

‘A MAN TEXTUEEL’: SCRIBAL READINGS  
AND INTERPRETATIONS OF *TROILUS AND*  
*CRISEYDE* THROUGH THE GLOSSES IN  
MANUSCRIPT BRITISH LIBRARY HARLEY 2392

*I kan nat glose, I am a rude man* (“The Merchant’s Tale”, 2351)

*Abstract*

Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* has a very complex textual history, in which different traditions seem to be intermingled—either because of diverse layers in the composition or transmission of the poem. Among the sixteen different manuscripts which are extant nowadays, we are especially interested in one of them, ms British Library Harley 2392 (H4). Although this copy of the text has been disregarded by some as a *thorough mess* (Hanna 1992: 179) from a textual point of view—it is a conflation of two groups of manuscripts—, however, there are some aspects in it that have caught our attention, namely the high amount of *marginalia* which are original to this particular copy. While other manuscripts have several *ordinationes* in common, and a few of them include glosses resembling the Italian titles for each section of the *Filostrato*, H4 has many marginal annotations which do not appear in any other extant exemplar. Our aim in this paper is to analyse the original glosses in this copy of *Troilus* in order to explore the role played by the scribe of the manuscript, “Style”: his additions to the *marginalia* seem to hint at something beyond the task of a copyist, as those glosses are not mere indicators of the subject matter or simple bibliographical references, but they entail an interpretation of what Chaucer wrote. **Keywords:** Medieval English Literature, Textual studies, Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *marginalia*, scribes.

*Resumen*

*Troilus and Criseyde* tiene una compleja historia textual, donde se mezclan diversas tradiciones—por los distintos niveles en la composición o transmisión del poema. Entre los 16 ms distintos que hoy poseemos, nos interesa particularmente uno, ms British Library Harley 2392 (H4). Aunque esta copia ha sido etiquetada como un *completo desastre* (Hanna 1992: 179) desde el punto de vista textual—es una refundición de dos grupos de manuscritos—, contiene sin embargo varios aspectos que han llamado nuestra atención: la gran cantidad de *marginalia* original de esta copia. Mientras que otros manuscritos tienen varias *ordinationes* en común, y unos pocos incluyen glosas que recuerdan los títulos italianos de las secciones del *Filostrato*, H4 tiene anotaciones marginales que no aparecen en ningún otro ejemplar conocido. Nuestro objetivo en este artículo es analizar las glosas en esta copia del *Troilus* y explorar el papel desarrollado por el escriba del manuscrito, “Style”: sus adiciones a la *marginalia* parecen apuntar una tarea más allá de la propia del copista, ya que estas glosas no son meros indicadores temáticos o simples referencias bibliográficas, sino que implican una interpretación de lo que Chaucer escribió. **Palabras clave:** Literatura inglesa medieval, estudios textuales, Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *marginalia*, escribas.

I THE TEXT AND THE MARGIN: INTRICACIES OF THE *TROILUS* MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR GLOSSES

Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is a poem with an intricate textual history. Of the sixteen manuscripts in which the poem has come down to us—none of them autograph—, three great groups have been identified; however, once this point is settled, it is difficult to find any agreement among scholars as for the complexities of *Troilus* textual tradition (Windeatt 1992: 19–24; Owen 1957–8, 1987). Some believe that these three groups correspond to diverse stages in creating the text—the first draft and subsequent revisions— (Hanna 1996: 98–101), while others think that they are the result of a combination of this and some scribal errors (Root 1916). In the last decades, other hypotheses have been advanced as the result of the notion that the texts were not necessarily copied as an indivisible unit, but loose quires were distributed among the scribes of a *scriptorium* (Windeatt 1979b, 1992; Griffiths & Pearsall 1989) or even supplied by a clearing-house (Hanna 1992); this would account for those manuscripts of the Chaucerian poem where two textual traditions merge. In spite of these new notions, the study of the *Troilus* textual tradition is far from being definite because—according to Seymour—“part of the difficulty here lies as much in the absence of detailed preliminary studies of scribal texture (dialect, spelling and copying habits, propensity to error and misreading, attitude towards the exemplar)” (Seymour 1992: 108). And although Seymour's demand had a response in Julia Boffey's enlightening approach to *marginalia* in some *Troilus* manuscripts (Boffey 1995), she focuses mostly on two of the manuscripts after a brief overview of the main features of marginal annotation in this

