Leeds Studies in English

"IN DIE SEPULTURE SEU TRIGINTALI": THE LATE MEDIEVAL FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL SERMON[1]

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> Mych haue many of vs bestowyd vppon rych men in
> gold ryngys and blak gownys: mych in many tapers and
> torchys: mych in worldly pomp and hygh solempne
> ceremonyes about our funerallys/ wherof the brotle
> glory standeth vs here god wot in very litle stede/
> but hath on the tother syde done vs great dyspleasure
> . . . for some hathe there of vs whyle we were in
> helthe/ not so mych studyed how we myght dye penytent
> and in good crysten plyght/ as how we myght be solempnely
> borne owte to beryeng/ haue gay and goodly funerallys
> wyth herawdys at our hersys/ and ofrynge vp oure
> helmettys/ settyng vp our skouchyn and cote armours on
> the wall though there neuer cam harneyse on our bakkys/
> nor neuer auncestour of ours euer bare armis byfore.
> Then deuysed we some doctour to make a sermon at our
> masse in our monthys mynde/ and there preche to our
> prayse wyth some fond fantesy deuysed of our name/ and
> after masse/ mych festyng ryotouse and costly/ and
> fynally lyke madde men made men mery at our dethe/ and
> take our beryeng for a brydeale.[2]

It must have been at celebrations similar to those criticised here by Sir Thomas More that the sermon was preached which is the culmination of this article. Though the society pictured by More is perhaps more affluent than that of "our gode ffrende N.",[3] the sermon's aptness for preaching at a month's mind is evidence of at least limited wealth,[4] as is the fact that it is wholly a lament for the loss of earthly goods, summarised by the text, "Solum michi superest sepulcrum", in paraphrase of which the dead man is imagined to cry out:

> Of all my goodis þat I was wont to haue
> Is oonly left me but my grave.[5]

The sermon is a general one, whose forlorn subject awaits a more specific title than "N." (= *nomen*). It does not, therefore, "preche to our prayse", as More complained, though this is a necessary feature of sermons preached after the deaths of specific men, such as Sir Hugh de Courtenay, Earl of Devon;[6] the Black Prince;[7] Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick;[8] or Walter Froucester, Abbot of Gloucester.[9] For the same reason, it does not indulge in "fond fantesy deuysed of our name", although this is indeed common

from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, so that Bishop Brunton, preaching in 1376 on the death of the Black Prince, shows his verbal ingenuity in "Edwardus, dum vixit, nos wardavit".[10] And again, John Paunteley in his sermon for Walter Froucester juggles with the text, "*Fluuius egrediebatur de loco*, Genesis 2 capitulo. Anglicus sicut, 'Water is went out of the reuer'"[11] (although he is rightly defensive of his interpretation of "water" as "Walter"[12]). Perhaps the same man, in the funeral sermon for Thomas Beauchamp, interprets the text, "Pulcritudo agri mecum est", as "Beauchampe is with me" ("зif зe wol medle Frensche with Englesch").[13]

It might seem from More's criticism that he was condemning the whole business of ritual commemoration of the dead. This is in fact far from the truth. The *Supplycacyon of Soulys* was written in defence of masses, prayers, fasting and alms for the dead and in vigorous assertion (here repudiating the recently-printed *Supplicacion of Beggers*) of the existence of purgatory, so that More's souls cry out:

> Consyder you our paynys/ and pyte them in your hartys/ and helpe vs wyth your prayours/ pylgrymagys and other almoyse dedys: & of all thyng in specyall procure vs the suffragis and blessyd oblacyon of the holy masse/ wherof no man lyuyng so well can tell the frute as we that here fele yt.[14]

The plea is just that made to his audience by the preacher of the sermon edited here:

> Right worshipfull ffrendis, it is a grete werk of pytee and mercy to helpe and comfort þem þat be bounde in bodely preson or temporall seruage. Mych more it is merytory and medefull to helpe, socour and releve þoo soules þat be bounde and peyned in þe preson of purgatory, for þei may right nought help þemself. Wherefore tho Goddis prisoners abyding in purgatory haue moste nede of helpe and socoure and comforth and sonnest may be holpe by almus dedis of merci and pitee, with precius prayers of þeire ffrendis.[15]

In late medieval religion the doctrine of purgatory assumed unprecedented importance.[16] Based as it was on an essentially pessimistic conviction of the greyness of human morality, it offered a mid-way between heaven and hell to which most souls might be consigned after death:

> There be many parfite sowles the whiche, as sone as they be passid here bodies, fleeþ vp in-to heuene, and there be som that ben vtterly euel, and they go downe in-to helle, and there be som in the mene be-twyx there two wayes, and for hem is siche commendacion and prayers to be made.[17]

The fate of even such important figures of Church and State as the

Abbot of Gloucester and the Earl of Warwick is uncertain. Of the
Abbot, Paunteley hopes, "ad nostram instanciam acius, ut spero,
habundanciam gratie anima illius refrigerabitur, si non dum fuerit
a penis Purgatorii liberata".[18] And prayers too are due for the
Earl, "ne forte sit arestatus per viam pro debito spirituali que
debet pro prima quam egisset, pro peccatis suis, et sit positus in
prisona Purgatorii, et non est in sua propria potestate in tam
breui tempore without gret dysese reddere omne quod debet".[19]

     If the fate of the good and famous was doubtful, what of the
common multitude? For these, All Souls' Day was instituted, a
general memorial sermon for the souls forgotten and abandoned in
purgatory:[20]

> on Sowlemasse-day, holy chyrch makyth mynd, and syngyth,
> and redythe generaly for all þe sowles þat ben yn
> purgatory, havyng full beleue forto relesch hom of hor
> payne, othyr yn parte, othyr yn all . . . for þe lest
> prayer þat ys made for hom dothe hom ese.[21]

Sermons for the day frequently point out that it was first cele-
brated at the specific request of just one of these souls, and the
Festial and *Speculum Sacerdotale* crowd their sermons with stories
from the *Legenda Aurea* illustrating the benefit to the dead of the
prayers of the living – the man who always said "De profundis" as
he walked through a certain churchyard was one day saved from
thieves by the grateful dead rising from their graves;[22] the priest
suspended by his abbot for knowing only the Requiem Mass was
reinstated at the request of the dead;[23] the soul imprisoned in a
block of ice was released by the singing of thirty Masses.[24]

     Not only prayers and Masses help the dead – almost every sermon,
whether it be for a specific soul or for All Souls' Day, cites four
sources of help, according to a decree attributed variously to
Augustine or to Gregory:

> Seint Austen, þat famous doctour, in a decre, xiij[a] q.
> 2[a], "Anime defunctorum", seith þat soules in purgatory
> be releced and eased of þeire peynes by iiij meanes and
> moste profiteth to spede þem to blisse, videlicet,
> "fidelium et amicorum oracio, oblacionum et elemosinarum
> largicio, ieiuniorum obseruacio, et, maxime, salut[ar]is
> hostis immolacio".[25]

     "Maxime, salutaris hostis immolacio" – of the four means of
help, the Mass is the most efficacious: "for alle þe prayeres þat
ben don for helpe of mannes sowles, þe masse is chef and princepal
sokur to alle soules".[26] But the Mass is, after all, only the
supreme example of prayer, and it is the encouragement of prayer
which is the primary aim of these sermons: "The fyrste dede off
mercye . . . ande the moste principall is to praye for hem".[27] The
two other deeds of mercy are much less important:

> As Sent Gregory seythe and stondythe in the lawe, "Quamvis
> ieiunium prodest mortuis, ex deuocione ieiunantis,

> elemosina plus prodest" et cetera - yff all ffastynge
> proffytt to the dede, yat commythe off deuocion off hym
> yat so ffastethe; almesdede profytt ᴣyt more to hem yan
> bothe yise done withowten onye prayᴣer; bot messe
> syngyne proffytt ouer all these to ye sawles in
> purgatorye yat been in yat peyne.[28]

In the *Festial* sermon for All Souls' Day, fasting is not even
mentioned,[29] although it is specified in the *Festial*'s source, the
Legenda Aurea,[30] and the *Speculum Sacerdotale* includes a story from
that source which reports how the soul of a wicked woman who died
in despair was saved by her son's fasting for seven years.[31]   When
the *Festial* sermon is revised later in the fifteenth century and
fasting is included among the other deeds of mercy, it is only
cursorily treated in comparison with the others:

> The third þing þat helpith sowles and eseth þem in
> peynes of purgatory it is fastyng of ffrendis for all
> Cristen sowles, ffor it is a custom vsed in dyvers
> londys and cuntreis, whan þeire frendis be passed out
> of þe worlde, þei shall fast, wepe and morne certeyn
> dayes in þe weke and in þe yere after, as it is well
> figured, Iudicum xjᵒ, how þe childre of Israel morned
> of custom after þe deth of þe doughter of Ieparte.[32]

Much more faith is placed in the power of almsdeeds, since, "as
water quenchith fyre, so almes dedis quenchith þe hote ffyre þat
brennyth þat be in peynes of purgatory".[33]   Often the fact is
illustrated by the *Legenda Aurea* story of the man who ignored his
cousin's request that his horse should be sold as alms if he died
in battle, and who was in consequence damned.[34]   The *Festial* sermon
which includes this story laments the general decline of alms-
giving - "and þat is pytee, in speciall whan a man may not haue
parte of his owne good þat he leveth here in his executour handis".[35]
The danger involved in entrusting ones spiritual welfare to possibly
false executors of one's will looms large in the materialistic
mentality of the late Middle Ages.[36]   In the sermon edited here,
the soul is pictured crying to its executors: "'Miseremini mei,
miseremini mei, saltem vos, amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit
me'. 'Haue mercy on me, ye þat my frendis be, ffor þe hande of
God hath touched me'".[37]   In the same sermon, the uncertain fulfil-
ment of one's will is illustrated by the *narratio* of children stealing
from an orchard, who throw out their spoils to friends. Once appre-
hended, they lose everything unless those friends are willing to
share with them:

> Right so in like wise of worldely worshippis þat gaddre
> togedir many temporall goodis in þe gardeyn of þis
> worlde. But in his dethe, whan he hath gaddrid frutes
> ynow, then commyth þe porter, þe keper of þe gardeyn,
> þat is Deth, or þe owner of þe gardeyn, þat is God, and
> taketh from þem all þat þei haue. And aftir þeire
> dethe it is in þe free will of þe executours and of
> oþer wheþir þei woll gefe hym a parte of his temporall

goodis or noo.[38]

Though false executors will not go unpunished - "they be in grete perell beforn God and dampned but if þei make a seethe",[39] the implication is clearly that one should not trust overmuch in one's descendants releasing one from the pains of purgatory. And if one's descendants do not help, there is certainly no chance of helping oneself:

> ffor as longe as þe soule and þe body bene knyt togedir, so longe may a man or a woman beyng in þis life help hymself and his soule. But whan þe soule is departed from þe body, hit may do no þing þat shuld mytigate, relese or ease þe peyn of hym or spede hym to blisse.[40]

Bearing these facts in mind, the pragmatic solution is to do all one can for one's own soul before death.

