations are given with references to page numbers within this volume, and translations are my own.

> (Then, when he sees and feels that he is worth nothing, that he has nothing, that he knows nothing and that he can do nothing, therefore he begins to be poor in spirit. These four thoughts are the four branches of the root of the tree of humility.)

In the language of the *Somme*, dread, brought on by awareness of the danger of the soul exposed to sin, removes the first of the vices, pride, and allows humility to develop in its place.

These terms are only the first in a long sequence of vices, virtues, and gifts, but were remarkably resonant in early fourteenth-century England. Their influence is visible in the Prologue to *The Prick*, which uses a set of Middle English cognates to describe a psychological and emotional process by which the reader will be spurred towards a virtuous life. Here, *drede* and *meknesse* describe the internal experience which will lead the reader to salvation, intended to be brought about by the text, in combination with a further term, 'luf of God'. These terms are in less hierarchical relation to one another than those in the *Somme*. Their first mention brings them together as part of the same imagined path:

> For þe right way þat lyggys til blys
> And þat ledys a man theder es thys:
> Þe way of mekenes principaly
> And of drede and luf of God almighty… (ll. 139-42)

'Mekenes' here may be translating the *Somme*'s 'humilité', and 'drede' its 'paour'. 'Luf of God' may translate 'bonne amour' (p. 254; 'good love') from the *Somme*, identified as the result of the second Gift of the Holy Ghost, 'pitié' ('mercy') which removes the vice of envy. In *The Prick*, these terms are no longer presented as components in a catechetical scheme, but instead as emotional states. The *Somme*'s gifts of the Holy Ghost are replaced by a metaphor of journeying, a 'way of wysdom' (l. 143) which leads the reader towards God. The *Somme* has not been proposed as a source for *The Prick*, and the Prologue in general seems to be an original composition where much of the rest of the poem

translates source materials more directly, but its use of this language indicates the influence of the French text here.[28]

Further evidence for the influence of the *Somme* on *The Prick* comes from the emphasis in both texts on self knowledge as a stage in the processes they imagine. When in the Prologue the three terms are grouped again, a few lines later, the poem describes a form of self knowledge which will 'stir and lede' the wilfully sinful 'til mekenes and til lufe and drede' (ll. 155-8). The entrance into the states of meekness, love, and dread is repeatedly identified as a kind of knowledge: in one case, an 'undirstanding / of many thynges, to knaw and se / Þat has bene and es and yhit sal be' (ll. 178-80). This knowledge, in turn, brings about the three states which lead to action towards better living: knowledge 'til mekenes might stir his wille / And til lufe and drede and to fle alle ill' (ll. 181-2). Self knowledge here recalls the awareness of sin described in the *Somme*, which leads the sinner to begin reforming his behaviour. While the exact relationships between the terms in *The Prick* are not precisely defined, this shared emphasis suggests that the *Prick* poet borrowed from the *Somme*.

Despite this overlap in terminology, the framework in which dread, meekness, and love operate in *The Prick* is different. *The Prick* is more directly psychological, concerned to a greater extent with the emotional experience it intends to bring about rather than the nature of individual sins and virtues. The description of this process is inconsistent, as the terms used to describe it shift in relation to one another, but it is distinctive: other instructional texts are concerned with the identification, analysis, and categorisation of sin and virtue, where *The Prick* focuses on a set of emotions. Its equally distinctive structure reflects this: the majority of the text is focused on the horrors awaiting the soul in life and death, but is framed with a prologue setting out the spiritual

[28] See Hanna-Wood, pp. lii-lxi.

edification intended to result from reading it.[29] This is different to other instructional texts which offer directions for how they should be read, for example *A Talking of the Love of God* or, in the fifteenth century, Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, divided into sections assigned to days of the week – *The Prick* gives little detail on how or when to read it, but explains at length how its contents will work on the mind.[30]

When large parts of the *Somme* came to be translated into Middle English in *Speculum Vitae* around the third quarter of the fourteenth century, the author of that text selected the same terms as had been used in *The Prick*.[31] *Speculum* is organised as a double explication of the Pater Noster, where the second is mostly derived from the *Somme*. This second explication describes sin and virtue in the same terms as the *Somme*, a series of gifts from the Holy Ghost which replace the sins: 'þe Seuen Giftes of þe Haly Gast, / þat puttes out of þe hert euen / þe principall Dedely Synnes Seuen'.[32]

At the end of the poem's list of the 'seuen siker askinges' (l. 3358) of the Pater Noster, what we now call the seven petitions, the poem translates some of the material from the *Somme* discussed above. Lorens's 'Sainte paour' becomes the 'Gift of Drede' (l. 3476), which,

> puttes þe synne of Pryde out
> Of þe hert þat es heghe and stout
> And instead of it plantes and settes
> Mekenes þat Pryde mast lettes… (ll. 3477-80)

[29] The unique role of fear in *The Prick* is discussed in Chickering, 'Rhetorical *Stimulus*' (particularly p. 193).
[30] On *A Talking*, see Andrew Taylor, 'Into his secret chamber: reading and privacy in late medieval England', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven and others (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 41-61 (50-51). On Love's *Mirror*, see Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Full Critical Edition*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent (Exeter, 2005), pp. 97-8.
[31] *Speculum*, ed. by Hanna, pp. lxii-lxiii.
[32] *Speculum*, ed. by Hanna, ll. 3362-4. Further quotations will be given with line references to this edition.

'Paour' becomes 'drede', and 'humilité' becomes 'mekenes'. This passage continues with material translated from an earlier chapter of the *Somme*, describing the vice of pride itself (p. 116). Following the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, a longer translated passage appears at the description of the seven 'degrees' and 'braunches' of humility (ll. 3881-82), where *Speculum* incorporates the sense of self-knowledge found in the *Somme*:

> The first degree may be þis,
> Þat when a man knawes his mysse
> And his defautes and his freilte,
> Þan bigynnes he meke to be… (ll. 3885-8)

Although *Speculum* reorganises some of the material found in the *Somme*, it brings both the vocabulary and the psychological framework of the earlier text into Middle English.

This translation may have occurred under the influence of *The Prick*, suggested by *Speculum*'s use of the same set of terms. Several other translations of the *Somme* into Middle English were made in the fourteenth century, which use different vocabulary to translate 'humilité'. *The A3enbite of Inwit*, a 1340 prose translation made by Michael of Northgate, a monk of St Augustine's, Canterbury, uses 'mildenesse',[33] while *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, an anonymous translation also of the fourteenth century, uses 'humblenesse'.[34] The terms of *Speculum* may therefore reflect a technical sense developed in Middle English by the *Prick* poet, working slightly earlier but in a similar Yorkshire context.

One apparent divergence between *The Prick* and the other two is its discussion of 'luf of God' in combination with *drede* and *meknesse*, but this idea is present, too, in the *Somme*. The second

[33] *Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyt or Remorse of Conscience*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, OS 23 (London, 1866), p. 127.
[34] *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed by W. Nelson Francis, EETS, OS 217 (London, 1942), p. 126.

Gift of the Holy Ghost in the *Somme*, 'La vertu d'amistié' (p. 254), connects dread and meekness with what it calls 'bonne amour':

> cis dons estrepe la racine de l'envie dou cuer [...] Dont li cuers qui reçoit ce don conçoit une douce rousee qui le fet germer une racine soueve et bien attrempee, c'est bonne amour... (p. 254)
>
> (this gift strips the root of envy from the heart [...] Thus, the heart that receives this gift conceives a sweet dew that brings forth a soft and well-tempered root; this is good love)

Love here is not a part of the process by which dread removes pride from the heart and creates space for humility, but is connected to these two terms as the second stage in the sequence of gifts, part of the broader spiritual process engendered by the Holy Ghost. *The Prick*, then, combines this second stage with the first to represent a distinctive emotional experience characterised by fear, humility, and desire. *Speculum* translates 'bonne amour' as 'charyte' (l. 4206), a lexical divergence which perhaps indicates that its author, if indeed influenced by *The Prick*, perceived its term 'luf' as a less precise equivalent for the language of the *Somme* and selected the alternative 'charyte'.

To sum up, the *Somme* developed in French a set of terms explaining the relationship between states of sin and virtue; three of these were adapted in *The Prick*, probably under the influence of the *Somme*, to describe emotional states in a process leading to salvation; and *Speculum* deploys two of these same Middle English terms, possibly influenced in its translation of the *Somme* by the language of *The Prick*.

Meekness, dread, and love in the A text

The Prick and *Speculum* indicate some of the pervasive influence of the *Somme* on religious discussion in fourteenth-century Middle English writings. Langland, too, knew Lorens's manual: several episodes show its influence, and Langland also knew it in Middle English, through *Speculum*.[35] These previous accounts have focused on the B text, where language derived from the *Somme* and other works appears in several episodes, and have therefore missed the earlier appearance of this language in the first visible stage of the poem's development.

This section presents evidence that Langland drew on the language of dread, meekness, and love in the composition of the A text. This occurred in two episodes: Piers Plowman's way to Truth in passus 6 and the speech of Wit in passus 10. The latter shows the influence of the *Somme* and *Speculum*, and identifying this influence extends our previous understanding of Langland's engagement with these two texts. The former episode reflects the language and the structure of *The Prick*, newly identified here.

Piers and the Somme

The speech of Wit in passus 10 of the A text shows the influence of the *Somme* and *Speculum* on its vocabulary of dread and meekness. The figure of Wit is the second of the allegories representing interior faculties of the mind encountered by the dreamer. In the A text, the dreamer meets Wit at the very end of passus 9 after journeying with Thought to find him. His speech occupies the entire

[35] Frank, Jr., draws comparisons between moments in passus 12 and *The Book of Vices and Virtues*: *Scheme of Salvation*, p. 63, n. 2, and p. 63, n. 4. On Langland's knowledge of *Speculum*, see Hanna, '*Speculum*'.

passus, and ranges across a set of issues connected to individual and social regulation with a particular focus on familial relationships: his allegory of the 'Castle of Kind', the balance between individual and institutional responsibility, married life, and the biblical examples of Cain and Noah.[36]

In the course of his speech, Wit defines the Dowel triad several times. These shifting definitions, which develop in response to the topics he addresses, draw on the language of dread and meekness. The first is framed by a discussion of individual and collective responsibility for sin, culminating in Wit's claim that 'iche wi3t in this world þat haþ wys vndirstonding' should 'saue hymself fro synne' (10.71, 74). In this context, Dowel is:

> a duc þat destroyeþ vices,
> And sauiþ þe soule þat synne haþ no mi3t
> To routen ne to resten ne roten in þin herte
> And þat is dred of god, dowel it makiþ. (10.76-79)

In this role, Dowel prevents sin from taking root in the heart. This power is aligned with the state of dread, in the technical sense developed in the *Somme* where dread replaces the vice of pride. This is stated more explicitly at the end of the passus, when Dowel is again defined as dread, and Dobest, which eventually results from Dowel, 'bringeþ down mody' (217). 'Mody' is an adjective synonymous with pride, here meaning something like 'the proud one'.[37] The language is not exactly the same, but the sense is equivalent to the *Somme* and *Speculum*. Meekness is also present in Wit's definitions of Dowel. In clearing the heart of sin, Dowel as dread creates room for meekness: Wit explains that

[36] These themes in Wit's speech are discussed in Tavormina, *Kindly Similitude*, pp. 48-109.

[37] See 'mo̱di adj.', *Middle English Dictionary* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED28431/track?counter=1&search_id=2627314> [accessed 10 December 2019]. Most manuscripts of the B text read 'þe mody', indicating widespread recognition of this sense and possible authorial revision for clarification, although the reading is not accepted in Kane-Donaldson (see p. 405, note to l. 208). Schmidt reads 'the mody' (B.9.205).

‘dred is such a maister / Þat he makiþ men meke & mylde of her speche’ (10.82-3). Meekness in Wit’s account results from dread, and so recalls the process described in the *Somme* and *Speculum* whereby the metaphorical tree of meekness is planted to replace pride.

Subsequent definitions of Dowel restate its link to dread (‘in dred liþ dowel’, 118), setting this within examples of good living. Wit describes how individuals should be content with ‘þe grace þat god haþ isent þe’ (100); ‘lou3ness’, perhaps here a synonym for meekness, is imperilled by pride in the form of social ambition (102), and he instructs ‘man maried, monk oþer chanoun’ (113) to ‘be paid wiþ þe porcioun’ (117). According to Wit, this acceptance of God’s will as manifested in social distinctions expresses how ‘in dred liþ dowel, and dobet to suffre […] and þus of dred & his dede dobest arisiþ’ (118, 121). Just as a rose blooms in a patch of scrub, ‘so dobest out of dobet & dowel gynneþ springe / Among men of þis molde þat mek ben & kynde’ (127-8). Dread and meekness emerge in Wit’s speech from specific behaviours, embedded in a vision of harmonious social relationships.

Dread and meekness, defined specifically in relation to sin and self knowledge, were not new coinages in *Speculum* or *The Prick* and are seen in other Middle English instructional texts and religious writing more broadly. Other sources for the language of Wit’s speech might therefore have been available to Langland, but none are plausible candidates. Individual references to dread and meekness in other texts are often isolated from the group found in *Piers*, as in Robert Manning’s *Handlyng Synne*. This 1303 translation of the Anglo-French *Manuel des Pechiez*, uses *drede* alone:

> Handyl þy synnye to haue drede:
> Noþyng but peyne ys þar fore mede.[38]

[38] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. by Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, 1983), ll. 101-2.

Dread here is an emotional state related to the process by which the reader should learn how to relate to sin, but not connected to meekness or to pride, the vice to which it is linked in the *Somme* and *Speculum* and subsequently *Piers*. Meekness, too, is found in isolation: consider a passage in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, an anonymous mystical text from the second half of the fourteenth century, which describes meekness as 'a trewe knowyng & felyng of a mans self as he is. For sekirly who-so mi3t verrely see & fele himself as he is, he schuld verrely be meek'.[39] Meekness is defined here as a form of self knowledge, echoing its sense in the earlier instructional texts, but disconnected from their other terms. Single uses like these, separated from the larger cluster seen in *Piers*, are unlikely to have provided Langland's source.

One example of their use together survives in a fourteenth-century text, roughly contemporary with *The Prick*. In *Speculum Guy de Warwick*, a versified homily framed as the sermon of a wise man, Alquin, retained at the court of the eponymous Guy, the cluster of terms identified above are found together:

> Wisdom in godes drede
> Vse wel, þat be my rede;
> Trewe bileue and charite –
> Þise sholen bileue wid þe –
> Stedefast hope and mieknesse,
> Pes, merci, and for3ifnes,
> Loue of herte, ful of pite,
> Þat is verray humilite.[40]

Alquin speaks in response to Guy's request for 'a god sarmoun' (l. 57) presenting a lesson in 'faire uertuz for to take / and foule þewes to forsake' (ll. 71-2). This echoes some of the language of the *Somme* in describing the relationship between sin and virtue, but Alquin's sermon combines

[39] *The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counselling*, ed. by Phyllis Hodgson, EETS, OS 218 (London, 1944), p. 40.
[40] *Speculum Guy de Warewyke: An Early English Poem*, ed. by Georgiana Lea Morrill, EETS, ES 75 (London, 1898), ll. 81-8.

meekness and dread with a host of other terms where Wit focuses on the two. Alquin presents these terms not as a process, but rather a series of disconnected states which together lead to the avoidance of sin, and makes no explicit link to pride as does the *Somme* and, in turn, Wit. So although Wit's language had many parallels in fourteenth-century Middle English writings, it seems most likely to be derived from the *Somme*, reflecting Langland's knowledge both of the French original, given the breadth of its circulation and previously identified parallels in the B text, and its translation in *Speculum* which provided vocabulary in Middle English.

Two translations of the *Somme* produced before the composition of *Piers*, *The Book of Vices and Virtues* and *The Ayenbite of Inwit*, are also possible sources for Langland, but unlikely given their use of alternative translations for the language seen in passus 10. One exception is *The Ayenbite*'s use of 'mildenesse' for the *Somme*'s 'humilité', reflected in Wit's use of 'meke & mylde' in his first definition of Dowel. *The Ayenbite* survives in only one manuscript, apparently not disseminated beyond Kent where it was produced, so is unlikely to be Langland's source.[41] Some of these terms remained current to the end of the fourteenth century, after the composition of the A text, as seen in Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*: the Parson explains that 'the remedie agayns the synne of Pride [...] is humylitee, or mekenesse./ That is a vertu thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of hymself'.[42] Meekness and humility are here connected to the same sense of self knowledge described in the *Somme* and *Speculum*, indicating the ongoing influence of the *Somme*'s language, but the availability of both terms as lexical choices towards the end of the century strengthens the likelihood that Langland drew on *Speculum* as a source which used *meknesse* specifically.

[41] This manuscript is described in Pamela Gradon, *Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwit, Volume II: Introduction, Notes, and Glossary*, EETS, OS 278 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 1-14.
[42] 'The Parson's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 303.

Wit's speech contains further indications of influence from the *Somme* and *Speculum*, in addition to its lexical parallels. Wit uses an arboreal metaphor which recalls that in the *Somme* and *Speculum* to describe sin ('roten in þin herte', 10.78), and again later in the passus when Wit refers to marriage as 'þe rote of dowel' (134). Wit also quotes a line of Latin, attributed to 'Salamon' (10.81), found in both Psalm 110 and Ecclesiasticus: '*Inicium sapiencie timor domini*' (10.81a, 'the beginning of knowledge is the fear of God'), which supports the link he makes here between dread and knowledge. *Speculum* includes an English gloss on this line in its discussion of the Gift of Dread, though attributed there to the Psalter: 'þe prophete þat Dauid hight / Says þus in þe Sauter right, / Þat Drede of Godde in hert to halde / Es þe bigynnyng of Wisdom called' (ll. 3503-6). This may be inspired by the paraphrase of a biblical verse attributed to David in the *Somme*, also quoted to explain the Gift of Dread: 'ausi trouble Nostre Sires le cuer que il veut guarri, comme dit David ou Sautier' (p. 239; 'so our Lord troubles the heart he wishes to protect, as David says in the Psalter'). This parallel may indicate that Langland had in mind the gloss from *Speculum* at this point, and chose to quote it from Ecclesiasticus, under Solomon's name.[43]

Previous accounts of Wit's speech have seen the relationship it establishes between Dowel and the protection of Anima in terms of the feudal relationships of the Castle of Kind allegory.[44] Its repeated definitions of the Dowel triad in terms of dread and meekness have been of secondary interest in this view: in one account, Dowel's definition as 'dred of god' is 'relatively ambiguous'.[45] But dread in passus 10 means something much more precise, referring to the emotional state in

[43] In the B text, A.10.81 ('Salamon it seide for a soþ tale') is revised to include a more precise source identification: 'Salamons sawes þat Sapience tau3te' (B.9.96). This might indicate that the line was misattributed by Langland to the Book of Wisdom, traditionally associated with Solomon, which does not contain the Latin quotation in question. Langland's engagement with the Bible's wisdom literature is discussed in Mary Clemente Davlin, '*Piers Plowman* and the Books of Wisdom', *YLS*, 2 (1988), 23-33.

[44] See Tavormina, *Kindly Similitude*, pp. 54-7,

[45] Megna, 'Dread', 70.

which the sinner becomes aware of their circumstances and begins to pursue virtuous life by countering pride. Wit speaks in the language of the *Somme* and specifically its Middle English rendering in *Speculum*, drawing on their instructional vocabulary to offer an account of Dowel which combines an allegory of social relationships with vernacular theological vocabulary current in the late fourteenth century.

Piers and The Prick

The Way to Truth in passus 6, laid out by Piers in response to the questioning of the pilgrims who find themselves lost, shows the influence of *The Prick* in its use of a similar set of terms to those identified in passus 10. Piers develops an extended metaphor of journeying through a syllabus of basic catechetical material, which borrows some of the terms identified above in the Prologue to *The Prick* along with its structure. This area of *Piers* has often been seen as little more than an interlude between passages of greater interest, but the influence of *The Prick* here suggests a new significance as a reflection on the terms of instructional writing.[46]

The way to Truth comes at a transitional moment, between the several confessions offered by allegorical representations of the sins in passus 5 and the ploughing of the half acre and pardon tearing in passus 7. It takes the action of the poem from the dreamer's observation of the scenes played out in the fair field to the events spurred by the first appearance of Piers Plowman himself in the poem, as a group of pilgrims set off to seek Truth. At the beginning of passus 6 they struggle to

[46] See, for example, John M. Bowers, *The Crisis of Will in Piers Plowman* (Washington, D.C., 1986), pp. 120-1, and John Burrow, 'The Action of Langland's Second Vision', in *Style and Symbolism in Piers Plowman: A Modern Critical Anthology*, ed. by Robert J. Blanch (Knoxville, 1969), pp. 209-27 (215). One exception is an essay by Elizabeth Zeeman, which reads the way to Truth as the first stage in the development of the figure of Piers the Plowman: '*Piers Plowman* and the Pilgrimage to Truth', in *Style and Symbolism*, ed. by Blanch, pp. 117-31.

find the route to him, and a false pilgrim offers little help, but the anonymous 'plouȝman' (6.25), whom the crowd recognise as 'piers' (43), emerges with a startling claim about Truth: 'I knowe hym as kyndely as clerk doþ his bokis' (26), and offers to take them to him.

Piers describes the way, which begins with three states: meekness, conscience, and the love of God. In Piers's words,

> ȝe mote go þoruȝ meknesse, boþe men & wyues,
> Til ȝe come into consience þat crist wyte þe soþe,
> Þat ȝe loue hym leuere þanne þe lif in ȝoure hertis (6.48-50)

The first of these is, of course, a key part of the salvational process described in the *Somme*, *Speculum*, and *The Prick*. The third is similarly central to the emotional mechanisms described in the Prologue to the latter, but the second is more difficult to pin down. Despite its title, conscience is only rarely discussed in *The Prick*, but at the end of the Prologue it occurs with some of the other key emotional terms. The poem talks about its own reading, which is intended to 'prikke þair conscience withyn, / And of þat drede may a lofe bygyn' (ll. 344-5). Conscience, dread, and love are present here; in passus 6, Piers lists meekness, conscience, and love. Although not an exact parallel, *The Prick* is a likely source at this point.

Piers's mention of conscience is not the only one in the poem. Conscience is a central figure in all three versions, and particularly in the B and C texts where his role is developed in passus 13 onwards.[47] In the A text, the personification of Conscience plays a role in the early passus; first called on by the King to marry Lady Mede, Conscience attacks her in passus 3 before giving a sermon in passus 5. Most subsequent references to 'conscience' reflect this allegorical representation, for

[47] See Wood, *Conscience*.

example earlier in passus 6 where Piers tells the pilgrims that 'clene conscience' led him to Truth (27), or in his encounter with the priest at the pardon-tearing scene: 'Abstinence þe abbesse myn a b c me tau3te, / And conscience com aftir & kennide me betere' (8.120-1). Conscience in the way to Truth more closely reflects its definition in the Prologue to *The Prick*, where conscience is a part of the mind which participates in a sequence of emotions leading the individual towards salvation.

The absence of dread from Piers's list of states might also be explained by the positioning of the way to Truth relative to the spiritual development already undertaken by the pilgrims. Although the stages of the process described in *The Prick* are not consistently organised, the end of the Prologue repeatedly suggests that dread is one of the first. The poet hopes that, 'thurgh drede', his readers will 'wirk gude werkes and fle foli' (ll. 334-5), and a few lines later that 'of þat drede may a lofe bygyn' (ll. 345). The pilgrims may already be in a state of dread, as they confronted their own sins at the end of passus 5: 'A þousand of men þo þrongen togideris, / Wepynge & waylyng for here wykkide dedis' (A.5.251-2). Having helped them to begin their journey in pursuit of Saint Truth, Piers is left to focus on later stages of the process.

Further evidence for Langland's engagement with *The Prick* in this area comes from Piers's extended metaphor of journeying. *The Prick* describes both the psychological process it imagines as a 'way' (l. 141), and repeatedly uses a metaphor of journeying to describe human life: 'wende / Till pyne of helle' (l. 87-8). On a larger scale, the structure of the way to Truth episode may also be derived from *The Prick*. As discussed above, *The Prick* combines a prologue, setting out how the text is intended to function on the mind and emotions of the reader, with books describing death and the end of the world. Piers's way, though dealing with different content, is similarly organised. It begins with a set of emotions before passing through a group of catechetical topics: the ten commandments, a number of sins and virtues, the seven remedies, and the sacrament of penance.

Seeing the structure of the way to Truth in these terms also suggests that it represents a deliberate imitation of instructional writing. The material following the initial psychological stages (6.50-71) represents in extremely compressed form the type of content which the English church sought to promulgate among its people. The development of pastoral literature in England following the 1281 Council of Lambeth was discussed above; this took more specific form in a council held at York in 1357, where Archbishop John Thoresby promulgated a syllabus now known as *The Lay Folks' Catechism*.[48] A Middle English version survives, which may be a translation and expansion of the original Latin, and this indicates the principal subjects in which the laity were to be instructed: the Pater Noster, the articles of the creed, the ten commandments, the seven sacraments, the works of mercy, the seven virtues and the seven sins.[49] These subjects were expanded upon by other Middle English writers before and after the York council, in works like *Speculum* or, on a smaller scale, Richard Lavynham's *Litil Treys on the Seven Deadly Sins*.[50] Langland's way to Truth, then, resembles closely the subjects of the catechetical syllabus allegorised in a structure resembling that of *The Prick*.

[48] The York council was preceded by several others and by other ecclesiastical syllabi: see Robert Swanson, 'Pastoralia in Practice: Clergy and Ministry in Pre-Reformation England', *Dutch Review of Church History*, 83 (2003), 104-27; Nicholas Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Exeter, 1999), pp. 331-52 (335); and Vincent Gillespie, 'Thy Will be Done: *Piers Plowman* and the *Pater Noster*', in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 95-119 (96-101).

[49] The English text of the *Catechism* is edited in *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. by Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henry Edward Nolloth, EETS, OS 118 (London, 1901). The historical context and compositional history of the English version is discussed in R. N. Swanson, 'The Origins of *The Lay Folks' Catechism*', *Medium Ævum*, 60 (1991), 92-100; for an account of the textual history and form of the Middle-English version, which has been seen in relation to alliterative texts, see Ian Cornelius, '*The Lay Folks' Catechism*, Alliterative Verse, and *Cursus*', *Review of English Studies*, 70 (2019), 14-36.

[50] *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. by Johannes Petrus Wilhelmus Maria van Zutphen (Rome, 1956).

Instructional process in *Piers Plowman*

The lexical influence of the *Somme*, *Speculum*, and *The Prick* in passūs 6 and 10 links these distant episodes as areas of shared interest in the terms of the three texts, but reading them together reveals a deeper connection: both participate in a narrative arc parallel to the main sequence of events, dramatizing the psychological process of religious instruction. The sense of imitation identified in passus 6 extends much further, as the A text develops a critique of the salvation theology of the three texts. This arc concerns the development of the will, which comes to encompass the dreamer himself, identified in part as an allegory of this faculty of the mind.

The dreamer and the will

In passus 11, Dame Studie rebukes Wit for having shared his sermon with the dreamer. She indulges in a long tirade against the abuse of learning by clerics who dispute blasphemous questions for the sake of testing the bounds of argument, leading young novices to question doctrine. The dreamer prostrates himself before her following this speech, and she praises him: "'For þi mekenes, man," quaþ she, "and for þi mylde speche, / I shal kenne þe to my cosyn þat clergie is hoten'" (104-5). This episode, as it appears in the B text, has been read as a representation of the stages in theological education, but at this moment Studie also identifies meekness in the dreamer for the first time.[51] At this moment of praise, this term, drawing on the instructional language I have traced in the A text,

[51] James Simpson, 'From Reason to Affective Knowledge: Modes of Thought and Poetic Form in *Piers Plowman*', *Medium Ævum*, 55 (1986), 1-23. See also Gillian Rudd, *Managing Language in Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 85, where Studie's way is 'the scholastic and deductive route to knowledge'.

links him to the language drawn from *Speculum* and *The Prick* as though he has moved through the stages of the processes they describe.

Studie's words respond to implicit characterisations of the dreamer earlier in the poem. The dreamer is named Will in all three versions, representing both a human male subject and the faculty of volition.[52] In the A text, he is named by Thought in passus 9, when Thought introduces him to Wit:

> Þanne þou3t, in þat tyme, seide þis wordis:
> 'Where þat dowel & dobet & dobest beþ in londe,
> Here is wil wolde wyte 3if wit couþe hym teche.' (9.116-8)

In his encounters with parts of the mind, his name takes on a new meaning as another of these interior faculties: the will, held to be responsible for desire and volition, and traditionally opposed to the wit.[53]

In both episodes drawing on the language of religious instruction, in passūs 6 and 10, the will is characterised as dangerous. In passus 6, Piers's description of the Court of Truth details the material components of the structure, whose defences include walls 'of wyt to holde wil þeroute' (74). This detail draws attention to the danger of the will, seen as a threat to Truth, grace, and the virtues which inhabit the building, and anticipates the speech of Wit later in the poem. During his final definition of the Dowel triad, following his long discourse on marriage, the sons of Cain, and Noah's flood, Wit sums up what has come before:

> Þanne is dowel to dreden, & dobet to suffre,

[52] See George Kane, *Piers Plowman: The Evidence for Authorship* (London, 1965), pp. 58-64 (Kane reads the name 'Will' as evidence for authorship by William Langland).
[53] Bowers offers an account of debates over the status of the will in the middle ages in relation to Langland in *The Crisis of Will*, pp. 41-60. See also James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction* (London, 1990), pp. 87-9, and Zeeman, *Discourse of Desire*, pp. 19-22, 107.

> And so comiþ dobest aboute, and bringeþ down mody,
> And þat is wykkide wil þat many werk shendiþ. (9.216-8)

Dobest, resulting ultimately from dread, will overcome 'mody', or pride, associated with the will in its most irrational and destructive form. As in the earlier opposition made between the wit and the will in passus 6, the will is here associated with impulses towards sin, held in check by the rational force of the mind.

These characterisations of the will at moments of interest in the emotional processes of religious instruction link these processes with the experience of the dreamer. Studie's praise of him in passus 11 indicates that he has forgone pride and entered a state of meekness, no longer the 'wykkide will' chastised in passūs 6 and 10. Instead, he has been educated in the terms of the *Somme*, *Speculum*, and *The Prick*.

The salvation of society

This instructional process, dramatised in the actions of the dreamer, is also investigated from the perspective of the social and interpersonal position of the sinner. *Piers* is deeply invested in the social terms of salvation, beginning in each of the three versions with a vision of all of humanity placed between the tower of truth and the dungeon of hell. Questions of governance and social regulation are central to the Lady Meed episode, and develop further in the ploughing of the half acre when Piers sets the group of pilgrims, in all their social diversity, to work.[54] Alongside the

[54] Langland's representation of human relationships and their impact on salvation has been widely discussed in scholarship: on agrarian labour relations, see William Rhodes, 'Medieval Political Ecology: Labour and Agency on the Half Acre', *YLS*, 28 (2014), 105-36; on family, see Tavormina, *Kindly Similitude*, pp. 48-109. See also Bowers, *Crisis of Will*, pp. 97-128; Watson, 'Politics', pp. 338-9; and Nicholas Watson, 'Conceptions of the Word: The Mother Tongue and the Incarnation of God', *New Medieval Literatures*, 1 (1997), 85-124 (particularly 117-8).

dreamer's plea to Holy Church, 'teche me [...] how I may sauen my soule' (A.1.81-2), is the larger issue of how everyone's soul is to be saved.

These are the questions at issue in passūs 6, 7, and 8, when Piers enters the poem and attempts to set the pilgrims on the right track towards Truth. But the way to Truth, with its representation of instructional texts, seems to fail when the resentments and tensions inherent in the society imagined by the poem impede the pilgrims' collective efforts to plough the half acre.[55] At the beginning of passus 7, following his description of the way, Piers sets the company to work. He addresses the needs of individual groups: first women, following the complaint of 'a lady in a scleire' (7.7), to whom Piers assigns the production of textiles (9-20); then the knight, who confesses he has no training in manual labour but offers to try, and whom Piers in response to this show of courtesy sets in a more traditional role protecting the labourers from physical threat and from pests who endanger the harvest (23-34). Yet despite this attention to the designation of pilgrims within socially appropriate roles, by nine o'clock laziness has set in and Piers is threatened by Wastour and other figures who reject the model established earlier in the morning (139-45). Collective effort falls apart in the face of individualism, and the path to Truth following the instructional models set out in the previous passus proves to lead nowhere.[56]

[55] This episode has been widely discussed by modern readers of the poem: see Emily Steiner, *Reading Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 83-92; Robert Worth Frank, Jr., 'The "Hungry Gap," Crop Failure, and Famine: The Fourteenth-Century Agricultural Crisis and *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 4 (1990), 87-104; and R. E. Kaske, 'The Character Hunger in *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. by Edward Donald Kennedy and others (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 187-97. David Aers finds in the poem an 'extremely hostile' response to agrarian labourers' resistance to authority: '*Vox Populi* and the Literature of 1381', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 432-53 (438). For accounts of Langland's representation of agrarian labour in historical terms, see Christopher Dyer, 'Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective', *YLS*, 8 (1994), 155-76, and Judith M. Bennet, 'The Curse of the Plowman', *YLS*, 20 (2006), 215-26.

[56] Similarly, Emily Steiner reads this episode as reflecting 'the difficulties of forming community': *Reading Piers Plowman*, p. 92.

By passus 10, the poem's focus has shifted away from communal labour directed towards Truth. Following the Castle of Kynde allegory, Wit's description of Inwit is extended into a broader discussion of responsibility for sin. The young, he says, lack Inwit because the faculty has yet to develop in them, and their misdeeds are therefore the responsibility of family (10.64-67). If they are also poor, the Church is 'owyng to helpe hem & saue / Fro folies' (69-70). For those capable of supporting themselves, however, the burden of responsibility falls on the individual:

> iche wi3t in þis world þat haþ wys vndirstonding
> Is chief sovereyn ouer hymself his soule to 3eme,
> And cheuisshen hym for any charge whan he childhod passiþ,
> Saue hymself fro synne, for so hym behouiþ… (10.71-4)

The individual here is responsible for their own salvation in adulthood. This is a significant shift from the position set out earlier in the poem, and frames Wit's first definition of the Dowel triad which immediately follows: 'þanne is dowel a duc þat destroyeþ vices, / And sauiþ þe soule þat synne haþ no mi3t / To routen ne to resten ne roten in þin herte; / And þat is dred of god, dowel it makiþ' (76-8). The link between Dowel and dread, which indicates Wit's borrowing from the *Somme* and *Speculum* here, is couched in a statement of the individual pursuit of salvation, following the failure of the way to Truth earlier in the poem in the face of collapsing collective responsibility.

Wit makes explicit here something assumed silently in *The Prick*, the *Somme*, and *Speculum*. Each of these texts imagines an audience of individuals, plural but essentially isolated. None investigates the social structures in which the pursuit of salvation is embedded, as Langland does, viewing each reader instead as a discrete subject able to pursue salvation independently. All three do of course make some assumptions about the status of their audience: they use masculine pronouns in referring to their readers, *The Prick* and *Speculum* explicitly imagine a non-Latinate

English-speaking audience, and their status as written texts must have excluded many without access to writing and literacy (though listeners could have accessed them indirectly in reading aloud). *Speculum* illustrates its descriptions of certain sins with examples of real crimes,[57] but explicit references to the social position of their audiences are rare in these texts, reflecting Derek Pearsall's view that 'the extensive medieval literature of poverty [...] is marked by its pursuit of philosophical and ideological issues: it rarely touches on the lives of poor people, except in a conventional way for purposes of demonstration'.[58] In *The Prick*, for example, the poet is much more likely to see differences between people in exclusively spiritual terms; in Book 3, death is shown to have two outcomes: 'way / til þe blisse of heven' for 'gude men'; 'entree / til þe pyn of helle' for 'ille men' (ll. 2118-9). *The Prick* assumes a world free from what we might now call 'structural inequalities'; the disadvantageous social, economic, and cultural positioning of individuals which might have prevented them from pursuing salvation on the terms it imagines.

The A text makes this assumption of individualism and individual responsibility explicit in dramatising the instructional model of salvation. Where the way to Truth failed, the individual pursuit promoted by Wit in passus 10 is eventually shown to be productive. After she identifies his meekness in addressing her, Dame Studie describes the way to her cousin Clergie and his wife Scripture, the next figures encountered by the dreamer. The way to Clergie is an allegorical journey through forms of good living, avoiding sins:

> 'Axe þe heiȝe wey', quaþ heo, 'from hennis to suffre
> Boþe wele & wo ȝif þat þou wile lerne,
> And rid forþ be ricchesse, ac reste þou not þerinne,
> For ȝif þou couple þe with hym to clergie comist þou neuere...' (11.114-7)

[57] Hanna, '*Speculum*', p. 127.

[58] 'Poverty and Poor People in *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. by Edward Donald Kennedy and others (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 167-85 (168); Pearsall contrasts this attitude to Langland's.

The journey continues through the land of lechery, which Studie advises the dreamer to avoid, to a court in which the dreamer must be wary of lying and deceitful words until sobriety and simplicity of speech come into view. Although the steps are different, this allegorised journey recalls the way to Truth from passus 6. It similarly involves a number of the sins, combined with forms of virtuous living more generalised than the cardinal virtues named in the way to Truth, but unlike Piers's earlier form of instructional education, this journey is successful. The dreamer 'wente wi3tly my wey wiþoute more lettyng, / And fond as she foretolde & forþ gan I wende, / And er I com to clergie coude I neuere stynte' (11.167-70). The instructional process undertaken by the dreamer, culminating in his display of meekness before Studie, proves successful in guiding him to the next stage of his search for Dowel.

The dreamer's progress is echoed in the resolution of another previous conflict. The last stage of Studie's way to Clergie occurs in a place where 'iche wi3t be in wille his wyt þe to shewen' (11.123), suggesting a society in which the will and the wit function together cooperatively. The opposition between them set up by Piers in passus 6 and Wit in passus 10 is here resolved, suggesting that the will is no longer a force of sinful Pride and a danger to Truth.

Processes of revision

I have argued that two episodes in the A text are influenced by the language of a related cluster of instructional texts: passus 6 by *The Prick*; passus 10 by the *Somme* and *Speculum*. Both episodes also characterise the faculty of the will as dangerous, and therefore the dreamer who stands for this part of the mind. The first episode, a representation of the content of instructional texts, fails in narrative terms when the subsequent scene proves not to lead the pilgrims to Truth, but this failure is resolved

in the later episode of Dame Studie's way, through which the dreamer is able to move forward. This progression, and the connection made between the dreamer and the language of the three texts (the prideful will, destroyed by Dobest which results from dread), links his actions and progress in the narrative to the processes presented in the three texts, and the dreamer himself is therefore represented as being instructed in the terms of the *Somme*, *Speculum*, and *The Prick*.

This section now turns to the B and C texts, where some of the episodes in A discussed above were revised and new areas of influence from instructional writing emerged. The three authorial versions of *Piers Plowman* represent forms of a work revised and rewritten across a period of at least two decades, a process of rolling revision whose products have been characterised as possibly accidental snapshots of a single, evolving, poem.[59] Criticism of the poem has long recognised the value of looking across the three versions for continuity and change, as a measure of Langland's developing thought.[60] I take this approach here, to consider how Langland's interest in instructional writing developed and what this might say about the status of *The Prick* in the late fourteenth century. The B text, the focus of past accounts of the poem's engagement with instructional texts, is here placed in a longer history of contact beginning at the start of *Piers*'s composition. A full version of this history would take up a large study in its own right, so I focus on the revision of passūs 6 and 10 in the B and C texts, and sketch only some of the continued engagement with *The Prick* and its fellow instructional texts found in those later revisions.

[59] Hanna, 'Versions of *Piers Plowman*', p. 203.
[60] See, for example, A. V. C. Schmidt, 'Langland's Visions and Revisions', *YLS*, 14 (2000), 5-27.

Wit in B and C

The speech of Wit undergoes significant changes in the B text which alter the engagement with instructional texts visible in the A version. Wit, whose speech occupies passus 9 in B, continues to define Dowel, sometimes in terms of dread, but focuses on forms of social regulation and collective responsibility different to the priorities of Wit A. This might be generalised as a move away from the individual and interior to the external and social.

Wit B begins, like his A version predecessor, with the Castle of Kind allegory, expanded with the addition of a passage comparing God's act of creation to the writing of letters (B.9.35-48) and a new definition of Inwit (58-67a). New material revises the passage preceding the first definition of Dowel, at A.10.76, which set out a view of individual responsibility for sin. Wit B expands the list of those who lack Inwit and are therefore the responsibility of the church (B.9.70-73), but thereafter discusses the responsibility of godparents to 'amende' bad behaviour in their godchildren, and adds a passage describing the sense of charitable solidarity observed among Jews. Wit marvels at how 'eyþer of hem helpeþ ooþer of þat þat hym nedeþ' (88) and laments the lack of a similar impulse among Christians: 'Whi ne wol we christene of cristes good be as kynde?' (89).[61] Wit predicts that 'the commune for hir vnkyndenesse, I drede me, shul abye' (91), and cites two Latin lines of uncertain source about the failure to support the poor through a more equitable distribution of wealth.[62]

The first definition of Dowel, immediately following these quotations, preserves references to dread but repositions these away from the instructional vocabulary found in A:

[61] Langland's representation of Jews is discussed in Elisa Narin van Court, 'The Hermeneutics of Suppression: The Revision of the Jews from the B to the C text of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 10 (1996), 43-87.
[62] John A. Alford, *Piers Plowman: A Guide to the Quotations* (Binghamton, 1992), notes that Skeat finds a parallel for these lines in the works of Peter the Cantor, but no direct source (p. 60).

> That dredeþ god, he dooþ wel; that dredeþ hym for loue
> And dredeþ hym no3t for drede of vengeaunce dooþ þerfore þe better… (9.97-98)

Although the terms dread and love inherited from *Speculum* are maintained here, Dowel is not defined in relation to the avoidance of sin and the individual pursuit of salvation. This form of Dowel and Dobet is targeted at the support of others, particularly the vulnerable. Dobest is defined as something resembling a regular, monastic life: he 'þat wiþdraweþ hym by daye and by ny3te / To spille any speche or any space of tyme' (99-100), signalling the greater focus in Wit B's speech on different forms of living, and particularly marriage. The later omission in B of A.10.82-130 removes several further references to the language of instructional texts. Wit A's brief discussion of conscience is lost, as is the later description of Dowel, Dobet and Dobest emerging from 'men of þis molde þat mek ben' (A.10.128).

The final definition of the Dowel triad in Wit A's speech remains in B, but is framed with new material changing its emphasis. Wit B sums up what has come before:

> Dowel, my deere, is to doon as lawe techeþ:
> To loue and to lowe þee and no lif to greue;
> Ac to loue and to lene, leue me, þat is dobet,
> To 3yuen and to yemen boþe yonge and olde,
> To helen and to helpen, is dobest of alle. (9.202-6)

This is followed by Wit A's final statement that Dowel is to drede, Dobet to suffer, and both together generate Dobest which will destroy pride, aligned still with the 'wikked wille' (209). The new material in B positions dread and love in relation to charity, rather than to sin. Dread and love are not here emotions in a process which removes pride and other sins from the heart, but instead part of the emotional conditions required to live charitably within the bounds of law and social structures.

The C text marks a more complete shift away from the language of instructional literature which organises the passage in A. Following the Castle of Kind allegory, the speech of Wit in C (10.128-307) focuses on the role of love in a reformed society, biblical examples of sinful living (Noah and Cain), and marriage. It maintains some of the material derived from A and B about individual and collective social responsibility (181-7), but this leads to a definition of Dowel as a kind of love which extends even to 'oure enemyes' (189) and which will bring together the whole world, 'that alle lands loueden and in on lawe bileuede' (191). Wit C's perspective is communal: he describes how 'thenne dede we alle wel' (188), consistently using the pronoun 'we' to imagine a collective social Dowel. The language of dread is absent, omitting the new sense for the term created by Wit B. The only other definition of the Dowel triad in the speech comes at the end, where the added definition from the B text is preserved: Dowel is 'to do as lawe techeth: / To louye and to loue the and no lyf to greue' (301-2). This definition promotes forms of loving, charitable behaviour founded on the law, detached from the framework of sin and virtue which structured previous definitions. Wit C's version of doing well is fundamentally collective.

Continuity and expansion

The gradual purging of instructional language in Wit's speech across B and C suggests a movement away from the questions raised by these texts during the process of revision. If B.9 and C.10 were taken in isolation, it might seem that Langland began to shift focus in his expansion of A, and more completely redirected the language of the poem towards new concerns in C, but the smooth trajectory of Wit's speech is unmatched in other areas which are more substantially preserved. The way to Truth in particular is remarkably stable across the three versions, altered only in C, and the

arc it creates with Dame Studie's subsequent way to Clergie remains in both. The B and C texts continue to engage with the discourse of instructional texts, though on different terms to their predecessor.

The way to Truth in B is altered with only a few added lines. The episode in C contains further tinkering, none altering the meaning of the passage significantly except for an addition following A.6.93/B.5.605. These new lines describe the state of Grace, found in the Tower of Truth, as an obligation to build a church through the virtue of charity which will support 'alle manere folk' with food for the soul (C.7.256-260a). These lines anticipate the ploughing of the half acre, with its vision of a community of worship growing food for itself and supporting all its members, and so reposition the state of grace which Piers imagines the pilgrims will reach on the Way to Truth as a continual process of living in 'loue and leute' (260), rather than an end in itself. The episode in the C text is thereby focused less on the individual pursuit of salvation than in A or B, but still fails in the sense that the ploughing scene in the following Passus breaks down for the same reasons as in the two previous versions. The scene following Wit's speech, the dreamer's encounter with Dame Studie, is similarly preserved. In B, this episode is almost identical to A, while C alters Studie's long rebuke of Wit and shortens the way to Clergie she describes. This represents only a compression: the way to Clergie still involves basic elements of living virtuously and avoiding sin (C.11.104-10).

The preservation of this material sits alongside new references to the language of instructional texts in the later passūs of B and C not yet present in A. There are indications of additional borrowing from the *Somme* in some of these new episodes, for example in the second part of passus 13 in the B text, where Conscience and Patience encounter Hawkyn the Wafrer after they leave the feast to search for Dowel. Hawkyn, the figure of the active life ('*activa vita*', 13.224), complains of his failed attempts to live well, stymied by repeated lapses into sin. After an exchange

between Hawkyn and Conscience, the poem explains how Hawkyn is in danger of falling into wanhope through sloth.[63] The poem asks, 'which ben þe braunches þat bryngen a man to sleuþe?' (409), and later asserts 'thise ben þe braunches, beþ war, þat bryngen a man to wanhope' (420). This description of sins as branches, explaining their relation to one another in a diagrammatical structure, is probably influenced by the *Somme*, which analyses sins and their components at great length in the metaphorical language of trees. Pride, for example, is said to have 'seven principal parts', each of which is called a 'branche' ('branch', p. 116).

The language of branches is explicitly linked to basic catechesis in passus 15 by Anima, the figure of the soul, who rebukes the dreamer for his prideful desire to know 'alle þe sciences vnder sonne and alle þe sotile craftes' (B.15.48). Anima describes how doctors would make better use of their learning by avoiding the pursuit of knowledge belonging solely to God and instructing the laity instead:

> tellen men of þe ten commaundement3, and touchen þe seuene synnes,
> And of þe braunches þat burioneþ of hem and bryngen men to helle,
> And how þat folk in folies hir fyue wittes mysspenden… (15.74-6)

This reflects the earlier encounter between the dreamer and Dame Studie, who invokes the language of religious instruction following her long castigation of Wit for sharing too much of his knowledge in the previous passus (B.10.5-139, A.11.5-92). Typical subjects of instructional writing are invoked at these two moments in which academic study, perverted into a quest for knowledge, is rejected. In the B text, then, one function of the symbolic representation of instructional texts is as an alternative epistemology, better suited to the dreamer's search for Truth.

[63] See Emily Rebekah Huber, 'Langland's Confessional Dissonance: Wanhope in *Piers Plowman* B', *YLS*, 27 (2013), 79-101.

Ralph Hanna has proposed that Langland was frustrated by what he perceived as the unhelpful focus in the *Somme* and *Speculum* on the categorisation of sins and virtues, which offered detailed lists of good and bad behaviours but little sense of how to implement them.[64] Langland's response to these two texts is seen in these terms as part of a broader decline in the genre of the catechetical manual throughout the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but this view fails to account for the continued interest in the terms of instructional writing, as both a body of knowledge and an emotional and experiential guide, seen in the revision from A to B.[65] Instructional texts provide for *Piers* a syllabus of material whose value in the pursuit of salvation is hugely significant.

Alongside psychological models derived from academic and theological discussions of the structure of the mind, *Piers* also embraces the subjectivity of instructional texts in which the individual is constituted by a set of emotions targeted at the self, the divine, sin, and virtue. In this latter sense, the continued influence of *The Prick* in particular might be visible, as a text distinctively focused on the emotional experience of salvation.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the A text deploys language borrowed from three widely disseminated works of vernacular instruction to explore the psychological processes by which readers could escape sin and achieve salvation. The A text has long been seen as the least developed of the poem's

[64] Hanna, '*Speculum*', pp. 127-8.

[65] Hanna's point is made in response to Nicholas Watson in 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409', *Speculum*, 70 (1995), 822-64, who argues that this decline was due to ecclesiastical legislation which aimed to restrict theological discussion in the vernacular. Hanna, '*Speculum*', p. 128-9.

three surviving versions; indeed, one modern reader has claimed that its brevity and fewer Latin quotations indicate that it was abridged from B for a different audience.[66] But its emphasis on individual salvation marks a significant divergence from the interests of its later revisions. The interrogation of vernacular instructional writing began at the composition of the A text, and in combination with its particular focus on individual responsibility indicates that this version is more fully and distinctively developed than its usual perception as an early draft of B suggests.

Identifying the influence of these texts on *Piers* also indicates that *The Prick* was available to Langland in the 1380s. This has significant implications for our view of *The Prick*'s circulation, and potentially for the provenance of *Piers*. The geographical origins of the A text are unclear: while authoritative manuscripts of B and C are associated with London, suggesting those versions were disseminated from the city, manuscripts of A show less clear signs of association with a particular place.[67] Langland himself has long been associated with the south-west Midlands, as manuscripts of the poem indicate an early dialectal layer pointing to the region.[68] Biographical assumptions, derived from the poem's own references to the Malvern Hills ('on a may morwenyng on maluerne hilles', A.P.5), and a memorandum in a C-text copy of the poem associating William Langland, identified as the author of *Piers*, with land holdings in Oxfordshire, have also connected the poem with this area, though the value of this evidence is unclear.[69] Langland may simply have produced

[66] Jill Mann, 'The Power of the Alphabet: A Reassessment of the Relation between the A and B Versions of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 8 (1994), 21-50.

[67] On manuscripts of B, see Ralph Hanna, *William Langland* (Aldershot, 1993), p. 14; on manuscripts of C, see Simon Horobin, 'In London and Opelond: The Dialect and Circulation of the C Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Medium Ævum*, 74 (2005), 248-69.

[68] On Langland's dialect, see M.L. Samuels, 'Langland's Dialect', *Medium Ævum*, 54 (1985), 232-47, and Horobin, 'Opelond'.

[69] Dublin, Trinity College, MS D.4.1, f. 89v: see Sebastian Sobecki, 'Hares, Rabbits, Pheasants: *Piers Plowman* and William Longewille, a Norfolk Rebel in 1381', *Review of English Studies*, 69 (2018), 216-36 (217). Skeat speculated about a link between Langland and a religious house in Malvern: *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman in Three Parallel Texts Together with Richard the Redeless*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 2 vols (Oxford, 1886), pp. xxxi-xxxii.

all three versions of the poem in London, writing in his native dialect. *The Prick*, however, seems to have been transmitted to the South West of England in the mid fourteenth century, suggested by the Wiltshire localisation of the dialect of the poem's earliest surviving copy.[70] As the next chapter will show, little evidence survives to place *The Prick* in London before the fifteenth century. If *The Prick* was available in the south-west Midlands, and available to Langland in the 1380s, the A text might in fact have been produced in this area. In either case, the A text gives further evidence of the presence of *The Prick* in southern England in the second half of the fourteenth century.

In addition to inferences about the circulation of *The Prick* at this period, the A text also indicates the cultural significance of the genre it represented. This is clear from other evidence, for example the many translations of the *Somme* undertaken in the first half of the fourteenth century, but the importance of *The Prick* and *Speculum* at this point has been less certain. Both poems were produced in their greatest numbers at the turn of the fifteenth century, but their earlier circulation, particularly in the South, has been less visible.[71] *Piers* indicates that they raised urgent questions for Langland at least a decade before the later expansion in their copying.

Vernacular instructional texts provided lexical influence for Langland and were represented symbolically in *Piers*, at moments like the way to Truth and Anima's words to the dreamer. Yet they were not represented allegorically, in the way that faculties of the mind derived from academic psychology take human form in encounters with the dreamer; Will meets no figure of Meekness, for example. Langland also omitted direct references to these texts, a habit which characterises Langland's use of many sources, but not all – the Latin lines quoted in the poem are sometimes

[70] Canterbury Cathedral Library, MS Lit. D. 13: see Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 47-48.
[71] Michael G. Sargent, 'What Do the Numbers Mean? A Textual Critic's Observations on Some Patterns of Middle English Manuscript Transmission', in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York, 2008), pp. 205-44 (218-21).

accompanied by source identifications, as the line attributed to Solomon discussed above indicates. This is a fact sometimes unacknowledged in discussions of Langland's relationship with source texts: although many relationships with prior works are oblique, the poem cites Latinate authorities by name, unafraid to invoke these directly. The status of vernacular instructional texts, in contrast, might have been determined to some extent by their vernacularity.

Vernacularity in *Piers* stands at some moments for breadth of access: suitable, in Dame Studie and Anima's view, for an unlettered audience, and opposed to the danger of too much knowledge. Yet the vernacular also had a lesser status, never subject to the same direct quotation as Latin material. This difference recalls *The Prick* itself, which packages hundreds of Latin quotations in English verse, making this material accessible to the 'unkunnand' audience it imagines for itself (l. 338), but obscuring the vernacular sources of much of its direct translation. In this view, the two poems are remarkably similar: both reflect the complexities of the relative status of Latin and Middle English, composing in a language of lesser value but wider comprehension while oriented towards the language of cultural and intellectual prestige.

Chapter 2: Transmission

The many journeys made by late-medieval texts from the desks of their authors into the hands of copyists, often geographically dispersed and sometimes centuries later, have left few explicit traces in the material or literary record. Chaucer's now-famous admonition of his scribe, Adam, for the poor job he made of copying Chaucer's works, is a rare medieval discussion of the personal relationships which facilitated textual production, however facetious it may have been.[1] Despite its ubiquity, the material circumstances of textual production seem in most cases not to have been worth recording directly.

These circumstances were varied, and their reconstruction offers a glimpse of the earliest stages of the reception of medieval texts. Manuscripts emerged from a network of relationships between book owners, commissioners, and scribes, potentially facilitated with the support of institutional or personal patronage. The contexts in which copying took place, the professional status of scribes and their institutional affiliations, and the environments in which manuscripts were first received and read comprise aspects of this transmission history. The transmission of both *Piers* and *The Prick* continued for well over a century and represents an important source of evidence for their early readership, not always, as this chapter will argue, the same as the picture generated by studies of secondary owners and readers. Following their composition, this was the next stage in their history of contact.

[1] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 650.

Where personal relationships remain largely invisible to us, the study of what Richard Beadle has described as the 'vast, invisible network of loans, borrowings, exchanges, sales, purchases and other less formal arrangements', which 'underpinned the spatial dissemination of Middle English compositions from around 1350 onwards', depends on evidence for the production context of individual copies and relationships between pairs and groups.[2] Forms of provenance information include direct scribal or institutional identifications; the inclusion of localisable texts such as documents or records, either compiled with the other contents or in the form of waste materials incorporated into the binding; watermarks in paper; and linguistic evidence in the form of dialect localisations. Relationships between books could include shared scribal hands, presentation features, formats, or bookmaking techniques (evidence similar to that studied in the fourth chapter). In drawing these various kinds of evidence together, a picture of provenance and affiliation emerges from which patterns of transmission can be inferred. Linking a group of copies to, say, a cluster of Benedictine houses might indicate that exemplars were shared among members of this order. If evidence of copying by professional scribes survives, such a group of manuscripts might be the result of demand for a particular text among monastic communities, met by the work of local scribes in the area of each house. I apply this approach here to three clusters of manuscripts, each associated with a geographical region where both *Piers* and *The Prick* were produced.

