

Reading the Historia Scholastica at the Close of the Twelfth Century: Nigel of Canterbury and Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5

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Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5, contains a copy of Peter Comestor's Historia scholastica, donated by Nigel of Canterbury to the library at Christ Church. This article focuses on the exegetical content of its dense annotations. Heavily dependent on the writings of theologians associated with the school of St Victor, they offer an insight into the kinds of sources which were read alongside the Historia scholastica in this period. The article also queries a note made on the flyleaf which identifies Nigel as the compiler, examining its credibility and its implications for the presumed chronology of his life.

BL = British Library, London; BM = Bibliothèque municipale; *HS* = *Historia scholastica*; *LE* = *Liber exceptionum*; *ODNB* = *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

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Among the books listed by donor in the early fourteenth-century catalogue of the library at Christ Church, Canterbury, are a number under the heading ‘Liber Nigello’.¹ The owner of these books has been identified as Nigel of Canterbury, a monk of the cathedral in the late twelfth century, best known as the author of a satirical poem, *Speculum stultorum*, and a critique of clerics at the court, *Tractatus contra curiales et officiales clericos*.² Of the eight books listed in his donation only one can be identified, now Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5, his copy of Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica*.³ This manuscript is described in the catalogue as ‘*Hystorie manducatoris*’, a reference to the play often made on Comestor’s surname – he was the ‘eater’ of knowledge.⁴ A marginal annotation reveals that the manuscript was copied in 1194.⁵ The prime evidence for Nigel’s ownership is a rhyming note made on the opening flyleaf which reads: ‘As studious Nigel applied himself and avoided times of idleness, he embroidered from various sources the writings of the present little book, which he wished to survive him after death as the future of his name and the undying memorial of his worthiness.’⁶

This copy of the *HS* is heavily annotated, but these annotations have received scant attention.⁷ They do not constitute a commentary on the

¹ This catalogue was made during the priorate of Henry of Eastry (1284–1331) but was copied from earlier ones: M. R. James, *The ancient libraries of Canterbury and Dover*, Cambridge 1903, p. xxxix.

² On Nigel’s life see A. Boutemy, *Nigellus de Longchamp, dit Wireker: Tractatus contra curiales et officiales clericos*, Paris 1959, 12–45; J. Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury: the Passion of St Lawrence, epigrams and marginal poems*, Leiden 1994, 6–42; and A. G. Rigg, ‘Canterbury, Nigel of [Nigel Wireker or Whiteacre]’, *ODNB*, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20191>>.

³ James, *Ancient libraries*, 101. MS B.15.5 is digitised at <<https://tinyurl.com/s28zyp5>>.

⁴ On Peter see M. J. Clark, *The making of the Historia scholastica, 1150–1200*, Toronto 2015, 1–52. A title consistent with Eastry’s list is given at MS B.15.5, fo. 1r – ‘*Hystoria manducatoris Nigelli*’ – while a barely legible inscription refers to the ‘*secunda demonstratio*’, the part of the library catalogue in which the book was listed.

⁵ MS B.15.5, fo. 174r. Ziolkowski transcribes this note as ‘*Notescat uniuersis quod presens annus ab incarnatione domino m^o. c^o. xciii^{us}, a passione eius m. c. lix^{us} est, a origine mundi v.c.xlv^{us}*’: *Nigel of Canterbury*, 283.

⁶ ‘*Otia cum fugerit studiosi cura Nigelli | textuit ex uariis presentis scripta libelli | quem superesse sibi uoluit post fata futurum | nominis et meriti memorabile non moriturum*’: MS B.15.5, fo. 1r, trans. in Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury* at p. 282. Nigel also played on the assonant rhyming between his name and the word ‘libellus’, in ‘Epigram 1’, suggesting that this verse is eponymous: Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 250–1, 268–9. The poem is added in a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century *littera textualis*, by a hand not found elsewhere in the manuscript.

⁷ Boutemy claimed that the annotations were ‘denuded of originality’: *Tractatus*, 61–3. Ziolkowski described them as ‘not often ground-breaking’: *Nigel of Canterbury*, 283–5. He notes that they provide insights into Nigel’s literary, classical and mythological knowledge, but treat exclusively their poetic content (pp. 286–302). Here and elsewhere ‘annotation’ is used as a neutral descriptive term to indicate all

HS, at least not in the vein of those of Stephen Langton, pseudo-Langton and Hugh of St Cher.⁸ What, then, is going on in the margins of MS B.15.5? This study argues that the annotations, the ‘embroidery’ referred to on the flyleaf, provide an insight into how the *HS* was read (and intended to be read) in England in the late twelfth century.⁹ While it cannot necessarily be assumed, per the note, that the annotations were compiled by Nigel himself, they undoubtedly reveal the sources which were studied alongside the *HS* in this period. The compiler, moreover, uses various techniques of excerption and information visualisation in his treatment of these sources; a close examination of these techniques enables us to come closer to understanding the range of analytical tools in the hands of medieval glossator-scholars such as Nigel at the turn of the twelfth century.

MS B.15.5: content and codicology

In his prologue Peter Comestor dedicated the *HS*, a historical commentary on the Bible, to William White Hands, referring to him as archbishop of Sens, a post that William held from 1169 to 1176. This gives us an approximate date for the completion of the *HS*, which may be further narrowed down by reference to an entry in the chronicle of William of Auxerre, who recorded in 1173 that Peter had ‘joined together in one volume the histories of both Testaments’.¹⁰

M. J. Clark makes a case for two ‘editions’ of the text; the first was composed by Peter Comestor, the second, a version with substantial input from Stephen Langton – which he terms the ‘university’ edition – was completed before 1176, while Langton continued to lecture on the text until 1193.¹¹ It is probable, moreover, that Peter continued to revise his own text until his death in about 1178. It is not the purpose of this study to expand upon the complex early tradition of the text and the process of authorial

content (including schemata and nota signs) added to the manuscript and distinct from the primary text.

⁸ J. H. Morey describes it incorrectly as a ‘commentary’: ‘Peter Comestor, biblical paraphrase, and the medieval popular Bible’, *Speculum* lxxviii (1993), 6–35 at p. 9 n. 7. Clark dismissed it as ‘not a commentary but a copy of the *History* with notes in the margin’: *Making*, 7–8 n. 31.

⁹ ‘The best way to get an insight into the historical study of the Bible at about the year 1200 would be to examine glosses on the *Histories* and the notes written in the margins of early copies’: B. Smalley, *The study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edn, Oxford 1983, 214–15.

¹⁰ Clark, *Making*, 1.
¹¹ Ibid. 171, 205–12; G. Lacombe, ‘Studies on the Commentaries of Cardinal Stephen Langton, part I’, *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire* v (1931), 5–151 at pp. 18–51.

and collaborative additions which shaped it, although it is worth considering some of the distinguishing features of the copy in MS B.15.5.¹²

First, it does not contain the dedicatory prologue to the text, but opens directly with the preface (following a rubric reading ‘Incipit hystoria scolastica magistri petri’).¹³ Secondly, the text contains a number of variants associated with a group of manuscripts which formed the model for the version of the *HS* used at the University of Paris and as the basis for vernacular translations.¹⁴ Finally, it has twenty-one of the twenty-five ‘notes’ that appear in nearly all manuscripts of the *HS*’s commentary on Genesis and which A. Sylwan, who identified them, described as probably authorial.¹⁵ These *notae* and *incidentiae*, which were incorporated to various degrees within the body of the *HS* and thereafter became a canonical part of it, are characteristic of the *HS*’s textual fluidity. MS B.15.5 presents nine as boxed additions within the text block, nine in the form of marginal notes, one placed within the text with its opening distinguished by a penwork initial, and a further two seamlessly integrated into the text. Four are not present at all (and an additional two blocks of text are treated as ‘notes’ and boxed within the text block).¹⁶ The diversity of the presentation of these ‘notes’ illustrates how challenging it is to use them as a clue to the status of the text at this point; in the absence of a complete modern scholarly edition of the *HS* any understanding of where MS B.15.5 sits in the tradition remains necessarily incomplete.¹⁷

Several codicological aspects of MS B.15.5 have thus far escaped notice or received insufficient comment. Neither André Boutemy nor Jan Ziolkowski noted in their examinations of the manuscript, for example, that it also contains another work, namely the *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi* by Peter of Poitiers (c. 1130–1205).¹⁸ The *Compendium*, which occupies fos 1v–6r of the manuscript, forms part of an independent

¹² Peter Comestor, *Scolastica historia: Liber Genesis*, ed. A. Sylwan, CCCM cxci, Turnhout 2005. Sylwan estimated that the text survives in over 800 manuscripts, recording twenty-five twelfth-century manuscripts.

