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NOTES ON THE SENTENCE OF CURSING IN MIDDLE ENGLISH; OR, A CASE FOR THE INDEX OF MIDDLE ENGLISH PROSE

By O.S. PICKERING

Contributors to the Index of Middle English Prose, now in course of preparation, are asked to identify the items they catalogue and, if possible, to indicate their relationship to versions existing in other MSS - a task which the Index itself, listing all known texts of a work, will eventually make much easier. In Lambeth Palace Library MS 172, which principally contains a Latin biblical concordance and "Distinctiones siue equiuocaciones verborum sacre scripture", there is at the end an item in a fifteenth-century hand beginning "þes poyntis suyng which y schal schewe to 3ou" (ff.172r-73v). It is listed but not identified by M.R. James,¹ and is in fact a version of the "Sentence of Cursing" or "General Sentence of Excommunication", which parish priests were instructed to recite in church to their parishioners three or four times a year. The subject figures largely in canon law, in episcopal and other constitutions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and in manuals for parish priests. There are a considerable number of extant Middle English texts of the Sentence (of which that in Lambeth 172 is typical in consisting of a list of offences liable to incur excommunication followed by a formal curse), but no attempt to list them all seems ever to have been made. The purpose of this paper is to classify the texts known to the present writer (over forty manuscripts are involved), and to say something about inter-relationships. Much remains to be done, not least on the subject of the Latin sources, which are here only glanced at. In particular, further work for the Index of Middle English Prose by other scholars will very likely bring more English texts to light.²

(1) (a) Bodleian Library, MS Douce 60
Bodleian Library, MS Douce 103

(b) British Library, MS Cotton Claudius A. II

One of the better-known versions of the Sentence is that associated with John Mirk's verse manual of c.1400, *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Two of the seven MSS of this work (Douce 60 and 103, in the same hand) incorporate a text of it after l.674, and two others show signs of knowledge of the same tradition. Partly for this reason, Gillis Kristensson, the poem's most recent editor,³ follows Peacock's EETS edition of 1868 in printing the Sentence in this integral position and from Douce 60, although his base text is otherwise Cotton Claudius A. II, which has a related but rather different version of the Sentence, separate from the *Instructions*. The Sentence seems oddly placed in the Douce MSS, between a discussion of

Baptism and Confirmation on the one hand and Penance and Confession on the other: when F.J. Furnivall reprinted Peacock's edition in 1902 he considered its "proper place" (p.xii) to be after the *Instructions*, and he printed it in this position, from MS Cotton. In this MS, however, the Sentence (ff.123v-126r) precedes the *Instructions* and follows Mirk's other English work, the *Festial*.

Dr Kristensson is partly swayed in his decision by the arguments of Adolf Pothmann, in a dissertation of 1914,⁴ that the text of the Douce MSS represents the original form of Mirk's Sentence. He is not, however, wholly convinced by Pothmann (whose rather obscure arguments he does not repeat), adding that "Despite Pothmann's competent exposition, the vexed question of which version is the original one is not conclusively settled" (p.13). His main reason for printing the Douce MSS' text as part of the poem is the presence of "the initial and concluding lines in verse", which are also found in the Cotton MS. While these do not absolutely "prove it to belong" (p.13) after 1.674, and even less that Mirk himself intended the prose Sentence to be part of his poem, it does seem that the Douce text was at least the version written 'for' the *Instructions*. It is shorter and much smoother than MS Cotton's, and lacks the latter's lengthy prologue and Latin rubrics citing authorities. In particular it does not have MS Cotton's section on false tithing, and Pothmann (p.22) points out that Mirk explicitly says in the *Instructions*: "I holde hyt but an ydul bynge/To speke myche of teythynge" (ll.356-7).

Before taking the argument further, another version of the Sentence must be considered.

- (2) Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 110
- Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 736
- British Library, MS Burney 356
- British Library, MS Harley 4172
- Trinity College, Oxford, MS F. 7

In all these manuscripts except Bodley 736 the Sentence forms part of a manual for parish priests in English prose that also deals with the Lord's Prayer, the articles of the faith, the commandments, the vices and virtues, the sacraments, etc.⁵ Dr Kristensson mentions none of the manuscripts, but Pothmann knew of two, Burney 356 and Harley 4172, and they are central to his arguments about the manuscripts of Mirk's *Instructions*. MS Burney in fact contains two consecutive forms of the Sentence, of which the first (ff.50v-53r), printed in full by Pothmann,⁶ is the one in question here: the second (ff.53r-54v) will be discussed below in section 10. The whole manuscript, which calls itself the "Flos florum", is analysed by W.A. Pantin,⁷ who dates it to "the beginning of the fifteenth century". The relevant part of the Harley MS, ff.1-63, is dated 1426.⁸ Its Sentence, ff.10v-15v, is virtually identical to the first one in MS Burney. The other three manuscripts also date from the fifteenth century, the text in Bodley 110 (ff.162v-166v) being especially close to Burney. Trinity College F.7 (ff.172r-176v) lacks the prologue and appears to be something of a paraphrase, while Bodley 736, where the Sentence is added at the end of

Bartholomew of Pisa's *Summa de casibus consciencie* (ff.191v-193r), also lacks the prologue.

