

A study of Oxford, Trinity College, MS 86, with editions of selected texts, and with special reference to late Middle English prose forms of confession.

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Abstract.

The thesis consists of a detailed examination of the contents of Oxford, Trinity College, MS 86, (Trinity), with particular attention being given to several lengthy English confessional items which it contains. This is complemented by a more general consideration of late Middle English prose forms of confession and the manuscripts in which they occur.

Part One consists of a survey of all surviving independent prose forms of confession preserved in late Middle English manuscripts. I divide the texts into groups according to their probable audience and readership, assessed from both internal and external evidence. This is preceded by a brief introductory section on the background to late Middle English guides to preparation for confession. In three appendices, I provide: a full description of London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584, with transcriptions of three confessional texts; a transcription of a form of confession from London, British Library, MS Harley 2383, with variants from all known manuscripts; a transcription of a form of confession from Yale, University Library, MS Beinecke 317.

Part Two consists of a close study of Trinity: a full description of the manuscript, supplementing existing catalogues; editions of four confessional texts from the manuscript, accompanied by detailed discussions of their form and probable function; an analysis of a series of short devotional texts which, taken together, constitute an elementary manual of religious instruction. I include full critical editions, with variants from all known manuscripts, of two of these texts, The Sixteen Conditions of Charity and The Eight Blessings of God, both of which originate in passages extracted from the Wycliffite Bible, and which survive, in varying versions, in thirty-four and nine manuscripts respectively. The thesis concludes with a summary of the probable origin and function of this manuscript collection.

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General Introduction.

The present thesis has originated in a close examination of Oxford, Trinity College, MS 86, (Trinity), a clerical miscellany in various hands of the early decades of the sixteenth century.

As argued in detail in Part Two below, it is likely that the material in the first two hands of this manuscript was put together to form a manual of practical guidance to a priest, most probably a simple parish priest. (See Part Two, pp.1-35, 237-238). Among this material is a series of items which constitute a self-contained manual of basic catechetical instruction, probably intended for use as an aid to Lenten instruction of the laity. (Discussed in detail, Part Two, pp.130-143). I provide full editions of two texts from this series, The Sixteen Conditions of Charity and The Eight Blessings of God, both of which originate in passages extracted from the later version of the Wycliffite Bible (Part Two, pp.144-226 and 227-237).

Minor subsequent additions to the manuscript suggest continuing use in similar contexts. However, material added in a fifth hand suggests a shift in the focus of the collection, with lengthy confessional material in Latin and English which is found in the existing collection being supplemented with further English confessional texts. It would thus appear that the new user of the manuscript has realised the penitential potential of the collection, which he has enhanced by the addition of new material. (See discussion, Part Two, pp.37-45, 79-86, 117-121). Latin

penitential material is also added at the end of the manuscript in a further two pre-Reformation hands.

All of the English confessional material in Trinity, in both the original and later hands, is in the form of what are usually called "forms of confession". (On the problems of nomenclature, see below, Part One, p.18). I therefore present in Part One of the thesis a survey of all independent late Middle English prose forms of confession preserved in manuscripts, in order to provide a suitable context for a detailed examination of the texts in Trinity. A discussion of the association of such texts with Lenten instruction (Part One, pp.120-132) also helps to place in context the series of catechetical items in Trinity.

In three appendices to Part One I provide transcriptions of several representative forms of confession from three different manuscripts, which serve both as illustrative examples for the discussion in Part One, and as comparative material for the texts from Trinity printed in Part Two. I also give an account of the contents of London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584, a manuscript which is discussed in detail at several points in Part One, and which provides a useful point of comparison for Trinity.

Abbreviations

- EETS The Early English Text Society (O.S.: Original Series; E.S.: Extra Series).
- IMEP The Index of Middle English Prose, edd. A.S.G.Edwards et al., Handlists I-X (Cambridge 1984-1994).
- IMEV The Index of Middle English Verse, edd. C.Brown and R.H.Robbins (New York, 1943).
- IPMEP The Index of Printed Middle English Prose, edd. R.E.Lewis, N.F.Blake, and A.S.G.Edwards (New York and London, 1985).
- Jolliffe P.S.Jolliffe, A Check-list of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance (Toronto, 1974).
- MED Middle English Dictionary, edd. H.Kurath and S.M.Kuhn et al. (Ann Arbor, 1952-). (Last fascicule of MED consulted: T.3, Testifien - Theim-self).
- MWME A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-

1500, edd. J.B.Severs and A.E.Hartung (New Haven, 1967-).

OED The Oxford English Dictionary, edd. J.A.H.Murray et al., 2nd ed. J.A.Simpson and E.S.C.Weiner (Oxford 1989).

PL J.P.Migne, ed., Patrologia Latina (Paris 1844-1890).

RSTC A.W.Pollard and G.R.Redgrave, A Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640, 2nd. ed., begun by A.W.Jackson and F.S.Ferguson, completed by K.F.Pantzer, 3 vols. (London, 1976-1991).

Stratmann F.H.Stratmann, A Middle-English Dictionary, revised and enlarged by Henry Bradley (Oxford, 1891).

Walther H.Walther, Carmina Medii Aevi Posterioris Latina, Parts I and II, vols.1-9 (Göttingen, 1963-1986).

General Editorial Note

In all transcriptions and edited texts, underlining denotes an expanded abbreviation, emboldening indicates characters rubricated in the manuscript or the use of a display script, < ' > denotes an unexpanded abbreviation, and < 3 > represents the graph < 3 >. (The symbol < 3 > is also used here for the corresponding littera notabilior; likewise, < þ > is used here both for the regular form and for the littera notabilior). `` indicate interlinear or marginal insertions, in the original hand unless otherwise noted. Angle brackets, < >, denote characters which are illegible in the manuscript, represented either by an appropriate number of dots or by a conjectural reading.

i. Edited texts and transcriptions of complete texts.

Abbreviations in English words have been expanded and the expansions underlined, while in Latin words abbreviations have been silently expanded. In cases where there are difficulties in ascertaining what, if anything, may be represented by a mark of abbreviation, the symbol < ' > is used and no attempt at an expansion is made. Otiose or calligraphic strokes are not reproduced, except where there appears to be a strong likelihood that an ambiguous mark may in fact represent a mark of

abbreviation. *þt* has been silently expanded as *þat* or *that* according to the regular usage of the manuscript in question, and *wt* likewise as *wip*, *wyp*, *wyth* or *with*. *nt* has been silently expanded as *not*. Modern punctuation has been adopted, although at all times careful attention has been paid to the guidance offered by the punctuation of the manuscripts. Modern capitalization has been adopted throughout. Changes of folio are indicated by a line | at the appropriate point in the text, with details recorded in the margin.

Characters in square brackets [] represent emendations of the manuscript reading. In general, whether or not a form is recorded in MED (for those words covered by the fascicules so far published) is used as the guide as to whether emendation should be made. Omissions in the edited text of characters found in the manuscript are not indicated in the edited text, but are recorded in the variants.

ii. The variants.

In the textual notes all abbreviations have been silently expanded. Neither punctuation nor capitalization is employed. The presence of rubrication or of display script in the manuscript is not indicated. "Linguistic" variation is not recorded; however, changes of number, and of mood and tense in verbs, are. The following abbreviations are employed:

] a single square bracket is used to separate lemma from variant.

, a comma is used to separate variants to the same lemma.

om.: omitted.

canc.: the preceding words are deleted either by subpunction or by crossing through.

`...': marginal or interlinear insertion.

iii. Transcriptions of incipits and explicits in manuscript descriptions.

The punctuation and capitalization of the manuscripts are retained, with < / > being used to represent both < / > and < // >. Where possible, the word division of the manuscript is also preserved. The symbol | denotes a line break, and || the end of the recto or verso of a folio. Manuscript abbreviations are treated in the same way as in transcriptions of complete texts, with the exception that *pt* and *wt* are here left unexpanded. Characters contained in brackets {} represent deletions in the manuscript, whether by subpunction or any other means.

General note on manuscript material cited.

With the exception of material cited from Oxford, Trinity College, MS 86, which has been checked thoroughly, it has proved impossible to carry out exhaustive checking of the large amount of manuscript material cited in this thesis. This is particularly the case with manuscripts held in remote locations, where in most instances only a single consultation has been possible for reasons both of time and of expense.

The Background to Late Middle English Guides to Preparation for Confession.

The subject of these notes is confession, usually made individually and privately to a priest, as a part of the process of sacramental penance. Both the earlier monastic practice of public confession and the Confiteor of the Mass are thus outside the main scope of this study.

The aim of this section is to provide a brief introduction to the late Middle English prose forms of confession examined below on pp.16-137. It is no way intended as a general account of the history of confession in later medieval England.

The necessity of annual confession.

The necessity of confession at least once a year for all Christians who had reached the age of discretion was imposed by capitulum xxi of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 in the pastoral constitution Omnis utriusque sexus:¹

¹ "All the faithful of either sex, after they have reached the age of discernment, should individually confess all their sins in a faithful manner to their own priest at least once a year, and let them take care to do what they can to perform the penance imposed on them. Let them reverently receive the sacrament of the eucharist at least at Easter unless they think, for a good reason and on the advice of their own priest, that they should abstain from receiving

Omnis utriusque sexus fidelis postquam ad annos discretionis pervenerit, omnia sua solus peccata saltem semel in anno fideliter confiteatur proprio sacerdoti, et injunctam sibi poenitentiam pro viribus studeat adimplere, suscipiens reverenter ad minus in Pascha Eucharistie sacramentum; nisi forte de proprii sacerdotis consilio ob aliquam rationabilem causam, ad tempus ab eius perceptione duxerit abstinendum;...

The confession is to be made privately (solus), and to the penitent's own priest (proprio sacerdoti). In the same sentence annual communion at Easter is made obligatory, and in subsequent authorities it is assumed that the obligatory annual confession is also to take place at Easter.²

Provincial and diocesan constitutions in the early thirteenth century reinforced these obligations, and in some cases extended them. For instance, the constitutions of Richard Poore, bishop of Salisbury, in 1217, impose at least three confessions and communions per year.³

From the late thirteenth century onwards the friars also came to play an important part in the penitential process, partly determined by successive legislation (particularly the papal bulls Ad fructus uberes of 1281, Super cathedram of 1300, and Vas electionis of 1321) which sought to define their rights with regard

it for a time."

Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta, ed. J. Alberigo et al. (3rd ed., Bologna, 1972), p.245; translation from N. Tanner, ed., Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils (Georgetown, 1990), I, p.245.

² See the authorities cited by N. Gray, "Penance in Piers Plowman", Cambridge University Ph.D. Thesis, 1984, p.154, n.165.

³ F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church (Oxford, 1964), I, pp.72-3.

to hearing confessions.⁴

The demands upon the clergy, and in particular the secular clergy and the friars, created by Omnis utriusque sexus and subsequent legislation encouraged the growth of a vast literature of confession. In the immediately following period the most noticeable literary works are the penitential summae, giving guidance to the confessor in all aspects of the hearing of confession, the imposition of penance and the administering of absolution.⁵

In the later medieval period shorter guides to hearing confession, often in the vernacular, become common. These often

⁴ See J. Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order, from its Origins to the Year 1517 (Oxford, 1968), passim; C.H. Lawrence, The Friars: The Impact of the early Mendicant Movement on Western Society (London, 1994).

For a review of the very limited evidence from England for problems concerning incursions of mendicants into the proper sphere of influence of parish priests in hearing confession, see L.G. Duggan, "Fear and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation", Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 75 (1984), pp.153-175; however, one should compare with Duggan's evidence the contemporary comments of Fitzralph's Defensio Curatorum and Trevisa's translation of this text (Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum, Richard FitzRalph's Sermon: 'Defensio Curatorum', and Methodius: 'þe Bygynnyng of þe world and þe Ende of Worldes', ed. A.J. Perry, EETS O.S. 167 (1925), p.40 ll.9-16 and pp.41-54). For a modern review of Fitzralph's comments, one should see K. Walsh, A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate: Richard Fitzralph in Oxford, Avignon and Armagh (Oxford, 1981), and especially pp.423-444.

⁵ See: L.E. Boyle, "The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology", The Popular Literature of Medieval England, ed. T.J. Heffernan, (Knoxville, 1985), pp.30-43; P. Michaud-Quantin, Sommes de casuistique et manuels de confession au moyen-âge (XII-XVIe siècles) (Louvain-Lille-Montréal, 1962); T.N. Tentler, Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation (Princeton, 1977); J. Goering and P.J. Payer, "The Summa Penitentiae Fratrum Predicatorum: a thirteenth-century Confessional Formulary", Mediaeval Studies 55 (1993), pp.1-50.

take the form either of model confessions or of series of interrogations to be addressed to a penitent.⁶ The latter group of vernacular confessional manuals have recently been discussed by E.Duffy,⁷ with particular attention being given to the lengthy manual in Cambridge, St.John's College, MS S 35. However, Duffy's discussion does not take into account the far more numerous category of model confessions which are the subject of the present study.

General and specific confessions.

In the discussion of confession subsequent to Lateran IV the distinction between general confessions and specific confessions of particular sins is essential. Specific confession is generally seen to be necessary for mortal sins, while a confession of a general nature made to a priest ensures forgiveness of venial and forgotten sins.

Even before 1215 the importance of general confession is recognised. Peter Lombard states that a confession made in general

⁶ For the distinction between *summae confessorum* and confessional formulae see also M.W.Bloomfield, The Seven Deadly Sins (Michigan, 1952), p.387, n.107. For the close link between model confessions and preparatory interrogations, see the adaptation of Grosseteste's confessional questionnaire as a model confession, discussed by S.Wenzel, The Sin of Sloth (Chapel Hill, 1967), p.84 and p.229, n.65.

⁷ E.Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars (New Haven, 1992), pp.58-60.

terms, without reference to a particular penitent's specific sins, is important to cover venial sins, and any mortal sins that the penitent cannot remember. Alain de Lille likewise states that a general confession should be made in the absence of serious sin, so that forgotten sins thus find remission, while the penitent avoids the danger of neglecting a sacrament of the Church.⁸

In the period following Lateran IV, there was much debate over whether confession of venial sins was demanded by Omnis utriusque sexus. Other means, such as the Confiteor of the Mass, were suggested as being sufficient for remission of venial sins. Raymond de Peñaforte states that it is not decided whether venial sins should be confessed to the priest, but that nonetheless the safest course is to do so,⁹ and most subsequent authorities agree with this opinion.¹⁰ The following opinion on the subject is found in the late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century English Clensyng of

⁸ Petrus Lombardus, Sententiae, IV, Dist.21, cap.7 (Petri Lombardi Sententiae in IV libris distinctae, Editio tertia, Spicilegium Bonaventuram 4, 1971, and 5, 1981, II, p.384); Alain de Lille, Liber Poenitentialis, IV, cap.1 (ed. J.Longère, Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia 17 and 18, 1965, II, p.162); see also O.D. Watkins, A History of Penance (London, 1920), pp.730-31.

⁹ Raymond de Peñaforte, Summa (Rome, 1603; reprint, Farnborough, England, 1967), Lib. III, Tit. xxxiv, 4.

¹⁰ See H.C.Lea, A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church (Philadelphia, 1896), II, pp.264-75. See also the discussion of this issue in a note in London, British Library, MS Harley 494, quoted below, p.44.

Mannes Soule:¹¹

Also conys in þe 3eere or ofter it is spedeful to make a general confession wip alle þe circumstauncis as myche as come to mynde.

The distinction between venial and mortal sins is clearly central to the distinction between general and specific confession. However, while the theoretical distinction between venial and mortal sins is the subject of much theological discussion, there is throughout the medieval period grave confusion in attempts to posit any categorisation of venial and mortal sins which might be of practical use to a confessor.¹²

The review of this distinction in The Cloud of Unknowing and Hilton's The Scale of Perfection given by M.W.Bloomfield illustrates the lack of clarity on this issue in the English mystical writers of the later medieval period.¹³ For the writer of The Cloud of Unknowing the distinction is purely a matter of degree:¹⁴

Bot 3if it so be þat þis likyng or gruching fastnyng in þi fleschly herte & þeires be suffred so longe to abide vnreproued, þat þan at þe last it is fastnid to þe goostly herte (þat is to sey þe wile) wip a ful consent: þan it is deedly synne.

¹¹ Cited from the edition by W.Everett, "A critical edition of the confession section of The Clensyng of Mannes Soule", Ph.D. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1974, p.37. See further p.19, n.4 below.

¹² Lea, Auricular Confession, II, chapter XX, and especially pp.239-44.

¹³ Bloomfield, Sins, pp.179-81.

¹⁴ The Cloud of Unknowing, ed. P.Hodgson, EETS O.S. 218 (1944), p.36.

A treatise on sin from the Hopton Hall manuscript (MS Chandos-Pole-Gell), which incorporates some material in a confessional format,¹⁵ offers a similar distinction to that found in The Cloud of Unknowing (fol.11r):¹⁶

And it is to wetyn þat þe fyrst steryng of þese synnys
aforn sayde ne arn not dedly synnes, bot qwan vp her
kynde arn contrary to charyte beknowyn of skylfulle
reson.

In the discussion of the seven deadly sins in The Scale of Perfection, Hilton attempts at several points to distinguish between venial and mortal manifestations of certain of the sins, yet at the end of chapter 56 during the discussion of pride he concedes that this distinction cannot be made consistently throughout.¹⁷

Similarly, the discussion of venial and mortal sin in the early fourteenth-century English collection of aids for preachers entitled Fasciculus Morum, which makes clear the necessity of confession and penance to remedy the spiritual death of mortal sin, offers only the following distinction between venial and mortal sin derived from Augustine, De perfectione iustitiae hominis:¹⁸

¹⁵ See further pp.115-116 below.

¹⁶ This should be compared also with the discussion found in London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A.iii; see pp.42-43 below.

¹⁷ The Scale of Perfection, ed. E.Underhill (London, 1923), p.135; see also the discussion of a later passage from this text in Bloomfield, Sins, p.416, n.185.

¹⁸ "According to Augustine, venial sin is a diminished love of God, namely when some creature is loved too much, yet still less than the Creator - when a creature is loved as much or even more than its Creator, this love would be considered plainly a mortal sin." Fasciculus Morum, I, i; ed. S.Wenzel (London, 1989), p.32;

Veniale autem peccatum, secundum Augustinum, est minor amor Dei, utpote quando nimis diligitur aliqua creatura set tamen minus quam Creator; nam si eque aut magis diligeretur creatura quam Creator, omnino mortale diceretur.

Thus, while the distinction between venial and mortal sin plays a pivotal role in the theoretical view of the penitential process, there is no clear guide to the confessor as to where the division can be applied in practice. A partial solution to this problem is found in vernacular texts which occur under such headings as *Confessio generalis ac specialis*, offering what is essentially a general confession of venial and forgotten sins with opportunities for specific confession of particular mortal sins. In such texts limited guidance is sometimes offered to a priest when deciding which sins require separate confession, but most decisions are left entirely to the priest's discretion, with the proviso that all sins have at least been confessed in the general formula. Such a confession would, according to most authorities, have no validity in the case of grave sins, but can be seen to offer reassurance to both priest and penitent that, in uncertain cases, at least some measure of penance has been performed.

A further confusion is created, for both modern and medieval readers, by the use of the term deadly in vernacular texts to

Wenzel's translation. Later in the same section the author of Fasciculus Morum gives the following general definition of mortal sin, again citing Augustine: "Mortale autem peccatum, secundum Augustinum Contra Faustum, 'est dictum, factum, aut concupitum quod fit contra legem Dei'; "Mortal, according to Augustine in Against Faustus, 'is any word, deed or desire which is contrary to God's law.'" (Wenzel, Fasciculus, p.32).

denote both mortal sins and the seven cardinal sins. As already noted in the discussion of Hilton, the seven cardinal sins, a method of categorising sins under seven chief heads, have both mortal and venial manifestations. An invaluable discussion of the long history of this framework for considering sin, and of the frequent medieval confusion of the concepts of mortal and cardinal sins, is provided by M.W.Bloomfield.¹⁹ An example of this confusion may be seen in the confessional interrogations in Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests²⁰ where interrogation concerning the seven deadly sins, here described as *dedly synnes* (l.973), is followed by interrogation in the five bodily senses and divers other sins, described as *synnes venyal* (l.1303).

The structure of a model confession.

Many late medieval authorities stress the importance of confessing according to the seven deadly sins.²¹ Typically, Robert

¹⁹ Bloomfield, Sins, p.43. See also S.Wenzel, The Sin of Sloth (Chapel Hill, 1967), passim. The expression "seven deadly sins" is used here to designate the cardinal sins throughout, following the usage of the vernacular texts.

²⁰ John Mirk, Instructions for Parish Priests, ed.E.Peacock, EETS O.S. 31 (1868, revised 1902); more recently, ed.G.Kristensson, John Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests, Lund Studies in English, 49 (Lund, 1974). Line numbers are identical in both editions.

²¹ See Gray, "Penance", p.108, n.3. On confession according to the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments and the five senses, see further J.Goering and P.J.Payer, "The Summa Penitentiae Fratrum Predicatorum: a thirteenth-century Confessional Formulary",

of Flamborough recommends confession according to the seven deadly sins in order that the penitent should not confuse either his own or the priest's memory:²²

Mihi placet ut incipiens a superbia, quae est radix omnium malorum, singula cum suis speciebus confitearis gradatim vitia.

Confession according to the seven deadly sins is central to nearly all model confessions, both Latin and vernacular. This is most frequently accompanied by a similar section, usually shorter, dealing with sins against the ten commandments. Sections dealing with the senses, bodily and spiritual, with the sacraments of the Church, and with failure to perform the bodily and spiritual works of mercy are also common. A discussion of sins of disbelief against the creed or the articles of the faith sometimes leads into a general statement of the creed or the articles, usually at the end of the text. Instruction in the articles of the faith and the rudiments of belief may also be seen accompanying confessional interrogations in pastoralia such as Quivel's Summula,²³ resulting from the close association between confession and Lenten

Mediaeval Studies 55 (1993), pp.16-20.

²² "It pleases me that you should confess the several sins with their branches step by step, beginning with pride, which is the root of all ills."

Robert of Flamborough, Liber Poenitentialis, Liber I, capitulum iii; ed. J.J. Francis Firth, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts 18 (Toronto, 1971); my translation.

²³ Powicke and Cheney, Councils and Synods, II, pp.220-26, 1061-62.

instruction.²⁴

Penance as a devotional exercise.

Within the tradition of sacramental penance there is evident in the fifteenth century a movement towards an interiorised penance, reflecting a wider movement towards private devotion.²⁵

This change is well summarised by R.M.Ball:²⁶

Attitudes to penance were apparently changing to accord with changing attitudes to devotion. An interiorised devotion (much as is indicated by the popularity of works such as Rolle's in the fifteenth century) demanded an interiorised penance.

In discussing the fifteenth-century annotator of Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 162, Ball further characterises this shift in attitudes towards penance:²⁷

Penance is apparently becoming a devotional exercise. This annotator notes the value of frequent confession to

²⁴ See further J.Shaw, "The Influence of Canonical and Episcopal Reform on Popular Books of Instruction", The Popular Literature of Medieval England, ed.T.J.Heffernan, (Knoxville, 1985), pp.44-60, and especially pp.47-48; on examination in basic religious knowledge during confession see also J.Hughes, "The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century", Borthwick Studies in History 1 (York, 1991), pp.87-163. See also the discussion of texts associated with Lenten instruction in pp.120-132 below.

²⁵ On earlier manifestations of this process see Boyle, "Manuals", pp.34-35.

²⁶ R.M.Ball, "The Education of English Secular Clergy in the later Middle Ages, with special reference to the manuals of instructions", Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis, 1977, p.256.

²⁷ Ball, "Education", pp.257-8.

different priests - a devotional exercise also practised by Margery Kempe - and of the parts of penance he puts little stress on the externals, penance and absolution, and more on the internal aspects of confession: self-examination ... and contrition. ...there appears to be a general movement away from a quasi-judicial concept of penance to an interiorised, devotional one. Sin is internal...

The practice of confessing to different priests and to private confessors, rather than to the parish priest alone, may be compared with the process of specialisation of confessional formulae; as penitents choose to consult particular priests for guidance in the penitential process, so aids to confession emerge which are addressed to particular categories of penitent,²⁸ such as the head of a lay household or a woman in regular orders.

Vernacular guides to confession, and in particular formulae for general confession, facilitate a change in the nature of penance in later medieval England, making available to the penitent a guide to self-examination in preparation for confession.²⁹ Such texts, whether consulted directly by a penitent, or presented to him by a priest as a model for preparation for confession, enable each penitent to take a greater responsibility for the keeping of his soul. Confession becomes transformed from a vehicle for resolving social disputes and conveying basic devotional instruction, into a powerful tool for the examination of one's own

²⁸ In a great many instances those acting as private confessors were friars, and it is likely that a number of the texts considered below which are addressed to particular categories of penitent were used by friars acting as private confessors.

²⁹ On the importance of the vernacular in this process, see Shaw, "Books of Instruction", p.51.

conscience.³⁰

In many instances this process of self-examination becomes closely associated with the daily prayers and devotions of the penitent, and may even be identified as an activity distinct from the process of sacramental penance. For instance, in Robert Copland's translation of Quentin's Manner to live well,³¹ the lay reader is advised to confess to his priest once a week if possible, and at least once a fortnight unless there is a great hindrance, but to confess daily directly to God any sins which he knows that he has done that day. It is the latter practice that some of the texts considered here, particularly in sections iii. and iv. below, are intended to facilitate. While not being intended to supersede or replace full confession to a priest, but rather serving to allay the widespread fears of layfolk and religious alike of dying unshriven, such a practice reinforces the role of private examination of conscience as a part of the responsibility of the individual penitent.

³⁰ On the earlier role of confession within the parish, see: J. Bossy, "The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 5th Series 25 (1975), pp.21-38; Duggan, "Fear and Confession", passim.

³¹ Printed in various Hours, such as that listed as no.92 in E. Hoskins, Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis, or Sarum and York Primers with Kindred Books and Primers of the Reformed Roman Use (London, 1901), RSTC 15966; see further M. Erler, "The Maner to Lyue Well and the Coming of English in François Regnault's Primers of the 1520s and 1530s", The Library 6th series 6 (1984), pp.229-243. On the advisability of frequent confession (although with the condition that this should preferably be to the parish priest), see further Trevisa's translation of Fitzralph's Defensio Curatorum, ed. A. J. Perry, EETS O.S. 167 (1925), p.48 l.20 - p.53 l.23.

A variety of responses to the sacrament.

While such developments in private devotion are of great significance in the history of penance in later medieval England, it should not be forgotten that older methods of response to the sacrament remain of central importance throughout this period. The first manuscript considered in the study below, London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584, dates from the very eve of the Reformation, yet shows a concentration upon the social aspects of confession within a rural parish which is barely touched by fifteenth-century developments in private devotion.

Until the end of the medieval period it is as a vehicle for education and for the restoration of harmony within the parish that the majority of penitents encountered confession. The newer methods of response to penance are the preserve of particular categories of penitent, chiefly regular religious and wealthy layfolk, whether mercantile or of higher social rank. Furthermore, even these social groups remain a part of the larger Christian community within which confession is such an important instrument of cohesion. As noted above, even as he advocates daily private self-examination, Quentin reminds his reader of the importance of full and frequent confession to a priest.

Similarly, penitents who are regularly shriven by a private confessor remain members of parishes or religious communities. In his recent survey of the general situation of traditional religion in later medieval England, E.Duffy amongst others has demonstrated

how the phenomenon of "privatisation" in lay religious experience co-exists with the traditional framework of communal religious life.³² Rather than shifting from the communal to the private sphere, the response to confession among regular religious and wealthy laymen is broadened to encompass both private and communal elements. Affective devotional reading in particular represents only a part of the religious experience of the individual Christian, for whom sacramental penance as set down in Omnis utriusque sexus is an essential part of the spiritual life both in this world and in the life to come.

³² Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, passim.

A survey of late Middle English prose forms of confession
and their manuscript contexts.

The Scope of the Present Study.

The aim of this part of the thesis is to provide an examination of all late Middle English prose forms of confession preserved in manuscripts, with the exception of the three lengthy English confessional items preserved in Trinity, which are discussed in greater detail in Part Two below.

The majority of these texts are listed in Jolliffe, section C, and in MWME VII, [211], pp.2562-63 (chiefly derived from Jolliffe with additional texts added). These lists are here supplemented by further texts not noticed by Jolliffe or MWME, and also by certain texts listed under Jolliffe's section E or from elsewhere in MWME. Where appropriate, I give for each text a reference to the classifications of Jolliffe (in the form of the lettered section followed by the number of each text within that section) and to MWME (for texts from VII [211], simply the letter assigned by Raymo to each "version"; for texts from elsewhere in MWME, volume number, numbered section, and page reference are given). I also give, where appropriate, references to the numbered sections of IPMEP, and references to the Handlists of IMEP. In the case of references to IMEP, it should be noted that useful amounts of the texts discussed are given in the form of incipits and

explicit. For each manuscript I also give an approximate indication of date.

Forms of confession preserved in printed books are not considered here. The small number of verse forms of confession (again listed in MWME VII, [211]) are excluded from this study, as is the Scottish prose form of confession (the table of confessioun) incorporated into a longer treatise on confession found in the Asloan manuscript, fols.1r-32v.¹

Owing to the constraints of space and time, only material presented principally in the form of a model confession is considered here. Thus, while some texts are included which contain brief supplementary material on the conduct of confession, longer and more general penitential guides, such as The Clensyng of Mannes Soule or Chaucer's Parson's Tale, are excluded from this study, even where, as with The Clensyng of Mannes Soule, they may include material in a confessional format. Likewise, texts dealing with topics found in model confessions but which do not present this material in a confessional format, such as the Somme le Roi and its various English versions, or Dives and Pauper, are outside the scope of this study.

Another category of texts excluded are guides to the visitation of the sick. While such texts are presented principally in the form of confessional formulae, they fulfil a specific

¹ W.A.Craigie, ed., The Asloan Manuscript, A Miscellany in Prose and Verse, I, The Scottish Text Society n.s. 14 (1923), pp.65-80.

function as guides to deathbed confession distinct from the more general texts considered here. Furthermore, they constitute in themselves a numerous and somewhat diverse genre, precluding their inclusion within the scope of this study.

It has also proved impossible to include within this study any consideration of possible sources for any of the texts examined here, whether in English, Latin, or other Continental vernaculars.

Terminology Adopted.

The majority of the texts examined here are guides to self-examination prior to confession,² most frequently in the form of a model confession.

Since it is in general use, the term "form of confession" is used here to describe these texts.³ Had this not been the case, "preparation for confession" might in most instances have been preferred.

Methodology.

For the purposes of this study, the texts have been divided into seven different groups. This classification of texts is intended as a means of investigating the variety of extant late Middle English prose forms of confession and their manuscript

² The chief exceptions to this are the texts intended for public recitation by priest and penitents considered in section i. below.

³ See especially Jolliffe, passim.

contexts.

There are often significant and important differences between texts which for other reasons are here placed in the same group, and some texts will be seen to belong equally appropriately in more than one group. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the categories presented here will highlight the variety of functions and associations these texts display.

Each section begins with a brief introduction, followed by discussion firstly of those texts and manuscripts which most clearly define the category, and subsequently of other texts and manuscripts which show similar characteristics.

In the majority of instances considered there is a consistent address to the needs and requirements of a single social group, thus revealing the intended audience of the text. However, in certain instances it will be found that a text appears to be addressed to a mixed audience, containing at some points material specific to one social group and at others material specific to a quite different group. This is similar to the situation found by W.Everett in his examination of the confessional material from The Clensyng of Mannes Soule.⁴

⁴ W.Everett, "The Clensyng of Mannes Soule: An Introductory Study", Southern Quarterly 13 (1975), pp.265-279. This text has been edited in full from a single manuscript by C.L.Regan, "The Cleansing of Man's Soul: Edited from MS Bodley 923", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Harvard, 1963). The confession section of the text has been edited from five manuscripts by W.Everett, "A Critical Edition of the Confession Section of The Clensyng of Mannes Soule", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1974). To those should be added Durham, Cathedral Library, MS Hunter 15, fols.44v-48v (Jolliffe C.5), which contains the opening of capitulum 7 of Part 2 of this text, corresponding to

It is necessary to draw a distinction between the intended audience and the users of a text. For instance, the manuscript context of a text often suggests clerical ownership, whereas the text itself is addressed directly to a lay audience. This indicates a use of the text within this manuscript context as an aid to a priest in the administration of confession, being presented to a penitent, most probably orally, as a model for his own confession.⁵ This is not, however, evidence for the function intended by the author of the text, but only for the use made of a text by a particular reader.⁶

p.65, 1.2, - p.85, 1.19 in Everett's edition. On Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2125, identified elsewhere as containing a part of this text, see the note below on manuscripts and texts excluded from the current survey, pp.141-142.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 774, which contains confessional material extracted from The Clensyng of Mannes Soule, is discussed further in the section dealing with miscellaneous texts below, p.135.

⁵ In this context one should consider the pictorial evidence adduced by Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, p.58, in his consideration of the function of penitential manuals, and also the evidence from the penance panels of seven-sacrament fonts considered by A.E.Nichols, "The Etiquette of Pre-Reformation Confession in East Anglia", The Sixteenth Century Journal 17 (1986), pp.145-63.

⁶ This may be contrasted with the internal evidence for intended function shown by the majority of the texts considered in section ii. below. On the adaptability of such material to different functions, see further V.Gillespie, "Doctrina and Predicacio: the Design and Function of Some Pastoral Manuals", Leeds Studies in English n.s. 11 (1980), 36-50, pp.45-46.

i. General confessions for public reading by a priest.

The texts considered in this section are all intended for the use of a priest in the administration of general confession prior to communion, in most instances annual communion on Easter Day. They are designed for public recitation by priest and congregation,⁷ and all presuppose that a private confession of any mortal sins has been made by each member of the congregation in accordance with the demands of Omnis utriusque sexus.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584 is the collection of John Gysborn, canon of the Premonstratensian house of Coverham in Yorkshire, and also at some stage curate of Alyngton, a Lincolnshire parish belonging to the Premonstratensian house of Newbo.⁸ A note (fol.87v) recording a debt owed by one canon of Newbo Priory to another would seem to suggest a link with the house

⁷ A parallel for such a practice prior to Lateran IV is provided by a passage from Honorius of Autun discussed by Lea, Auricular Confession, I, p.206, where a congregation and priest are described making a general confession of sins, at the end of which the priest administers absolution. The priest admonishes the congregation that the general confession is valid only for those sins which have been confessed individually to the priest and for which penance has been performed, and also for forgotten sins. The distinction between mortal and venial sins is thus not involved in this instance.

One should note that the English texts examined here lie outside the geographical area of non-monastic public confession prior to Lateran IV. (See further J.Bossy, Christianity in the West, 1400-1700 (Oxford, 1985), p.45).

⁸ For a fuller description of the manuscript and its contents see below, Appendix A.

at Newbo itself. Gysborn would thus appear at different times to have been attached to the houses at both Coverham and Newbo.

For Gysborn to have performed a pastoral role in the parish of Alyngton while resident in the house at Newbo would have been in accordance with the regular practice of the Premonstratensian order, as described by Dom David Knowles:⁹

All the abbeys held churches, and at the end of the fifteenth century many, though not the majority, were served by vicars, perpetual or casual; the remainder were occupied by canons who, if their cure was a neighbouring one, were expected to return to the abbey at night and for meals.

There are similarly items in the manuscript recording a pastoral role for Gysborn in the parish of Coverham neighbouring the Yorkshire house at some stage in his career, although the relative chronology of the items is often difficult to establish with any certainty. Dated items in this collection range between the years 1520 and 1531.

The manuscript contains on fols.46r-54v a *Breuis exortacio ad populum in die Pasche* (Jolliffe C.3; MWME B).¹⁰ This text is an address by a parish priest to his parishioners prior to annual general confession and the receiving of communion on Easter Day.

The address falls into two halves of roughly equal length, the first introductory (1-120) and the second a brief but compendious model confession (121-230). This confession is of

⁹ Dom David Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, III, (Cambridge, 1959), p.50.

¹⁰ For a transcription of which see Appendix A, pp.xviii-xxvii. Line references (given in bold type) are to this transcription.

venial sins only, and presupposes that a full private confession of mortal sins will have been made. This need is addressed by another text in the same manuscript.¹¹

In the introductory section the necessity of full and particular confession of mortal sins is demonstrated by a narrative passage describing the divine vengeance visited upon an unrepentant sinner who received communion unshriven of mortal sin (50-77). The use of this narrative (described in the manuscript as being found in *scriptur*, 48) and its highly dramatic character recall the central device of the *exemplum* in the technique of the sermon ad *populum* in the later medieval period.¹²

This introductory section clarifies the purpose of the general confession in a discussion of those who are unshriven of mortal sins (85-92). Here it is made clear that such sins, although their nature is here unspecified, are not covered by the general confession, and that if any of the congregation is in a state of mortal sin he should come and confess it aloud and without shame before approaching the altar, and then the priest will await him when the mass is ended.

The introduction ends with instructions from the priest to the congregation to kneel down *devowtly vpeone yowre knees withe meknes in hart and contricon ffore yowr synnes, and say after me lyke as*

¹¹ See below, pp.31-34.

¹² Such an *exemplum* is not recorded in F.C.Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, *FF Communications*, no.204 (Helsinki, 1969). See further below, Appendix A, p.xlvii.

I shal tell yowe (115-120). It is followed directly by the heading *Confessio generalis*, and what appears to be an incomplete note of a further reminder to the congregation of the danger of receiving communion in an unshriven state, followed by the opening of the confessional formula (121-125). Thus, if the first part of the text resembles a sermon, the second part is serving directly as a general confession to be repeated by the congregation after the priest, perhaps phrase by phrase since no reference is made to any exercise of the power of memory by the congregation.

The general confession deals in order with the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the seven bodily and spiritual works of mercy, and the five bodily and spiritual senses. The sections on the deadly sins display a concentration upon their social manifestations, while the subsequent sections do little more than specify the headings under which confession is to be made. The confession is immediately followed in the manuscript by a form of absolution in Latin (fol.55r).

The text of this form of confession is frequently abbreviated, with the omission of whole words and groups of words, as at 153, 160, 167, 194, 212, 224, suggesting that the user (presumably Gysborn) is well acquainted with the material. This is particularly true of the omission represented by the word *etcetera* at 160, where the material omitted is unlikely to have been of a formulaic nature.

The concentration upon the social aspects of sin is shown more

clearly by fols.7r-12r of the same manuscript, a form of confession preceded by preparatory interrogations addressed to different categories of penitent (Jolliffe E.10 (fols.7r-10r), C.34 (fols.10r-12r); MWME VII p.2524 [88] (fols.7r-10r), EE (fols.10r-12r)).¹³ That this was also intended for public recitation prior to communion is indicated by comments such as those addressed to a plural audience at 150-152. These comments precede a general confession which is compendious but cursory, simply listing the headings under which confession is to be made. It is followed by a form of absolution in Latin (190-195), and by advice to the audience that this general confession is again intended for venial and not mortal sins (196-204). There are concluding remarks specifying how the penitents should behave after receiving communion, and enjoining a Pater Noster, Ave Maria and Creed as penance (205-214). This text thus performs much the same function as that on fols.46r-54v, and may have been included in Gysborn's collection as a general form of confession for use on days other than Easter Day.

The preliminary interrogations (1-147) are subdivided into sections relevant to different social categories (husbandmen, women, servants, single women), and would thus seem intended for use in hearing individual confessions, which would have preceded the public reading of the general form of confession which follows

¹³ For a transcription of this text see again Appendix A, pp.xxviii-xxxvii. In both Jolliffe and MWME the preparatory interrogations and the form of confession are classified as two separate texts.

them. Concerns with the life of the parish are evident in these interrogations: for example, the payment of tithes and offerings to the Church (9-10), enclosure of land (19-20), and encroachment into another's land by illicit ploughing (28-29); all of these would be applicable in any rural parish such as either of Gysborn's, Coverham in Yorkshire or Alyngton in Lincolnshire. The emphasis throughout these interrogations is on the role of confession as an instrument of resolving social disputes and conflicts within the parish.¹⁴

A similar text is found in Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.iv.2 (s.xv ex.), a collection of materials in English and Latin chiefly of practical use to a parish priest, including an abridgement of the Fasciculus Morum.¹⁵ Fols.159r-160v contain a general confession for Easter Day under the rubricated heading **Confessio generalis die Pasche** (Jolliffe C.21; MWME A). The opening address makes clear that this text is also intended for public recitation prior to communion:

All þat sall be howsylytt at þis messe knele downe on
3our kneys & saye after me

This is followed by the Benedicite and the Dominus in Latin, and

¹⁴ On such a role for confession within the parish see above, p.12, n.30.

