

From Scribe to Reader: A Study of the Marginal Annotations
of *Piers Plowman* C Text Oxford Bodleian Library Digby 102

by

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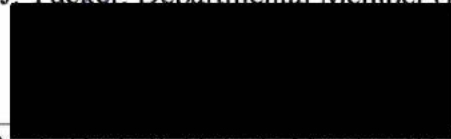
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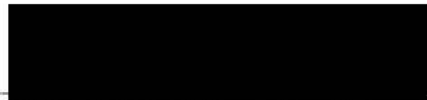
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ABSTRACT

This is the first complete transcription of the marginal annotations of *Piers Plowman* C Text found in Oxford Bodleian Library Digby 102. The annotations are transcribed as they appear in the manuscript; the lineation used is that of Derek Pearsall's 1978 edition of the C text. This transcription presents a unique display of marginalia not often found in *Piers Plowman* manuscripts. Not only does the manuscript contain a layer of marginalia contemporary with the text of the mid-fifteenth century, but it also contains a more substantial layer of marginalia written in the early-sixteenth century.

The introductory sections of this thesis provide a study of the manuscript itself as well as a transcription and discussion of two original scribal interpolations not found in any other *Piers Plowman* manuscript. Following the transcription, the annotations are discussed in detail and categorized in relation to the marginalia found in Douce 104 and HM 143.


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Introduction

Despite its potential as a valuable source for the study of medieval reader response, little scholarly attention has been paid to the marginalia found in *Piers Plowman* manuscripts.¹ This dissertation provides a complete transcription of the marginalia found in the *Piers Plowman* C text Oxford Bodleian Library MS Digby 102. Along with other political complaint poetry of the late middle ages, Digby 102 contains a mid-fifteenth-century copy of the C text of *Piers Plowman*, imperfect at the beginning, commencing in the middle of Passus II.

Digby 102 is quite a good copy of the C text but unfortunately due to its imperfect beginning has been given little attention by most *Piers* scholars.² The first section of this thesis provides a careful study of the manuscript itself: the estimated date of the manuscript as well as estimated dates for the various annotating hands, a collation and bibliographic description of the manuscript, and an examination of its contents. In addition, the various economies with which the manuscript was produced will be

¹ General discussions of marginalia found in *Piers Plowman* manuscripts include: George Russell, "'As They Read it': Some Notes on Early Responses to the C-Version of *Piers Plowman*," *Viator* 15 (1984): 275-303 and Wendy Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anti-clericalism*, (Cambridge, 1989). Kathleen Scott offers a detailed discussion of the marginal illustrations in Douce 104 in her article "The Illustrations of *Piers Plowman* in Bodleian Library MS Douce 104," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 4 (1990): 1-86. For complete transcriptions of *Piers* marginalia, see Carl James Grindley's transcription of the annotations of HM 143 in his unpublished diss., "From Creation to Desecration: The Marginal Annotations of *Piers Plowman* C Text HM 143," University of Victoria, 1989, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise Despres' transcription of the written marginalia of Douce 104 in *Iconography and the Professional Reader in the Douce Piers Plowman*, forthcoming, U of Minnesota P, and Marie-Claire Uhart's transcriptions of Digby 145, British Library Add. 35287, Douce 104, and British Library Add. 35157 in her unpublished diss., "The Early Reception of *Piers Plowman*," University of Leichester (UK), 1986. In "'As They Read It': Some Notes on Early Responses to the C-Version of *Piers Plowman*," Russell offers transcribed extracts from three *Piers Plowman* manuscripts: Bodleian Library MS Douce 104, British Library MS Add. 35157, and Huntington Library MS HM 143.

² Janet Coleman offers a brief discussion of Digby 102 in her book, *English Literature in History, 1350-1400: Medieval Readers and Writers*. (London: Hutchison, 1981) 98-110. J. Kail provides a brief description of the manuscript contents as well as a complete transcription of the political poems found in Digby 102 in "Twenty-Six Political and Other Poems (Digby 102)," *EETS* o.s. 124, (London: 1904).

discussed. It appears as though the manuscript was professionally produced by a number of different scribes; this is not an amateur or homemade production such as the Findern or Thornton manuscripts. The scribes of Digby 102 seem to have made a deliberate effort to save time, space, and money in the production of the manuscript which perhaps suggests they were working with a limited budget, possibly commissioned by a rather poor patron.

Digby 102 presents a rare display of marginalia not often found in *Piers Plowman* manuscripts. Not only does the manuscript contain a typical layer of scribal marginalia contemporary with its creation, it also contains another more substantial layer of marginal annotation written in a much later hand, that of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. There are a total of 480 written annotations in Digby 102 compared with 208 in HM 143 and 254 in Douce 104. Of these 480, however, 381 were written approximately 65-75 years after the creation of the manuscript. Only 97 annotations are scribal, that is, annotations produced at the time of manuscript creation. The remaining 2 annotations, which are neither scribal nor in the hand of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century annotator appear to be written in an even later hand and will be discussed later.

As Paul Saenger and Michael Heinlen have recently shown in their article on late medieval reading habits, it was the duty of the scribes to correct the punctuation, add the foliation and rubrics (if needed), and (depending on the text) to provide annotations as finding notes for readers.³ These duties were usually shared by more than one scribe: the

³ Paul Saenger and Michael Heinlen, "Incunable Description and Its Implication for the Analysis of Fifteenth century Reading Habits" *Printing the Written Word: the Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca: Cornell, 1991) 239.

corrector for example, was usually not the rubricator. As Saenger and Heinlen explain, medieval annotations were “provisions for the reader, and not necessarily, as is often thought, evidence of reader use” (244). In other words, the primary concern of the scribal annotators was for future readers; it was their duty to enhance the readability of the poem, to provide marginalia which would clarify the meaning of the text and expedite the retrieval of information. As Kerby-Fulton suggests in her study of the annotations of Douce 104, *Piers* annotators were concerned with the edification of readers and paid special attention to mnemonic devices; “[m]edieval annotation was a labour of love stimulated, apparently, by the conviction of labouring for the corporate, social good.”⁴ So if scribal annotations are evidence of a reading administered at the professional level, one motivated not so much by personal convictions as by a concern for the reading and comprehension of others, what can we make of the 381 annotations written approximately 65-75 years after the manuscript’s creation? It is possible that this annotator was recording his own personal reactions to the text rather than supplying provisions for future readers. Of course, someone may have returned the manuscript to a scribe for more professional annotation. The style and manner in which these annotations were written, however, suggests they are the product of a private, rather than professional reading, the details of which will be discussed later in this thesis. A transcription of the marginalia of Digby 102 offers scholars a unique example of *Piers* marginalia and an opportunity to examine the marginal response of some of the mid-fifteenth century scribes of *Piers Plowman* as well as the response of a late fifteenth or early sixteenth

⁴ Kerby-Fulton, “The Professional Reader as Annotator,” *Iconography and the Professional Reader in the Douce Piers Plowman*. Forthcoming, U of Minnesota P.

century reader who appears to be annotating not for the benefit of others but for his own personal use.

During the process of transcribing the marginalia of Digby 102, several other interesting features were discovered and considered important enough to discuss in detail. In particular, two scribal interpolations not found in any other C text of *Piers* appear on two separate folios in the manuscript. The second section of this thesis provides a transcription of both of these interpolations and a scenario for their creation and inclusion in the text.

Following the transcription of the marginalia, the annotations will be discussed in detail and categorized according to Grindley's model. During this study, Digby 102 was examined from microfilm.⁵ The manuscript's collation as well as a bibliographic description of the manuscript were taken from the unpublished dissertation of Marie-Claire Uhart, as well as from my own examination of the microfilm. All quotations from *Piers Plowman* within the body of this thesis were taken directly from Digby 102.

The purpose of a transcription of the marginalia of Digby 102 is to provide a useful and insightful resource for scholars interested in the study of the marginal annotations in *Piers* manuscripts. Together with the work done by Grindley on HM 143 and Add. 35157 and that of Kerby-Fulton and Despres on Douce 104, it is hoped that this study will aid in the discovery of a tradition of annotation in *Piers* manuscripts.

⁵ Unfortunately, I have been unable to view the manuscript in its original form at the Bodleian Library at Oxford. I do, however, intend to pursue the possibility of publishing some of the discoveries made in this thesis which will require direct examination of the manuscript.

Bodleian Library MS Digby 102

The Manuscript

In 1634, Sir Kenelm Digby donated a large collection of manuscripts consisting of 233 codices, five rolls, and a catalogue to the newly-built library of Sir Thomas Bodley at Oxford. Among this collection is Bodleian Library MS Digby 102, a parchment codex dated from the mid-fifteenth century and originally owned by Sir Thomas Allen, a renowned Oxford scholar.⁶ The manuscript has since been assigned the sigil “Y” by W.W. Skeat and has been neglected by most textual scholars due to its imperfect beginning.

A description of Digby 102 is as follows:⁷

Vellum, 15 x 22cm. 142 leaves, numbered 1-141, with 98 repeated, and subsequent misnumbering. Date: mid-fifteenth century (Skeat). Collation: ii (modern) + ii; 1-4; 5: three leaves; 6-12⁸; 13⁸ (lacks 8); 14-18⁸; 19⁸ (lacks 5-8). Catchwords survive, but no signatures.

Piers Plowman: very small cramped book hand, variable; c. 35 lines per page; passus headings red, occasionally partially in margin, following text; one with blue paraph; initials blue, 2-3 lines, with extensive red pen ornament, omitted once only at XIV; Latin usually slightly larger script, underlined in red; frame and line ruling; text occasionally overruns; red “notas”; end of lines of poem marked off with a red (sometimes blue) stroke; the lines of the text are not otherwise set out as verse; metrical stop is in red; catchwords roughly boxed, and canceled; two colours; “Explicit etc.”, in red with a monogram of the letters “RNE”.

Other Contents: all in the same hand and format as *Piers Plowman*, poems written as prose.

⁶ For information on Thomas Allen and his manuscripts, see Andrew G. Watson, “Thomas Allen of Oxford and his manuscripts,” *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, and Libraries: Essays Presented to N.R. Ker*. Eds. M.B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson. (London: Scolar Press, 1978)

⁷ Uhart 274.

Uhart suggests here that there is only one hand throughout the entire manuscript. I will argue, however, that there are, rather, two different hands in the body of text and a number of additional hands in the margins. The dialect of the body of text throughout Digby 102 has been identified as belonging to the South-western district of Worcestershire.⁸

The fly leaf at the beginning of the manuscript is marked with various pen trials in the hand of the first scribe. These sorts of fly leaves were used as outer wrappers to prevent the text from smudging before the manuscript was bound and it was quite common for scribes and owners to write on them. Some of these fly leaves remained as permanent covers. The first item following the pen trials is William Langland's *Vision Concerning Piers Plowman* (leaves 1-97v), a copy of the C text, imperfect at the beginning, commencing in Passus II at line 156.⁹ The second item (leaves 98-127v) is a collection of twenty-four political poems composed in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. In his examination of these poems, J. Kail concludes that the first eighteen poems date from 1400 to 1421 while the last six poems cannot be dated with certainty.¹⁰ He suggests that these poems appear to be the work of one author belonging to the south or south-midland area since his works exhibit more enthusiasm for the rights of the Commons than for loyalty to the Sovereign, the latter traditionally a more Northern sentiment (ix). There are Latin marginal notes on some of the leaves. The third item (leaves 128-135v) is a metrical paraphrase of the seven Penitential Psalms of Richard

⁸ See Angus McIntosh, M.L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English* 1 (1986): 147.

⁹ All passus and line numbering in both the body of the thesis and the transcription will be taken from Derek Pearsall's 1978 edition of the C text.

¹⁰ Kail xi-xxii.

Maydestone, followed by the final item in the manuscript, *The Debate of the Body and Soul* (leaves 136-138v). Leaves 140-141 are left blank.

Careful study and comparison of all the various handwriting in both the body of the text and in the margins permits the suggestion of a scenario for the overall creation of the manuscript. Of course, any discussion which attempts to recreate the scribal practices of a particular manuscript is, by its very nature, speculative and is by no means indisputable. Often, in situations where many possibilities exist, one can only suggest the most reasonable possibility.

The first scribe, hereafter referred to as Scribe A, began the copying and continued to folio 35v. On the basis of letter form identification, beginning on folio 36 a second scribe, Scribe B, began copying the text and continued until folio 70, when Scribe A returned and finished copying the text to the end.¹¹ Both scribes used an anglicana formata hand of medial quality: they wrote in a rather untidy, cramped style. While Scribe A's hand is not extremely different from Scribe B's, there is enough variation to suggest the work of two separate people. In particular, Scribe B uses an "h" with a descender that loops back under the limb of the letter while Scribe A uses a much more spacious "h" with a descender extending back beyond the limb of the letter; in its terminal position, the descender on the "h" used by Scribe A extends in the opposite direction. Scribe B also uses a more circular initial "v" with a long descender rounding out of the left side of the letter while Scribe A uses a boxier "v" with a shorter descender. The lobe of the "d" used by Scribe A in its initial position is also much boxier than the

¹¹ See Appendix 1 for handwriting samples of Scribe A and B.

one used by Scribe B.¹² In addition to these letter form variations, the hand of Scribe A appears to be larger and somewhat more untidy than the hand of Scribe B. Scribe A also seems to favour the use of the abbreviated form for “and” whereas Scribe B almost always chooses to write it out in full. Neither Scribes A nor B scraped or crossed-out any of their text, nor did they provide any interlinear corrections.

