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*Thema, Divisio and Exempla in the C-Text of Piers Plowman: Passus I. 81–203 and X. 20–55*¹

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The relationship between medieval literature and sermon has been a controversial topic. In his seminal study on preaching in medieval England, G. R. Owst argues that medieval sermons provided the underlying *topoi* of much contemporary Middle English literature, including William Langland's *Piers Plowman*.² Later generations of scholars, especially in the 1960s, turned to focus on the 'form' of this poem, sharing a common awareness of the structural similarity between *Piers Plowman* and contemporary Latin sermons. Many have made efforts to demonstrate that the Latin quotations in it function as starting points and are then used to construct the narrative, both in parts and as a whole, like a sermon.³ More specifically, Elizabeth Salter considers Langland's technique of inserting Latin quotations to be his *ars poetica* and proposes that he deploys Latin quotations at specific points to develop the poem from *thema* or *themata*, rather than from narrative.⁴ A. C. Spearing extends her discussion and alludes to the arrangement or *dispositio* of the whole poem, in which Langland utilizes both *thema* and *divisio*—essential components of the contemporary sermon.⁵

The Latinized rubrics inserted into most of the *Piers Plowman* manuscripts indicate a bipartite division: between the Prologue/Passus I–IX and Passus X–XXII.⁶ Regarding the second half of the poem, A. C. Spearing, Judson Boyce Allen and Marita Law share the view that a possible *thema*, 'What good thing shall I do?'—part of Matthew 19.16—is implied in the first half of the poem but never explicitly stated, even though it permeates the poem. They also suggest that the *thema* can be broken down into a threefold *divisio* between Dowell (Passus X–XVII), Dobet (Passus

XVIII–XX) and Dobest (Passus XXI–XXII).⁷ Yet, although they refer to descriptions of the fourteenth-century *artes praedicandi* (formal guides for sermons) of Robert of Basevorn and Thomas Waleys, their arguments are unconvincing because they only consider those passages in *Piers Plowman* that are particularly influenced by the medieval sermon and then treat them as specific examples of Langland's *ars poetica*.

The purpose of this paper is to review the extent to which certain relevant passages in *Piers Plowman*, Passus I and X, do in fact rely on the medieval sermon. It will show that Langland's use of sermon components in *Piers Plowman* is not a reflection of his *ars poetica*, but rather evidence of his application and modification of the more formal elements of the sermon, *thema*, *divisio* and *exempla* for rhetorical purposes. In order to do this, I will compare the use of these terms with the description of them in the medieval *artes praedicandi*, especially that of Robert of Basevorn. The medieval sermons that we know of and are extant in manuscripts were used as a model for other preachers, so that there was a distinction between model sermons and 'live' preaching.⁸ The *Artes praedicandi*, however, provide us with the standard sermon structure and techniques which can be applied to the sermon components in *Piers Plowman*. In the following, I will use the C-text of *Piers Plowman* because the two relevant Passus are a little longer than those in the B-text and so more clearly reveal Langland's technique when employing sermon components.

Modern scholars on preaching have described the changes to the sermon form in the late Middle Ages as leading to two distinct forms, the 'ancient form' and the 'modern form'.⁹ The ancient form, Helen Spencer explains, was a commentary method in which the practitioner could give a detailed account of an entire passage of Scripture, typically offering a running commentary on it.¹⁰ A preacher of this type played a role as a 'commentator' on the Bible or on the gospels; hence, he did not rely on clear and systematic structural elements such as *thema* and *divisio* but on structurally simple memorable content, specifically homilies.¹¹ Although this type of sermon continued to be used by vernacular preachers, for example during the short morning mass, until the later Middle ages, the form underwent gradual change toward the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries.¹² The 'modern sermon' gradually emerged, reflecting the preacher's 'careful elaboration of a single selected

thema, an individual line from Scripture'.¹³ The preacher selected a *thema* from the Bible and divided it into two or three parts, each of which was followed by annotations and *exempla*, in a kind of tree diagram. As the mendicant orders moved out into the cities in Western Europe, their audience gradually expanded to include lay congregations, and sermons were often delivered in the vernacular.¹⁴