Chaucerian poem.<sup>1</sup>

What we intend to address in this paper is the glosses in one of the most intricate *Troilus* manuscripts, ms British Library Harley 2392, usually referred to as H4. Our aim is to make a preliminary attempt at a more in-depth analysis of the glosses in this copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* in order to explore their function in the poem as well as the role and interests of its scribe, "Style".<sup>2</sup> Most marginal annotations in this manuscript do not appear in any other extant exemplar, and they even seem to go beyond the mere indication of the contents or sections of the text. In our analysis, we hope to cast some light on this extraordinary case of *marginalia* and the diversity of the glosses, bearing in mind what G. Caie said in connection with *The Canterbury Tales*: "the Chaucer glosses... have no single function" (Caie 1984: 77).

The manuscript Harley 2392 has been rarely studied due to the fact that it is considered irrelevant from a critical and textual point of view, as it is a late manuscript resulting from a conflation of diverse groups; or as some put it, in quite a pejorative manner, it is "a thorough mess" (Hanna 1992: 179). Certainly, it is not one of

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<sup>1</sup> Nor even Benson & Windeatt (1990) analyzed systematically the glosses in their useful comparative edition of the *Troilus marginalia*. It is regrettable that Baker (2002), who analyzes the role of the scribes as proof of literary reception in her Ph.D., also disregards the importance of the glosses in that type of approach. Boffey's introductory survey of the functions of marginal annotation is seminal inasmuch as it establishes its basic categories, namely, the glosses which identify sources and proverbs, the explanatory ones, the structural and the speech indicators; though her classification has been quite enlightening to us, in our article we reconsider and remake it with the specific traits of ms H4 in mind.

<sup>2</sup> In spite of Skeat's belief that "this manuscript [H4] has a large number of notes and glosses. Some are of small interest, but others are of value, and doubtless proceeded from the author himself" (Skeat 1894: lxxii–lxxiii), we believe, with Windeatt (1979), that the part of the scribes is a key to the understanding, not only of the copies of texts, but also of their *marginalia*.

the richest or most beautifully illustrated texts of *Troilus*—only a few initials are slightly decorated; on the contrary, the impression conveyed by the manuscript is rather of sobriety. This unostentatious character is clearly in tune with other features, namely its small written space (145 × 85 mm—the smallest of all the manuscripts) as well as the material it is made of. In fact, it is one of the *Troilus* manuscripts in paper, in this case with outer and inmost bifolia of each quire of parchment (as in two other manuscripts: Bodleian Library, Arch. Selden Supra 56—ms S2—and Huntington Library, HM 114—ms Ph). This is a detail which must not go unnoticed, as this type of composition of quires might indicate a way of protecting them in case they were used separately (for instance, in case they were provided by a clearing-house).

But this material austerity in ms H4 contrasts with the abundance of *marginalia* (and occasionally, of interlinear glosses too) in it: no other text of *Troilus and Criseyde* has more glosses, nor even the manuscript Bodleian Library, Arch. Selden B (ms S1, a conflation similar to the copy we are studying here). Though several manuscripts include *ordinationes* indicating the book division and Troilus's song (*TC* 1, 400–20),<sup>3</sup> marginal or interlinear annotation is scarce in most of them (Benson & Windeatt 1990), with the exception of S1 and the manuscript held at the Bodleian Library, Rawlison Poet. 163 (ms R, usually considered the textual base for H4 from II, 65). The former is well known for indicating names of characters in the margin, in a style that might remind of a modern theatrical text—but in fact it has been connected with contemporary French lyric manuscripts and their concern with structural and formal features (Butterfield 1995); the latter, for the translation into English of the Italian titles of sections in *Il Filostrato* (Hardman 1995).

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<sup>3</sup> We follow Windeatt's critical edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* (1984). The poem will be referred to as *TC* when quoted; otherwise, its full title (*Troilus and Criseyde*) or an abbreviated form (*Troilus*) will be used.