In the sermons there is little specification of the behaviour by which one may store up sufficient treasure in heaven to avoid hell, perhaps even purgatory. Most preachers are content with the vague phrase, "gode werkis":[41]

> For his [the dead man's] merytory dedis and his gode werkis þat he hath do in his life shull now stonde vnto hym to grete remedy, help and gostely comfort. And þoe gode werkis he berith with hym. But of all his temporall goodis he hath right nought with hym.[42]

The stripping of all man's worldly accretions, until all that is left him are his good deeds, is the usual metaphor by which the preacher stresses man's total dependence on those good deeds at his death.[43] One preacher attributes the germ of the idea to Chrysostom:

> Ande therffore take gode hede qwhat Crisostom seythe: Qwhen we dyen, owre ffrendys ffeylen, owre kyn weende aweye, all yat we off erthe have reseyved in erthe we it leefe, ande no man xall wee have with vs save onlye owre deedys - yff yei be gode, to ioye; yff theye bee yvell, to peyne.[44]

Often the personification of the forlorn dying man is sufficiently fully-developed as to be only a step away from its complete drama-tisation in *Everyman*. In one sermon, the old man cries: "'I axe of all you: Who is he þat woll go and dye with me and bere me felyship and company? And now euery ffrende þat I haue forsaketh me and letteth me dye alone'".[45] In another, Everywoman, "Lady de Blacworth", complains:

> 'My frendys, my godes me hav forsake.
> To wyrmes mete now am I take.
> Of al the word now haf I noȝth
> Bitt gode dedes that I wrogth.

> Only tho schuln abyde wit me,
> Al other thynges arn vanyte.'[46]

It has already been pointed out that the sermon edited here is
built solely around this theme. It culminates in two *narrationes*
which have as their moralisation the fact that one should prepare
for heaven by good deeds on earth.[47] Here the good deeds are
specified more directly than in other sermons, in a way which rein-
forces the theme of late medieval materialism, in that, in a sermon
addressed to a very property-conscious audience, they amount to the
giving of money to the poor and needy, on the understanding that the
man who "with his handis dothe almus dedis and spendith his goodis
to Goddis worship" "may fynde þem in þe kyngdam of heven after þat
he be banysshed and put dovn bi deth oute of þis worde".[48]

   It will be clear already that the scope of the funeral sermon
is severely limited. Its aims are, first and foremost, to promote
ritual acts for the dead, and in this the doctrine of purgatory so
encumbered religious writing that it left little room for the
encouragement of active good, as opposed to mechanical charity.
But if the aims of the sermons are limited, so are the methods by
which those aims are achieved. The intellectual scope of the
funeral sermon is much more seriously restricted than other sermons,
for there is but one driving force behind it. The medieval preacher
of such a sermon can never resist playing the one certain card
which always enables him to win the game - "memento mori":

> remembre þe þat þou shalt dye, þou wotis not whan,
> nor whedir þou shalt goo to saluacion or to dampnacion,
> to heven or to hell. And prynte þis wele in þy mynde,
> and þou shalt haue lytell cause of myrth but grete
> cause of hevynes, þat woll induce, meve and stirre þe
> to devocion to pray for þe soule of N. and all Cristen
> sowles . . .[49]

Where appeals for charity may fail when they are made on the
grounds of pity and unselfishness, the practical reminder that one
too will be in the position of these "Goddis presoners, abiding þe
oure of his mercy",[50] never fails:

> Therefore knowe þou wele þiself, what þou art and what
> þou shal be, and whidir þou shall goo. Full sekir, þi
> body to þe erthe and perhappis þi soule to þe peynes
> of purgatory. Aray þe þen and make redy þi way þat þou
> may cum to þe life þat is euerlasting . . .[51]

   In the *Festial* sermon for Septuagesima Sunday, of three
medicines for the "sekenes of synne", the most efficacious is
thought of death, which "ys a pryncypall salue to ych man þat
takeþe hit to hert, to put away all maner worldes vanyte, and vayn
murthe, and reuell".[52] In an elaborate allegory in the course of
the funeral sermon for Thomas Beauchamp, man fighting on the
battlefield of life is depicted, according to scriptural authority,
clothed in leather, the skin of dead animals. "Sed forte tibi

videtur that þis ys a sengul aray for to goo to batel yn" - no, on
the contrary, "videbis que nullum reperitur securius", since this
leather armour is thought of death and, as Augustine says, "'Memoria
mortis est defensorium sufficiens contra quecumque peccata'".[53]
And, if the Biblical *exemplum* is not enough, the preacher reinforces
it with one from natural life. Just as the peacock, "be he neuer
so prowd of his gay fethurus, wen he loketh ouer hys fowle fet
deponit caudam et obliuiscitur tocius glorie sue",[54] so man is saved
from pride and other sins by thought of death. More prosaically,
another sermon cites Seneca on the salutary effect of thought of
death: "For as Senec seythe, noo thynge xall profytt to thee so
myche to temperawnce as offte thynkenge on thye dethe."[55]

In promoting constant thought of death, the aim is, of course,
to inculcate fear. It is this "timor servilis" which is to the
medieval preacher the most effective means of promoting good, so
debased is man's concept of man in the late Middle Ages. And fear
is most effectively aroused, not by abstract discussion of death[56]
(for death is, after all, comfortingly remote for most men, and may
even, in a time of pain and privation, be a welcome release), but
by the concrete visualisation of Death.

The importance of pictures to the medieval imagination needs
no stressing. Before literacy was widespread, pictorial represen-
tation was the essential tool of the Church. For this reason images
are defended as "libri laicorum"[57] and sermons stuffed full of
exempla and *narrationes* are defended:

> But ȝet for þat mony wyttys ben lat and heuy forto leue
> þat þay may not here ny se, but þay be broght yn by
> ensampull. For þogh þe ensampull be not most commendabull,
> ȝet for þe more parte hit may soo lyghten his wit, þat
> he may þe sondyr come to beleue.[58]

In the same way, thought of death is encouraged visually by paint-
ings of corpses and double tombs, where the recently-dead man rests
in splendid but unquiet repose above his own cadaver or skeleton.[59]
Sometimes the plastic image is reinforced by the written word in
epitaphs of the "As I was, so are you; as I am, so will you be"
variety, while in literature proper these visual representations of
death are parallelled in images of the stripping of Everyman's
possessions at death; descriptions of hell, purgatory and the Day
of Judgment; listing of the stages of old age or corruption;
narratives of death-bed scenes and warnings from the tomb; the
personification of Death.[60] In the more sophisticated sermons,
elaborate allegories will compare man's life to a battle where
"nostri spirituales inimici, diabolus, caro, et mundus han piȝth
here tentus, rerud and displaied here baners, et fortiter pugnant
contra gonus [sic] humanum",[61] or to a ship which appears stable and
unmoving - "sed non est ita".[62] Even the set-pieces, such as the
originally pre-Christian invocation of transience through the "ubi
sunt" *motif*, depend for their efficacy on the visual creation of the
figures of the past great - Alexander, Aristotle, Richard II, Abbot
Walter himself - and then the reduction of these images to food for
worms:

Auertas bene et audies que nunc rex, nunc regina moritur,
nunc prins vel dux, nunc episcopus vel abbas, nunc baro
et burgenses, pauper et diues transeunt ut aqua in cloacha
mortis. Ha, Domine Iesu, vbi est nunc magnus Allexander
et iste sapiens philosophus Aristoteles, ipsius magister;
illi fortes milites Hector et Troilus qui tam viriliter
pugnarunt in obsidione Troie? . . . Iesu, auctor pietatis,
vbi sunt gloriosus princeps rex Richardus, comites et
barones, et alii recentes milites, quos infra paucos annos
hic vidimus oculis nostris qui fuerunt magis delectabiles
et pulcri in oculis hominum qua aqua decurrens in riuo
sane? . . . Sed si queramus propinquius nostro propositio,
vbi est Walterus Froucester qui fuit hic nobiscum infra
tres septimanas? . . . Mortuus est et sepultus, et nunc
vermes se depascunt in suis visceribus. Et cum quales
vos estis nunc, tales fuit ipse; et qualis nunc est ipse,
tales vos eritis. Quia mortuus est et sic vos eritis.[63]

In presenting Death as vividly as he can, the preacher of the
funeral sermon is of course aided by the presence of the dead man
himself: "Gode men, as ȝe alle se, here is a myrroure to vs alle:
a corse browth to þe chyrch".[64] In default of such immediacy, the
image of the corpse is still invoked as a *memento mori*: "Lat þem be
þi mirroure þat be dede and passed oute of þis worlde, and þere þou
shall vndirstond what þou art and what þou shalt be".[65] The facts
of death may be presented most vividly by that common lyric *topos*,
the Signs of Death,[66] whether in intact lyrical form, as in the
sermon edited here,[67] or in prose:

Vndurstonde howe in yi dethe thyne nyen xall turne in
thyne hede, yi veynes xall breste in thye bodye, ande
yine herte xall be departed ff[or] soroo . . . Ande
therffore yche prowde man take hede to thyse wordys yat
Sent Austyne seythe off the dede man. Hys noose, he
seythe, waxethe colde and hys fface pale, and noothyng
is more horrible yan is a dede body. Ande therffore it
is noghȝt syfferde to be aboven the erthe, bot as dedlye
venom is throwen in a dyche with erthe stopped and with
stones, yat it no more be seen, and therwith all toodes
are norysched ande wormes, the qwyche xall cum off
itselff and ete it to noghȝt."[68]

Even in the sixteenth century the style is not forgotten in
Fecknam's sermon on the death of Queen Joanna of Spain:

At whose [i.e. Death's] first entrye and breakynge into
our houses, beholde howe the conscience begynneth to
dreade, howe the hearte quaketh, the head stoupeth, the
witte wasteth, the strengthe faileth, the visage waxeth
pale, the tonge fombleth, the breath goeth away, the
speche very rare and thynne, all the beautie of the body
cleane tourned into a grisely and fylthye corruption:
and after that the bodye is buried, it falleth into a
cationlyke stenche the fleshe cleane tourned into grubbes

meate.[69]

These descriptions of the dead or dying body are closely
related to the device of meditation on the actual moment of death,
when the soul departs from the body. At the moment of death man
will be assailed by doubt:

> ffor, as dyuerse doctours seyne, at the owre off owre
> dethe ffeendys xall bee theyr ande all the synnes yat
> wee have doon thei xall schewe tyll vs in all yat theye
> meye to brynge vs in dyspeyre, ande syn off dyspeyre is
> neuer ffor3even i[n] thys worlde ne in the todur.[70]

The arch-sin, despair, has Biblical precedent to the medieval mind
in Judas, who hanged himself in disbelief of forgiveness, and is
the subject of numerous sermon stories, such as that attached to
the name of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who only narrowly
avoided despair,[71] or that found in the *Speculum Sacerdotale* sermon
for All Souls' Day, which shows a sinner succumb: "But or the preste
come deuelles were come in-to hire, and þrou3 terrour and drede of
whome sche dyede ne my3te no lenger a-byde."[72] In the sermons at
any rate, advice for coping with this moment is, as usual, prac-
tical.[73] The resurrection of the soul is ensured by unswerving
faith in the teaching of Holy Church, and by the fact that one has
received the sacrament of the last rites before death:

