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TWO MANUSCRIPTS OF THE PRICKE OF CONSCIENCE IN THE BROTHERTON COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

BY K. W. HUMPHREYS AND J. LIGHTBOWN

In 1950 two manuscripts of the *Pricke of Conscience* were purchased for the Brotherton Collection. As neither of these volumes has been fully described elsewhere, a detailed account of the two manuscripts may assist anyone working not only on the *Pricke of Conscience*, but also on the various shorter pieces contained in one of the volumes.

Leeds University, MS Brotherton Collection 500.


pe my3t of pe fader al my3ty
pe wytt of pe sone al witty.

Explicit: To pe wiche place vs alle brynge

Jhesus kyng ouer vch kynge. Amen.

After l 2689 is interpolated:

Querunt multi cur deus homines fecerit qui peccare potuit . . . per septimum vitam nostram in fine debito consummare.

Binding: Rebound in 1896 in imitation vellum. Lettered on cover: PRICK OF CONSCIENCE BY RICHARD . ROLLE COMMONLY CALLED RICHARD DE HAMPOLE. Lettered on spine: PRICK OF CONSCIENCE BY RICHARD DE HAMPOLE.

Fly-leaves: f i. Examples of alliteration.

ff ij-iiij. Biographical sketch of Robert Grosseteste copied from Rees' *Cyclopedia* xvii (London 1819), Sig. G 2.

ff iv-vj. J. B. Yates's description of his own MS of the poem taken from *Archaeologia* xix (1821), 314-34, in the handwriting of T. C. Neale, a former owner.
f viij. Notes on owners of this MS by Frederick A. Harrison, grandson of T. C. Neale.


Collation: 147 folios, paginated in last century, probably by T. C. Neale.

[i-x] A⁸, B⁸ + 2 cancels, C⁸, D⁸, E⁹ + cancel, F¹¹ + cancel, G⁸, H⁸, J⁷ + cancel, K⁸ - Q⁸, R¹⁰ + two cancels, S⁶.

Signatures below last two words in the final line have mostly been trimmed away by the binder but are visible on several pages.

Text: Early 15th-century hand written on vellum with flesh side outside and like facing like throughout where not affected by cancels. There are some corrections in a slightly later hand and annotations in a much later hand. The text is not punctuated except at the beginning and at the end. All rubrication is in red. There are no paragraph marks, headings, running titles or rhyme brackets. There are damp stains on the lower fore edge of most leaves.

Ruling: The ruling is in ink: two vertical and two horizontal lines, now almost imperceptible, formed a frame for the text. In many cases the flesh side only is ruled. The text varies from 28 to 33 lines to a page with one column on each page.

Provenance: There is no trace of the history of this MS until it belonged in the nineteenth century to T. C. Neale, governor of the Essex County Jail at Chelmsford. It passed into the possession of Neale’s grandson, Frederick A. Harrison, by 1898 and was sold in 1920 at Sotheby’s. It was in the collection of Sir Leicester Harmsworth until 1945, when it was again sold at Sotheby’s. It is mentioned by H. E. Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle* (New York 1927), 377.

*Leeds University, MS Brotherton Collection 501.*

Contents:

1. ff 1a-58b. *Pricke of Conscience*, ll 1130 to the end.
for all men after somys daio that be there they shal sandle ap
pe god in their lawes rest a pe the ley in proven y menys shal say.
Now the theere y the crevynne was shoold y and sandle more to men
that shal nether do gude presc we trewe by the men y montyne shal y no be
ye sable nether do sandle for saumyn but all the ethe shal be than enyn playn.
And be made so stray and clevere as ever ysshall that her ye sone
nolde have ye her y the trew of the bay of her y many wan stry.
And of ymbrey y of tomys ete y men bryte shal se and here
And beth the trewd h the nolde shew the home as nolde shal be.
As men may finde quide so theyll bode in the hyte party of ethe bode.
Here on ethe y no longer sandle// but go to the nort part folowward.
Thet at cyphe sandle as at wem eny of the plys of helle y am caddles
yet the fynys at full folk and hard// as ye may here afterward/
Eche man beth the yong y olde// may be how to yer therfys at told-
Lamentee etwam ye pons within.

