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Brotherton Collection MS 501: a Middle English Anthology Reconsidered

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Brotherton Collection MS 501, in Leeds University Library, is a fifteenth-century anthology of Middle English religious verse and prose, best known for the *Prick of Conscience* with which it begins. It received its first proper description in 1952,¹ and it has recently been described in detail by Ralph Hanna (1982) and N. R. Ker (1983).² Nevertheless the published descriptions are unsatisfactory in one way or another, and the manuscript's special character has not been brought out.

I

MS 501 is of paper, and now contains 122 leaves measuring approximately 222 x 200 mm after heavy trimming. The marked-out writing area is approximately 195 x 140 mm. The text can be attributed to a single scribe writing in the mid-fifteenth century, at least partly in 1456 which is the date appended to a marginal note on fol. 65r.³ The watermarks also support a mid-fifteenth-century date.⁴ The changes in the appearance of the hand that are particularly noticeable at fols 59r, 100r and 117r can be put down to compilation over a period of time. The scribe used a distinctive, practised anglicana for his main text, and textura or anglicana formata for chapter or section headings and for Latin quotations.⁵ Such headings are frequently in red ink, as are the often lengthy introductory rubrics that are a feature of the manuscript. Red ink is also used for decoration, as will be noted below. The writing of the manuscript has been localised on linguistic grounds to the south-west corner of Lincolnshire.⁶ There are occasional signatures and other notes in sixteenth-century hands, and frequent stains, though these have not obscured the text. The signatures most often belong to members of the Sheldrake family, possibly the family of this name recorded in Norfolk in later centuries.⁷ The half-

calf binding is modern. There is good evidence that the editor Alexander Dyce worked with the manuscript in the 1840s,⁸ but it first came to light, this century, in a Sotheby's sale catalogue of 1929 as the property of the late Sir F. S. Powell of Horton Old Hall, Bradford.⁹ It can subsequently be traced through a number of other catalogues, finally being acquired by the Brotherton Collection in 1950.¹⁰

The collation and original structure of MS 501 are difficult to determine because of the loss and disordering of leaves and the present tight binding. Some catchwords are visible, but no leaf signatures. Many leaves towards the end of the manuscript have at some time been mounted. Hanna has been the most successful in solving its collational problems, but a close examination of different kinds of marks within it, often caused by offsetting from one page to another, allows his account to be corrected and supplemented. In the following analysis the contents of the manuscript are set out in relation to the book's physical structure in what seems to have been their order when it was finished, i.e. at the time of its decoration.¹¹ The first item, the *Prick of Conscience*, begins imperfectly at line 1130; Hanna (p. 40) has calculated that the missing portion would exactly have filled sixteen pages, i.e. one quire. Assuming that this was the original first quire:

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|---|
| [18] | Lost | 1. [<i>Prick of Conscience</i> lines 1-1129] |
| 2-8 ⁸ | fols 1-56 | The <i>Prick of Conscience</i> (fols 1r-58v, <i>IMEV</i> 3428), beginning at line 1130.
(catchwords throughout) |
| 9 ⁸ | fols 57-64 | The <i>Prick of Conscience</i> , continued, ending part way down fol. 58v; rest of page blank. |
| | | 2. Thomas Wimbleton's sermon 'Redde rationem villicacionis tue' (fols 59r-67v, <i>IPMEP</i> 560), beginning top fol. 59r.
(fol. 64v has catchword to fol. 65r) |
| 10 ⁸ | fols 65-70
(wants 7-8) | Wimbleton's Sermon, continued, ending towards bottom of fol. 67v; rest of page blank. |
| | | 3. Richard Lavynham's <i>A Litil Tretys on the Sevene Dedly Synnys</i> (fols 68r-74r, <i>IPMEP</i> 789), |

beginning top fol. 68r. Text missing after fol. 70 owing to loss of leaves 7 and 8.

(no catchword in consequence)

11⁸ fols 71-77
(wants 1)

Lavynham's *Tretys*, continued, ending at the bottom of fol. 74r. Text missing before fol. 71 owing to loss of leaf 1, i.e. three consecutive leaves are lost at this point.¹²

4. 'A tretys of the ten comaundmentis' (fols 74v-81r, an expanded version of *IPMEP* 48), beginning top fol. 74v.

(fol. 77v has catchword to fol. 78r)

12⁸ fols 78-85

The Ten Commandments, continued, ending fol. 81r, followed by a gap of several lines.

5. 'A declaracion of the vij dedis of mercy' (fol. 81r-v), prose, beginning part way down fol. 81r and ending towards the bottom of fol. 81v; rest of page blank.

6. A form of confession (fols 82r-86r), prose, beginning top fol. 82r.

(fol. 85v has catchword to fol. 86r)

13⁸ fols. 86-91
(wants 6-7?)

The Form of Confession, continued, ending part way down fol. 86r; followed without a break by the next item.¹³

7. The 'second' Middle English version of William Flete's *De remediis contra temptaciones* (fols 86r-88v, *IPMEP* 230),¹⁴ beginning part way down fol. 86r and ending towards the bottom of fol. 88v; rest of page blank.

8. 'A lytyl matyr of the gloryous virgyne' (fols

89r-90r), a prose miracle of the Virgin, apparently unique,¹⁵ beginning top fol. 89r and ending bottom fol. 90r.

9. *Points best pleasing to God* (fol. 90v, Jolliffe I. 12(f), an altered version of *IPMEP* 410), beginning top fol. 90v and ending towards bottom; rest of page blank.
10. Chapter 15 of the *Prickynge of Love* (fol. 91r-v, *IPMEP* 46),¹⁶ beginning imperfectly at the top of fol. 91r and ending after three lines of fol. 91v; rest of page blank.
(no catchword to next leaf)

[Problems with the collation of the manuscript begin at this point. Contrary to Hanna and Ker, the present fols 92-99 did not originally follow fol. 91, and do not therefore form quire 14. Instead, a clear offsetting of red ink from the ornamental initial on fol. 107r back on to fol. 91v reveals that the former originally followed the latter.¹⁷ It has previously been recognised that the order of the present fols 100-107 needs to be exactly reversed, i.e. to be read in the sequence fols 107, 106, 105, 104, 103, 102, 101, 100.¹⁸ These eight leaves form a quire (quire 14), as fol. 100 ends with the remains of a catchword, and sewing is visible between fols 104 and 103. It follows that fol. 91 must therefore be the final leaf of quire 13 (even though it lacks a catchword), which thus lacks two leaves internally. It is natural to assume that this loss occurred between fols 90 and 91, as the extract from the *Prickynge of Love* begins imperfectly. This, however, in turn assumes that the extract must have been longer than Chapter 15 alone, the lost beginning of which would have required only a single leaf, or else that another short text preceded it; it may be noted that a second extract from the work (see fols 115v-116v below) is undoubtedly only of a single chapter. An alternative possibility is that only one leaf was lost between fols 90 and 91, another being lost from between fols 88 and 89, i.e. between the *De remediis* and the Miracle of the Virgin. But this theory also presupposes that another short text has wholly disappeared.]¹⁹

14⁸ fols 107-100 11. The *Invention of the Cross* from the verse

(i.e. bound in reverse order)

South English Legendary collection (fols 107r-v, 106r-v, 105r-v, 104r-v, 103r),²⁰ beginning top fol. 107r and ending midway down fol. 103r; followed without a break by the next item, the beginning of which is distinguished only by a slightly larger initial.

