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MIDDLE ENGLISH METRICAL VERSIONS OF THE DECALOGUE WITH REFERENCE TO THE ENGLISH CORPUS CHRISTI CYCLES

By A.C. CAWLEY

The first two sections deal briefly with the didactic background to vernacular texts of the commandments and with the christianizing of the Old Testament decalogue in England during the later Middle Ages. The third section identifies the Old and New Testament versions of the commandments in the Prophets' plays and Doctors' plays respectively of the Corpus Christi cycles. The fourth section examines the different renderings of the commandments in the Doctors' plays of the Towneley and York cycles.

I

THE DIDACTIC BACKGROUND TO VERNACULAR TEXTS OF THE COMMANDMENTS

The stimulus to all later diocesan statutes, canons of provincial councils and manuals concerned with the instruction of clergy and laity in the rudiments of the Christian faith, seems to have been the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which sought to enforce annual confession and communion.¹ Since confession was regarded as an essential preparation for communion, the need was felt for a more searching procedure to be followed in the confessional. In consequence, a combination of such basic doctrines as the ten commandments, the seven cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins, which served to satisfy this need, came to be included in sermons and treatises written for the instruction of both clergy and laity. Thus Gaytryge's sermon (see below) on the fundamentals of Christian faith and practice is linked with the procedure of confession:

Here begynnes a Sermon þat Dan Iohan Gaytryge
made, þe whilke teches how scrifte es to be made, and
whare-of, and in scrifte how many thynges solde be
consederide.²

Not the earliest of its kind, but certainly one of the most influential outlines of religious instruction inspired by the decree of 1215 was canon 9 (*De informatione simplicium sacerdotum*) of the constitutions of the Council of Lambeth, summoned in 1281 by Archbishop John Pecham. This canon, known as *Ignorantia sacerdotum* from its two opening words, required priests to provide vernacular instruction to the people once a quarter in the elements of the

Christian faith:

quatuordecim fidei articulos, decem mandata decalogi, duo precepta evangelii, scilicet, gemine caritatis, septem etiam opera misericordie, septem peccata capitalia, cum sua progenie, septem virtutes principales, ac septem gratie sacramenta.³

A brief exposition of each of these matters then follows for the benefit of ignorant priests. Added to the exposition of *decem mandata decalogi* is a commentary on the two precepts of the Gospel: "dilectionem scilicet dei et proximi".⁴

Pecham's famous canon influenced the manuals and penitentials issued by later ecclesiastical legislators, notably Archbishop Thoresby's instruction to his clergy (1357) based, in its original Latin form, on the *Ignorantia sacerdotum*. Thoresby's aim, no less than Pecham's, was to provide "parish priests with the rudiments of religious instruction which they needed for themselves and for the teaching of their flock".⁵ This teaching was to be given "saltem diebus dominicis" in English ("in vulgari").⁶ In the same year, Thoresby's original Latin instruction was officially translated into English verse by John Gaytryge (alias Gaytrik, Garryk, Taystek, Graystok), a monk of St Mary's Abbey, York.⁷

Gaytryge's translation is concerned with the same fundamentals of Christian faith and practice as canon 9 of the Lambeth constitutions quoted above:

In the fourtene poyntes that falles to the trouthe,
In the ten comandementez that god has gyven us,
In the seuen Sacrementz that er in hali kirke,
In seuen dedis of merci until oure euen-cristen;
In the seuen vertues that ilk man sal use,
And in the seuen dedely sinnes that man sal refuse.
(53-8)⁸

Although the above summary makes no mention of the Gospel precepts,⁹ Gaytryge's detailed exposition of the ten commandments is followed, as in canon 9, by the two commandments of Christ:

The tane is we love god ouer al thinges,
The tothir that we love our euen-cristen als we do
oure selven. (260-61)¹⁰

Not all manuals of religious instruction were derived from the *Ignorantia sacerdotum*. Those from other sources include the thirteenth-century Latin *Speculum Ecclesie* of St Edmund¹¹ and the *Somme des Vices et des Vertus* compiled in 1279, two years before the Council of Lambeth, by the Dominican friar Lorens d'Orléans, together with its English translations, the *Ayenbite of Inwyte* (c. 1340) and

the fourteenth-century *Book of Vices and Virtues*.¹² Nevertheless, the influence of the *Ignorantia sacerdotum* on popular literature of a didactic kind was strong and long-lasting.¹³ For example, the *Speculum Christiani* (c. 1360-70),¹⁴ a widely-read work of religious instruction in the fifteenth century and one of the first books printed in England (c. 1480), is partly derived from the constitutions of Lambeth; and its second *tabula*, which treats of the ten commandments, has long quotations from the *Ignorantia sacerdotum*.