More than forty preaching manuals, dubbed as *artes praedicandi*, written by theologians, monks and clerics between the early thirteenth and the late fifteenth centuries, follow the structure of the modern sermon, including studies on a good moral life and with a few references to preaching methods—including the vocal articulation and gestures to be used while preaching.¹⁵ Among them, Robert of Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi* was the most comprehensive and prestigious preaching manual, composed in the early fourteenth century. To understand what preaching would have been like in the late fourteenth century, Basevorn's preaching manual is an appropriate choice, although there is no evidence that Langland knew his book. In Chapter 14, Robert of Basevorn enumerates twenty-two ornaments used to compose the well-constructed modern sermon, elaborating on each with its own respective model sermon in the following chapters.¹⁶ Basevorn sets out the necessary components of the modern sermon: the *thema*, the *prothema* (which functions merely as a prologue to the following content), the introduction of the *thema*, the *divisio*, the *subdivisio* and the discussion. These five components (except for the discussion) are often grouped together and known as the Introductory section.¹⁷ In the Introductory section, the *thema*, invented first, is reiterated for the audience and then also divided into parts, with relevant biblical quotations cited in order to confirm each part. A discussion that follows the Introductory section further subdivides each *divisio* into two or three parts, leading to the conclusion. The most significant components are the *thema* and the *divisio*, which will be explored below, mainly with reference to Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi*.

The *thema* was, according to Siegfried Wenzel, 'the defining element of the new sermon form, as described, explained and taught in the various sermon manuals' and was, therefore, a central component of the modern sermon.¹⁸ Basevorn sets out its characteristics in chapters 15–23 of his *Forma praedicandi* as follows: (1) it

corresponds to a feast day (Chapter 15); (2) it is a complete sentence and does not lack a verb (Chapters 15–16); (3) it includes a text from the Bible cited without any corruptions (Chapters 16–18); (4) it comprises no more than three statements (Chapter 19–20).¹⁹ The *thema* quoted precisely word for word from the Bible can confer *auctoritas* on the sermon, and this is known as the Confirmation.²⁰ While the authoritative *thema* in sermons is customarily quoted from the Bible, mainly the gospels, the authors of the Wisdom Books in the Old Testament, such as Solomon, or the authors of the epistles in the New Testament, such as Paul, he provides no absolute rule about which book of the Bible the *thema* should be taken from (Chapter 26).²¹ For the sake of argument, we can define *thema* as a grammatically correct and concise statement quoted from the Bible or from an authoritative work, which lends *auctoritas* to a sermon and was key to its subsequent development.

After the Confirmation, the *thema* is divided into two or three parts in which further discussion of the sermon develops. Many writers of *artes praedicandi* mention that the number of *divisio* should neither be too many nor too few, recommending, for example, that ‘three is an ideal number, two is tolerable, but not as satisfying as three, four is the most that can be allowed’.²² Having too many *divisio* was seen as a major source of concern for construing the sermon’s content and might even risk deterioration of the sermon’s structure, leading to the problem of excessive time taken in preaching; for example, John Mirk, an Augustinian canon writing in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, seemed to have made efforts to plan both the form and content of the sermon because of his fear of drawling.²³ The *thema*, therefore, had to be divided clearly with the help of logic and biblical *distinctiones* to achieve harmony of both content and form in the sermon.²⁴

The third element of the modern sermon, the *exempla*, was not an essential component, unlike the *thema* and *divisio*, but the *exempla* can be said to have a rhetorical function that effectively communicates Christian doctrine to the lay congregation. Modern scholars generally follow Bremond, Le Goff and Schmitt’s definition of the *exempla* as ‘un récit bref, donné comme véridique, et destine à être inséré dans un discours (en general un sermon) pour convaincre l’auditoire par une leçon salutere’ [a short story, given as very specific [to the subject], and intended to be inserted into a

speech, usually a sermon, to convince the audience with a salutary lesson (translation mine)].²⁵ In chapter 49 of *Forma praedicandi*, Basevorn also stresses that the *exempla*, when used in the Introductory section of the sermon, is a productive way to win the audience's hearts and minds.²⁶ A preacher must not only faithfully correlate the *exempla* to the *thema* of his sermon but must also willingly recount narratives based on local lore and events, as well as tell stories based on the Bible. Although Basevorn promoted the use of authoritative narratives from such *auctores* as St Augustine, Gregory, Helinandus, Valerius, Seneca and Macrobius, as well as from the Bible, mundane anecdotes were also useful for preaching to the laity.²⁷