> One is yat - qwhen he passethe owte of thys warlde with
> perffyte charyte anense God ande hys negh3bour with hope
> and stedffaste in the ffeythe and rygh3t beleve in all
> the xij articulls as Holye Chyrche techethe . . . The
> secunde is yat man xulde vse that he departe with verre
> contricion ande confessyoun off his synnes . . .[74]

It was faith that saved Grosseteste:

> But þen was oure lady redy, þat ys ay redy in nede, and
> sayde to hym: "My seruand, say þou beleuyst as holy chyrch
> doþe." And he cried and sayde: "Y beleue as holy chyrch
> beleuyth." And þerwyth þe fendes vanechid away anon;
> and he 3af vp his spyryte.[75]

As for the last rites, their importance lies both in the sacra-
ment of penance and in the swallowing of the Host. Incomplete
fulfilment of the former was enough to send a soul to purgatory, as
is the case of the soul who begs for the institution of All Souls'
Day: "'ffor as yett I haue not done my penaunce whan I was lyvyng
in erth þat answerd to myn offencis and grevous synnes þat I did in
my life tyme'".[76] Conversely, the safe passage of Thomas Beauchamp's
soul is more likely because he died "tamquam bonus Christianus
miles, armatus cum scuto bone fidei, confessus et valde contritus
pro peccatis suis".[77] On the importance of communion with God
through the Eucharist, Mirk in particular is most insistent. In
his burial sermon he includes a story on the possession by a devil
of an unhouselled corpse as evidence that "hit is ofton sene þat

fendis han pouste to trobolon a cors þat hath not hys ful sacrament
of holy chyrch."[78] In a Corpus Christi story one man is so con-
vinced of the efficacy of the Host at the moment of death that,
unable to swallow it for vomiting, he prays that it may enter his
body through his side:

> And þerwyth, in sy3t of al men, þe syde opened, and þe
> ost glode into þe body; and þen þe syde closet a3en,
> hole as hit was befor, and so sone aftir he 3af þe gost
> vp.[79]

Death is cruel and inevitable, but there is a further irony,
in that its hour is unknown and often unexpected: "'Nichil enim
morte cercius, nec hora mortis incercius' . . . 'For noþing is more
certeyn nor sykyr as deth, nor noþing so vnsekyr as þe oure of
dethe'".[80] The uncertain hour of death may be expressed by the
common literary device of the Three Ages in which man may be seized
from the world.[81] In the sermon edited here, the three letters sent
by Death to the king in his castle are interpreted as the three
assaults made by Death on man at different stages of his life.[82]
In a Latin sermon on the text, "Dies mei transierunt quasi nauis",
the ship represents man's life, in which Youth sits at the fore-
castle, Middle Age at the topcastle, Old Age at the hindcastle.[83]
Though these are the traditional divisions, one sermon gives a
variant of this in the deaths of young men, children and old men,
describing these deaths as "bytter ande more esye and kyndele
dethe".[84] Where the threefold division is not made, the random
arrival of Death is illustrated in *exempla* such as the one edited
here, where the archer shoots around the target till finally he
hits the bull's eye:

> By þis but is vndirstond euery man lyving. Þe archere
> is Deth. And þan shotith he above þe prik whan he
> sleeth one þat is oldere þan þou, sumtyme lower whan
> he sleeth yonger þan þou, sumtyme on bothe sydes of
> þe butte whan he sleeth þi broþer, þi suster, wife or
> childe or eny of þi kyn. And so longe he shoteth, þe
> atte last he hittith þe prik whan he sleeth þe.[85]

A further uncertainty surrounds the death of medieval man –
whether his soul is destined for heaven, hell, or, most likely,
purgatory.[86] The sermons deal little with heaven, since their aim
is fear of punishment rather than hope of reward.[87] The descrip-
tion of hell is conventional:

> all the wyttys off man schulde soroo ande be afferde
> off the horrible sygh3tys off the duellys ande nogh3t
> xall be herde bott soroynge and weylynge and gneystynge
> off tethe, and yer xall be man in all hys v wyttys.
> Yer been markenes ande myche stynke, stronge colde and
> heet, hunger and schryste [sic], tempestes and stormes,
> and theye be ffedde with dragons gall ande drynke venom
> with moo peynes ande sorows than all thys world can
> tell . . .[88]

Purgatory is no better, save that its torments are at least finite:

> The ffyre off purgatorye ouerpassethe kyndelye thys
> ffyre here withowte comparyschoun in hete more yan yis
> ffyre ouerpassethe in kyndelye hete the hete off the
> sun. Mervel no man yff it so schulde be yat the same
> fyre is theyr as it is in hell withowten anye dyfference
> withe syche odyr peynes, owte-take yis, yat in hell is
> noone hope off dylyverawnce and yei yat been in
> purgatorye arne comfforted bye [hope].[89]

In comparison, the Day of Judgment is remote and indeed to be
desired, promising the end of purgatory and the translation of
purged souls to heaven. It is therefore rarely treated in these
sermons, where much more immediate horrors are available, but where
it is found, again the depiction is concrete and the aim is to
arouse fear of the day "quando tota terra schal tremble and quake
for drede fere, et sepulcra et monimenta aperientur et mortui
resurgent".[90] On that day not even the living will escape death
but must die only to rise again - even Enoch and Elijah who were
translated from life without suffering death "ʒytt xall yei dye and
be sleyne in the eende off the worlde".[91]

In presenting death vividly to his audience, the preacher in
the late Middle Ages resorts to an often naive and soon outworn
personification of Death. The Protean shape of death lends itself
to many comparisons - the king, the thief, the summoner - and its
visual creation may be achieved by many concrete aids - the bow and
arrow, the sickle, the hour-glass, the mirror.[92] Of these, Death
as king and tyrant is the most powerful and constant image evoked,
as in the sermon here, where Death is "a grete kynge, hardy, stronge
and dredefull", who "hath regnid from Adam and yett he shall regne
vnto þe worldis ende vpon all mankynde."[93] The image of Death as
thief informs the whole of that sermon, the theme of which is the
theft of man's earthly goods, and much of which devolves around the
question, "Quis eum spoliauit?" - who has robbed him? The answer
is Death:

> Deth takith away and privith a man of all his goodis
> and revith hym of his life which is a thinge þat is
> moste desyrous to euery man. Wherefore Deth may wele
> be called dredfull, for he haþe spoyled hym. So shall
> he robbe bothe þe and me and euery creature, yonge and
> olde.[94]

The personification is so familiar that it needs no explanation in
Fecknam's description of the spoliations of Death ("at whose first
entrye and breakynge into our houses")[95] or in such a sentence as:
"How slely the deth schal robben ham: how apertely he schal a-teyn
ham: how diversly he schal towche hem!"[96] Here, Death as thief is
paired with Death as summoner or sergeant, the latter most familiar
from Thomas Wimbledon's Paul's Cross sermon of 1388, where Death is
imagined as the last of "þre somoners oþer seryauntis" who call man
to his reckoning.[97] Both images are used in the acrostic on "mors"

in one of the Latin sermons, where each letter is interpreted as
an image of the whole, Death - "m" as "myrrur", "o" as "orolage",
"r" as "rubber" (i.e. robber), "s" as "sumuner".[98]

An attempt to summarise the funeral or memorial sermon of the
late Middle Ages may serve as an introduction to the sermon edited
here. Up until the final overthrow of Catholicism after Mary's
reign, the aim of these sermons is a narrow one. Such a ritual had
built up around the doctrine of purgatory that the placation of
souls in purgatory had become a never-ending task which many
preachers saw as sufficient end in itself. Sometimes indeed, prac-
tical charity for the living is urged as well as mechanical charity
for the dead, but even so, both are urged for selfish reasons -
"talis qualis vos estis . . .".[99] Where pragmatism and materialism
determine the content of the sermon, the style is generally charac-
terised by an unsubtle and concrete approach to one over-riding
emotion, fear of death. This approach expresses itself in standard
visual representations of aspects of death, designed originally to
present death vividly and fearfully to the ordinary man, but over-
worked and outworn by the end of our period. Aimed at the mean of
the people, neither the labouring classes nor the clergy or
University men, the sermon edited here captures the essence of late
medieval preaching on death. It is not without merit as a piece of
literature, even if its limited intellectual aims are stereotyped
in their realisation.[100] It may fairly, though perhaps negatively,
be introduced by reiterating Huizinga's damning summary of the late
medieval vision of death: "The desire to invent a visible image
of all that appertained to death entailed the neglecting of all
those aspects of it which were not suited to direct representation.
Thus the cruder conceptions of death, and these only, impressed
themselves continually on the minds. The macabre vision does not
represent the emotions of tenderness or of consolation. The elegiac
note is wanting altogether. At the bottom the macabre sentiment is
self-seeking and earthly. It is hardly the absence of the departed
dear ones that is deplored; it is the fear of one's own death, and
this only seen as the worst of evils."[101]

[1] This article comprises a survey of the late medieval funeral and memorial
sermon, together with an edition of one such sermon, "In Die Sepulture seu
Trigintali", edited from MS Harley 2247 which, with its sister MS Royal 18
B XXV, represents a mid-fifteenth century revision and substantial augmen-
tation of the earlier *Festial* of John Mirk. For further details of the
collection, see A.J. Fletcher and S. Powell, "The Origins of a Fifteenth-
Century Sermon Collection: MSS Harley 2247 and Royal 18 B XXV", *LSE*, n.s.
10 (1978), 74-96. A critical edition by S. Powell of the *Temporale*
section of the collection exists as an unpublished Ph.D. thesis of the
University of London (1980), while an edition of the Advent and Christmas
sermons is in preparation for publication in the *Middle English Texts*
series. For a related collection, see A.J. Fletcher, *A Critical Edition
of Selected Sermons from an Unpublished Fifteenth-Century De Tempore
Sermon Cycle*, unpublished Oxford B.Litt. thesis (1978).

The article is intended as a preliminary study only of the late
medieval funeral and memorial sermon, a field neglected not only because
such sermons are comparatively rare but also because very few indeed are
available in print. It may, therefore, be of value to list here the
sermons studied at first hand in the compilation of this article, as a
short check-list of fifteenth-century sermons for funerals, anniversaries
of deaths, or All Souls' Day. Printed texts of vernacular sermons: *Mirk's
Festial*, ed. Th. Erbe, EETS, ES 96 (London, 1905), All Souls' Day sermon
pp.269-71, burial sermon pp.294-97, notes on church burial pp.297-99;
Speculum Sacerdotale, ed. E.H. Weatherly, EETS, OS 200 (London, 1936), All
Saints' Day sermon (containing All Souls' Day material) pp.218-24, All
Souls' Day sermon pp.224-32, explanation of the Office of the Dead pp.232-
35. Printed texts of macaronic sermons: P.J. Horner, F.S.C., "John
Paunteley's Sermon at the Funeral of Walter Froucester, Abbot of Gloucester
(1412)", *American Benedictine Review* 28 (1977), 147-66 and "A Sermon on
the Anniversary of the Death of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick",
Traditio 34 (1978), 381-401. MSS of vernacular sermons: British Library
MS Harley 2247, All Souls' Day sermon (a revised version of the *Festial*
All Souls' Day sermon) ff.205v-07r, sermon for a burial or a trental or
an anniversary (a revised version of the *Festial* burial sermon with a new
introduction) ff.207r-10r, sermon for a burial or a trental (edited here)
ff.210r-13v; Cambridge University Library MS Gg.vi.16, burial sermon
ff.22r-26r (also found in MSS John Rylands Library Manchester Rylands
English 109, ff.6v-9r; Bodley 95, ff.107r-11r; Sidney Sussex College
Cambridge 74, ff.202r-04r. MSS of Latin sermons with English tags:
Bodleian Library Oxford MS Bodley 649, burial sermon ff.119v-24r; Bodleian
Library Oxford MS Barlow 24, burial sermon for a man ff.206r-08r, burial
sermon for a woman ff.208r-09r, burial sermon for man or woman ff.209r-10v,
anniversary sermon ff.210v-12r, All Souls' Day sermon ff.212r-13v. For
references to other funeral sermons and related material, see G.R Owst,
Preaching in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1926) and *Literature and Pulpit
in Medieval England* (second revised edition Oxford, 1961) *passim*.