After Scribes A and B finished copying the body of the text, another scribe, Scribe R rubricated the text, adding the Lombard initials, the rubrics (sometimes partially in the margin), the red underlining of Latin text, the red (sometimes blue) strokes dividing the lines of poetry, and the occasional red “nota” in the margin. There are two rubrication errors in the manuscript: 1) the rubricator has forgotten to add the Lombard capital and flourishing at the beginning of Passus XIV; 2) the rubricator misplaces the red strokes which divide the lines of poetry at Passus IX: 70-78. The hands of Scribe A and Scribe R are similar, the only major difference being the superscript “a”: the tail of the superscript “a” of Scribe A extends to the right and drops down whereas Scribe R’s loops back over the initial letter. The superscript “a” of Scribe R, however, could reflect a different level of formality of the hand of Scribe A as it is normal for the rubrics to appear in a more formal hand than the body of text. There is, therefore, the possibility that Scribes A and R are, in fact, the same person, similar to the case of HM 143.¹³

Either before or after rubrication, another scribe, Scribe C, corrected the text for line omissions, the first being found on folio 9v in Passus IV between lines 47 and 49. The corrector inserts line 48, omitted by Scribe A, at the foot of the page and marks it

¹² The terminology used is from M.B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands: 1250-1500*, (Oxford, 1969), xxvi.

¹³ Grindley 6-8.

with an insertion mark. Scribe C is also responsible for two textual interpolations inserted into the text in the same way as the line on folio 9v. These two textual interpolations, however, are not omissions from the text but are original compositions inserted into the C text of Langland's poem. Both of these scribal interpolations will be discussed in some detail later in this study. The distinct hand of Scribe C occurs once more on folio 136 in the *Debate of the Body and Soul* towards the end of the manuscript. Scribe C inserts a line of text omitted by the scribe although here the missing line appears in the margin rather than at the foot of the page. The hand of Scribe C is definitely a different hand than those of Scribes A, B, and R.¹⁴ In the two textual interpolations, Scribe C consistently uses the thorn wherever possible, whereas Scribes A and B in the entire body of text do not. The use of the thorn is an indication that Scribe C was most likely trained earlier than Scribes A and B, perhaps during the early fifteenth century, as thorn popularity in manuscripts began to fade as the century progressed. Scribe C was very likely an older scribe than Scribes A and B and possibly acted as a senior scribe on the production of this manuscript; the old-fashioned elements in his hand and his role as the corrector would support this.

Unlike HM 143 and Douce 104, Digby 102 is not elaborately decorated or illustrated. Throughout the entire manuscript, there is very little ornamentation that does not also serve a practical role. In her study of Huntington Library MS HM 149, a copy of Nicholas Love's *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*, Shearle Furnish remarks on several characteristics of manuscript economy:

¹⁴ See Appendix 2 for a facsimile of the two scribal interpolations of Scribe C.

In broad and general outline, two features of HM 149 bespeak the economy with which it was planned and produced. One is the systematic subordination of all decorative effects to principles of utility: there is no significant decorative effect in the book which is not also functional. The second feature is the designer's attitude toward the use of parchment. Lines are ruled closely and filled entirely; holes, while not patched, are also not allowed to disrupt the copy for more than the minimum necessary; and parchment within the copying space is never left blank even to enhance the decorative or useful functioning of capitals or incipits...in its present state HM 149 does not have spacious margins, because subsequent trimming has destroyed all evidence of original quire signatures, removed almost all sign of several of the boxed catchwords, and nicked many of the running titles and marginal glosses....Finally, what must have been useable blank sheets at the end of the extant final quire have been neatly removed.¹⁵

In terms of manuscript economy, Digby 102 is, in many ways, similar to HM 149. Like HM 149, Digby 102 is scarcely decorated, the only decorative aspect of the manuscript being the Lombard capitals which occupy, on average, 2-3 lines of text. As Furnish suggests for HM 149, this sort of decorative effect can be reduced to a principle of utility: "those features of [HM 149's] production which are the most carefully crafted are features not of luxury consumption or artistic pride but of utility"(51). In observing the decorative capitals which begin each new section in HM 149, Furnish goes on to suggest that "[t]hough minimal measures have been taken to make these capitals decorative, the most striking thing about them is that they were surely executed quickly and cheaply...they are effective place-finders, but at best mediocre decoration"(57). In her discussion of the illustration and decoration of late fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts, Kathleen Scott suggests,

[t]he frequency of these larger ornamental features -- not to speak of the many types of smaller decorative items -- was undoubtedly owing to the function performed by decoration as a quick flip-through method of locating a list of contents, the first text page, the chapters, book divisions, and other units of a text.

¹⁵ Shearle Furnish, "The *Ordinatio* of Huntington Library, MS HM 149: An East Anglian Manuscript of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*," *Manuscripta* 34 (1990): 62.

This service to the reader was, however, couched in such a form -- a pleasant growing of vines, flowers, birds, animals and people -- that nothing less than delight was meant to be a concomitant effect of the function. If function had been the only reason for the existence of borders, then an unadorned band of red or blue along one margin would have served the same purpose; and pictures might have been entirely unnecessary.¹⁶

While the capitals which begin each new passus in Digby 102 appear to be somewhat decorative and cannot be described as simple, unadorned bands of colour, they are in no way as carefully crafted as those of HM 143, for example, and can easily be explained as practical place-finders. There are, of course, *Piers* manuscripts that display even less decoration than Digby 102; some contain no colour at all.

Another characteristic of manuscript economy identified by Furnish and shared by Digby 102 is the unpatched holes in the parchment. As Furnish tells us of HM 149, “the scribe’s accommodation of the holes...is noteworthy. In every case he wrote carefully to the very edge of the hole and picked up his text on the other edge...this accommodation of holes indicates a conscientious effort to use all ruled surface”(54). There are several holes in the parchment in Digby 102, the most noticeable being on folio 16. On both the recto and the verso of this folio, the scribe has made a conscientious effort to write around the hole. The fact that the scribe has written around the hole proves that it existed at the time of copying, a clear attempt to save parchment.

Probably the most obvious effort to save parchment, however, lies in the fact that the text is written as prose rather than verse, each line separated with a red (sometimes blue) stroke.¹⁷ Rather than writing *Piers* out in verse leaving substantial margins on

¹⁶ Kathleen L. Scott, “Design, Decoration and Illustration,” in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*. Eds. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, (Cambridge, 1989) 31.

¹⁷ M.B. Parkes offers a description of the punctuation in Digby 102 in *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*. (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Scolar Press, 1992). He tells us “the text has

either side, as is the case in most other *Piers* manuscripts, the scribes of Digby 102 chose to write the text as prose, limiting the margin size and thus preserving as much parchment as possible. As Uhart identified in her description of Digby 102 quoted above, the text is written in a cramped hand with approximately 35 lines per page. This may suggest another effort on the part of the scribes to economize.

A question arises from this evidence of manuscript economy: why did the scribes choose to produce Digby 102 in such a fashion? There is no sure way of knowing. The possibility does exist, however, that Digby 102 was commissioned by a rather poor patron, or at least by someone who did not care for lavish ornamentation. The fact that the scribes appear to have made conscious efforts to preserve parchment through their lack of decoration (and the reduction of the decoration that does exist to a level of utility), their accommodation of unpatched holes in the parchment, their cramped hand and their copying of the poem in prose rather than verse suggests they may have been required to work within a limited budget.

been written continuously: one verse follows another across the page, but separated from its predecessor by a *punctus* splashed with red. A current version of the *punctus elavatus* in which the *pes* is formed by a stroke resembling an *s* lying on its side separates the hemistichs of each verse.” 201

The Annotators

One of the most interesting and probably most confusing aspects of Digby 102 is the amount and variation of marginal annotation. Unlike HM 143 and Douce 104 (excluding the marginal illustrations), Digby 102 was annotated by more than one annotator. Not only does there remain a substantial layer of annotations by a late fifteenth/early sixteenth century annotator, there also remains a layer of scribal annotations written in more than one hand. Through comparison of handwriting and the identification of letter form variation, a scenario may be advanced for the overall annotation process.

Many of the red *notas*, along with most of the other written annotations (all but one of which are written in Latin), appear in the hand of Scribe R, the rubricator. Out of the 97 scribal annotations, 71 appear to be written in his hand. Marginal annotations by the scribes who produced the manuscript are not evidence of a general reader's personal reaction to the text but are, rather, evidence of the scribes' daily work. Kerby-Fulton defines this type of scribe as a 'professional reader' whose work "is not the stuff of a quill-happy owner, but real scriptorium slog-work."¹⁸ The content of the annotations of Scribe R, as well as the content of all the other annotations which appear in the manuscript, will be discussed in the latter part of this thesis.

Unlike other *Piers* manuscripts such as HM 143 and Douce 104 in which the annotations are written consistently in one hand, Digby 102 contains scribal marginalia in

¹⁸ Kerby-Fulton, "The Professional Reader as Annotator," forthcoming.

more than one hand.¹⁹ A second annotator, hereafter referred to as Scribe D, annotated the text with a total of eleven *notas*. These eleven *notas* are written in the same thickness of pen used by Scribe R but seem to be the work of another scribe; Scribe R uses a superscript “a” which loops back over the “n” of his *nota* while Scribe D’s superscript “a” moves in the opposite direction, the tail of which leans over to the right side.

A third annotator, hereafter referred to as Scribe E, annotated the text in a much smaller hand using a distinctively thinner pen than that of Scribe R and D. All of the annotations of Scribe E are circled and consist of eight *notas*, one *nota bene*, and one identification of a figure in the poem. Saenger and Heinlen show us that even in the production of incunables, there exists a strong tradition of marginal annotation and professional manuscript preparation. In their study of the various hand-written added features of incunables, they also discovered the hand of more than one scribe. In fact, they were able to record handwritten additions to the principal texts in two fields: rubricating (red ink marks) and non-red reader marks.²⁰ The evidence they discovered suggests that it was not so unusual for more than one scribe to work on annotating the text.²¹

In amongst the marginal annotations of Scribes R, D, and E is a set of annotations written in yet another hand and for seemingly different reasons. This annotator, hereafter referred to as Scribe F, writing in a small, abbreviated style, marked various folios with a total of five marginal notes. These marginal notes, however, do not represent the typical

¹⁹ See Appendix 3 for facsimiles of all the various annotating hands.

²⁰ Saenger and Heinlen 239.

²¹ For a more detailed analysis of other incunables which reflect this sort of annotation process, see Saenger and Heinlen 240-49.

mnemonic devices of Scribes R, D, and E such as *nota* marks, authority identification, biblical references, and other notes designed to aid reading and comprehension. Instead, the five marginal notes of Scribe F can be identified as markers rather than annotations, notes which mark where one is in the progress of the work rather than annotations to the text. Three of these markers form a distinct pattern: the first mark made by Scribe F appears half way down folio 19 and is the abbreviated version of “quartus”; another mark in the same hand appears 26 folios later on the top left corner of folio 45v and reads “medius”; a third mark occurs once again, 26 folios later on folio 71v and reads “3 quartus”; exactly 26 folios later, we reach folio 97, the end of the *Piers* text. Thus, the first mark records the first quarter of the text, the second records the middle, and the third records the third quarter.²² These annotations most likely represent a scribe marking the text for payment; the shop may have provided interval payments as the scribe completed each new section. The other two marks, one on folio 21 reading “media” and the other on folio 27v reading “tertia pars”, also favor this theory, that is, that a scribe marked the text for his stints in order to receive payment. If we recall the arguments above, that Scribe A copied the body of the text to folio 36 where Scribe B then took over, this curious mark reading “tertia pars” on folio 27v begins to make sense; folio 27 occurs at exactly seventy-five percent of the way into Scribe A’s initial work. Unfortunately for this argument, the annotation on folio 21 reading “media” does not come at the mid-point of Scribe A’s initial copying; if it had it would have shown up on folio 18. Nonetheless, because the mid-point of Scribe A’s initial copying and the folio on which this mark

²² I am indebted to Professor Tim Haskett for his helpful observations on the fact that the annotations “medius” on folio 45v and “3 quartus” on folio 71v occur exactly half way through and three quarters of the way through the text respectively.

occurs are only three folios apart, there is a strong possibility that again it represents an effort on the part of the scribe to mark his stints for payment.

As mentioned above, the 97 scribal annotations in this version of *Piers* represent a small portion of the overall number of annotations in the manuscript. The other 381 are written in the hand of a late fifteenth or early sixteenth century annotator. This annotator used an Early Tudor Secretary hand. This hand dates from around 1485 (the accession of Henry VII) to the late 1540s, the later years of the reign of Henry VIII. The annotator's version of the hand dates around the turn of the century: a similar hand occurs in MS Cambridge University Lib. Dd. 8.2, Kington St. Michael, England, dated between 1492 and 1506. The most common features of the hand include the single-loop "a", the double-loop "v" (clearly distinguishing itself from the "u"), the "m" with a descender below the line, the long "r", the long "s" (like a long staff), and a spread-out "w".²³ If in fact this annotator, hereafter referred to as the early-sixteenth-century annotator, was writing at the turn of the century, his annotations would be set approximately 65-75 years apart from the earlier ones. This annotator clearly had no trouble reading Middle English and also appears to be familiar with Latin; many of the annotations which are written in Latin are actually commenting on a section of the text written in Middle English and vice versa. Possible reasons for this will be discussed below.²⁴

There are two additional annotations which are written in a hand much later than that of the sixteenth century annotator, one appearing on folio 36 at Passus X, line 74

²³ For a facsimile of a plate from this manuscript, see P.R. Robinson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts, c.737-1600*, in *Cambridge Libraries*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988) 2: plate 341.

²⁴ See p.79-82 of this thesis.

which reads “Thought” and the other on folio 51 at Passus XIV, line 18a which reads “imprecare”. While these two annotations are not written in the same hand, it is possible that they are additions made by even later annotators of the manuscript, perhaps even by Allen or Digby themselves.