Based on these descriptions of the medieval *artes praedicandi*, we can turn to explore how these three sermon components are rhetorically and structurally incorporated into *Piers Plowman*. The first example is Holy Church's sermon in Passus I. 81–204, which has often been held up as a typical demonstration of the connection between *Piers Plowman* and the contemporary sermon.²⁸ Falling asleep in the first vision, the Dreamer, Will, encounters a 'lovely lady of leere in lynnene yclosed' (I. 3) going by the name of Holy Church. She answers his questions on the nature of those who desire worldly goods (I. 11–40), the false treasure that is the money of this world (I. 41–71), and how he can save his soul (I. 80). It has been pointed out that she begins with the *thema* in response to the last question:²⁹

'When alle tresores ben tried, truethe is the beste—
I do hit vppon *Deus caritas* to deme the sothe.
Hit is as derworthe a druerie as dere god hymseluen'. (I. 81–83)

The rest of the Introductory section of her sermon consists of references to two gospel texts, John 10.34 (I. 86) and Luke 6.35 (I. 87)—as Confirmation of the *thema*—and the insertion of two *exempla*—David's investiture (I. 90–103) and Lucifer's pride. She repeats the *thema* (I. 136), and concludes her discourse (I. 202–03) 'by siht of this textes [i.e. the *thema*]'. It has been pointed out that the repetition of the *thema* (I. 136) means that her speech imitates the sermon form, and so it can also be considered a sermon. Further discussion about charity—*Deus caritas* (I. 139–202)—is followed by Will's apology for 'no kynde knowyng'

(I. 137–38) the ‘truethe’, with two quotations from James 2. 26 and Luke 6. 38 as the final Confirmation.

This outline shows that her discourse develops in typical sermon fashion. However, she clearly deviates from modelling the sermon on the traditional medieval *artes praedicandi* in the invention of the *thema* and the lack of a *divisio*, both of which were *fundamenta* that characterized the modern sermon. She does not observe the strict rule that the *thema* must be quoted from the Bible (although she meets one of the other requirements of the *thema* that it must be a complete sentence and make one statement in saying ‘truethe is the beste’).³⁰ As John Alford notes, moreover, she quotes not the Bible but the *Secreta Secretorum*, a pseudo-Aristotelian encyclopaedia translated from the tenth-century Arabic *Kitāb Sirr al-asrār* [*The Book of the Secret of Secrets*], in order to confer *auctoritas* on this passage.³¹ However, this is not to say that her choice of *thema* deviates from the rules of the *artes praedicandi*, because John Gower drew from the same sources—from pagan *auctoritates* on politics, Aristotle and King Alexander, King Solomon, and from scriptural *auctoritas*, in his *Confessio amantis*, Book VII.³² Therefore, it is possible to say that the precedent of Gower’s literary practice enabled Langland to confer on Holy Church’s *thema* a similar non-biblical *auctoritas*, fulfilling one of the prerequisites of the *thema* in the modern sermon, albeit in an unusual context.

On the *divisio*, Siegfried Wenzel illustrates that her sermon can be divided into two parts at the point of Will’s digression: the first half deals with ‘truthe’ and the second half with ‘loue’.³³ According to Holy Church’s interpretation, however, ‘Truthe’ is ‘fader of fayth and formor of alle’ (I.14)—that is to say, ‘Truthe’ is equated with God or the love of God (*Deus caritas*), and is also a love-token (I. 82–83). She first explains what ‘truthe’ is with the theological words which only the ‘lettred knoweth’ (I. 135), but Will cannot understand how ‘Truthe’ and *Deus caritas* are the same:

‘I haue no kynde knowyng,’ quod Y [i.e. Will], ‘yut mot ye kenne me bettere
By what wey it wexeth and wheder out of my menynges.’

[...]

And this Y [i.e. Holy Church] trowe be treuth: ho-so kan tecche the bettre

Lok thow [i.e. Will] soffre hym [i.e. 'Truthe'] to seye and so thow myht lerne.

(I. 137–38 and I. 144–45)

She responds to his request and struggles to divert away from the question of what is 'Truthe' to what is *Deus caritas* using plainer words. The fact that she consistently develops the *thema* quoted at the beginning of her sermon reveals that there is no clear *divisio* between the topics of her lesson.³⁴ In the modern sermon, the separation between the Introductory section and the discussion was not regarded as the *divisio*; rather, the *divisio* must be derived from the *thema* proper.