In noting the influence of the *Ignorantia sacerdotum* on later manuals of religious instruction in English, mention must be made of the Wycliffite adaptation of Gaytryge's sermon. The Wycliffite prose version of Gaytryge injects a number of characteristic Lollard doctrines directed against image-worship, negligent priests, and the mendicant orders; it also advocates religious instruction in English ("And here godys lawe tawȝt in þy modyr tonge. For þat is bettyr to be: þan to here many massys").¹⁵ The Wycliffite expansion of Gaytryge's sermon is further distinguished by the emphasis it gives to a Christian (New Testament) interpretation of the ten commandments; for example, it introduces the first commandment with verses on Christ's two precepts paraphrased from Mk. xii. 29-31:

Thou schalt haue a god and no mo.
Ouyr al thyngge loue hym al-so.
And þy neghebore bothe frend and fo.¹⁶

D.L. Douie mentions the "quiet but persuasive influence" exercised by the *Ignorantia sacerdotum*, "on popular religious literature for over two centuries",¹⁷ but she confines her attention to popular manuals and does not consider the drama which is the main concern of this article. For there are interesting links between the manuals influenced by Pecham's canon and the English Corpus Christi cycles. One such link occurs in the Towneley *Doctors* (Play 18). This is sharply distinguished from the parallel play in the York cycle (Play 20) by having a quatrain version of the last eight commandments based on an English metrical decalogue found in many manuscripts of the *Speculum Christiani* (see below, p. 139), a work known to have been influenced by Pecham's canon. Again, there is an early fifteenth-century reference to the English translation of Thoresby's instruction being sent "in smale pagynes" to the common people, which may suggest that an attempt was made to dramatize the ten commandments and the other fundamentals of Christian belief.

This reference to "smale pagynes" is found in what Margaret Deanesly has called Purvey's Determination,¹⁸ an English version made (c. 1405) by a Lollard of an orthodox tract *De versione Bibliorum*, in which the lawfulness of vernacular translations of the Bible is defended. To reinforce the argument, the following example is given from the writer's own day of biblical translation into English authorized by the Archbishop of York:

Also Sire Wiliam Thorisby, Erchebischof of 3ork,
did do to drawe a tretys in Englisce be a worschipful
clerk wos name was Gaytrik in þe wiche weren conteyned
þe articulis of þe feith, seuene dedli synnes, þe werkes
of mercy & þe ten comandementes, and sente hem in smale
pagynes to þe comyn puple to lerne þis & to knowe þis,
of wiche ben 3it manye a compyne in Englund.¹⁹

Another text of this passage, first printed by Hans Luft in 1530 and reprinted by T.F. Dibdin in *Typographical Antiquities* (1816), III, 257, is quoted from Dibdin by Simmons and Nolloth (p. xviii). It is substantially the same as the above passage, except that the name of the "worschipful clerk" has become "Garryk", and the last part of the concluding sentence reads: "and sente them in small payyantes to the common people to learne it and to knowe it, of whiche yet many a cotype be in England". Here the reading "cotype" is possibly a mistake for "compyne" in the sense of "collection".²⁰ But it is still doubtful whether the word "payyantes" refers to a dramatized presentation of Gaytryge's treatise on pageant-wagons, or is simply a variant spelling of "pagynes" meaning "pages, books".²¹

Whether or not Gaytryge's English translation of Thoresby's instruction was dramatized and performed on pageant-wagons, there can be no doubt that "dogma, as well as history, was illustrated by miracle-plays".²² Not only the ten commandments but most of the other "six things" expounded in Thoresby's instruction and in Gaytryge's translation find expression in the Corpus Christi plays. The Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed have ennobled the conception of God at the beginning of the Creation plays.²³ Similarly, in the *Ludus Coventriae* play of the Doctors, the discussion between Christ and the Doctors on the unity of the Trinity and on the manner of the Incarnation is influenced by both the structure and wording of the Athanasian Creed.²⁴ Further, in the Towneley plays the ten commandments are expounded twice (7/49-84, 18/117-76); the sacrament of baptism is described (19/85-8, 185-200), and of the "vj othere" (19/197) the sacrament of the eucharist is referred to in several plays (26/324-33, 27/328-31, 28/81, 127) as well as the sacrament of penance (10/326, 338f., 28/320f.);²⁵ the seven corporal works of mercy are enumerated by Christ in the *Judgment* (30/442f.); and of the seven deadly sins "som thyng speciall" is said in the same play (30/305f.).

There is some evidence, then, that the doctrinal content of the Corpus Christi plays was influenced by the official movement for the instruction of the laity in the elements of the faith, a knowledge of which was considered essential for making a good confession. All together, the "six things", including the commandments, provide a substantial part of the didactic content of the biblical cycles, and function as authorized glosses interpreting certain parts of the biblical text for the layman.

II

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT VERSIONS OF THE DECALOGUE

There are many variant versions of the commandments in Middle English which have nothing to do with orthodoxy or the lack of it, but which seem to come under the heading of human error. Two notable examples of this, both uninfluenced by Wycliffite doctrines, are the version from the Kildare collection (before 1325)²⁶ and John Audelay's fifteenth-century metrical rendering of the commandments.²⁷ In the Kildare decalogue it is Isaiah, not Moses, who is ordered by God to teach the people, because "Isay" happens to rhyme with "Synay"; again, the second commandment is omitted, Christ's second precept ("loue þi neigbore as þine owe bodi") is introduced as a new fourth commandment, and the normal order of the remaining commandments is changed completely. Audelay, apart from substituting Christ's two precepts for the first commandment, puts false witness and theft (eighth and seventh) before adultery (sixth), and omits the commandment against covetousness. The author of the decalogue in the Chester episode of the Doctors is scarcely more accurate (see below, p.).