[2] T. More, *The supplycacyon of soulys made by syr Thomas More knyght
councellour to our souerayn lorde the kynge and chauncellour of hys
Duchy of Lancaster. Agaynst the supplycacyon of beggars*. Quotation is
from the Bodleian Library Oxford edition of 1529.

[3] This quotation is from the sermon edited in this article (hereafter
referred to as Sermon), 11.12-13.

[4] The title of the sermon ("In Die Sepulture seu Trigintali") suggests that
it may be preached either at the burial service or at the memorial service
on the thirtieth day after burial (the "trental" or "month's mind"). Such
a service presupposes the ability to pay.

5   Sermon, 11.26-27.

6   The Earl's funeral sermon was preached by Bishop Grandisson of Exeter in
     1341 (see Owst, *Preaching*, p.265).

7   *Ibid.*, pp.268 and 329.

8   The sermon, which was preached in 1401, has been edited by Horner, "A
     Sermon".

9   The sermon, which was preached in 1412, has also been edited by Horner,
     "John Paunteley's Sermon". In the same *genre* is the sermon preached by
     Bishop Sheppey of Rochester on the death of Lady Cobham, who was a personal
     acquaintance. Sheppey's macaronic sermons, perhaps in his own hand, are
     preserved in New College Oxford MS 92. Several of the sermons, including
     Lady Cobham's, have been edited by G. Mifsud, *John Sheppey, Bishop of
     Rochester, as Preacher and Collector of Sermons*, unpublished Oxford B.Litt.
     thesis (1953).

10   Owst, *Preaching*, p.329.

11   Horner, "John Paunteley's Sermon", 149, 11.3-4.

12   *Ibid.*, 151, 11.48-64. The interpretation needs defending, not because
     of the "l" (which was not pronounced in "Walter"), but "quia nomen suum
     fuit Walterus et non aqua, id est Wateer et non Watur. Differentia est
     inter has vocales E et V."

13   Horner, "A Sermon", 385-6.

14   More, *The supplycacyon*.

15   Sermon, 11.2-10.

16   Its Biblical authority is tenuous, based in the Old Testament on the
     second Book of Maccabees xii, 39-45 and in the New Testament on inferences
     drawn from Matthew xii, 31 and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians iii,
     11-15. The foundations of medieval teaching on purgatory were laid by
     Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, xxi, 13 and 24) and defined at the Councils
     of Lyons (1274) and Florence (1439).

17   *Speculum Sacerdotale*, p.234, 11.22-7.

18   Horner, "John Paunteley's Sermon", 153, 11.149-51.

19   Horner, "A Sermon", 389.

20   The universal observation of All Souls' Day on the 2nd November, the day
     after All Saints' Day, was established through the influence of Odilo of
     Cluny (c.962-1048), who in 998 commanded its celebration in the Benedictine
     houses at Cluny. This founding of the feast is briefly mentioned in the
     Legenda Aurea sermon for All Souls' Day, which served as a model for the
     All Souls' Day sermons in the *Festial* and the *Speculum Sacerdotale*.

21   *Festial*, p.269, 11.6-12.

22   *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Th. Graesse (Dresden and Leipzig, 1846), p.733. Cf.
Festial, p.269, 1.25 – 270, 1.3.

23   *Legenda Aurea*, p.733. Cf. *Festial*, p.271, 11.2-11, and *Speculum Sacerdotale,*
p.225, 1.34 – 226, 1.6.

24   *Legenda Aurea*, p.731. Cf. *Festial*, p.271, 11.13-34, and *Speculum
Sacerdotale*, p.226, 11.8-36.

25   MS Harley 2247, f.208v. Though the sermon is a revision of Mirk's burial
sermon, the attribution to Augustine is not found in the *Festial* sermon,
which cites only three sources of help for the dead and is entirely in the
vernacular (cf. *Festial*, p.269, 11.14-16). The fourfold division is
standard, cf. *Legenda Aurea*, p.732; *Speculum Sacerdotale*, p.225, 11.30-33;
MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.22v; MS Barlow 24, f.206v
(here the decree is attributed to Gregory the Great, who indeed ratified
Augustine's teaching on the subject). See too Sermon, 11.182-5 and Note
to 11.184-208.

26   *Festial*, p.296, 11.21-3. The supreme efficacy of the Mass was clearly
viewed sceptically by many in the late Middle Ages. Chaucer in the
Summoner's Tale encourages his unscrupulous friar to preach for money
for Masses for the dead (*The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F.N. Robinson
(London, 1957), p.94, 11.1724-32):

> "Trentals", seyde he, "deliveren fro penaunce
> Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge . . .
> Delivereth out", quod he, "anon the soules!
> Ful hard it is with flesshhook or with oules
> To been yclawed, or to brenne or bake.
> Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake!"

Langland, too, doubts the superiority of Masses over other ways of helping
the soul (*Piers Plowman*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London, 1978), Passus VII,
11.180-81):

> . . . to trust on thise triennals - trewly, me thynketh,
> It is noght so siker for the soule, certes, as is Dowel.

Nevertheless, faith in Masses survived well into the era of the Reformation,
and Thomas Cromwell, for example, left money in his will for 3,000 Masses
for his soul as late as 1540. In 1555 at least two clergymen "indepen-
dently revived the pre-Reformation practice of saying a trental, or series
of thirty requiem masses" (A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (Fontana,
London, 1967), p.21). Dickens notes (p.20) that "some Englishmen felt
profound offence when the government of Edward VI forbade organised inter-
cession for their dead parents and benefactors; they hastened spontaneously
to restore the practice when the accession of Queen Mary made it safe".

    The most concrete manifestation of this belief in the efficacy of
Masses for the dead is, of course, the typically English institution of
the chantry chapel from the second half of the fourteenth century on.

27   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.22r.

28   *Ibid.*, f.22v.

29   See *Festial*, p.269, 11.14-16.

30   *Legenda Aurea*, p.732.

31   *Speculum Sacerdotale*, p.226, 1.38 – 227, 1.24. Cf. *Legenda Aurea*, pp.735-6.

[32]   MS Harley 2247, f.209v.

[33]   *Ibid.*, f.208v.

[34]   *Legenda Aurea*, p.739. Cf. *Speculum Sacerdotale*, p.227, 1.25 - 228, 1.7.

[35]   Quotation is from the revised *Festial* sermon (MS Harley 2247, f.209r),
       which is here more cogent than the version edited by Erbe (cf. *Festial*,
       p.270, 11.16-17).

[36]   On false executors and the dangers involved in trusting one's family and
       friends, both before and after death, see the Septuagesima Sunday sermon
       in MS Royal 18 B XXIII (*Middle English Sermons*, ed. W.O. Ross, EETS, OS
       209 (London, 1940 for 1938), pp.83-91). The total desertion of a man by his
       family is especially pertinent: "But what frenshippe sheweþ þise vn-to
       hym? Wepon and cryon and veylon is dethe and bryngeþ hym to ys graue,
       and þer þei leven hym; and aftur þat þe moneth mynd is do, anon aftur þei
       haue forȝett hym" (p.87, 1.35 - 88, 1.3). See too the speech of Lazarus
       in the Towneley play dealing with his resurrection (*The Towneley Plays*,
       ed. G. England and A.W. Pollard, EETS, ES 71 (London, 1897), pp.390-2).
       The theme is very common and is, of course, closely connected with that of
       Everyman, the desertion of man by all but his good works (see below, p.199).

[37]   Sermon, 11.213-7 and Note to 11.213-4.

[38]   *Ibid.*, 11.59-66.

[39]   *Ibid.*, 11.219-20.

[40]   MS Harley 2247, f.208r.

[41]   The origin of the phrase may be traced to Revelation xiv, 13 ("Beati
       mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur. Amodo iam dicit Spiritus, ut requiescant
       a laboribus suis: opera enim illorum sequuntur illos").

[42]   Sermon, 11.19-23.

[43]   John Bromyard in his *Summa Predicantium* compares the plight of the dying
       man leaving his mourning family to a visitor leaving a fine court - for
       the dying man "all that remains to him then are his deeds and short-comings"
       (quoted Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, p.529).

[44]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.25r.

[45]   MS Harley 2247, f.208r.

[46]   MS Worcester Cathedral Library F.10, f.208r (quoted Owst, *Literature and
       Pulpit*, p.530).

[47]   Sermon, 11.237-83.

[48]   *Ibid.*, 11.253-5. The sermon further asserts (11.282-3) that "on peny
       gife in þi life profetiþ more þan many after þi dethe".

[49]   MS Harley 2247, f.208r (the MS reads "a lytell cause"). The Biblical
       locus classicus for thought of death is Ecclesiasticus vii, 40 ("Memorare

nouissima tua; et in aeternum non peccabis"). In the lyrics the refrain
from the Office of the Dead, "Timor mortis conturbat me", is much exploited,
e.g. William Dunbar's "Lament for the Makaris" (*The Poems of William
Dunbar*, ed. W.M. Mackenzie (London, 1932), pp.20-3).

50   MS Harley 2247, f.207r.

51   Sermon, 11.289-94.

52   *Festial*, p.64, 11.20-2.

53   Horner, "A Sermon", 387-8.

54   *Ibid.*, 388.

55   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.25r.

56   Of those sermons studied here, the one to discuss death in the most
abstract and academic way is that in Cambridge University Library MS
Gg.vi.16 and other MSS (see footnote 1), which includes discussions on
topics such as why one should die since baptism washes away original sin
(for which death is the punishment), and why men die with different degrees
of suffering since all carry the same burden of original sin.

57   See Mirk's defence of images in his sermon for Corpus Christi Day
(*Festial*, p.171, 11.18-29), which is based on John Beleth's *Rationale
Divinorum Officiorum* (*PL* 202, col.89), cf. "Nam ut ait Greg., quod
clerico littera, id laico est pictura".

58   *Festial*, p.166, 11.2-6.

59   There are interesting discussions of such sculptural and pictorial
devices as wall-paintings, double tombs and epitaphs in D. Gray, *Themes
and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London, 1972),
Chapter 10; P. Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English
Literature* (London, 1976), Chapter V; R. Woolf, *The English Religious
Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968), Chapters III and IX. The most
authoritative work on double (or *transi*) tombs is K. Cohen, *The
Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol* (Berkeley and London, 1973).

