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Ralph Hanna, The Penn Commentary on "Piers Plowman", Volume 2: C Passūs 5-9; B Passūs 5-7; A Passūs 5-8

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2001), and see also C. David Benson's chapter on public art in *Public Piers Plowman: Modern Scholarship and Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, Pa, 2004), from his earlier article 'Piers Plowman and parish wall paintings', *YLS*, 11 (1997), 1–38.) Wit describes Kynde in terms that suggested to Schmidt the scholastic differentiation between a divine 'creating nature', *natura naturans* – 'þat is þe grete God þat gynnyng hadde neuere' (B.IX.28) – and 'created nature', *natura naturata*. Davis enquires whether Grosseteste's *Château de l'amour* (already noted as a similar source of a 'four daughters of God' allegory) displays affinities here as well. Langland's refashioning of the relationship between God and creation, as Davis illustrates, grounds the 'reversibility' seen in the poem's programme: just as the natural world connects to the divine, so too does the divine, through the invisible hand of grace, acting through human hands and their good works, continue to inform and shape the natural world. Further chapters explore this dynamic, taking up Langland's interest in natural science and his interrogation of exemplarism (and moral extrapolation from natural law) and the thrill of encyclopedism. The final chapter centres on the Christian task of 'fullynge', perfecting or completing what Nature cannot except through humanity, and here Davis offers a cogent (if brief) account of Langland's moderated aspiration for universal salvation. Here, too, Davis seeks to recontextualize recent critical interest in Langland's staging of failure, responding directly to Nicolette Zeeman's earlier notice of the 'lack' in *kynde* (Nicolette Zeeman, 'The condition of kynde', in *Medieval Literature and Historical Inquiry: Essays in Honor of Derek Pearsall*, ed. David Aers (Cambridge, 2000), 1–30). As Davis notes in her discussion of Langland's notably inclusive soteriology, it is also that imperfect Nature, shared *kynde*, that moves in the blood of Langland's Christ, provoking mercy to sinners: 'Ac blood may noȝt se blood blede, but hym rewē' (B.18.396).

Durham

MICHAEL BAKER

Ralph Hanna, *The Penn Commentary on 'Piers Plowman'*, Volume 2: *C Passūs 5–9; B Passūs 5–7; A Passūs 5–8* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). xxvi + 390 pp. ISBN 978-0812248913. \$89.95.

This is the third volume of *The Penn Commentary on 'Piers Plowman'* (2006–) to be published. Earlier volumes, authored by Andrew Galloway and Stephen A. Barney, respectively, treat the first dream of the poem and its last three dreams. The current volume treats the second dream and adjunct waking episodes. Two further volumes are in preparation.

The *Penn Commentary* is keyed to the Athlone edition of *Piers Plowman* (3 vols, 1960–97, under the general editorship of George Kane). It joins Joseph Wittig's

Concordance (2001) and Kane's *Glossary* (2005) as Hilfsmittel, aids to study of Langland's poem in the standard scholarly edition of it. Whereas Kane's *Glossary* accords interpretative priority to the B version, the *Penn Commentary* volumes are keyed in the first instance to the C version, prioritized as the poet's 'last words' (p. xviii). Cognate lines in the A and B versions are always registered; lines and passages unique to the earlier versions receive attention at corresponding points. The commentary volumes therefore supply something approaching a synoptic experience of Langland's poem, projecting all three versions into one long ribbon of text and gloss (see p. xix for cautionary remarks on this procedure; pp. 168f. exemplify annotation informed instead by the poet's conjectural work-sequence).