Yet it cannot always be assumed that departures from the biblical norm signify lapse of memory, carelessness or ignorance on the part of the author. In particular, it has to be recognized that Audelay's substitution of Christ's precepts for the first commandment is a regular feature of a christianized, New Testament, type of decalogue which replaces one or both of the first two commandments of Exodus and Deuteronomy (according to the Catholic enumeration) with one or both of Christ's precepts of love towards God and one's neighbour. To the same tradition belongs the type of decalogue combining the first Old Testament commandment with one or both of Christ's precepts. The fourteenth-century poem *Kepe wel Cristes Comaundement*²⁸ links the first commandment to the first of Christ's precepts and interpolates Christ's second precept between the first and second commandments. The process of christianizing the decalogue is well illustrated by this same poem, in which God's law has become Christ's law, or by the Wycliffite prose version of the decalogue in which Christ says, "3if þou wolt come to blisse, kep my comaundementis"²⁹ (cf. Mt. xix. 17: Vulgate "serua mandata", Douay "keep the commandments"). Christ's emphasis on love - love of God and one's neighbour - belongs to the new law that Christ himself promulgated in the Sermon on the Mount; in the words of St Paul, "Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

This Christ-centred version of the decalogue existed side by side with a straightforward rendering of the commandments in Exod. xx. 3-17 and Deuteronomy v. 7-21. The injunctions of the Old Testament version were divided by St Augustine into two parts: to the first part belong the three commandments relating to God (on strange gods and image-worship, on taking God's name in vain, and on honouring the Sabbath); to the second belong the seven commandments relating to man.³⁰

The two main types of decalogue are both found in the English Corpus Christi plays, and are always kept distinct. The Old Testament version is regularly used for the laws given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai; the christianized version, on the other hand, is used only for the laws which are the subject of discussion between Christ and the Doctors in the Temple. Moses, as Representative of the Law, is a type of the Christ who will come to fulfil God's law enunciated in the Old Testament. Strictly speaking, the recital of God's commandments on Mount Sinai should have as its antitype the fulfilment of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount - "a new Law given on a new Sinai".³¹ In fact, it is the episode of Moses reading the tables of the Law and that of Christ discussing the commandments with the Doctors in the temple which function as type and antitype.³²

III

THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE PROPHETS' AND DOCTORS' PLAYS

Plays of the Prophets

The vernacular plays of the Prophets go back ultimately to a sermon of the fifth or sixth century, once attributed to St Augustine, entitled *Sermo contra Judaeos, Paganos et Arianos de Symbolo*. The twelfth-century Arles version of the *lectio*, taken from chapters xi-xviii of the *Sermo*, has thirteen prophets, of whom Moses is the fourth to speak (after Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel). However, in neither the *lectio* nor the *Ordo Prophetarum* (the liturgical play based on the *lectio*) is there any attempt to expound the commandments, and Moses does no more than display the two tables of the Law ("tenens tabulas legis apertas").³³ It is therefore possible that the exposition of the commandments in the vernacular Prophets' plays was derived from homiletic material not directly connected with the *lectio* or the *Ordo Prophetarum*.³⁴

In the Corpus Christi cycles the commandments are first expounded in the Prophets' plays or in plays associated with the prophets: Chester 5 (*de Mose et Rege Balaak et Balaam Propheta*), 5-24; Towneley 7 (*Processus Prophetarum*), 49-84; *Ludus Coventriae* 6 (Moses), 67-178. York has no formal Prophets' play, although seven prophecies are alluded to in the Annunciation play.

In the Chester play the commandments are spoken by Deus to Moses on Mount Sinai, but they are read in Towneley by Moses from the tables inscribed by God, and in *Ludus Coventriae* by Moses from the tables that God has delivered to him from the burning bush.³⁵ The Chester play (MS Harley 2124), even though it has no obvious connection with the sermon *de Symbolo*, is in essence a Prophets' play which, in addition to Moses and Balaam, presents seven other prophets. The incomplete Towneley *Processus Prophetarum* has only four prophecies - those of Moses, David, the Sibyl and Daniel. The *Ludus Coventriae* play of Moses may be regarded as an introduction to the following play 7 which has twenty-six prophets and kings,

beginning with Isaiah. Together the two *Ludus Coventriae* plays are similar in scope to the liturgical *Ordo Prophetarum* at Rouen with its twenty-eight prophets, the first of whom to be summoned is Moses.³⁶

The Chester *de Mose* gives a simple Old Testament rendering of the commandments in twenty verses (two and a half stanzas rhyming *aaabcccb*). MS Harley 2124 prohibits "mawmentrye" (idolatry) as part of the first commandment, where four other cyclic versions of the Chester plays have "false godes" (l. 6). The ninth and tenth commandments follow the order of Deut. v. 21 by putting the injunction against coveting our neighbour's wife before that against coveting his house and goods.