The second example, Passus X, is a prelude to the second half of the poem. Will walks around asking many people 'where Dowel was at inne' (X. 4). After some time, and unable to get a satisfactory answer from anyone, Will encounters two Franciscan friars, 'men of grete witte' (X. 9), and asks them 'wher that Dowel dwelleth' (X. 13). He is dissatisfied with the Franciscans' answer that 'sothly a soiourneth with vs freres' (X. 18), however, and his refutation comes in the manner of a scholastic disputation:

'*Contra*', quod Y [i.e. Will] as a clerk, and comsed to despute

And saide, 'Sothly *septies in die cadit iustus*,

Fallyng fro ioye, Iesu woet the sothe!

'Seuene sithe', sayth the boek, 'synegeth day by day

The rihtfulluste renk that regneth on erthe.'

And ho-so synegeth', Y syde, 'certes he doth nat wel

For ho-so synegeth sicurly doth euele,

And Dowel and Do-euele may nat dwelle togyderes.

Ergo, he is nat alwey at hom amonges yow freres;

He is other-while elleswher to wise the peple. (X. 20–29)

Contra and *ergo* are terms used in syllogisms of scholastic disputation. In chapter 31 of his *Forma praedicandi*, Robert of Basevorn also states that the syllogism can promote the audience's understanding, highlighting this particularly in the Introduc-

tory section of the sermon.³⁵ A syllogism consists of a major premise with *auctoritas*, a minor premise and a conclusion.³⁶ The first major premise can be identified with the *thema* because both components need to be taken from the Bible and can grant *auctoritas* to a subsequent disputation. The phrase '*septies in die cadit iustus*' in this passage is, according to John Alford, based on Proverbs 24.16, with the insertion of '*in die*' taken from Psalms 118.164.³⁷ As with Holy Church's speech, the *thema* in this passage does not have a *divisio*, so that Passus X as a whole does not strictly follow the modern sermon structure; instead, it utilizes sermon components in a quasi-sermonic fashion.

In the following lines, the Franciscans expand upon the meaning of the *thema*, '*septies in die cadit iustus*', with a 'forbisne' [i.e. *exempla*] (X. 29). When a small boat floats on the sea and is subjected to the fury of rough waves, storms and gales, then people in the boat fall down again and again due to the rocking (X. 33–40). One Franciscan then goes on to explain this *exemplum* in two stages. The first is allegorical, in that the seawater is a metaphor for the world, the great waves caused by the storms and tempests are a metaphor for the riches of the world, and the body is a metaphor for the inherently fragile human body (X. 42–50). The second is anagogical, explaining that free will and wisdom encourage everyone to repent and confess their sins because even the righteous sin seven times daily through the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil (X. 51–55). It is undeniable that these two types of commentary can be construed as the *divisio*, since the *thema* is often divided according to the four senses of Scripture; in other words, the understanding of the *thema* is deepened from the literal (historical) to the anagogical sense through the *divisio*.³⁸ However, this manner of *divisio* is applied as a rule to the *thema*, not to the *exempla* as noted above. It can be said that the friars' speech deviates from the sermon model. Comparing to Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi*, it is obvious that both examples utilize the sermon components effectively, and also follow the sermon structure.

Examining the two Passus of *Piers Plowman* according to Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi*, it is clear that the three sermon components constituting the Introductory section in the modern sermon are incorporated into the preludes of the two Passus in each of the main sections of the poem. Both Passus are essential to the development

of the poem by emphasizing the teaching of the faith, in which the *thema* and *exempla* serve to grant *auctoritas* and so attract the audience in a quasi-sermonic fashion. In Passus X, in particular, the language of scholastic disputation adds depth to the Invention of the *thema*. Nevertheless, the lack of a *divisio* between both Passus highlights the structural difference between *Piers Plowman* and the modern sermon. This is not Langland's vague *ars poetica*, but his conscious application and modification of the preaching techniques of his time, intended to have a dramatic and rhetorical effect in the poem.