Any man myght of helle but of the plys sandle can tell
For there ye no myght lusth there// that plyn the uynful y that sele
The grete Sede they shal be bode// as quene they on that plyn sbole.
And theser y men brothet not tryste// the plys y melle an snyght
Bryght eche eche for oynful man y that sbole ye as y can//
A party of the plys sone// as ye afterward shall here
Thet beth y selle ye// where ye beth// as y han selle great sself-tell
And oynful yad y obb ye~ as moore// as spoke of plys y ten there
Dem clerh y sone as the bode butn y selle emyn treys the etche es
All the etche be selle may bemyg be to a round amyke of a tre
Y eny in the mypye hast a ayle// ye may be bemyg to an egge yole
For as a solt ye tymes bache// the yole of an egge quene ye vys yole
Therefore the tryste telle the selle treys the etche to mos but of ethel.
And as the yolle treys the egge yole// y the blichea a bold p of same byke
Yo ye the etche selle bont bont y mypye the hierous y doth a bold
This why men be to an egge snyght boch bemon Phale // the treys yought y
Sull yntt Palesl bort ye as y boll for quoy y the etche ye vys yole
Thus we the uynful shall be shrty as some as the home ye pwyn
Yntt all the scone yntt to smycke not bort in the ayer a ther
Theare shall they then be all to goth// we folk they be y that am ther
Neither ye do myyn bode and selle// Phaltre plys selle lang tak.
That all the clerh y selle shal sandle y selle that es lenwy zullt.
Incipit: Omne quod est in mundo aut est concupiscencia carius aut est concupiscencia oculorum aut superbia vite Concupycscens of flesh ys o thng/þ fallyth to fleshly lykyng.

Explicit: To whych place he vs all bryng/þ for oure hele on rode ded hyng. Amen.

After l 9532 is interpolated:
Conclusio compilatoris . . . Preteria iste libellus prefatus per idonium clericum fuit in loquela anglica compilatus et pro laicis ad intelligendum euocatus.

2. ff 59a-67b. Thomas of Wimbledon's sermon on the text 'Redde racionem villicacionis tue' preached at Paul's Cross, 1388.

Incipit: Here beginnyth a notabill matyr extracte in the maner of a sermoun . . . puppyshid and prechid at Poulis cros in London the 3eris of oure lord crist jhesus þ tyme beyng mccciii et viij [sic].

Explicit: But ioye and ioye to hem that be sauyd, ioye in god, ioye in hemself, ioye in othir that be sauyd. Also ioye for here trauayle ys brought to so gracious an ende, ioye for they scapid the peyn of helle. Joye for the endeles blys that they haue in the syght of god. To whom be wurship and glorye in to worldis of worldis. Amen.

3. ff 68a-74a. Prose treatise of the seven deadly sins.

[Imperfect.]

Incipit: Here begynnyth a notabyll tretys of the sevyn dedly synnys and of her braunchis.

Explicit: Now from thes sennys and al othyr cryst kepe vs thorw3 his grace and aftyr oure deth vs to brynge to his blyssyd and eternall place. Amen.

4. ff 74a-81a. Prose treatise on the ten commandments.

Incipit: Here beginnyth a tretys of the ten commandmentis as folwith here: O ye crystyn men ye shal vndyrstande that all manyr of pepill that shal be sauyd and go to blys.

Explicit: and lete we prey to hym nyght and day þ he sende vs grace to fultylle his comand and leue in this worlde to his blyssyd plesing þ when we shal dye we may
come to that place he hath promised us of his mercy and charity. Amen.

5. ff 81a, b. *The seven deeds of mercy.*
Incipit: A declaration of the seven deeds of mercy that are bodily here folwith. Of the seven deeds of mercy God shall speak at the day of doom.
Explicit: Depart ye from me ye cursed folk into everlastingly fire that is ordained to the devil and his angels for ye dide not the deeds of mercy neither bodily nor ghostly.

6. ff 82a-88b. *A form of confession.*
Incipit: O my brother art young of age whiche canst not confess thyself.
Explicit: Whiche lord through his precious passyon felle the myght and the host of the fende and sende us grace to come to his euerlastynge ioye and solace with hym to regne without ende. Amen.

Incipit: Here begynnyth a lytyl matyr of the gloryous virgyne oure lady seynt marye . . . Wurshypfull frendys we rede among myraculys of oure lady .
Explicit: And than qwan hys tyme was come he deyde and went to the ioyes of heuyn and there he ioyeth with hym and oure lady. To whiche ioyes god vs alle brynge. Amen.