The Towneley *Processus Prophetarum* also keeps to the Old Testament form of the commandments, although it amplifies them somewhat: apart from three introductory stanzas and one concluding stanza there are thirty-six verses devoted to the decalogue (six stanzas rhyming *aabccb*). Towneley prohibits the making of any "god of stok ne stone" (51) in its version of the first commandment, and interprets the second commandment as an injunction against swearing falsely by God's name. It wrongly reverses the order of the fifth and sixth commandments, and, like Chester, it follows Deuteronomy in its arrangement of the ninth and tenth commandments. It fills out more lines of verse than are found in Chester by enlarging upon the Old Testament prohibitions; for example, the sixth commandment (Exod. xx. 13 "Non occides") becomes:

thou shal not be
Man sloer, for gold ne fee,
Ne for luf, ne for hate. (70-2)

The *Ludus Coventriae* play of Moses treats the decalogue at much greater length than Chester or Towneley, and is rich in glosses on the terse Old Testament wording. It gives 112 verses to the commandments (fourteen stanzas rhyming *ababbcbc*), each of the first four commandments occupying two stanzas, and the remaining six commandments one stanza each. The source of the decalogue is wrongly described as "deutronomini vj^{to}", instead of Deut. v. There are two stanzas introductory to the decalogue proper. In the second of these Moses says that the commandments are written "in þese tablys tweyn" (60), the first table being inscribed with the three commandments "that towch to god" (62), the second with "þe tother vij þat towch mankende" (64). The first commandment, which has the heading "Primum mandatum non habebis deos alienos" (Deut. v. 7), is actually rendered:

þou xalt haue neythyr nyght nore day
noon other god but þe kyng of blysse. (69-70)

There is no mention of graven images under the heading of the first commandment.³⁷ Although the order of the ninth and tenth commandments is that of Deuteronomy, some of the wording of the Vulgate quotations given as the headings of these two commandments is derived from Exodus rather than Deuteronomy.³⁸ After the exposition of the decalogue there are two concluding stanzas (179-94), in the first of which Moses distinguishes between the sixth commandment against lechery (the deed of adultery) and the ninth and tenth commandments against covetousness (both deed and thought).³⁹ Several of the glosses are conventional and can be paralleled in other versions of the decalogue: the sin of taking "wurdly rycches . . . ffor þi god" (77-8) regarded as one kind of transgression against the first commandment;⁴⁰ the inclusion of slander, i.e. murder of reputation, under the heading of murder (134-8);⁴¹ or again, under the fourth commandment, the injunction to honour not only one's earthly parents but one's spiritual father (the priest) and spiritual mother (Holy Church).⁴² However, the gloss on the ninth commandment is less likely to have a literary source:

desyre not þi neyborys wyff,
þow she be fayr and whyte as swan
And þi wyff brown. (165-7)⁴³

Plays of the Doctors

There is biblical warrant in Lk. ii. 46-7 for the meeting between Christ and the doctors in the temple, but St Luke does not say that Christ expounded the commandments to the doctors:

46 And it came to pass, that after three days
they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of
the doctors, hearing them and asking questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his
wisdom and his answers.

The idea of including the commandments may have come from the Latin version of the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas* xix. 2:

And after the third day they found him in the
temple sitting in the midst of the doctors and hearing
and asking them questions. And all men paid heed to
him and marvelled how that being a young child he put
to silence the elders and teachers of the people,
expounding the heads of the law and the parables of the
prophets.⁴⁴

It also seems likely that Christ's meeting with the doctors in the temple has fused with Christ's enunciation of his two great precepts to "a doctor of the law" (Mt. xxii. 35) and to "one of the scribes" (Mk. xii. 28). Certainly, the exposition of the commandments in the

English plays of the Doctors has been influenced by Christ's two precepts of charity, on which "dependeth the whole law and the prophets" (Mt. xxii. 40). Again, all the Doctors' plays have been influenced by a detail in Lk. x. 25-7, where "a certain lawyer" reads at Christ's request what is written in the law. In the English plays the Doctor or Magister reads the first commandment from a book at Christ's request, while it is Christ himself who recites the rest.

The popularity of the Doctors' episode is attested both in literature and the visual arts: the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral include three scenes in the temple, one of which shows Christ seated with the doctors who are dressed "in furies fyne".⁴⁵ The triumphal procession for Isabella at Brussels (1615) has a pageant car representing the same scene,⁴⁶ and there is a reference to the Doctors' play in the last stanza of the Digby Killing of the Children of Israel:

and the next yeer, as we be purposid in our mynde,
The disputacion of the doctours to shew in your presens.
(561-2)⁴⁷

There are five English plays on this subject, and four of them expound the commandments: York 20 (Christ with the Doctors in the Temple), 145-92; Towneley 18 (Play of the Doctors), 117-76; the Coventry Weavers' Pageant, 965-1000; Chester 11 (The Purification; Christ and the Doctors), 277-300. The *Ludus Coventriae* play on the same subject (Play 21) stands alone in not expounding the commandments. Instead, Christ enlightens the doctors concerning the unity of the Trinity and the nature of the Incarnation.