NOTES

- 1 An earlier version of this article was read as a paper at the Twelfth Congress of the Japan Society for Medieval European Studies in October, 2020. I wish to thank Professor Takami Matsuda of Keio University for his very valuable comments and Dr Jeremy Lowe for proofreading my draft. This article was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP 21J10285.
- 2 G. R. Owst, 'The "Angel" and the "Goliardeys" of Langland's Prologue', *The Modern Language Review*, 20 (1925), 270–79 (271). This idea is expanded in his two volumes: *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c. 1350–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926) and *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961; first publ. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).
- 3 See Siegfried Wenzel, 'Medieval Sermons', in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. by John A. Alford (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 156–61.
- 4 Elizabeth Salter, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), chapter 2, esp. pp. 44–48.
- 5 A. C. Spearing, 'The Art of Preaching and *Piers Plowman*', in *Criticism and Medieval Poetry*, ed. by A. C. Spearing, 2nd edn (New York: Edward Arnold, 1972), pp. 107–34 (first publ. in *Criticism and Medieval Poetry* (London: Arnold, 1964), pp. 68–95; repr. in *Chaucer and His Contemporaries*, ed. by Helaine Newstead (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1968), pp. 255–82).
- 6 William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A New Annotated Edition of the C-Text*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2008), p. 1. All quotations from *Piers*

- Plowman* in this article are taken from Pearsall's edition.
- 7 See Spearing, pp. 116–19. Boyce Judson Allen focuses on the Prologue of the poem in his *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 275–79, suggesting that the whole poetic structure of *Piers Plowman* can be construed as an arrangement of *thema* and *divisio* leading up to a conclusion. Marita Law discusses the sermon structure of *Piers Plowman* in relation to Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi* in her doctoral thesis 'Piers Plowman: The Influence and the Effects of Sermon Structure and Rhetoric in the B Text' (unpublished doctoral thesis of the University of Arizona, 1990).
 - 8 David L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 105.
 - 9 See, for example, Th-M. Charland, ed., *Artes praedicandi: Contribution à l'histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge*, Publications de l'Institut d'études Médiévales d'Ottawa, 7 (Paris: Vrin, 1936), pp. 109–226; D'Avray, pp. 123–33; H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 231–47.
 - 10 Spencer, p. 236.
 - 11 For example, Robert of Basevorn succinctly explains the difference between the ancient sermon and the modern sermon as follows (Chapter 10): '*Primus modus [i.e., sermo antiquus] esset bonus eis qui sunt labilis memoriae vel debilis, quia facilius potest occurrere homini processus alicujus magni evangelii quam subtilis argumenti, vel parva divisio unius membri. Secundus modus [i.e. sermo modernus] est modo magis usitatus, quia curiosior*' [The first method [i.e. modern sermon] should be good for those who have poor or weak memories, because the thread of some great Gospel can be mastered more easily than that of a subtle argument, or a small division of one member. The second method [i.e. ancient sermon] is more common, because it is more novel]. Quotations from Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi* are from Charland, pp. 231–323 (pp. 246–47). The English translation is by Leopold Krul, in his 'Robert of Basevorn: The Form of Preaching (1322 A. D.)', in *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts*, ed. by James J. Murphy, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 109–215 (p. 130).
 - 12 See Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 145.
 - 13 Michèle M. Mulchahey, *First the Bow Is Bent in Study: Dominican Education before 1350*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies and Texts (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), p. 402.
 - 14 D'Avray, pp. 90–95.
 - 15 Siegfried Wenzel provides the essential resources for understanding the medieval *artes praedicandi* in his *Medieval Artes praedicandi: A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

