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THE IRELAND BLACKBURN MANUSCRIPT OF THE SEVEN PENITENTIAL PSALMS, THE PRICKE OF CONSCIENCE AND LAMENTACIO SANCTI ANSELMI.

"The Pricke of Conscience" was the most popular of Middle English devotional works. In *A Register of Middle English Religious and Didactic Verse*, II, 60, 114, 328-333, Professor Carleton Brown listed 99 copies and four fragments; Miss Hope Emily Allen (*Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle*, pp. 372 ff.) noted five MSS. and one fragment which have come to light since Carleton Brown's *Register* was printed; and to these may now be added the Ireland Blackburne text which, through the great kindness of Major Gilbert Ireland Blackburne of Hale Hall, Liverpool, was placed at my disposal for some weeks in 1933. This MS. is bound in a vellum wrapper lettered on the spine in a modern hand "Rolle—|Hermit|of Hampole|De Morte|Purgatorio|Die Judici|&c.—|1340." There is however no good reason for associating any one of the three works it contains with Richard Rolle. The version in eight-line stanzas rhyming *abababab* of "The Seven Penitential Psalms" is attributed to Rolle in the Bodleian MS. Digby 18; but the Bodleian MS. Rawlinson A. 389 states that it is "By frere Richarde Maydenstoon,

In Mary ordre of pe Carme."

Maydenstoon's authorship is accepted by Carleton Brown (*Register*, II, 182-3, 361). The evidence for the ascription of

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1 A fine window in the north aisle of All Saints', North Street, York, has representations of the Fifteen Last Days and at the bottom of each panel is an appropriate couplet derived from "The Pricke of Conscience." This window is illustrated in colour in the Rev. P. J. Shaw's *An Old York Church* (York, 1908).

2 There is a brief reference to this MS. at p. 70 of the anonymous *Hale Hall: with Notes on the Family of Ireland Blackburne*, Liverpool, 1881. The British Museum ascribes this book, which was printed for private circulation, to C. Blackburne, but the copy in the office of Messrs. John White and Company, of Warrington, agents for the Hale Hall estate, has pencilled on the title-page "by John Paul Rylands."

3 This hand is not earlier than the ownership of Mr. John Blackburne of Orford (ob. 1833), whose bookplate is carried by the MS.

4 M. Adler and M. Kaluza, who edited this work in *Anglia* x, 215-254, rightly assign it to the East Midland area but do not think it probable that it is the work of Maydenstoon, who was a Kentishman.
"The Pricke of Conscience" to Rolle has been shown by Miss Allen (Radcliffe College Monographs, No. 15, pp. 115-170 and Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, pp. 372-397) to be most unsatisfactory, while neither the language nor the style of the third is that of Rolle. This last is a homiletic poem of 200 octosyllabic verses grouped into stanzas rhyming *ababccbcbb*; the rhyme-word usually alliterates with at least one other syllable in the verse. Its first line is not recorded by Carleton Brown, nor have I been able to trace its publication elsewhere.

The manuscript, the parchment pages of which measure 9½ by 6½ inches, now comprises sixteen gatherings (the first of three sheets and the rest of four sheets) followed by a single leaf and a single sheet; the last leaf is pasted down to the inside of the back cover. There is no certain trace of foliation in the first two gatherings, but the first surviving leaf of the third bears the appropriate '16' in the top right hand corner of the recto and thence to the end of the fifth gathering the foliation offers no difficulty, though a little muddled in the fifth gathering, so that what is foliated '34' (see below) is really f. 35. It begins again with '45' on the first leaf of the sixth gathering that survives and, though often rendered illegible by damp, is apparently carried through to the end of the volume.5 Unless the foliation was in error this allows for the loss of a gathering of six folios only after f. 38—which may suggest that the missing section, as compared with the printed text of "The Pricke of Conscience," was a good deal abridged. In addition one sheet (ff. 18-19) and six single leaves have been cut out, in most, if not all, cases for the illumination they bore. Red and blue are used to good effect on almost every page, and illuminated initials and floriated borders survive at ff. 26a, 34a, 45b and 132b (this last affected by damp). They are of good quality, executed in gold-leaf, blue, red, white and (at f. 34a and f. 132b) green, and taken along with the hand show that the MS. belongs to the early part of the fifteenth century.

