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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IAN CORNELIUS


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
identifying the scribe of the Trinity Piers with that of the Hg/El-scribe, and indeed largely contradicts it. On the basis of this identification, Mooney and Horobin suggested that the apparent standardization of English spelling dubbed ‘Type III’ by Michael Samuels might be better explained as a reflection of the ‘idiolect’ of this one scribe: but, as Warner carefully documents, this argument is in several respects confused, circular, and/or tendentious.

Attention then turns to the scribe of San Marino, Huntington Library MS Hm 114 (which includes copies of Piers Plowman and Troilus and Criseyde). Mooney and Stubbs identify him as the London Guildhall clerk Richard Osbarn, but Warner shows that this identification is far from secure: Mooney and Stubbs ‘have misread or misunderstood the evidence’ (p. 9). According to Warner, the Hm-scribe ‘was indeed a Guildhall clerk, just not Osbarn, and he had left that institution by the time he turned to literary copying’ (p. 9). He also challenges the identification of Scribe D of the Trinity Gower manuscript (Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2) as John Marchaunt, common clerk of the Guildhall: ‘there is no support for the identification of D as Marchaunt, and abundant reason to reject it’ (p. 103). He does accept the suggestion that Marchaunt’s successor at the Guildhall, John Carpenter, was responsible for the copy of the Confessio Amantis in Cambridge, UL MS Dd 8.19, which he calls the ‘great triumph’ of Scribes and the City (p. 108), but casts doubt on two other ascriptions to Carpenter made here (i.e. the Campsall manuscript of Troilus and Criseyde, New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 817, and the Confessio Amantis in Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library MS 1083/29). Overall, Warner’s arguments seriously undermine the central hypothesis of Scribes and the City, that the Guildhall played a crucial role in the dissemination of Middle English literature (and therefore in the standardization of the language). Finally, he convincingly rejects Mooney’s identification of BL, Royal MS 17.D.Xviii as a Hoccleve holograph, and he identifies several important weaknesses in Horobin’s case (in Chaucer Review 2015) for seeing Hoccleve as Chaucer’s ‘first editor’.

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NEIL CARTLIDGE


Glenn Burger’s latest book is well researched, clearly argued, and well written. It paints an overarching narrative that late medieval conduct books for women, especially wives, both perform and expose a transition in medieval spirituality from monastic devotion, to private lay practices, to the more public, married,