¹⁵ I am grateful to have been given access to a draft description of this manuscript from a catalogue of medieval manuscripts in Durham University Library in preparation by A.I.Doyle. On the Fasciculus Morum, see further S.Wenzel, Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and its Middle English Poems (Cambridge Mass., 1978); S.Wenzel, ed., Fasciculus Morum (London, 1989).

then the English general form of confession. The text concludes with a Latin form of absolution. The general confession is again highly compendious but extremely cursory in its treatment of each topic, giving the audience little scope for reflective self-examination. This text seems very specifically addressed to an audience of layfolk, since the reference to the sacrament of holy orders merely demands respect towards those who are in orders, without conceding the possibility that any of the audience might be in orders themselves.

A similar address by a priest to a congregation prior to communion is found in London, British Library, MS Harley 2383. (s.xv in./med.), fols.60v-61r,¹⁶ beginning Good men and women (fol.60v), and ending with a very brief general form of confession (Jolliffe C.11; MWME H) for public recitation with the following introduction (fol.60v):

Also 3e shall knell adown apon yowr kneys, seyng after
me

The opening address specifies that communion should only be taken under the following conditions: the penitent must steadfastly believe that the host is the flesh and blood of Christ in the form of bread, and that the wine is nopyng ellys but wyne & water forto

¹⁶ No division is marked in the manuscript between this and the preceding text, also a form of confession (fols.57r-60r), discussed at length in section ii. below, pp.35-40. It has been decided here, following Jolliffe, p.71, to regard these as two distinct texts, and thus obviate the necessity of otherwise accounting for a text comprising two distinct general forms of confession.

clense yowr mowþys of þat holy sacrament; he must be confessed of all sins, and be contrite for them; he must not feel any hatred or rancour towards any fellow Christian; he must be determined to resist all sin. Strangers must not take communion until they have spoken with the priest or his asynys. Those who have servants must ensure that their employees show restraint in taking food and drink, lest a servant brakythe or castythe...owte the host within a day and a night; if he should do so, he must place it in a vessel and burn it, and then be confessed the next day. The text is followed by a form of absolution in Latin.

Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 803/807 (s.xv) is item 53 in a series of fragments. It has been extracted from a printed book, F.31.25 in the same library, a Flores Doctorum produced in Geneva in 1593 by Jacobus Stoer, which entered the college collection in 1619 as a gift from William Branthwaite, master of the college. The fragment is described in a note on an accompanying modern paper wrapper as "? printer's waste". The fragment is the lower part of a leaf, the current dimensions being 122 x 194 mm., and the width of the written space 165 mm. The recto of the leaf contains a fragment of a text on the eucharist, including a brief commentary upon Matthew 26:26, and a summary of Exodus 14:10-21.¹⁷

¹⁷ See further V.M.O'Mara, "A Checklist of Unedited Late Middle English Sermons that Occur Singly or in Small Groups", Leeds Studies in English n.s. 19 (1988), pp.141-166, where the contents of this fragment are transcribed in full.

The opening of a general form of confession is found on the verso of the fragment (MWME KK), and is in the same hand as the recto. Only the opening of the confession and the beginning of a list of topics in which confession is to be made survive, and it is uncertain whether this list constitutes the full treatment of each topic or whether a more detailed discussion under each head is to follow. The introductory address makes clear that the text is intended for a context similar to those of the texts discussed above, although no specific function is indicated:

Pray we all to God almy³ty of mercy & forgyvenes, & be 3e aknow of 3our synnes & trespasses, and devoutly all sey after me

The discussion on the recto of the origin of the eucharist includes the words of Christ from Matthew 26:26, accipite et comedite hoc est corpus meum, with an English translation and commentary. In this commentary it is twice stated that by Christ's words the bread is made both his body and his blood. This is followed immediately, with the link we rede also in holy wrytt, by the summary of Exodus 14:10-21, describing how, when the people of Israel were pursued by Pharaoh's army, Moses struck the waters of the Red Sea with a rod and caused them to part. The contents of this fragment suggest that it may be part of a sermon on the eucharist. It could possibly form part of a preliminary address to a congregation prior to the form of confession on the verso; O'Mara suggests that, if the two were part of the same text, "this would

make an Easter Day occasion likely."¹⁸

Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 2829, fols.284r-85v, contains a brief form of confession, (not noticed by Jolliffe or Raymo), incorporated within a text intended for reading aloud by a priest to a congregation prior to communion, and identified by V.O'Mara as an Easter Day Sermon.¹⁹ The main part of the manuscript contains Augustinus de diuino Iudicio, followed by an extremely extensive collection of exempla preceded by a table of contents. The text containing the form of confession is copied in a quite different and later hand at the back of the manuscript. The main hand is described by V.O'Mara as fifteenth-century, and the hand of fols.284r-85v as being of the late fifteenth century.²⁰ The form of confession deals briefly with the seven deadly sins, and refers to sins against the ten commandments, the seven bodily and spiritual works of mercy, and the seven sacraments, before a brief section dealing with the bodily senses. Both the preceding address to the congregation, which is couched in highly figurative language, and the following verse penance are discussed and summarized by O'Mara.²¹

¹⁸ O'Mara, "Checklist of Unedited Late Middle English Sermons", p.148.

¹⁹ O'Mara, "Checklist of Unedited Late Middle English Sermons", p.150, where the incipit and explicit of the text are given.

²⁰ V.M.O'Mara, "A Middle English Versified Penance Composed of Popular Prayer Tags", Notes and Queries 231 (1986), pp.449-50.

²¹ O'Mara, "A Middle English Versified Penance".

ii. Texts intended as practical aids for priests in hearing individual confession.

The first two texts considered in this section are aids to the priest in hearing private confession, in fulfilment of the demands of Omnis utriusque sexus. They are designed for the use of parish priests in administering to laymen, in the context of private confession heard, in the words of Bossy, "in the not-so remote presence of a large number of neighbours."²²

A comparison of the four extant witnesses of parts of the third text considered here reveals a rather more complicated situation, where a text with an underlying address to a penitent who may be either clerical or lay has been adapted in at least two manuscripts to an exclusively lay audience.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584 fols.55v-62r contains a form of confession (Jolliffe C.16; MWME M) with a function rather different from those texts from this manuscript already considered.²³ The stress throughout this text is again upon those aspects of confession most closely related to the regulation of the communal life of the parish and the resolution of disputes within

²² J.Bossy, "The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 5th series 25 (1975), p.24.

²³ See above, pp.21-26. For a transcription of this text, see Appendix A, pp.xxxviii-xlvi. References (in bold type) are again to the numbered lines of this transcription.

it. However, this text is intended for the guidance of a priest in the administration of private confession to a layman rather than public confession. The function of the text is complementary to those others in the same manuscript discussed above, directly answering the requirements of Omnis utriusque sexus for annual private confession of mortal sins. It is copied immediately after the Easter Day address and its subsequent Latin form of absolution, probably as a companion text.

The introduction gives instructions in Latin for the penitent to kneel before the priest and say the *Benedicite*,²⁴ to which the priest is to reply with either of two blessings, the texts of both of which are given (1-7). The priest is then to hear the penitent confessing all his sins, and is to encourage him to make a full confession by *salutaria monita* (7-10). After this, the penitent is then to begin a general confession *sub hac forma* (13-16):

I am aknowe to God & to owre lady Sant Mary, & to all the holy company off hevynne, & to youe prest, my gostly fader, att this tyme, þat I haue synnyd in the vii dedly synnys, & all the branchis þat spreng' off them.

The text from this point is taken up with a series of interrogations by the priest to the penitent, beginning with the *inquisicio de superbia*, and covering the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the seven works of bodily mercy, and the five bodily senses. The course of the confession is at various points to be

²⁴ On evidence for the procedure of the opening of a private confession see A.E.Nichols, "The Etiquette of Pre-Reformation Confession in East Anglia", The Sixteenth Century Journal 17 (1986), pp.145-63.

determined by the penitent's responses to the priest's interrogations, as in a passage from the end of the section on pride (28-32). After the interrogation concerning the five bodily senses, the priest gives the penitent a general reminder of the failings he may have made in his duty to make full and regular confession (169-174). The priest then asks the penitent whether there is anything else of which he desires to be confessed (175-176). If the penitent replies that there is not, the priest is then to ask the penitent whether he is contrite for all his sins (178-182). If he replies that he is, the confession is to be completed with the penitent repeating after the priest the following formula (185-190):

- Off thes synnys, and all other synnys þat I wold be schreyne off, [&] haue fforgyffnes off att this tyme & thay wold come to my mynd, I cry God mercy & our lady Sant Mare, & all the sayntys off hevyne, & youe my gostly father, off pennance and absoluc[i]one ffore saynt charyte.

The priest then says *miseriatur tui* [sic] and, after inquiring whether the penitent owes any dues to the church, is under any sentence of cursing, or has had dealings with any in such a state, is finally to administer absolution (190-197).

The closing formula quoted above demonstrates that, while in the context of this manuscript the text is probably intended as a guide to the priest in the interrogation of the penitent in specific mortal sins requiring confession prior to the general form of confession in the Easter Day address, this confession is itself

intended to cover all sins, including venial and forgotten sins.²⁵

A similar text (MWME AAA) intended for the use of a priest is found in London, British Library, MS Harley 2391 (s.xv in.), fols.134r-138v. The bulk of the manuscript is taken up by Mirk's Festial. The confessional text opens with directions to the priest in Latin. The penitent is to say the benedicite, to which the priest is to reply with the dominus followed by an exhortation to confession per verba salutaria hoc modo (fol.134r-v):

Son, if þer be anythyng on þi conscience þat þu has noght beyn schreuyng of, I cownsyll þe to avise þe weyll, and haue no dred nor no schame þerof; ffor I am a synfull man as þu arte another, & oure lord es mersefull & gracyus & aye redy to forgyfe. |(fol.134v) Warfor, let noght to schew any trespas þat comys to þi mynd; for if þu lau anythyng wylfully it schall be schewed apon þe day of dom befor all þe warlde opynly.

The priest is then to hear the penitent until he reaches the end of what he wished to confess, when the priest is to address him thus in lyngua materna (fol.134v):

Son perauenter þer comis nomor to þi mynd, & þerfor I schall touche dyuerser poyntys vnto þe; & if þu fynd þe gylte in any of þam, I pray þe to excuse þe noght.

There follows a confessional formula in the second person to be read by the priest to the penitent and dealing with the seven deadly sins. A reference to pride of wyfe or of chyld (fol.134v)

²⁵ This manuscript also contains on fols.63r-79r an incomplete copy of a text dealing with the origin and nature of confession, ending with a series of confessional interrogations. (See below, Appendix A, pp.xi-xii, and n.3). These interrogations break off in the middle of the section dealing with lechery, possibly because Gysborn realised that the present text could serve for much the same purpose.

suggests intention for a lay male penitent. At various points Latin directions for the priest occur, such as the following from the end of the discussion of pride (fol.135r):

Si penitens (sic) concedat se reum, dicat sacerdos hac (sic) modo remedium.

At one point in the section dealing with avarice the confessional formula switches to interrogative forms in a passage opening as follows (fol.136v):

Besyde þis, has þu delt with any bynyng or sellyng? & in speciall, has þu boght or seld anythyng der or gret chepe for þe fyrst?

After the end of the discussion of the seven deadly sins, the text continues with a shorter discussion in the first person of the ten commandments (fols.137v-138r), and brief summaries of sins against the twelve articles of the faith and the bodily and spiritual works of mercy, again in the first person. The change from the second to the first person is not marked in any way, and perhaps shows the conflation of different exemplars. There are no further directions to the priest after the change to first person forms, with the text ending simply *explicit bona confessio pro salute humani generis* (fol.138v). A short fragment, probably from a form of confession, also occurs in this manuscript on fol.238v (Jolliffe C.45; MWME PP), where there is no indication of the likely audience or users of the text.

A single form of confession (Jolliffe C.27; MWME X) is found in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 210 (s.xv in.), fols.85v-87r

(henceforth Linc.), London, British Library, MS Harley 2383 (s.xv in./med.), fols.57r-60r (Ha.2383), and incomplete in Cambridge, University Library, MS Ee.i.18 (s.xv med.), fols.175v-176v (Ee.). Parts of the same text are also found incorporated into an otherwise entirely different form of confession (Jolliffe C.15; MWME L) in London, British Library, MS Harley 1288 (s.xv med./ex.), fols.76r-81v (Ha.1288). A collation of all of these manuscripts against the text from Ha.2383 is provided in an appendix below.²⁶ It should be noted that the order of the items in the text is different in Ha.2383 and Linc., and is different again in the common material in Ha.1288.²⁷

Ee. consists of a Latin Dictionarium Theologicum followed by approximately the first half of the form of confession found in the other two manuscripts, copied in a different hand from that of the Latin text. The text breaks off in mid clause half way down fol.176v, thus making it clear that, even though two subsequent leaves have apparently been removed, the copying was never completed. This may be explained either by the hypothesis that the

²⁶ See below, Appendix B. All line references given here (in bold type) are to the transcription from Ha 2383 given there.

²⁷ See the correspondence of line numbers at the head of the collation in the appendix below. Ha.2383 has items in the order: ten commandments; seven deadly sins; seven works of bodily mercy; five bodily senses; seven spiritual works of mercy; five spiritual senses. Linc. has: ten commandments; seven deadly sins; seven works of bodily mercy; seven spiritual works of mercy; five spiritual senses; five bodily senses. In the passages it shares with this text, Ha.1288 has: ten commandments; seven works of bodily mercy; five bodily senses; five spiritual senses; seven spiritual works of mercy.

exemplar from which the scribe is copying also ends at this point, or that the scribe has copied as much of the text as is here required. Since the copying here breaks off in only the fifth clause of the discussion of sloth, itself only the fourth of the deadly sins in the order adopted here, the second explanation may probably be discounted in this instance.

Linc. is a handbook of pastoral instruction, chiefly in Latin, containing a number of abbreviated or extracted items;²⁸ Ha.2383 is similarly a collection of material in Latin and English chiefly of use to a parish priest. In Linc., as in Ee., there is no indication of the function of the text. In Ha.2383 the form of confession is followed by an address using second person plural pronoun forms to an audience, enjoining penance after general confession. The opening of this passage shows that it is intended to follow the form of confession and to be used in conjunction with it (fol.59v):

For bys opyn knowlich & confession þat 3e have mad to God allmy3thty & to his modyr Seynt Mary, & to all þe seyntys of heuen, and to me yowr gostelych fadyr, to wham 3e haue shewyd yow at bys tyme, Y 3eue yow yn partly of penaunce þat 3e shall be sory for yowr synnys

According to this address, the penitents are to be contrite for their sins and pray to God that they may serve him wyth a meke spryte & a clen herte and make amends of all sins confessed. As penance they are then to say the pater noster five times kneeling before an image of the cross in worship of the wounds of Christ,

²⁸ For a detailed account of the contents of this manuscript, see R.M.Thomson, Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library (Cambridge, 1989), pp.170-173.

the ave maria five times kneeling before an image of the virgin in worship of her five joys, and the creed once in worship of the apostles, that they might vouchsafe at the Day of Judgement that the penitents have made a full confession.

In this context the form of confession as preserved in Ha.2383 may thus be intended for public reading like those discussed in section i. above. Alternatively, this passage may be intended for public reading by the priest after individual confession has been heard with the guidance of the form of confession.²⁹ As presented in the other manuscripts, the text appears to be intended for use in hearing individual confession rather than for public reading.

The form of confession appears to be addressed to a layman, as may be seen from the discussion of sexual relations within wedlock in the section dealing with lechery (120-124). However, the discussion of the seventh commandment seems to suggest a rather different audience. Whereas the first part of this section seems appropriate to a merchant or a tradesman (43-46), the remainder seems in Linc., with its censure of bearing false pardons and of selling the sacraments of holy church, to be addressed to one in orders.³⁰ The reference to selling the sacraments also occurs in this passage in Ha.1288, while this clause in Ha.2383 and Ee. may show substitution of mysvsyng for selling in order to eliminate a

²⁹ On the form of confession for public reading which immediately follows this text in Ha.2383, see above pp.27-28, and n.16.

³⁰ See the collation offered in the appendix below, 46-48.

reference to simony and thus adapt this passage for an exclusively lay audience.³¹ The reading *betyng* in the previous clause in *Ee.* does not provide any clear sense, while the readings of *Ha.2383* and of *Ha.1288* in 46-47 do not show such an obvious relation to the sin of theft as does that of *Linc.*. Similarly, the readings of *Linc.* and of *Ha.1288* at *fleschly*, 61, and the omission in *Ha.1288* of *maydyn*, 62, may also show intention for an audience which is not exclusively lay. Unlike the discussion of lechery in the section dealing with the seven deadly sins, the discussion of the fourth commandment makes no reference to wedlock in any of the manuscripts, further suggesting that the discussion of the ten commandments, if no more of the text, may derive from a source intended for an audience which may be either clerical or lay.³²

The material from the form of confession in *Ha.1288* which is not common to any of the other manuscripts is addressed clearly to a lay audience. The section dealing with lechery deals first with adultery, in a passage where the penitent is assumed to be male, and then discusses incest in terms which seem addressed to penitents of either sex (fol.78r-v):

Also in incest I haue trespasyd, - þat is to say, I a father wyth a dowter, or I a modyr wyth my son, or brodyr wyth syster, or cosyn, or any persone alyed wyth the fourte degree of sibred, as godfadyr and | (fol.78v)

³¹ It is impossible to discern the relationships of the manuscripts with any certainty from the surviving evidence.

³² There are also close verbal similarities between parts of this section of the text and a tract on the ten commandments preserved in the St.Albans, Cathedral Library manuscript. For a discussion of this text see G.R.Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1961), passim.

goddowter, or any of per chyldren.

The discussion of the seven sacraments (fol.80r-v) likewise makes no mention of the sacrament of holy orders.

The main contents of the part of Ha.1288 containing the form of confession are the Speculum Christiani and a long series of Latin notes and narrations suitable for use in preaching or other aspects of pastoral care, suggesting use by a priest or friar.

iii. Forms of confession addressed to those in regular orders.

The texts discussed in this section are all addressed to penitents in regular orders. The texts in the first three manuscripts are probably intended for the use of the penitent alone in preparing for confession. The texts in the fourth manuscript, part of the consuetudinary of a religious house, and in the fifth, a copy of a parchment roll without any further manuscript context, may be intended for use either by the members of a religious house or by a confessor administering to them.

The text in the sixth manuscript, addressed like several others considered here to women religious, forms part of a large and very wide-ranging collection, the intended user of which it is very difficult to deduce with any certainty. The seventh is preserved only as a fragment, and there is no way of discerning whether it is intended for the use of priest or penitent.

The text in the eighth manuscript is intended for the use of a priest in administering to those in regular orders, and may be compared with similar aids to the priest in administering chiefly to laymen examined in section ii.

The last text examined in this section is addressed ostensibly to both layfolk and regular religious. However, it shows greater attention to the needs and circumstances of regular religious than to those of layfolk, and I have therefore decided to include it in this part of the study.

Several of the texts considered here are concerned with

frequent confession, and with self-examination as a part of the daily devotional life of the penitent. Together with the texts considered in the next section, they thus provide important evidence for the interiorization of the penitential process.³³

The second part of London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A.iii consists of a number of texts in Latin and English intended chiefly for the guidance of regular religious.³⁴ The first item in this half of the manuscript is a record of Benedictine statutes of 1444, followed by a series of items in various hands of somewhat later date. Several of these items relate to the Carthusian order.

Among these items is a text on fols.135v-137r with the heading **A compendius forme of dayly confessions** (Jolliffe C.42, O.45; MWME MM; IPMEP 136). This model confession opens with sins against love of God and one's fellow Christian, and then deals with not keeping the principal vows of regular religious and the other statutes of a religious order. The diction of part of this section seems somewhat formulaic (fol.135v):

with all other obseruaunce of þe order, as syght, sylence
and cell; þe stall and bell

There follow sections dealing with the seven deadly sins, the bodily and spiritual works of mercy, the sacraments, forgotten sins

³³ See further the introduction above, pp.11-13, and section iv below.

³⁴ The first part of the manuscript contains a much earlier collection of Latin and French items also intended for the guidance of regular religious.

and forgotten penance, the articles of the faith and the bodily wits. The content of each of these sections is addressed carefully to the needs and experience of one in regular orders, such as the discussion of not treating the sacrament of the Mass with due devotion and with prayers for oure founders, frendys and benefactors, or the discussion of not fulfilling the works of mercy (fol.136v):

specyally nott occupied my tyme in prayer, meditacyon, lecture and gud operacyon as I myght haue doyn.

At the end of the confession (fol.137r) one is referred by the note *quere ante folio vii'* to a Latin form of absolution which occurs on fol.130v.

The form of confession is followed immediately by a short text on frequent confession (fol.137r-v) with the heading *Alia nota de confessione*. It is noted, following St. Bernard and other holy doctors, that when a man is accustomed to confess daily or often, he should make his confession short and deal principally with those matters with which his conscience is most grieved, lest he should make his confessor weary. The penitent should confess first those sins which are mortal, or of which he is in doubt whether they are mortal or venial, and after that venial sins, of which a series of examples is given, followed by what serves as a definition (fol.137v):

With other suche that cannot be flede and well forborne of a febyll and a wake sawle. When it suffers suche agayns it wyll thay are bott lyght veniall; neuerlesse, thay wolde be confessyd in generall.

A textually related note on frequent confession is found appended to a different form of confession (Jolliffe C.25, O.25; MWME V) in London, British Library, MS Harley 494 (s.xv ex./xvi in.), fols.94r-96r. In this instance the note ends with the following discussion of venial sins (fols.95v-96r):

in owre confessyons it is sufficient to confesse them in generall in thende of our confession, as seynt Barnarde techith, saynge in this wise:

- Ffor thes þat I haue now confessede and all other I yelde me giltye to God and ask hym mercy. And although man be not bounde of necessite to confesse eny venyall synne, for þat it excludeth not from |(fol.96r) the kyngdom of heuen, nother remouethe charite, yet neuerthesse of perfeccyoun and counseill it is conuenyent and good to confesse venyallys, for therby moche grace encreasith and moche profyte. But suche venyallys of which be in dout and fere lesse they be mortall we ought to be confesside, and that in specyall, in eny wise.

The form of confession which this note precedes (fols.91r-94r) is again identified by its heading as being intended for frequent use by regular religious (fol.91r):³⁵

Here foloweth a shorte confessionall for religious persons of eueryday' synnes aftir Bonaventure.

This text shows an unusual structure, being divided into eight numbered sections dealing in turn with: failings in saying divine service; inobedience to the ten commandments and to the vows of regular religious; misspending one's time; unkindness and lack of gratitude to God; negligence in one's spiritual duties; sins of the heart and the mind; sins of the mouth; sins of action and deeds. It is throughout addressed specifically to one in regular orders.

³⁵ For the attribution of the text to Bonaventura here, see MWME IX, p.3102.

The manuscript is a small paper volume,³⁶ copied chiefly in a single hand.³⁷ Several of the texts in the main hand of the manuscript, including the form of confession, contain references to St. Bridget, suggesting that the collection was copied for the use of a member of the Bridgettine house at Syon.³⁸

The other contents of the collection include on fols. 6r-19v a text offering devotional guidance to a woman on her conduct at various points during the course of the day (including at least partial reference to the passage of the day by the canonical hours, as on fol. 18v, at *complyn tyme*). It is not entirely clear whether the text is intended for the use of regular religious or for a

³⁶ Dimensions of leaf = 151x101 mm.; dimensions of written space for majority of items = 111x61 mm.

³⁷ Fols. 6r-19v, 22r-61r, 63r-89v and 91r-100v are all copied in the same hand. On fol. 107v a hand showing the influence of Humanist scripts occurs.

³⁸ The manuscript has on fol. iv in a poor display script the ascription *Domine [sic] Anne Bulkeley attinet liber iste*, and again on fol. 1r in another crude display script *Domina Anna Bulk<.>le*. The British Library catalogue (A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum (London, 1808), p. 329), speculates that this Anne Bulkeley was abbess either of Syon or of Barking. However, her name does not appear in the list of abbesses of Syon printed by G. J. Aungier (The History and Antiquities of Syon Monastery, London, 1840, p. 108), nor in the fraternity lists he gives for 1428, 1518, 1539 or even 1557 (pp. 51, 81, 89 and 97). There is no mention of Bulkeley in C. F. R. de Hamel's study of books connected with the library of the nuns at Syon (C. F. R. de Hamel, Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and their Peregrinations after the Reformation, Roxburghe Club, 1991), while the manuscript is only mentioned on p. 144, n. 109, as being possibly the work of a scribe who had copied other material for a Syon nun. Similarly, the name does not appear in the list of abbesses of Barking given in The Victoria County History, Essex II, edd. W. Page and J. H. Round (London, 1907), pp. 120-122.

On a rather different manuscript with possible Syon associations, see below, p. 101-102.

devout laywoman. Latin prayers and English translations are provided for remembrance of God during the course of the day, and there are extensive passages dealing with conduct on the way to and from church, during service, and at meal times. In particular, chapters from the "lyf of Iesu after Bonauentur'" are specified for reading and contemplation on each of the days of the week.³⁹

On fols.22r-25r there occurs a text offering counsel to one who is accustomed to receive communion once in a week or a fortnight. The reader is advised that it is best to receive communion often, but that nothing is more perilous than to do so in the wrong frame of mind. The writer further states that it is not enough to be shriven of mortal sins before receiving communion, but that all hede synnes both mortal and venial must be remitted by the sacrament of penance.

³⁹ These chapters, presumably from the pseudo-Bonaventuran Meditationes Vitae Iesu Christi, are listed here simply by number, and the text is presumably to be used in conjunction with a copy of the Meditationes, possibly in Nicholas Love's English version; I have been unable to find any reference to the present text in any of the following studies: L.F.Powell, ed., The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ (Oxford, 1908); M.G.Sargent, ed., Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: a critical edition based on Cambridge University Library Additional MSS 6578 and 6686, Garland Medieval Texts, v.18 (New York, London 1992); E.Salter, Nicholas Love's "Myrroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ", Analecta Cartusiana 10 (Salzburg, 1974); E.Salter, "The Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's Myrroure of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ and Related Texts", Middle English Prose: Essays on Bibliographical Problems, edd. A.S.G.Edwards and D.Pearsall (New York, 1981) pp.115-27.

On fols.26r-35r there is a series of prayers under the heading **A short meditacion and informacyon of our lord Iesu schewyd to seynt Mawde by reuelacion.** This is followed by a series of prayers to be said at various points during the mass (fols.35v-61r), including prayers for the seruice of Corpus Christi and for daily masses when the sacrament is not received. A similar text on fols.63r-75r offers meditations for each stage of the mass, as well as commentary on the activities of the priest, addressed to one receiving communion. The longer texts in the manuscript are interspersed with shorter prayers and meditations, both in the main hand and in several other hands, s.xv ex./s.xvi.⁴⁰

Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.1.74 contains two forms of confession copied consecutively, the first clearly addressed to women in regular orders, the second less clearly so. Both texts are contained in the second and greater part of the manuscript, fols.17-126r (s.xv med./ex.), all copied in the same hand. (Fols.1r-16v contain The Counsels of St.Isidore in a different hand with quite different dimensions of the written space; the binding of the manuscript is modern, and thus there is no evidence for when the two parts of the manuscript may have been brought together.)

⁴⁰ For a list of these items see P.Revell, Fifteenth-century English Prayers and Meditations: A Descriptive List of Manuscripts in the British Library (New York and London, 1975), passim.

The first form of confession, fols.60r-65v (Jolliffe C.28; O.26, MWME Y),⁴¹ has the rubricated heading Here bigynneb a maner of a confessioun for religious persouns, and is concerned with transgressions from the vows of one in regular orders. The intention for women is shown by the following (fols.60v-61r):

And customably in al placis and tymes {h} where and whanne Y schuld haue kept my silence, wil|fully and 3enst my conscience I haue talkid with my sistren or with religyous men or wom'en, or with secler men or women

The intended audience of the second form of confession, fols.65v-70r (Jolliffe C.37, O.28; MWME Y), is rather more difficult to determine. It follows directly after the first, and has the rubricated heading A confessioun to seie as oft as 3e wil be confessyde. The following passage (fol.69v) may lead one to speculate as to whether this text might not also be intended for the use of those in regular orders:

I haue not be chast in body & soule as Y am bound be my religioun. Y haue not kept my sylence in placis and tymes ordeyned, ne myn enclynyngis ne oþer obseruaunce as Y am bownd.

Some of the terms employed here are perhaps in need of some clarification before any clear impression may be reached of their exact meaning in this passage.

For religioun noun 1, MED⁴² sense 1b, "the way of life governed

⁴¹ Raymo in MWME regards fols.60v-70r as a single text, and also lists a further form of confession as occurring on fol.1r, where The Counsels of St.Isidore begins.

⁴² Title stencils for quotations and the dates assigned to them are given here in the format found in MED. No attempt has been made to revise any of the dates assigned to these quotations by MED.

by the rule of a religious order, the religious life; contemplative life" would perhaps fit best in the context of this passage, and the evidence given by MED for this meaning relates overwhelmingly to regular religious. However, sense 3e, "pity, reverence for God; religious devotion and observance" is also possible here, and the quotations given for this meaning show no particular association with regular religious. (It should perhaps be noted that the evidence of MED for the adjective religious show a preponderance of meanings restricted to the field of regular orders, with a direct contrast frequently being found with the term secular, and further that one of the examples for religious in the sense of general devoutness is a gloss from the W.Bib. (2) Gloss, suggesting that this meaning of the adjective was unfamiliar at the end of the fourteenth century at least.)

Meanings restricted to the field of the religious observance of those in regular orders are frequent in the examples cited by MED for the noun observance, and it should be noted that this meaning is to be deduced in several instances from the wider context of the text (as in c.1450, E. Black Monks), rather than being determined by a modifier, (as in observances regulere, 1440, Visit. Alnwick). Such senses are also frequent in the examples given for the expression kepinge of observances, suggesting a ready association of this phrase with regular orders.

Examples of binden with specific reference to monastic vows are also frequent in the evidence of MED, with one example having particular reference to religious vow of chastity (c.1450,

Capgrave, St. Aug.). The frequency of examples of ordeinen with reference to the decrees and proclamations of religious figures should also be noted, and in particular the following with reference to regular orders (1450, Ben. Rule (2)):

All...wyll lely lyue in land Als sant Benet has ordand. Likewise, in this same part of the text there occurs the expression Y haue desirid myn own wil a3ens my souereyns (fol.69v),⁴³ again suggesting the milieu of a closed community.

The cumulative weight of this linguistic evidence would seem to lead to the conclusion that this part of the text does indeed have specific reference to those in regular orders, and that this text, like the preceding one, is intended for the use of women religious. However, the possibility should be borne in mind that language associated with those in regular orders may be employed in this second text deliberately to suggest such a milieu, as might perhaps be the case in a text written for those leading a "mixed" life,⁴⁴ and desiring as far as possible to emulate the life of a

⁴³ souereyns is here presumably to be taken as MED sovereign n. 3 (a), ("one vested with religious authority by the church, a member of the clergy, a religious superior, especially the superior of a religious house"), as also in the passages quoted below from Yale, University Library, MS Beinecke 163, and from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS eng.theol.e.181, on pp.63 and 67 respectively. However, for the possibility of the use of this term applied to layfolk, see the passage quoted from Oxford, St. John's College, MS 94 on p.74 below.

⁴⁴ For the concept of mixed life see Hilton's Epistle of Mixed Life; ed. S.J.Ogilvie-Thomson, Walter Hilton's Mixed Life: edited from Lambeth Palace MS 472, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, (Salzburg, 1986). One should also consider the possibility of vowesses being the users of such texts; see M.C.Erler, "Three Fifteenth-Century Vowesses", Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500, edd. C.M.Barron and A.F.Sutton, (London, 1994) pp.165-184; see also

community in regular orders, such as those for whom the previous text is clearly intended. Such an intention is one that might not easily be deduced from linguistic data alone, and it should be noted that this second text shows no direct reference to the life of a religious house as is found in the preceding text.

An examination of these texts is further complicated by the fact that in both texts there occur points where material is clearly missing, with the text both breaking off and resuming in mid clause. In each instance this is indicated, unusually, by physical gaps in the copying. In the first text there is a single gap of about the space occupied by twelve letters (fol.60v), and in the second one gap of two lines (fol.66r) and another of one and a half lines beginning halfway through a line (fol.69r).

The shortness of the gap in the first text suggests that it may be the result of one or more unreadable words in the exemplar, and the context would seem to support such a hypothesis (in a passage which again clearly reveals the intention of this first text for the use of women in regular orders, fol.60v):

not keping þe obseruaunce of {my} releyoun as Y haue be
tau3t, which Y cowde doo and my3t haue doo
(gap of c.12 letters at the beginning of the line)
excusacyons, specially in silence breking, in qwere,
cloyster, fraytour, dortour;

A hypothetical reconstruction of the exemplar might involve the insertion of withouten where the gap is found here, or another word or words with a similar meaning.

J.A.F.Thomson, The Early Tudor Church and Society, 1484-1529 (London, 1993), pp.336-337.

The two gaps which occur in the second text are, however, rather less easily explained. The first gap occurs in the middle of the opening passage of the confession (fols.65v-66r):

I synful wrecche accuse me to þe mercy of God, and knowleche here to God & to 3ou þat, from þat tyme þat Y was borne into þis tyme, greuously Y haue synned in al
(gap of two lines in text)
mispendid my fyue wittis, & not fulfillid þe vii werkis of mercy bodily ne goostly. Wherefore Y putt me in Goddis mercy, and aske him for3euenesse.

One might perhaps conjecture that this gap has been left in order for the penitent to supply a personal account of sins committed. However, the word al immediately preceding the gap seems to demand a more specific reconstruction, and an examination of the opening of most other forms of confession would suggest that the next words should refer to the seven deadly sins or the spices therof. Such a conjecture is further borne out by the fact that after this introduction the text proceeds with a discussion of the seven deadly sins and their many spicis (fols.65v-67r). Since the average number of letters per line in this part of the manuscript is around nineteen, it is not inconceivable that the gap represents something equivalent to the words in many spicis of al þe seuen deedly synnys which occur on fol.67r. The gap may here have been left simply because this passage was damaged or unreadable in the exemplar.

The context of the second gap presents no such easy reconstruction (fol.69r):

Also Y haue do þat Y haue be forbodyn be þe law of God; and Y haue not doon þat Y was comaundid to do be obedyence. Also Y haue
(gap of one and a half lines in the text, beginning halfway through a line)
so specially as Y am bound, but a3enst myn obedyence Y

haue desirid myn own wil a3ens my souereyns.

The passage from fol.69v which has been discussed above comes after this gap, and the material preceding the gap contains little material which seems to indicate any specific intention for use by regular religious, secular clergy or layfolk. A passage dealing with divine service yields little evidence (67v-68r):

And at al tymes my mynde is ful vnstable, & specially in dyuyne seruice and oper deuocyouns, which Y seie with greet vnstabilnesse of mynde, & oftty|mes with interrupciouns of speche whanne no nede was, and with oper occasiouns. And ful necligently Y haue doon be seruyce of God.

It is uncertain here whether seie refers only to oper deuocyouns or to dyuyne seruice as well, making it unclear what role the speaker is assumed to be performing in the service. Even if the latter were the case, it is unclear whether seie would have reference to a priest saying mass, to a regular religious saying mass or another part of the observance, to a layman repeating those parts of the mass recited by the congregation, or even to a layman privately reading a service book in his possession. It is furthermore uncertain whether doon be seruyce of God refers again to the divine service, or whether seruyce might here have the less specific meaning of general service to God's will, a sense amply attested by the evidence of MED.

Given these uncertainties it would seem unwise to assume any particular intended audience for this passage, and so for the whole of this text preceding the second gap. It might thus seem tempting, if the passage from fol.69v quoted above is taken to have reference

to regular religious, to hypothesise that this gap might represent a change of exemplars, and furthermore a change from an exemplar of one text to an exemplar of another. The scribe, or possibly his own or an earlier exemplar, would thus at this point be seen to be "switching" texts, moving from one text with no specific intended audience to another intended for those in regular orders. The physical gap in the text might thus be taken to represent the point in the present text where this switch occurs.

At this point one should, however, consider the role of the word **obedience** both shortly before and after the second gap in this text. Like the terms found in the passage from fol.69v, this word would seem to suggest, although not directly to specify, the milieu of a religious house. The evidence of MED presents a large number of examples of the use of **obedience** with specific reference to monastic vows, although again the word is well attested in more general senses.

The presence of this term both before and after the gap would seem to suggest that both parts of this text do in fact originate in a single text, and that the gap occurs within a section of this text dealing with the topic of **obedience** from which some material has been omitted. This omission may be explained as above by an illegible exemplar or the presence in the exemplar of unfamiliar words at this point, or possibly by the deliberate omission of material considered unnecessary or unsuitable for the purposes of the present manuscript.

It may thus be concluded that this text has been copied from

a single exemplar, in which either or both of the gaps may already have been present. The intended audience of the text is certainly not so clear as in the case of the preceding text, which is unambiguously intended for the use of women in regular orders. What cannot easily be determined is whether or not this lack of clarity is deliberate. It may be the case, as suggested above, that this text is intended for those leading a mixed life, desiring to emulate the life of a community in regular orders, and that the somewhat opaque nature of the language employed may thus be deliberate. However, it is equally possible that the text is in fact intended for those in regular orders, and that the opacity is thus coincidental.

When the context of the preceding text is considered, the second of these possibilities seems much more likely, and that, in this manuscript at least, this text is in fact intended for the use of regular religious. The two texts might thus be seen here to be complementary: the first dealing with the vows of one in regular orders; the second conforming more closely to the pattern of a general form of confession with special reference to those areas which would be of concern to one in regular orders. The heading of the second text, as cited above, would support an interpretation of this text as a general form.

The remainder of this part of the manuscript is taken up by a series of basic items of religious instruction which constitute a catechetical sequence (fols.17r-60r), the relationship of which to textually related sequences in other manuscripts is discussed

most recently in a review by V.Gillespie.⁴⁵ The possible applications of such items and their relation to confessional formulae is considered in detail below in Part Two.⁴⁶

In addition, the forms of confession are followed by a brief text (fols.70v-73r) with the following heading:

How þu schalt spende þe vii oures of þe day

The subjects of the devotions one should make at each of the canonical hours of the day are described. Again, it is not made clear whether this text is intended for those in regular orders or for those in a "mixed life" situation.

There follow miscellaneous prayers and devotions in English (fols.73r-126r). These prayers and devotions are as follows: a prayer to Christ (fols.73r-74v); prayers to be said every day after the Ave Maria (fols.74r-77r); prayers to be said to Christ in various situations (fols.77r-80r); five prayers to Christ to be said in Passiontide (fols.80r-81r); a devotion which will protect one from temptation in one's faith at death (fols.81r-82r); a prayer to be said in grievance or disease (fols.82r-84r); devotions on receiving communion (fols.84r-89r); prayers to be said to the Virgin before receiving communion (fols.89r-91r); a further devotion (fols.91r-93r); a series of prayers of praising and thanks to Christ (fols.93r-97v); a series of salutations to the Virgin (fols.97v-102r); a prayer to God (fols.102r-106r); a series of

⁴⁵ V.Gillespie, review of The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist II, *Medium Aevum* 57 (1988), pp.113-14.

⁴⁶ See below, Part Two, pp.130-143.

prayers to Christ concerning his suffering for mankind, each ending with the same formula (fols.106v-126r).

Cambridge, St.John's College, MS D.27 (s.xv in.), the consuetudinary of the Benedictine abbey of St.Mary's, York,⁴⁷ contains the opening of a form of confession in English on fol.49r (Jolliffe C.35; MWME FF), embedded in a Latin text De prima de domina. This text begins with the order for prime on Sundays, followed by a description of how the bell for the missa familiaris is to be rung as the convent leave the choir after Prime, when the members of the house are to begin to process around the cloister. During this time those who need to make a confession are to detach themselves from the procession and enter the chapter-house, where the confessor will hear their confession. Having arrived here those who are to confess are to prostrate themselves, remove their capucia (hoods), make a longa venia (low bow), and then say to the confessor in a dialect of Old French ma culpe, to which he is to reply esteez susez (be upstanding).⁴⁸

Each penitent is then to make his personal confession, first covering his head with his capucium and kneeling on a step before the confessor, who will give the blessing Benedicite, to which the

⁴⁷ Edd. the Abbess of Stanbrook and J.B.L.Tolhurst, The Ordinal and Customary of the Abbey of St.Mary York, The Henry Bradshaw Society 73, 75 and 84 (1936, 1937 and 1951).

⁴⁸ The use of French rather than English as the vernacular at this point perhaps reflects a vestige of the earlier medieval monastic practice of public confession, for which see Lea, Auricular Confession, I, pp.197-8.

penitent replies *Deus*.⁴⁹ The confessor is then to recite the following preparatory prayer:

Suscipiat Dominus Jhesus Christus confessionem vestram ad laudem et honorem nominis sui et det vobis de peccatis vestris ita conteri et eadem confiteri quatinus confessio vestra sibi cedat ad laudem, vobis autem ad anime salutem et ad vitam capependam eternam.⁵⁰

The penitent is then to make his confession in *compunctione cordis et effusione lacrimarum*, beginning thus in *lingua materna*:⁵¹

I schryue me, and knawes me culpabyll, to God allmyghty, & to our lady Seynt Mary, to Seynt Petre & Seynt Paule, to Seynt Benet our haly fadyr, and to all þe fayre felyschyp of heuen, and to yow, gastely fadyr undyr Godde, of all my synnes; þat is to saye etcetera.