There have been two previous efforts at synoptic annotation, both joined to parallel-text editions of the poem: by Walter Skeat in 1886 and A. V. C. Schmidt in 2011. The *Penn Commentary* is more copious than either, but also differs in conception. The annotations of Skeat and Schmidt are focused on *kleinere Einheiten*: words and their combination, poetic line-work, quotations, allusions, and historical references. In a programmatic preliminary essay, Hanna terms such annotation 'grammatical' (pp. ix–xvii), for it curates textual meaning within the domain that the ancient and medieval discipline of grammar claimed as its own: the sentence and below. Though Hanna delivers much grammatical annotation in this volume (e.g. lexicographical essays on 'longe clothes' and 'lollare', pp. 9–12), he and his collaborators have prioritized the exposition of larger units of meaning: 'poetic argument' rather than 'poetic craft' (cf. p. xxii).

Anne Middleton was the principal theoretician of this annotative practice. Its principal vehicle is the 'structural note': annotation anchored not to a word or line, but to a verse paragraph or larger segment, and aiming to clarify the argument of that segment in relation to adjacent segments and to deeper currents of thought and discourse, within the poem and beyond it. In place of a conventional lemma, structural annotations bear a short descriptive title for the passage under discussion: e.g. '196–349 (B 5.188–295, A 5.107–45) Covetise's confession' (p. 115). A reader who jumps from one structural note to the next will find that the *Penn Commentary* volumes are not just reference works: they may be consulted, but also read.

Hanna's segment contains some of the great moments of Langland's poem: the poet's *apologia pro vita sua*, the confession of the sins, apparation of Piers the ploughman, ploughing of the half-acre, the pardon from Truth, and the great quarrel between Piers and the priest. Throughout, Hanna's exposition is stimulating and judicious, the product of long and deep thought, engaged in intimate dialogue with previous commentators and scholars. What emerges powerfully here – indeed, as the thesis of the volume – is the poet's recentring of his poem on the figure of the dreamer in the C version. This thesis is mooted in the opening pages of the commentary and pursued throughout its length.

There is, however, no pretence of interpretative finality: expository programme is persistently fractured by centrifugal forces – provocations to continue enquiry elsewhere or in another direction.

Penn Press is to be commended for investing the *Penn Commentary* volumes with high production values: sturdy construction, large type, and plenty of blank space on the page. Reference consultation is facilitated by two indexes: a general index (pp. 371–9) and an index of line references (pp. 380–90). The latter registers the fact that commentary on any one sequence of *passūs* presumes some apprehension of the whole, and thus frequent local discussion of passages outside the sequence to which this volume is dedicated. Hanna's commentary will be a vital addition to the working library of every student of *Piers Plowman*.

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Lawrence Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384–1432* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). xv + 222 pp. ISBN 978-1-108-42627-5. £75.00.

This is an important book, essential reading for anyone with an interest in the manuscripts of Middle English literature. In it, Lawrence Warner makes a number of very precise, substantive, and persuasive arguments, which, both separately and together, challenge the particular narrative of London literary scribes developed over the last fifteen years or so by Linne Mooney and her collaborators (e.g. in Mooney's 2006 *Speculum* essay on 'Chaucer's Scribe', and in the 2013 book by Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*). Aspects of this narrative have been challenged before, most notably by Jane Roberts (in *Medium Ævum* 2011) and by Alexandra Gillespie (in *Chaucer Review* 2008), but Warner goes beyond them in various ways, in effect offering a sustained critique, not just of the conclusions reached by Mooney and her collaborators, but also of their methods.

He argues, first, that Adam Pynkhurst was *not* Chaucer's scribe (as Mooney asserted in 2006). According to Warner, Pynkhurst did not copy the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, and the sole surviving literary manuscript for which he was responsible is the *Piers Plowman* MS, Cambridge, Trinity College, B.15.17. He also argues that the poem to 'Adam Scriveyne' (preserved only in another Trinity manuscript, R.3.20) offers much less support for the identification of Adam Pynkhurst as Chaucer's scribe than Mooney suggests, and that a good case can be made (on linguistic and stylistic grounds) against Chaucer's authorship of this poem. He shows that the dialectal evidence offered by the manuscripts does not add any weight to the case made by Mooney and Simon Horobin (in *Studies in the Ages of Chaucer*, 2004) for

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