8. ff 91a, b. *Prose treatise on a good life.*
Incipit: Here thou shalt weten how thou shalt please most god . . . Synt Poule the fyrst hermyte.
Explicit: Crye to my blyssyd modyr and worship her wyth orysouns for she wyll gete the pe blysse of heuyn. Amen.

9. ff 91a, b. *Prose treatise.* [Imperfect.]
[ Begins]: 3yf thou offer thin herte to him and turne velany to wurship.
Explicit: Thou shalt sothfastly hate senne and all thy wickednes and be fastnyd wyth the bonde of love to jhesu endeles spouse he vs graunte the lyf that euyr shall last. Amen.

Incipit: Here begynnyth a notabyll matere and a gret myracule don be oure lord jhesus cryst.
Lorde and god alway/lovere of all mankynde
Ys wont wondrys to werke al day/al oure feyth to amende.
Explicit: Mercyfull god graunt vs p t blys/all wey there
in to haue duellyng.
Dresse vs to go as thi wyl ys/euer whil we be here leyng.
Amen to that ioye he vs bryng/When we make oure
endyng.

11. ff 100a, b; 114a, b; 113a, b; 112a, b; 110a, b; 111a, b; 109a, b. *Prose treatise on the Passion of Our Lord.*
Incipit: Here begynnyth the passyon of oure lord cryst ihesus.
Explicit: And also that yt wryghtyth or redyth or heryth
haue that ich blyssing and here parte in my sonys kyngdam
wyth the fadyr and the sone and the holy gost thre
personys and oo god that leuyth and reygnyth w t out
ende. Amen.
Here endith the passion of crist . . .

12. ff 107a, b; 102a-106b; 101a, b. *A Metrical Declaration of the Holy Cross.*
Incipit: Here beginnyth a proces and a declaracion of the
holy cros . . . The holy rode the swete tre/ys good
to haf in mynde/For thurgh it fro deth to lyue/was
broght al mankynde.
Explicit: Now jhesu thurgh thy holy Rode/Schylde vs fro
the fende
And bryng vs to that mekyll ioye/that neuyr shal haf
ende. Amen.

13. ff 109b; 108a, b; 115a. *Gospel of Nichodemus (Prose version).* [Imperfect.]
Incipit: And now here begynnyth the Epystyll of
Nichodemus . . .
The gode man the Nobyll prynce Nichodemus.
Explicit: To the whyche he of hys mercy vs alle bryng.
Amen.

Incipit: O p u my frend y wyll teche p e a lityll lesson how
p u shal loue god and forstere thyself to kyndele thin
herte in to his loue.
Explicit: Qwerfor lete vs hertly loue our blyssid lorde \( p^t \) we may duelle \( w^t \) hym \( w^t \)out ende. Amen.

15. ff 117a-122b. The miracles of Our Lady (verse).

Incipit: Here beginnith miraculis of our ladi seint Marie . . .

Seint Teophile was a grete man and a grete clerk also

Heiest man he was byfore all othir vndir the bisshop tho.

Explicit: And seue vs swete lady thy glorious luff. \( p^t \) we may here suche grace wynne

That we may com to the ioye where thi blyssid sone and

the arn inne. Amen.

Binding: Modern half calf. Lettered on spine 'Rolle.

Prick of Conscience.'

At foot — 'MSS' [sic]. Many pages have been mounted and secured by stab binding.

Collation: 122 folios. As a result of the stab binding the volume is difficult to collate. The first eight gatherings were originally in 8s and are probably rebound in that form; but after H8it is impossible to decide on the existence of gatherings, particularly as in parts of the MS cognate leaves have not remained attached together, e.g ff 100-15.

There are no signatures on the gatherings except for recent pencil figures on the first eight gatherings. There are catchwords in frames on ff 8b, 16b, 24b, 32b, 40b, 48b, 56b, 64b slightly to the right of the central position.

Text: Mid 15th-century hands, written on paper. The watermark, a hand surmounted by a crown, is not identifiable with any of the specimens in Briquet. Changes of hands are found at ff 59a, 100a, 108a, 117a.