The penitent is then to confess what particular things, in *speciali*, are on his conscience, clearly and distinctly, omitting nothing, and describing also the circumstances of his sins. He is then, *propter oblita*, to confess in *generalis* the seven deadly sins, the five senses, sins of omission and commission, the seven works of mercy, and the ten commandments of the decalogue. It is not specified whether the senses and the works of mercy are bodily or spiritual, nor is it specified whether these parts of the

⁴⁹ The main confession made here is thus a private, individual confession fully within the tradition of sacramental penance, and is quite distinct from the older monastic practice of public confession referred to in the previous note.

⁵⁰ "May the lord Jesus Christ receive your confession to the praise and honour of his name, and allow you thus to be contrite for your sins and confess them, in order that your confession may give him praise, and you health for your soul and the means of gaining eternal life." My translation.

⁵¹ The opening of a vernacular confession, in French in this instance, is likewise found embedded in a Latin text in London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 499, a thirteenth-century manuscript.

confession are to be said in Latin or English. The penitent is to conclude the confession as follows:

De hiis et de omnibus aliis peccatis meis et eorum circumstanciis de quibus vellem confiteri si occurrerint memorie, clamo Dei misericordiam, et precor vos Pater spiritualis, de penitencia et absolucionem.⁵²

The confessor is then to say the Misereatur and enjoin penance according to his judgement, after which the formulae and procedures for absolution are given.

Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 229 is a parchment roll, containing a late Middle English form of confession (Jolliffe C.38, 0.29; MWME II) addressed to a woman in religious orders. The manuscript was copied in the seventeenth century, as is asserted by J.Martin.⁵³ A note in the manuscript gives some evidence both for its copying and for the previous history of its exemplar:

A copye of an ancient manuscript w^{ic}h as is sayd was Sr George Saintpolls and afterwardys was Mr.Lynoldys, Rector of Healyng in Com. Lincoln, and by him gyven to Mr Iohn Barnard, one of the Fellows of Lincoln Colledge in Oxford, to the end it might remayne in the Lybrary of that Colledge. Transcribed by me Wilfrid Smith.

The exemplar was, it appears from Lynold's will, itself a roll, and was bequeathed to Lincoln College along with twenty other manuscripts. None of these manuscripts ever reached Lincoln

⁵² "Of these and of all my other sins and their circumstances, of which I should wish to be confessed if they came to my memory, I call on God for mercy, and beg you, spiritual father, for penance and absolution." My translation.

⁵³ J.Martin, "Edmund Lynold and the Court of High Commission," Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, Reports Papers 5 (1953), pp.70-74.

College, and a catalogue stated by Lynold's will to be in the possession of one of his kinsmen is lost.⁵⁴

That the exemplar was a roll carries implications about the use to which this text might have been put. Unlike all the other texts considered here, this text was not copied in a manuscript book in the company of a number of other texts, but was used alone, perhaps implying frequent use, rather like the small everyday service books which survive in such small numbers from religious houses. Further, a roll is particularly light and portable, and in this instance may have been intended for the use of an individual assisting a large number of women in their preparation for confession; possibly even for someone travelling to more than one religious house.

The form of confession shows a fairly complex structure, dealing first with the vows of obedience, continence and wilful poverty. The sections on obedience and continence deal with the ten commandments and the seven deadly sins respectively. The section on wilful poverty deals with the following subjects: not giving thanks to God for bringing one to the religious life; not thinking upon the reward that awaits those who keep their vows, but rather cursing those who counselled one to enter the religious life; not being content with the goods and the degree of one's religion, but desiring to have worldly wealth and bear children as a married woman; not ordering one's mind to God and to virtuous

⁵⁴ See further Martin, "Edmund Lynold", pp.4-5.

life as a religious woman should; not showing the virtue of prudence to overcome temptations; not showing the virtue of rightfulness, in loving God fittingly, and giving what is fitting to each category of one's fellow Christians; not patiently suffering worldly tribulation, but desiring worldly prosperity; committing various transgressions in one's daily religious observance; not behaving fittingly on feast days and holy days; and being seldom virtuously occupied.

After this discussion of the three principal vows there are brief sections on the seven works of mercy, the five bodily wits, the seven sacraments (dealing in particular with those received by the penitent: baptism, confirmation, penance and the eucharist), the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seven spiritual works of mercy, and the four cardinal virtues. These are followed by a concluding prayer, including prayers for intercession by the Virgin, the angels and all blessed saints in heaven, both men and women.

There follows a statement of the twelve articles of the faith and how one may have failed in one's belief, with brief discussions of superstition and desperation.⁵⁵

Yale, University Library, MS Beinecke 163 (s.xv med.), the "Wagstaff Miscellany", contains at fols.179r-183v a form of

⁵⁵ For further discussion of such summaries of catechetical material incorporated in model confessions, see section vi. below, pp.120-132.

confession (MWME VV) addressed to a woman in regular orders.⁵⁶ This text is contained in the first and larger part of the manuscript, a wide-ranging collection in Latin and English, including medical and culinary recipes, a treatise *de modo [tenendi] parliamentum*, and various treatises on prognostication both from date of birth and from dreams, on horse-breeding and keeping, on the properties of herbs, on astronomy, and on venery.

The form of confession begins with a statement that the penitent has sinned in the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the five bodily senses, and the seven works of mercy (which are discussed under sloth during the treatment of the seven deadly sins).⁵⁷ A brief discussion of the five bodily senses is then followed by a detailed discussion of the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, and the seven principal virtues.

The treatment of pride and its spices includes the following discussion of obedience, suggesting a user in regular orders (fol.179v):

In the fifte spice of pride Y haue synned thatt is in

⁵⁶ In the recent catalogue of Yale manuscripts (Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, I, (New Haven, 1984), p.221). B.A.Shailor writes of this text that it "appears to be an abbreviated version of one found in Beinecke MS 317, fols.42v-50v" (for a discussion of which text, see below, pp.94-102). There is, however, little similarity between the two texts, except for the fact that both are forms of confession and both deal with the seven deadly sins, ten commandments and seven principal virtues (together with a great many other topics, in the case of the latter text).

⁵⁷ For similar discussions of the works of mercy incorporated into sections on sloth, see pp.75 and 134 below, and also the long form of confession from The Clensyng of Mannes Soule (as in London, British Library, MS Sloane 774, fols.11r-11v).

obedience thatt Y haue nott leuyd obediently after the profession thatt I haue made to God butt do ofte ayenste my rewle & holy customys of my ordre & otherwhile be mespaid with myne state & than to wilfulli ayenst my religion.

Similarly, the discussion of sloth includes the following passage (fol.180v):

lothe Y haue be forto sey Goddis seruyce & feyned excusacions forto go fro the queer

Again, the discussion of avarice deals with property in terms of the obligations of regular religious (fol.180v):

In couetise Y haue trespassed God couetyng of worly riches more þan me neded & yhid priueliche my good fro the knowlich of my souerayns & fro the nedy.

This discussion of avarice includes treatment of simony and usury, after which the first-person confessional voice is momentarily suspended (fol.181r):

yf ye be gilty yn thes spices schryue you & biddeth God mercy.

In the discussion of lechery, the expression I haue willied forto breke myn order of maydynhode (fol.181v) cannot be taken as revealing the gender of the intended audience of the text, since MED gives ample evidence for maidenhede sense 2 (b) applying to men as well as women in regular orders (fol.181v). However, the following two passages clearly indicate that a female penitent is intended (fol.181v):

ofte arayed myself the clenner of clothyng yn waisshyng my fysage with dyuers likurs for Y wold be the more plesyng & coueited of man

& whan Y was yn will to do amys Y had nott þowht wheþer thatt Y had do amys with a seculer oþer with anoþer reguler, wheþer with a sengyl man oþer with a weddyd man

Similarly, the discussion of the tenth commandment shows adaptation of the customary wording to include a female audience (fol.181v):

The tenthe hest is þu shalt nott desyre thyne euencrystenis wife non desiderabis vxorem proximi tui neyther thyne euencristenis hoseband

The discussion of faith includes an interesting condemnation of questioning the tenets of the faith and giving credence to new, presumably heterodox, beliefs (fol.182v):⁵⁸

In the fyfthe Y haue be nott stedefast, butt desired ofte forto haue hitt ypreued & openly yshewed þat Y shold stedefastely belyue, & sone yyefe credens to newe opynyons & to newe sectys

The text ends with an exhortation to the penitent that confession must be voluntary, timely, and shamefull, and that the penitent should tell the naked truth.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng.theol.e.181, fol.11r-v, contains a fragment of a form of confession (not listed in Jolliffe or MWME) on a single leaf which shows considerable signs of wear. The hand is similar to but different from that of the quire of ten leaves which makes up the main part of the manuscript (s.xiv ex.).⁵⁹ The dimensions of the written space are the same as those of the other leaves of the manuscript, as is the number of lines per page. The colour of the ink on this leaf is lighter, and the decoration

⁵⁸ In this respect one should compare this text with the longer of the two forms of confession in Yale, University Library, MS 317, fols.42v-50v. See below, pp.94-102.

⁵⁹ See A.Hudson, "The Lay Folks' Catechism: A Postscript", Viator 19 (1988), p.307; B.Barker-Benfield, The Bodleian Library Record vol.12, no.6 (April, 1988), pp.489-90.

is of a quite different character and lacks the gold that is present elsewhere in the manuscript. The letter forms of the illuminated capitals, particularly the two-tier < a >, are also different from those found elsewhere. Although there is some sign of wear on the recto of the leaf, the damage to the verso is more considerable, suggesting that it may possibly have occurred after the attachment of this fragment to the preceding leaves. The binding is eighteenth-century, and can thus offer little information as to the medieval history of the manuscript.

The first ten folios of the manuscript have been identified by A.Hudson as having originally formed part of the same manuscript as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 273 and MS Douce 274.⁶⁰ These folios immediately preceded MS Douce 274, which itself preceded MS Douce 273. The contents of the first ten folios of MS Eng.theol.e.181 comprise related tracts on the Pater Noster, Ave Maria and Credo, the first of them imperfect at the beginning, followed by the opening of a version of The Lay Folks' Catechism which breaks off incomplete at the end of MS Douce 274. The text is very similar to that from London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 408 printed by T.F.Simmons and H.E.Nolloth,⁶¹ suggesting common derivation from a shared source.

⁶⁰ A.Hudson, "A New Look at the Lay Folks' Catechism", Viator 16 (1985), pp.243-258; "The Lay Folks' Catechism: A Postscript", Viator 19 (1988), pp.307-9. For Douce 273 and Douce 274, see IMEP IV, pp.59-61.

⁶¹ The Lay Folks' Catechism, edd. T.F.Simmons and H.E.Nolloth, EETS O.S. 118 (1901).

The similarity of the hand, and the number of lines per page and dimensions of the written space, do not, however, provide sufficient grounds for suggesting any definite link between fol.11 and the preceding folios of MS Eng.theol.e.181, particularly considering the very different style of the decoration.

The part of the form of confession which survives comprises the opening and the following sections: Of Godis seruyse; Of myspendyng <of> tyme; Of unkyndenesse (incomplete). The first two of these sections would seem particularly suitable for those in orders, and the second perhaps specifically for those in regular orders. The section Of Godis seruyse opens thus (fol.11r):

At þe bygynnyng I crye God almy3ti mercy and 3ou of
myssayng of my seruise, þat I haue no3t sayd it ny3t and
day as I am behalden þor3 myn holi religion

For the significance of the term religion and the sense in which it is here intended, one should refer to the discussion of Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.1.74 above.⁶² As in that discussion, it is assumed here that there is a strong possibility that in this context the word has specific reference to regular religious observance, particularly in the absence of any contrary evidence elsewhere in the text. The reference in this passage to saying divine service ny3t and day would also accord well with a function as a guide to regular religious. The following passage also occurs in the same part of the text on saying divine service:

Wherfor I drede me þat I haue left sum word or sum
cylable, and also þat I haue no3t seid it wip als mochel
deuocion as I am haldyng of myn holy stat; bote often I

⁶² See above, pp.47-56.

haue songen and seid mor for drede of my souereyns and
for preysynge of þe world þan for loue or worchip of God.

As with the second form of confession in the Cambridge manuscript, layfolk leading a "mixed life" could also possibly be users of this text, although the specificity of the section dealing with saying divine service and the use of the term *souereyns* perhaps makes this somewhat less likely here.⁶³ It should be noted that there is no evidence as to the gender of the intended audience.

Also of interest in this text is a shift of voice from first to second person on fol.11v, where supplementary interrogations, beginning *Also 3if þu hast said*, occur at the end of the section on saying divine service. This would seem to betray a possible function of this text as a preparatory guide to making confession similar to some of those to be discussed below, which may have been further borne out by the missing portion of the text. However, no such interrogatory material is found in the briefer subsequent section *Of myspendyng <of> tyme*, while the third section ends incomplete.

A form of confession incorporated into a longer work (Jolliffe C.17, O.20; MWME N) is found in both Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 60 (s.xv med.), fols.213r-227v,⁶⁴ and London, Society of

⁶³ See above, p.50, n.43.

⁶⁴ See IMEP IV, pp.25-30. In this copy of the text two blank pages occur, fols.215v and 216r. There is no material missing at this point, and the omission of these leaves may be explained simply by scribal error.

I have chosen to regard the whole of fols.213r-227v as a single text; however, both Jolliffe and MWME regard the

Antiquaries, MS 687 (s.xv in.), pp.359-81.⁶⁵ MS Douce 60 consists chiefly of Mirk's Festial and Instructions for Parish Priests, and thus would seem most likely to be a parish priest's collection. Although it is a collection of a somewhat different character, the Society of Antiquaries manuscript would appear also to have been compiled by or for a priest. This is suggested chiefly by the inclusion of the Latin Visio et exhortacio sancti Edwardi Regis et confessoris et vocatur speculum sacerdotis, and perhaps also by the presence of a treatise on excommunication. Among the other items are The Prick of Conscience,⁶⁶ an A-text of Piers Plowman ending at passus xi, Lavenham's treatise on the seven deadly sins, and a treatise on the ten commandments.

The confessional text opens with Latin directions on how the penitent is to kneel before the priest and, after the *benedicite* and the *dominus*, there occurs the direction *tunc penitens dicet*

confessional text as ending on fol.222v, while L.Braswell in IMEP IV describes fols.213r-227v as "[Form of Confession]; other items, rubricated" and regards the material on fol.227v as forming a separate text.

⁶⁵ I am grateful to have been given access to a draft description of this manuscript from a forthcoming catalogue of manuscripts in the possession of the society. This description supplements that given by N.R.Ker, Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, I, (Oxford, 1969).

⁶⁶ According to Lewis and McIntosh, this witness of the text shows only the second of the interpolations common to the "Lollard" subgroup, and this interpolation contains only generally anti-clerical sentiment (R.E.Lewis and A.McIntosh, A Descriptive Guide to the manuscripts of the Prick of Conscience, Medium Aevum Monographs n.s. 12 (Oxford, 1982)).

sic,⁶⁷ followed by a lengthy model confession in English. This confession is interrupted at various points by further directions in Latin to the priest on how to guide the penitent during the confession, notably in the sections dealing with lechery and gluttony.

The confession appears to be directed to one in regular orders, as in the following passage from the discussion of sloth (f.217r-v):

Also oft tyme whan I shuld haue geuen me to gostely lyvyng, I haue geue me to slepe and to slouthe, and in Goddys seruice I haue be necligent. Also oft in chirch and in oper places whan I shuld haue seyde my prayers, with ydell wordes I haue letted myself and other bothe; | (f.217v) also my matens and my houres, and oper charges which I am bounde to sey and to do, rechesly and not with herte and mouthe, but thou3t one and seyde another.

Again in the same section:

Also oft broken my silence in chirch and in quer and in oper places of rule in evyl ensample of other, ayenst myn obedience and obseruance of my religioun

The use of the word rule in this passage strongly suggests that the reference here is to the regular observance of a religious order, while the reference to the choir makes intention for an anchorite or hermit unlikely. Likewise in the section dealing with pride the following passage occurs (f.213v):

haue Y be inobedient the rule of my order and of my profession

⁶⁷ The witnesses in both manuscripts are extremely close textually. Folio references given here are to MS Douce 60, and quotations are given in the form found in that manuscript.

Furthermore, in the discussion of lechery there is no mention of the offences of married men in displaying lusts at inappropriate times, but rather all fleshly deeds and thoughts are condemned.

The text thus seems to contradict the intention for use by parish priests suggested by its context in both manuscripts. It may be that in each instance this text was the only model confession available to the scribe, and has thus been copied for lack of any more suitable text for the guidance of lay parishioners. However, the current survey shows such texts to have been widespread, and it is furthermore unlikely, if this text had been the only one available for copying, that no attempt would have been made in either instance to tailor it to a lay audience.⁶⁸ It is possible that the text may have been intended for the use of a member of one of the religious orders which regularly undertook parochial duties, such as the Premonstratensian Canons or Mirk's own Augustinian Canons.

The model confession contains sections dealing with the seven deadly sins,⁶⁹ the ten commandments, the seven sacraments, the seven deeds of bodily mercy, and the bodily senses. The conclusion to the confession contains unusual petitions to St. Augustine and St. Nicholas.

⁶⁸ See the discussion of such a process of adaptation above, pp. 35-40.

⁶⁹ The discussion of envy contains an unusual passage describing five species of detraction.

There follow summaries of the fourteen articles of the faith and the seven principal virtues, which may be compared with the interrogations in the articles of the faith accompanying confessional interrogations in pastoralia discussed above.⁷⁰ In this instance the collocation of the two again reflects the association of confession with Lenten instruction.⁷¹ In this context one should also consider the closing discussion of the articles of the faith in the form of confession addressed to women religious in Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 229.⁷²

That these summaries of the articles of the faith and the principal virtues are intended to be used in conjunction with the confessional formula is suggested by the following general statement, which occurs immediately after the end of the summary of the virtues (ff.224v-225r):

Hit is to knowe | (f.225r) that euery man or woman that is sinfull may sey his shrift in this maner as byfor is writen, adding mor or lesse as him lyketh and after he hath grace of God, begynnyng with þe wordes as byfor is writen

The suggestion that the penitent amend the model confession according to his own needs makes clear the difference between the form of confession here and the general forms for public reading discussed in the previous section. Likewise the following passage occurs at the very end of the text, after a list of ambitions þat

⁷⁰ See above, p.10.

⁷¹ See further section vi. below, pp.120-132.

⁷² See above, pp.59-61.

God hateth (which include a prelat proude, noyse in cloystr' or othir place of rule of silence, stryve in chapitr', and violence in quer) (f.227v):

This maner of shrift is writen not for þat euery man shuld sey all that is writen her, but that hit be diligently and oft ysey; and of all the synnes þat he feleth him gylty yn, with contricioun sey hem to his shrift fader in the maner as byfor is writen.

The confessional formula may thus be regarded as a model confession which a priest may present to the penitent as a guide in his preparation for making a confession.

The list of ambitions þat God hateth is preceded by a brief discussion of how confession should be administered, a commentary on the text of the Latin Confiteor, and a discussion and enumeration of the circumstances of confession which would seem to derive, directly or indirectly, from one of the penitential summas.⁷³ Unlike the confessional formula which is interspersed with Latin directions to the priest, this part of the text does not demand a knowledge of Latin on the part of its audience further than the text of the Confiteor.

Oxford, St.John's College, MS 94 (s.xv in./med.), the collection of the Dominican anchorite of Newcastle-upon-Tyne John

⁷³ This discussion of the circumstances of confession is both fuller than, comprising a more extensive list of circumstances, and textually independent of that found in The Clensyng of Mannes Soule.

Lacy,⁷⁴ contains at fols.144va-150va a lengthy form of confession (Jolliffe C.4; MWME C).⁷⁵ This text has the heading Heer begynneth þe trety þat perteyneth to confession, and opens with directions to the penitent that one must not confess sins to one priest and seek absolution from another, that one day of penance imposed by one's own priest is worth ten days of þin awne deuocion takyng', and that one should not delay in confessing one's sins.

A section follows (fol.144vb) on how þat þou salt say in þe begynninge, in which the penitent is informed that if he knows the Confiteor he should say it, with the text being given as far as quia peccauit in multis; if he does not know the Confiteor in Latin, he is to say it in English, and a translation of the same material is given. The penitent is then further instructed that he should use the text selectively in making a confession (fol.144vb):

loke werin þu art gulty bi þi consciens, and þat þinketh vpon, and oper lette passe. For heer is generally for sengul or weddeth, prest or religius. Therefore after þi degre as þou fyndest taketh, and þe remenant leuith; for

⁷⁴ IMEP VIII, pp.87-89. On Lacy and this manuscript, see: J.B.Friedman, "Books, Owners and Makers in Fifteenth-Century Yorkshire: the Evidence from some Wills and Extant Manuscripts", Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late Medieval Texts and Manuscripts, ed. A.J.Minnis (York, 1989), pp.111-127; A.I.Doyle, "A Prayer Attributed to St.Thomas Aquinas", Dominican Studies 1 (1948), pp.229-238; "Publication by members of the religious orders", in Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475, edd. J.Griffiths and D.Pearsall (London, 1989), pp.109-124; C.Pepler, "John Lacy: A Dominican Contemplative", The Life of the Spirit 5 (1951), pp.397-406; R.M.Clay, "Further Studies of Medieval Recluses", Journal of the British Archaeological Association 3rd series 16 (1954), pp.74-86; "Some Northern Anchorites", Archaeologia Aeliana 4th series 33 (1955), pp.202-217.

⁷⁵ The manuscript has been refooliated; the folios occupied by this text were formerly numbered 142v-148v, as listed in MWME VII, p.2562.

a man or a woman nis not bounde to akusen his self bot in
pat he is gulty in special.

The text is thus intended to be used selectively by penitents of various categories, both clerical and lay, male and female. Similarly, the discussion of pride contains the following passage (fol.145va):

raper suffur payne & tormentinge þan forto meke me to my souerens for Godes sake in lafulnes. þe menyng' of þis is: þe childe to fader & moder; & wif to þe hosbonde; þe seruant to his maister; and man & woman of religion to here souerens for Godes sake.

However, the discussion of pride opens with a passage tailored to regular religious, including confession of vnboxsanes to my prelatus, and grucchinge agaynes þe firste pynte of my profession pat I made for God (fol.145ra). Similarly, the lengthy discussion of lechery (fols.146va-147rb), while maintaining throughout the possibility that the penitent might be of either sex, contains only a very short concluding passage on sins within wedlock. Accordingly, I have chosen to include this text in this part of the study among texts intended chiefly for the use of regular religious.

As noted above, the introductory part of the text allows for the possibility of a penitent who cannot say the Latin of the Confiteor. During this introductory material, Augustine and Matthew 25:13 are cited in English in the body of the text, while a longer list of authorities are given in Latin at the end of each part of the introduction (before the sub-heading how þat þou salt say in þe begynninge and before the beginning of the discussion of pride).

Similarly, during the discussion of pride Matthew 18:8 (or possibly Mark 9:43-47) is paraphrased in the body of the text in English, while citations in Latin are reserved to the end of this section. However, in the subsequent discussion of avarice, Gregory is cited in Latin in the body of the text (fol.146rb), and during the discussion of lechery passages from Romans, Psalm 32:9 and Isidore are quoted in Latin (fols.146vb and 147ra). Thus, while there is some evidence of a not entirely consistent attempt to make the body of the text usable by a non-latinate penitent, an ability to read Latin is necessary for a full understanding of the English text, even without the supporting Latin material at the end of each section.

During the discussion of sloth, the author demonstrates an attention to illustrative detail, presumably intended to elicit a more direct response from the penitent (fol.148va):

in þe tyme of Godes serues, parid myn nayles & loked on
bokes þe wilke perteyneth not to þe serues of God for þat
tyme.

The same part of the text includes a section dealing with a servant being slow in service to his master (fol.148rb).

The section on performing the bodily works of mercy which is incorporated into this discussion of sloth (fol.149ra) refers the user back to an earlier discussion of the ten commandments, presumably the treatise on this subject which occurs earlier in the manuscript (fols.120ra-127va), for further information:

as þou mayst fynde in þe commaundementis before wretton,
& þat þat lackith heer in þese seuifne deedly synnes 3e
mow fynde þam in þe ten commaundementis.

One should thus consider the possibility either that the form of confession (or at least, this part of it) is Lacy's own composition, or that both texts have been copied from the same exemplar.

The text ends with a statement that one has sinned in the ten commandments, the five bodily and spiritual senses, the seven sacraments, the twelve articles of the faith, and the seven bodily and spiritual works of mercy (fol.150rv), followed by this advice on making a selective confession (fol.150va):

Nou þou schalt vnderstonde þat þou maste brynge in þe ten commaundementis & þi fyf wittes & þe seuifne deedes of mercy and þe seuifne uertues vnder woon in þis schrifte, if þat þou wolt ouerloke þam alle enterely with cleyne consciens. For þou maiste vnderstonde þat þe beste schrifte is, & moste plesinge to God, wen þat it comith with contricion & bitynge of consciens. And þen þis schrifte bifore wol helpen to brynge to mynde of for3etyn þinges. Now God g[r]aunte `vs` vere contricion. AMEN.
Amen.

The text is followed on fols.151r-153r by a series of verses with the heading how þat a man sall knowen þe perelles þat longeth to schrifte (MWME VII, p.2525).

iv. Texts with devotional associations.

The first text examined in this section is found appended to a Book of Hours, and it seems likely that it was used in conjunction with the Hours in the daily devotions of a lay owner. Similarly, the second text is found in the company of the Hours, and the third following a Psalter. The fourth text is again found alongside the Hours and other prayers and devotions, while the fifth is preserved in a manuscript which also contains the Hours of the Spirit and meditative items. The latter text opens in the form of a prayer, a characteristic shared by all but the last of the remaining texts examined here.

These texts reflect the development of penance as a devotional exercise, as self-examination becomes a part of the penitent's private, spiritual life.⁷⁶ Taken with several of the texts examined in the previous section, they demonstrate a changing response to confession among the audience for vernacular texts. Here confession becomes less an instrument for the resolution of social disputes than a tool for the penitent to employ in examining and exploring his own conscience.

York, Minster Library, MS Additional 2 (s.xv med.), the Bolton Book of Hours, contains a form of confession (Jolliffe C.32; MWME CC) copied in the available space at both the beginning and the end

⁷⁶ See also the introductory discussion above, pp.11-13.

of the manuscript, fols.1r-4r and fols.209r-210v.⁷⁷ The text is incomplete, breaking off in the middle of the section dealing with the spiritual works of mercy. The confession is brief and compendious, implying use as a model confession or as a memorial guide to the pattern of a confession, rather than as an aid to extensive examination of conscience. In the treatment of coveting another's partner, during the discussion of the tenth commandment (fol.3v), a second hand has inserted the word *husbond* above *wyfe* in the original hand, implying adaptation of the text for use by a woman, or perhaps for both men and women. This may be connected with an illustration in the body of the Book of Hours (fol.40v) depicting St.Sytha attended by a suppliant woman in blue, perhaps showing female ownership or use of the manuscript at some stage. If the suggestion that the manuscript was produced for the use of John Bolton, merchant, alderman and mercer, is correct,⁷⁸ these features may perhaps show the use of the manuscript by his wife or by another female member of his household.

A fragment of a form of confession (Jolliffe C.22; MWME S) is similarly found preceding a Book of Hours in Bristol, Central Reference Library, MS 14 (s.xv in.), fol.2r.⁷⁹ The fragment (copied in a different, fifteenth-century hand from the Hours) consists of

⁷⁷ See IMEP VI, pp.61-62.

⁷⁸ N.R.Ker, Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, IV, (Oxford, 1991), p.791.

⁷⁹ On this manuscript see Ker, Medieval Manuscripts, II, pp.209-210.

the opening of the confession (in which there is no indication of any topics to be discussed apart from the seven deadly sins), a discussion of pride, and the beginning of a discussion of envy. The fragment breaks off in mid sentence at the base of the recto, and it would appear that copying was never completed. There is no indication in what survives of the text as to the intended audience.

A form of confession is found following a Latin Psalter in The Schøyen Collection, MS 1371 (Oslo/London), fols.206r-209r.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, I have been unable to consult this manuscript, one of those in this collection which are kept in Norway, in person (the tightness of the binding makes photographic reproduction impossible in this instance). However, I am extremely grateful to have been given access to a draft description of this text by Dr.I.Taavitsainen of Helsinki University.⁸¹ Her description reveals that the confession contains sections dealing with the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the five bodily senses, and the seven bodily works of mercy.⁸²

⁸⁰ For a description of this manuscript, see the Sotheby's sale catalogue for June 18th, 1991, pp.192-195 (lot 121).

⁸¹ This description has now been published in IMEP X, pp.31-32.

⁸² In this description, Taavitsainen regards this material as forming four separate forms of confession, one dealing with each of these topics. However, the incipits and explicits supplied make it clear that this is in fact a single text on the pattern of most others examined in the present study. (One should compare also the description of this text given in the sale catalogue cited above, p.195, where the form of confession is regarded as a single text). Taavitsainen compares fols.206r-207v with Jolliffe C.24 (see p.126 above) and C.32 (pp.76-77 above), and fols.207v-208r with Jolliffe C.27 (pp.35-40 above); I have been unable to investigate these

In all three preceding cases, it would appear that the forms of confession have been added to the manuscripts as aids to the devotional life of the user of the manuscript. However, it cannot be determined more precisely in what context the texts were intended to be used.

A form of confession (MWME SS) is found copied together with the Hours of the Virgin and various other prayers and devotions in Ipswich School (formerly, Ipswich Town Library) MS 7 (s.xvi in.). The form of confession occurs towards the end (fols.282v-287v) of this long collection of devotional items in English and Latin, which M.R.James suggests was "written for a private person, probably a woman, living in London."⁸³ The assumption that the manuscript was intended for a female user is presumably on the basis of the presence of a prayer for wommen travelyng of childe, fol.79v, while the localization is given by the inclusion of a number of London feasts in the Kalendar, fols.1r-6v.

The text deals in order with the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the five bodily senses, the seven bodily works of mercy, the seven spiritual works of mercy, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seven sacraments and the beatitudes. There is no sign in the text itself of adaptation for female use. The

comparisons any further.

⁸³ M.R.James, "Descriptions of the Ancient Manuscripts in the Ipswich Public Library", Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History 22 (1934), p.95.

discussion of lechery includes sinning in syght of virgyns, wyfes and wedowes (fol.284r-v) and, while the treatment of the seventh commandment is unspecific as to the gender of the penitent (fol.285r), the treatment of the tenth commandment likewise censures coveting one's neighbour's wyfe, dowghter or seruant (fol.285r). The treatment of the seven sacraments (fol.286r-v) is simply a list, and therefore gives no information as to whether the intended user of the text is male or female, clerical or lay.

Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 3042 (s.xv in.) comprises chiefly the Hours of the Holy Spirit in Latin (fols.7r-32v) and the Meditation B here ascribed to Richard Rolle (fols.36r-78v),⁸⁴ both copied in the same hand. A form of confession (Jolliffe C.10, O.12; MWME G) occurs on fols.79r-80v in a hand (s.xv in./med.) not found elsewhere in the manuscript, among a series of miscellaneous shorter items in various hands. The form of confession is brief and shows the unusual characteristic of opening in the form of a prayer (fol.79r):

Good lorde, that knowest all thyng, whom I offende fro day to day, thy mercy 3ette on me spring. And my defautes to knowe allway to thi mercy be I meke, ay in full hope to haue it with all my mende. Thus I preye to thyn owne loue, make thu me knyht.

The remainder of the text does not, however, show such characteristics, and includes the usual address to a confessor in the conclusion (fol.80v):

⁸⁴ See S.J.Ogilvie-Thomson, Richard Rolle: Prose and Verse, EETS O.S. 293 (1988), pp.xcii-iv.

I crye Godde mercy with all myn hert, and oure lady Seynt Marie, Seint Augustyn, and all the seyntes in heuen, and the my gostly fadere. Mea culpa. Nowe and euer, Iesu blessed be thi name. Amen.

The reference here to St. Augustine may imply intention for use by one who is in one of the Augustinian orders, and this should be compared with the reference to obseruaunces of religioun (fol. 80r).

This text may be compared with the longer St. Brendan's Confession (Jolliffe C.31; MWME BB; IPMEP 311),⁸⁵ which shows no reference to a confessor at any point, and maintains the form of a prayer throughout.⁸⁶

Throughout this text there is a stress on the private, devotional aspects of confession, which accords well with the devotional function of the Primer. There are highly affective passages, such as the following simile from the section on the eighth commandment (239-243):

I haue also, my good Lord God, bihi3te to þee and to þe prest: to leue and forsake synne, and algatis 3it I dwelle and waltre þere, as a fatte sowe in hoot somer turnep and weendip hir in þe foule stynkinge slou3.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Printed from Cambridge, University Library, MS Hh.i.12 by R.H. Bowers, "The Middle English St. Brendan's Confession", Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen 175 (1939), pp.40-49; and, more accurately, from London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 541, by F. Kuriyagawa, "The Middle English St. Brendan's Confession and Prayer", Geibun-Kenkyu 25 (1968), pp.1-23. Quotations are given here in the form in which they occur in Kuriyagawa's text, and line references (in bold type) are to this edition.

⁸⁶ As noted in Jolliffe, p.42.

⁸⁷ The copy of this text in Oxford, Queen's College, MS 210 reads an hog in place of a fatte sowe in this passage.

Elsewhere another simile is combined with an allegory and a direct appeal to Christ (265-272):

A, my good Ihesu, what schal I do? Truly, Lord, what schal I do I woot not, but if þi greet grace, þat is þi messenger, praie pyte þi porter, þat he wolde opene þe 3ate charyte: þat I my3te entre in to þe brood bosome of þi mercy; for I, as a fals truaunt fleyng þe profitable teching of his maister, haue fled away fro þin hoolsum, nedeful, leeful and profitable doctryn of þi blessid lawe.

In the opening of the text there is an examination of sins against each of the persons of the Trinity (5-10), and in the section on the bodily wits sinning in misuse of one's sight is defined as failing to look upon the goodness of God and his works (307-310), showing a devotional element far greater than in most of the texts discussed above.

A copy of this text unnoticed by Bowers occurs in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1288 (s.xiv ex./xv in.), fols.112v-130r. (It is also omitted in Jolliffe; in IMEP IX the end of the text is wrongly transcribed as the end of the Primer; and in MWME it is incorrectly catalogued as an independent text,⁸⁸ possibly because this witness lacks any mention of St.Brendan either in the heading or at the end of the text). The text occurs at the end of a Primer in English, copied in the same hand after the Comendacioun. It should be noted that the Penitential Psalms stand in their usual place in the Primer, and are not replaced by the form of confession, which stands as an independent text at the end of the manuscript. Likewise, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS

⁸⁸ MWME VII, p.2563, text QQ.

Rawlinson C 699 (s.xv in./med.), fols.162v-179v, a copy of the text is found at the end of a manuscript containing an English Primer and a series of extracts from Pore Caitif.

Similarly, in Oxford, Queen's College, MS 210 (s.xv med.),⁸⁹ fols.1r-11v this text is found preceding a richly illuminated and illustrated Latin Primer. The English text has the same dimensions of written space and number of lines per page (eighteen) as the Hours, and is copied in a hand very similar to one of the textura hands of the main text. (The Hours would appear to be copied in at least two different hands, as shown by the alternation in the form of the stroke above the letter <i> in different stints of copying). The illumination in the English text is also very similar to that found in the main text (in particular, the initial <A> on fol.9v or again on fol.10v should be compared with the initial <Q> on fol.18v or <D> on fol.19r). There is thus no reason for thinking that the English text did not form part of the original plan of the manuscript, and thus was presumably intended to be used as a companion text with the Hours in the devotions of the user.

A further witness of the same text unnoticed by Bowers occurs in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Anglais 41, (s.xv med.), fols.162v-176r.⁹⁰ The dimensions of the manuscript are extremely small (dimensions of leaf = 110 x 80 mm.), and the current binding is post-medieval. The various post-medieval notes found in the

⁸⁹ IMEP VIII, p.81.

⁹⁰ IMEP VII, pp.4-6.

manuscript are recorded and discussed by F.Kuriyagawa in his description of the manuscript.⁹¹ The form of confession is the last item in the manuscript. The first and longest item is a full text of Pore Caitif, followed by Hilton's Eight Chapters on Perfection and chapters 32-33 of his Prickyng of Love.

Again, in London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 541 (s.xv in.), the text is found beside Pore Caitif, while in Cambridge, University Library, MS Hh.i.12 (s.xv med.) it is found with a spiritual miscellany consisting of extracts from longer works, including Pore Caitif.⁹² The text is also found in London, British Library, MS Harley 1706 (s.xv ex.), fols.84r-88r, and, in fragmentary condition, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 322 (s.xv med.), fols.98r-100r and 101r-v.⁹³

In addition to the St.Brendan's Confession, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C 699, also contains on fols.88v-92r a form of confession (omitted in Jolliffe, and regarded as part of the St.Brendan's Confession by Raymo in MWME) copied at the end of the

⁹¹ F.Kuriyagawa, Walter Hilton's Eight Chapters on Perfection (Tokyo, 1967), pp.xiii-xix.

⁹² On the latter manuscript, see V.Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion", Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475, edd. J.Griffiths and D.Pearsall, (London, 1989), p.330.

⁹³ On the contents, background and context of these two manuscripts see A.I.Doyle, "Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey", Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society n.s. 25 (1958), pp.222-243. These two manuscripts also contain a much briefer confession in the seven deadly sins (see below, pp.123-124), lacking the affective, devotional content of the present text.

Primer in English. This text again has no reference to a priest at any point and seems intended for use as a prayer, although it should be noted that the educational element in this text is also pronounced. During this brief text scripture is cited frequently, and Augustine is also cited twice.⁹⁴

The text opens with a discussion of the spiritual manifestations of the ten commandments, which are not separately enumerated or otherwise distinguished from one another. There follow very brief summaries of the seven deadly sins and the five bodily and spiritual senses, followed by a commentary on the seven bodily works of mercy. Rather than the customary reference to book of Tobit, the seventh work of mercy is explained as being understood in the third, as a failure to acknowledge that one is in the spiritual death of sin, not *mekeli knowlechinge hemsilff wrecchid wormes mete erþe & askis* (fol.92r). The text ends somewhat abruptly, and may be incomplete (fol.92r):

Of þese goostli wittis spekiþ Crist whanne he criep so ofte in þe gospel:

- He þat haþ eeris, heere he; and þat I seie to 3ou, to alle I seie, wake 3e, for 3e knowen not þe dai neiþer þe our

Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS F.4.13, contains on fols.123v-135r a form of confession (MWME RR) with the heading *A deuoute prayer to God the fathur of heuyn, & therwith a good forme*

⁹⁴ The second citation of Augustine is the same allegory of the iron chain of the seven deadly sins which is found in Yale, University Library, MS Beinecke 317. See the transcription in Appendix C below, 11.26-28.

of confession somewhat generally, and which, like the St. Brendan's Confession, maintains throughout the form of a prayer to God, rather than that of a confession to a priest. The manuscript is an early sixteenth-century devotional collection compiled by or for Jasper Fyloill, a London Dominican. The front flyleaf bears the name of a female member of the Bridgettine house at Syon. However, in his recent study of books connected with Syon, C.de Hamel states that "the name of a Syon lay sister ... seems to me to be among other jottings rather than unambiguously as owner."⁹⁵

There is little internal evidence for the intended audience of the text. The discussion of the seven sacraments states that the penitent should both honour and keep the sacrament of matrimony, but only that he should honour the sacrament of the priesthood, suggesting intention for a lay audience. However, throughout the remainder of the text there is nothing that would not be equally applicable to either a lay or a religious audience, and both the emphasis of the text on the devotional life and the lack of reference to the social manifestations of sin suggest that in the present manuscript context this text is intended for the use of the owners of the manuscript rather than for the guidance of layfolk.

The text opens with a lengthy preamble in which the sinner describes himself as unworthy to be called God's simplest and

⁹⁵ C.F.R.de Hamel, Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and their Peregrinations after the Reformation (Roxburghe Club, 1991), p.134. In the list of manuscripts, p.119, de Hamel lists this manuscript as "Women's liturgical use. Devotions (probably but not necessarily from Syon)."

lowest servant, and remembers that God has not saved Lucifer and his company, heuenly spiritys & moste clere aungellys, on account of their oone only thoughte & sodayne synne of rebellyon. Against this is set scriptural authority that God does not desire the everlasting death of a sinner, but rather that he should be conuertid from his sin.