There are a number of marginal notes of no great interest

5 It was certainly carried out before the excision of the leaves specified below.
in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hands. Of greater interest and probably earlier in date are the "Ihus mercy" (top margin of f. 33b), apparently in the same hand as "Wyllm. Wilkyns" (fore-edge of f. 34a—according to the correct numbering), and the inscription written vertically in a single line on the fore-edge of f. 89a, "Rycharde Halter ys my name And withe my hande I wrote This same. Franciscus Quawden ow this boke &c."—which gives the name of an early owner of the manuscript.

The first and second gatherings, which were apparently copied independently of the rest, contain the greater part of "The Seven Penitential Psalms," though the Latin rubric at the head of each stanza is reduced to a single line, as "Laboraui in gemitu meo lauabo per singulas noctes," except at the beginning of the psalm where two lines in rubric are allowed. F. 1 is cut away except for a narrow strip at the top with traces of illumination; this is pasted down to the inside of the cover. The remainder of the first gathering corresponds to vv. 43-395. The first leaf of the second gathering has also been cut out, but ff. 8-14 cover from v. 467 to the end of the work, which has the colophon in red "Here ende the Seuene Psalmis." The bottom quarter of the page is left vacant and there is no catchword. Moreover the gatherings that follow are written in a hand certainly similar but not identical.

The first, fourth and fifth leaves of the third gathering have also been cut out; but ff. 16-17 and 20-38 correspond to vv. 78-237 and 404-1959 of the printed text of "The Pricke of Conscience."\(^6\) After f. 38 comes the lacuna I have described above. The sixth and seventh gatherings that survive correspond to vv. 2629-3915. F. 61 has been cut out; but ff. 62-90 (comprising the remainder of the eighth, the ninth, the tenth

\(^6\) The text presented by this MS. has passed through the hands of a Midland scribe who has removed many of the Northern characteristics of the language and in places modified his original. I hope that my pupil Mr. Joseph Lightbown, who is working on the "Pricke of Conscience," will be able to examine this text and discuss it in greater detail.
and the first six leaves of the eleventh gathering) correspond to vv. 3996-6353. F. 91 has been cut out; but ff. 92-104 (comprising the last leaf of the eleventh, the twelfth and the first four leaves of the thirteenth gathering) correspond to vv. 6437-7494. F. 105 has been cut out; but ff. 106-132a (comprising the last three leaves of the thirteenth, the fourteenth, the fifteenth and all but the last page of the sixteenth gathering) cover from v. 7560 to the end of “The Pricke of Conscience.” The colophon in red runs “Explicit Tractatus qui dicitur Stimulus conscientie.”

The third poem occupies ff. 132b-134b, which have been affected by damp and are in places very difficult or impossible to decipher. The poem, which I should say was originally written in a Central- to North-East Midland dialect of the fourteenth century, has as title in red “Incipit lamentacio sancti Anselmi.” It opens:

Qwhan drightew dere his doom schal dresse
And alle oure dedys demen on a day
Oure owyn werkys schuln bere witnesse
How we han went in wylsum way
And how we han wrout a3ens his wil
De prince þat may vs spare and spil
And fere vs with þe fendis fray
Þanne schal be schiftyd al with skil
Good for good and ille for il
And put in no lengere delay.

S. Anselm is introduced in Stanza V and the ‘lamentacio’ proper begins in Stanza VII. It is clearly based on S. Anselm of Canterbury’s “Deploratio male amissæ virginitatis” which forms the third of his “Meditationes” (Migne, Patrologia Latina, CLVIII, 725-729). Stanzas VII, VIII, IX and XX may be given as specimens, followed by the corresponding passages from S. Anselm:—