¹³ Sylwan suggests that, judging by the number of manuscripts in which it is omitted, the prologue was not regarded as an important part of the text: *ibid.* p. xxvii.

¹⁴ On these variants see *ibid.* pp. xxxviii–xxxix. On this version see Clark, *Making*, 159–60.

¹⁵ A. Sylwan, ‘Petrus Comestor, *Historia scholastica*: une nouvelle édition’, *Sacris Erudiri* xxxix (2000), 345–82 at p. 363; cf. *Scolastica historia*, pp. lxxvi–ii. For Stephen Langton as witness to the notes see Clark, *Making*, 161–2, 173–82. Clark argues that Langton’s references to ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ glosses refer to their placement on the page, but Smalley notes that Langton uses these terms to make an exegetical distinction between literal and spiritual meaning: *Study of the Bible*, 217.

¹⁶ MS B.15.5, fos 11r–v, 12v, 13r, 14r, 15v, 17v, 18v, 19r, 23r–v, 24r, 26r, 30r, 33r, 34r–v.

¹⁷ The most accessible complete edition remains *PL* cxcviii.1053–722.

¹⁸ L. Cleaver refers to a ‘diagram of biblical genealogy’ without explicitly identifying the *Compendium*: ‘The monks’ library at Christ Church Canterbury, c. 1180–c. 1250’, in

codicological unit (fos 1–10), but is written in a contemporary hand. Fo. 6v is blank, but contains drypoint tracings of oval roundels connected with lines, the outline of an unexecuted diagram. A number of additional genealogies are listed on fo. 7r; these are arranged in three columns and grouped according to the ages of the world, culminating in a list of Roman emperors up to the birth of Charlemagne.¹⁹ Originally fo. 7v was blank, but now contains two biblical verses by Peter Riga, added in a later hand.²⁰ The *capitula* of the *HS*, arranged in three-to-four columns, are found on fos 8r–10r, written in the same hand as the *Compendium*. Fo. 10v is blank, with the text of the *HS* beginning on fo. 11r, the start of the second codicological unit.²¹

Multiple pieces of evidence suggest that the two parts are independent, but related; they must, therefore, be examined in conjunction. While their physical independence is demonstrated by the fact that the second unit has a separate series of quire signatures, they were clearly brought together at an early date, as the lack of discolouration on fo. 11r, the beginning of the *HS*, suggests.²² They are textually related, with the first unit containing a contemporary contents list of the second. This is unsurprising, given that the *Compendium* was frequently associated with the *HS*; both texts emanated from a similar milieu in Paris and served as tools for the historical interpretation of the Bible.²³ Moreover, the verse identifying Nigel as the owner of the manuscript was written on the recto of the opening of the first part (fo. 1r). Given that there are no annotations to the *Compendium*, the reference in this short verse to Nigel's 'embroidering' must refer primarily to the second section of the manuscript, although the addition of the codicological unit containing the *Compendium* to the *HS* could be regarded as one aspect of his intervention into the form of the completed codex.

Nigel and MS B.15.5

A further outstanding issue in existing descriptions of MS B.15.5 regards the near-cessation of annotations on fo. 200v, noted by both Boutemy and

A. Bovey (ed.), *Medieval art, architecture and archaeology at Canterbury*, Leeds 2013, 156–66 at p. 162.

¹⁹ This list appears in manuscripts from the early ninth century on. See, for example, Stiftsbibliothek, St Gall, Cod. Sang. 397, 141–4.

²⁰ Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 286–7.

²¹ M. R. James collates the manuscript as 'a¹⁰, 1-26⁸, 27¹⁰': *The western manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College: Cambridge*, Cambridge 1900, i. 470.

²² Quire signatures are found at MS B.15.5, fos 145v ('xvii'), 208v ('xxv').

²³ S. Panayotova, 'Peter of Poitiers's *Compendium in genealogia Christi*: the early English copies', in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds), *Belief and culture in the Middle Ages*, Oxford 2001, 327–41 at p. 335.

Ziolkowski. Boutemy suggests that the cessation of the annotations could be explained by various causes, including Nigel's death, while Ziolkowski speculates that the change may have been due to Nigel's ill-health.²⁴ The fact that there is a sharp change in the frequency of annotations at this point can, however, be explained in a less dramatic fashion. Neither Boutemy nor Ziolkowski observed that on fo. 200v the text of the second part of the *HS*, the *Historia evangelica*, ends and another text, the *Historia actuum apostolorum*, a continuation written by Peter of Poitiers, begins.²⁵ The change in annotation pattern simply reflects a change in the subject matter of the manuscript, with the *Historia actuum apostolorum* attracting less attention from the annotator.²⁶ Nevertheless, Boutemy and Ziolkowski's speculations raise an important question – what precisely was Nigel's role in the compilation of MS B.15.5?

Boutemy implies that MS B.15.5 was an autograph.²⁷ Ziolkowski is more cautious in this respect, referring simply to Nigel's 'work on the glosses', and suggesting that his relationship to the manuscript can be compared to the supervisory role that he played in the compilation of a collection of his poems, now BL, MS Cotton Vespasian D.xix.²⁸ The format of MS B.15.5 suggests that, while it may have been written under Nigel's supervision, it was not an autograph, but copied by a well-trained scribe; by contrast Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, MS 427/427, the autograph copy of Nigel's *Tractatus contra curiales et officiales clericos*, uses a less formal scribal register, displaying cursive and documentary features.²⁹ MS B.15.5 exhibits many features common to professional book production in this period; it opens with an illuminated initial, and uses alternating red and blue initials and a system of rubricated headings throughout. The layout of the manuscript has been clearly planned, with the text written in two columns, and blocks of ruling of varied dimensions provided in the marginal spaces to accommodate the annotations.³⁰ In general the annotations were added before the decoration, as can be seen by the way in which the coloured penwork is sometimes obliged to work around them, suggesting a systematic approach to the successive execution of

²⁴ Boutemy, *Tractatus*, 24; Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 283.

²⁵ 'Explicit hystoria scolastica. Incipit libellus actuum apostolorum': MS B.15.5, fo. 200v.

²⁶ Short annotations are, in fact, present at fos 209r, 213v and 215r.

²⁷ Boutemy, *Tractatus*, 44.

²⁸ Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 283, 43–51. Digitised at <<https://tinyurl.com/y44ar8xk>>.

²⁹ Cleaver refers to a decline in in-house book production in Canterbury in this period: 'The monk's library', 156–7.

³⁰ MS B.15.5, fo. 111r = 355 x 260 mm; writing space per column = 220 x 75 mm. Width of intercolumnar space = 150 mm. The truncated penwork suggests that the leaf has been slightly cropped at the top and bottom.

text, gloss and decoration.³¹ The annotations are written in the same hand as the main text, but to a smaller scale. Usually they are placed adjacent to the passage upon which they comment; otherwise they are linked to it with a sophisticated system of *signes-de-renvoi*. These observations demonstrate that the annotations are not spontaneous additions, but carefully planned and executed.