In contrast with the latter, in ms H<sub>4</sub> the majority of the glosses are in Latin, with a few interlinear English clarifications of the poem. According to Seymour, the *marginalia* must be based on a smaller set of glosses (Seymour 1992: 121). Certainly, some of them coincide with those in other manuscripts; however, if we analyse these coincidences (excluding the *ordinationes*, common to the majority of the texts), we find that those coincidences are far from being systematic in their character or source. For instance, it is true, as Seymour points out, that some glosses in ms St John's College, Cambridge, ms L.i (ms J) recur in our manuscript, but some of them are *ordinationes* and others concur in more texts, the most relevant being ms Ph;<sup>4</sup> this detail should not go unnoticed, as ms Ph is considered a textual source of our manuscript up to book 2, line 65. But, surprisingly enough, most of the coincidences in glosses between H<sub>4</sub> and Ph happen after that line, when the scribe of manuscript H<sub>4</sub> was apparently copying his text from a different manuscript, R.<sup>5</sup> Considering this puzzlement in the filiation of the glosses, it is not surprising that Hanna affirms that the manuscript is a textual mess. And though we disagree with the term "mess" because of its pejorative sense, it must be admitted that from the point of view of its *marginalia*, not much order, consistency or system is found in H<sub>4</sub>, as a brief description of some of its features will show. Firstly, the number of glosses is highly increased from

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<sup>4</sup> The glosses common to the manuscripts Ph, J and H<sub>4</sub> are: "Littera troili Cressaide" (at *TC* 5, 1317), "[l]itera] Cressaid" (at *TC* 5, 1590) and "nota Gallus vulgaris astrologus Alanus de planctu nature" (at *TC* 3, 1415).

<sup>5</sup> In fact, there are some stanzas in book 3 where the number of glosses shared by H<sub>4</sub> and Ph is quite important: "Imeneus deus nupciarum" (*TC* 3, 1258), "nota Gallus vulgaris astrologus Alanus de planctu nature" (*TC* 3, 1415), "lucifer id est stella matutina" (*TC* 3, 1417), "Almena fuit mater herculis" (*TC* 3, 1428). On the other hand, the marginal notes coinciding in R and H<sub>4</sub> are *ordinationes* usually common to several other manuscripts.

quire seven onwards (*TC* 3, 1184); and secondly, as we shall see in our analysis, they seem to come in bunches. Notwithstanding all this, it is possible to see some general trends in the type of marginal annotation of *H4*, and that is precisely our purpose in the ensuing analysis.

## 2 STYLE AND HIS GLOSSES: A TYPOLOGY

In spite of the fact that Style is not systematic in glossing the Chaucerian poem, all the marginal annotation can be divided into seven main groups: *ordinationes*, summaries, explanatory glosses, sources and quotations, highlighters, commentaries and discourse markers.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.1 *Ordinationes*

The *ordinationes*—the notes indicating the parts in which the text is divided, its internal organization<sup>7</sup>—are the group bearing most coincidences with other manuscripts, where *incipits* and *explicitis* are usually provided for every book, as well as references to some other sections such as songs or letters, e.g. “littera troili cressaid” (at *TC*

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<sup>6</sup> Grindley (2001: 77–91) has made a classification of *marginalia* in British manuscripts. He intends to give a thorough analysis of any mark and graphical material appearing in the margins from a diversity of viewpoints, mostly formal and thematic. The subsection on “narrative reading aids” (part of type III, reader-response *marginalia*) is quite interesting for us, because it shows that the glosses could reveal the interests of the reader of a manuscript. However, it only seems to point out to the audience of the text, which leaves out the scribe, its first reader and the main concern of our essay. Our study focuses on the glosses not only as an integral part of this manuscript of *Troilus*, but also as the output of the scribe’s very particular reading.

<sup>7</sup> We use the term *ordinationes* in its etymological sense, that is, referring to the internal organization of the text. However, we do not forget the discussion on how to use this label, as well as that of *compilatio*, which has given place to a very enlightening discussion (Parkes 1976, Rouse & Rouse 1992).

2, 1065). This type of marginal annotation and its disposition has already been analysed in all the *Troilus* manuscripts (Butterfield 1995: 52–61); also, Julia Boffey (1995a) has studied its possible origin in connection with the process of composition of the poem. Therefore, we refer to these authors for an in-depth examination of these glosses; however it is interesting to remark that the scribe of H4 does not fully stick to the usage in other texts, some *ordinationes* are missing in H4<sup>8</sup> and some new are added, mostly *explicitis* for those minor passages: “Explicit Cantus” (at *TC* 2, 875), “Finis littere troili” (at *TC* 5, 1421), which might indicate the scribe’s awareness of the limits of that composition.