Much of the version of the Sentence preserved in these manuscripts (hereafter called B) is shared with that of MS Cotton (as Pothmann realised was the case with MSS Burney and Harley). The prologue is the same, and the wording and the Latin rubrics run parallel for approximately two-thirds of MS Cotton's text: but it then preserves only the first part of an admonition concerning the withholding of tithes because of enmity to the clergy (Pothmann, p.53, l.14), and changes the subject to heretics.⁹ It is at just this point that MS Cotton begins to agree largely with the Douce MSS' text, but the relationship is not straightforward. To attempt to explain it, it is simplest to assume what is now becoming apparent (as Pothmann realised), that MS Cotton's text is a conflation of B and Douce, and to analyse what its procedure seems to have been.

Cotton first borrows Douce's introductory verses, but changes "twies or thries in the yere" (Kristensson, p.104, l.2) to four times, in accordance with B's prologue, and adds an extra four verses listing these. It then adopts B's prologue and opening section, but after "Infringentes libertates ecclesie" (Furnivall, p.62, l.4) it inserts a short passage, not in B, which corresponds very closely to lines from near the beginning of Douce (Kristensson, p.104, ll.14-19) which there also follow the topic of infringing ecclesiastical freedoms. Cotton then returns to B until the point described above. It is significant that the subject of the interpolation from Douce just mentioned (Furnivall, p.62, ll.4-10) is also the withholding of tithes for reasons of enmity - virtually Douce's only reference to tithing - and it is likely that Cotton finally departs from B because the writer realised that he was about to repeat a subject he had already dealt with. Cotton now picks up Douce at a point only a few lines after its previous borrowing. It had covered the intervening topics of church-burning and robbery while copying B, but heretics is a new subject that B deals with only after Cotton's divergence (Pothmann, p.55, l.4). And Cotton then carries on in the same way for the remainder of its list of offences: it selects from Douce, taking over virtually the same wording, those items that were not treated when it was following B, and leaves out those that were. So, for example, it takes over unlawful coining of money (Kristensson, p.105, ll.30-31; Furnivall, p.65, ll.28-9), not mentioned by B, but not the counterfeiting of papal seals (Kristensson, p.105, ll.29-30; Pothmann, p.50, ll.13-16). Cotton has no more Latin rubrics after it diverges from B. Its text is now shorter than the corresponding part of Douce, and only once does it have an item not found there: "Also alle þat turneth fro crystendome to ethenness" (Furnivall, p.66, ll.18-19).¹⁰ After the list of offences it keeps very close to Douce during the lengthy formal curse and the concluding verses. Altogether there is no doubt that Pothmann is correct in believing Douce to have been a source of Cotton.

After Cotton's divergence, B continues in the same style as before for the rest of its length (Pothmann, pp.53-6), the cited authorities continuing to be the later books of canon law¹¹ and the constitutions of Archbishop John Stratford (1342).¹² The text ends,

however, without a final curse such as we find in most other versions of the Sentence.

B is also drawn upon by the 'mixed' versions of the Sentence in MSS Rawlinson B. 408, Bodley 123, and Harley 2383, for which see sections 14-16 below. It is also closely related to the Lambeth version to be discussed next.

(3) Lambeth Palace Library, MS 172

The Lambeth Sentence, referred to at the start of this paper, is found in no other MS, but it is clearly related to B. Its prologue appears to be a condensed and altered version of B's and apparent condensation of B is also a feature of its list of offences. There are over seventy of these, generally succinctly expressed, and it often seems that B's wording is being summarized. There are no Latin rubrics. The exception to Lambeth's terse entries is a long passage on tithing, shared with B (and Cotton), in which everything that should be tithed is enumerated in detail according to an ordinance of Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury (the only time that Lambeth names an authority).¹³ The wording and arrangement of this passage are not, however, the same as in B, and the listed offences in general are arranged very differently in the two versions. Lambeth differs at once by beginning with heresy, a subject which B mentions only in passing in connection with witchcraft and necromancy (Pothmann, p.55, l.4). Lambeth's next fourteen items follow the opening of B fairly closely, but thereafter there is considerable divergence. At times the two versions are remarkably close, but the relationship is intermittent and disordered, and there are items in each not represented in the other. Lambeth's final seven items, however, correspond well to the last section of B (Pothmann, pp.55-6), before a short formal curse brings the Sentence to an end.

- (4) Eton College Library, MS 98
 Lambeth Palace Library, Reg. H. Chichele, II
 Salisbury Cathedral Library, MS 148
 Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, MS 55
 Sotheby's sale, 4 April 1939, lot 295
 Sotheby's sale, 4-5 July 1955, lot 877

When ecclesiastical legislators of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries promulgated sentences of excommunication, they naturally did so in Latin. The constitutions of Archbishop Stratford and an ordinance of Archbishop Boniface have already been mentioned. Other influential provincial formulations include those of Archbishop Stephen Langton at the Council of Oxford of 1222, and of Archbishop John Peckham at the Council of Reading of 1279 and the Council of Lambeth of 1281.¹⁴ The 1222 and 1279 canons were included by William Lyndwood in his codification of English church law, the *Provinciale*,¹⁵ written c.1432-3 at the request of Archbishop Henry Chichele. E.F. Jacob notes that "In 1431 Chichele and his brethren had been told that in a number of places the incumbents 'did not dare nor were permitted to pronounce the general sentence of excommunication in their churches' ",¹⁶ and in response to this Chichele issued a form of Sentence in English at the Council of London of October 1434 - the