The formality displayed by MS B.15.5 is not unexpected. The *HS* was a popular and revered text in English religious houses by the early thirteenth century, and usually produced to a standard which reflected its status. For example, BL, MS Royal 7 F III was copied for the Benedictine abbey of Elstow in 1191/2 by a professional scribe, Robert Fitzralph, who noted in its colophon that the abbess, Cecily de Channeville, had commissioned the manuscript for the 'education and advancement of her convent'.³² Meanwhile BL, MS Royal 4 D VII was made in-house at St Albans before 1214 and described in Matthew Paris's *Gesta abbatum* as 'most elegant' and 'perfectly written and bound'.³³ The emphasis placed on its quality echoes a note found in Durham Cathedral's early fifteenth-century library catalogue, which adds 'bonus liber est' alongside the entry for one of its copies of the *HS*.³⁴ A picture emerges of the *HS* as a relatively large and *de luxe* manuscript, although this was not always the case, as BL, MS Arundel 368, a late-twelfth-century copy produced for the Cistercian abbey of St Mary, Byland, demonstrates. This copy of the text is on the smaller side, measuring 225 x 115 mm, and decorated simply with alternating green and red initials (rarely elaborated in any way), resonant of the style of late twelfth-century Cistercian book production.³⁵ Nevertheless, as this brief survey of some surviving English copies of the *HS* from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries show, the stately format of MS B.15.5 by no means marks it as an outlier.

How closely, then, can Nigel be linked to MS B.15.5? The main evidence for his involvement remains the verse appended to the manuscript, which

³¹ Observed on MS B.15.5, fos 65r, 79r. An exception can be seen at fo. 177r.

³² Robert identifies himself at BL, MS Royal 7 F III, fo. 196r: 'Hunc librum scripsit Robertus filius Radulfi discipulus et scriptor ultimus Magistri Roberti Bonni de Bedeford.' The second colophon on fo. 196v refers to the date and destination of the manuscript: 'Scriptus est liber iste anno tertio coronationis Regis Ricardi quem scribere fecit C[ecily] de Chanuill. bone memorie Abbatissa beate Marie de Helenestow'. in eruditionem et profectum conventus sui et ceterorum inspicientium.'

³³ R. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans Abbey, 1066-1235*, Woodbridge 1982, i. 71-4, 95-6.

³⁴ R. Gameson, *Manuscript treasures of Durham Cathedral*, London 2010, 95; J. Greatrex, 'Benedictine sermons: preparation and practice in the English monastic cathedral cloisters', in C. Meussig (ed.), *Medieval monastic preaching*, Leiden 1998, 257-78 at p. 266.

³⁵ By contrast, BL, MS Royal 7 F III measures 335 x 250 mm, and BL, MS Royal 4 D VII measures 380 x 250 mm.

describes how he sought material to augment the text. There is no conflict between this description and the annotations; they do indeed exhibit a magpie tendency towards a range of sources. Furthermore, as Ziolkowski has noted, several annotations bear specific relevance to Canterbury and England, again strengthening the argument in favour of Nigel as their compiler.³⁶ But how do we weigh these pieces of evidence against the fact that the manuscript is a professional production, devoid of traces of personal drafting, distant from the intermediate stages of compilation and source sifting which must have preceded it? How, indeed, can we exclude the possibility that this is not a copy of a set of *scholia* to the *HS*, more widely circulated beyond this manuscript?³⁷

The truth is that we cannot. The production of professionally-produced annotated texts of this type in the Middle Ages forces us to reassess our conception of ‘author’ or compiler, recognising that they are but one element in a complex set of productive forces, and frequently operating at several removes from the completed product. The annotations in MS B.15.5, which largely consist of extracts from other texts, were presumably compiled in an anterior material form, perhaps as ephemeral as wax tablets or parchment slips, before being formally copied along with the main text into this manuscript.³⁸ I will set out the scant information that we have on the chronology of Nigel’s life against what we can establish regarding the scholar-compiler of MS B.15.5, who clearly had access to cutting-edge Parisian theological scholarship of the second half of the twelfth century. This will demonstrate that while it cannot be proved beyond doubt that Nigel’s guiding hand was behind MS B.15.5, such an identification cannot be excluded.

³⁶ Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 284. In addition, fo. 187r refers to the return of ‘beatus Thomas’, i.e. Thomas Becket, to England alongside the account of Jesus’ triumphant return to Jerusalem; fo. 196r refers to the so-called ritual murder of William of Norwich in 1144 alongside the account of the crucifixion.

³⁷ *Contra* this speculation, I have not yet found another *Historia scholastica* manuscript with an identical set of annotations and, as noted below, the manuscript is unique in terms of some of the source material that it incorporates.

³⁸ On the use of such ephemeral media in textual drafting and note-taking see M. Brown, ‘The role of the wax tablet in medieval literacy: a reconsideration in the light of a recent find from York’, *British Library Journal* xx (1994), 1–16 at pp. 10–11, and C. Burnett, ‘Give him the white cow: notes and note-taking in the universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’, *History of Universities* xiv (1998), 1–30. On the challenges that our lack of definitive knowledge on drafting processes pose see M. Teeuwen, ‘Writing in the blank space of manuscripts: evidence from the ninth century’, in B. Crostini, G. Iversen and B. M. Jensen (eds), *Ars edendi lecture series*, iv, Stockholm 2016, 1–25 at p. 12.

Nigel's education and life

Scholars have aimed to reconstruct Nigel's early life and schooling based on comments made in his popular satirical work, *Speculum stultorum*.³⁹ The first part of this text describes the experiences of an ass by the name of Brunel, who wishes to have a longer tail. In pursuit of this vain (in every sense of the word) endeavour, he travels to Paris, where he enrolls in the schools. The schools of Montpellier and Bologna are also satirised, but only Paris, which Brunel leaves after a number of years only able to spell the words 'hee-haw', is described in any detail, suggesting first-hand knowledge on Nigel's part. Upon arriving in Paris, Brunel establishes himself among the English students who are known for their drinking, 'waissailing' and whoring – a trio of indulgences which draw an implicit satirical parallel with the subjects of the trivium.⁴⁰ But he is slow to learn, inhibited by his nature, 'quod natura dedit ... hoc habet'.⁴¹ His teachers give up, after having made recourse to instruments of discipline – the *virga*, *baculus* and *ferulus* – reference not only to modes of punishment but also to the metaphoric rod wielded by Grammar.⁴² Brunel leaves, no better off than when he arrived, and upon looking back at Paris can no longer even remember the name of the city.

Speculum stultorum implies that Nigel was educated in Paris, but falls short of offering definitive evidence. Indeed, a lot of what is known about Nigel is conjecture – from when he was born, to where he studied, to when he became a monk.⁴³ Boutemy suggested that the recipient of a letter (late 1168) addressed to a 'Magister Nigellus' in the collection of John of Salisbury (late 1110s–80) could be identified with our compiler.⁴⁴ However, attempts to reconstruct the association between Nigel and John of Salisbury (and with the circle of Thomas Becket more generally) have failed to demonstrate any particularly strong relationship.⁴⁵ If Boutemy's identification is to be supported, it requires Nigel to have completed his education by this time and returned to Canterbury to become a master. This chronology would place Nigel's birth in the 1130s/40s and

³⁹ *Nigel de Longchamps, Speculum stultorum*, ed. J. H. Mozley and R. R. Raymo, Berkeley, CA 1960. ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* lines 1521–2. ⁴¹ *Ibid.* lines 1547–8. ⁴² *Ibid.* lines 1551–2.