60   As Dickens points out (*English Reformation*, p.26), it was not until the
Reformation that "emphasis in religion shifted steadily from the image
to the printed word, from pictures to literary ideas".

61   Horner, "A Sermon", 387.

62   Horner, "John Paunteley's Sermon", 150, 11.29-30.

63   *Ibid.*, 160, 11.380-98.

64   *Festial*, p.294, 11.2-3. Wynkyn de Worde's 1509 edition of the funeral
sermon preached on the death of Henry VII has an engraving which shows
the preacher, the Bishop of Rochester, facing his audience from the pulpit,
while between them lies in state, in robe and crown, with sceptre and orb,
the body of the King (reproduced Owst, *Preaching*, p.267).

[65]   Sermon, 11.284-6.

[66]   Despite the seeming inappropriateness to poetry of both subject matter and
       style, the Signs of Death are "the most popular of all Middle English death
       lyrics" (Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p.78). The *motif* is adapted to
       drama in Lazarus' Towneley Play speech on the horrors of the grave. The
       origin of the device is Job xvii, 14 ("Putredini dixi: Pater meus es,
       mater mea, et soror mea, vermibus").

[67]   Sermon, 11.162-73. The insertion of whole lyrics into sermons, as opposed
       to rhymes as mnemonic devices, is not unusual. See A.J. Fletcher, "A
       Death Lyric from the *Summa Predicantium*, MS. Oriel College 10", *Notes and
       Queries*, n.s. 24 (1977), 11-12 and "'I Sing of a Maiden': A Fifteenth-
       Century Sermon Reminiscence", *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 25 (1978), 107-8.
       Cf. too Lady de Blacworth's complaint quoted above (pp.199-200).

[68]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.25r-v. Cf. the description in
       the *Festial* sermon for the first Sunday in Quadragesima (p.84, 11.20-30).

[69]   Quoted by J.W. Blench, *Preaching in England in the late Fifteenth and
       Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1964), p.290.

[70]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.24v. In *The Faerie Queene*,
       Despair tries to persuade the Red Cross Knight to kill himself.

[71]   *Festial*, p.78, 11.19-28.

[72]   *Speculum Sacerdotale*, p.227, 11.19-20. The *narratio* originates in the
       Legenda Aurea (pp.735-6).

[73]   In the *Artes Moriendi*, it is more meditative. For a typical example, see
       the section on dying well in the *Book of Vices and Virtues* (the section is
       edited by N.F. Blake, *Middle English Religious Prose* (London, 1972),
       pp.132-8).

[74]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.24r.

[75]   *Festial*, p.78, 11.24-8.

[76]   MS Harley 2247, f.206v.

[77]   Horner, "A Sermon", 389.

[78]   *Festial*, p.295, 11.14-16.

[79]   *Ibid.*, p.172, 11.30-2.

[80]   Sermon, 11.96-103.

[81]   For the Three Ages convention and its elaboration as the *motif* of the
       Three Living and the Three Dead, see Gray, *Themes and Images*, pp.208-09;
       Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death*, pp.162-7; Woolf, *English Religious
       Lyric*, pp.344-7.

[82]   Sermon, 11.117-57.

[83]   MS Bodley 649, f.121r-v.

[84]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.23v.

[85]   Sermon, ll.108-14.

[86]   In MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.24v, this is the third of
         three reasons to fear death: "One ffor peyne in dyynge, the secunde in
         departynge off etheyr ffro other [i.e. body from soul], ande the thyrde
         at qwhat plyte yei xall been qwhan thei been dede".

[87]   Though the text of the funeral sermon in MS Cambridge University Library
         Gg.vi.16 and other MSS (see footnote 1) is "Mortuus viuet", the fear of
         mortality is a more potent force in it than confidence in resurrection.

[88]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, ff.25v-6r.

[89]   *Ibid.*, f.22r.

[90]   Horner, "A Sermon", 400.

[91]   MS Cambridge University Library Gg.vi.16, f.23r.

[92]   The personification of Death in literature seems to appear first in the
         fourteenth century. Cf., for example, Death as warrior in Passus XX of
         Piers Plowman and the pursuit of Death by the three rioters in Chaucer's
         Pardoner's Tale. For Death the archer, see Sermon, ll.105-16; for Death
         as harvester, see Horner, "A Sermon", 393; for Death as time-piece and
         mirror, see MS Barlow 24, f.212r.

[93]   Sermon, ll.77-80. The same image of Death as "a myghti and a stronge
         tiraunt" informs the *narratio* of ll.117-57. It is grounded in texts
         like Romans v, 14 ("Sed regnavit mors ab Adam usque ad Moysen . . .")
         and Revelation vi, 8 ("Et ecce equus pallidus: et qui sedebat super
         eum, nomen illi Mors, et infernus sequebatur eum, et data est illi
         potestas super quattuor partes terrae, interficere gladio, fame, et
         morte, et bestiis terrae").

[94]   Sermon, ll.84-9. Cf. "a privee theef men clepeth Deeth" in Chaucer's
         Pardoner's Tale (Robinson, *Chaucer's Works*, p.152, l.675) and the verses
         beginning "Be war, man, I come as þef" in John of Grimestone's common-
         place book (quoted Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p.337).

[95]   See p.202 above.

[96]   MS Cambridge University Library Ii.iii.8, f.160v (quoted Owst, *Literature
         and Pulpit*, p.532).

[97]   The personification is common, cf. the lyric beginning "Ffare well, this
         world! I take my leve for evere. / I am arested to apere at Goddes face"
         (*Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. C. Brown (Oxford, 1939),
         pp.236-7); John Waldeby's reference to Death as "God's bailiff" (quoted
         Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, p.532); Hamlet's description of Death as "this
         fell sergeant" (Act V, Scene ii). For the reference in Wimbledon's sermon,
         see I.K. Knight, *Wimbledon's Sermon* (Pittsburgh, 1967), p.99.

[98]   MS Barlow 24, f.212r. The acrostic is taken from the *Fasciculus Morum* and

is cited from MS Cambridge University Library Dd.x.15, f.23r by S. Wenzel,
Verses in Sermons (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978), pp.152-3. For examples
of other acrostics in sermons, see Owst, *Preaching*, p.329.

99 This common warning uttered to the living by the dead is here used by
Paunteley of Walter Froucester: "Talis qualis vos estis ipse fuit; et
tales qualis ipse nunc est vos eritis" (Horner, "John Paunteley's Sermon",
153, 11.127-8).

100 This comment on the late medieval funeral sermon may fairly be applied
to late medieval religion in general. In Dickens' view, "the Catholic
party lost the struggle in England not simply because they temporised
with Henry VIII but also because, in an age when an increasing number
of men were thinking for themselves, the intellectual slackness of much
late medieval religion played into the hands of Protestant critics"
(*English Reformation*, p.22).

101 J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Penguin, 1955), p.151.

"Solum michi superest sepulcrum", Iob 17.
Right worshipfull ffrendis, it is a grete werk of pytee
and mercy to helpe and comfort þem þat be bounde in bodely
preson or temporall seruage. Mych more it is merytory and
5   medefull to helpe, socour and releve þoo soules þat be
bounde and peyned in þe preson of purgatory, for þei may
right nought help þemself.   [210v] Wherefore tho Goddis
prisoners abyding in purgatory haue moste nede of helpe and
socoure and comforth and sonnest may be holpe by almus dedis
10   of merci and pitee, with precius prayers of þeire ffrendis.
And for þis cause I suppose we be all now cum hyddir at þis
tyme to remembre and help and comfort þe soule of our gode
ffrende N., whose body hath his sepulture in þis sanctuary,
whose soule God hath departed from þe erthly careyn and take
15   it vnto his mercy; that if ⌜hit⌝ be in peynfull preson of
purgatory, lat vs do oure dewtye devoutely and specially to
pray for þat soule and all Cristen soules, þat allmyghti
Ihesu þat is mercifull, by our mediacions and meane prayers,
þe raþer he woll take it vnto his infinyte mercy. For his
20   merytory dedis and his gode werkis þat he hath do in his life
shull now stonde vnto hym to grete remedy, help and gostely
comfort. And þoe gode werkis he berith with hym. But of
all his temporall goodis he hath right nought with hym.
Wherefore he may well say with þe holy prophete Iob, "Solum
25   michi superest sepulcrum", þat is to say:
        "Of all my goodis þat I was wont to haue
        Is oonly left me but my grave".
And þat ye may þe more be meved to mercy and pytee to
pray for þat soule and all Cristen, ye may se at ⌜the⌝ eye _
30   what is reft hym and what is left hym.
        What is reft hym?
        Certis, all þat he was wont to haue.
        What is left hym?
        Vndirstonde it, verrey riȝt nought but his grave.
35   So of all his goodis he hath nought
        But a lytyll place in þe erth wrought,
which is his grave. Wherefore consydre þe wrecchednes of þis
vnstabill worlde.
It is necessary to gode men to remembre þat þe ioye of
40   þis transytory lyfe is right nought worth noþer to be trusted
vpon. Which worldely ioyes stande in iij: in ricches, in
worshippis and in delitis.
But as for worshippis and rycches, be þou neuer so
worshipfull, be þou neuer so riche, all shall be take from þe
45   in þi dethe and right not shalt þou haue but a sengle shete
and oonly þy grave, but þi gode werkis, as I seyde beforn, yf
þere be eny.
It is of them þat trusten in worldis worship and rycches

as it is of wanton childre þat breke into a mannis gardeyn to
50   gadder applis, peris, nuttis or oþer frute. Sum gone in and
sum stand withoute and dare not entir þe gardeyn for betyng or
rebuking. And þei þat be within cast applis and such frute
as þey haue to þem þat be withoute. But atte last commyth
þe owner or keper of þe gardeyn and fyndith þem þat be within
55   breking his gardeyn. He takyth from þem all þe frute þat þei
haue gaderid and leve þem not oon. Nor noon þey   [211r]
shall haue, but if þei woll gife þem eny þat stande withoute,
and yett þat is in þeire ffre wyll wheþir þei woll gefe þem
parte or noo. Right so in like wise of worldely worshippis
60   þat gaddre togedir many temporall goodis in þe gardeyn of
þis worlde. But in his dethe, whan he hath gaddrid frutes
ynow, then commyth þe porter, þe keper of þe gardeyn, þat
is Deth, or þe owner of þe gardeyn, þat is God, and taketh
from þem all þat þei haue. And aftir þeire dethe it is in
65   þe free will of þe executours and of oþer wheþir þei woll
gefe hym a parte of his temporall goodis or noo.
        I seid also þat þe ioye of þis worlde stondith in delytis.
But take hede. He þat ioyeth and inforsith hym in delytis
he shall be tormentid in peynes and his stynking careyn to
70   wormys mete.
        Than sithen our welbeloued ffrende N. seyth and
compleyneth þat of all his goodis þat he was wont to haue is
oonly left hym but his grave, I axe a question - "Quis eum
spoliauit?" - who hath spoyled hym of all his goodis, of his
75   ricches, of his honours and his delytis, wheþir bi infortune
of ffire or water or thevis? It is answerd, noþer ffire,
water nor thevis, but oon þat is a grete kynge, hardy, stronge
and dredefull. His name is Dethe, and he hath regnid from
Adam and yett he shall regne vnto þe worldis ende vpon all
80   mankynde. He woll no man nor woman spare, grete nore smale,
tyme nor place. Ad Romanos 5°. "Audax et fortis est mors,
quia nulli parcit persone magne vel parue, nec loco, nec
tempore." This king Deth is dredefull, ye, noþing so dredefull.
And cause whi seith þe philosophir, ffor Deth takith away
85   and privith a man of all his goodis and revith hym of his
life which is a thinge þat is moste desyrous to euery man.
Wherefore Deth may wele be called dredfull, for he haþe
spoyled hym. So shall he robbe bothe þe and me and euery
creature, yonge and olde.
90   Therefore euery man make hym redy, for sodenly dredefull
Dethe shall cum whan man þinkeþ lest. Ecclesiastici xj°,
"Memor esto, quoniam mors non tardabit." Hereto accordyth
Seint Austen, "De Spiritu et Anima", saying þus, "Nec inicium,
nec finem meum scio. Nescio aut quo venio aut quo vado, sed
95   plane scio quod mortales sumus, et quamuis volumus quamuis
omnes moriemur. Nichil enim morte cercius, nec hora mortis
incercius". Seint Austyn seith, "I knowe noþer my begynnyng
nor my last ending, ffor I wote not from whens I cum, nor