The confession proper begins with an unusual account of sin by misuse of the feet, knees, thighs, the secrett & pudende membris, the sides, back and neck, shoulders, arms, hands, mouth, tongue, heart, ears, nostrils, eyes, head, and again the heart (fols.125r-126r). This is followed by discussions of the seven deadly sins and the ten commandments (fols.126r-128v and 128v-129v), in which, as already noted, there is little stress upon the social manifestations of the sins. The discussion of lechery is divided into sections dealing with fornication (with unchaste, unmarried women), strumpetyng (deflowering virgins), adultery, rape, and sacrilege (with women religious). Sins against nature, homosexuality, and effeminacy are discussed in Latin, implying a latinate user, and perhaps revealing also a desire to keep knowledge of such sins secret from the unlearned.

There follow discussions of sins against the seven spiritual and bodily works of mercy (fol.130r-v), the twelve articles of the faith (fol.130v), the seven sacraments (fol.131r-v), the seven virtues theological and cardinal (fols.131v-132r), the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost (fol.132r-v), the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost (fol.132v), and the eight evangelical beatitudes (fol.133r-v). The

discussion of the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost contains the following simile (fol.132v):

I haue often greuously offendyd bi high maieste in þe premises, like a horse & mule in whom ys non vnderstanding.

A further simile occurs in the peroration (fol.134r):

For as the sterris in the firmament & the grauell & sande in the see be multiplyed withoughte numbur, so good lorde be my synnes in me.

On both fols.134r and 134v there are appeals to þe blessid confessor saynt Gylys (fol.134v).

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 131 (s.xv in.), copied by John Morton,⁹⁶ contains a form of confession (Jolliffe C.33; MWME DD) on fols.136v-139r. Although there are few clear indications of function, the text would appear to be intended for layfolk,⁹⁷ as is shown by the reference in the section on lechery to performing deeds for purposes other than the principal intention of procreation (fol.138r), and perhaps also by the reference under sloth to being slow in hearing, rather than saying, divine service

⁹⁶ For the probable York localization of the manuscript, see A.I.Doyle, "Reflections on Some Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ", Leeds Studies in English n.s. 14 (1983), p.87.

⁹⁷ Probably here intended for the use of Morton and his wife Juliana, for whom letters of fraternity with the Augustinian friars in York are recorded in the manuscript, fols.148v-149r. See further J.Hughes, "The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century", Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England, ed. D.M.Smith, Borthwick Studies in History 1 (York, 1991), p.110, where Hughes suggests that the friars acted as confessors for Morton and his wife.

on workdays and holidays (fol.137v). Unlike a text such as the St.Brendan's Confession, the confession is in this text addressed to a confessor, whether real or imaginary. However, as with many of the texts discussed in this section, the emphasis on the communal life of the parish noted in the texts discussed in earlier sections is here entirely absent. Furthermore, although one should note that the passage quoted by J.Hughes in his recent discussion of this text is not entirely representative of the whole,⁹⁸ it is still to some extent true that this text does as he asserts show a certain devotional, reflective bias. However, this is rather more an argument from the absence of strong elements of social regulation than it is one from direct evidence, as in the case of the St.Brendan's Confession.

⁹⁸ Hughes, "Administration of Confession", p.156.

v. Texts addressed to a lay audience.

The texts examined in this section are all addressed to lay penitents, chiefly of high social rank and, - as appears from frequent and detailed discussions of using false weights and measures, buying and selling for profit, and usury,⁹⁹ - predominantly mercantile. In most instances they are addressed to the male head of a lay household; however, one text is addressed to a laywoman, and another may originally have been intended for a female audience. One text shows a concern with the implications of guild oaths.

Most of the texts are preserved in manuscripts which are likely to have been in clerical ownership, the texts being used either as model confessions to be read to lay penitents, or as guides to framing penitential interrogations. They are distinct from the texts examined in section ii. in being specifically targeted at penitents of a particular social background, implying use by priests who are accustomed to hearing the confessions of certain groups of lay penitents. Such users could include private confessors, friars, or priests administering to lay associates of religious houses.

These texts are concerned with the daily life of men and women

⁹⁹ One should perhaps compare here the detailed treatment of these subjects in the section on avarice from The Book of Vices and Virtues and other translations of the Somme le Roi (ed. W.N.Francis, The Book of Vices and Virtues, EETS O.S. 217 (1942), pp.30-43); on the translator's possible interest in mercantile affairs, see Francis' introduction, pp.lx-lxii.

of a specific social class, and provide a large amount of information concerning the social and moral preoccupations of a group which is of increasing prominence and importance during the later medieval period.

Yale, University Library, MS 317 (s.xv ex.) contains two forms of confession (neither are listed in either Jolliffe or MWME), fols.34v-35r and fols.42v-50v. The first of these is preceded by a brief discussion of the necessity of confession, on the lower part of fol.34r.¹⁰⁰ This discussion identifies three promptings to sin and to breaking the first promise made at baptism: frailty; ignorance; and presumption. To these there correspond three remedies: contrition; confession; and absolution. All three promptings to sin may, however, be seen to be comprehended within the single sin of ignorance, which itself has three varieties: i, the ignorance of natural fools, which excuses both the blame and the pain of deadly sin; ii, the ignorance of those who wish to learn but have no learning, which excuses the blame of deadly sin but not the pain, which shall be suffered in Purgatory; iii, the ignorance of those who have knowledge and may recognise good and evil but will not do so, who may kunne & wole not. The fate of this

¹⁰⁰ In the description of this manuscript in the recent catalogue of Yale manuscripts (New Haven, 1987, II, pp.120-123), the opening of this text is given as Hec in constitutionibus capitulum Ignorancia sacerdotum. However, this is better regarded as a colophon to the preceding text, the second part of the Lay Folks' Catechism, which does indeed represent an exposition of the Pechamite syllabus.

latter group is exemplified by a number of quotations and paraphrases from Isidore, Solomon, Anselm, Isidore again, and Ambrose.

The form of confession itself opens with a statement that it is a fourme of a generall confessyoun pat euery crysten man & woman is bownde to kunne & knowe (fol.34v). A deletion shows close attention by a reader or corrector to the meaning of the text:¹⁰¹

& also lefte vndo pat I am bownde to do be þe first promysse pat I made whan I was first crystenyd {& also many tymes sens} wher I promysyd to almyghty God to forsake þe devyll & alle his werkys

The treatment of the seven deadly sins shows a detailed discussion of pride, but not of any other of the sins, suggesting that a fuller exemplar with full discussion of each of the sins may have been abbreviated:

& specyally I haue synnyd first yn pryde, pat is to wyte ageynst þe honour & worship of God. I haue wylyyd & desyryd myn owen worship & preysynge for þe goodys & vertues pat I had of Goddys gyfte, & noughth of mysilf; as strength, beawte, kunnynge, wytte & oper lyke. Also I haue be prowde of þe worldly goodes pat I haue, & not þankyd God of hem; as gold, syluer & oper catell etcetera. In thise & many oper spyces & branchys pat comyth of pryde as ferforth as God knoweth me gylty I beseke hym of his mercy.

Also I knowleche & yelde me gylty pat I haue trespacyd ageynst God þorough þe synne of envye & also of wrath, slowth, gloteny & lecherye `&` be many dyuers spyces & branches of þeym; of þe which I crye God mercy.

¹⁰¹ The mode of deletion here by striking through is the same as is found at other points where corrections or emendations follow in the main hand, suggesting that this deletion may have been made by the scribe in the course of copying from his exemplar. However, since it has only been possible to consult this manuscript in microfilm, it is difficult to be certain whether the deletion has been made by the main scribe or by a subsequent user of the manuscript, and if it has been made by this scribe whether it was done during the copying of the text or at a later stage.

The text ends with a note that this confessyoun, here rehercyd generally, ow{.}yth to be declaryd mor opynly yef a man wolle clerly be shryven, referring the user to be trefyse next befor for a mor opyn declarayoun of the many horyble & abhomynable vyces which lie under the hed synnes listed in this text. The user is thus referred to the copy in this manuscript of the second part of the Lay Folks' Catechism where many of the topics listed in the form of confession are dealt with at greater length. This suggests that at least this concluding passage of the form of confession has been written especially for the context of this manuscript, or alternatively that this text has been copied from an exemplar which has both this text and the Lay Folks' Catechism in the same order. It is also of interest that the user is not referred to the subsequent much fuller form of confession on fols.42v-50v, suggesting that these two texts have been copied from different sources.

The second form of confession contained in this manuscript (fols.42v-50v) is by a considerable margin the longest to be considered in this study, and for this and other reasons requires to be discussed at some length.¹⁰² It contains a wealth of social detail, both in the attitudes expressed towards questions of matrimony or astrology, and in the more general impressions of social life preserved in such passages as those from the discussion

¹⁰² For a transcription of this text, see below, Appendix C. References (here given in bold type) are to the numbered lines of this transcription.

of sloth discussed below. It is also notable for a wealth of similes and figurative language, some associated with the central metaphor of Christ as healer of the wounds inflicted by the three enemies of the spirit, but others standing alone.

The introductory discussion of the spiritual plight of the penitent (12-63), with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10, 30-37, here misidentified as Luke 11) being used as an illustration of the penitent's position, immediately reveals the devotional interests of the text.¹⁰³ The extensive list of topics in which the penitent who is to be saved by Christ the Good Samaritan must believe reveals the educational function of the text (36-60), in addition to providing authority for the sacrament of confession (60-64, 75-78).

The allegory is carried forward into the confessional format where the outward and inward senses are described as the gates of the soul, by means of which the three robbers or enemies have entered the three powers of the soul, - Reason, Will and Understanding, - robbing them of their natural powers and goods of grace (79-185).

The description of the seven links in the chain of sin (186-203) carries the allegory further forward, and again displays the didactic aspect of the text. The use of affective language in the impassioned statements, close to the register of a prayer, with

¹⁰³ Augustine (Confessions, VIII, v), is correctly cited as the origin of the image of the linked chain of iron at 28; however, I have been unable to identify any source for the broader allegory here.

which this section ends (208-216), reveal both didactic and devotional concerns, inviting a direct emotional response in the audience.¹⁰⁴ In this latter respect the text thus demonstrates, in a text directed specifically to a lay audience, one of the central characteristics of many of the texts considered in sections iii. and iv. above.

The allegory of the wounds inflicted by the three enemies of the soul is continued in the following section, dealing with the ten commandments (217-430). The treatment of the fourth commandment (277-311) shows an expansion of the usual two categories, of loving one's natural parents and one's spiritual parents the Church, into four: one's natural father and mother; the spiritual father and mother, holy scripture; the supernatural father and mother, Cryste Iesus & all holy chirche; and the eternal father and mother, God the father and all holy ch<ir>che triumphant. The section on the sixth commandment (335-378) includes an unusual discussion of spiritual lechery in wedding one's soul to the devil (338-339), and in the discussion of bodily lechery includes a prophecy attributed to Boniface (342-348).

There follow sections dealing with the seven deadly sins (431-675) and with sins against the articles of the faith (676-772). During the discussion of the articles pertaining to the godhead there occur condemnations of non-Christian practices and of prognostication from the stars (692-697), and a particularly

¹⁰⁴ In this context one should note also the use of simile, as at 190-192 or 834-835.

detailed discussion of the resurrection of the bodies of the deceased at the Last Judgement (712-722). The discussion of the articles pertaining to the manhood of Christ includes an account of the Trinity choosing the most pure drops of blood in the Virgin's womb from which to fashion the material body of Christ at the Incarnation (725-733), and a standard simile to explain the virgin birth (737-741). Other notable features in this section include a reference in the discussion of the Ascension to the souls of those who have died in grace between the Resurrection and the Ascension being taken up by Christ (759-761), and in the discussion of the Last Judgement a description of Christ showing both his manhood and his godhead to those who shall be saved, but only his manhood to those who shall be damned (768-771).

The subsequent discussion of the three theological and the four cardinal virtues (773-853) describes these as a *softe oyle* among the *medycynes* of Christ the *souereyn leche*. In the discussion of error, heresy is condemned, as is placing one's trust more in natural reason than in *feyth passynge all reson, whych neper kan neper may be preyuyd be reson* (790-798).

The subsequent section dealing with the seven sacraments (854-952) includes in the discussion of the eucharist a condemnation of sinning in not fully believing in transubstantiation (866-881), and in the discussion of holy orders a highly orthodox account of the divine authority vested in the priest through sacramental orders (918-927). The discussion of penance condemns those who do not choose a *trewe yndifferente iugge*, and also those who confess some

of their sins to one priest and some to another (895-899). The discussion of matrimony asserts that it is an error to consider that a subsequent marriage contract which is physically consummated undoes a previous contract which is unconsummated; the previous contract is binding so long as both parties consente eyther to oper with good deliberacyon, & pervppon expresse peyr consente after pe fourme ordeyned be pe chirche (935-946).

This model confession thus incorporates in its treatment of the articles of the faith, the virtues and the sacraments a highly compendious devotional manual, setting out in frequently striking and affective language many of the central tenets of Christian belief. Heresy is explicitly condemned, and an orthodox account is given of many of the chief areas of theological debate. (Similarly, the earlier treatment of sins of sight includes a highly orthodox statement of the dangers of not paying sufficient attention to devotional images at 95-100).

The text ends with a brief commentary on the seven petitions of the Pater Noster (964-1026), and a confession of sins against the bodily and spiritual works of mercy (1027-1045). The peroration (1046-1060) makes clear the educational implications of the text, stating that the confession is intended to remedy yn especyall ... pe gret ignorance contynuall reygnyng yn me (1048-1049).

A lay audience is assumed throughout the text, as in the discussion of holy orders (917-931), which demands respect for those in orders, without taking any consideration of whether the penitent might himself be in orders. A note on simony in the

discussion of the seventh commandment (408-410) refers the reader forward to the discussion of avarice in the following section dealing with the seven deadly sins, demonstrating a degree of sophistication and integration in the structure of the text. When simony is again discussed in the later section, the wording implies that what is here being condemned is the purchasing of spiritual goods with worldly goods, and thus abetting a priest in simony, rather than the commission of simony by the penitent (573-574).

The gender of the intended audience is more difficult to determine. In the discussion of sins against wedlock, both defloration and the loss of one's own virginity are listed as sins to be confessed (370). In the section on avarice the word *husbonde* has been struck through (553), which may show that the text was originally intended for the use of a married laywoman and has been adapted for other use.¹⁰⁵ (The situation found here is thus the reverse of that found in the Bolton Hours, pp.77-78 above).

The text also reveals a good deal of incidental social information concerning the intended audience. The discussion of sins of sight includes a reference to avoiding the sight of those in need of charity who might cause one to feel pity (100-102). (The section on the sixth commandment possibly manifests a desire to dissociate the penitent from those of lower social rank in a condemnation of committing the sin of lechery *lyke a comyn person*

¹⁰⁵ See the discussion of a deletion from the shorter form of confession in this manuscript, p.93, n.101 above, for the problems in discerning the stage at which the deletion has been made.

(fol.45v); however, MED commun(e adj. sense 9, "having an unfavorable or unsavory reputation, notorious" is just as possible here as sense 8 (a), "of low rank").

In the section on the sacraments, the discussion of penance curiously identifies oper languages as being among the causes of sinful behaviour (903-907). The context suggests that the languages in question here are other spoken languages, rather than Latin, Greek or Hebrew. The implication is thus that the penitent is one who is likely to have contact with speakers of foreign languages; possibly a merchant travelling overseas, or somebody travelling for reasons of diplomacy or war. However, there is nothing else in the text to suggest such an audience.

In the same part of the text, the discussion of the last unction asserts that the last rites should be administered once a year yeff seknesse contynewe & peryll apper, explaining that it will putt away venyall synne and restor þe seek sonner to bodyli helthe yeff it please God þat þey <s>hall lyve, and if they die help them to a mor gracyows disposicyon to gadre þeyr mynde togyder yn þeyr ende towarde God (908-916).¹⁰⁶

The section on sloth includes a wealth of social detail in the sections dealing with tendyrnesse and ydylnesse (612-625), although not such as to help greatly in identifying the specific social milieu of an intended audience.

¹⁰⁶ This should be contrasted with the popular superstitions concerning the plight of those who recovered after receiving the last rites discussed by Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, p.313.

The main hand of the manuscript, in which both forms of confession are copied, may be dated on palaeographical grounds to the period between 1470 and 1480.¹⁰⁷ On fol.1r a hand with considerable Humanist influence is attempted by the same scribe. Along with other vernacular items of devotional guidance, including several commentaries on the Mass for the guidance of layfolk, there occurs on fols.36r-42r, between the two forms of confession, a subject index to all four books of Gregory the Great's Dialogi. The presence of this item indicates that the intended user of the manuscript was latinate and had ready access to a copy of the Dialogi, perhaps implying membership of a large religious house.¹⁰⁸ On account of the Syon provenance of Symon Wynter's English version of the Life of St.Jerome, occurring on fols.5r-21v, and the inclusion in this copy of the text of passages relating to its composition and early distribution, G.R.Keiser has suggested that this manuscript is itself of Syon provenance.¹⁰⁹ Although this evidence for the provenance of the manuscript is at best circumstantial, a house such as Syon would provide a likely origin for the manuscript. The vernacular devotional items contained in

¹⁰⁷ I am indebted to Dr.M.B.Parkes for his advice on this matter.

¹⁰⁸ One should perhaps also note that in the longer form of confession, 27-28, the citation of Augustine gives the information not only that the image is from the Confessions, but also gives the number of the book concerned.

¹⁰⁹ G.R.Keiser, "Patronage and Piety in Fifteenth-Century England: Margaret, Duchess of Clarence, Symon Wynter and Beinecke MS 317", Yale University Library Gazette 60 (1985), pp.32-46.

the manuscript, including perhaps the Life of St. Jerome, would be highly suitable for use by a priest attached to a large religious house in counselling and administering to the lay friends and visitors of the house.¹¹⁰

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 142 (s.xv med.), fols.107v,col.2 -110v,col.2, contains a lengthy form of confession (Jolliffe C.30; MWME AA), dealing in detail with the ten commandments, seven deadly sins, five bodily senses, and the seven bodily and spiritual works of mercy. An intended address to the head of a lay household is indicated by the treatment of teaching in the section dealing with the seven spiritual works of mercy (fols.110r,col.2 - 110v,col.1):

First þat I haue noght tau3t mekelye hem þat ben vndir my
gouernayle, - as my children, and hem princpally þat be
in my howse, seruauntis & alle opere þat be dwellynge wip
me, - as þer pater noster and her commaundementis.

The subsequent discussions of counselling and chastisement likewise have references to the duties of the head of a household towards those under his keeping. Elsewhere, the reference to failing to pay tithes and offerings to the Church in the section dealing with pride (fol.108v,col.2) perhaps also suggests an intention for a lay audience.

¹¹⁰ On the duties of the monks of Syon with regard to hearing confessions, see Dom D.Knowles, The Religious Orders in England, 3 (Cambridge, 1959), p.213. The manuscript also contains extensive Latin notes on fols.51r-56v, including notes on the administration of penance and absolution incorporating a brief summary of a form of confession in Latin.

In this context the discussions of the sixth commandment and of lechery are somewhat surprising in their failure to make any reference to lawful sexual relations within wedlock in their general censure of sinful relations with both married and single women.¹¹¹ This should perhaps be explained as being a result of the stress on the spiritual life and the suppression of worldliness to be found throughout this text, as in the following passage from the end of the section on lechery (fol.109v,col.2):

Also þat I haue noght chastysid my flesshe wip wakyng in goode preieres, in goode meditaciouns & opere discrete penauncis doynge, I beseche almy3ty God of mercy and of for3evenes.

Similarly, in the section dealing with the bodily senses, the following condemnation of hearing worldly fables is found (fol.110r,col.1):

Also I beseche God mercy þat I haue had ofte tyme moore lust and likyng to rede & to here of fablis and oper talys þat be not of oure bileve, ne of no credence, ne of lernyng, þan to rede or to here of þe lawe of God, or to lerne þe commaundementis of God, by keyng of whiche commaundementis every man shall be sauid or dampned.

In this respect this text might be compared with the St.Brendan's Confession and certain other of the texts discussed in the previous section,¹¹² further reflecting the growth in lay spirituality in

¹¹¹ The marginal notation refers to this commandment as the seventh; however, this is apparently due to a confusion on the part of the scribe, since the tenth commandment is clearly divided into two parts which the scribe of the marginal headings has failed to distinguish, while a part of the introductory passage describing the conditions of transgressions against the commandments is misidentified as the first commandment.

¹¹² See above, pp.77-90.

later medieval England.

The remainder of the manuscript contains: Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesu Christ, with the Latin memorandum (fol.2r) specifying that this translation is licensed by Archbishop Arundel for the edification of the faithful and the confutation of Lollards;¹¹³ a treatise on the sacrament of Christ's body and the marvels therof; lives of St.Nicholas bishop of Myrre, St.Katherine, and St.Margaret from the Gilte Legende; the Tretyse of Gostly Batayle;¹¹⁴ and a general sentence of excommunication.¹¹⁵ These texts would seem to indicate a combination of devotional and practical applications such as is also indicated by the form of confession. The saints' lives in particular might be seen as devotional fables intended to take the place of the worldly fables proscribed in the discussion of the bodily senses. The presence of the sentence of excommunication makes it likely that the user of the manuscript is a priest, making use of this selection of items in the pastoral care of the members of a lay household.

The manuscript is of large dimensions (dimensions of leaf = 325 x 218 mm.), copied in double columns, and quite expensively decorated. There are two indications of private ownership in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries.

¹¹³ See Doyle, "Reflections"; A. Hudson, The Premature Reformation (Oxford, 1988), pp.437-40.

¹¹⁴ Edited by V.Murray, Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1970.

¹¹⁵ See O.S.Pickering, "Notes on the Sentence of Cursing in Middle English; or, a Case for the Index of Middle English Prose," Leeds Studies in English n.s. 12 (1981), pp.233-4.

A single form of confession (Jolliffe C.20; MWME Q) is found in the following manuscripts: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Miscellany 210 (s.xv in.), fols.157r-165r, (henceforth: Laud); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1286 (s.xv in.), fols.252r-260v,¹¹⁶ (henceforth: Ashmole); Marquess of Bath, Longleat House, MS 29 (s.xv in./med.), fols.24v-29v and 31r,¹¹⁷ (henceforth: Longleat); London, British Library, MS Harley 4172, fols.116r-122v, (henceforth: Harley). An edition of this text based on Longleat with variants from all manuscripts listed is given by S.J.Ogilvie-Thomson.¹¹⁸

The witness of this text in Harley (Jolliffe E.17, N.13; MWME VII, p.2300, section 88) is incomplete at beginning and end, and occupies a single quire (s.xv ex.) unrelated to the remainder of the manuscript (s.xv med.). As Ogilvie-Thomson notes, throughout the text first person forms have been consistently erased and second person interrogatory forms inserted in their place,¹¹⁹ effectively

¹¹⁶ See IMEP IX, pp.45-47; among the contents of this manuscript are translations of parts of the Somme le Roi, related to the shorter extracts from this text in London, British Library, MS Royal 18.A.x.

¹¹⁷ Fols.30r-31v, the middle sheet of a quire, are misbound, hence explaining the apparent break in the copying of this witness of the text. See further S.J.Ogilvie-Thomson, "An edition of the English works in MS Longleat 29, excluding The Parson's Tale", Oxford University D.Phil. Thesis, 1980, p.232.

¹¹⁸ Ogilvie-Thomson, "Longleat 29", pp.232-83. Line references given here are to this edition.

¹¹⁹ Ogilvie-Thomson, "Longleat 29", p.234.

converting the text into a set of confessional interrogations, probably for use by a priest.¹²⁰ The hand of these alterations is extremely similar to the main hand of this witness.

In her discussion of the relationship of the manuscripts, Ogilvie-Thomson identifies two independent branches in the dissemination of the text as being represented respectively by Laud and Ashmole, and by Longleat and Harley. All four manuscripts show evidence of separate omissions which cannot be explained by scribal error and would appear to be the result of scribal "editing". In addition, Ashmole shows considerable evidence of minor expansions and stylistic alterations, leading Ogilvie-Thomson to suggest that "its scribe, or a predecessor, ...virtually rewrote some of his copy in his own style."¹²¹

Ogilvie-Thomson also lists evidence for the witness of this item in Longleat having been copied from a Northern exemplar, and suggests on the basis of certain items of vocabulary that the text itself could be of Northern origin.¹²²

The text seems to be intended for the head of a lay household, as is shown by references in the section dealing with the spiritual works of mercy to failing to teach one's meyne their bileue and

¹²⁰ For an example of this process of adaptation working in the opposite direction, see the adaptation of Grosseteste's confessional questionnaire as a model confession, discussed by S.Wenzel, The Sin of Sloth (Chapel Hill, 1967), p.84 and p.229, n.65.

¹²¹ Ogilvie-Thomson, "Longleat 29", pp.234-37.

¹²² Ogilvie-Thomson, "Longleat 29", p.237.

Goddes lawes (404-5), and to teaching one's wife and children to love and worship God above all things (411-13). Elsewhere there are further references to *my wif* and *my meyne*, as in the discussion of anger (117-18). The section dealing with the bodily senses is followed by an unusual section on misuse of worldly goods with which one might have helped poor men, perhaps again suggesting an intention for a lay, secular environment (396-401).

More puzzling is the intention of a passage from the discussion of the eighth commandment (347-49):

Also by brotherhede of yeldes oper of craft oper of kyn mayntened other and sustenede her falshed.

A similar passage occurs in the discussion of the fifth commandment (288-300; <or> and <to> both represent amended readings in the text offered by Ogilvie-Thomson):

Also by confederacie of craft oper of kyn or els of yeldes consented by confortynge <or> maytenaunce and defendynge or helpynge <to> bodyly mensleers and gostly.

All four manuscripts offer broadly similar readings in both passages. In the second passage, Ashmole and Harley have the somewhat less specific readings *supportacione* and *consideracion* respectively in place of *confederacie* in Longleat. The syntax of this second passage in Ashmole is extremely unusual, and needs to be given in a slightly longer context (fol.258r-v):

Also I crie God mercy þat | I haue in maner of conentyngge to do manslau3ttre, bodily and goostely, willynge þe deep of myn emcristen and myn enemyes, and also by supportacioune of craftis or of kyn, or els by broperhedis eiper 3eeldes, me maynteynyngge and defendyng and helpynge to bodily manslau3ttre and goostlely also.

Here, *willynge*, *maynteynyngge*, *defendyng* and *helpynge* are all

apparently used as main verbs, with *me* being used as MED pronoun (1), sense a, with the meaning "people" or "unspecified persons". In no manuscript is the scribal "editing" noted by Ogilvie-Thomson evident in either of these passages, and the variant readings of the second passage in Ashmole may be taken to be examples of the stylistic rewriting typical of this witness, or possibly as a result of misunderstanding of the syntax of an exemplar.

Similar discussions of crafts, guilds or brotherhoods are not found in any other of the texts included in this survey. The wording of these passages should be compared with the summary of the oaths of religious guilds and lay fraternities given by J. Bossy:¹²³

Brothers were sworn to secrecy, to give information of danger impending to the brotherhood, to stick up for a brother or for the fraternity as a whole if reflections were passed on him or it by outsiders, to support one another at law.

The passages cited above seem to contain a deliberate echo of such guild oaths, showing an awareness of how such oaths could lead to conflict with the law of the Church. A concern with such issues on the part of the author of the text may imply that he is writing

¹²³ Bossy, Christianity in the West, p.62. See further, C.M.Barron, "The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London", The Church in Pre-Reformation Society, edd. C.M.Barron and C.Harper-Bill (London, 1985), pp.13-37; G.F.Westlake, The Parish Gilds of Medieval England (London, 1919); G.Unwin, The Gilds and Companies of London (London, 4th ed., 1963); Toulmin Smith, English Gilds, EETS O.S. 40 (1870); Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, pp.142-154; J.Simpson, "'After Craftes Conseil clotheth yow and fede': Lanceland and London City Politics", England in the Fourteenth Century, Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium, ed.N.Rogers (Stamford, 1993), pp.109-127.

for a particular audience of guild members, perhaps intending the text for the use of guild members or of a guild chaplain who hears their confessions. The inclusion of both of these passages in much the same form in all four witnesses of this text suggests that for the scribes of these manuscripts, and perhaps also for their users, these passages had some particular significance. However, one should set against this the very widespread membership of guilds in later medieval England,¹²⁴ suggesting that guild oaths of one sort or another would have been taken by a very sizeable proportion of the population, and also the fact that the manuscript contexts of none of the witnesses of this text show any further signs of association with a guild of any type.

Somewhat similar considerations are raised by a reference to not honouring a vow of chastity in the discussion of the sixth commandment (316):

Also broken my wedlake after I haue ben bound to chastitee.

There is some, albeit very limited, evidence for the taking of vows of chastity by married layfolk in later medieval England while both partners were still living.¹²⁵ However, the presence of this passage, not paralleled in other texts intended for laymen examined

¹²⁴ See Duffy, Stripping of the Altars, p.142.

¹²⁵ See D.Elliott, Spiritual Marriage, Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock (Princeton, 1993), p.9, n.10; J.C.Ward, English Noblewomen in the later Middle Ages (London, 1992), p.144. On more common vows of chastity by laywomen after a husband's death, see H.M.Carey, "Devout Literate Laypeople and the Pursuit of the Mixed Life in Later Medieval England", Journal of Religious History 14 (1987), pp.361-381.

here, in a text surviving in several manuscripts, suggests again that some specific intention may be reflected here. The somewhat unusual reference to infidelity in one's spiritual relationship with God in the same part of the text should perhaps be considered in the same context, raising questions of the evidence offered by this text for the growth of lay piety.

Rejecting the theory of Manly and Rickert that Longleat is a monastic compilation made by a number of monks,¹²⁶ Ogilvie-Thomson describes the manuscript as being the work chiefly of a single scribe, probably intended for a devout lay family.¹²⁷ V.Gillespie, in discussing the lack of cohesion found in Laud in spite of its appearance of having been produced "perhaps professionally and certainly with care and attention", suggests that the manuscript may have been "the product of a closed society, either clerical or lay."¹²⁸ In this context, one might consider the suitability of this text, and in particular the reference to a vow of chastity, for layfolk leading a "mixed" life. This still does not, however, provide any specific explanation for the two passages referring to crafts, kin, brotherhoods and guilds, unless the layfolk were also

¹²⁶ J.M.Manly and E.Rickert, The Text of the Canterbury Tales (Chicago, 1940).

¹²⁷ Ogilvie-Thomson, "Longleat 29", pp.24-25.

¹²⁸ V.Gillespie, "Lukyngge in haly bukes: Lectio in some Late Medieval Spiritual Miscellanies", Spätmittelalterliche Geistliche Literatur in der Nationalsprache 2, Analecta Cartusiana 106 (1984), p.20; see also V.Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion", Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475, edd. J.Griffiths and D.Pearsall, (London, 1989), p.326.

members of a guild or fraternity. V.Gillespie in discussing the manuscripts of the Fervor Amoris states that "the contents of Bod. Ashmole 1286 seem to point towards compilation for religious use."¹²⁹ If this is taken to refer to regular religious, those passages in the form of confession which appear to be addressed to the head of a lay household would seem to be redundant, unless the text were perhaps intended for the guidance of a lay associate of a religious community. Alternatively, this manuscript might also be intended for the use of a closed lay society as suggested above in the case of Laud. Again, like two other manuscripts of the Fervor Amoris discussed by Gillespie, this manuscript could perhaps have been the possession of a friar, and the form of confession used for the guidance of a layman for whom he acted as confessor.¹³⁰

A different version of the discussion of the seven deadly sins from this text, (thus lacking the discussions of guilds and of vows of chastity, which occur during the treatment of the ten commandments), is also found incorporated in an otherwise quite different form of confession (Jolliffe C.43; MWME NN) in London, British Library, MS Royal 18.A.x (s.xv in.), fols.55v-60r (henceforth: Royal). This manuscript is a wide-ranging collection of devotional texts, including a number of items addressed to an

¹²⁹ Gillespie, "Vernacular Books of Religion", p.342, n.59.

¹³⁰ Ashmole fols.223r-226r, a text offering preparatory guidance to the mass, is also addressed to a layman. The text is printed by T.F.Simmonds, The Lay Folks Mass Book, EETS O.S. 71 (1879), pp.122-26. For discussion of this text and its intended audience, see the forthcoming D.Phil. thesis by C.Fraser of Balliol College, Oxford.

audience of devout women (whether regular religious or lay is unclear). However, a series of theological commonplaces in Latin also occurs in the same part of the manuscript as the current text, suggesting compilation for use by a priest, or for a woman with the extremely rare accomplishment of a reading knowledge of Latin.

The discussion of pride in this text shows substantial variation from that found in the text in the Longleat group, perhaps as a result of the conflation of different exemplars. However, it is also possible that Royal shows an earlier stage in the development of this part of the text, from which the common ancestor of the Longleat group has been adapted. The text in Royal has readings identified by Ogilvie-Thomson as being characteristic of each of the branches of the Longleat text, and thus must be related to the Longleat text at a stage earlier than any of the surviving manuscripts.

The Royal text appears to be addressed to a laywoman¹³¹ of some wealth and with considerable financial dealings,¹³² possibly of a similar social milieu to the male penitent addressed in the Longleat text. The discussion of the seven deadly sins in Royal is preceded by a brief section dealing with preparation for shrift, and is followed by discussions of the bodily senses, misuse of goods temporal and spiritual, the ten commandments, and the bodily and spiritual works of mercy.

¹³¹ housebonde is found for Longleat wyf, 215, under lechery.

¹³² Indicated in particular by passages unique to this text in the discussion of avarice at Longleat 53-82, 86-87.

This text is followed in Royal by a brief confession (Jolliffe C.9; MWME F) attributed to St. Edmund of Canterbury, fols.60v-61v.¹³³

The text is chiefly in the form of a prayer, and includes confession in the bodily senses.

London, British Library, MS Harley 6041 (s.xv in.) contains on fols.97r-102v a text incorporating a form of confession (Jolliffe C.8; MWME E) which, from the discussion of sins within wedlock during the discussion of lechery (fol.100v), appears to be addressed to a layman. The Latin devotional texts prescribed as preparation for confession which are discussed below reveal that the user of the text is expected to be at least partially latinate.

The remainder of the manuscript contains from the Prologue to Passus XI of the A-Version of Piers Plowman, followed by Passus XII, line 297, to Passus XXIII of the C-Version.¹³⁴ The form of confession is copied in a different ink and with different dimensions of written space and number of lines per page from Piers Plowman. However, the hand is either the same or very similar. On the basis of the evidence of heraldic shields found at various points in the manuscript, it would appear to have been copied for

¹³³ Printed by W.Wallace, Life of St.Edmund of Canterbury (London, 1893), p.362.

¹³⁴ See G.Kane, Piers Plowman: the A Version (London, 1960), p.6. On the attitude towards confession manifested by Langland in the various versions of the poem, see Hudson, Premature Reformation, pp.404-405, and also P.Gradon, "Langland and the Ideology of Dissent", Proceedings of the British Academy 66 (1980), pp.192-193.

a member of the Bedfordshire family of Hoo, and later to have passed into the ownership of a member of the house of St. Augustine's, Canterbury.¹³⁵

The confessional text opens with directions to the penitent on preparation for penance, recommending that he should review his past conduct in a private place, and that he should say *wyb grete deuocion and with contricion of herte* the Latin hymn Veni creator spiritus, of which a full text is given. Psalms 25 and 43, (24 and 42 in the Vulgate), Ad te domine levavi and Iudica me dominus et discerne, are also recommended and the opening words of each given in Latin, implying that the user of the text either has access to a Psalter for the full text or knows these psalms by heart.

The form of confession includes a lengthy discussion of the seven deadly sins, and much shorter discussions of a variety of topics: sins of speech; unshriven sins; sins of omission; sins against the sacraments; the ten commandments; the deeds of bodily mercy; the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; the four principal virtues; the virtues þat been clepid gratuite and virtues of diuinite; the seven virtues which are remedies against the seven deadly sins; sins of all parts of the body; and falling in the sentence of cursing pronounced four times annually in the church.

The text also includes on fol.98r-v, during the discussion of pride, a condemnation of confessing to other than one's own proper priest in order to conceal one's sins from him. During the

¹³⁵ For this and details of sixteenth-century ownership see Kane, A Version, p.7.

discussion of gluttony there occurs on fol.100r a reference to having letten myn oures and orisones and opre gode dedis, showing a stress on lay devotion similar to that shown by the Latin texts recommended for reading prior to confession.

The Hopton Hall manuscript (MS Chandos-Pole-Gell) (s.xv in.) contains on fols.1r-3v the opening of a form of confession (Jolliffe C.13; MWME J). The text consists of an introduction and confession in the seven deadly sins, ending immediately after the section dealing with lechery without any formal conclusion.

The discussion of avarice (fol.2r) seems to be addressed to a wealthy lay audience such as that of several of the texts discussed above, with condemnations of deceiving others in buying and selling, using false weights and measures, and withholding þe hyre of werke men. There is also criticism of withholding goods from the needy, and giving them instead to those who have no need and to minstrels. (A similar condemnation of minstrelsy is found in the discussion of gluttony, fol.2v). The discussion of avarice ends with praise of the virtues of work and its benefits for the spiritual wellbeing of the penitent.

The text is followed immediately on fol.2v without any clear division by a version of the Lay Folks' Catechism.¹³⁶ This is followed in turn by a discussion of sin occupying fols.9v-13r, which at two points incorporates material in a confessional format

¹³⁶ As identified by A.Hudson, "A New Look at the Lay Folks' Catechism", Viator 16 (1985), p.247.

on fols.11r and 11v-12r.¹³⁷ The second of these gives a detailed discussion of sins of mouth, heart and deed.

Leeds, University Library, MS Brotherton Collection 501 (s.xv med.), contains on fols.82r-86r a form of confession (Jolliffe C.39; MWME JJ). The manuscript has been most recently described and discussed at length by O.S.Pickering.¹³⁸ The opening of the text specifies a particular context and function for the form of confession (fol.82r):

O þu my brothyr þat art yong of age, qwiche kanst not confesse thiself onto thy gostly fadyr, þerfor Y shal wryghte to the how þu shalt haue the in thy confession.

Pickering notes the address to the singular brothyr here, and links this with similar references in rubricated passages in this text, and also in rubricated passages and marginal annotations to other texts in the manuscript (and further asserts that they originate together at a stage at least one remove from the present manuscript). He also shows that this address to a singular audience has at many points been supplemented by the scribe of the present manuscript with rubrics and annotations addressed to a plural audience, and suggests that the use of frater or fratres as forms of address makes a religious community a likely milieu for this

¹³⁷ This text is identified as a form of confession both by Jolliffe and by Raymo in MWME; Jolliffe lists this manuscript among those he was unable to consult in person.

¹³⁸ O.S.Pickering, "Brotherton Collection MS 501: a Middle English Anthology Reconsidered", Leeds Studies in English n.s. 21 (1990), pp.141-165. See also IMEP VI, pp.7-12.

manuscript.¹³⁹

If so, it should be noted that, when denuded of its rubricated passages, those parts of the form of confession which are in the first person, "confessional", voice show little evidence of adaptation to a religious audience. The discussions of lechery and of the first commandment both make reference to the penitent's wife and children, while those of avarice and of the third commandment both assume that the penitent has servants. Likewise the discussion of the seven spiritual works of mercy, with its reference to childyrn, would seem at least as suitable for a lay user, such as the head of a lay household, as for regular religious (fol.85v):

I haue not tawte my sogettys ne my childyrn the poyntys of her feyth, and þe artyculys wherthrow they shulde be steryd to loue God almyty; I haue not tawte hem to hate senne, wykkyd vycys and bad thewis, and forto loue good vertuys as me fyll to done; I haue not chastysid hem that hath ben in my gouernaunce, but suffryd hem to be mysgouernyd to God & man, coueytyd hem gode to me, and noght chargyd her vycys & mysgouernaunce a3ens God and othyr men.

The body of the text would thus appear to be addressed to an audience similar to that of the the other texts in the present section, and shows no signs of adaptation for an audience of regular religious outside the rubricated passages addressed to the singular brothyr.¹⁴⁰ The reasons for the selection of this model

¹³⁹ Pickering, "Brotherton Collection MS 501", pp.152-154, 160.

¹⁴⁰ It is possible that, like Oxford, St. John's College, MS 94, this text may be intended for penitents from a variety of backgrounds; however, in the absence of any specific reference to the particular circumstances of regular religious in the material in the first person "confessional" voice, such an explanation seems less likely here.

confession for inclusion in such a collection as this, with the addition of rubrics addressed to a singular, presumably clerical, penitent who is yong of age, are thus difficult to discern. Lack of availability of other exemplars could provide a possible explanation, although if such is indeed the case it is strange that the confessional material does not show more obvious signs of adaptation, such as the elimination of references to the penitent's wife and children.