Both poems were disseminated across wide areas of England. They moved in opposite directions: *The Prick* down from Yorkshire to the Midlands and the South, and *Piers* outwards from London, mostly in north-easterly and north-westerly directions. Their joint production by six scribes and availability as a pair to a further reader indicates the convergence of their transmission

[2] Richard Beadle, 'Middle English Texts and their Transmission, 1350-1500: some Geographical Criteria', in *Speaking in Our Tongues: Proceedings of a Colloquium on Medieval Dialectology and Related Disciplines*, ed. by Margaret Laing and Keith Williamson (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 69-91 (74).

in seven places. Some of these were isolated: Corpus Christi College Oxford, MS 201 for example, is dialectally localised to Essex, an area from which few other copies have survived, but others occurred in areas with a rich history of copying both: Society of Antiquaries, MS 687 was produced in Norfolk, to which many manuscripts are localisable.

These areas of rich survival are the subject of this chapter: Norfolk and the surrounding eastern counties, Lichfield and the West Midlands, and London. Each is in some ways typical and in some ways distinctive. In Norfolk, both poems survive in relatively large numbers with connections reaching into nearby areas of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, and Suffolk. Norfolk is the county where Antiquaries 687 was produced, containing both *Piers* and *The Prick* alongside religious prose texts in English and Latin. Lichfield was a major copying centre for *The Prick*, producing the Vernon manuscript and related clusters, but *Piers* was much less popular. It survives only in the Vernon, and its presence in the area is implied by revisions to the text of *The Prick* drawing on the poem in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139, newly identified here. No jointly-produced copies survive in London, but the city is significant for upending the pattern seen almost everywhere else. Here, *Piers* survives in larger numbers than *The Prick*, and the poems were transmitted in different networks.

This chapter offers a new account of the dominance of ecclesiastical institutions over the transmission of the two poems outside London and shows that many scribes combined literary and documentary copying in their professional lives. It argues that although *The Prick* was more popular than *Piers* in terms of manuscript production (judging by surviving copies), their relative status was not stable and sometimes more complex than this simple sense of popularity implies. The chapter ends with the suggestion that the transmission of the two poems in London anticipates the pattern

of their modern reception, in which *Piers* massively overshadows *The Prick* as an object of scholarly and cultural interest.

Norfolk and the East of England: Antiquaries 687

Norfolk has long been recognised as an especially active centre for textual production in the late middle ages.[3] Both *Piers* and *The Prick* are richly attested in manuscripts written in the dialect of this county, with further manuscripts localisable nearby.[4] In combination with neighbouring counties, Norfolk seems to have been the focus for the dissemination of a cluster of A texts, alongside many groupings of *Prick* manuscripts. The A text and a copy of *The Prick* are found together in Antiquaries 687, very likely a Norfolk product. The production of the A text in this area has been the focus of several previous studies, so I begin here by presenting the evidence already established for the provenance of *Piers* manuscripts in the region, in addition to some new findings. This is followed by a survey of *Prick* manuscripts associated with Norfolk, with a final section focusing on the production of Antiquaries and the traditions of manufacture and layout from which it stems.

[3] Richard Beadle, 'Prolegomena to a Literary Geography of Later Medieval Norfolk', in *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, ed. by Felicity Riddy (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 89-108.

[4] Lewis-McIntosh's maps of dialect localisations show a cluster of Main Version copies in Eastern counties (p. 171); and the similar map for *Piers* in M. L. Samuels, 'Dialect and Grammar', in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. by John A. Alford (Berkeley, 1988, pp. 201-21 (207), shows a smaller cluster in the same area.

Dialect

Dialect evidence offers a useful starting point for thinking about transmission. Regional forms of Middle English varied substantially, and the lack of a standard orthography meant that these dialects were reproduced in the written form of the language. Hence Chaucer's imitation, in the Reeve's Tale, of the dialect of the two 'yonge povre scolers' from 'fer in the north': spellings including the use of *a* in place of *o* ('na peer', 'na swayn') play on the dialectal differences between the speech of the scholars and Chaucer's southern usage.[5] More recently, dialectologists of Middle English have developed a detailed picture of regional variation and tools with which to map samples of writing.[6] The most substantial of these, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (*LALME*), presents dialectal localisations for many literary manuscripts including copies of *Piers* and *The Prick*.

The use of dialect localisations drawn from *LALME* and other sources comes with some significant caveats. *LALME*'s editors warn that linguistic profiles indicate only 'where the scribe of a manuscript learned to write', rather than where the manuscript was written.[7] The dialect features of a written sample are not necessarily an indicator of the place where they were produced, representing instead the particular usage of the scribe responsible for that sample. This could also be influenced by factors other than the scribe's native dialect. Some were capable of reproducing exemplar forms, obscuring whatever dialect they had acquired, in a practice known to dialectologists as 'literatim' copying.[8] So, in strict terms, a dialect localisation represents the mapping of that single instance of written language detached from the scribe who produced it.

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[5] 'The Reeve's Tale', in *Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Benson, pp. 77-84, ll. 4002, 4015, 4025-6 (and see p. 850, note to l. 4022).
[6] For dialectal studies of *Piers* and *The Prick* in particular, see the dialect localisations for individual manuscripts in Samuels, 'Dialect and Grammar', 207; and Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 171 and 173.
[7] *LALME*, I, p. 23.
[8] *LALME*, I, p. 13. *Literatim* copying is discussed in relation to manuscripts of *Piers* in Simon Horobin, 'In London and Opelond': The Dialect and Circulation of the C Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Medium Ævum*, 74 (2005), 248-69.

Localisations alone are therefore not necessarily indicators of geographical provenance, but remain useful despite these limitations. Beadle has suggested that texts were unlikely to have been written with distinctive dialect features outside the area to which those features were native. He argues that 'scribes of Norfolk training would scarcely have persisted in using that area's highly dialectal colouration in their work [...] if they were working anywhere other than East Anglia'.[9] Spellings which seem particularly unusual or regionally restricted might then indicate the production of a text for speakers of the same dialect in its native area. The presence of similar but not identical dialects within a single manuscript can also be a strong indicator of provenance. Compilations of English texts written in multiple similar dialects probably reflect a scribe copying *literatim* from exemplars sourced in the area, as several manuscripts in a regional language are likely to have been accessed most easily in that region. Importantly, dialect is only one form of provenance information among many; this and following sections combine it with other kinds of evidence to assess the likely geographical origin of the manuscripts in question.

Piers in the East of England

Seven copies of *Piers* were written in eastern dialects, or are known to have been produced in the region:

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Text*
C^2	Cambridge, University Library, MS Ll.4.14	B
H/H^3	London, British Library, MS Harley 3954	B-A
M	London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687	A
J	New York, Morgan Library, MS M.818	A

[9] Beadle, 'Prolegomena', p. 2.

A	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1468	A
Z	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 851	A-C
U	Oxford, University College, MS 45 e	A

Ashmole 1468, Antiquaries 687, and Harley 3954 are part of a textual group, AMH[3], which includes more distantly one further manuscript written in a northern dialect, discussed in more detail below.[10] Antiquaries 687 and Harley 3954 are both compilations: Antiquaries contains *The Prick* alongside devotional prose in English and one Latin text (discussed in the next chapter); Harley contains devotional English verse and an illustrated copy of *Mandeville's Travels*. Ashmole 1468 is a single-text copy surviving in a postmedieval composite. The members of this group contain no direct provenance information linking them securely to the region, but dialect information implies a Norfolk origin. The language of the non-*Piers* content of Harley and *The Prick* in Antiquaries are localised by *LALME* to Norfolk, while the other content of Antiquaries and the *Piers* text in Ashmole are localised to Suffolk.[11] However, a recent reanalysis of all the dialects present in Harley and Antiquaries has found that each corresponds to Norfolk, and on this basis it has been argued that both are likely to have been produced in the county.[12] No such layered information is available for Ashmole, but a shared watermark in Ashmole and Antiquaries, resembling Briquet's *Mont* 11722,

[10] Trinity College Dublin, MS 213, localised in Samuels, 'Dialect and Grammar', pp. 205, 207. The AMH[3] group is discussed in Kane, pp. 92, 104-5; Schmidt, II, pp. 100, 104; and Simon Horobin, 'Harley 3954 and the audience of *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (London, 2008), pp. 68-84 (74-9).

[11] Norfolk localisations for Harley 3954 and Antiquaries 687 are found in *LALME*, III, pp. 335-6 and 319-20, respectively. Localisations for Ashmole 1468 are found in the same volume at pp. 478-9. The treatise on excommunication in Antiquaries 687 (pp. 552-8 of the manuscript), described as 'religious prose', is fully profiled and localised to Suffolk in *LALME*, III, pp. 474-5, and unprofiled localisations for *Piers* and jointly for Lavynham's *Tretys* and the treatise on the ten commandments (at pp. 383-430 of the manuscript), described as 'prose', are given in *LALME*, I, p. 137.

[12] Michael Alex Madrinkian, 'Producing *Piers Plowman* to 1475: Author, Scribe, Reader' (unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), pp. 123-30.

suggests that they may have been written on the same paper stock, which might tie Ashmole more firmly to the same area as the other two.[13]

The remainder of the manuscripts can be localised more securely to the counties west and north of Norfolk. University College 45 is written in the dialect of Cambridge, and contains a mix of Latin material probably compiled with *Piers* in the fifteenth century (given its survival in a medieval binding).[14] Little else is known about this copy, but I have identified previously-unnoticed codicological evidence which points to its ownership in the early fifteenth century within eastern England. The final quire of *Piers*, written on paper, is reinforced with strips of parchment on the outside of the outer bifolium and in the gutter of the inner bifolium.[15] These were recycled from a legal document carrying the name 'Will*ia*me lampet', which also appears on documents from the first quarter of the fifteenth century concerning land transactions in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.[16] These fragments suggest the paper quire was produced in a copying centre where waste documentary materials were available, and therefore that the book is likely to have been written near to where its language is placed in Cambridgeshire. Although these parchment strips might theoretically have been added at any point in the book's history, their presence is most easily explained at the point of production, where other written materials might have been available.[17]

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[13] The watermark is visible, *inter alia*, on pp. 29, 33, 37 (lower part, including *mont*), 39 and 43 (upper part, including cross) in Antiquaries; and on ff. 341, 349, and 371 in Ashmole. This was first noticed in Madrinkian, '*Piers Plowman*', p. 131.

[14] *LALME*, III, pp. 26-7.

[15] On the reinforcement of quires with strips of additional material, see Hannah Katharine Ryley, 'Sustainability and Recycling in Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), pp. 102-5.

[16] London, National Archives, E210/9459; E210/9463; E210/9461; E210/9462, E327/241; and Ipswich, Suffolk Record Office, HD 1538/151/7.

[17] Lotte Hellinga similarly discusses the value of codicological fragments as provenance information, in the later context of recycled printed material in Dutch books: 'Fragments Found in Bindings and their Role as Bibliographical Evidence', in *'For the Love of the Binding': Studies in Bookbinding history presented to Mirjam Foot*, ed. by David Pearson (London and New Castle, 2000), 13-33.

University College 45 has a textual twin, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 137. This book was produced by a scribe who also copied *The Prick*, in University College Oxford, MS 142. University College 45 and Rawlinson share 210 agreements in error, suggesting they were copied from the same exemplar.[18] Much more is known about Rawlinson: Simon Horobin has identified its scribe as a vicar of Chichester Cathedral, and its dialect reflects this provenance.[19] This pair, like the AMH[3] group, demonstrates how far exemplars were capable of travelling, producing related copies hundreds of miles apart. Horobin suggested that links between the copyist of Rawlinson and the parish church of Burwell, Cambridgeshire, may explain how the exemplar of Rawlinson and University College came to travel between Cambridgeshire and Sussex, which may indicate that the copyist of University College was also a cleric.[20]

Morgan M.818 is traditionally localised a little further afield in Lincolnshire, on the western shore of the Wash.[21] The localisation of this multi-text manuscript has been questioned on the basis of evidence that two of its contents, the *Pistill of Susan* and the A text, contain relict Norfolk forms – isolated spellings, not typical of the text's main dialect, reproduced from the exemplar.[22] These dialectal links suggest that the *Piers* text in Morgan may have been disseminated from Norfolk, but I have discovered further overlooked codicological evidence linking it to Boston. Morgan is written on paper, and like the rewritten portion of University College 45 its quires are reinforced with recycled strips of parchment. These were originally pasted to the leaves but have come loose in places, and writing is legible on some of them. On the strip of parchment supporting the centre of

[18] Kane, pp. 78-80.
[19] Simon Horobin, 'The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry 137 and the Copying and Circulation of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 19 (2005), 3-26.
[20] Horobin, 'Rawlinson Poetry 137', 20-2.
[21] *LALME*, III, pp. 283-4.
[22] Madrinkian, '*Piers Plowman*', pp. 135-7. On relict forms, see *LALME*, I, pp. 13-14.

the fourth quire are visible the words 'agnes vx*or*i willi*elmi* holley de boston'. On the half-strip visible at the back of this quire is a reference to 'ecclesie be*ate* marie in Swyneshede', presumably referring to the parish church at Swineshead, seven miles west of Boston. The use of these recycled documents makes it likely that the manuscript was produced in or near the city, possibly in the church at Swineshead itself, but its dialectal links to Norfolk, and textual links discussed below, pull it into the orbit of the Norfolk copies.

Scraps of recycled documentary material appear also in the dialectally northern manuscript related to Ashmole, Antiquaries, and Harley, which offer possible provenance information newly identified here. Trinity College Dublin, MS 213 (E of the A text) is a late fifteenth-century paper copy dialectally localised to the North of England, possibly Durham.[23] Many of its quire gutters are reinforced with pairs of oblong parchment strips, seemingly recycled from a number of different texts. Some contain writing, while the strip found between folios 59 and 60 (foliated as 59a) carries ruling and the edge of a flourished initial. The surviving fragments of text are difficult to make sense of, as the words run between the two longer sides, leaving only short fragments legible, and many words are cut off. However, on the upper strip between folios 46 and 47 (foliated 46a) is visible the word 'Kelinghall', which might be a reference to Kelling Hall, a manor near the north coast of Norfolk. This could be evidence of the book's production in Norfolk, or of links between Norfolk and Durham manifested in the presence of a document referring to a Norfolk manor in the North.

The provenance of Bodley 851 has been disputed but is now thought to be eastern. Bodley contains a text of *Piers* in three segments. The first is the controversial 'Z text', which some editors consider to be a discreet stage in the development of the poem anterior to A, while others view it as

[23] Samuels, 'Dialect and Grammar', p. 205; *LALME*, I, p. 229.

a scribal corruption of A.[24] The second two represent portions of A and C respectively. The 'Z text' portion corresponds to A from the Prologue to 8.88, and is written in a Worcestershire dialect with a layer of eastern forms.[25] A different scribe, known as Q, continued the text to the end of Passus 9 from an A text exemplar (the Q continuation), before copying the rest of the poem from a C copy, all in a dialect pointing to the east of England.[26] Bodley 851 is associated with Ramsey Abbey, as it contains the ownership note of a monk of the house, John Wells.[27] Its texts of *Piers* were not necessarily written in that centre, as the ownership note is codicologically independent of the book's other components, but it has been suggested that this copy of the poem may still be a monastic product.[28] The highly idiosyncratic Z text resists comparison with other copies, but the Q continuation corresponds most closely to the A text in University College 45.[29] The two manuscripts were probably also each other's closest neighbours geographically, if the Ramsey connection is correct, and the Z text itself is also related to the AMH[3] group.[30] These links indicate that the common ancestor of these copies may have circulated in these eastern counties.

A further, unusual, copy was also written in an eastern dialect. Cambridge University Library Ll.4.14 is the only single-version B text with links to the region, written in the dialect of Ely,[31] but its provenance is confused by the presence in the manuscript of sixteenth-century records

[24] The argument in favour of a discreet Z text is made in *Piers Plowman: The Z Version*, ed. by A. G. Rigg and Charlotte Brewer (Toronto, 1983); and Schmidt, II, pp. 211-16. This view is contested in George Kane, review of *Piers Plowman: The Z Version*, ed. by A. G. Rigg and Charlotte Brewer (1983), *Speculum*, 60 (1985), 910-30; and Ralph Hanna, 'MS. Bodley 851 and the Dissemination of *Piers Plowman*', in Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 195-202.

[25] *LALME*, III, p. 557, places the dialect in Worcestershire; Horobin, 'Harley 3954', p. 78-9, identifies an 'East Midlands overlay'.

[26] On the Q scribe, see *Piers Z*, ed. by Rigg and Brewer, pp. 5-6; and on his dialect, see Horobin, 'Harley 3954', p. 79.

[27] On f. 6v is written 'Iste liber constat ffratri Iohanni de Wellis monacho Rameseye', almost certainly linking the book to John Wells, a monk of Ramsey Abbey, who died in 1388. See Hanna, 'Bodley 851', p. 196.

[28] Hanna, 'Bodley 851', pp. 196-7.

[29] *Piers Z*, ed. by Rigg and Brewer, pp. 28-9.

[30] *Piers Z*, ed. by Rigg and Brewer, pp. 23-5; discussed in Horobin, 'Harley 3954', p. 78.

[31] *LALME*, III, pp. 111-2.

pointing to Oxfordshire.[32] The B text was certainly available independently of Ll.4.14 in the East of England, surviving as part of the unique conjoint B-A text in Harley 3954, although there is no evidence of a textual relationship between Ll.4.14 and Harley.[33] The manuscript to which Ll.4.14 is most closely related is Oriel College, MS 79 (sigil O), written in a Hertfordshire dialect and offering equally little sense of where Ll.4.14 may have been produced.[34] Andrew Galloway has suggested that it may have Cistercian connections on the basis of its content, which might place it within a similar ecclesiastical transmission network as identified for several other *Piers* manuscripts in the East of England, or, if it was produced elsewhere, suggest that this kind of network was prevalent in other areas too.[35] Ecclesiastical transmission networks appear to have been responsible for the production of Bodley 851, which may have a monastic connection, and Morgan M.818, which the new evidence presented above links with the secular clergy serving the parish church at Swineshead.

The presence of recycled legal documents in three of these manuscripts also offers clues to the nature of their production context. It indicates that whoever bound these books, two of which survive in medieval bindings, had access to waste documentary material. Although it remains uncertain whether these parchment supports were added during the original production of the books they survive in, they raise the possibility that all three scribes were also involved in the copying of documents, perhaps as legal scribes or in offices of local recordkeeping alongside their literary efforts. This kind of professional overlap between documentary and literary copying has been widely studied in London, and recent work has increasingly shown that the practice was common in other regions. Examples from London include the copyist of Huntington Library, MS

[32] Andrew Galloway, '*Piers Plowman* and the Schools', *YLS*, 6 (1992), 89-107 (100).
[33] Kane-Donaldson, p. 21.
[34] Kane-Donaldson, pp. 22-4; Schmidt, II, p. 132. For the dialect of O, see *LALME*, III, p. 177.
[35] Galloway, 'Schools', 100-4.

Hm 114 (containing *Piers* alongside other Middle English texts including *Troilus and Criseyde*), whose hand has been identified in record books from the City of London bureaucracy.[36] Outside the city, overlap between literary and documentary copying has been identified in the West Midlands (discussed in more detail below): in the early fourteenth century, the copyist of British Library, MS Harley 2253 produced legal documents in the area surrounding Ludlow, and, around 1400, scribes associated with the Vernon manuscript have been identified in legal records from Lichfield.[37] This situation appears to have been the case, too, in the east of England. The survival of University College 45 and Morgan M.818 in medieval bindings, moreover, might indicate that parchment supports for paper quires were regularly disposed of in later rebindings, and that the practice was originally more widespread.

The Prick in the East of England

The situation among *Prick* manuscripts produced in the region is different. There appear to have been many more lines of transmission for *The Prick*, reflected in the many representatives of different textual groups surviving in eastern dialects. Norfolk alone accounts for ten manuscripts, representing at least three of the four textual families within the Main Version identified in Lewis-McIntosh, and a copy of the Southern Recension:

[36] Simon Horobin and Linne R. Mooney, 'A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript by the Hengwrt/Ellesmere Scribe and Its Implications for London Standard English', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 26 (2004), 65-112 (99), and John M. Bowers, 'Two Professional Readers of Chaucer and Langland: Scribe D and the HM 114 Scribe', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 26 (2004), 113-46 (132, n. 77).

[37] Carter Revard, 'Scribe and Provenance', in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. by Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, 2000), pp. 21-109; and Simon Horobin, 'The Scribes of the Vernon Manuscript', in *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript: The Production and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a 1*, ed. by Wendy Scase (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 27-47.

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Group*
MV39	London, British Library, MS Additional 11304[38]	2
MV37	London, British Library, MS Sloane 1044[39]	?
MV48	London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 492	4
MV50	London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 288	4
MV51	London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687	2
MV65	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 99	4
MV81	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 138	4
MV91	Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 196	3
SR7	Lichfield, Lichfield Cathedral Library, MS 50	SR
E3	Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.5.40[40]	?

Some of these manuscripts contain provenance information in addition to their dialect. Lambeth 492 contains a fifteenth-century document relating to the dioceses of Lincoln and Norwich recycled as a flyleaf, indicating that the manuscript may have been bound in either county. Although representing a slightly different form of re-use, the incorporation of this document in the book's binding suggests, as do the parchment scraps in paper manuscripts of *Piers*, that the scribe of this book worked in an environment where documents were available.

The Norfolk pedigree of Digby 99 is clear from its contents and scribal colophon. *The Prick* is preceded by a copy of the statutes of William Raleigh, Bishop of Norwich, and the scribe of the manuscript identifies himself as 'ffrater Johannes stanys canonicus Thetfordie' (f. 156v). This might refer either to the Cluniac priory at Thetford, Norfolk, or to the priory of Augustinian canons also in

[38] Three scribal hands are present in Additional 11304. None are fully profiled in *LALME*, but Hands 2 and 3 are localised to west Norfolk or north-west Suffolk and the manuscript is therefore included in this list; *LALME*, I, p. 100.

[39] Sloane 1044 is a postmedieval collection of manuscript fragments, of which item 235 is a leaf of *The Prick* carrying ll. 2755-829 from Book 4. Its brevity prevented a textual analysis in Lewis-McIntosh (p. 70).

[40] This manuscript contains a twenty-eight-line extract corresponding to ll. 6067-110 in Book 5, which survives also in two other books. Like Sloane 1044, it is too short to have been grouped with a textual family in Lewis-McIntosh (p. 152).

the town.[41] Additionally, the watermark in Antiquaries 687 shared with Ashmole 1468 (discussed above) recurs in Digby 99, suggesting that all three were produced from a common paper stock.[42]

Rawlinson poetry 138 may also have had an Augustinian connection. Lewis-McIntosh identify a thin strip of parchment glued to the pastedown, carrying an inscription which, though extremely faded, makes reference to 'monast*eri* be*ate* marie de vluerscrofte' and to 's*ancti* augustini lincoln*ensis*'. Ulverscroft Priory was a small house of Augustinian canons in Leicestershire, while Lincoln was home to a community of Augustinian friars.[43] The nature of this piece of parchment is unclear. There are two other parchment strips of similar size interleaved at different points in the book, one of which is attached to the top of the spine, which might have functioned as bookmarks in the way some modern hardback books are bound with ribbons or thin lengths of fabric. It is unclear whether the inscribed strip was used similarly, or whether it might have been cut from a larger document, and the text at either end is too illegible to determine whether it might have continued. Nonetheless, its scribe or medieval binder appears to have had a connection with one or both of the Augustinian orders.

This manuscript also shares decorative features with Digby 99. John Stanys, the scribe of Digby, wrote in an idiosyncratic anglicana hand with enormously exaggerated loops on letters with space above them, particularly on the top line of each leaf and on rubrics written in large gaps. Many of these loops are decorated with small faces, mostly of a neutral expression or frowning slightly. Similar figures appear on some of the top-line ascenders in Rawlinson, as well as on catchwords and

[41] Daniel Sawyer, 'Codicological Evidence of Reading in Late Medieval England, with Particular Reference to Practical Pastoral Verse' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), p. 50, n. 70, suggests that the latter is more probable, on the basis that the book's contents would have better suited the canons' pastoral responsibilities.

[42] This watermark is visible on ff. 51, 52, 54, 76, and 131.

[43] See David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London, 1971), p. 242 (Lincoln); Ulverscroft is identified on the map titled 'The Augustinian Canons & Others' inserted at the end of this volume.

ascenders on Latin lines protruding beyond the text block (see Figures 1 and 2). This distinctive shared decorative feature might suggest that the scribe of Rawlinson was known to John Stanys, perhaps trained in the same centre.

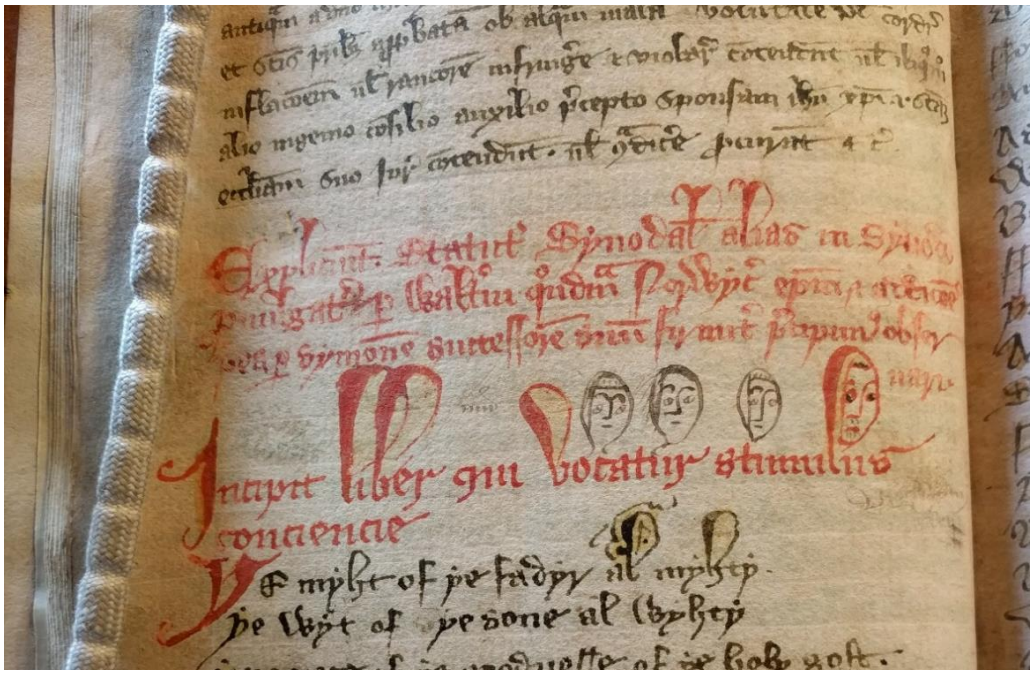

Figure 1: Bodleian Library, MS Digby 99, f. 8v (detail). Opening of The Prick.
By permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

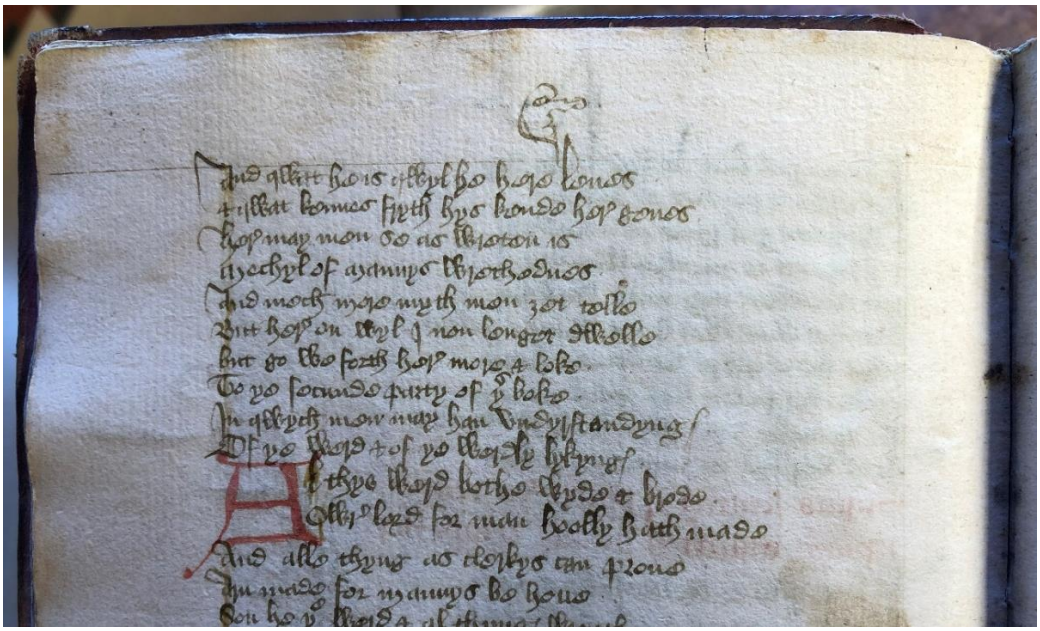

Figure 2: Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 138, f. 14v (detail).
By permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

Several of the eastern *Prick* manuscripts can therefore be localised with some certainty to Norfolk. In combination with the number of *Piers* manuscripts whose provenance, as indicated by external or physical evidence, matches their dialect localisations, these give support to Beadle's claim that scribes who wrote in distinctively regional dialects probably worked in those same areas. The provenance information from Lambeth, Digby, and Rawlinson additionally indicates a similar pattern of ecclesiastical transmission as seen in the copies of *Piers* discussed above. These patterns are found on a larger scale among the *Prick* manuscripts, for which there appear to have been significantly more lines of transmission. Seven out of the eight manuscripts of *Piers* localised to eastern counties contain copies of A, in whole or part, which fall into two broad textual groupings: AMH^3 and RUZ. These reflect the relationships between the groups EAMH^3 and the pair RU established by Kane, plus the relationship between U and Z not considered by him.[44] Four groupings are present among the Norfolk *Prick* manuscripts alone, without taking into account copies produced in neighbouring counties. The presence of multiple discreet textual traditions suggests that the poem arrived in the county through several different routes.

The production of Antiquaries 687

Antiquaries 687 represents the product of several intersecting lines of textual transmission which brought together *Piers*, *The Prick*, and its various other contents. As discussed above, its A text is related to the two other probable Norfolk copies, Ashmole and Harley, while its copy of *The Prick* is a member of the Eight Part Version (8PV), a scribal recension characterised by extended passages

[44] Kane, pp. 82, 94-5.

of interpolated Latin prose and English verse, surviving in four other copies. The contents of Antiquaries are discussed in more detail in the third chapter, while the 8PV is the subject of the final chapter; this section focuses on how the manuscript relates to other eastern copies of *Piers* and *The Prick*.

As will be shown in the final chapter, Antiquaries appears to be on the periphery of the 8PV family. It is not the only eastern copy, as all but one of these books are copied in the dialects of counties near Norfolk,[45] but it is the only paper copy, and significantly smaller than the others.[46] Textually, it preserves less of the revised material characteristic of the 8PV than any other, and lies outside the closest relationships traced in the final chapter. The size of Antiquaries is more in line with other paper manuscripts of *The Prick* dialectally localised to Norfolk and Suffolk, a group whose dimensions are remarkably consistent:

Shelfmark	*Dimensions* (*mm*)
Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 386/606	213 x 146
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 288	210 x 140
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687	215 x 145
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 99	222 x 146
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 138	222 x 148

This group incorporates one new manuscript, Gonville and Caius 386, written in a Suffolk dialect.[47] The height of these copies varies by 12 mm, and the width by 8 mm, meaning that the height of the

[45] According to *LALME*, John Rylands Library, MS English 90 is localised to Shropshire; Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 60 to Ely; Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 76 to Essex; and University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 218 to Lincolnshire (III, pp. 435-6, 106-7, 116, and 228-9, respectively).

[46] English 90 and Codex 218 are both among the largest surviving *Prick* manuscripts, at 343 x 245 mm and 390 x 253 mm respectively, and are written in double columns. Ashmole 60 and e Musaeo 76 are more standard in size, at 290 x 190 mm and 283 x 190 mm (see Appendix 2).

[47] *LALME*, III, pp. 476-7.

shortest copy is 95% of the height of the tallest. The relationship between the widest and narrowest copies is the same, and the variation in size between these books is therefore very small.

These nearly even dimensions are likely to be the result of a common way of folding the sheets of paper from which these books were made. Before the adoption of papermaking technology in England, all paper was imported, largely from Italy.[48] Medieval paper was produced in standard sizes and there is strong evidence that these standards remained consistent throughout the period.[49] The four standard sizes are presented below, listed with both their medieval Italian names and modern English equivalents, and with two estimations of their dimensions calculated by the nineteenth-century filigranologist Charles-Moïse Briquet and modern scholar Paul Needham.[50]

Size	*Italian name*	*Briquet*	*Needham*
Imperial	*Inperialle*	500 x 740	*c.*490 x c.740
Royal	*Realle*	445 x 615	*c.*430 x c.620
Median	*Meçane*	345 x 515	*c.*350 x c.510
Chancery	*Reçute*	315 x 450	*c.*320 x c.450

Looking again at the *Prick* manuscripts produced in Norfolk and Suffolk, there is a correspondence between what appears to be the roughly standard size of these manuscripts and the dimensions of Chancery paper. A sheet of Chancery folded in quarto (producing four sheets of paper) results in maximum dimensions of 225 x 157 mm (Briquet) or 225 x 160 mm (Needham). These sizes relate to those of the *Prick*-copies listed above, which are all slightly smaller than these largest possible dimensions. The lesser width of the manuscripts compared to the hypothetical dimensions of

[48] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*, trans. by David Gerard, ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton (London, 2010), p. 32.
[49] Paul Needham, 'Res papirea: Sizes and Formats of the Late Medieval Book', in *Rationalisierung der Buchherstellung im Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*, ed. by Peter Rück and Martin Boghardt (Marburg an der Lahn, 1994), pp. 123-45 (125-6).
[50] Charles-Moïse Briquet, *Les Filligranes: Dictionnaire historique des Marques du Papier dès leur Apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 4 vols (Paris, 1907), I, p. 2-3; Needham, 'Res papirea', p. 125.

Chancery in quarto is probably exacerbated by the loss of measurable width in binding: it is difficult to accurately measure pages which disappear into the gutter once folded into bifolia and gathered in quires. This correspondence is not necessarily evidence for a link in their production, but does imply that these manuscripts were made to a shared format, and perhaps therefore a common understanding of what a *Prick* manuscript ought to have looked like (a possibility discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter).

Two of the eastern *Piers* manuscripts are also produced in this format. Morgan M.818 is written entirely on paper, while University College 45 contains one quire of paper. The dimensions of Morgan's leaves vary substantially due to damage sustained in intervening centuries, leaving its height between 216 and 222 mm, and its width between 127 and 146 mm. The paper in University College is more uniform, at 211 mm tall and 143 mm wide. The parchment quires preceding the paper were originally larger before trimming, which may have taken place when the paper was added as the book survives in a fifteenth-century binding. Allowing for the variation in Morgan, these manuscripts are both near to or within the range of the *Prick* copies, and are therefore likely also to have been produced from Chancery paper. The survival of two *Piers* manuscripts on paper folded in a larger format (Ashmole 1468 and Ll.4.14) indicates that the format of the small copies was not the only one available to scribes.

Conclusions

Judging by the number of surviving copies, there were almost certainly more manuscripts of *The Prick* than *Piers* produced in the medieval East of England. Although fewer manuscripts of *The Prick* dialectally localisable to Norfolk and the broader region can be linked to it with other kinds of

provenance information, it remains likely that more were copied there. The visible evidence for provenance, distributed across only a portion of all surviving manuscripts, points largely to the Church as the source of textual transmission: ecclesiastical networks, whether regular or secular, appear to have been responsible for many copies, but whether this characterises all the copying of the two poems which took place here is unclear. The shape of their transmission was also different: the circulation of *Piers* was fairly restricted in its focus on the A text and close textual affiliations, where *The Prick* was probably transmitted to and within the region by many more routes, reflected in the range of textual affiliations present in the surviving corpus.

The findings discussed above raise the possibility of widespread overlap between literary and documentary copying. Several of the scribes who copied both poems seem to have worked in environments where waste documentary material was available for bookbinding, and may therefore have combined different kinds of copying work in the manner documented in London and the West Midlands. The copying of some of these *Piers* and *Prick* manuscripts might then have been undertaken by professional copyists hired by ecclesiastical institutions, rather than by ecclesiastical scribes, but some scribes, including John Stanys and potentially the copyists of Bodley 851 and Morgan M.818, were certainly in holy orders.

Antiquaries 687 is part of a group of manuscripts of both *Piers* and *The Prick* which seem to have been produced to a common format, likely to have resulted from a common practice of folding sheets of Chancery paper in quarto. The additional evidence of shared watermarks between Ashmole 1468, Antiquaries 687, and Digby 99 indicates that a common paper stock was available to these three copyists. Digby 99 was copied by John Stanys of Thetford, and so we might conclude that this stock was imported, or purchased after import, by either the Benedictines or the Augustinian canons and perhaps that it was distributed to the production context of the other two

manuscripts. Other paper copies are linked to ecclesiastical institutions, including Morgan M.818 and Rawlinson poetry 138. The overlap between copying on paper and ecclesiastical provenance may suggest that Church institutions in Norfolk and nearby were major importers of this material.

Lichfield: the Vernon manuscript and Rawlinson poetry 139

This section examines two manuscripts, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a.1 (more commonly known as the Vernon manuscript), and Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139 (hereafter Rawlinson). The Vernon is famous as the largest surviving compilation of Middle English texts. Its own contents page gives a sense of medieval perceptions of its scale: though incomplete, it lists 394 items up to *Piers* and would likely have totalled over 400 had it been finished (f. iiir). This figure includes chapters of works we would now consider a single text, and according to the count of items in A. I. Doyle's facsimile edition the manuscript contains some fifty-nine items on 412 folios, including texts of *The Prick* and *Piers*.[51] Less capacious, this is still an enormous number especially given the size of some of those texts (consider *The Prick* alone). Its scale is matched by the widespread critical interest it has attracted, manifested in the two books of essays devoted to it and its publication in print and digital facsimiles.[52]

Rawlinson, meanwhile, has received much less attention from modern readers, one of many *Prick* manuscripts not of use to editors and therefore little studied, but is unique among the group

[51] See the contents list inserted at the end of *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. poet. a.1*, ed. by A. I. Doyle (Cambridge, 1987).

[52] *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1990); *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. by Wendy Scase (Turnhout, 2013); *Vernon Facsimile*, ed. by Doyle; *A Facsimile Edition of the Vernon Manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. A. 1*, ed. by Wendy Scase (Oxford, 2011). The Bodleian maintains an online exhibition devoted to the manuscript: 'The Vernon Manuscript: A Literary Hoard from Medieval England', <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/whats-on/online/vernon> [accessed 11 September 2019].

of otherwise regular productions to which it is related. It contains interpolations of original verse not found in any other copy of the poem, mostly short, fifteen to twenty lines at most, clustering in Book 4. These challenge statements made in the poem about the process of salvation, and seem to have been produced by a reviser who wanted to reshape *The Prick* from a different theological perspective. Several of these insertions contain embedded Latin quotations, in imitation of the style of the poem, and some of these quotations were taken from a copy of *Piers*. The insertions, and their relationship with *Piers*, have gone unnoticed by previous readers of the manuscript.

Vernon and Rawlinson both result from the convergence of networks transmitting *Piers* and *The Prick*, but represent very different productions. Vernon sits at the centre of one of the largest geographical concentrations of surviving *Prick* manuscripts, focused on the city of Lichfield, where the cathedral appears to have been the focus of a major effort to produce copies of the poem. The production of Vernon must also have involved an enormous effort to source exemplars of the many texts it contains, so probably represents one of the largest single projects of Middle English textual production. Rawlinson is something of a poor relation in contrast: a single-text copy of *The Prick* genetically related to Vernon but not apparently part of the Lichfield cluster, geographically isolated in Shropshire. But its newly-identified insertions are significant for our understanding of the transmission of *Piers*, indicating the existence of a previously-unknown B-text source in the region.

The transmission networks which brought the two poems into contact in the hands of these two copyists are the subject of this section, which will explore both the startling popularity of *The Prick* among copyists in the North West Midlands and the apparently lesser status of *Piers* there. Both Vernon and Rawlinson express this uneven interest despite their differences, reversing modern assumptions to an extreme degree. Beginning with Vernon and its many related *Prick* copies, before turning to Rawlinson, this section will suggest that this unevenness was characteristic

of the reception of the two poems among clerical readers and represents a historical reality which should be more fully embraced in modern scholarship.

Lichfield and Vernon

Research since the 1960s has generated a picture of a network of related manuscripts and copyists of *The Prick* centred on Vernon, emanating from the city of Lichfield. Horobin's study of the scribal hands in Vernon demonstrated that the book was produced by copyists associated with Lichfield, probably as a commission by the cathedral.[53] This has shifted previous views of the association of the book with smaller religious houses in Warwickshire, where the dialect of Vernon's Scribe A is localised.[54] The association with Lichfield fits with the textual and dialectal evidence of a large group of manuscripts related to Vernon associated with the city. Lewis-McIntosh identify three genetic groups containing and related to Vernon and its 'sister', British Library, MS Additional 22283 (the Simeon manuscript). The first comprises Vernon, Simeon, and six other copies (hereafter the VS group), and is characterised by the displacement of a 231-line passage from Book 2 to Book 1.[55] These copies are dialectally scattered across the Midlands, with one further afield in Suffolk. The second group is derived from VS, comprising a cluster of seven manuscripts, four of which are written in a consistent Lichfield dialect and the rest in nearby Midlands dialects (known as the Lichfield group).[56] Lichfield manuscripts contain a ten-line insertion before the Prologue and, in the

[53] Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon'.
[54] The possible association of the book with Bordesley Abbey in Worcestershire is discussed in *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle: The 'Vernon' Text*, ed. by Anne Zettersten and Bernhard Diensberg, EETS, OS 310 (Oxford, 2000), xiv-xv.
[55] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 8.
[56] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 8. A stemmatic analysis of the Lichfield group is presented in Margaret Grace Dareau and Angus McIntosh, 'A dialect word in some West Midland manuscripts of the *Prick of Conscience*', in *Edinburgh Studies in English and Scots*, ed. by A. J. Aitken and others (London, 1971), pp. 20-6.

assessment of Lewis-McIntosh, 'other readings that show an independent editor trying to make better sense of what he had in front of him'.[57] A further group of four manuscripts is also identified as descending from VS, though the dialect localisations of these copies are more peripheral: two in Devon, one in Gloucestershire, and only one closer to Lichfield in Worcestershire. These manuscripts are described here as the VS-derived group.[58] The VS group also contains a dialectal outlier, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C. 319, written in a Suffolk dialect with relict Midlands forms. The three groups are presented below, accompanied by the dates of production and dialectal localisations given in Lewis-McIntosh.

The Vernon-Simeon group

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Date*	*Localisation*
MV18	Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 33	xiv 2	West Lincolnshire
MV31	British Library, MS Harley 1205	xiv ex	Lichfield
MV36	British Library, MS Lansdowne 348	xv in	Central Staffordshire
MV40	British Library, MS Additional 22283	xiv ex	North Worcestershire
MV59	Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 41	xiv ex	Central Staffordshire
MV70	Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a.1 (Vernon)	xiv ex	North Worcestershire
MV77	Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.319	xv 1	North-west Suffolk
MV82	Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139	xiv 2	North-east Shropshire

The Lichfield group

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Date*	*Localisation*
MV23	Wells, Holkham Hall, Earl of Leicester's Library, MS 668	xiv/xv	Lichfield
MV45	London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 67	xiv ex	Lichfield
MV54	Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 50	xiv ex	Lichfield/South-east Staffordshire[59]

[57] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 8.

[58] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 8.

[59] Lewis-McIntosh's localisation for this manuscript is given as 'South east Staffordshire' in the description on p. 88, but earlier the manuscript is included as one of the five members of the Lichfield group 'coming from the Lichfield area in Staffordshire' (p. 8). *LALME* places it near Lichfield ('Key map 2', II, p. 384) as LP 519 (III, pp. 464-5).

MV57	New Haven, Yale University Library, MS Osborn a13	xv 1	Lichfield
MV68	Bodleian Library, MS Douce 156	xiv ex	Central Midlands
MV88	Oxford, Trinity College, MS 16A	xv 1	South Shropshire
MV89	Oxford, Trinity College, MS 16B	xiv/xv	Lichfield

The Vernon-Simeon derived group

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Date*	*Localisation*
MV4	Brussels, KBR, MS IV 998[60]	xv in	Devon
MV24	Leeds University Library, MS Brotherton 500	xiv/xv	North-west Worcestershire
MV63	Bodleian Library, MS Digby 14	xv 1	Devon
MV72	Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 486	xv in	South Gloucestershire

Although these groups are set out unambiguously in the introduction to Lewis-McIntosh, subsequent discussions of the affiliations of individual manuscripts indicate that their boundaries may be more porous. Some members of the VS group are described as being related also to the Lichfield group (Lansdowne 348, Ashmole 41, Rawlinson C. 319, and Rawlinson poetry 139), while Lewis-McIntosh suspect Harley 1205 may have been the 'ultimate exemplar' of the Lichfield group.[61] For the sake of clarity, the manuscripts are presented in the above tables according to their simpler classification in the introduction (p. 8).

The Lichfield group takes its name from five manuscripts within the family supposedly written in a consistent Lichfield language. The characteristics of this language are not given in Lewis-McIntosh, and all but one of the five, Rylands English 50, are unprofiled in *LALME*. This manuscript is localised near Lichfield, and while the other four are all associated by *LALME* with Staffordshire, only Harley 1205 and Trinity 16B are explicitly placed in Lichfield.[62]

[60] KBR was formerly known as Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque royale.
[61] Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 68, 93, 111, 116, and 8.
[62] *LALME*, I, pp. 239.

While the dialect evidence drawn on by Lewis-McIntosh and the editors of *LALME* is unavailable for review and therefore potentially unreliable, scribal links between the five Lichfield copies and the Vernon place their production in the city more securely. Arundel 57 and Rylands English 50 have been attributed to a single scribe along with Harley 1205, known as the Lichfield Master and possibly identifiable as one John Scriveyn.[63] Scriveyn was associated with the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts through a memorandum naming him in Simeon, partially repeated at the same location in Vernon, though his hand does not appear in either.[64] He was employed as a scribe in the Lichfield area, from which records bearing his name appear.[65] The main scribe of Vernon, known as Scribe A, also worked on other copies of *The Prick*: this hand has been identified in Trinity 16B, as Hand A, and in Holkham 668, as Hand 1.[66] Hand B of Trinity 16A has been identified as the scribe of Douce 156.[67]

The production of the Lichfield group therefore seems to have been dominated by Scriveyn and Vernon's Scribe A, partially in collaboration with others; Trinity 16A is the only manuscript of the Lichfield group not copied by a member of this trio. Ashmole 41 of the VS group may also be related to the cluster of activity surrounding Vernon-Simeon: the artist who supplied decorated initials in the Vernon has been identified as the likely artist of similar initials in Ashmole.[68]

These close scribal links, in combination with a diachronic range of around fifty years (from the second half of the fourteenth century to the start of the fifteenth), seem to indicate a deliberate

[63] The identification has been made several times, but no account of the palaeographical grounds on which it rests has been published. See Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 28, repeating earlier partial identifications in Angus McIntosh, 'A New Approach to Middle English Dialectology', *English Studies*, 44 (1963), 1-11 (7), citing M. L. Samuels.
[64] Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 28, and *Vernon Facsimile*, ed. by Doyle, pp. 13-14.
[65] Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 30, 32; A. I. Doyle, 'Codicology, Palaeography, and Provenance', in *Making of the Vernon*, ed. by Scase, pp. 3-25 (14-15).
[66] Doyle, 'Facsimile', p. 13, Lewis and McIntosh, pp. 54 and 121, and Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 45.
[67] Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 46.
[68] *Vernon Facsimile*, ed. by Doyle, pp. 7-8. Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 39, further suggests that the scribe of Ashmole may be the same as the copyist of part of the episcopal register of Bishop Stretton of Lichfield.

programme of dissemination generating copies of *The Prick* in Lichfield and the broader West Midlands, with lines of transmission further afield to Suffolk, Devon, and Gloucestershire. Close collaboration between a group of scribes might be evidence for some form of centralised production, perhaps through the sponsorship of an institution like Lichfield Cathedral.

While there is an obvious physical and presentational difference between Vernon and Simeon and the rest of the manuscripts of the VS and Lichfield groups, which are all much smaller than their two giant relatives, this remainder has much in common. All but two of the other VS and Lichfield manuscripts are single-text productions. The exceptions are Arundel 57, which is also an outlier in terms of its size and use of double columns, and Rylands English 50. Newberry 33, Harley 1205, and Lansdowne 348 all contain square bracketing marking couplets; Rylands English 50, Osborn a13, and Douce 156 all use running headers; and the latter three manuscripts and Trinity 16B are all of a similar size.[69] These similarities across manuscripts produced by different scribes might indicate that production in Lichfield was related beyond the work of Scriveyn and Scribe A, perhaps conforming, like the paper manuscripts discussed in the previous section, to a common standard.

The production of *The Prick* in Lichfield was the product of ecclesiastical transmission networks. It was apparently common in this area for Church institutions to employ professional scribes, such as John Scriveyn, in the copying of vernacular religious texts. This phenomenon is less visible among the Eastern manuscripts discussed in the previous section, but the surviving evidence for the large-scale production of *Prick* manuscripts in Lichfield is unusual. There may also have been a level of centralisation of production not seen in the East. Overlapping scribal hands and similar formats might indicate that some of these copies were produced as part of a deliberate programme

[69] Rylands English 50: 250 x 150 mm; Osborn: 240 x 155 mm; Douce: 252 x 150 mm; Trinity 16B: 242 x 158 mm. See Appendix 2.

of dissemination which aimed to distribute *The Prick* widely, but it is unclear for whom the copies made by Scriveyn and Scribe A were intended. They may also have been commissioned by the Cathedral at Lichfield, or equally by other patrons in the area.

Piers in the North West Midlands

The transmission of *Piers* in this area seems to have been much less extensive. No manuscripts of the poem are localised to Lichfield, or even to Staffordshire. The possibility that copies were produced there is not excluded by this lack of dialectal evidence: the A text in Vernon is now thought to have been produced in Lichfield, though Scribe A's dialect in this manuscript is localised to Worcestershire.[70] The exemplar of this copy appears to have remained in use for at least fifty years, as a mid-fifteenth-century scribe produced a genetic twin of the Vernon text in British Library, MS Harley 875.[71] This might indicate sustained interest in the poem in the Lichfield area, but as the manuscript is written in a Warwickshire dialect its provenance is not obviously related to Vernon. No other surviving copies contain evidence to place them in the same environment, leading to the conclusion that the circulation of *Piers* in Lichfield and the nearby areas in which associated copies of *The Prick* were written was extremely limited.

The manuscripts of the VS group do, however, contain one further previously unrecognised indication of the presence of *Piers* in the area, in Rawlinson poetry 139. *LALME* places the dialect of Rawlinson in north-east Shropshire, very close to the border with Staffordshire, and it seems to be something of an outlier within the Vernon-Simeon group.[72] This position is isolated, and might

[70] Samuels, 'Dialect and Grammar', p. 206.
[71] Schmidt, II, pp. 3, 93.
[72] The language of *The Prick* is profiled as LP 192 in *LALME*, III, p. 426. It is mapped on 'Key map 2', *LALME*, II, p. 384.

reflect transmission of a VS group exemplar to a scribe some distance away from Lichfield. Rawlinson's dialectal profile may not, of course, reflect production in the area, but the marked difference in layout between the oblong 'holster book' format of Rawlinson and other manuscripts in its textual family might suggest its separateness from these more consistent productions (discussed in the fourth chapter).

This geographical isolation reflects the unique state of its text. As mentioned earlier, Rawlinson contains insertions of material not found in the Main Version of *The Prick* or in any other copy of the poem. The reviser who composed them appears to have taken issue with some of *The Prick*'s theological views: although they mimic the style of the Main Version, in rhymed octosyllabic couplets, they challenge its statements about the help available to souls in purgatory and insist that only the individual Christian can save their own soul.

Three of the insertions contain Latin quotations which also appear in *Piers*. On folio 49v, between lines 3833-4 in Book 4 of *The Prick*, a nineteen-line passage is inserted containing Verse 41 of the Athanasian Creed: 'Qui bo*na* eger*un*t ib*un*t i*n* uita*m* et*er*na*m* q*ui* u*ero* mala i*n* igne*m* et*er*na*m*'. This quotation is familiar, of course, from all three versions of *Piers*, in which it constitutes the pardon sent by Truth to Piers and destroyed by Piers in the infamous pardon-tearing scene (A.8.95-6, B.7.133-4, C.9.287-8).

Later in the text of Rawlinson, lines 3924-5 are omitted and replaced with six lines of new material incorporating two pieces of Latin. The first is a quotation from Psalm 50:19: 'Cor *contri*tu*m et* hu*m*iliatu*m* de*u*s non despicies' (f. 50r), found also in the B and C texts of *Piers* (B.13.58a, C.15.62). The second resembles closely a line found only in B: '*sola contricio delet peccatum*' (B.11.81a),[73]

[73] The Latin quotations in *Piers* are conventionally presented in italics.

apparently known to other writers but uniquely adapted in *Piers*. In Rawlinson, it appears as 'Sola cont*ric*io deleþ om*n*e peccatu*m*' (f. 50r), giving the Latin 'delet' an English ending.

A third interpolated passage follows on folio 50v, where five new lines are inserted between lines 3929-30 incorporating a quotation from Matthew 3:2: 'Penite*n*cia*m* agite q*uia* ap*r*opinq*uabi*t regnu*m* celor*um*'. This finds a less exact parallel in *Piers*, but might also be derived from the poem. At B.13.49, part of this line is embedded in the English verse: 'He sette a sour loof toforn vs and seide '*Agite penitenciam*'. The likelihood of a Langlandian source for this very common piece of Latin is strengthened both by its proximity in the manuscript to the preceding insertion and by its proximity in *Piers* to the quotation from Psalm 50, '*cor contritum*…', a few lines later in Passus 13.

These quotations were widely dispersed in late-medieval England, and the Rawlinson reviser could conceivably have accessed them independently of *Piers*. The creedal verse and the quotation from Psalm 50 were both used liturgically, as John Alford notes, while '*Agite penitenciam*' is found also in the Latin pastoral manual *Fasciculus Morum*.[74] There are also three further insertions in Book 4 (two on folio 47r and one other on folio 50v) which contain five quotations in total, all biblical, not found in *Piers*, indicating that the reviser had access to other sources. However, '*sola contricio delet peccatum*' appears to be a unique Langlandian formulation, not identified, though paralleled, in other texts, and *Piers* is therefore its most likely source in Rawlinson.[75] And although the four quotations overlapping with *Piers* were available separately, their presence together in Rawlinson seems most easily explained as the result of the reviser's reading of passūs 7-13 of the B text.

[74] John A. Alford, *Piers Plowman: A Guide to the Quotations* (Binghamton, 1992), pp. 56-57, 83, 82. *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. by Siegfried Wenzel (University Park and London, 1989), p. 484, l. 57.
[75] Nick Gray, 'Langland's Quotations from the Penitential Tradition', *Modern Philology*, 84 (1986), 53-60 (56).

Other evidence strengthens this point. Firstly, the Rawlinson text contains an unusual system of rubrics which at the beginning of the poem do not correspond to the Prologue and Book divisions seen in other copies. The rubric for Book 3 is significant here, given the heading 'Passus tertius' (f. 23r), the same term used for the structural divisions in *Piers*. No other manuscript of *The Prick* and indeed very few other Middle English texts, none of them widely circulated, use the term *passus*. Andrew Galloway notes that although a number of other alliterative texts use the cognate Middle English term *pas*, only *The Wars of Alexander* (surviving in two manuscripts) and a single copy of *The Siege of Jerusalem* use *passus* to describe textual divisions.[76] Given their restricted dissemination, it seems unlikely that either is the source of Rawlinson's use of the term, so the apparent slip indicates familiarity with Langland's poem.

