

The idea of medieval scribes as mechanical, mindless or slavish copyists has come under increasing pressure over the years.

K H 0 H U F K B Q W I I s a n y D e c e s s i v e l y c r i t i c a l r e m a r k s c o n c e r n i n g t h e c a n o n i c
priesthood.

While outliers such as MS Bodley 586 and MS Harley 7333 give us evidence of later
PHGLHYDO VFULEDO DQG HGLWRULDO FHQVRUVKLS RI &
indicate that scribes were perfectly willing to indulge even indulge
in³ Chaucer's U.L.T.E. Copy of \ preserved in Oxford, New College MS
314(1450/70) is one such manuscript. As Carissa Harris and other scholars have established, it
is one of a handful of manuscripts that not only preserve, but actually go as to expand on
& K D X F H U . V U L E 5 8 6 G S D V V D J H V

of . That these interpolations belong to Chaucer is doubtful, which means that where DORQJ WKH ZD\ D VFULEH LQ WKH SURFH.MV RI FR S terms of the date of its execution, Princeton University MS 100 (formerly Helmingham copied 1420-30) is likely the earliest extant manuscript to contain part of these interpolated passages (ten out of fourteen lines). In his study of the manuscripts of , Charles Owen suggested that the Helmingham might have authored the ten spurious lines in that copy of 7 KH 0 HUF (AD 1676v), which KH GHVFULEHG DV ¶VRIW SRUQRJUDSK\ RI D KLJK HQRXJ the ¶HG of Wotton, British Library, MS Harley 1758 (1450-60), who copied the lines to the margin of that manuscript (fol. 88r). In other words, although the authorship of these spurious lines is by no means certain, and although scribes responsible for copying each of these four manuscripts may simply have been dutifully following their exemplar(s) when copying out these lines, the fact remains that they nonetheless chose to include them. In both Princeton MS 100 and New College MS 314, and in the copy of