⁴³ Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 9–11. On Nigel's origins see A. G. Rigg, 'Nigel of Canterbury: what was his name?', *Medium Aevum* lvi (1987), 304–7, and R. Coates, 'Nigel of Canterbury's surname(s) and a specious link with Guernsey', *Notes and Queries* lxiv (2017), 24–7. On his activities at Canterbury see J. D. Cotts, 'The critique of the secular clergy in Peter of Blois and Nigellus de Longchamps', *Haskins Society Journal* xiii (2004), 137–50.

⁴⁴ John of Salisbury, letter 284, in *The letters of John of Salisbury*, ii, ed. W. J. Millor and C. N. L. Brooke, Oxford 1979, 624–5.

⁴⁵ On the role of Becket in Nigel's writings see Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 11–22, and Boutemy, *Tractatus*, 35–45. See also n. 36 above.

date his education in Paris to the early or mid-1160s. Other external evidence linking Nigel to Canterbury, such as the lease records of his sister, Agatha de Sarneis, which date from 1178–1200, suggest a later chronology, perhaps re-dating his birth to the early 1150s.⁴⁶ This would permit the first version of the *Speculum stultorum*, completed by 1180, to be read not as a distant satire composed long after Nigel's own experiences in the schools, but instead as a fresh take inspired by relatively recent events in his life (assuming, then, that he attended the Parisian schools in the late 1160s or early 1170s).⁴⁷

An examination of the content of the annotations to MS B.15.5 indicates that the particular constellation of exegetical sources found there suggest that its compiler had intimate knowledge of developments in theological study in Paris in the early 1170s. Were this compiler to be identified with Nigel, evidence would shift in favour of this, later, chronology and away from that proposed by Boutemy. It is important to recollect, however, that the value of the annotations in MS B.15.5 as a witness to how the *HS* was read in England in this period does not depend on the identification of the compiler with Nigel; the annotations remain of interest in their own right as valuable insights into practices of glossing, textual scholarship and exegesis.

The Gloss

The opening of the *HS*, which concerns Creation and the Fall (Genesis i–iv), is the most heavily annotated part of MS B.15.5, with the glosses sometimes filling almost all of the available marginal space. These leaves (fos 11r–18v = *HS*, *In Genesim* 1–28) serve as an appropriate case study to understand the unique scope of the compiler's exegetical source base. The opening passages of Genesis had implications for the understanding of the metaphysics of the world, the place of man within God's plan and the very nature of sin and grace. Numerous patristic and medieval writers were cited in the margin – Alcuin, Augustine, Bede, Gregory, Isidore, Jerome and Strabus – sometimes by name, sometimes by the type of interpretation offered ('mistic', 'historic').⁴⁸ At first glance this gives the impression that the compiler was quoting from an extensive range of sources. In fact every single one of these attributed excerpts (numbering fifty-eight) can be found in the

⁴⁶ Mozley and Raymo, *Speculum stultorum*, 123 n. 2.

⁴⁷ Cf. John of Salisbury's *Entheticus maior*, which may derive from earlier drafts made during his time as a student: J. van Laarhoven, *John of Salisbury's Entheticus maior and minor*, Leiden 1987, 15–16. On the rhetorical use of 'veteris' in the dedication see Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 6; cf. *Speculum stultorum*, 123 n. 1.

⁴⁸ Ambrose is cited on a single occasion (fo. 11r) but the quotation is from Cicero, *De oratore* II.36.

exegetical staple, the *Glossa ordinaria* on Genesis.⁴⁹ The *Gloss* on Genesis is rarely excerpted after fo. 18v, a fact that reflects the significance accorded to the *HS*'s discussion of Genesis i–iv.⁵⁰

The appropriation of the *Gloss* in the margins of the opening pages of ms B.15.5 demonstrates its role as the source *qua non* for exegesis on the Bible in this period, but is also powerful evidence for the fact that the *HS* was read and studied in this instance as a proxy for the Bible itself.⁵¹ This unapologetic use of the *Gloss* may be compared with that of Ralph Niger, who wrote in the prologue to his commentary to Kings (completed in 1191, so roughly contemporaneous with ms B.15.5) that 'We put the sacred expositions of the holy Fathers before our own researches, just as we heard them in the schools [*in scolis*], but in brief, that those who read may understand, by reason of this very brevity, that one should go back to the originals [*ad originalia scripta*] for full knowledge of them.'⁵² While Ralph saw the *Gloss* as a prompt to return 'ad originalia scripta', to the full patristic sources and to the Bible, the compiler of ms B.15.5 was content to present the material as encountered 'in scolis'. This is a clue, perhaps, not only to the origin of this assemblage of interpretations but also to the intended use of the manuscript as a whole; we can postulate that the excerpts from the *Gloss*, itself a collection of *excerptiones*, were intended to serve those studying the *HS* as a shortcut to key themes in exegesis.

The school of St Victor

The *Gloss* is the dominant voice in the margins surrounding the account of Creation and the Fall, but it is complemented by a number of other contemporary sources, including four that can be associated with exegetical activity at the school of St Victor, namely the writings of Hugh (c. 1096–1141), Richard (d. 1173, discussed below), Andrew (d. 1175) and

⁴⁹ J.-P. Pouzet ascribes views on the derivation of language to Nigel based on a selection of these annotations, which are, in fact, quotations *via* the *Gloss* from Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*: "Seli timinge": traduction et "structure d'intention" dans *Genesis and Exodus*, in J. Jenkins and O. Bertrand (eds), *The medieval translator: traduire au moyen âge*, Turnhout 2007, 77–94 at pp. 82–5.

⁵⁰ I have compared the annotations to the *Editio princeps*, ed. A. Rusch, Strassburg 1480–1, <<https://tinyurl.com/ybymok6v>>, and to the *glossa reformata* version, BnF, Paris, ms lat. 14399, xii⁴, provenance Saint-Victor, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8442906c>>. The compiler refers to other books of the *Gloss*: *In Genesim*, fos 29r, 34r refer to the '*Glosa*' on Isaiah; fo. 29 refers to the '*Glosa*' on Abdias; fo. 38v refers to the '*Glosa*' on Matthew.

⁵¹ Direct quotations from the Bible are rare. Only Hebrews xi.4–22 is quoted throughout ms B.15.5, introduced with the words 'In epistola ad hebreos' or 'Apostolus ad ebreos', demonstrating the role of various biblical figures as champions of faith.

⁵² This is translated in Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 226.

Stephen Langton (c. 1150–1228). Of these Hugh is the least used; on fo. 12r there is an explicit reference to ‘Hugo m<agister>’, quoting in full *De sacramentis* 1.20, which debates why God did not explicitly remark upon the work of the second day of Creation as ‘good’.⁵³ By comparison, Andrew’s commentary, *In Genesim*, is excerpted (without attribution) on ten occasions from fo. 11r to fo. 18v.⁵⁴ These excerpts are sometimes very brief, such as the appropriation of Andrew’s definition of the ‘limus terrae’ from which Adam was created or his discussion of the difficulties in pronouncing the place name ‘Heuilath’.⁵⁵

In some cases the compiler engages more actively with Andrew’s *In Genesim*. For example, in one instance, the compiler splices together two passages from the text, namely Andrew’s discussion of the creation of man in the image of the rational and triune, but singular, God.⁵⁶ On two occasions, Andrew’s commentary is mined for the interpretation of non-Christian sources. On fo. 12r, adjacent to the commentary of the *HS* on the second day of Creation, there is an excerpt discussing the opinion of the ‘philosophers’ on whether water could be placed above the heavens (as described in Genesis i.9).⁵⁷ On fo. 15r, alongside the discussion of the tree of knowledge, a Jewish interpretation is cited on the state of man prior to the Fall.⁵⁸ While no copy of Andrew’s commentary on the *Heptateuch* is recorded in the Canterbury booklists, a number of manuscripts of the text were in circulation in English monastic libraries from the 1180s on.⁵⁹ The selective employment of the commentary over these eight folia implies the compiler’s familiarity with the text, and moreover, his interest in the type of literal and lexical exposition favoured by Andrew.⁶⁰

Aside from the writings of Hugh and Andrew, a further voice in the margins stands out – that of a scholar who in many ways inherited the

⁵³ MS B.15.5, fo. 12r = Hugh of Saint Victor, *De sacramentis Christiane fidei*, PL clxxvi.201A–C. There are further references to ‘mag-iste>r h.’ on fos 61v, 190v.