The new context into which the Latin material is placed in Rawlinson also suggests that it was borrowed from *Piers*. The first of the three insertions outlined above, containing the creedal verse found in the pardon-tearing scene, is used to make a point about pardons. The second and third insertions contain quotations found also in the 'Feast of Conscience' scene, which stages a dramatisation of the sacrament of penance (B.13). These are used also to support the reviser's view on pardons, incorporated into insertions which insist that only penance, and not indulgences, can save the soul. The other quotation in the second insertion, taken from the first inner dream in B.11, occurs during the dreamer's rebuke of the friars for neglecting their duties of baptism and confession in the pursuit of wealth. Associated thereby with opposition to clerical corruption, it bolsters the reviser's stance against indulgences. These parallels make clear that the context of the Latin in *Piers* is related to its new setting in Rawlinson.

[76] *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman, Volume 1* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 19-21.

The content of the Rawlinson insertions and what they demonstrate about the reviser's view of *Piers* and *The Prick* is discussed in detail in the final chapter; for the moment, this manuscript indicates a previously-unknown line of transmission bringing the B text to the north-west Midlands, an area from which no copies of this version (or the C text) now survive. The textual affiliation of this lost manuscript is indeterminable on the basis of the Latin quotations borrowed from it, but evidence from Rawlinson may point to an ecclesiastical source: its links to the VS group, and the interest of its reviser in the theology of pardons (discussed in the final chapter), might be evidence of clerical production – though laypeople could equally have taken an interest in doctrinal subjects.

Conclusions

The transmission of *Piers* in the north-west Midlands was entangled with *The Prick*. Both surviving witnesses to the poem were in contact with it, through their compilation in Vernon and the work of the Rawlinson reviser, and the surviving evidence suggests *Piers* was not produced independently in this area as it was in Norfolk and the East. The transmission of *The Prick*, too, was distinctive: Lichfield was the site of a major effort to produce copies of it, perhaps spurred by institutional sponsorship or other kinds of centralised production. But there were also similarities, as indications of provenance suggest production mainly for ecclesiastical institutions. As in the East, the immediate audience for both poems seems to have been dominated by readers associated with the Church.

Evidence survives from Lichfield and the north-west Midlands for a high rate of manuscripts produced by professional scribes. In a slightly earlier period, the scribe of British Library, MS Harley 2253 has been identified as a copyist of legal documents in the area surrounding Ludlow in

Shropshire.[77] The Lichfield Master/John Scriveyn and Vernon's Scribe A appear to have had similar careers, copying literary manuscripts alongside documentary material. This seems to have been the case less frequently among the Norfolk books discussed above, suggesting that patterns of scribal employment and labour may have been different there, with a higher rate of user productions.

Rawlinson itself suggests some conclusions about the relative status of *Piers* and *The Prick*, independent of the obviously greater interest in the latter indicated by the Lichfield copies. The insertions in Rawlinson indicate a desire to preserve the wholeness of the Main Version. Even while directly challenging material in the poem, the reviser chose not to omit those statements he clearly found troubling. This fidelity perhaps implies that *The Prick* had an authoritative status of its own. It was certainly important within the local textual culture which produced it, and among the nearby group of scribes around Lichfield who generated one of the largest surviving local clusters of a single text. This culture appears to have favoured works of northern Middle English verse: copies of *Speculum Vitae* and *Cursor Mundi* are copied in the hand of the Lichfield Master (perhaps John Scriveyn).[78]

In contrast, while Rawlinson offers the first evidence that the B text was present in the north-west Midlands in this period, the poem still appears to have been very sparsely copied in the area. Rawlinson and Vernon's A text are a lonely pair of witnesses to Langland's poem compared to the abundance of *Prick* manuscripts surrounding them. The material evidence for the substantially greater popularity of *The Prick* compared to *Piers* among medieval readers is a challenging prospect for our field, accustomed as it is to viewing the two in almost oppositional terms. Where *Piers* is regularly lauded, not undeservedly, for its ambition, complexity, and interpretative openness, *The*

[77] Revard, 'Scribe and Provenance'.
[78] Doyle, 'Codicology, Palaeography, Provenance', p. 15; Horobin, 'Scribes of Vernon', p. 30; Dareau and McIntosh, 'Dialect word', p. 22.

Prick has mostly experienced neglect.[79] As I suggested in the introduction, we must take seriously the interest of medieval readers in the latter text to better understand the culture inhabited by early readers of Langland.

London

London, including its suburbs and the neighbouring city of Westminster, is in some ways a counterexample to Lichfield, and has increasingly come into view as the most significant centre for the production of *Piers*. The B text has long been associated with the city, but Horobin's reassignment of an authoritative group of C-text manuscripts to it has suggested that Langland himself may have remained there longer than previously thought, and that London scribes formed the first audience of C, as well as B.[80] *Piers* was popular here, penetrating the economy of deluxe Middle English literary production represented by the work of Scribe D and other prolific metropolitan copyists, and so associated in the early fifteenth century with Chaucer, Gower, and Trevisa.[81] In contrast, very few copies of *The Prick* can be assigned with certainty to London, or even nearby areas. No jointly-produced copies survive from London, but the region is significant precisely because of this lack of convergence. The poems' reception here inverts the pattern seen elsewhere,

[79] See, for example, Andrew Galloway's praise of the poem in 'Madame Meed: *Fauvel*, Isabella, and the French Circumstances of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 227-52 (particularly 229: 'the most ambitious and scandalous invitation *to* topicality that any poet in English of his century carried out'), and in 'Non-literary Commentary and its Literary Profits: The Road to Accounting-ville', *YLS*, 25 (2011), 9-23 (especially 22-3).

[80] Horobin, 'London and Opelond'.

[81] Scribe D's work on *Piers* is discussed in Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Steven Justice, 'Scribe D and the Marketing of Ricardian Literature', in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe and Gower*, ed. by Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (Victoria, 2001), pp. 217-37. An identification for Scribe D has been offered in Linne R. Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature, 1375-1425* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 38-65, but is contested in Lawrence Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes: London textual production, 1384-1432* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 96-103.

aligned more closely with modern views of their relative status than those of many medieval readers outside the capital.

This section examines the surviving evidence for the transmission of the two poems in London, Westminster, and nearby suburbs. It begins with *Piers*, exploring how prolific copyists transmitted the poem to a range of probably lay audiences, before examining the much sparser evidence for the circulation of *The Prick*. Much of this evidence is of a different sort to that assembled in foregoing sections: for reasons discussed in more detail below, dialect evidence associates very few copies with the city so most localisations rely on scribal identifications or production features.

Piers in London

The poem was transmitted here by some of the same scribes responsible for authoritative and sometimes deluxe copies of Middle English literary texts. University of London Library, MS S.L. V. 88 is a copy of *Piers* in the hand of Scribe D, a prolific copyist of Gower, Chaucer, and Trevisa. Most of the books produced by Scribe D seem to have been commissioned by high-status lay patrons, many of them part of the nobility, as indicated by the several coats of arms in Scribe D manuscripts.[82] Scribe D is famous for his stint in the 'Trinity Gower', a copy of the *Confessio Amantis* produced in coordination with four other scribes including the copyist of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* (Scribe B) and Thomas Hoccleve, poet and clerk of the Privy

[82] A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The production of copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the early fifteenth century', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. by M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London, 1978), pp. 163-210 (208-10).

Seal.[83] The Hengwrt scribe has been identified as the copyist of another *Piers* manuscript long associated with the city, the B text in Trinity College Cambridge, MS B.15.17, which if accepted draws another copy into the ambit of Scribe D.[84] This manuscript has been the base text for most modern editions of B, and, given its likely production at the turn of the fifteenth century, indicates the availability of authoritative copies of the poem at an early date in London.[85] Other copies of the B text associated with London include the three conjoint C-A-B-text manuscripts, known by the combination of their sigla as BmBoCot. They each reproduce an extremely similar text of this unique combination of versions, and have been linked to the city on the grounds of their layout and production features.[86] On the basis of its script, it has been suggested that the former Duke of Westminster's manuscript, now in private hands, was produced by a scribe trained in the Privy Seal.[87]

Another C text was produced by a scribe who also made copies of other Middle English verse texts. In Huntington Library, MS Hm 114, *Piers* sits alongside *Troilus and Criseyde*, *Mandeville's Travels*, and other biblical and historical texts, and the copyist of this book was responsible for two other literary manuscripts including another copy of *Troilus*.[88] These books are less obviously

[83] These identifications were first made in Doyle and Parkes, 'Production of Copies'.

[84] Horobin and Mooney, 'A *Piers Plowman* Manuscript'. Trinity B. 15. 17 has a history of association with the city even before Horobin and Mooney's identification: Kane-Donaldson, p. 13 n. 91, for example, identify the book as paleographically similar to other London productions. The identification is contested in Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes*, pp. 45-51.

[85] The exception to this rule is *Piers Plowman: The Prologue and Passus I-VII of the B text as found in Bodleian MS. Laud Misc. 581*, ed. by J. A. W. Bennett (Oxford, 1972).

[86] British Library, MS Additional 10574, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 814, and British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A XI: see Carl James Grindley, 'The A-Version Ancestor of BmBoCot', *YLS*, 24 (2010), 63-88 (75).

[87] A. I. Doyle, 'Remarks on Surviving Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of George H. Russel*, ed. George Kratzmann and James Simpson (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 35-48 (46).

[88] A. I. Doyle, 'The Manuscripts', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background: Seven Essays*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 88-100, 142-7 (p. 94); Ralph Hanna, 'The Scribe of Huntington Hm 114', *Studies in Bibliography*, 42 (1989), 120-33 (121). Recent discussions include Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes*, pp. 17-37, and Noelle Phillips, 'Compilational Reading: Richard Osbarn and Huntington Library MS Hm 114', *YLS*, 28 (2014), 65-104.

expensive productions than those associated with Scribe D, but similarly demonstrate how *Piers* was transmitted alongside imaginative and historical narratives.

Dialect evidence has traditionally had less purchase on London than other areas, resulting in a noticeable gap in an area where common sense would suggest that many books were produced.[89] This is related both to the nature of dialectal change in cities, faster than in rural areas, and historical patterns of immigration to London in the late middle ages.[90] Manuscripts produced in London often replicate the 'native' forms of their scribes, resulting in dialect localisations far from the capital. Few copies of *Piers* or *The Prick* (discussed in a moment) are localised there or to areas of the home counties bordering it (with the exception of Trinity B.15.17, localised to Middlesex). It has been assumed that scribes from other areas of the country immigrated to the city and brought their language with them, an exception to Beadle's view that strong dialectal characteristics indicate production in the same region.[91] More recently, Horobin has demonstrated that some London scribes of *Piers* maintained what are thought to be Langland's authorial south-west Midlands dialect features, masking their own dialect under a layer of Worcestershire forms.[92] This argument has reassigned members of the textually-authoritative *i*-group of C-text manuscripts from this area to London, indicating that C, alongside B, may have been produced in the city.[93] The immediate audience of these manuscripts is not clear; Horobin suggests they may be the product of a 'workshop', a designation applied to a number of other copies showing evidence of consistency in

[89] See, for example, Samuels's map of dialect localisations for *Piers* manuscripts in 'Dialect and Grammar', p. 207.
[90] *LALME*, I, pp. 12 ('2.3.7 *A mapping problem*') and 23 ('4.1.1 *Scribes and scriptoria*').
[91] Doyle, 'Remarks', p. 40.
[92] Horobin, 'London and Opelond'.
[93] Horobin, 'London and Opelond', 263.

production, but the nature of this kind of copying environment and its links to patrons and commissioners remain mysterious.[94]

Piers was also available to the kinds of scribes identified in the other regions discussed above. John Cok, an Augustinian canon and brother of St Bartholomew's hospital, copied extracts of the poem into Gonville and Caius College, MS 669*/646. This book, probably written towards the end of the first half of the fifteenth century, contains a range of Middle English religious texts, some translated from Latin.[95] It may have been copied for John Shirley, another scribe known for his preservation of several short poems attributed to Chaucer.[96] Cok's association with Shirley suggests there may have been several routes by which he could have sourced exemplars, beyond his obvious ecclesiastical connections; Horobin points out that Cok's fragment shares textual variants with another manuscript associated with London, owned in the mid-fifteenth century by a member of Lincoln's Inn.[97]

All this adds up to suggest a picture quite different to that found in other regions. The copying of some *Piers* manuscripts may have been influenced by some form of centralisation, generating manuscripts with similar presentational features and close textual links. This recalls the situation among *Prick* manuscripts in Lichfield, and copying in London seems also to have been

[94] Horobin, 'London and Opelond', 264; see also comments in Kane-Donaldson, p. 50, regarding a 'workshop' origin for the ancestors of several B text copies. C. Paul Christianson sketches some of the questions over the nature of scribal workshops, still unanswered: 'Were these large, centralised workshops where limners, textwriters, and binders worked together, or was the process of manufacture a more decentralised activity, with independent artisans working in small shops on jobs farmed out to them by an entrepreneur?', 'Evidence for the Study of London's Late Medieval Manuscript Book-Trade', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 87-108 (94). See also Erik Kwakkel, 'Commercial organization and economic innovation', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 173-91 (181-2). An example of decentralised production is the 'Trinity Gower', discussed in Doyle and Parkes, 'Production of Copies'.

[95] See Simon Horobin, 'John Cok and his Copy of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 27 (2013), 45-59.

[96] Horobin, 'John Cok', 47. Shirley's role in English literary history is discussed in Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 1-9.

[97] Horobin, 'John Cok', 50-1.

undertaken by lay scribes working for book commissioners, but the immediate audience represented by those patrons is more likely also to have been lay. The poem circulated among scribes of major metropolitan verse texts, the works of Chaucer and Gower, and that other staple of the deluxe London book market, Trevisa. And the transmission networks which facilitated its copying in the city may have reached back to Langland himself, given the density of authoritative B- and C-text manuscripts produced by London scribes. In sum, the transmission of *Piers* in London at the turn of the fifteenth century indicates a deep integration into the city's book trade and literary culture.

The Prick in London

In perhaps surprising contrast, the transmission of *The Prick* in London appears to have been decidedly peripheral. Direct evidence of metropolitan origin is vanishingly rare. Our view may be distorted by the same problems with dialect evidence affecting *Piers* manuscripts, and it may be that the London pedigree of many more copies is disguised by regional dialects, but the surviving evidence links only very few copies to the city or its suburbs and none to the kind of literary networks in which Scribe D worked. Much of it is also later than the evidence for *Piers*'s transmission in the city, suggesting that the poem never reached a comparable status here, and certainly not before the mid fifteenth century.

The cartulary of the parish church of St Margaret's, New Fish Street, compiled in 1472, refers to a copy of *The Prick*.[98] This is one of only very few such inventories of books from parish churches

[98] See Pamela Robinson, 'A 'Prik of concience cheyned': The Parish Library of St Margaret's, New Fish Street, London, 1472', in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. by Takami Matsuda and others (Brewer and Yushodo, 2004), pp. 209-21.

to survive, and all the more unusual for its inclusion of vernacular texts. Pamela Robinson has tentatively suggested that the copy in question may be British Library, MS Royal 18 A V, an early fifteenth-century Southern Recension manuscript.[99] An identification with this book might indicate that *The Prick* had been present in the church since earlier in the fifteenth century, but remains speculative.

A copy of the Southern Recension in British Library, MS Additional 11305, was produced by Stephen Dodesham, a professional scribe and Carthusian monk first of the Charterhouse of Witham and then Sheen.[100] Dodesham was active between the middle of the fifteenth century and his death in 1482, and at least twenty-three books have been attributed to him. He appears to have had a role in the wider book trade, beyond producing books for use in the Charterhouse: in addition to service books and Latin devotional material, copies of Lydgate (*The Siege of Thebes*) and Chaucer (*Treatise on the Astrolabe*) survive in his hand.[101] Dodesham's potential connections in this role may have brought *The Prick* into similar networks of literary readership as identified for *Piers* above, but the parallels are not strong enough to suggest that *The Prick* may have had a similar role in the city's textual culture. Dodesham worked significantly later than Scribe D and the Hengwrt scribe, and although he copied the *Siege of Thebes* three times, his oeuvre remains dominated by devotional material. The dialect of his *Prick*-manuscript is localised to Middlesex, suggesting it was the product

[99] Robinson, 'Parish Library', pp. 215-6.

[100] A. I. Doyle, 'Stephen Dodesham of Witham and Sheen', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. by Pamela Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 94-115.

[101] Doyle, 'Dodesham', pp. 112-13. The manuscripts of Lydgate are Boston Public Library, MS f.med.94, Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 3137, and Yale University Library, MS 661. These are described, with an account of the production of the latter, in A. S. G. Edwards, 'Beinecke MS 661 and Early Fifteenth-Century English Manuscript Production', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 66 (1991), 181-196. The Chaucer manuscript is identified in Simon Horobin, 'The Scribe of Bodleian Library MS Bodley 619 and the Circulation of Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 31 (2009), 109-24.

of his time at the latter house, so although not associated with the city itself is dialectally one of the most proximate.[102]

Another copy was owned by a canon of the Augustinian priory of St Mary Overy in Southwark, placing it close to the city.[103] Although not identified as the scribe of the book, this 'Johann[es] B' (most of his surname has been erased) appears to have been its original owner (f. 351r). The text of *The Prick* ends with a colophon which itself ends with the words 'iste liber constat', all in the same hand. A second hand, slightly different in ink and aspect but carefully mimicking the previous, adds John's name and description as '{Canonico} eccl*es*ie b*ea*te marie {de Suthwerk}' (where brackets indicate words visible under UV light), as though the main scribe left room for the inscription to be completed. Further upstream on the other side of the Thames, another copy produced at the start of the fifteenth century came into the ownership of a monk of Westminster Abbey, probably in the late fifteenth century or early sixteenth.[104] This book contains a note claiming it as the property of one Brother John Holonde.[105] While both of these books had an immediate, or at least early, ecclesiastical audience, they might equally have been produced by lay scribes employed by these individuals or their institutions.

The production of very few manuscripts of *The Prick* can therefore be firmly linked with London. Of those with a certain or likely provenance in the city, little information to determine the nature of their transmission is available. Here, as elsewhere, ecclesiastical individuals and

[102] Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 140-41 (description of Additional 11305, sigil SR 11), and p. 173 (map showing the localisation of SR 11 on the Middlesex/Surrey border).
[103] Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 423.
[104] The text of this manuscript is copied in anglicana with no influence from secretary, suggesting an early fifteenth-century date of production. Lewis-McIntosh date the manuscript at the turn of the fifteenth century (p. 82).
[105] London, Sion College, MS Arc. L. 40. 2/E.25 (now a Lambeth Palace Library deposit); Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 82-3.

institutions seem to have been responsible for the production of most copies, either in the role of commissioners or scribes.

Conclusions

London upends some of the findings gathered in the foregoing sections of this chapter, suggesting that *Piers* was not only more popular than *The Prick* but also transmitted through networks of higher status. It is striking, given the likelihood that both poems were produced in large numbers in the city, that no scribal overlaps have survived.[106] Basing an argument on negative evidence is risky, but this lack of jointly-produced copies might be a symptom of the different transmission networks which seem to have facilitated their production in London. *The Prick* is associated here, as elsewhere, with ecclesiastical institutions, while *Piers* seems to have been connected to networks of Middle English literary production which have been linked to gentry audiences.

This difference in transmission anticipates the dominant pattern of the poems' postmedieval reception, which has also characterised their modern study: *Piers* as a work of literature, and *The Prick* as a work of clerkly, practical interest. The textual culture of London has been central to canon formation since the end of the middle ages when Hoccleve and Lydgate developed the enormously influential image of Chaucer as the father of English literature, epitomised in Hoccleve's praise of Chaucer in *The Regiment of Princes* as 'flour of eloquence, /

[106] A provenance in the court of Chancery (not accepted here) has been argued for Corpus Christi College Oxford, MS 201 (*Piers* B), whose scribe also copied the fragment of *The Prick* surviving as Durham, Ushaw College, MS 50, in Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 'Professional Readers of Langland at Home and Abroad: New Directions in the Political and Bureaucratic Codicology of *Piers Plowman*', in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 103-29 (107-11).

Mirour of fructuous entendement, / O universel fadir in science!'[107] *Piers*'s contact through London scribes with the works of Chaucer and other Middle English texts which have come to constitute integral parts of this national corpus may therefore have determined, to some extent, how it has come to be read since.

Conclusion

Previous scholarship on the transmission of *Piers* has emphasised a 'composite' audience for the poem: a mix of clerics and laypeople.[108] In Anne Middleton's words,

> The audience of *Piers Plowman* is best characterized neither by regional peculiarities nor by 'estate' as such, but by a common social location, and range of activities and interests. Whether laymen or ecclesiastics, their customary activities involve them in counsel, policy, education, administration, pastoral care – in those tasks and offices where spiritual and temporal governance meet. [...] They saw it as a poem at once historical and pious...[109]

Although Middleton's account incorporates the evidence of secondary readers as well as those responsible for its transmission, these comments have a bearing on assumptions about the kinds of scribes who might have copied the poem. The findings gathered here suggest a different picture. Middleton underrepresents the scribal overlap between *Piers* and *The Prick*, noting that 'it is twice accompanied by the much-copied *Pricke of Conscience*', citing Huntington Library, MS Hm 128 and Antiquaries 687. Bringing to light the much more significant overlap between the copying of the two poems changes our view of the nature of the poem's early readership, suggesting one of mostly

[107] Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. by Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, 1999), ll. 1962-4.
[108] Anne Middleton, 'The Audience and Public of Piers Plowman', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 101-23 (106).
[109] 'Audience and Public', p. 104.

clerical interest in the poem outside London, and a marked regional difference between the capital and elsewhere. Studies of the readership of *The Prick*, too, have emphasised a mixture of clerical and lay readers; on the basis of the evidence presented here, it seems likely that this mixed audience developed around copies in secondary ownership, as copying of the poem was mostly carried out by scribes affiliated with the Church.[110]

New forms of production for both *Piers* and *The Prick* are suggested by some of the manuscripts examined here. Some manuscripts of *Piers* have been associated with 'workshop' production, but little evidence has survived to suggest this kind of environment actually existed. The newly-visible evidence for overlap between literary and documentary copying gathered in this chapter indicates that manuscripts of both poems were produced in regional centres where a range of material was copied. This might further indicate that many of these copies were produced by scribes commissioned by individuals or institutions, as appears to have been the case for the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts in Lichfield.

Finally, a new perspective on the relative status of the two poems emerges from the chapter's findings. London proves the exception to a rule which holds firm across two other regions in which *Piers* and *The Prick* were produced in significant numbers; that the transmission of both poems was largely the result of ecclesiastical demand, scribes of the poem combined this work with extensive documentary copying, and *The Prick* was more popular than *Piers*. Their joint production by six scribes and joint availability to a seventh reader all outside London should now be unsurprising: their transmission was similar outside the city, and therefore converged. *Piers*, at least

[110] Sawyer, 'Codicological Evidence', pp. 29-61.

in its two later versions, was a metropolitan production, and was embraced by its literary culture and book market, where *The Prick* remained peripheral.

Chapter 3: Compilation

The Vernon manuscript is renowned today as the largest surviving book of Middle English texts, both in its physical size and in the number of items it preserves. Unusual also is the manuscript's description of its own nature: a book of 'sowlehele' (f. iv), writing for the good health of the soul. It contains a range of devotional texts, encompassing virtually all the major (and many of the minor) works of spiritual edification composed in Middle English up to the point of its production around 1400, including *The Prick*.[1] Into this pious mix is inserted, near the end, an A text of *Piers*.

The A text is in some ways a fitting addition to this compilation, as all three versions of the poem have a deeply religious focus. As shown in the first chapter, it also reflects on the status of religious writing in Middle English, of which the Vernon represents a huge collection. The A text is less Latinate than its longer relatives, which has led to the suggestion that it was written for an audience unfamiliar with the language, a view which might fit the linguistic uniformity of Vernon.[2] Yet the shortness of A also increases its focus on the political questions addressed in the early passūs, out of step with the otherwise devotional contents of the book, and it might be wrong to see a less theologically developed text as appropriate for Vernon simply because of its focus on Middle English. *Piers* is also narrative, but placed alongside a combination of narrative and non-narrative material.[3] Generically mixed but with clear elements of romance and political satire, its conjunction

[1] A full list of contents is given in *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. poet. a.1*, ed. by A. I. Doyle (Cambridge, 1987), inserted sheet following f. 143; see also the Vernon's own list of contents at ff. ir-iiir.
[2] This is proposed during Jill Mann's argument that the A text was redacted from B for a different audience, a view not accepted here: 'The Power of the Alphabet: A Reassessment of the Relation between the A and B Versions of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 8 (1994), 21-50. On the languages of Vernon, see N. F. Blake, 'Vernon Manuscript: Contents and Organisation', in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 45-59 (46).
[3] The organisation of material in this area of the manuscript is discussed in S. S. Hussey, 'Implications of Choice and Arrangement of Texts in Part 4', in *Studies in the Vernon*, ed. by Pearsall, pp. 61-74.

with devotional, pastoral, and practical texts is not entirely coherent in the terms of these categories of critical analysis.

Many of Vernon's contents are misaligned in the forms of reading they expect. Vernon contains texts written for public delivery, for example *The Northern Homily Cycle*, texts for specific pastoral purposes, as in the model confession on folio 336v, column b, and a text to be read partly as an image: the dizzyingly interlaced diagram combining the Pater Noster with the seven petitions, seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, seven virtues, and seven vices described in the table of contents as 'Pater noster in a table ypeynted' (f. iiv).[4] Vernon therefore raises important questions around how its users and readers approached these many texts, including *Piers* and *The Prick*, despite their differences.

Vernon is one of three books to compile the two poems – the others are Society of Antiquaries, MS 687 and Huntington Library, MS Hm 128. These books were produced within a roughly fifty-year period, from the last quarter of the fourteenth century to the first quarter of the fifteenth. Their three scribes were almost certainly unrelated, and each worked in a different area of the country. The three books, therefore, represent three discrete acts of compilation bringing together *Piers* and *The Prick*.

The term 'compilation' is used here to describe both the act of combining more than one text in a single book and the resulting multi-text manuscript. Compilation is preferred over other terms regularly employed in studies of multi-text manuscripts, particularly 'miscellany' and 'anthology'.[5] These were central in the developing critical conversation over the study of multi-text

[4] See Avril Henry, "The Pater Noster in a table ypeynted' and Some Other Presentations of Doctrine in the Vernon Manuscript', in *Studies in the Vernon*, ed. by Pearsall, pp. 89-113.

[5] Theo Stemmler, 'Miscellany or Anthology? The Structure of Medieval Manuscripts: Harley 2253, for Example', in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. by Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, 2000), pp. 111-21; Julia Boffey, 'Short Texts in Manuscript Anthologies: The Minor Poems of John Lydgate in

manuscripts, and have been used to indicate different levels of coherence, consistency, and intent in the gathering of texts. Both make assumptions about the production of the books they describe, categorising groups of material as either deliberate or not. Compilation is more neutral, used here to describe a range of assemblages ranging from deliberate groupings of material gathered in the middle ages to postmedieval composites put together by book collectors.

Each manuscript reflects questions emerging from the previous chapter's identification of ecclesiastical transmission networks as the main source of contact between *Piers* and *The Prick*, questions which are central to this and the two subsequent chapters. Why did readers put the two texts together, and how were they read as a pair? Although the first chapter demonstrated the influence of *The Prick* on *Piers*, their conjunction in subsequent copying and reading was not a foregone conclusion. The two have significant formal and generic differences which create different expectations of reading and use. *Piers*, through its depiction of fictional events and characters and borrowing of romance conventions, in part asks readers to engage with it in ways which have been associated with literary reading. *The Prick* is explicit in expecting what might be described as literal or informational reading: referring to events and places medieval audiences would have understood to be real, its readers are imagined to learn from it in ways which will directly affect how they relate to themselves and the world. But it also engages the imagination and appeals to the emotions (particularly fear), aspects shared with literary texts, while *Piers* depicts events from biblical history, for example in the passion sequence in B.18/C.20. It is also in part a debate or dialogue ('dialogus',

Two Fifteenth-Century Collections', in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. by Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 69-82; Ad Putter, 'The Organisation of Multilingual Miscellanies', in *Insular Books: Vernacular manuscript miscellanies in late medieval Britain*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford, 2015), pp. 81-100.

in the terms of some manuscripts), a genre which might also be understood as informational.[6] These differences in expected forms of reading are the focus of this chapter.

Some medieval texts were written explicitly for particular purposes: model sermons supported preaching, pastoral manuals aided individuals and communities in the quest for salvation. Many of the works now canonical in literary studies were produced to discuss political or cultural questions, or for the pleasure felt in reading them among coterie audiences. Individual texts could combine such expectations, but multi-text manuscripts did so frequently. They raise significant questions about our understanding of medieval reception: whether texts written for particular purposes might be appropriated for others. Specifically at issue here is the question of how *Piers* and *The Prick* were read together, similarly or differently, more like one or like the other.

Each of the three manuscripts has been subject to arguments about the kinds of reading for which they were produced, with implications for our understanding of how both *Piers* and *The Prick* were received by early audiences. Arguments focused on the two smaller manuscripts, Hm 128 and Antiquaries 687, discussed in detail below, have claimed that the conjunction of the two poems in the same books indicates that both were used in forms of practical, pastoral, and public reading, supporting clergy in instructional encounters with laypeople. These claims are partly based on a view that *The Prick* was itself used for such purposes and that *Piers* in compilation with *The Prick* was assimilated to them, and partly on arguments about the production history of these manuscripts. This chapter re-examines Hm 128 and Antiquaries 687 to show, instead, that neither book supports a view of public or pastoral reading, and to argue that the surviving evidence for *Piers*

[6] Trinity College Cambridge, MS B.15.17, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 581, Newnham College, MS 4, and British Library, MS Lansdowne 398/Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 38 (originally a single manuscript). See Simon Horobin, 'Manuscripts and readers of *Piers Plowman*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. by Andrew Cole and Andrew Galloway (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 179-97 (184); and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, '*Piers Plowman*', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 513-38 (515, n. 6).

and *The Prick* in compilation suggests they were read together privately. It begins with questions of methodology, presenting an approach to compiled manuscripts which diverges from previous accounts in de-emphasising the value of similarity between compiled materials as evidence of deliberate assembly. I focus on the two smaller manuscripts rather than Vernon because the great size of Vernon suggests that it offers little evidence of responses to *Piers* and *The Prick* as a pair. These two are separated by some 218 folios, in different areas of the book, and are each surrounded by enough other material to fill a more standard size of book.[7]

Approaching compilation

Forty-three texts of the Main Version and six of the Southern Recension, forty-nine in total, survive in multi-text manuscripts. These books are immensely varied. Some were copied by single scribes, some by several, and some are made of separately-produced units brought together in the middle ages or later. Some include only very short texts alongside *The Prick*, while others place it with other long works. Ignoring this variation for the moment, ninety-five Main Versions and eighteen Southern Recensions survive in total (excluding extracts), so around 45% of the former and a third of the latter are compilations in a broad sense – around 43% in combination. Twenty-six copies of *Piers* are multi-text manuscripts of all kinds, compared to fifty-three texts in total (again excluding extracts), meaning just under half are compiled (47%). These figures indicate that from the late middle ages until the point in the modern period when books stopped being regularly assembled by collectors, both poems were compiled with other material at around the same rate, between a

[7] *The Prick* ends on f. 284r and *Piers* begins on f. 394v.

half and two-fifths of all surviving copies. There are the same number of compilations for each text of *Piers*: seven each of single-version copies.[8] These numbers suggest that compilation was unconstrained by genre or size; both the shorter A text and full copies of *The Prick* were regularly produced with other material.

These numbers indicate an important similarity in the reception of the two poems, but fail to account for the detail and variation hinted at above. Not all multi-text manuscripts containing either poem were produced as such: some are made of codicologically disparate units brought together in the middle ages, while others are in various scribal hands who may or may not have worked together at the same time. Some of these compilations may have been unintentional in the sense that they do not reflect a direct interest in reading their contents together, not least composite manuscripts gathered after the middle ages. Early modern and later collecting habits were sometimes shaped by convenience, as in the book of manuscript fragments gathered by the seventeenth-century London bookseller John Bagford and sold by him to Hans Sloane. British Library, MS Sloane 1044, as it is now known, contains fragments from a manuscript of *The Prick*, an eighth-century Gospel book, and the Gutenberg Bible (now detached and catalogued in the incunables collection).[9] Medieval bookmakers must sometimes have acted similarly, binding separate items together for the sake of efficiency or preservation.

[8] A: Trinity College Dublin, MS 213 (D. 4. 12), Lincoln's Inn Library, MS 150, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687, Morgan Library, MS M.818, Bodleian Library, MSS Digby 145, Douce 323, Vernon, and University College Oxford, MS 45; B: Newnham College, MS 4, Trinity College Cambridge, MS B.15.17, Cambridge University Library, MSS Dd.1.17, LL.4.14, Gg.4.31, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128, and Oriel College, MS 79; C: Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.5.35, British Library, MSS Cotton Vespasian B XVI, Royal 18 B XVII, University of London Library, MS S.L. V. 17, Huntington Library, MS Hm 143, and Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102 and Laud misc. 656.

[9] See Margaret Nickson, 'Bagford and Sloane', *The British Library Journal*, 9 (1983), 51-5 (54), and Eberhard König, 'A Leaf from a Gutenberg Bible Illuminated in England', *The British Library Journal*, 9 (1983), 32-50. For a broader account of Sloane's collecting, see James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: The Life and Curiosity of Hans Sloane* (London, 2017).

The identification of intent is therefore a crucial starting point in studying compilation. The deliberate gathering of a specific set of texts into a single volume might speak to a host of readerly and cultural attitudes to the material brought together, where the selection of material at random might only reflect the material circumstances of a book's production context. This distinction is to some extent artificial, and some of these artificialities are discussed in a moment, but the point remains that intentional compilation, in whatever form that may have taken, potentially holds meaning of significance to the reception history of the texts in question. This view is opposed to some recent approaches which have made the reader of multi-text manuscripts responsible for determining their intentionality; while this perspective might chart a history of reception for compiled books, it fails to account for the cultural meaning and status of texts at the point of their production together.[10]

In practice, compilation in late-medieval England was affected and constrained so that intention was not always straightforward, singular, and unified, and is sometimes difficult to identify. Choice of texts was not free, but limited by the availability of exemplars which may have been patchy and uneven.[11] The selection of an A-text exemplar of *Piers Plowman*, for example, may have been affected by the unavailability of either of the longer versions.[12] The form in which books from this period survive, often partial, damaged, rebound, and removed from their original environments, limits the evidence on which an argument for intention can be built. Some books

[10] See, for example, Arthur Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (Chicago, 2013), p. 10; Noelle Phillips, 'Compilational Reading: Richard Osbarn and Huntington Library MS Hm 114', *YLS*, 28 (2014), 65-104 (72).

[11] Ralph Hanna III, 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England', in *The Whole Book*, ed. by Nichols and Wenzel, pp. 37-51 (particularly 47). For an example of manuscripts not produced under these conditions of scarcity, see Hanna's discussion of Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2498 and Vernon in *London Literature, 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 154.

[12] The survival of conjoint A-B, A-C, and indeed B-A texts of the poem may be the result of a situation like this. See, for example, Simon Horobin, 'Harley 3954 and the audience of *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (London and New York, 2008), pp. 68-84 (69-70).

have been dismembered since their production in the middle ages: the Clopton manuscript, produced for a household in the West Midlands and related to Vernon, survives in three pieces in three different repositories.[13] There may also be multiple intentions present in a single book. Individual compilers must sometimes have changed their intention in the course of producing a manuscript, and some books have arrived at their present form as a result of several stages of production, by different scribes and in different places, multiplying intentions.[14] The sometimes extended production histories of multi-text codices and the tangled labours of different scribes present in them are manifested in the difficulty encountered by modern scholars attempting to categorise such books as either 'anthologies' or 'miscellanies'.[15]

In response to these conditions, the study of compilation must be grounded in an account of production history constructed from examination of a book's material features.[16] Structure, binding, and quiring can suggest if a book survives in its original state or not, and how separate units or booklets relate to one another.[17] The identification of the same or different scribal hands across a group of texts can show whether the same person or people were at work. Similarity in layout, decorative features, and palaeographical aspect can indicate other kinds of relationship between texts, such as the harmonisation of appearance or exaggeration of differences. This process is

[13] Ryan Perry, 'The Clopton Manuscript and the Beauchamp Affinity: Patronage and Reception Issues in a West Midlands Reading Community', in *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Wendy Scase (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 131-59.

[14] The York scribe Robert Thornton appears to have changed course at several points during the lengthy production of the two books surviving in his hand: see Joel Fredell, 'The Thornton Manuscripts and Book Production in York', in *Robert Thornton and His Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, ed. by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (York, 2014), pp. 109-29.

[15] Stemmler, 'Miscellany or Anthology?'.

[16] This point is echoed by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu, who write that 'a prerequisite is the need for sustained focus on the material object of the book itself': *Insular Books*, ed. by Connolly and Radulescu, p. 8.

[17] On 'booklet theory', see P. R. Robinson, 'The Booklet: A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts', in *Codicologica 3: Essais typologiques*, ed. by A. Gruys and J. P. Gumbert (Leiden, 1980), pp. 46-69.

analogous with literary study more broadly: all arguments about the cultural meaning of texts are based on an understanding of their material form and circumstances of production.[18]

This intentionalist approach to compilation runs the risk of privileging certain kinds of books, namely those whose contents are seen to be similar. This has been an issue in previous accounts of *Piers* in compilation, which have tended to focus on similarity between *Piers* and the other contents of the books under discussion as a means of explaining these gatherings of material.[19] The identification of intent in these cases is aligned or merged with a view of the intentional similarity of the contents of a book. For example, Anne Middleton surveyed the most frequent overlaps between *Piers* and other works, drawing attention to the five manuscripts in which it accompanies *Mandeville's Travels*, the widely copied and adapted narrative of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and beyond.[20] Many of the other texts with which *Piers* is most frequently compiled are also narrative, including two copies of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, a fictionalised account of the Roman destruction of the city in 70 CE noted for its graphic violence and antisemitism, two of *Troilus and Criseyde*, and two of Alexander romances, recounting episodes in the life of Alexander the Great. In analysing similarities between these texts, Middleton suggested that medieval audiences read *Piers* as 'a synthetic "history"', understanding the compilation of *Piers* with these texts to mean that their perception by medieval readers was assimilated.[21]

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[18] Arthur Bahr makes a similar point in tracing the derivation of the modern study of 'compilation' from the codicological term '*compilatio*': *Fragments and Assemblages*, pp. 6-11.

[19] Michael Calabrese, 'HM 128 as a Medieval Book', in *Yee? Baw for Bokes: Essays on Medieval Manuscripts and Poetics in Honour of Hoyt N. Duggan*, ed. by Michael Calabrese and Stephen H. A. Shepherd (Los Angeles, 2013), pp. 127-64 (discussed in more detail below); Phillips, 'Compilational Reading', 79-99. On a different set of texts, see also Andrew Taylor, *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers* (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 204.

[20] Anne Middleton, 'The Audience and Public of Piers Plowman', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 101-23.

[21] 'Audience and Public', p. 106.

This approach raises several problems. The evidence of common compilations like those between *Piers* and *Mandeville* is difficult to interpret and its value in danger of being overstated. If such overlaps resulted from the sharing of exemplars between a group of readers, leading to similar collocations of material in several books, this might only be evidence for reception within a restricted circle.[22] Repeated instances of the same group of texts might also indicate commercial production, rather than 'personalised taste'.[23] If more dispersed, they might be better interpreted as chance overlaps not representative of broader patterns. The numbers involved are small compared to the whole corpus of compilations for both poems: five overlaps between *Mandeville* and *Piers* compared to twenty-five compilations in total. The evidence of a small sample is at risk of being privileged in this approach over a wider body of evidence, and looking more closely, the picture is more complicated than suggested by this statistical approach. In terms not strictly of manuscript compilation but of shared readers, *Piers* and *The Prick* overlap more than any other text with which the two are compiled, in the hands of six scribes and one reviser. In itself, this overlap indicates that boundaries between narrative and non-narrative, imaginative and didactic, such as might give meaning to the idea that *Piers* was understood to be similar to *Mandeville's Travels*, were porous in late-medieval English literary culture.

A focus on similarity runs into further difficulties which problematises its usefulness methodologically. There is no consensus on how many thematic or stylistic links are necessary to demonstrate that a compiler intended two texts to be read in conjunction. How similar do two texts need to be for it to be certain that they were compiled deliberately, rather than being copied

[22] See, for example, the group of late fourteenth-century manuscripts sharing northern verse texts, discussed in Ralph Hanna, 'Some North Yorkshire Scribes and their Context', in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (Abingdon and New York, 2008), pp. 167-91.
[23] Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Towards A Taxonomy of Middle English Manuscript Assemblages', in *Insular Books*, ed. by Connolly and Radulescu, pp. 263-79 (268).

together for some other reason? There can be no clear answer, and this approach risks making 'principles of organization' come to seem 'indefinitely extensible if not indefinable', in Derek Pearsall's words.[24] Furthermore, the links perceived by modern readers of medieval texts are not necessarily those perceived by medieval readers. A unique collocation of texts, where the same pairs or groups appear together in no other compilation, is not in itself evidence that they were thought to be similar. Compilations may have deliberately brought together dissimilar material, and a much wider array of evidence is needed to identify medieval perceptions of similarity. Such dissimilar books are sidelined by the distorting effect of privileging similarity: as the editors of a recent book of essays on vernacular multi-text manuscripts lament, 'volumes which offer combinations of both Latin and vernacular writing, or spiritual and secular material, or even those that mix up orthodox texts with other supposedly heretical works, have traditionally been side-lined in critical debate in favour of more homogenous collections whose rationale may be more easily perceived'.[25]

This is not to claim that texts were never brought together because they were thought to be similar; clearly many books contain materials considered by their producers to be appropriate company, sometimes in ways that are still obvious today.[26] But basing an argument for intent on similarity between texts is unstable, and attempting to reconstruct the cultural meaning of texts by thinking about their similarity when compiled is difficult. Their presence together is not in itself evidence that they were thought to be similar, and medieval readers have almost never left records

[24] Derek Pearsall, 'The Whole Book: Late Medieval English Manuscript Miscellanies and Their Modern Interpreters', in *Imagining the Book*, ed. by Stephen Kelly and John Thompson (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 17-29 (29). See also Boffey and Edwards, 'Taxonomy', p. 273: 'it is rarely possible to be confident about assessing a manuscript's 'meaning' on the basis of content, since such content rarely possesses a single unified generic focus'.

[25] *Insular Books*, ed. by Connolly and Radulescu, p. 9.

[26] Manuscripts of the *Confessio Amantis*, for example, regularly include other texts by Gower: shared authorship is an obvious category of similarity. See Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower's Works', in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. by Siân Echard (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 73-97 (73, 80).

of their opinions about the similarity, or not, of the texts they read.[27] I take a different direction here in two ways, by focusing on difference between texts, rather than similarity, and by addressing questions primarily of book use and reading practice, and only secondarily of literary and cultural meaning. These two areas are not entirely separable, of course, but this distinction acknowledges the limits of compilation study described above (it will be argued in the following chapter that analysing presentation features is a better method for accessing those literary and cultural questions).

In focusing on difference, attention is drawn to the dissimilarity in a range of categories between compiled texts, for example in terms of genre, form, and narrative or non-narrative mode. Scribes of both poems threw together such differences regularly. Consider the several manuscripts of *The Prick* which compile the poem with historical or documentary material: one manuscript with a unique Latin colophon to *The Prick* praising the poem's edificatory power also contains a list of the names of the kings of England up to Henry VI.[28] Another includes a chronicle of London and regulations for Henry V's army, alongside, strangely perhaps, a copy of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*.[29] It is difficult to imagine how readers might have made meaning out of the conjunction of *The Prick* with forms of historical writing or record-keeping, and indeed these compilations may not be intentional in the sense that *The Prick* was meant to be compared on the same terms with the other, often short, contents. They do, though, raise questions about the kinds of reading that was

[27] One obvious counterexample is Vernon's self-identification as a book of 'sowlehele': on this term, see Masha Raskolnikov, *Body Against Soul: Gender and 'Sowlehele' in Middle English Allegory* (Columbus, 2009).

[28] Bodleian Library, MS Digby 14, f. 160r. See Andrew Galloway, 'Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, the *Prick of Conscience*, and the History of the Latin Gloss in Early English Literature', in *John Gower: Manuscripts, Readers, Contexts*, ed. by Malte Urban (Turnhout: 2009), pp. 39-70 (56-7).

[29] St John's College Oxford, MS 57. See Ralph Hanna, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of St John's College Oxford* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 75-7; see also Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.891, containing *The Prick* alongside 'brief annals of England from the Creation to 1377' (Lewis-McIntosh, p. 112).

expected from this book: what kind of practices, perhaps of devotion, memorialisation, or study, did these books support?[30]

Other examples of striking disjunctions occur in a manuscript containing a B text followed by the unique copy of the '*Piers Plowman* tradition' text, *Richard the Redeless*, and two scientific texts, one an English translation of a treatise on mathematics by Johannes de Sacrobosco, scholar of the University of Paris, and a treatise on physiognomy of unidentified authorship.[31] Academic and homiletic materials rub shoulders in another book containing *The Prick* alongside the *Northern Homily Cycle*, Sacrobosco's astronomical treatise *De Sphaera Mundi*, a preaching manual known as the *Convertimini* possibly associated with Dominican scholastic Robert Holcot, and Latin sermons.[32] These examples further show how compilation can produce surprising mixtures of texts which resist simple classification as either devotional, practical, or literary.[33]

Mixtures of this sort also occur in compilations produced by later owners. Two manuscripts containing *Piers* seem to have been put together in the middle ages: University College Oxford, MS 45 (whose provenance was discussed in the previous chapter), is an assemblage of several booklets in a fifteenth-century binding. The A text sits alongside Latin works by the twelfth-century historian Henry of Huntington, French bishop and theologian Hildebert of Lavardin, and English mystic Richard Rolle.[34] None of these texts are particularly long, and scattered among them are even shorter

[30] Andrew Taylor takes a similar approach in his study of British Library, MS Harley 1706: 'Into his secret chamber: reading and privacy in late medieval England', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven and others (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 41-61 (57).

[31] Cambridge University Library, MS LL.4.14. Its contents are identified in Andrew Galloway, '*Piers Plowman* and the Schools', *YLS*, 6 (1992), 89-107 (100).

[32] Lambeth Palace Library, MS 260. On the *Convertimini* and its relationship to Holcot, see John T. Slotemaker and Jeffrey C. Witt, *Robert Holcot* (Oxford, 2016), p. 238.

[33] Similar questions are raised in Edward Wilson's account of the 'Winchester Anthology', a monastic production containing a mix of pedagogical, scientific, and literary materials: *The Winchester Anthology: A Facsimile of British Library Additional Manuscript 60577 with an Introduction and List of Contents by Edward Wilson and an Account of the Music by Ian Fenlon* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 13-16.

[34] H. O. Coxe, *Catalogus codicum mss. qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie adservantur* (Oxford, 1852), pp. 13-14.

verses and an exposition of the Pater Noster. Similarly Latinate material accompanies the conjoint text of *Piers* in Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 851. This manuscript is associated with Ramsey Abbey in Huntingdonshire (also discussed in the previous chapter), so might reflect the varied interests of monastic readers in academic, historical, and imaginative vernacular writing, as too might University College 45.[35]

Finally, we might also note that *The Prick* could apparently fit in a book like those on which Middleton's claim about *Piers* is made. In British Library, MS Arundel 140, *The Prick* appears alongside *Mandeville*, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, the *Speculum Guy de Warwick*, Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee*, and *Ypotis*. This manuscript is not unlike the compilations drawn on by Middleton to suggest that *Piers*'s reception in compilation was dominated by a view of the poem emphasising its imaginative and narrative elements. Might *The Prick* also have been read for its imagery and storytelling? These examples begin to show how seeing the difference in compilation opens questions about how texts might have been read when their expectations are misaligned.

The key difference explored in this chapter is between forms of public and private reading. Some texts expect forms of reading which involve elements of recital or performance, for example the confession manual in Antiquaries 687 (discussed in more detail below), which scripts the questions and responses of confessor and penitent, presenting words intended to be spoken aloud: 'sacerdote dicat sic' (p. 359). Similarly, many sermon manuals and model sermons were written to be read aloud to a congregation; Mirk's *Festial*, again discussed in more detail below, provided Middle English sermons for 'alle the principale festus that cometh in the 3ere'.[36] I define these

[35] 'M.S. Bodley 851 and the Dissemination of *Piers Plowman*', in Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 195-202.

[36] *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II*, ed. by Susan Powell, EETS, OS 334, 2 vols (Oxford, 2009), p. 3.

reading activities as public in the sense that they involve multiple people, recital, performance, and sometimes ritual. Private reading, in contrast, is defined as being removed from practices of social participation.[37] Private reading in this sense may not have been individual: accounts of medieval reading have suggested that reading alone was probably rare, so my term 'private' indicates more strongly what this reading was not, rather than what it was.[38] This is apparently the kind of reading expected by *The Prick* which, as discussed in the Introduction, imagines an audience of literate laypeople reading the text without an intermediary, clerical or otherwise.

My distinction between public and private reading does not map exactly onto the goals or aims of reading. These might include pleasure, information, learning, a desired change in psychology, perception, or behaviour, support for actions or intentions in the world, or reflection on historical or current events. Medieval readers could imagine public reading with the goal of entertainment, just as much as edification: consider the famous image in Corpus Christi College Cambridge, MS 61, opening *Troilus and Criseyde*, in which Chaucer is depicted reading his work aloud to an aristocratic audience (f. 1v).[39] Private reading might have had instructional or educational aims, just as reading in the context of schooling was educational.[40] Many forms of religious reading were private: the growth of religious writing for vernacular audiences has been linked to an increased interest in 'meditative devotional reading'.[41] Private reading was not

[37] My definition reflects the distinction made by Joyce Coleman: 'What distinguishes public from private reading [...] is that the former defines literature as a social event': *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 28.

[38] Coleman, *Public Reading*; Karin Littau, *Theories of Reading: Books, Bodies, and Bibliomania* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 17-19. See also Jessica Brantley's account of monastic reading, which examines how forms of public reading could be imagined in private: *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago and London, 2007).

[39] See also Joyce Coleman's discussion of the public reading of romance: *Public Reading*, pp. 110-3.

[40] On educational texts in the period, see Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature: England, 1300-1400* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 41-83.

[41] Taylor, 'Reading and Privacy', p. 43; and see also, on meditative reading, Susan Uselmann, 'A Matter of Convenience: Nicholas Love's *Mirror* of Private Devotional Reading', in *Devotional Literature and Practice in Medieval England: Readers, Reading, and Reception*, ed. by Kathryn R. Vulić and others (Turnhout, 2016), pp. 159-94.

necessarily literary reading, and public reading not always edificatory: whether or not it reflects a real event, the *Troilus* image shows that imaginative and historical texts could be seen as public and performed.

At issue in this chapter is the question of whether *Piers* and *The Prick* were read publicly for instructional or pastoral aims. Although the distinction between public and private reading is not always clear cut, this particular combination of public reading with instructional goals has been claimed for Hm 128 and Antiquaries 687 in previous accounts of both manuscripts. In examining the combination of reading practices expected by the contents of these books, this chapter will argue that both are more likely to have been produced for forms of reading which, though they may have been instructional, were also private.

San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128

During the confession of the sins in passus 5 of the B text, Envy describes a scene of religious instruction:

> Whan I come to þe kirk and knele to þe Roode
> To preye for þe peple as þe preest techeþ,
> For Pilgrymes, for palmeres, for al þe peple after,
> Thanne I crye on my knees þat crist 3yue hym sorwe
> That bar awey my bolle and my broke shete. (B.5.105-9)

Ineffective as it may be, the teaching of the priest who shows his parishioners how to pray for others reflects the pastoral responsibilities of the late-medieval parish clergy in guiding the souls under their charge towards salvation. Indeed, the figure of Repentance, who guides the confession of the

sins at this point in the poem represents in more abstract terms the church's emphasis in this period on penitential theology, the result of efforts in the thirteenth century to codify pastoral practice.[42]

These historical contexts, reflected in *Piers*, have influenced claims not only about the cultural positioning of the poem relative to the church (including in the first chapter of this thesis) but also of its use by early readers in encounters between clergy and laypeople. C. David Benson has suggested the poem would have generated 'sound bites' for preaching, a theory echoed by others.[43] Michael Calabrese has asserted that the poem may have been deployed in 'teaching, preaching, and learning applications'.[44] These arguments imagine the poem as a repository of material for sermonising, providing images and *exempla* for the instruction of the congregation.

Calabrese's argument is made in relation to a manuscript which has been a testing ground for ideas of *Piers*'s practical use, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128. This book compiles the poem with *The Prick* and other texts, and has been subject to claims of production in a pastoral or educational context. In this section, I re-examine the book's production to argue that previous accounts, claiming that almost all of its contents were written together in the same copying centre, depend on palaeographical evidence whose significance has been overstated. Instead, Hm 128 began as a compilation of *Piers* and *The Prick* to which other materials were added later, possibly in the same context but not securely with the intention of creating a larger volume. This changes how the

[42] Norman Tanner, 'Pastoral Care: The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215', in Tanner, *The Ages of Faith: Popular Religion in Late Medieval England and Western Europe* (London, 2009), 19-31; Joseph Goering, 'Pastoralia: The Popular Literature of the Care of Souls', in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by Frank Anthony Carl Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington, D.C., 1996), 670-6.

[43] C. David Benson, 'Another Fine Manuscript Mess: Authors, Editors and Readers of *Piers Plowman*', in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (York, 2000), pp. 15-28 (22).

[44] Calabrese, 'Hm 128', p. 157; see also the similar suggestion by David Lawton in private correspondence cited in the same place.

dynamics of its compilation should be read: not as a volume of pastoral materials into which *Piers* was assimilated, but, in the first stage of its history, as a joint copy of *The Prick* and *Piers*.

Description and contents

Hm 128 is a parchment manuscript containing six texts, on which at least six different scribes worked. In addition to the manuscript's six scribal hands, several correctors and rubricators were involved in its production. Some of the added material across the different texts may be the work of a single scribe (described as the 'corrector' or 'rubricator', discussed in more detail below). The contents and corresponding hands of Hm 128 are presented in Figure 3.

Hm 128 was probably produced in a clerical centre in the south-west Midlands. Its localisation in this area is made on the basis of dialect: two linguistic profiles have been identified, one for Hand 1 and another for Hand 5, both of which are placed in Warwickshire.[45] A clerical centre seems most likely given the evidence presented in the previous chapter, but the manuscript lacks clear provenance information. Previous accounts have come to the same conclusion: A. I. Doyle, for example, has suggested that the manuscript 'looks more like the work of a clerical group than of a commercial workshop'.[46]

The manuscript is noted for its particularly complex structure, which has a bearing on the following discussion of its production history. The complexity attends Hm2, the fragment of *Piers* surviving at the end of the final quire of *The Prick*. Hand 1 copied the first quire of *Piers* (and all of

[45] Hand 1 is referred to as Hand A (*LALME*, III, pp. 534-5), and Hand 5 as Hand B (*LALME*, III, p. 530).
[46] 'Remarks on Surviving Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G. H. Russell*, ed. by Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 35-48 (40). See also Doyle, 'The Manuscripts', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 88-100 (94).

Figure 3: Texts and scribal hands in Hm 128.

Text	*Short title*	*Folio range*	*Hand(s)*
1. *The Prick*, Southern Recension	*The Prick*	1-94	1
2. *Piers*, B text, fragment	Hm2	95-6	2, 1
3. Commentary on the Sequences	*Sequentia*	97-112	3
4. *Piers*, B text	Hm	113-205r	1, 4
5. *The Siege of Jerusalem*	*The Siege*	205v-216r	5
6. *How the Good Wife Taught her Daughter*	*Good Wife*	216v-219	6

The Prick) while Hand 4 copied the remainder. The text of Hm2 corresponds to B.2.211-3.73, a portion of the poem which in Hm runs from the beginning of the second quire. It apparently represents a first attempt at this second quire, abandoned shortly after Hand 2 took over copying from Hand 1. It has been suggested that the work of Hand 2 was not considered to be of a high enough standard, and that he was stopped in order that the quire could be rewritten by another scribe (presumably Hand 4).[47] The two bifolia on which Hm2 was written were then reused as part of the final quire of *The Prick*. In this process, the central folds of the two bifolia were reversed, so that the blank leaves were at the new front of the gathering, and what had been the outer bifolium placed within the inner. Hm2 now begins with the unfinished portion of text from 3.50-73 on folio 95r while 95v is blank, followed by 2.211-3.49 across folios 96r-v. The implications of this structural situation for the production of the manuscript are explored in more detail below.