12. *The Exaltation of the Cross* from the *South English Legendary* (fols 103r-v, 102r-v, 101r-v), beginning midway down fol. 103r and ending towards the bottom of fol. 101v; rest of page blank.
13. *The Complaint of Our Lady*, a prose narrative of the Passion of Christ (fols 100r-v, 114r-v, 113r-v, 112r-v, 110r-v, 111r-v, 109r-v),²¹ beginning top fol. 100r.
(fol. 100v has catchword to fol. 114r)

[The leaves of the next quire have also been misbound, and need to be read in the order fols 114, 113, 112, 110, 111, 109, 108; a leaf has been lost between fols 109 and 108.]²²

16⁸ fols 114-108
(see above; wants 7)

The Complaint of Our Lady continued, ending midway down fol. 109v; followed without a break by the next item.

14. *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, a prose narrative continuing the previous item (fols 109v, 108r-v, 115r, cf. *IPMEP* 397), beginning midway down fol. 109v. Text missing owing to the loss of a leaf between fols 109 and 108.
(fol. 108 has remains of catchword, apparently matching top fol. 115r)

16⁸ fols 115-22

The Gospel of Nicodemus continued, ending at bottom of fol. 115r.

15. Chapter 11 of the *Prickyng of Love* (fols 115v-116v, *IPMEP* 46), beginning top fol. 115v and ending midway down fol. 116v; rest of page blank.
16. 'Miraculis of our ladi seint Marie', the *South English Legendary* item known as *Theophilus*, (fols. 117r-122v),²³ beginning top fol. 117r and ending midway down fol. 122v; rest of page blank.
(no catchword to next leaf)

[Despite the absence of a catchword, the offsetting of what are probably sixteenth-century scribblings from fol. 122v on to fol. 92r reveals that fols 92-99, shown above not to follow fol. 91, once followed fol. 122 instead.]²⁴

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------|---|
| 17 ⁸ | fols 92-99 | 17. The <i>Gast of Gy</i> (<i>IMEV</i> 2785), preceded by a prose preamble, beginning top fol. 92r and ending near bottom of fol. 99v. ²⁵
(no catchword) |
|-----------------|------------|---|

The collational formula to describe this reconstructed ordering of the manuscript would be:

[1⁸ lost] 2-9⁸ (fols 1-64) 10⁸ wants 7-8 (fols 65-70) 11⁸ wants 1 (fols 71-77) 12⁸ (fols 78-85) 13⁸ wants 6-7? (fols 86-91) 14⁸ (fols 107, 106, 105, 104, 103, 102, 101, 100) 15⁸ wants 7 (fols 114, 113, 112, 110, 111, 109, 108) 16⁸ (fols 115-122) 17⁸ (fols 92-99)

II

The scribe's procedure in compiling his manuscript can now be examined in more detail. Some general remarks about its physical appearance were made earlier. It is unified partly by being written in a single hand and partly by its decoration, consistent features of which are two-line ornamental initials with red marginal

penwork (stylistically uniform, and sometimes decorated with faces or similar features), and the use of red to pick out phrases, marginal notes, initial letters, etc. However, in terms of the colour of the text ink, the size and density of the script, and the general continuity of the writing, six sections may be distinguished, as follows:

- A fols 1r-58v (item 1). Verse. Dark grey ink, 30-38 lines to a page, each line containing a couplet of the poem, the break between the couplet lines marked by a double virgule.
- B fols 59r-91v (items 2-10). Prose. Brown ink, smaller script. 44-49 lines to a page, generally increasing in number as the section proceeds.
- C fols 107r-100v, 114r-108v, 115r (items 11-14). Grey ink, of similar colour to that in A. Verse (items 11-12), 38-40 lines to a page, the mid-point of the lines marked by a double virgule. Prose (items 13-14), at first 39-40 lines to a page, increasing to 43-46 lines with a corresponding increase in the number of words to a line.
- D fols 115v-116v (item 15). Prose. Brown ink and smaller script, as in B. 48-50 lines to a page.
- E fols 117r-122v (item 16). Verse. Pale grey-brown ink. 41-45 lines to a page. Somewhat more casually written, and (exceptionally) with two-line initials in plain red, without ornamentation.
- F fols 92r-99v (item 17). Verse. Brown ink and smaller script, as in B and D. 48 lines to a page except for 52 on fol. 99r, each line containing a couplet of the poem, the break marked by a double virgule.

It is noteworthy that after the opening (acephalous) section, only C and F begin at the start of gatherings, i.e. the transitions from A to B, C to D, and D to E occur in mid-gathering. In terms of appearance, A and C clearly resemble each other, as do B, D and F. It may be assumed that these two groups represent, in a broad sense, two different stints of writing or compiling, section E representing a third.²⁶

On the assumption that the scribe began with the grey ink, he may first have

written section A, the *Prick of Conscience*, leaving blank for other didactic material the remainder of quire 9 on which it ends. Section C may then have followed, started on a fresh gathering because of the different (narrative) nature of the texts. The two verse and the two prose items (11-12 and 13-14) are in each case run together, but this is either not unusual or normal with these particular texts, and the scribe clearly regarded the *Invention and Exaltation of the Cross*, and the *Complaint of Our Lady* and *Gospel of Nicodemus*, as forming continuous sequences.²⁷ The second, prose sequence begins at the top of a fresh page (fol. 100r), a procedure that the scribe adopts for virtually all the texts in the manuscript that he treats as separate. This concern to enable a subsequent item to begin at the top of a new page may account for the very evident compression of his writing as the end of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* approaches. He fits it all on to fol. 115r, but only by writing the brief 'Explicit epistela Nichodemi' [*sic*] on the same line as that in which the text itself ends. It is unlikely that fol. 115v, the verso of the opening leaf of a gathering, would have been written first and the recto left blank to be filled later.