Two Scribal Interpolations

Unlike HM 143, Digby 102 was not the object of an involved, complicated correction process.²⁵ In fact, it appears as though Scribe C, designated as the corrector of the manuscript, only corrected two line omissions, one found on folio 9v, the other on folio 136 in the *Debate of the Body and Soul*. In addition to these two corrections, however, Scribe C is also responsible for two of the most fascinating, yet unnoticed, aspects of Digby 102, namely the two original textual interpolations found on folios 53v and 59v.²⁶ As far as may be determined, neither of these interpolations exist in any of the variant readings of *Piers*, suggesting they may have been composed by a scribe. Since they are present only in Digby 102, most likely they were composed by Scribe C himself.²⁷ There is also the possibility that these interpolations were present in the exemplar. Both interpolations are written in the same alliterative style as the body of text but unlike the body of text which is copied in prose, both of these interpolations are copied in verse.

The following is a transcription of the first interpolation found on the verso of folio 53, inserted at Passus XIV between lines 193 and 194. I have also transcribed lines from the body of text, lines 191-93 which directly precede the interpolation and lines 194-98 which directly follow it in order to place the interpolation in the textual context in which it appears in the manuscript. This section is part of a long speech by Imaginatyf in

²⁵ For a detailed analysis of the correction process of HM 143, see Grindley 10-16.

²⁶ See Appendix 2 for a facsimile of the two textual interpolations of Scribe C.

²⁷ Neither of these textual interpolations appear in the variant readings in the new parallel edition of A.V.C. Schmidt, *Piers Plowman: A Parallel-Text Edition of the A,B,C, and Z Versions*, (London: Longmans, 1995).

which he tackles the question of the salvation of the righteous heathen, one of the central themes in the poem.²⁸

l.191 And where he be saef or nat saef the sothe woet nat clergie
 Ne of Sortes ne of Salomon no scripture can telle
 Wher that they ben in helle or in heuene or Aristotel the wyse

insertion Job was a paynym *and* plesede god at prys
 And arystotle also sewed þe same secte
 And ful holy lyf ladde after lawe of kynde
 Wher for it semeth soþely by sondry skeles to schewe
 That he is saf as was job y can not wete þe soþe

l.194 Ac god is so goed y hope that sethe he gaf hem wittes
 To wissen vs weyes therwith that wenen to saued
 And the betere for here bokes to bidden we ben y holde
 That god for his *grace* gyue here soules reste
 For lettrede men were as lewed men yut ne were the lore of the clerkes

This interpolation represents an original contribution to the overall debate in *Piers* over the salvation of the righteous heathen. The composer appears to have borrowed the half-phrase “skeles to schewe” from Langland’s “mony skeles shewed” which occurs at Passus XI: 163 and XIII: 129. This particular interpolation attempts to continue, and possibly strengthen, the logical progression of this important debate. In order to exemplify the righteous heathen, Imaginatyf makes reference to such well-known authorities whose fate is unknown: Porphyry and Plato (l.189), Socrates and Solomon (l.192), and Aristotle (l.193). The dreamer responds to Imaginatyf’s exposition by concluding that all Christian scholars declare no Saracen or Jew will be saved without baptism. “*Contra,*” says Imaginatyf, “*Vix saluabitur iustus in die iudicii; Ergo*

²⁸ The most important new study on this topic is Nicholas Watson’s “Vision of Inclusion: Universal Salvation in Prereformation England,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, forthcoming, 1997. For a detailed discussion of the issue of the salvation of the righteous heathen in *Piers*, see G.H. Russell’s “The Salvation of the Heathen: The Exploration of a Theme in *Piers Plowman*,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 101-116.

saluabitur,” that is, “The righteous shall scarcely be saved on the day of judgment; Therefore, he shall be saved.” Imaginatyf goes on to show that Trajan was a righteous man who was never baptized, yet was saved. As Russell puts it, Imaginatyf explains to the dreamer that,

there are baptisms of water, of fire and of blood. And this is defined doctrine. It follows, he seems to say, that if there is one who has lived faithfully in accordance with his law and has no suspicion that there is a higher law -- to which, if he were to know it, he would give allegiance -- and if he dies in this disposition, God would not fail to reward his righteousness....He has not said flatly that baptism is not necessary for salvation in the case of the just unbeliever, but he has come close to saying it and, as a good theologian, he has made the right distinction and invoked the right safeguards. And his words, just before he vanishes, seem deliberately imprecise. For once, B and C are closely parallel here. Langland is clearly satisfied to leave the discussion stand.²⁹

The composer of the interpolation, however, is not satisfied to leave the discussion stand and attempts to continue the debate by invoking another authority figure, namely Job, one of the best known Gentiles in the Bible.³⁰ The Book of Job addresses the subject of theodicy, that is, the vindication of the justice of God in the context of human suffering. Job becomes the ultimate example of a righteous man overcoming suffering through patience and faith. Job is used earlier by Langland at the beginning of Passus XIII, a section that addresses the issue of patient poverty and praises the righteous men, such as Abraham and Job, who have endured it through faith. The composer of this interpolation appears to have regarded Job also as a good example of a righteous man who was never baptized, yet was saved. He obviously felt it useful to extend Langland’s list of righteous heathens by including a biblical figure whose story would be familiar to most of

²⁹ Russell “The Salvation of the Heathen,” 109.

³⁰ For a discussion of the virtuous heathen in Middle English Literature, including *Piers Plowman*, see Cindy Vitto, *The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature*, (Philadelphia: Amer. Philos. Assn., 1989).

Langland's audience. During the final section of the book of Job, God restores Job and blesses the latter part of his life more than the first; there is certainly no mystery surrounding his redemption and salvation. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the composer felt the usefulness in including him among the list of others. Job represents yet another aspect of the debate, that is, a righteous heathen whose salvation is not questioned.

The second original scribal interpolation occurs on folio 59v at Passus XVI between lines 88 and 89. In this passage, Patience explains how it is much easier to live faithfully in poverty than in wealth (l.44-99). In doing so, he outlines the various deadly sins and shows, through a detailed description of each, how it is less likely for a poor man to commit these sins than a rich one. In the entire passage, however, Patience only covers six of the seven deadly sins, namely Pride, Wrath, Gluttony, Avarice, Lechery, and Sloth, omitting from his discussion an analysis of the sin Envy. Between the discussion of Avarice and Lechery, the composer of this second interpolation inserts the following passage:

And þou3 þe porer wolde holde eneuwe in his herte
 He may not greue no gost so gretly as hym sulve
 For his eneuwe may do non harm to hys ne to lawe
 Bote his owen carful cors he croneth neyh to deþe
 Wher for pore pacient may no puyre enuwe haue
 Bote enuwe mot fle hym fro for his pacient herte

The composer of these six lines obviously noticed the omission of Envy and decided to include a few lines of instruction regarding this sin. One possible reason Langland neglected to include Envy in his discussion is that unlike the other six deadly sins, Envy seems more a temptation for the poor than the rich. Unlike the other deadly sins, such as Pride, Avarice, or Sloth which, as Patience shows, are sins easily committed by the

wealthy, Envy seems to be more a temptation for those without. Unlike Patience -- a character who exposes the dangers of wealth and the blessings of poverty -- the composer of this interpolation provides a warning for the poor and shows, through a brief mention of Envy, that the poor are not entirely invulnerable to sin, that out of necessity, they are more likely to envy than the rich. By including a brief discussion of the sin Envy, the composer shows readers the other side of the argument, that is, the dangers that are inherent in poverty. It is for this reason perhaps that Langland saw the inclusion of Envy as being inappropriate to a discussion of the blessings of poverty.

Clearly, the composer of these two interpolations is familiar not only with Langland's alliterative and poetic style, but also with two of the central themes of the poem: the salvation of the righteous heathen and patient or holy poverty, which in *Piers* represents the prince of all virtues. Both of these interpolations are sophisticated, intelligent additions to Langland's verse and are clearly the product of someone keenly interested in Langland's concerns. As B.A. Windeatt explains in his discussion of the scribes of Chaucer's work, variation in the text "is of value in illustrating how some sensitive scribes were involved with their texts to the extent of occasionally improving and elaborating them in ways which show the larger influence of the text upon them. A scribe may magnify the emotional force of the original scene by his participation."³¹ The scribe of these two interpolations was clearly influenced by the text, so much so that he interfered with the original action of the poem. Simply to disregard these variations as

³¹ B.A. Windeatt, "The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 1 (1979): 123. Scribal variation, in Chaucer's case, ranges from simple emendation and word preference to the occasional invention of lines or the reversal of word order. As Windeatt notes, "[u]nlike *Piers Plowman*, there is relatively little controversial material in Chaucer's works to invite participation by scribes stimulated by their own prejudices and convictions." (122)

contaminations to the text would be a mistake. In a recent study, Helen Barr tells us “there are also ‘contaminations’ in the manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* arguably composed from scribal memory which show how the poem exerted textual force on its reader... We might regard these ‘contaminations’ as an incipient tradition of reader response.”³² The issues Langland raised in *Piers*, issues such as the salvation of the righteous heathen and the importance of patient poverty, were of immediate concern for Langland’s early readers, and instances of scribal interference such as these illustrate the strong connection Langland’s work made with early readers.

³² Helen Barr, *Signes and Sothe: Language in the Piers Plowman Tradition*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994) 15-16.

The Annotations of Digby 102

A Note on the Transcription

What follows is a complete transcription of the marginalia of Digby 102. The text has been transcribed from microfilm and the folio numbering used is based on the collation by Uhart. The passus and line numbering used is based on Derek Pearsall's 1978 edition of the C text. The original spelling as well as the distinctions between "u" and "v" and "i" and "j" have been preserved. Capital letters are used only where they occur in the manuscript. Both English and Latin words which are divided by lineation have been silently restored and all Latin abbreviations have been silently expanded. All expansions of English abbreviations, however, have been italicized. All notations written in hands other than the hand of the sixteenth century annotator appear in boldface type.³³

Apparatus

The transcription which follows is set out according to the format recommended by Parkes in *English Cursive Hands 1250-1500*.³⁴ The following symbols have been used:

- enclose words and letters which have been deleted by the scribe by means of crossing out, erasure or expunctuation.
- { enclose letters which have been supplied in the transcription

³³ All of the annotations in boldface type, with the exception of "Thought" on folio 36 and "imprecare" on folio 51, are scribal, that is to say, they are all written in hands contemporary to the manuscript's creation.

³⁴ xxviii-xxix.

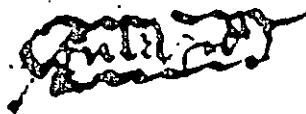
where the manuscript is deficient through damage, or where letters have been hidden by the binding. Where traces of the letter are still visible in the manuscript, the supplied letter has been printed in roman type. Where no traces of the letter remain, the supplied letter has been italicized.

Where it is not possible to determine the nature of the missing letters from the context, dots have been supplied to indicate the number of letters which would fit into the space available.

l indicates the presence of a combination bracket and underline, appearing in the manuscript as



o~ indicates the annotation has been circled in the text, appearing in the manuscript as



Passus II:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
1	156	gyle
1	169	lawe
1	177-78	mede ridit on a shiref
1	182	provisers shale <i>serue prelates</i>
1v	200	Sothenesse
1v	203	Concyens
1v	205	Rex precipit attachiare falshede et alie
1v	219	nota
1v	220	Falshede to the frerys <i>and gile to merchautes</i>
1v	227	lyar to <i>pardoners</i>
2	231	<i>pardon for pe{ns}</i>
2	233	leches
2	240	lyar to Freris
2	246	Nota de regno

Passus III:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
2	2	mede brought to the kyng
2v	14	Ioy the iustice cam to mede
2v	26	Clerkes

Passus III cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
2v	34	nota
2v	38	A confessour to mede
2v	46	shrifte shameles
3	55	Syngyng for mede
3	57	lechery
3	61	nota
3	68-9	Nota of <i>grauyng</i> in wallys
3	77-8	pyllery for misdoers
3	82	Regratourz
3v	88	nota
3v	95	gylours
3v	113	vsurers <i>and</i> regratourz be not enfraunchised
4	119	mayres
4	131	The kyng <i>and</i> mede
4	143	loue treuthe <i>and</i> counsell of reson
4v	154-57	concyens is desired to wedde mede
4v	166	nota
4v	179	mede copith the <i>commissary</i>

Passus III cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
5	194-95	mede ledith lawe
5	202-03	mede <i>and</i> religion
5	210	clerkes <i>and</i> couetise
5	218	concyens accusid mede to the kyng
5v	244	nota
5v	250	a conquerour
5v	258	nota
6	267	mede maketh loue
6	293	nota
6	296	a difference bytwene hyre <i>and</i> mede
6v	315-16	nota de adnullacione doni
6v	323	nota de salamone
7	342	Relacio recta `
7	351	hope
7	362	Relacio indirecta
7	373	ryghtfull custom
7v	383-4	nota of comens

Passus III cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
7v	402-3	Charitie
7v	406	o~nota
7v	408	what hurte is by mede
8	435	nota
8v	450-51	nota mede lettith lawes
8v	453	love shall make lawe a laborer
8v	462	nota
8v	475	Nota
9	488	Nota

Passus IV:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
9	8-9	reson to rule the realme
9	17-19	nota
9v	28-29	wytty man <i>and</i> wyly man
9v	45	!_{.}billa
9v	47	a bille by pees a3enst wrong
10	72	nota

Passus IV cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
10	73-74	wisdom witte <i>and</i> mede
10	89	nota
10v	95-97	mede agreid pees with wronge
10v	101	nota
10v	107	Nota bene
10v	122	o~nota
11	133-36	wronge to be punyshyd for any mede
11	158-59	maryage for goodes
11v	168-71	mede <i>and</i> men of lawe muche treuthe lettith
11v	184-88	reson chaunceler to the kyng <i>and</i> concyens be luges in courtres
11v	189-91	vnfittyng sufferaunce