The contents of Hm 128 are varied. It begins with the two long verse texts, between which is sandwiched the *Sequentia*, a para-liturgical text explicating a series of eucharistic hymns. *The Siege*, as discussed above, is a versified historical narrative of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, while *Good Wife* is a conduct manual in verse addressed to a 'dughter' (f. 216r), offering advice

[47] Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Putting it Right: The Corrections of Huntington Library MS Hm 128 and BL Additional MS. 35287', *YLS*, 16 (2002), 41-65.

on how to live virtuously as a wife. These texts are all different in origin and assume different audiences and kinds of reading.

Production history

In my view, Hm 128 began as a copy of *The Prick* and *Piers* to which the other items were added later, probably by different users, and its divergent contents are therefore the result of a series of decisions made by different people at different times. The evidence for this claim is presented below.

The manuscript's collation suggests that there may be a link between Hm, *The Siege*, and *Good Wife*, as the transitions between these texts occur within quires. Hm is copied from quire 15 to the fifth leaf of quire 26 (f. 205r). *The Siege* begins directly below, running to folio 216r, on the verso of which begins *Good Wife*. However, from a stricter codicological viewpoint, only *The Prick* and *Piers* are necessarily related. *The Prick* and the *Sequentia* are isolated in discreet units: *The Prick* and Hm2 occupy quires 1-12 (with an error in binding reversing 3 and 4); the *Sequentia* is isolated on quires 13 and 14. The codicological relationship between *The Prick* and Hm2, which only makes sense as the result of a situation in which *The Prick* and *Piers* were copied in the same place, is the only codicological evidence that any two texts in the book were produced by the same people or intended to exist together in the manuscript by its original producers. Both *The Siege* and *Good Wife* could have been added later by other scribes in a new context; their appearance in the same sequence of quires as *Piers* does not necessarily indicate related production. Furthermore, the book shows evidence of rebinding: its current cover is sixteenth-century, and it seems likely that the error which reversed quires 3 and 4 occurred during this work rather than in the original construction of

the volume. The position of the *Sequentia* between *The Prick* and *Piers*, or indeed its addition to the manuscript, might also have occurred at this point and therefore represent later intervention.

An additional indication of the joint production of *The Prick* and *Piers* separate from the other items in the manuscript is the extensive correcting work present in these two texts. Both are heavily tampered with, containing a number of erased and rewritten passages with extra lines inserted, small corrections to readings throughout, and inconsistent erasure of word-final **e**.[48] The other texts are not treated in the same way, suggesting they were added after work had finished on *The Prick* and *Piers*.

This account of the production of Hm 128 suggests that *The Prick* and *Piers* were intended to be read together in the same book, and that the manuscript was adapted by other scribes later in the middle ages. These later moments might also represent responses to both poems, combining them with new material meant to augment how the whole book was read. But here, the original moment of production is of most interest as the only example of a book produced to contain the two poems alone. It poses directly the questions presented at the beginning of this chapter, of why they were paired and how they were read together.

These have been answered in previous accounts of the manuscript by explaining it as the product of a pastoral or instructional environment. Michael Calabrese has argued that Hm 128 was produced within a 'pastoral community', and that its contents, though showing evidence of expansion over time, were 'collected' by 'one agent', and had 'pedagogical and pastoral functions'.[49] This idea is echoed by Felicity Riddy, who describes the book as 'a partly pedagogic collection [...] clearly clerical in origin', and claims it 'suggest[s] that for around eighty or ninety years, at least,

[48] Discussed in Turville-Petre, 'Putting it Right'.
[49] Michael Calabrese, 'Hm 128, pp. 158, 128.

"What The Goodwife Taught Her Daughter" was part of the pastoral repertoire of clergy serving the populations of the central and west Midlands towns'.[50]

These views draw on the development of religious instructional literature to claim that *Piers* and *The Prick* were used in teaching encounters between the clergy and the laity. Indeed, because *The Prick* is regularly understood to be a pastoral manual deployed in these kinds of uses, its presence in the book is cited in support of the view that *Piers* was read similarly.[51] If true, these claims have significant implications for our understanding of the reception of both poems. Although *Piers* drew on the language and tropes of instructional writing, the poem is not itself an instructional or pastoral manual. Its use as such would represent the appropriation of an imaginative vernacular narrative poem by members of the clergy for use in the delivery of pastoral care. While *The Prick* was firmly rooted in the tradition of *pastoralia*, it was also not explicitly intended to be a support for clerical work, and its appearance alongside *Piers* does not necessarily mean both were read in the same way. *The Prick* imagines an audience of literate but non-Latinate laypeople, accessing the text without clerical mediation, and makes no explicit reference to being used in the kinds of pastoral encounters imagined for Hm 128. Despite the assumptions of some modern readers of the poem, there is little manuscript evidence to support the idea that the poem played a direct role in instructional encounters (a point made more fully below). So although the association of the poem with a religious copying centre seems most likely, as the first chapter has shown that the two poems were often produced together in this kind of environment, its use in forms of public, pastoral reading is not immediately apparent.

[50] Felicity Riddy, 'Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 66-86 (74).
[51] See, for example, Jonathan Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', in *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England*, ed. by David M. Smith (York, 1991), pp. 87-163 (105).

Calabrese's claims are based both on literary arguments about the similarity of the book's contents and on a view of the unity of its copying. The latter point draws on evidence for the production of Hm 128 presented in several previous descriptions of the manuscript. In Kane-Donaldson, the manuscript's collation and layout serve as evidence of its possible unity: 'the transitions *Piers* > *Siege* and *Siege* > *Good Wife* occur within leaves. Thus fols. 113-219 might seem a distinct book. But a general palæographic similarity between *The Prick of Conscience*, the *Piers* fragment, and the whole *Piers* text, suggests a common and contemporaneous origin for items 1, 2 and 4, and therefore also for 5 and 6'.[52] On the basis that the final three texts are linked, plus the view that *The Prick* and *Piers* are presented similarly, the editors suggest that the book survives almost as it was intended to appear (with the later addition of the *Sequentia*).

Others present palaeographical evidence. Thorlac Turville-Petre claims that some of the erased and rewritten passages in Hm were the work of Hand 1, suggesting that these two hands worked collaboratively to produce *Piers* and *The Prick*.[53] Ralph Hanna and David Lawton argue that a single hand (the 'rubricator') added the red ink headings in the *Sequentia*, passus rubrics in *Piers*, and the title of *The Siege*.[54] They claim that 'the continuity of decorative features indicates that the manuscript, however ad lib the provision of texts at the end, was a corporate product and remained in situ'.[55] The *Sequentia* is codicologically isolated, on two quires with no other material, and written by a scribe whose hand appears nowhere else in the manuscript, so Hanna and Lawton's argument ties this text into the construction of the rest of the book.

[52] Kane-Donaldson, p. 9, n 57.
[53] 'Putting it Right, p. 45.
[54] *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, EETS, OS 320 (Oxford, 2003), p. xxiii.
[55] *The Siege*, ed. by Hanna and Lawton, p. xxiv.

The editors of the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* edition of Hm 128 add further palaeographical evidence. They argue that the 'small rubricated initials' in the *Sequentia*, referring to the red lombardic capitals throughout the text, are in the same hand as those in *The Siege*.[56] This is reiterated by Calabrese.[57] They also find the rubricator's hand at work in the corrections to *The Prick* and *Piers*.[58] The editors are more circumspect about the relationship between *Good Wife* and the rest of the texts (it 'seems an anomaly, and may have been added when the volume had been put to new use'), but they repeat Riddy's argument for the 'regional and cultural logic' of its inclusion.[59] The work of the rubricator, according to this view, connects *The Prick*, *Piers*, the *Sequentia* and *The Siege*.

As shown above, the codicological evidence only supports a link between *The Prick* and *Piers*, and, in my view, the significance of the palaeographical evidence marshalled in these descriptions has also been overstated. Palaeographical analysis supplies the evidence for tying the *Sequentia* and *The Siege* to one another and to *The Prick* and *Piers*. Bridges between these two texts include the lombardic capitals in the *Sequentia* and *The Siege* and the hand of the rubricator, who is supposed to have added rubrics in the *Sequentia* and *Piers*, written the title of *The Siege*, and rewritten corrected passages in *The Prick* and *Piers*.

There are nine lombardic capitals in *The Siege*: the letters **I**, **N**, **T**, **A**, **W**, **I**, **N**, **A**, and **N**. The *Sequentia* contains seventy-one, but only fifteen which correspond to those in *The Siege*: two **N**s, three **I**s, and ten **A**s. This adds up to twelve instances of **A** supposedly in the same hand across these

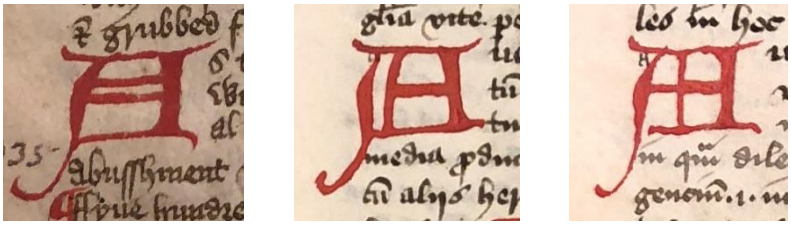
[56] *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive, Vol. 6: San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128* (*Hm and Hm2*), ed. by Michael Calabrese and others (2008) [on CD], II.1.3.2 'The Rubricator as Corrector'. Further references are to the online edition (The Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts, 2014) <http://piers.chass.ncsu.edu/texts/Hm> [accessed 22 January 2020], cited as *PPEA: Hm 128*.

[57] Calabrese, 'Hm 128', p. 127.

[58] *PPEA: Hm 128*, II.1.3.2, 'The Rubricator as Corrector'. A list of corrected passages in *Piers* attributed to the rubricator is given at II.1.3.2.1, 'One View of the Matter'.

[59] *PPEA: Hm 128*, I.6, 'Sequence of Construction'.

two texts, but wide variation in their letterforms calls this identification into question. The left side of each is extended into the margin, but this extension varies greatly in length. One **A** in *The Siege* has a double crossbar, one in the *Sequentia* a double left bar, and another a vertical centre stroke. These variations within a small sample problematise the identification of a single hand across both texts (see Figure 4).



f. 214r f. 108v f. 109v

Figure 4: Lombardic capital As. Hm 128, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

The *PPEA* editors identify the hand of the rubricator in the following places: two marginal rubrics and two in-line rubrics in *The Prick* (ff. 1v, 2v, 10v, and 35v), three corrected passages in *Piers* (ff. 114v, 186r, and 186v), all passus headings in *Piers*, the seventy-one rubrics for new sections in *Sequentia* (spread across all but folios 100v and 101v), and the title of *The Siege*. They point out four characteristic letterforms identifying the hand: 'textura minims', 'flat-topped' minuscule **d**, 'horned' minuscule **s**, and z-shaped minuscule **r** 'with tail'.[60]

The samples used by the editors introduce problems, even before the palaeographical features themselves are analysed. Palaeographical identifications depend on a combination of distinctive letterforms (sometimes described as *duct* or *ductus*) and similarity in aspect.[61] This latter term describes the impression made by a sample of handwriting, which is generated by features like

[60] *PPEA: Hm 128*, II.1.3.2.1, 'One View of the Matter'.
[61] Lawrence Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384-1432* (Cambridge, 2018), p. 33.

its density, the slant of its vertical strokes, and the proportions of its letters: tall, short, narrow, or wide.[62] Two samples of writing might contain similar letterforms, but look different as a whole, and distinctive letterforms can be copied (seen in medieval forgeries of earlier documents).[63] The analysis of aspect, though inherently impressionistic, is therefore a means to contextualise the evidence of letter shape.

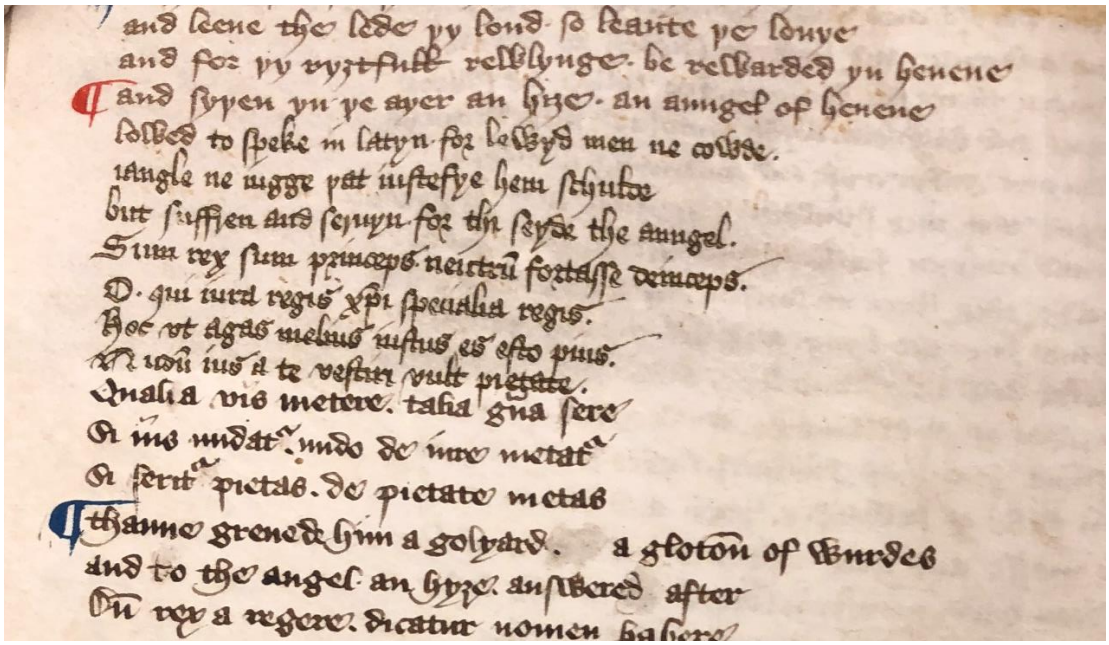


Figure 5: Hm 128, f. 114v (*detail*). *Corrected passage in Piers. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.*

Aspect proves to be extremely difficult to identify across the various samples presented as instances of the rubricator's hand. The corrections in *Piers* are the most substantial: three passages of inserted text constituting thirty-six lines of verse altogether. The aspect of the script in this area is markedly different to the surrounding work of Hands 1 and 4, cramped and squashed in

[62] Definitions of aspect are given in M. B. Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes* (Aldershot, 2008), 149; and A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'A Palaeographical Introduction', in Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales: A Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript, with Variants from the Ellesmere Manuscript*, ed. by Paul G. Ruggiers (Folkestone, 1979), pp. xix-xlix (xxxv).

[63] Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London, 2004).

comparison (Figure 5). The correcting hand here was adding at least an extra line in every case, meaning his letterforms were smaller by necessity, and are therefore poor samples on which to judge aspect. Every other sample attributed to the rubricator is too small and too isolated to offer a useful comparison, comprising only a few words or a line at a time.

The four characteristic letterforms of the rubricator are found, according to the *PPEA* editors, in the three corrected passages from *Piers* described above. The first of the four, 'textura minims', is not a distinctive identifier on its own. Textura, or textualis, is a script characterised by parallel vertical lines, lozenge shapes for round letters like **d**, and connecting strokes on the top and bottom of some letters, particularly those formed with minims.[64] Other scripts, particularly anglicana formata, borrowed aspects of this script to create the impression of greater formality, seen throughout Hm 128.[65] Some of the Latin quotations in *The Prick* are written by Hand 1 in a more formal grade of anglicana formata than the main text, mimicking textura minims (for example on folio 6v, 'Homo nascit*ur* ad laborem sicut anis ad volantum'). This ubiquity makes it a poor comparison for the samples in question. Of the other three, almost none are present in the samples from *The Prick*, with the exception of a single z-shaped **r** with hook which is found in the portion of the rubric written by Hand 1 ('fordon', f. 35v: Figure 6). This rubric shows a clear change in hand, where a second scribe has expanded the rubric following 'synnes', but this hand is not unambiguously the same as that of the corrector in *Piers*. None are found, either, in the title of *The Siege*.

[64] Albert Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 72-101.
[65] M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500* (London, 1979), pp. 4-6.

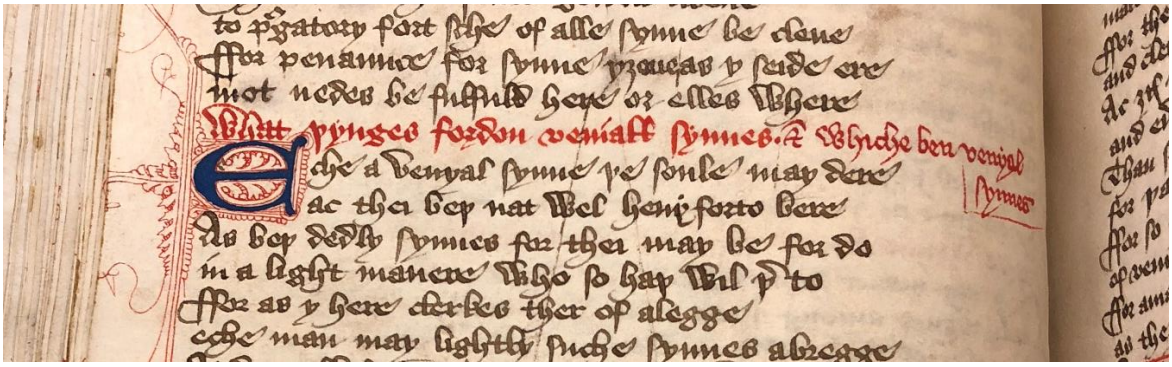


Figure 6: Hm 128, f. 35v (detail). Rubric in The Prick. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

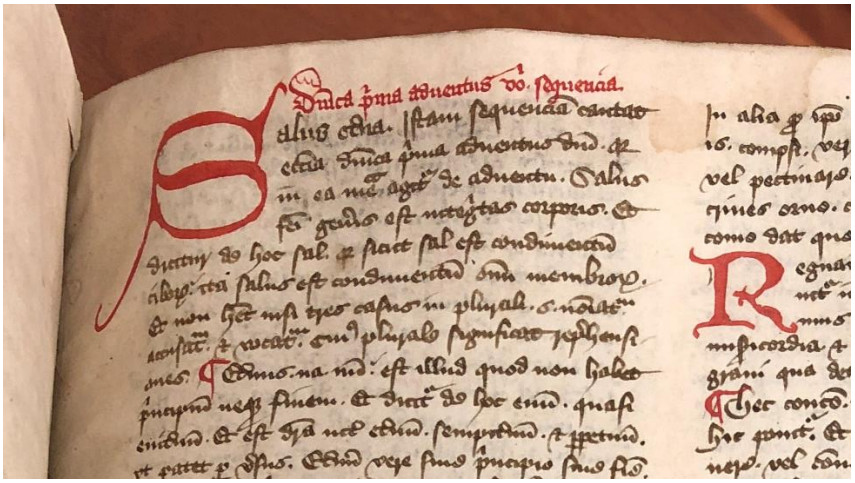


Figure 7: Hm 128, f. 97r (detail). Rubric in Sequentia. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

The characteristic letterforms are present in greater numbers in *Sequentia*. There are three instances of flat-topped **d** and six instances of z-shaped **r** with hook. However, these are only a small fraction of the whole corpus of **d** and **r** in the *Sequentia* rubrics, and are by no means the usual form employed by the scribe. There are several instances of minuscule **s** with a flourish extending up and left from the top compartment, but these are not always formed in the same way as those in the *Piers* sample. Where the end of the 'horn' on minuscule **s** in the three corrected passages ends with a small downwards curve of the pen, the flourish on the first **s** in *Sequentia* ends with a large downwards stroke (f. 97r, Figure 7). On f. 103r, the first rubric at the top of the first column has a flourish much shorter than those in the *Piers* sample. Elsewhere on this leaf, flourishes are applied

to a more cursive 'sigmoid' form of word-final **s** (both occurrences of 'pentecostes'), a habit not present in the *Piers* sample. So, although the letterforms identified as typical of the rubricator in the three corrected passages in *Piers* are present also in the *Sequentia* rubrics, they are much less characteristic of this hand and occur with significant variations which problematise the identification of a single hand across both. In sum, the palaeographical evidence marshalled by Hanna and Lawton and by the *PPEA* editors supports the identification of the rubricator across the four texts less securely than they suggest.

Conclusions

Returning to a discontinuous view of the book's production, in which only *Piers* and *The Prick* can be securely associated with its original form, challenges the view that its contents were intended to work together towards the same instructional aims. But the claim has also been made that *Piers* and *The Prick* together are likely to have been used instructionally, which might indicate that even as a book intended to contain only these two, Hm 128 was still used in this way.[66] Reasons to doubt this assertion have been given above – to summarise, neither poem was explicitly written for the purposes imagined for Hm 128.

Instead of assuming that the pairing of *Piers* and *The Prick* indicates that the reading of *Piers* was assimilated to a historically inaccurate version of how *The Prick* may have been read, we might instead consider the range of other possible ways in which the two texts might have been read together, similarly or not. Claims about the 'sound bite' quality of *Piers*, though probably not

[66] According to Calabrese, 'Hm 128', 'thematic connections' between *Piers* and *The Prick* explain 'why they could work so well together as instruction' (pp. 130-1).

indicative of its use as a preaching aid, do indicate ways in which it might have been read informationally, as a work of historical or edificatory interest. *The Prick* meanwhile might have been read for its imagistic or narrative contents, as a text which could engage the imagination and provoke reflection in the same ways modern readers have encountered in reading *Piers*. Hm 128 also, like some of the books mentioned above, demonstrates the tolerance of audiences and book producers of significant differences between texts. This book offers an indication of how the insoluble differences between the two poems in contact were acceptable to early readers.

London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687

Antiquaries 687 was partly the focus of the previous chapter, which explored how transmission networks in the East of England, where Antiquaries was produced, brought *Piers* and *The Prick* into contact. That chapter showed that ecclesiastical copying dominated the production of both poems in this region, indicating, despite a lack of direct evidence, that Antiquaries is likely to have been copied in the same kind of centre. It also examined the book's codicological form, suggesting this may be the result of common production practices in the region linking it to several other similarly-sized paper manuscripts.

Alongside our two poems, Antiquaries contains a cluster of short prose texts dealing with elements of catechesis and ritual. Some of these were written for practical purposes, notably the confession manual following *The Prick*. These contents make Antiquaries in some ways a more natural fit for claims of instructional use than Hm 128, which, with the possible exception of *Good Wife*, lacks material written to support clerics in pastoral roles. Indeed, Antiquaries has been subject to claims of this kind, which again have significant implications for our understanding of the early

readership of *Piers*.[67] Viewing the book in these terms raises immediate problems, some now familiar. Neither *Piers* nor *The Prick* naturally fit these imagined forms of use, and given that they dominate the manuscript, taking up vastly more of its leaves than the other items put together, it makes little sense to characterise the intended reading of the entire book on the basis of a few short items. These questions are again the focus of this section, which offers a new account of the production of Antiquaries 687 and places it in the context of several other manuscripts to argue that it is more likely to have been produced for private reading.

Contents

The contents of Antiquaries 687 are more uniformly devotional than Hm 128 (presented in Figure 8), and the book was written by a single scribe – factors which might both indicate that its surviving arrangement of material was deliberate. But variation in form, language, expected audiences, and intended forms of use between its texts are difficult to reconcile. The first item in the compilation is a translation of the Pater Noster, Ave, and Creed on a single leaf. This precedes a text of the Eight-Part Version of *The Prick*, a revision characterised by extensive inserted passages of Latin prose and English verse in the Prologue and Book 6. As shown in the final chapter, the Antiquaries text contains only the second of these insertions, and the scribe may not have recognised the long insertion in Book 6 as a part of this text of *The Prick*: on page 230, the Main Version text stops before

[67] Michael Alex Madrinkian, 'Producing *Piers Plowman* to 1475: Author, Scribe, Reader' (unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), p. 171; Philip N. R. Durkin, 'A study of Oxford, Trinity College, MS 86, with editions of selected texts, and with special reference to late Middle English prose forms of confession' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1994), p. 68.

Figure 8: Texts in Antiquaries 687.

Text	*Short title*	*Page range*
1. English translation of the Pater Noster, Ave, and Creed	*Pater Noster*	3
2. *The Prick of Conscience*, Eight-Part Version	*The Prick*	5-358
3. English prose confession manual	*Forma*	359-81
4. Richard Lavynham, *A Litil Tretis on the Seven Deadly Sins*	*Tretis*	383-411
5. Prose treatise on the ten commandments	*Commaundementis*	412-30
6. Extract from the *Speculum Sacerdotis* (Latin prose)	*Speculum*	431-68
7. *Piers Plowman*, A text	*Piers*	470-549
8. Prose treatise on excommunication	*Maner of Cowrs*	552-8

the end of the column and the Latin prose begins on the next as though the start of a new item. These changes in layout might indicate that the scribe did not expect *The Prick* to contain the kind of material found in the Eight-Part insertions, with their focus on ecclesiastical reform and extensive passages of Latin prose, indicating, perhaps, that the book was intended to be a more straightforward collection of devotional material.

The Prick is followed by a cluster of prose works. The first of these is a model text and guidebook for the administration of the sacrament of penance, described in the manuscript as 'forma co*n*fessionis' (p. 359). It begins with the initial words spoken by confessor and penitent, followed by a script for each of the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the seven sacraments of the church, the seven works of mercy, the articles of the faith, and the seven principal virtues. Its Latin is straightforward and uncomplicated, lacking lengthy quotations of the sort found in the longer verse texts. It may have been written for the use of the regular clergy: at the opening, the text refers to 'þe reule of myn order and of my professioun' (p. 359); later, to 'my matynes myn houres *and* othere charges' (p. 364), and on the same page to 'quer and […] other place of rule'.

The *Forma* is followed by Richard Lavynham's *A Litil Tretis on the Seven Deadly Sins*. The *Tretis* is a prose guide to the sins, taking each in turn and explaining their 'co*n*dyciou*n*s' and 'wat braunches growet oute of hem' (p. 383). References to Latin texts throughout are given with precise source identifications. The following text is a prose explication of the ten commandments, highlighting biblical and patristic quotations in red. This is followed by an extract from a priest's manual known as the *Speculum Sacerdotis*, attributed in the middle ages to Edward the Confessor.[68] This is the only entirely Latin item in the manuscript, excepting the possible assumption of the scribe that the Latin prose in *The Prick* constituted a separate work. The A text of *Piers* follows the *Speculum*, in turn followed by a prose treatise on excommunication describing two 'man*er* of cowrs' (p. 552) by which the church can expel errant members, along with the actions which lead to these punishments.

Lavynham's *Tretis* is unattributed in the manuscript, but described in a colophon as 'tractat*us* de septe*m* p*ecca*tis mor*talia* / lib*er* in lingua mat*er*na' (p. 441). This description draws attention to the varied status throughout the book of Latin and vernacular, and so to the different expectations of readership and use in its contents. *The Prick* and Lavynham's *Tretis*, neither of which explicitly anticipate public reading or practical use, sit alongside the *Forma*, which presents words to be spoken aloud by confessor and penitent in the course of the sacrament. Elements of basic religious instruction, including the ten commandments and seven deadly sins, are separated by no more than a few dozen leaves from discussions of church reform in Latin. This is not straightforwardly a devotional or pastoral book aimed at a single purpose, no more than Hm 128, and the role of *Piers* within this cluster of material is at first glance equally unclear.

[68] Richard Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997), pp. 108-9.

Production history

The production of Antiquaries 687 was not entirely uniform, and may have a bearing on our understanding of its development. As mentioned above, it was written by a single scribe, but variation in the quality of this hand and in aspects of presentation and decoration suggest unevenness and gaps in production. The script is modelled on anglicana, and is executed at the beginning of *The Prick* in a formal style with a slightly spiky aspect. As the text progresses, it becomes more cursive and rounded, suggesting a 'working in' period during which the scribe decided to write more quickly and drop formal features that were slower to produce. Some of this formality is briefly reprised for the few leaves following page 20, but at the end of the manuscript (particularly in the *Maner of Cowrs*), the legibility of the hand decreases sharply. These variations in aspect have prompted a recent judgment that the hand changes between pages 20-23 and again in the *Maner of Cowrs*, but the consistent letterforms in these sections despite changes in formality indicate that a single scribe copied the entire book.[69] Variation in the neatness and formality of the hand across the manuscript, compared, for example, to Vernon, might instead indicate gaps in the scribe's work.

Similar disjunctions are suggested by the uneven application of decorative features. *The Prick* begins with a red lombardic capital **Þ** (p. 5), and Books 5, 6, and 7 also begin with red lombardic capitals (pp. 135, 216, 297). Book 1 begins with a standard letter (p. 17), while at the start of Books 2, 3, and 4, space containing a small guide letter was left for red capitals which were not filled in (pp. 32, 59, 91). Other aspects of rubrication are equally inconsistent. Bracketing for couplets appears in red ink on pages 5-19, and from page 21 to the end of the poem in text ink. The initials of verse lines are fully decorated with red ink on twenty-seven pages, and partially decorated on fifty-two pages.

[69] Madrinkian, 'Producing *Piers Plowman*', p. 122. A single scribe for the entire manuscript is the view held by Pamela J. Willetts, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Society of Antiquaries of London* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 293-4.

Latin is treated more uniformly. Quotations in the English verse appear in red, but the passages of Latin prose which mark the Eight-Part Version are written in text ink. Source identifications in these sections are red, and initials at the start of sentences are decorated, also in red. The text is accompanied by manicules on twenty-six pages, and by 'cc' parasigns on 104 pages. The scribe appears to have made some effort to present the poem with a range of features typical of other *Prick* manuscripts, but red ink may not have been available at all stages of production, leading to changes in colour or the abandonment of red decorative features.

In the *Forma*, Latin is consistently written in red; this includes rubrics, quotations, and the names of sins. Unfilled space is left for a lombardic capital at the start of the text (p. 359) and initials at new sections are decorated in red. Lavynham's *Tretis* is similarly presented: the opening English rubric, and subsequent Latin rubrics, quotations, and source identifications are in red. Section breaks for each of the sins begin with a two-line lombardic capital in text ink; three of these are overwritten in red ink.[70] Initials at new sentences are decorated with red. The first line of the *Commaundementis* is written in red, and subsequent Latin rubrics, quotations, and source identifications are also in red. The first initial of the text, and subsequent initials on the rubrics for the first two commandments, are presented as two-line lombardic capitals in text ink overwritten with red. After page 425, the red ink stops altogether and the final five pages of the *Commaundementis* and the *Speculum* after it are written entirely in text ink, suggesting further problems with the scribe's supply.

The presence of red ink in *Piers* is similarly patchy. After lacking entirely from page 425, it appears again on page 492, during passus 3. From this point on, Latin quotations and passus headings, some of which are missing, are in red. Decoration of initials with red ink occurs only on

[70] Wrath, p. 394; Sloth, p. 398; Gluttony, p. 404.

pages where red was used also for quotations or rubrics, and usually runs from the top of the page only to the last Latin quotation, leaving lines at the bottom of the page without decoration.[71] The scribe, in other words, seems to have added red decoration to initials only on pages where quotations and rubrics were to be inserted in red anyway.

Possible further evidence for a situation in which the manuscript's production was subject to gaps or delays comes from the layout of *Piers*. The ruling is too narrow for the poem's alliterative long lines, which protrude beyond the right margin of the text block. The book appears to have been designed for a poem more like *The Prick*, whose form fits neatly within the limits set by the ruling, or for prose. This was not an isolated problem: the scribe of Lincoln's Inn, MS 150 seems to have had a similar issue in adding the A text to the end of a book of verse romances in shorter couplets. The margins are shrunk substantially in *Piers* compared to the earlier material, but still the alliterative lines threaten in places to run off the edge of the page. In Antiquaries, the reappearance of red ink in *Piers* might indicate that the scribe attempted to make its decoration continuous with the earlier texts once red became available again, and the poem may have been an unexpected later addition to a book originally planned to take a different direction. The disjunctions and inconsistencies in the contents of Antiquaries 687 might then be the result of contingency and constraint in the availability of texts and materials, and we should therefore be cautious in assuming that the book was used for any of the purposes stated within it.

[71] This occurs, for example, on pp. 493, 494, 501, 519, 526, 529, and 546.

Evidence for public reading

Arguments for the practical use of Middle English verse texts have tended not to consider how books from late-medieval England containing material intended for public delivery in ecclesiastical settings looked. Sermons are an obvious category of texts written for the kinds of use some modern readers of *Piers* have imagined for Langland's poem, and equally for *The Prick*, and survive in many forms in both Latin and Middle English. Their production was varied and rarely standardised, but many contain extensive systems of marginal annotation which may have supported the public reading of their contents. Comparing Antiquaries 687 with books of this sort suggests how the Antiquaries scribe and the book's early users may have understood its function differently.

Not all manuscripts containing sermon material were used in real sermonising. Indeed, according to one account, most books containing sermon material were not actually used to deliver sermons.[72] They represent instead records of real sermons produced after the event, or materials on which preachers drew in composing a sermon for delivery. Real sermons are perhaps more likely to have been preached from loose sheets or from memory; in Alan J. Fletcher's words, 'in the moment of their codification, sermons were inevitably entering the domain of the literary and the consultative, and becoming estranged from the actuality of their delivery'.[73] If manuscripts containing materials with an unambiguous relationship to real-world preaching were not actually used for public reading aloud, it seems unlikely that this situation applied to manuscripts of verse texts which assume private reading.

[72] Alan J. Fletcher, 'Compilations for preaching', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume II, 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 317-29 (318-9).
[73] Fletcher, 'Compilations', p. 319.

The distinctively annotated layout of some sermon manuscripts might then be a means to determine the kind of traces left by the study of these books, if not an indication of preparation for direct public delivery. Consider Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C. 751, a book of Middle English sermons which begins with a long and extremely complex funeral sermon followed by Sunday sermons from Septuagesima to the end of Lent.[74] Although trimming has reduced the margins in some places, marginal annotations are visible throughout the book. These comprise extensive source identifications, numeration of parts of the text, and Latin content summaries in the hand of the scribe. For example, in the sermon for Quadragesima preaching resilience 'a3eyns al te*m*ptac*i*on of þe feend' (f. 54r), a passage describing how 'p*ri*de deposiþ a man fro þe worshipful state *and* frenship þ*a*t he haþe wiþ god' is annotated in the margin, 'de s*uper*bia' (f. 66v). The rest of the margin is filled with source identifications: 'luc*us*.I.', 'Mach*abaei*.2.', 'Job.XX.', and others. Running titles for the date of the sermon are accompanied by content summaries: 'de gula', 'de vana gloria', and 'de avaricia'. These forms of content summary and finding aid might have supported the quarrying of material for new compositions.

Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 706 is a book of macaronic Latin and English sermons probably produced at the Benedictine abbey of St Peter in Gloucester.[75] It contains a funeral sermon for Abbot Walter Froucester (preached on 3 May 1412) and a sermon on the anniversary of the death of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. These sermons also contain extensive marginalia, in this case for sources and textual features. Froucester's funeral sermon is marked 'exemplum', 'ffigura' and 'naracc*i*o' (ff. 13r, 15r). An earlier but also monastic sermon compilation is Bodleian Library, MS

[74] H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 264-5, 354-8.

[75] Patrick J. Horner, 'A Sermon on the Anniversary of the Death of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick', *Traditio*, 34 (1978), 381-401 (see particularly 381, n. 4, discussing the identification of the front flyleaf as part of an account roll recording the abbey's properties).

Laud misc. 511, containing Latin sermons produced by a Dominican, possibly in Oxford, between 1256 and 1275.[76] It is extensively annotated with marginal lines highlighting passages, source identifications, and lengthy comments in the bottom margin, some of which explicate the hierarchical relationship of concepts in sprawling lateral tree diagrams. Although these examples are scattered and represent only a very small survey of marginalia in sermon manuscripts, they indicate the kind of presentational evidence that would constitute more substantial proof that a text of Middle English verse not written for public delivery was used in this way.

Some books do contain marginal annotations, and in fact the marginalia appearing in some textually authoritative copies of *The Prick* are incorporated into the text of Hanna-Wood on the assumption that it may be authorial.[77] The following chapter will examine this in more detail, arguing that marginal annotations in both texts tend to represent the borrowing of presentation models designed to make the poems look more Latinate. But in looking at Antiquaries 687 and Hm 128, with almost no marginalia, our first assumption should be that they were not produced for forms of public delivery.

Reading alone

Where direct evidence for public reading in Antiquaries 687 is difficult to locate, clear evidence for other kinds of engagement is also elusive. Inferences from other books, though, suggest how private reading might make sense of the book's divergent contents and assumptions of use. Turning to a

[76] Maura O'Carroll, 'Notes on Some Vernacular Phrases Found in MS Laud Miscellaneous 511', *Notes and Queries*, 29 (1982), 301-3.
[77] Hanna-Wood, p. 263, note to l. 15.

related group of manuscripts, this section now examines how texts written explicitly for public delivery may have been adapted for private reading.

Bodleian Library, MS Douce 60 is a copy of John Mirk's *Festial* and *Instructions for Parish Priests*, respectively a set of model sermons in prose for the whole liturgical year and a versified guidebook for priests. It also contains the only other identified copy of the *Forma* found in Antiquaries 687 and a copy of Lavynham's *Tretis* textually related to that in our manuscript. Antiquaries was unknown to the editor of the *Tretis* in 1956, but according to my collation of sample passages probably belongs to the group containing Douce.[78] It is written on paper, now almost the same size as Antiquaries 687 (but both manuscripts have been trimmed).[79] The text is written in black ink, and decorated only in red. Its dialect, according to *LALME*, is of Northamptonshire.[80]

At first glance, this book seems to be a straightforwardly pastoral compilation, containing materials for sermonising, the administration of confession, basic catechetical instruction, and general guidance on the life of the priest. Texts of this kind seem to have been this scribe's focus: a further copy each of the *Festial* and the *Instructions* survive in the same hand, in Bodleian Library, MSS Douce 108 and Douce 103 respectively. Neither of these books are compilations: Douce 108 contains only the *Festial*, and Douce 103 is a postmedieval composite in which the *Instructions* occupy an isolated codicological unit with no other material. Their texts are laid out and decorated in the same style as Douce 60.

Despite the apparent focus in the surviving output of this scribe on texts for parish priests, the intended uses of these manuscripts are not straightforwardly related to their contents. Each text

[78] AncDoHa$_4$RaRy: Richard Lavynham, *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. by Johannes Petrus Wilhelmus Maria van Zutphen (Rome, 1956), p. lvii.
[79] 190 x 130 mm. Some catchwords in both books have been cut through, indicating that both are now smaller than when they were produced.
[80] *LALME*, III, pp. 319-20.

of the *Festial* produced by this scribe presents a unique arrangement of Mirk's sermons. The two arrangements are different, but have some consistency in grouping, and are presented in Appendix 1. Douce 60 begins with three Marian sermons, followed by four on women saints, the Advent sequence through to Epiphany and the Conversion of St Paul, with some omissions and rearrangements, five dealing with male saints plus the Invention of the Cross, the sermons for Shrovetide, Lent, and Easter, the four sermons from Ascension to Corpus Christi, and finally a group of four comprising Ember Days, St John the Baptist, St Michael, and a repeat of Ember Days. The sermon for All Saints Day is isolated from the rest, appearing later in the manuscript. Douce 108 reflects some of these groupings: the sermons from Advent to St John at the Latin Gate in this copy are similarly ordered, excepting some additions and omissions in both. The sermons for Mary and women saints, and the Shrovetide, Lent, and Easter sermons, are displaced relative to Douce 60, appearing in that order after the sermons for Pentecost, Trinity, and Corpus Christi.

The arrangement of the sermons in neither chronological nor service order, and instead by theme or content, suggests that neither copy was intended for sermonising. Using this book to preach the liturgical year would be inconvenient, and the wide dispersal of Mirk's text, which survives in forty-four copies (including fragments and extracts), suggests a copy in chronological order would not have been difficult to source.[81] Douce 60 also omits the Prologue (though this is present in Douce 108), in which Mirk sets out his intentions for the text: 'I haue drawe this treti sweyng owt of *Legenda Aurea* wyth more adding to, so he that hathe lust to study therein he schal fynde redy of alle the principale festis of the 3ere a schort sermon nedful for hym to techy[n]'.[82] This

[81] *Festial*, ed. by Powell, I, p. xiii-xiv.
[82] *Festial*, ed. by Powell, I, p. 3.

explicit reference to the use of the text as a preaching aid is suppressed here, another indication of the book's alternative purpose.

This lack of interest in the practical or public uses of the text is further supported by some of the marks of reader engagement throughout the *Festial* in Douce 60. The text has been corrected, possibly by more than one hand. These corrections often clarify grammar and content, for example in the sermon for Ascension day where the corrector has altered each instance of the words 'this day' to 'asce*n*cion' (f. 122r). These readings are not attested in the edited text of the *Festial*, nor in any collated manuscript, so are most likely original interventions by the corrector.[83] In the Corpus Christi day sermon, the corrector added 'pope' in front of 'Vrban' (132r), again not attested in the edition.[84] These kind of alterations are minute, and seemingly unnecessary; which other 'Vrban' would be under discussion in this context? And in the sermon for Ascension, it seems acceptable to elide the name of the day in repeated mention as Mirk does. But if this sermon were read on a day other than Ascension, if this book were intended for some form of private reading unrestricted by the liturgical schedule, the clarification of these references might make more sense.

While Douce 60 contains pastoral material, it may not have been produced for sermonising in a parish church as Mirk anticipated, and instead represent a bespoke arrangement of sermons for a private reader. Reading privately is an extremely flexible form of engagement with written texts – texts produced for any purpose can theoretically, if given material form in a book, be read by an individual alone. The relationship between Antiquaries 687 and the Douce trio is not clear, but both scribes evidently participated in close textual networks, resulting in the presence of a unique pair of copies of the *Forma* and a related text of Lavynham. Although Douce does not offer direct

[83] *Festial*, ed. by Powell, I, pp. 140-3.
[84] *Festial*, ed. by Powell, I, p. 154.

evidence for how Antiquaries may have been read, it makes a suggestive comparison. Seeing Antiquaries 687 as a book made to be read privately makes sense of its divergent contents: not similar, but not necessarily similar as a group to be read and contemplated alone.

Conclusion

The evidence gathered here suggests that Antiquaries was produced over a period of time, possibly with breaks or discontinuities in production; that *Piers* may not have been planned as a part of the compilation at the outset; that the texts in the manuscript are not presented in a way which obviously indicates public reading; and that it was related to a cluster of texts written for public delivery but copied for private reading. In sum, Antiquaries does not indicate the use of *Piers* in forms of public, pastoral reading, but instead suggests that all its contents are likely to have been read privately.

My emphasis on private reading here diverges from some previous accounts of the history of medieval reading. Joyce Coleman has claimed that many late-medieval literary texts were written to be read aloud, though her study focuses on Chaucer and excludes Langland.[85] The evidence gathered here, though admittedly not on the same scale as that on which Coleman's arguments are based, indicates that private reading may have characterised not only a text like *Piers*, associated with the literary, but also texts explicitly written to be read publicly.

This private reading might have produced various and divergent assimilations between texts and the forms of reading they expected. *Piers* engages with political, psychological, historical,

[85] *Public Reading*; see pp. 182-3.

and salvific discourses, asking its readers to think in various ways some related to the real material world and some focused on the interior. *The Prick* is oriented towards psychological and behavioural change in its readers, but also targets their place in history, the material world, and the invisible but no less real spaces of hell, purgatory, and heaven, and readers' cultural positioning in England's multilingual society. Reading these texts together privately might have involved a number of the reading goals set out earlier in this chapter, including some of the instructional or pastoral aims suggested in the accounts of the two manuscripts described above, but not in the context of ritual or performative settings. We might turn back to the texts themselves to consider how they expected readers to engage with them: in the absence of evidence to the contrary, Antiquaries 687 and Hm 128 seem likely to have been read without the kinds of mediation *The Prick* explicitly rules out.

From this perspective, Antiquaries 687 and Hm 128 suggest in their likely production for private reading that their audiences read the two poems in ways consistent with what the poems expect. Later chapters will explore in closer detail the attitudes medieval readers held towards the two poems, and, in more detail, how they were read; but in so far as they are likely to have been read privately together, not in the forms of public reading claimed for these books, these readers were not the resistant and disruptive subjects imagined by some accounts of historical reading. As I suggested in the Introduction, some readers consciously aligned their reading with cultural expectations of what reading should be. The immediate audience of these two manuscripts may have found *Piers* and *The Prick* useful or interesting to some extent in the terms both texts imagine for themselves.

The two manuscripts also demonstrate the tolerance of medieval readers for significant differences between texts, perhaps most significantly the difference between narrative and non-narrative, or between literal and figurative. Books like Antiquaries 687, and the other examples of

manuscripts compiling divergent contents described earlier, might indicate a cultural view of books as repositories open to a range of dissimilar but significant materials. This was surely shaped by the scarcity of book materials, both physical and textual: parchment was expensive, and exemplars sometimes hard to come by. Yet in its discontinuities, Antiquaries 687 might indicate how a book would not have been understood as principally a copy of *The Prick*, but as an open-ended folder for whatever texts might cross its user's desk. We might be in danger of misrepresenting the nature of compiled manuscripts in treating their contexts as fixed and therefore characteristic of what they were meant to be.[86]

The findings of this chapter are not fully conclusive or concrete, but they establish a view of how readers engaged with *Piers* and *The Prick* together which informs the study of readerly attitudes to the two in contact carried out in the following two chapters. This is in itself a methodological point: studying compilation, in my view, offers access to a more limited range of information about the medieval past than has been claimed. Self-justifying or circular logic is a significant risk, for example in arguments about how similarities between texts explain their compilation together, when those similarities are only apprehended because the texts are compiled. Compilations indicate readerly tolerance of difference, in various forms, and making sense of this difference should be our goal.

[86] A similar point is made in Boffey and Edwards, 'Taxonomy', pp. 279.

Chapter 4: Presentation

> I want to tell you a little about myself. I am really an artist, not a writer. So, I like the way Arabic numbers look un-written out on a page. When I say someone is 15 years old, I like the way 15 looks. I like the way 9 million looks and I hate the way nine million looks. 9 seems like more of a number to me.
>
> Also, I believe that places should be capitalized. North, South, East and West are all places as far as I'm concerned I don't care what anyone else thinks. When I think of North, it's capitalized. West, especially, is a serious place that should ALWAYS be capitalized. It also sounds more adventurous to go West than to go west.
>
> Since this is my book and since the advent of James Joyce, why don't we let me have my way? It's such a small thing, and just think, I could be James Joyce writing in latin all the time and stuff.[1]

So begins Eve Babitz's first novel, *Eve's Hollywood*, chronicling her childhood and early career in Southern California. In this note to the reader, she asserts her control over typographic form: 'writing out' a number is different, she says, to using a numeral; majuscule letters give emphasis; minuscules make 'latin' seem like Joycean pretence. Babitz reminds us that the presentation of features as small as the individual letter is meaningful.

Medieval scribes might have disagreed about the status of Latin, but they too were responsible for shaping the look of the texts they copied. In some ways they had vastly more control than the authors of printed texts: scribes, sometimes in combination with artists, illuminators, and other bookmakers, generated by hand every feature of the page. Yet they were also constrained, by material limitations, the desires of the commissioners of books, and by tradition and convention. The choices made by scribes, whatever combination of freedom or constraint produced them, determined how texts were packaged, encoding information about genre, status, internal structure,

[1] Eve Babitz, *Eve's Hollywood* (1972; repr. New York, 2015), pp. xvii-xviii.

and other kinds of 'metadata', as we might call it today. The study of these features of presentation can offer evidence about how medieval texts were constituted in these terms, individually and across larger corpora.

Presentation encompasses marks made on the page; the size, shape, colour and position of text and nonverbal signs, and structural choices like page format and column arrangement. It also addresses the material form of the book itself, its size and shape. Other terms are often used in discussions of scribal work, for example 'layout', '*mise-en-page*', or 'decoration', but I prefer 'presentation' here for its wider semantic range, describing how parts of the page are shaped visually rather than focusing on the spatial relationship between them.[2]

While interest in the manuscripts of *Piers* has increased over the last two decades, little work has been carried out on its presentation. Some unusual copies have been examined in detail, as have isolated features present across larger groups (particularly rubrication), and the publication of a catalogue of the manuscripts of the B text has made the layout of those manuscripts more visible.[3] Yet few surveys have been made, and equally little work has been done on the presentation of *The Prick*, although a recent study has examined selected features across the whole corpus of surviving copies.[4] The presentation of the two poems has been seen as similar: A. I. Doyle suggests that the

[2] See, for example, Aditi Nafde, 'Deciphering the Manuscript Page: The *Mise-en-Page* of Chaucer, Gower, and Hoccleve Manuscripts' (unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2012), and 'Text and Decoration', in Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca and London, 2007), pp. 18-34.

[3] Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise Louise Despres, *Iconography and the Professional Reader: The Politics of Book Production in the Douce Piers Plowman* (Minneapolis, 1999); Simon Horobin, 'In London and opelond': The Dialect and Circulation of the C Version of *Piers Plowman*', *Medium Ævum*, 74 (2005), 248-69; Anne Middleton, 'The Prologues and Ends of *Piers Plowman* A', in *Pursuing Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts: Essays in Honour of Ralph Hanna*, ed. by Simon Horobin and Aditi Nafde (Turnhout, 2016), pp. 199-224; C. David Benson and Lynne Blanchfield, *The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: The B-version* (Cambridge, 1997). Note, however, reservations about the accuracy of Benson and Blanchfield's catalogue, expressed in Ralph Hanna, review of *The Manuscripts of Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. by Benson and Blanchfield (1997), *The Review of English Studies*, 50 (1999), 74-5.

[4] Daniel Sawyer, 'Codicological Evidence of Reading in Late Medieval England, with Particular Reference to Practical Pastoral Verse' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016).

layout of manuscripts of *The Prick* was among the closest to that of *Piers*, but their presentation has not been systematically compared.[5] The comparison would be valuable: both poems survive in many copies, offering a large body of evidence, and both are in part typical of the way that many other texts were presented and in part distinctive. As verse, they might tell us about how particular literary forms were treated. As Middle English verse with embedded Latin quotations, they might tell us about the relative status of those two languages in late-medieval England. In the context of this thesis, the study of their presentation addresses questions raised by the previous chapters: we have seen how both poems are likely to have been produced for private reading, rather than sermonising, so were they presented similarly? Both poems were produced by and for ecclesiastical audiences, so how were the Latin quotations treated?

This chapter offers the first response to some of the questions raised by the presentation of the two poems by the same scribes. It turns from the previous chapter's study of book production in terms of the selection and arrangement of material towards the work of scribes at a more granular level: the decisions they made about materials, layout, annotation, and other components of the text as material object. It focuses less on the group of jointly-produced copies than the previous chapter, taking a wider view across almost all surviving copies of both poems.

In comparing them, this chapter focuses on aspects of presentation shared between *Piers* and *The Prick* – their size and shape, features common to all books, and their treatment of the Latin quotations present in both. One area of divergence is also studied: the presentation of *The Prick* according to models derived from Latin texts, seen in a significant group of copies but rarely in *Piers*. These features are related to the questions posed in other parts of the thesis, particularly the issue

[5] A. I. Doyle, 'Remarks on Surviving Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*', in *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of George H. Russel*, ed. by George Kratzmann and James Simpson (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 35-48 (47).

of how the two poems were seen in relation to Latin. A number of other features might be relevant to a fuller study of both, but these are beyond the scope of this chapter; equally, both poems were regularly compiled with others whose presentation might also suggest how scribes responded to them, but these avenues are necessarily left unexplored.

In turning towards the detail of scribal copying, this chapter draws on the evidence of surveys and other large-scale comparisons. It studies how scribes copied the two poems in the several decades on either side of the turn of the fifteenth century, contrasting the perspectives derived from surveys with the evidence of individual copies. My focus on the behaviour of a large group of mostly unrelated scribes reflects the development of quantitative codicology, which examines bibliographical features statistically to draw out patterns in production.[6] This approach aims to illuminate how scribes of *Piers* behaved differently to scribes of *The Prick* in ways that can be generalised and might speak to trends in their reception. In reality, of course, there was no 'average' scribe, and too much reliance on data can produce results which reflect no actual historical circumstance. The surveys presented here are therefore starting points for examination of individual scribes and books, which sometimes buck the trends seen from above.

Scribal work raises important questions within the study of the two poems' joint reception history. The work of scribes combined elements of reading with elements of textual production and design, traditionally seen as opposed and separate processes.[7] Yet scribes worked in both of these roles, crossing the divide as the human agent which mediated between text and reader. Their work had many forms in reality: some scribes were close to the source of new texts, even working directly for authors, while others worked from exemplars long separated from authorial milieux, but all

[6] See Carla Bozzolo and Ezio Ornato, *Pour un histoire du livre manuscript au Moyen Âge: trois essais de codicologie quantitative* (Paris, 1983).

[7] On the role of design in scribal work, see Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford, 2018).

participated jointly in the reading of an old work and the writing of a new. In these terms, scribes had a complex set of relationships with the authors of texts, the exemplars from which they worked, and the audiences and readers for whom they worked.

Reading has been seen in modern scholarship as resistant, defiant, and creative, as I described in the introduction.[8] Scribes, then, might also be seen in these terms: their freedom to change and remake was potentially huge, with nothing but the bounds of the page and their supply of ink to constrain them. But the findings presented in this chapter suggest a different picture, showing evidence for highly conservative presentation practices among scribes of *Piers* and *The Prick*. Many sought authorisation for the texts they copied, changing little or working to emphasise the derivation of the two poems from authoritative models. Their status was different, as *The Prick* seems to have been linked more closely to Latin genres, but both were presented in ways which stressed their place within tradition.

Size and shape

The material experience of reading medieval books has changed significantly since the middle ages, due to the confinement of most examples in modern research libraries. In these settings, manuscripts are supported on foam book rests or cushions, their leaves held in place with book weights, while ink and other substances liable to stain parchment and paper are kept at a safe distance. The size and shape of these books is now for the most part apprehended visually, except for the brief moments in which books are lifted out of their conservation boxes (and not at all in

[8] Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, 1994), p. viii.

libraries where staff deliver and remove items to and from desks personally). Readers experience little of the weight of books; indeed, books themselves are protected from the damage their own mass can cause to their bindings and structure.[9]

The book as physical object is the focus of this section. Texts written in codices are encountered first in the solid, three-dimensional form made from sheets gathered together and wrapped in a binding. The properties of the resulting item are a component of textual presentation, but recovering the meaning of the size and shape of medieval manuscripts is complicated, like many other aspects of their cultural significance, by the loss of contact with materiality experienced in their modern setting.

Many material features of books might be relevant to the study of the cultural meaning attached to their contents: size, format, binding. Among manuscripts of *Piers* and *The Prick*, medieval bindings are extremely rare (as in general).[10] Those that do survive are mostly of a standard variety, made from wooden boards covered with leather, and offer little new information about how the poems were presented.[11] No copies of either survive in decorated, metalwork, or jewelled bindings – unsurprising, as these were likely to have been applied only to works of the highest status, bibles and service books.[12] One copy of *The Prick*, at least, seems to have been revered enough by a postmedieval owner to justify a lavish rebinding: Bodleian Library, MS Lyell empt. 6 is covered in red velvet and kept in a red leather-backed wrapper. The manuscript, thus sheathed, sits in a red

[9] The effect on research of the consultation of medieval books in institutional libraries is discussed in Siân Echard, 'House Arrest: Modern Archives, Medieval Manuscripts', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 30 (2000), 185-210.

[10] See Alexandra Gillespie, 'Bookbinding', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 150-72.

[11] The prevalence of wooden boards in late-medieval European bindings is discussed in J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 216-7.

[12] The scarcity of metalwork bindings is discussed in Mirjam Foot, 'English Decorated Bookbindings', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 65-86 (65).

box trimmed with more red leather.[13] No copies survive with evidence of similar special status in the middle ages.