When the scribe changed to brown ink he very likely began with the sequence of mainly instructional prose items (section B, items 2-10) copied in after the *Prick of Conscience*; they occupy the remainder of quire 9 and then four subsequent gatherings. The majority of them (items 2, 3, 6, 8 and presumably 10) commence at the top of recto pages following blank space on verso pages at the end of preceding items (1, 2, 5, 7 and 9). Item 7, Flete's *De remediis*, is different in being linked to the end of the preceding Form of Confession by a long continuous rubric (see further below), while item 5, the Seven Deeds of Mercy (only just over a page in length) may begin part way down the recto on which the Ten Commandments ends so that the longer Form of Confession can begin 'regularly' at the top of the following recto;²⁸ there is no instance in the manuscript of the remainder of a recto page on which a text finishes being left blank. In all these cases there is no sense that the scribe is trying to fit his texts into a predetermined number of pages. None of the items in section B begins a gathering.

However, items 4 and 9, the Ten Commandments and the *Points best pleasing to God*, begin at the top of verso pages after texts that do appear to have been made to finish at the foot of the preceding rectos (like the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, mentioned above). On fol. 74r the four final words of item 3, Lavynham's *Liil Tretyz* ('& eternall place Amen') are written immediately below the end of the last full line of text, and the explicit ('Explicit tractatus prefatus etc') is placed in the lower margin, the words heavily abbreviated. The same thing happens

at the end of item 8, the Miracle of the Virgin, which fills exactly three closely-written pages. On fol. 90r the final 'Amen' is placed immediately below the end of the last full line of text, and there is no explicit of any kind. In both these cases the scribe was clearly taking steps to ensure that the following items began at the top of fresh pages.

This particular scribal trick is not, however, restricted to the ends of texts. It also happens at the bottom of fol. 89v, the second page of the Miracle of the Virgin, where the final word 'misericordie' (abbreviated) is written below the end of the preceding complete line of text, and elsewhere in the manuscript on fols 61r, 63v and 115v. These last three cases occur during Wimbledon's Sermon (item 2, section B) and the second of the extracts from the *Prickynge of Love* (item 15, section D), both of which finish in unhurried fashion on pages that are otherwise left blank. It would therefore seem that the scribe, rather than attempting compression in mid-text by occasionally writing odd words separately at the foot of pages, was deliberately following the page breaks of his exemplars. This matter of his exemplars will be considered more fully below.

The order of items in section B appears to have been planned with some care. Wimbledon's Sermon, on the reckoning that all men must make at the Day of Judgement, is followed by three treatises covering basic doctrines of the Church, namely the Seven Deadly Sins, the Ten Commandments, and the Seven Deeds of Mercy. Next comes a Form of Confession that goes over similar ground, and then follows the Remedies against Temptation. The emphasis then shifts to a more personal relationship between man and God. The Miracle of the Virgin teaches that God's love and mercy are always available even to the most hardened sinner; the *Points best pleasing to God* follows next; finally there is (the acephalous) chapter 15 of the *Prickynge of Love*, which is usually headed 'Hou a man shal ordeyne hym-self þat he myȝte parfiteli loue god'.²⁹

However, this last item clearly marks a break in the scribe's compiling programme. It finishes abruptly at the top of fol. 91v, without an explicit, and the whole of the rest of the page is blank, lacking a catchword despite the fact that fol. 91 (as has been shown) is the final leaf of a gathering. It appears from this that the scribe was uncertain about what should follow next. Evidence presented earlier shows that at the stage of the book's decoration fol. 107 (beginning section C) was placed after fol. 91, and that the present fols 92-99 have been misbound. They may nevertheless be what the scribe wrote next after his evident pause, as the separate gathering that they occupy (comprising section F) exhibits the same brown ink and small script as does section B. It is, however, more likely that he followed fol. 91v

by writing section D (fols 115v-116v). These few pages share the same characteristics of ink and script, and bear the manuscript's second extract from the *Prickyng of Love*, which by this theory the scribe would have copied directly after the first. There is indeed a case for arguing that the second extract might have been the first written (and thus, perhaps, that section D preceded all of section B): it represents an earlier chapter of the *Prickyng*, and has an introductory rubric that may suggest that the scribe (or his exemplar) is coming to the work for the first time:

O þou my frend y wyll teche þe a lityll lesson how þou shal loue
god and forstere thyself to kyndele thin herte into his loue quich
lessoun ys callyd Stimulus Amoris drawyn of Bonauenture
cardynal and doctour

If it is the case that the writing of fols 115v-116v (section D) at least preceded that of fols 92-99 (section F), the latter can plausibly be seen as a later addition to the book that the scribe was unsure where to place. It occupies its own gathering, which has no final catchword leading elsewhere, and its text, the *Gast of Gy*, represents a genre – versified doctrinal teaching within a miraculous narrative setting – rather different from the other material for which the scribe had used his brown ink. Section E (fols 117r-122v) is also likely to be a late addition. Its text, the verse miracles of the Virgin known collectively as *Theophilus*, begins at the top of a fresh page following Chapter 11 of the *Prickyng of Love*, and fills the remainder of gathering 16 (again with no catchword at the end). The pale grey-brown ink and the less careful writing suggest a third and final stage in the scribe's compilation of his manuscript.

III

The sections written in brown ink, B, D and F, are also linked by another factor, namely 'personal' rubrics of the kind just quoted from Chapter 11 of the *Prickyng of Love*, in which (it seems) a particular reader is being directly addressed in the second person singular. The Form of Confession (item 6) begins with the same distinctive 'O þou my . . .' formula, and similar forms of address occur elsewhere, as will be seen.

The majority of the introductory rubrics in section B are in fact impersonal.³⁰ Lavynham's *Litil Tretys* (item 3) has merely 'Here begynnyth a notabyll tretys of the sevyn dedly synnys and of her braunchis' (fol. 68r), the Ten Commandments

(item 4), 'Here begynnyth a tretys of the ten comaundmentis as folwith here' (fol. 74v), and the Deeds of Mercy (item 5), 'A declaracion of the vij dedis of mercy þat arn bodily here folwith' (fol. 81r). Two other of the rubrics are longer and more discursive. That to item 8, the Miracle of the Virgin, reads:

Here begynnyth a lytyl matyr of the gloryous virgyne oure lady seynt marye whiche for al senful ys mene to hyr sone ihesu that wurshepith here wyth ony preyer or orysoun as yt folwyth here (fol. 89r)

and that to item 2, Wimbledon's Sermon:

Here begynnyth a notabill matyr extracte in the maner of a sermoun auctorysyd aftyr dyuers auctorys whiche was compilat to excite lay pepill to forsak here senne and to loue god and drede qwiche pefat sermon was aftyr this compilacion puplyshid and prechid at poulis cros in london the 3eris of oure lord crist ihesus þat tyme beyng mccc iiij^{xx} and viij modo attende diligenter (fol. 59r)

This rubric ends with a (Latin) singular imperative to pay attention, but it cannot be called 'personal'. Both it and the rubric to item 8 are in fact similar in style to the lengthy descriptive introduction to item 13, the *Complaint of Our Lady* (section C):

Here begynnyth the passyon of oure lord cryst ihesus aftyr the declaracion of oure lady hys blyssyd modyr the wyche she told to þem þat delytyd to here yt to be rehersyd and of the grete lamentacion and heuynes the whyche she had in tyme of hyr sonys passyon (fol. 100r)

Item 9, the *Points best pleasing*, begins rather differently with definite singular address ('Here þou shal weten how þou shalt plese most god of all thingis attende', fol. 90v), but this still does not qualify as 'personal'.³¹

Of quite a different kind are the rubrics that introduce item 15, Chapter 11 of the *Prickyng of Love*, quoted above (section D), and items 6 and 17, the Form of Confession and the *Gast of Gy*. The Form of Confession (section B) is extensively rubricated in that passages of instruction addressed directly to a young man (written

in red) alternate with specimen forms of confession covering the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the five wits and the seven deeds of mercy. The opening rubric is strikingly personal:

O þou my brothyr þat art yong of age qwiche kanst not confesse
thiself onto thy gostly fadyr þerfor y shal wryghte to the how
þou shalt haue the in thy confession whan þou comyst to thy
gostly fadyr sey benedicite than shal he sey dominus and fyrst or
þou come to thy gostly fadyr þou most haue v thingis in thy
mynde . . .

continuing in this vein for altogether two-thirds of fol. 82r. Similar personal phrasing recurs several times, for example 'In this wyse o þou my brothir', fol. 83v, and 'Alwey my brothyr make alwey pleyn confessyon', fol. 85v. The final rubric begins 'O þou my chylde y haue now wretyn to the how þou shalt confesse thyself of thy sennys' (fol. 85v), and eventually, on fol. 86r, becomes the introduction to item 7, Flete's *De remediis*:

Now y shal wryghte to þe how þou shal be war of ydyl thoughtys
and of temptacions wyth othyr thingys as folwith here take hede

The same writer is evidently continuing to address the same novice, and the scribe does not treat the new piece as a separate item.

The *Gast of Gy* (section F) also begins with a lengthy rubric, covering the upper part of fol. 92r. This stands out from the others in containing, in succession, both of the styles of rubric that have been distinguished, i.e. the discursive and descriptive, and the directly personal. It begins with the former:

Here begynnyth a notabyll matere and a gret myracle don be
oure lord ihesus cryst and shewyd in the 3eer of his incarnation
m ccc xxiii and in the xvi day of decembyr in the cete of aleste
whiche myracle ys of a certeyn man that was callyd gy . . .

and then becomes personal:

Qwerfor my frend þis boke ys profytabil for the for to haue yt
translatyd fro latyn into ynglysh and so thorw þe grace of god y

shal declare it in englysch for þe more intellection for the þat
canst no latyn fyrst y wyl shewe the how it begynnyth in latyn
þat þou shal not doute þat y make yt of my simpl ingenye but as
y fynde þus wretyn

This passage is especially important because the writer is claiming that he himself has composed this English *Gast of Gy* specifically for the benefit of the friend he is addressing, a matter that will be taken up again below. There is no doubt that this friend is the same as that for whom the Form of Confession was written, as the rubric on fols 85v-86r that concludes this piece twice quotes from a (presumably Latin) version of the *Gast* that the writer evidently has at hand. For example:

Also y fynde in a certeyn book autentyk which is callyd spiritus
guydonis where he seith a confortabyll word whiche / ys
this . . .

It can safely be assumed that the 'frend' addressed at the beginning of Chapter 11 of the *Prickyng of Love* (item 15) is again the same. It may be noted further that direct address also occurs at the end of this item, and as part of the text, not in a rubric, for it has a conclusion not found in other manuscripts that begins:

Qwerfor o man at this lessoun take good heed & think how
mercyfull our gracious lord ys and full of loue therfor loue him
with al thin herte aȝen & wurship him nyght and day and loke
þat þou besye þe for to se hym onys a day or than þou begynne
ony werk . . . (fol. 116v)

This singular form of address does not occur in items in sections C and E of MS 501, which seems to support the distinction previously made between the 'physical' characteristics of sections B/D/F and those of sections C/E. We have seen, however, that the discursive type of introductory rubric (so far noted in items 2, 8, 13 and 17) is more widespread in the manuscript. Another example is the rubric to the linked *Invention and Exaltation of the Cross* (items 11-12), which, in addition, uses a clearly plural form of address:

Here beginnyth a proces & a declaracion of the holy cros how it
was fyrst sett of kernelys the wiche cam fro paradys & þan of

the myraclys of the cros as ye shal here aftyrward (fol. 107r)

So, too, does the rubric to *Theophilus* (item 16):

Here beginnith miraculis of our ladi seint marie wiche is helpere
& louere of all senneris þat to hyr do wurship & loue as ye may
se here folwing (fol. 117r)

A further example of this plural form of address in fact occurs within the long 'mixed' introduction to the *Gast of Gy* (item 17), immediately before the transition to the distinctive second person singular mode:

Than she toke conseyl & went to the freris of þe same cete &
tolde the pryor frere john goly of þis mater ye shal here
aftyrward how he dede (fol. 92r)

Because the 'discursive' rubrics occur throughout the manuscript, linking together the B/D/F and C/E groups of texts, it is likely that the first part of the introduction to the *Gast of Gy* was written later than the second, 'personal' part, as a preface to it; that these 'Here begynnyth' rubrics, in other words, represent the latest, 'unifying' stage in the manuscript's compilation, and that they can possibly be attributed to the scribe himself.

IV

From this position we can begin to see the process of compilation more clearly. If the discursive rubrics represent a layer of writing later than the personal ones, then those items in which a novice is addressed directly are not as 'immediate' as they seem, but were copied by the scribe from elsewhere.