### 2.2 *Summaries*

In the second place, glosses can be Latin summaries, intended to point out the subject matter of the nearby stanza(s): when Calchas, in his plea to the parliament, tells the origin of the Trojan war, the scribe writes on the margin “*causa destructio civitatis Troianorum*” (at *TC* 4, 124). Also, this type of glosses can be a way of summing up the contents and the events in the poem, focusing on the process rather than on the topic dealt with; this is the case of “*cressaida obuiabat patri suo Calcas*” (at *TC* 5, 192), where the scribe gives an abbreviated overview of what happens in the stanza:

Hire fader hath hire in hise armes nome,  
And twenty tyme he kiste his doughter sweete,  
And seyde, “O deere doughter myn, welcome.” *cressaida obuiabat patri suo Calcas*  
She seyde ek she was fayn with hym to mete,  
And stood forth muwet, milde and mansuete.  
But here I leue hire with hire fader dwelle,  
And forth I wol of Troilus 3ow telle. (*TC* 5, 190–6)

Their character could lead us to suspect a similarity with the English

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<sup>8</sup> Maybe by coincidence, there is no marginal indication for any of the “Cantus Troili” (*TC* 1, 400; 5, 638) in the poem.

marginal abridgments in mss R and S<sub>1</sub> (sometimes derivative from subtitles in *Il Filostrato*). However, those in H<sub>4</sub> rarely coincide with the ones in mss R and S<sub>1</sub>, even if their purpose is the same; and in that case, their disparity is evident. When Criseyde, already at the Greek camp, finally decides to love Diomedes, her determination is pointed out at the margin of some manuscripts:

H<sub>4</sub>: “causa & periculum atque concessio amoris cressaid’ diomed”  
(at *TC* 5, 1026)

R: “How eft agayn diomedes spak to Cresseyd & prayed hyr of loue  
so ferforth that she gaf hym a stede & a broch whych was troilus  
& made hym were a pencil of hyr sleue” (at *TC* 5, 1030)

Apart from the linguistic disparities and the difference in their length, it is evident that H<sub>4</sub> is more concerned with an analytical approach to the story, to the explanation of Criseyde’s change of mind, while R is more narrative, focusing on her course of action and thus giving a shorter account of the Chaucerian stanzas, with details that Style must have found irrelevant for his purpose.

### 2.3 Explanatory glosses

The third class of glosses is the one we have termed explanatory, notes intended to help understanding the Chaucerian text. This is achieved by two means, explanation properly and clarification. The explanation adds new material in an attempt to make easier the understanding of the poem or some elements in it; therefore, it usually entails an amplification of the text that would allow to connect the poem with the reader’s lore. This is the case of “Almena fuit mater herculis”, where some extra information is provided after Chaucer’s reference to Alcmena; here, the genealogical connection with Hercules will make the character more familiar to the readers.



This type of explanatory gloss differs from the strict clarifications that intend to avoid ambiguity and obscurity. They could appear as interlinear glosses, illuminating a concrete word (these are the only English notes in the ms), and quite frequently they come in bunches:

But O fortune, executrice of wyerdes <sup>id est destine</sup>,  
O influences of thise heuenes hye,  
Soth is that vnder god 3e ben oure hierdes <sup>id est gouvernours</sup>,  
Though to vs bestes ben the causes wrie <sup>id est couered</sup>.  
This mene I now, for she <sup>Cres</sup> gan homward hye,  
But execut was al bisyde hire leue  
The goddes wil, for which she moste bleue.  
The bente <sup>id est curua</sup> moone with hire hornes pale... (TC 3, 617–624)

These clarifications also seek to help to understand the text, but both the position and usage of the formula “id est” in some of them remind us of a thesaurus or a glossary rather than an explanation. And in those cases where the scribe does not seem to feel the need to translate the terms, the gloss intends to disambiguate referents which might be misleading, as is the case of the pronoun “she” in line 621.

#### 2.4 *Glossing sources and quotations*

This group of glosses is that of sources and quotations, whose function is to provide the bibliographical references of the works used by Chaucer in his poem (the Ovidian *Metamorphosis*, Lucan, Alain de Lille or Statius); occasionally, the source text is quoted too (Boffey 1995a). As in the case of clarifications, the bibliographical glosses are accumulated on one occasion:

“... I meene Adoun, that with the boor was slawe. <sup>Methamorphoseos X<sup>o</sup> capitulo hos tu care mihi  
perlegemetha-  
morphoseos ii</sup>” O Ioue ek, for the loue of faire Europe,  
The which in forme of bole away thow fette,