This leaves size and shape as possible avenues of investigation. As handcrafted objects, the size of medieval books was constrained in theory only by the size of the available materials, and could be shrunk as far as scribes could write legibly.[14] Most books were neither very large nor very small, but surviving examples at both extremes show that some medieval bookmakers exploited these possibilities to create distinctive objects. Most books are also rectangular, but some are not: the phenomenon of *cordiforme* or heart-shaped books, produced towards the end of the middle ages, again demonstrate the interest of some producers in using the format of books expressively. The Chansonnier de Jean de Montchenu, for example, is a collection of French and Italian love songs from the late fifteenth century in the shape of a heart, a 'reified metaphor' for its own contents.[15] Books could express social status too: one example survives of a book shaped like a fleur-de-lis, possibly produced for the French king Henry II in the sixteenth century.[16]

Size and shape are significant as the first, external aspect of textual presentation, but the study of both faces problems. Judgments about size can be limited by the apparent imprecision of what it conveys: large books might seem impressive and important, yet may offer no clues to their contents. The shape of books could result from production processes which limited the available

[13] This book was acquired by Lyell in 1937 and was previously owned by Thomas Phillipps. See Albinia C. de la Mare, *Catalogue of the Collection of Medieval Manuscripts Bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, Oxford by James P. R. Lyell* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 287-8.

[14] Thirteenth-century bibles, for example are noted for their miniature script; see Christopher de Hamel, *The Book: A History of the Bible* (London, 2001), pp. 115-7; Chiara Ruzzier, 'The Miniaturisation of Bible Manuscripts in the Thirteenth Century: A Comparative Study', in *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, ed. by Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden and Boston, 2013), pp. 105-25 (108).

[15] Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago and London, 2000), p. 85.

[16] Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, Fonds Lescalopier MS 22. This and other examples of unusual formats are discussed by Erik Kwakkel in a blog post, 'Strange Medieval Books' (2014) <https://medievalbooks.nl/2014/08/29/strange-medieval-books/> [accessed 25 October 2019].

options, particularly in the case of paper manuscripts which were made from sheets in standard sizes folded into folio, quarto, octavo, or smaller gatherings.[17] Some formats might have had more specific meanings, but scholars have struggled to define these accurately. The 'holster book', a tall and narrow codex, was once thought to indicate reading aloud or public delivery; while this theory has since been dispelled, no plausible alternative has replaced it.[18]

Studying the shape and size of manuscripts is also complicated by their history. Many have been trimmed since their production, surviving in formats which may be different to those originally intended. Trimming can be obvious in cases where bits of marginalia, or even the text itself, are visibly missing, but trimming was probably not severe in most cases.[19] Parchment and paper can also shrink over time, creating problems for measuring their dimensions and also for measuring the depth of a book, which might not be the same at every point, or be artificially expanded by the buckling of leaves.[20]

Studying the size and shape of manuscripts systematically can overcome some of these difficulties of access and imprecision. Quantitative approaches surveying large corpora have revealed trends in production invisible from the perspective of smaller studies.[21] J. P. Gumbert, for example, studied the size of over 2000 manuscripts in Parisian and Viennese repositories, finding that the formats of these books were remarkably similar across different sizes, periods, and centres

[17] Paper formats are discussed in Paul Needham, '*Res papirea*: Sizes and Formats of the Late Medieval Book', in *Rationalisierung der Buchherstellung im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: Ergebnisse eines Buchgeschichtlichen Seminars Wolfenbüttel 12.-14. November 1990*, ed. by Peter Rück (Marburg an der Lahn, 1994), pp. 123-45 (125-8).
[18] Andrew Taylor, 'The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 43-73.
[19] J. P. Gumbert, 'The sizes of manuscripts: some statistics and notes', in *Hellinga Festschrift: Forty-three Studies in Bibliography presented to Prof. Dr. Wytze Hellinga on the occasion of his retirement from the Chair of Neophilology in the University of Amsterdam at the end of the Year 1978*, ed. by A. R. A. Croiset van Uchelen (Amsterdam, 1980), pp. 277-88 (277, 279).
[20] Gumbert, 'Sizes', p. 277.
[21] For example, Bozzolo and Ornato, *Trois essais*; Ruzzier, 'Miniaturisation'; and Sawyer, 'Codicological Evidence', pp. 127-73.

of production.[22] This section brings similar methods to bear on the format of copies of *Piers* and *The Prick* in comparing the dimensions of their surviving manuscripts. Using the measurements listed in the three Athlone editions (Kane, Kane-Donaldson, and Russell-Kane) and Lewis and McIntosh's catalogue, corrected with my own where errors occur, I calculated the ratio of height to width for all copies of *Piers* and the Main Version and Southern Recension of *The Prick* described in these sources (excluding fragments).[23] The resulting numbers are presented in Appendix 2. It lists the height and width of individual copies and the proportion of each unit of height to each unit of width, which indicates their format: how tall and narrow, or conversely how squat. A value of 1 in this field indicates a perfect square, but most folios are taller than they are wide and therefore have a value above 1. A value below 1 indicates a page in 'landscape' format, but no such manuscripts survive in this sample.

Format

Figure 9 presents a summary of the data in Appendix 2, showing the average proportion of height to width for manuscripts of *Piers* and *The Prick*. This data demonstrates that both, in their present form, are remarkably consistent in format. The average proportion of height to width for manuscripts of the Main Version is 1.5, meaning that the average folio is one-and-a-half times as tall as it is wide. The average for Southern Recension manuscripts is 1.46, a little more square. The average for *Piers* manuscripts is 1.48. Manifested in the dimensions of a real page, these differences

[22] Gumbert, 'Sizes'.

[23] Kane did not collate Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 851, and Kane-Donaldson did not collate Huntington Library, MS Hm 114. Neither offers physical descriptions of these books, so both are included in Appendix 2 with my own measurements.

are insignificant: a manuscript with a width of 150 mm would, if an average copy of the Main Version, be 225 mm tall; an average copy of *Piers* would be 222 mm tall.

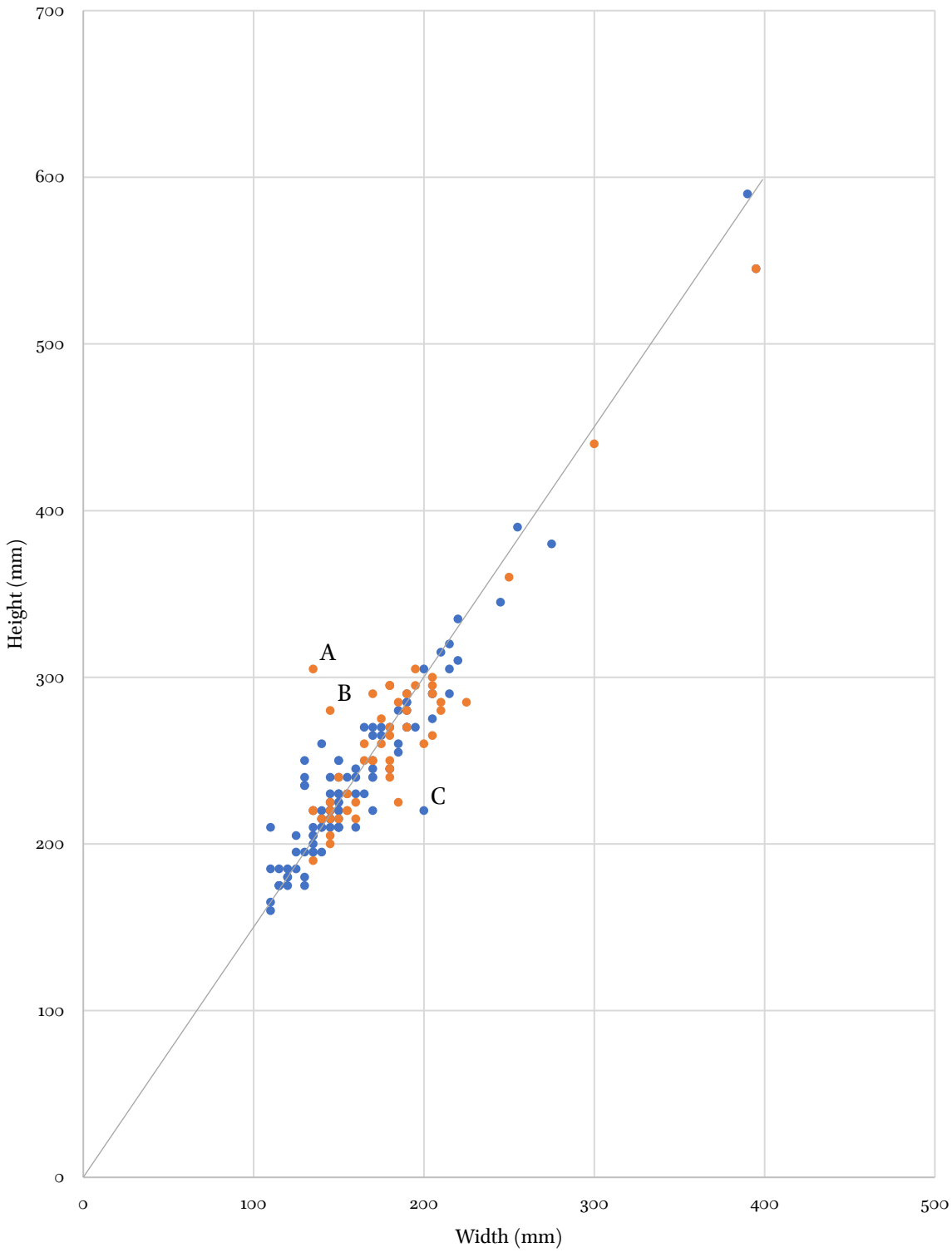
Figure 9: Texts and scribal hands in Hm 128.

Text	*Manuscripts*	*Average proportion of height to width*
Piers (all manuscripts)	52	1.47
Piers (single-version A)	10	1.57
Piers (single-version B)	12	1.46
Piers (single-version C)	18	1.46
The Prick (all manuscripts)	115	1.5
Main Version	97	1.51
Southern Recension	18	1.46
Piers and *The Prick*	167	1.49

Within versions of *Piers*, the differences are also minimal. Single-version manuscripts of the B and C texts have an average proportion of 1.46. The whole corpus of single-version A texts has an average proportion of 1.57, rather narrower than B and C, but this figure is distorted because the manuscript Lincoln's Inn, MS 150 is extremely tall and thin; removing this outlier gives an average of 1.48.

Significant also is the stability of these average ratios across different sizes. The graph in Figure 10 compares the ratio of height to width for both manuscripts, with orange dots for *Piers* and blue for *The Prick*. The graph shows one dot for each position, so manuscripts with the same measurements are represented together and the total number of dots is therefore less than the number of manuscripts in the sample. A line shows the ratio 1:1.5, very close to the average reported among copies of both texts. Manuscripts of all sizes cluster along this line, with only a few outliers, demonstrating that even very large manuscripts were produced in a similar format to smaller ones.

Figure 10: Ratio of height to width in manuscripts of Piers (orange) and The Prick (blue).



These results match the findings of Gumbert's survey, which examined books surviving in Paris and Vienna. These books, ranging in date from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries, corresponded to a similar proportion of height to width across different sizes. Gumbert's estimation of this ratio is 1:√2, or roughly 1:1.41.[24] The average proportion observed among *Piers* and *Prick* manuscripts, 1.49, is not far off, suggesting that these English manuscripts fit with a broader pattern of European book production.

The normativity of the ratio of height to width in most manuscripts of the two poems is further indicated by comparison with two other groups of Middle English books. The Wycliffite Bible and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were both very popular: the Bible survives in more manuscripts than any other work in Middle English, while the *Tales* has the second-highest rate of survival for Middle English verse, second to *The Prick*.[25] No catalogue exists for the whole corpus of Bibles, but Elizabeth Solopova's catalogue of Bibles now in Oxford gives a sample of sixty-three manuscripts,[26] while Daniel Mosser's online catalogue of *Tales* manuscripts lists eighty-four.[27] From the dimensions in these sources the average ratio for each can be calculated and compared with the above figures for *Piers* and *The Prick*.

[24] Gumbert, 'Sizes', p. 279.

[25] Michael G. Sargent, 'What Do the Numbers Mean? A Textual Critic's Observations on Some Patterns of Middle English Manuscript Transmission', in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York, 2008), pp. 205-44.

[26] *Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible in the Bodleian and Oxford College Libraries* (Liverpool, 2016). The catalogue contains sixty-four entries, but I exclude the fragment in Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Misc. C. 27.

[27] Daniel Mosser, 'A Digital Catalogue of Pre-1500 Manuscripts and Incunables of the *Canterbury Tales*' <https://www.mossercatalogue.net/> [accessed 5 December 2019].

Figure 11: Average ratio of height to width in manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible (surviving in Oxford) and Canterbury Tales.

Text	*Manuscripts*	*Average proportion of height to width*
Wycliffite Bible	63	1.48
Canterbury Tales	84	1.48

Figure 11 shows that manuscripts of both texts are very similar in shape to those of *Piers* and *The Prick*. The Bible was usually lineated as prose, and the *Tales* contains a mix of forms, suggesting that the format of books was highly standardised and had little to do with their contents. The shape of most copies of *Piers* and *The Prick*, in other words, was thoroughly normal, roughly the same as any number of other English and continental books.

Material constraints

The consistency in the format of manuscripts of both poems indicates that scribal training and other features of book production were strongly influenced by convention, and might also indicate that parchment, as well as paper, was available in standard sizes. The production of paper according to four regular formats was discussed in the second chapter, and evidence survives from England of the production of parchment in discrete grades of quality; perhaps it was also produced to a standard format, if not with the same regularity in dimension.[28] These suggestions are speculative, but it seems clear that scribes of the two poems may not have been able to, or been concerned with, producing them in distinctive shapes.

[28] Michael Gullick, 'From parchmenter to scribe: some observations on the manufacture and preparation of medieval parchment based upon a review of the literary evidence', in *Pergament: Geschichte, Struktur, Restaurierung, Herstellung*, ed. by Peter Rück (Sigmaringen, 1991), pp. 145-57.

There are some outliers in the sample, visible in Figure 10. The manuscripts marked A and B are both much taller than they are wide, while C is unusually short. A and B, representing respectively Lincoln's Inn, MS 150 and British Library, MS Harley 3954, are both in the tall and narrow format historically known as the 'holster' book, described above. There are no defined criteria for this format, but several manuscripts clearly fall into the category, visible in Figure 10 by their position far to the left of the diagonal line.

Tall and narrow books have proven difficult to analyse, but one manuscript of *Piers* suggests why texts might have been produced in this format. Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 137 is a copy of the A text which uniquely preserves the whole of Passus 12, containing the apparent continuation of the poem by John But.[29] The scribe of this book also worked on a copy of *The Prick*, in University College Oxford, MS 142, similarly proportioned.[30] Rawlinson's format, though, may have been accidental: the first two bifolia of the first quire are ruled for the layout of a liturgical calendar, with regular horizontal ruling for lines of text but several vertical lines at regular intervals on the left side of the text block, creating square boxes into which the dates of the calendar would have been entered (ff. 1, 2, 7 and 8). These leaves seem to have been prepared for a different project, but went unused and were recycled to produce the surviving copy of *Piers*. Its distinctive shape may not represent a response to the text, but rather a practical decision to use up leftover material.[31] The scribe of this manuscript, one of the six who produced copies of both *Piers* and *The Prick*, has been identified as a member of the vicars choral of Chichester Cathedral, active in the early fifteenth

[29] Simon Horobin, 'John But and the Ending of the A Version of *Piers Plowman*', forthcoming in *YLS*.
[30] This identification is made in Simon Horobin, 'The Scribe of Rawlinson Poetry 137 and the Copying and Circulation of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 19 (2005), 3-26.
[31] On recycling in manuscript production, see Hanna Katharine Ryley, 'Sustainability and Recycling in Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), particularly pp. 90-102.

century.[32] A cathedral would have had substantial use for liturgical books, so the production of tall and narrow copies of both poems in this centre may have resulted from a habit of copying vernacular texts on excess material generated in the process of making service books, demonstrating that even unusual formats could reflect the constraints of the available resources.

Size

Format expresses the relationship between the height and width of a page or book, but these dimensions could be scaled to produce books vastly different in proportion. The Vernon, for example, demonstrates the ambition of some bookmakers to create monumental productions out of parchment and ink. Some medieval books were very small, representing, like the heart-shaped manuscripts discussed above, the interests of their patrons in creating objects whose material form was expressive and surprising.

Both *Piers* and *The Prick* were produced in large books, but these tend to be compilations. Vernon has been discussed in the previous chapter, along with Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.1.17. The scale of these two manuscripts clearly reflects the ambitions of their producers in collecting together a 'virtual library' of material, but tell us little about how they responded to *Piers* and *The Prick* specifically.[33] There are no very small books in the sample on the scale of the miniature books of hours produced in the late fifteenth century.[34] The smallest manuscripts in the sample are

[32] Horobin, 'Rawlinson poetry 137'.
[33] Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, 2 vols (London, 1996), II, p. 20.
[34] See, for example, Margaret T. Gibson, *The Bible in the Latin West* (Notre Dame, 1993), pp. 72-3 (description and images of Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Library, MS 4, measuring 90 x 65 mm). See also, on the subject of small bibles, Ruzzier, 'Miniaturisation'; and compare the examples in Scot McKendrick and Kathleen Doyle, *Bible Manuscripts: 1400 Years of Scribes and Scripture* (London, 2007), pp. 110-11.

copies of *The Prick*: KBR, MS IV.998,[35] British Library, MS Sloane 1044, and Bodleian Library, MSS Digby 14 and Rawlinson D.913. Two of these, Sloane and Rawlinson, are fragments preserved within postmedieval compilations, indicating that damage may have affected our view of the proportion of small manuscripts in this group.

Most manuscripts fall roughly between 200-300 mm tall and 100-200 mm wide. This set of dimensions marks the approximate 'standard' size of manuscripts of *Piers* and *The Prick*, and suggests that most book producers created copies in sizes perceived as average or normal. This may have been connected to material constraints similar to those which determined the format of books – large sheets of parchment were clearly difficult or expensive to obtain, and few producers worked at a scale smaller than about 130 x 200 mm. Material constraints of another sort might also have been relevant, in that many books were probably intended to be handled and therefore needed to be the right size for a pair of hands.[36] But this standardisation might also indicate a desire to authorise texts by presenting them in a recognisable shape. Heart- and lily-shaped books were aristocratic productions, made for people whose extreme wealth and power shielded them from the pressure of conformity felt by the less privileged; for most people able to afford books, economy and social compliance are likely to have been important factors, resulting in the remarkably similar averages now observable across hundreds of manuscripts.

[35] KBR was formerly known as Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque royale.

[36] This point is made in relation to twentieth-century book production in Jan Tschichold, 'Consistent Correlation Between Book Page and Type Area', in *The Form of the Book: Essays on the Morality of Good Design*, ed. by Robert Bringhurst, trans. by Hajo Hadeler (London, 1991), pp. 36-64 (36): 'The format of a book is determined by its purpose. It relates to the average size and the hands of an adult'.

Models

Presentation features express the connection between written texts and cultural expectations of them. Some texts simply have a certain look, in the way that academic monographs and articles are laid out with footnotes, numbered figures, and labelled subsections, while tweets and other social media come with hyperlinked account names, sans-serif typefaces and sometimes heavy abbreviation. These expectations can be codified, as in the University of Oxford's regulations for the presentation of research theses, which have determined the appearance of the present one.[37]

So, too, were the manuscripts of *Piers* and *The Prick* linked in their layout to expectations of how texts in various categories should look. Most manuscripts of both poems replicate a core set of presentation features determined by their status as verse: each line of verse is written on a single line, running from top to bottom, left-justified. Very few books buck this trend: one example is the copy of *Piers* in Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102, lineated as prose, but the otherwise almost universal conformity to a set of basic principles about what both texts should look like indicates a similarly conservative approach to presentation as identified in the foregoing section.[38]

Within this set of rules, which allowed both poems to be recognised as verse, some books display distinctive features which indicate in more detail the models to which their producers wished to link them. One feature is found at a higher rate in manuscripts of *The Prick* than of *Piers*: thirteen *Prick* manuscripts are laid out in double columns, and two (Vernon and Simeon) in triple columns, while double columns are found among copies of *Piers* only in Vernon and Dd.1.17. This occurs at a particularly high rate in a cluster of Northern manuscripts judged to be the best

[37] 'General Regulations Governing Research Degrees', *Examination Regulations* (University of Oxford, 2019) <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2019-20/grgoveresedegr/> [accessed 15 January 2020].
[38] On Digby 102, see Simon Horobin, 'The Scribe of Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102 and the Circulation of the C Text of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 24 (2010), 89-112.

representatives of the poem's early transmission.[39] These copies suggest how the layout of the poem was influenced by models derived from traditions of Latin writing, in ways that occasionally resurface in the wider corpus of *Prick* manuscripts.

The c-type group

British Library, MS Cotton Galba E IX, MS Harley 4196, and Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 175 were all produced towards the end of the fourteenth century in the North of England. In combination with British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius E VII, they form a cluster whose overlapping texts and scribal hands indicate closely-related production: the second scribe of Galba is the third scribe of Harley, while the fifth of Harley is the second of Rawlinson.[40] Galba, Harley, and Rawlinson contain copies of *The Prick*, among those used by the poem's modern editors to establish a critical text, alongside other works of Northern religious verse: *Speculum Vitae*, *The Northern Homily Cycle*, *Cursor Mundi*, and other short pieces. Their production has been linked to Ripon Minster, and I refer to them here as the *c*-type group following their position within the stemma discussed below.[41]

The Prick was probably composed in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, but these three manuscripts, and some of the six others used to establish the text of Hanna-Wood, were produced around fifty years later in the final quarter of the century:

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 131
London, British Library, MS Cotton Galba E XI
London, British Library, MS Harley 4196
London, British Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 175
London, British Library, MS Additional 33995

[39] Described in Hanna-Wood, pp. xv-xxxiv, lxi-lxxiv.
[40] I agree in this view with Ralph Hanna, 'Some North Yorkshire Scribes and their Context', in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (Abingdon and New York, 2008), pp. 167-91 (168).
[41] Hanna, 'North Yorkshire Scribes'.

London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 260
London, Sion College, MS Arch. L.40.2/E.25 (held at Lambeth Palace Library)
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 52
Wellesley, Wellesley College Library, MS 8

These copies have been judged to be the best representatives of the early stages of the poem's transmission. This had an unusual tripartite shape: three hypothetical descendants of the archetype are posited in Hanna-Wood's model (*a*, *b*, and *c*), which modifies slightly the earlier stemma proposed by Derek Britton.[42] The nine manuscripts listed above are the most direct descendants of these hypothetical copies. The manuscript *a* is represented by Additional and Wellesley; *b* by Lambeth, Fitzwilliam, Ashmole, and Sion; and *c* by Galba, Harley, and Rawlinson. The manuscripts *a* and *c* are thought to have no further descendants, while *b* is the ancestor of the 'general tradition', encompassing all other surviving copies.[43]

Not all are equally authoritative. Lambeth, Fitzwilliam, Ashmole, and Sion are not fully collated in Hanna-Wood, as the manuscript *b* is judged to be too advanced in transmission. Wellesley is also only partially collated, as Hanna-Wood believe it to have been conflated with a *b*-type source and to contain too many independent errors (pp. lxix-lxx). This leaves the three *c*-type manuscripts, Galba, Harley, and Rawlinson, and the remaining *a* source, Additional, as the main witnesses from which Hanna-Wood's text is constructed.

In addition to their overlaps between scribal hands and contents, the *c*-type manuscripts show signs of high-quality production. Harley is particularly large, at 380 x 275 mm, but the others are also sizeable: Galba measures 335 x 220 and Rawlinson 268 x 190 (Additional is similar at 305 x 200). These measurements are all above average: according to the table of sizes in Appendix 2, the

[42] Hanna-Wood, p. lxx; Derek Britton, 'Unnoticed Fragments of the "Prick of Conscience"', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 80 (1979), 327-34.
[43] Hanna-Wood, pp. lxx-lxxi.

average *Prick* manuscript measures 240 x 160 mm. The text of *The Prick* in Galba contains gilded lombardic capitals with blue and purple foliate decoration at the opening of new books, and smaller capitals for subdivisions within books. Capitals in a similar style appear throughout Harley. All are written in double columns and textualis (see Figure 12), and indeed Galba and Harley are almost identically presented, copying the same text page-for-page and probably derived from the same exemplar.[44]

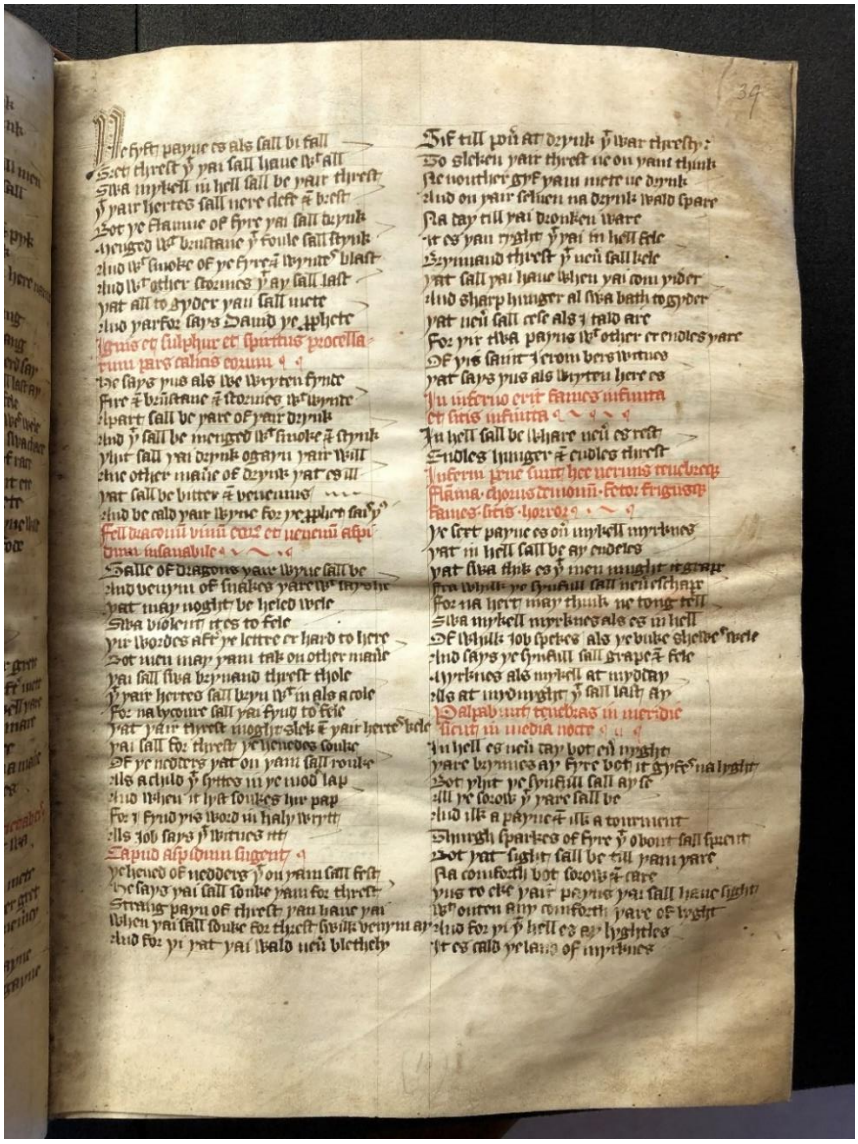


Figure 12: Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 175, f. 39r.
By permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

[44] Hanna-Wood, p. xxi.

Additional is a less deluxe production, written in a more cursive anglicana hand and decorated only with red ink, but stands out for its extensive programme of marginal annotations which give source identifications for the Latin quotations and content summaries in English. Some of this material is found also in Wellesley. Hanna-Wood take these annotations to be original, and reproduce them, but their relationship to the archetype is not settled (pp. lxxiii, 263). Many copies contain marginal source identifications like those in Additional and Wellesley, but it is unclear whether this represents the transmission of these features to later copyists or later reconstructions of the programme of annotations spurred by an interest in the source of the Latin material.

Double columns

The most consistent presentation feature among the *c*-type manuscripts and Additional is their use of double columns. This feature also appears in Lambeth 260 and Ashmole 52. The meaning of this layout in the copying of Middle English is not clear; their lack of direct signification, as a form of arrangement rather than a piece of decorative or organisational content, makes it difficult to determine what they were intended to signal. Impressionistically, two-column layouts suggest some kind of high status, especially as the extra room they require on the page means texts presented in this way tend to be found in large books, but their meaning is not always directly related to size: Ashmole 52, for example, is much smaller than its fellow double-column copies at 175 x 115 mm, and many very small bibles are copied in double columns despite the increased challenge of legibility in this format.[45]

[45] See De Hamel, *History of the Bible*, p. 116, and examples in n. 34 above.

Though not necessarily an indicator of status in terms of physical size, double columns in Middle English texts often expressed a relationship with presentation models used for Latin works. They were part of the standard layout for manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible, the first full translation of the Latin Bible into English and the best-attested Middle English text. The Wycliffite Bible was probably produced in Oxford in the 1380s, emerging from the teaching of John Wyclif and composed by his followers at the University in several stages.[46] This is a different context than that in which the *c*-type group was produced, but is roughly contemporary and indicates how a text fundamentally indebted to Latin models was presented in a way that communicated its relationship with those authoritative sources.

No comprehensive account of all the copies of the Bible exists, but among manuscripts surviving in Oxford, fifty-one out of sixty-three are written in double columns.[47] (This is a slight generalisation: some parts of some copies are ruled in specialist formats, for example calendars or tables of lections, so my description of these books as double-columned refers only to the biblical text itself.)[48] As described by Elizabeth Solopova, single-columns layouts appear 'in predominantly small and often informal part-Bibles', where they were 'chosen for practical reasons: to fit the text in the written space of smaller manuscripts and to accommodate extensive marginal apparatus'.[49] Double columns, then, appear to have been standard, dropped only where material conditions made them unfeasible. These books were mostly produced in the first quarter of the fifteenth

[46] See Jeremy Catto, 'The Wycliffite Bible: The Historical Context', in *The Wycliffite Bible: Origins, History and Interpretation*, ed. by Elizabeth Solopova (Leiden and Boston, 2017), pp. 11-26, Anne Hudson, 'The Origin and Textual Tradition of the Wycliffite Bible', in *The Wycliffite Bible*, ed. by Solopova, pp. 133-61; and Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge, 2007).

[47] This count excludes Bodleian Library, MS Douce 265-a, a single bifolium from a table of lections which gives no evidence for the columniation of the biblical text it may originally have been paired with. Solopova, *Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible*, p. 173, gives no explicit columniation for Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 33, but this book is written in a single column.

[48] See plates 7, 10, and 12 in Solopova, *Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible*.

[49] Solopova, *Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible*, p. 24.

century, a little after the *c*-type copies were made, with a small number dated to the end of the fourteenth and a few from later decades.[50]

The production and form of the Bible was highly determined by its relationship to the Vulgate, whose text it translated. Manuscripts of the Latin bible were frequently copied in double columns, and it has been suggested that their use in manuscripts of the Middle English version represents 'one of their strongest allusions' to the material form of the Vulgate, specifically as manifested in the 'Paris bible'.[51] The frequent use of textualis in Wycliffite Bibles also reflects the borrowing of presentation features from the Latin version.[52] Other Middle English translations of Latin texts were also commonly presented in double columns. Almost all manuscripts of John Trevisa's translation of Bartolomaeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, for example, adopt this format.[53] Double columns in Middle English copying seem therefore to have been a marker of Latinity in some cases, indicating the derivation of a text from a Latin original.

Other relationships with Latin models were also expressed with double columns. Early manuscripts of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* have been described as conforming to a 'standard': almost uniformly of London provenance, early fifteenth century, and presented in two columns.[54] The *Confessio* is a tale collection of the late fourteenth century drawn from a blend of Latin and vernacular sources. Its immediate model as a story cycle may have been Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but

[50] Solopova dates Bodleian Library, MSS Douce 240, Douce 265, Laud misc. 36 and New College, MS 320, after the first quarter of the fifteenth century.
[51] Ralph Hanna, 'The Palaeography of the Wycliffite Bibles in Oxford', in *The Wycliffite Bible*, ed. by Solopova, pp. 246-65 (249, 254).
[52] Solopova counts only nine Wycliffite Bibles in Oxford libraries not in textualis: *Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible*, p. 296. The suggestion that textualis is borrowed from Latin bibles is made in Hanna, 'Palaeography of Wycliffite Bibles', p. 258.
[53] Manuscripts of Trevisa's translation are described in *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum*, ed. by M. C. Seymour, 3 vols (Oxford, 1975-88), III, pp. 10-26.
[54] Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower's Works', in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. by Siân Echard (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 73-97 (80). A fuller account of these features is given in Nafde, 'Deciphering the Manuscript Page', pp. 118-90.

Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* suggest analogues in Italian and English.[55] Gower also depended on a number of French sources.[56] Although not derived directly from a single Latin source, the text has a metaphorical gloss of Latinity in the name of its narrator, the penitent Amans who confesses to Genius, chaplain of Venus, and an actual Latin gloss in the apparatus which accompanies the text.

A group of early *Confessio* manuscripts, as described above, are remarkably consistent in production. Aspects of their format have been explained as means of establishing the authority and status of the *Confessio*. In two of the earliest copies, some of this material is presented marginally, thought to reflect Gower's intentions for the layout of the text, while in others it appears in the main column.[57] This layout has been linked to the presentation of manuscripts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, on which Gower drew.[58] It also reflects the practice of presenting commentaries or glosses in academic and scholastic texts marginally, a scheme whose development between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries has been traced by M. B. Parkes.[59] Commentary texts of this kind were frequently presented in double columns, and the use of the same feature in *Confessio* manuscripts is therefore likely to indicate a similar Latinate status.

The examples of the Wycliffite Bible and Gower's *Confessio* show how the scribes of the *c*-type group shaped the layout of their texts to draw on presentation models associated with Latin. *The Prick* is written in a distinctly vernacular genre, both in terms of its derivation from instructional

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[55] See Siân Echard, 'Introduction: Gower's Reputation', in *Companion to Gower*, ed. by Echard, pp. 1-22 (16-17).
[56] Ardis Butterfield, '*Confessio Amantis* and the French Tradition', in *Companion to Gower*, ed. by Echard, pp. 165-80.
[57] Bodleian Library, MSS Fairfax 3 and Bodley 902. Compare Bodleian Library, MSS Laud misc. 609, Bodley 693, and Bodley 294, where the Latin appears in the main column. Derek Pearsall, 'The Organisation of the Latin Apparatus in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: The Scribes and their Problems', in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. by Takami Matsuda and others (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 99-112 (102-4).
[58] Pearsall, 'Organisation', p. 102.
[59] 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande, 1991), pp. 35-70.

manuals and its geographical context as part of a tradition of northern Middle English verse composition, but like the *Confessio* was presented with features signalling its affiliation with Latin. A manuscript on the periphery of the Northern group developed this link further: Additional, as described above, contains extensive marginalia, like that of the two *Confessio* manuscripts which present their Latin apparatus marginally.

Like the regularity in format discussed above, this allusion to the way Latin was expected to look may have resulted from a desire to authorise the poem. Readers of these manuscripts were encouraged to see it as a Latinate work, not necessarily related to a specific genre or type of writing but arranged with features broadly associated with the Bible, service books, and academic texts. This is not to say that the scribes of the *c*-type manuscripts were concerned that the text might be perceived as heretical; instead, it seems likely that Middle English manuscript presentation in general was to some extent a conservative exercise which aimed to make texts seem as normative, and sometimes authoritative, as possible.

Double columns elsewhere

In addition to the three *c*-type manuscripts and Additional, a further fourteen copies of *The Prick* replicate parts of this presentation scheme in presenting the poem in double columns (or in the case of Vernon and Simeon, triple). Two of these, Lambeth 260 and Ashmole 52, are also part of Hanna-Wood's group representing the early stages of transmission:

Dublin, Trinity College, MS 69
British Library, MS Sloane 2275
British Library, MS Additional 22283 (Simeon)
London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 57

London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 260
Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 90
Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 52
Bodleian Library, MS Douce 126
Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a. 1 (Vernon)
Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 218
San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 139

These manuscripts reimagine *The Prick* in the Latinate terms of the *c*-type group, probably representing mostly independent responses to the poem uninfluenced by the example of the Northern copies, as the majority were produced in other areas.

John Rylands Library, MS English 90 is a large, double-columned manuscript of *The Prick*. Its text is a member of the Eight-Part Version (8PV), a revision of *The Prick* containing two long interpolated passages of English verse and Latin prose and a new Book 8 made of displaced material from Book 5. It survives in five copies, including Rylands and a manuscript discussed in the previous two chapters, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687. The 8PV is the subject of the final chapter, where it will be shown that Rylands seems to be closely related to the source of the revision, and may reflect alterations to the text made in the process of composition. Its presentation may therefore be a close reflection of how the revised version was intended to look. The Latin passages suggest that it was produced for a much more Latinate audience than imagined by *The Prick* itself, and its use of double columns suggests that the scribe of Rylands wished to reflect that status.

Rylands is copied by the scribe responsible for the C text in British Library, Additional MS 34779. This manuscript, containing only *Piers*, is presented in a single column, which might indicate that Langland's poem was not seen in the same terms. This is not an exact comparison, in the sense that Rylands contains a heavily interpolated text of *The Prick* which probably had a different status to the Main Version in its production context, but in a culture where vernacular

texts often circulated without titles, authorship markers, or other identifiers, no comparison speaks directly to a universal view. Rylands and Additional give some evidence that the two poems were seen differently, which matches the broader statistical pattern: only two manuscripts of *Piers* out of just over fifty are written in double columns, a rate of roughly 4%, compared to 15% of *Prick* manuscripts.

In Lichfield, discussed in the second chapter, another cluster of manuscripts contains examples of multiple-column layouts. Besides Vernon and Simeon, Arundel 57 is written in double columns, unlike its relatives in the 'Lichfield group'.[60] The text in Arundel is also presented with a substantial set of marginal source identifications, absent from most of these others. A member of the related 'Vernon-Simeon group', a family of manuscripts containing Vernon, Simeon, and six others, may be the source of these annotations: British Library, MS Harley 1205 is the likely ancestor of the Lichfield group and contains marginal source identifications particularly for biblical books.[61] The presentation of Arundel might therefore reflect a reformatting of the Harley layout, adding double columns to link *The Prick* more strongly with the Latin models identified above.

Vernon and Simeon are presented mostly in triple columns, responding both to the enormous size of their leaves and magnifying the high status implied by double columns on an even greater scale. But Vernon also reflects material restrictions: the fourth part of the manuscript, containing mostly prose, is laid out in double columns, and *Piers* is located here.[62] Langland's alliterative lines are significantly longer than those of *The Prick*, and the poem was clearly a better fit in the more generous surroundings of this latter part of the book. Vernon brings back into view

[60] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 8.
[61] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 64.
[62] *Piers* runs from ff. 394v, column b to 401v, column b, where it breaks off. *Joseph of Arimathea* begins on the next leaf, foliated 403.

the material constraints discussed earlier, showing how size and proportion could also determine presentation. Of course, the length of *Piers*'s lines causes a problem in Vernon only because of its enormous size: like the difference between quantum and Newtonian mechanics, Vernon exists at a scale where a different set of rules seem to apply.

Rylands and Arundel show how copyists outside the Yorkshire circle which produced the *c*-type group applied similar presentational models to *The Prick*, and the work of the Rylands scribe indicates that *Piers* was not presented in the same way in that context, but Langland's poem was also occasionally laid out at impressive proportions. One copy in particular rivals the presentational sophistication of the northern copies: Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.1.17. This book, formerly known as the 'Liber Glastoniensis' for a spurious connection with Glastonbury Abbey, situates *Piers* among an array of Latin and English texts.[63]

Dd.1.17 is bound as three units separated by modern paper (described as 'volumes'), but appears to have been written by a single scribe. The first two volumes contain exclusively Latin texts, while the third contains a group of English materials (including *Piers*) followed by Clement of Llanthony's concordance of the Gospels.[64] The Latin materials in the first volume are largely historical narratives, including Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*, while those of the second are mostly accounts of Asia including Marco Polo's *Travels* and texts depicting Muslims and Mohammed. The English texts begin with *Piers*, followed by a prose treatise on visiting the sick, Mandeville's *Travels*, and *The Seven Sages of Rome* before Clement's concordance. This focus on history and the non-Christian world led Anne

[63] Ralph Hanna, 'Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.1.17: Some Historical Notes', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 16 (2016-), 141-60; Anne Middleton, 'The Audience and Public of Piers Plowman', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 101-23 (105-6).
[64] These contents are listed in Benson and Blanchfield, *Catalogue*, pp. 33-4.

Middleton to describe *Piers*'s place within the book as 'a contemporary chronicle of an apparently genuine person, surveying the history of the faith from within his own time'.[65]

All the contents are similarly presented: with the exception of *The Seven Sages of Rome* among the English materials, everything is copied in double columns (the *Sages* has three, another case of material efficiency in a huge book); marginal annotations are frequent; running headers present for every text; and structural divisions are carefully marked with capitals, paraphs, and rubrics in display script and sometimes red ink. This consistent presentation lays out the English material in the same style as the Latin, perhaps supporting Middleton's claim that *Piers* was intended to be read as a similarly historical text. However, one significant difference between the Latin and English materials suggests that their linguistic difference mattered to the scribe of the book. While the Latin materials are written in a rounded form of textualis, the English is in anglicana formata. Similarity between the display script used for rubrics in both English and Latin texts suggests that the same scribe copied both, but the distinction in script between the two languages would be significant even if copied by different scribes. The change to anglicana formata suggests that the presentation of the English texts, though made similar to those in Latin, was in some sense vernacularised. Dd.1.17 deploys presentation features which both connect and distance *Piers* from the Latin material elsewhere in the book, a reminder that vernacular texts, though they might be presented according to models which suggest a Latinate status, were for some readers firmly distinct.

[65] Middleton, 'Audience and Public', p. 106.

Latin

Piers Plowman's Latin quotations are deeply embedded in the critical imagination as perhaps its most characteristic attribute. Described by John Alford as 'the feature that most obviously sets *Piers Plowman* apart from other Middle English poems',[66] the uniqueness of Langland's macaronic poetics has sometimes been overstated, for of course Latin quotations also feature in *The Prick*.[67] Latin quotations link both poems explicitly to traditions of Latin writing, yet also separate them: almost every scribe of each highlighted the Latin in some way, marking its special status distinct from the surrounding Middle English verse. This highlighting took different forms: some scribes copied the Latin in red ink, others in a larger or more formal display script, and some did both. The ubiquity of highlighting suggests that for most copyists they were in some sense Latinate texts, but like the differentiation in script between English and Latin in Dd.1.17, the two languages are held at a distance by these habits of presentation.

Ubiquity might explain why the highlighting of Latin has been little analysed by readers of the poems' manuscripts. The origin of the practice seems to lie in forms of presentation developed for academic texts: Parkes suggested that red ink began to be used in the twelfth century for the marking of biblical lemmata in the commentaries of Peter Lombard, and that it came to be deployed by vernacular scribes as a means of organising their texts more clearly.[68] The almost universal presence of highlighting Latin in manuscripts of both *Piers* and *The Prick* suggests that it originates with their authors, indicating that writers began to draw on these habits of presentation in composing new works.

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[66] *Piers Plowman: A Guide to the Quotations* (Binghamton, 1992), p. 1.
[67] See, for example, John Alford's comments echoing Carmeline Sullivan in 'The Role of the Quotations', *Speculum*, 52 (1977), 80-99 (80).
[68] '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', pp. 36, 64-5.

This view offers a plausible source for the practice which came to be so widely used in the two poems' copying, but offers little sense of what red ink meant. Did it continue to evoke the presentation of academic commentaries in the late fourteenth century, or was it seen in relation to other uses of red ink? This section examines what the presentation of Latin quotations in both poems suggests about how they were conceptualised by scribes and readers, drawing first on a single comparison and then on a larger survey of features.

Latin in Antiquaries 687

The use of red ink in *Piers*'s Latin has come to seem like a default choice, but it may have had more determinate meanings in certain contexts. Red ink, along with blue, was a basic element of manuscript decoration: many books contain lombardic capitals, foliate spray, paraphs, and other paratextual markings and decoration features in red and blue, but red had a special status. It was regularly used for headings, rubrics, and marginalia, preferred over other colours for written elements of the page requiring special attention.[69] An enormous range of colours was available during the production of an early copy of the *Confessio* now in the Yale University Library, demonstrated in the foliate border decorations accompanying new books, yet book headings and rubrics are written only in red.[70]

[69] See G. S. Ivy, 'The Bibliography of the Manuscript-Book', in *The English Library before 1700: Studies in Its History*, ed. by Francis Wormald and C. E. Wright (London, 1958), pp. 32-65 (56-7).

[70] MS Osborn fa1. Multispectral imaging of this manuscript has found that its red ink is similar to that used in the 'Trinity Gower' (Trinity College Cambridge, MS R. 3. 2), suggesting that ink products may have circulated between London book producers: Eric Weiskott, 'Multispectral imaging and medieval manuscripts', in *The Routledge Research Companion to Digital Medieval Literature*, ed. by Jennifer Boyle and Helen J. Burgess (London, 2017), pp. 186-96.

In Antiquaries 687, containing *Piers* and *The Prick*, red ink appears in several of the texts it compiles, and despite the possible issues with access to red ink during its production examined in the previous chapter, the scribe presented various textual components in red including source identifications, rubrics, section headings, and, of course, Latin quotations.

These habits of presentation are mirrored in another manuscript closely related to Antiquaries. British Library, MS Royal 17 A XXVI contains a mixture of religious prose and biblical translation in Middle English, including the only other identified copy of the prose treatise on the ten commandments found also in Antiquaries (*Commaundementis*). It contains four scribal hands: Hand 1 is responsible for the isolated bifolium bound at the start of the book (ff. 2-3), Hand 2 for the religious prose (ff. 4-37r), Hand 3 for the continuation of this material with a translation of the Book of Revelation (ff. 37r-106), and Hand 4 for the translation of the Gospel of John bound at the end (ff. 107-143). The main portion of the book produced by Hands 2, 3, and 4 is very similarly presented, with margins of the same size and red ink for decoration, and the shared interest in the translation of material associated with John the Apostle, between the codicological unit worked on by Hands 2 and 3 and the separate unit produced by Hand 4, suggests it may have been conceived as a single volume.

Its relationship with Antiquaries is strongest in the portion copied by Hand 2, which contains the *Commaundementis* alongside other prose texts on the sins, the deeds of mercy, the virtues, other basic catechetical topics, and a text on the visitation of the sick. Like the pastoral material in Antiquaries discussed in the previous chapter, there are divergences among these texts. Many of them are straightforwardly didactic, written in a single consistent voice: in the words of the *Commaundementis*, 'alle manere of men schulde holde goddis biddyngis . for wiþoute holdyng of hem mai no man be saued' (Royal, f. 4r). This is not the case across all texts in this section: the final

item, on the visitation of the sick, is written for multiple voices, presenting questions and responses between different parties framed by a narrative voice addressing the reader. It begins with a direction to ask the sick person, 'Broþ*er* or sistir louest þou god þi lord', followed by a description of what the reply may be: 'he or sche if þei mai speke wol seie ȝhe / or parauenture if þei mai not speke . þei wolen þenke ȝhe' (f. 32r). As the text progresses, red ink appears as a marker of these different imagined voices, as in a later passage:

> Whann þou hast teld hym al þis . or ellis if þou maist not seie al for haaste of deþ .' bigynne here or his mynde go fro hym / Broþ*er* or sistir art þou glad þat þou shalt die in cristen feiþ ȝhe Knoulechist þ*o*u to god þat þou hast not lyued aftir his comau*n*dementis ȝhe (f. 35r)

The text guides the dying person through elements of Christian belief: the trinity, the incarnation, the passion, the redemption, and so on, to which the text assumes they will respond 'ȝhe'. Red ink marks both a 'narrative voice' within this text, highlighting the words which give instruction and direction for the user, and the responses of the sick person. Like headings and other forms of paratext, both part of the work and separate from it, these unvoiced 'narrative' lines have a different meaning to the words in text ink, not spoken in the imagined scenario of visitation but structuring its written form and marking shifts between the reader's words and those of the dying person.

This microscopic attention to the presentation of voices makes clear what is evident only by implication elsewhere: that red ink was used to mark changes in speaker or subject. The Latin in *Piers* and *The Prick* is drawn from other material, representing usually scripture or patristic authorities, and so the use of red ink recognises a fundamental similarity between them: their incorporation of hundreds of pieces of external material, representing separate, pre-existing voices often bearing substantial cultural weight. The use of red ink was both a strategy of authorisation derived from the earlier presentation practices of academic scribes, but also a means of recognising

the polyvocal texture of both poems, their many subjectivities represented only incompletely in quotation.

Et cetera

Although the practice of highlighting Latin in red is remarkably widespread among manuscripts of *Piers* and *The Prick*, two scribes who compiled both treated them differently. In the Vernon manuscript and Huntington Library, MS Hm 128, the Latin in *The Prick* is highlighted while that in *Piers* is not. In Vernon, highlighting takes the form of a larger display script in the same text ink for Latin in *The Prick*, while no change is made in *Piers*. In Hm 128, Latin in *The Prick* is under- and overwritten in red ink, but not in *Piers* (although the single Latin quotation in the fragment Hm2, part of the brief stint of Hand 2, is written in a textualis display script on folio 95r). Red ink was available during the production of *Piers*: the hand who entered passus headings did so in red, while paraphs and foliate spray on capitals also use red, so its absence from the poem's Latin seems deliberate. This is especially likely given that the presentation of the two poems is otherwise very similar: both open with a large decorated blue-and-red initial in the same style, and subsequent structural divisions are marked in each with similar blue lombardic capitals with red foliate spray.

The difference in the presentation of Latin in Hm 128 is striking, and becomes even more so on closer inspection. Some of the quotations end with an abbreviation, '&c', for '*et cetera*'. In the portion of *Piers* copied by Hand 4, this is appended to almost every quotation, but is virtually absent from the portion copied by Hand 1 and *The Prick*. 266 out of 299 quotations copied by Hand 4 end with the abbreviation (89%), compared to one out of thirteen in the first quire written by Hand 1, and four out of 206 in *The Prick* (2%). Incompleteness seems to characterise *Piers*'s quotations in

this manuscript to quite an extreme degree: '&c' indicates that more material exists, but is not presented on the page (literally 'and the rest'), so in these terms Hand 4's 266 quotations might have seemed in some way unfinished.

The presence of '&c' in Hm 128 is not unique to this copy, found, in fact, throughout the manuscript tradition of both poems and in edited texts of each. Looking systematically at its distribution across editions and manuscripts offers some context for the extreme difference between the treatment of Latin in Hm 128 by Hands 1 and 4, and suggests how the Latin in both poems may have been conceptualised differently by scribes. Using the corpus of variants in the Athlone editions of *Piers*, it is possible to calculate how many quotations are present in individual manuscripts and how many end with '&c'. The rate at which the abbreviation occurs at the end of quotations can then be expressed as a percentage, which enables comparisons across copies accounting for omissions and losses (as not all manuscripts record the same number of quotations). Appendix 3 presents this information in two parts: first, an entry for each manuscript showing the total number of quotations, the number ending with '&c', and the percentage ending in '&c', grouped into separate tables for single-text and multi-text copies; and second, an analysis of multi-text copies, in which the figures for each manuscript are split to analyse sections from different texts (A, B, and C) separately. For copies like British Library, MS Harley 3954, a conjoint B-A text, the number of quotations in the B and A portions are analysed separately giving separate percentages for each. The first part of the Appendix gives the average percentage rate for the three groups of single-text manuscripts, while the second gives an average for each text based on sections in multi-text manuscripts. These averages are presented in combination in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Latin quotations and the abbreviation '&c' in manuscripts of the A, B, and C texts.

Text	*Manuscripts*	*Average percentage of quotations ending with '&c'*
A	18	23
B	15	40
C	28	25

The same process can be applied to the edited texts of the Athlone editions, which allows the figures from individual manuscripts to be compared against a reconstructed archetype. Figure 14 shows how many quotations in each version are thought to end with '&c' by the editors of the Athlone editions. It is difficult to be sure of the accuracy of these figures, as none of the editions makes explicit a policy for the treatment of '&c', so the decisions which guided the presence of the abbreviation in any single case are unclear. The editions also suggest that its presence changed in the process of revision: where the same quotation exists in more than one text, it does not necessarily end with '&c' in both or all three. The diffusion of '&c' in the manuscripts of each text is also inconsistent. While manuscripts of A and B on average contain more instances than the Athlone edition of A and B, manuscripts of C contain fewer.

Figure 14: Latin quotations and the abbreviation '&c' in the Athlone editions of the A, B, and C texts.

Text	*Quotations*	*'&c'*	*%*
Kane (A text)	50	7	14
Kane-Donaldson (B text)	316	78	25
Russell-Kane (C text)	304	95	31

It is clear, though, that many scribes of *Piers* exercised considerable control over the presence of the abbreviation. In comparison with other copyists, Hand 4 of Hm 128 is by some distance its most prolific user, but many added '&c' at rates far above that of the edited text. Several

also appear to have substantially reduced the number of instances: the notoriously idiosyncratic text in Corpus Christi College Oxford, MS 201 (F of the B text) adds the abbreviation to only sixteen quotations out of 289.[71] Research into scribal practice has stressed the impulse of most copyists to reproduce the readings of their exemplar accurately, but this high level of variation suggests '&c' was an aspect of the text which many scribes felt relatively free to vary.[72]

These divergent impulses are difficult to reconcile with impressions of the practice of these scribes drawn from other aspects of their work. The redactor who produced the Corpus text, probably not the scribe of the manuscript itself, has been characterised as 'an editor's despair' for his substantial enthusiasm for variation and rewriting, yet the manuscript reduces the number of '&c' abbreviations compared with the average for the B text.[73] Perhaps this activity reflects instead the response of the manuscript's scribe, exercising control over this small area of its contents. The text of *Piers* in Hm 128, meanwhile, is extensively corrected at an extremely small scale: the corrector tinkered throughout with word-final **e**, changing its position with the possible aim of reflecting metropolitan orthographic trends he understood only poorly.[74] But the many '&c' abbreviations at the end of Latin quotations are untouched by this activity, seemingly deemed appropriate.

What might be seen as a sense of scribal freedom may have resulted from the indeterminate meaning of the abbreviation. In indicating the existence of additional absent material, it engages

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[71] F contains substantial variation, characterised by Kane-Donaldson as 'sustained and intensely interested scribal activity' (p. 166); discussed in James Weldon, 'Ordinatio and Genre in MS CCC 201: A Mediaeval Reading of the B-Text of *Piers Plowman*', *Florilegium*, 12 (1993), 159-75; Sean Taylor, 'The F Scribe and the R Manuscript of *Piers Plowman* B', *English Studies*, 77 (1996), 530-48; and Simon Horobin, 'Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201 and its Copy of *Piers Plowman*', in *Middle English Texts in Transition: A Festschrift Dedicated to Toshiyuki Takamiya on his 70th Birthday*, ed. by Simon Horobin and Linne Mooney (York, 2014), pp. 21-39.

[72] Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 43-70.

[73] E. Talbot Donaldson, 'MSS R and F in the B-Tradition of Piers Plowman', *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 39 (1955), 177-212 (187). For the relationship between the manuscript, its scribe, and the redactor of its text, see Horobin, 'Corpus Christi College MS 201'.

[74] Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Putting it Right: The Corrections of Huntington Library MS Hm 128 and BL Additional MS. 35287', *YLS*, 16 (2002), 41-65 (49).

the memory of the reader in recalling either more of it or some part of its original context.[75] This kind of recollection is subjective; some readers might not recognise quoted material, but the presence of '&c' indicates the expectation of the scribe that the users of a manuscript (even if that were to be the scribe himself) would recognise the missing words. It might not in that sense have been understood as an integral part of the text, but rather as a placeholder for absent material. The rate at which individual scribes deployed it might then indicate to what extent they wished to highlight the missing context of a piece of Latin.

These findings are harder to generate for *The Prick*, for which no published corpus of variants is available, but based on a sample of all copies surviving in the Bodleian Library (twenty-seven in total), the rate at which '&c' appears is much lower (presented in the third section of Appendix 3). Seven manuscripts record no instances of '&c' at all, joined by twelve who add the abbreviation to fewer than five percent of quotations. Over two thirds of manuscripts, therefore, record the abbreviation at negligible rates. A few scribes were more liberal, among them John Stanys, the copyist of Bodleian Library, MS Digby 99, whose unusual face-shaped ascenders were discussed in the second chapter. But with a rate of only nineteen percent, joint highest in this sample, no scribe of *The Prick* is likely to have come close to the treatment of Latin seen in Hm 128.