first English prelate to do so, although earlier legislators had instructed that the Sentence be expounded "in lingua materna" or "in anglico".¹⁷ Chichele's English Sentence is preserved in his official Register at Lambeth (vol.II, f.100v),¹⁸ and slightly divergent texts are found in Salisbury Cathedral MS 148 of c.1445 (ff.19v-20v)¹⁹ and and in the fifteenth-century MSS Eton College 98 (ff.331v-332r)²⁰ and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 55 (ff.52v-54r).²¹ Wordsworth (p.44) believed Chichele's Sentence to be based on that of the Council of Oxford of 1222, but it is closer to Archbishop Peckham's of 1279, which added to the 1222 canons certain resolutions of the Council of the papal legate Ottobuono in 1268.²² The greater part of Chichele's Sentence closely follows Peckham's sequence of subjects, in contrast to the eclectic nature of the Sentences discussed in sections 1-3 above.

(5) Sarum Manual (printed editions)

Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 750
 Bodleian Library, MS e. Mus. 212
 British Library, Addit. MS 33784
 British Library, MS Harley 335
 British Library, MS Harley 2399
 Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 142
 Society of Antiquaries Library, MS 687
 Trinity College, Oxford, MS E. 86

Salisbury Cathedral MS 148 is a Sarum Processional, and so this diocese seems soon to have adopted Chichele's English Sentence for its official use. However, the printed Sarum Manuals of the early sixteenth century contain a much longer English Sentence which is unrelated to it. This form, headed "Articuli generales maioris excommunicationis", occurs in the 1498 Paris edition and in most subsequent editions up to c.1530, after which it was banned by the reformers.²³ Its length, discursiveness, and comprehensiveness set it apart from most other Middle English versions. It is more than a list of offences, rather a sermon or treatise, frequently citing and expounding canon law. Despite the length of his text, the writer explicitly leaves out "many other" offences, and for the thirty-five points of Magna Carta and the fifteen points of the Charter of the Forest he refers his readers to the *Pars Oculi*, part of William of Pagula's *Oculus Sacerdotis*. This Latin manual was written in the 1320's by a penitentiary of the Salisbury diocese,²⁴ and the Sarum Manual as a whole seems to have been influenced by it.²⁵ It has a great deal to say about excommunication, not only in the *Pars Oculi*, which is on confession, but also in the *Dextera Pars*, which is concerned with pastoral teaching, and it may possibly have been an important source for the Sarum version of the Sentence.²⁶

Texts of the Sarum Sentence have been reprinted in modern times from the 1510 (Rouen), 1523 (Antwerp), and 1530 (Paris) editions of the Manual,²⁷ and there is very little verbal difference between them. The surviving fourteenth and fifteenth-century manuscripts of the Manual, often fragmentary, do not seem to contain the Sentence,²⁸ and it is possible that it was a relatively late accretion to the book. The text occurs independently in a considerable number of

non-liturgical manuscripts, and it may originally have had a separate existence.

Of the eight manuscripts listed above, five appear to have (or to have had) a text close to the printed version. BL Addit. 33784 is a *Gesta Romanorum* manuscript, in which the Sentence occurs at the end (ff.162r-70r) in a hand of the earlier fifteenth century. Its one divergence is to expand the item on false weights and measures by adding a reference to the auncel weight, which was apparently a special concern of Chichele's (Wordsworth p.46 and p.253, n.2). Bodleian e. Mus. 212 is a fifteenth-century pamphlet containing only the Sentence. Ashmole 750, also fifteenth-century, is a miscellany that has the Sentence on ff.15r-22v. Corpus Christi 142, of the mid-fifteenth century, principally contains Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesu Christ*: the Sentence occurs at the end, on ff.121r-126r. Harley 2399 is a miscellany of originally unrelated pieces now bound together. Its Sentence (ff.65r-68v) is in a hand of perhaps the end of the fourteenth century, but it is fragmentary. Comparison with the printed Manual shows that a single leaf must have been lost after each of ff.65, 67, and 68, and two leaves after f.66.²⁹

The other three manuscripts contain partial texts of the Sarum Sentence. Society of Antiquaries 687 is a fifteenth-century miscellany containing among other things the *Prick of Conscience* and *Piers Plowman*.³⁰ An abridged version of the Sentence is written informally, without rubrics, on pp.552-8. There are several small omissions and some larger ones,³¹ the second of which is replaced by a shorter passage (p.556). At the end there is a short addition on surrendering stolen goods. There is no final curse, but the text does not seem to be physically imperfect. Harley 335 is mainly a fifteenth-century collection of Latin constitutions in which the Sentence occurs as an independent item (ff.21r-24v) in a textura hand. It is carefully written, with rubrics, but the text is again abridged.³² Trinity College E.86 has first a non-Sarum Sentence (see section 10 below), and then on ff.48v-49v, standing alone after intervening matter, the Sarum Manual's final curse (Wordsworth p.254), to which is added a short passage comparing the effect of the curse to the extinguishing of the candle.

Six other manuscripts not listed above are also to be associated with the Sarum group. The Sentence in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 248 is principally a Sarum text, but as it also draws on another version not yet described it will be discussed later in section 13. The mixed texts in Dulwich College 22, Durham University Cosin V.IV.2, Rawlinson B.408, Bodley 123, and Harley 2383 also make use of the Sarum Sentence (see, respectively, sections 7, 12, 14, 15, and 16).

