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THE MANUSCRIPTS OF JOHN MIRK'S FESTIAL

By MARTYN F. WAKELIN

Some of the existing manuscripts of John Mirk's *Festial* of English homilies are listed in J. E. Wells's *Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1100-1450*,¹ and some of them are described in detail in C. Horstmann's *Altenglische Legenden*.² Since neither list is complete, it is the object of this paper to enumerate and describe briefly all those manuscript versions which are known to me. In compiling this list, I have been fortunate enough to secure the expert advice of Professor Angus McIntosh on the dialect of the different hands in the texts (as also on many other matters, duly noted below). It has seemed simpler, instead of mentioning individually the dialect of every text, to give a map of localizations based on the work of Professor McIntosh and Professor M. L. Samuels on ME dialect material, and kindly supplied by Professor McIntosh. It should be emphasized that this map shows only provisional localizations, and should not be regarded as final. It does, however, suggest placings for the dialects of most of the texts. At the same time, I should also like to record my indebtedness to the following for their kindness in suggesting datings for various of the manuscripts: Mr. C. E. Wright of the British Museum, Miss Albinia de la Mare and the staff of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Dr. Malcolm Parkes of Keble College, Oxford, Mr. Neil Ker, Mr. H. W. Pink of Cambridge University Library. I am indebted to Mr. R. M. Beaumont, Honorary Librarian of Southwell Minster, for allowing me access to the Southwell manuscript, and for much subsequent help and information; to Dr. A. I. Doyle for all the details of Durham University Library MS. Cosin V.III.5; to Mr. J. L. Hobbs, Borough Librarian and Curator of Shrewsbury, and Mr. D. S. Colman, Librarian of Shrewsbury School, both of whom have given generous assistance in my efforts to trace the "Shrewsbury" manuscript.

The *Festial*, or *Liber Festialis*, a collection of English homilies written for the use of unlettered clergy before 1415³ by John Mirk (fl. c. 1403, see *D.N.B.* s.v.),⁴ Prior of Lilleshall, Shropshire, was a popular compilation. This is clear not only from the number of early printed texts (Caxton and his successors printed nearly twenty editions between 1483 and 1532),⁵ but from the existence of twenty-six manuscripts (some containing only fragments or extracts of the work), a written copy of the printed text, and a translation into early modern Welsh. Further, a number of possible references to lost copies are collected from wills and chartularies by R. M. Wilson in *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*.⁶ From the order of the contents of the *Festial*, the manuscripts can be classified, generally speaking, into two types: in Group A, commencing with Advent Sunday, the homilies are given for

the sundays and feast-days as they occur through the Church year, together with homilies for various occasions, and these collections are usually pre-faced by a prayer, and by a prologue of introductory matter; in Group B, the homilies are arranged *de temporibus et de sanctis*, i.e. the homilies for sundays and some of the major feasts are separated from those for saints' days, the latter being placed all together in the second half of the compilation. This latter arrangement conforms more closely with that of the Missal. Since the Group B manuscripts are not many more than half a dozen in number, only when a manuscript belongs to this group is it specifically stated below. The homilies in this group commence with Advent Sunday, and continue as far as Corpus Christi; they then recommence the liturgical year with S. Andrew (November 30th). Except for the expanded versions in MSS. Harley 2247 and Royal 18 B XXV (see below, numbers 9 and 10, respectively), the contents of the versions belonging to Group B are very much smaller than most of those in Group A. The Group B manuscripts omit the prayer and prologue (but see MS. Durham University Library Cosin V.III.5, number 26, below), the homilies for S. Barnabas, S. Winifred, the homily on Nero, that for S. Alkmunde,⁷ and everything after the Dedication. Most of them also omit the homily De Dominica Prima Quadragesime and the first one for the Assumption. Finally, in all Group B manuscripts the homily for Good Friday and the explanation of the Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday ceremonies are reversed. Various omissions peculiar to one or other of the manuscripts need not be mentioned here, since they do not appear to be significant. It should be noted, however, that the textual affinities between the manuscripts of the two different groups do not appear to be as close as those which are observable between the manuscripts *within* each group. Before proceeding with the description of the manuscripts of the *Festial*, it only remains to be mentioned that numbered lists of the homilies in MS. Cotton Claudius A II (representing Group A) and MS. Harley 2371 (Group B) are given in an appendix to this paper for the purposes of comparison.

1. Cotton Claudius A II (British Museum)

- Contents:*
1. ff. 1b-123b **The Festial.**
 2. ff. 123b-126a The order for pronouncing excommunication.
 3. ff. 127a-152b Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests.*
 4. ff. 152b-153a List of months of the year with various feasts.
 5. ff. 153b-154a Various ordinances of the popes.

All are in English except 4 (Latin). From its contents, the manuscript seems to have been compiled with pastoral needs in mind.

Date: 1425-50.⁸

The manuscript is of parchment, and contains four fly-leaves plus 154 numbered ff. The ff. are approx. 9½in. x 6¼in. in dimension, and there are 26-42 lines per side in the *Festial* section. The fly-leaves at the beginning appear to have once formed part of the directions and music for the Office of the Dead, while the two at the back are part of a litany.

In all, five hands can be distinguished,⁹ as follows: hand A - f. 1b, B - ff. 2a-237b, C - ff. 38a-126a, D - ff. 127a-152b, E - ff. 153b-154a. Hands A and E are too short for an assessment of their dialect, and are not shown on the map. The prayer and prologue at the beginning of the *Festial* are in red lettering, the first word, "God," having a large, ornamented initial. The *Festial* proper commences with a large red and blue initial in "Thys," and initials of the first words of homilies or new subjects throughout are ornamented. The manuscript is rubricated in red and blue as far as the end of the *Instructions*, the Latin portion is alternately in blue with red capitals or red with blue capitals, and ff. 153b-154a are not rubricated or embellished in any way. One of the characteristics of some of the manuscripts of the *Festial* is a pointing hand, and this is present from time to time, usually in the left-hand margin, the only other sketch being a seated dog (?), with human or animal head, at the bottom of f. 56a.

The *Festial* in MS. Cotton Claudius A II is the fullest of those extant, comprising, besides the prayer and prologue, seventy-four items.¹⁰ The homily De Dominica Prima Quadragesime (number 34), a special homily for the first sunday in Lent (as distinct from the usual Lent I composition, number 19), on the text of the day's Epistle, "Hortamur vos, ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis," should be particularly noted as of rare occurrence in the extant manuscripts, as should also its position, between the homilies for the Invention of the Holy Cross (May 3rd) and that for S. John Ante Portam Latinam (May 6th).¹¹ Of special interest, too, and also of comparatively rare occurrence, are the homilies for the feasts of S. Winifred (number 43) and S. Alkmunde (number 56), the homily on the death of Nero (number 46) and the homily on the Lord's Prayer (number 74).¹²

Description: C. Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden, Neue Folge* (Heilbronn, 1881), pp. cxiii-cxvii.

2. Lansdowne 392 (British Museum)

Contents: 1. ff. 3a-95b **The Festial.**
2. ff. 96a-121b Six short Latin items, mostly relating to biblical matters.

Date: A little before 1450.¹³

The manuscript is of vellum except for two paper fly-leaves (ff. 1 and 2) at the front and one (f. 122) at the end, and contains in all 122 numbered ff. The ff. are approx. 10½in. x 6¾in. in dimension, and there are 30-38 lines per side. The early ff. are very faded and discoloured, but the writing is neat, well-formed, clear, and easily legible apart from this. On f. 86a, at the beginning of line 13, however, the writing changes to a blacker colour, and becomes less neat. By the time it has reached the top of f. 86b the whole character of the hand has changed, although it remains the same hand. The titles of the homilies, and the first letter of each homily, are in red. There is additional rubrication in the first few ff., and then only very rarely afterwards. At the top of f. 3a an old but later hand has written, "This boke is called the ffestial of Englishe Sermones. necessari to simple Curates and

parishe priestes. p^r," and at the bottom of the page, "Actor libri dicit fuisse plommer," thus identifying the manuscript with the one mentioned by Thomas Hearne¹⁴ as loaned to him by his friend, Thomas Ward of Longbridge, near Warwick.

The *Festial* opens with a prayer and prologue,¹⁵ the opening prayer being different from that in any of the other manuscripts except MSS. Harley 2403, Cambridge University Library Dd.10.50 and Durham University Library Cosin V.III.5. It occurs, however, in the early printed editions (e.g. Caxton's of 1483 and Wynkyn de Worde's of 1493), and at the head of a homily in MS. Royal 18 B XXIII.¹⁶ Fifty-one homilies or parts of homilies follow the prologue, in the Cotton order, items 28, 34, 46, (most of) 47, 48 to 57 inclusive, 59 and everything after 64 except part of the homily on the Lord's Prayer (Cotton number 74) being omitted.¹⁷ Only the first ten lines of 47, the homily for the Translation of S. Thomas of Canterbury, are present (f. 85b, line 24, to f. 86a, line 1), a large number of ff. apparently having been removed between ff. 85 and 86.¹⁸

Description: C. Horstmann, op. cit., p. cxviii.

3. Harley 2403 (British Museum)

Contents: 1. ff. 1a-191a **The Festial.**
2. ff. 191b-194a Explanation in English of the Apostles' Creed.