54 within] with (hym cancelled) in MS.
98 my] nor my repeated MS.

whidir I shall go. But playnly oon þing I knowe well þat ys
100   [211v] certeyn *and* sekir, þat all we be mortall *and* dedely,
and wheþer we will or no we shall dy. For noþing is more
certeyn nor sykyr as deth, nor noþing so vnsekyr as þe oure
of dethe". There*fore* be redy, for Dethe hath spoiled *and*
slayne elder þan þou art *and* yonger þan þou art.
105   Wherefore Deth may be assembled and likenyd vnto an
yonge arch*ere* or a schoter. Su*m*tyme he shotyth o*ue*re þe
butt, su*m*tyme vndir, su*m*tyme on þe side, *and* su*m*tyme he
hittith þe prik wi*th* þe garlond. By þis but is vndirstond
e*ue*ry man lyving. Þe arch*ere* is Deth. *And* þan shotith he
110 above þe prik whan he sleeth one þat ⌈is⌉ oldere þan þou,
su*m*tyme lower whan he sleeth yonger þan þou, su*m*tyme on
bothe sydes of þe butte whan he sleeth þi broþer, þi suster,
wife or childe or eny of þi kyn. And so longe he shoteth,
þe atte last he hittith þe prik whan he sleeth þe. For
115 þou art vnto þe sharp arrowe of Dethe as a prik or a mark in
þe butte. Tren*orum* 3⁰, "Posuit me *quasi* sign*um* ad sagitta*m*".
     I rede in a story how on a tyme þere was a myghti *and* a
stronge tiraunt þat longe tyme beseged a kyng in his castell
where he lay. Whan þe tyrau*n*t perceyved þe kinge wolde not
120 yelde vp his castell to hym, he ordeynyd gu*n*nes *and* engynes
and dyd þem lose vnto þe castell, *and* at euery stroke of þe
engynes he cast in a *lettre* writen to þe kyng. The first
scripture *and* writing was þis:
        "Kyng, be þou redy, wach *and* wake;
125   Or þou be ware I woll þe take".
[The secunde tyme he wrote þus:]
        "Though þou be stovt, noble *and* gay,
        Thou shalt yelde þe castell, yf I may".
The þird tyme he wrote þus:
130   "O þou kyng, aslake þi boste,
        For Deth is ny to take þi goste".
Gostely bi þis [tyraunt is] vndirstond dredefull Deþe þat no
man he sparith, riche, pore, yonge nor olde. This kyng in þe
castell ys vndirstonde ma*n*nis soule þat is closid in þe body
135 as a kinge in þe castell. This tyraunt Deth yevith iii saw*tis*
to þe kyng, ma*n*nis soule. First Deth seyþ in youthe þus,
"Yonge man, be þou redy, wache *and* wake; or þou be ware I woll
þe take". But whan seith Deth þ*us*? Pleynly, whan he sendith
þe sikenes, by the which þou maiste vndirstond evidently *and*
140 þink, notwithstonding in þy yowthe.   [212r] Ecclesiastici
7⁰, "Ne impie agas *et* noli esse stultus ne moriaris in tempore
non tuo". The wise man seyth, "Do þou not wikkedly, be þou
no fole þat thow dye not in þat tyme þat is not thyne". As
who sey: suche tyme as þou art not redy to Godward. The
145 secunde tyme, Dethe leyth a sawte in þe myddis of þi life in
thy best lyking seying þus, "Though þou be stronge *and* gaye,
þou shall yelde þe castell, if I may". And þis ys whan he
send*ith* the not oonly bodily sikenes but also *tribulacions*,

126 The . . . þus] *omitted* MS.
132 tyraunt is] *omitted* MS.

diseses, sclaundrys, motyng, pletyng, by which þou maiste
150   well vndirstond that þe worlde is fals *and* disseyvable.
Ecclesiastici xjᵒ, "Nescit homo quod tempus pretereat et mors
appropinquat et relinquat omnia alijs et morietur." As who
sey: man woll not knowe in his best liking þat deth ys nygh,
and all that he hath he shall leve behynde hym to othir and
155   he shall dye. The thrid tyme, Dethe leyth a sawte to the in
thyne age, sending þe nowe hard tokenes seying thus, "O þou
man, slake þi boste, ffor Dethe is ny to take þi goste".
Whan spekith thus Dethe vnto þe? In þyn age without [doute],
whan þere apperith in þy body tokenys *and* signes þat þou
160   maiste well knowe þat þou art atte þe pyttis brynk. Þat is
to sey:
                Whan þi handis quaketh,
                Þi lippes blaketh,
                Thyne hed rokkyth,
165   Þy nose droppith,
                Þy shynnes sharpith,
                Þi synewes starkith,
                Þi brest pantith,
                Þy breth wantyth,
170   Thy tethe rattlyth,
                Thi þrote rotelyth.
                Anon þou thenkkest þyn hert wolde brast
                For þy life may not last.
Ecclesiastici 14, "Homo, memor esto quoniam mors non tardabit."
175   The secunde question may not be axed of þis man þat
Dethe hath þus spoyled – whereby he may þe rather helpe *and*
make hym riche ageyn? It may be answerd, without fayle
[212v] bi the speciall suffrages *and* precious prayers of
Holy Chirch he may be releved, holpe and socoured *and* be
180   restored to moo *and* gretter riches, delytes, honoures,
dignitees, ffrendshippes, ioyes *and* salaces þen euere had
beforn. In which suffrages be these: prayers, ffastingis,
almus and þe immolacion in offering of Cristis body, þe holy
sacrament of þe awter. As Seint Austyn wryteth in a decree,
185   xiijᵃ q. ijᵃ, "Anime defunctorum 4ᵒʳ modis soluuntur."
Doctours seyn þo soules þat lyen in purgatory þei must be
holpe from peyn oþer be þe wey of grace or ellis by þe wey of
rightwisnes. Bi þe wey of grace as þus, by devout, besy and
diligent prayers of rightful men. Iacobi 2, "Multum valet
190   deprecacio iusti assidua." And bi immolacion vnto God whan
verrey Goddis body is offerid in þe messe. Figure of þis,
Machabeorum 12, de Iuda Machabeo, how þat a myghti prince
called Iudas Machabeus was meved of pyte þat he sende to
Ierusalem xij millia dragmys of syluere to offre þere in
195   messis for þe defawtis of þem þat were dede, where it is seid
in þe text folowyng, "Sancta et salubris est cogitacio pro
defunctis exorare vt a peccatis soluantur." That is to sey,
it is full holy, merytory *and* medefull to pray for þem þat
be dede, þat þei may be relevid of þeire synnes *and* take
200   vnto Goddis mercy. Secunde, soules in purgatory be holpe

158 doute] *omitted* MS.

per viam iusticie, bi way of rightwisnes thus, in geving
almous, Thobie 4°, "Elemosina ab omni peccato et a morte
liberat", or ellis bi þe way of rightwisnes as þus, paying
peyne for peyne by ffastingis, pilgrimagis and oþir grete
205   werkis of penaunce ffor þo soules þat be in peynes,
Prouerbiorum 10, "Iusticia liberauit a morte animas
defunctorum." By þis ⌜wey⌝ of rightwisnes soules in purgatory
be delyuered from endeles dampnacion.
    The þird question is þis - who is bounde to helpe and
210   releve oure ffrende N.? It is answerd, his executours,
chosen of trust to do for hym, and oþer ffrendis þat he gafe
a parte to of his goodis, to whom þe soule cryeth day and
night, "Miseremini ⌜mei⌝, miseremini mei, saltem vos, amici
mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me" -
215   "Haue mercy [213r] on me,
            Ye þat my frendis be,
            For þe hande of God hath touched me".
And þeire executours and þeire frendis helpe þeym not with
his owne godes at his nede, they be in grete perell beforn
220   God and dampned but if þei make a seethe. Nota narracio de
milite in prelio interfecto supra in alia exortacione. For
oure ffrende N.-
            Of all þat he was wont to haue
            Is left hym oonly but his grave.
225   For if it be axed whose be þe londis or þese houses, þis
grounde, þis wife, þis childe, I shall answere: it were his,
but not his now. But goo to his grave and axe: who is this?
It shall be answerd and seyd: þis is his grave. And all
oþer goodis and catellis he shall leve to oþer men þat he was
230   wont to haue, and oonly left hym but his graue. Psalmo 48,
"Relinquent alienis diuicias et sepulcra eorum domus illorum
in eternum." These wordis ben seyde of þis man and of all
oþer þat be dede - thei haue left þeire goodis and rycches
to oþer men, but þe graues of þem is þeire houses into þe
235   worldes ende. For all þeire rycches, dignytees, honouris,
delites, ffrendshippis ben goodis of þe worlde and þe worlde
woll kepe þem to deceyve oþer as it deceyved hym.
    Wherefore þe worlde wele may be likenyd and assemblid
vnto a certeyn citee, þat of custom þei wolde chese þem euery
240   yere a new kyng þat knewe not of þeire lawes. And whan þe
yere was com to an ende, þat king shuld be banysshed into
straunge lande and neuer cum oute after, nor haue gode of
þem, nor after to be putte to worship with them. Vpon a tyme
þei chose þem a newe king and he vndirstode wele þat he shuld
245   regne vpon þe cite but oon yere. And so by grete policie and
wisdom he gaderyd togedir all þe rycches and tresoure þat he
myght spare and sent all þat rycches into þat ilelande where

207 ⌜wey⌝] ⌜weys⌝ MS.   234 men] and of all oþer þat be dede
þei haue left þeire goodis and rycches to oþer men repeated MS.
247 into] 'the lande of' added MS; -lande] cancelled MS.