(6) Salisbury Cathedral Library, MS 103

Another work with probable Salisbury connections is the long hortatory treatise, *Jacob's Well*. It survives in a single MS, Salisbury Cathedral 103, and is dated c.1445.³³ The work is divided into ninety-five chapters which seem to have been intended for delivery as daily

sermons. The opening section deals with the need to cleanse man's body of sin, and the streams of sin entering the pit of the body are identified with the articles of the great curse, to which the homilist pays remarkably close attention. Chapters 3-5 are in fact an undisguised Sentence of the same kind as those described elsewhere in this paper, only broken up into three sections no doubt for fear of tiring the audience: "bis day, for lesse taryng", writes the author at the end of chapter 4, "I schal schewe you no more of þise artycles of cursyng, tyl anoper day" (Brandeis, p.30), and the hard matter is alleviated with short exempla such as occur throughout the work. The subject-matter of the tripartite Sentence is generally familiar. There is a formal curse at beginning and end, and a long and detailed list of offences, citing many authorities from canon law and English councils and constitutions. Even after three chapters the author has not finished. Chapters 6-8 go on to develop two particular articles of the curse, false tithing and marrying within the prohibited degrees, and Chapter 9 is a complete "Recapitulacio compendiosa articulorum sentencie excommunicacionis" (Brandeis, pp.55-63). This is now a formal, unified Sentence, uninterrupted by asides and references to authorities. The material of Chapters 3-5 is gone over again, in a more concentrated form and differently arranged, but with the same phrases often repeated.

An extract from *Jacob's Well* forms part of the next Sentence to be considered.

(7) Dulwich College MS 22

Dulwich 22 is a miscellaneous volume written at different times.³⁴ It contains only a fragment of a Sentence, interpolated on f.28r-v in a late fifteenth-century hand, but this is interestingly made up of continuous extracts from the two versions last discussed. It begins perfectly with the opening part of the Sarum Sentence's prologue (Wordsworth, p.245, ll.1-29), jumps then to a short passage further on in the same version (p.246, ll.43-4), and then switches without any break in the text to *Jacob's Well*. It picks it up at the beginning of its list of offences in Chapter 3, and is still following it closely when it breaks off. The corresponding passage in *Jacob's Well* is Brandeis p.14, l.22 - p.15, l.22, omitting p.14, ll.23-29.

(8) York Manual (printed editions)

Cambridge University Library MS Ee. iv.19
 Durham University Library, MS Cosin V. IV. 2
 Harvard University Library, MS Widener 1
 Society of Antiquaries Library, MS 285
 York Minster Library MS XVI. M. 4

Like the Sarum Manual, the York Manual contains a version of the Sentence of Cursing, in this case one which is related to other versions. The York Manual was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1509, and it is this edition which was reprinted by W.G. Henderson in 1875:³⁵ the Sentence, headed "De Anathemate", is on pp.119-22. Henderson refers to three manuscripts of the Manual as containing

the Sentence, namely Sir John Lawson's MS (now Widener 1) of the early fifteenth century (ff.101v-104v);³⁶ York Minster Library XVI. M. 4, also of the early fifteenth century (pp.166-72); and CUL Ee. iv. 19, dated fourteenth century by the CUL catalogue of manuscripts (ff.85v-89r). There are also texts in Cosin V. IV. 2, ff.128v-131r (for which see section 12 below), and Society of Antiquaries 285 of the fifteenth century (ff.5v-8v).³⁷ The printed edition and these five manuscripts appear to preserve practically the same text of the Sentence.³⁸ Unlike those of the Sarum version, all but one of these manuscripts (MS Cosin) are themselves Manuals, the Society of Antiquaries MS being very fragmentary. In comparison with some of the forms of Sentence described above, the York Manual's is a plain text, comprising a simple list of some fifty of the usual offences. No authorities are cited, and the formal curse at the end is given in Latin. The text is of particular interest for its relationship with other versions, for which see sections 9-11 below.

- (9) *Quattuor Sermones* (printed)
Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson A.381

Caxton printed "The Generalle Sentence" (and "The Bedes on the Sunday") at the end of his editions of the *Quattuor Sermones* (*QS*), the first of which, assigned to 1483-84, has recently been edited by N.F. Blake.³⁹ The Sentence was regarded as an integral part of the book, and appeared in editions of *QS* by other printers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁰ There is no known manuscript of *QS* either with or without the Sentence and the Bedes, but it is unlikely that Caxton was responsible for its printed form or for bringing the texts together. *QS* itself is a manual of religious instruction, apparently based on the *Lay Folks' Catechism* (1357) but conflated with material from other works of a similar type.⁴¹ The "Generalle Sentence", however, is found in an identical form (save for a few omissions) in the fifteenth-century MS Rawlinson A.381, ff.1v-2v,⁴² alongside "material similar to the main part of *QS*", as Blake notes (p.16): in fact a "Libellus de Doctrina Simplicium" (ff.3r-6v).⁴³ It is also interesting that this manuscript principally contains Mirk's *Festial*, for it was noted earlier that the Sentence in Cotton Claudius A. II follows a text of the *Festial*. In this connection Dr Susan Powell points out to me that Professor Blake's statement (p.13) that there is no manuscript evidence that *QS* and the *Festial* were associated "before the rise of printing" needs some qualification, especially if *QS* is understood as including the "Generalle Sentence". (Printers after Caxton, although not Caxton himself, sometimes issued *QS* and the *Festial* jointly.)