Date: 1475-1500.¹⁹

The manuscript is of parchment, and contains 194 ff. The ff. are approx. 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in dimension (the edges of the leaves are uneven), and there are 28-32 lines per side. The two items are written in different hands, A and B, neither of them very neat. The *Festial* has homily titles and the first letter of each homily in red, and very rare rubrication otherwise; the second item has headings and the first letters of new subjects in red.

A reasonably full version of the *Festial* is present, the collection commencing with the prayer found only in MS. Lansdowne 392 and the other two manuscripts mentioned above. This is followed by the usual prologue, and continues with seventy homilies. Omitted are numbers 34, 46 and 56, while 72 and 73 seem to have been regarded by the scribe as one homily, there being only a line's space between the last words of 72 ("without devocion") and the beginning of 73 ("There was on a tyme a man"), and no red initial letter.²⁰ (The homily numbers refer to the Cotton order, see appendix.) Several ff. are missing between ff. 183 and 184, so that only the beginning of the homily Qui Sunt Sepeliendi in Cimitorio is present, f. 183b, lines 21-31, and the next homily, that on the Lord's Prayer (which in this manuscript immediately precedes the homily for the Salutation), starts in the middle of a sentence at the top of f. 184a, the first dozen or so lines being missing.

Description: C. Horstmann, op. cit., pp. cxvii-cxviii.

4. Harley 2417 (British Museum)

Contents: ff. 1a-87b (the entire manuscript) **The Festial**.

Date: A little before 1450.

The manuscript is of parchment, and contains 87 ff. The ff. are approx. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in dimension, and there are 30 lines per side. The manuscript is written in a small, uniform hand. The titles are in red, as are also the first initial of each homily and underlining of key-words and phrases. There is rubrication throughout, but no other embellishment.

The prayer and prologue are missing, and this version of the *Festial* appears to be unique in that it consists only of the *sanctorale*. The collection begins at the end of the usual order, with the last fourteen lines of the homily Qui Sunt Sepeliendi in Cimiterio (Erbe's edition, p. 298, line 30). This is followed by the homilies on the Lord's Prayer, the Salutation of Our Lady, the Dedication of a church, and the Miracles of Our Lady. Then the order recommences at the beginning of the liturgical year with S. Andrew, S. Nicholas, etc., but omitting the *temporale*, and ending with All Souls. The homily for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross follows the homily for the Invention of the Holy Cross, instead of being in its usual place later in the collection. The whole of the homily for the Translation of S. Thomas of Canterbury (ff. 50a-52a) is crossed through. From f. 84a onwards the leaves are quite badly stained, and the writing on ff. 86b and 87a is very faint, while the discoloration of f. 87b makes it virtually illegible. The homily for All Souls (which begins on f. 86a) obviously ends halfway down f. 87b, for a large red "G" stands out from the blackened page where a new homily begins with "Gode" In its present condition, the manuscript contains (including the fragments at the beginning and the end) forty-one items.

5. Harley 2250 (British Museum)

- Contents:*
1. ff. 1a-47b Versified English homilies on the subjects of feasts and sundays.
 2. ff. 48a-49b Versified English Lives of S. Martin and other saints.
 3. ff. 50a-64b Abridged version of the *Speculum Christiani*.
 4. ff. 64b-67b *Themata Dominicalia*.
 5. ff. 68a-72a *Diuisio Membrorum Capituli primi Diete prime*.
 6. ff. 72b-83b Versified Lives of saints (resumed).
 7. ff. 84a-87b **The Festial** (extracts).
 8. ff. 88a-108a Tract (in English) on the Ten Commandments, Vices and Virtues, etc.

Items 4 and 5 are in Latin, and are probably from Bonaventura's *Diaeta Salutis*.

Date: After 1477. At the end of the *Speculum Christiani*, on f. 64b, is written: "libro finito assint laudes Deo Amen Explicit Speculum Xpiani Anno doⁱ M^oCCCC^{mo} LXXVII^o Thomas Masse esquier." The manuscript was therefore probably put together in the last twenty years of the fifteenth century. Notes on ff. 8a and 71a make it clear that at about the end of that century it was owned by Sir Thomas Boker or Bowker. On f. 75b there is a reference to one Elsebyth Bothe of Dunham Massey, Cheshire.²¹

The manuscript is of paper, and contains two fly-leaves (one at each end) plus 108 numbered ff. The leaves are very worn at the edges, and have been mounted on stiff paper backing (part of the left-hand edges probably thus being lost); at the present time they are approx. 11½ in. x 8 in. in dimension. In the latter half of the Mirk section the edges of the ff. are badly worn, f. 87 is very mutilated, and some of the text is missing. The extracts from the *Festial* are written in rather small script in double columns, there being 62-76 lines per column in this part of the manuscript. There is occasional rubrication, the first letter of each piece sometimes being in red.

The extracts from the *Festial* comprise the homily for Corpus Christi (without title), the explanation of the Maundy Thursday and Holy Saturday ceremonies, headed in red "Deus Expediat me," the homily "De Festo Apostolorum philippi et Jacobi, sermo breuis,"²² and five exempla extracted from various of Mirk's homilies. These are equivalent to those printed in Erbe's edition on pp. 9, 91, 145, 146, and 248, respectively.²³

Edition (of "Deus Expediat me" only): Karl Young, *Speculum*, XI (1936), 224-31.

Description: *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, II, by H. L. D. Ward (London, 1893), 690, 738; III, by J. A. Herbert (London, 1910), 705-7. G. Holmstedt (ed.), *Speculum Christiani*. EETS, OS 182, 1933, pp. lxix-lxx.

6. Harley 1288 (British Museum)

<i>Contents:</i>	1. ff.	1a-33a	The <i>Speculum Christiani</i> .
	2. ff.	34a-60a	Latin exempla.
	3. ff.	64a-75b	Version of Richard Lavynham's <i>Treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins</i> .
	4. ff.	76a-81b	A general confession in English.
	5. ff.	81b-86b	Chapters 24 and 25 of the <i>Chastising of God's Children</i> .
	6. ff.	86b-87b	Passage on pollution.
	7. f.	87b	Part of an item on the feast of the Holy Name (seven lines).
	8. ff.	88a-90a	The Festial (extracts).
...	9. ff.	91a-105b	Latin version of the <i>Contes Moralises</i> of Nicholas Bozon.

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.

The first 90 ff. of the manuscript are of vellum, ff. 91-105 are of paper and vellum. There are in all 105 ff. plus one fly-leaf at the end. The ff. are approx. 8½ in. x 5¼ in. in dimension, and there are 29-30 lines per side in the *Festial* section.

The first part of the manuscript (i.e. ff. 1-90) is neatly and clearly written in a single hand but in two slightly differing dialects, shown on the map as 6.¹ (ff. 4b-16b, the English part of the *Speculum Christiani*) and 6.² (the remainder of the first part of the manuscript, including the *Festial* extracts), respectively, in order to distinguish two dialects in the hand of a single scribe. Ff. 91-105 are in a different hand. The titles of the Mirk exempla are in red, with the first letter of each exemplum alternately in red

and blue. There is no other rubrication in this part of the manuscript. On f. 61b is scribbled, "Robert Ri . . son of the toun of Lynkecoun (?)," which would seem to confirm a Lincolnshire provenance for the manuscript (see map, below).²⁴

The extracts from the *Festial* comprise five exempla and a half of a sixth. The incomplete one comes first, commencing about halfway through the story, and is the last one for the feast of the Purification (Erbe's edition, p. 61). The other five exempla are equivalent to those to be found in Erbe's edition, pp. 113, 125, 173 (line 11), 271 (line 2), and 270, respectively.

Description: *Catalogue of Romances*, III, 100-5, 681-6.

J. P. W. M. Van Zutphen (ed.), *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins by Richard Lavynham O. Carm.* (Rome, 1956), pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

G. Holmstedt, *op. cit.*, pp. liii-liv.

See also J. Bazire and E. Colledge (eds.), *The Chastising of God's Children* (Oxford, 1957), p. 5.

7. Harley 2371 (British Museum)

- Contents:*
- | | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| 1. | ff. 1a-141b | The Festial. |
| 2. | ff. 142a-148a | Tract in English containing advice on spiritual matters (f. 148b contains a legend, but is probably part of the tract). |
| 3. | f. 149a | Latin poem to Our Lady. |

Date: c. 1475-1500.

The manuscript is of paper, and contains 149 ff. The ff. are approx. 8in. x 5½in. in dimension, and in the *Festial* section there are 28-30 lines per side, written in one rather neat hand, and without rubrication except for some red decoration on the blue initial letter of each homily. There are no titles.

MS. Harley 2371 is the first manuscript so far mentioned to divide the contents of the *Festial* into a *temporale* and a *sanctorale*, and falls into the Group B classification (see above). It will be noted from the list of contents in the appendix to this paper that, in common with the other Group B manuscripts, there is no prayer or prologue. The collection commences with a fragment of the Advent Sunday homily (Erbe's edition, p. 4, line 29), and ends with an ink-blackened fragment of the Dedication homily (f. 141b, bottom). Several ff. are missing between ff. 73 and 74, and only the ends of the leaves remain: the homily for S. Thomas of Canterbury commences at f. 73b, line 12, but has been blackened with ink. It breaks off abruptly at the bottom of the page, and at the top of f. 74a the homily for New Year's Day begins. The homily for the Translation of S. Thomas has also been removed: the first eleven lines are present on f. 104b, and then the homily for S. Margaret's day starts (in the middle of a sentence) at the top of f. 105a. The homily for Quadragesima Sunday is entirely omitted. Including the fragments, there are altogether sixty-one homilies.