- 16 Charland, p. 249; Krul, pp. 132–33. For a descriptive summary of the *Forma praedicandi*, see James. J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 344–74. Yuichi Akae’s monograph provides a detailed analysis of the *Novum opus dominicale* of John Waldeby in relation to Robert of Basevorn’s *Forma praedicandi*, especially in chapter 4 of *A Mendicant Sermon Collection from Composition to Reception The ‘Novum opus dominicale’ of John Waldeby*, OESA, SERMO, 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).
- 17 See, Woodburn O. Ross, ed., *Middle English Sermons Edited from British Museum MS. Royal 18 B. XXIII*, Early English Text Society, o.s., 209 (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1940), pp. xliii–lv. For a lucid exposition of the sermon form and its components, see Spencer, pp. 228–68, 335–58; and Wenzel, *Medieval Artes praedicandi*, Part II, on pp. 45–86.
- 18 Wenzel, p. 50.
- 19 Basevorn summarizes these points at the beginning of the Chapter 15 as follows: ‘*Bene inveniendū themati illa requiruntur: ut festivitati congruat, ut plenum intellectum generet, ut sit de textu Biblicae, non mutato nec perverso, ut non contineat plures dictiones quam tres vel tribus convertibiles, ut de illis dictionibus possint inveniri concordantiae abundantes, etiam vocales, ut ipsum thema loco antethematis vel etiam prothematis, quod idem est, ministrare possit*’ [For a good Invention of the theme the following are required: that it concur with the feast, that it beget full understanding, that it be on a Bible text which is not changed or corrupted, that it contain not more than three statements or convertible to three, that sufficient concordances can be found on these three ideas, even vowel concordances, and that the theme itself can serve in place of the antetheme or protheme.]: Charland, p. 249; Krul, p. 133.
- 20 According to Siegfried Wenzel, Confirmation, *confirmatio* or *probatio*, was ‘a basic urge’ in medieval preaching as well as reading and writing and ‘a logical and verbal procedure rather than merely a specific step in the sermon structure’ in his *Medieval Artes praedicandi*, pp. 75–78 (pp. 75 and 77).
- 21 ‘*Nunc eliminandus est error quorundam qui dicunt quod praecipue de hiis: quatuor Evangeliiis, Psalmis, Epistolis Pauli et libri Salomonis, sunt themata eligenda; quia tota Scriptura Sacra ex Spiritu Sancto tanquam ex auctore dependet, qui nec mentiri nec errare potest, qui nec maioris auctoritatis est in uno libro quam in alio, immo in omni libro sententias summe motivas inserit si sit qui intelligat. Ideo secure dico quod de quocumque libro Scripturae authentico thema sumitur*’ [Now must be eliminated the error of those who say that the themes must be selected from the following sources: the four Gospels, the Psalms, the Epistles of St. Paul, and the Books of Solomon. Because all of Scripture depends on the Holy Ghost as the author, Who can neither lie nor err, Who has no greater authority in one Book than in another, but in fact inserts statements of great motivation in every book, as long as there is a person to

- understand. I, therefore, safely say that it does not matter radically from what authentic book of scripture the theme is taken.] Charland, pp. 264–65; Krul, p. 150 (I modified the English translation a little).
- 22 Spencer, p. 244. She quotes from the *ars preadiciendi* attributed to Jacques de Fusignano in Oxford, University College, MS 36, fols 127^v–128^r. See also Wenzel, *Medieval Artes praedicandi*, pp. 65–75.
- 23 Susan Powell, *John Mirk's Festial, Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II, 2 vols*, Early English Text Society, o.s., 334 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009–11), I, pp. xxxi–xxxii.
- 24 For biblical *distinctiones*, see Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'Biblical Distinctions in the Thirteenth Century', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, 41 (1974), 27–37.
- 25 Claude Bremond, Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L'Exemplum*, 2nd edn (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), pp. 37–38. Thomas Frederick Crane shows that they construe its meaning as 'an illustrative story' in *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. by Thomas Frederick Crane, Publications of the Folklore Society, 26 (London: Nutt, 1890), p. xviii. Akae further divides the *exempla* into two groups, (1) example and (2) illustrative story, with special reference to Waldeby's sermon; see also Akae, pp. 151–57.
- 26 '[*exemplum*] multum valet laicis, qui gaudent exemplis [[the *exemplum*] prevails much with the laity who are pleased with examples]: Charland, p. 293; Krul, p. 182. Further, Basevorn explains the effectiveness of using *exempla* with the following: 'Et est modus iste quod statim eligunt tres materias quas reputant auditoribus magis utiles et magis convenientes, et dividunt thema in illa tria, et probant 1° primum per aliquid manifestum in natura vel arte vel utroque, adducentes ad propositum auctoritatem Bibliae, quae utrumque contineat realiter exemplum adductum et vocaliter dictionem, super quam eligitur illa materia prima. 2° ostendunt hoc idem per aliquam figuram Veteris Testamenti, vel saltem Bibliae. Et 3° idem ostendunt per aliquam narrationem authenticam' [The first of these is very useful and effective and understandable to the ordinary people in any vulgar idiom. [...] This method is one by which they immediately choose three materials which they consider very useful and fitting for their listeners. They divide the *thema* into these three and prove (1) the first by something evident in nature or art or in both, adducing for their proposition an authority of the Bible which contains an example, actually and verbally a statement from which the first material was chosen. (2) They demonstrate this same thing by some figure of the Old Testament, or at least the Bible. (3) They demonstrate the same by some authentic narrative.]: Charland, p. 314; Krul, p. 205. Here I have adopted the English translation by Akae, who modifies Krul's translation for the purpose of providing a clear context: see Akae, pp. 157–58.