Passus V:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
12	16	idelnes
13	83	prayers <i>and</i> penaunce is god labour
13	111	reson revest as a pope concyens his crosier
13v	114	pestilence for synne

Passus V cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
13v	124	nota hou oon shall <i>comme</i> to heven
13v	141	<i>prelates</i>
13v	147	religion
14	151	o~nota
14	158	l_monachi etcetera
14	180-82	the kyng to love his comens
14v	188	vnitee
14v	196	nota pylgrymages

Passus VI:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
14v	3	Repentaunce
14v	20	l_Superbia
15v	64	l_Inuidia
16	102	l_Ira
16v	147	o~nota bene
17	166	nota
17	170	[o~luxuria]

Passus VI cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
17	170-71	luxuria
17v	196	covetise
18	239	l_ Auaricia
18	256	nota bene
18v	257a	Restitucioun
18v	287	o~nota
18v	290	nota bene
19	299	o~nota bene
19	300	of tithes
19	309	A walssheman didde restitucioun
19	315	quartus
19	323	nota for theym that haue not to restore
19v	350	o~Gula etc
20	376	o~nota
21	437	Abstinence

Passus VII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
21	1	media
21	3	Accidia
22	70	nota
22	84	sage foles
23	152	Spes
23v	164	pylgyrme
23v	176-79	pilgyrmes knowith not trouthe
23v	182	nota
23v	183-84	ploughman sayd trouthe
23v	194-95	<i>propertees</i> of trouthe
24	205	wey to trouthe
24	208	mekenes
24	211	love god <i>and</i> thy neybur
24	216	honour thy fader <i>and</i> moder
24	222	X precepta
24v	229	Nota bene
24v	246	Grace

Passus VII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
24v	255	trouthe
24v	262	nota
25	269	grace
25	270	vij susters that <i>serue</i> trouthe
25	274	largitas
25	284	cuttepurse
25	288	mercy
25	292	vaynglory
25	295	Covetise
25	300	lechery
25v	304	contemplacyon

Passus VIII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
25v	8	occupacion for women
25v	22-23	knyghthode <i>and</i> ploughman
26	36	nota bene
26	40	take no yeftes of pore

Passus VIII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
26	45	chorles bonys in charnell ar not knowen fro lordes
26	51	speke not agenst concyens ne holy chirche right
26v	68-72	Al treu crafty men <i>and</i> true laborers doo folowe trouth
26v	77-78	no tithes of dysers <i>and</i> suche unlaufull getynges
26v	81	piers ploughman is wyfe <i>and</i> his children
26v	85	nota bene
26v	96	pers testament
27	128	lorels <i>and</i> faytourz
27v	150	waster
27v	161	knyght
27v	168	hunger
27v	bottom	tertia pars
28	183	heremytes
28v	221-23	punyshe stray beggers with hunger
28v	232-33	wikkydly wonne wysly to be spente
29	271	nota de dieta salubri
29	287	nota almes to moste nedy
29v	295	leches

Passus VIII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
29v	316	piers mete
30	333	wasters mete
30	339	vacabundes curse the kyng <i>and</i> his lawes
30	345	Famyne to chastise wasters
30	350	nota bene

Passus IX:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
30v	15	byshoppis
30v	23	merchauntz
30v	45	nota
30v	45	menne of law
31	61	beggars
31	73	nota almes
31v	98	nota bene
31v	106	lollard
32	127a	nota
32	129	mynstrellys

Passus IX cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
32	140	heremytez
32v	167	nota
32v	190	holy heremytz
33	199-200	heremytes vnthryfty
33	213-14	o~nota
33	216	lollardes
33v	232	holy dayes to be kepte <i>and</i> fastyng dayes vnder payn of dedly synne
33v	249	nota
33v	255	bisshops
34	257	nota
34	261-62	nota bene
34	284	<i>pardon</i> of pers
34v	291	doo well <i>and</i> haue well
34v	293	he that evyll lyvith evill he shale dye
34v	311	nota
34v	323	dowell passith pardon <i>and</i> pilgrymages to rome
35	331	trentals is not so goode as doo welle
35	344-45	<i>pardon</i> auayleth lytell <i>with</i> out doo well

Passus X:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
35	4	doo welle
35v	31	nota bene
36	74	Thought
36v	79-80	doo welle
36v	88-89	doo bettyr
36v	92	doo beste
37	114	witte
37	131-32	corpus et Anima
37	136	Kynde
37	143-44	In witte
37v	146	vij kepers of the soule
37v	151-52	discripcioun of kynde
37v	164a	nota bene
38	200	love god
38	210	bastardes
39	255	nota
39	257	nota bene

Passus X cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
39	276	matrimonium
39	278	wydowes
39	283	weddyng
39	287-88	weddid men

Passus XI:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
39v	1-2	witte wyfe is studye
39v	14-15	witte mengid <i>with</i> couetise is vsed
39v	19-20	o~nota
40	37	nota
40	38	of spekyng dyvinyte at <i>bordes</i>
40v	59	nota
41	106	nota
41v	132	clergy
41v	154	nota
41v	160	Trinite
42	173-74	concupiscencia carnis et oculorum

Passus XI cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
42	189	Age
42	196	Rechelesnesse
43	242	nota bene
43	249	nota

Passus XII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
44	10-11	pena pecuniaria
44	23	nota
45	74	l_Troianus
45	84	Iustice
45	93	love and leaulte
45v	top left corner	medius
45v	115	lawe of love
45v	131	<i>our</i> lord in pore apparell
46	140-42	pouerte is beste if pacyence folowe
46v	171	paupertas

Passus XII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
46v	175-77	pacyent pouerte prynce of all vertues
47	182	nota
47	221	o~nota
47	226	couetise

Passus XIII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
47v	32	nota
48	40	merchaunt
49	115-16	o~nota
50	180-83	mankynde is worse than bestes
50	195-95a	o~nota
50	202-03	nota bene
50v	223a	nota

Passus XIV:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
51	18a	imprecare
51v	63	nota bene clergye

Passus XIV cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
52	73-74	Astronomy
53	154-55	nota bene
53v	177	pecok
53v	197-98	nota of salamon <i>and oder</i>
54	202	Imagynacioun
54	203	nota

Passus XV:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
54	9	Freres
54	13	covetise ouercam all sectes lered <i>and lewde</i> Curates
54v	26	Concyens <i>and</i> clergye <i>and</i> Resoun
54v	33	pacyence
54v	34	o~nota
55	56-7	penauns
55	60	nota bene
55	65-7	nota a doctour of dyvinte drank wyne
55	76-7	Freres

Passus XV cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
55	83	nota
55v	94	nota
55v	96	nota of the frere
56	123-27	do well is as doctour <i>precheth</i> do beste is to <i>preche and</i> doo beste is to doo as he <i>precheth</i>
56	133	nota bene
56	144-45	nota to get loue of thyn enemy
56	149	nota
56	154	o~nota
56v	158	<i>pacientes vincunt</i>
56v	170	nota
56v	179-80	nota
56v	185-87	<i>pacyence sobrietas and sothffast</i> byleve
56v	193	A mynstrell <i>actiua vita</i>
57	225a	nota bene de papa
57v	250	<i>voluntas dei</i> to fynde al men
57v	255	sobrenes in the v wittes
58	274-75	what is <i>parfite</i> pacience
58	301	nota bene

Passus XVI:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
58v	25	nota
58v	34-5	nota bene
59	47-8	nota
59	58	pride is in Riches
59v	90	nota bene de paupertate
59v	106	nota of maryage
59v		pacyence is <i>withoute</i> Envy*
60	116	quid est paupertas
60	117	o~nota
60	127a	l_paupertas
60v	157	actif had a leder that is <i>liberum arbitrium</i>
61	172-3	<i>liberum arbitrium</i>
61	183-86	the differens of anima <i>and</i> animus sensus et cetera
61	200a	Anima
61	200a	nota bene
61v	204-05	nota bisshipis haue diuerse namys
61v	211	lucifers knyghtes
61v	216	nota bene
61v	222-25	connyng to knowe sciences put Eve oute of paradyse

*This annotation appears next to the scribal interpolation at the foot of the page. For a transcription of this interpolation, see p. 22 of this thesis.

Passus XVI cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
61v	237	nota bene
62	242-49	As all goode <i>commyth</i> of holy chirche by prestehode so oute of evyll prestis all evyll <i>commyth</i>
62	263	ypocrysy
62	271a	nota bene
62v	271a-274	goodis ill geten wikked men shall have
62v	295	Charite
63	312	Charite
63v	340	mery at mete
63v	363	Auaricia

Passus XVII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
64	3	irascimur et nolite peccare
64	18	nota
64	19	holy heremit
64v	42-3	take that right wylle
64v	47	nota

Passus XVII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
64v	52	Mesure
64v	53-4	Mortmayn
64v	61-2	to helpe thy kyn is charite
65	69-72	Clerkes kepe cristes tresire that pore men shold have
65	90	nota bene
65	92	if men doo well all thynges shalbe plente
65v	106	science is not had nowe perfitely
65v	111	nota
65v	126	charite is to loue god <i>and</i> doo after his lawes
66	141	nota de amore dei et proxime
66	164	macomete
66v	195-96	nota bene
67	206-07	couetise shall cause the chirche to be lowed
67v	214	nota
68	281	norma presulis
68	285a	o~ nota

Passus XVIII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
68v	10	nota
68v	14	Caritas
69	28	sancta trinitas
69	31	thre wynde the world the Flesshe <i>and</i> the devyll
69	40	nota
69	61-64	nota why sume appils be gretter than odyr
69v	76	l_ nota
69b	83	vita Actiua et contemplatiua
70	123	Anunciacio
71v	198	nota
71v	202	Trinitas
71v	214	3 quartus
71v	216	nota bene
72	257	nota bene

Passus XIX:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
72v	1	Spes
73	18-19	dilige deum and proximum

Passus XIX cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
73v	59	hope <i>with</i> Moises <i>commaundementes</i>
73v	64	Samaritauns
74	83-84	nota
74	96	nota bene of the olde lawe
74v	127	newe lawe
75	145	nota
75v	202	nota
76	214	nota de ingratitude
76	227a	mihi
76	229	diues
76	235a	a nygard
76v	246-7	nota bene to <i>departe with your goodes</i>
76v	252-53	that kynde dothe vnkynde fordothe
76v	262	peccatum in spiritum sanctum
77	272-73	o~nota

Passus XX:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
78	22-3	passio domini

Passus XX cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
78v	53-4	de passione Christi
79v	115	Mercy
79v	123	Treuthe
80	144-45	nota
80	165	nota bene
80	168	Rightwisnesse <i>and</i> pees
80v	204	nota
81v	272	o~ nota
82v	322-23	it is not well gotten there gyle is the rote
83	340	nota bene
83	355	mendacium
84	419-20a	brodyrs in blode <i>and</i> in baptisme

Passus XXI:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
85v	41-2	o~ nota
86	84-5	magi <i>and</i> their offerynges

Passus XXI cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
86v	115	diliges inimici
86v	128-29	Miracula Christi dovette
87	154	o~nota
87	156	Resurrectio cristi
87	161a-62	that woman knowith may be noo counsell
87v	182-83	dobeste perdon
87v	187	redde <i>quod</i> debes
87v	197-99	Concyence spake of criste <i>and</i> of the crosse
87v	204	The holy goste
87v	208	Concyence
88	211-13	grace is <i>with</i> perse the ploughman
88	215-16	diuisiones graciaram
88	222	Antecriste
88	223-24	False flaterers shalbe curate ³
88	233	nota bene
88	234	diuersitatem graciaram
88v	255	nota bene
88v	256	concyens to be kyng <i>and</i> crafte to be stiward

Passus XXI cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
88v	276	iiij cardynall vertues
89	304	nota bene de iusticia
89v	326	Mercy
89v	330	vnite all holy chirche
89v	334-35	pers goth to tylve trouth
89v	338-39	pride <i>and</i> his <i>seruauntes</i> to lette pers
90	347	nota bene
90	349	colourid confessioun
90	359	grace
90	361-62	kynde witte
90	370	Iiurour ³
90v	375-78	holynes to growe <i>and</i> to stinde euery man helpe
90v	385	sacramentum altaris
90v	390	Redde quod debes
90v	407	nota a brewer
91	410	o~nota
91	411	a curate

Passus XXI cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
91	417	cardynals
91	425-26	nota of the pope
91	435-37	the ploughman tilleth for gode <i>and</i> bad
91	442	nota
91v	443	nota de papa
92	479a	nota bene

Passus XXII:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
92	10-11	nede hath noo lawe
92	26-7	nota bene
92v	46	necessitas
92v	53	nota Antecristus
93	70-72	pryde bare antecristes baner
93	80	l_natura
93	84	o~nota
93	85	kynde
93	89	Elde age

Passus XXII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
93	91	kynde
93	92	dethe
93v	104	kynde
93v	110	l_Fortuna
93v	111	lecherye
93v	121-23	covetise ouercam concyence <i>and</i> all cardynall vertus
93v	126-27	Symony suyd covetise
93v	132	nota bene
94	135	Iugys
94	137	l_Arches
94	138	Syvile turnyd in to symony
94	143	l_vita
94	157-59	lyfe <i>and</i> his leman Fortune
94	160-62	Sleuthe weddid wanhope
94	166	l_nota Senex
94v	171	lyfe
94v	178	Age made man balde
94v	191-93	Age takith away tethe <i>and</i> bryngith gowtys

Passus XXII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
94v	198	o~nota
94v	200-01	kynde drewe a way <i>and</i> dethe drewe nere
95	204	vnyte
95	218	l_nota sacerdotes
95	221	nota bene
95	223-26	vices had vnyte <i>and</i> concyens down
95	228	nota
95	228-30	conciens callid clergy to helpe
95	230	l_Freres
95	233	freris cam for couetise to haue cure of soule
95v	240-42	let freris lyve like beggers or by aungels fode
95v	256a	o~nota
95v	269-70	freris be withoute nombre
96	275-76	all thynges in comen
96	278-79	non concupisces rem proximi tui
96	282-83	l_nota
96	288-90	confession of iurrou ³ <i>and</i> oder false
96	299	concyens was <i>with</i> vnite

Passus XXII cont'd:

<u>Folio</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Content</u>
96	302	Ipocrisy
96v	306-08	gode shrifte wolde haue sharpe salue redde <i>quod debes</i>
96v	315	Frere flater
96v	331	<i>o~nota</i>
96v	334-36	contricioun hurte with Ipocrisye
97	340	frere penitrens domos
97	347	nota
97	362-63	the frere gaue contricioun a plastyr of a pryvy payment
97v	369	nota bene
97v	379-80	no drede of synne
97v	383-86	concyence is gone to seke pers plough man <i>and</i> grace

Understanding the Annotations

Introduction

In attempting to understand the marginal annotations of *Piers* manuscripts, one is, by the very nature of the exercise, also attempting to understand the context in which *Piers* was first read and received. The marginalia of *Piers* manuscripts represent for the modern scholar evidence of the early responses and concerns of Langland's audience. In her discussion of the annotations of Douce 104, Kerby-Fulton suggests that while scribal annotation may in fact be an exercise in preparing the manuscript for other readers -- that is, they represent more a running commentary on the text than a personal reaction -- they are also not entirely objective nor without personality.