The educational implications of the opening rubric are, however, borne out by the main part of the text, where the discussion of the first commandment includes an elaborate summary of the articles of the faith. The text ends with a further rubricated passage, during which a version of the Gast of Gy is cited for the doctrine that once a particular sin has been confessed once, it need not be confessed again, unless that sin has been committed again (fols.85v-86r):

Also Y fynde in a certeyn book autentyk which ys callyd Spiritus guydonis, where he seith a confortabyll worde whiche | ys this: God wyll not, quod he, that what tyme ys onys treuly shreuyng ony man of her sennys, to telle hem euyr a3en or confesse hem, but yf he do the same sennys a3en aftyrwarde, ffor God forbede, seyth Spiritus guydonis, ony man to telle euer more tho sennys þat God hath for3eten.

A brief form of confession is found in London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii (s.xv ex.), fols.69v-70r (Jolliffe C.18; MWME 0). The first part of the manuscript, in which this text is contained, is grouped by J.Boffey and J.J.Thompson among

collections of *domestitia* for family use,¹⁴¹ and comprises chiefly verse items, including several romances and numerous pieces of a devotional or morally instructive nature. The form of confession is somewhat unusual in dealing first with sins against the ten commandments, followed by the seven deadly sins and the bodily senses. The text is immediately followed by penitential verses, IMEV 1701.

¹⁴¹ J.Boffey and J.J.Thompson, "Anthologies and miscellanies: production and choice of texts", Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475, edd. J.Griffiths and D.Pearsall, (London, 1989), p.297. The second part of the manuscript begins at fol.142r and contains a series of Carthusian statutes. It is not clear when the two parts of the manuscript were brought together; this must certainly have been before the addition of the post-medieval lists of contents on fol.1r and fol.140r, and also before the gilding of the outer edges of the leaves.

vi. Texts with educational associations.

The close association between confession and Lenten instruction has been noted at various points in the preceding discussion. The texts examined here show particularly strong links with the educational process, providing summaries, either implicitly or explicitly, of a syllabus of Lenten instruction. Several of the texts also show links with elementary instruction in reading and writing, demonstrating an involvement of confession and function for model confessions in education in areas beyond the purely catechetic.

Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 2830, fols.80r-83v, contains a tractatus de modo confitendi composed by John Drury (Jolliffe E.13),¹⁴² and copied, together with the majority of the other items in the manuscript, by Hardgrave, a scribe of Beccles, in Suffolk, c.1434/5.¹⁴³ Drury describes himself as mayster of the

¹⁴² MWME VII, p.2359, text 212. Edited by S.B.Meech, "John Drury and his English Writings", Speculum 9 (1934), pp.76-79. Quotations given here are from this edition. (The text is also reprinted from this same edition in R.N.Swanson, Catholic England: Faith, Religion and Observance before the Reformation (Manchester, 1993)). See also V.Gillespie, "Doctrina and Predicacio: the Design and Function of Some Pastoral Manuals", Leeds Studies in English n.s. 11 (1980), pp.36-50; N.Orme, "Schoolmasters, 1307-1509", in Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England, ed. C.H.Clough (Liverpool, 1982), p.233.

¹⁴³ See description in David Thomson, A Descriptive Catalogue of Middle English Grammatical Texts (New York, 1979), pp.169-178; a draft description by J.Ringrose for a forthcoming catalogue of additional manuscripts in Cambridge University Library has also been consulted.

school at Beccles at the end of the text (fol.83v):

And þus, child, be þese materis qwyche j, simple & onworthy Iohn Drury þy mayster at þis tyme, haue 3eue þe þis lenton' here in Becclis schole, þu xalt knowe better how þu xalt schryue þe an-oper 3er. For be godis grace þu xalt fynde more edificacion' in þese lesson' þan j may haue leyser to schewe, and so dresse þyn lyf to þe plesawns of god, qwose grace & mercy euere more be with vs. Amen.

The function of the text is thus made clear, and although it is not strictly a form of confession, but rather a tract on the manner in which confession should be made, the evidence given for the application of the confessional format as a vehicle for Lenten instruction of children provides a useful context in which to consider certain other texts.

London, British Library, MS Additional 60577 (s.xv ex.), the "Winchester Anthology",¹⁴⁴ fols.159v-179v, contains a form of confession (MWME ZZ) at the end of a long series of basic devotional items in English. On this series of items and their probable educational function, see the detailed discussion in Part Two below, pp.130-132, and the secondary material cited there.

The hypothesis that the form of confession in this manuscript may have functioned as an educational text of some sort is supported by its compendious yet cursory nature, and further by the brief summary of topics covered by the text which occurs on

¹⁴⁴ For a full description and discussion of this manuscript, see E.Wilson and I.Fenlon, The Winchester Anthology: A Facsimile of British Library Additional Manuscript 60577 with an Introduction and List of Contents by Edward Wilson and an Account of the Music by Iain Fenlon (London, 1981).

fol.179r, for which a mnemonic function seems likely. However, one should also bear in mind the slightly different emphasis on spiritual guidance suggested by the heading of the text (fol.159v):

<H>ere begynneth howe and in whate wyse a crystene mane schulde lede hys lyffe, frome that he be of lawefulle age vnto hys laste `ende' of dethe, in wylle, in worde, in werke and thought, mynde, vnderstondynge, ymaginacyon & reson, as hit folowethe here afture.

This accords well with the function of other of the items found in this part of the manuscript, such as The Sixteen Conditions of Charity, (fols.137r-138r), or The Eight Blessings of God, (fols.156r-157r), the primary function of both of which is elementary devotional guidance. It should also be borne in mind that, although in a sense elementary, the applications of the basic Christian teachings found in these texts can be profound, and the longer versions of The Sixteen Conditions of Charity in particular testify to the creative attention given to this basic devotional text of scriptural origin in later medieval England. Likewise, the suitability of the form of confession found in this manuscript as an educational vehicle should not lead one to a restricted view of its function. As the heading suggests, a wider application of this text than solely as a tool for elementary education may have been envisaged, and should not necessarily be precluded by considerations of layout. One should perhaps again here consider the conclusion from the Tractatus de modo confitendi quoted above, where Drury expresses his desire that the child should derive 'edificacion' from this Lenten instruction, and make use of it as

a guide to living to be plesawns of god.¹⁴⁵

A different form of confession (Jolliffe C.23; MWME T) is copied by the scribe of the "Winchester Anthology" in London, British Library, MS Harley 172 (s.xv ex.), fols.11r-19r.¹⁴⁶ The longest items in the manuscript are Peter Idley's Instructions to his Son and Burgh's translation of the Cato Major, both suggesting a function associated with moral instruction and edification. Among the shorter items are the Fifteen Oes and verse by Lydgate. A series of short Latin items at the end of the manuscript, including a note concerning St. Antony of Padua, records of papal indulgences, and the Pater, Ave and Credo suggest that the intended user of the manuscript was at least partially Latinate.

The form of confession contains references to the Winchester saints Birinus and Swithun, as noted by Wilson.¹⁴⁷ The inclusion of a reference to St. Benedict also in the opening formula may result only from the career of the scribe,¹⁴⁸ rather than revealing anything about the intended audience. The text deals in order with the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the bodily and spiritual works of mercy, the twelve articles of the faith

¹⁴⁵ See above, p.121.

¹⁴⁶ For a recent description of this manuscript see Wilson and Fenlon, Winchester Anthology, pp.39-40, where it is suggested on palaeographical grounds that the copying of this manuscript is close in date to that of the "Winchester Anthology".

¹⁴⁷ Wilson and Fenlon, Winchester Anthology, p.40.

¹⁴⁸ See again Part Two below, pp.130-132.

contained in the Creed, the seven sacraments, and the bodily and spiritual senses. Both order and content are thus rather different than is suggested by a summary at the beginning of the text (fol.11r):

I haue wyllfully offendyde and synned in all the vii dedely synnes, and in all the braunches and spyces that spryngethe of them; in brekyng of the x commaundementys, and in myspendynge of my v wyttes, bothe bodyly and goostly; nother fulfilled the werkys of mercy, bodyly nor gostly, nor other giftes of grace, suche as almyghty God hathe endewyde me withall.

A passage from the discussion of the sacraments seems to imply that the intended user is a priest, or is at least assisting a priest in the administration of the sacraments (fol.16r):

Whereas I haue nott doo my dewte and parte in mynistracyon of the seyde sacramentys aftur the lawe vnto them that I was bounde, but haue bene fulle neclygente in doynge of them.

A passage from the discussion of ruling one's life according to God's law could either refer to some aspect of pastoral care or equally apply to the head of a lay household (fol.17v):

[A]lso I haue not rewlyde my lyff by resone afturethe forme of Goddys lawe, nother wysly rewlide and governede suche pepull by resone that hathe bene vnder me to protecte.

The discussion of avarice (fol.13r) shows a concentration upon desiring worldly goods in general, and lacks the references to sins associated with mercantile activity that are common in texts addressed to laymen. This section also includes an unusual reference to giving money to entertainers:

Also I haue not cheryssched and holpe them whiche hadde nede, but haue be overelarge in spendyng vnto suche as nedyd nott, - to mynstrallys, to iogolers, - agayne conscience, all only for vaynglorie of the worlde.

The sections dealing with lechery and with the sixth commandment contain no reference to lawful sexual intercourse within wedlock. Neither of these sections specify the gender of the penitent, while the discussion of pride includes references to pride in both lordship and ladyship (fol.11v). However, the discussion of the ninth commandment, after stating the commandment in terms addressed to both male and female penitents, proceeds to address a specifically male audience in the subsequent material in a first-person, confessional voice (fol.15r):

The xthe commaundement ys that I shuld not desyre my neyghtbourys wyf, dou3ter ne seruaunte; and ayenwarde the contrarye, noo woman, wyff, mayde, ne seruaunte ought not to desyre another womans husbonde, nother none of hys howse meyne vnlawfully.

I haue desyrede my neyghtbours wyff, dou3ter and seruaunte ayens Goddys lawes and commaundemente; and by remembraunce in my mynde of that foule synne, as be rageynge comynge aftur in my mynde, haue hadde reioycynge therof, and no sorowe therefore as me oughte; nother drede of that synne what tyme that I haue ben in felawshipe of womene that I haue louyde lecherouslye.

The discussion of the fourth commandment includes a reference unusual in such texts to failing to honour one's godparents, in addition to the usual references to one's bodily father and mother and goostlye faders (fol.14v).¹⁴⁹ At the conclusion of the confession there occurs an unusual discussion of entering places forbidden by the laws of the state or of the church (fol.17v):

Also I haue with my feete gone many vnleful wayes, into

¹⁴⁹ Such references to failing to honour one's godparents are uncommon in forms of confession; however, one should compare this with texts on the commandments such as Dives and Pauper, where this topic is discussed (P.H.Barnum, ed., Dives and Pauper, I, EETS O.S. 275 (1976), pp.328-330).

vnhoneste places or into suspecyous places, over cornes,
over medowes, over closys, over gardyns, the whiche haue
be forbodnye by the kynges lawe, & also by the chiriche.

There follows a brief discussion of associating with those under a sentence of cursing, and a section dealing with sins against the seven cardinal virtues. This is followed by a summary of each of the fourteen articles of the faith (fol.18r-v), in which the confessional format is abandoned, and where the function of conveying religious instruction is clear. This is, however, enclosed within the confessional formula, which ends with a general conclusion on fols.18v-19r.

Similarly, Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève, MS 3390, (s.xv in.), fols.52v-57r,¹⁵⁰ contains a form of confession which ends with a general statement of the creed (fols.56r-57r). This again suggests a function for the text as a summary of a course of Lenten instruction, and the simple but comprehensive nature of the preceding sections in this text dealing with the seven deadly sins, ten commandments, and five bodily senses would be well adapted to such a function.

The text shows no intention for any particular type of audience. The other items in the manuscript are all well suited to offer basic devotional instruction and guidance: orthodox commentaries on the ten commandments, apostles' creed, and Lord's Prayer; a treatise on the theological virtues (concluding with The

¹⁵⁰ IMEP VII, pp.22-28; not listed in Jolliffe or MWME.

Sixteen Conditions of Charity); The Lay Folks' Catechism; a discussion of lechery and its remedies; and Rolle's The Form of Living and Ego Dormio.

London, British Library, MS Additional 37075 (s.xv med./ex.), is a collection of grammatical and educational texts for school use, perhaps associated with St. Anthony's School in London.¹⁵¹ It contains a form of confession (Jolliffe C.24; MWME U) added in a slightly later hand (s.xv ex.) on fols.39v-40v. The text is copied roughly, and contains sections dealing with the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments and the bodily senses.

A single form of confession (Jolliffe C.21; MWME R; IPMEP 309) is found in the following manuscripts: London, British Library, MS Additional 37787 (s.xv in.), fols.3r-11v;¹⁵² Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 596 (s.xv in.), fols.31v-34r; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS eng.poet.a.1 (s.xiv ex.), fols.366r-367r; and incomplete in London, British Library, MS Additional 22283 (s.xiv ex.), fol.170v, where the text breaks off after the discussion of

¹⁵¹ See David Thomson, A Descriptive Catalogue of Middle English Grammatical Texts (New York, 1979), pp.219-232.

¹⁵² Quotations are given here in the form as found in this manuscript, with line numbers in bold type. The text is printed from this manuscript by N.S.Baugh, A Worcestershire Miscellany compiled by John Northwood c.1400 (Philadelphia, 1956), pp.87-95, and from Oxford, Bodleian Library, eng.poet.a.1, in C.Horstman, Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and his Followers (London, 1895-1896), II, pp.340-345.

the fourth commandment.¹⁵³ The opening part of this text, consisting of a confession in the seven deadly sins, is also found, with the heading *these ben the seyn dedely synnes*, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 322 (s.xv med.), fol.17r-v, and in London, British Library, MS Harley 1706 (s.xv ex.), fols.17v-18r.¹⁵⁴ A very different version of this opening section is also found incorporated into a quite different text in Bristol, Central Reference Library, MS 6 (s.xvi in.), fols.134r-137v.

The first part of the text consists of a confession in the seven deadly sins, ten commandments, seven bodily works of mercy, and five bodily senses. This is followed in certain manuscripts by an exposition of each of these topics with the addition of the spiritual works of mercy, in which substantially the same material as is found under each of these heads in the confession is presented in a question and answer format, resembling the technique of John Drury's text. The text ends with the following colophon, revealing that the model confession is intended to be used selectively:

Hec confessio prescripta compilatur non ut quilibet eam totam dicat, sed ut ea in quibus se reum esse cognoscit confiteatur.

¹⁵³ On the latter two manuscripts (MS Vernon and MS Simeon), see A.I.Doyle, The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. Poet. a.1 (Cambridge, 1987), and further references given there; also, A.I.Doyle, "The Shaping of the Vernon and Simeon Manuscripts", Studies in the Vernon Manuscript, ed. D.Pearsall (Cambridge, 1990), pp.1-14.

¹⁵⁴ On these two manuscripts, see also above, p.85, and Doyle, "Vere Family".

The witness of this text preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 596¹⁵⁵ lacks this concluding interrogatory material. The text in this manuscript is substantially the same as that printed by Baugh, although with a great deal of variation in phrasing and some minor differences in content, up to the end of the discussion of the seven deadly sins. However, the subsequent discussion of the ten commandments is highly unusual, including the material from the text as printed by Baugh dealing with the first, second, fourth, sixth, eighth and ninth commandments only, with the following passage inserted between the sixth and eighth commandments (fol.33v):

Also I cry God mercy þat I haue nought do to myne emcristen like as I wolde they dede to me, and ferthermore I haue take othir thingis thanne my owen a3en the wil of hem þat owed it. Wherefore I crye God almyty mercy.

Thus, the third, fifth and tenth commandments are omitted entirely, while the seventh commandment is given an unusual treatment. None of the commandments are here numbered, and it is just possible that material has been omitted by error, although this seems highly unlikely in the case of such basic material as the decalogue.

In the subsequent treatment of the seven bodily works of mercy, housing the homeless and burying the dead (146-148 in Baugh's text) are both omitted. From here until 163 in Baugh's text, the end of the form of confession proper, the text is again

¹⁵⁵ On the background to the part of the manuscript in which this text is preserved, a manuscript connected with the Baron family, see A.I.Doyle, "Survey", II, p.223.

substantially the same as that printed by Baugh.¹⁵⁶

The text ends in this manuscript with a brief prayer that the penitent and his dependents should have their *lyuys fode* in this world, *shrifte and hosill and verrey repentaunce* at death, and afterwards the *blys that euyr shal leste* (fol.34r).

The text is copied at the end of a *bona et vtilis tabula fidei* in Latin (fols.26r-31v), which incorporates brief summaries of many key elements of the faith, followed by longer passages describing the manner of living well addressed to various different social categories (such as the rich, poor, widows, virgins and girls, or merchants), then an account of the temptations of the devil through each of the deadly sins, with the replies of the guardian angel to each.

Bristol, Central Reference Library, MS 6 (s.xvi in.), a collection of texts associated with the Hospital of St.Mark at Bristol, contains on fols.134r-137v a form of confession (Jolliffe C.21; MWME R) which opens with a discussion of the seven deadly sins which, while differing in some major respects from the other witnesses of the text, is clearly a version of the corresponding section from Baugh's text.¹⁵⁷ This is followed by discussions of the

¹⁵⁶ However, where Baugh's text reads at 159-160, *but be Ioyed of hem & of me sunger*, this manuscript reads *bot be the ioye in heuene of me synner*.

¹⁵⁷ It is impossible to determine with any certitude the direction of borrowing in this instance. However, the evidence discussed below for a particular audience in the case of this manuscript strongly suggests that it is the present text which is an adaptation.

For further details of the contents of this manuscript (one of the items in which is dated 1502) see Ker, Medieval Manuscripts,

ten commandments, the seven deeds of mercy, bodily and spiritual, the articles of the faith (with the number unspecified), the sacrament of the altar, the four cardinal and three high virtues (wisdom, temperance, prudence and strength, and faith, hope and charity respectively), the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the five spiritual and bodily senses, none of which are related to any material from Baugh's text.¹⁵⁸

As noted above, the discussion of sloth in this text is quite different from that in Baugh's text, and omits any reference to preaching duties or to divine service. Instead, confession is made in being slow to rise, in being slow to think of God and ready to fall into thoughts of evil and of worldliness, and in being slow to be sorry and contrite for one's sins. The discussion of lechery is again entirely different from that in Baugh, and is apparently addressed to a female audience (fol.135r):

yf I see a fayre man and shapply, desyryng in my soule to haue had dalyaunce wyth hym in clyppynge, in kyssynge and vnclene touchynge.

N. Matthews suggests that this passage reveals that the text is intended for the use of female penitents at the Hospital of

II, pp.203-204

¹⁵⁸ The exception to this is the discussion of the seven deeds of bodily mercy, where both texts cite the same Scriptural passage. The wording in the present manuscript is as follows:

doynge agayns the worde of the Gospell, sayng, "That ye done to the leste of myne, ye done to myselfe."

The verbal similarity with Baugh, 144-145, **doynge ayeyne the wordes of þe Gospel** may be the result of memorial recollection on the part of the author of either text.

St.Mark,¹⁵⁹ and there is nothing elsewhere in the text to rule out such an interpretation, although it should be noted that masculine pronouns are used throughout in referring to the penitent. The only explicit link with the Hospital of St.Mark found in the text is in the closing words, *Sancte Marce ora pro nobis.*¹⁶⁰

The treatment of certain of the commandments may also reflect the nature of the intended audience. While it is possible that the treatment of the seven deadly sins may derive from a copy of Baugh's text lacking the subsequent material,¹⁶¹ a comparison with the discussion of the ten commandments from Baugh's text remains instructive. Where Baugh's text in the third commandment is concerned with attendance at church, the present text concentrates upon charitable deeds. The subsequent commandment deals with both the bodily and the spiritual father and mother, whereas Baugh's text mentions only the former. The discussion of the fifth commandment is concerned only with spiritual manslaughter, while Baugh's text deals with more physical manifestations of hatred (in neither text is confession made for actual killing of another). Whereas in the sixth commandment Baugh's text specifies desire of women, the present text does not specify any gender.

¹⁵⁹ N.Matthews, Early Printed Books and Manuscripts in the City Reference Library, Bristol (Bristol, 1879), p.67.

¹⁶⁰ The subsequent three names, Ihesus Maria Johannes, regarded by Matthews as forming part of this text, may well be part of the heading of the subsequent text.

¹⁶¹ A full critical edition including variants from all witnesses of Baugh's text along with the present text might provide further illumination here.

vii. Miscellaneous Texts.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 59 (s.xv med.), copied chiefly by John Shirley, contains a fragment consisting of the opening of a form of confession (Jolliffe C.14; MWME K) with the heading The morow off screfte on fol.130v.¹⁶² This fragment is in a fifteenth-century hand other than Shirley's, and seems to have been copied by a later scribe into available space in the manuscript. Only the top quarter of the leaf remains, with the lower part possibly removed to make use of blank space on the recto, where the copying of part of the Three Kings of Cologne seems to have been left off incomplete by Shirley. The fragment of the form of confession consists only of the opening formula (consisting of a brief confession of sinning in the ten commandments, seven deadly sins, five senses, and in misusing God's gifts) and the beginning of a section on the first commandment, with no indication being given of what further topics may have been treated in detail. Although material has clearly been lost where the lower part of the leaf has been removed, there is no indication of whether copying of the text was ever completed.

London, British Library, MS Harley 7578 contains several independent sections which seem to have been brought together in the seventeenth century. A fragment of a form of confession

¹⁶² See IMEP IX, pp.2-4, where L.M.Eldredge asserts that the manuscript is "written throughout in John Shirley's hand."

(Jolliffe C.44; MWME 00) in a late fifteenth-century hand occurs on fol.1r-v. This leaf has the same dimensions (21 mm. shorter than the current binding) as the following nineteen parchment leaves, and seems likely to have been bound together with them as a flyleaf prior to being brought together with the other contents of the manuscript. These leaves contain poems by Lydgate.

Fol.1 shows severe trimming in the outer margin, and probably also at top and bottom, leaving the original dimensions of the leaf difficult to establish. It is copied in two columns, containing on the first column of the recto a verse summary of the ten commandments in four-line stanzas rhyming abab, IMEV 3687, and on the second column of the recto and the two columns of the verso the opening of the form of confession. Much of the recto is illegible. The fragment of the form of confession consists of the opening and sections dealing with pride, wrath, sloth, avarice and gluttony. The text appears to be addressed to a layman. The section dealing with sloth is the longest, and includes brief discussions of the works of mercy and the bodily senses, perhaps implying that no separate sections on these topics were to follow.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 201, contains on fol.1r an extremely brief form of confession (Jolliffe C.36; MWME GG). Jolliffe¹⁶³ regards this text as a fragment. However, the text constitutes a complete confession in itself, and there is no

¹⁶³ Jolliffe, p.73.

evidence of copying having been broken off. It is copied in a very small, current Secretary hand, and occupies only the upper sixth of the leaf. The main contents of the manuscript (s.xv in.) consist of the Memoriale Credientium, preceded by a series of short didactic items in a different hand, listing the seven deadly sins, seven virtues, seven bodily and spiritual works of mercy, and five bodily and spiritual senses.

In addition to material extracted from The Clensyng of Mannes Soule,¹⁶⁴ London, British Library, MS Sloane 774 contains also on fols.40v-45v a further prose form of confession with the heading a compendyos general confessioun. The structure and content of this text are described by W.Everett.¹⁶⁵ However, in the context of the large number of texts considered in the present survey which contain similar formulaic expressions, the common phrases cited by Everett should be disregarded as evidence for any specific link between this text and The Clensyng of Mannes Soule.

¹⁶⁴ See p.19, n.4 above; fols.1r-45v are Jolliffe C.5.

¹⁶⁵ W.Everett "The Clensyng of Mannes Soule: An Introductory Study", Southern Quarterly 13 (1975), pp.278-9.

Summary

The texts examined in the first two sections of this study give an insight into the role of penance within rural parishes during the later medieval period, and indeed until the very eve of the Reformation. Both in public, general confessions and in private, specific confessions to a priest, a concern is found with confession as a means of resolving social disputes and restoring harmony within the parish.

Alongside these should be placed the texts discussed in the next two sections, which exhibit a greater concern with the interior, devotional life of the penitent. Such texts are often intended for the use of those in regular orders, particularly women, or for the lay associates of religious houses. Frequently presented in the form of a prayer, they contain passages of highly affective language, answering a need for private self-examination distinct from, although still complementary to, full sacramental penance.

Similar concerns are also frequently reflected in texts addressed to layfolk, both men and women, usually of high social rank and an urban milieu, who are accustomed to confess frequently to a confessor other than their parish priest (in one case, the private priest of a lay guild). While usually preserved in collections owned and used by priests, these texts are concerned directly with the needs and concerns of particular categories of penitents, demonstrating an awareness of the different needs of

distinct social groups within the penitential process.

Finally, the texts considered in section vi illustrate the close association of confession with Lenten instruction, and by extension with elementary instruction in both reading and writing. Such texts frequently demonstrate a fusion of the practical and the devotional, conveying basic instruction within a format which nonetheless provides the penitent with a powerful vehicle for reflective self-examination.

Note on rejected manuscripts.

Jolliffe lists a form of confession (Jolliffe C.26) "conflated with another tract at the end" as occurring in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 789, fols.105r-107r.¹⁶⁶ This text opens in the manner of a confession with acknowledgement of sins in specifically spiritual manifestations of the ten commandments, after which there occur summaries of the seven deadly sins and the five bodily works of mercy. This is followed by a warning to the audience to think upon the Day of Judgement, after which the text concludes with a lengthy account of the seven bodily works of mercy (fols.107r-108v) in which the confessional format is not maintained. The text as it stands is coherent as an examination in the spiritual life, and there is no reason to think that conflation has in fact occurred.

Raymo lists a form of confession in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.285, fols.60v-61r¹⁶⁷. At this point in the manuscript there in fact occurs a copy of a short treatise on the visitation of the sick, here attributed to St.Anselm (Jolliffe, L.6, N 12).¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Raymo also lists this text as a prose form of confession, MWME VII, pp.2562-4, [211] version W.

¹⁶⁷ MWME VII, pp.2562-4, [211] version WW.

¹⁶⁸ On such texts, see above, p.17.

Raymo also lists a prose form of confession as occurring in London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 559, fols.45r-47v.¹⁶⁹ This text is in fact the second in a series of three penitential prayers. The first, fols.43r-45r, opens as a verse form of confession, becoming a prayer for various social categories. The third, beginning on fol.47v, is a verse penitential prayer. The text in question here, fols.45r-47v, is likewise a penitential prayer, chiefly in prose, the latter part of which is in the form of a confession.

Jolliffe lists a fragment of a form of confession found in London, Public Record Office, MS E.101/185/1 (Jolliffe C 6). The fragment is found on a narrow parchment strip reinforcing the outer edge of the third paper quire of the manuscript. The fragment consists of two lines which are probably from a prose form of confession. However, they yield little information as to the possible structure or content of this text.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 246 is a Primer in English (IPMEP 135), with various supplementary material at the end, including tabulations, and in some instances brief summaries, of the five bodily senses, the seven deadly sins, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seven bodily works of mercy, the six manners of conscience, and the seven spiritual works of mercy (fols.106r-107r), along with a commentary on Luke 10:27, *Diliges dominum deum*

¹⁶⁹ MWME VII, pp.2562-4, [211] version TT.

tuum ex toto corde tuo.¹⁷⁰ The Primer is preceded by a quire of four leaves containing tables for calculating Easter Day and English translations of the Credo, Misereatur and Confiteor¹⁷¹ (fols.1r-4r). The function of the Confiteor would appear here to be concerned with providing the layman with English translations of the central elements of the Mass, similar perhaps to one of the possible functions of the Primer. The identification by Raymo¹⁷² of a form of confession on fol.58v is a mistaken reading of Psalm 137, Confitebor tibi Domine.

Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.6.2 contains on fol.3r a brief devotional text which Raymo lists as a form of confession,¹⁷³ although it shows none of the characteristics of a model confession. The text opens by asserting that God will forgive the sinner and grant him grace if he keeps in his mind the three following truths: that he has displeasure at his sins and desires for penance; that he has the desire to amend hereafter; that he intends to make a full confession when time and occasion permit. The text further asserts that one who recites these truths in his heart, wherever he may be, will gain full remission of sins, and

¹⁷⁰ See IMEP IV, pp.46-50.

¹⁷¹ Raymo identifies fols.4r-10v as form of confession, MWME VII pp.2562-4, [211] version XX. On fol.4r there in fact occurs this translation of the Confiteor, while fol.4v is blank, and fols.5r-10v contain a Calendar.

¹⁷² MWME VII, pp.2562-4, [211] version UU.

¹⁷³ MWME VII, pp.2562-4, [211] version YY.

that if he dies without making a full confession to a priest, on account of sudden death, he will thus be granted eternal life. The reader is thus exhorted to examine his conscience and to think upon these truths once or twice each day, both early and late at night, and especially on holy days, that he might be in a state of grace.

Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2125 contains on fols.56v-60v a text with the incipit *Lauamini et mundi estote, be 3e wasshe and be 3e clene*. This is identified in the recent catalogue of college manuscripts, following Jolliffe and Raymo, as being from The Clensyng of Mannes Soule.¹⁷⁴ However, this is denied by W.Everett,¹⁷⁵ and the two texts are indeed independent. After a brief commentary upon the opening text from Isaiah 1:16, a discussion is given concerning how confession should best be made, of which there are diverse opinions bothe among religious & among seculers (fol.56v). All say *benedicite*, and the priest *dominus*, after which some who are lettrid say the *Confiteor*, some just to *et peccauim nimis* (i.e., *quia peccavi nimis* in the post-Tridentine Missal), others to the end. Some religious, however, do not say their *Confiteor* until after they have made their confession.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ A Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge, V, Manuscripts, Part i: Medieval, compiled by R.McKitterick and R.Beadle (Cambridge, 1992), p.55.

¹⁷⁵ Everett, "Introductory Study", p.265, n.5.

¹⁷⁶ A similar discussion of the same subject in The Clensyng of Mannes Soule states rather that among the lettered some say the *Confiteor* as far as *mea culpa*, while others stop at *et peccauim* (again, *quia peccavi* in the post-Tridentine Missal). It lacks entirely the comment concerning the practice of regular religious.

There follows an example of the pattern of a confession, in the seven deadly sins and their branches, the five bodily senses, the ten commandments, the seven bodily and spiritual works of mercy, and a general statement of having lived in vain thoughts and evil deeds (fols.57r-58r). The discussion of the seven deadly sins in particular provides only the bare framework for a confession in the sins, with frequent use of the word etcetera to indicate where a full confession in the sins and their branches should be made by a penitent. This demonstration of the pattern of a confession is followed by a detailed exposition of the seven deadly sins and each of their branches (fols.58r-60v).

A further discussion of the manner of beginning a confession is found in Oxford, St. John's College, MS 94, fols.142v-148v (see above, p.71).

Appendix A.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584.

- p.i. Manuscript description.
p.xviii. Transcription of fols.46r-54v.
p.xxviii. Transcription of fols.7r-12r.
p.xxxviii. Transcription of fols.55v-62r.
p.xlvii. Notes on transcriptions.

General note.

Throughout this manuscript there occur highly idiosyncratic spellings and scribal habits (particularly in the use of what is normally in English the abbreviation for -is or -ys). In all cases the scribal spellings are recorded (even where they are probably the result of error), and where possible reconstructions have been made of what is most likely to be represented by marks of abbreviation.

As noted in the discussion above (Part One, p.24), the first text transcribed here shows frequent abbreviation in the form of the omission of words and phrases (often represented by the word etcetera). No attempt is made to extend these abbreviations here when they occur at the end of a sentence.

Manuscript description.

Note.

A brief account of this manuscript, the collection of John Gysborn, Premonstratensian canon, is given above, Part One, pp.21-22. A more detailed discussion of Gysborn's career and the likely conditions of the compilation of this collection will be found below in the sections on date and provenance.

In describing a manuscript of this kind, containing a very large number of short items, mostly of a practical nature, it is unfeasible for the purposes of the present study to provide an exhaustive account of all items. In this description it has been decided to account in full only for those items which may be of particular significance in a discussion of the function of the manuscript, and in a comparison with Oxford, Trinity College, MS 86.

Date.

The evidence for dating the manuscript is summarised by A.G.Dickens in a brief discussion of the manuscript in The English

Reformation¹:

Gysborn's career unfortunately cannot be dated from the Lincoln diocesan records, but the three or four datable documents in his collection range between the years 1520 and 1531.

The series of model letters, Item 23, should perhaps not be considered for purposes of dating, since the items seem to have been collected, possibly from a variety of sources, with the probable intention of use as aids in teaching, as discussed below. Apart from these texts, the earliest dated item is Item 51, dated 10th October 1520. Item 30 is dated 4th July 1529, and Item 50 is dated 8th October 1530-31, the twenty-second year of the reign of Henry VIII. However, it should be borne in mind that not all the items in the manuscript necessarily fall between these dates. Furthermore, it is clear that not all of the dated items were copied on the dates specified, since, in spite of the impossibility of discerning the original collation of the manuscript, Items 50 and 51 have clearly been copied consecutively, yet Item 51 is dated some ten years earlier than the preceding item. These dated items should thus be treated with some caution, and can only be truly of value in establishing a terminus post quem for the completion of the collection.

¹ A.G.Dickens, The English Reformation (London, 1964), p.4.

Contents.

1. fols.2r-4r. Note on the duties of the deacon and subdeacon.

Imperfect at beginning.

Incipit: he has done lett hyme go behynd the | awter & prepare the
challys & putt in wyn

Explicit: and so go & do off | ther gere and say ther seruys & come
| to the quere

Colophon: Thus endys the mynystracion off the dekyne and subdekyne
after | the order off premonstratenus writtyne in | owr bokys by
our eldar fathers beffore

2. fols.4v-5r. Note on the duties of ministers at evensong.

Incipit: In euery princypall ffest ore dubyll ffest | ther awght
to be iii mynysterys att euensong & att masse fforto provid att
all | mynystracion

Explicit: and | then go furth þe abbott or he þt is þe mynyster |
& helpe hyme off wt is cope & then come | to the quer whene ye are
vngeryd

Colophon: Thus endys þe mynystracion att euensong

3. fols.5r-6r. Directions to ministers at the mass.

Incipit: Too mynysterys cled in albys to be dylygent | abowt all
mynystracion att the awter & to provyd for all thyngys that lakys

Explicit: When masse ys done & ite missa est go foch | youre
candylstykys vp to þe awter & cum don be|fore þe abbot into the

revestre & so helpe | them of wt per ger & cum to the quer

4. fol.6r. Medical recipe. Heading: To make Gra' dei

5. fol.6r. Medical recipe. Heading: A medsyne to claryfy sore ene

6. fols.7r-12r. Preparatory questions and form of confession. Jolliffe E.10 (fols.7r-10r), C.34 (fols.10r-12r); MWME VII p.2524 [88] (fols.7r-10r), VII pp.2562-5 [211] version EE (fols.10r-12r). Transcribed below.

7. fol.12r. Latin note on celebrating marriages.

8. fol.12r. Latin verses, four lines. Not in Walther.

Incipit: Xristus Rex Regum det michi scribere verum.

Colophon: Scriptum per me Johanum Gysborn Canonicum De Couerham.

9. fols.12v-13r. Dicta attributed to Solomon, Augustine, Gregory, Pope Innocent, and Jerome. In Latin.

10. fols.13v-14r. Forty-four lines of verse in Latin, arranged in groups of four rhyming lines. Walther (II) 36025.

Incipit: Cur mundus militat sub vana gloria

11. fols.14v-15v. English poem in eight-line stanzas, rhyming ababbcbc, with a Latin refrain. IMEV 2444.

Incipit: O Glorius Lady And Virgyn Imaculatt
Succur hus thy seruantis in our tribulacion

12. fols.15v-16v. Marian verses in English in seven line stanzas, rhyming ababbaa, with Latin refrain. The last two stanzas lament the mistreatment of ministers of the church and the deconsecration of church property. IMEV 2446.

Incipit: O Glorius mothar and mayd off pety
The swerd off Sorow persyd thy hart

13. fols.16v-18r. Further stanzas in English. IMEV 914.

Headings: To owre lady; To the aungelles; To the patriarkes; To the apostles; To the martyres; To the confessores; To the orderes; To the virgyns; To all saynttys

14. fol.18r-v. Saint Bernard's Fast.

Heading: Sent Bernardys ffast

Incipit: Ther be xii frydays in the yer þt whoso | wyll ffast them truly ons in ther lyff bred | and water they shall haue mony fere gyftys

Explicit: The xi fryday befor allhalomas day | The xii afor cristinmes day | And this is callyd Sent bernardys ffast

15. fols.19r-20v. Confessional tract in English. Imperfect at end. A fuller copy of the same text occurs as item 42 below.

Incipit: Att the begynnyge itt is necessarie vnto | a prest to

knowe what tyme os Confessyoun | begane ffyrst and by whome
Explicit: for taryng in Confession is a parlevse | thyng ffor many
schyllys for as l<o>ng | as a mane is in syne itt lessyn <..> not

16. fols.21r-22v. Narration of a vision which befell Pope Innocent of his mother in torment, followed by the Latin texts of the masses to be said on twelve consecutive days to remedy her distress.

Heading: **Miraculum**

Incipit: Ther is att exceter in The mynster a boke | fastenyd wt a cheyn vpon The Tumbe | off byschope lacy that latt ther dyscessyd in | the which bok is writton That pope Innocent | The fourth sawe in a vision the spryte | off hys modyr horrybylly turmentyd

Explicit: centum dies vere indulgencie | ffinis

17. fols.23r-25r. A series of prayers in English, to be said in a parish church before communion.

Incipit: 3e shall knell youe downe apone your knes and mak a specyall prayer to god allmyghty and to owr lady saynt mare and to all the holy company of heuene

18. fol.25r. An illuminated alphabet.²

² On this and similar model alphabets on fols.27r-28r, see below, Part Two, pp.127-140, and also B.L.Wolpe, "Florilegium Alphabeticum: Alphabets in Medieval Manuscripts", Calligraphy and Palaeography: essays presented to Alfred Fairbank, ed.A.S.Osley (London, 1965), pp.69-74.

19. fols.25v-26r. Hand 2. A series of medical recipes in English. Headings: for eyen þt be dasued or darke; for a stynkyng brethe; for all euylls in þe stomacke; for to auoyde & destroy fleme; for hym þt pysseth blode; for þe lyuer þt ys wastyne

20. fol.26v. An illustration in pencil and red ink, depicting a bleeding heart in the centre and bleeding hands and feet in the top and bottom corners.

21. fols.27r-28r. A series of illuminated alphabets.

22. fol.28v. An illustration showing a trellis pattern.

23. fols.29r-34r. A series of letters, the first eight being in English and the remainder in Latin.

(i) fol.29r. A letter of regards from a child to his parents.

(ii) fol.29v. A letter from a child or young man to his uncle, asking to be recommended to his parents.

(iii) fol.30r. A letter from a child or young man to his aunt, stating that he is now attending writing school and that he has himself written this letter.

(iv) fol.30v. A letter to the writer's cousin asserting that he has represented affairs entrusted to him to his master the archbishop of Canterbury, and that he awaits a reply.

(v) fols.30v-31r. A letter to the writer's ecclesiastical master requesting payment of a sum by his receiver general to a third

party for distribution.

(vi) fol.31r. A document certifying the receipt of payment of a debt.

(vii) fol.31v. A letter giving a reminder of a debt and threatening legal proceedings if payment is not made.

(viii) fols.31v-32r. A letter to a lady accompanying payment of a sum sent via a servant.

(ix) fol.32r. A certificate of a debt.

(x) fol.32v. A letter from Richard, Abbot of the Premonstratensian Monastery of Saint Mary of Newbo in the diocese of Lincoln, to Thomas, Archbishop of York, preferring a canon to the post of vicar of Akester Malbis in the diocese of York, made vacant by the death of the previous incumbent.

(xi) fol.33r. Comic macaronic verses.

(xii) fol.33v. Certificate of a debt.

(xiii) A further note relating to the previous item.

24. fol.34r. Latin note on the ornaments of the soul.

25. fols.34v-35r. Latin note on the nine pains of hell.

26. fol.35r. Latin note of John Gysborn, curate of Alyngton, having heard a confession.

27. fol.35r. A Latin note on the mass, in the form of two questions with answers.

28. fol.35v. Recipe. Heading: To gravenin metelle

29. fols.35v-36r. Recipes: To Enaymell Vppone Gold sylueror playtt; Ffore Gold

30. fol.36v. Will of Robert Wright in parish of Coverham, witnessed by John Gisborne.

31. fols.37r-39v. Treatise on preparation of soul for death.