Now help; O Mars, thow with thi bloody cope,  
ffor loue of Cipres, thow me nought ne lette;  
O Phebus, thynk whan Dane hire seluen shette methamorphoseos I Vix precatur prece finita etc  
Under the bark and laurer wax for drede,  
3et for hire loue, O help now at this nede.  
”Mercurie, for the loue of Hierse eke,  
ffor which Pallas was with Aglawros wroth, methamorphoseos ii  
Now helpe, and ek Diane, I the biseke,  
That this viage be nought to the looth;  
O fatal sustren, which er any cloth tres sorores fatales Cloto.lathesis & attropas una cloto colum batulat  
Me shapen was, my destine me sponne,  
So helpeth to this werk that is bygonne.” (TC 3, 721–735)

However, we cannot turn this example into a tendency to put together bibliographical references in the margin, because of two reasons. First, this type of annotation is surprisingly scarce in H4; second, the accumulation of glosses in this passage is not confined to the mention of sources. In the right margin, lines 722, 725, 727, 729 are also annotated with Latin summaries referring to the gods’ love stories such as “Amor phebi dannas” and clarifications like “id est luna diana”. Therefore, the bunches of glosses which are so recurrently found in the margins of H4 do not seem to be related to any specific type of *marginalia*.

### 2.5 Highlighters

One of the most important types of glosses is the one which we have called highlighters; it is also one of the most numerous. The function of these marginal notes is to remark some element of the text by singling it out in the margin. In this sense, the highlighters are very interesting in order to outline what the glossator thinks needs to be noted, either for his own interests or for the commissioner/reader of the manuscript.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the areas they cover will be specially

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Reynolds (2000) on the role of the glosses as a negotiation between the text and the audience.

meaningful in the analysis of the context of the work. There are three main forms of highlighting elements in the poem: verbal repetition, Latin translation and *notae*.

**Verbal repetition.** Sometimes a word used in the text of the poem is merely repeated in the margin –either in English or in Latin–, without any further commentary. Usually, they are proper names referring to infernal characters like “Cerberus” (at *TC* 1, 859) and, in most cases, mythological personages such as “Minos” (at *TC* 4, 1188) or “ceres bachus cipride” (at *TC* 5, 208). This latter case deserves some reflexion, as this gloss is placed by a verse which mentions Troilus’ curse on these three deities, but it is just a continuation of another line where Jupiter, Apolo and Cupid are also implicated:

He corseth Ioue, Appollo and ek Cupide,  
He corseth Ceres, Bacus and Cipride <sup>ceres bachus cipride</sup> (*TC* 5, 207–8)

No doubt, there must be some reason why, in two lines so alike, only the second one is annotated in the margin. It might have to do with the fact that it was a commonplace to associate Bacchus, Ceres and Venus, as Windeatt has pointed out (1984: 457 n).

**Latin translation.** Some parts of the English text are translated into Latin. Here, it is not evident that the scribe is merely making a linguistic transfer in order to help understanding. He might possibly be remarking certain passages, and he does so in the language of the rest of the *marginalia*, Latin. Therefore, the purpose does not seem to be translation. What is interesting about them is the fact that, once more, they are related to the mythological world, usually in connection with the advocacy of gods and goddesses.

Now Ianus, god of entree, thow hym gyde! <sup>Janus deus introitus</sup> (at *TC* 2, 77)  
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on lyue <sup>pheton filius solis methamorphoseos 2<sup>o</sup></sup> (at *TC*  
5, 664)

Also, some others are connected with passages of proverbial character or are proverbs themselves.

Ek wonder last but nyne nyght neuere in towne <sup>Quo mirabilia non durant nisi ix</sup>  
<sup>noctibus</sup> (*TC* 4, 588) (Whiting 1934: W 555)  
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupieth <sup>extrema gaudii luctus</sup> (*TC* 4, 836) (*Proverbs*  
14:13, Whiting 1934: E80)

*Troilus and Criseyde* is reckoned as the Chaucerian poem with the highest proportion of proverbs (Whiting 1934; Hall 2000). And, according to Boffey (1995b), in the fifteenth century there was a tendency to regard Chaucer as a source of wisdom, which is reflected in scribal usage in general and in H4 in particular.

*Notae*. The *nota* is a type of highlighter very habitual in medieval manuscripts, the most abundant kind of marginal annotation in the manuscript Harley 2392: there are thirty nine of them scattered through the manuscript. Small and insignificant though they look among the rest, they are of the utmost importance in order to give an insight into the scribe's contribution to the text itself, because they point to elements that, for some reason, must be of special relevance to him. We have here analysed them trying to find a pattern for their use, but the irregularities are such that they suggest different readings and indicate completely different textual elements.