Modern readers approaching the reading-aid annotations of a MS like Douce 104 or HM 143 will be disappointed not to find instances of the kind of colourful, subjective reactions to the text that Plummer made famous in his article on the marginalia of Irish scribes...however, although not brimming with local colour, these are not wholly 'impersonal' productions. Although [the Douce annotator] adopts a mask of objectivity, no exercise of this sort is ever purely objective.³⁵

In her study of the anti-clerical issues in *Piers* and its various manuscripts, Wendy Scase provides a rather helpful perspective on the role of medieval marginal annotation suggesting that every collection of variant readings is a context for a text and that medieval marginalia is itself a context.

Even if scholars could be confident that editors had recovered the authorial versions of the poem, it would still be questionable whether they should in every case disregard the state of the poem in its manuscripts. For even if the editors have recovered what the poet wrote, it is perfectly clear that they have not

³⁵ Kerby-Fulton, "The Professional Reader as Annotator," forthcoming.

recovered what any medieval reader could have read....the mass of data in the *Piers Plowman* manuscripts, arguably more important both quantitatively and qualitatively, has for the most part been used only for editorial purposes. The large amount of medieval marginal annotation in the *Piers Plowman* manuscripts has been ignored, or perhaps not even suspected, by most of the poem's critics.³⁶

In other words, through a study of the scribal annotations in *Piers* manuscripts it is possible to discover and unmask something of the identity and agenda of some of Langland's earliest readers and, thus, discover some of the context in which *Piers* was read.

As is evident in the transcription, Digby 102 has a relatively small number of scribal annotations (those somewhat objective remarks intended to guide the reader to significant passages in the text) and a rather large number of annotations by the sixteenth century annotator. While no marginal response can ever be entirely objective, the annotations of the early sixteenth century annotator seem to reflect more of a private or personal response than those of the scribes, whose primary concern in annotating the text was to aid in reading and comprehension. The distinction between the two types of annotators may be seen as the provider (the copyist reading and responding for the sake of others) and the consumer (the reader responding out of a personal reaction to the text.) There is the possibility, of course, that an early-sixteenth-century owner of Digby 102 brought the manuscript to a professional reader in a shop. The style in which many of these annotations were written, however, suggest they are the work of one reader responding to those sections of the text which most concern him.³⁷

³⁶ Wendy Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism*, (Cambridge UP, 1989) xi-xii.

³⁷ See pp. 71-74 of this thesis.

As mentioned above, there are a total of 480 written annotations in Digby 102: 381 written in the early sixteenth century, 97 written at the time of manuscript creation, and 2 written in very late hands of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. As Grindley and Kerby-Fulton discover in their analyses of the marginalia of HM 143 and Douce 104 respectively, applying an analytical structure to the annotations is a helpful way of making sense of the large amount of marginalia found in *Piers* manuscripts.³⁸ Four of the categories outlined by Grindley provide the most useful way of approaching a discussion of the marginalia of Digby 102: the Reading Aid annotation, the Summation annotation, the Comment annotation, and the Address annotation.³⁹ In the following section, these categories will be applied to some of the marginalia of Digby 102 accompanied by a discussion of some of the more interesting annotations. Since the annotations of the scribes and those of the early sixteenth century annotator seem to have been written for very different reasons, they will be discussed separately.

³⁸ For a categorization of the marginalia of Douce 104, see Kerby-Fulton, "The Professional Reader as Annotator," forthcoming and for HM 143, see Grindley, 43-72.

³⁹ I have excluded Grindley's fifth category, the Illustration, since it does not appear relevant to a study of Digby 102.

The Scribal Annotations

There are four categories of annotations which occur in Douce 104, HM 143, and to some extent, Digby 102: 1) Reading Aid Annotations (annotations which identify sources and key figures and which delineate formal arguments); 2) Summation Annotations (direct references to the action in the poem and occasionally to the motivations behind these actions);⁴⁰ 3) Comment Annotations (annotations which neither summarize the text nor delineate logical processes but instead, indicate an annotator's concern for a particular passage); 4) Address Annotations (annotations that directly address the reader or attack various groups). In HM 143, these four annotation types occur with relative consistency throughout the manuscript appearing in approximately equal numbers.⁴¹ When applied to the scribal annotations of Digby 102, however, these four types of annotations appear much more sporadically.

Of the 97 scribal annotations in the manuscript, 63 are *notas*. Grindley classifies the *nota* as a sub-category of the Comment Annotation which he calls the Simple Note, usually a Latin comment under four words in length.⁴² With the exception of Scribe E and his one written annotation at Passus VI: 350, fol. 19v, Scribe R is the only one to have annotated the text using anything other than the simple *nota* or *nota bene*. In many instances, the scribes have noted passages which censure the sinful behaviors of particular groups such as barristers, friars, and various other clergy. A typical example of

⁴⁰ Grindley tells us that Summation Annotations differ from Reading Aid Annotations in that they “reveal purpose and direct textual content; they are less concerned with matters of academic formalities and logical structure and are more concerned with the overall plot of the poem” (50).

⁴¹ Grindley 42.

⁴² Grindley 59.

this kind of note may be found at Passus VI: 287, fol. 18v in which Repentaunce argues that if he were a friar, he would refuse to accept any payment for his work:

.../ now redyly *quod* Repentaunce y haue
reuthe of thy lyuyng / were y a frere in goed fayth for
nota al the gold on erthe / y ne wolde cope me with thy catel
ne oure kyrke mende / ne take a meles mete of thyn
And myn herte hit wyste / Thou were suche as thou
sayst y sholde rather sterue....

A concern for passages dealing with friars is also evident in the scribal *notas* found at Passus II: 219, fol 1v (the point at which Falsness flees to the friars), Passus VI: 299, fol. 19 (Repentaunce's advice that friars must make restitution), Passus IX: 249, fol. 33v (a description of friars), Passus XII: 23, fol. 44 (Will's complaint to Leaute that the friars ignore him now that he is poor), Passus XXII: 282-83, fol. 96 (Conscience's words on how shame has caused parishioners to flee to friars, as "fals folk to Westmynstre")⁴³, and Passus XXII: 331, fol. 96v (a friar declaring his will to be for profit and health.)

Other scribal *notas* in the manuscript draw attention to key passages citing religious doctrine, biblical authorities, and references to Christ's death and resurrection.

A typical example of the kind of *nota* which highlights religious doctrine, in this case, the Trinity, occurs at Passus XI: 37, fol. 40:

.../ now is the manere at the
mete When mynstrals ben stille / The lewed ayen the
lered holy lore to despute / And tellen of the Trinitee how nota
two slowe the thridde....

⁴³ In a footnote to these lines, Pearsall suggests that "[Langland] recurs to one of the fundamental themes of the poem -- the way in which friars, by taking over the role of confessors, have undermined the efficacy of confession and the penitence that must accompany it....People evade the real soul-searching of confession, the shame and repudiation of sin, the consequences as to penance and amendment, by making superficial formal confession to friars, who have little interest in the matter apart from money." 373

In a footnote to these lines, Pearsall tells us that Dame Studie is alluding here to the heretical denial of the triune nature of the Trinity, lines which were so shocking for the scribes of B, that they substituted the second half of line 37 with “a tale ouper tweye.”⁴⁴ In marking this passage with a *nota*, this annotator may have been startled by this passage as well although unlike the scribes of B, he does not censure the passage or try to control the reading by commenting at length; his *nota* may simply reflect an interest or concern for the passage. Other instances of *notas* which highlight passages alluding to the Trinity may be found at Passus XI: 154, fol. 41v (a description of the Trinity) and Passus XVIII: 40, fol. 69 (a reference to *Sapientia-dei-patris*, -- Sapience, or Wisdom, traditionally identified with the second person of the Trinity.) *Notas* which draw attention to Christ and his death and resurrection occur at Passus XX: 144-45, fol. 80 (Mercy’s assurance that what death has brought down, death shall revive), Passus XXI: 41-2, fol. 85v (Conscience’s words that on the cross Christ was crowned King of the Jews), and Passus XXI: 154, fol. 87 (a reference to Matt. 28:13, the chief priests told the soldiers Christ’s body had been stolen). There are also a number of instances in which the scribes noted passages alluding to biblical sources and authorities: Passus III: 406, fol. 7v (a reference to “Regum”, the books of Kings, specifically 2 Reg. 14-18 or II Samuel 15), Passus IX: 311, fol. 34v (a reference to Jacob and Joseph, specifically Gen. 37:9), Passus XI: 249, fol. 43 (a reference to the carpenters who built the ark as a metaphor for the priests of the church), and Passus XVII: 18, fol. 64 (a reference to Paul of Tarsus).

⁴⁴ Pearsall 195.

An additional concern for the annotators which is also reflected in their *notas*, is poverty, not surprising considering its thematic significance in the poem. Issues of particular concern include the disadvantages of poverty, priestly poverty, the importance of patience, and the dangers of wealth. Instances of these *notas* occur at Passus XII: 182, fol. 47 (a reference to the metaphor of the seed in a larger passage on patient poverty), Passus XII: 221, fol. 47 (a warning to the rich, “soon ripe, soon rotten”), Passus XIII: 115-16, fol. 49 (a passage on priestly poverty), Passus XV: 34, fol. 54v (a description of Patience looking like Piers), Passus XVI: 47-8, fol. 59 (the argument that it is easier to sin when rich than poor), and Passus XVI: 117, fol. 60 (Actif’s confusion over the Latin definition of poverty.) This emphasis on the theme of poverty also shows up in many of the other annotations, including those of the early-sixteenth-century annotator, and will be discussed in more detail below.

Unfortunately, due to limited space, it is not possible to comment on the significance of all the scribal *notas* in the manuscript. However, it becomes clear from this brief examination of the various scribal *notas* that they were not designed to draw attention to the plot nor to any of the dramatic personae. Instead, they were intended to highlight key passages of religious, social, moral, or political significance. The implications of this annotation pattern are interesting: medieval readers regarded *Piers* more as a polemical work than a work of fiction. Of all the scribal annotations, sixty percent are *notas*, annotations, as we have seen, which flag passages of religious, social, moral or political significance rather than fictional events or characters. Rather than focusing their attention on the fictional aspects of the poem, the scribes of Digby 102

concentrate their efforts on passages of polemical significance. One rare occasion in which a scribal *nota* does draw attention to the plot may be found at Passus VII: 182, fol. 23v. This unusual *nota* is significant in that it marks the point at which Piers himself first enters the action of the poem.

With the exception of the one annotation by Scribe E at Passus VI: 350, fol. 19v (a Latin reference to the character Gluttony), the remaining scribal annotations which are not *notas* are written in the hand of Scribe R. Unlike many of the annotations of HM 143 and Douce 104, these 28 annotations never consist of more than one or two words and almost all of them are written in Latin. Most of these annotations can be categorized as Reading Aid annotations, specifically those which highlight key figures in the poem. Typical examples of Scribe R's use of Latin in Reading Aid annotations may be found at Passus VI: 20, fol. 14v, VI: 64, fol. 15v, VI: 102, fol. 16, and VI: 239, fol. 18 in which he cites the Latin term for Pride, Envy, Anger, and Avarice, respectively. More unusual Latin annotations occur at Passus VII:152, fol. 23 where he writes "Spes" next to the passage where Hope blows her horn, and Passus VII: 222, fol. 24 where he writes "X precepta" next to the passage referring to the ten commandments. At Passus XII: 74, fol. 45, a passage concerned with the story of Trajan, Scribe R writes "Troianus" and later at Passus XXII: 80, fol. 93 in a reference to "kynde", he writes "natura".

Scribe R's consistent use of Latin is not the only unusual aspect of his annotating style. In his attempt to highlight the key figures of the poem, he neglects to draw attention to most of the major figures, instead focusing on some of the more minor characters and groups as well as some of the objects in the poem, such as the bill from

Peace against Wrong which he annotates with “billa” at Passus IV:45, fol. 9v. He does not provide marginal place-finders for major characters such as Mede, Conscience, Rechelessnesse, Repentance, or even Piers, for that matter. Instead, he identifies minor characters and groups with annotations such as “monachi etcetera” (monks and others; V:158, fol.14), “nota sacerdotes” (priests; XXII: 218, fol. 95), “nota Senex” (old man; XXII: 166, fol. 94), “Arches” (advocates or proctors who pleaded in the provincial court of the archbishop of Canterbury; XXII: 137, fol. 94), “Fortuna” (Fortune the flatterer; XXII: 110, fol. 93v) and “vita” (life; XXII: 143, fol. 94).