Heading: De morte et Pestilencia

Incipit: Iff a mane be neyght to the speke to hyme on' | This maner
Mane yff þu thoghte and well | see þo meschevys off this world yowe
| schuld desyre to dye & be wt god

Explicit: into thy handys lord betake my | sowle ffore Thowe bowght
me lord | god off trewthe Amen

32. fols.39v-41r. A series of practical recipes: To grind Gold to write wtall; ffore hyme that wold be a drawer; To make Grene wax; To make Red Wax; To mak Blacke Wax; To mak paperto shyne; To glewe parchment or vellum together; To Graue in Irone or stele; To make aqua uite off erbys

33. fols.41v-42r. Two cures for the plague: A medcyne That the p<op>e | send to tornay ffor the | pestylens reynyng; A medsyne ffor the plage | yff ytt ffortune he be stry|kyne with ytt

34. fols.42v-43r. Forty lines of Latin verse. Walther (II) 11795.
Incipit: In Iano claris calidisque cibis potiaris
35. fols.43v-44r. Hand 2. Medical Recipes: for þe stone; Also for
þe stone; for þe Collyke / strangury & þe stone
36. fols.44v-45r. Two medical recipes: That thes be sertene medsens
for the poxe
37. fol.45v. English verses, eighteen lines in rhyming couplets.
IMEV 2654.
Heading: So well ys me begone troly lole so | well ys me begone
troly loly
38. fols.46r-54v. Form of Confession. Jolliffe C.3; MWME VII
pp.2562-5 [211] version B. Transcribed below.
39. fol.55r. Latin Form of Absolution.
40. fols.55v-62r. Form of Confession. Jolliffe C.16; MWME VII
pp.2562-5 [211] version M. Transcribed below.
41. fol.62v. Hand 2. Recipe: for þe stone & colyke
42. fols.63r-79r. English treatise on confession and its conduct,

ending with a narration of the pains of hell and the joys of heaven (fol.73r-v), and a series of confessional interrogations dealing with the seven deadly sins, ending incomplete (fols.74r-79r). Jolliffe E.2; MWME VII p.2524 [88]. (This treatise is preserved complete in London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A.XXV, where the interrogations in the seven deadly sins are followed by a guide to imposing penances for each of these sins).³ See also item 15 above.

Incipit: At the begynnyng it is | necessare unto a preste to |
knowe what tyme os confessione | begane

Explicit: ffreysche | or gay in Rament to mak any | womane to be
anameryd on the | has thowe bene of consell or consent

43. fols.79v-80r. Hand 2. Post-Reformation General Form of Confession.

44. fol.80r. Hand 2. Recipe: for wynde colyke

45. fol.80v. Recipe: Memorandum that os for bytinge off a doge

³ For a full discussion of this text, see F.N.M.Diekstra, "Paul of Hungary's Quoniam circa Confessiones (1219-21) and a Middle English Prose Tract on Confession", This Noble Craft: Proceedings of the Xth Research Symposium of the Dutch and Belgian University Teachers of Old and Middle English, ed. E.Kooper (Amsterdam, 1989). Diekstra revises the account given by Raymo of the structure of this text (MWME VII, pp.2300-2302), and identifies Paul of Hungary's text as the main source, with additional material from Raymond of Peñaforte, for the first part of the text; however, no source is offered for the interrogations in the seven deadly sins, nor for the guide to imposing penances.

46. fol.83v. A sketch of a man.

47. fol.84r. Hand 2. Recipes: To cause a man to make water pt ys stopped in hys yarde; for the stone & strangury

48. fol.85r. Poem in stanzas of eight lines, rhyming aabbcdcd. IMEV 1018.

Incipit: Greuus ys my sorowe
Both evyne and moro

49. fol.87v. Latin letter from curate of Alyngton to curate of Segbrocke.

50. fol.87v. Note in English of a debt owed by one canon of Newbo to another.

51. fol.88r. Latin note of marriage of Ezella Wynter and Wylliam Steuenson, written in Grantham, 10th October 1520.

52. fols.89r-95v. An English version of the rule for hermits attributed to Celestine V; MWME II, pp.479 and 658-9.

Incipit: Pope off Rome that hyght Celestyn | mad this maner off
lyff that ys writ|tyne here ffore lyffynge off hermettys pt | lyffys
alone wtowttyne certan Rewle

Explicit: And so end his lyff wt | dred off god allmyghty amen

ffinis

Material.

fols.2-26 paper; 27-28 parchment; 29-62 paper; 63-84 parchment; 85-88 paper; 89-95 parchment.

Number of leaves: i+96+i.

Dimensions of Leaf and of Written Space.

Dimensions of leaf: 138 x 91mm.

There is no regularity in the dimensions of the written space.

Foliation.

Foliated 1-96, with the front flyleaf numbered as the first folio and the back flyleaf as the last. Two blank parchment leaves between fols.82 and 83 are unnumbered.

Pricking and Ruling.

Pricking is not found at any point in the manuscript.

Ruling is not found regularly in the manuscript. A ruled space of irregular dimensions is found on fols.89r-95v, and both a ruled space and ruled lines are found on fol.84r only.

Collation.

Modern rebinding has made the original collation of the

manuscript impossible to ascertain. The following is a description of the present state of the manuscript:

fols.2-3, 14-49, 60-62, 75-80, 83-89: single leaves mounted on separate stubs.

fols.4-13, 50-59, 63-74: three quires, each of ten leaves, with each quire being mounted on a single modern stub and sewn.

fols.81, 82 and two unnumbered blank leaves: a quire of four leaves, similarly mounted.

Signatures and Catchwords.

Neither quire signatures nor catchwords are found at any point in the manuscript.

Script.

The majority of the manuscript is in a single current secretary hand. A slightly later hand, s.xvi²/ex., is responsible for Items 19, 35, 41, 43, 44 and 47.

There are post-medieval notes in an Italic hand at fols.81v-82r, 83v and 88v.

Punctuation.

The manuscript is for the most part unpunctuated, with occasional and sporadic use of the punctus.

Decoration.

See Items 18, 20, 21 and 22 in the list of contents, and also

the description of the contents of the flyleaves below. The remainder of the manuscript is without decoration.

Binding.

Modern binding, stamped with the date 13th February 1963.

There is a single front parchment flyleaf, with signs of having been folded in quarters. This leaf has been cut down from original size, repaired with parchment at the top and the inner side, and remounted on a modern stub. There is an intricate abstract pattern with a fish in the centre on the recto.

The rear flyleaf is also parchment, and contains a Latin fragment, ending incomplete. All except the last two lines are in a display script.

Dicta probatoria.

pt ytt

Origin and Provenance.

The main scribe of the manuscript is identified on fol.12r as John Gysborn, where he describes himself as a canon of Coverham, a Premonstratensian house in Yorkshire. In Item 30, dated 1529, he witnesses, with others, a will in the parish of Coverham. In Item 26 he styles himself as curate of Alyngton in Lincolnshire, and again in Item 49, although he does not here refer to himself by name. In Item 50 he records a debt owed by one canon of Newbo Priory to another, suggesting some involvement with the life of

this house. Items 1, 2 and 3 are clearly connected with the life of a Premonstratensian religious house, although which is less clear. The witnessing of a will in Coverham in Item 30 would seem to imply Gysborn's presence in this parish in 1529, and it is of Coverham that he styles himself a canon, not Newbo. However, the majority of the items which refer to any location refer to Alyngton, and include items dated both before and after Item 30. Thus, while it is clear that over a quite considerable period Gysborn performed a pastoral role in Alyngton, other details of his career remain less certain.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584.
fols.46r-54v, Form of Confession.

Breuis exortacio ad populum in die Pasche.

Venite congregamus ad cenam magnam Dei. - Cometh and
beth gaderyd together gladly vnto the grett ffest off
God allmyghty. Apostolus.

5 Ffrendys, ye shall vnderstond that thes wordys
whiche I haue rehersed bene the wordys off the holy
apostyll Saynt John the Euangelyst, whome allmyghty God
this day makyth his messynger, commawndyng euery crystyne
creatur this day to be gaderyd together and come to his
10 grett ffeest.

& trowly, ffreyndys, 3e may well vnderstonde that
this cometh off a grett kyndnes, & off a grett loue that
owr blessyd lord God hathe to mankynd, to send so
f.46v specyall a messynger to hus synfull wre|ches, - his owne
15 dere darlyng, whom he louyd best in erthe, & most knewe
off his councell, to byd hus to this most ryall ffest,
this solempe day off his gloryus resurreccon. In which
ffest are the most plesaunt dayntes & most precyus þat
euer was ordenyd for mankynd, - that ys to say, his owne
20 precyus body in fforme off bred, the very fflessche off
Cryst whiche sufferyd passyone for our gylte & not ffor
his; and this day roos ffrome dethe to lyffe in redemyng
off our sowllys, ouer þe whiche þe deuyll had power be

the syne off Adam our fyrst fader.

25 And to this gloryus ffeest he byddyth all maner off
crystyn pepull this day, - bothe hye and lawe, ryche and
power, lernyd & lewyd, - and all schuld be ffed in
f.47r lyke, & none better than other. | Quia non est personarii
excepcio apud Deum.

30 Butt beware, I avyse youe, that none off youe
presume to be so boold to come to this ffeest, bott he
be wordy, - that ys to say, in clen lyff. Ffor Saynt
Powle saythe vpeon the word off Cryst, ad corinthios:
Homo qui manducat et bibit indigne, iudicium sibi
35 manducat et bibit. He þat ettys, he sayth, & drynkys at
this ffeest vnworthy, - that ys to say, in dedly syne, -
he ettythe and drynkys his owne iugement, - that ys to
say, euerlastyng dampnacon, withowt amendys and the grett
mercy off God.

40 Therffore, ffrendys, I requyre yowe ychone, & charge
youe as 3e shall answer beffor the face off God in the
f.47v dredffull day off iugement, in | dyscharyng off me that
ame your curett, þat no mane ne woman this day presume
to come to Goddys borde to tast off this glorius fest, -
45 that ys to say, to resae the blessyd sacrament off the
awter, which ys the very body off Cryst Iesu, - yff he

35 corinthios] MS two letters unclear after mark of
abbreviation.

knewe hymeselffe in any dedly synne, that veniance ffall
nott apone hyme; lyke as I red and ffynd in scriptur, þat
sumtym ffell vpon a man that so dyde:

50 Ther was onys a man vpon Ester Even be þe deuyllys
fowll cumberaunce ffell in the fowll synne lechery; and
when he had done the deyd, he waxyd aschamyd þeroff
grettly, that he had don so ffowlle a synne vpeon so holy
f.48r a even, & so nye the day | that he shuld resayve his God
55 vpeone, & seyde, "Yff I shuld go & schryve me nowe off
this ffowlle deyd, ytt ware a right grett scham to me
that euer any man schuld knowe ytt be me, þat I shuld be
so cursyd this holy tyme. And yff I resave my God in this
fowle dedly synne, I ffere that venians wyll ffall
60 theroff. Alas, what I shall do I cannot sey."

Thus this synnfull man stoode trobelede grettly in
his wyttys, tyll the tyme came that euery man shuld go
to Goddys boorde; ande presumtuusly, be the fowle
temptacion off the ffeend whome he had seruid beffor, he
65 resauyd the blessyde sacrament as other dyd to his
f.48v euerlastyng dampnacion, as 3e shall | here.

Than thre days after, when he was most meryest
amongys his neyburrys, this ffowll dede cam to his mynd
agayne, & he thought he had scaped well, & seyde in his
70 mynd, "Has many men seyne that lechery is no synne, nott
butt a mannes kynd."

& sodenly with that hether cam a thonder clape, &

smott hym down all to powder among all pepyll; and
forthewith they hard a voce in the eyre weylyng and
75 crying, that sayd, "Alasse the tyme that I was borne.
Ffor loue off synne I ame fforlorne. Nowe what ys synne?
- 3e may well se, that well ys hyme ys ware be me."

This reuelacon yt plesyd allmyghty God to schewe
f.49r vnto his currett, & the cause off hys | dampnacion.
80 Therffore I avyse youe ycchon to remember well this
warlde, & bewar; ffor well 3e may wete, syne God toke so
grett venians vpeon' this sely mane here one erth, that
myche more horrybyll & veniabyll peynys be putt to that
cely sowle in hell, - that God haue mercy vpeon vs.

85 Beware euery crystyne creatur for the bytter passyon
off Crist, & remember well this mater. & yff any off youe
knowe hymeselffe in eny dedly synne which peraventer he
durst nott be schreven off ffor schame this holy tyme off
lent, 3ytt lett hyme com and tell ytt owt or he go to
90 Godys boord. I schall wayte hyme alasar whene mase ys
done, - be ytt man, be ytt woman, - & spare nott fore no
reboke off the pepyll.

f.49v Ffore | seyth: Melius est insidere in manus hominum,
quam in manus Dei. Itt ys better, ytt seyth, ffor to
95 ffell in dawnger off mannes power, than in Goddys; - ffor
man may no mor do butt hurt thy body, be word or be ded,
butt God may hurte the both body & sowle, & putt theme
into the ffyer off hell withowten end.

100 Therffor ffer nott ffor no shame, butt boddely cum
& shewe thy lyff ffor dred off the grett venians off God,
ffor yowe he smyt nott anone; - a tyme shall come when
knowyst leest thervpon, ffor God fforegetyth ytt nott;
hardely he dothe, butt deffarre ytt to loke wheder yowe
wyll amende ye or nott. Ffor he seyth hymeselffe: Nolo
105 f.50r mortem peccatoris | sed ve magis conuertatur & viuat. I
wyll nott the dethe off a synner, he seythe, butt rather
that he shuld be conuertyd & leve in the blysse off
hevyne.

110 Nowe than, syn God ys so gracyus & mercyfull, and
wold no manys deth butt þat he shuld leve & amend, wytt
nott hym, tho þu be dampnyd & þu wylt nott amend. Ffor
ytt ys thyn owne deffawt, & nott his.

115 Therefore, ffore perell off yowr sowllys, late euery
creatur amend hymeselffe in þat he knoweth hymeselff
gylte in agayns God & his owne conscyans. & euery man &
woman þat bene her present which this day shuld come to
Godys boord to resave hys precyus body, þe blystffull
f.50v sacrament off the awter, | kneleth downe devowtly vpeone
yowre knees withe meknes in hart and contricon ffore yowr
120 synnes, and say after me lyke as I schal tell yowe.

Confessio generalis.

Benedicite dominus Christe, audi nos. In nomine patris et filii etcetera. Confiteor Deo celi et beate Marie et omnibus sanctis etcetera.

125 I make aknowledge to God allmyghty, & to ovr lady Saynt Mary, and to all sayntys off hevynne, & to you, prest, my gostly ffather, att this tyme, that I haue synnyd in þe vii dedly synnys, - that ys to say: in pryde; ire; invy; couetus and glotony; slovth & lechery.

130 In pride þat I haue synnyd, - þat is to say, I haue
f.51r bene proud in hart off | ffarnes, off strenth, off
cunnyng, off clothyng, off ryches, off bewte, of kynne,
off vertuus þat God has send me more thene myn evyn
crystyne. I haue bene proud in bostyng off my gud dedys,
135 - off spirituall dedys, in proud awnsweryng to hyme þat
covth better then I, & also to be reprevyd ffor my
better; not louyd God off all gudnes or vertuys þat he
has send me. Wherffor, as forfurthe as I haue synnyde in
this syne off pryde, I cry God mercy.

140 Also I haue synnyd in ire agans my evynecristyne,
in yreffull wordys spekyng. In tyme off yre I haue wyllyd

122 benedicite] MS I charge youe one Godis behalffe that
ther come no mane nor womane to benedicite. 138
forfurthe as] MS forfurthe as god.

his skathe & harme, & desyryd venians off theme I haue
f.51v bene wrothe with otherwas thene | God wolde haue takyne
off me ffor my trespas. Wherffore, as ffareffurthe as I
145 haue synnyd in this synne, I cry God mercy.

Also I haue synnyd in envy, - þat ys to say, I haue
had invy that any shuld ffare better thene I; sore þat
any man shuld be more wyrshyppytt then I or mor mad off.
Also I haue bene sore off ther welfare and glad off ther
150 yllfare & dysse, & haue spokyn behynd ther bakkys,
thorowe the whiche thay haue loste ther gud name & fame.

As farfurthe as I haue synnyd in this syne or any
spyce þerof, I etcetera.

Also I haue synnyd in couytus, - þat ys to say, I
155 f.52r haue couett to be prwdly arayd, or to | haue had more
gold & syluer, ore worldly ryches & wyrshyppys; nott
holdyng me plesyd with the statt that God had sent me,
but grogyd þer agayns many tymys. Or haue couytt any
manys wyff, or his dovghter, or his seruaund, or haue
160 couet any womane be myne seyng, or hatth couyt etcetera.

Also I haue synnyd glotonye, - þat ys to say, I haue
resauyde more off metys & drynkys then dyd me gud,
thorowe the whiche I haue bene seke in my body or my hed.
Also I haue brokyngge ffastyng days which has ben

158 agayns] MS agayns god.

165 commaundyd be the chirch, in desyryng swett mettys &
f.52v drynkys, & dystroyd with my body that oder | mene myght
haue ffarne the better perwith. Wherfor I cry.

Also I haue synnyd in slowth, - þat ys to say, I
haue bene slawe in the seruice off [God] in matens &
170 messe & evensong seyng, in prayerys sayng, in pennance
doyng, in allmus gyffying, & in gud warkys wyrkyng. Also
I haue bene wyllffull to do lust & lykkyng off my
flesche. Also I haue stolne my neyburys gud in fals bying
& sellyng, fals mettyng; beryng abowt fals powndys, fals
175 mesurys; sellyng the sacrament off holy kyrke; oft
brekyng off this commawndment, I cry God mercy.

Also I haue synnyd in lechery, - þat ys to say, I
haue synnyd bodely with many certane personys, wedyd &
f.53r vneweddyd; & also I haue synnyd be my menese|yng, or be
180 yll cogytacions thynkyng off dyuerse personys whiche I
haue be in company withall in tymes past, - I cry God
mercy & fforegyffnes.

Also I haue brokyne the x commaundmentys off
allmyghty God. I haue borne fals wyttnes, in leys making
185 off myn evyncristyn, to make theme to lese per gud, ther
cattell, or ther gud name, ffor brekyng off commawndment.
Also I haue brokyne the [ix] commawndment off God, I haue

169 god] MS om.

187 ix] MS om.

wrongfully covett my neyburys gud: his howse; his land;
his corne; his hey; or ony other thyng. I cry God mercy.
190 And also I haue brokyne þe x commawndment off [God], I
haue desyryde my neyburys wyffe, his dowghter, or his
f.53v seruaund wrongffuly; his | hors, his mette, or any other
gud off his to his harme & to my worldly profett, - & off
the brekyng off this commawndment I crye.

195 **Septem opera misericordie.**

Also I haue nott fullffyllyd the vii warkys off
mercy, nother in wyll nore ded, to my powre: I haue not
gyffyne mett to the hungry; nor drynke to þe thyrsty; nor
clothid the nakyd; nore vesytt the seke; I haue not
200 comford thame þat ware in prison; I haue nott harberyd
the harberles; I haue nott helpyd to bery þe ded. Wherfor
I haue putt in þe mercy.

I haue nott ffulfylyd the vii warkys off mercy
gostly: I haue nott cownseld synfull mene to leyff ther
205 synne; I haue nott helpyt to chasty wykkyd mene þat wold
f.54r nott be gouernyd | after rygh' and resone as farfurth as
my power has bene, nother in word nore ded; I haue nott
comffurth mene in ther grett ned & in myscheffe; I haue
not forgyffyn men ther trispas þat has down wrong to me,
210 as owr lord God dyd fforgyff hus; I haue nott prayd
trewly ffor all my good doerys as I haue bene holdyne to
do ffor. I cry God mercy and.

Quinque sensus.

215 I haue synnyd in myspendynd of my v inwyttys, - þat
ys to say: in seyng vanytys; in ffowle syghtys and
vnesemely; in seyng worldly thyngys, by the whiche I haue
bene styryd to pryde, couytus and lechery, or to any
f.54v oder syne. I cry. | I haue synnyd in heryng harlotty,
rebaldry, lechery; in lyyng or bakbytyng. Wherffore I cry
220 God mercy. I haue synnyd in smellyng delycat mettys &
drynkys, both hott & colde. Wherffor I cry God mercy and.
I haue synnyd in tastyng off ouermekyll mettys & drynkes
to hastely, or to greddely, to oft, or ouermekyll owt off
tyme. I cry God mercy &.

225 I haue brokyne my v inwyttys gostly, - þat is to
say: I haue had lytyll [wyll] or none to do gud & ffle
yll; I nas nott chast in my mynd & my vnderstandyng; my
knowyng and my resone was away, by the which I shuld haue
rewlyde me with, both in my sowle inward & owtward to myn
230 evynecristyn. Wherffor I cry Gode mercy.

226 wyll] MS om.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584.
fols.7r-12r, Preparatory Questions and Form of Confession.

Questions.

Haue youe bene proud in yowr harte off persone, off
ryches, off lyffloyd, or of dignite, or off worldly gudys
that ye haue had?

5 Haue youe lyffyd in avotre with any manys wyff, ore
dowghter, or seruaunt?

Haue youe bene any oppessore off the chirche, or
off any othere power mane?

10 Haue yow gyffune your tythes & offeryngys onto God
& holy chirche?

Haue youe done any extorcion vnto any mane, or
consent therto?

15 Haue yow slayne or kyllyd any mane or womane ffore
hateryd ore yll wyll, ore bene causare or consentyd
perto, ore gyffune maintenance perto?

Haue youe opprest any pore mane to do hyme wrong in
any cowrt, spirituall ore temporall, in sessionys or
leuerans?

20 Haue ye clossyd any land in any pastor of yorys or
any manys agaynys his wyll or good conscience?

Vnto a husbandman.

Haue youe payd your tythes and offeryngys vnto the chyrche?

25 Haue 3e fforsworne youe in any cowrt wylllyng ore leuerance off sessions apone a boke?

f.7v Haue youe had any preuy | hateryd in your hart ageyns yor ney3burn, or causyd hyme to haue hurt perby?

Haue youe aryd any manys land with your plow3th into your owne land, wylllyngly ore wyttyngly?

30 Haue youe kepyd yor haylyday and Sunday ffrome worldly labur?

Haue you wrought agayns God any tyme, ffor the wedder has nott bene after your mynd?

Haue youe consentyd to any thyft or felonye?

35 Haue youe kyld any mane ore womane with your hand, or consentyd therto?

Haue youe brokyne your wedlocke with any woman bysyd your wyffe?

40 Haue youe maid any solem wowe & has brokune ytt? - A vowe soleme ys yff you take ytt att your gostly father, as thus: yff ye iunyd off pennans, by your owne desyer, take any ffast, or to go a pylgrymage vnto any sent, yff ye take ytt of your gostly fader, that is a soleme vowe, or ellys nott. & ye brek ytt, thene ytt ys vnto youe grett perell and dedly syne. A synglar vowe is per yowe
45 take on yor own selfe & promysse, & not of your gostly

f.8r father; then ytt ys lesse perell to breke | ytt.

Haue youe keypt your fastys þat are commawnddyd by the chyrch to be fastyd?

50 Haue youe bene mystemperyd with ale or wyne att any tyme, and bene dronkune & past your resone in suche tymes? Haue ye commyne to the chirche one Sondays and hard God seruys as ye awght to do?

55 Haue youe dronkune any tyme on the Sondays before ye haue hard masse ore gospell, & takune haly water & haly bred?

Haue youe done yor pennans that ye haue takene before tyme of yowre gostly ffather in tyme off Lent?

60 Haue youe bakbytyd ore slaunderd any persone wrongfully for yll wyll ore hatryd off hyme?

Haue yowe had any vomyt ore castyng att Eyster when ye haue resauyd your howsyll, or in any oder tyme off the yere, in takyng excessys off mettys ore drynkys, and ouercharyng off your stomocke thorowe glotony?

65 Haue youe vsyd to be schavene on the Sunday any tyme?

Questions for a woman.

f.8v Haue ye maid youe more gayer in reyment off kercheuus one your hed for plesur of þe | world ore off the pepull ony tyme more thene other?

70 Haue youe obeyd yor husband att all tymes os ye are

bownd?

75 Haue you weschyd your face with any stylyd waters
ore owyntementys to make youe fayrer in the syght off
pepull? Haue you schewyd your brestys open to tempt any
to syne?

 Haue youe had any enuy agayns any womane that sche
has bene fayrer then youe or better lovdy then youe?

80 Haue ye synnyd in lechere with any mane besyd your
husband? Haue ye synnyd with your husband when ye haue
ben in childbed? Haue ye ouerlyne your chyld ore
peryschyd itt att any tyme? Haue youe gyffune any drynke
vnto your husband to make hyme lystear to occupye with
youe? Haue youe drunkune any contagius drynke to dystrowe
85 your chyld, other weddyd ore syngull?

 Haue youe bene mystemperyd with ale att any tyme?

 Haue ye sworne with any womane in any purgacion apou
a boke, & has forsworne youe wylyngly?

f.9r Haue ye consentyd vnto any bawdry for | lukar off
90 money, and keppyd ther cownsell?

 Haue ye bakbytyd ore slaunderd any man or woman &
brought them in an yll name?

 Haue yowe maid any soleme vowe of fast ore
pylgrimage?

95 Haue youe payd your tythes & offeryngys onto the
chirche?

 Haue youe done your pennans that ye haue bene iuneyd

before tyme?

Questions vnto a seruant mane or womane.

100 Haue youe desauyd your maister or dam att any tyme,
& done them any hurte? Haue youe spendyd any off your
masters good, that he wyst note one? Haue youe maid any
lyes and forsworen youe, by God or any sentys?

105 Haue yowe bewryed his consell to any mane and causyd
hyme to be hurtyd therby? Haue ye knowne any harme toward
hyme and nott told hyme perof?

 Haue youe struyd his corne or his greys with his
cattell? Haue ye dyssavyd his cattell any tyme off ther
mett?

110 Haue ye bene lachyd & slowthfull to hyme in yor
f.9v seruys? |

 Haue ye bene prouyd off your persone, & off bewte,
& of streynth, & wysdome, or reyment, or any other good
that ye haue had?

115 Haue ye maid any soleme vowe off fastyng ore
pylgrymage?

 Haue ye had any vomytt or castynge att Ester or any
tyme off the yer?

 Haue youe payd your tythes and offeryngys to the

110 bene] MS nott bene.

112 bene] MS nott bene.

120 chirche?

Haue ye maid any contract to any womane to be hyre husband?

Haue youe keppyd yor fastyng days & halydeys as ye are bowne?

125 Haue ye bene drounkune off ale or wyne at any tyme?

Haue ye downe your pennans that ye ware chargyd with be yor gostly fader to do?

Questyons vnto the syngull woman.

130 Haue ye maid any contract with any man to be his wyff?

Haue youe synnyd in leythere with any mane, syngull or weddyd?

Haue ye drunkune any drynkys that ye schuld nott consaue with chyld?

135 Haue ye desyryd to syne with any mane prevely

f.10r | in your hart?

Haue ye mayd youe more gayer in kerchufys or any other reyment att any tyme, more ffore plesure off yonge mene then off God? Haue ye weschett your face with any maid waterys off herbys to make youe fayr?

140 Haue ye takyne any manys good that he kend nott off?

Haue ye ben drunkune & past your ressune att any

tyme? Haue youe had any vomytt or castyng att Eyster ore
any other tyme off the yere?

145 Haue ye downe your pennans as your gostly ffather
and ye ware agreyd at all tymes?

Explicit interrogacio confessionis.

In the name off the father & the sone & the holy
gost, thre persons & one God in trinite, etcetera.

150 All ye that bene cleyne schryuen & shall reyseue
this day Crystys blessyd body in forme off bred, shall
knell downe apone yowre kneys & say devoutly after me:

I do make aknowleg' to God allmyghty & to our lady
Sent Mare, & to all the holy company off hevyne, & to
155 f.10v | youe, my gostly ffather in Godys sted, that I haue
synnyd ageynst the wyll off God & the helth off my soule
in the vii dedlye synnys, - that ys to say, in pryde, ire,
invy, in couetus, in glotony, in slowtht, and in lechere,
- also in the seruys off almyghty God. That I haue synnyd
160 in thes, & all the branches, & the spycys, & the
circumstance that commys off theme, I knowlege me gelte.
I beseke God off hys mercy.

The x commawndementys that I haue brokyne, & nott

143 att eyster] MS att att eyster.
in in thes.

160 in thes] MS

165 keppyd nore holdyne theme; and namly has nott lovyde God
ouer all thyng, & my evynecristen as myselfe, - I
knowleche me gyilty. I cry God mercy.

170 The xii artyculys off the fathe that I haue areyd
in agayne the lawe off God and the ordinance of holy
chirch, and the helth off myn own soule, I knowlech me
gylte. I beseke God of his mercy & forgyffnes.

f.11r The vii sacramentys off holy chyrch that I haue
trespast in, & not worshyppe theme as I owght to | haue
done, I aske God mercy.

175 The vii warkys of mercy, bodely & spiritually, that
I haue nott fulfyllyd to my pover, - þat is to say: not
feyd þe hungre; nore gyffune drynke to the thyrste; nor
cled the nakyd; nor harberyd the harborlyss; nor vysytt
the seke; nor delyueryd þe prisonerys; nor beryd the
dede, - I cry God mercy & forgyf[fnes].

180 Also my v inwyttys that I haue wronfullye dyspentyd
agaynst the wyll of God & þe helth off my soule, - that
is to say: with myne eyne seyne; with my herys hard; with
my noese smellyng; with my fett goyng; with my movthe
spekyne; with my handys handylllyng; with my hart thought;
185 & all my synfull body wrought, - I cry God mercy.

In thes poyntys, & all other þat I haue synnyd in,
179 forgyffnes] MS forgyf.

I knowe me gylte, & I beseke God of his mercy & forgyffnes, & our lady Sent Mare, & all þe holy compane off heyvyne, to pray for me.

190 Tunc dicat sacramentum absolutionis: Absoluimus vos vice, beati Petri, apostolorum principus, cui dominus potestatem ligandi atque soluendi dedit, et quacumque ad vos pertinet accusacio et ad nos remissio; sit vobis deus omnipotens vita et salus et de omnibus peccatis
195 f.11v veniaris parvis indultor. Qui tecum viuit. |

Syrs ye shall vnderstand veraly that þis generall conffessione is maid ffor veniall synnys & other synnys that ye haue fforegottyne, and cannott bryng theme to yowre mynd. I charge youe in payne off dampnacion off
200 your soulls, that yff ther be any mane or womane her that knowys theme gylty off ony dedly syne that he ys nott 3ett shryvyn off, that he cume nott to Goddys boerd to resaue that holy sacrament to his dampnacion, ffor this generall conffessione shall nott profeytt hyme.

205 And in the wyrshipe off God thes thre days after that ye haue resavyd this holy sacrament, gouorne yow wysely in eyttyng, and drynkyne, and spekyng, and cume to the holy kyrke and her devowtly yowr seruyce; and also

198 and] MS I and.

208 and also] MS & also and also.

210 pennans that ye ar iunyd for yowr synnys, that yowe do
f.12r them in all þe hast þat ye may whylyst that ye stand
in cleyne lyff, and then ytt shall | be plesyng to God,
and gretly prophetyng yowr sowllys. Ffore this
confessione ye shall say a pater noster & aue maria & a
crede.

London, British Library, MS Sloane 1584.
fols.55v-62r, Form of Confession.

Fforma audiendi confessionem.

Primo genuflectit penitens, dicens, "Benedicite."
Deinde sacerdos dicit, "Domine Christe audi nos. In
nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen," vel,
5 "Dominus infundat tibi gratiam ad confitendum peccata tua
ab ipso valeas consequi veniam omnium delictorum tuorum.
In nomine patris et filii." Deinde audiat sacerdos cum
paciencia omnia peccata penitentibus ipsis amonendo per
salutaria monita, vt nullum celet peccatum suum integrum
10 faciat confessionem. Postquam penitens omnia dixerit
peccata sua. Incipiat <.....> et dicat penitens sub
hac forma:

I am aknowe to God & to owre lady Sant Mary, & to
all the holy company off hevyne, & to youe prest, my
15 gostly fader, att this tyme, þat I haue synnyd in the vii
f.56r dedly synnys, & all the branchis þat spreynge | off them.

Et inquirat sacerdos inquisicio de superbia:

Sune, has thowe synnyd in priyd? Has þu bene proud:
off kynryd; of ffarnes; off strenth; off schap; off
20 clethyng; off guddys; off catell; of wyff or chyld; off
lordschipe; off masterschipe; off fauor or frenschip; off
craft or cunnyng; off vertuus leuyng to the body or to
the soyle, wherffor thow has sett lese be then

evynecrystyne, & takyne more opone the, & mad bost
beroff, & had ioy beroff in thy hart; wherfor thorowe þu
25 has couet to haue thy owne wyll sumetyme in word agane
f.56v the wyll off God & agane the dome off resone? |

Si concedat penitens dicat sacerdos:

Sune, as ffareffurthe as God wyll gyffe the grace,
beware off the syne off pryð, & drawe the to vertuus off
30 meknes; ffor meknes ys a vertu by the which a man gyttys
in this world grace euerlastyng & ioy in anothere worlde.

Sune, has þu synnyd in couytys: off worldly
wyrschipe couet more then God has sent the; not holdyn
the payd off þat gud þat God has sent the, butt gruchyð
35 agayns the sond of allmyghty Gode?

Sune, as ffareffurth as God wyl gyff the grace,
beware off þe synne off couetus; & þat God sendys þe with
truth, holde the plessyd berof; & whedar he send the
ryche or pouerte, helth or seknes, ese or dyses, allway
40 f.57r | blys God & thanke God for the sondys he sendys the &
me & ylkone off hus, all that ys best ffor hus.

Sune, has þu synnyd in slewth, nott commyne to holy
chirche one þe holyday, - þat ys to say, to matyns, to
masse, to evynsong, nor hard Goddys seruis besely, nor
45 byd the bedys with thy moth, bott ianglyng and spekyng

44 to matyns] MS to to matyns.

with thame þat has bene abowte the also one the
wark`d`ay? þu has nott seruyd God as þu myght haue done,
nor þu hast nott bene sett be the craft & the cunnyng þat
50 God has sent the to gytt with truthe þat has bene nedfull
vnto the & thyne, & to the wirschop off God & to the
helpe off þe power.

f.57v Sune, as ffareffurth as God | wyll gyffe the grace,
beware off the synne off slewthe, & cum to þe holy kyrke
55 one the holyday to her Goddys seruace & Goddys worddys
besely, & byd the beddys devowtly, & bewar off ianglyng
& of chattyng with tho þat are abowt the. Ande one the
warkday, serue God ffor the tyme, & be besy with þe craft
& thy cunnynge that God has send the to gytt ytt with
60 trouth þat ys nedeffull to the, and to the helpe off the
powre pepylle.

Sune, has þu synnyd in envy? Has thowe had any envy
to thyn evynecristyne, - þat ys to say, has þu bene evyll
payd off þer wellfare & wellpayd off ther yllfare;
65 f.58r ore envy to then evyne|cristyne wiche has bene more mayd
off then thyn owne selffe has bene, or bene putt beffore
the in ffavore or in wurschipe because off rechis or off
cunnyng?

Sune, as ffareffurthe as þu may, bewar off the synne
70 off envy; and þu se thyn evynecristyne far well, be glad
theroff, & yff thay ffare ylle, haue compassyon & helpe
thame att thy powere. And yff þu se any man ore womane

mad more off then thysselffe ys & putt beffor the for
cunnyng in fauor or wurschope, be glad off ther puttyng
75 furth & off ther makynge one, os þu wold be maid off
f.58v thyn owne selffe, | ffore ytt ys charyte so to do.

Sune, has thowe synnyd in wrath? Has thowe bene
wrath with any man ore woman, chyld or seruand,
wherthorowe þu has wylyyd tham ony bodely harme, or
80 gostly bannyde theme, or weryd theme, or vengyd them in
word or ded?

Sune, may thowe ffynd in thy hart att the reuerens
off God & the schryfte att þu makys to me att this tyme,
to foregyffe all mene & wemen all rankyr off hart & all
85 þat has trespass agans the.

Si concedat penitens, respondeat sacerdos: "Deus
dimittat," - "God forgyffe bothe partys for his mekyll
mercy."

Sune, has thowe synnyd in gloteny? Has thowe ettyne
90 more then nedyd the to the sustynans off thy body,
f.59r sumetyme ffore fyllyng off thy|n owne lust, or ellys
because of company wherthorowe thowe has bene more
holdyne to the synne off lechery, or mor fallyng to
bodely seknes? Sune, as farfurth as God wyll gyff þe
95 grace, beware off the synne off glotony, & take mett &
drynke at mesur & in tyme, & as ytt ys nedfulle to the
sustynence off thy body, ffore owteragnes is noþer gud
ffor thy body nore ffore thy sowle.

100 Sune, has thowe synnyd in lechery? Has thowe
assentyd to þe synne off lechery in wyll, or has thowe
done the synne off lechery in dede, sleppyngre ore
wakkyngre?

105 f.59v Sune, as farfurthe as God wyll gyffe the grace,
beware off þe synne off lechery, & kepe thy sovle & thy
wyll fro consentyng therto, for oft tymys | God takys
grett venians here in erth ffore the synne off lechery.

Decem mandata.

110 Sune, has thowe brokyne the x commawndmentys off
God, - þat ys to say, has thowe nott luffyd God ouer all
thyng, & thyn evyne crystyne as thysellffe?

 Sune, þu beleuys in the xiiii artykyllys off þe
ffathe off holy kyrke as holy kyrke beleuys.

115 Sune, has þu takyne Godys name in vayne; sworne be
God ore be owr lady, or be any saynt of hevyn, sumetyme
trewe, sumetyme fals?

 Sune, has þu dysmembard God in sweryng be his hart,
be his body, be dyuerse membarys off hyme? Ore has thowe
fforesworne the off any boke beffor a domysman?

120 f.60r Sune, has thowe kepyd thy holyday in holy lyff, in
heryngre þe seruice off [God], & done gud deddys to þi|n

120 god] MS om.

evynecristyne? Has þu wroght any bodely labur off warke on the holyday? Ore gone to ffarys or to ma[r]kettys one the holyday, whene youe shuld haue commyne to the chirche & haue prayd to God?

125 Sune, as farefurth as God wyll gyff the grace, beware off holyday laburys, & kepe the holyday in holy levying & prayer, & in vesetyng power pepyll, & in other gud dedys doying.

130 Sun, has þu grevyd thy gostly fader or thy gostly mother, thy bodely fathere or thy bodely mother? Sune, yff þu haue grevyd thy gostly father or thy gostly moder, thowe shall haske theme fforgyffnes & wurschyppe theme both bodely & gostly, and be buxum to theme in all þer commandmentys.

135 Sune, has þu done any mannysslawghter, or bene ther
f.60v wher any man was kylyd, ore manytt, ore bettyn? | Ore slawnderyd any man ore womane, wherthorowe thay haue lost ther gud name or fame?

140 Sune, as ffarefurth as thowe has done any mane or womane any bodely harme, amend ytt ayens theme; & yff thowe hyndard any mane ore womane be þi sclaunder ore bakbytyng, restore them agayn to ther gud name.

Sune, has thowe fallyne in syne off dewowtre? For

122 marktettys] MS makettys. 139 as] MS has þu as.
143 has thowe] MS has thowe has thowe.

devowtre ys a synne that God takys venians on in erthe.

145 Sune, has thowe takyne any mannys gudys wrongfully,
off þat þu art bune to make restytucon? Sune, yff thow
haue takyne ony mannys gud wrongfully, restore ytt
agayne, ffor the synne ys not fforgyffyne to the
restytucyone be mad.

150 Sune, has thowe mad ony lessyngys off mane or woman,
f.61r or borne ony fals wytnes, make | amendys to thy power.

Sune, has þu couett thy neyburys wyff, or his
doyghter, or his seruand, ore his gud, or his cattel with
wrong? - ffore vnleffull couettus ys the rott off all
155 yll.

Septem opera misericordie.

Sune, has thowe ffullfylllyd the vii warkys off mercy
to thy power, - þat ys to say: gevyne mett to the hungre;
drynk to the thryste; cled the nakyd; harberd the
160 howsles; vysett the seke; helpyne theme thet ware in
prisone at þi powr; & helpyne to bery the ded, & prayd
ffore theme, & done almus dedys ffore theme at thy power?

Quinque sensus.

Sune, has thowe ott mysspendytt þi v inwyttys, - þat
165 ys to say: with thyn eyne seyng; with thyn ers hard;
f.61v with thy nose smellyng; with thy movth spekyng; | with
thy handys handylllyng; with þi fett goyng; with thy hart

thought; & with all thy body wrought?

170 Sune, thowe knowes the gyilty thorowe tarrying off
schryft; þu has foregottyne thy synnys, & þu has omytt
to schryft. Thowe has nott mad thy schryft, as thowe has
done thy synne, with delectacion, nor schewyd thy synnys
with the circumstans as þu has done theme in ded, nore
done the penans devoutly as ytt has bene injonyd the.

175 Sune, ys there ony thyng ellys that thowe wold be
schryvyne off?

Si penitens negauerit, tunc dicat sacerdos:

180 Sune, art thowe sory in þi hart because thowe has
greuyd God, defyld thyn owne sowle, dysesyd thyn
f.62r mo synnys sen the tym | þat thowe was borne into this
world vnto this owre?