S. Anselm is twice cited by name in the “Pricke of Conscience”—vv. 2424 ff. and 8303 ff. in Morris.
And panhe he gan to grede and grone
And sy3ed for his synnis sere
And on pis wyse he mad his mone
With his sowle as 3e schuln here
A sowle he seyde wrecche of wrecchis
Pat deuelys alday with synne drecchis
Sum tyme pow was clensyd ful clere
Of ry3t rewle nowght now pow recchis
Tene schal turne vs fro8 for pin tecchis
Be dom of drightin dere.
A slepende soule sleke out pin slewthe
And deseure pe from synne
And in pin pow turne pin trewthe
How lo3 lif pow leuyst inne
And in pin herte tak good hede
Of pin dispytowsful mysdede
And of pin bryggows baret blynne
Now wayte wrecche wers pan wede
ffor pin defaute droupe and drede
Of mornyng wel panne my3t pow mynne.
Whys3t was pow waschin pow it wost
In baptem aftir pow was born
Enduyd with grace of pe holygost
To crystendom profest and sworn
And as a mayde pow were mary3ed
To cryst pat neuere kendenesse contraryed
And for pe corownd was with thorn
But now werkys wylde and wary3ed
Dere pow was virgyne pow art vary3ed
And loue of pin lele leraman lorn.

Wel may pow morne for pat myscheef
Pat pow pin lele loue hast for lete
Now is lucifer pin owyn leef
Lo whiche a lemman pow hast gete

8 fro is ‘under-dotted’ to indicate omission.
A carful chaungyng men may calle
To chaungyn hony for bittir galle
Dis marchaundise a mys is mete
Of alle thrallis he pat is thralle
Vn to his font now art pow falle
And crystis forward fowle f[or]3ete.


The poem, if of no very striking merit, does not attempt to reproduce the rhetorical devices of its source, which is freely paraphrased and expanded. For example, the comparison in Stanza XVIII of a soul in torment with a bear at the stake has no counterpart in S. Anselm's "Meditationes":

Pow schalt stande as bere at stake
ffor sorwe to swelle and neuere to swage
P ow schalt be beytyd as a bere.9

Stanzas VII-XX correspond however to two only of the seven paragraphs of the "Deploratio," and XX ends rather

9 It may have been influenced by the East Midland recension of the "Pricke of Conscience." Bodl. 2322 has in place of Morris, vv. 3294-5:
And som pat dethe sodeynely dothe take
In dedely synne bepe jbound as bere to pe stake.
(cf. C. D' Evelyn, PMLA xlv, 182). The Ireland Blackburne text has however
Some pat deeth here sodeynly sleth
In dedely sinne stre3t to helle geth
—which is merely a transposition of the Northern original into East Midland dialect.
abruptly without 'Explicit' or colophon in English. F. 135a, though left blank by the scribe, has the vertical rules of the foregoing pages, and it is possible that he has copied part only of a poem which may have been continued at some length. The "Lamentacio sancti Bernardi" edited by G. Kribel (Anglia viii, 67-114) runs to 97 eight-line stanzas.

The following words of lexicographical interest are found in the printed and unprinted stanzas of the poem:—

bryggows (77), 'factious' (NED. brigous).
contraryed (86), 'thwarted' (NED. contrary, v.).
dispytowsful (76), 'malicious (not in NED.).
enduyd (83,=dotata), 'endowed' (prob. earlier than any example cited under NED. endow or endue).
fyle (Thow fornicacioun pow fyle 151), 'rascal' (NED. file, sb.4).

mystecchis (oure mystecchis Schal turne vs panne to trey3e and tene 33), 'bad habits' (NED. mistetch, sb.).
pleizende (in pleizende pych 26), 'boiling' (NED. play, v.).
recuryngge (in recuryngge of his right 20), 'recovery' (not in NED.).
sleke out (71), 'shake off' (sense not recorded under NED. sleek, v.1).
specyal (He pat was pin lemmman lele Pin spowse and al pin specyal 92), 'male lover' (NED. special).
stake (173), 'post to which a bear is fastened to be baited' (much earlier in this precise sense than any example in NED.).
trey3e (oure mystecchis Schal turne vs panne to trey3e and tene 34; to tray and tene 39), 'affliction' (NED. tray, sb.1).

vary3ed (90), 'maculate' (sense not recorded under NED. varied).

Bruce Dickins.