Foregoing sections of this chapter have shown that material constraints could often have an effect on presentation, and some instances of the abbreviation '&c' may be no exception. Rather than indicating some missing context or additional text, it might have been used to shorten quotations which threatened to overrun the boundaries of margins or pages, representing simply a necessary abbreviation. In practice, this seems not to have been an issue. Where quotations were

[75] This is suggested in Alford, 'Role of the Quotations', 82.

written in red, they were probably added after the copying of the main text, meaning scribes planned ahead for the amount of space they needed and could use the exemplar to make a judgment. In cases where this pre-planning went wrong, scribes often went to great effort to present all the Latin shown in their exemplar, even at the cost of aesthetic uniformity. In Ashmole 52, the small double-columned *b*-type manuscript discussed above, the scribe repeatedly left too little room for the quotations, whose ends are squeezed down the right edge of the text block (see Figure 15).

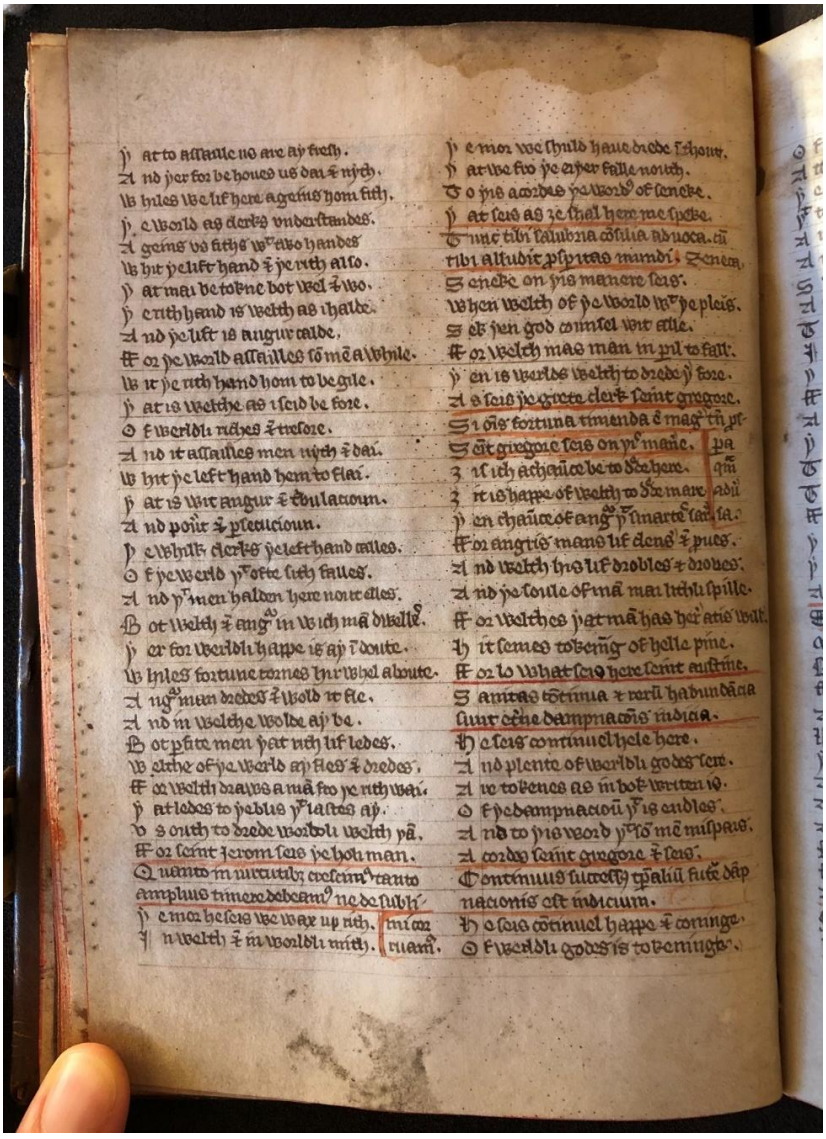

Figure 15: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 52, f. 9v.
By permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

Some texts show evidence that the quotations were shortened, with '&c' inserted to make up the difference. The manuscript R of the B text, now split into two volumes held in separate libraries, records only part of a quotation in passus 11:

Kane-Donaldson	*Domine, non est tibi cure quod soror mea reliquit me solam ministrare?* (B.11.252)
R	Domine non est tibi cure *et cetera*

The two surviving halves of this book are not particularly narrow, and there seems to have been little danger of these quotations overrunning.[76] This shortening occurs in several other places, suggesting that this scribe may have been content to provide a cue for the longer Latin quotations, using '&c' to trigger the recollection of the full version.[77] The abbreviation in this case may have deliberately facilitated further use of the memory, shortened not out of necessity but for the expectation that the book's users would understand what was meant.

So, the more frequent use of '&c' in Hm 128's text of *Piers*, suggesting more extensive engagement of the memory, might reflect a difference in the nature of the Latin in the two poems. Quotations in *The Prick* are almost always accompanied by an indication of their source, separate from the marginal identifications found in some copies. The origin of the Latin in an external text is foregrounded, part of a general concern in the poem to transmit the teaching of authoritative sources clearly. This is not the case in *Piers*, where Latin is more flexibly deployed and usually unattributed.[78] Langland seems to demand more from his readers, placing greater responsibility on them to recognise and reconstruct the material he quotes. This habit has been studied by modern

[76] British Library, MS Lansdowne 398/Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 38; see Appendix 2.
[77] Two other quotations in passus 11 are shortened: 255a and 309 (see Kane-Donaldson, pp. 452 and 456).
[78] In reviewing editorial treatment of the quotations, Alford, *Guide*, pp. 3-9, shows the several ways in which Langland incorporated quoted material into the English verse.

readers of the poem, who have explored how the context of quotations in external sources might influence the passages in which they are borrowed; many of Langland's scribes seem to have looked at the poem similarly.[79]

The findings of this section demonstrate how the Latin quotations in *Piers* and *The Prick* were a focal point for scribal interest in the intertextuality of both poems, their relation to a vast corpus of Latin material. Copying or highlighting the quotations in red marked them as separate and external while embedded in the Middle English verse, and some scribes, particularly of *Piers*, sought to indicate the context in which these quotations were more commonly known, bringing their meaning in other settings to bear on the text. In a culture much more dependent than ours on the role of memory in organising information, the forms of presentation for Latin quotations examined here may have served as something analogous to modern hypertext, triggering neural links with recollections of external material.[80] But where hypertext has been seen as shifting power from authors and bookmakers towards readers, this practice connects both poems to a fixed corpus of material, reinforcing their relationship with texts of greater authority and intellectual status with which the reader is expected to engage.[81]

Scribal treatment of Latin also indicates that the status of the two poems may have been different. Like the Latinate presentation models applied to some copies of *The Prick* but very rarely to *Piers*, there seems to have been a difference in how the two poems were seen in relation to the texts they quoted. This may have followed the cues offered by the texts themselves: *The Prick* gives

[79] Alford, 'Role of the Quotations'; Alford, *Guide*, p. 8.

[80] On memory in the middle ages, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990). Vincent Gillespie has made a similar comparison between a medieval text describing painted *tabulae*: 'Medieval Hypertext: Image and Text from York Minster', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers. Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. by P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 206-29.

[81] See the introduction to *The Future of the Page*, ed. by Peter Stoicheff and Andrew Taylor (Toronto, 2004), pp. 12-13.

source identifications for almost all its quotations, where *Piers* is often vague, so it makes sense to see scribes of the latter amplifying Langland's tendency to invoke the context of quoted material. Other cues were also followed: both the borrowing of older presentation models and the treatment of Latin indicates a deep desire to see these texts in relation to Latin works, rather than vernacular. Just as the poems themselves fail to acknowledge their many debts to vernacular material, where Latin writers are explicitly mentioned (more systematically in *The Prick*), so too did scribes orient their presentation in relation to Latin.

Conclusion

In a 1964 lecture on 'The Importance of Tradition in Typography', the German typesetter and historian of printing Jan Tschichold made a claim for the value of stability and continuity in the presentation of texts. Translated into English, Tschichold's clipped sentences retain their force:

> The real reason for the number of deficiencies in books and other printed matter is the lack of – or the deliberate dispensation with – tradition, and the arrogant disdain for all convention. If we can comfortably read anything at all, it is exactly because we respect the usual, the commonplace. To be able to read implies conventions, knowledge of them, and regard for them. If conventions are thrown overboard, the danger arises that the text will become unreadable.[82]

This view promotes a highly conservative approach to textual presentation in which even small deviations from age-old standards are a threat to understanding (Tschichold later complains, for example, of paragraphs lacking an initial indent). This perspective is embedded in a sense of the craft of typesetting, of the accumulated wisdom of many years leading to consensus on the correct

[82] 'The Importance of Tradition in Typography', in *The Form of the Book*, pp. 23-32 (26).

way to handle the practical business of type, paper, and ink, and the aesthetic qualities of harmony, clarity, and proportion.

Eve Babitz also thought of herself as an artist, yet saw things differently. Her rules, as she tells us, are her own. Both positions capture part of the way in which scribes of *Piers* and *The Prick* behaved: some areas of the text were open to variation and reinvention, and some scribes embraced these possibilities to a greater extent than others, but all were probably concerned with tradition. A widespread interest in the authority and status of our two poems is on display here, as many scribes presented them in ways which were traditional and normative.

Both Tschichold and Babitz draw attention, perhaps unintentionally, to the constraints imposed by the modern systems of book production with which they were familiar. Babitz's concern over numerals and capitals and Tschichold's microscopic attention to letterforms expressed later in the lecture were both determined by the choices available to them, which were limited by the typographic forms available in their cultural, geographic, and historical moments. The many scribes examined in this chapter similarly worked with what they had, and some presentation choices reflect no more than that.

Yet some efforts to authorise the poems created new visual forms for them. The scribes of the *c*-type manuscripts deployed a distinctive double-columned layout for *The Prick* to link it with the presentation of Latin texts, a habit seen also in other copies. In these contexts, it may have approached a kind of vernacular commentary, in some cases complete with gloss. This was rare for *Piers*, suggesting that it did not carry this status, but the presentation of Langland's poem still orientated it towards Latin. Its quotations were, on average, more frequently marked with a sign of their incompleteness and connection with an absent context.

It has been suggested that *Piers* was read as a Latin text by its early audiences.[83] In their production, this was true of both poems. Latin, as a language, a collection of culturally important writings, and as a model for how texts should look, was a crucial vector in their presentation, second only to their status as verse which determined the most basic features of their layout. I think this similarity should encourage us to see *Piers* as less distinctive, less of an outlier, in late-medieval English literary culture, as its presentation was in some ways similar to one of the most popular products of that culture, *The Prick*, and therefore, in some ways, made to seem normative.

[83] Lawrence Warner, *The Myth of Piers Plowman: Constructing a Medieval Literary Archive* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 53-71.

Chapter 5: Interpolation

A condition of medieval manuscript culture was the relative ease with which texts could be altered. Small, often unconscious or accidental changes during copying produced variation and contributed to the unique state of every text in manuscript. Some were subject to sustained, deliberate intervention which reworked old material in more significant ways. This capacity for intervention and change was so great that some modern readers of medieval texts have come to see them as 'destabilized into the plurality of [their] variants', constituted, that is, by multiple material forms in potentially uncertain relation to one another.[1]

With a combined corpus of over 200 witnesses, revision is clearly identifiable in the textual tradition of both *Piers Plowman* and *The Prick of Conscience*. Among manuscripts of *Piers*, the related pair Huntington Library, MS Hm 114 (manuscript Ht of the B text) and University of London Library, MS S.L. V.88 (the 'Ilchester' manuscript of the C text) stand out for their shared preservation of two C-text passages in a unique, revised form. Ht inserts this material in Passus 6, while Ilchester incorporates it into its notorious Prologue, mostly drawn from an A, or possibly C, source.[2] Other copies are marked by frequent, microscopic tinkering, for example Corpus Christ College Oxford, MS 201 (F), an extremely divergent B text with a unique, reorganised system of passus divisions.[3] Similarly small-scale but thorough rewriting characterises the most successful revised text of *The*

[1] Suzanne Fleischman, 'Philology, Linguistics, and the Discourse of the Medieval Text', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 19-37 (25), discussing Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la Variante: Histoire Critique de la Philologie* (Paris, 1989).

[2] Ilchester is discussed in Derek Pearsall, 'The 'Ilchester' Manuscript of *Piers Plowman*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 82 (1981), 181-93. The connection between Ht and Ilchester was discovered by Wendy Scase: 'Two *Piers Plowman* C-Text Interpolations: Evidence for a Second Textual Tradition', *Notes and Queries*, New Series, 34 (1987), 456–63. The Ilchester Prologue is published in Russell-Kane, pp. 186-94.

[3] James Weldon, 'Ordinatio and Genre in MS CCC 201: A Mediaeval Reading of the B-Text of *Piers Plowman*', *Florilegium*, 12 (1993), 159-75; Sean Taylor, 'The F Scribe and the R Manuscript of *Piers Plowman* B', *English Studies*, 77 (1996), 530-48.

Prick, the Southern Recension.[4] Surviving in nineteen manuscripts, its text is slightly shorter than the Main Version measured by number of lines,[5] but almost every individual line was lengthened in rewriting.[6]

The status of variant material is not always clear, and these three manuscripts of *Piers* demonstrate the power of revised texts to provoke controversy. It has been argued that the C text materials interpolated in Ht and Ilchester represent an earlier authorial draft of these passages, a view contested in subsequent work.[7] Some of the variants in F were interpreted by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson as conflations from a superior manuscript and used to emend readings against the support of all other witnesses in their edition of the B text. It has since been demonstrated that these 'superior' readings are instead conflations from an A-text source.[8] The status of the revisers responsible for new material of this kind has also been contested: creative and generative in one view, reckless and troublesome in another. Revision and variation have been celebrated as evidence of medieval literary criticism at work, but equally damned as destructive intervention in the material record of literary art.[9] Some modern responses to the work of medieval scribes have sought

[4] Manuscripts of the Southern Recension are listed in Hanna-Wood, pp. 381-2. Since the publication of Lewis-McIntosh, one further fragment has come to light: Ushaw College, MS 50 (SR 19 in Hanna-Wood), identified in A. I. Doyle, 'Ushaw College, Durham, MS 50: Fragments of the *Prick of Conscience*, by the same Scribe as Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 201, of the B Text of *Piers Plowman*', in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie and Ralph Hanna (London, 2000), pp. 43-9.

[5] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 9.

[6] Daniel Sawyer, 'Codicological evidence of reading in late medieval England, with particular reference to practical pastoral verse' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), pp. 254-75.

[7] Scase, 'C-Text Interpolations'; contested in Ralph Hanna, 'On the Versions of *Piers Plowman*', in *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 203-43. I do not accept Scase's claim for the authorial status of the passages here.

[8] Discussed in Schmidt, II, pp. 55-6.

[9] B. A. Windeatt, 'The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 1 (1979), 119-41; George Kane, '"Good" and "Bad" Manuscripts: Texts and Critics', in *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches* (London, 1989), pp. 206-13 (particularly 208).

to blur the line between copying and authorship, refusing to distinguish between textual production and reproduction.[10]

While I avoid the view expressed elsewhere, and discussed in the introduction, that evidence of creativity and originality in medieval reading practices should be celebrated on those terms, revision is nonetheless a source of evidence for the cultural meaning of texts and for the attitudes of their audiences. Where revision is unambiguously postauthorial, revised texts reflect the responses of early scribes and readers to their content, form, and cultural position. Efforts of alteration might have been spurred by concerns over textual accuracy, appropriateness for a particular audience, or the impulse to disseminate a new or different viewpoint.[11] Interventions can express a view of literary form: the insertion of new material or the reworking of old might represent an attempt to improve the metre of verse or the style of language, or an attempt at harmony between original and added text, or a disregard for consistency.[12]

This chapter takes as its subject two revised texts of *The Prick*. The first is the Eight-Part Version (8PV), named for its rearrangement of Book 5 material to form a new Book 8, and produced by a reader of the poem towards the end of the fourteenth century.[13] The 8PV is characterised by

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[10] Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus, 2012), particularly p. 6. See also Susannah Fein's description of the 'literary scribe', 'a category that falls between an author and a copyist': 'Literary Scribes: The Harley Scribe and Robert Thornton as Case Studies', in *Insular Books: Vernacular manuscript miscellanies in late medieval Britain*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford, 2015), pp. 61-80 (62).

[11] See, for example, Karrie Fuller's account of the Z-text poet: 'The Craft of the 'Z-Maker': Reading the Z Text's Unique Lines in Context', *YLS*, 27 (2013), 15-43. On the revision of *Ancrene Wisse* for new audiences, see Catherine Innes-Parkes, 'The Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*: Translations, Adaptations, Influences and Audience, with Special Attention to Women Readers', in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Yoko Wada (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 145-73, and Christina von Nolcken, 'The *Recluse* and its Readers: Some Observations on a Lollard Interpolated Version of *Ancrene Wisse*', in *Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Wada, pp. 175-96.

[12] See Daniel Wakelin's discussion of correction as a form of literary criticism in *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 254-75. Daniel Sawyer has argued that the revision which produced the Southern Recension attempted to improve the quality of the verse of *The Prick*: 'Codicological Evidence', pp. 245-75.

[13] This version was formerly known as the 'Lollard Subgroup', in response to several anticlerical passages: Hope Emily Allen, *Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole and Materials for his Biography* (New York, 1927), pp. 387-94, repeated in Lewis-McIntosh 6-7. The 8PV is now known to have no connection to lollardy and was recently renamed in Ann Killian, 'Menacing Books: *The Prick of Conscience* and the Rhetoric of Reproof', *YLS*, 31 (2017), 5-41.

two lengthy inserted passages of English verse and Latin prose, in the Prologue and Book 6. It had a close relationship with *Piers*: two of its five manuscripts were produced by scribes who also made copies of Langland's poem. One of these, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687, is discussed in the second and third chapters of this thesis; the other is John Rylands Library, MS English 90. The second revision survives in a single manuscript: Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139, newly identified in the second chapter. The added material in this text is much smaller in scale than that in the 8PV, but represents a rare example of intertextuality between Langland's poem and another work. It contains previously unidentified Latin quotations taken from a copy of *Piers*, embedded in English verse passages inserted in the main text. Both versions have been interpolated with new material, the term which gives this chapter its title. Both texts contain a mix of new English verse and quotation from Latin sources, imitating the style of the Main Version, and further new Latin prose in the 8PV, but minimal alteration of the original.

I begin with the 8PV. Interest in this revision has revived recently, following its identification in the 1920s, but the state of its text, which survives across five manuscripts, is not well understood. These textual issues, I argue here, are important in interpreting the work of the reviser who produced it because of its fragmentary transmission and the possibility that it was generated in multiple stages of revision. This chapter therefore offers, for the first time, a preliminary textual analysis of the 8PV before exploring its relationship with *Piers*. Previous readers of the 8PV have been circumspect about a direct connection, but the analysis offered in this chapter suggests that the C text of *Piers* may have been present in its context of production, opening up the possibility that *Piers* influenced the reviser.[14] Following this longer section, the chapter turns to the Rawlinson

[14] Killian, 'Menacing Books', 35.

text, a version of *The Prick* with a significant but overlooked relationship with *Piers*. Although it was produced for different purposes than the 8PV, it too is engaged with the communication of salvation theology to English readers, and indirectly supports a link between the 8PV and *Piers*.

The Eight-Part Version

The 8PV is a substantial revision to the text of the Main Version, preserved in five copies. Although manuscript survival is not necessarily an accurate indicator of medieval dissemination, it was perhaps the third most successful scribal revision of *The Prick*, after the Southern Recension (nineteen manuscripts) and the Latin translation (six).[15] Group 2 of the Main Version, one of the four major families into which the poem's copies are divided, is thought to be the source of the revised text.[16] Judging by the date of its manuscripts, discussed below, it must have been produced before the end of the fourteenth century. Unlike the Southern Recension, the 8PV does not appear to be marked by rewriting of the original verse, and instead the revision constitutes two interpolated passages of alternating English verse and Latin prose in the Prologue and Book 6, and a rearrangement of material from Book 5 to the end of the poem as 'Book 8'. The revised material survives unevenly across the five manuscripts which preserve it, but this broad shape is clear.

The Prologue interpolation is inserted after line 192, beginning with a verse of the Athanasian Creed: 'Qui bona egerunt ibunt in vitam eternam', the same quotation found in all versions of *Piers* (A.8.95-6, B.7.113-4, and C.9.287-8). It follows the discussion in the Main Version of

[15] Issues around judging the popularity of medieval texts statistically based on surviving copies are discussed in Michael G. Sargent, 'What Do the Numbers Mean? A Textual Critic's Observations on Some Patterns of Middle English Manuscript Transmission', in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (York, 2008), pp. 205-44.
[16] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 6.

things 'þat nedeful were to knawe',[17] and is focused on questions of salvation, beginning with a lengthy explanation of the difference between virtue and vice. It examines how sin endangers the soul and the meaning of moral blindness, the difference between contemplative and active life and the danger of reading romances and other trivial, imaginative writing, compared with the good exempla to be found in biblical narratives and saints' lives – this latter section quoted in part from the prologue to *Cursor Mundi*.[18] The Book 6 interpolation occurs after line 6890, within the description in the Main Version of the seventh pain of hell.[19] This insertion is focused on the suffering that will befall the sinful in hell, and on questions of good government in the church and among secular rulers. It contains fewer, longer sections of Latin prose than the Prologue interpolation, but runs to roughly the same length. The rearrangement moves lines 6343-406 from Book 5 to between lines 9471-2 in Book 7, and this transplanted passage is preceded by eight new lines ending Book 7 and giving a rubric for the start of Book 8.

The 8PV has been discussed by several previous readers of *The Prick*, but little attention has been paid to the relationships between its copies.[20] Lewis-McIntosh remains the only commentary on its text, in which the authors identified what were considered to be four core members of the group: Society of Antiquaries, MS 687, John Rylands Library, MS English 90, and Bodleian Library, MSS Ashmole 60 and e Musaeo 76. They also identified three further peripheral copies described as having 'similarities' with the central witnesses: British Library, MSS Harley 6923 and Additional

[17] Quoted from Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 60, f. 10r, and corresponding to l. 187 in the Main Version.
[18] *Cursor Mundi* (*The Cursur o the world*)*: A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century in Four Versions, Two of them Midland*, ed. by Richard Morris, 7 vols (London: Trübner, 1874-93), ll. 1-26.
[19] Lewis-McIntosh erroneously cite l. 6894 (p. 6).
[20] Allen, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 387-94; Killian, 'Menacing Books'.

25013, and University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 218.[21] The last of these three copies contains a portion of the Prologue interpolation, while the other two contain no revised material.

The reviser does not appear to have made alterations to the text of the poem. Lewis and McIntosh describe no such variants specifically, but do claim that Harley 6923 and Additional 25013, the two manuscripts containing no revised material, are related to the four core copies. This suggests that they discerned variants in the main text indicative of shared descent, but in checking my own collated passages against other Group 2 manuscripts, I identified no material unique to the Eight-Part copies beyond the shared variants discussed below. For this reason, I exclude Harley 6923 and Additional 25013 from the textual analysis, but include Codex 218 as a witness to revised material.

Manuscripts

The five manuscripts containing revised material included in the textual analysis are described below. These descriptions are not intended to be full or evenly detailed, but instead highlight the revised material present in each copy alongside physical features and aspects of production and provenance relevant to the subsequent discussion. Their order is random, and in the textual analysis the manuscripts are cited in this order.

[21] Lewis-McIntosh, pp. 68, 76, and 125. Codex 218 is referred to by its previous shelfmark, 'English 8'.

Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 76 (*E*)

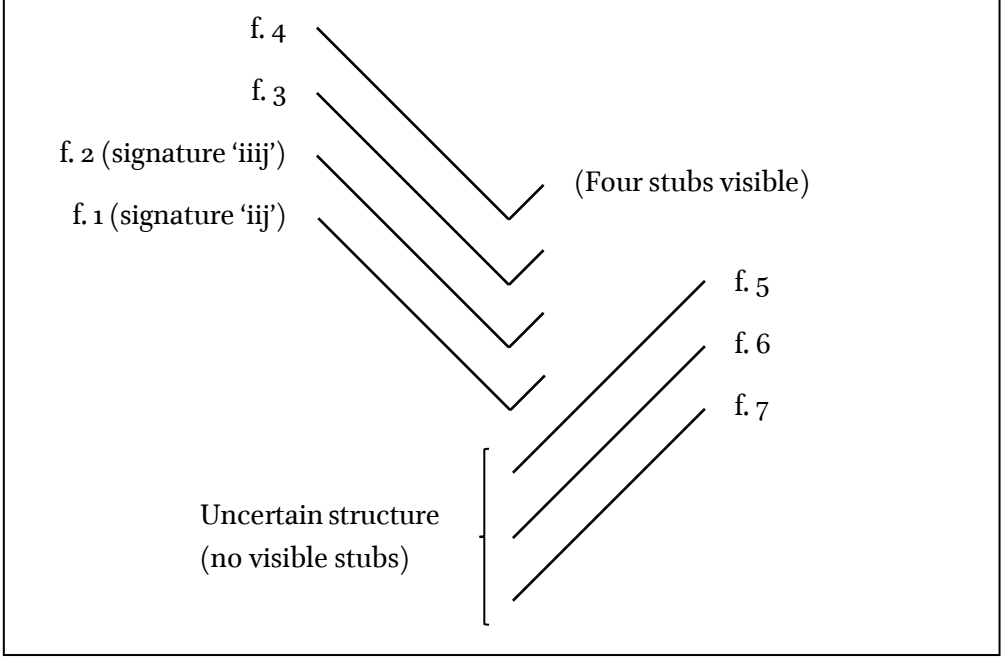
E is a single-text copy of *The Prick*, dated paleographically to the first half of the fifteenth century.[22] Its dialect is localised by *LALME* to Essex.[23] E contains the Book 6 interpolation and the Book 8 rearrangement, but in the Prologue it contains only the creedal verse following line 192 and no further revised material. The Book 6 interpolation appears in this manuscript in a shorter form than others due to the omission of some of the Latin prose.

Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 60 (*A*)

A is also a single-text copy, dated paleographically to the end of the fourteenth century.[24] *LALME* localises its dialect to Ely.[25] A contains the Book 6 interpolation and the Book 8 rearrangement, and a portion of the Prologue interpolation surviving on a single quire which precedes the start of the main Prologue (now folios 1-7). This portion begins some way into the interpolation as it survives in the manuscript R (described below). The structure of this first quire is unclear. It begins with four singletons, whose stubs are visible, followed by three leaves whose relationship with the rest is uncertain. The first two leaves are marked in the bottom-right corners with the numerals 'iij' and 'iiij', respectively, probably the remains of a fuller set of quire signatures. This suggests there may originally have been two leaves preceding these, which would have carried the missing interpolated material. Relative to R, there is no gap in the text between folios 4 and 5, even though the first four leaves appear to be singletons. My view of this structure is presented in Figure 16.

[22] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 106.
[23] *LALME*, III, p. 116.
[24] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 94.
[25] *LALME*, III, pp. 106-7.

Figure 16: Structure of the first quire of A.



Between lines 192-3 in the main text of the Prologue, the scribe added a marginal note containing the creedal verse followed by the comment 'Quere istu*m* ver*s*u*m* In þis vers þat is here writen *and* said in principio libri p*er* istud signu*m*', followed by a cross (f. 10r). This may be an instruction to insert the Prologue interpolation surviving on the separate quire at this point in the text (which begins in R, 'In þis vers þat is hier writen and said', folio 2v, column b), though no corresponding sign appears anywhere else in the manuscript. It might have been carried by the leaves probably missing from the start of the first quire, which would have contained the beginning of the interpolation.

Society of Antiquaries, MS 687 (S)

S is a compilation containing *The Prick* alongside English and Latin prose material and an A text of *Piers*, dated to the first half of the fifteenth century.[26] Its English contents represent a number of different Norfolk dialects,[27] and it shares a watermark with an A text of *Piers* dialectally localised to Suffolk, suggesting they may share a paper stock and strengthening the likely provenance of S in the East of England (discussed in the second chapter).[28] S contains only the Book 6 interpolation, with no trace of revised material in the Prologue. The portion of Book 6 which forms Book 8 in other copies is not displaced here. This book was examined in detail in the third chapter, where I suggested that its scribe may not have recognised that the Book 6 interpolation was intended to constitute part of *The Prick*. The textual analysis presented here further suggests that this manuscript was on the periphery of the transmission of the 8PV.

Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS English 90 (R)

R contains *The Prick* and an English prose exposition of the Pater Noster. It is the only manuscript in the group not localised in the East, as *LALME* places its dialect in Shropshire.[29] It contains three identifiable scribal hands: Hand 1, who copied almost all of *The Prick* (ff. 2r-63v), Hand 2, who copied the passage of Latin prose with which the Book 6 interpolation begins on folio 39r, column b (Figure

[26] Lewis-McIntosh, p.84. Kane, p. 12, dates the book to 'about 1425'.

[27] *LALME*, III, pp. 319-20; Michael Alex Madrinkian, 'Producing *Piers Plowman* to 1475: Author, Scribe, Reader' (Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), pp. 123-30.

[28] This manuscript is Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1468. They share a watermark resembling Briquet's *Mont* 17722; Charles-Moïse Briquet, *Les Filligranes: Dictionnaire historique des Marques du Papier dès leur Apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600*, 4 vols (Paris: A. Picard & fils, 1907).

[29] R was initially analysed in a joint linguistic profile with its twin C text: *LALME*, III, pp. 435-6 (LP 4218), but was reanalysed separately for *eLALME*: <http://archive.ling.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme_scripts/display_lpZ.php?lpref=7560> [accessed 15 January 2019].

17), and Hand 3, who copied the exposition of the Pater Noster (ff. 63r-65v). Hand 2 is distinguished from Hand 1 by its script: where Hand 2 uses a form of anglicana formata, Hand 2 wrote in a more cursive anglicana with no borrowings from textualis. Five further Latin quotations throughout *The Prick* and the rubric for Book 7 were not written by Hand 1; they may all be the work of Hand 2 but are too small to identify securely. Hand 1 also copied the C text of *Piers* in British Library, Additional MS 34779 (P^2).

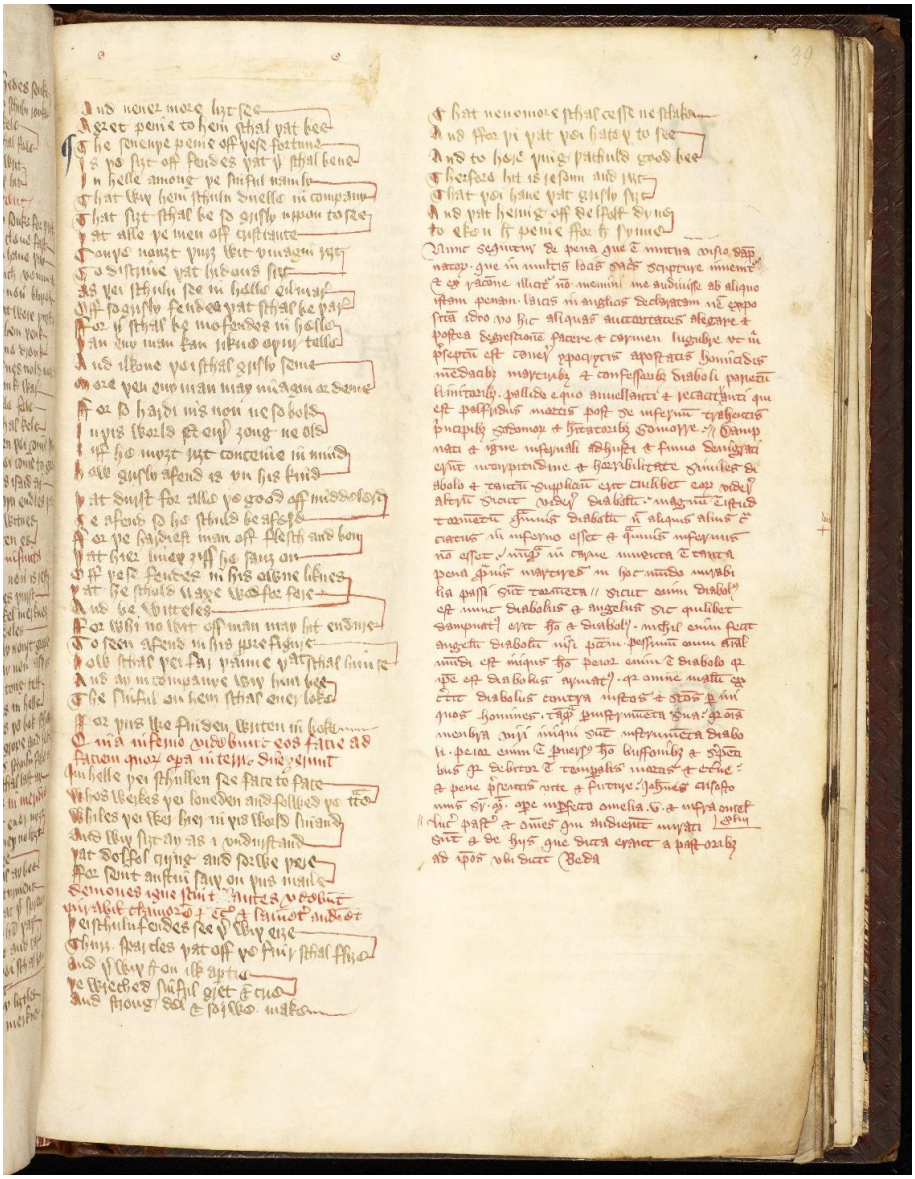


Figure 17: R, f. 39r. Hand 2 copies the opening of the Book 6 interpolation. Copyright of the University of Manchester.

The Rylands Library catalogue dates R to the end of the fourteenth century, while Lewis and McIntosh place it at the turn of the fifteenth.[30] P² has been dated to the beginning of the fifteenth, circa 1400-10,[31] but in my view the absence of secretary influence in both R and P² makes a date at the end of the fourteenth century likely. This means that both A and R have a claim to be the oldest manuscript of the 8PV. R contains the fullest version of the revised material: the Book 6 interpolation, the Book 8 rearrangement, and the longest version of the Prologue interpolation found in any copy, of which the portion from folio 4r onwards is matched in the first quire of A.

Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 218 (*C*)

C contains four texts: Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and *Prickynge of Love*, the anonymous *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* (here given the title 'Amor dei' on folio 146v), and *The Prick*.[32] It has been dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century.[33] Two hands are present, the first of which copied the first three texts (ff. 1r-146v) while the second copied *The Prick* (ff. 147r-59v). The dialect of the first hand is localised by *LALME* to Ely, while the second is localised to Lincolnshire.[34] The text of C contains a portion of the Prologue interpolation and a number of other interpolated passages of varying length not found in any other copy. These additional insertions probably derive

[30] Moses Tyson, *A Hand-List of the Collection of English Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library, 1928* (Manchester, 1929); Lewis-McIntosh, p. 89.
[31] Schmidt, II, p. 6.
[32] The text of the *Contemplations* in this manuscript was identified in Jeanne E. Krochalis, '*Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*: Two Newly Identified Pennsylvania Manuscripts', *The Library Chronicle of the Friends of the University of Pennsylvania Library*, 41-2 (1976-8), 3-22.
[33] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 124.
[34] *LALME* cites this manuscript by its former shelfmark, 'English 6'. For Hand A, see *LALME*, III, pp. 108-9 (sampled from *The Scale*); for Hand B, see III, pp. 288-9.

from a different source than the 8PV, as the Prologue interpolation is abridged in comparison with R and A. It breaks off during one of these, inserted after line 2001 in Book 3.

Methodology

The 8PV is thought to descend from the larger Group 2 of *Prick* manuscripts, but the relationships among this family are not clear. Analysing the text of the five Eight-Part copies thoroughly is therefore impractical, as it would also require comparing the text against every Group 2 copy to establish what readings are original to the common ancestor of the five, as opposed to the common ancestor of Group 2. It would also be beyond the scope of this chapter, which is concerned with the relationship between the 8PV, its manuscripts, and *Piers Plowman*.

Instead, this chapter establishes a working theory of the relationships between the five manuscripts which preserve interpolated material, from which a broader argument about the production of the 8PV can emerge. These relationships are analysed with a form of textual criticism related to the standard approach in textual editing adapted for different purposes. Passages from the Eight-Part manuscripts are collated and their readings checked against the text of *The Prick* in Hanna-Wood. This edition is used as a base text and is not assumed to represent perfectly an authorial version; instead, it offers a standard which is used to assess the likely unoriginality of shared variants in the texts of the Eight-Part copies. These shared variants are used to judge the likelihood of patterns of affiliation in the following section, and are presented in Appendix 4.

This process of comparison is not entirely mechanical and some editorial judgment is involved, illustrated in the following examples. At their simplest, instances of shared deviation from

the edited text are understood as unoriginal to the text of the Eight-Part ancestor, as in this example from line 9 in the Prologue:

Hanna-Wood	Befor ar any thing was wroght	l. 9
E	Byfore any thyng was then wrought	f. 1r
A	As he was bifore þat any thyng was wrou3t	f. 8r
S	Before þat ony thyg [*sic*] was wrowth	p. 5
R	As he wes bifore þat eni þing wes wrou3t	f. 2r a
C	before þat any þing was wrou3t	f. 146r a

AR read 'As he was'/'wes' before the beginning of the line; SC replace 'ar' with 'þat'; E omits 'ar' and adds 'then' after 'was'. AR and SC can therefore be said to contain shared variants. These might be evidence that the two pairs each derive from an exclusive common ancestor which contained these readings, separate from the 8PV ancestor, but a number of potential situations complicate the evidence. Such shared variants can be the product of accidental convergence, where two scribes changed the text in the same way. They might represent only part of a relationship: if AR share a common ancestor which contained the reading 'as he was', E, S, or C may also be derived from this ancestor but lost the reading due to another layer of scribal intervention. The true relationship would therefore not be visible in this example. It is through the weight of agreements that relationships are established; if shared variants between a group of manuscripts persist and add up to significantly more than agreements which contradict that grouping, they can be judged to represent shared descent.[35]

In some cases, shared variants occur where no manuscript preserves the reading found in Hanna-Wood, for example at line 690 in Book 1.

[35] This understanding of the nature of variation and the capacity of textual criticism to establish an accurate picture of affiliations is indebted to George Kane's description of the process of editing the A text: Kane, pp. 53-114.

Hanna-Wood	And comly of shap, lufly and fayre	l. 690
E	And of face boþe fre and faire	f. 9r
A	And also of face be trewe and fair	f. 16r
S	And als of face be fre and fayre	p. 27
R	And also off face be trewe and fair	f. 9v b
C	and of face boþe fre and faire	f. 150v a

All five copies deviate in similar ways from the edited text. EC omit Hanna-Wood *comly*, while ASR exchange it for 'also'/'als'. No manuscript records Hanna-Wood *lufly*, but in its place ESC read 'fre' while AR have 'trewe'. It is unclear which is the closest to the original in these two cases (EC versus ASR and ESC versus AR), which might represent the common ancestor of the five against a shared variant. In the absence of this knowledge, any of the opposing variants could be evidence for shared descent, and indeed all might be. In cases like this, I have chosen not to judge what kind of variant is more likely to be original, for example applying the editorial maxim that the more 'difficult' reading is likely to be the original, because such processes aim to reconstruct a posited authorial text assumed to be more complex than what later scribes were capable of reproducing. Assumptions about scribal competence aside, I am concerned here with establishing possible groups of variants, not the superiority of one text over another. In cases like this, both pairs of potentially erroneous readings are counted. Given that such examples are few, I have judged that including them does not distort the sample of agreements on which the analysis of relationships is made.

In addition to 'opposed' variants such as the above example, some lines present possible variants in conflict. Judgement is then needed to determine which manuscripts are in agreement, illustrated in an example from Book 6, line 6532:

Hanna-Wood	Til helle come and tuke out þat his was	l. 6532
E	and come to helle *and* toke out whom his wille wos	f. 79r
A	and how he com to helle *and* tok out þ*a*t þer was	f. 83v
S	tyl helle he com *and* tok owth þ*a*t hys wase	p. 219
R	and to hell co*m and* tok out þat þ*er* was	f. 37v a

Relationships in the first half of this line are not immediately clear: EAR add 'and' to the beginning of the line; EA add 'to hell' after 'come'; and AS add 'he', though in slightly different contexts. The shared 'and' is a clear variant, and in this case I judge the rearrangement of material in EA to be a shared variant, and the conflicting shared 'he' in AS to be coincidental. Cases like this one are rare, and therefore not marked in the list of shared variants.

One further example demonstrates the process by which variants are counted. Some lines contain more than one variant shared between the same copies, and the rule has been applied here that such cases are counted as a single shared variant. An example from earlier in Book 6, at l. 6453, demonstrates this point:

Hanna-Wood	And sythen wille I shew yhow mare	l. 6453
E	and afterward i shall telle 3ov more	f. 78r
A	And aftir y shal telle 3ow more	f.82v
S	and sethen i wele schewe 3ow mor*e*	p. 217
R	And afft*er* i schal tell more	f. 37r b

In this example, ESR replace 'sythen' with a variant clearly related despite the different reading in E ('after'/'afterward). The same manuscripts replace 'shew' with 'tell' later in the line. These two variants, as they occur within a single line, are counted as a single shared variant between EAR. This rule is arbitrary, as it is impossible to reconstruct how variants are related to the circumstances of

copying (how many altered readings were produced by a single moment of scribal distraction, for example). The line offers a workable boundary by which to fix the process of counting.

Two kinds of variant are distinguished here: substantive and minor.[36] Substantive variants constitute the substitution of a different word or phrase, while minor variants are different spellings of the same word. Only substantive variants are included. Dialectal variation and alterations to verb endings which produce no change in sense are also excluded. Some minor variants occur in consistent patterns: the word *born*, for example, is regularly spelled 'born'/'borne' in ARC, while ES use 'bore'. This consistency may be the result of affiliation between copies, but as it may also represent convergence due to dialectal similarity, cases like this are discounted from the analysis.

Textual analysis

The survival of interpolated material across the four manuscripts offers preliminary evidence for their relationships. A and R share the most, and A may have originally contained the same apparently complete text of the Prologue interpolation now found exclusively in R. C also contains a portion of this material, while E contains only the creedal verse which begins the Prologue interpolation. This suggests that AR, ARC, and EARC may be genetic groups.

The analysis of shared variants between the copies partially supports these conclusions, but also generates some contradictory evidence. Using the methodology outlined above, I compared the readings of the five manuscripts across three areas of the text: the Prologue, Book 1, and a sample from the start of Book 6, lines 6419-890. These samples exclude interpolated material, as the inserted

[36] Also discussed in Kane, p. 68.

passages are not comparable to the text in Hanna-Wood. The shared variants analysed in these areas are presented in Appendix 4, where they are listed according to the sample from which they are taken. This reflects the imperfect state of the manuscript C, whose text breaks off in Book 3, meaning the collation of the first 472 lines of Book 6 cannot be directly compared with the collation of the Prologue and Book 1 for which all five witnesses are present. It also highlights the significant change in the weight of attestation of variant groups between the earlier and later passages (discussed in more detail below). This section addresses first the Prologue and Book 1 before turning to Book 6. The patterns of agreement discussed in each subsection are summarised in Figures 18-21.

Shared variants in the Prologue and Book 1

In the Prologue and Book 1, AR is by far the most well-attested group of two manuscripts. With seventy-two variants in the Prologue and 101 in Book 1, they share 173 in total. The strong presence of AR in this area fits with the preservation of the most complete version of the Prologue interpolation in these two copies, but there are a number of contradictory groupings which, if AR do indeed share an exclusive common ancestor, must represent coincident variation. A shares seven variants with single manuscripts other than R, and R fourteen with single manuscripts other than A. A appears six times in groups of three manuscripts excluding R, and R appears seven times in groups of three excluding A. Groups of four are very weakly attested in the collation, but A appears once in a group excluding R. Agreements contradicting AR in the Prologue and Book 1 therefore total thirty-five, substantially less than the evidence in support of the relationship. On this basis, it seems likely that at this point in the text AR share an exclusive common ancestor.

Figure 18: Shared variants between two manuscripts in the Prologue and Book 1.

	Total	Prologue	Book 1
AR	173	72	101
EC	29	9	20
ES	20	2	18
SC	12	2	10
SR	7	1	6
ER	5	2	3
EA	3	1	2
AS	2	1	1
AC	2	1	1
RC	1	-	1

Other significant groups of two include: EC with nine agreements in the Prologue and twenty in Book 1 (twenty-nine total); ES with two in the Prologue and eighteen in Book 1 (twenty total); and SC with two in the Prologue and ten in Book 1 (twelve total). These additional groups of two may be related to the most significant group of three manuscripts: ESC is represented in eight agreements in the Prologue and twenty-two in Book 1, totalling thirty. If this group is genetic, the sixty-one agreements between pairs within it might represent instances where a single manuscript diverges from the other two, and might therefore be indirectly in support of ESC.

This possible split between AR and ESC is problematised by the large number of agreements contradicting ESC. E appears in a pair with A or R nine times, S with A or R three times, and C with A or R three times. ES appear together with A or R but without C five times, EC appear with A or R without S three times, and SC appear with A or R without E five times. There are therefore twenty-eight contradictory agreements, compared with the thirty agreements in support of ESC. While AR are clearly attested as a variational group, the relationships between the remaining three manuscripts are muddled.

Figure 19: Shared variants between three manuscripts in the Prologue and Book 1.

	Total	Prologue	Book 1
ESC	30	8	22
ARC	10	2	8
ASR	8	-	8
EAR	7	1	6
ESR	3	1	2
SRC	3	1	2
EAS	2	-	2
EAC	2	-	2
ASC	2	-	2
ERC	1	-	1

The nature of the Prologue interpolation

The AR relationship might suggest that their ancestor split from the others after the insertion of the Prologue material. This would fit with the default assumption that one line of transmission existed from an archetype which contained all the inserted material now surviving across the five copies, but this does not adequately explain the fragmented distribution of the interpolations. At issue is the question of how A came to record the Prologue interpolation on a separate quire from the rest, and how E and C ended up with only partial versions of the revision nonetheless inserted in the right place. Given that C breaks off within a passage of English verse indistinguishable on the manuscript page from the surrounding Main Version text rather than a passage of interpolated Latin prose much more clearly an addition, there must have been awareness of the unoriginal nature of the interpolations in the ancestor at least of C. Such an awareness of the novelty and extent of the interpolations could explain how the scribes of E and C, or that of an ancestor, were able to select parts of the interpolated material for inclusion at the right point, but still does not account for the decision to leave the interpolation separate in A, possibly marked for insertion after line 192.

Instead, I propose that the Prologue interpolation was available for copying in the eastern counties as a codicologically separate unit. This is based in part on the provenance of the five manuscripts: all but R are written in eastern dialects, and it is only in eastern copies that the interpolation appears fragmentarily. This suggests that the presence of interpolated material in the Prologue in E and C may be due to collation with a manuscript related to A, or the availability of the interpolation separate from any single copy of *The Prick*. Conflation of this sort might also indicate that some of the EA, AC, and EAC agreements are genuine variants, rather than the result of coincident variation.

The availability of exemplar material in pieces has been proposed in other circumstances, notably in the production of the Hengwrt manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales*. It has been argued that the scribe had problems accessing linking passages between tales, resulting in gaps and haphazard layout features.[37] A similar situation has been proposed, too, for scribes of Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*.[38] In each of these cases, the codicological fragmentation of the exemplar is partly attributable to the nature of the text it carried – both tale collections. The insertion of new material into a text could have given rise to similar material circumstances, with pieces of new material physically separate from the original. The record of exemplar instability in R, A, E, and C might therefore indicate that these manuscripts were produced not long after the composition of the text.

The theory of fragmentation is further supported by the correlation between the text of the Prologue interpolation in A and C. The interpolation in C begins with the creedal quotation and the

[37] Simon Horobin, 'Compiling the *Canterbury Tales* in Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts', *The Chaucer Review*, 47 (2013), 372-89 (377-8).
[38] Orietta da Rold, 'Materials', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 12-33 (32).

first eight lines of English verse found in R. After this, it skips ahead to a point corresponding to the beginning of the English verse following a passage of Latin prose on folio 5v, column b, of R (beginning, in that copy, 'Ne gode words and good werkes'). The interpolation in A, as mentioned above, begins some way into the interpolation in R, probably due to the loss of preceding leaves. It then breaks off after the line 'and sei3e alas why wolde we nou3t knawe', found on folio 5r, column b, in R, and resumes at the same point where C resumes ('Ne gode words and good werkes'). This shift happens between the end of folio 3v and the start of 4r, but does not correspond to a codicological break; there appear to be no lost leaves at this point in the quire. It is therefore probable that this gap was due to a scribal error in the transmission of the interpolated text prior to the copying of A. The correlation with C suggests that the text of the interpolation surviving in these two manuscripts is related.

Shared variants in Book 6

The situation in Book 6 is different, as only four manuscripts preserve the text at this point (C breaks off during the unique passage inserted after line 2001 in its text). The relationships in Book 6 look strikingly dissimilar to those in the earlier sample. AR is much less strongly attested, with only twenty-five shared variants across a passage slightly longer than the Prologue (472 lines compared to the Prologue's 369). AR is contradicted by almost twice as many shared variants. A shares thirteen with E and four with S. R shares sixteen with E and three with S. A appears in a group of three without R five times, and R appears in a group of three without A four times. In total, there are forty-five agreements contradicting a genetic relationship between AR, compared with twenty-five in support.

Figure 20: Shared variants between two manuscripts in Book 6.

AR	25
ER	16
EA	13
ES	11
AS	4
SR	3

Figure 21: Shared variants between three manuscripts in Book 6.

EAR	80
ASR	12
EAS	5
ESR	4

However, AR do appear together within the group the group EAR, attested in eighty agreements. This is contradicted by thirty-nine: eighteen where a single member of EAR agrees with S, and twenty-one where two members of EAR agree with S without the third. At this ratio, the contradictory evidence is not as easily accounted for as that weighing against AR in the Prologue and Book 1. The fifty-four agreements between two members of EAR without the third might, however, be indirectly in support of the group. These pairs (EA, ER, AR) are significantly better attested than the contrary groups ES, AS, and SR. Without the presence of C at this point, conclusions from the evidence of Book 6 must be treated with caution. However, the strength of the EAR relationship in this sample suggests that the relationship may either be present throughout the text but less clear at the beginning, or that the affiliation of E changes between Books 1 and 6.

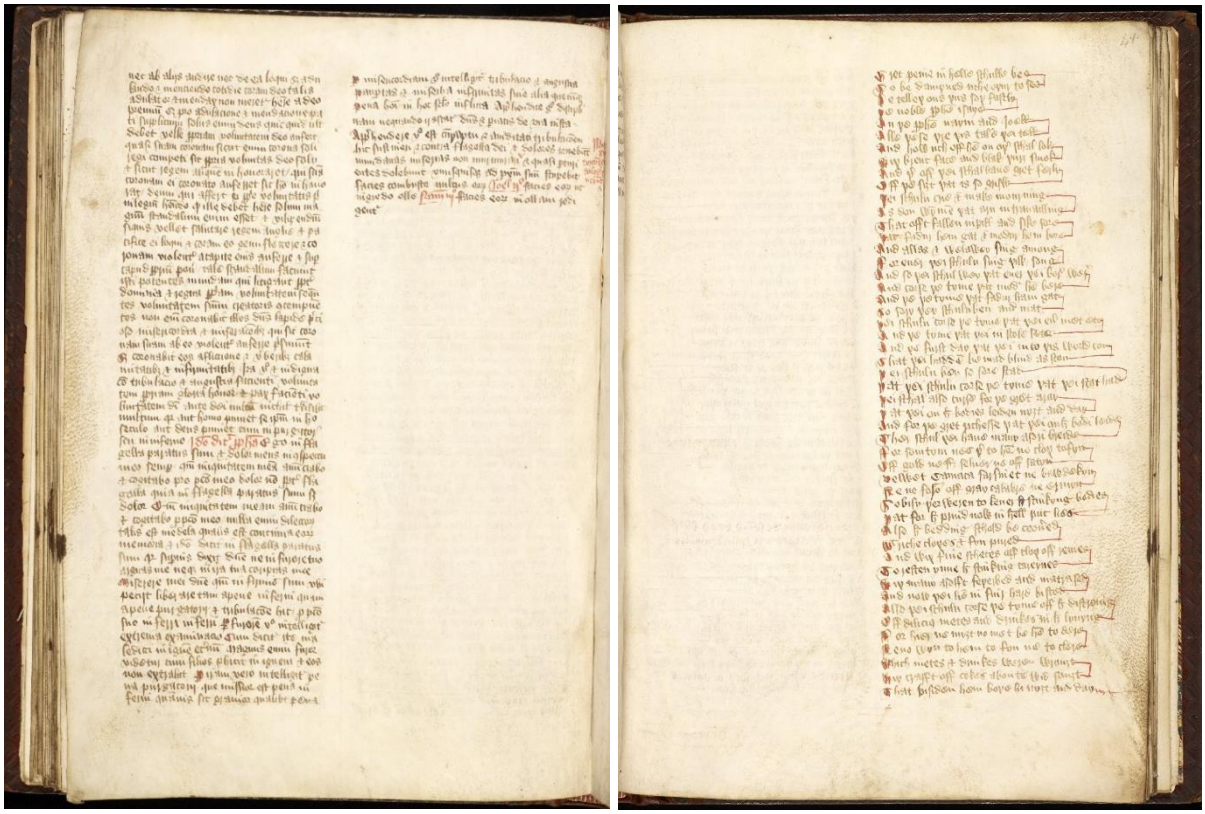


Figure 22: R, ff. 40v and 41r. Gap between Latin prose and English verse.
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Textual evidence for the status of R

The state of the Book 6 interpolation in R is unique. As mentioned in the earlier description of R, the Book 6 interpolation begins with a Latin prose passage copied by Hand 2 after Hand 1 breaks off at line 6890 near the top of folio 39r (Figure 17). At the top of the first column of the verso, Hand 1 resumes and copies more Latin prose in text ink. Hand 1 appears to have left a space between the point at which Book 6 breaks off and the start of the new Latin prose insertion. In the resulting space, Hand 2 supplied the missing material, but his smaller script running over the margins of the text block did not entirely fill the space left by Hand 1. A number of other gaps occur at moments of transition between English verse and Latin prose. The prose section started by Hand 2 and continued by Hand 1 ends on folio 40v near the top of the second column. The English verse resumes

at the top of folio 41r, column b, leaving a gap of almost two columns (Figure 22). Later, on folio 44v, a section of Latin prose ends near the top of the second column leaving a large gap before the English verse resumes. A gap between two sections of Latin prose copied in text ink from near the bottom of the first column of folio 46r to near the top of the second is partially filled by Hand 1 with more Latin prose, this time in red ink.

These shifts in hand, changes of ink, and gaps in the layout are not exactly matched in the other manuscripts which record this material. In A, the English of Book 6 ends at the bottom of folio 88r and the Latin prose interpolation begins at the top of the verso, with no change in scribe. In E, the interpolated material begins on folio 83r with no break in the text. In S, Book 6 ends midway down page 230 and the interpolation begins on the facing leaf. This seems to indicate, as discussed previously, that the scribe thought the Latin prose was a new text: a rubric appearing again later in the text (and at the same later point in R and A) is also placed here, giving the interpolation a title. The gap between the first section of Latin prose and English verse in R between folios 40v and 41r is not matched in A (f. 90v), S (p. 240), or E (f. 83v). The shift from Latin prose to English verse which occurs with a gap in R on folio 45v, column b, is seamless in A (f. 97r) and S (p. 254), while E omits this section of Latin. The gap between two sections of Latin prose in R on folio 46v, column b, occurs with no gap in A (f. 101v) or S (p. 266), and is also omitted in E.

The gaps in the layout of the Book 6 interpolation in R and their lack of correlation with the texts of E, A, or S, indicates that the text of the Book 6 interpolation in R was produced in stages. The passage by Hand 2 seems likely to have been added later, as Hand 1 copied all the surrounding text, but Hand 1 may also have added material later (particularly the section on folio 46r). Other spaces were left, perhaps to allow for more such insertions. This is a different situation to the one that produced the state of the Prologue interpolation in A, where the whole interpolation appears

to have been supplied separately to the main Prologue text for the A scribe, possibly resulting in its fragmented appearance in E and C. In Book 6, small pieces of the interpolation were apparently available separate to the rest for the copyists of R, but in one piece to those of A, S, and E (though the E version was abridged).