8. Harley 2391 (British Museum)

- Contents:*
- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. ff. 1a-1b | "Prognostica ex dies natalis domini"
(Latin). |
| 2. ff. 2a-133a | The Festial. |
| 3. ff. 133a-134a | Story and some fragments in English. |
| 4. ff. 134a-138b | The form (in English) for exhorting and examining a penitent. |
| 5. ff. 138b-156a | English homilies. |
| 6. ff. 156b-230b | Legendary tales in English verse for use on the sundays of the year. |
| 7. ff. 231a-235b | Latin exempla. |
| 8. ff. 235b-238a | Homily (in English) on the Seven Deadly Sins. |
| 9. f. 238b | English fragment (unidentified). |

Date: c. 1450.²⁵

The manuscript is of paper, and contains a fly-leaf at each end and 238 numbered ff. The ff. are approx. 8¼ in. x 5¾ in. in dimension, but the left-hand edges of the leaves have been lost in a new binding. There are 28-32 lines per side in the *Festial* section. The *Festial*, and everything up to f. 156a, is written in one hand, A, but the remainder of the manuscript is in two hands, B (ff. 156b-230b) and C (ff. 231a-238b). Ff. 1a-1b are probably in yet another hand. The dialects of hands B and C are very similar (see map, below). The manuscript is unrubricated, but, except in the first two homilies, spaces have nearly always been left for the customary large initial at the beginning of each homily. There are no titles. On f. 230b, at the end of item 6, is written, "Amen quod Johannes Smyth," presumably the scribe of this section.

The contents of the *Festial* are divided into a *temporale* and a *sanctorale*, and are similar to those of MS. Harley 2371 (above). The whole of the homily for the feast of the Translation of S. Thomas is missing, however, together with the end of that for the feast of SS. Peter and Paul and the beginning of that for the feast of S. Mary Magdalene. Further, only the first twelve lines of the homily for the Ember Days are present, and the last thirteen of the homily for S. Matthew's day. There are thus two lacunae, one between ff. 100 and 101, and one between ff. 121 and 122. The collection ends with the homily for S. Katherine's day, and underneath this:

Amen Amen Amen Amen
ffelix dicetr cum felix finis habet

Description: C. Horstmann, op. cit., pp. cxx-cxxi.
Catalogue of Romances, III, 333-6, 708-9.

9. Harley 2247 (British Museum)

- Contents:* ff. 1a-213b **The Festial.**
F. 214 is mostly scribbling, but has a two-line narratio at the top of f. 214a, relating to the feast of All Saints. F. 215 has some references to the contents of the *Festial*, perhaps in a later hand.

Date: Towards the end of the fifteenth century. "About the times of King Edward IV and King Henry VII," according to the *Catalogue of Harley manuscripts*. Miss Lillian Steckman (in *Studies in Philology*,

XXXIV, 1937, 36-48) proposes a more precise dating, along with MS. Royal 18 B XXV (below), of 1483, suggesting that both this and the Royal manuscript were later revisions, written specifically for the public as distinct from the clergy, and with an independent use of Mirk's sources.

The manuscript is partly of paper and partly of parchment, and contains 215 ff. plus one unnumbered leaf. The ff. are approx. $11\frac{5}{8}$ in. x $8\frac{3}{8}$ in. in dimension, and have 27-39 lines per side, being more closely written at the beginning of the book. The manuscript is written in a single hand. The first letter is a large blue "W" in "Worshipfull frendes," and thereafter the first letter of each homily is in red. There is no other rubrication, but brown underlining is frequent, and the first letter of each large, clear Latin title is often turned into a sketch of a grotesque head or the like, or decorated and embellished. There are marginal notes in a contemporary hand, and a lot more in a later hand. Some of the latter refer to Queen Elizabeth I, and several to one Thomas Miles of Milton Hernes. The word "Pope" is twice crossed out on f. 192a.

The version of the *Festial* in this manuscript (and also in the next) is expanded both in contents and text. Omitting the prayer and prologue, the collection commences with three homilies for Advent Sunday, and comprises altogether ninety items, there being one or two extra homilies for many of the feasts.²⁶ It is arranged *de temporibus et de sanctis* like the two preceding manuscripts. The homily for the feast of the Translation of S. Thomas is omitted: the title is given at the bottom of f. 169a, but f. 169b begins on line 1 with a homily for the feast of the Holy Relics.²⁷

10. Royal 18 B XXV (British Museum)

Contents: ff. 1a-139b **The Festial.**

F. 140 (fly-leaf) contains a form of a certificate (in Latin) by a priest that he has shriven a penitent, with the date 1534. On f. 141 there are pasted slips of paper with fifteenth-century sermon notes, one lot in English, and two in Latin.

Date: c. 1475. Steckman, op. cit., suggests 1483.

The manuscript is of paper, except for a fly-leaf, f. 140, which is of vellum, and contains 141 ff. and one further, unnumbered, leaf. The ff. are approx. $11\frac{7}{8}$ in. x $8\frac{1}{4}$ in. in dimension, and there are 35-44 lines per side closely written in a single hand. The first letter is a large red "W" in "Worschypfull frendys"; there is no further rubrication, but spaces have been left for the first initial of each homily. At the beginning the titles are occasionally missing, sometimes they are inserted in the margin, and towards the end they are omitted altogether. As far as, and including, f. 5a, and occasionally later, someone has annotated the text in the left- and right-hand margins, giving a summary. There are also several pointing hands.

The contents of the manuscript are very similar to those of MS. Harley 2247. The prayer and prologue are omitted again, and the collection, expanded in text and with several new homilies for some feasts, is arranged *de temporibus et de sanctis*. There are ninety items,²⁸ including the last one, In Die Sepulture, which is incomplete, and a narratio as a sort of short

appendage (f. 122a) to the homilies on the Assumption. There is no homily for the feast of the Translation of S. Thomas, but there is one for the Holy Relics. In the earlier part of the manuscript the homilies occasionally break off, and the reader is directed to another part of the manuscript to find the remainder.

11. Royal 18 B XXIII (British Museum)

- Contents:*
1. ff. 1a-37b Homilies, etc., in Latin.
 2. ff. 39a-156b Homilies in English, including three homilies from **The Festial**, ff. 49a-50a, 72b-73b and 148b-149a respectively.
 3. ff. 157b-158b Notes in Latin and English on religious subjects.
 4. ff. 159a-165b Index to the English homilies.
 5. ff. 166a-173b Homilies in English (resumed).
- F. 174a contains a now almost illegible license issued in 1560 to one Peter Cooke of Exning (Suffolk), allowing him to be a buyer of various commodities.²⁹

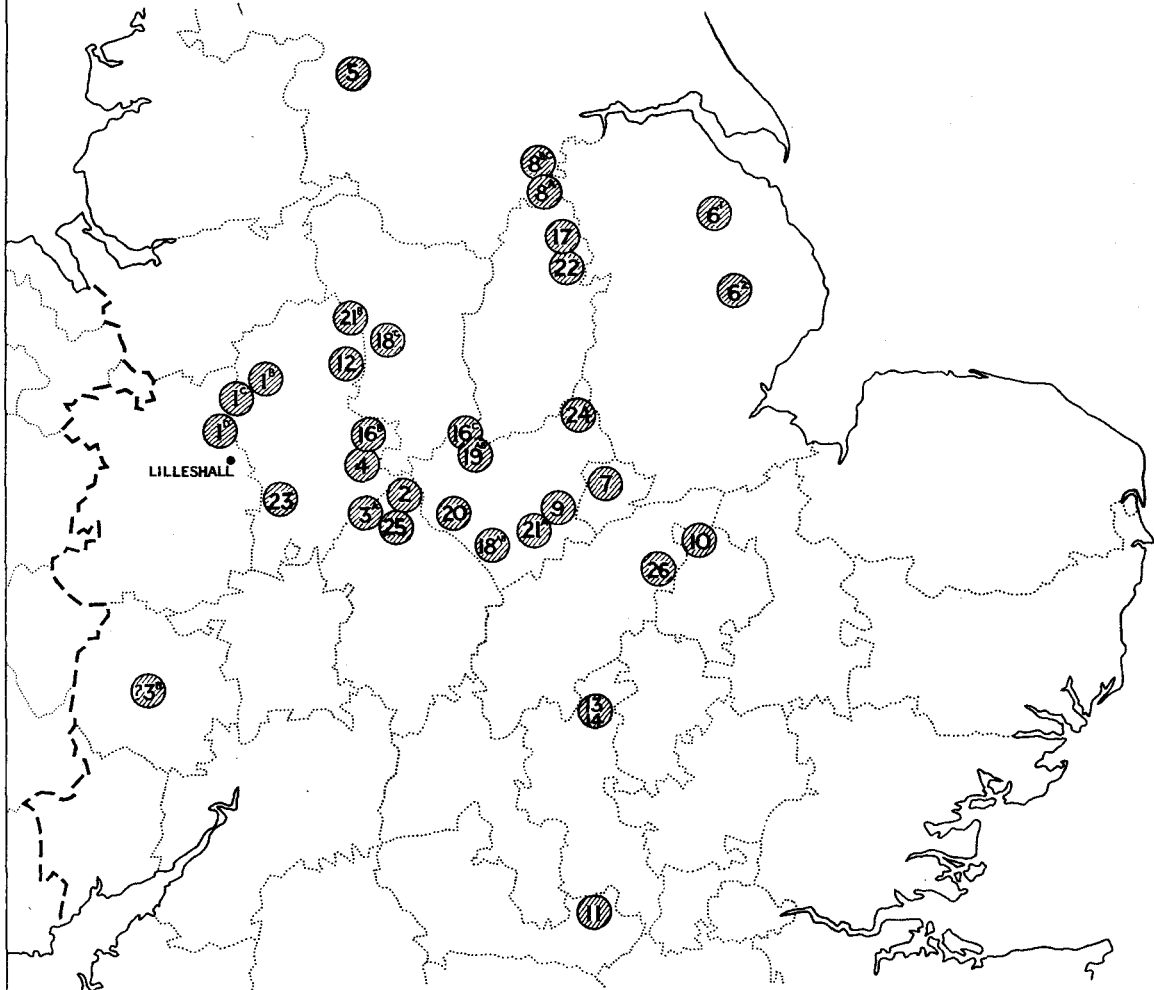
Date: 1450-1500.