Si concedat penitens, dicat sacerdos:

Sune, say after me:

185 - Off thes synnys, and all other synnys þat I wold
be schreyvne off, & haue fforgyffnes off att this tyme
& thay wold come to my mynd, I cry God mercy & our lady
Sant Mare, & all the sayntys off hevyne, & youe my gostly
father, off pennance and absoluc[i]one ffore saynt
190 charyte.

170 omytt] MS comytt.
absolucone.

189 absolucione] MS

190 Tunc dicat sacerdos, "Miseriatur tui." Deinde dicat
sacerdos:

- Sune, art thowe behynd with any dewe off holye
chyrch, off tythe, offerryng, or ony other thyng? Sune,
has þu fallyn in ony sentans off cursyng, or commond with
195 ony cursyd man or woman because off fauor?

Si penitens dicat non, absoluat eum sacerdos tali
forma.

Notes on Transcriptions.

pp. xxi-xxii, 50-77: On this exemplum, see above, Part One, p. 22 and n. 12. The verses with which this exemplum ends, ll. 75-77, are not recorded in this form in IMEV, but are closest to IMEV 142A and 142B. These are both among the English verses included in the Fasciculus Morum discussed by S. Wenzel, Verses in Sermons: 'Fasciculus Morum' and its Middle English Poems (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), where IMEV 142A is text 35, and IMEV 142B is text 47. (On the former text, see also S. Wenzel, 'The 'Gay' Carol and Exemplum', Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 77 (1976) pp. 85-91, and on both texts see further S. Wenzel, 'The English Verses in the Fasciculus Morum', in B. Rowland, ed., Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins (London, 1974) pp. 230-248.) In neither instance is the context in Fasciculus Morum particularly close to the exemplum here. IMEV 142A (Wenzel's text 35) occurs at the end of the story of the sinner Gayus, who calls out these words when he is taken away by demons (Fasciculus Morum IV, ii; S. Wenzel, ed., Fasciculus Morum (London, 1989) pp. 320-321); IMEV 142B (Wenzel's text 47) occurs as the words of an unearthly voice heard by a priest after the death of a virgin with a reputation for outstanding piety who, it transpires, had died unshriven of the sin of mumbling against her mother (Fasciculus Morum V, xiii; S. Wenzel, ed., Fasciculus Morum (London, 1989) pp. 488-491).

p. xxxix, ll: The Latin word enclosed in angle brackets, <>, is

illegible in the manuscript, and I have been unable to arrive at a satisfactory reconstruction.

p.xxx, l.18, leuerans; p.xxxi, l.25, leuerance: presumably OED liverance n., MED liveraunce n., a shortening of deliverance. Senses 1, 4, or 8 of deliverance n. in OED, or senses 1(b) or 2 of deliveraunce n. in MED may be related to that shown here; however, none of these senses, nor those recorded for liverance, fit well in either passage in the present text. (It should also be noted that the syntax of ll.24-25 is unclear.) I have been unable to find any further information which might be of use here in the files of the OED.

p.xxxv, l.153: The noun aknowleg' is difficult to account for. The mark of abbreviation found in the manuscript is that which usually represents -ys (although, as noted on p.i above, this mark is frequently used somewhat idiosyncratically in this manuscript). MED does not record any nouns beginning aknow-, while OED records no examples for acknowledgment earlier than 1594. The form found here is perhaps an independent formation from the verb aknowen on the basis of the noun knowleching. I have therefore not attempted a conjectural reconstruction of what is represented by this mark of abbreviation here.

Appendix B.

A form of confession from London, British Library,
MS Harley 2383
with variants from all known manuscripts.

The following transcription with variants from all known manuscripts is given for ease of reference in the discussion of the textual variants of this text above.¹ I therefore do not offer an account of the textual relationships of the manuscripts here.

The Manuscripts.

The following sigla represent the manuscripts consulted:

- H London, British Library, MS Harley 2383, fols.57r-60r.
- L Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 210, fols.85v-87r.
- C Cambridge, University Library, MS Ee.i.18, fols.175v-176v.
- K London, British Library, MS Harley 1288, fols.76r-81v.

¹ See above, pp.35-40.

Y knowlyche to God and to my gosty fadyr þat Y haue synnyd yn the brekyng of þe x commaunmentys of God.

5 Fyrst Y haue nott lowyd God ouer all þyng, ne dred hym, ne worshypyd hym, ne seruyd hym as Y shuld. And of the brekyng of þys commawndement Y cry God mercy.

10 Y haue brokyn þe secund commaunment of God yn takyng the name of God yn vayn, - yn grett othys sweryng by God and Goddys boddy, and by his woundys, by his armys, by his naylys, by his bonys, by his blode, by his hede, by his hert, by his sowle, by his feete, by owr lady, by Seynt Petur, by Seynt Paule, & mony oper seyntys; Y haue forsweren me parawenter vnwytynly. And of þe brekyng of þys commawndement Y cry God mercy.

15 Y haue brokyn þe iii commawndement of God, - þat ys to say, Y haue nott kepte my holyday yn holy lewyng: [beyng] slowe yn goyng to churche; now3te lernyng Goddys lawe, no mor þan a beeste; now3te herd Goddis servyse; now3te seyð hit wyth deuocion, but wythe bostyng, hastyng, ianglyng, iapis, trifolys; ybowyd me now3te to þe preste, yn prechyng, yn his masse seyng; in hyy[n]g me faste home to fyll my body sone after at þe tauerne, wythe syngyng, cryyng, drynkyng & bollyng, sweryng & staryng, scornyg & lyyng, bostyng & braggyng; wyth

MSS: H; C 1-108 mercy; L 1-139, 162-178, 140-158, 179-190; K 1-65
amen, 131-158, 173-178, 162-171.

1 Y...pat] also K. Y knowlyche] I am aknow C, incipit tabula de
decem preceptis cum septem peccatis mortalibus et vii opera
misericordie cum aliis qui necessaria sunt I am aknowe L.
and...fadyr] om. L. my] the C. 2 yn] `god` yn H. the]
om. CLK. of(1)] om. K. of god] om. LK. 3 fyrst] ffor þe
furst L, the frist þat K. ouer] abouen L. þyng] oper thynges
K. ne] ner C, om. L. dred] I haue not heryed L. 4 shuld]
schulde do C, shuld haue doo L, shuld adoon K.
and...commawndement] om. K. and] om. C. 6 Y...takyng] also
I haue taken K. 7 vayn] ydyle CL, ydylnesse K. by] as by CL.
8 and(1)...feete(10)] hymself and by oder parties of hys body and
K. and goddys] othyre by hys blessyd body C.
and(2)...woundys] by hys yen and C, by his eyen L. by his
naylys] om. C. 9 by(1)] and by L. by his hede] om. L.
10 by(2)] and by L. by(4)...mony(11)] & K. 11 by] e canc.
and C, om. L. &] and by CL. Y...me(12)] & K. 12
vnwytynly] vnwytyngly and somtyme wytingly L, ofttymes forsworn me
wyttyngly and sumetyme vnwittyngly K. and...commawndement(13)]
om. K. of(1)] for CL. 13 cry] prey almy3ty L. 14
Y...say(15)] om. K. brokyn] ybrokyn the wyche þat ys C. 15
my holyday] myn halidays in prayers and in dedis of charite
fulfylllyng ne K. 16 beyng] om. HCL, bot beyng K. to] to the
CLK. lernyng] seruyd C. 17 no...beeste] om. K. 18
now3te seyð hit] om. LK. bostyng] om. LK. 19 hastyng] om.
CLK. iapis] iapes and L, and iapyng and K. trifolys]
trufullyng K. ybowyd me now3te to] longe me thowth CLK. 20
preste yn] om. K. yn(2)] and K. in hyyng] in hyydg H, ihyede
CL, and deide K. 21 me] om. L. body] bely CL. 22
syngyng] syng`yng` and L. cryyng] and cryyng and C, crying in
L, cryyng and K. &(1)] in L, om. K. bollyng] om. K. 23
lyyng] lawyng C. braggyng...rybawdry(24)] bakbityng wyth rybald
wordes K.

harlatry, rybawdry, and tokenys & countenance & wordys
25 of lechery; wyth chydy[n]g, fy3tyng; - & pus of pe
holeday Y haue made a synfull day. Of pe brekyng of [bis]
commawndementt Y cry God mercy.

Y haue brokyn pe iiii commawndement of God. Y haue
nott worshypyd my fadyr & my modyr, but [ben] rebell and
30 f.57v vnbuxume & vnkynd to heme, angeryd hem & grewyd | hem,
note soferyng hem mekely as sune shuld do; note helpe hem
in here age wyth my travell, wyth my good, ne wyth suche
cunnyng as God haþe sente to me. & of bys Y cry God
mercy.

35 Y haue broke pe v commawndement of God. Y have sley
my emecristen wyth wickyd powtys, wyckyde wyllys, wickyde
wordys & wickyde workys. & of pe brekyng of bys
commawndement Y cry God mercy.

40 Y have broke pe vi commawndement of God. Y have
synnyd yn lechery, yn vnclen powtys, in fowle wyll, ore
in fy3tys, yn lecherus wordys, yn wyckyde dedys, yn
lecherys kyssyngys, yn lecheris handelyng, yn many oper
covntenansys of lechery. And of pe brekyng of bys
commawndement Y cry God mercy.

45 Y have broke pe vii commawndement of God. Y haue
stole my ney3barys good, yn false byyng & sillyng, in
false metys and mesurys, & false wytys and sly3thys; besy
abowte false faynynggys, euer to begyyl my ney3bore;

24 rybawdry] and ryboudry C. and] wordes canc. and C. &(1)]
 off C, om. K. countenance &] countenaunces of L. 25
 chydyng] chydyg H. fy3tyng] & flytyng with 1 deleted K. þus]
 thys C. holeday] wolyday C. 26 synfull] synful and a sory
 L. of...commawndementt(27)] not gowernyd me after goddys wyll
 K. of] and of L. þis] þe H. 27 god] almyghty god L.
 28 Y...god] om. K. of god] om. L. 29 my(1)] om. CLK. &
 my] ne C, and L, om. K. modyr] modyr bodyly ne gostly K. ben]
om. H, be CL, ben to þem K. and] om. LK. 30 &(1)] om. LK.
 to...grewyd] & ouerthwart grewed and angred K. to] and
 ouerthwart vnto CL. angeryd] wrathed CL. &(2)] om. L.
 31 soferyng] suffryd CK. as...do] om. K. as] as a CL.
 sune] chylde L. do] om. C. note(2)] om. K. helpe] holp C.
 32 her age] nede K. age] olde age L. wyth(2)] ne with K.
 good] goodus LK. ne] om. L. ne...me(33)] om. K. 33
 &...mercy(34)] wherfor I beseke god of hys mercy K. þys] brekyng
 off thys commandement C, þe brekyng of þis comaundement L. god]
 almyghty god L. 35 of god] om. L, for K. 36 wylle] wyllys
 L. 37 &(1)] wykud conseyl and CLK.
 &(2)...commawndement(38)] om. K. þe] om. L. 38 god]
 almyghty god L. mercy] mercy and of for3eunes C. 39 of god]
om. CL, for K. 40 fowle] full K. wyll] wyllys C. ore in]
 in vnleful CK, in vnlieful sightis L. 41 yn(1)] off C, om. K.
 lecherys] lechery C. yn wyckyd] & lecherous K. yn(3)...yn
 lecheris(42)] kyssyng K. 42 kyssyngys] kyssyng CL. yn(1)]
 and CL. yn(2)] and CL. many] om. K. 43 covntenansys]
 contenance CK. of(1)...commawndement(44)] makyng K. þe] om.
 C. 44 god] almyty god CL. 45 broke...haue] doon thefte
 K. of god] om. L. of...haue] om. C. 46 good] godes K.
 &] or K. 47 and(1)] om. K. &] in CL. and(2)] & wytnes
 and K. besy] betyng C, beryng L. besy...ney3bore(48)] om. K.
 48 faynynggys] pardouns L. euer...ney3bore] om. CL.

50

mysvsyng þe sacramentys of þe cherche. Of þys Y cry God
mercy.

55

Y have broke þe viii commawndement of God. Y haue
bore false wytnyse, yn lesyngys makyng of myne
emecristen, to make hem lese her good & catell, & here
name & fame. Y haue bore false wytnyse of mysylfe,
shewyng me a cristen man & [doyng] note þe workys of a
cristen man. And of this Y cry God mercy.

60

Y have broke þe ix commawndement of God. Y have
wronfully ycovetyd my ny3barys good: his howse; his lond;
his corne; his grase; & many oþer of his goodys, to his
harne & his hurte. & of this Y cry God mercy.

65

f.58r

Y have broke þe x commawndement of God. Y have
desyryd my ney3bareys wyfe fleschly, his seruant, his
maydyn, his oxe, his horse, & oþer goodys of his, to his
hurte & harne, & to my wordely profete. & of þe brekyng
of þys commawndement Y 3eld me gylty, & pute me fully in
Godis mercy, & axke for3euenys for cherite. Amen. |

70

Y have synnyd yn the vii dedely synnys.

Y have synnyd yn pryd. Y have be proud: yn my hertt,
yn wyll and dede; proud of ray; proud of seruys; proud
of beryng; proud of speche; proud of awnswer; proud of
connyng; lothe to be towte, loþer to be repreuyd; Y haue
sett mucche by mysylfe, lytyll or now3th by all oþer; Y
woll nott be bore adowne, yn ry3th noþer yn wrong; yn

49 mysvsyng] in selling of LK. sacramentys] sacrament C. þe] holy CLK. of] and of the brekyng off CL, and in sweche manerys or braunches and spices K. þys] þis commandement CL, om. K. god] almyty god CL. 51 Y...god] om. K. of god] om. C. 52 of...cristen(53)] om. K. 53 hem] men K. lese] to lese L. good &] goodys and here C, goodys her LK. here] þar good K. 54 name] good name L. & fame] om. CLK. of] ageyns K. 55 shewyng me] om. K. note] nowyt C. doyng] om. H, doon K. þe] om. K. 56 cristen(2)] vncristen K. and] om. K. of] for the brekyng of CL, wherfor K. this] thys commandement CL. god] almy3ty god L, god almyghty K. 57 Y(1)...god] om. K. 58 ycovetyd] couetud CL. good] goodes K, om. L. his(1)] þer K, om. L. howse] houses K. his(2)] þer K. 59 his(1)] ryches of K. his grase] om. CLK. oper of his] of hys othyr CLK. to...hurte(59)] om. CLK. 60 & of this] om. K. of] of the brekyng off CL. this] thys commandement CL. god] almyty god CL. 61 Y(1)...god] om. K. 62 fleschly] falsly L, om. K. his maydyn] om. K. 63 horse] asse CLK. goodys of his] of hys goodes K. 64 hurte &] om. CLK. & of...amen(66)] of these poyntes of the x comandmentys K. 65 þys] alle þise L. commawndement] comaundementys L. 66 godis mercy] þe mercy of god L. axke] aske hym L. for...amen] om. CL. 67 Y...amen(131)] om. K. 68 Y(2)...my] of C, in hie pride of L. 69 yn] and of CL. dede] of dede in L. of ray] aray C, aray of body L. proude of seruys] om. L. 70 awnswer] vnswere C, answere proude of seruyse L. 71 loþer] loþ L. Y...muche(72)] lasse mykyl C, laten mych L. 72 Y] om. L. 73 woll] wyl C, wolde L. bore] sworne L. adowne] don CL. noþer yn] ny with C, ne L.

bostyng; yn braggyng; yn grette vanyty; yn [byngys] þat
75 Y coud euer do; yn ypocrisy, make mysylfe holy owtwerd
and false ynward; - and yn many oper spycys of pryde Y cry
God mercy, and all þe holy company of heven.

Y haue synnyd yn envy: yn envyys þoughtys; yn
envyuse wyllis; sory þat eny man shuld be even wyth me,
80 muche mor sory þat eny man shuld be more worshyppyd þan
Y, oper mor ymad of; sory of my felowys wellfare; glad
& mery of his evyllfare; and wyth lesyngys & false talys
tellyng, opynly and prively, to hyndyr hem. Herof Y cry
God mercy.

85 Y haue synnyd in wrethe. Y haue be wrothe whan eny
man hath told me sothe of my defawtys. Whan eny man
warnyd me of my herme, - of good cherite and for my good
profete, - Y haue be wroth wyth hym. Y have be fayn &
well payyd whan eny man flatteryd me & glosyd me, wroth
90 yf eny man held a3enste me. Y haue allso for wrethe made
lesyngys & told false talis of my felowys, & meynteynyd
hem yn her vysage whan Y wyste þat Y had ylyyd falsely
apon hem. And þerof Y cry God mercy.

Y have synnyd in slewthe. Y have [ben] slow to lerne
95 Goddys lawys; slow to fle syn; slow to be sory for my
f.58v synnys; | slow to cry God mercy of my synnys; slow &
rechelese yn heryng of Godis seruyse yn þe holyday, &
ydull all þe day aftyr; slow yn my maystrys seruyse, wyth
many grocchyng and grownyng wordys. Wherof Y cry God

74 vanyty] auauntynge L. byngys] bynkyng H. 75 euer]
nothyre se3y ne CL. yn...ynward(77)] om. CL. 76 Y] wherfore
L. 77 and...heven] om. L. holy] om. C. 79 wyllis] wylle
L. man] om. C, felowe L. even wyth] euenlyche to L. 80
man] schuld be aboue me sory that eny mon CL. þan Y] om. CL.
81 of(1)] then Y CL. felowys] ney3borus C. 82 his] hyre C.
83 opynly...herof] hulpen pryuely þerto L. and] or C.
to...hem] om. C. herof] herfore C. 86 hath] om. CL.
sothe] my sothes L, my sores C. of] and CL. 87 of good
cherite] charitabuly CL. 88 profete...be(2)] but CL. 89
payyd...man] alowed hym þat L. flatteryd] faltred C. 90 yf]
3eue C. held] hulde C. wrethe] suche L. 91 fleowys]
ney3borus and C. &(2)] awo canc. auowyd hem and C, and avowed
hem and L. 92 hem] om. C. her...whan] wrongges in which L.
þat] when C, wel L. had] om. L. ylyyd] ly3ed C. 93 apon]
vpon C. and þerof] om. CL. god] almy3ty god C. 94 Y
have...mercy(100)] om. C. ben] om. H. 95 slow to] sclowe
to lerne to serue god sclowe to lerne to L. 96 synnys(1)]
synne L. god] om. L. of] for L. synnys(2)] synne L. 97
yn(2)] on L. 99 wherof] om. L. god] almy3ty god L.

100

mercy.

105

Y have synnyd yn cowetyse. Y have covetyd to be prowdely arayyd, to have had mor gold & syluer, mor of wordely rychese and worshypys, and hold me nott apayd wyth þat state þat God hathe send me yn; and note þankyð God þerof, but ygrucchyð þer a3enste mony tymys. Y have covetyd hy metys & drynkys & ry3th costelow, & allso to have synnyd yn lechery, wheþer hit had be [wyth] a weddyd wyfe or mayde. Y cry God mercy.

110

Y have synnyd in gloteny: yn ouermuche etyng and drynnkyng, & owte of tyme, mor þan nedid, to erlyche, to late & to ofte; yn to muche etyng & drynkyng of bodely metys & drynkys, & to costelow, & to hote, þat sumtyme my stomake ys grevyd, my hede akythe, my body my3th note kepe hit, so þat iii days or iiii afterward Y have be full evyll at ese & vndisposyd in my body, and well wurse yn my sowll. Whereof Y cry God mercy.

115

120

Y have synnyd in lechery: yn fowle lecherys wordis, þowghtys, willys & desyrys, & þe dede of doyng; in lecherys sy3thtys, kyssyngys, & vnclene handelyngys & towchyngys; in fowle spekyngys and heryng of suche þyngys, & mony oþer lecherys cowntenaunces. Y have note had my wyfe yn tyme & sesun, but Y have vsyd þat dede onlyche forto fullfyll my fowle luste, and not for þe princypall cause, - þat ys, forto bere & bryng forth chyldren. And also Y haue constraynyd mysilfe to þat dede

125

101 Y have(2)] om. L. be] haue bene L. 103 worshypys]
 worships and lordshipes L. hold...nott] no3wt hold me CL.
 104 pat(1)] pe L. state] estate CL. send] sette L. and
 note...perof(105)] om. CL. 105 per] om. C. Y] and ofte Y
 CL. 106 hy] aftyr hy3e CL. metys] met C. ry3th] om. L.
 & allso] om. CL. 107 wheper] where C. wyth] om. H. a
 weddyd] wedow CL. 108 mercy] mercy I haue synned in slewpe I
 haue be slow to lerne goddys lawhis slow to lerne to fle syn slow
 to be sory for syn slow C. 110 &...tyme] om. L. pan] pan me
 L. to(2)] and to L. 111 bodely] curious L. 112 hote]
 hoote and dight wip to moche bysynesse L. 113
 stomake...grevyd] body akep and L. akythe] om. L. 114 iii]
 twoo L. iiii] pre L. afterward...evyll(115)] after I am at
 euent L. 115 & vndisposyd] om. L. 116 whereof] om. L.
 118 pe] in pe L. 119 &(1)] and rageynggys in L. handelyngys]
 handelyng L. 120 towchyingys] touchinge L. spekyngys]
 spekinge L. 122 had] spared L. &] & in L. 123 forto]
 to L. 124 forto] to L. bere &] om. L. 125 Y haue]
 neded and L. mysilfe...dede] me perto L.

more þan nede or kynd wold axke, and in mony oþer spycys
of lechery mor þan Y cane telle.

130 f.59r Wherfor, of all þese vii dedly synnys and of all
here spycys, Y 3eld me fullyche gilty & cry God mercy,
and aske for3euenys for cheryte. Amen. |

Septem sunt opera misericordie corporalia.

135 I have note fulfillyd the vii workys of mercy
bodelyche, in wyll noþer in dede, aftyr my power. Y have
note 3eue mete to þe hungry. Y haue note 3eue drynke to
þe þyrsty. Y haue note clothyd þe nakyd. Y haue note
visytyd þe syke. Y haue note comfertyd hem þat bythe in
preson. Y haue note herboryd hem þat bythe herborlyse.
Y haue note holpe þe dede to be beryd. Wherfor Y cry God
mercy.

140 **Quinque sensus corporales.**

Seyng, heryng, tastyng, smyllyng & handelyng.

145 Y haue synnyd in seyng vaneteys and fowle sy3thys,
in vnsemylyche sy3thtys, in seyng rychese & oþyr wordely
þyngys, by þe whyche Y haue be storyd to pryde, to
cowetyse, to lechery, & to many oþer synnys.

Y haue synnyd in heryng harlatry, yn rybawdry, fowle
wordys of lechery, lesyngys, ba[k]byty[n]gys,
scornynggys, dyspysyng, blasphemying.

Y haue synnyd in smyllyng of delycate metys &

126 nede or] om. L. axke] om. L. 129 mercy] hertely of
mercy L. 130 aske...amen] for3euenesse L. 131
septem...corporalia] the seuen werkes of bodely mercye L, also K.
132 workys] dedys L. mercy bodelyche] bodily mercy neiper L.
133 in(1)] nowper in K. noþer] ne L, nor K. aftyr] to L, att
K. 134 Y...note] ne K. 135 Y(1)...note(1)] ne K.
þe(2)] þe bare and þe L. Y(2)...note(2)] ne K. 136 syke]
pore ne the seek K. Y...note] om. K. bythe] wer K. 137
Y...note] ne K. hem...herborlyse] þe houslees L. bythe] wer
K. 138 Y haue] nor hase K. þe...beryd] to bury þe dede LK.
Y(2)] hertely I L. 140 quinque...corporales] I haue synned in
my v bodyly vittes outward as in K. quinque...handelyng(141)]
the v wittes bodily outward I haue mysspendyd my v wittes outward
L. 141 tastyng...handelyng] smellyng tastyng and tochyng K.
142 seyng] seinge of L. and] in LK. 143 in(1)] om. K.
144 þe] om. LK. pryde] lechery pride K. to(2)] om. L, & K.
145 to(1)] and L. to(1)...&] and K. to(2)] om. LK. 146
yn] om. LK. fowle] and fowle K. 147 lesyngys] and mony oþer
synnes I haue synned canc. lesyngys L. bakbytyngys] bagbytybgys
H, and bakbytynges K. 148 dyspysyng] dispisynges L.
blasphemying] blasfemynges L, and slaundrynges K. 149 synnyd]
om. K. of] of oþer K. delycate] ouer delicate L.

150 drynkys, to hote & to costelow.

Y have synnyd yn tastyng of meny metys & dryngkys,
to hastelyche, to glotenlyche, to gretelych, to ofte &
owte of tyme.

155 Y haue synnyd in towchyng of vnclen sy³thtys, of
fowll lustys, of synfull lykyng of pyngys; yn vnsemylych
handelyng & vnlusty fylyng; yn smytyng; yn betyng; yn
oper synfull ded doyng. Of þes & of all oper Y cry God
mercy.

Septem opera misericordie spiritualia.

160 Teche, consell & chasty ay,
Confort, ffor3eue, ssuffir & pray.

Y haue note fulfillyd þe vii workys of mercy
gostelyche. Y haue note tow³the vnkonyng men Godys lawys.
f.59v Y haue note conselyd men to leue here syn. Y haue | note
165 chastyd þem þat Y was ybownd to chaste. Y haue note
confortyd men in here grete dyssese and mischefe. Y haue
note for3eue men here trespase þat þey haue do to me, as
owr lord God did for wse. Y haue note suffryd my better
whan he hathe repreuyd me for my vycys. Y haue note prayd
170 truly for þo þat Y ame bownd to pray for. & of all þes
Y cry God mercy.

150 costelow] costly þat styrryd me to syn K. 151 Y...synnyd]
om. LK. meny] ouermoch LK. 152 to(2)...gretelych] to
 gredyly K. glotenlyche] glotenously L. 154 Y...synnyd] om.
 LK. vnclen...lykyng of(155)] vnleful LK. vnsemylych]
 `vnsemely' L. 156 & vnlusty] in lusty LK. yn(3)] & in K.
 157 ded] dedys L. þes...oper] all these poyntes & oper þat I
 haue synnyd in K. of...mercy(158)] om. L. 159-161 om. K.
 162 mercy gostelyche] goostly mercy L. 163 Y] for I K.
 tow3the] taught þe L. vnkonyng...lawys] good lawes to þam þat
 wer vnconnyng K. lawys] lawe L. 164 men] synful men LK.
 165 þem...chaste] wikked men LK. 166 here] om. LK. grete]
om. K. 167 men] them K. þey...to] trespasid K. me] me
 I haue not suffred mekely wrongges done to me L. 168 god]
 iesus crist L. Y...vycys(169)] om. LK. 169 note] om. K.
 170 truly] om. L. þo...ame] suche þingges as I haue be L.
 &...þes] wherfor lowly L, om. K.

Quinque sensus spirituales.

175 Y haue had lytyll wyll to do good & to fle yvyll.
Myn ymagynacion was note caste to good dedys & to fle
yvyll, my myn but lytull oper now³te perapon. My
vndirstondyng was note to seche connyng & knowyng perof.
My reson was away, by pe whych Y shuld haue rulyd me
discretly wythyn & wythowt.

180 Of pes synnys, know and vnknow, pat Y haue do, sythe
Y was bore ynto pys day, Y mekelyche 3eld me gylyty & put
me fullyche & holy into pe mercy of God, & hertelyche
aske grace & for³euenys; - and pray yow, my gostely
fadyr, pat art her yn Goddys stede, to 3eue me penaunce
& to have absolucion of all my trespase, & teche me suche
185 menys & medicynys pat Y may pe better fle all maner
synnys to my lyfeys end; and pat 3e wold pray for me to
allmy³thty God, pat he of his endelese grace and mercy
wold wytsafe to assoyle me of all my synnys pat Y may cum
to his blyse pat he hathe ybow³the me to. Amen.

172 quinque...spirituales] v wittes inwarde or goostely wille mynde
ymagynacioun vnderstondyng & resoun ffyue wittes bodely outward
seyngge heryng smellynge taastyng & touchyngge ffyue wyttys inward
I haue mysspended my v wittes inward L, om. K. 173 Y] also I
haue synned in myn v werdely wittes & gastely in wyll mynde
ymagynacion vndyrstandyng and resoon K. wyll] wille or noon LK.
to(2)] om. LK. yvyll] ewyll bott mekyll wyll to doon ewyll K.
174 dedys] thewys K. caste...yvyll(175)] to cast good meenes
herfore L. &...yvyll(175)] bot occopyed with vices and syn K.
175 but] was but L, om. K. oper] or LK. perapon] here vpon
L, on god or of pat at itt shuld be sett on K. 176 note] nott
seett K. perof] hereof L, of pat at I xuld haue connyng and
knawynge of boot of oper thyngys ageyns me K. 177 be] om. LK.
178 discretly] stretly K. wythowt] wipout and perof I cry god
mercy L, wythoute I crie god mercy K. 179 synnys] synnes and
al oper L. 180 Y(2)] to be almercyful god I L. 181
be...god] pi mercy L. 182 aske] I aske be L. yow...fadyr]
be preest L. 183 her] om. L. to...trespasse(184)] or
schuldest be to be mene bytwene god and me to counsaile me L.
185 maner] maner of L. 186 3e wold] pu wilt L. 187
grace...wytsafe(188)] mercy & goodnesse vouche sauf L. 188
wold wytsafe] pat he wold wytsafe of his grete mercy H. 189
to his] into pat hie L. 189 hathe...me] bou3t vs L. amen]
amen explicit confessio L.

Appendix C.

Yale, University Library, MS Beinecke 317, fols.42v-50v.

Textual note.

The following transcription has been made from a microfilm, which it has unfortunately been impossible to check against the original manuscript. At a number of points readings in this microfilm are unclear which might be legible in the manuscript. There is a particular problem with readings in the inner margins of the manuscript, which are unclear on the microfilm because of the way the manuscript has been held open when the film was made. Such readings are enclosed in angle brackets <>. Conjectural readings and emendations are given in square brackets [], with the reading of the manuscript given at the base of the page. The note missing in the apparatus denotes conjectural reconstructions of characters on portions of the outer edges of leaves which have now been lost through damage or wear. Because of the problems of working from a microfilm, it is also impossible in most instances to determine at what point deletions and cancellations have been made.

Where Roman or Arabic numerals appear in the manuscript, it has been my policy to expand ordinal numbers (using where possible full forms found elsewhere in the text) but not to expand cardinal numbers. With regard to the large number of ambiguous marks of abbreviation or otiose strokes in this manuscript, the policy outlined in the general editorial note at the beginning of the thesis has been followed.

Confessio generalis ac specialis.

5 ` In this generall confessyon her wryten may euery man
& woman see & vndirstande clerly how & wheryn þey haue
offended God & goostly wounded þeyr sovles, & be þe vertu
of þis seyð confession be mad perfy3tly hoole in soule
as þat howr þey came out of þe fonte stoon, & þerfor
euery man & woman as þey fynde þeymsilf gyilty so confesse
þey<m>.`

Exhortatio.

10 Miserere mei domine, quoniam infirmus sum, sana me;
psalmo sexto.

15 Beholde how þe seek soule of mankynde sore woundyd,
knawynge his freelte, dystresse & peryll, cryeth to our
moste mercyful Lorde, hyr spovse & leche, to heele hyr.
And how she is woundyd & rygth seek our Lorde shewyth yn
a parable, Luce octavo, wher he lyketh hyr vnto a man
þat wente fro Jerusalem to Jericho & felle amongst
thevys þat dyspoyled, bownde & woundyd hym & lefte hym

18 &] MS <.> canc. &.

nyghe ded. So gostly, I, & euery crysten soule walkynge
20 vnwarly yn this deserte worlde, frome þe begynnyng of
our lyves to our deth, be vndyscrete openyng of þe 5
outward & ynwarde wyttes, suffre thre thevys & enmyes, -
the fende, þe fleysh & þe worlde - to entre ynto þe
soule, which dyspoyleth vs of all þe yeftys of grace, &
25 byndeth vs full harde to þe tree of dyspeyr, hauynge v.
parlyov<s> branches of synne ayenste þe holy goost, with
þe lynked yron cheyne þat seynt Austyn spekyth off,
octavum Confessionum; & þen woundeth vs dedly with þe
sharpe dartys of þe vii dedly synne<s> thorough brekyng
30 of þe x commandmentys.

But it happyth þat the Samarytane, our moste sofreyn
leche Cryst Iesus, cometh to cure hys spouse our soule
sore woundyd, & not þe hole þat nedyth no leche, saynge
be his prophete þat he wole not þe deth of a synner, but
35 rather þat he lyve, thus exhortynge vs:

"Thou art seek & sor woundyd. Yeff þou wolt beleue
sadyly yn me thy leche,

bis septem articuli

"þat is yn þe dowble sevynfolde artycles perteynynge to
40 my Godhede & manhode,

21 5] MS w canc. 5.

septem virtutes

"& also to my two medycynes, þat is to sey, þe softe & esy medycyne of þe three dyvyne & theologycall virtues & iiii cardynall;

45 **septem sacramenta**

"also yn þe sharpe medycyne of þe vii sacramentys, whos vertu is to heele all synne,

septem petitiones

50 "with þat thou wolt hertyly prey me, deuoutly offrynge vp þe vii petycyons of þe Pater noster;

septem opera misericordie

"also þerwith somewhat to pay after thi power to my nedy seruantes for thi restorynge to helth & opir benefetys, fulfyllynge þe vii werkys of mercy bodyly & gostly;

55 "- vpon this condycyon I shall lede `þe' ynto þe stable of my chirche, wher all beestly people be restreyned with the brydell of areeste of holy churches ordynance frome gret wyldnesse, & brought to gret tamenesse, coreyed be sharpe penaun<ce>, & clene wyped
60 be þe sacramentall absolucyon. And I shal [send] thy kepar vndyr me to kepe & heele the, whoes offyce is to avoyd all fylth of synne, frome all such beestly people & make hem feyr & heele hem be my seyð medycynes."

60 send] MS om.

62 beestly] MS . canc. beestly.

Then, Lorde, syth it is soo þat my synfull soule thi
65 spouse is tachyd wyth þe seyde þevys, dyspoyled, bounde
& dedly woundyd with synne yn all his powerys, I wylle
f.43r for my syngler comforte & helth loke yn þis |
presente myroure of conscyence, rede & studye hit, yn þe
70 which I shall veryli conceyve how fowle þi spouse my
soule is spottyd & wound[yd] with synne to þi grett
dyspleasure, trustynge fully yn thy abundant mercy, þat,
wher I may not heele mysylf, þou wolt, syth euery lovyng
spouse hath compassyon vpon his spouse, & þerwith I wyl
hertyli bothe pray & pay to the & thyne after my power.

75 And syth þou vndir þe seyde condycyon hast brought
me ynto the stable of þi chirche & commytted me to my
curatt, thi mynistre yn thi stede, to be heelyd, I opyn
& shewe my sores to hym, thus begynnyng my confessyon:

I moste synfull wrecche knowleche to almyghty God,
80 his blyssed modyr, all his seyntys, & to þe my goostly
fadyr, þat I haue greuously synned ayenst my lord God yn
myspendynge my v outwarde & ynwarde wyttes þat been þe
yatys of my soule; falsly as fals porterys betraynge hit,
suffryng my mortall foon to entre & dyspoyle hit of all
85 goodys of grace, & sore to wounde hit.

70 woundyd] letters yd missing in MS.
canc. my.

81 my] MS ar

Oculi

Ffyrst openynge the yates of myn ey3en synfully,
beholdynge bewtuovs creaturys both fleyshly & worldly.
Ffleishly be nyce & wantoun lokys styrynge to synne, &
90 haue had peryn grett delyte to beholde such - not for
hyr silf goodnesse, noper to preyse pe maker, but for an
vnordynat pleasure. Also worldly vanytees beholdynge, as
jewellys, rychesses & freysh aray, to engendre & encrece
yn me an ynordynat appetyte. Also hauynge many proude &
95 dysdeynows lokes, & eke wythdrawynge my sygth frome my
Maker `yn` the sacramente of pe awter, fro pe figurys of
the crucyfixe, of our Lady & oper seyntys & holy
scripture, pat been ordeyned as spectacles to brynge to
mynde the pyngys that pey represente, to styr to vertu
100 & to remove temptacyons; & also ofte sythes wythdrawynge
my sygth from wrecchyd, nedy & seeke persoones pat mygth
haue mevyd me to pyte.

Aures

Also openynge myn eerys: herynge with gret delyte
105 vycyous talkyngys, lesyngys, detraccyones, preuy
rownyngys; & shettynge frome Goddys worde, his seruyse
& oper vertuovs tales, & also fro the crye of pe power

93 engendre] MS engrendre with first r deleted.

people. Salomon: Qui auertit aurem suam etcetera.

Os

110 Also openynge þe yates of my mouth, with my tonge
mysspekyngē & mystastyngē, multyplyenge much language
that kan not be doon withoute lesynges, avauntyngē,
bakbytyngē, flaterynge, horribly sweryngē; & vnchaste
language hauynge, and more reioyced yn sych þan yn
115 preyerys or vertuous comenyngē; noþer haue kepte dewly
sylence yn tyme & place.

 Also yn tastynge ynordynatly delycyows & swete metys
& drynkes.

Nasus

120 Also openynge þe yates of my noose, gretly delytyngē
as yn muske, powne, `awmbr`, & oþer gummes & herbys, and
yn clothes engreynd or oþerwyse sauoryngē, - rathir to
f.43v þe | entente to make þe stynkyngē & vyle careyne to be
swete sauoryd to synne, than to expelle contagyows eyrys.

110 mouth] MS tonge canc. mouth.
or.

122 or] MS & canc.

125

[Man]us

Also myn hondys yn vnhonestly touchynge mysilf or
oper yn eny partye, or yn vyolente betynge or vndyscrete
punysshynge, oper yn vnleffull withdrawynge oper mannys
goodys; neper puttyngge to myn neyghbor an helpynge hand,
130 neper yevynge almesse yn tyme of nede.

Pedes

135

Also with my feete I haue vysite many a suspecte
place to seke occasyones of synne, & ofte hauntyngge
tauernys & spectacles; & withdrawe hem frome good placys,
as frome Goddys chirche, pylgremage goynge, & to vysyte
the power & nedy.

Sensus interiores

140

And þus my seyde porterys þorou3 þeyr neglygent
kepyngge of þis outtyr warde haue suffred myn enmyes to
entre ynto þe mydlewarde.

Communis sensus

Ffyrste, ynto the comyn wytte receyvyngge &
herberyngge þe lyknessys & similitudes of þise outwarde

125 manus] first three letters missing in MS.

synfull þynges afore beholde, herde & spoken; demynge hem
145 more feyr, swettyr & more worthy to be beholden, herde
or be spoken þen oþer,

Ymaginatio

& so gydynge hem forth ynto þe ymagynacyoun, be þe
whiche I haue ofte ymagynde vntrewly þynges to be þough,
150 spoken or doon, þat neuyr wer spoken, þough, ne
wrougth.

Estimatio

And so forth hath presentyd þe same þynges ynto myne
estymacyon, wher withoute eny euydence I haue wenyd
155 vntrew certeyn persoones to haue been myn enmyes, & to
haue seyde & doon ayenste me þat wer nothynge gylty.

Ffantasia

And when þe lyknessys haue entred ynto my
fantasye, I haue had many fantastycal operacyons, both
160 wakynge & slepynge, gretly prouoknge mysilf & oþer
vnto synne. Wakynge: as yn spekynge wantounly, wrytynge,
endytynge, baladys makynge, syngynge, settynge,
dysgysynge & straunge aray vsynge. Also slepynge &
dremynge: be such forþou3tes, wordys & dedys semynge
165 þe seyde þyngys absent to be presente whoes lyknesses
be present, & þyngys vndoon to be doon.

170 And þus þe thre enmy<es> - the fende, þe fleysh &
þe worlde -, haue entred ynto þe thre pow<ers> of my
sowle, dyspoylynge he`m´ of her naturall powerys & of
a<ll> hyr goodys of grace.

Raticinatio

Ffyrste, blynded my reson of his trewe kn<ow>leche
& iuggement, & made me iugge falshode for trewth,

Voluntas

175 & cr<oo>kyd my wylle, ofte chesyngge euyl for good
& þe wers for bete<r>, noþer confourmyd hit to Goddys
wylle, but rathir commandyd all mend<..> subiecte &
bounden to wylle seruyse to execute þe euyl,

Memoria

180 & so <..> ympressyd yn my mynde such thynges þat
rathyr causeth vnreste þan reste, & makyth hym
foryetefull of such þynges þat ow<en> to be remembryd,
as þe ynumerable benefetys of God shewde & do<on> to me,
& also þo þynges þat I am bounden to do.

185 Off all whych I aske mercy.

169 hem] MS he`m´ with m written over deleted r.

181 þan] MS single character deleted at end of word.