The most abundant type of *notae* is placed next to lines conforming some sort of moralizing elements. They are basically proverbs or set phrases tinged with some ethical or philosophical idea; for example, the *nota* at *TC* 2, 1385: "ffor swifter cours comth thyng that is of wighte, whan it descendeth, than don thynges lighte." Indeed, heavy things fall faster than lighter ones: those two verses are part of a series of stanzas where Pandarus places himself as Troilus' guide on the difficulties of love. They are spiked with moralising advices that Pandarus directs to Troilus, but the reader, as Style probably thought, could also benefit from them. In most cases, the scribe

seems to be very interested in the reader's appreciation of some maxims or proverbs that look very much like teachings with a moral or philosophical value, a tendency we have already observed in the glosses that render some of those aphorisms into Latin. Style, the scribe, undoubtedly wanted to highlight examples that might be useful to the reader. This is the most common type of *notae* in H4.

But Style also made use of this type of gloss for other purposes: there is a kind of *notae* that seem to correspond to some special events in the text. Four of them point out important inner decisions taken by Criseyde in the course of the story. These glosses mark the moments when Criseyde, after receiving some encouragement from Pandarus, decided to be benevolent to Troilus (at *TC* 2, 474); when she first felt something for him (at *TC* 2, 1266); when we find the first hint of Criseyde's betrayal (at *TC* 5, 1002). They have nothing to do with other *notae* relating moral *sententiae*, because these are the result of the scribe's reflection on the argument. Not surprisingly, one of these *notae* is found after the famous inner monologue where Criseyde ponders over the advantages and disadvantages of being attached to a man (at *TC* 2, 773), a passage which has been found highly interesting as a portrait of the female character in the poem (Pearsall 1987, Hallet 2000: 486–8). No doubt, the consequence of this and other similar disquisitions is essential to the subsequent plot, and it seems to be what the *nota* highlights.

Apart from these, there is an instance where the literary taste of the scribe is put forth by this type of marginal annotation: there is a *nota bene* intended to remark a specially notable passage of the text; Troilus' monologue in *TC* 5, 541 beautifully plays with the image of a desolate palace deprived from Criseyde's light. Highlighted by this *nota*, the monologue seems to be singled out by the scribe for its

literary merits rather than for its moral values.<sup>10</sup> There are no glosses with similar purposes in other manuscripts.

### 2.6 Commentaries

The next type of glosses we are focusing on is what we have called commentaries. This is a very interesting type of glosses because they definitely set the outlook of the scribe not only on the poem but on the ideas contained in it. There are very few of them, only four in the whole manuscript, and they resemble the *notae* inasmuch as they have some moral undertones. In that sense, they could be considered “extended” *notae*; however, the commentary does not only highlight some proverb or *sententia* but also asserts the scribe’s opinion on the matter. At *TC* 5, 627 there is a commentary, “nota de fatuitatis troilum”: in the text, Troilus is suffering from despair after Criseyde has left Troy, and he feels “bitwixen hope and drede”. Though apparently a summary of the contents, the inclusion of a notion absent from the poem, the word *fatuitatis*, clearly pejorative, offers new layers of meaning. The scribe seems to be criticising the dismal state that Troilus is suffering as a consequence of his unhappy love affair, as well as his brooding on it and feeling compassion for himself. This can be related to some previous *notae* in which the scribe marks some parts of the text where the author, by means of proverbs or set phrases, mocks the affected suffering of the lover, as at *TC* 1, 196 where the highlighted verse is “god woot, she slepeth softe ffor loue of the, whan thou turnest ful ofte”.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> According to M.W. Bloomfield (1972), this type of lyrical passage can be connected with several classical and medieval models. That could be precisely what the scribe intended to point out.

<sup>11</sup> Also another *nota*, this time at *TC* 3, 1098 (“And seyde, ‘O thef, is this a mannes herte?’”), suggests that love distresses and changes men’s hearts. In this case, it is Pandarus who comments on the pernicious effects of love.

But other commentaries are not always clear, their meaning remaining enigmatic to us. For instance, at *TC* 3, 11812, there is a gloss that reads *nota dubium*. There are no clues as to why the word “doubt” is mentioned beside a text containing Chaucer’s gratitude to Venus and the muses without the least reference to uncertainty. This is the key that leads us to assert that here, as in other glosses, the scribe is uttering his own views on the text even if it is not possible for us to grasp what he means. Of course, this makes them more interesting, in spite of—or due to—their intriguing character.