In addition to the various *notas* and Reading Aid annotations, Scribe R is also responsible for a number of annotations which supply more information than given in the text. Grindley identifies this type of annotation as the Textual Extrapolation annotation, the rarest sub-type of Summation annotation.⁴⁵ The first, and probably most obvious, example of Scribe R’s use of the textual extrapolation annotation occurs at Passus XVIII: 123, fol. 70:

...Thenne mouede hym
 moed in magestate dei / That libera voluntas dei lauhete
 the myddel schoriare / And hit after the fend hap how hit
 myhte / Filius by the faderes wille fley with *spiritus sanctus*
 /To go ransake that rageman and reue hym of his apples
 /That thorw fals byhest *and* fruyt furst man disceyuede Anunciacio
 / And thenne spake *Spiritus Sanctus* in Gabryeles mouth / To
 a maide that highte Marie a meke thyng with alle
 That oen *Ihesus* a mistrees iustices sone most jouken in here
 chaumbre / Til plenitudo temporis tyme y come were....

As Pearsall explains in a footnote to line 124, “[t]he Annunciation is the moment of the intersection of the timeless with time...the moment of God’s second entry into human

⁴⁵ Grindley 56.

time. It is the most stupendous moment in Christian history, and Langland, by his sudden and startling shift from allegorical abstraction to historical reality, makes it seem so."⁴⁶

Clearly, "anunciacio" is neither introducing a speaker nor identifying a central theme in the poem; the word is not even present in the passage. Scribe R realizes Langland's allegorical reference to the annunciation and highlights the passage with an explanation not readily available in the body of text.

In the same passus at line 202, fol. 71v, we find another instance of the textual extrapolation annotation, also in the hand of Scribe R:

	...¶ Muse nat to moche ther
	on <i>quod</i> fayth tyl thow more knowe / Ac leue hit
	leelly al thy lyf tyme / That thre bilongeth to
	a lord that leiaunse claymeth / Might and a
Trinitas	mene to se his owne myhte / Of hym sulue <i>and</i>
	his <i>seruant</i> and what soffreth hem bothe....

These few lines are part of a longer passage beginning at line 179 in which Faith attempts to explain the triune nature of God to the dreamer. Nowhere in this entire passage, however, does Faith refer specifically to the Trinity. Instead, Faith explains the nature of the Trinity metaphorically using the analogy of a lord in power: the three aspects of his position are his power, an instrument of this power, and that which allows them both to exist. It is quite possible that Scribe R recognized the complex and somewhat confusing nature of this analogy and out of a concern for future readers, provided "Trinitas" in the margin as a helpful tool for understanding.

A third example of the Textual Extrapolation annotation may be found at Passus XX: 22-23, fol. 78:

⁴⁶ Pearsall 298.

.../ *liberum*

dei arbitrium for loue hath vndertake / That this
Ihesus of his gentrice shal iouste in Peres armes / In
 his helm *and* in his haberion humana natura / That passio domini
 crist be nat y knowe for consummatus deus / In Peres
 plates the Ploughman the prikiare shal ryde / For
 no dynt shal hym dere as in deitate *patris*....

In this passage, Faith allies Jesus with Piers, thus emphasizing Christ's role as the second person of the Trinity, that is, the union of God and humankind. Faith uses the jousting metaphor to illustrate Christ's passion: the crucifixion becomes a combat between Life and Death in which Death is defeated forever.⁴⁷ Quite possibly, for many readers, the implication of the jousting metaphor as a description of Christ's passion does not become clear until line 31. Perhaps Scribe R was familiar with the entire passage and felt it useful to annotate this section with "passio domini" in order to expose and expound the metaphor early on at line 22. In this case, as in the previous, the scribe finds it useful to extrapolate the meaning of the text, or more specifically, to clarify the implications of the metaphor.

Probably the most fascinating of all of Scribe R's annotations occurs at Passus IX:

106, fol. 31v:

.../ Ac 3ut ar ther other beggares in hele as hit semeth

lollard Ac hem wanteth wyt men *and* wommen bothe / The whiche
 aren lunatyk lollares and lebares aboute / And madden
 as the mone syt more other lasse / Careth they for no
 colde ne counteth of noon heete / And aren meuyng after
 the mone moneyeles they walke / With agoed wille
 wittelles many wyde countrayes / Ryht as peter dede *and*
 paul saue that they *preche* nat / ne none myracles maken.

⁴⁷ See Pearsall's footnote to lines 27, 320.

In this instance, the scribe appears to have interpreted Langland's discussion of the "lunatyk lollares", those physically able but mentally unstable beggars, as a subtle reference to Lollards, a pejorative term which came to be associated with the followers of the heretical teachings of Wyclif. On folio 33 at lines 213-14 of the same passus, the rubricator notes the use of the "lollare" vocabulary once more, in this case noting the word "lolleth"; directly below his annotation, the annotator of the early sixteenth century, marks the passage with "lollardes".

	.../ Kyndeliche
be crist ben suche ycald lollares / As by the engelisch	
of oure eldres of olde mennes techyng / he that lolleth	nota
is lame or hys leg oute of ioynthe / Or y maymed	
in summe membre for to meschyef hit souneth	lollardes
Riht so sothly suche manere heremytes / lollen a3en	
the byleue and the lawe of holy church...	

Both of these passages belong to a larger section of the poem in which Langland attempts to distinguish between false beggars and the needy poor. They are also part of an even larger section which is completely new to the C text (IX:66-281). Both of these passages may reflect an attempt on Langland's part to reclaim the traditional definition of "lollare" as one of God's "priue disciples" (IX:118). In her study, Scase offers an explanation of the historical and etymological context of the word "lollare".

The persistence of words and phrases such as "faitours", "bold beggars" and "beggars with bags" in satirical writings almost certainly written after *Piers Plowman* suggests that one of the most important contributions of the poem to late medieval English literature was in the area of anticlerical poverty vocabulary....The word "loller", however, seems to have been one of the exceptions to this pattern....Usage in the poem, and in contemporary and later writings, suggests that it was only possible for a short time in late fourteenth-century England to use "loller" as a satirical term for those who were defined by the law of Christ as the gyrovagues of the contemporary church. The evidence suggests that this definition was maintained despite (and most probably because of) the growing use of the near-homonym "lollard" for the heretics who followed

the teachings of Wyclif, but that the “*Piers Plowman* sense” soon lost ground in competition with the other usage.⁴⁸

Through an examination of the evidence found in the various marginalia of *Piers* manuscripts, Scase concludes that despite Langland’s efforts to divorce his work from any Wycliffite tendencies, it did nevertheless become associated with Lollard sentiments. The annotations transcribed above are good examples of such evidence.

If the *Piers Plowman* examples of “loller” were part of a tussle for control of the word, history of course shows that ultimately the religious won this battle, and succeeded in establishing “lollard” as a pejorative term for the Wycliffites. Most of the evidence in the poem’s manuscripts points to an early defeat for the alternative, *Piers Plowman*, “loller”. Many of the manuscripts have variant readings instead of “loller”....Medieval annotation in manuscripts of the poem in the main confirms the impression of the failure of “loller” in the *Piers Plowman* sense, although there are exceptions.(155-57)

Scase goes on to cite the annotator of Douce 104 who avoids using the “loller” vocabulary and instead, uses terms such as “Beggars and bidders” and “begers þat hath lemmonys;” HM 143 is an exception, as the annotator does use the “loller” vocabulary in his annotations.(157) Scase cites Digby 102 as an example of a manuscript which shows a scribal interest in the etymology passage, that section in Passus IX which attempts to define “lollare”: “In Cambridge University Library Additional 4325 ‘Kyndeliche, by Crist, ben suche ycald ‘lollares’ (C IX 213) has been underlined in red ink, as is usual only for the Latin quotations in this manuscript. In Bodleian Library Digby 102 there is a *nota* beside ‘He þat lolleth is lame...’ (C IX 215).” (157) Of course, the two instances of the “lollard” annotation in Digby 102 are also excellent examples of how readers, both

⁴⁸ Scase 155.

early and late, were concerned over the etymological implications of the term and did indeed associate the “loller” vocabulary with “lollardy”.

What we can conclude from this brief examination of the various scribal annotations in Digby 102 is that all the annotators, and especially the rubricator since he is responsible for the bulk of the annotations, were concerned and interested readers of *Piers*. The rubricator was quite familiar with the poem and had a keen interest not only in major themes such as the glorification of poverty but also in some of the more minor, yet interesting, characters. From a few examples of his use of the textual extrapolation annotation, he also seems concerned with expounding some of the more difficult metaphors.

The Later Annotations

The contributions of the early-sixteenth-century annotator, the heaviest layer of marginalia in Digby 102, were most likely copied for very different reasons than the scribal annotations. There is always the possibility, of course, that an early sixteenth century owner of the manuscript brought the book to a scribe for annotation although this is highly unlikely. The style of the annotator suggests that he was either annotating for someone he knew very well, or he was annotating for himself (as a private reader, perhaps as the owner of the manuscript). The latter explanation is stronger for a variety of reasons. In HM 143 and Douce 104, there is a number of address annotations which directly address the reader and usually begin with words and phrases such as “nota hou”, “nota de hou”, “hyere”, “lo how”, or “loke hyer”. Of all the sixteenth century annotations in Digby 102, only one appears to be an address annotation and may found at Passus V: 124, fol.13v: “nota hou oon shale *comme* to heven.” All of the other annotations are made up of either words and phrases directly gleaned from the text, paraphrases which summarize the plot, or various instances of textual extrapolation. With the exception of this single annotation, none of the others sound as though they were specifically intended for other readers.

In addition, while many of the annotations are helpful place-finders (that is, Reading Aid and Summation annotations, both of which are intended to guide the reader to particular themes, actions and key figures in the poem), there are also annotations which would seem meaningful only to the annotator himself. Typical place-finders or

Reading Aid annotations intended to guide a reader to key figures in the poem include “gyle” (II:156, fol. 1), “Concyens” (II:203, fol. 1v), “The kyng *and* mede” (III:131, fol. 4), and “Rechelesnesse” (XI:196, fol. 42). Typical examples of the Summation annotation which highlight plot action include “provisers shale *serue* prelates” (II:182, fol. 1), “lyar to Freris” (II:240, fol. 2), “a bille by pees a3enst wrong” (IV:47, fol. 9v), and “pride *and* his *seruauntes* to lette pers” (XXI:338-39, fol. 89v). In amongst these somewhat typical place-finders are a few other annotations which would only seem meaningful to the annotator of the text. One may be found at Passus III: 250, fol. 5v:

A conquerour	<p style="text-align: right;">.../ And that is the kynde of a kyng that conquereth on his enemys / To helpe hyseliche alle his host or elles <i>graunte</i> / Al that his men may wyne do therwith here beste....</p>
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If this note was intended as a place-finder for the reader, it should have read “a kyng that conquereth” or “kyng a conquerour”. Instead the annotator chose to note only the word which describes the king, making no marginal reference to the king himself.⁴⁹ It would seem that such an annotation would be useful only for the person who wrote it or for someone who knew the poem very well.

In addition to this kind of annotation, there is a number of others which also suggest that the sixteenth-century annotator was writing for himself rather than for other readers. At first glance, many of these marginal notes appear to be simple Reading Aid

⁴⁹ In her analysis of the annotations of Douce 104 (“The Professional Reader as Annotator,” forthcoming), Kerby-Fulton found a similar trend at Passus xii. 19 where the annotator writes “nota de wowere” alongside a passage which describes the friar as “lyke þe woware”. She suggests that “[w]hen annotating xii. 19, [the Douce annotator] could easily have written “nota de fals frers” or the equivalent (as [the annotator of HM 143] did) to draw attention to the literal event (a confessor deserting a confessee down on his luck), but he chose to note the image in Langland’s simile. Now such an annotation would only be meaningful to a rereader and a ruminator - it would be no good to a topic hunter.”

annotations which highlight key speakers in the poem. The points at which these speakers are being noticed, however, is of interest. Take for example the annotation which occurs at Passus XIV:202, fol. 54:

...Withouten bapteme as by here
 bokes beth nat y saued / *Contra quod* Ymagenatyf tho and *Imagynacioun*
 comsed to loure / And sayde....

Even though Ymagenatyf has been speaking for the last 198 lines -- since the beginning of the passus, in fact -- the annotator chooses to highlight his name at the point in which he is interrupted by the dreamer. Readers are told in the first line of the passus that Ymagenatyf is speaking but from that point on are not reminded of this until line 202, when he begins speaking again after the interruption. If the annotator was merely concerned with highlighting the key figures of the poem, why would he not have written this annotation at line 1, where Ymagentyf first enters the action of the poem? There are two possibilities: either this particular annotation is evidence of an annotator writing for his own private benefit, a simple marginal reminder to himself that it is Ymagentyf who is speaking, or it is at this point in which Ymagentyf has attracted the interest of the annotator.

Another example of an annotation which highlights the speaker's name directly after an interruption in the text occurs at Passus XVI: 173, fols.59v-61:

...Wher of *serue* // (fol.61)
 ye y sayde sire liberum arbitrium / Of *somme* tyme to fyhte
quod he falsnesse to destruye / And *somme* to soffre both tene liberum arbitrium
 and sorwe....