This supposition is confirmed by textual evidence, particularly from the *Gast of Gy*. There seems no reason to doubt that the author of the personal part of its prose introduction is telling the truth when he claims to have translated the Latin into English verse. Between the introduction and the poem he gives the opening of the Latin version ('Augustinus in libro de fide ad petrum . . .') to show that the poem is not his own invention ('þat þou shal not doute þat y make yt of my simpil ingenye but as y fynde þus wretyn'). Later, two Latin marginal notes preserved by the scribe

on fols 97r and 97v show him using the same personal style as in the introduction (in this case 'O frater karissime . . .') to draw the attention of his young reader to particular points in the text. The second of these notes, on an 'unmentionable' sin, refers back explicitly to the Latin original: 'Hec testamente latina Guydonis eloquia'. (A third note, also on fol. 97r, reads simply 'Nota et caue o frater mei', and is presumably also attributable to the translator.) Neither the introductory preamble nor these marginal notes occur in Magdalene College Cambridge, Pepys 2125, the other manuscript to preserve a complete text of this version of the *Gast of Gy*, yet the text of the poem in MS 501 is clearly corrupt, probably more corrupt than that in Pepys 2125, as successive scholars and editors have recognised.³²

Secondly, the Miracle of the Virgin (item 8), which we have not previously considered as one of the 'personal' items, apparently has examples of the distinctive 'O þou my . . .' formula embedded within it. The text itself begins with plural address, but in this case it appears to be a feature of the exemplum or sermon-like style with which the tale naturally begins:

Wurshypfull frendys we rede among myraculys of oure lady of
a certeyn man the whiche was a grete sennere and an horrybyll
(fol. 89r)

A distinctive part of the Miracle is a long address to the sinner by the Virgin Mary, which (it has recently been shown) has largely been adapted from what must have been a pre-existing stanzaic poem.³³ In the extant prose version the Virgin repeatedly addresses the sinner as 'O þou my brothyr' or 'O þou man', for example:

O þou my brothyr haue in thy mende how thy flesh and thy
blood ys ordeynd to be in heuyn above all angelys clere (fol.
89v)

Whereas it is possible that these phrases formed part of the original poetic version,³⁴ the occurrence elsewhere of quite clearly extra-metrical examples of 'my brothyr' as a form of address leads to the suspicion that the 'O þou my' forms were also introduced into the text as part of the process of deversification; because of the similarity of style they may well be attributable to the author of the personal prose rubrics in the manuscript. Again it is notable that the text of the Miracle is corrupt, in this case to only a small degree but sufficient to show that MS 501 is preserving a copy of a pre-existing composition.

Thirdly, an examination of the text of item 9, the *Points best pleasing to God*, reveals that it, too, can be regarded as a member of the 'personal' group. As has been said, its short introductory rubric ('Here þou shal weten how þou shalt plesse most god of all thingis attende') is not by itself distinctive enough, lacking the 'O þou' formula, but one of its deviations from the more usual version of the *Points best pleasing* links it with the opening rubric of the Form of Confession (item 6), quoted earlier: after the standard point, 'Telle to me all thin herte', we find 'þat is to sey confesse thiself of thy sennys to thi gostly fadyr' (fol. 90v).³⁵ Once again, textual corruption shows that the scribe has copied the item from elsewhere.

If the Miracle of the Virgin is accepted as a 'personal' item, and given that the acephalous item 10, the first extract from the *Prickyng of Love*, is (on the basis of the second) also likely to belong, then the group in question can be seen to comprise items 6-10, 15, 17 (i.e. the second half of section B, followed by sections D and F) which, it was suggested earlier, were very possibly written sequentially. Taken together, these seven items are likely to represent one exemplar underlying the manuscript.³⁶

The textual nature of items elsewhere in MS 501 allows us to make some deductions about other exemplars. Thus the *South English Legendary* pieces, the linked *Invention* and *Exaltation of the Cross* (items 11-12) on the one hand, and *Theophilus* (item 16) on the other, have been shown to represent two different textual traditions: the Cross items are intelligently revised from the standard version of the *South English Legendary*, and form part of the so-called East Midland Recension,³⁷ whereas *Theophilus* is a corrupt and 'garbled' version of the standard text.³⁸ This distinction reinforces the physical differences between sections C and E of the manuscript, remarked on earlier; the notion that the scribe wrote them at different times is supported by the near-certainty that he was working from different exemplars. Instead, the *Invention* and *Exaltation of the Cross* are linked explicitly by a rubric to the items that immediately follow them in the manuscript, the *Complaint of Our Lady* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (items 13-14, the other members of section C): 'Explicit virtus sancte crucis vt supra. Iam incipit passio domini nostri' (f. 101v), possibly suggesting that the scribe found these four items in the same exemplar. It is additionally interesting that the text of the *Complaint* and *Nicodemus* has also, like that of the Cross poems, been shown to exhibit deliberate, confident revision.³⁹

It would seem that the non-personal items in section B (items 2-5) may also have derived from several different exemplars. Wimbleton's Sermon and Lavynham's *Litil Tretys* are well-known texts, surviving in nineteen and sixteen

manuscripts respectively, and so could have been readily available independently; they occur together in no other manuscript.⁴⁰ The expositions of the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deeds of Mercy are rather different. Although the latter is not outspoken in content, the only other two manuscripts in which it occurs (Cambridge University Library Nn.4.12 and Trinity College Dublin 245) are both Wycliffite collections. The Ten Commandments, in its turn, is not the Wycliffite treatise on this subject (*IPMEP* 49), but is nevertheless a strongly-worded expansion of the 'orthodox' version (*IPMEP* 48), apparently unique, that bitterly attacks both secular power and clerical abuse:

In this onskylfull coueytise stonidith moche pepyll as lordys that for coueytise of rentys and lordshepis sellen ther mens lyuys and sendyn many soulys to helle to make her place redy. For suche coueytise popis werryn prystis pletyn at Rome . . . Idiotys therfor takyn the ordyr of prysthod by fals suggestyon to go to scole and aftyr to leue in ydylnes & lewdnes all her lyftyme. Laborers vppon lond lepyn fro her werk to the crafte of pelours god woot not for loue of kyngis ryzt but for coueytise of ther good kyllyn her neybour . . . (fol. 80r)

There is the further point that expositions of basic elements of the faith like the Deeds of Mercy and the Commandments are more commonly found alongside other tracts of the same kind (on, for example, the Pater Noster and the Creed), forming part of manuals of instruction. Even though it was suggested above that the order of items in section B of MS 501 appears to have been planned with some care, the actual combination of texts is not easily paralleled elsewhere. This also applies to the contents of the manuscript as a whole, which (although entirely religious) are distinctly eclectic. Leaving aside the linked *Complaint* and *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and the *South English Legendary* items, the list of mutual occurrences in other manuscripts is a short one. Wimbledon's Sermon and the *Gast of Gy* also occur together in Pepys 2125; Lavynham's *Litil Tretys* and a complete text of the *Prickyng of Love* in Trinity College Cambridge B.14.19; the *Prick of Conscience*, a complete text of the *Prickyng*, and a similar version of the *Points best pleasing* in the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts, i.e. Bodleian Library Eng. poet. a.1 and British Library Addit. 22283 (without the *Points* also in University of Pennsylvania, English 8); the *Prick of Conscience* and Lavynham in Society of Antiquaries 687; and the same version of Flete's *De remediis* but a different chapter

from the *Prickyng* in Cambridge University Library Hh.1.11.