⁵⁴ Andrew of St Victor, *In Genesim*, in *Expositio super Heptateuchum*, ed. C. Lohr and R. Berndt, CCCM liii, Turnhout 1986, 6–95. Smalley noted, but did not identify, two excerpts from Andrew’s work in MS B.15.5: *Study of the Bible*, 183. As well as the excerpts discussed in detail, note MS B.15.5, fo. 12r = *In Genesim* 1.11, lines 304–6; fo. 13v = *In Genesim*, 1.26, lines 473–7; fo. 13v = *In Genesim* 1.28, lines 572–6; fo. 14r = *In Genesim* 11.3, lines 690–4; fo. 14r = *In Genesim* 1.27, lines 552–4.

⁵⁵ MS B.15.5, fo. 14v = *In Genesim* 11.7, lines 792–3; fo. 15r = *In Genesim*, 11.11, lines 880–4.

⁵⁶ MS B.15.5, fo. 13r = *In Genesim* 1.26, lines 488–500; 1.27, lines 520–4.

⁵⁷ MS B.15.5, fo. 12r. Compare *In Genesim* 1.6, lines 245–51.

⁵⁸ MS B.15.5, fo. 15r = *In Genesim*, 11.9, lines 856–61.

⁵⁹ Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 176–8, 183–4. She refers (p. 184) to extensive excerpts from Andrew’s commentary in a thirteenth-century *HS* owned by the Dominicans of Beverley Priory.

⁶⁰ No other references to *In Genesim* are found in the rest of the *HS*’s commentary on Genesis.

approach to biblical exegesis popularised by members of the Victorine school. Stephen Langton lectured on the *HS* in the first half of the 1170s, and an examination of the *marginalia* in MS B.15.5 reveals that the compiler had access to the first (and shortest) version of the record of Langton's lectures, which survives in the form of a *reportatio* in only one manuscript (BnF, Paris, MS lat. 14417).⁶¹ It treats Gen. i–iv on fo. 129r–v, and although the treatment is relatively brief, this part of the *reportatio* is quoted verbatim on five occasions in MS B.15.5.

Three of these occurrences are found in the margins of fo. 11r, the first offering a brief definition of 'ephemera', the second referring to the differences between tropological and analogical interpretations, and the third comparing theological and philosophical interpretations of the initial confusion of the world. The fourth reference, found beside the opening of the account of the fifth day (fo. 13r), refers to a hymn by Gelasius on the creation of the birds and fish. The final reference is found beside the account of the Sabbath rest on fo. 14r. Moreover, a comparison of the annotations to the first *capitulum* of the *Historia evangelica* (fo. 169v) – one of the few chapters in this manuscript which also contains interlinear glossing – with Langton's treatment of the same passage reveals that all the marginal and interlinear notes of this *capitulum* also tally with those given in the *reportatio* of Langton's teaching on this section of the text.⁶² This reinforces the assertion that the compiler was familiar with Langton's treatment.

Richard of St Victor's Allegoriae in Vetus et Novum Testamentum

By far the most consistently used source in the margins of MS B.15.5 is Richard of St Victor's *Allegoriae in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, which is quoted extensively alongside the Genesis commentary and throughout the manuscript. Part of Richard's *Liber exceptionum*, a large-scale exegetical work on the Bible, the *Allegoriae* was frequently included in manuscripts of the *HS*.⁶³ In fact, the association between the two texts was so strong that the *Allegoriae* was sometimes attributed to Peter Comestor.⁶⁴ Thus far, however, I have identified no other case where passages from the

⁶¹ BnF, MS lat. 14417, <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9067144n>>; Lacombe, 'Commentaries', 20. Clark describes two partial manuscripts: *Making*, 127, and (pp. 166–72) dates it to pre-1176.

⁶² Comparing MS B.15.5, fo. 169v with the edition of this part of the *reportatio* in Clark, *Making*, 292.

⁶³ *LE* II.I–IX, XI–XIV comprised the *Allegoriae*. On its circulation see *Richard de Saint-Victor, Liber exceptionum*, ed. J. Chatillon, Paris 1958, 28–49, 62–5, 83–6. BL, MS Royal 7 F III and MS Royal 4 D VII both contain the *Allegoriae* directly subsequent to the *HS*.

⁶⁴ D. Luscombe, 'The place of Peter Comestor in the history of medieval theology', in G. Dahan (ed.), *Pierre le Mangeur ou Pierre de Troyes, maître du XIIe siècle*, Turnhout

Allegoriae were copied alongside, rather than subsequent to, the *HS*.⁶⁵ Given that the *Allegoriae* emphasises different aspects of the biblical narrative from those discussed in the *HS*, quotations from it inevitably ebb and flow. A sense of the extent to which it was used can be gathered by the fact that excerpts from sixteen out of the nineteen chapters of book 1 of the *Allegoriae* (*LE* II.1.1), which covers the period from the Creation to the death of Noah (Gen. i–ix), appear on fos 11r–21r.⁶⁶

The text was not regurgitated blindly. Many of the chapters of the *LE* consist of a body of text explaining allegorical parallels, followed by a brief summary; this summary, however, is rarely quoted in isolation by the compiler, in spite of its potential utility as a mnemonic.⁶⁷ Instead the general order of the main body of text is usually observed, with notable jumps in the narrative indicated; for example, an excerpt on fo. 36r (*LE* II.1.15) is linked with a distinctive tiemark to an annotation found on fo. 34v, indicating that this is a resumption of the narrative. Texts are occasionally repeated: the account of the formation of man (*LE* II.1.8) is given twice in near identical form on fos 14r and 16r. Most significantly, on fo. 32v the introduction to the six days of creation (*LE* II.1.2), already quoted in full on fo. 13v, is repeated, at a distance of twenty folia from the section to which it relates and without obvious connection to the chapter that it accompanies.⁶⁸ Possible motivations for this repetition are to underscore the significance of the account of the works of the six days, and to highlight the allegorical interpretations which, the compiler may have worried, were in danger of becoming lost among the heavy annotations surrounding the account of Creation.

The compiler's extensive use of the *Allegoriae* is significant for two reasons. First, the careful excerption of passages and their placement alongside sections of the *HS* to which they bear most relevance offers indubitable evidence that the *Allegoriae* was intended to be read here in conjunction with, not simply in addition to, the *HS*. By contrast, the

2013, 27–45 at pp. 44–5; P. Moore, 'The authorship of the *Allegoriae super Vetus et Novum Testamentum*', *New Scholasticism* ix (1935), 209–25 at pp. 211–12, 223–4.

⁶⁵ Compare Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 159, which is annotated with excerpts from Hildebert of Lavardin's *Epigrams*: R. Thomson, *A descriptive catalogue of the medieval manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Oxford*, Woodbridge 2011, 83–4.

⁶⁶ Cf. Ziolkowski, *Nigel of Canterbury*, 287–8, who discusses a verse accompanying the treatment of Noah's ark on fo. 20r, drawing parallels with the writings of Hildebert and Peter Riga, but not identifying Richard as the source (*LE* II.1.14, lines 25–31, 55–67, 44–5, 45–8).

⁶⁷ For example, *LE* II.1.11 is quoted in full on fo. 18r, with the exception of the concluding summary. Chapter titles are never cited. On the mnemonic function of the *LE* see I. van t'Spijker, *Fictions of the inner life: religious literature and formation of the self in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, Turnhout 2004, 133–4.