The manuscript is mostly of paper, but f. 174 and several other leaves are of vellum. It contains 174 ff. The ff. are approx. 11½ in. x 8½ in. in dimension, and in the *Festial* sections there are 40-43 lines per side. The manuscript is written by several hands — it is not quite clear at the moment how many: Dr. W. O. Ross, its editor, distinguishes six — but the first two of Mirk's pieces are in one single hand (Ross's Hand 1), while the third is in quite a different hand (Ross's Hand 4). There is no rubrication or decoration anywhere: spaces were left for the usual coloured initials, but have never been filled. The scribal signature "Quod Thomas Looke" or "Quod Looke" appears at the end of six homilies in the Latin section, on the first three of which it is crossed out. It also occurs in eighteen of the English homilies, including the first two by Mirk.³⁰ Other scribbled names (of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries) occur: James Robynson and Giles Robynson on f. 16a, John Graunge on f. 21a, and Oleuer Bregman on f. 64a.

The dialect of the manuscript is probably to be localized in the south midlands: Professor M. L. Samuels suggests east Berkshire, and more precisely somewhere near Waltham St. Lawrence. The dialect is apparently fairly uniform throughout (though there are some northern forms), and the linguistic characteristics taken as a whole suggest this provenance. Dr. Ross suggests that "such dialectal differences among the various sermons and sermon groups as may have existed at first have been practically obliterated."³¹ He assigns the dialect to the SW Midlands, and suggests that the collection was put together at Oxford.³²

Edition (but excluding Mirk's homilies): W. O. Ross, *Middle English Sermons*. EETS, OS 209, 1940.

TENTATIVE LOCALISATIONS OF THE DIALECTS OF
MANUSCRIPTS OF MIRK'S FESTIAL



- 1 Cotton
- 2 Lansdowne 392
- 3 Harley 2403
- 4 Harley 2417
- 5 Harley 2250 (only *Festial* hand shown: the dial. of some of the other parts is Cheshire)
- 6 Harley 1288
- 7 Harley 2371
- 8 Harley 2391
- 9 Harley 2247
- 10 Royal 18 B XXV
- 11 Royal 18 B XXIII
- 12 Gough
- 13 Douce 60
- 14 Douce 108
- 15 Hatton 96
- 16 Rawlinson A 381

- 17 Univ. Coll. Oxford 102
 - 18 C.U.L. Dd.10.50
 - 19 C.U.L. Ee.2.15 (only *Festial* hands shown: hand B is probably very slightly to the NW of A)
 - 20 C.U.L. FF.2.38
 - 21 C.U.L. Nn.3.10
 - 22 Caius
 - 23 Southwell
 - 24 Brotherton (only *Festial* hand shown)
 - 25 New College
 - 26 Durham
- No localization is shown for MSS.:
- 27 St. John's Coll. Camb. G 19
 - 29 Havod 22

12. Gough Ecclesiastical Top, 4 (Bodleian Library)**Contents:** ff. 1a-164a **The Festial.**

F. 164b has various notes and scribblings in English, including what looks like a recipe for a medicine.

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.

The manuscript, except for the fly-leaves, which are of paper, is of parchment, and contains two fly-leaves (one at each end) plus 164 numbered ff. The ff. are approx. 8½ in. x 6 in. in dimension, and there are 31-34 lines per side. The *Festial* is written in a single, clear hand, but from f. 99b up to and including f. 114a, and in some later portions, the leaves are a bit rubbed in places, and therefore faint. The initial "G" of "Gode" on f. 1a is in blue with red embellishment, and the other first letters are in red. The titles and headings are in red, except for the first one, "Advent Sunday," which is in brown ink, and written in the right-hand margin, possibly in a different hand. There is rubrication throughout. The manuscript is annotated in a fainter, presumably later, hand, in the margin, and there are occasional pointing hands drawn in the left-hand margin. The manuscript ends halfway down f. 164a, with "Explicit Liber Festiuale," and underneath, "Tho: Martin of Palgrave in Suffolk." (This same Tho. Martin has also signed his name on the first fly-leaf and on f. 1a.) At the top of f. 164b is written, "Liber iste attenet Henryco Gonner (or ? Bonner) Rycm^sswort³³ Manente."

The *Festial* commences with the usual prayer, in red, but there is no prologue, apart from the "hic incipit liber qui vocatr festiuale." It has sixty-nine items, including homilies for S. Winifred and S. Alkmunde and the Denarracio de Morte Neronis, and ending with the homily on the Lord's Prayer.

Edition: Th. Erbe, *Mirk's Festial*. EETS, ES 96, 1905.**13. Douce 60 (Bodleian Library)****Contents:** 1. ff. 1a-146b **The Festial.**2. ff. 147a-189a *Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests.*3. ff. 189a-192b **The Festial** (homily for All Saints).4. ff. 193a-213a Richard Lavynham's *Treatise* on the Seven Deadly Sins.

5. ff. 213a-228a Form of confession in English, with notes on the Seven Principal Virtues and similar matters.

The manuscript was obviously compiled with pastoral needs in mind.

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.³⁴

The manuscript is of paper, and contains one fly-leaf plus 231 numbered ff. These really amount to 239, since ff. 62, 66, 85, 86, 90, 91, 92 and 97 are duplicated. At the end, f. 229 is the real fly-leaf, and ff. 230 and 231 consist of a double sheet stuck in later, and bearing a list of the contents of the *Festial*. The ff. are approx. 7½ in. x 5¼ in. in dimension, and in the *Festial* sections there are 15-26 lines per side. The manuscript is written in one hand, rubricated throughout, and with Mirk's homily titles in red. Ff. 146b and 228b contain notes of payments of Welsh rents owing to Sir John Davyys, partly in 1492-4. These notes show that the book was in the hands of a

priest on the Hereford-Wales border at Pencoyd, about eight miles south of Hereford, at the end of the fifteenth century.³⁵

MS. Douce 60 is in the same hand as MS. Douce 108 (see below) and the version of Mirk's *Instructions* which is contained in MS. Douce 103.³⁶ All three manuscripts are to be assigned a midland provenance, and may probably be more precisely localized in NE Buckinghamshire (the Bletchley-Fenny Stratford area) or in Northamptonshire. Since both MSS. Douce 60 and Douce 103 contain notes relating them to Herefordshire at the end of the fifteenth century, it is possible that parts of their contents (but not necessarily the *Festial*) could be a midland rewriting of a SW original.³⁷ Up to the present, however, research into their language has not revealed any SW underlay.

The *Festial* has neither prayer nor prologue, but commences with the homily for the Nativity of Our Lady, and ends with that for the feast of All Saints. The homilies, which number forty-four altogether, are not arranged in any *overall* chronological sequence, but fall into groups, some of which are identical with those in MS. Douce 108 (below), e.g.: the Nativity, Conception, and Purification of Our Lady (at the very beginning of the collection); S. Margaret, S. Mary Magdalene, S. Katherine; S. John Baptist, S. Michael, the Ember Days; S. George, S. Mark, SS. Philip and James, the Invention of the Holy Cross, S. John Ante Portam Latinam.³⁸ This manuscript and the following one are the only versions to include a homily for the Second Sunday in Advent, apart from the expanded *Festial* in MS. Harley 2247.

Description: C. Horstmann, op. cit., pp. cxix-cxx.

J. P. W. M. Van Zutphen (ed.), *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins by Richard Lavynham O. Carm.* (Rome, 1956), pp. xlii-xliii.

14. Douce 108 (Bodleian Library)

Contents: pp. 1-350 (the entire manuscript) **The Festial.**

Latin interpolations occur on pp. 205 and 282.

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.³⁹

The manuscript is of paper, and contains two initial fly-leaves plus 354 numbered pages, pp. 351-4 being the end fly-leaves. The pp. really amount to 358, since pp. 203 and 281 are triplicated. The pp. are approx. 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in dimension, and there are 19-25 lines per p. The manuscript is written in a single hand. There is a certain amount of rubrication, and some of the titles and the initial letters of some homilies are in red, but rubrication is used very sparingly between pp. 65 and 112, 175 and 203, and after 270.