V

But while this may suggest a fragmentation of the scribe's exemplars, there is some reason to believe that the items comprising section B, both personal and non-personal, well-known and less well-known, had already been brought together by the time they reached the scribe – and thus that he took the complete contents of the three 'brown ink' sections B/D/F from a single exemplar.

Firstly, his practice of writing words below the ends of lines at the foot of pages, suggesting that he is taking care to copy the page breaks of an exemplar, is found in items dispersed through sections B and D (2, 8 and 15), as was noted earlier. The phenomenon does not occur in other sections of the manuscript.

Secondly, the Ten Commandments, after its short impersonal rubric, begins with what resembles a plural form of the 'O þou . . .' formula:

O ye crystyn men ye shal vndyrstande that all manyr of pepill
that shal be sauyd and go to blys . . . (fol. 74v)

The standard version of this item normally begins simply 'Alle maner of men . . .'; it looks as if 'O ye crystyn men . . .' is a deliberate change to the opening (turning a statement into an address), and that this may have been modelled on 'O þou my', suggesting that the reviser had to hand items that began in this way. (It may be noted that the text of the Ten Commandments displays certain textual corruptions, showing that it is not original to the scribe.)

Thirdly, there is a marginal note against the 'Laborers vppon lond . . .' section of the Ten Commandments' 'outspoken' passage quoted above:

Pensa homo bene in mente et caue quod reddes racionem de
omni tempore perduto in d[ie] iudicij idcirc[o] stude in virtu[te]
(fol. 80r)

This is similar in style and content (a warning of the Day of Judgement) to the note in the margin of fol. 65r (during Wimbledon's Sermon) that precedes the date 1456, mentioned at the beginning of this paper:

Nobis appropinquat nouissima dies iudicij idcirco pensate fratres
carissimi quod regnum dei prope est.

Given that the scribe, as we saw earlier, apparently carries over, during the *Gast of Gy*, marginal notes supplied by the translator of that item, it is possible that he also took these two notes from his exemplar, which in that case would have had the Ten Commandments and Wimbledon already linked. A striking feature of the note to the latter is, once more, the element of direct address, 'fratres carissimi', 'dearest brothers', which is reminiscent both of the singular 'O þou my brothir' (or more precisely the 'O frater carissime' in the margins of the *Gast of Gy*) and the plural beginning to the Ten Commandments; it may be that the former phrase is again being adapted for 'plural' purposes.

However, the note on fol. 80r ('Pensa homo bene . . .') reads like a comment on an existing text, and we must consider the possibility that both these notes originated with the scribe himself (especially as the date on fol. 65r is likely to be scribal). Leaving aside the *Gast of Gy*'s three notes addressed to the 'frater carissime', there is in fact enough similarity between marginal annotations in different sections of the manuscript for them to be regarded as a 'unifying' feature, attributable to the scribe, in the same way as the 'Here begynnyth' rubrics discussed earlier. A number of the texts lack marginal notes of any kind, and those in the *Prick of Conscience* and Wimbledon's Sermon are almost entirely restricted to citing authorities. But the sole explanatory comment in the margins of the *Complaint of Our Lady* (section C) once more draws attention to the Day of Judgement ('Dies iudicij significat', fol. 112v), creating a link with Wimbledon and the Commandments (section B), as quoted above; while a concern to stress the mercy of God is a common feature of notes in the *Prick of Conscience* (section A) and, once again, the *Gast of Gy* (section F).

The former text has, on fol. 37r, the comment 'attende de magna misericordia domini nostri' – 'attende' is found also, as we have seen, in the rubrics to Wimbledon's Sermon and the *Points best Pleasing*, and it additionally occurs in the margins of the Ten Commandments, on fol. 75v. The *Gast of Gy* is the most extensively annotated text in the manuscript, partly because the alternating names of 'Spiritus' and 'Prior' (the speakers in the dialogue of which the work largely consists) are consistently given in the margins. The notes headed 'O frater' seemingly addressed by the translator to his pupil (and preserved by the scribe), have already been mentioned. Among others are a plural 'O fratres pensate bene' (fol. 95r), which links with the 'pensate fratres carissimi' of fol. 65r and is likely to be the scribe adapting the personal style;⁴¹ and the following on fols 97v and 98r

which have mercy as their theme: 'Nota quanta sit confessio et quanta misericordia dei', and 'Nota quantum sit auxilium et quanta marie beate misericordie eis qui eam cordialiter adorant'. It is the first of these that most resembles the note to the *Prick of Conscience*; the second recalls part of the rubric used to introduce the Miracle of the Virgin (item 8): '. . . oure lady seynt marye which for al senful ys mene to hyr sone ihesu that wurshepith here wyth ony preyer or orysoun . . .' (fol. 89r).

The evidence of these links leads to the conclusion that the scribe added marginal comments as well as rubrics to many of the texts he copied from his various exemplars. If he was, as it seems, responsible for both the initial rubric and the marginal note to Wimbledon's Sermon, then he may be identifiable with the 'M. R.' that occurs at the end of the Sermon in the only copyist's signature in the manuscript: 'Explicit iam sermo notabilis secundum M. R.' (fol. 67v). In view of the use of 'frater' and 'fratres' as terms of address, it is likely that he was writing for or within a religious community.⁴² The occurrence of 'ye' in the discursive rubrics and of plural forms in the marginal notes suggests that he himself had a plural readership principally in mind, but he evidently considered both singular and plural address acceptable for those for whom he was writing. As has been said, MS 501 has been localised on linguistic grounds in the south-western corner of Lincolnshire, which makes it possible that it derives from one of the communities in Stamford.⁴³ It is a manuscript of considerable fascination, whose provenance and connections further research may enable us to trace with greater certainty.⁴⁴

NOTES

¹ K. W. Humphreys and J. Lightbown, 'Two Manuscripts of the *Pricke of Conscience* in the Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds', *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*, 7-8 (1952), 29-38.

² Ralph Hanna III, 'Leeds University Library, MS Brotherton 501: a redescription', *Manuscripta*, 26 (1982), 38-42, referred to here as 'Hanna'; N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, III: *Lampeter-Oxford* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 67-70, referred to here as 'Ker'. See also the short account of the manuscript in Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series, 6 (Leeds, 1974), pp. 121-22, and the brief description in R. E. Lewis and Angus McIntosh, *A Descriptive Guide to the Manuscripts of the Prick of Conscience*, Medium Aevum Monographs, n.s. 12 (Oxford, 1982), pp. 56-57.