⁶⁸ 'Haec glosa est de operibus vi dierum supra'; 'Glosa haec congrue ad aptatur operibus sex dierum supra Genesi a. b. c.': MS B.15.5, fo. 32v.

common placement of the *Allegoriae* subsequent to the lengthy *HS* was not conducive to cross-referencing in this manner nor to reading the two texts simultaneously. Secondly, its presence here in the margins implies that the lack of allegorical interpretation in the *HS* was regarded as a deficiency; Richard's text, with its impressive summaries of symbolic affinities, made recompense for Peter Comestor's decision to interpret the Bible from a solely historical perspective.⁶⁹ Given the fact that the *Allegoriae* also stemmed from a teaching context, its pairing here with the *HS* made the resultant volume an ideal entry-level resource for students of biblical exegesis.⁷⁰

Peter of Poitiers's Sententiae

Nigel left a copy of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard to Canterbury Cathedral.⁷¹ It is, however, another set of *Sententiae* which are regularly quoted in the margins of his copy of the *HS*, namely those of Peter of Poitiers (probably completed between 1168 and 1175).⁷² These *Sententiae* borrowed extensively from Peter Lombard's collection, but offered a different approach, avoiding questions that had already been discussed by the Lombard, and focusing instead on *dubitabilia*, contentious matters.⁷³ Using tools of dialectic, such as syllogistic arguments and speculative grammar, Peter of Poitiers composed five books of 'questions', probably intended to furnish material for disputation.⁷⁴ P. S. Moore identified thirty-three manuscripts of the text dating from between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.⁷⁵ The compiler of the annotations in MS B.15.5 refers to the text (without attribution) on a number of occasions, concerning topics such as the nature of sin, of lying and of love.⁷⁶ The familiarity of

⁶⁹ *Scolastica historia, prologus*, 3.

⁷⁰ Chatillon, *Liber exceptionum*, 68; Van t'Spijker, *Fictions*, 132–3; L. Smith, *Masters of the sacred page: manuscripts of theology in the Latin West to 1274*, Notre Dame, IN 2001, 57–60.

⁷¹ James, *Ancient libraries*, 101.

⁷² P. S. Moore, *The works of Peter of Poitiers: master in theology and chancellor of Paris (1193–1205)*, Notre Dame, IN 1936, 25–50. Books I–II are found in *Sententiae Petri Pictaviensis*, ed. P. S. Moore, M. Dulong and J. Garvin, Notre Dame, IN 1943, 1950 (all subsequent references to books I–II are to this edition). The full text is found in *PL* ccxi (all subsequent references to books III–IV are to this edition). M. Colish dates the *Sententiae* to 1173: 'The Pseudo-Peter of Poitiers Gloss', in P. Rosemann (ed.), *Medieval commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, II, Leiden 2009, 1–33 at p. 3.

⁷³ *Sententiae* I, pp. x–xiii.

⁷⁴ Moore, *Peter of Poitiers*, 25–50.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 28–36. By comparison, there are estimated to be between 600 and 900 extant manuscripts of Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*. P. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, Oxford 2004, 55.

⁷⁶ The most extensive uses of the *Sententiae* throughout the manuscript include fo. 13r = II.9, lines 3–6, 19–20, 21–8, 55–7, 59–65, 81–3, I.28, lines 15–18; fo. 16v = II.19,

the compiler with the *Sententiae* is evinced by the fact that passages are frequently reordered, pieced together from different parts of a chapter, or even from different books of the text.

In addition to these textual borrowings, the compiler offers several schematic paraphrases of parts of the *Sententiae*.⁷⁷ Schematic summaries are common in ms B.15.5, and are found in varied degrees of complexity on nearly 25 per cent of the folios of the *HS*. They are used throughout to itemise, summarise and capture multiple meanings of the text. Peter of Poitiers's familiarity with the use of visual techniques in his pedagogy is also well-established, as his *Compendium* illustrates. He also made use of schemata on three occasions in his *Sententiae*, referring to them as 'figurae' and 'distinctiones'.⁷⁸ These particular schemata are not reproduced in ms B.15.5; instead there are seemingly original attempts to summarise and visually paraphrase parts of Peter's text.

An example of such a schematic paraphrase is found on fo. 48r (see [Figure 1](#)) alongside the discussion of the Ten Commandments. The schema efficiently summarises *Sententiae* iv.4 which treats the observation of the commandments.⁷⁹ Presenting this material in schematic form serves to distinguish the proper form of observation (through love, 'ex caritate') from the improper form (through feigning to do so, 'ex simulatione'). One can also observe the commandments simply as law ('in re'), as indicated here by a separated distinction placed on the same level as observation through will ('in voluntate') and proposition ('in propositio'). While this discussion of observation occurs in the context of Peter's remarks on the sixth commandment in the *Sententiae*, its placement here at the start of the discussion of the commandments in the *HS* generalises its application. It is not enough to avoid guilt, but one must also obey all the commandments through love.⁸⁰ Extensive quotations from the *Sententiae* are also found in the lower margin of fos 48v–49r, comparing the precepts of the Old and New Testament and the differences between the old and new law; these further illustrate the compiler's intention to frame the *HS*'s discussion of the commandments in the light of Peter's interpretation.⁸¹

lines 21–2, 44–52, 32–4, 23–6; fo. 17v = iv.20, *PL* ccxi.1218A; fo. 18r = ii.17, lines 121–6, 132–3, 126–9, 280–91; fo. 41v = iv.4, *PL* ccxi.1152A–C; fo. 48v = iv.3, *PL* ccxi.1147A–48B, iv.5, *PL* ccxi.1153A; fo. 49r = iv.3, *PL* ccxi.1148B–C; fo. 49v = iv.3, *PL* ccxi.1144B–C; fo. 58v = ii.12, lines 274–82; fo. 85v = iii.1, *PL* ccxi.1041C–D; fo. 180r = *PL* ccxi.871C; fo. 187r = *PL* ccxi.1146D–1147A; fo. 193v = *PL* ccxi.1218B–C.

⁷⁷ Fo. 16v contains a schema entitled 'status hominis' presenting an enumerated passage (*Sententiae* ii.8) in the form of a tripartite list. Fo. 190v offers a schematic paraphrase of *Sententiae* iii.23 entitled 'debemus diligere'.

⁷⁸ *Sententiae Petri Pictaviensis* i, p. xx; 1.15, 1.22; 1.30.

⁷⁹ *PL* ccxi.1150C.

⁸⁰ See L. Smith, *The Ten Commandments: interpreting the Bible in the medieval world*, Leiden 2014, 133.

⁸¹ *PL* ccxi.1147A–1148B.

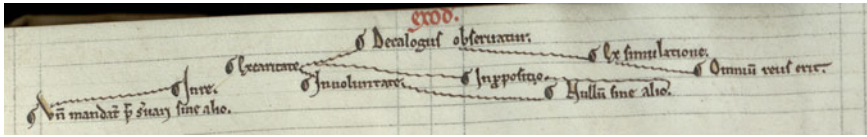


Figure 1. Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5, fo. 48r (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

The preference for the *Sententiae* of Peter of Poitiers over those of Peter Lombard is striking. A reference in the *Historia evangelica* (fo. 183r) to a difference of opinion between the Lombard, ‘Magister P’, and Paganus of Corbeil, ‘Magister Pagani’ (who prepared a commentary on the Lombard’s *Sentences* in the 1160s–70s), over whether the Gates of Heaven were opened at the Passion or the Ascension, reveals that the compiler had access to the Lombard’s *Sentences*.⁸² His preference for the *Sententiae* of Peter of Poitiers may stem from the association of this teacher with Peter Comestor; the *Compendium* and the *Historia actuum apostolorum* are evidence of their tight intellectual bond. However, the status of the *Sententiae* as part of this intellectual conversation has thus far been underestimated. Clearly the compiler, at least, viewed the *Sententiae* and the *HS* as part of a similar intellectual system and, in spite of the authority later accorded to the Lombard, was unambiguous in his preference for Peter of Poitiers’ text.