Liberum Arbitrium first enters the poem at line 157, where the annotator notes "actif had a leder that is liberum arbitrium" (fol. 61), a rather typical Reading Aid annotation

introducing the presence of a key figure. A few lines later at line 166, *Liberum Arbitrium* begins speaking but is interrupted at line 172 by the dreamer. Once he begins speaking at line 173, the annotator notes his name in the margin for a second time. This type of annotation also occurs at *Passus XXI: 197-99, fol. 87v* where the annotator notes “Concyence spake of criste *and* of the crosse,” the first point at which Conscience has stopped speaking since line 26. Only eight lines later, the point at which Conscience begins again, the annotator notes his name once more. All of these examples seem to suggest that the annotator was reacting to the text in a way that is familiar to many modern readers, jotting down marginal notes as brief reminders to the action or characters in the poem. The fact that these examples occur at passages in which the central speaker has been interrupted may suggest that the reader was suddenly reminded as to who was speaking. Perhaps out of an effort to aid his reading in the future, he noted the names of some of the more important speakers, for reasons of authority, often more than once, in order to keep his reading and comprehension on track.

Whether or not this annotator was annotating for his own private use or was in fact paid for his services as a scribe by someone interested in having the manuscript further annotated, his annotations provide a fascinating piece of evidence of the early sixteenth-century interest in *Piers* and its many issues. As mentioned above, many of these annotations can be categorized as either Reading Aid or Summation annotations. Unlike the scribal annotators, this annotator does highlight some of the more significant figures and events in the poem. But like the scribal annotators, this annotator also shows an interest in some of the more minor characters and events: at *Passus VII: 284, fol. 25,*

the annotator highlights the “cuttepurse” or pick-pocket; at Passus VIII:8, fol. 25v, he notes “occupacion for women” next to a passage which briefly outlines the working role of women in a utopian society; at Passus XIX:235a, fol. 76, he highlights the description of Lazarus with “a nygard”; at Passus XXI: 407, fol. 90v, he writes “nota a brewer” next to a passage in which Conscience rebukes a brewer for his lifestyle; and at Passus IV: 28-29, fol. 9v, he records the characters “wytty man *and* wyly man,” those representatives of worldly wisdom who believe they have a special claim on Reason’s help and advice.⁵⁰

In addition to the somewhat typical Reading Aid and Summation annotations, there is also a number of textual extrapolation annotations, those annotations which supply more information than given in the text. As mentioned above, Grindley defines this type of annotation as the rarest sub-type of Summation annotation. His claim, however, developed out of an analysis of scribal annotations, those notes supplied at the time of manuscript creation intended to aid in reading and comprehension. In this context, it is easy to see why this type of annotation is so rare; it seems likely that in order to avoid confusion for future readers, the scribal annotator would stay as close to the text as possible, highlighting key personae, summing up significant passages, and noting various moral and political concerns. For a reader annotating for himself or someone he knew, however, there is no reason to avoid annotations such as the textual extrapolation annotation. The number of instances of the textual extrapolation annotation in the hand of the sixteenth century annotator suggest that he made no effort to avoid these types of marginal comments.

⁵⁰ See Pearsall’s footnote to lines 27-31, 89.

Three interesting examples of the textual extrapolation annotation occur one after the other at Passus VII: 292, 295 and 300, fol. 25:

.../ 3e villam emi <i>quod</i> oen and now	vaynglory
y moste thyder / To loke how me liketh hit and toek	
his leue at peres / An other anoen ryht nede he sayde	
hadde / To falwe with fyue 3okes for thy me byhoueth	Covetise
/ To goo with a good wil and graytheliche hem dryue	
/ For thy <i>praye</i> y 3ow peres <i>paraunter</i> 3yf 3e meten / Treuth	
telleth hym this that y be excused / Thenne was oen	
hihte actyf an hosbonde he semede / I haue wedded	lechery
a wyf wel wantowne of <i>manneres</i>	

This passage describes those members of society who excuse themselves from the pilgrimage, choosing the “Actif” life rather than the “Contemplatif” life, thus rejecting the invitation to God’s kingdom. Clearly, the annotator was concerned with this issue, offering moral verdicts such as “vaynglory” and “covetise” to those who choose not to abandon worldly possessions for the kingdom of God. The passage goes on to speak of a man named Actif, whose marital status prevents him from taking part in the pilgrimage. As Pearsall tells us in a footnote to line 304a, “[t]aking a wife, in the context of the parable, was interpreted by the commentators as attaching oneself to delight in the pleasures of the flesh.”⁵¹ Shocked by Actif’s rejection of the pilgrimage and perhaps more so by the qualities of his wife (“wel wantowne of *manneres*”), the annotator writes “lechery” in the margin. The issue of lechery is, in fact, a great concern for this annotator. There are numerous occasions throughout the poem in which he annotates passages directly concerned with the issue of lechery and the pleasures of the flesh: at Passus III: 57, fol. 3, he writes “lechery” next to Mede’s speech on the desires of the

⁵¹ Pearsall 145.

flesh; at Passus III: 166, fol. 4v, he marks a *nota* next to a passage which describes Mede as “tikel of here tayl,” a term which Pearsall translates as “sexually promiscuous;”⁵² at Passus VI: 170-71, fol. 17, he writes “luxuria”, a Latin term for the fourth deadly sin, Lechery; at Passus X: 283, fol. 39, he writes “weddyng” next to a passage encouraging marriage and warning against lechery; and at Passus XI: 173-74, fol. 42, he writes “concupiscencia carnis et oculorum,” a Latin reference to the two maids, “Lust-of-the-flesh” and “Lust-of-the-eyes.”⁵³

Another example of the textual extrapolation annotation occurs at Passus XII: 84, fol. 45:

.../ God of his godnesse y sey his grete wille / And withouten
 mo bedes byddyng his bone was vnderfonge / And y saued as Justice
 ye may se withoute syngyng of mo masses / Loue withoute
 lele byleue as my lawe ryhtfol / Sauede me sarrasyn soule
 and body bothe....

In this passage, Trajan explains how he was saved despite being unbaptized. This passage also represents Trajan’s attack on learning. In annotating this passage with “Iustice,” the annotator may perhaps be referring to the salvation of Trajan as an exemplar for true justice. In Douce 104, the annotator annotates this same passage with “troian þe trew hemperowr and a pagan,” also a textual extrapolation annotation. As Kerby-Fulton explains,

[i]t supplies information (that Trajan was an emperor) not given in the text, but more importantly, it comes out in support of Trajan as “trew”. Modern readers may perhaps not realize how troubling the issue of Trajan’s salvation could be. In Douce 104 the other reader response we have, the illustrator’s, is entirely negative. Trajan is represented as a pagan - and therefore grotesquely....Trajan’s story was a crux for theologians debating issues of grace

⁵² Pearsall 72.

⁵³ The sixteenth century annotator’s unusual use of Latin in his annotations will be discussed below.

and salvation, and discreet writers seem to have avoided pronouncing upon it.⁵⁴

Just as the Douce 104 annotator supports the “trewe” nature of Trajan and his story, the Digby 102 annotator supports the “justice” of it. In this particular case, the Douce annotator and the Digby annotator appear to be thinking and annotating along similar lines.

The annotator extrapolates meaning from the text again at Passus XIX: 96 and 127, fols. 74 and 74v:

.../ In thre persones aparceles departable fram other / And all thre bote a god thus Abraham me tauhte / And hope afturward of o god more me toelde	nota bene of the olde lawe
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neuwe lawe	.../ The fader is thenne as the fust with fynger <i>and</i> with paume / To huyde <i>and</i> to holde as holy writ telleth / <i>Omnia</i> traham ad me ipsum / And that the fynger gropeth he grypeth bote if hit greue the paume / Thus are they alle bote oen as hit an hand were....
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In the first passage, the dreamer asks the Samaritan (Christ) if he should believe in the Trinity as Abraham taught. In the second passage, Christ offers the dreamer a new analogy for the Trinity, that of a fist, finger, and palm. As the annotator has noted in the margins, Abraham’s version of the Trinity represents the “olde law” while Christ’s represents the “neuwe lawe.” Other examples of the textual extrapolation annotation include “nota almes” at Passus IX: 73, fol. 31 (a section describing the most needy of the poor), “heremytes vnthryfty” at Passus IX:199-200, fol. 33 (a passage on providing food for the hermits), “corpus et Anima” at Passus X: 131-32, fol. 37 (a passage describing

⁵⁴ Kerby-Fulton, “The Professional Reader as Annotator,” forthcoming.

how Dowell lives with Anima; there is no mention in this section of the body, or “corpus”), “couetise” at Passus XII: 226, fol. 47 (a passage describing the greed of rich men), and “Astronomy” at Passus XIV: 73-74, fol. 52 (a passage describing men of natural intelligence who lack the revelation of the Christian faith.)⁵⁵ Unlike the typical, and rather predictable Reading Aid and Summation annotations, the textual extrapolation annotation provides some insight into the way in which an annotator reads a particular passage.

Before attempting to offer some concluding remarks regarding the concerns and perspectives of the sixteenth-century annotator, it is necessary to analyze another aspect of his annotations. Throughout the text, this reader has the habit of annotating in Latin, often where no Latin occurs in the text. This type of annotation occurs nineteen times throughout the *Piers* text. While this may be unusual in *Piers* manuscripts, many of the Latin annotations are terms which would be familiar even to those who knew very little Latin. Take for example the annotation “nota de salamone” which occurs at Passus III: 315-16 and the annotations “luxuria” at Passus VI: 170-71, fol. 17 and “Accidia” at Passus VII: 3, fol. 21 which highlight the Middle English reference to Lechery and Sloth. Latin terms for major biblical figures as well as the Latin terms for the seven deadly sins would be known to many, even those with very little Latin learning.

Another instance of this type of annotation may be found at Passus II: 205, fol. 1v:

	.../ now by crist
Rex precipit	quod the kyng and y cacche myhte / Fals or Fauel or
attachiare	here felawe Lyare / y wole be awreke in the wreches
falshede et	and on here werkes alle / And do hem hange by the
	halse and alle that hem maynteyneth / Shal neuere

⁵⁵ Incidentally, this annotation occurs at the same location in the text in both HM 143 and British Library Add. 35157. For a brief analysis of the annotation in HM 143, see Grindley, 57.

in the same passus at line 450-51, fol. 8v. Could the annotator be marking sections of the poem discussing the immorality of his own profession?

There are also nine annotations in Middle English where the same word or phrase has been written in Latin in the body of the text. An example of this may be found at Passus XXI: 204, fol. 87v:

The holy goste	.../ I wondred what that was and wagged Conscience / And was afered for the lyhte for in fuyres liknesse / Spiritus paraclitus ouerspredde hem alle....
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In this example, the annotator has translated the “Spiritus paraclitus” into “The holy goste.” Most of the time, these annotations are simple translations from Latin to Middle English, or vice versa. There are a few other cases in which the annotator writes a Latin phrase in the body of the text with a slightly different Latin phrase with similar connotations in the margin. One of these annotations occurs at Passus XVII: 141, fol.66:

...dilige deum propter deum id est propter veritatem / et inimicum tuum propter mandatum id est propter legem / et amicum propter amorem id est propter caritatem / loue god for he is goed and ground of alle treuthe / Loue thyn enemy entierly godes heste to folfille / loue thy frend that folweth thy will that is thy faire soule....	nota de amore dei et proxime
---	---------------------------------

The annotator sums up the meaning of the Latin phrase, that is, to love God, your enemy and your friend, with a slightly different Latin annotation.

This type of annotation occurs once more at Passus XIX: 214, fol. 76:

.../ To alle vnkynde creatures as Crist hym sulue witnesseth / Amen dico vobis nescio vos....	nota de ingrati- tudine
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In this instance, the annotator notes Christ’s word, translated as “Truly I say to you, I do not know you” (Matt. 25: 12), with “nota de ingratitude”. The Latin word “ingratus”

does appear four lines later so there is, of course, the possibility that the annotator read the entire passage in full before annotating. Other examples of this type of annotation occur at Passus XV: 225a, fol. 57, where he writes “nota bene de papa” next to a Latin quotation from Paul and at Passus XVI: 90, fol. 59v, where he writes “nota bene de paupertate” next to the line, “lasse boest hit maketh / To breke a beggares bagge then an yre-bounden coffre.”

As Siegfried Wenzel tells us in his study of macaronic sermons of late-medieval England, bilingualism in texts occurred in many forms:

Any society or social group in which at least some members are more or less fluent in more than one language tends to produce ‘texts,’ both oral and written, that mix languages in one form or another...Such bilingualism occurs in the societies of medieval Western Europe in many forms. It not only served pre-eminently practical purposes, as in...later court records and biographies that tell us about bilingual proceedings and individuals, but was utilized for ultimately artistic aims.⁵⁸

Wenzel goes on to list some of the more prominent literary works in which this bilingual pattern exists, among them poems by Lydgate in the fifteenth century, Dunbar and Skelton in the early sixteenth century, and of course, *Piers Plowman*. The knowledge and use of Latin by all the annotators of Digby 102, at least in terms of Latin Scripture and perhaps legal Latin, emphasizes the bilingualism of the literate community. These annotators were participants of a community in which Latin and Middle English were used interchangeably, not only in official documents and religious sermons but also in literary works such as those listed above.

⁵⁸ Siegfried Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England*, (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994) 1.

Other issues with which the sixteenth-century annotator is concerned are similar to those which interested the scribal annotators discussed in the previous section. These include the issues of poverty and wealth⁵⁹ and the behaviour of friars and other clergymen.⁶⁰ In an attempt to get closer to the identity of the early-sixteenth-century annotator of Digby 102, it is helpful to compare his interests and concerns with those of the annotators of HM 143 and Douce 104. As Kerby-Fulton tells us in her comparison of the annotators of HM 143 and Douce 104,

Both annotators exhibit clerkish mentalities in that the kinds of social and legal issues which would interest a layman are of little interest to them. For instance, neither annotator picks out for comment the social domestic advice which forms a considerable chunk of Reason's sermon.⁶¹

As she goes on to describe the annotation pattern in Douce 104, we learn that

the kind of interest [the Douce 104 annotator] takes in marriage is of a social and theological kind such as one might expect from someone trained in pastoral care. Langland's extensive discussion of marriage in passus x provokes three notes from [Douce 104](and none from [HM 143] whatsoever). [Douce 104's] notes betray no interest in property, sexuality or romance (all topics covered by Langland), but rather in the social and moral ramifications of illegitimate children or ill-advised marriage.