It is known that four of the five Doctors' plays are related: the York and Towneley plays are derived from an earlier York original, Coventry has verbal parallels with York and Towneley and may have been influenced by both, while Chester possibly shows some slight dependence on York.⁴⁸

W.W. Greg⁴⁹ observes that "the York text preserves the play in its most original form. This appears from the regularity of the metrical structure, that text being written almost throughout in twelve-line stanzas riming *ab ab ab ab cd cd*, the octave consisting of lines of four accents, the quatrain of lines of three". In York the passage dealing with the commandments takes up forty-eight lines (four stanzas). The first two commandments are not those of Exodus and Deuteronomy but are based on Christ's two great precepts. The ninth and tenth commandments follow the order of Exod. v. 17.

The Towneley Doctors' play is substantially the same as the corresponding one of York, except that (1) its incomplete opening of forty-eight lines (twelve quatrains) is different from the opening of the York play, and (2) it has its own version of the last eight commandments which is written in ten quatrains (141-80), the first of these (141-4) being parallel to the opening quatrain of a twelve-line stanza in York (169-72). The reasons for Towneley's

different version of the last eight commandments are discussed below in section IV. Towneley agrees with York in substituting Christ's two precepts for the first and second commandments of the Old Testament. The remaining commandments are dealt with on a more ample scale than in York, and the order of the ninth and tenth commandments is that of Deuteronomy.

The Coventry Doctors' play is the final episode (722-1192) of a longer play which begins with a number of prophecies (1-176) and continues with the Purification (177-721). In its exposition of the commandments Coventry has more verbal parallels with Towneley than with York; but it does not follow that Coventry is more likely to have been derived from Towneley than from York.⁵⁰ For it is difficult to dismiss as mere coincidence either the rhyme-words common to Coventry and Towneley in the third and fourth commandments or those common to Coventry and York in the seventh and eighth. If these rhyme-words in common are taken seriously as evidence of dependence, they may mean that someone at Coventry (possibly Robert Croo by whom the extant text was newly "translated" in 1534) had either access to two texts, or a memory of two texts, resembling York and Towneley. The Coventry version of the commandments is limited to thirty-six lines of verse made up of eight-, six- and four-line stanzas with various rhyme schemes. As in Towneley and York, the first two commandments of Exodus and Deuteronomy are replaced by Christ's two precepts:

II DOCTOR. I rede this in the furst byddyng,
 Wyche Moses dyd rede vs vntill,
 Furst honor⁵¹ God aboue all thyng
 With all thy hartt and all thy wyll,
 And asse thy-self love thy neybur
 And in noo wyse to do hym yll. (965-70)

Coventry then follows the order of Deuteronomy, except that it replaces the ninth commandment against coveting our neighbour's wife by one against swearing oaths ("othys grett" 993), which is usually put under the heading of the second Old Testament commandment.

The Chester episode of the Doctors is added to a Purification play, and there is evidence that it is a later addition.⁵² The Chester version of the commandments at l. 285 has the same rhyme-word as York 172 and Towneley 144, and at l. 289 the same rhyme-word as York 174. It may therefore be tentatively inferred that Chester shows some slight dependence on York, although only as far as the fourth commandment. The Chester decalogue occupies twenty-four lines of verse in eight-line stanzas and quatrains. The first commandment is the first of Christ's precepts - "to love our God above all thinge" (279) - replacing the first Old Testament commandment. This precept and the next two commandments (on not taking God's name in vain and on honouring the Sabbath) belong to "the first table" (288).⁵³ The fourth commandment (on honouring parents) correctly follows, but thereafter the order is eccentric: on stealing (7), on false witness (8), on murder (5), on adultery (6), on

coveting our neighbour's wife (9), and (once again) on stealing (7). We can say without exaggeration that the Chester treatment of the decalogue in the scene of the Doctors makes "a sad mess of it",⁵⁴ as if the author was writing from an exceedingly faulty memory.

To sum up: the version of the commandments given in the play of Christ and the Doctors in York, Towneley, Coventry and Chester is christianized by the substitution of Christ's two great precepts of charity for the first and second commandments of the Old Testament (in Chester only the first commandment is changed). This substitution serves to distinguish the New Testament version of the decalogue in the Doctors' plays from the Old Testament version in the Prophets' plays or in plays associated with the prophets in Chester, Towneley and the *Ludus Coventriae*. Hence, in those two cycles (Chester and Towneley) in which the commandments are given twice, the second version is significantly different from the first. The two different versions function as type and antitype: Christ, the antitype to Moses the Lawgiver of Israel, has come to fulfil the law.⁵⁵

IV

THE TOWNELEY AND YORK VERSIONS OF THE COMMANDMENTS

Source of Towneley version of last eight commandments

The first two commandments in the York and Towneley Doctors' plays are substantially the same; so too are the four opening lines of the remaining eight commandments (Y 169-72, T 141-4). The Towneley version diverges from York at l. 145 (i.e. after Y 172); the two versions become parallel again at Y 191 and T 179.