Schematic paraphrase and the quaestio: fo. 16v

An examination of a cluster of passages and schemata regarding the nature of free will, found alongside the discussion of the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden on fo. 16v (see Figures 2, 3), offers further illumination of the compiler’s methods. Peter of Poitiers serves again as a source, with passages from the *Sententiae* selected and reorganised in the upper margin.⁸³ As well as a textual extract, there is also a visualised summary of the states of free will, reorganising the enumerated content of *Sententiae* II.22. The source text outlines, first, the four states of free will and then man’s inherent potential for sin in each state; the schema pulls information together from both halves of the passage, condensing the content and describing status and potential in one.⁸⁴

Reading down the side of the page, a short quotation on the nature of free will in the outer margin of fo. 16v is ascribed to ‘Peter’, but correctly

⁸² On Paganus see Colish, ‘Pseudo-Peter of Poitiers’, 1. On fo. 44v the annotator refers to a ‘M. Petrus’, but uses the term reflexively to clarify the text of the *HS*.

⁸³ Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiae* II.19, lines 21–2, 44–52, 32–4, 23–6.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* II.22, lines 78–105.

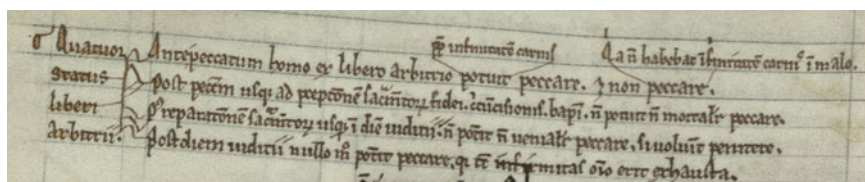


Figure 2. Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5, fo. 16v (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

attributed (in superscript) to Jerome. While this quotation from Jerome was used by both Peter of Poitiers and Peter Lombard in their discussions of the potential of angels to sin, the wording of the annotation finds its closest parallel in a set of *Quaestiones* found in BM, Troyes, MS 964 (Clairvaux), where it is embedded (as here) in the context of a discussion on the nature of free will and the unique sinless quality of Christ.⁸⁵ Ignatius Brady argued that these *Quaestiones*, regarded by Landgraf as among the most important collections from the second half of the twelfth century, were derived from the Parisian teaching of Peter Comestor.⁸⁶ The compiler's familiarity with this set of *Quaestiones* is supported by a further annotation on this folio regarding Adam's proclivity to sin, which quotes from yet another *quaestio* found in this collection.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ 'Liberum arbitrium estabilitas rationabilis uoluntatis qua homo dirigitur ad bonum et declinat ad malum. et in christo uere fuit liberum arbitrium liberius quam in aliquo aliorum hominum. non tamen potuit per illud flecti ad malum, quia ille homo christus erat deus. Unde petrus [ieronimus] "Solus deus est in quem peccatum cadere non potest": MS B.15.5, fo. 16v; BM, Troyes (now Médiathèque du Grand Troyes), MS 964, fo. 127r–v (accessed via <<https://bvmc.irht.cnrs.fr>>); A. Landgraf, 'Quelques Collections de "Quaestiones" de la seconde moitié du XIIe: premier classement', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* vi (1934), 368–93, q. 68 at p. 377. Landgraf dates the manuscript to the first quarter of the thirteenth century, while the texts it contains date to the second half of the twelfth; cf. Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* II.7.2; Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiae* II.4.

⁸⁶ I. Brady, 'Peter Manducator and the oral teachings of Peter Lombard', *Antonianum* xli (1966), 454–90; F. Siri, 'Les *Quaestiones* attribuées à Pietro Comestor', in Dahan, *Pierre le Mangeur*, 191–223.

⁸⁷ 'Adam [secundus] de singulis statibus aliquid habuit. de primo innocentias. de secundo mortalitatem et passibilitatem. de tercio non posse peccare. Status Ade non fuit sine uetustate culpe et pene christi status habuit uetustatem pene non culpe': MS B.15.5, fo. 16v; BM, Troyes, MS 964, fo. 134r–v; Landgraf, 'Quelques Collections', q. 74, at p. 377. See also Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, MS Pal. lat. 2499, fo. 43r, ed. Y. Iwakuma in 'The *Introductiones dialecticae secundum Wilgelmum et secundum G. Paganellum*', *Cahiers de l'Institut du moyen-âge grec et latin* lxxiii (1993), 45–114 at p. 85. Both *quaestiones* occur in multiple manuscripts, but BM, Troyes, MS 964 is the only one recorded by Landgraf as containing both.

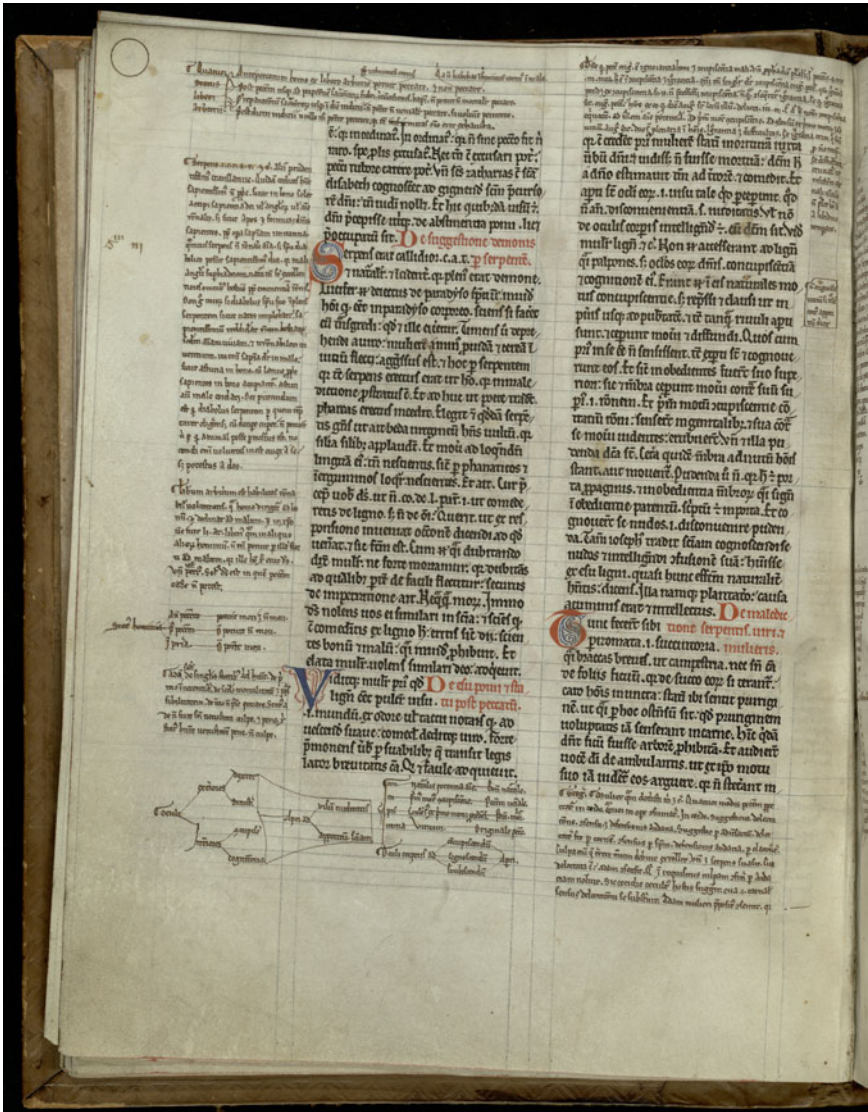


Figure 3. Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5, fo. 16v. Reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

In both of these instances, the compiler makes no attempt to incorporate the procedural structure of the *quaestio*. In the first case he quotes part of the given *solutio* without referring to the *quaestio* that provoked it; the emphasis is placed upon the definition of free will, not on the

argumentative context within which it is situated. Meanwhile, while the original thrust of the second *quaestio* was to examine whether the status of Adam was the same as that of Christ, the compiler presents the *solutio* as a statement of fact, neutralising its argumentative connotations; Adam was not without the guilt of original sin. These *quaestiones* are imported not as intellectual exercises, nor as structured leads for debate, but as just one element of an informative analytic apparatus. It would seem that the compiler is anticipating a receptive and passive, rather than disputational and active, interaction between the intended reader and the annotations in this case.