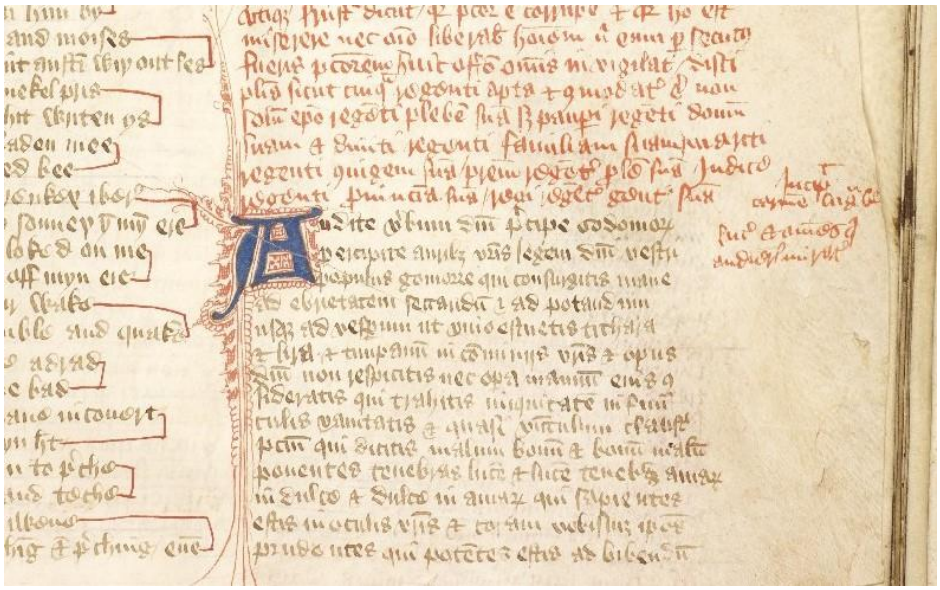

Figure 23: R, f. 46r, column b (*detail*). *Marginal rubric: 'Incipit carmen lugubre'. Copyright of the University of Manchester.*

More tentatively, this evidence might also suggest that R represents a stage of the text closer to the source of the 8PV, when revisions or additions were still in progress. This is further supported by the state of two marginal annotations in R. On folio 46r, column b, Hand 1 added the rubric 'incipit carmen lugubre' in the right margin, at the point where a new section of Latin prose begins (Figure 23), the same annotation used as a title for the Book 6 interpolation in S. At the point corresponding with its marginal placement in R, it appears in-line with the text in A (f. 100v) and S (p. 264), suggesting the version in R represents an earlier stage in the development of the text before the annotation was moved into the main column. The same situation applies to the annotation on

folio 42v, column b, where the column begins with a passage of Latin prose in red ink. Above this, in the top margin, Hand 1 copied a note: 'hic red*et* ad mat*eri*a*m*'; this text appears in-line at the start of the prose passage in A (f. 93v) and S (p. 248); the passage is omitted in E. The view that the additions and gaps in R reflect revision of the 8PV text fits with the theory presented above to explain the fragmentation of the Prologue interpolation, which also indicates a text available for copying in multiple parts.

Conclusions

In sum, the foregoing textual analysis demonstrates that the manuscripts AR probably share an exclusive common ancestor, and that the fragmented state of revised material across the five manuscripts may be the result of the codicological separation of the main text and the interpolation. Whether this was due to a process of 'rolling' revision released for copying at different stages, or the lack of a fair copy serving as archetype, is unclear. The analysis shows that the exclusive common ancestor of AR contained the Prologue interpolation, which may have reached the manuscripts E and C through conflation with A or an ancestor of that manuscript in the East of England. This interpolation was available to the A scribe as a separate unit, resulting in its presence on a separate quire in A and perhaps its fragmented state in C. The ancestors of E, A, S, and R (and perhaps also C, though this is now indeterminable), contained the Book 6 interpolation, though the text in R may derive from an earlier source. The production of the Book 6 interpolation was partly fragmented, leaving traces in R but no other manuscript and suggesting the proximity of that copy to the reviser. This is a complex narrative, but explains the piecemeal preservation of the 8PV across the five copies witnessing it. The complexity of these relationships warrants more attention than can be given here;

for the purposes of this chapter, the affiliations established so far give enough evidence to assess the relationship between the 8PV and *Piers*, and other questions can be left unexplored.

Evidence for a relationship between the Eight-Part Version and *Piers Plowman*

The Prologue interpolation begins with a now doubly-familiar piece of Latin:

> Qui bona egerun*t* in vita*m* et*er*na*m* q*ui* v*ero* mala *et* c*etera* (R, f. 2v, column b)

Verse 41 of the Athanasian Creed appears in all three versions of Langland's poem and, as identified in the second chapter, in the unique text of Rawlinson poetry 139. It is the only such overlap in either of the 8PV interpolations, and raises the possibility of a direct point of contact between *Piers* and the 8PV reviser. This in turn raises a second possibility: that the copying of R and the C text in P^2 by the same hand might have been a deliberate extension of that compositional relationship. This section examines these possibilities, suggesting that a relationship between the 8PV and *Piers*, though uncertain, is likely.

The 8PV reviser as a reader of Piers

The Prologue interpolation continues with an English gloss[39] on the Creed:

> In þis vers þat is hier writen and said
> Al holy writ may be contayned

[39] This gloss is present in R and C, and partially in A. R also contains a second piece of Latin following the creedal verse, partly original and partly a quotation from Deuteronomy (f. 2v, column b).

And al teching and alle sinne
And is to say þat þat þ*a*t han do wel
Schuln wend into euerlesting ciel
And þei forsoþe þat han don sinne
To þe fuir off helle þat eu*er* schal bre*n*ne (R, ff. 2v b-3r a)

The 8PV reviser reads the creedal verse as a summation of Christian doctrine, scripture, and morality. Its meaning is clear in that it can be glossed in English in a pair of couplets, but also requires explication and unpacking, as it spurs the composition of the remainder of the interpolation.

The gloss bears comparison with the words of the priest in response to the pardon sent by Truth to Piers:

'Peter!', quod the prest tho, 'y kan no pardoun fynde
Bote do wel and haue well, and god shal haue thy soule
And do yuele and haue euele and hope thow non oþere
Bote he þat euele lyueth euele shal ende.' (C.9.289-92)

These lines are quoted from the C text, but with the exception of the last are substantially the same in all three versions. The gloss in the 8PV is not obviously a direct borrowing from the priest's words, and so not direct evidence of a relationship, but the implications of this possible connection are nonetheless interesting. This moment in Piers is regularly described as the most important in the entire text.[40] In the A and B versions, the priest's words are followed by the 'pardon-tearing scene', in which Piers rips apart the document in apparent frustration, an event excised in the revision to C. The meaning of the pardon's destruction has long been controversial among modern readers of

[40] Robert Worth Frank, Jr., 'The Pardon Scene in *Piers Plowman*, *Speculum*, 26 (1951), 317-31 (317): 'The Pardon Scene in *Piers Plowman* is perhaps the most critical passage in Langland's great work'; Ralph Hanna, 'The "Absent" Pardon-Tearing of *Piers Plowman* C', *Review of English Studies*, 66 (2015), 449-64 (449): 'at the central and generative moment of *Piers Plowman*, in B passus 7, Piers tears in two his pardon sent from truth'.

the poem, but whether Piers's actions represent a rejection of the pardon itself or the priest's interpretation of it, the 8PV in contrast embraces the lines as a representation of 'al holy writ…and al teching'. Whether or not the use of the Creed and its gloss were inspired by *Piers*, the Eight-Part reviser clearly took a different view of this piece of doctrine than is expressed in Langland's poem. While the quotation is by no means the last word on the subject in either text, *Piers* expresses considerably more uncertainty about its status. In this sense, the 8PV is similar to *The Prick* which in almost every case offers only one interpretation of the Latin material it quotes, minimising any sense of disagreement or instability. This is the interpretative approach adopted by the 8PV reviser.

In other terms, though, the 8PV aligns itself more closely with *Piers*. While for the most part the style of the English verse throughout both the Prologue and Book 6 interpolations carefully copies that of *The Prick*, parts of the Prologue interpolation are unusually alliterative. For example, in the text of the interpolation on folio 4r, column a, of R, a pair of couplets is adorned with extensive alliteration on the <s> and <sch> sounds:

> Who is him þat þat si3t schal misse
> Was þer neuer sunne þat 3aff suche li3ht
> On somers day whan hit schon bri3t
> As þat briht face out schal sprede

Alliteration is not particularly characteristic of the Main Version, and certainly not at such density. These lines are not metrically equivalent to Langland's, still in the octosyllabic form of *The Prick*, but while their use of alliteration is therefore decorative, rather than a component of verse form, it nonetheless indicates the possible stylistic influence of *Piers*. Other examples include the two lines, earlier on the same leaf, alliterating on <r> and <b> 'And rasen hem bi þe rote / Ther schal be bale wiþouten bote'. On folio 5r, column a, a further four lines, two of them a couplet, are similarly

decorated: 'ffor her meri melodi', 'That saileþ þus into þe see', 'To seilen in þe salte flod / Wher wawes risen as þei wer wod'.

The presence of alliteration in the Prologue interpolation strongly increases the likelihood that the reviser drew on *Piers* in composing this insertion. Viewing the 8PV as, in part, a response to *Piers* might then suggest how the reviser understood Langland's poem. Quoting the same creedal verse as *Piers* but offering a significantly different interpretation of it indicates a fundamentally different stance towards salvation theology and the exegesis of authoritative writings. In both the Prologue interpolation and *Piers*, the quotation is the starting point for extensive further discussion and thought, but the 8PV adopts an orientation towards doctrine much more like *The Prick*. *Piers* is animated by uncertainty: multiple, unresolved readings spur the dreamer and the narrative itself towards new questions which are ultimately unanswered.[41] This quality was not apparently of interest to the Eight-Part reviser, who viewed interpretation in more fixed terms.

While the gloss on the creedal verse, though similar to the words of Langland's priest, ultimately diverges from the view suggested in *Piers*, the reviser seems to have taken an interest in its form. I have used deliberately cosmetic terminology (decorate, adorn) to describe the use of alliteration because it seems most likely that the alliteration in the Prologue interpolation has little to do with a view of the cultural significance of alliterative verse. This has in any case been contested and remains unclear, but it seems improbable that the reviser drew on the style of *Piers* to invoke, for example, 'the central question of the alliterative tradition: how to uncover and understand the

[41] Uncertainty and discontinuity in the poem's narrative elements have been the subject of many modern readings of it: see Anne Middleton, 'Narration and the Invention of Experience: Episodic Form in *Piers Plowman*', in *The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo, 1982), 91-122; Steven Justice, 'The Genres of *Piers Plowman*', *Viator*, 19 (1988), 291-306; and Nicolette Zeeman, *Piers Plowman and the Medieval Discourse of Desire* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 1-37 ('Introduction: trial by desire').

distant past', in the words of a recent account of the form.[42] The reviser's ornamental use of alliteration might reflect the status of *Piers* in this context as a purely aesthetic object, a model for verse style but little else.

R and P²

The relationship between R and P² arises as a question from the identification of a possible relationship between the 8PV and *Piers* – could it be the result of the reviser knowing *Piers*? – and, as a material fact, adds to the evidence supporting that possible relationship. It is both potentially proof of a relationship between the 8PV and *Piers* and explained as a result of it. To avoid the clear risk of circularity here, this section addresses these two questions separately and independently.

Despite being copied in the same hand, the exact nature of the relationship between R and P² is difficult to determine. They cannot have been produced in compilation as their dimensions are different, so they must have been written as separate books. Despite the work of Hand 1 of R across both manuscripts, their production context seems not to have been the same. R was clearly subject to some form of collaborative production: the insertion of material in *The Prick* by Hand 2 and possibly others in space left by Hand 1 suggests that the work of the main scribe was intended to be supplemented. Hand 3 copied the exposition of the Pater Noster, but this text is decorated in a style consistent with *The Prick*. The decorated capitals appearing at the start of new books of the poem, new sections in the interpolated Latin prose, and new sections of the exposition, may possibly be

[42] Eric Weiskott, *English Alliterative Verse: Poetic Tradition and Literary History* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 127. Other recent accounts of alliterative metre, texts, and the 'alliterative revival' include Ian Cornelius, *Reconstructing Alliterative Verse: The Pursuit of a Medieval Meter* (Cambridge, 2017), and Thorlac Turville-Petre, *Description and Narrative in Middle English Alliterative Poetry* (Liverpool, 2018).

the work of the same artist, which would indicate that the two texts were intended to form part of the same compilation.

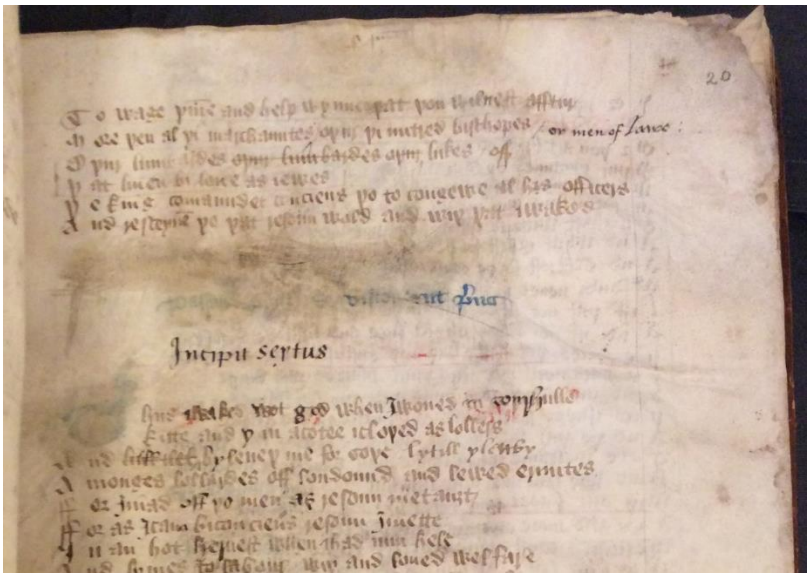

Figure 24: © British Library Board, Additional MS 34779 (P²), f. 20r (detail). Blue ink rubric and capital, partially erased.

P² contains no similar evidence of collaboration. Hand 1 of R copied the entire text of *Piers*, except for two rubrics which appear in a different hand. On folio 20r, an unusually bright blue ink was used to enter the heading for Passus 5 (Figure 24), and at the bottom of folio 40v for the heading of Passus 10.[43] Blue ink was also used to supply lombardic capitals throughout the poem, a feature absent in R. An unsuccessful attempt was made to erase these capitals and the Passus 5 rubric but, despite the damage, they appear to be in the same shade of bright blue so markedly different to the darker colour used for capitals in R. The capitals in P² may have been added after the book was bound: in several places, a smudge of blue ink was left on the facing page where a capital had been written, suggesting that the quires had already been assembled when the blue ink scribe worked on

[43] An early-modern annotator wrote alternative Passus headings throughout the manuscript, mistaking the Prologue for Passus 1 and therefore ahead by one. Below the blue rubric for Passus 5 is written 'Incipit sextus'.

it and that he closed the book too quickly, before the ink had dried.[44] The blue ink additions might then represent later alterations to the manuscript, filling in missing capitals and rubrics at a point after the book had been bound. If they were part of the original process of production, P^2 seems to have been worked on by a different team than R. All this means that the extent to which P^2 and R may have been produced for the same audience or users is unclear, so the material features of R and P^2 do not substantiate a clear relationship between them.

However, other evidence from the texts may support this view. The absence of the 'pardon-tearing scene' from the C version might indicate that the pairing of P^2 with R is connected to a relationship between the 8PV and *Piers*. The creedal verse is not explicitly rejected in this form of the poem, which may have made its view of salvation theology seem closer to the interpolator's own. However, a recent argument has claimed that, though the scene itself is removed, the concerns it expresses remain present, displaced elsewhere, suggesting we ought to be cautious in seeing the C text as more 'conservative' than its predecessors.[45]

The scribe of the AR common ancestor

The work of one further scribe offers support to the view that the 8PV and *Piers* were related, and that R and P^2 were copied by the same scribe because of a perceived or actual relationship between the 8PV and *Piers*. This is the scribe of the common ancestor of AR, a manuscript identified in the textual analysis above as likely to lie behind the significant relationship between those two copies, and probably the source of conflation in E or an ancestor of that manuscript. Like in the Prologue

[44] Smudges occur on ff. 23r, 41r, 54r, and 57r.
[45] Hanna, '"Absent" Pardon-Tearing'.

interpolation, alliteration appears in the corpus of variants in Appendix 4, specifically in the shared variants between AR and EAR, indicating that the text of the AR common ancestor may have been edited under the influence of *Piers*.

As in the Prologue interpolation, the variants do not create alliterative long lines; the metre remains octosyllabic, save for where variation affects the stress pattern. However, alliteration in these variants is often on auxiliary verbs (like 'haþ') or prepositions, rather than nouns and main verbs as seen in the examples from the Prologue. Consider, for example, line 283, where E, A, S, and R are present (C has broken off at this point):

Hanna-Wood	For þai wald noght here bot þat þam pays	l. 283
E	ffor þei wille not here bote þat hem payeþ	f. 4r
A	ffor þei nolden nothyng but þat hem pais	f. 11r
S	ffor þey wyl no3th here but þat hem pays	p. 14
R	ffor þei nold noþing here but þat at hem pais	f. 7v b

A and R have the compound 'nold' in place of 'wald noght' and the additional 'nothyng', creating a double negative and alliteration on the <n> sound. A similar revision occurs at line 572, in Book 1, where AR add 'non' to create alliteration: 'ffouler careyne ne my3tte neuere non be' (A, f. 14v). Other instances of small-scale reworking to generate alliteration include line 796 in Book 1, where 'has' in Hanna-Wood is replaced with 'hym han' in AR. At line 702, 'hym mas' becomes 'maken a man'. Some instances are more evocative: at line 657, Hanna-Wood's 'wlatsom stynk and sour' becomes 'ful loþly licour' in AR.

These examples show that the text of the common ancestor of AR contained variants which increased alliteration. Similar changes are found in shared variants between EAR sampled from Book 6, which might have been carried into the text of E by the process of conflation described

above, responsible for the presence of a fragment of the Prologue interpolation in that manuscript. At line 6499, Hanna-Wood's 'in helle has been' becomes 'han in helle ben' in EAR; at line 6528, 'Þai saw in helle' is replaced with 'and þere þei sauȝ'; and at line 6674, 'als I here shewe yhow can' turns into 'þat seiþ þus þan' (all quoted from A). This alliteration is less extensive than that identified in the Prologue interpolation, which along with its tendency to focus on auxiliary verbs and prepositions suggests it was the work of a different scribe.

The presence of alliteration in the common ancestor of AR implies that *Piers* may have been present in the early stages of the dissemination of the 8PV, where it influenced the scribe of that manuscript. In combination with the evidence of alliteration in the Prologue interpolation, and the copying of P^2 by the same scribe as R, it is highly plausible that *Piers* was present at the composition of the 8PV and remained connected to it through at least two stages of copying. Alliteration in the AR common ancestor might therefore be the result of emendations to the text made by the 8PV reviser and reproduced by that scribe, but this remains only a possibility: certainly, though, the 8PV had a close relationship with *Piers* from early in its production.

Alliteration, probably through contact with *Piers*, was dispersed as a stylistic feature among the scribes and readers who produced the 8PV. This interest among 8PV scribes in *Piers*'s alliteration might indicate a different response to the poem compared to those identified in the previous chapter (and below in the present chapter). I suggested in the previous chapter that readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* were focused on their Latin quotations, and that these had a higher status than the English verse, but *Piers*'s influence on the style of interpolations in *The Prick* indicate attention to the form of Langland's poem.[46] This might be read in opposition to the focus on Latin demonstrated

[46] On *Piers* as a Latin text, see also Lawrence Warner, *The Myth of Piers Plowman: Constructing a Medieval Literary Archive* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 53-71.

by scribes who highlighted the quotations or appended the abbreviation '&c' to them, but it might also imply a similar absence of interest in the content of the English verse demonstrated in responses to Latin. The 8PV scribes borrowed alliteration as a decorative feature, extracting the aural quality of the poem's verse without also importing its metrical principles or its words. Again, *Piers*'s English verse seems to have been read by these individuals as a kind of transparent container, through which they looked for things of greater interest.

Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139

The second interpolated text of *The Prick* under discussion in this chapter is the unique version preserved in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139 (Rawlinson). This manuscript was partly the subject of the second chapter, where its unique interpolations of English verse were identified for the first time. The text of this manuscript was edited by a reviser who inserted several original passages of English verse, some of which contain Latin quotations. Four of these, spread across three insertions, are found also in *Piers*, one exclusively in the B text. In addition to the overlap itself, the similarity between the context of these quotations in *Piers* and in Rawlinson, and the unique use of the term *passus* to describe Book 3 of *The Prick* in Rawlinson, indicate that the reviser had access to a copy of the B text and drew on it in composing the new material. The second chapter showed how the use of the four quotations taken from *Piers* was guided by their context in Langland's poem, making claims on the same subjects – pardons, penance, and salvation. This section examines in closer detail how the interpretation of the Latin quotations in Rawlinson and the style of the interpolations there reflects a view of both *Piers* and *The Prick*.

The Rawlinson insertions

Rawlinson contains many, mostly short, insertions throughout its text of *The Prick*. They are all in octosyllabic verse, or represent an attempt at the form not always accurately executed. They mostly reinforce doctrinal points from a perspective in some ways more conservative than the Main Version, discussed in more detail shortly.

Some engage with social issues, where a similarly reactionary attitude is on display. The first insertion, between lines 887 and 888 in Book 1, responds to the point made in the Main Version that everyone, no matter their status in life, will die and decay. The Rawlinson reviser claims that,

> By fortune when pore me*n* i*n* hono*ur* beþ set
> Lytil þenke þey on þet
> In her welþe wodly þey raues
> And þenke neue*r* on þa*t* þey were knaues
> To worche wronge þey dar *and* may
> Þey spare neyþ*er* ny3t ny day (f. 13r)

This insertion continues for a further thirteen lines in which the reviser quotes a line of Latin attributed to 'a clerk of great app*ri*se', translated as 'More tyra*n*d is no*n* he seiþ i*n*to hie hono*ur* whe*n* he is bro3t / Þan he þat is comen vp of no3t' (13r).[47] The reviser claims that 'knaues' elevated to positions of status and wealth are inherently sinful, in danger of tyranny until 'goddes wraþþe' casts them down from good fortune.

This is an example of a kind of medieval classism not often encountered so explicitly in Middle English religious texts. Although research on the representation of poverty in late-medieval England has stressed tensions between different forms of poverty and the valorisation of labour over

[47] This line, 'Nichil asp*eriu*s humili cu*m* surgit in altu*m*' is found in the *In Eutropium* of Claudian, the late-antique Latin poet associated with the court of Emperor Honorius in late-fourth-century Milan: Claudian, *Invectives contre Eutrope*, ed. by Pierre Fargues (Paris, 1933), l. 181 ('Asperius nihil est humili cum surgit in altum').

voluntary poverty, particularly in antifraternal writing and legislation, Middle English religious texts tend to stress the suffering of the poor and to encourage charity in their readers' relationships with poor people.[48] *The Prick* in particular is remarkably neutral in social terms, making almost no reference to social class or stratification. The point at which the above passage in Rawlinson is inserted is one of very few such moments in the Main Version, and even where social rank is discussed, the point is that the same fate will befall all sinful men (women going unmentioned). The Rawlinson reviser's insistence that poor men are inherently wicked, and that this wickedness expresses itself in moments of social elevation, is therefore curiously at odds with the sentiment of *The Prick*.

The group of insertions borrowing Latin material from *Piers* are concerned with penance and salvation, but diverge in similar ways from the views of the poem in which they are embedded. A passage added a few folios before those identified in the second chapter as influenced by *Piers*, between lines 3705-6 on folio 47r, follows a discussion in Book 4 of the value of mass in moving a soul more quickly through purgatory. The inserted lines clarify the point that the prayers of the damned are worthless, quoting both from the Gospel of John and Psalm 118. In doing so they imitate the style of the Main Version in supporting the argument with Latin material and glossing that material in English. This passage insists on the importance of 'þe gospel' as a guide to correct practice, and the reviser was clearly concerned about the danger of misunderstanding the Main-Version text. *The Prick* was theologically orthodox (though not always uncontroversial), but the

[48] See Kate Crassons, *The Claims of Poverty: Literature, Culture, and Ideology in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, 2010), and additionally Dinah Hazell, *Poverty in Late Middle English Literature: The Meene and the Riche* (Dublin, 2009).

reviser seems to have disagreed with its stance on the value of mass for souls in purgatory and was moved to compose an insertion directly contradicting what came before.[49]

These insertions may be connected to the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century interest in church reform traced in recent scholarship.[50] The 8PV has been linked to these concerns, but in some past accounts was erroneously associated with Wycliffism or lollardy – long known, in fact, as the 'Lollard subgroup'.[51] The Rawlinson revisions similarly appear not to have been influenced by the thought of Wyclif or his followers: the revisions promote none of the characteristic theological or social ideas associated with the movement, for example emphasis on the ten commandments, on prayer, or on social reform.[52] Instead, the reviser appears to have taken a particularly strong view on the value of pardons (discussed in more detail in a moment), and to have placed extreme emphasis on the sacrament of penance as the only correct route to salvation. The revisions are not in that sense heterodox, but were probably not entirely in the mainstream given that they disagree with the views of *The Prick* so widely disseminated among readers of Middle English.

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[49] See *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Brown and others (Exeter, 1999), p. 242; and on heterodox readers and owners of *The Prick*, Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 485-7.

[50] Vincent Gillespie, 'Chichele's Church: Vernacular Theology in England after Thomas Arundel', in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 3-54; Killian, 'Menacing Books', 20.

[51] Lewis-McIntosh, p. 6; Allen, *Writings*, pp. 387-94. In using the term 'lollard', rather than 'Lollard', I follow the view that people who held hereticated views associated with or derived from the thought of Wyclif should not be assumed to have formed a 'distinctive, cohesive social group': see Fiona Somerset, *Feeling Like Saints: Lollard Writings after Wyclif* (Ithaca and London, 2014), p. 16.

[52] Views associated with Wycliff, Wycliffite writers, and lollards are difficult to generalise or schematise but several accounts have been given covering aspects of their thought: see the introduction to *Wycliffite Spirituality*, ed. and trans. by J. Patrick Hornbeck II and others (New York and Mahwah, 2013), pp. 1-29, and Somerset, *Feeling Like Saints*, pp. 5-8, 273-83. For more detailed accounts of particular aspects of lollard thought, see the essays in *Lollards and their Influence in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Fiona Somerset and others (Woodbridge, 2003).

The Rawlinson reviser as a reader of Piers

Looking at the first of the three insertions containing Langlandian Latin in closer detail shows how the reviser was guided by the context of the material in *Piers*, while at the same time redeploying it in a different style. The first insertion occurs during the discussion of pardons in Book 4, where the *Prick* poet describes pardons as follows:

> Pardon helpes þam, als clerkes says,
> Þat is has purchased in þair lif-days,
> For pardon of papes and bisschopes,
> Þat es granted here als men hopes,
> May availe þair saules in purgatory
> Þat has purchaced it here worthyly,
> If þai of þair syn had contricion
> And war shrifen byfor þat pardon. (ll. 3802-9)

This position was apparently too generous for the Rawlinson reviser, for the insertion following it a few lines later asserts a different view:

> Of al þis þat I haue said bifore [l. 3832]
> Is ged*er*id holy chirche tresore [l. 3833]
>
> [Interpolated material begins here]
>
> Þ*a*t is grauntid to he*m* þ*a*t haue u*er*rey cont*ric*ion
> And after h*er* power makeþ satisfaccio*un*
> Of alle wrongwise takyng i*n* h*er* lyue
> And of alle her synn*es* clene hem schryue
> In his bulle to oþ*er* g*ra*untid þe pope neu*er* p*ar*don
> Ffor if he hade a3eyn our*e* crede hade he don
> Þat in q*ui*cu*nque* wlt [*sic*] saiþ þus
> And al holy writ þ*er*to bereþ witn*es*
> Qui bo*na* eger*un*t ib*un*t i*n* uita*m* et*er*na*m* q*ui* u*ero*
> mala i*n* ign*em* et*er*na*m*
> Þ*a*t is to say þ*a*t goode werk*es* don i*n* charite
> In eu*er*lastynge lif h*er* wonyng schal be
> And þei þ*a*t yuel wirche *and* so ende

Into fuir for eu*er* schul þei wende
Þ*er* is no p*ar*don þ*a*t schal hem saue
Þa*n*ne it is to drede leste fewe it haue
In þis forme to pet*er* þis treso*ur* c*ri*st dide 3iue
Among his disciplis whil he dide lyue
Goode to louse *and* yuel to bynde
And þis power hade*n* þe apostl*es* alle we fynde (f. 49r)

The inserted material expresses a more restrictive view than the Main Version. Drawing on the language of the sacrament of penance, the reviser claims that pardon should be interpreted as the gift of salvation given to those who receive satisfaction for their sins. This view is derived from an interpretation of Verse 41 of the Athanasian Creed which stresses the 'drede' it should inspire, and which is placed in the historical context of Christ's gift of the power of judgment to his apostles. Papal pardons in this view are a misunderstanding of doctrine, as they contradict this interpretation of the Creed – like Langland's priest, the reviser sees 'no p*ar*don' in it.

This insertion suggests that the reviser found *The Prick* dangerously ambiguous in its treatment of the subject of pardons, and drew on the Latin in *Piers* to compose an insertion clarifying a more correct position. Although the insertion borrows material from the poem, the views it expresses are not straightforwardly derived from *Piers*. In the B text, the words of the Creed borrowed by the reviser are destroyed in the pardon-tearing scene. Following the tearing, Piers declares that,

Of preiers and of penaunce my plou3 shal ben herafter,
And wepen whan I sholde werche þou3 whete breed me failleþ
The prophete his payn eet in penaunce and in sorwe
By þat þe Sauter vs seith, and so dide othere manye. (B.7.124-7)

These lines are part of a speech in which Piers seems to lament the injustice of the Creed. He asks, 'The foweles in þe firmament, who fynt hem at wynter? […] Haue þei no gerner to go to but god fynt

hem alle' (7.133, 135). The position taken here is complicated: Piers laments the suffering of the poor and the weak, yet seems also to assert faith that God will protect them. The emphasis on penance and on a return to the sacraments as the source of redemption is tonally ambiguous, resigned yet also in acknowledgement of the security offered by the 'Sauter'. The position in the inserted passage is not entirely dissimilar. It emphasises the responsibility of the individual to atone for their own sins, but maintains that forgiveness is possible through penance.

Nonetheless, this insertion represents a flattening of the scene in *Piers*. Its ambiguity and emotional conflict are discarded and its underlying point translated into the discursive style of *The Prick*. Although the reviser's views are misaligned with the Main Version, he adopts its typical clarity and singlemindedness, and this loss of ambiguity is reflected also in the treatment of Latin in the new insertions. The Rawlinson text emphasises the clarity of guidance offered by scripture and other authoritative Latin materials; unlike *Piers*, it admits no sense of confusion or difficulty of interpretation. This is unsurprising, given the reviser's evident concern with possible errors in *The Prick* and attempts to control its interpretation by the intended readers of the new version, but it also represents another kind of assimilation. It reflects the interpretative mode of *The Prick*, discussed above in relation to the 8PV, in which Latin quotations express a single fixed and explicable meaning. Like the 8PV, the Rawlinson reviser adopts the intellectual style of *The Prick*, rather than *Piers*.

Also significant is the reviser's exclusive interest in Latin. While the creedal quotation inserted between lines 3833-4 contains a gloss on the Latin like that of Langland's priest, the revision makes no direct borrowing of English material from the poem. Instead, *Piers* was mined for the Latin it contains, and it was in the Latin that the reviser found authoritative support for his views on pardons and other contentious subjects. The Rawlinson revision put *The Prick* in contact with *Piers*

through this most visible of their shared formal features, and suggests that the reviser treated Langland's text as a repository of Latin scaffolded with English.

Evidence for a relationship between the 8PV and Rawlinson

Both Rawlinson and the 8PV show an interest in Langland's reflection on the creedal verse they each repeat. The Rawlinson reviser was invested more broadly in Langland's Latin, which was apparently useful to him. He appears to have taken a utilitarian approach to *Piers*, excavating quotations from areas in which their context was related to his own aims. The 8PV reviser, and one of the earliest scribes of the 8PV who produced the AR common ancestor, were probably influenced by the form of *Piers*, but beyond this interest in its alliteration *Piers* seems to have had a lesser status than *The Prick*. *The Prick* was the vehicle by which the 8PV and Rawlinson revisers each communicated their views. This choice may have been constrained by practical or material factors – perhaps a need was felt for more copies of *The Prick* – but it still indicates the poem's adaptability and relevance.

Piers was available in the production context of both interpolated versions, and continued to be associated with the 8PV in the copying of the AR ancestor and the work of the scribe of R and P^2. This might imply that R remained physically close to the source of the revision, and that its dialectal localisation in Shropshire reflects the area where the 8PV was written. It has been shown that the 8PV incorporates material found also in the *Speculum Christiani*, a late fourteenth-century Latin pastoral manual, and suggested on this basis that the 8PV may have been produced in the same Yorkshire context.[53] The material evidence for its circulation, however, does not support this

[53] Killian, 'Menacing Books', 20-4.

view, with no indications of northern production. It seems more likely that the 8PV reviser worked in the Midlands and accessed the materials overlapping with *Speculum Christiani* separately from its compilers.

Shropshire is the same county to which the dialect of Rawlinson is localised. Neither manuscript contains other provenance information, but their dialectal similarity might suggest that there was some link between them. Two revisers of *The Prick* possibly active in the same county, both with an interest in the salvific implications of the Athanasian Creed and its transmission in English, and both with access to *Piers*, is at the very least a striking coincidence. The aims of the two revisions are clearly very different, but their shared interests at least speak to the dissemination and influence of *Piers* in this area, not visible from surviving manuscripts of the poem alone.

Conclusion

This chapter has made a claim for the existence of a web of readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* together in the north-west Midlands at the turn of the fifteenth century. Up to four individuals are identifiable as readers of both poems: the Rawlinson reviser, the 8PV reviser, the scribe of the common ancestor of AR, and the scribe of R and P^2. The texts and manuscripts produced by these people are likely to have reached a larger audience of readers or listeners as they were read and circulated. The north-west Midlands emerges in this account as a newly-visible area of interest in *Piers*, not as significant as the centres of production identified in the second chapter, but equally not previously evident from the surviving copies. This interest, though, did not take the form we might expect; the evidence gathered here suggests its status was secondary to that of *The Prick*, and it was read in ways which do not correspond to modern habits.

Both interpolated texts suggest *The Prick* was valued as a vehicle for the new material the two revisers wanted to communicate, but also as a standard for expression. They may have had questions about its content, which seems to have required adaptation for the specific audiences or contexts in which the 8PV and Rawlinson were intended to circulate, but its discursive mode and form was clearly considered useful. Both interpolators composed new verse imitating the style of the Main Version, and borrowed the interpretative approach of the poem too.

The narrative form of *Piers* was not useful in the same way. Although alliteration was apparently considered an attractive stylistic device, neither interpolation was composed in alliterative long lines or adopts Langland's trademark uncertainty. This should not be taken for granted – manuscripts of *Piers* contain many insertions in stylistically congruent alliterative verse, and *Piers* inspired a group of later texts (the '*Piers Plowman* tradition') which all indicate that some people were up to the task of composing in alliterative metre and narrative form.[54]

This difference indicates that the form of *The Prick*, its octosyllabic couplets embedded with Latin quotations, was generically associated with religious and theological discourse. How, then, was *Piers* read in contact with it, when the evidence amassed here suggests that readers were interested in its Latin content particularly in relation to salvation theology? Perhaps it seemed like a version of *The Prick* wrapped in a strange skin, alliterative and narrative. That medieval readers might have seen the poem in similar terms to more directly didactic texts should not come as a surprise: *Piers* has long been seen in modern criticism as a 'commentary'. Where for readers of the last century the target of that commentary has sometimes seemed 'an unknown text', for readers in

[54] See the list of unoriginal added lines in Kane, pp. 45-50, Kane-Donaldson, pp. 221-4,and Russell-Kane, pp. 183-5. The texts of the '*Piers Plowman* tradition' are edited in *The Piers Plowman Tradition: A Critical Edition of Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger, and The Crowned King*, ed. by Helen Barr (London, 1993).

the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the answer may have been clearer.[55] Like *The Prick*, *Piers* was a collection and discussion of Latin texts drawn mostly from the Bible. At the same time its strangeness, so apparent to modern readers, may also have been a feature of its medieval reception: the borrowing of alliteration by the Eight-Part interpolator and an associated scribe indicates that this audience was aware of its form, and in selecting not to copy it more accurately may have registered their view of its misalignment with the poem's content.

The two interpolated texts also suggest how their producers sought to mediate both *Piers* and *The Prick* to the audiences and readers imagined for these new versions. The 8PV interpolator and the Rawlinson reviser were both less interested in the kinds of access to Latin material by English readers imagined and promoted by the two poems. The Eight-Part reviser inserted many long passages of Latin prose surely inaccessible to the 'laude men þat er unkunnand' (l. 338) assumed by the poem itself. The Rawlinson reviser was clearly mistrustful of the capacity of his audience to understand *The Prick* without being drawn into error. Both cases might suggest a narrowing of the interest in Middle English theological discussion, or 'vernacular theology', represented by both poems and many other fourteenth-century texts.[56]

So in a sense, both poems became objects of suspicion in contact. The interpretative openness of *Piers* was discarded by both revisers in favour of clean-cut glosses and exegesis, a mode borrowed most directly from *The Prick*; but *The Prick* too was augmented in the Rawlinson revision through the 'correction' of its views, and by the 8PV through the change in its Latinity, limiting the

[55] Morton W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, 1962), p. 32.
[56] 'Vernacular theology' is defined in Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409', *Speculum*, 70 (1995), 822-64 (823, n. 4).

access of the non-Latinate readers imagined by the poem itself by interpolating new, lengthy passages of Latin prose.

These are forms of reader response which have had a chequered reception in modern scholarship. The regulation, and sometimes constraint, of textual production and culture has been of interest to many accounts of literature in late-medieval England, in terms of the Wycliffite heresy, other hereticated theological movements, and the discussion of theological subjects in Middle English.[57] Studies of reading and readers, however, have tended to overlook examples of restriction. There has been a tendency in scholarship to look for creativity and originality in medieval reading practices, but particularly in the Rawlinson revisions these qualities are not apparent.[58] The insertions instead suggest concern over ambiguity and a conservative approach to form, seemingly disengaged from the attributes of the poem celebrated today. So, how can we address medieval reception when it is opposed to the ways we ourselves want to see medieval texts? Without returning to the George Kane school of thought, which unhelpfully chastised the supposed incompetence of scribes, it may be productive to consider ways in which medieval reading could sometimes be simplifying, dogmatic, and reductive.[59] A balanced view of the medieval past must embrace the 'bad' readers, as well as the good.

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[57] On Wycliffism and lollards, see Hudson, *Premature Reformation*; Somerset, *Feeling Like Saints*; *Wycliffite Spirituality*, ed. and trans. by Hornbeck and others; and *Lollards and their Influence*, ed. by Somerset and others. The development of and response to other heresies is traced in Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, 2006). Discussion of the 'censorship' of academic discussion and literary production was stimulated by Watson, 'Censorship'; see responses in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, (Turnhout, 2011).

[58] See the influential view of the value of scribal variation as a form of literary criticism in B. A. Windeatt, 'The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 1 (1979), 119-41.

[59] Articulated, for example, in '"Good" and "Bad" Manuscripts: Texts and Critics', in *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches* (London, 1989), pp. 206-13 (particularly 208).

Conclusion

The final two chapters have described how readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* responded to the two poems in contact. These individuals extracted Latin from the two poems: the reviser of Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 139 plucked Latin quotations from a copy of the B text, guided by their context in *Piers*, and placed them into new bits of verse intended to fit the form of *The Prick*. Others, many in fact, highlighted Latin in their copying of the two poems: scribes copied the embedded quotations in red or in eye-catching 'display' scripts, drawing attention to the special status of these words. Some expressed the relationship between the poems' Latin and other Latin: copyists of *Piers*, in particular, were likely to indicate the missing context or conclusion of these quotations with the abbreviation '&c', marking their relationship with the world of authoritative Latin textual culture. These responses suggest two things about the joint reception of *Piers* and *The Prick*: firstly that both poems were read as Latin texts, and secondly that they were read for specific parts of their content, in a kind of 'selective' or 'extractive' reading.

Collections

Reading has been called 'poaching': in Michel de Certeau's formulation, 'readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write'.[1] Might these terms characterise readers of *Piers* and *The Prick*? In reading these two

[1] Michel de Certeau, 'Reading as Poaching', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 165-76.

Middle English texts, readers appear to have focused on the part of both poems of most interest to them, the Latin, and paid only minimal attention to the English. From this perspective, they might have subverted the linguistic form of these works to take what they wanted, resisting the structures of vernacularity imposed on them. Readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* might come to seem more like the rebellious readers I described in the introduction, characterised there as potentially inaccurate representations of reading in the medieval past.

De Certeau identifies his nomadic subjects in resistance to a view of readers as passive consumers, 'grazing on the ration of simulacra the system distributes to each individual'.[2] The nature of these readers is determined by their technological and cultural circumstances; fed texts through the television screen, a medium which allows no response or rewriting, such readers are disempowered by cultural elites through the mass media, which in the modern period has come to replace the Church as the principal institution by which subjects are conditioned into subjugation. De Certeau seeks out forms of reading which defy this characterisation of readerly passivity within a totalitarian cultural regime, insisting that reading, even if it leaves no traces, remains private and free.

Many people in the middle ages lived within oppressive systems, and resisted these structures in their reading. The period's many heresies testify to ongoing tension between established power and rebellion, cast as a struggle between orthodox belief and blasphemy.[3] The Wycliffites and lollards in England demonstrate how reading could be fundamental to political

[2] 'Poaching', p. 166.

[3] On the expression of heretical ideas in late-medieval England, see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, 2006).

resistance, and a marker of dissent from the perspective of authority.[4] Yet while some readers of *Piers* may have ended up on the wrong side of power, if we accept the view that the text circulated among Norfolk rebels in the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, many were not.[5] Indeed, as the second chapter showed, many were members of the very institution which de Certeau held to be the ultimate premodern enforcer of cultural hegemony, the Church. It seems unlikely that ecclesiastical readers would have perceived their reading as resistant to the structures of authority manifested in the texts they encountered, particularly when those texts were concerned with religious subjects. This probability is borne out in the evidence of the fourth chapter, where I suggested that most producers of *Piers* and *The Prick* worked to make their books fit with widespread normative standards. The selective reading identified in that and the final chapter might then have been equally normative, a common strategy or response from readers who viewed their reading practices as standard.

Langland and the *Prick* poet, in fact, may have expected this kind of reading. Medieval authors sometimes imagined reading as a form of extraction, as in the wry comments of the Nun's Priest at the end of his tale of Chaunticleer and Pertelote:

> But ye that holden this tale a folye,
> As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
> Taketh the moralite, goode men.
> For Seint Paul saith that al that written is,
> To oure doctrine it is ywrite, ywis;
> Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.[6]

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[4] Ann Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books* (London and Ronceverte, 1985). See also Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford, 1988), and for selected texts associated with the heresy, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Anne Hudson (Cambridge, 1978).

[5] Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 102-39; Sebastian Sobecki, 'Hares, Rabbits, Pheasants: *Piers Plowman* and William Longewille, a Norfolk Rebel in 1381', *Review of English Studies*, 69 (2018), 216-36; Anne Hudson, '*Piers Plowman* and the Peasant's Revolt: A Problem Revisited', *YLS*, 8 (1994), 85-106; and Michael Johnston, 'William Langland and John Ball', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 29-74.

[6] 'The Nun's Priest's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford, 2008), pp. 252-61, ll. 3438-43.

His readers are advised to extract the 'moralite' from the story, like drawing a grain of wheat out of the papery folds which sheath it. This image probably derives from Saint Augustine, who uses it to describe the difference between the sense of a text and its expression in words: finding the grain requires reason, a human faculty, and therefore a desirable one.[7] This kind of reading, searching in a text for its inner sense, was virtuous.[8] This view is reflected elsewhere: Mary Carruthers, for example, has examined how the *Didascalion* of Hugh of Saint Victor, a manual of theological instruction, taught students to 'gather' from texts, breaking long works up into smaller components to be memorised.[9] In the context of monastic teaching, and the broader mnemonic practices associated with the divine office and exemplified in the memorisation of the Psalms, reading was again a selective, extractive process.[10] Storage of the whole work might have been the aim, but this required an analytical approach.

Might these forms of reading, which emphasised distinctions between different textual elements, selection of certain categories of material, and extraction of that material, sometimes into the memory, have conditioned how texts were viewed? These reading practices may have conceptualised texts as containers, repositories, or collections of material to be 'mined', as readers looked for meaning surrounded by disposable packaging.

This perspective is not unique to the late middle ages: in our own period, some texts are approached in ways we might call utilitarian, and written with the same expectation. The forms of reading applied to self-help books, for example, have been characterised as a 'self-help hermeneutic' which 'expropriat[es] textual insights for the purposes of self-betterment'.[11] But the perspective of

[7] See D. W. Robertson, Jr., *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 57-8.
[8] Robertson, *Preface to Chaucer*, pp. 316-7, suggests that reading the 'chaff' was associated with heresy.
[9] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 104-5.
[10] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, p. 101.
[11] Beth Blum, 'The Self-Help Hermeneutic: Its Global History and Literary Future', *PMLA*, 133 (2018), 1099-117.

the middle ages was partly determined by technological and cultural conditions which gave rise to the particular attitudes I identify in readers of *Piers* and *The Prick* in particularly pervasive ways. The middle ages were characterised by a widespread essentialism, holding that concepts and beings existed outside of perceptible material reality but were accessible through certain experiences or forms of language. In one account, 'most pre-modern writers thought of knowledge as a collection of truths awaiting expression in human languages [...] these truths are general but can never, with the exception of a limited set of axioms, be universally or singly expressed'.[12] A. C. Spearing has argued that medieval people understood certain narratives to exist outside of texts and separate from individual subjectivity, in opposition to our presentist view in which all narratives are attributable to a speaking voice.[13] Instead, some stories simply existed outside the physical medium of a speaker, whether real or represented. In this climate, it seems possible that many textual forms, not just those of the highest status, might have been perceived as containing or expressing essential truths or concepts.

This period was also marked by a high level of reliance on the memory for the storage and retrieval of information, which may have created dependence on texts as organised repositories of a range of material: practical, literary, theological.[14] In a world without mechanised systems for data storage and retrieval, a much wider range of texts than we are now familiar with might have been expected to carry out the collection and preservation of cultural materials. Although it might be objected that every written text can be seen as part of the archive of the culture which produced it, consider how scribes of *Piers* often treated its Latin quotations: their addition of the abbreviation '&c' to many of them suggests how *Piers* combined a mnemonic function with other uses for its late-

[12] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, p. 30.
[13] *Textual Subjectivity: The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 21-3.
[14] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, pp. 99-152.

medieval audience. Written texts could also function as a record of images or other texts displayed in church buildings, allowing these objects to be reconstructed in the imagination.[15] So, while some texts were fully committed to the memory (like the Psalms), others served in other ways to preserve cultural materials, and evidence from the layout of books also supports this view. M. B. Parkes's account of textual presentation in the late middle ages suggests how scribes increasingly developed tools to organise academic texts; increasingly sophisticated divisions, arrangements, and hierarchies imply that these writings were immensely important repositories of knowledge.[16] The third chapter showed how books themselves may have been seen in similar terms: as repositories of dissimilar materials useful in different ways to their producers.

Under these circumstances, writers may have deliberately structured their works as collections of other material, suggesting how these conditions of reception might have affected how texts were composed. *The Prick* clearly saw itself in these terms: in its own words, the poem is 'drawen / of sere maters' (ll. 336-7), as it brings together and stores for future readers a host of culturally-important materials in its many pieces of Latin. This practice has long been recognised in the genre of *compilatio*: the collection of authoritative materials presented with interpretative aids and commentary.[17] *Compilators* practiced a 'specialised literary activity', excerpting and reciting the words of their *auctors*, with whom real authority rested.[18]

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[15] Vincent Gillespie, 'Medieval Hypertext: Image and Text from York Minster', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers. Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. by P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 206-29; Sonja Drimmer, 'Off the wall: the circulation of St. Paul's *Tabula* chronicle in manuscript', conference paper given at The Early Book Society Conference, Dublin, July 2019.

[16] M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande, 1991), pp. 35-70.

[17] Alastair Minnis, 'Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Rôle of the *Compilator*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 101 (1979), 385-421.

[18] Minnis, '*Compilatio*', 390.

The Prick was clearly written in view of this tradition, but Langland has not usually been seen in direct relation to it (although other fourteenth-century literary texts have).[19] His Latin quotations have been read, instead, in relation to the structure of sermons, seen as an expression of scriptural concordance.[20] The quotations, in this view, structure the poem: linked by shared vocabulary, they form a net of resonances accessible only to the trained ear. Concordance certainly explains the selection of many quotations, but the lack of interest among modern readers in seeing Langland's poem as another gathering of 'sere maters', a *compilatio* of Latin, might reflect the deep-seated habit described in the introduction of viewing *Piers* as a literary text. Our sense of this category may fail to account for the wider range of functions a narrative verse text could have in late-medieval England: seeing the relationship between *Piers* and *The Prick* suggests how Langland may have borrowed the earlier poem's model for a vernacularised *compilatio* in his own work.

Piers also reflects in other ways the late-medieval view of texts as collections I have suggested here. The poem gathers a huge range of generic forms: romance, estates satire, debate, biblical narrative, apocalypse.[21] It also represents discourses symbolically, as explored in the first chapter. Langland invokes instructional literature, legal texts, documents, academic writing, patristics, and the bible. These textual forms are sometimes portrayed as books or other objects which stand for whole traditions of writing, for example in the pardon-tearing scene or the feast of Conscience in passus 13, where the guests are literally served the writings of Ambrose and Augustine for dinner.[22] These genres and discourses are mixed together in ways modern readers have

[19] Ralph Hanna, '*Compilatio* and the Wife of Bath: Latin Backgrounds, Ricardian Texts', in *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late-Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1-11.
[20] John A. Alford, 'The Role of the Quotations in *Piers Plowman*', *Speculum*, 52 (1977), 80-99.
[21] Steven Justice, 'The Genres of *Piers Plowman*', *Viator*, 19 (1988), 291-306.
[22] On the representation of documents in the poem, see Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 93-142; on books in the feast of Conscience, see Anne Savage, '*Piers Plowman*: The Translation of Scripture and Food for the Soul', *English Studies*, 1 (1993), 209-21.

sometimes found confusing, but which may have made sense to medieval readers as a repository of cultural artefacts. Structured by its principle of linked dream visions, the poem stores these and a host of other late-medieval tropes into a form ready for extraction in reading.

Latin and English

Together, *Piers* and *The Prick* pose questions of the status of English and Latin in late-medieval England, as many of their readers, together and separately, took most interest in the Latin quotations. *Piers* may have stored genres and discourses in its written repository, but the findings gathered here suggest that the poems' Latin was the target of the most sustained focus in reading.[23] Particularly in the Rawlinson revisions, English seems to have provided a kind of packaging, serving as a guide to the interpretation of the quotations but not of much worth on its own. This might suggest that in collecting Latin quotations, the English verse of both poems formed the chaff around the grain within. I have suggested that both poems were structured to invite this approach, but this view raises another set of questions about their composition: why write in English at all, if Latin was what your readers cared about? What was the status of composition in Middle English, in texts written to collect pieces of Latin?

The genre of *compilatio* was developed in Latin for clerical readers. Texts of this kind functioned as an index to the materials they cited, and enabled those without access to substantial libraries, or the training required to read complex Latin works, to engage with the writings of

[23] A similar pattern has been found in previous accounts of the poem's reception: see Lawrence Warner, *The Myth of Piers Plowman: Constructing a Medieval Literary Archive* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 53-71; and Simon Horobin, 'John Cok and his Copy of *Piers Plowman*', *YLS*, 27 (2013), 45-59.

auctors.[24] *The Prick*, in Middle English, imagines itself enabling access to these materials for the non-Latinate, linking the vernacular to mass participation in textual culture. This view is laid out in the Prologue, which echoes the prologues of several other long verse texts produced in the North of England which similarly reflect on the meaning of composition in English and connect vernacular writing to a wide audience. The most forceful of these is *Cursor Mundi*, a verse history of the world composed in the early fourteenth century, which asserts that English is 'for the commun at understand'.[25] *Speculum Vitae*, similarly, claims of English, 'that canne ilk a man understand / that es borne in Inglande'.[26] The extent to which these claims reflect the historical reality of a sense of linguistic identity has been debated, and they may well represent little more than a fantasy of ethnic and political unity, but nonetheless indicate the deep connection perceived by these writers between English and textual access.[27]

At the same time, the poem's vernacular sources are submerged. Substantial portions of it were translated from an Anglo-French text, *Les Peines de Purgatorie*, but these borrowings are unacknowledged. The same is true of the Latin works it translates into Middle English verse, which mostly include theological compendia from which extracts were borrowed, but no vernacular source is treated like the Latin quotations which are consistently cited with source identifications.[28]

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[24] Minnis, '*Compilatio*', 402-3.

[25] *Cursor Mundi: A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century*, ed. by Richard Morris, EETS, OS 57, 59, 66, 3 vols (London, 1874-93), l. 236 (quoted from MS Cotton Vespasian A III).

[26] *Speculum Vitae: A Reading Edition*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, EETS, OS 331 and 332, 2 vols (Oxford, 2008), ll. 67-8.

[27] John J. Thompson, 'The *Cursor Mundi*, the 'Inglis tong', and 'Romance'', in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. by Carol M. Meale (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 99-120; Nicholas Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Exeter, 1999), pp. 331-52 (334-8); Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 40-6. See also Douglas Moffat, 'Sin, Conquest, Servitude: English Self-image in the Chronicles of the Early Fourteenth Century', in *The Work of Work: Servitude, Slavery, and Labor in Medieval England*, ed. by Allen J. Franzen and Douglas Moffat (Glasgow, 1994), pp. 146-68.

[28] Hanna-Wood, p. lv; see also Rheinhold Köhler, 'Quellennachweise zu Richard Rolles von Hampole Gedicht *The Pricke of Conscience*', *Jahrbuch für romanische und englische Literatur*, 6 (1865), 196-212.

The openness demonstrated in *The Prick* to what we might now think of as plagiarism has, in other contexts, been connected to a sense of ambition about the capacity for the vernacular to 'displace' Latin: Rita Copeland argues that vernacular translation of academic texts made a claim for the place of the vernacular within this textual culture.[29] The *Prick* poet might have displaced the Latin texts translated into Middle English verse, and evidently viewed English as capable of glossing the Latin quotations, but drew a distinction between the quotations, as separate, pre-existing material, and his own English verse. The status of the vernacular in *The Prick* is therefore characterised by its association with wide access but also its lesser prestige and intellectual significance.

Similar differences are present in *Piers*, where Langland represents the vernacular in several ways. In places, as shown in the first chapter, the vernacular discourse of instructional writing serves as a powerful alternative to the dreamer's sinful desire to know everything. Anima, figure of the soul, chastises him in the B and C texts, comparing his desire to the dangerous preaching of friars, whose discussion of complex theological questions threatens to lead the people into error (B.15.50-79, C.16.212-38). Instead, they should restrict their sermonising to the ten commandments and the categorisation of the sins. Likewise Dame Studie, in all three versions of the poem, repudiates Wit for sharing too much with the dreamer and sets out an alternative course of basic religious instruction. These discourses are spiritually beneficial – the dreamer progresses on his journey through Dame Studie's path – and are also widely accessible: vernacular instruction is available to 'lewed peple' (B.15.72), not restricted to the clergy. This term echoes the earlier identifications of unlearned people from the northern Prologues: *The Prick*, for example, is written for 'laude men' (l. 338).[30] Langland's representation of the capacity for vernacular discourses to reach a wide audience

[29] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 7.
[30] On the term 'lewed', see Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1998).

reflected a much broader concern with this possibility among religious writers and the church itself.[31]

Yet vernacular sources for *Piers* are disguised, like those of *The Prick*. Unlike Latin authorities, none are cited by name, and few are quoted directly. Although Langland drew on the vocabulary of *The Prick*, alongside the *Somme le roi* and *Speculum Vitae*, this language is put in the mouths of Piers Plowman and Wit, spoken by figures with a range of other meanings. The poem's debts to other kinds of vernacular writing too are implicit: some lexical parallels indicate Langland's familiarity with love poetry, but romance is mostly signalled through its typical tropes, like the dreamer falling asleep on a spring morning.[32]

These joint impulses in the representation of vernacular writing indicate the difference in its status compared to Latin. Composition in English meant writing in the language of a huge audience; though not necessarily intended to reach that audience in its entirety, the vernacular was associated with a much wider capacity for textual access. The class positioning of this audience is not entirely clear: both Anima's 'lewed people' and *The Prick*'s 'laude men' might encompass a range of non-Latinate individuals, but Latin nonetheless had a higher intellectual status, and while the languages might interact, they were separate. This is reflected in the presentation of a manuscript like Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.1.17, discussed in the fourth chapter: a huddle of Middle English texts follow the mass of Latin works, written in anglicana where Latin is presented in textualis. Middle English, in this view, is the chaff of *Piers* and *The Prick*, a medium of composition for the two poems which facilitated their collection of Latin quotations.