As in MS. Douce 60, the version of the *Festial* present here is a much abridged one: there are the usual prayer and prologue and forty-four homilies, commencing with the homily for Advent Sunday, and ending with that for the feast of the Circumcision.⁴⁰ The collection follows the order of the Church's year much more closely than the collection in MS. Douce 60 does, but there are many gaps and some considerable diversions from the strict order of, for example, MS. Cotton Claudius A II.

Description: C. Horstmann, op. cit., p. cxix.

15. Hatton 96 (Bodleian Library)

- Contents:*
- | | | |
|--------|----------|---|
| 1. ff. | 3a-6b | The Festial (homily for Christmas Day). |
| 2. ff. | 7a-8b | Latin homilies for Christmas and Advent. |
| 3. ff. | 8b-92a | Collection of short homilies in English. |
| 4. ff. | 92b-305a | The Festial (some Latin homilies and others are interpolated). |

Date: Mid-fifteenth century. An added note on f. 256b referring to the death of Robert Whytt, B.A., probably refers to the Robert Whyte in A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1957-9), III, 2042-3, who died in 1461.

The manuscript is of paper, except for ff. 3 and 9, which are of parchment. It contains 307 numbered ff., including the two fly-leaves at each end of the manuscript, but these really amount to 309 ff., since f. 137 is triplicated. The ff. are approx. $7\frac{7}{8}$ in. x $5\frac{3}{8}$ in. in dimension, except for ff. 213-217, which are larger ($7\frac{1}{4}$ in. x $5\frac{3}{8}$ in.), and form a separate insertion. In the *Festial* sections there are 25-36 lines per side.

At least four different hands, and possibly five or six, are represented in the manuscript.⁴¹ The greater part of it was written by a scribe whose hand may be designated A. It is not clear, however, whether or not hand A may, in fact, be the work of not one but three scribes. For the time being, these three apparent varieties are labelled A¹, A² and A³, rather than A, B and D (each letter corresponding to the order of the first appearance of the hand or variety of hand), which would automatically suggest three different hands. Hand A, whether the work of one scribe or three, has written all the manuscript (ignoring one or two small scraps of English) except for ff. 135a-136a, 213a-217b (which, as noted above, form a separate quire), and 262a-301b, line 9. These are written in three other, and quite distinct, hands, labelled, in accordance with the order of their first appearances in the manuscript, C, E and F, respectively.

There is no rubrication or decoration in the manuscript. Spaces have been left for the usual large initial letters, but have never been filled.

The manuscript as a whole shows an amazing variety of different dialects, tentatively divided by Professor McIntosh into eighteen different kinds, and all of a west central or central midland character. The portions written in hands C, E and F present comparatively little difficulty: C, a very late hand, uses a standardized kind of dialect, distinct from the other varieties, and presumably much modified by the scribe himself; E is likewise all in one dialect not found elsewhere in the manuscript; F, however, is linguistically very close to three passages of A¹, and probably drew on the same text as that used by the scribe of A¹ for these three. The quite unusual dialectal diversity chiefly occurs in hand A, and its very abnormality is an argument in favour of A being not three hands but one. The changes of dialect nearly all occur at the beginning of new sections, not usually in the middle of the text, thus seeming to imply that there was some definite plan behind the writer's diversity, involving the choice of different exemplars, often varying dialectally quite widely from each other, as the work proceeded. Finally, the fact that some of the dialects represented correspond closely with the regular dialect of some of the other manuscripts of the

Festial may prove to have an important bearing on the question of *textual* relationships. This, however, awaits further investigation.

There are no prayer and prologue for the *Festial* homilies. The manuscript opens with Mirk's homily for Christmas Day (ff. 3a-6b), and is followed (f. 8b) by a collection of short homilies, not by Mirk but in his style. The *Festial* proper commences at f. 92b, with the homily for the Rogation Days, and continues, interrupted from time to time by some Latin homilies and others, to f. 260b (the end of the homily for the Purification). The *Festial* then begins again at Advent Sunday (f. 262a), and continues to the end of the homily for Pentecost (f. 305a). This section (viz. ff. 262a-305a) duplicates some of the homilies of the group immediately preceding. There are altogether some sixty homilies by Mirk in the book.

16. Rawlinson A. 381 (Bodleian Library)

- Contents:*
- | | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| 1. | ff. 1b-2b | The order for pronouncing excommunication. |
| 2. | ff. 3a-6b | <i>Libellus de Doctrina Simplicium</i> (dealing with the spiritual life). |
| 3. | ff. 7a-106b | The Festial. |
| 4. | ff. 107a-115a | Exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins. |

All the contents are in English.

Date: Mid-fifteenth century, probably c. 1440-55 from the style of the illuminated border.

The manuscript is of parchment, and contains 115 numbered ff. plus one fly-leaf at the end. The ff. are approx. 11½ in. x 7¾ in. in dimension. The manuscript is clearly and neatly written in double columns with 38 lines per column. It is possible to distinguish three hands, as follows: hand A - ff. 1b-2b, probably of a north central midlands provenance, but too short to place at all accurately, B - ff. 3a-6b and 107a-115a, C - ff. 7a-106b. The manuscript is one of the most lavishly decorated of all the manuscripts of the *Festial*, which, generally speaking, are fairly plain. F. 7a has a beautifully illuminated border consisting of a gold-leaf frame with pink, green and blue flowers twining round it, and the first letter, the "T" of "This," also decorated with flowers, and on a gold-leaf background. The *Festial* is rubricated throughout in red and blue. The first letter of each homily is in blue, decorated with red tracery, and the homily titles are in red.

The contents of the *Festial* are divided into a *temporale* and a *sanctorale*, and the collection belongs, therefore, to the Group B classification. Like the other collections of this group, it has no prayer or prologue. It has sixty-three items, ending with the homily for the Dedication.

17. University College Oxford 102 (Bodleian Library)

- Contents:*
- | | | |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1. | pp. 1-261 | The Festial. |
| 2. | pp. 261-7 | Two short Latin treatises.
P. 268 contains accounts ("for making a gyrken and buttens viii ^d ," etc.), and pp. 269-70 have a contents list in a later hand. P. 271 is blank. |

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.

The manuscript is of paper, except for the fly-leaf at the beginning, which is of very faded, stained and wrinkled parchment. It contains two fly-leaves, one at each end, and 271 numbered pp. The pp. are approx. $8\frac{5}{8}$ in. x $5\frac{7}{8}$ in. in dimension, and there are 26-31 lines per p. in the *Festial* section. The manuscript is neatly written in one hand, and is easily legible; it is rubricated up to and including p. 119. The margin contains occasional scribblings in a different hand. The first side of the fly-leaf at the beginning is mainly illegible, but the second side contains some Latin collects, so far unidentified.

The version of the *Festial* extant in MS. University College Oxford 102 belongs to Group B, and in common with the other manuscripts of this group omits the prayer and prologue. It comprises sixty-one items, commencing with the homily for Advent Sunday, and ending with that for the Dedication. At the end of the *Festial* is written, "Ihc est Amor meus."

18. Cambridge University Library Dd.10.50

Contents: ff. 1a-158b (the entire manuscript) **The Festial.**

Date: Fifteenth century.

The manuscript is of paper, except for the vellum fly-leaf, and contains the one fly-leaf at the beginning plus 158 numbered ff. and also two blank, unnumbered leaves at each end of the book. The ff. are approx. $8\frac{3}{4}$ in. x $5\frac{5}{8}$ in. in dimension, and there are 25-36 lines per side, the writing being closer from about f. 144b.

The manuscript is written by four different hands, as follows: hand A - ff. 1a-13a, B - ff. 13a-14b, C - ff. 15a-end except for D's contribution, D - f. 43b, line 12 to bottom and the top five lines of f. 56a. Hands A and B are linguistically very similar, but there is too little of D to be able to localize the dialect with any certainty. There is rubrication throughout the manuscript, and the initial letter of each homily is in red. The homily titles are mostly in black, but some are in red from f. 129b onwards. For some obscure reason, some of the titles are crossed through. The second homily for the Assumption has no title. There are doodlings (in red) and also some marginal notes. The fly-leaf, although now very faint, is written on in Latin vertically: over the vertical script, on the recto side is written horizontally, "This MS. belongs to John Worthington, Fellow of S. Peter's College in Cambridge.

The *Festial* commences with the prayer which occurs in MSS. Harley 2403, Lansdowne 392 and Durham University Library Cosin V.III.5 alone of the other texts, and this is followed by the usual prologue. There are fifty-eight homilies, and a fragment (twenty-one lines) of another one — that for the feast of SS. Simon and Jude. Here the collection breaks off. The local homilies are also omitted, as are the homily De Dominica Prima Quadragesime (Cotton number 34) and the homily on Nero (Cotton number 46).

19. Cambridge University Library Ee.2.15

Contents: 1. ff. 1a-16b **The Festial.**

2. ff. 18a-112b English poetry (including a version of *Dame Constance* ff. 18a-23b; poems on *S. Edmund* ff. 48a-51b, and *S. ffremond* ff. 83a-84b, by Lydgate; and *pe Chartur* (on the Passion) ff. 107a-111a).

Date: Fifteenth century.