The Towneley quatrains from ll. 145-76 are nearly identical with a metrical version of the last eight commandments which is present in a majority of the manuscripts of the *Speculum Christiani*.⁵⁶ The text closest in its readings to the Towneley quatrains is found in manuscripts of the *Speculum* belonging to Holmstedt's Group B.⁵⁷

The essential difference between the Towneley and *Speculum* decalogues is the adoption by Towneley from York of the first two commandments (in the form of Christ's two precepts). In the remaining commandments the verbal differences between Towneley and the *Speculum* text are largely due to the fact that the editor-scribe of the Towneley Doctors' play who borrowed ll. 145-76 from the *Speculum* decalogue had to find space within the line for the number of each commandment, and this made it necessary for him to change or omit several of the words in his source. For example, the following line in the *Speculum* decalogue

Be pou no þefe nor þefes fere⁵⁸

becomes in Towneley:

The vij bydys the be no thefe feyr.

Towneley's *thefe feyr* "thief's accomplice" makes less sense by itself than *þefe nor þefes fere*. There can be no doubt that the *Speculum* reading here is the right one; it is a traditional phrase already found in thirteenth-century metrical versions of the commandments.⁵⁹

Reasons for divergence between Towneley and York versions of commandments

W.W. Greg⁶⁰ has suggested that the Towneley Doctors' play was derived from a defective copy of the "original" in the hands of the Sporiers and Lorimers of York. He bases this suggestion on the ground that Towneley gives a different version of the last eight commandments: "since there is no apparent reason for the change it looks like the filling in of an accidental lacuna".

The alleged lacuna to which Greg refers presumably began at about Y 173, where the two texts diverge, and finished at about Y 190,⁶¹ after which the texts are once again parallel. The lacuna theory receives some slight support from the version of the decalogue in Chester play 11, which seems to have been influenced by York, but not after the fourth commandment (Y 173-74).⁶² It is therefore just possible that Chester, like Towneley, was dependent on a defective York text which had a lacuna after Y 174. However, the Chester version makes such a hash of the decalogue that it would be dangerous to take it too seriously as evidence of dependence on a defective York play.

There is an alternative explanation of Towneley's different version of all but the first two commandments. We know that the editor-scribe of the Towneley Doctors' play was well disposed towards the quatrain form; he may therefore have been attracted by the *Speculum Christiani* version because it was written in quatrains. He may also have preferred the *Speculum* version of the last eight commandments because it is fuller than in York. York gives four lines each to the sixth and seventh commandments (adultery and stealing) but only two lines each to the rest;⁶³ Towneley gives five lines each to the third and fourth commandments (observing the Sabbath and honouring parents) and four lines each to the rest. The result of the Towneley redactor's conflation of the York rendering of the first two commandments and the *Speculum* rendering of the last eight can be seen as a new version which he may have judged to be better than either of his two sources. This new version christianizes the first two commandments of the *Speculum* decalogue and is therefore better suited to the New Testament part of a Corpus Christi cycle. At the same time, its exposition of the last eight commandments is more detailed and rather more interesting than the stanzas it replaces in York.

NOTES

[Biblical quotations in English are from the Douay Bible. Quotations from the English cyclic plays are taken from the following editions: L. Toulmin Smith, *York Plays* (Oxford, 1885); R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills, *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, EETS, SS 3 (1974); G. England and A.W. Pollard, *The Towneley Plays*, EETS, ES 71 (1897, reprint 1952); K.S. Block, *Ludus Coventriae*, EETS, ES 120 (1922); Hardin Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, EETS, ES 87 (1902, 2nd ed. 1952).

The division and enumeration of the ten commandments (Exod. xx. 3-17 and Deut. v. 7-21) follow the Catholic version, which combines the prohibitions of strange gods (Vulg. "deos alienos") and image-worship as the first commandment, and separates the two precepts against covetousness as the ninth and tenth commandments. The Catholic decalogue may be summarized as follows: 1, strange gods and image-worship; 2, the name of God; 3, the Sabbath; 4, parents; 5, murder; 6, adultery; 7, stealing; 8 false witness; 9, coveting our neighbour's wife; 10, coveting our neighbour's goods.]

- 1 For the influence of the Fourth Lateran Council, and especially of canon 21 (*Omnis utriusque sexus fidelis*), on didactic literature in England, see E.J. Arnould, *Le Manuel des Péchés* (Paris, 1940), pp. 39ff. The text of this canon is given in E. Friedberg, *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, II, *Decretalium Collectiones* (Leipzig, 1881), col. 887.
- 2 *Religious Pieces in Prose and Verse*, ed. G.G. Perry, EETS, OS 26 (1867, enlarged reprint, 1913), p. 1.
- 3 F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, *Councils and Synods* (Oxford, 1964), II, ii, p. 901; D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae* (London, 1737), II, p. 54, col. 2.
- 4 For Christ's precepts see Mt. xxii. 36-40, Mk. xii. 29-31, Lk. x. 27.
- 5 Powicke and Cheney, p. 887.
- 6 *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. T.F. Simmons and H.E. Nolloth, EETS, OS 118 (1901), p.6.
- 7 The authorized English translation of Thoresby's instruction is edited by Perry, op.cit., pp. 1-14, as "Dan Jon Gaytryge's Sermon" from the Thornton MS (c. 1440), Lincoln Cath. Lib. 91; also by Simmons and Nolloth as *The Lay Folks' Catechism* from Thoresby's Register (1357). These are one and the same work, as pointed out by F. Tupper, *MLN*, 30 (1915). Perry's title is preferable. Gaytryge's work is called "a Sermon" in the incipit of the Thornton MS copy (above, p. 129) and "ista praedicacio" in a note at the end of another copy in MS Harley 1022 (Simmons and Nolloth, p. xvii). It is also called a treatise in the English tract defending vernacular translations of the Bible (above, p. 132). "Gaytryge" and "Taystek" as the translator's name are from the Thornton MS and Harley 1022 respectively; for "Gaytrik" and "Garryk" see the English translation of *De versione Bibliorum* (above, p. 132). "Graystok" appears in Thoresby's Register; see A.L. Kellogg and E.W. Talbert, "The Wyclifite Pater Noster and Ten Commandments . . .", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 42 (1959), 356, where Dr J.S. Purvis is given as the informant.
- 8 Simmons and Nolloth, p. 20.