The lower margin of fo. 16v (see Figure 4), meanwhile, contains a further complex series of schemata regarding the disposition of the eyes to sin, and on the nature of concupiscence. These are prompted by the text of the *HS* itself. In the accompanying chapter, ‘De esu pomi et statu post peccatum’, Peter Comestor describes how the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened after they consumed the paradisiacal apple and became aware of their nudity. This awareness was not facilitated by the corporeal eye, but by their latent tendencies towards lust and knowledge – their inner eyes. The first of the schemata on the left reflects this content: the eyes are exterior (left, right) and interior (of concupiscence, of knowledge); they are open to the sight of nudity and to the appetite for knowledge (‘scientia’). Another schema describes how the ‘oculi corporis’ – the eyes of the body – are thus open to lusting, knowing and feeling shame. In the text Peter describes how the ‘first movement’ of concupiscence, felt in the genitals, arouses shame, an involuntary movement which cannot be controlled.⁸⁸

The last of these three schemata elaborates further on the text by investigating the relationship between concupiscence, ‘concupiscentia’, and different types of sin. The potential of the soul is directed towards the natural good. The involuntary ‘first movement’ of lust constitutes a venial sin, while the consent to lust is a mortal sin. Evil is equated with original sin. This schema also exploits a form of wordplay with the word ‘concupiscentia’ divided into four – con|cul|pis|centia – with the definition of each type of sin starting with the sound of the next syllabic chunk of the word; this divisional technique was conducive to memorisation.

The use of schematic annotations is not uncommon in manuscripts of the *HS* of this period; they are often used to present information such as brief genealogies, etymological musings and asides concerning natural history and geography. In most cases these schemata either parse the text itself, or are directly prompted by it; they serve as a sort of diagrammatic commentary to the text. The frequent recurrences of some of the schemata suggests that they quickly became part of the complex copying

⁸⁸ *Scolastica historia, Liber Genesis* 23, lines 20–1.

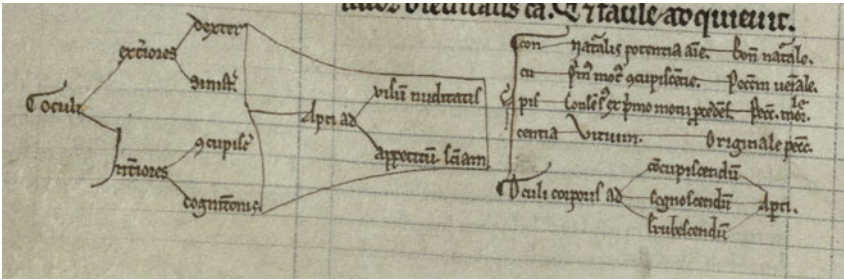


Figure 4. Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B.15.5, fo. 16v (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

tradition of the *HS*, an observation which merits further study in its own right.⁸⁹ Versions of the first two of the three schemata found in the lower margin of fo. 16v also appear in the margins of BL, MS Royal 4 D VII (fo. 14r), the copy of the *HS* made in 1214 at St Albans, and were added by a later hand to another early thirteenth-century copy of the text, now Cathedral Library, Salisbury, MS 84 (fo. 5v). Although they comment on the same passage of text, substantial variance remains between the other marginal annotations given in the three manuscripts. This suggests that these manuscripts do not share a common exemplar (or in the case of the Salisbury manuscript that neither MS B.15.5 nor the St Albans copy was the immediate source of its additions). Instead, the schemata form part of seemingly individuated sets of marginal annotations, in a state of flux around the main text. The complex status of these schemata and others is difficult to tease out in the absence of a full critical edition of the *HS*. However, their occurrence in MS B.15.5 in combination with the aforementioned *quaestiones* raises the possibility that they may also have been directly inspired by Comestor's teaching.

Who was the compiler?

Although the annotations surrounding the *HS*'s commentary on Genesis in MS B.15.5 represent only a small proportion of those found in the manuscript as a whole, they make it possible to establish the kinds of sources upon which the compiler was dependent. The fact that so many of the authors quoted can be associated with theological activity at the schools of late twelfth-century Paris, and more precisely with the school of St

⁸⁹ I am preparing a separate study focusing on the phenomenon of schematic annotations to the *HS*.

Victor, is striking. These authors, as Beryl Smalley and others have established, cannot be regarded as a coherent group but rather as a set of overlapping generations. However, they shared a common approach to literary and historical exegetical techniques, clearly of interest to our compiler. The inspiration to bring this particular set of texts into orbit around the *HS* may well have resulted from direct exposure to the environment which produced them. How can this further inform the debate regarding a potential identification between the compiler and Nigel? Can the note on the flyleaf of the manuscript, which attested to his involvement, be trusted?

Precise evidence of Nigel's education eludes us. Were Nigel to be identified securely with the compiler, this would open up the intriguing possibility that he may have been a student at St Victor, perhaps as late as the early 1170s (the period during which Langton first lectured on the *HS* and around the time when Peter of Poitiers completed his *Sententiae* collection). A revised chronology of Nigel's life could plausibly fit this picture, and the content of the glosses adds further weight to this identification. The bias in favour of so many Victorine texts seems to attest to a particular affinity with that school. In spite of the professional production of MS B.15.5 and the precision with which the texts described above are quoted and manipulated (which suggests that they are not a record of oral study but reflect careful use of manuscripts of the sources), the possibility that Nigel was drawing on his own schooling cannot be excluded. It is feasible, for example, that this manuscript of the *HS* could be a cleaned-up version of a set of annotations gathered by Nigel during a period of schooling in Paris and later elaborated at leisure. Even though several of the annotations are of particular relevance to Canterbury, and so suggest that that was the context of their composition, the possibility that the compilation of the apparatus took place in several stages from the early 1170s to its completion by 1194 cannot be excluded.

In the absence of secure evidence of this drafting process no firm identification can be made. However, the note on the flyleaf does offer a supposed motivation for Nigel's intervention. He 'embroidered' the text 'to survive him after death as the future of his name and the undying memorial of his worthiness'. Assuming the identification to stand (and acknowledging the trophic quality of this address), who would have been his audience? The most likely addressees, as the content of the annotations suggests, were those involved in biblical study at Canterbury. The variety of source texts used, the material omitted or included from these texts, and the manner in which these excerpts are set in conjunction are far from random. They suppose a model reader who would have been able to use the material to deepen his understanding of both the *HS* and of biblical exegesis more generally. While largely derivative, the annotations to MS B.15.5 typify a medieval style of reading which valued contextualisation and accumulation of information, as seen elsewhere in popular collections of biblical glosses

and thematic *florilegia*. Through excerpting and reshaping, even literally through the reorganisation of material into schemata, the compiler not only 'embroidered' the *HS* but created a potential nexus for further scholarly amplification. It is ironic, therefore, that the manuscript shows few traces of later use; this suggests that the relatively conservative range of sources from which the annotations drew failed to maintain their relevance in a changing theological curriculum increasingly dominated by systematic commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ On the persistence of such conservative approaches to scholastic theology in the thirteenth century and beyond see Colish, 'Pseudo-Peter of Poitiers'.