Provenance: There are names of probable owners at:—f 6b Mark Sheldrake on this booke witnes William. George Sheldrake; f 13a Jhon Marten; f 29b Mark Sheldrake; f 57a Thomas Fotucehithe (?). Thomas Pell (also twice at f 73a and again at f 121); f 122a Item George Sheldrake oweth Antonye Bowes some theye made there last accounte on Monday next before midlente Sunday—xs. No certain identification is possible of these previous owners.
GENEALOGY OF THE BROTHERTON MANUSCRIPTS

The great length of the *Pricke of Conscience* coupled with the fact that more than one hundred MSS of the poem are known to have survived has deterred scholars from attempting any exhaustive study of the relationships of all MSS. Miss Allen points out that 'immense variations in the text were discovered when thirty-one copies of the poem were examined with a view to establishing the text. No copy was found to be the source of any other and the groups into which all were divided were badly confused'. It is not therefore surprising that the articles so far published on the genealogical relationships of certain MSS of this poem have each necessitated a modification of at least part of the pedigree set up by Andreae in his pioneer study, which has nonetheless remained the basis of all subsequent research on the MS tradition. Andreae selected three test passages from approximately the beginning, the middle and the end of the poem, ll 1836-1927, ll 5126-5204 and ll 9335-9394, on which to establish the genealogical relationships of the eighteen MSS of the *Pricke* in the British Museum. This method can give only a partial answer to the problem since the choice of other passages might conceivably give different results; but in view of the ten thousand lines of the poem this basis for comparison has been adopted by later scholars.

Andreae's main classes of MSS from the archetype U were Q and Z. Z contained MS Harley 4196 and MS Galba E ix, which were used by Morris for his edition of the poem. From Q descended a small sub-group C, an East-Midland recension Xij and a large sub-group Xj to which the Brotherton Collection MSS may be assigned.

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4 C. D'Evelyn, 'An East Midland recension of the *Pricke of Conscience* ', *PMLA* XLV (1930), 180-200.
Andreae's genealogy:

Bulbring (Br) modified the position of this Xj group by introducing a larger class Y from which Xj was descended, and Xj itself was sub-divided several times, viz:—
In accordance with Andreae's method the two Brotherton Collection MSS have been examined in order to establish, as far as possible, their place in Bülbbring's scheme of classification. MS Brotherton Coll 500 satisfies 5 out of 8 test readings for Q, 1 out of 8 for C, 1 out of 3 for Xij, and 13 out of 21 for Y. It satisfies 28 out of 37 readings for Xj, 3 out of 7 for Aiv, and 3 out of 10 for Aiij. For A however it agrees in 25 out of 38 readings, although for the third test passage only 3 out of 8 readings agree. As we move further down the table the difficulty of placing new manuscripts increases. Until more copies in the sub-group Xj have been examined and the tree modified and extended, it will not be possible to be precise in establishing relationships. MS Brotherton Coll 500 satisfies only 1 out of 19 readings for Aj and 2 out of 5 for Aij, 5 out of 10 for aij but 2 only out of 7 for aj, 5 out of 15 for a, and 4 out of 19 for aij (aj is represented by one MS only which is a direct copy of aij). It would appear therefore that the Harmsworth MS may be assigned to class aij, but it would be injudicious to proceed further.

MS Brotherton Coll 501 satisfies 7 out of 8 tests for Q, only 2 out of 30 test passages for C, and none out of the three readings from the middle test passage which identify Xij as a sub-group. It agrees with Y in 15 out of 21 readings, in 34 out of 37 readings for Xj, in 3 out of 7 for Aiv, and in only 1 out of 10 readings for Aiij. For A it satisfies 29 out of 38 readings. For Aj it agrees in 1 reading only out of 13, and in 2 for Aij. Only 1 in the 10 readings for aij agrees, but 4 out of 7 readings are satisfied for aj. As only one reading in each group a and aij is satisfied, it would be more dangerous than in the case of MS Brotherton Coll 500 to extend the classification further. This MS would seem to belong to the sub-group aj.

Over half a century ago Bülbbring (Br) stated that 'a new edition [of the Pricke of Conscience], with all the many variations of its different copies, is much to be desired'. It is still

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5 It is interesting to note that for the third test passage the MS agrees with 10 out of 11 readings of MS Lansdowne 384, which Bülbbring (B2) assigns to Xij with little justification: his remark 'there are no proofs for the position of the end of Lansdowne 348 in the pedigree but presumably it was copied from Xij' is a confusing non sequitur.
unfortunately much to be desired, and our justification for
endeavouring to describe and classify these MSS must be
Bülbring’s exhortation that he ‘who has an opportunity of
examining one or more of the remaining MSS should not
hesitate to contribute his share of the work’.