The Rawlinson/*QS* Sentence (R) begins with an explanatory prologue, proceeds to a typical list of excommunicable offences, and concludes with a formal curse in Latin. In this last particular it resembles the York Manual's Sentence, but the curses are not the same and the Manual version has no prologue. The lists of offences, however, are in large part parallel. R lacks the Manual's three paragraphs on wrong tithing and that on sacrilege from near the beginning of its list (Henderson, p.119), and, later, those on abandoning children and on arson (p.121). R in turn has occasional sentences not in the *Manual* (Blake, p.82, 11.8-10; p.83, 11.10-12;

p.84, ll.14-15, the first in place of the section on tithing); transfers its indictment of witches to later in the Sentence (Blake, p.84, ll.33-4; Henderson, p.120); and transposes two other paragraphs (p.83, ll.31-5; Henderson, p.121). In place of a reference to the province of York it has Canterbury (p.84, l.23; Henderson, p.121). Otherwise the texts are virtually identical until the end of the Manual's list of offences.⁴⁴ Then, instead of the latter's final English paragraph on when the Sentence should be published in church, R ends its own list of offences with, after all, wrong tithing. The sequence of ideas corresponds to that in the Manual's earlier treatment of this subject, but the wording is now not the same. R, for example, gives a detailed list of what should be tithed (Blake, p.85, ll.10-17) similar to that found in some other versions of the Sentence.

On textual grounds it is not a simple matter to say which of these two Sentences is the source of the other. Given, however, that the main part of Caxton's *QS* is based on the *Lay-Folks' Catechism*, which was written in York, the natural presumption is that his "Generalle Sentence" is in its turn derived from the York Manual. This would seem to be additional evidence for the constituent parts of *QS* having been associated in manuscript form before Caxton came to print them.

- (10) British Library, MS Arundel 130
 British Library, MS Burney 356
 Trinity College, Oxford, MS E. 86

The relationship of the York Manual Sentence and R is complicated by another version which textually appears to stand mid-way between them, and which incidentally reveals corruptions in R. The three manuscripts of the group do not, however, preserve identical texts.⁴⁵ Trinity College E. 86 is a priest's instructional miscellany of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its Sentence (ff.44r-47r) resembles R in not having the Manual's paragraphs on tithing, on abandoning children, and on arson, in referring to Canterbury instead of York, and in having an additional short item on heresy (which R corrupts unrecognisably);⁴⁶ but it begins like the Manual, and agrees with it in including sacrilege, in its positioning of the item on witches, in the order of the two paragraphs that R transposes, and in ending its list of offences at the same point. It concludes with a short curse in English not found in either of the other versions. Arundel 130 is principally a Sarum Breviary made in the mid-fifteenth century for Henry Percy, third Earl of Northumberland. The Sentence occurs on the last leaf of the book, f.118r, and is fragmentary, though in apparently the same hand as the preceding text. It begins midway through the Manual/R Sentence (at Blake, p.83, ll.2-3), and thereafter exhibits the same features as MS Trinity in respect of R and the Manual. However, it omits the longer reference to heresy (Blake, p.84, ll.34-37), as well as the item on money-clippers (p.83, ll.36-38), and it ends abruptly without a curse. Burney 356 ff.53r-54v is the second consecutive Sentence in this MS (see section 2 above). It has its own distinctive features in beginning with an introductory curse found nowhere else, and in inserting a paragraph on simony (f.54v). In addition

its final curse soon diverges from that in MS Trinity, and becomes longer and more dramatic. Otherwise it matches Trinity (it has the additional item on heresy), except that sometimes it is textually closer to the Manual: in particular it includes a version of the latter's item on abandoning children.

- (11) Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 229
National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 18.3.6

The texts of the Sentence in these manuscripts are not completely identical (each has some material not in the other), but they clearly preserve the same version within the York 'complex'. MS Advocates 18.3.6, seemingly of the end of the fourteenth century, principally contains the *Oculus Sacerdotis*. The Sentence occurs on ff.3v-4v after a table of contents for the *Oculus* and before tables for calculating liturgical dates. In Lincoln 229, an otherwise Latin miscellany of perhaps the end of the fourteenth century, the Sentence occurs on ff.124v-126v. Both texts have a short formal curse before the list of offences (in Lincoln this curse and the first offence are in Latin), and a longer one at the end.⁴⁷ The latter is in English, unlike in the York Manual, but the two versions otherwise agree fairly closely in content and arrangement. Some of the Manual's categories are, however, transposed or amalgamated in the Advocates and Lincoln manuscripts, and others are omitted, including the last half dozen. They in turn have several items not in the Manual, including secular officers that unjustly extort money from the common people, and (in MS Advocates only) eavesdroppers, a subject that also occurs in the Douce/Cotton Sentence. Wrong tithing, positioned in the same place as in the Manual, is interestingly worded quite differently, and here the Advocates and Lincoln manuscripts also diverge textually. These two manuscripts naturally often run parallel to the R Sentence as well as the Manual's, but there is no doubt that this is because these two versions have much of the latter in common.

The remaining versions of the Sentence known to me will be described more briefly. There are first (sections 12-16) some additional mixed texts that make use of one or more of the versions analysed above.