- 9 The Latin original has "praecepta tam novi quam veteris testamenti" corresponding to "In the ten comandementez that god has gyven us". See Simmons and Nolloth, p. 20.
- 10 Simmons and Nolloth, p. 60.
- 11 Ed. Helen P. Forshaw (London, 1973).
- 12 Ed. W. Nelson Francis, EETS, OS 217 (1942).
- 13 For English manuals of religious instruction influenced by the Lambeth canons see J.L. Peckham, *Archbishop Peckham as a Religious Educator*, Yale Studies in Religion 7 (1934), pp. 106-13; D.L. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 140-41.
- 14 Ed. G. Holmstedt, EETS, OS 182 (1933). The MSS of the *Speculum*, of which Holmstedt lists more than sixty, are written in Latin with English verse and prose interspersed, except for one text wholly in English.
- 15 Simmons and Nolloth, p. 41. The Wycliffite adaptation of Gaytryge's sermon is edited mainly from Lambeth MS 408.
- 16 Ibid., p. 33. These are the first three verses of a metrical version of the commandments otherwise in couplets which is distributed through the Wycliffite prose expansion of Gaytryge's ten commandments, a couplet being used to introduce each of the remaining commandments. See C. Brown and R.H. Robbins, *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York, 1943), no. 3685.
- 17 Pecham, p. 142.
- 18 For the full text from Camb., Trinity College MS B.14.50 see Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible* (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 437-45; also C.F. Bühler, "A Lollard Tract: on Translating the Bible into English", *ME*, 7 (1938), 170-9. I am obliged to Dr Anne Hudson (Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford) for pointing out to me that the Latin original of this tract is orthodox, and that while the English version is certainly by a Lollard there is no reason to connect it with Purvey.
- 19 Bühler, 175.
- 20 See *MED*, s.v. *compaignie*, n., 7.
- 21 See *OED*, s.v. *pagine*, where the spelling *pagent* (1475) is recorded.
- 22 Simmons and Nolloth, p. xviii.
- 23 Four attributes of God - that he is "maker vnmade" (*increated Pater*), almighty, eternal, and one - are common to York play 1 and the Athanasian Creed. Cf. Towneley 1/1-12.
- 24 The division of the Athanasian Creed into two parts, expounding the Trinity and the Incarnation, is reflected in the *Ludus Coventriae* play of the Doctors. The verbal correspondences include: LC 21/84 "Ryght so thre personys be oo god of myght", *Ath. Creed* "Et tamen non tres omnipotentes sed unus omnipotens"; LC 21/89 "pe fadyr of myght", *Ath. Creed* "omnipotens Pater".

- ²⁵ For the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist see E.M. Clark, "Liturgical Influence in the Towneley Plays", *Orate Fratres*, 16 (1941), 78-9. For the sacrament of penance see E. Prosser, *Drama and Religion in the English Mystery Plays* (Stanford, 1961), pp. 94, 156.
- ²⁶ W. Heuser, *Kildare-Gedichte*, Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik 14 (Bonn, 1904), p. 113. Heuser notes the "freier behandlung des Stoffes".
- ²⁷ R.L. Greene, *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1935), no. 324.
- ²⁸ Carleton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* (Oxford, 1924), no. 102.
- ²⁹ T. Arnold, *Select English Works of John Wyclif* (Oxford, 1871), III, 82. One text of the orthodox decalogue from which this Wycliffite version is derived has "kepe þe Comaundemens of God"; see Kellogg and Talbert, 367.
- ³⁰ in Exod. qu. 71, Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, XXXIV, cols. 620-1. The same division appears in the *Ludus Coventriae* play of Moses; see above, p.
- ³¹ R.M. Grant, "The Decalogue in Early Christianity", *Harvard Theological Review*, 11 (1947), 3.
- ³² See V.A. Kolve, *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (London, 1966), p. 78.
- ³³ Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford, 1933), II, 156.
- ³⁴ See P.E. Dustoor, "The Origin of the Play of 'Moses and the Tables of the Law' ", *MLR*, 19 (1924), 459-62.
- ³⁵ See Rosemary Woolf, *The English Mystery Plays* (London, 1972), p. 154.
- ³⁶ Young, 154ff.
- ³⁷ The omission from orthodox medieval versions of the decalogue of the prohibition of image-worship as part of the first commandment may indicate an anti-Lollard attitude to images. For the orthodox defence of images as "lewde menys bokys" see Mirk's *Festial*, ed. T. Erbe, EETS, ES 96 (1905), p. 171, and for the Lollard objection see G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1961), p. 143.
- ³⁸ Thus "Nonum mandatum non desiderabis vxorem . . ." and "Decimum mandatum non concupisces domum . . ." (*LC*, Play 6, before ll. 163 and 171) combine the wording of Exod. xx. 17 and the order of Deut. v.21.
- ³⁹ Cf. St Augustine, in Exod. qu. 71, Migne, *P.L.* XXXIV, col. 621: "in illis duobus praeceptis, non moechandi et non furandi, ipsa opera notata sunt: in his vero extremis [i.e. the ninth and tenth commandments] ipsa concupiscentia".
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Simmons and Nolloth, p. 35: "Who brekys þe fyrste maundement? . . . wordly men. for þey make worldly godys here god". See also Arnold, *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, III, 82; J.F.R. Royster, "A Middle English Treatise on the Ten Commandments", *SP*, 6 (1910), 15; *Middle English Sermons*, ed. W.O. Ross, EETS, OS 209 (1940), p. 22.