The manuscript is of paper, and contains 112 ff. The ff. are approx. 11½ in. x 8 in. in dimension, and there are 28-32 lines per side in the *Festial* section. There are probably two similar, but distinct, hands in the *Festial*, viz. hand A - ff. 1a-15a line 16, B - f. 15a line 17 to f. 16b bottom. The remainder of the manuscript may be in one or more different hands. There is no rubrication in the *Festial*, but spaces have been left for large initials and the titles. The titles have, however, been written in the margin. There is also an occasional pointing hand.

The *Festial* comprises eight homilies only, from S. Nicholas to S. Thomas of Canterbury (Cotton number 10) in the Cotton order.

20. Cambridge University Library Ff.2.38

Note—The ff. of this manuscript are now numbered in the order 28-39, 19-21, 3-18, 40-261; ff. 1, 2, 22-27 and 262-81 are lost.

Contents: 1. ff. 35b-39b and f. 40a **The Festial**.
2. Remainder of manuscript: Romances and religious works (including *Guy, Earl of Warwick, Sir Degare, etc.*).⁴²

Date: Fifteenth century.

The manuscript is of paper, and contains in all 247 ff. The ff. are approx. 11½ in. x 8 in. in dimension. The manuscript is written in double columns with 39-44 lines per column in the *Festial* section. There seems to be only one hand, except that ff. 93a-160b look rather different from the rest of the manuscript. There is no rubrication except for large initials in a dark red colour.

The *Festial* is represented by three homilies only, viz. those for S. Mary Magdalene, S. Margaret, and S. Thomas of Canterbury (Cotton number 5), in this order. The last named is crossed through, except for the last (separate) portion, on f. 40a.

21. Cambridge University Library Nn.3.10

Contents: 1. ff. 1a-28b *The Cordyal* (English prose; according to the Catalogue, this is a copy of Caxton's printed edition of 1479. It is incomplete).

2. ff. 29a-85a **The Festial**.

At the end of the *Festial* on f. 85a there appears to be a list of accounts.

Date: Late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The Catalogue gives c. 1500.⁴³

The manuscript is of paper, and contains 85 ff. The ff. are approx. 8½ in. x 5½ in. in dimension, and there are 22-28 lines per side in the *Festial* section. There is probably only one hand: the script of the first item is larger than that of the *Festial*, but should be compared with, e.g. ff. 61b, 62a, 80b (all parts of the *Festial*), which are similar. The dialects of the two items are, however, remarkably different: suggested localizations are shown on the map, designated 21A and 21B, respectively. There is no rubrication, but large initials are sometimes expanded into faces, and there are occasional drawings. The first few homilies (and also some of the later ones) lack titles.

There are nineteen homilies in the *Festial*, not including a fragment (eight lines) of the homily for the Assumption on ff. 73a-73b. There are no prayer

and prologue. The collection commences with the homily *De Dominica Prima Quadragesime*, commencing at "Wherefore he seys by þe prophetys" (Erbe's edition, p. 87, line 25), and ends with the homily for Sexagesima Sunday. The homilies are arranged in three groups.⁴⁴ The homily for the Assumption is, as noted, fragmentary: it breaks off on f. 73b, and the rest of the page is occupied with scribblings. F. 74a commences something new — it looks like part of a treatise on excommunication — which, however, gives way to a new homily (for Septuagesima Sunday) at the top of f. 76a.

22. Caius College Cambridge 168/89

Contents: pp. 1-336 (the entire manuscript) **The Festial.**

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.⁴⁵

The manuscript is of paper, except for the vellum fly-leaves, and contains the two fly-leaves at the beginning plus 336 numbered pages. The pp. are approx. 8½ in. x 5½ in. in dimension, and there are 31 lines per p. written in one uniform fairly good hand. There is rubrication throughout, including some red capitals.

The *Festial* has the usual prayer and prologue and seventy items.⁴⁶ It includes the homilies for the local feasts, but omits the homily for the Conception of Our Lady, the homily *De Dominica Prima Quadragesime*, and everything after *Qui Sunt Sepeliendi in Cimiterio*.

Description: C. Horstmann, *op. cit.*, p. cxvii.

23. Southwell (Southwell Minster)

Contents: 1. ff. 1a-171b **The Festial.**

2. ff. 172a-202b *Lives of Saints* (in English).

Date: Just after 1500.⁴⁷

The manuscript is of paper except for vellum fly-leaves, and contains three fly-leaves (one at the beginning and two at the end) plus 202 numbered ff. The ff. are approx. 11½ in. x 8 in. in dimension, and there are 33-38 lines per side. The manuscript is written in a single hand, and is rubricated. The first fly-leaf is a page from a Latin theological treatise, illuminated in red and blue; the ones at the end contain music.

The *Festial* has the usual prologue but no prayer. It contains seventy-one homilies, omitting *De Dominica Prima Quadragesime*, S. Alkmunde and the *Miracles of Our Lady*, but including the homily for S. Winifred and the homily on the Lord's Prayer.

24. Brotherton (Brotherton Collection, Leeds University)

Contents: 1. ff. 1a-116b **The Festial.**

2. ff. 117a-138b *Late fifteenth-century Sequentiale* (Latin), with partial interlinear gloss in English.

Date: c. 1450.⁴⁸

The manuscript is of paper, and contains 138 ff. The ff. are approx. 8½ in. x 5½ in. in dimension, and there are 28-36 lines per side in the *Festial* section. The *Festial* is written in a single hand, rubricated and with initial letters in red on ff. 1a-73b, 82a-85a, 94a/b. There are no titles. An occasional pointing hand appears in the margin.

The version of the *Festial* here present conforms to the Group B type. It commences with the end of the homily for Quinquagesima Sunday, and has fifty-five items, whole or in part. Several homilies at the beginning are missing, and towards the end (from f. 100 onwards) the edges of the ff. begin to wear away badly and get gradually worse. The last item is a fragment of the homily for All Souls' day. The homily for Easter Sunday is missing, together with portions of the homilies which precede and follow it (viz. those for Good Friday and the Rogation Days).

Edition: M. F. Wakelin, "An Edition of John Mirk's *Festial* as it is contained in the Brotherton Collection Manuscript." Unpublished M. A. Dissertation, Leeds University, 1960.

25. New College London Z.c.19

Contents: pp. 3-342 (the entire manuscript except for pp. 1-2, 343-4: there is scribbling on p. 343) **The Festial.**

Date: 1450 - 1500.⁴⁹

The manuscript is of paper and (leaves 1, 8, 9 and 16 of each quire) parchment, and contains, including the fly-leaf (pp. 1-2) at the beginning, 344 numbered pages. There are two unnumbered fly-leaves at the end. The pages are approx. 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in dimension, and there are 21-31 lines per p. The manuscript is written in a single poor text hand, with rubrication on pp. 3-13, 27 and 32, and titles in red throughout. Latin quotations (and occasionally also Latin names) are in red, or in a darker brown ink. Spaces were left throughout for the usual large initial letters, but were never filled. There are occasional marginal notes, perhaps in different hands, in English and Latin. P. 343 contains scribbling. The localization of this manuscript shown on the map above is based upon an examination of only a few pp., but may be accepted tentatively pending further investigation.

The *Festial* has no prayer or prologue; it commences with the homily for S. Andrew, of which the beginning is missing, and ends with the homily for the Dedication, of which the last two narratios are missing. There are remnants of two leaves following this. The homily for the Translation of S. Thomas ends abruptly at the bottom of p. 244 (Erbe's edition, p. 198, line 20), and the homily for S. Margaret commences at the top of p. 245, the first few lines being missing. Including the incomplete homilies, there are altogether fifty-seven items.

26. Durham University Library Cosin V.III.5⁵⁰

Contents: ff. 1a-156b (the entire manuscript) **The Festial.**

Date: Second or third quarter of the fifteenth century.

The manuscript is of paper except for the first fly-leaf, four of the end fly-leaves and the outer and inner bifolia of each gathering, which are of parchment. It contains one fly-leaf plus 163 numbered ff., of which ff. 157-63 are end fly-leaves, four parchment and three paper. The first fly-leaf and parchment end-leaves are medieval, the paper end-leaves post medieval. The ff. really amount to 167, since ff. 72, 91, 95 and 121 are duplicated. The ff. are approx. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. x 8in. in dimension, and there are 31-34 lines per side in a single secretary hand of good and careful character, with blue and red initials and paragraph decoration and rubrication. The first initial is historiated, with a tonsured priest in an hexagonal pulpit, with his hands

clasped, and a tapestry hanging down the front, with a crimson background decorated in gold, all about 2in. x 2in. There are various contemporary annotations (some in a hand of a hostile, protestant tone, and some in another, non-hostile hand), some pen-trials and jottings (including a love poem on f. 162b), and on f. 161a accounts for parchment, paper and wax for "mastere heryng" and "mastere garite." On f. 157a is "Wyllyam northe citsyne of london and of cawntiberye," probably of the middle of the sixteenth century, and the name occurs again on f. 161b and, with "Thomas northe," on f. 142b.

The introductory prayer is that found only in MSS. Lansdowne 392, Harley 2403 and Cambridge University Library Dd.10.50. There is no prologue. The collection commences with the homily for Advent Sunday, and follows the Group B order, ending with the homily for the Dedication. There are sixty-one items altogether.

27. St. John's College Cambridge G 19

This is a copy of the Rouen printed edition of 1499.