he shuld be putte in to helpe hymself withall in his nede as
longe as he lyved. This wise kynge þat sent before hym his
250   rycches, goodis and tresour into a str[au]nge londe [i]s
euery wise man [þat] must remembre þat he shall dye, that
with his handis dothe almus dedis and spendith his goodis to
Goddis worship þat he may fynde þem in þe kyngdam of heven
after þat he be banysshed and put dovn bi deth oute of þis
255   worde. [213v]
     I fynde þere was a grete lorde vpon a tyme þat had a
fool. The lorde dyd make a babull and gafe it vnto þis fool
and commaundid neuer to gefe his babull vnto he founde a more
fool þan he was. So by þe visitacion of God, þe lorde was
260   passing sike vnto þe dethe. His meaneall men seide oon to
anoþer, "Mi lorde goeth; he may not abide". Þe fool herd
þis. He toke his babull and went into þe chambre. He come
to þe lorde and axed hym, "Whidir shall þou goo, lorde?"
He answerd, "I wote not". "Whan shall þou cum ayene?" Þe
265   lorde seid, "I wote not". "How longe shall þou abide þere?"
"I wote not". "Now certes, I may wele sey þou art a fole if
þou go þou wote not whidir, nor how shalt ffare whan þou
commyst þere, nore wotist not whan þou shall cum ageyn, nor
how longe tyme þou shall abide þere. Whi sendist [þou not]
270   beforn þe caryage with vitayll and such þingis as were
necessari vnto þe whan þou commyst þere? I holde þe a more
fole þan I am. Have þou now my babull." Þe lorde vnderstode
þat wisdam was in his wordis, so forthwith he gafe grete
almous and gafe away with his handis a grete parte of his
275   goodis and disposid hym all to Godward and made an holy ende.
So in like wyse eueri Cristen man, þat shall dye and passe
oute of þis transsitory life whidir he wote not, how he shal
fare þer we knowe not. We must þerefore send before us almus
and dedis of merci and pyte into þe tresory of God, ffor
280   almous is a grete sikernes and trust to all þem þat do it
beforn God. Thobie 4°, "Fiducia magna erit coram Deo
elimosina omnibus ffacientibus eam." For on peny gife in þi
life profetiþ more þan many after þi dethe.
     Lat þem be þi mirroure þat be dede and passed oute of
285   þis worlde, and þere þou shall vndirstond what þou art and
what þou shalt ⌐be⌐. For beaute, ffayrenes, wisdam,
ffrendeship, ricches, delites, honours, dignytees and all such
be take from þe in þi dethe, ffor þi body is but stynking
careyn þat from þe erthe it come and to þe erth it shall turne
290   ageyn. Therefore knowe þou wele þiself, what þou art and what
þou shal be, and whidir þou shall goo. Full sekir, þi body
to þe erthe and perhappis þi soule to þe peynes of purgatory.
Aray þe þen and make redy þi way þat þou may cum to þe life
þat is euerlasting, which graunte vs þat gracius and mercifull
295   Savioure Criste Ihesu that dyed for mercy vnto man. Amen.

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250 straunge] stronge MS;   is] as MS.   251 þat] *omitted* MS.
269 þou not] *omitted* MS.

I fynde þe was a grete lorde. vpon a tyme þt had a fool þe lorde dyd
make a babull & gafe it vnto his fool & comaundid; neu to gefe his
babull vnto he founde a more fool þan he was. So by þe visitacion
of god þe lorde was passing sike vnto þe dethe. his meneall menstre
be oon to anoþ. say lorde goeth he may not abide þe fool herd þis
he toke his babull & went in to þe chamber. he come to þe lorde & ayed
hy whidur shalt þu goo lorde. he answerd I wote not. whan shalt þu
cū agayne. þe lorde seid I wote not. how longe shalt þu abide þere.
wote not. þoss certes I may wele say þt art a fole. eff þu goo þu wote
not. whidur nor how shalt þare. whan þu comyst þis. nore wotist not
whan þu shalt cū agayn. nor how longe tyme þu shalt abide þe
whi benedist be forn þy vyayage wt vitayll & such þings as were necessar
vnto þy. whan þu comyst þis holde þe a moy fole þan I am. habe
þu now my babull. þe lorde vndstode þt wisdam was in his
wordes. So forth wt he gafe grete almes & gafe away wt his handes
a grete þre of his goodis & dyspofd hym all to godward & made
an holy ende. So in like wyse. euy cristen man þt shall dye & passe
oute of þis trusiory life. whidur he wote not. how he shal fare þ.
we knowe not. we must þe forsend before us. almse dedes of mcy
& pyte in to þe cefery of god. for almose a grete þing is & quyt
to all þem þt do it be forn god. Thobie. & Chidnein may oure conā
doo elmosina sibz faciendz ea. for on peny gafe in þy life is of ety
moy þan many aft þy dethe. lat þom be þy executour þt be dede
& passed oute of þis worlde. And þe þu shalt vndstond what
þu art & what þu shalt. for bewte fayrnes wisdm stren
desship riches. delites. honours. dignytees & all such. betake
from þe in þy dethe. for þy body is but stynking cayeyn. þt
from þe erthe it come. And to þe erth it shall turne agayn
therfore knowe þu wele þi self what þu art & what þu shal
be & whidur þu shalt goo. And þen þi body to þe erth &
þhappeis þi soule to þe payns of purgatory. I pay þe þen
& make redy þi way þt þu may cū to þe life þt is eulasting
which graunte vs þat grace & mafull Almesse cū þis
that dyed for þe to man. Amen

DEO GRACIAS

Notes to the Text

In Die Sepulture seu Trigintali] The sermon is suitable for
preaching at either a burial ("in die sepulture") or a trental or
month's mind ("seu trigintali"). It is perhaps more apt for the
latter, since the body seems already to be buried ("whose body hath
his sepulture in þis sanctuary", 1.13).
    The sermon is edited from MS Harley 2247 and emendations are
conjectural. Punctuation, capitalisation and word-divisions are
modernised throughout. The MS's use of ff has been retained except
where modern usage requires a capital. Suspensions and contractions
have been expanded and the expanded letters italicised. ƈ is
expanded as is. Superscript additions are indicated by half
brackets.

1-27   In that it begins and ends with the text of the sermon, and
requests the audience for prayer, this opening section performs the
function of the prothema of the more structured "University" sermon
(see Ross, Middle English Sermons, pp.xliii-lv).

1 Solum . . . 17] Job xvii, 1. This opening sentence, from a
sapiential book used extensively in the liturgy for the dead, serves
as the thema for the sermon. Job xvii, 1 begins the first reading
of the third nocturn of the Office of the Dead (see Breviarium ad
Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum, ed. F. Proctor and C. Wordsworth
(Cambridge, 1879), II, col. 277).

2 Right worshipfull ffrendis] The opening tone of address is
respectful and suggests a prosperous lay audience. One may contrast
the more familiar formula, "Good men and women", favoured in the
Festial, which was aimed at a largely illiterate audience.

2-7 it . . . þemself] One of the seven deeds of corporal mercy,
helping those in prison, is used as an exemplum of the importance
of helping prisoners in purgatory. A reference may be intended to
one of the seven deeds of spiritual mercy, praying for the sinful.
The preaching of both sets of deeds of mercy was an essential require-
ment of the curatus after the Lambeth Constitutions of 1281 and
their endorsement by Archbishop Thoresby of York in 1357. (For the
English translation of Thoresby's decree, which includes a section
on the deeds of corporal and spiritual mercy, see Blake, M.E.
Religious Prose, pp.73-87).
    Patterns of alliteration are apparent in these opening lines
("bounde in bodely preson", "merytory and medefull", "peyned in þe
preson of purgatory") and elsewhere in the sermon. Alliteration as
an ornament for local effect is, of course, common in medieval
sermons.

13 N.] "N." designates "Nomen", a cue for the preacher to insert
at this point the name of the dead man (cf. the funeral sermons of
MS Barlow 24). The use of "N." is a further indication of the
adaptability of the collection for preaching requirements.

whose . . . sanctuary] This line affords no precise indication
of the nature of the burial, lavish or modest, in church or outside.
The word "sanctuary" is recorded in OED from the fifteenth century
on, meaning either "churchyard" or, perhaps less commonly, "chancel".
Mirk in his *Instructions for Parish Priests* (ed. E. Peacock, EETS,
OS 31 (London, 1868), p.11, 1.330) seems to differentiate "chyrche"
and "seyntwary", while in his *Festial* notes on "Qui sunt sepeliendi
in cimiterio", "sentuary" is used for the general enclosure of church
and churchyard (ed. Erbe, pp.297-9).

19   At this point in the MS a marginal "nota bene" has been added
in a hand other than the scribe's.

26-7   Couplet translation of the Latin *thema* was a common practice
of medieval sermon writers (see Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons*, p.80).
The couplet has been noted by Wenzel in "Unrecorded Middle English
Verses", *Anglia* 92 (1974), 68, no.47, and again (together with other
vernacular tags from the sermon) by K. Bitterling in "Signs of
Death and Other Monitory Snatches from MS Harley 2247", *N & Q*, n.s.
26 (1979), 102.   It is repeated at 11.72-3, 223-4 and 229-30 below.
     MS Barlow 24 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford includes a
funeral sermon which introduces the text from Job xvii, 1 and
translates it with a similar couplet (f.207r-v):
                    "Of all þat I was wont to haue
                    To me alone ys lefte my graue".
The couplet has been printed by A.J. Fletcher ("'I Sing of a
Maiden'", 108), who notes that it is also found in two other sermons
in the collection.   More sustained verbal connections may be dis-
covered in the two MSS (see Notes to 11.77-83, 105-14 and 184-208),
which are also connected by their dependence on the *Fasciculus
Morum*.   (An article on its relation to the Barlow MS is in prepar-
ation by S. Powell.   For its relation to the Harley MS, see Fletcher
and Powell, "Origins", 78-80, 88-90.)

28-70   This section seems to serve as an introduction to the
principal three-fold discussion of the theme which is the sermon
proper.   The rhyming antonyms, "reft" and "left", are used in the
questions asked about the dead man, "What is reft hym?" and "What
is left hym?" (11.31, 33).   The answer to each question introduces
one line each of the *thema* couplet - "Certis, all þat he was wont
to haue" and "Vndirstonde it, verrey riȝt nought but his grave"
(11.32, 34).   The summing-up in 11.35-36 involves the rhyming of
"nought" and "wrought", facilitated by the postponement of the
past participle "wrought".   Cf. Note to 11.215-17.
     The rest of the section deals with those worldly joys of which
the dead man is reft, and these are treated in what may be a cor-
ruption of an original three-fold division into riches, worships
and delights, the first two dealt with together (11.43-66) and the
third mentioned only cursorily (11.67-70).

39-42   The scribe here comments in the margin: "q*uod* gaudium
istius transitorij mundi nichil valet *et consistit in* tribus,
scilicet, in diuicijs, in honoribus *et* delicijs".

48-66   This *exemplum* is the first of three portions of the text
which may have been derived from the *Destructorium Viciorum* of
Alexander Carpenter (see Fletcher and Powell, "Origins", 91).
However, Siegfried Wenzel has pointed out to us the existence of
the *exemplum* in the *Fasciculus Morum* (cf. Bodleian Library MS
Rawlinson C.670, f.81v), and for further modification of the
Destructorium evidence see Note to 11.105-14 below.