There are two other cases of marginal annotation that remain as ambiguous as the last one: they are placed very close together in book 3, at the moment of the consummation of the love between Troilus and Criseyde. Both of them are biblical quotations (*Matt*: 5, 7 and 7, 7) but they refer not to the moral or philosophical value of love but rather they seem to be the scribe’s afterthoughts, with a certain humorous shade, on the events of the poem. When, after many problems and doubts Criseyde finally accepts Troilus, the scribe writes “Beati misericordi” not as a translation of her “of gilt misericorde”, at line 1177, but as an expression of personal blessing to the lovers.

And she answerde, “of gilt misericorde-<sup>beati misericordi</sup>  
That is to seyn, that I for3eue al this;  
And euere more on this nyght 3ow recorde,  
And beth wel war 3e do namore amys.”  
“Nay, dere herte myn,” quod he, “i-wys.”  
“And now,” quod she, “that I haue don 3ow smerte,  
ffor-3eue it me, myn owene swete herte.”<sup>petite et actipites</sup> (*TC* 3, 1177–1183)

The other biblical quotation, “petite et actipites”, appears only five lines below, in 1183, and this time the scribe seems to anticipate the result of Troilus’ request for mercy while at the same time addressing the reader by means of the well-known biblical quotation on the effectiveness of prayer. Again, this seems to indicate that the scribe

is somehow maintaining a dialogue with what the poem says.

### 2.7 Discourse markers

To complete this account of the different types of glosses we have to illustrate yet another type of marginal notes, discourse markers. In this group we have included thirty five glosses appearing in the margins of the text, which are highly characteristic of H4: in no other *Troilus* manuscript does exist that definite determination to mark the different types of discourse that appear in the Chaucerian poem. In essence they are similar to the summaries as they give a brief description of the text's main idea. But the scribe's focus is different in the discourse markers: whereas the summaries only concentrate on the contents, the discourse markers "carefully and intelligently" (Butterfield 1995: 53) underline rhetorical or literary elements of the text. This makes us think that Style's interest in the discourse is prompted by a knowledge of technical terms like *condiciones* (at TC 5, 820 & 827), first used by Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria* (5,10, 38) as an argumentative *locus* and adapted by the medieval *Artes Poetriae* to describe people (Faral 1982: 75ff.). Some other marginal notes use words that designated rhetorical genres in the Middle Ages such as "lamentatio", "exemplum", "narracio", "oratio", "monicio" or "peticio"; this usage of marginal annotation was habitual in school texts and handbooks from the twelfth century (Reynolds 2000). Curiously enough, some of these glosses are nouns derived from verbs used by Chaucer in his poem.<sup>12</sup> For example, "peticio Calcasii in consistorio" (at TC 4, 68) is a

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<sup>12</sup> Yet, though some of these deverbal glosses refer to rhetorical genres, there are others which, being also deverbal, do not apply to any genre. For instance the marginal note *ploracio Cressaid* (at TC 5, 717): the word *ploracio* is a noun derived from the verb *plorare*, the Latin word for "weep". In a magnificent demonstration of accuracy, the scribe used that only word to comprise both the content and the characteristic of the discourse of several stanzas.



reference to Calcas' speech among the Greeks asking for the return of Criseyde:

And with a chaunged face hem bad a boone,<sup>peticio Calcasii in consistorio</sup>  
ffor loue of god, to don that reuerence,  
To stynte noyse and zeue hym audience.

...  
"Hauyng vn-to my tresore ne my rente  
Right no resport to respect of 3oure ese;  
Thus al my good I lefte and to 3ow wente,  
Wenyng in this, my lordes, 3ow to plese.

...  
"Allas, I ne hadde i-brought hire in hire sherte!  
ffor sorwe of whiche I wol nought lyue to-morwe,  
But if 3e lordes rewe vp-on my sorwe. (*TC* 4, 68–98)

The very special qualities of the fragment link it with the tradition of the deliberative discourse originally developed by Greeks and Romans as a means of addressing an assembly which decides on public affairs.<sup>13</sup> Curiously enough, Style does not identify this in the margin as a speech, an "oratio", as Boccacio does in the heading of this section—"orazion di Calcas a' Greci..."—, but rather he mentions the term *petitio*, which had been connected to the judicial discourse since Antiquity.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the scribe does not only highlight the rhetorical discourse, but also its technical and literary features; in fact, it is not improbable that he might be singling it out as a model for that type of speech. This scribal attitude is no doubt in tune with the tendency to make explicit a critical perspective on the poem which Julia Boffey pointed out in manuscripts R and S1 (Boffey 1995a: 13).