- (12) Durham University Library, MS Cosin V. IV. 2

MS Cosin, which was written by "Thomas Olyphant cappellanus" in 1477, first has the York Manual Sentence on ff.128v-131r (see section 8 above). This is followed on f.131v by a lengthy and outspoken curse of excommunication which does not seem to be taken from any of the texts discussed elsewhere in this paper, and then on ff.131v-132v, as a separate paragraph, by most of the Sarum version's prologue: it corresponds to Wordsworth, p.245, l.1-p.246, l.30, and is brought to an end with "Amen". There is finally on f.133r-v what appears to be the beginning of an otherwise unrecorded Sentence. It concentrates on the terribleness of being cursed, elaborating further the idea of the curse as a sword that is also prominent in the prologues of the B and Sarum Sentences. It ends inconclusively.

(13) Emmanuel College, Cambridge, MS 248

Emmanuel 248 is a fifteenth-century volume of ecclesiastical offices, in Latin, with the English Sentence on ff.41v-45v. It is basically a text of the Sarum Manual version, as was said above, but an abridged one. There are fairly consistent minor omissions, and some more considerable ones.⁴⁸ Rubrics are only occasionally retained. The text is of particular interest because of the insertion into the Sarum prologue of most of the first paragraph of that of R (ff.41v-42r; Blake, p.81, ll.9-24). There are a few other small additions, noticeably at the end, between the last of Sarum's offences and the final curse (f.45r-v). These additions include items on eavesdroppers and extortionate officials.

(14) Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B. 408

Rawlinson B. 408 is the Godstow Register manuscript, and the Sentence is the first of the "prefixed liturgical pieces".⁴⁹ Only the final portion is preserved (f.2r-v), two leaves having been cut out beforehand. What is left shows the text to be a somewhat altered version of the B Sentence (section 2 above), with other material added at the end. Page 1, l.1-p.2, l.14 of the printed edition corresponds fairly closely to Pothmann, p.54, l.36-p.56, l.11 (where B ends), but some items are rearranged and others expanded or omitted (Pothmann, p.55, ll.14-22, 32-40). B's rubrics are retained, and authorities continue to be cited in the same way during the additional items that follow. Of the "many oper poyntes" that are next referred to, the writer picks out blasphemy and dice-playing for individual mention (p.2, l.26-p.3, l.12). The Sentence then ends with the Sarum version's final curse in the same form as Trinity College, Oxford, E. 86 has it, i.e. with the extinguishing of the candle added (see above section 5).

(15) Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 123

Bodley 123 is a miscellany mainly written c.1477-89 by Thomas Urmston, chaplain of Lyme, in Cheshire. The Sentence, ff.2r-6v, is, however, in two hands. After a reference in Latin to Archbishop Peckham's constitutions of 1279, the first of these begins with a version of the opening part of the B Sentence. The prologue is closely parallel, but the categories of offence are rearranged, some are omitted, and new material is added. The second hand takes over on f.6r, beginning with two single items but then moving at once to a formal curse. This is first in Latin, then English, the latter version being that of the Sarum Manual.

(16) British Library, MS Harley 2383

Harley 2383 is a fifteenth-century clerical miscellany in various hands, containing English sermons and much pastoral material. It has three items in English concerning excommunication, of which the third (ff.54v-56r) is a treatise on the subject. The other two are Sentences that overlap in content and require detailed examination: they appear to draw arbitrarily on a number of the Sentences described earlier. The first text covers ff.43r-45r, and ends with

a version of the Sarum Manual curse. The second, more formally written, runs from f.46r to f.54r. It begins like the Sarum version, but most of its material seems to come from the B Sentence. The textual parallels are sometimes very close and the arrangement is broadly the same, but individual items are often differently positioned. Not only does the Sarum Sentence continue to be an intermittent source, but one passage on f.49r closely corresponds to the R Sentence (Blake, p.83, ll.16-23), and another on false tithing (f.46v) resembles a passage apparently found only in MS Lincoln Cathedral 229 (f.124v, see section 11 above). The matter is complicated by the repetitive nature of the Harley Sentence: f.48v is a copy of f.47v, and f.49v of f.48r.

(17) Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 66

A version of the Sentence of Cursing not found elsewhere occurs in a northern dialect on ff.24v-26v of this fifteenth-century miscellany, the contents of which are mainly Latin. It is a long and learned text of the type represented by the B Sentence, the Sarum Manual, and *Jacob's Well*, and it frequently resembles these in content and in the many authorities cited. Its Latin source or sources may not be very different from theirs, but its order of items is wholly its own. It ends imperfectly at the bottom of f.26v.

(18) British Library, MS Harley 665

Harley 665 is a mid-fifteenth-century theological miscellany, mainly in Latin. All it has of the Sentence is a curse (even though it refers to "these forseyd evelledoers"), on the last page of the manuscript, f.301v. It has affinities with some of the more dramatic curses found elsewhere.

(19) Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 296

This important Wycliffite manuscript, dated internally to 1383, is a special case, for its "Great sentence of curs expounded" (pp.239-88) is violently opposed to the Sentence, and uses items from it as starting points for a long and fluent attack on the ecclesiastical establishment.⁵⁰ Its twenty-nine chapters expound twenty-five offences from a list which does not seem to be identifiable with, or extracted from, any of the Sentences described elsewhere in this paper. It begins with heretics and gives unusual prominence to simony, but is otherwise unexceptional.