In contrast to these two annotators, the sixteenth-century annotator of Digby 102 does show an interest in legal issues as well as social and domestic issues. His reaction to the discussion of marriage in Passus X is rather extensive and he remarks not only on the moral ramifications of illegitimate children and ill-advised marriage ("bastardcs" at l. 210, fol. 38 and "nota bene" at l. 257, fol. 39), as does the Douce annotator, but he also

⁵⁹ See for example the annotations at Passus VIII: 40 (fol. 26), 287 (fol. 29), IX: 61 and 73 (fol. 31), 98 (fol. 31v), XII: 131 (fol. 45v), 140-42 (fol. 46), 175-77 (fol. 46v), and 221 and 226 (fol. 47).

⁶⁰ See for example the annotations at Passus II: 220 (fol. 1v), 240 (fol. 2), IX: 15 (fol. 30v), XI: 132 (fol. 41v), XV: 9 (fol. 54), 65-7, 76-7, and 83 (fol. 55), 96 (fol. 55v), XXII: 221 and 233 (fol. 95), 240-42 and 269-70 (fol. 95v), 315 (fol. 96v) and 347 (fol. 97).

⁶¹ Kerby-Fulton, "The Professional Reader as Annotator," forthcoming.

shows an interest in advice given on widows and on the sexual behavior of married men (“wydowes” at l. 278, fol. 39 and “weddid men” at l. 287-88, fol. 39). Even though the sixteenth century annotator of Digby 102 does show an interest in some of the main ecclesiastical concerns of the poem (concerns he shares with his scribal predecessors of Digby 102, HM 143, and Douce 104), he also shows an interest in some of the more social and domestic topics. As mentioned above, he may have been a lawyer or a clerk in a court, or perhaps a secular priest interested in pastoral care, or simply an educated layman.

Conclusions

The enthusiasm and consistency with which the sixteenth-century reader annotated the manuscript suggest he was a concerned reader of *Piers*. In many ways, his annotations are entirely unlike those of the more sophisticated manuscript, HM 143. As Kerby-Fulton suggests,

‘professionalism’ in [HM 143] often means ‘professional’ slacking off on a commissioned job which the scribe sometimes apparently found tedious, especially towards the end of a passus or of the MS itself. Annotations were the first aspect of a text to suffer when (professional) boredom set in, because they were the most disposable.⁶²

As the graph below shows, boredom does not appear to have set in Digby 102.

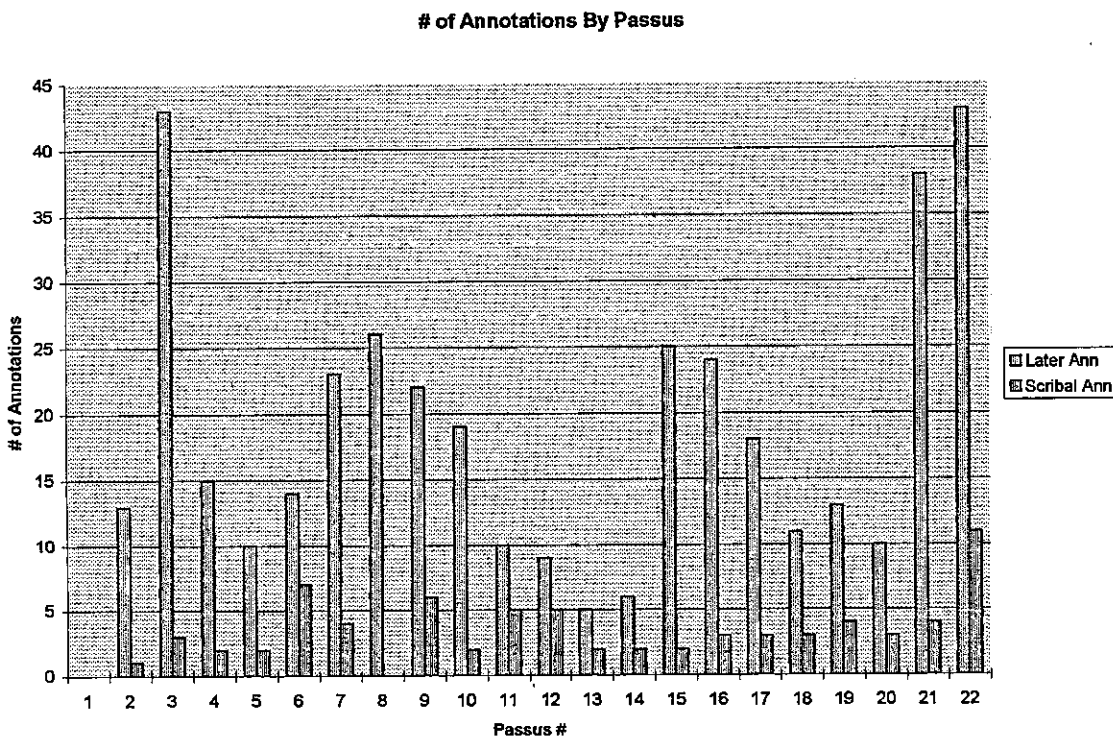


Figure 1.0

⁶² Kerby-Fulton, “The Professional Reader as Annotator,” forthcoming.

As the graph illustrates, the greatest number of annotations in Digby 102 occurs in Passus XXII, clearly not evidence of a disinterested reader. Unlike the annotator of HM 143, the sixteenth-century annotator of Digby 102 seems to have become most enthusiastic towards the end of the manuscript.

It is difficult to know whether the sixteenth-century annotator was a paid scribe, annotating the text for someone else, or a reader of the poem, annotating for his own private use much as a modern reader would when reading a difficult or important text. Regardless, his annotations do indeed offer an exciting portrait of an enthusiastic and concerned reader of *Piers*. In attempting to describe the audience and public of *Piers Plowman*, Anne Middleton explains how two main inferences have developed from descriptions of the various owners of *Piers* manuscripts, as they can be identified through an examination of the various books bequeathed in wills:

One is that *Piers* reached ‘two kinds of audience - the old audience of clerks and the new one of prosperous literate laymen’. The other is that the national readership of *Piers* is somehow different in composition from the ‘local’ or regional audiences achieved by other fourteenth century alliterative works, that the poem had an extensive popularity among some class of the community not normally reached by alliterative poetry.⁶³

Middleton, however, does not adhere to this perspective and instead sees the clerical and lay readers of *Piers* as a single audience, rather than an audience of two separate and therefore, different groups,

The audience of *Piers Plowman* is best characterized neither by regional peculiarities nor by ‘estate’ as such, but by a common social location, and range of activities and interests. Whether laymen or ecclesiastics, their customary activities involve them in counsel, policy, education, administration, pastoral care - in those tasks and offices where spiritual and temporal governance meet.(104)

⁶³ Anne Middleton, “The Audience and Public of *Piers Plowman*,” *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, Ed. David Lawton, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1982) 103-04.

In light of what we have discovered about the concerns and interests of all the various annotators of Digby 102, as well as some of the interests of other annotators such as those of HM 143 and Douce 104, this concept of a single audience, made up of both laymen and ecclesiastics, interested in issues of both spiritual and temporal significance, appears valid. Despite living approximately 65-75 years apart, the later annotator and the scribal annotators in Digby 102 share an interest in many of the same issues: both were concerned with issues of poverty and the behavior of friars and clergymen. The later annotator, however, also reveals an interest in legal issues as well as the issue of sexuality and its moral ramifications.

We must not forget, however, that the early-sixteenth-century annotator was living in a somewhat different religious and political context than that of the scribal annotators. As Middleton suggests in her discussion of the way in which the *Piers* text was associated with Lollard sympathies,

In the period of manuscript circulation...the poem's relation to Lollardy is cultural rather than textual; only in the mid-sixteenth century does the poem come to be treated by copyists and commentators as itself a Reformist (capital - R) or proto-Protestant text, a treatise among other treatises in an argumentative and rhetorical programme.⁶⁴

The later annotations, however, emphasize moral diagnosis and show no evidence of overt Protestantism. In fact, the content and meaning of many of these annotations share much in common with the earlier annotations of the scribes; if it were not for the handwriting of the later annotator, which clearly places him in the early sixteenth century, it would be difficult to distinguish these annotations from those copied many

⁶⁴ Middleton 107.

years prior. The later annotator of Digby 102 also has no difficulty in understanding Middle English or reading the various scribal hands.

As this study has shown, whether they are the product of a scribe in the early fifteenth century or a reader in the early sixteenth century, marginal annotations do indeed provide evidence of the early influence of *Piers* on its readers. Scribal annotations represent an effort on the part of the annotators to help shape and guide the concerns of future readers; they are not merely a reflection of the interests of the annotators themselves. In highlighting particular passages and themes, marginal annotations must have played a significant role in drawing the reader's attention toward important passages. In her discussion of the letters of John Ball, Barr suggests that in writing these letters, John Ball may have been influenced by the *Piers* text and perhaps even by the rubrication and manuscript layout.

[T]he names of the actants in John Ball's letters blend fictional representation and plausible historical identity and it is interesting that names of this type in *Piers*, from Letyse at the style, Chichester the Mayor, to Robert the Robber himself, often attract the interest of rubricators. So too do the prophetic passages in *Piers*. The texts of Ball's letters do not explicitly draw on the verbal details of prophetic passages in *Piers*, but menacing phrases such as 'ygrounde smal, smal, smal;/The Kynges sone of heuene schal paye for al'; 'Loke thy mylne go aright, with the foure sayles, and the post stande in stedfastness' and 'for now is tyme' create a tone similar to that of the prophetic passages in *Piers* and indicate a centre of interest shared both by the author of these letters and by those responsible for the layout of the poem in its manuscripts. The correspondence between the nature of reference to *Piers* in these letters and the dominant interest of the rubricators may be no more than coincidence. It would be extreme to suggest that Ball's familiarity with *Piers* extended no further than knowledge of its rubrics, but perhaps it is plausible to posit a reading response to *Piers* that was guided by the emphases of manuscript layout.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Barr 11-12.

Barr cites the scribal *nota bene* in Digby 102 at Passus VI: 147, fol. 16v as one example of an interest in Letyse at the style.⁶⁶ In any discussion of the early responses to *Piers*, it seems a mistake to perceive the manuscripts of *Piers* as a reflection of the work and interests of one man, William Langland. When trying to recreate the historical context in which a text such as *Piers* was first read and received, it is better to view the text as one which was ultimately produced from more than one hand. As Jerome McGann points out, modern editors of *Piers* have tended to ignore the historical context available through manuscript study: “the dynamic social relations which always exist in literary production -- the dialectic between the historically located individual author and the historically developing institutions of literary production -- tends to become obscure.”⁶⁷ In attempting to discover something of the historical impact a text such as *Piers* exerted on its readers, it is necessary to recognize the concerns and interests of all who left some sort of literary mark on the manuscript. This means focusing on the various scribal errors, corrections, interpolations, and of course, marginal annotations.

⁶⁶ For a listing of annotations in various other *Piers* manuscripts which appear to have had some effect on Ball's letters, see Barr fn. 55, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, (U of Chicago P, 1983) 89-90.

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Appendix 2: Facsimile of Two Scribal Interpolations

Scribal Interpolation #1, fol. 53v:

¶ Job was a paym^r & please god at pye /
 And aystote also. p^rceded pe same secte /
 And ful. holy lyf lasso. & aft^r lalle of kynde /
 Wher for it semeth p^rely. by sondy y^r felas to schelle /
 That he is saf as was job. & can not bete pe soye /

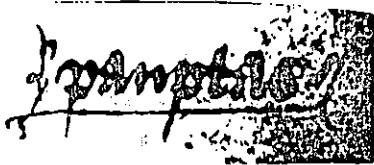
Scribal Interpolation #2, fol. 59v:

¶ And wuz pe for woldo holdo enemye in his herte /
 He may not zewe no soft. & so stetly as hyin oulde /
 For his enemye may do non harm. & to hyo ne to lorde /
 Wote his owen causful coze. & he cioneth neyhe to depe /
 p^rher for p^rre patient. & may no p^ryo enye haue /
 Wote enemye mot fle by fye. & for his patient herte /

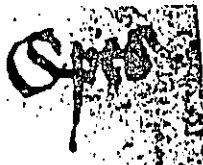
Facsimile of Annotations by Scribe

Sample Annotations by Scribe R:

fol. 46v



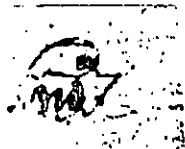
fol. 23



fol. 31v

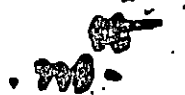


fol. 33

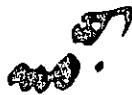


Sample Annotations by Scribe D:

fol. 64

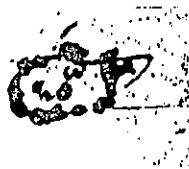


fol. 56v

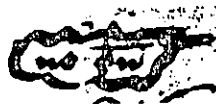


Sample Annotations by Scribe E:

fol. 56



fol. 19



Sample Marginal Notes by Scribe F:

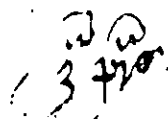
fol. 19



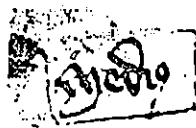
fol. 21



fol. 27v



fol. 45v



Sample Annotations by the Early Sixteenth Century Annotator:

fol. 39

no^u but

fol. 33

lollay

fol. 65v

guyw is to
come godys doc
up to the same

Vita

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Author:

Tanya Geraldine Schaap
September 30, 1996