³ On the subject of the approaching Day of Judgement. This date has not been noticed in previous accounts of the manuscript.

⁴ There are two watermarks in the manuscript, a column surmounted by a cross, close to no. 4358 (examples dated 1448-51) in C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes*, second edition (Leipzig, 1923), II; and a version of the very popular head of an ox surmounted by a cross, widespread in the mid-fifteenth century: cf. Briquet, IV, nos. 15039-15100, and Gerhard Piccard, *Die Ochsenkopfwasserzeichen* (Stuttgart, 1966), II, Abt. 7, nos. 221-722. I have not found the 'hand surmounted by a crown' described by Humphreys and Lightbown, 'Two Manuscripts', p. 34.

⁵ Folio 38r is reproduced in reduced facsimile in Humphreys and Lightbown, 'Two Manuscripts', and fol. 27r in the Maggs Bros catalogue, *The Art of Writing, 2800 B.C. to 1930 A.D. illustrated in a collection of original documents* (London, 1930), item 133. Folio 115v has recently been reproduced actual size, with a brief characterisation of the manuscript by the present writer, in *The Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds: its contents described, with illustrations of fifty books and manuscripts* (Leeds, 1986), pp. 6-7.

⁶ Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (Aberdeen, 1986), II, 385 (map), and III, 258-59 (analysis), MS 501 being their LP 69. Cf. Lewis and McIntosh, *A Descriptive Guide*, p. 57, and their map, p. 171.

⁷ See the entry for Timothy Sheldrake in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁸ See J. Lightbown, 'A Shorter Metrical Version of "The Gast of Gy"', *Modern Language Review*, 47 (1952), 323-29 [p. 324].

⁹ 19 December 1929, lot 786. I am grateful to Dr Christopher de Hamel of Sotheby's for confirming that this manuscript is Brotherton Collection 501. The suggestion was made in Rosell Hope Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexington, 1965), p. 382 (item 3428, the *Prick of Conscience*), and see also Lewis and McIntosh, *A Descriptive Guide*, p. 57. Hanna, p. 42, discounts the idea, wrongly believing that the Brotherton

manuscript was at Maggs in 1929 (see the next note).

¹⁰ It appeared in four Maggs Bros catalogues, namely catalogue 542 (1930), item 133 (see note 5 above); catalogue 555 (1931), item 204; catalogue 580 (1933), item 450; and catalogue 687 (1940), item 171. It was subsequently offered at Sotheby's as lot 309 on 14 March 1949, when it was purchased by the bookseller Francis Edwards, who sold it to the Brotherton Collection as item 411 in his catalogue 700 (1950).

¹¹ The prose contents of the manuscript are set out in detail, with full bibliographical references, in O. S. Pickering and Susan Powell, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist VI: a Handlist of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Prose in Yorkshire Libraries and Archives* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 7-12 (where the present article, then forthcoming, is referred to as 'Brotherton Collection MS 501: a Further Study'). References are given here to Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York, 1943), hereafter *IMEV*; R. E. Lewis, N. F. Blake and A. S. G. Edwards, *Index of Printed Middle English Prose* (New York and London, 1985), hereafter *IPMEP*; and to P. S. Jolliffe, *A Check-List of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance* (Toronto, 1974), hereafter 'Jolliffe'.

¹² The missing text is equivalent to p. 8/23 – p. 16/10 in the edition by J. P. W. M. Van Zutphen, *A Litiil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins by Richard Lavynham* (Rome, 1956). The calculation is made by Hanna, p. 40.

¹³ The last formal section of the Form of Confession ends on fol. 85v, and is followed by a lengthy rubric addressed to the reader to whom the whole treatise is directed, of the kind that occurs also on fols 82r, 83v, 85r and higher up fol. 85v. This rubric continues on the subject of confession until part way down fol. 86r, when the writer introduces the next item with 'Now y shal wryghte to þe how þou shal be ware of ydyl thoghtys & of temptacions . . .'. Ker, p. 68, Hanna, p. 39, and Jolliffe K. 8(b), however, all regard this item (no. 7 below) as beginning on fol. 86v. Humphreys and Lightbown treat the two as a single item.

¹⁴ Hanna, p. 39, mistakenly refers to this text as an 'excerpt' that 'parallels ch. 10 in the text of the third version'.

¹⁵ The text is published and discussed in O. S. Pickering, 'A Middle English Prose Miracle of the Virgin, with Hidden Verses', *Medium Ævum*, 57 (1988), 219-39.

¹⁶ Hanna, p. 39, following Jolliffe J. 5, describes this text merely as a tract on tribulation. The identification is made in Ker, p. 69, from information supplied by Dr A. I. Doyle.

¹⁷ Similar offsetting of red ink, within quires, is apparent on (for example) fol. 67v (from fol. 68r), fol. 81v (from fol. 82r), and fol. 101v (from fol. 100r).

¹⁸ Noted in Ker, p.69 (and in Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, p.122), but Hanna, p. 41, mistakenly gives a reading order of fols 107, 102-06, 101, 100.

¹⁹ Both Hanna and Ker also deduce that fol. 91 ends quire 13. Hanna assumes that the two missing leaves were 6 and 7; Ker collates the quire as of 'six (ff. 86-91)', leaving the question open.

²⁰ See Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, pp. 121-22, for some account of this and the subsequent text in this manuscript. The two were edited together from MS 501 by J. P. Toomey, 'An Edition of a Middle English Metrical Version of the Legends of the Holy Cross' (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Leeds, 1959).

²¹ This and the following item have recently been edited together by C. William Marx and Jeanne Ferrary Drennan, *The Middle English Prose Complaint of Our Lady and Gospel of Nicodemus*, Middle English Texts, 19 (Heidelberg, 1987), with variant readings from the present manuscript.

²² In this instance Hanna, p. 41, gives the correct order of leaves (so also Marx and Drennan, p. 12), while Ker, p. 69, mistakes it.

²³ See Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, pp. 121-22. The legend of Theophilus himself is, as usual, followed by other miracles of the Virgin, but in this case only by the first five of the standard six.

²⁴ Post-medieval notes, probably in the same hand as on fol. 122v, are frequently offprinted elsewhere in the book, for example on fols. 12v, 29v, 120v and 121v (from fols. 13r, 30r, 121r, and 122r).

²⁵ Edited from this manuscript by J. B. Shackleton, 'An Edition of the Gast of Gy as it is contained in the Brotherton Collection MS 501' (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Leeds, 1953).