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<sup>13</sup> This rhetorical practice came down to the Middle Ages in a sketchy way, but some of its rules were followed and even practiced in some scholarly exercises (Murphy 1974: ch. 3).

<sup>14</sup> "...[genus] iudiciale, quod positum in iudicio habet in se accusationem et defensionem aut petitionem et recusationem" (Cicero, *De inventione*, I, 7).

Discourse markers appear in two different ways in H4: there is a number of glosses that mark the characters' speeches as in theatrical texts, also remarking their discursive involvement by means of the term *verba*. They indicate the character that is speaking and sometimes also the person addressed. These indicators of speakers have a parallel in ms S1, where the parts of the characters are marked in the margins, in this case only with their names. However, in H4 these glosses do not coincide with those in S1, which excludes the possibility of their being based on its *marginalia*; also, in H4 the glosses are more common in the last two books, whereas in S1 they appear only in the first ones, as already seen. These markers serve as a kind of summary of the speech contents, focusing on the character that is speaking and his utterance rather than merely pointing out the subject matter of the text:

And pitously he cryde vpon Criseyde,  
And to hym self right thus he spak and seyde:  
Wher is myn owene lady lief and deere? *verba t. in absentia* (TC 5, 216–8)

Discourse markers, though not exclusive of the H4, are characteristic of the kind of reading that this scribe undertook, not only copying the text but also defining the parts and even giving his opinions by way of highlighting relevant maxims. They are relevant in order to understand the scribe's concern with the technical features of the text, and a certain critical outlook on the Chaucerian poem, which in some of the aspects here analysed could be connected with the type of interests and exercises found in school-oriented *marginalia*.

### 3 STYLE'S READING OF *TROILUS* THROUGH HIS GLOSSES

With this first approach to the *marginalia* in ms H4, we think it is possible to draw some provisional conclusions not only about the functions of the glosses themselves but also on what the scribe saw in the Chaucerian poem, what interested him and what he thought

might be useful for another reader.

The relevance of the H<sub>4</sub> *marginalia* is undeniable, both for their number and their novelty, as well as for their character, different from those in other manuscripts. In spite of Seymour's belief that they could have been drawn from a previous set of glosses, no proof of it has been found so far. Although some glosses concur with those in other texts, some problems related to the textual tradition arise: coincident notes happen to belong to manuscripts that do not belong to H<sub>4</sub>'s textual family, whereas there is not a regular pattern linking H<sub>4</sub> glosses with those R or Ph, the textual siblings of this manuscript. Nor even the fact that they tend to come in bunches helps us to find a neat relation with any other extant text or filiation.

Style's glosses are the result of his intention of singling out whatever he considered relevant. The characteristics of these glosses point to a reader who had a clearly defined literary taste and knowledge (as confirmed by some of the *ordinationes* and *notae*), and who also cared about the difficult reading of the text (for which he provided explanations and translations). Because of the high number of glosses referring to mythology, we can infer that he was undoubtedly interested in that theme, and that he was well versed in it.

But it is not only his interest in certain topics that is revealed in Style's marginal notes. The scribe of ms H<sub>4</sub> seems to be defending that a glossator cannot be a "rude man": he proves himself an active reader with knowledge of writing tools, handbooks and rules, as shown in his awareness of diverse aspects of composition and in the critical perspective of several glosses. This focus on the literary aspects of the poem makes us think that the scribe was attempting to give a very particular reading and interpretation of *Troilus*, a

reading that would turn the poem into the subject of scholarly interest from a literary and rhetorical point of view.

Another outstanding sign of his involvement with the text is what can be derived from glosses as intriguing as the *notae*, where his contribution seems to be focused on moral and amorous guidance through his marking of proverbs related to both issues. There is a particular interest in the amorous subject in highlighters—and in its most important sub-type, *notae*—where it is not infrequent to see him pointing out decisive moments of the poem, as Criseyde's changes of mind; they could serve as a valuable example for the reader. All this makes us think that Style could be intending to provide the reader with a useful moral and amorous handbook through those glosses which are peculiar to this manuscript.

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