For the present purpose I have not examined in any detail the Middle Scots versions of the Sentence, but they may be noted here for the sake of completeness. There seem to be two: that preserved in the *Liber sancti Terrenani Ecclesie de Arbuthnot*, of c.1491-2;⁵¹ and that promulgated by Gavin Dunbar, Archbishop of Glasgow, in 1525, which is extant in the *St Andrews Formulare* and (a slightly shorter text) *British Library MS Cotton Caligula B. II.*⁵²

NOTES

- ¹ M.R. James and C. Jenkins, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace*, II (Cambridge, 1931), p.271.
- ² I have incurred numerous debts of gratitude in preparing this article: to Dr A.I. Doyle for providing me with many references to manuscripts; to Dr Ruth Morse, Dr Susan Powell, and, in particular, Mr R.F.S. Hamer for examining manuscripts for me and sending me transcripts; and to those librarians who, at short notice, answered enquiries and sent me copies of texts. In what follows I do not cite standard library catalogues of manuscripts.
- ³ John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, edited from MS Cotton Claudius A II and six other Manuscripts . . . by Gillis Kristensson, *Lund Studies in English*, 49 (Lund, 1974).
- ⁴ *Zur Textkritik von John Myrk's Pars Oculi* (Bonn, 1914). Cited as 'Pothmann'.
- ⁵ British Library Addit. MS 10053 ff.99r-114r and Cambridge University Library MS Dd. xii. 69 ff.24r-31v contain the same manual, but the Sentence is lacking in both: in the former the text breaks off before the Sentence is reached, and in the latter leaves have been torn out after f.31.
- ⁶ Pothmann, pp.49-56. The opening passage is also printed by G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926), p.359.
- ⁷ *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), pp.277-9.
- ⁸ See Andrew G. Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts, c.700-1600, in the Department of Manuscripts, the British Library* (London, 1979), I, p.142.
- ⁹ *Instructions for Parish Priests*, by John Myrc, edited from Cotton MS. Claudius A. II. by Edward Peacock, EETS OS 31 (1868, revised 1902 [by F.J. Furnivall]), p.65, l.23. I cite this edition as 'Furnivall'.
- ¹⁰ This may of course be due to corruption in the course of transmission. There is no question of MS Cotton having been copied directly from one of the Douce MSS.
- ¹¹ For excommunication in these books see especially Decret. Greg. IX, Lib. V, tit. 39; Sexti Decretal., Lib. V, tit. 11; Clementinae, Lib. V, tit. 10.
- ¹² Printed in *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae A.D. 446-1717*, [edited by] David Wilkins (London, 1737), II, pp.696-709. For the importance of Stratford's constitutions, see Brenda Bolton, "The Council of London of 1342", in *Councils and Assemblies*, edited by G.J. Cuming and Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History*, 7 (London, 1971), pp.147-60.
- ¹³ Printed in *Councils & Synods, with other Documents relating to the English Church*, II, A.D. 1205-1313, edited by F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (London, 1964), II, pp.792-7.
- ¹⁴ *Councils & Synods*, I, pp.106-07; II, pp.848-50; and II, pp.905-07.

- 15 *Provinciale, seu Constitutiones Angliae* (Oxford, 1679), Lib. V, tit. 17, Cap. 1 and 6.
- 16 E.F. Jacob, *Archbishop Henry Chichele* (London, 1967), pp.66, fn.3.
- 17 For example, Archbishop Robert Winchelsey in 1298 (*Councils & Synods*, II, p.1195).
- 18 Printed in *The Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury 1414-1443*, edited by E.F. Jacob, III, Canterbury and York Society, 46 (Oxford, 1945), pp.257-8.
- 19 Printed in *Ceremonies and Processions of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury*, edited . . . by C. Wordsworth (Cambridge, 1901), pp.44-6. I cite this edition as 'Wordsworth'.
- 20 Printed in the *Provinciale*, appendix, pp.73-4. The manuscript is described by N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, (Oxford, 1977), II, pp.711-12.
- 21 For the text in the Sidney Sussex manuscript, see further fn.43 below. Dr A.I. Doyle informs me that two manuscripts sold by Sotheby's respectively as Lot 295 on 4 April 1939 and Lot 877 on 4-5 July 1955 apparently also contain the Sentence "as decreed by the Council of London, 7 Oct. 1434". Another text is anticipated at the end of British Library MS Royal 11. A. I, but only the first five lines now remain.
- 22 *Councils & Synods*, II, pp.747-92.
- 23 See *Manuale ad Vsum Percelebris Ecclesie Sarisburiensis*, [edited] by A. Jefferies Collins, Henry Bradshaw Society, 91 (London, 1960), pp.xxi-xxiii and 166, fn.3; Wordsworth, p.244. The latter, p.333, has a list of early editions, for which see also A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640*, 2nd edition, (London, 1976), II, p.82.
- 24 L.E. Boyle, "The *Oculus Sacerdotis* and some other works of William of Pagula", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth series, 5 (1955), 87-90. The whole work is unprinted.
- 25 *Manuale*, ed. Collins, pp.xv-xviii.
- 26 It is noteworthy that part of the *Dextera Pars*, including the section on excommunication, circulated as a separate tract: see Boyle, "The *Oculus Sacerdotis*", pp.89-90, *Manuale*, ed. Collins, pp.xvii-xviii, and also C.R. Cheney, *English Synodalia of the Thirteenth Century* (London, 1941), pp.112, 115 and 147. The section on excommunication alone is printed in *Concilia*, ed. Wilkins, II, pp.413-15, as an appendix to Archbishop Greenfield's York constitutions of 1311.
- 27 Respectively in *Manuale et Processionale ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Eboracensis*, [edited by] W.G. Henderson, Surtees Society, 63 (Durham, 1875), pp.86*-94*; in Wordsworth, pp.245-54; and in *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae: the Occasional Offices of the Church of England According to the Old Use of Salisbury . . .*, [edited] by William Maskell, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1882), III, pp.309-26.