[31] Watson, 'Politics', p. 335.

[32] On lexical parallels with love poetry, see Sarah Wilma Watson, 'Grace Holds the 'Clicket' to the Heavenly 'Wicket': *Piers Plowman*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the Poetics of Penetration', *YLS*, 30 (2016), 207-26.

Despite its status relative to Latin, Middle English could still be turned to poetic ends in both texts. This kind of 'chaff' was not completely worthless: both poets clearly invested substantial time and energy into composing verse, and both, to some extent, used the vernacular to discuss questions which were also posed elsewhere in Latin.[33] In the context of religious writing, imitating the form of *compilatio*, writing in English might therefore have represented a conscious investment in a language of lower status. Alongside the evidence of readers' responses to *Piers* and *The Prick*, indicating that English had a lower status than Latin for many Middle English speakers until well into the fifteenth century, this view of the composition of the two poems adds to a body of scholarship which has investigated the complex status of the vernacular in the late middle ages, against older views of the 'triumph of English'.[34]

Access and exclusion

Piers and *The Prick* consider questions of access to written texts through language. They both, along with other fourteenth-century works, saw the vernacular as a language of wide social reach but low intellectual status, and chose to write in it despite that status, but neither poem was clearly written in a spirit of full access to English writings for all people in England. Nicholas Watson has suggested that Langland saw a danger in widespread engagement with vernacular instructional writing, concerned that this might spread low-quality advice and reduce self examination.[35] Similarly, Langland's expectations of his audience are suggested by the demands the poem makes of its

[33] For a similar view of *Piers*, see Alastair Minnis, *Translations of Authority in Medieval English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 5-6.
[34] Basil Cottle, *The Triumph of English 1350-1400* (London, 1969). See Sarah Stanbury, 'Vernacular Nostalgia and *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 44 (2002), 92-107.
[35] Watson, 'Politics', p. 339.

readers' Latin: it only rarely glosses the quotations it contains, and competency in Latin, or the translations provided in modern editions, are required to read the poem fully. In some obvious ways, *Piers* was not written to be read by the people it imagines as the audience of vernacular instructional texts.

The Prick is substantially more accessible for non-Latinate readers, but in their written form, both *Piers* and *The Prick* were available in a primary sense only to people with access to literacy and book technologies. Audiences who received the poem aurally might also have had access to it, but only through the mediation of a reader; like language, materiality also produced conditions which excluded some from these two texts. The second chapter showed that, in their joint transmission, the poems found an audience among clerical readers. In these contexts, both poems were produced for the readership of people with the set of classed skills required for access to them, and which both to some extent expected.

What, then, did the low status of English composition mean in the context of writing for a clerical audience? Both poems preserve the hierarchy of languages which placed Latin above English, so their composition in English might have constituted a means of engaging with questions of 'lewed' access to religious instruction while reproducing forms of access and exclusion. Both poems were deeply invested in the power structures inherent in England's multilingual culture, and their readers also sought to maintain these.

This view implicates what has been an important question for *Piers Plowman* studies: for whom was the poem written? This question has received substantial attention, but its corollary has been paid much less: for whom was it not written? This second question is important because in writing literary history, we must account for the ability of certain individuals and groups to access

and respond to the materials under consideration at the expense of others. If not, we risk writing this history from only one perspective.

Many modern readers of medieval texts have worked to understand more fully the representation of marginalised communities in the period: women, immigrants, colonial subjects, queer people, serfs.[36] Yet a key issue has remained: the fact that almost all the materials on which this work has been carried out are the product of an elite culture. Books themselves could only be produced by those with access to book technologies and literacy, reflected in Steven Justice's argument that the rebels in the 1381 revolt took aim at symbols of literacy and textual production. Writing a history of economically marginalised people is difficult in every period, but from the middle ages very little survives.[37]

The history of contact between *Piers Plowman* and *The Prick of Conscience*, then, is a history of elite access to written texts. This fact is unavoidable, but produces its own conclusions which might be usefully taken forward. As a history of reading, the relationship between them suggests that many medieval readers were extremely concerned with normativity, tradition, and the reproduction of the structures of power operating in their moment: what they might have understood as the maintenance of stability. These readers were individuals with substantial economic and cultural privilege relative to most others in their society, and their desire to preserve the conditions which offered them this privilege should not be surprising. In reading medieval texts, particularly those we now see as 'literature', and in reading the responses of their early readers, we must therefore be willing to find difference and discontinuity with the present. Normalising the

[36] See, for example, Priscilla Martin, *Chaucer's Women: Nuns, Wives and Amazons* (Basingstoke and London, 1990); Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York, 2003); Glenn Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation* (Minneapolis and London, 2003); Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*.

[37] This difficulty is discussed, in the context of modern literature, in Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edn (New Haven, 2008), pp. 1-11.

material productions which survive to us as a cultural record on our terms is not enough: the middle ages were profoundly alien, a time when the rules to which we are accustomed did not always apply, and so we must look for their strangeness as well as their familiarity.

Appendix 1: Mirk's *Festial* in Douce 60 and Douce 108

The following table shows the order of sermons in the texts of Mirk's *Festial* in Bodleian Library, MSS Douce 60 and Douce 108, and the order of the edited text of the *Festial* in *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II*, ed. by Susan Powell, EETS, OS 334, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). The order of sermons in Douce 108 is pegged to that of Douce 60, to indicate the relationship between their slightly different groupings. The order of the edited sermons is unrelated to either of the manuscript copies, and is shown for reference.

Douce 60		Douce 108		Edition
Sermon	**f.**	**Sermon**	**p.**	**Sermon**
		Prologue	1	Prayer
Nativity of the Virgin	1r			Prologue
Conception of the Virgin	3r			Advent
Purification of the Virgin	5v			St Andrew
St Margaret	9r			St Nicholas
Mary Magdalen	12r			Conception of the Virgin
St Katherine	17v			St Thomas Apostle
St Anne	20r			Nativity of Christ
Fist Sunday in Advent	23r	First Sunday in Advent	2	St Stephen
Second Sunday in Advent	2r	Second Sunday in Advent	5	St John Evangelist
St Andrew Apostle	27r	St Andrew Apostle	13	Holy Innocents
St Nicholas	33v	St Nicholas	27	Thomas of Canterbury
St Thomas of India	35r	St Thomas of India	36	Circumcision
Christmas	38v			Epiphany
		St Stephen	42	Conversion of St Paul
St John Evangelist	45v	St John Evangelist	51	Purification of the Virgin
Holy Innocents	49v	Holy Innocents	58	Septuagesima
St Thomas Beckett	53r	St Thomas Beckett	65	Sexagesima
		Circumcision	84	Quinquagesima
Epiphany	62ar	Epiphany	92	St Matthias
Conversion of St Paul	66av			1 Lent
St Matthew Apostle	69r	St Matthew Apostle	103	2 Lent
		Lord's Supper	110	3 Lent
St George	70r	St George	123	4 Lent
St Mark	74r	St Mark	131	Annunciation
SS Philip and James	77r	SS Philip and James	139	Passion Sunday
Invention of the Cross	79v	Invention of the Cross	150	Palm Sunday
St John at the Latin Gate	81r	St John at the Latin Gate	157	Tenebre

Septuagesima	83v			Good Friday
Sexagesima	86br			Maundy Thursday/Easter Eve
Quinquagesima	91br			Easter Sunday
Quadragesima	92av			St George
First Sunday in Lent	95r			St Mark
Second Sunday in Lent	100r			SS Philip and James
Third Sunday in Lent	104r			Invention of the Cross
Fourth Sunday in Lent	108v			1 Lent (second sermon)
Passion Sunday	113r			St John at the Latin Gate
Palm Sunday	117r			Rogation
Easter	119r			Ascension Day
Ascension	121v			Eve of Pentecost
		Vigil of Pentecost	163	Pentecost
Pentecost	125r	Pentecost	175	Trinity
Trinity	129r	Trinity	181	Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi	132r	Corpus Christi	187	St Barnabas
		Nativity of Mary	205	St Winifred
		Conception of Mary	209	Nativity of St John Baptist
		Purification of the Virgin	213	SS Peter and Paul
		Annunciation	220	Life of Nero
		St Margaret	225	Translation of Thomas of Canterbury
		St Mary Magdalen	233	St Margaret
		St Katherine	242	St Mary Magdalene
Ember days	137r			St James Apostle
St John the Baptist	138v	St John the Baptist	257	St Anne
St Michael	142v	St Michael	265	St Laurence
Ember days	145v	Ember days	270	Assumption of the Virgin
		Christmas	273	Assumption of the Virgin 2
		Quadragesima	283	St Bartholomew
		First Sunday in Lent	290	St Alkamund
		Second Sunday in Lent	301	Nativity of the Virgin
		Third Sunday in Lent	301	Exaltation of the Cross
		Fourth Sunday in Lent	315	Ember Days
		Passion Sunday	322	St Matthew
		Palm Sunday	329	St Michael
		Tenebre	332	St Luke
		Easter	337	SS Simon and Jude
		Rogation	341	All Saints
		Circumcision	346	All Souls
				St Martin

	St Katherine
	Dedication of a Church

Appendix 2: Manuscript sizes

This appendix describes the dimensions of manuscripts of *The Prick* and *Piers*, using measurements in four published sources: Lewis-McIntosh, Kane, Kane-Donaldson, and Russell-Kane. For the manuscripts Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 851 and Huntington Library, MS Hm 114 (not described in Kane or Kane-Donaldson), I have included my own measurements. Where Lewis-McIntosh offer dimensions as a range (reflecting the variety in the size of leaves of some books) I have selected the median figure, resulting in some measurements which appear impossibly precise (down to half a millimetre). However, the Athlone editions give some measurements at this precision, so I have chosen not to round those derived from Lewis-McIntosh. I have also converted the measurements in Kane, given there in inches, into millimetres. Figures in the 'Proportion of height to width' column are rounded to two decimal places.

Manuscripts containing extracts from either poem are excluded, as are five fragmentary copies of *The Prick*, as their current measurements are unreliable indicators of their original size: the single leaves in British Library, MS Sloane 1044, Bodleian Library, MS Selden Supra 102*, and Hatfield House, Library of the Marquis of Salisbury, Deeds 59/1, and the two leaves in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson D.913. The fragment of *Piers* surviving as Yale University Library, MS Osborn fa45 is also omitted, as is the sixteenth-century manuscript Yale University Library, MS Takamiya 23 (formerly Sion College, MS Arc. L.40 2/E).

The Prick

Main Version

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Height (mm)*	*Width (mm)*	*Ratio of height to width*
MV1	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn 11.6 (formerly Porkington 20)	210	150	1.40
MV2	Arundel Castle, Library of the Duke of Norfolk, MS of the *Stimulus Conscientie*	228	156	1.46
MV3	Private collection, *olim* Beeleigh Abbey, Foyle MS	233	130	1.79
MV4	Brussels, KBR, MS IV 998 (formerly Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique)	164	112	1.46
MV5	Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 131	222	133	1.67
MV6	———, Gonville and Caius College, MS 386/606	213	146	1.46
MV7	———, Magdalene College, MS F.4.18	238	152	1.57

MV8	———, St John's College, MS D.5	270	165	1.64
MV9	———, ———, MS E.34	210	152	1.38
MV10	———, University Library, MS Dd.11.89	197	133	1.48
MV11	———, ———, MS Dd.12.69	197	127	1.55
MV12	———, ———, MS Ll.2.17	311	222	1.40
MV13	———, ———, MS Add. 6693	179	118	1.52
MV14	Cambridge MA, Harvard University Library, MS English 515	180	120	1.50
MV15	Canterbury Cathedral Library, MS Lit D.13	222	140	1.59
MV16	Charlottesville, University of Virginia Library, MS Hench 10	270	180	1.50
MV17	Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 32.9	197	133	1.48
MV18	———, ———, MS 33	210	110	1.91
MV19	Upper Woolhampton, Douai Abbey, MS 7	175	113	1.55
MV20	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 156	216	141	1.53
MV21	———, ———, MS 157	212	158	1.34
MV22	———, ———, MS 158	195	131	1.49
MV23	Holkham Hall, Wells, Library of the Earl of Leicester, MS 668	230	145	1.59
MV24	Leeds, University Library, MS Brotherton 500	205	125	1.64
MV25	———, ———, MS Brotherton 501	222	200	1.11
MV26	London, British Library, MS Arundel 140	290	215	1.35
MV27	———, ———, MS Cotton Galba E.9	335	220	1.52
MV28	———, ———, MS Cotton Appendix 7	240	145	1.66
MV29	———, ———, MS Egerton 657	235	132	1.78
MV30	———, ———, MS Egerton 3245	215	145	1.48
MV31	———, ———, MS Harley 1205	185	115	1.61
MV32	———, ———, MS Harley 2377	222	145	1.53
MV33	———, ———, MS Harley 2394	210	140	1.50
MV34	———, ———, MS Harley 4196	380	275	1.38
MV35	———, ———, MS Harley 6923	175	130	1.35
MV36	———, ———, MS Lansdowne 348	172.5	112.5	1.53
MV38	———, ———, MS Sloane 2275	245	180.5	1.36
MV39	———, ———, MS Add 11304	220	150	1.47
MV40	———, ———, MS Add 22283	590	390	1.51
MV41	———, ———, MS Add 24203	185	110	1.68
MV42	———, ———, MS Add 25013	215	145	1.48
MV43	———, ———, MS Add 32578	210	135	1.56
MV44	———, ———, MS Add 33995	305	200	1.53
MV45	———, College of Arms, MS Arundel 57	318	216	1.47
MV46	———, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 260	275	205	1.34
MV47	———, ———, MS 491	220	145	1.52
MV48	———, ———, MS 492	250	130	1.92

MV49	———, Sion College, MS Arc. L.40.2/E.25 (now a Lambeth Palace Library deposit)	215	142	1.51
MV50	———, Society of Antiquaries, MS 288	210	140	1.50
MV51	———, ———, MS 687	215	145	1.48
MV52	Longleat, Library of the Marquis of Bath, MS 31	220	170	1.29
MV53	Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 8008	204	137	1.49
MV54	———, John Rylands Library, MS English 50	250	150	1.67
MV55	———, ———, MS English 51	175	120	1.46
MV56	———, ———, MS English 90	343	245	1.40
MV57	New Haven, Yale University Library, MS Osborn a.13	240	155	1.55
MV58	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS Buhler 13	230	150	1.53
MV59	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 41	265	175	1.51
MV60	———, ———, MS Ashmole 52	173	115	1.50
MV61	———, ———, MS Ashmole 60	290	190	1.53
MV62	———, ———, MS Bodley 99	200	134	1.49
MV63	———, ———, MS Digby 14	161	110	1.46
MV64	———, ———, MS Digby 87	210	148	1.42
MV65	———, ———, MS Digby 99	222	146	1.52
MV66	———, ———, MS Douce 126	230	167	1.38
MV67	———, ———, MS Douce 141	246	160	1.54
MV68	———, ———, MS Douce 156	252	150	1.68
MV69	———, ———, MS Douce 157	245.5	180	1.36
MV70	———, ———, MS Eng. poet. a.1	572	394	1.45
MV71	———, ———, MS Junius 56	206	134	1.54
MV72	———, ———, MS Laud misc. 468	207	137	1.51
MV73	———, ———, MS e Musaeo 76	283	190	1.49
MV74	———, ———, MS e Musaeo 88	270	190	1.42
MV75	———, ———, MS Rawlinson A.366	245	170	1.44
MV76	———, ———, MS Rawlinson C.35	212	144	1.47
MV77	———, ———, MS Rawlinson C.319	240	130	1.85
MV78	———, ———, MS Rawlinson C.891	270	172	1.57
MV81	———, ———, MS Rawlinson poetry 138	222	148	1.50
MV82	———, ———, MS Rawlinson poetry 139	260	138	1.88
MV83	———, ———, MS Rawlinson poetry 175	268	190	1.41
MV85	———, St John's College, MS 57	304	215	1.41
MV86	———, ———, MS 138	225	145	1.55
MV87	———, Trinity College, MS 15	197	140	1.41
MV88	———, ———, MS 16A	224	148	1.51
MV89	———, ———, MS 16B	242	158	1.53
MV90	———, University College, MS 142	265	168	1.58
MV91	Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Codex 196 (formerly English 1)	250	170	1.47

MV92	———, ———, MS Codex 218 (formerly English 8)	390	253	1.54
MV93	Princeton, University Library, MS Taylor 13	184	121	1.52
MV94	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 139	288	205	1.40
MV95	Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury School, MS 3	216	152	1.42
MV96	Wellesley, Wellesley College Library, MS 8	210	150	1.40

Southern Recension

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Height (mm)*	*Width (mm)*	*Proportion of height to width*
SR1	New Haven, Yale University Library, MS 1086	286	192	1.49
SR2	Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 272	187	127	1.47
SR3	———, St John's College, MS B.7	289	203	1.42
SR4	———, University Library, MS Ee.4.35	279	184	1.52
SR5	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 69	255	185	1.38
SR6	Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS 16	258	185	1.39
SR7	———, ———, MS 50	180	130	1.38
SR8	London, British Library, MS Harley 1731	215	142.5	1.51
SR9	———, ———, MS Harley 2281	225	147.5	1.53
SR10	———, ———, MS Royal 18 A.v	229	159	1.44
SR11	———, ———, MS Additional 11305	270	175	1.54
SR12	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 423	272	195	1.39
SR13	———, ———, MS Laud misc. 601	315	210	1.50
SR14	———, ———, MS Lyell empt. 6	228	148	1.54
SR15	Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 138	280	190	1.47
SR16	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 125	238	170	1.40
SR17	———, ———, MS Hm 128	240	168	1.43
SR18	———, ———, MS Hm 130	240	160	1.50

Piers Plowman

A text

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Height (mm)*	*Width (mm)*	*Proportion of height to width*
E	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 213 (D.4.12)	219	146	1.50
H	London, British Library, MS Harley 875	260	165	1.58
L	———, Lincoln's Inn, MS 150	305	133	2.29
M	———, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687	214.5	143	1.50
J (I)	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.818	219	136.5	1.60

A	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1468	295	203	1.45
D	———, ———, MS Douce 323	281	210	1.34
V	———, ———, MS Eng. poet. a.1	546	387.5	1.41
R	———, ———, MS Rawlinson poetry 137	241	149	1.62
U	———, University College, MS 45	201	143	1.41

B text

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Height (mm)*	*Width (mm)*	*Proportion of height to width*
Y	Cambridge, Newnham College, MS 4	295	182.5	1.61
W	———, Trinity College, MS B.15.17	287	190	1.51
C	———, University Library, MS Dd.1.17	440	305	1.44
G	———, ———, MS Gg.4.31	249	175	1.42
C^2	———, ———, MS Ll.4.14	285	210	1.36
R	London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 398/Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 138	288	207	1.39
M	———, ———, MS Additional 35287	300	195	1.54
L	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 581	267.5	185	1.45
F	———, Corpus Christi College, MS 201	293	173	1.69
O	———, Oriel College, MS 79	215	157	1.37
Hm	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128	247.5	170	1.46

C text

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Height (mm)*	*Width (mm)*	*Proportion of height to width*
S	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 293	250	165	1.52
G	———, University Library, MS Dd.3.13	295	180	1.64
F	———, ———, MS Ff.5.35	240	180	1.33
Q	———, ———, MS Additional 4325	270	180	1.50
V	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 212	275	175	1.57
M	London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian B.xvi	265	180	1.47
N	———, British Library, MS Harley 2376	220	135	1.63
R	———, ———, MS Royal 18 B.xvii	285	225	1.27
P^2	———, ———, MS Additional 34779	300	205	1.46
U	———, ———, MS Additional 35157	230	155	1.48
A	———, University of London Library, MS S.L. V.17	360	250	1.44
I (J)	———, ———, MS S.L. V.88	225	160	1.41
Y	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102	220	155	1.42

K	———, ———, MS Digby 171	262	174	1.51
D	———, ———, MS Douce 104	215	150	1.43
E	———, ———, MS Laud misc. 656	205	145	1.41
P	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 137	286	185	1.55
X	———, ———, MS Hm 143	225	185	1.22

Multi-text

Text	*Sigil*	*Shelfmark*	*Height*	*Width*	*Proportion of height to width*
A-C	N/N^2	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 733B	184	133	1.44
A-C	T	Cambridge, Trinity College, MSR.3.14	289	168	1.72
A-C	Ch	Liverpool, University Library, MS F.4.8	267	203	1.32
C-A-B	Cot/ O	London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.xi	220	155	1.42
B-A	H^3/H	———, ———, MS Harley 3954	292	146	2.00
A-C	H^2	———, ———, MS Harley 6041	225	144	1.56
C-A-B	Bm/ L	———, ———, MS Additional 10574	250	170	1.47
C-A-B	Bo/B	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 814	250	170	1.47
A-C	Z	———, ———, MS Bodley 851	240	180	1.33
A-C	K/D^2	———, ———, MS Digby 145	295	197	1.50
ABC	Ht	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 114	215	140	1.53
A-C	W	Private collection, formerly on deposit as Borthwick Institute, MS Additional 196 (*olim* Duke of Westminster)	279	191	1.46

Appendix 3: Latin quotations

This appendix describes the Latin quotations in manuscripts of *Piers* and *The Prick*. For each manuscript listed, it shows the number of Latin quotations copied in the main scribal hand (excluding those added by other medieval or later hands), the number of those which end with the abbreviation '&c', and the percentage of quotations which end with the abbreviation '&c' rounded to the nearest 1%. In counting *Piers*'s quotations, I exclude words or phrases of Latin embedded in English lines (for example at B.12.66, where part of a quotation is reiterated: 'Of *quod scimus* comeþ Clergie…'). I have excluded Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 851 (A-C text of *Piers*) and Huntington Library, MS Hm 114 (composite text of *Piers*), as neither is collated in any Athlone edition.

The first section shows manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*, categorised by text. Single-version copies of the A, B, and C texts are presented first, followed by multi-text manuscripts. The second section presents multi-text manuscripts of *Piers*, analysing the different texts in each separately. The third shows manuscripts of *The Prick* surviving in the Bodleian Library, split into Main-Version and Southern-Recension copies.

1. Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*

A text

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Total quotations*	*'&c'*	*%*
E	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 213 (D.4.12)	8	5	63
H	London, British Library, MS Harley 875	22	4	18
L	———, Lincoln's Inn, MS 150	19	5	26
M	———, Society of Antiquaries, MS 687	50	5	10
J (I)	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.818	50	11	22
A	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1468	45	8	18
D	———, ———, MS Douce 323	50	14	28
V	———, ———, MS Eng. poet. a.1 (Vernon)	37	6	16
R	———, ———, MS Rawlinson poetry 137	51	15	29
U	———, University College, MS 45	48	7	15
W	Private collection, formerly on deposit as York, Borthwick Institute, MS Additional 196 (*olim* Duke of Westminster)	48	11	23
			Average:	25

B text

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Total quotations*	*'&c'*	*%*
Y	Cambridge, Newnham College, MS 4	314	166	53
W	———, Trinity College, MS B.15.17	313	100	32
C	———, University Library, MS Dd.1.17	313	129	41
G	———, ———, MS Gg.4.31	315	144	46
C^2	———, ———, MS Ll.4.14	320	107	33
R	London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 398/ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poetry 138	296	83	28
M	———, ———, MS Additional 35287	315	117	37
L	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 581	315	112	36
F	———, Corpus Christi College, MS 201	289	16	6
O	———, Oriel College, MS 79	307	99	32
Hm	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128	313	268	86
			Average:	39

C text

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Total quotations*	*'&c'*	*%*
K	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 293	159	26	16
V	———, University Library, MS Dd.3.13	282	39	14
Q	———, ———, MS Ff.5.35	300	177	59
I (J)	———, ———, MS Add. 4325	255	38	15
E	Dublin, Trinity College, MS 212 (D.4.1)	293	39	13
R	London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian B.xvi	291	43	15
P^2	———, ———, MS Harley 2376	293	50	17
Y	———, ———, MS Royal 18 B xvii	286	98	34
A	———, ———, MS Additional 34779	279	52	19
D	———, ———, MS Additional 35157	300	24	8
S	———, University of London Library, MS S.L. V. 17	171	14	8
M	———, ———, MS S.L. V. 88 (Ilchester)	264	36	14
X	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102	299	97	32
N	———, ———, MS Digby 171	297	44	15
G	———, ———, MS Douce 104	290	32	11
F	———, ———, MS Laud misc. 656	243	91	37
U	San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 137	301	99	33
P	———, ———, MS Hm 143	297	42	14
W	Private collection, formerly on deposit as York, Borthwick Institute, MS Additional 196 (*olim* Duke of Westminster)	174	39	22
			Average:	21

Multi-text

Text	*Sigil*	*Shelfmark*	*Total quotations*	*'&c'*	*%*
A-C	N/N^2	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 733B	61	12	20
A-C	T	Cambridge, Trinity College, MSR.3.14	310	145	47
A-C	Ch	Liverpool, University Library, MS F.4.8	310	152	49
C-A-B	Cot/O	London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.xi	310	127	41
B-A	H^3/H	———, ———, MS Harley 3954	231	48	21
A-C	H^2	———, ———, MS Harley 6041	209	39	19
C-A-B	Bm/L	———, ———, MS Additional 10574	232	39	17
C-A-B	Bo/B	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 814	232	157	68
A-C	Z	———, ———, MS Bodley 851	222	50	23
A-C	K/D^2	———, ———, MS Digby 145	211	42	20
A-C	W	Private collection, formerly on deposit as York, Borthwick Institute, MS Additional 196 (*olim* Duke of Westminster)	222	50	23

2. Multi-text manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*

Text	*Shelfmark*	*Sigil*			*A text Latin*			*B text Latin*			*C text Latin*		
		A	*B*	*C*	*Total*	*'&c'*	*%*	*Total*	*'&c'*	*%*	*Total*	*'&c'*	*%*
A-C	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 733B	N		N2	20	5	25				191	37	19
A-C	Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 3. 14	T		T	50	10	20				181	38	21
A-C	Liverpool, Liverpool University Library, MS F. 4. 8	Ch		Ch	50	8	16				182	31	17
A-C	London, British Library, MS Harley 6041	H2		H2	49	7	14				160	32	20
A-C	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 145	K		D2	50	17	34				182	140	77
A-C	Private collection, formerly on deposit as York, Borthwick Institute, MS Additional 196	W		W	48	11	23				174	39	22
B-A	London, British Library, MS Harley 3954	H3	H		36	5	14	25	7	28			
C-A-B	London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.xi		Cot	O				299	123	41	11	4	36
C-A-B	London, British Library, MS Add. 10574		Bm	L				299	140	47	11	5	45
C-A-B	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 814		Bo	B				299	148	49	11	4	36
					A-text average:		21	B-text average:		41	C-text average:		33

3. Latin quotations in *The Prick of Conscience*

Three fragmentary copies are omitted from this table: the two in MS Rawlinson D.913 and the single leaf in MS Selden Supra 102*. MS Rawlinson C.891 contains three scribal hands, but the first, which copied only a few leaves, is omitted. Hands 2 and 3 are analysed separately.

Sigil	*Shelfmark*	*Quotations*	*'&c'*	*Percentage*
MV59	Ashmole 41	200	5	3
MV60	Ashmole 52	207	3	1
MV61	Ashmole 60	197	32	16
MV62	Bodley 99	198	0	0
MV63	Digby 14	220	36	16
MV64	Digby 87	196	3	2
MV65	Digby 99	170	33	19
MV66	Douce 126	192	23	12
MV67	Douce 141	200	2	1
MV68	Douce 156	159	1	0
MV69	Douce 157	256	25	10
MV70	Eng. poet. a.1	197	2	1
MV71	Junius 56	183	8	4
MV72	Laud misc. 468	193	37	19
MV73	e Musaeo 76	192	5	3
MV74	e Musaeo 88	157	4	3
MV75	Rawlinson A.366	189	0	0
MV76	Rawlinson C.35	195	4	2
MV77	Rawlinson C.319	195	11	6
MV78	Rawlinson C.891 (Hand 2)	60	0	0
	(Hand 3)	119	2	2
MV81	Rawlinson poetry 138	205	1	0
MV82	Rawlinson poetry 139	216	18	8
MV83	Rawlinson poetry 175	203	2	1
SR12	Bodley 423	196	0	0
SR13	Laud misc. 601	202	0	0
SR14	Lyell empt. 6	204	2	1
			Average:	5

Appendix 4: Shared variants

The following appendix presents shared variants between the five manuscripts analysed in the fifth chapter. These are taken from three areas: the Prologue, Book 1, and a sample from the start of Book 6 (ll. 6419-890), listed in that order. Variants are grouped according to the manuscripts containing them. These groups are listed in the order of sigils set out in the final chapter: EASRC, and ordered from smallest to largest (groups of two, then three, then four). Agreements are listed by the line number in Hanna-Wood to which they correspond. The lemma is given in italics followed by a square bracket. Variant readings are then listed by sigil in normal text. Omissions are indicated by '*om*'; other italics in variant readings represent expanded abbreviations. Identical variants are grouped by sigil, while variants with minor differences are separated with commas. Lemmata are given a number in brackets when the same word appears more than once in the same line in Hanna-Wood, indicating which instance is modified by the variants.

Variants which do not entirely replace the lemma are presented in a number of ways, depending on their exact circumstance:

1. Variants which add material to the original are usually presented with lemmata representing the word before the addition, for example:

   73 *hys*] A his owen, R his owne.

   Here, the manuscripts A and R both add 'own' following 'his'.

2. Variants which add material to the beginning of a line are presented with lemmata representing the first word of the line in the original, for example:

   6446 *Ymyddes*] ES in mydward, R in þe mydward;

   Here, the manuscripts E, S, and R modify the start of the line with the preposition 'in' and change the original 'ymyddes' to 'mydward'.

3. A small number of variants are presented with lemmata representing the word after the addition, usually because the manuscripts sharing a variant do not record the line in exactly the same way, for example:

   178 *undirstandyng*] A good vnderstondynge, R good vndurstonding.

   The manuscript A reads 'brou3t to good vnderstondynge', while R reads 'brou3t good vndurstonding'; as R lacks the original 'to' preserved in A ('til' in Hanna-Wood), the variant is more clearly presented in relation to the lemma *undirstandyng*.

Ellipses are used to represent material unmodified in the variant reading, rather than indicating an abbreviated passage all of which is modified, for example:

6712 *Thurgh…mast*] EA by…*om*, R bi…*om*;

Hanna-Wood reads 'Thurgh kynde langes mast aftir mete'. EAR replace 'thurgh' with 'by'/'bi', and omit 'mast', but 'kynde langes' is unaltered in both.

Prologue

Between two manuscripts

EA – 1
158 *and* (1)] EA *om*

ES – 2
194 *myrknes*] E derknes, S derknesse; 291 *to*] ES *om*.

ER – 2
75 *of*] ER in; 140 *es thys*] ER iwis.

EC – 9
19 *never*] EC *om*; 40 *þe*] EC *om*; 44 *myght nathing*] EC noþing myȝt; 54 *it*] EC *om*; 96 *mon*] E shal, C schal; 126 *a*] EC a grete; 189 *ne*] EC and; 200 *þe…ilk wise men*] EC no…on þat wise; 233 *out*] EC *om*.

AS – 1
126 *Elles*] A ellis wytterly, S ellys wytterly.

AR – 72
4 *A Godde and lorde*] A O god and oo lord, R O god and O lord; 9 *Befor*] A as he was bifore, R as he wes bifore; 15 *For*] AR ffor as; 17 *beyng*] A o beyng, R o being; 18 *Withouten any bygynnyng*] A Euere was and shal be wiþ outen endyng, R Euer was and schal be wiþ oute ending; 20 *He*] AR ffor he; 22 *myghty*] A myȝtty he was, R myȝti he was; 25 *Þe sam*] A siþ þe same, R seþe þe same; 27 *And*] AR and riȝt; 30 *Þus*] A thus it, R thus hit; 39 *se*] A see as it is, R see as hit is; 44 *For withouten hym myght nathing be*] A ffor nothyng wiþouten hym myȝtte be, R ffor noþing wiþouten him may bee; 46 *byfor*] AR bifore at; 49 *er dom*] A here han no resoun, R hier han no reson; 50 *And na witt ne skille has, er bughsom*] A ne wyt ne skille and ben to man buxom, R ne wit ne skile and ben to man boxom; 52 *On*] AR in; 53 *ilka*] A eche, R uche; 54 *Þat*] AR it; 55 *Loves*] AR and loueþ; 62 *creatours*] AR creatures þat ben; 63 *folow*] AR suwe; 66 *es*] A he es, R he eesse; 71 *and*] AR and al; 72 *And*] A and aftir, R and afftur; 73 *hys*] A his owen, R his owne; 78 *a*] AR *om*; 81 *alswa*] AR as; 82 *in*] AR on; 84 *And*] AR and alle; 86 *at þe last*] AR shal he; 88 *Til*] AR he goþ to; 89 *Ilk*] A eche, R vche; 90 *God*] AR god haþ;[1] 102 *creatures*] AR creatures best; 104 *befor*] AR aforn; 117 *Wharfor*] A forwhy, R fforwhi; 120 *þus*] AR *om*; 128 *man self*] A man himsilf, R man himself; 131 *How*] AR and how; 133 *How*] AR and how; 136 *done*] AR don þe; 144 *na man may com*] A may no man come, R may no man came; 157 *þat*] AR what; 159 *es way*] A weiȝe is, R wey is; 169 *Þat*] AR that ilk; 171 *Namly*] AR and namly; 175 *oght*] A litil, R luitil;

[1] Lines 89 and 90 are reversed in all four manuscripts.

178 *undirstandyng*] A good vnderstondynge, R good vndurstonding; 179 *Of*] AR and; 183 *Many*] A many men, R mani men; 186 *lere*] A lerne thyng, R lurne þinges; 192 *way*] AR *om*; 193 *þai*] A þou3 þei, R þau3 þei; 195 *Withouten*] AR And wiþouten; 199 *Þat*] AR and; 201 *be*] AR be ay; 210 *On*] AR vppon; 227 *lere*] A lerneþ, R lurneþ; 229 *For*] AR and; 234 *Be*] AR and be; 236 *es*] A it es, R hit is; 242 *a*] AR *om*; 249 *and*] AR in; 251 *Reves*] AR keneþ; 254 *right*] A ari3tte, R ari3t; 276 *yf*] A þou3, R þau3; 280 *myght*] A hem my3tte, R hem moht; 282 *Þat*] A nothyng, R noþing; 283 *wald nogh*t] A nolden nothyng, R nold noþing; 316 *cordes*] A accordeþ, R acordeþ; 325 *with þam*] A wiþinne, R wiþynne; 337 *Of*] AR ffor.

AC – 1
137 *mankynde*] A mannys kende, C mannes kynde;

SR – 1
231 *to*] S tyl a, R to a.

SC – 2
20 *ay*] S euere, C euer; 21 *ay*] S euere, C euer.

Between three manuscripts

EAR – 1
16 *anhede*] E manhode, A manhede, R manhed.

ESR – 1
120 *mans kynde*] ES mankynde, R mankind.

ESC – 8
8 *alle*] ESC *om*; 56 *þe*] EC in his, S in hys; 63 *folow*] ESC do; 67 *alle*] ESC *om*; 106 *other*] ESC *om*; 112 *wald*] ESC gan; 188 *lere*] EC here, S heryn; 141 *Þe*] ESC *om*;

ARC – 2
111 *mans kynd*] AC mankynde, R mankind; 150 *Intyl*] ARC into;

SRC – 1
149 *may he haf na*] S gette he no, R ne geteþ he no, C getes he no.

Book 1

Between two manuscripts

EA – 2
576 *men*] EA *om*; 905 *vile*] EA foule.

EC – 20

432 *Alle*] EC Also; 444 *es*] EC we; 465 *ne*] EC *om*; 475 *and*] EC and euer; 477 *goule*] EC wepe; 486 *and þe*] E hede, C to hede; 543 *foul*] EC bride; 573 *of*] EC on; 590 *and*] EC *om*; 646 *þat*] EC *om*; 685 *away*] EC *om*; 694 *fayre*] EC *om*; 708 *aught*] E shold, C schuld; 721 *et* (1)] EC et mane; 758 *yhit*] EC *om*; 778 *and*] EC his; 799 *ay*] EC euer; 838 *with him nathyng*] E nought with hym, C nou3t wiþ him; 841 *lapped*] EC lappe þan.

ES – 18
375 *forthy þat*] ES for þat; 376 *mater*] E maters; S materys; 392 *thurgh*] E thorou3, S thoruw; 433 *þis*] ES *om*; 526 *als*] ES *om*; 589 *over*] E euer, S euere; 593 *wantes*] E fayleþ, S faylyt; 615 *þan es*] E then þat, S þan þat; 631 *fruyt*] E fruy3t here, S frut here; 704 *man*] ES man wel; 717 *ay*] E euer, S euere; 744 *Forwhi*] ES for þe; 748 *ay*] E euer, S euere; 759 *þus*] E nov, S now; 818 *lefte*] ES leste; 886 *ne*] ES *om*; 900 *and*] ES or; 910 *unto*] ES to. s

ER – 3
443 *þat*] ER *om*; 528 *þus*] ER this; 887 *vyle*] E foule, R foul.

AS – 1
559 *þus*] AS vs.

AR – 101
373 *foulest*] AR wel foul; 377 *fel*] A fel fram heuene, R fel fro heuen; 378[2] *als*] A whanne, R when; 389[3] *sen*] A siþþe, R seþ; 395 *þat mek es*] AR he be meke; 397 *How*] AR how þat; 402 *Yhe*] AR 3e ne; 403 *Hevenryke*] A þat blisse, R þe blisse of heuen; 412 *brekes*] A leikeþ, R leikes; 419 *þis*] þat; 421[4] *Agayn til man þus shortly*] A Thus a3en man shortly, R Thus a3ein man shortly; 422 *homo*] AR *om*; 429] A owen, R own; 430] AR now; 436 *spaces*] AR parties; 438 *Bygynnyng*] A the bigynnyng, R the biginning; 444 *als es*] A as it is, R as hit is; 447 *awen*] AR *om*; 459 *glet*] A layt, R lait; 462 *came*] A clombe, R clomb; 464 *til*] AR into; 466 *yhit*] AR *om*; 471 *Als-tite aftir*] AR hider and þider; 478 *þat*] AR þe; 479 *or*] A other, R oþur; 480 *cryes*] A seiþ, R saiþ; 486 *and þe hede*] A of oure moder eue, R off our form moder eue; 495 *þe*] A oure, R our; 507 *made*] A maken, R make; 507 *Al*] AR Alle we; 508 *bare*] AR ful bare; 514 *cam*] AR clomb; 515 *hyder*] A into þis werld, R into þis world; 524 *whils*] A whiles þat, R whil þat; 527 *on*] A vppon, R apon; 540 *nascitur*] AR natus; 546 *es*] AR *om*; 547 *þe*] AR is þe; 548 *ay*] AR ac; 556 *of*] A of a, R off a; 566 *fode*] AR mete; 572 *never*] A neuere non, R neuer non; 589 *over*] AR ay so; 592 *bot*] AR but a; 628 *saw*] AR ne sau3; 613 *filthe with stynkand*] A stynk wiþ foul, R stink wiþ foul; 614 *es nane*] A nys þere noon, R nis þer no; 631 *kynd*] A kynde here, R kind hier; 633 *es*] AR is boþe; 636 *investiga ille*] AR de; 639 *urinam*] AR vrina; 646 *trese*] E trees he seiþ, S treys he seys; 649 *and*] AR *om*; 653 *for*] AR to; 654 *mykel*] AR *om*; 655 *als*] AR ffoul; 657 *wlatsom stynk and sour*] A ful loþly licour, R ful loþly likour; 662 *a*] AR lik to; 672 *bot a*] AR lik to; 680 *er þe*] AR arn her; 681 *legges with þe fete*] A feet wiþ þe leggis, R fet wiþ þe legges; 682 *þe braunches may men by skille calle*] A thise may men þe braunchis calle; R this may men þe braunches calle; 683 *þe*] AR wiþ þe; 690 *lufly*] AR trewe; 691 *hym*] A hym sone, R him sone; 694 *chaunge*] AR to chaunge; 697 *þe*] AR his; 700 *iaunys*] AR iaundise; 702 *hym mas*] A maken a man, R makeþ man; 706 *son... þat*] AR also sone...as; 715 *on*] A vppon, R uppon; 716 *state*] A staat he, R stat he; 722 *als*] A as it, R as hit; 725 *passes*] AR passeþ

[2] This line is omitted in E.
[3] This line is omitted in S.
[4] This line is omitted in E.

sone; 726 *late*] AR last; 744 *Forwhi*] ffor þi; 746 *es it*] AR is he; 765 *in*] A it, R hit; 771 *dysy*] AR disgisy; 796 *has*] A hym han, R him han; 804 *whaso*] AR þat þem knowe; 809 *so*] AR is so; 816 *bygynnes*] A gynneþ, R ginneþ; 823 *bely*] A bely gynneþ, R bely ginneþ; 826 *to*] AR to þe; 829 *er of a man*] AR haþ a man; 836 *cam*] AR clomb; 847 *stynkand*] A any stynkande, R eny stinking; 855 *homine*] AR homo; 864 *be*] AR be al; 865 *fynde*] A fynden it, R finden hit; 872 *man*] AR men; 874 *þat*] AR his; 878 *þat*] AR and þat; 883 *ne other*] A ne noon oþer, R ne non oþur; 909 *swa had*] A so hym hadden, R so hym had; 911 *grysly*] AR foul; 913 *for*] AR wherefore; 915 *et*] AR *om*; 921 *was*] AR is; 929 *to þe*] AR in þe.

AC – 1
448 *herber*] A herberwe, C herbere.

SR – 6
695 *dos*] SR *om*; 838 *with him nathyng*] S nothing with hym, R noþing wiþ him; 863 *þan*] SR *om*; 897 *þus*] SR *om*; 905 *of*] S our, R ouer; 913 *þos*] SR *om*.

SC – 10
443 *Befor*] SC before or; 459 *wlatsom glet*] S wlatsumnesse, C wlatsomnes; 470 *it es born*] S is bore it, C is borne it; 471 *Als-tite aftir*] S also sone, C al sone; 507 *made*] SC made we; 662 *es*] S ys als, C is als; 702 *fayrnes*] S forse, C force; 705 *fayre*] S fayr on, C fayre on; 730 *bers*] SC *om*; 798 *ay*] S euere, C euer.

RC – 1
894 *whyles he*] R 3et, C 3it.

Between three manuscripts

EAS – 2
477 *ne*] EAS *om*; 894 *whyles he*] *om*.

EAR – 6
494 *or*] EA oþer, R oþur; 539 *yhit*] EAR *om*; 583 *wlatsom*] E loþsume, AR loþly; 613 *Alkyn*] ER alle maner, A alle manere; 633 *wlatsome*] EAR loþly; 854 *enim*] EAR est.

EAC – 2
547 *es*] EAC *om*; 556 *I*] EC i haue, A y haue.

ESR - 2
630 *man*] ESR men; 755 *þair*; ESR my.

ESC – 22
425 *into*] ES to; 461 *first*] ESC *om*; 468 *myght*] ESC *om*; 470 *a best when*] EC whan a best, S wanne a best; 526 *And*] ESC a; 604 *when he es til worshepe*] E when he to wurchepe is, S wan he to worchepe hys, C qwen he to worschip es; 615 *es*] ESC þat; 661 *gude*] ESC a; 682 *by skille*] E kyndely, S kendely, C kindely; 690 *lufly*] ESC fre; 704 *a man may*] ESC may a man wel; 706 *son*] E when, S sone wen, C sone quen; [could use this line to illustrate the point that some variants contain bits of the lemma but are still judged to constitute shared agreements in error] 717 *ay*] EC euer, S euere; 754 *falle*] ESC

may falle; 765 *in*] *om*; 775 *hand*] E breþ, S brath, C breþe; 804 *whaso*] E þat know hem, S þat knowe hem, C þat know þem; 809 *þat*] ESC *om*; 821 *þan*] E and þen, S and þanne; C and; 827 *ay*] EC euer, S euere; 845 *es*] E semeþ, SC semys; 856 *thyng*] ESC *om*.

ERC – 1
559 *þus*] ERC *om*.

ASR – 8
475 *and*] ASR and ay; 551 *and*] AS and of, R and off; 575 *And*] ASR and also; 661 *knawes*] AR knoweþ wel, S knowys wel; 690 *comly*] AR also, S als; 907 *to syght may*] A þanne wiþ men, S þan wyt men, R þan wiþ men; 908 *syght*] AR a si3t, S a syth; 930 *In*] ASR *in þe*;

ARC – 8
482 *þe first letter es*] AC is þe first letter, R is þe furst lettre; 641 *suavitatem odoris*] ARC suauitatem et odorem; 723 *passes*] AR dwyneþ, C dwynes; 772 *waxes*] A wexeþ þane, R waxeþ þanne, C waxes þan; 803 *a*] ARC *om*; 832 *men*] A man þere, R men þer, C men þare; 843 *behald*] AR be old, C be olde; 908 *whaso*] A whoso þanne, RC whoso þan.

ASC – 2
609 *of*] ASC on; 675 *on*] ASC on a.

SRC – 2
905 *vile*] SRC *om*; 912 *myght*] SRC may.

Between four manuscripts

EARC – 4
419 *Til*] EARC to; 596 *at*] EARC *om*; 659 *on it*] ER þer on, A þer onne, C þare on; 697 *stormes*] ER stormes hit, AC stormes it; 766 *waxes*] EARC is.

EASC – 1
818 *þan*] EASC *om*.

ASRC – 4
633 *thyng*] ASRC þat; 902 *be blythe*] ARC haue ioie, S haue ioye; 906 *rote*] ASRC *om*; 912 *of*] ASRC on.

Book 6, ll. 6419-890

Between two manuscripts

EA – 13
6500 *þar*] E þ*er* þei, A þere þei; 6510 *his*] E his gret, A hys gret; 6511 *he*] E he þ*er*, A he þere; 6524 *þat has þam*] E þat þ*er* haþ be and, A þat þere haþ ben and hem; 6528 *a*] EA a sory; 6532 *Til helle come*] E and come to helle, A and how he com to helle; 6627 *brynned ay*] EA ay brenne; 6654 *als*] E as hit,

A as it; 6688 *Sal*] EA shal also; 6810 *sal*] EA shal be; 6850 *Þan*] E ffouler þan, A foulere þan; 6860 *Suld...be*] E þat he ne...*om*, A that he ne...*om*; 6881 *here*] EA *om*.

ES – 11

6420 *þar*] E þerof, S þereof; 6501 *þat*] ES *om*; 6567 *of*] ES of þe; 6586 *þam*; ES *om*; 6603 *ay*] E eu*er*, S euere; 6604 *waters*] ES wat*er*; 6713 *Right swa*] E 3it, S 3et; 6716 *dight may þai noght*] E þei may deye, S þey may dey3e; 6731 *be*] E be þ*er*, S be þere; 6735 *and*] E and wiþ, S *and* wyth; 6773 *forþi*] ES for.

ER – 16

6423 *in*] ER in a; 6436 *And*] E ffor i wille, R ffor i wol; 6475 *þe sorow telle*] E telle þe paynes ry3t, R telle þe peines ri3t; 6509 *And*] ER *om*; 6513 *þe*] ER *om*; 6551 *als*] ER alle; 6563 *þe*] ER so; 6564 *er*] E be so, R ben so; 6610 *sleken*] E quenche, R que*n*ch; 6646 *Whar*] E wherefor, R wh*er*fore; 6657 *of*] ER to; 6678 *slekend*] E hit slaked, R hit sclaked; 6717 *Ion*] E ioh*a*n þ*er*of, R ion þeroff; 6729 *payne*] ER *om*; 6734 *brunstan*] E brymstone *and* wiþ, R bri*m*ston and wiþ; 6796 *sal*] ER may.

AS – 4

6475 *þe sorow telle*] A þo peynes telle ri3t, S þe peynes telle ryth; 6532 *his*] A þer, E þ*er*; 6657 *of*] AS *om*; 6670 *ful*] AS *om*.

AR – 25

6438 *myddes*] A colk, R colke; 6441 *in*] AR in þe; 6447 *þe*] AR a; 6453 *myrke*] A mykil, E mykel; 6477 *witt*] A wi3t, R whi3t; 6504 *þar*] AR *om*; 6593 *Whare*] A where as, R wh*er* as; 6605 *and*] AR wiþ; 6608 *Yhit*] A 3it ne, R 3et ne; 6621 *est*] AR *om*; 6622 *tam*] A tuam, R tua*m*; 6645 *strang*] A ilke, R ilk; 6655 *nivium*] AR niueis; 6698 *wele*] A it wele, R hit wel; 6713 *Right swa*] A 3if, R 3iff; 6716 *dight may þai noght*] A þei may nou3t di3e, R þei may nou3t dei3e; 6723 *wald*] A nolden, R nold; 6752 *snakes*] A neddris vnheilsom, R nedres unholso*m*; 6773 *wald*] AR nolden; 6777 *wald*] A nolde, R nold; 6778 *til*] AR vnto þat; 6805 *es*] A nys, R nis; 6838 *sal be sene*] A þere shal bene, R þ*er* shal bene; 6846 *Of*] A of so, R off so; 6851 *es*] A nys, R nis.

SR – 3

6614 *and*] SR on; 6684 *hert*] S herte may, R hert may; 6881 *here þarwith*] S þarwyt here, R þ*er*wiþ h*er*.

Between three manuscripts

EAS – 5

6476 *synful*] EA synful men, S synful me*n*; 6583 *aftir*] ES aft*er* þat, A aftir þat; 6633 *es*] EAS is þe; 6690 *of*] EA of alle, S of al; 6691 *synful*] EA þei, S þey.

EAR – 80

6435 *sythen*] E afterward, A aftir, R afft*er*; 6439 *For*] EAR and; 6444 *Þe*] E of þe, A of an, R off þe; 6448 *obout on*] EA goþ aboute in, R goþ about in; 6451 *egge*] E eye when hit is, A egg whan it is, R hegge wha*n* hit is; 6456 *tyte*] EAR sone; 6457 *þe*] E þe horible, A þe horrible, R þe orrible; 6481 *Omang*] E bote among, AR but among; 6483 *Bot*] EAR and; 6490 *þe Buke says þus of Wysdome*] E seiþ þe boke of wisdome, A seiþ þe bok of wisdome, R saiþ þe book off wisdome; 6495 *alle þat er þar*] E hoso comeþ þeder þ*er* he, A whoso comeþ þere he, R whoso comeþ þ*er* he; 6496 *Þai*] EA ffor þei, R ffor

þennes; 6499 *in helle has bene*] E haþ in helle bene, A han in hele ben, R han in helle be*n*; 6501 *Has*] E and haue, AR and han; 6506 *at*] EAR in; 6509 *hym*] E hym ful, A hym in ful, R him ful; 6517 *Yhit*] EA and 3it, R and 3et; 6518 *he*] EAR he ne; 6525 *Alswa*] EAR and also; 6527 *Whan þa first…went*] E anone so þei…þei went, A anoon so þei…þei went, R anon as þei…þei we*n*t; 6528 *Þai saw in helle*] E and þ*er* þei sawe, A and þere þei sau3, R and þ*er* þei sau3; 653o *ded*] ER deþ to lyue, A deeþ to lyue; 6535 *leve*] EA lif, R liff; 6538 *blithe*] EAR glad; 6545 *many*] EAR many an; 6552 *þas*] EAR þei; 6554 *of*] EAR *om*; 6563 *horribel*] EAR grisly; 6565 *es*] EAR is þe; 6567 *dyngyng*] E betyng, A betynge, R beding; 6582 *þat*] E þ*a*t þ*er*, A þat þer, R þat þ*er*; 6588 *þe…þat I shewed*; E *om*…as i seid, A *om*…as y seide, R *om*…as i said; 66oo *sal*] EAR may; 6602 *sal nevermare ende*] E neu*er* more ende shal, A neuere ende shal, R neuer more end schal; 6604 *or*] EAS *and*; 6605 *On…withoute*] EA vppon…aboute, R vppon…about; 6606 *alle þe erthe oboute*] E wiþinne *and* wi*th*out, A wiþinne and wiþoute, R wiþynne and wiþout; 6607 *Suld*] E and þei schold, A and shulde, R and schuld; 6608 *myght*] E shold, A shulde, R schold; 6623 *Als þe fire of þe werld*] E our fire þan we haue, A oure fier þat we han, R our fuir þat we han; 664o *frese and*] EAR *om*; 6648 *þam*] E hem forþe, AR hem forþ; 6654 *þus*] EAR *om*; 6657 *snawes*] ER snowe, A snow; 6665 *outwith*] ER wiþout, A wiþoute; 6666 *hete*] E hete hote, A heete hoot, R hete hot; 6668 *wynter*] E wat*er*, A water, R watre; 6672 *es*] EA shal be, R schal be; 6673 *saynt*] E seiþ seint, A seiþ seynt, R saiþ seint; 6674 *als I here shewe yhow can*] EA þat seiþ þus þan, R þat saiþ þus þan; 6679 *ugly*] EAR grisly; 6681 *For*] E ffor þ*er* may, A ffor þer may, R for þ*er* may; 6691 *þe*] EAR þat; 6698 *knawes*] E witeþ, A wyten, R wite*n*; 6702 *For*] ER ffor þ*er*, A ffor þere; 6704 *dede*] ER deþ, A deeþ; 6711 *als*] EAR *om*; 6712 *Thurgh…mast*] EA by…*om*, R bi…*om*; 6717 *Ion*] E ioh*a*n þ*er*of, A ion þer, R ion þeroff; 6722 *And*] E bote, AR but; 6724 *here*] EAR *om*; 6726 *ay*] EAR *om*; 6729 *als*] ER as hit, A as it; 6731 *Swa*] EA ffor so, R for to; 6737 *Þat*] EAR fforþi; 6765 *I fynd*] ER hit is, A it is; 6767 *Caput*] EAR capita; 6774 *til poer*] EA pore men, R pore me*n*; 6782 *And…alswa*] ER *om*…and þurst; A *om*…thurst; 6786 *als*] ER as hit, A as it; 6801 *Myrkness als mykel*] E and also myche derknes þei shul fele, A and also mekil merknes þei shal fele, R and also mekel merknes schuln fele; 6814 *any*] EAR *om*; 6837 *es*] EAR *om*; 6838 *Þe*] EAR is þe; 6841 *to*] EAR vppon to; 6844[5] *swa hydus*] EAR þat hidous; 6849 *ilkan…mare*] E echon þei…*om*, A ilcone þei…*om*, R ilkone þei…*om*; 686o *may*] ER may hit, A may it; 6871 *in*] EAR in þis; 6873 *here*] E þ*er*, AR þere.

ESR – 4

6446 *Ymyddes*] ES in mydward, R in þe mydward; 6471 *ilka* (1)] ESR alle; 6551 *Þe whilk*] ESR þat; 671o *þam…dolefuly*] E delfully hem, S dolfully hem, R deolfully hem.

ASR – 12

6529 *on*] A vppon, S vpon, R uppon; 6564 *þe*] ASR *om*; 6645 *evermare*] ASR ay; 6646 *bathe*] ASR *om*; 6647 *devels*] A fendis, SR fendes; 666o *buke*] AR book on, S bok on; 6661-2 *in fornace*] ASR *om*; 6673 *haly*] A wise, S wyse, R wis; 6695 *haf*] ASR *om*; 6758 *within*] AS hote, R hot; 6806 *Þar brynnes ay fire*] A ffier brenneþ ay, S ffyer bry*n*nes ay, R ffuir bre*n*neþ ay; 6814 *of*] A oþer, S or, R oþur.

[5] E reverses this and the previous line (f. 82v).

Variants where R is not present (*ll. 6817-34*)

EA – 3
6821 *Loverd*] EA *om*; 6823 *ay*] EA ful; 6828 *uglynes*] E hidousnes, A hidousnesse.

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