28. The "Shrewsbury" Manuscript

Horstmann inferred the existence of this manuscript from a footnote in Thomas Wright's *History of Ludlow*, 1826, p. 181, "who (i.e. Wright) gives a miracle from a legend of Saint Winifred from a Shrewsbury MS."⁵¹ Horstmann quotes the beginning of the text given by Wright, which coincides with Erbe's edition of the *Festial*, p. 181, lines 7 - 13. Efforts to trace the manuscript in question have so far proved fruitless, and from Wright's footnote, which refers to "an ancient manuscript still preserved in that town" (i.e. Shrewsbury), it is clear that he is referring not to a *Festial* but to a manuscript Life (also untraced) of S. Winifred, from a version of which Mirk presumably obtained the narratio in the homily for S. Winifred in the *Festial*. This being the case, the "Shrewsbury" manuscript may now be discounted as non-existent.⁵² If further evidence is needed, it may be noted that in Thomas Wright's *History of Ludlow*, 1852, reference is made to the *Festial* on p. 201, but only to the British Museum MS. Cotton Claudius A II. It seems strange that Wright should not have mentioned the "Shrewsbury" manuscript in this later work. Finally, no trace of any manuscript of the *Festial* can be found in Shrewsbury itself. Two fifteenth-century manuscripts in the library of Shrewsbury School contain homilies, but one collection is in Latin, and a comparison of the others with those of Mirk shows that they are not of his authorship.

29. Havod 22 (Free Library, Cardiff)

The Welsh translation of the *Festial* occupies pp. 80 - 195 of this collection of theological tracts, Gospel translations, and other religious works. The manuscript has 728 pp. in all, and is written in two hands of the third quarter of the sixteenth century. The *Festial* is in hand A.⁵³

A much abridged version of the *Festial* (perhaps taken from a printed source) is represented, both in the number of homilies and in their contents. It comprises fourteen items, viz. the homilies for Advent Sunday, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima and Quadragesima Sundays, the Second, Third and Fourth Sundays in Lent, Passion and Palm Sundays, Good

Friday, Easter Sunday, the Vigil of Pentecost and Pentecost. It will be noted that this list represents an abridged version of the *temporale*.

My first aim in writing this article was simply to provide, as a basis for further research, a list of all known manuscripts of whole or parts of John Mirk's *Festial*. In the course of writing the article, however, something else has emerged — the importance of the link between textual comparison and linguistic geography. I have not been able to pursue this subject in any detail here, but the following note is intended to indicate a possible line of approach.

The A-B classification of the manuscripts is basic: the contents are arranged in different orders, and the texts themselves differ considerably from A to B. A textual comparison of the A manuscripts would, I think, show that certain broad groupings emerged (e.g. MSS. Bodley Gough Ecclesiastical Top. 4, Douce 60 and Douce 108 are probably very close textually),⁵⁴ even if no definite relationship can be established. In the A group, there is, of course, the complicating factor of MS. Hatton 96, whose scribes seemed to have at least fragments of many versions at their disposal, the variety of the dialects seems to show this. What will its textual affinities prove to be? This in itself is an illustration of the importance of the textual-linguistic link. Further, a textual comparison of the Group B manuscripts would, I think, show that they are very closely associated with each other, even if as yet revealing no definite relationships. If we look at the map, we shall see that the Group A manuscripts can mostly be localized in the west (6 in Lincolnshire may be ignored for this purpose, since it consists only of five and a half separate tales, and might even belong to Group B). On the other hand, the Group B manuscripts (viz. 8, 17; 7, 9, 10, 16, 24, 26) seem to form two easterly groups. The link between text and language is even more strongly emphasized when we know, for example, that 7 and 24 (i.e. MSS. Harley 2371 and Brotherton) have a very close textual relationship,⁵⁵ as well as being linguistically close.

The conclusion that one would wish to draw is that the Group A manuscripts are copies of Mirk's original work — geographically they are near Mirk's home, and some of them include homilies for the local (west midland) saints, Winifred and Alkmunde. Then a redaction was made, resulting in a second family of texts, mostly distributed further east, and not including the "local" (and some other) homilies. This is mere hypothesis, but it is suggested by the contents of the manuscripts and by their geographical distribution. A thorough investigation of their textual relationships might be conclusive.

NOTES

I acknowledge with pleasure grants made to me by the School of English of the University of Leeds, to assist me in my researches for this article.

¹ New Haven, 1916-, p. 301.

² *Neue Folge* (Heilbronn, 1881), pp. cix ff.

³ Wells, p. 301.

- ⁴ Mirk was also the author of the well-known versified *Instructions for Parish Priests*, adapted from the Latin *Oculus Sacerdotis* of William de Pagula, and extant in several manuscripts. MS. Royal 17 C XVII of this work is erroneously named as a manuscript of the *Festial* by G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 245, footnote 2.
- ⁵ The one modern edition was only partially completed by Th. Erbe for EETS (ES 96, 1905), and gives the text of MS. Gough Ecclesiastical Top. 4, with variants from five other manuscripts and a Glossarial Index.
- ⁶ London, 1952, p. 101. Whether or not Professor Wilson's examples can be identified with any of the extant manuscripts, it has not so far been possible to discover.
- ⁷ The (apparently deliberate) omission of the local saints, Winifred and Alkmunde, suggests that these collections were compiled for use in an area where the cults of the saints in question were not important. A glance at the proposed localizations of the Group B manuscripts (viz. 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 24 and 26) will bear this out. The omission of the other homilies is inexplicable.
- ⁸ Horstmann, op. cit., p. cxiii, suggests c. 1420, stating that this is the earliest and best manuscript (he had not, however, seen most of them). However, he notes that the text is not as good as might be expected from such a dating, that it needs much emendation from the other manuscripts, and that its text is some way removed from the original. He distinguishes three hands.
- ⁹ I am grateful to Professor McIntosh for his tentative suggestions about the contributions of the various hands in this and the other manuscripts, as also for their provisional geographical localizations.
- ¹⁰ The homily for the feast of SS. Philip and James is reckoned as one homily only. In the Group B manuscripts, the copyists seem to have regarded it as two, the second homily beginning at "Now . . ." (MS. Harley 2371), and the lay-out of the text indicating that a fresh homily is intended. In my treatment of the manuscripts, where the homily is obviously *one*, I have regarded it as one only; where it seems to be intended as two, I have regarded it as two.
- ¹¹ In the other manuscripts in which it occurs (see note 12, below), this homily is placed between the homilies for Quadragesima Sunday and Lent II.
- ¹² The homily *De Dominica Prima Quadragesime* occurs in MSS. Cotton Claudius A11, Gough Ecclesiastical Top. 4, Douce 60, Douce 108, Hatton 96 and Cambridge University Library Nn.3.10. S. Winifred occurs only in MSS. Cotton, Lansdowne 392, Harley 2403, Harley 2417, Gough, Caius and Southwell; S. Alkmunde only in Cotton, Gough and Caius; Nero only in Cotton, Gough, Caius and Southwell; the Lord's Prayer only in Cotton, Lansdowne 392, Harley 2403, Harley 2417, Gough and Southwell.
- ¹³ Horstmann, op. cit., p. cxviii, suggests the first half of the fifteenth century.
- ¹⁴ In his edition of Peter Langtoft's *Chronicle* (1725), I, lx, Ward apparently identified Plommer with Robertus Plimmodunensis or Plympton, an Augustinian canon of Plympton, Devon. Hearne considers his claim for authorship against that of Mirk, to whom he finds the Cotton version of the work ascribed in a catalogue. He says that Ward's manuscript is very different from the printed book (one of the Wynkyn de Worde versions) which he (Hearne) mentions in his glossary to Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* (1724, II, 739-40). The printed book, in particular, he says, omits the account of S. Winifred, and he declares his intention, therefore, of supplying the account in his Appendix to Langtoft's *Chronicle*. The account is accordingly given (I, cxcvi-cc1).
- ¹⁵ On f. 2b, facing, a modern hand has copied out the prayer and prologue, presumably because of the difficulty in reading the faded and discoloured f. 3a. On ff. 122a/b the same hand has given an index to the *Festial*. The same hand has written "in his olde age/ and now is knowen in all Cristendom" on a slip pasted at the bottom of f. 85b, in an attempt to supply the next line of the homily for the Translation of S. Thomas, only ten lines of which are present in the manuscript.
- ¹⁶ Edited by W. O. Ross, *Middle English Sermons*. EETS, OS 209, 1940. See p. 46. This is not one of the three homilies by Mirk.