- ⁴¹ This is one of the conventional patterns of doctrinal theology noted by D.W. Robertson, Jr. in "Certain Theological Conventions in Mannyng's Treatment of the Commandments", *MLN*, 61 (1946), 509.
- ⁴² Cf. Simmons and Nolloth, pp. 43, 45; Royster, "M.E. Treatise", 25.
- ⁴³ I see a touch of humorous realism in these verses. The decalogue does very occasionally receive humorous treatment, e.g. "the Decalogue Window at Ludlow (Salop) in which each light shows Moses displaying one of the Commandments, writ large across the Tables of Stone, to a group of people who are mostly occupied in breaking it. A thief is quietly cutting the purse-strings of a man who gazes devoutly upon the words 'thou shalt not steal'" (M.D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 65 and Plate 20a).
- ⁴⁴ M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924), p. 54.
- ⁴⁵ A detail common to York (20/32), Towneley (18/220), Coventry (1040) and Chester (11/316).
- ⁴⁶ James Laver, *Isabella's Triumph* (London, 1947), p. 12, Plate 7.
- ⁴⁷ *The Digby Plays*, ed. F.J. Furnivall, EETS, ES 70 (1896), p. 23.
- ⁴⁸ It should be understood that "York", "Towneley" etc. do not refer here to the texts of the extant plays but to the textual traditions represented by these plays.
- ⁴⁹ "Bibliographical and Textual Problems of the English Miracle Cycles III", *The Library*, 3rd series, 5 (1914), 298.
- ⁵⁰ As Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, p. xxxiv, believes. Craig's opinion is challenged by C. Brown, "The Towneley Play of the Doctors and the *Speculum Christiani*", *MLN*, 31 (1916), 226.
- ⁵¹ York, Towneley and Coventry all have "honor" (in various spellings); Chester alone has "love".
- ⁵² Greg, "Bibliographical and Textual Problems", 300.
- ⁵³ The second table is not mentioned.
- ⁵⁴ Greg, "Bibliographical and Textual Problems", 316.
- ⁵⁵ Therefore (pace Rosemary Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 213), it is not really puzzling to find that Chester expounds the commandments in the Doctors' episode, even though "the Ten Commandments had already been set out once before".
- ⁵⁶ See Brown and Robbins, *Index*, nos. 1491, 3687. Greg, "Bibliographical and Textual Problems", 312, supposed that the Towneley version of the last eight commandments was an original composition. G.C. Taylor, *MP*, 5 (1907-8), 28, printed these eight alongside a quatrain version of the same commandments ed. T. Wright and J.O. Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae* (London, 1841), I, pp. 49-50, from Camb., Jesus College MS Q. G. 3, f. 4a. Carleton Brown, *MLN*, 31 (1916), 223, first pointed out that the Jesus text is from a MS of the *Speculum Christiani*. It is likely that the Towneley redactor found ll. 145-76 in a MS of the *Speculum Christiani*, but not

certain since the *Speculum* version of the decalogue also occurs separately (Brown and Robbins, *Index*, no. 1111).

- 57 Holmstedt, *Speculum Christiani*, p. cxlviii.
- 58 Ibid, p. 31.
- 59 "Be neipir þef ne þefis fere", in C. Brown, *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century* (Oxford, 1932), no. 70A; "þef ne þeues fere", in *An Old English Miscellany*, ed. R. Morris, EETS, OS 49 (1872), p. 200; "þef ne þefis fere", in *Archiv*, 104 (1900), 302-3. Cf. "thef, or thefys fere" T 20/702.
- 60 "Bibliographical and Textual Problems", 306.
- 61 There is evidence that the alleged lacuna did not reach as far as Y 190. Thus "wyfe ne his women" T 170, not found in the *Speculum Christiani* decalogue, seems to have been influenced by "wiffe nor his women" Y 189.
- 62 See above, p. 138.
- 63 An even briefer treatment, one line only to each commandment, is characteristic of the earlier versions of the decalogue, e.g. Brown, *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, nos. 23, 70A and B.