56   leve]   The final -þ of the third person singular has probably
been assimilated to the initial þ- of the following word, "þem".

69-70   he . . . mete]   A verb may be missing from the second half
of the co-ordinate clause ("his . . . mete"), although it is
possible that the referent of "shall be tormentid" is "his stynking
careyn", as well as "he".

71-174   This is the first division of a three-fold division of
the main body of the sermon. It is unusual, however, that there is
no indication at this point that the sermon is to be divided in
this way, and the text is perhaps corrupt (see Note to 11.175-208).
Certainly, the second and third divisions seem to presuppose such
an initial explanation ("The secunde question", 1.175; "The þird
question", 1.209).
    Alongside the first question ("Quis eum spoliauit?", 11.73-4)
the scribe has noted in the margin, "*prima* questio quis istum
mortuum spoliauit". The question is answered by a description of
Death through Biblical and patristic quotation, an *exemplum* and a
narratio.

77-83   oon . . . dredefull]   This passage is very close to part of
one of the Latin funeral sermons in MS Barlow 24, f.212r: "Et merito
est mors terribilis, cum sit rex magnus et fortis qui regnat ab
Adam super totum genus humanum, sicut dicit Apostolus, Romanos 5.
Iste rex terribilis est quia nulli parcet, ymmo, nec filio Dei".
It seems that in translating this passage from Latin into English,
it was assumed that the Biblical reference referred to the following,
rather than the preceding, quotation. The Harley MS therefore cites
the second sentence ("Iste . . . Dei") in the original Latin, while
translating into English the actual quotation from Paul's letter to
the Romans v, 14. Moreover, later re-arrangement of the text,
involving the insertion of "He . . . place" (11.80-1), has meant
the separation of the Biblical reference (1.81) from the text to
which it refers ("His . . . mankynde", 11.78-80).

84   cause . . . ffor]   "Cause whi" is a frequent idiom in the Harley
MS (cf. ff.38v, 85v, 86r, 107r, 107v, 109r, etc.). Where it occurs
without a dependent verb, it seems to mean "why?", but in other
cases, as here, the interpretation might be "the reason why" (see
MED, *cause*). A translation of the sentence might be: "and the
philosopher gives the reason why – because . . .".

92   Memor . . . tardabit]   Ecclesiasticus xiv, 12.

93-103   The quotation is indeed from Augustine's *De Spiritu et*

Anima (*PL* 40, col. 800). The sentence "Nichil enim morte cercius nec hora mortis incercius" (11.96-7) refers to two of the Three Sorrowful Things (see Note to 11.256-75). In the *Pricke of Conscience* it is variously ascribed to Bernard and Augustine (see Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, pp.531-2). It appears too in the *Meditatio* vii of Anselm (see Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p.86, note 2).

105-14   This *exemplum* has been suggested as the second borrowing from the *Destructorium* (see Fletcher and Powell, "Origins", 91). It also occurs, however, in the sermon "in anniuersario cuiuscumque defuncti" in MS Barlow 24, f.211v: "Et mors non solum senes capit, sed et iuuenes, senes et fortes. Vnde est de morte sicut de sagittante ad signum qui quandoque mittit sagittam vltra signum, quandoque citra signum, et quandoque signum percutit. Sic mors quandoque senes, quandoque iuuenes, infantes et fortes in maxima prosperitate accipit".

114 þe (1)]   This seems to be a survival of the Old English relative pronoun (recorded as late as c1460 in OED, *The*, particle, 3). Cf. f.123r of the same MS ("þe brennyng love and fervent charitee þe we must haue").

116   Posuit . . . sagittam]   Lamentations iii, 12.

117   The scribe here notes "Narracio" in the margin.

132   Gostely]   This word is often used in sermons and other devotional works to introduce an interpretation of a text which is not after the literal sense. Here its meaning may be rendered, "tropologically" (for this and other types of medieval exegesis, see H. Caplan, "The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation", *Speculum* 4 (1929), 282-90).

     tyraunt is]   The omission may be explained by *homeoteleuton* (the similar appearance of "þis" and "is").

132-57   This tropological interpretation of the three assaults of a tyrant upon a castle as the assaults of Death on the "Castle of Mansoul" is a variation on a traditional theme used in, for example, Part Seven of the *Ancrene Wisse*, and the *Castle of Perseverance*. See Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, p.80. On the Three Ages of Man mirrored in the three assaults, see p.204 above.

141-2   Ne . . . tuo]   Ecclesiastes vii, 18.

151-2   Nescit . . . morietur]   Ecclesiasticus xi, 20.

158   doute]   As at 1.132 above, the omission may be explained by the fact that "withoute" and "doute" have similar endings in "oute".

162-73   This lyric in the extremely popular Signs of Death tradition has probably been taken from the *Fasciculus Morum* (cf. MS Rawlinson C.670, f.148v). This relationship was noticed independently by

Fletcher and Powell ("Origins", 90) and Wenzel (*Verses in Sermons*, pp.44, 198-9). It has been printed by Wenzel (p.199) and by Bitterling ("Signs of Death", 102). The *Fasciculus* text is printed by Wenzel (p.197) and in *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century*, ed. C. Brown (Oxford, 1932), p.222.

174 Homo . . . tardabit] Ecclesiasticus xiv, 12.

175-208   The confident statement, "The secunde question" (1.175), suggests that the three questions on which the sermon is based have already been mentioned. The fact that this is not the case in our extant version, together with the strange use of "not" in the same line, suggests corruption. See Note to ll.71-174 above.
     The secund question to be introduced is: "whereby he may þe rather helpe and make hym riche ageyn?" (ll.176-7), and the scribe augments the text by the marginal comment "2ª questio hec est per quid potest iste defunctus leuius iuuari". Four ways are cited, according to a decree attributed to St Augustine, and these four ways are shown to correspond to either the way of grace (in prayers and the Mass) or the way of righteousness (in alms, fasting, etc.). The whole is illustrated by Biblical quotation.

181-2 þen . . . beforn] The omission of the pronoun in such a context is not uncommon (see T.F. Mustanoja, *A Middle English Syntax* (*Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki* 23, Helsinki, 1960), pp.138ff.).

184-208   The whole passage bears close comparison with part of the funeral sermon for a dead woman in MS Barlow 24 (f.208r); "Vnde ad hoc sepulturam huc venimus ut animam istius de pena reuelemus [*sic*] per 3ª que habentur in Can. 13. q. 2ª, 'Anime defunctorum', quod sunt oraciones et missarum celebracio, ieiunia, elemosinarum largicio. Et causa est quod anime existentes in purgatorio liberari a pena non possunt nisi per viam gracie aut viam iusticie. Per viam gracie ut per devotam oracionem et missarum celebracionem. Iacobi 2º, 'Multum valet deprecacio iusti assidua'. Per viam iusticie liberari possunt per modum redempcionis quod fit per penie implecionem et elemosinarum largicionem . . .".
     The decree cited here is from Causa 13, Quaestio 2, Capitulum 22 of Gratian's *Decretum* (see *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. E. Friedberg, (Leipzig, 1879), I, p.728). For further details, see p.197 above.

186-8   The scribe glosses the passage in the margin: "*doctores dicunt liberari non possunt a penia nisi aut per viam gracie aut per viam iusticie*".

189-90 Multum . . . assidua] James v, 16.

191-7   The incident is recorded in 2 Maccabees xii, 43, and the quotation is from v.46. The doctrine of purgatory is partly grounded on this passage (see footnote 16). A later hand has noted in the margin: "nota de Iuda Machabeo".

202-3 Elemosina . . . liberat] Tobit iv, 11.

206-7 Iusticia . . . defunctorum] Proverbs x, 2.

209-83 The third question is: "Who is bounde to helpe and releve oure ffrende N.?" (ll.209-10). The scribe notes in the margin: "3ª questio quis enim tenetur et debet eum iuuare vel relevare a miseria sua". If a man's executors fail him, he himself no longer possesses the help of worldly goods. The importance of good works as compensation for worldly goods is then urged through two narrationes.

213-14 Miseremini . . . me] Job xix, 21. These words, used in the Office of the Dead, are commonly put into the mouth of the dead man, as here. One of the funeral sermons in MS Barlow 24 is entirely built around the text, each part of which ("Miseremini", "vos", "amici mei") is analysed. The quotation is used in the prothema to the preceding funeral sermon in the Harley MS, f.207v. In a poem on the death of Edward IV it is put into the mouth of the dead King, who begins, "Miseremini mei, ye that ben my fryndys . . ." (Brown, Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century, p.159).

215-17 Haue . . . me] The Latin is translated into a sentence of rhymed prose, achieved by the postponement of "be" in "ye þat my frendis be".

220-1   The reference is to a narratio from the Legenda Aurea found in the preceding funeral sermon in the MS, f.209r (see p.198 above and footnote 34).

225-8   These lines may be compared with part of the Destructorium Viciorum (see Fletcher and Powell, "Origins", 92).

231-2   Relinquent . . . eternum] Psalm xlviii, 11-12.

238-55   Although this narratio circulated widely, a marginal note in the scribe's hand specifies its immediate source as the Gesta Romanorum ("In Gestis Romamorum" in scribe's hand and "Narracio" in a later hand). See F.C. Tubach, Index Exemplorum (Helsinki, 1969), no. 2907 ("King, for a year") and H. Oesterley, Gesta Romanorum (Berlin, 1872), p.224.

255 worde] The omission of l in "worlde" is amply recorded in OED (World, sub 𝛿). Cf. too the quotation from MS Worcester Cathedral Library F.10 at pp.199-200 above.

256-75   This narratio (marked in the margin by a scribal "Narracio") may be a modified version of one in the Fasciculus Morum (see Wenzel, Verses in Sermons, p.44 and footnote 148). Certainly Wenzel's earlier statement ("Chaucer and the Language of Contemporary Preaching", SP 73 (1976), 150), that the story here is a literal rendering of the Fasciculus text, is not correct.
    The fool's three questions are connected with the common topos of the Three Sorrowful Things (see Woolf, English Religious Lyric, p.86). One of the funeral sermons in MS Barlow 24 introduces an English verse on the same subject (f.211v):

> "Whan I thyng [*sic*] on thyngys iij,
> Sory may my hert be.
> One ys, þat I schall away;
> The second ys, I note how sone ne what day;
> The iij^d ys þen my moste care,
> That I wote neuer heder to fare."

(For other examples of the verse, see Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p.86 and Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons*, p.90.) The Barlow MS sermon continues with a *narratio* about Philip of France, in which the sentiments of the dying king may be compared with those of the king in the previous Harley MS *narratio* (11.238-49): "'Karissimi, magno tempore vobiscum vixi in diuicijs, delicijs et honoribus, ampla palacia et castra fabricaui quibus, cum michi placuit, nuncios misi ad hospicium michi preparandum. Sed ista vice non habeo nuncium ad hospicium michi preparandum quia ignoro quo ibo.'" (f.211v).

281-2 Fiducia . . . eam] Tobit iv, 12.

284-95   The sermon concludes with an exhortation that the memory of the dead may prepare the living for their own dissolution.