- ²⁸ *Manuale*, ed. Collins, pp.ix-x, has a partial list of these MSS.
- ²⁹ The missing text corresponds to Wordsworth, p.246, 1.25 - p.247, 1.26; p.248, 1.30 - p.250, 1.24; p.251, 1.27 - p.252, 1.26; and p.253, 1.37 onwards.
- ³⁰ It is described by Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, (Oxford, 1969), I, p.314.
- ³¹ Wordsworth, p.247, 1.52 - p.248, 1.15; p.248, 1.45 - p.250, 1.1; p.250, 11.29-46; p.251, 1.1 - p.252, 1.26.
- ³² The omitted passages correspond to Wordsworth, p.247, 11.27-32; p.247, 1.42 - p.248, 1.15; p.248, 1.56 - p.250, 1.1; p.250, 11.13-28; p.250, 11.34-47; p.251, 1.1 - p.252, 1.37; p.252, 11.48-51.
- ³³ For the first half of the work see *Jacob's Well*, edited . . . by Arthur Brandeis, Part 1, EETS OS 115 (1900).
- ³⁴ Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p.43.
- ³⁵ *Manuale*, ed. Henderson. It is unclear whether or not the other early edition to which he refers, that by Gachet at York, contains a form of the Sentence.
- ³⁶ The Sentence is printed in *Fifth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, C.1432 (London: HMSO, 1876), appendix, pp.305-6.
- ³⁷ Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p.309.
- ³⁸ It may be noted that the final item on usury which is not in the printed edition and which Henderson supplies from the York Minster MS, occurs in all the manuscripts (inserted by a later hand in MS CUL).
- ³⁹ *Quattuor Sermones, printed by William Caxton*, Middle English Texts, 2 (Heidelberg, 1975). Cited as 'Blake'.
- ⁴⁰ The Sentence from Wynkyn de Worde's edition of 1532 was reprinted by John Strype in *Ecclesiastical Memorials . . . under Henry VIII*, (Oxford, 1822), I, Pt.ii, pp.188-93.
- ⁴¹ See Blake, pp.12-16. Trinity College Cambridge MS B.14.19 contains material very similar, but not identical, to *QS* itself.
- ⁴² The beginning of Rawlinson's text is printed in Owst, *Preaching*, p.359. Its main omissions are Blake, p.82, 11.29-35; p.84, 11.6-9, 11-14, 16-18, 21-6, 35-7, and 38 - p.85, 1.5.
- ⁴³ Chichele's Sentence in Sidney Sussex College MS 55 (see section 4 above) also follows English prose material similar in content to the main part of *QS*. This text in fact diverges from the standard version of Chichele's Sentence in having an addition at the end, part of which is especially close to *QS*'s Sentence (Blake, p.84, 11.26-30).
- ⁴⁴ *QS*'s Sentence includes the final paragraph on usury (see fn.38), but it takes a somewhat different form (Blake, p.84, 1.38 - p.85, 1.5) and the Rawlinson MS preserves only the first few words.

- ⁴⁵ A fourth MS, Ashmole 750, which has a Sarum Manual Sentence on ff.15r-22v (see above, section 5), has additional items on f.25r which may also come from this version.
- ⁴⁶ "al tho that them meyntheyne or susteyne" (Blake, p.83, l.28): MS Trinity reads "heresy" for "them". The sentence does not occur in the York Manual.
- ⁴⁷ The final curse in MS Advocates is printed in Owst, *Preaching*, p.359.
- ⁴⁸ Wordsworth, p.247, ll.27-51; p.248, ll.6-15, 21-6, 56 - p.249, l.31; p.250, ll.20-47; p.251, l.1 - p.252, l.29; p.252, ll.38-47, 52 - p.253, l.10.
- ⁴⁹ *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, near Oxford*, edited by Andrew Clark, Part 1, EETS OS 129 (1905), pp.1-3.
- ⁵⁰ Printed in *Select English Works of John Wyclif*, edited . . . by Thomas Arnold (1871), III, pp.271-337.
- ⁵¹ Printed in *Liber Ecclesie beati Terrenani de Arbuthnott: Missale secundum usum Ecclesie Sancti Andreae in Scotia*, ed. A.P. Forbes (Burntisland, 1864), pp.lxx-lxxi; *Concilia Scotiae: ecclesie Scoticanae statuta . . .*, ed. Joseph Robertson, Bannatyne Club, 113 (Edinburgh, 1866), II, pp.6-8; *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559 . . .*, ed. David Patrick, Publications of the Scottish History Society, 54 (Edinburgh, 1907), pp.5-7. See also Wordsworth, pp.46, 254.
- ⁵² Printed, respectively, in *St Andrews Formulare, 1514-1546*, I, ed. Gordon Donaldson and C. Macrae, Stair Society, 7 (Edinburgh, 1942), pp.268-71; and in *State Papers of Henry VIII* (London, 1836), IV, Part 4, pp.417-19.