

Piers Plowman 3.51

The Age of Chaucer, A Guide to English Literature, Vol. I, edited by Boris Ford (Cassel: London) 1954

Langland's Piers Plowman by Derek Traversi, Representative, The British Council, Spain.

p.126 This allegorical structure, properly conceived, may even throw some light upon the long process of growth by which Piers Plowman appears to have assumed its final and complete form. The facts themselves are under dispute,^c and there is even some question as to whether the poem, in its longer versions, is the work of a single hand.

Footnote c, p. 137 The theory of divided authorship is most authoritatively stated by J. M. Manley in The Authorship of Piers Plowman (Early English Text Society, 1910). See also A. H. Bright, New Light on Piers Plowman (Oxford, 1928)

Communal Composition

Medieval Lyrics and the Ballads, by M. J. C. Hodgart, Lecturer in English, the University of Cambridge.

p. 157 The theory of communal composition can account for certain kinds of primitive folk-song, but not for any ballad as we know it. Ballads are comparatively late in date. Judas is a ballad-like religious poem of the thirteenth century and there is reason to believe that the Robin Hood cycle existed in the fourteenth century, but nothing else like a ballad is found until the fifteenth century; most are of the sixteenth century or later.