²⁶ The distribution of the two watermarks in the manuscript (note 4 above) is not related to these divisions. The column occurs in quires 2-6, the head of an ox in quires 7-17, i.e. the change from one sort of paper to the other takes place during section A.

²⁷ The content of the *Exaltation of the Cross* is anticipated in the introductory rubric to the *Invention* ('Here begynnyth a proces & a declaracion of the holy cros how it was fyrst sett of kernelys the wiche cam fro paradys & þan of the myraclys of the cros as ye shal here aftyrward', fol. 107r), and the two items are written continuously with only a slightly larger initial and a marginal 'Exaltacio sancte crucis' to mark the beginning of the second. See Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, p. 165, for the *South English Legendary* manuscripts that bring the two texts together. The *Complaint of Our Lady* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* are separated only by the linking rubric 'Here endith the passion of crist and the compassion of his modir of the tellyng of the same modyr of cryst And now here begynnyth the epystyll of nichodemus þe whyche tellyth of the resurreccion and of the assensyoun of cryst etcetera' (fol. 109v). For the invariability of this sequence in the surviving manuscripts of these texts, see C. W. Marx, 'Beginnings and Endings: Narrative-Linking in Five Manuscripts from the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries and the Problem of Textual "Integrity"', *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England*, edited by Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 70-81.

²⁸ It may be noted that the introductory heading to the Seven Deeds of Mercy is given more than usual prominence by a formal use of textura script, as if to compensate for the fact that the

text begins in mid-page.

²⁹ Quoted from the edition by H. J. Kane, *The Prickyng of Love*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies, 92 (Salzburg, 1983), II, 93.

³⁰ As far as can be ascertained, none of the introductory rubrics in MS 501 occurs in other manuscripts of the same texts. This also applies to the explicits, and to the marginal notes discussed in V below.

³¹ It has been pointed out that in the early-thirteenth-century *Ancrene Wisse* and *Hali Meidhad*, second-person singular address is less likely than second-person plural to be 'personal'; see Bella Millett, ed., *Hali Meidhad*, EETS, os 284 (Oxford, 1982), pp. xxii-xxiii. However, the distinctive second-person singular rubrics now to be discussed are very different from what is found in these works, and the developments in personal devotion during the intervening two centuries make it additionally likely that a particular person is here being addressed.

³² See Shackleton, 'An Edition of the Gast of Gy', p. 20, and Ed Eleazer, 'The Gast of Gy: an Edition of the Quatrain Version [from Pepys 2125], with Critical Commentary' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Florida State University, 1984), p. 80.

³³ See Pickering, 'A Middle English Prose Miracle' (note 15 above).

³⁴ They have been admitted into the reconstruction of the poem printed in Pickering, 'A Middle English Prose Miracle'.

³⁵ Compare the text printed from the Vernon manuscript in *Yorkshire Writers*, edited by C. Horstman (London, 1895), I, 110-11.

³⁶ Of the items in the group whose text is not discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the Form of Confession (item 6) is seemingly unique; the two chapters of the *Prickyng of Love* (items 10 and 15) appear to stay close to the text in British Library MS Harley 2254 as printed by Kane (note 28 above), with the exception of the extended conclusion to Chapter 11 referred to earlier; while the text of Flete (item 7), which represents the unprinted 'second' Middle English version of his Latin original, is reported to be 'relatively close to the archetype, apart from a few additional identifications of Scriptural quotations, but it has many notable corrupt readings' (B. Hackett, E. Colledge and N. Chadwick, 'William Flete's *De Remediis contra Temptaciones* in its Latin and English Recensions: the Growth of a Text', *Mediaeval Studies*, 26 (1964), 210-30 [p. 227]).

³⁷ See Manfred Görlach, ed., *An East Midland Recension of the South English Legendary*, Middle English Texts, 4 (Heidelberg, 1976), and, for the skill of the revision, Toomey, 'An Edition of a Middle English Metrical Version', pp. 18-19 (quoted by Görlach, p. 31 note 21).

³⁸ Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, p. 122, and *An East Midland Recension*, p. 13.

³⁹ See Marx and Drennan, *The Middle English Complaint of Our Lady and Gospel of Nicodemus*, pp. 53-55. There is, however, no reason to think that the *Prick of Conscience*, section A of the manuscript (which, earlier in this paper, was associated with section C on the evidence of ink colour), formed part of this same exemplar. It may be noted here that Lewis and

McIntosh, *A Descriptive Guide*, p. 57, report MS 501's text of the *Prick of Conscience* to be 'slightly abbreviated (c. 8048/8495 ll.), with Book VII the only one that deviates greatly from Morris's text'.

⁴⁰ MS 501's text of Wimbledon's Sermon has remained unknown to the various editors of this work, and has consequently not been studied. It appears to stay close to the text in Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 357 as printed in *Wimbledon's Sermon 'Redde Rationem Villlicationis Tue'*, edited by Ione Kemp Knight (Pittsburgh, 1967). The text of Lavynham is reportedly closely related to that of two other East Anglian manuscripts, British Library Harley 1288 and Norwich Castle Museum 158.926.4g.5, the latter text, in particular, being 'practically identical' to that in MS 501 (Van Zutphen, *A Litol Tretyys*, p. liii).

⁴¹ 'Pensate', alone, occurs also in the margins of the Ten Commandments (on fols 78v, 79v and 80v), which might be thought to conflict with 'Pensa homo bene . . .' (fol. 80r), quoted above. The latter, however, is clearly intended to be universal in application; the same no doubt applies to the isolated 'Pensa' on fol. 76v, and the 'Attende et nota' on fol. 75v.

⁴² It may be that the description of Wimbledon's Sermon, in that text's introductory rubric, as 'compilat to excite lay pepill to forsak here senne . . .' (fol. 59r), indicates that the author of the rubric was not himself writing for the laity.

⁴³ See note 6 above. A connection with Stamford is also suggested in Görlach, *An East Midland Recension*, pp. 13 and 31.

⁴⁴ It may be noted that the religious anthology, MS Pepys 2125, which (as has been said) contains both Wimbledon's Sermon and the *Gast of Gy*, has also, between items, sporadic addresses to a 'friend' and 'brother', e.g. 'Dere frend' and 'Herkne lef brother' on fol. 39r. I am grateful to Dr A. I. Doyle for this information, and to Dr Veronica O'Mara for checking the manuscript for me. See also A. I. Doyle, 'A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in English in the 14th, 15th and early 16th Centuries with Special Consideration of the Part of the Clergy therein' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1953), II, 129, for the suggestion that Pepys 2125's 'owner or owners would seem to be male, religious or reclused'.