- ¹⁷ The homily on the Lord's Prayer commences immediately after All Saints, at f. 94b, line 12. It continues to the bottom of f. 95b, but this leaf has been cut vertically down the middle, and half of it is missing. The homily probably continued for at least one more f.
- ¹⁸ It is perhaps a measure of their post-Reformation use that in many of the manuscripts the homily for the Translation of S. Thomas has been removed or crossed through.
- ¹⁹ Horstmann, *op. cit.*, p. cxvii, suggests the first half of the fifteenth century.
- ²⁰ On the other hand, the "H" of "Hit" (Erbe's edition, p. 301) is a large red letter; apparently the scribe regarded homily number 73 as beginning here.
- ²¹ I have not identified any of the names. Ward tentatively suggests an identification for Elsebyt Bothe; see *Catalogue of Romances*, II, 690.
- ²² The section on S. James does not appear to be regarded as a separate homily; cf. note 10, above.
- ²³ It may not be without significance that the last three of these exempla deal with the punishment or conversion of various Jews.
- ²⁴ I am grateful to Professor McIntosh for drawing my attention to the scribble.
- ²⁵ Horstmann, *op. cit.*, p. cxx, suggests the second half of the fifteenth century.
- ²⁶ There is no separate homily for S. James the Less under the heading of SS. Philip and James. Miss Steckman points out (*op. cit.*, 44) that "the added sermons are only in the *temporale* section of the book." This is not entirely true of the Royal manuscript.
- ²⁷ This manuscript and the following one are the only two to include homilies for this feast, which, in England before the Reformation, was celebrated on the Sunday after the feast of the Translation of S. Thomas (July 7th).
- ²⁸ The portion of the homily for SS. Philip and James which deals with S. James forms a separate and distinct item.
- ²⁹ See G. F. Warner and J. P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, II (1921).
- ³⁰ Ross, *op. cit.* (see note 16, above), p. xvi.
- ³¹ *Op. cit.*, p. xxvii.
- ³² *Op. cit.*, p. xxxi.
- ³³ Presumably modern Rickmansworth.
- ³⁴ Horstmann, *op. cit.*, suggests no date.
- ³⁵ See J. P. W. M. Van Zutphen (ed.), *A Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins by Richard Lavynham O. Carm.* (Rome, 1956), pp. xlii-xliii.
- ³⁶ I am grateful to Miss Kathleen Smith of Oxford for this information.
- ³⁷ The version of Lavynham's *Treatise* in MS. Douce 60 is textually related to that in MS. Harley 2383, which has a Somerset provenance. But it is probable that the *Treatise* in MS. Douce 60 is the *source* of the version in MS. Harley 2383, rather than vice-versa (see Van Zutphen, *op. cit.*, pp. xxix, lvi).
- ³⁸ Horstmann, *op. cit.*, pp. cxix-cxx, gives a full list of the contents of MSS. Douce 60 and Douce 108.
- ³⁹ Horstmann, *op. cit.*, p. cxix, suggests the second half of the fifteenth century.
- ⁴⁰ See note 38, above. This homily is given twice.
- ⁴¹ I am grateful to Professor McIntosh for all the information regarding the hands and dialects of MS. Hatton 96. He and Dr. A. I. Doyle have suggested to me that hand A is perhaps indicative of a peripatetic scribe collecting text from manuscripts in a wide variety of places.
- ⁴² These cannot all be mentioned here, but are itemized in the *Catalogue of Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1856-67), II.
- ⁴³ Horstmann, *op. cit.*, p. cxiii, suggests no date, but says that this is presumably a copy of an already printed book. He does not, however, say on what grounds he ventures this opinion.
- ⁴⁴ These are as follows: 1. De Dominica Prima Quadragesime, Lent II, Lent III, Lent IV, Passion Sunday, Palm Sunday, S. George, S. Mark, SS. Philip and James, S. John Baptist, SS. Peter and Paul, the Translation of S. Thomas; 2. Ascension, Vigil of Pentecost, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Assumption (fragment); 3. Septuagesima Sunday, Sexagesima Sunday. Cf. the list of homilies in MS. Cotton Claudius A II (appendix to this paper).

- ⁴⁵ I have so far been unable to obtain an expert opinion on the date of this manuscript. Horstmann, *op. cit.*, p. cxvii, suggests the first half of the fifteenth century.
- ⁴⁶ The section on S. James the Less is regarded as a separate homily.
- ⁴⁷ For this information I am grateful to Mr. Neil Ker, who has made a careful consideration of the date and script of the manuscript.
- ⁴⁸ The date 1430 appears on the spine of the book: the source of this opinion is unknown.
- ⁴⁹ The authority for this dating is Mr. Neil Ker.
- ⁵⁰ I have so far been unable to examine this manuscript, and am indebted to Dr. A. I. Doyle for all the details printed here, as also for other information about the *Festial* manuscripts.
- ⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, p. cxii, footnote 1.
- ⁵² The "Shrewsbury" manuscript is also listed by Wells, *Manual*, p. 961.
- ⁵³ See Historical Manuscripts Commission, 48, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language*, II, Part I (1902), 329. The Welsh version is printed, with introduction and notes, by Henry Lewis as a *Supplement to the Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, Session 1923-4.
- ⁵⁴ This was established by taking variant readings from the homily for Pentecost. See Wakelin, *op. cit.*, pp. xv-xvi, 603-20.
- ⁵⁵ Wakelin, *op. cit.*, pp. xvi-xvii, 603-20.

APPENDIX

I. Numbered list of the homilies in MS. Cotton Claudius A II (Group A).

- Prayer and Prologue
- 1 Advent Sunday
 - 2 S. Andrew
 - 3 S. Nicholas
 - 4 Conception of Our Lady
 - 5 S. Thomas Apostle
 - 6 Nativity of Our Lord
 - 7 S. Stephen
 - 8 S. John Evangelist
 - 9 Holy Innocents
 - 10 S. Thomas of Canterbury
 - 11 Circumcision
 - 12 Epiphany
 - 13 Conversion of S. Paul
 - 14 Purification
 - 15 Septuagesima Sunday
 - 16 Sexagesima Sunday
 - 17 Quinquagesima Sunday
 - 18 S. Matthias
 - 19 Quadragesima Sunday
 - 20 Second Sunday in Lent
 - 21 Third Sunday in Lent
 - 22 Fourth Sunday in Lent
 - 23 Annunciation
 - 24 Passion Sunday
 - 25 Palm Sunday
 - 26 Explanation of Tenebrae
 - 27 Good Friday
 - 28 Explanation of Maundy Thursday
and Holy Saturday rites
 - 29 Easter Sunday
 - 30 S. George
 - 31 S. Mark
 - 32 SS. Philip and James
 - 33 Invention of the Holy Cross
 - 34 De Dominica Prima Quadragesime
(On the Epistle for the first
Sunday in Lent.)

- 35 S. John Ante Portam Latinam
- 36 Rogation Days
- 37 Ascension
- 38 Vigil of Pentecost
- 39 Pentecost
- 40 Trinity Sunday
- 41 Corpus Christi
- 42 S. Barnabas
- 43 S. Winifred
- 44 Nativity of S. John Baptist
- 45 SS. Peter and Paul
- 46 Denarracio de Morte Neronis Sermo
- 47 Translation of S. Thomas of Canterbury
- 48 S. Margaret
- 49 S. Mary Magdalene
- 50 S. James
- 51 S. Anne
- 52 S. Lawrence
- 53 Assumption
- 54 Sermon on the Gospel for
the Assumption
- 55 S. Bartholomew
- 56 S. Alkmunde
- 57 Nativity of Our Lady
- 58 Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 59 Ember Days
- 60 S. Matthew
- 61 S. Michael
- 62 S. Luke
- 63 SS. Simon and Jude
- 64 All Saints
- 65 All Souls
- 66 S. Martin
- 67 S. Katherine
- 68 On the Dedication of a church
- 69 Sermo de Nupciis
- 70 In Die Sepulture
- 71 Qui Sunt Sepeliendi in Cimiterio
- 72 Salutation
- 73 Miracles of Our Lady
- 74 Lord's Prayer
- II. Numbered list of the homilies in MS. Harley 2371 (Group B).
- 1 Advent Sunday (fragment)
- 2 Septuagesima Sunday
- 3 Sexagesima Sunday
- 4 Quinquagesima Sunday
- 5 Second Sunday in Lent
- 6 Third Sunday in Lent
- 7 Fourth Sunday in Lent
- 8 Passion Sunday
- 9 Palm Sunday
- 10 Explanation of Tenebrae
- 11 Explanation of Maundy Thursday
and Holy Saturday rites
- 12 Good Friday
- 13 Easter Sunday
- 14 Rogation Days
- 15 Ascension
- 16 Vigil of Pentecost
- 17 Pentecost
- 18 Trinity Sunday
- 19 Corpus Christi

- 20 S. Andrew
- 21 S. Nicholas
- 22 Conception of Our Lady
- 23 S. Thomas Apostle
- 24 Nativity of Our Lord
- 25 S. Stephen
- 26 S. John Evangelist
- 27 Holy Innocents
- 28 S. Thomas of Canterbury
- 29 Circumcision
- 30 Epiphany
- 31 Conversion of S. Paul
- 32 Purification
- 33 S. Matthias
- 34 Annunciation
- 35 S. George
- 36 S. Mark
- 37 SS. Philip and James
- 38 S. James the Less
- 39 Invention of the Holy Cross
- 40 S. John Ante Portam Latinam
- 41 Nativity of S. John Baptist
- 42 SS. Peter and Paul
- 43 Translation of S. Thomas of Canterbury
- 44 S. Mary Magdalene
- 45 S. James
- 46 S. Anne
- 47 S. Lawrence
- 48 Sermon on the Gospel for
the Assumption
- 49 S. Bartholomew
- 50 Nativity of Our Lady
- 51 Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 52 Ember Days
- 53 S. Matthew
- 54 S. Michael
- 55 S. Luke
- 56 SS. Simon and Jude
- 57 All Saints
- 58 All Souls
- 59 S. Martin
- 60 S. Katherine
- 61 On the Dedication of a church