- 27 *‘Tamen hic sciendum quod ita potest adduci historia alia sicut historia Bibliae, ut puta aliqua narratio Augustini vel Gregorii, vel alicujus auctoris, vel Helinandi vel Valerii vel Senecae vel Macrobiani’* [I must here explain that another story than one from the Bible may be used, for example, some narrative from Augustine, Gregory or another author, or from Helinandus, Valerius, Seneca or Macrobius.]: Charland, p. 316; Krul, p. 207. See also Minnis, pp. 10–12.
- 28 For example, James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), pp. 23–24.
- 29 See Wenzel, ‘Medieval Sermon’, pp. 165–67.
- 30 On this point, Andrew Galloway accurately makes an annotation in his *The Penn Commentary on ‘Piers Plowman’*, Vol. 1: C Prologue-Passus 4; B Prologue-Passus 4; A Prologue-Passus 4 (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 184–85. Paradoxically, Siegfried Wenzel makes little mention of this crucial issue in his analysis of Holy Church’s sermon in his ‘Medieval Sermon’, pp. 165–66.
- 31 John A. Alford, ‘More Unidentified Quotations in *Piers Plowman*’, *Modern Philology*, 81 (1984), 278–85 (278).
- 32 Minnis, pp. 184–85
- 33 Wenzel, ‘Medieval Sermon’, pp. 165–66.
- 34 See Galloway, pp. 202–03.
- 35 *‘Tertio modo arguendi potest esse introductio, scilicet syllogistica, sic: Omnia quae rationi rectae eveniunt secundum ejus sententiam et appetitum conformem ei ad suum bonum cooperantur. Sed diligentibus Deum eveniunt omnia secundum rectae rationis sententiam et appetitum conformem. Igitur diligentibus Deum, etc.’* [An Introduction can be formed by a third method of argument, syllogism, thus: All things that befall right reason, according to its judgement, and the appetite conforming to reason cooperate for their own good. But all things befall those loving God according to the judgment of right reason and the appetite conforming to it. Therefore, *to them that love God*, etc.]: Charland, p. 270; Krul, p. 155.
- 36 *‘posita majori, statim probari debet si de se non sit evidens. Et postea ponenda est minor cum probatione sua. Et si probationes sint prolixae, post probationem minoris resumendae sunt major et minor, et statim concludetur thema, sic dicendo: Probatum est jam quod omnia quae rationi rectae, etc.; 2° probatum est quod diligentibus Deum omnia eveniunt secundum sententiam, etc. Sequitur igitur quod pro themate est assertum, quod diligentibus Deum, etc’* [[T]he major premise cannot be proved self-evidently. Then the minor premise must be given through proof. If the proof be too extended, then after proving the minor, the major and minor must be restated, and the theme immediately concluded by stating: it has already been proved that all things are subject to reason, etc. In the second, it has been proved that all things befall those loving God, etc. Therefore, it follows what has been asserted in the theme, that *to them that love God*, etc.]: Charland, p. 271; Krul, 157 (I modified the English translation a

- little). For more information of medieval *ars disputandi*, see Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), chapter 5 on pp. 133–71.
- 37 John A. Alford, *Piers Plowman: A Guide to the Quotations*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 77 (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), p. 58. Proverbs 24. 16: '*Septies enim cadet justus, et resurget: impii autem corruent in malum*' [For a just man shall fall seven times and shall rise again: but the wicked shall fall down into evil.]; Psalms 118. 164: '*Septies in die laudem dixi tibi, super iudicia justitiae tuae*' [Seven times a day I have given praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justice.]. Quotations from the Bible are taken from *Douay-Rheims Bible + Challoner Notes* <<http://www.drbo.org/drl/index.htm>> [accessed 23 April 2021].
- 38 See Spencer, p. 244; Wenzel, *Medieval Artes preadicandi*, pp. 66–67.