Also thise seyde enmyes haue bounde me so harde with
þe lynked yrony cheyne of synne, þat I may no<t> ly3tly
breke out, neþer loose hit; whoes fyrste lynke is the
sotyll suggestyon of þe enmye, dayly offrynge to mynde
190 many<e> an horryble synne full colorably, - as who
tryndlyth a feyre appyll rotyn withyn afore a chylde,
f.44r apperynge withouteforth feyr | & swete, - to which
suggestyon I haue consentyd & coplyd anoþer lynke of
taryenge thou3tes yn þe seyde synne, to which I haue
195 coplyd þe þyrde lynke of ynordynat dylectacyon yn the
same; to which dilectacyon I haue copled þe [fourthe]
lynke of deliberatyf consente; to which I haue coplyd þe
[fifthe] lynke of dede be actuall execucyon of þe same;
to which I haue copled þe vi lynke of fals custome
200 gendryd be longe contynuance yn synne; to which I haue
copled þe vii lynke of verrey nede to vse that synne so
customyd; to which I haue copled the viii lynke of bolde
defense of synne.

&, thus bounden, my seyde enmyes haue tyed me to
205 the v parlyous branches of synne ayenste þe Holy Gost:
to presumpcyon, dyspeyr, impugnynge of trewth knawen,
despysyng of Goddys grace, & obstynacye.

Goode Lorde defende me frome þe syxte, þat I fynally

196 fourthe] MS iiii'th.

198 fifthe] MS v'the.

decesse not withoute repentance.

210 And be þe meanys of þise my seyde enmyes I, lyke a
cursyd persone, am dysseueryd be þe dredfull censurys of
þe chirche frome þe merytes of Crystes passyon, frome þe
sacramentys & suffragys of all holy chyrche, & frome þe
comenyng of all crysten people, so ferforth þat I was
215 allmoste brought ynto dyspeyr. Wherfor I mekly aske
mercy.

10 Precepta.

 Moreouyr þey woundyd me full greuously, makynge me
to breke þe x commandmentys, yn which synglerly I knawe
220 me gylty.

Primum.

 Ffirst, I haue not louyd, dredde & worshipped God
aboue all erthly creaturys, but often put on syde his
love for þe loue of hem, & for the tyme made hem my
225 goddys. Neþer I haue louyd hym with all my herte, yn
feythfull vndirstandyng his ynfynyte power withoute
errour; with all my wylle, withoute contraryenge, not
confourmyng my wylle & werkys to his wylle; noþer with
all my mynde, withoute foryetyng, but often foryett hym
230 & his benefetys, of which I aske lowly mercy.

Secundum.

235 I haue also clepyd to wytnesse veynly the most
blyssed name of my lorde God, his holy modyr, seyntes &
creaturys, withoute treuth yn conscyence, affermyng to
be trewe þat was not, & withoute rygthwysnesse, as
withoute necessarye causes; & often promyttyng to do
vnlefull thynges withoute constreynt of outwarde iugges
or iuggement of reason; not consideryng the dewe
240 circumstancys of sweryng, as whan, wher or for what
cause; vntrewly, forsweryng mysilf wytyngly full ofte,
oper while vpon a booke & oper holy thynges;
vnreuerently, disfiguryng & yn oper wyse departyng my
Lordys most blyssed body; customably, allmoste at euery
worde an othe; hastily, yn angre sewyng þe passyones of
245 yre; of which I aske mekly mercy.

Tercium.

250 Also I haue not kepte myn halyday: abstenyng frome
bodily laboures, neþer frome þe synfull werkys of the
soule; neþer I haue occupied mysilf yn holy & vertuows
workys. I haue yn the festyvall dayes doon bodily
f.44v laboures | that shulde not haue been doon but vpon þe
werkdayes, þat wer neþer werkys of pyte necessarye, neþer
for þe comynwele, - & made my seruantys & opir aboute me
doo the same, - as to ryde, to goo, to hunte, to havke,
255 to fysshe, to shote, to iuste, to wrastle, etcetera, &

soo made no dyuersyte betwyx þe holydayes & tyme ordeyned to mesure yn þe werkys of þe soule only, & þe werkedayes deputed to bodily laboures.

260 Secundely, I haue yn þe feestys doon synfull werkys: as often vndir þe colour of necessary recreacyon, haue vsyd dycyngge, cardyngge, shotyngge & oper games & pleyes, rathir for lucre & ynordynat luste þan for eny leefful<l> eende; & also be wanton talkyngge & contynance haue youen many synfull occasyons to oper.

265 Thirde, I haue not spendyd þe holy tyme yn holy werkys: not rysen noper comyn so tymely to matynnes as I wolde [haue] applyed to serue þe worlde; neper when I came thidyr hertyli prayed nor herde Goddys worde & his seruyse deuoutly, but grucchyd of þe length of hem, - & 270 dully, as oper while slepyngge & slombryngge, vnreuerently, as talkyd & iangle<d>, lettyngge mysilf & oper. And ofte vpon þe Sondayes, agenst þe laudable custome of crysten people, withoute masse, holy wat<er> or holy brede, no cause necessarye compellyngge, haue etyn & dron<k>, rathyr 275 desyryngge bodyly þan gostly foode, to þe euyll ensampl<e>. Wherof I aske God mercy.

267 haue] MS om.

Quartum

280 Also I haue broken þe fourthe coman<d>ment,
dyshonowrynge my fadyr & modyr, - naturall, spirituall,
supernaturall & eternall:

285 Naturall, þat gave me beynge, noryssh<ynge> &
techynge: in worde, be muche vnfyttynge language of
mo<ne> and reproff, & not pacyently haue suffred hem
speke, bot as <o...> to hem haue full contraryowsly
ympugnyd þer sayenges; noþer dede, helpynge hem yn her
nede, but rathir withdrawe from hem such goodes as þey
hadde, & often dysdeyned to her hem clepyd my
progenytourys.

290 Also I haue dishonoured my gostly fady<r> & modyr
holy chirche, which yevyth me, brought to nou<t> be
synne, a newe gracyows beynge yn my feyth, not sadly
beleuynge hyr doctryne neþer yn worde ne dede, but much
syny<.> language haue reryd vpon hem, peruertynge hyr
holynesse <&> blyssednesse to wrecchydnesse, & haue
295 oppynyd & argued hy<r> trewe techynge & vndirstandynge
to þe contrarye; and yn ded<e> I haue vexyd my gostly
fadres & troubyd, hurtynge þem bo<þe> yn her goodys &
fame.

278 fourthe] MS iiii'the. 290 chirche] MS 'chirche'.
290 which] MS scriptur canc. which.

300 Also I haue dyshonowryd my <su>pernaturall fadyr and
modyr, Cryste Iesus & all holy chirche, [pat] regendryth
me & yevyth me, brought to noughth be synne, <a> newe
gracyows beynge, gostly norysshynge & techynge: in <my>
herte, be vnstedfaste beleuynge; in worde, not dewly
louyng<e> & preysynge hem; in dede, vnreuerently
305 worshipped & seruyd <hem>.

I haue also dyshonowryd allmyghty God my fadyr
eternall, <pat> made me of nowgth, by myshope, & my modyr
all holy ch<ir>che triumphant pat grantyth me hyr
herytage & noryss<hed> me be verey hope to be receyvyd
310 f.45r fynally ynto hyr lappe | of eternall coseruacyon.

Off all þise I crye God mercye.

[Quintum]

315 Also I haue broken þe [fifthe] comandmente, kyllynge
my broderys & sustrys dyuers wyse, bothe bodyli & gostly,
as yn withholdynge necessarye sustynance frome hem yn tyme
of nede, & suffyrd þem to perysse bothe bodyli & gostly
for lakke of doctryne & correccyon.

320 Also gostly, be privey haterede, wyllynge &
desyrynge harde deth. Also gostly, yevynge wykked
ensample to othir & lyenge vpon þem, & so [be] detraccyon

299 my] MS y canc. my. 300 pat] MS illeg. 310
Latin notes at base of fols.44v and 45r not transcribed,
as not forming part of this text. 312 quintum] MS
missing. 313 fifthe] MS v'the. 320 be] MS illeg.

cavsed þem to lese þeyr gode name & fame, be þe which þey
lyved, kyllynge mysilf & also þe person disclavndryd, &
all glad herarys, wyth oo stroke of my venemows tonge.

325 Also bodily, be fals iuggement or procurement for
eny cause [of] þe ynnocent to be condempnyd to the deth,
oper be harde presonement or be peynfull & rygorows
punyshmentys besydys þe lawe. Also not abhorynge t[o]
shede þe blode of my kynde, woundynge to the deth
withoute cause; oper consentyd to priuey venemows
330 yntoxicacyons, or caused oppressyon or destruccyon of
childre, afore þe birth or aftyr, or suffred hem to
peryshe withyn vii yer þorou3 neglygent kepynge or
attendance.

Of all which I aske God mercy.

335 **Sixtum**

The syxte, I haue doon lecherye many maner of wyse;
commytted advoutrye bodily & gostly.

Ffirst gostly, knyttynge my soule, Crystes spouse,
to the fende, þorou3 dilectacyon & consentynge to synne.

340 Also bodyli, I beyng weddyd & so hauynge no power
of myn owen body, haue take it to oper þan to that person
to whom I was bownde; not ferynge þe dredfull sentence

325 of] MS om. 327 to] letter o illeg. in MS.

& profecye þat the holy martyr Boneface wrotte to þe
kinge of Ynglonde, saynge that yeff Englysh men breke
345 hyr wedloke, þere shall sprynge of hem wykkyd seede gotten
yn þat synne, whome God shall hate, noþer of hem þeyr
fadrys shall haue worship, noþer þey shall be stronge yn
feyth noþer yn bateyle.

I haue also mysvsyd the sacrament of wedlok with my
350 felowe dyuersly, not vsyng hit for þe ende God ordeyned
it ffor multiplicacyon of þe worlde to Goddys pleasure,
neþer yeldynge my dewte dewly askyd, neþer for þe
eschewynge of oþer ynconuenyencys & more evyll, but
rathir for luste & vnlefull concupyscence of verrey
355 freyelte full vnreuerently, with serpentynes
blaundysshynge sacyate my lybidyows appetyte.

Also yn vnlefull wyse, as oþer to bestly &
dampnably, or not most secretly but withoute
shamefastnesse.

360 Also yn vnlefull tyme: as yn the holy vygylls of
God & his seyntes, yn which I shulde haue absteyned frome
such at þe reuerence of hem that suffred harde peynes yn
hyr bodyes þe seyde tymes; & yn tyme forbode be the
chirche; and yn all oþer tymes of contagyows seknesse.
365 Of which I aske God mercy.

I also soole & syngle haue synned yn fornycacyon,
f.45v comenynge with oþer soole & syngle, demynge | that synne
defowlynge bothe soule & body lesse þan oþer defowlynge

the sowle oonly.

370 Also yn defloracyon, & lesynge of my virgynyte, and
yn inceste, hauynge no consideracyon to þe nyghnesse of
consanguinyte, affynyte, gossyprede, or any maner
sybrede.

375 Also yn sacrylege, as with ordred persoones
consecrate to Goddys worshipp.

 Also vsed þe synne lyke a comyn persoon, or yn any
wyse subuertynge þe dewe ordyr of nature or Goddys
ordynance. Of which I aske mekly mercy.

Septimum.

380 The [seuenthe] I haue doon thefte yn many maner
wyse: yn withdrawynge my neyghborys goodys & consentyng
þerto, & withholdynge hem be vndewe detencyon; yn
withdrawynge or withholdynge any dewte frome holy chirche
or holy place, as tythes or oper; & wrongfully
385 appropriynge ded mennys goodes to myn vse ayenst hyr
testamentys & laste wylles, - for which I am acursyd,
knowynge þat it is werse to stele frome the ded þat may
not helpe themsilf, þan fro þe lyvynge þat may.

390 Also vnlefully withholden goodes fownden, & not
restoryd noper doon my devour to knawe þe verrey aw3nerys

380 seuenthe] MS vii'the.

to whome þey awghte to be restoryd.

Also withholden goodes borowyd to þe lenarys gret
hurte & harme, & also wrongfully getyn goodys be my
predecessoures; & withholden & [a]brygged my seruantys &
laborerys wagys trewly deseruyd; and I some tyme, beyng
395 a seruant or a laborer receyvynge my hole wage not trewly
deseruyd, do thefte.

I haue also doon þeft<e> be vyolente extorcyon, be
fals purchace, forfeitures, eschetys, pleyntys, pleyes,
400 endytementys, mercymenyntys, & be many oper uniuerte
exaccyons.

I haue also doon thefte be fraude, deceyte & gyle
yn vttrance [of] badde for goode, mysrekenynge,
myscovntynges, & be fals weyghtes & mesurys, & periurye.

405 Also be vserye, sellynge derrer for þe loone, &
lenynge my money or chaffer, to respyte þe paymente for
an encrece.

Also yn symonye, yevynge & changynge spirituelle for
temporalle, oper þe contrarye, as I shall say more
410 plenary after yn couetyse.

Of which I aske mercy.

394 abrygged] MS ymbrygged.

403 of] MS om.

Octavum.

The [eighth], I haue borun fals wytnesse: ayenste
God, contraryenge my feyth; ayenste the chirche,
415 contraryenge þe trewe doctryne þerof; ayenste mysilf yn
bostyng<e> & avauntynge of dedys doon, vndoon, & thynges
to be had, not had; & propyrly ayenste my neyghbor, bothe
falsly belyenge vpon hym to his gret hurte or sklawndyr,
& also sparynge þe trewth þe which seyde & knawen myth
420 haue been his promocyon, wher I kepte sylence ageynste
charyte & seyde not of þe trewth as I myght haue doon.
Of þe which I aske God mercy.

Nonum et decimum.

In the [ninthe] & [tenthe], I haue offendyd be
425 vnlefull concupyscence, bothe fleyshly & worldly,
desyrynge my neyghboures hurte: yn that persone þat is
oone with hym; yn his seruauntys or worldly goodys; or
yn his goodys vnmevable, as londes, rentys & oper; or
mevable, as fees, offyces, golde, syluer & oper. Of all
430 which I aske hertyli merc<y>.

413 eighth] MS viii'the.

424 ninthe] MS ix'the.

419 myth] MS y canc. myth.

tenthe] MS x'the.

Septem peccata

I am also dedly wounded þorou³ þe vii dedly synnes.

f.46r Ffyrste | be pryde of herte, thynkyng mysilf to passe
all oper: yn goodes of grace, as yn love, deuocyon,
435 trewth & ryghtwysnesse, & oper syngler vertues yoven of
God; in goodes of nature, as yn wytte, vndirstandyng,
kunnyng, counceyle, wysdom & oper of þe soule.

Bona [.....]

440 Also yn goodys of nature of þe body, as yn eloquente
spekyng, yn facundyte, & pronuncyacyon, yn redyng, yn
curyosyte, yn syngyng, yn strength, bewte & comlynes of
person, noblesse of blode, ientylnesse of kynrede, plente
of children, abundance of herytage & oper.

Bona f[ortunae]

445 In goodes of fortune, as yn abundance of londys &
rentys, offyces, fees, tresour, jewellys, clothyng &
onourmentys, hors, harneys & catell, lordship, frendship
& oper. And for þe excesse yn thise, I haue desyred &
loked to bee þe more worshippede, dredde & obeyed þan
450 oper my bettres; & so presemyng & puttyng mysilf

438 bona] subsequent words missing on outer edge of leaf
in MS. 444 fortunae] MS missing.

ferthir yn preece amongeste worthi, lokynge after
reuerence & worship yn the presence of þe people, to
speke firste, to sytte above, to be obeyed & preferryd.

455 Also yn veynglorye rehersynge my commendable dedys,
avauntyng & reioycynge when I haue been magnyfyed, &
looved wele flaterarys & glosarys, & hated my sothsayerys
& tellarys off my defautes.

460 Also yn vnbuxumnesse, disobeyenge þe preceptys of
God & mynystres of the chirche, & byddynges of fadyr &
modyr, naturall & spirituall, þe kynges lawes & lawfull
ordynancys off sovereynes, & made conspyracyes,
confederacyons & ynsurreccyones, & wylfully of
frowardnesse latte to be doon þat is comanded & [caused]
to be doon þat is forboden.

465 Also yn grett boldnesse to synne, bynkyng no peryl
to doo as evyll or werse þan oper, & as longe or longer
to contynewe þeryn, noþer dredynge vengeaunce heer, noþer
þe peynes off helle.

470 Also yn ypocrysy, shewynge mysilf more vertuows
withouteforth yn lokynge, goynge, spekyng & oper
demenynge þan withynforthe, as more holy, trewe,
ryghtwys, chaste, & yn oper, yn comenyng & talkynge of

463 caused] MS om.

all thise, & despysynge hyr vyces.

475 Also yn fastynge, almesse yevynge, praynge & penance
vsynge, to thentente to be preysed & holde such oon.

Also yn yndignacyon, disdeynynge to her þe power
speke, or I to hem but yn scoorn.

480 Also yn vnshamefastnesse, avauntyng of my synne &
delytyng to speke of hem yn audyence, prouokynge hem to
þe same.

Also yn sturdynesse, excusynge my defavtes, noþer
wyllynge to knawe hem, neþer to be correctyd of hem be
my bettres.

Of all which I crye God mercy.

485 **Inuidia**

Also I haue synned yn envye iiii maner wyse:
reioycynge of my neyghboures aduersyte, seyng hem whome
I hate leese hyr goodes, good fame & frendys, falle ynto
seknesse, dawnger or yndignacyon of lordship, or ynto eny
490 oþer ynfortune;

Also I haue sorowed & grucchid my neyghboures
encrece yn vertu, yn fame, yn worship, yn getynge of
goodes of fortune, & ymagynynge menys to hurte or ympayr
hem;

490 ynfortune] MS ynfortunye.

495 Also yn detraccyon, tellynge tales both soth & fals,
berynge euylly thynges abowte, dyscoverynge secrete
cownceyles, hydynge trowth to be knawen, praysynge þe
f.46v vycyows | & dispreysynge þe vertuows, turnynge þe good
wordys & dedys of hem that I hated to evyll entente;

500 Also I haue sow3ne discorde, fals tales & reportes
born abowte betwyx partyes, & made frendly louerys [to
be] at þe debate.

Of all which I aske lowly mercy.

Ira

505 Also I haue synned yn wrath, bothe yn herte, worde
& dede, vii maner wyse: yn herte, hauynge privy hate,
lowrynge chere, eschewynge þe compane of hem þat I hate,
ymagenynge malyciously to revenge me vpon hem, & fynally
some tyme made a feyned love & Iudas cusse;

510 Also yn malycyows language with a fervent spyryte,
rehersynge all evyll þat I knewe, scornynge, reprovyng,
despysynge & shamyng hem;

515 Also yn revengynge mysilf yn dede, doynge all my
bysynesse to shewe myn outtermest<e> cruelte withoute
mercy;

Also yn fersnesse, withoute deliberacyon or

501-2 to be] MS om.

506 wyse] MS of canc. wyse.

rygthfull procese of lawe, of a fervent passyon of yre,
angrynge or smytynge or opirwyse my vengeaunce
executynge;

520 Also yn bodyly or gostly kyllynge be prevy mordyr,
ymagenynge priuy meanes or ponyshmentys to deth, othir
opynly be fals appelynge or iugemente, & yn all oper wyse
as it is rehersyd yn þe [fifthe] commaundment;

525 Also yn ympacyence, not suffrynge resonable
correpcyon neper correccyon, chastysynge, reprovynge of
my frende or of my bettyr for my defawtes, - thynkynge
all such ageynst my wylle wronges, þove reson deme hem
to be doon;

530 Also yn blasphemye, sore grucchynge ageynst God yn
trybulacyon, seknesse & dysease, bothe þynkynge or
sayenge þat God is vnrygthfull & vnmercyfull, ffor he
wole not relece me of all suche at my desyre.

Of which I aske hym mercy.

Auaricia

535 I haue also synned yn couetyse, be vnlefull gadrynge
togydre worldly goodys, be vnlefull kepynge, & be synfull
& wantovnly spendynge of hem, yn viii maner wyse:
Ffirste yn mawmete<.> settynge, fastnynge & lovynge more

523 fifthe] MS v'the.
viii] MS viii'the.

530 or] MS of or.

537

erthly rychesse þan God or soule heel<.>, hauynge a gret
540 pleasure to shewe or handle & avawnte of hem, & to gadyr
tresour ouyr nede, not determenynge to what goode ende
or vse, but oonly to be holde ryche & ryall, - wherfor
ofte sythe by Goddes rygthwysnesse I haue be dyspoyled
& depriuyd of suche be dyuerse meanys;

545 Also yn ambycyon, vsynge sleychtes & colorable
meanes to enryche mysilf, as yn plesynge, veyne
preysynge, glosynge and flaterynge, to thentente to haue
lordship, to be avaunsed, opir to get<e> rewarde, - &
often haue refused smale yeftes, vpon hope to haue
550 grettyr;

Also yn nygardship, hauynge suffycyent, & sparyd to
spende when nede & worship requyred, bothe of mysilf, my
husbonde, howseholde & vpon oper my symple kynne, - neþer
I haue had pyte of þe poor, & doon lytell for þe loue of
555 God of whom I haue all receyved;

Also yn treson, beyng fals & dysceyvable to theym
þat trustyd yn me, oper for mede or avaunsemente, & ofte
lyke a fals traytour haue solde þe trewth;

560 Also yn ravyne, takynge my neyghboures good
vyolently or be tyrannye ayenste his wylle;

Also yn bryngynge vp newe customes, exaccyons,
tallages, taxes, or dymes & subsydyes to ofte & to

553 husbonde] appears to have been struck through by a
later hand.

onerows, & dysheretyngre trewe possessyonerys & trewe
heyres;

565 f.47r Also yn sacrylege, withdrawyngre or | withholdyngre
goodes or dewteys of þe churche, or consentyng[e] oþer
fauoryngre such, ffor which I am acursyd;

570 Also yn vserye, lenyngre my money or chaffer to
thentente to take yeftys or presentys for þe loone
priuyly or opynly, or to take or to yeve encrece for þe
loone be eny maner couenawnte expressyd or withoute
entendyd ffor the which I am acursyd;

 Also yn symonye, yevyngre or takyngre, oþer changyngre
þe temporall for spirituall, for þe which I am acursyd.

575 Wherfor I aske mercy etcetera.

Gula

 I haue also synned yn glotonye iiii maner wyse:
Ffirst, hauyngre a gredy howndys appetyte, which I haue
sacyate ofte etyngre & drynkynge ouer mesure & nede,
580 hastyngre me to ete or drynke afore dewe tyme & howr, -
& setyn longe þeratte, etyngre to hastily, vncurteysly,
vnmanerly & devouryngly, yn poynte to choke mysilf;

 Also yn surfete & superfluyte, receyvynge dowble
sustynance not nedfull, & þat wolde haue suffysed bothe
585 to me & oþer, hauntyngre tauernys, vsyngre brekefastnes,
rersoperys & oþer gret ryotysnesse oute of tyme, & often

566 consentyngre] last letter missing in MS.

been dronke & browgth mysilf yn a dayli custome of þe
same, & so loste my wyttes & sewyd þe bestly passyones, -
& þorou³ such pamprynge & ouercharynge of nature I haue
590 often lyke an hownde prouokyd mysilf to vometynge, thus
wastyng 'bothe' nature & my ovyn crysten lyflode &
sustynance;

Also yn lusty, plesaunte, delytyows & curyows metys
& drynkes, ymagenyng & bisily studyenge to ordeyne such
595 delycate & curyows deynteys, rathir to fede þe appetyte
than to quenche hungyr, hauynge gret luste & delyte to
her, see & speke & taste such & to be seruyd of hem, -
& yn especyall with dyuerse sawcys, with frutes, spyces,
swete wynes vpon fastynge dayes, þynkyng noo goode so
600 wele to be spendyd.

Of which I aske entyerly mercy.

Accidia

I haue also synned yn slewth, viii maner wyse,
beynge vnlusty, dulle, werye & hevy, bothe yn body &
605 soule to serue God or þe worlde:

Ffyrste yn sluggyshnesse, loth to travele, lovyng
muche reste, muche sleep, lyenge longe yn my bedde, comyn

591 nature] MS my canc. nature.
viii'the.

603 viii] MS

late to Goddys seruyse, `as leeuve' not to come noþer to
her it as to do, & herynge it withoute sauour & with
610 lytyll deuocyon, - often slombred & slepte when I shulde
haue prayed;

Also yn tendyrnesse & softenesse, delytynge yn softe
clothnge, beddynge, often waysshnge, bathnge, kembynge
& cherysshnge my body so tendyrly þat I may suffyr noon
615 hardnesse noþer penance for Goddys love, - as loth to go
a pylgyrmage barfote, barhede, wollewarde, ffaste pray,
enclayne or knele vpon þe grownde, or to suffir colde yn
eny parte of þe body, oþer to go to vysite þe seeke &
nedy;

620 Also yn ydylnesse, lothynge all vertuows occupacyon
& lovynge veyn werkys withoute gostly profyte, as to
pleye att dyce, chesse, kardys, shote, wrastle, iuste &
opir owt of tyme, as yn tyme of Goddys seruyse, oute of
measure, as to longe or to customably, neþer for a dewe
625 ende, as for recreacyon pryncypally;

Also yn rechelesnesse or negligence, takynge noon
hede to þat I am bownde lyke a crysten man, as to go to
the chirche, & yn especyall yn the holydayes to her
dyvyne seruyse, sey my preyerys attentyfly, dressynge my
630 mynde yn þe begynnnge & attendynge þerto for þe tyme of
f.47v prayer, noþer while I say or heer | quykkene mysilf & my

608 as leeuve] MS `as leeuve' fore.

dulle spiryte to deu[oc]youn & swetnesse yn the love of
God, neper serchynge my synfull thou3tes, wordes & dedys
dayli, - thought, spoken & wrougth, - havynge an ey3e
635 allwey to mysilf & to noon oper;

Also yn delay, lyenge longe yn synne, loth to
repente, lother to be shryven, & lotheste to doo penance
& to restore etcetera, but dyfferr all þise tylle I falle
ayene, - & thus contynewe yn synne frome day to day,
640 frome yere to yere, demynge yn that delay noon peryll,
but presumynge at þe laste ende to repente & make aseth
for all þat is vncerteyne;

Also yn arowghnesse, levynge many good purposes &
dedys for perylles þat I mygth falle ynto be lyklynnesse,
645 - as for drede of seknesse leftte pylgrymage, for drede
of poverte almes, for doute of feblenesse fastynge &
oper;

Also yn dispeyr, thynkynge my freelte so grett þat
I may not withstonde noon temptayon, & so haue suffred
650 þe fende to worche all his wylle yn me, & I sewynge hit
so mysavysed, lyke Cayn or Iudas, haue at some tymes
demyd my synne more þan Goddys mercy & worthi to be
dampned & ympossib<le> to be sauyd, - wherfor nowe wele
avysed I beseche hym to take me to hys mercy as my full
655 beleve is yn hym;

Also yn werynesse, beyng yrke yn Goddis seruyse,
362 deuocyon] letters oc illeg. in MS.

preyerys & oper goode dedys.

Of all which I aske mekly mercy.

Luxuria

660 Also I haue synned yn all þe branches of lecherye,
lyke as I rehercyd afore yn the sexte commawndmente, &
þerwith polluted my body & my soule both slepyng &
wakyng be dyuers meanes & causes: sometyme be ouermuche
pamperyng of my freel fleysh & soules enmye with
665 delycyows metys, drynkes, sleep & ease; sometyme be
premedytacyons of dyuers occasyons yoven & taken afore
be synfull & wantowne ragyng, whos ymagynacyons
remaynyng yn the tresour hows of my remembrance when þe
fantasye roweth þeryn, meveth my body slepyng & wakyng
670 to purge hymself of þat he is ouerchargyd; and sometyme
wylfully prouokyng nature therto.

Of which, & of all oper causes of pollucyones caused
be eny of my gostly enmyes which causeth dowte, wheþer
þey be dedly or noo, with þer effectys I commytte to
675 Goddes iuggemente & mercy.

Articuli fidei

I haue not also holy belevyd yn God my leche, þat
he may & wole hele me, ffor I haue been full waueryng
yn all þe artycles of my feyth.

680

Septem ad divinitatem

685

690

695

Ffirste, I haue not sadly beleuyd to be oon God yn substance, font [of] alle plenyttude, of whome spryngeth all power, kunnyng & goodnesse & all perfeccyones; neper yn God þe fadyr, neper yn God þe sone, neper yn God þe Holy Goste; & þat þise iii distyncte yn persones be oon verrey God yn substance, & euerych of hem to be withoute begynnyng & ende, ynfenyte, vnchangeable & allmyghty. In which I haue fowly erryd, belevyng yn charmys, wycchecraftys, sorcerye, nycromancye, enchaumentys, sekynge helpe of such, or to haue knowleche of þynges withdrawen, oper to knawe fortunes or ynfortunyes comyng. Also obseruyng dyuers rytes of gentyles & paynemes, gydyng my werkys after þe covrs of sterrys, planetys & sygnes, bothe yn byeldyng<e>, eryng, sowyng, settyng of treys, & medycynall herbys gadryng with yncantacyones; eschewyng dayes to iorney yn, to wedde or to make maryage yn, & many such oper.

700

Nethyr I haue sadly beleuyd yn all holy chirche & yn all þe sacramentys þerof, neper yn oper thynges determenyd be þe chirche to be holden & tawgth, neper þat it is stablysshyd & made so holy be God þat it may not be euyll yn all partyes, neper þe feyth þerof

681 font of alle] MS fontalle.

outtyrly fayle.

f.48r Nethir yn comenynge of seyntes | as to rythwys & all
705 worthily receyvynge þe sacramentys, & yn especy[all] þe
 sacrament of þe awter, to whome gret grace is comendyd
 yn þis lyf, & also gret glorye to seyntes yn heuyn.

 Neþer yn foryevenesse of synne, þat God bothe may
& wole foryeve yef it be askyd.

710 Neþir yn þe [seventhe] article of our laste
 reserreccyon, not sadly beleuynge þat God almyghty shall
 commawnde myn angell to gadyr togedyr þe same materyall
 duste, powdre & aysshes ynto whome my body was resoluyd,
 & to refourme it ynto a dewe staturee of þe moste bewtuows
715 shappe & bettyr þan euer it was yn afore, withoute eny
 deformyte, yef I shall be sauyd, - & oþerwyse yef hit
 shal be dampnyd, - & þan to ympresse yn hit þe same sowle
 þat quykned & rewlyd it afore, & so to ryse yn body
 gloryfyed yef I shal be sauyd yn full age of Cryste, þat
720 is xxxii yerys & iii monethys, so to receyve eternall
 ioye for my fynall rewarde; & oþerwyse, euerlastynge
 peyne after my demerytes.

Septem ad humanitatem

I haue also erryd yn the vii oþer artycles

705 especyall] last three letters missing in MS. 710
seventhe] MS vii'the. 718 to] MS so canc. to.

725 concernynge þe manhode of Cryste, not sadly growndynge
my feyth yn þe trewe maner of his conceyuynge, howe þat
þe blyssed Trynyte dyd chese þe moste pure dropes of
blode yn the virgynes wombe for þe materyall substance
of his moste blyssed body, & þer disposed & fourmed it
730 sodeynly to receyve a resonable soule, which of þe seyde
moste blyssyd Trynyte was fourmed & ympressyd yn the same
ynstante of tyme, and þan vny'e'd his godhede þerto
ynseperably yn þe same ynstante of tyme; and þat he toke
þis nature wylfully with straunge condicyones of dyuers
735 penalyteys, bothe yn body & sowle, as with mortalyte &
grucchyng to dye.

Neþer sadly beleuyd yn his byrth, how he be þe
specyall worchynge of þe Holy Goste entyrd & essewyd the
pure vyrgynes wombe, hyr vyrgynyte remaynyng hoole &
740 vnhurte lyke as þe sonne entryth & passyth þorou3 þe glas
withoute hurte or brekyng of hit.

Neþer I haue beleuyd sadly yn þe artycle of his
passyon, howe þat he beyng God & man wylfully suffred
peynfull passyon yn all partyes of his blyssed body &
745 dyed to pay a suffycyaunte rawnson for all synne.

Neþer yett verreyli yn his descense to helle, how
þe sowle of Cryste, vnyd with þe godhede yn þe ynstante
of his departynge, descendyd to purgatorye & to lybum
patrum, þe godhede with þe body remaynyng also

750 yn þe sepulcre, ther beyngē to þe howr of his
reserrecyon, & þan brou3te out with hym all þe
prysonerys þer beyngē.

Neþer yn his gloryows reserrecyon, how my maker
Cryste Iesu, þat was afore his deth yn body passible &
755 mortall be the power of his godhede, reysed hymself frome
deth to lyff yn body gloryfyed ympassible & ymmortall.

Neþer yn his ascensyon, þat he ascendyd with
multytude of angellys mynystryngē & of holy seyntes
rysyngē with hym yn body & soule, & with all soules
760 decessyngē yn grace frome hys reserrecyon to his
ascensyon, presentyngē his prisonerys dere boughte to his
Fadyr.

Neþer yn his laste dome, to þe whiche Cryste shal
sodeynly come yn þe mownte of Caluarye with all angellys
765 & seyntes mynystryngē & assystyngē, and commawndyngē his
archangell with þe trompe of hys moste ferfull voyce to
clepe to þe dome bothe quykke & dede, & he be þe
auctoryte of his godhede shal deme hem, shewyngē bothe
þe godhede & þe manhode to hem þat shal be sauýd yn token
770 f.48v of verrey blys, & oonly | the manhode to þe dampned, yn
token of p[urdi]cyon.

Of all which I crye hym mercy.

171 purdicyon] letters urdi illeg. in MS.

[Virtutes theologicae et cardinales]

775 Also I haue not put full truste yn the medycynes of
my souereyn leche Cryste Iesu, as yn the softe oyle made
of the iii theologycall & iiii cardynall vertues.

780 Ffirste, not stablysshynge mysilf sadly yn the
groundes of feyth, as þat holy scripture is made, & þe
trewe knowleche þerof openyd, expowned, & declaryd, be
holy seyntys and doctoures þorou3 specyall ynspyracyon
of þe Holy Goste þat may not err, - to which declaracyon
yn thynges pertenyng to my feyth I awe to leeuue sadly,
settyng oparte my naturall reson, wytte & felyng; &
þerwith to beleve þat allmyghty God, þat is maker of all
785 lawes and rewles of nature, & hath sett hem yn ordre &
course, may & doeth dispence with his seyde lawes &
rewles when it pleasith hym & als ofte, and suspendyth
bothe þe ordre & course of þem as it apperyth bothe yn
the artycles of þe feyth & yn the sacramentys.

790 **Errores**

I haue also ofte sythes erryd yn the conclusyones
of þe artycles of þe feyth, affermyng þat fornicacyon
with oþer been no dedly synne, & ofte fallen ynto
erroures & heresyas be þe fendys temptacyones & fals

773 virtutes...cardinales] damaged in MS.

795 heretykes opynyones & oper synystre doctrynes; & ofte
leuyd more to naturall reson than to feyth passynge all
reson, whych neper kan neper may be preuyd be reson.

Off which I aske mercy.

Misericordia et Caritas

800 Also I haue not sadly trustyd þat þe ynfenyte mercy
of God may save me & I wyll sece of synne; neper yn
charyte kepyng þe dewe ordre þerof, as lovyng God more
for his benefetys þan for hymsilf þat is all goodnesse
and perfeccyon; neper my neyghbour for his vertu, but
805 rathir for his benefet comenyd to me, þat is a
marchaundys love dere boughte.

Quattor virtutes cardinales

Nepir I haue wysely gyded mysilf be þe iiii virtues
cardynall.

810 Prudencia

Ffirste be prudence, sadly consideryng the
disposycyon of syngler thynges present, neper prudently
remembryng myschevys paste yn eschewyng lyke
ynconuenyencys, neper wyttyli þynges comyng to be doon,
815 beyng redy allwey with my lampelygth full of oyle of

virtues to entre with be prudente virgynes.

Temperancia

820 Neper kepte temperance yn my werkys, lyvynge a chaste lyff, restreynynge me frome ynordynat lustys of be fleysse.

Sobrietas

Neper sobyrenesse, but receyved withoute mesure & nede bodily sustynance.

[Moderacio]

825 Neper moderacyon, dewly moderynge my desyrynge, my desyre yn worl<dly>, rychesse, neper moderyd my feruente passyones of be soule; neper the bodyli execucyon, restreynynge be hondes frome strykynge vnleffull, & withdrawynge be tonge frome superfluows talkynge & oper.

830 Ffortitudo

Neper yn gostly strength, myghtily resistynge be fervente passyones of yre & vnleffull concupiscence; neper paciently suffred iniuryes & aduersyte; neper cowthe kepe mysilf vpryghte, - as be dyce, howe so euer

824 moderacio] MS moderacionem.

835 he be caste & what chance euer appere, - but often gretly
murmured & grucchyd ayenste such; neper putt mysilf yn
gyberdye for the comen wele, iustyfyenge trowghte, but
been full tyme rows to correcte & rebuke synne.

Iusticia

840 Neper dressynge my werkys be rygthwysnesse, yeldynge
to God honour, loove, & feer dewe vnto hym, neper to be
powerys of my soule, - as to my blynde erroneows reson,
trewe knowleche & iuggemente; to my croked & frowarde
wylle, evennesse & conformyte; & to my foryettfull mynde,
845 f.49r sadde remembrance | of benefytys.

Neper to serche nor to correcte the defawtes of þe
book of my conscyence.

Neper to þe fleysse dewe chastysemente, neper to
myn neyghbour pyte & compassyon.

850 Neper to þe worlde, hys transitorye rychesse borrowed
for a tyme with a streyte acownt of hyr mysspendynge.

Neper to þe fende, synne dewe tyll hym, as to þe
firste auctour þeroff, of which I crye God mercy.

Septem [Sacramenta]

855 Neper I haue sadly belevyd yn þe oper sharpe
medycynes sanatyve made of wyne, [ip....] out of þe vii
sacramentys.

Baptisma

860 Ffirste yn my bapteme, tak[yng] the name of Cristys
seruaunt, vsynge outwarde sygnes an[swerin]ge to þe same,
but withynforth not lyved þerafter. Neper I cri[sten]ynge
& confermynge children haue doon teche þem þeyr beleve,
neþir to kepe hem frome perylles as þe chirche
commawndeth.

865 Euk[arista]

870 I haue also not sadly dressyd my worship & entente
to þat þat awgth to be beleuyd yn, þe moste holy
sacramente of þe awter, but raper to þat þat is oonly
seene with þe bodily ey3e, neper sadly beleuynge yn þe
blyssed Trynyte with angellys & seyntes assistynge yn
tyme of þe consecracyon be his auctoryte & dewe
mynystracyon of þe preste saynge þe sacramentall wordys,
changeth þe substance of brede & wyne ynto þat ylke lorde
God & man lyvynge þat was yncarnate & born of þe virgynes

854 sacramenta] MS illeg. 856 ip....] this word illeg.
in MS. 859 takyng] last three letters illeg. in MS.
860 answeringe] letters swerin illeg. in MS.
861 cristenyng] letters sten illeg. in MS.

875 wombe, and þat dyed, roose, & ascendyd vndir þat ilke
quante þat he was of when he consecrate his owen moste
blyssed body, alle hole ymportyble yn all þe hoole hooste
& yn euery partye, þove it be broke, - as þe sonne yn þe
hoole myrrour, & yn euery partye, þove it be broke, & as
880 þe worde of God outtryd be þe prechour is all oon & hoole
yn hym & yn eche herer. I haue also erryd not reuerently
abydyng & knelyng vntyll þe sacramente be receyved
vndyr bothe lyknesse, but ofte goon my wey aftir the
firste receyvyng.

885 Also vnworthily receyvyng it yn synne or wylle to
synne; vndevoutly with lytell deuocyon; vndiscretly, not
dyscernyng betwyx þat heuynly gostly foode & bodily
sustynance.

Penitencia

890 I haue also erryd yn þe sacramente of penance, not
had so grett & a contynuall sorowe for my synne as I haue
delyted þeryn, & ofte sorowed more for drede of deth &
paynes þan for myn vnkyndnesse ayenste God be contynuall
recidyvacyon, oþer for lesyng þe grace and glorye of
895 God. Neþer I haue chosen me a trewe yndifferente iugge
to be confessyd to, but rathir suche oone þat neþer
cowthe, wolde, neþer durste displese, & not outtryd þe
troughte, but raper excused me, noþer confessyd me hoolly
of all, but tolde parte to oone & parte to anothir. Neþer

900 I haue obseruyd my medycynes & penance enioyned, but
often grucchid & delayed hit, tyll I haue fallen ynto
synne ayene oper foryete hit. Neber I haue att all tymes
been yn full wylle & purpose outtyrly to eschewe þe
meanes & occasyones of synne, as of evyll companye,
905 suspecte places, oper languages, & such oper þat shulde
ynduce me to synne ynevitably; & eke to restore vnleffull
getyn goodes as I am bownde.

Vnctio extrema

I haue also erryd yn þe sacramente of aneylynge,
910 takynge lytle hede how it awghte to be mynystred oones
yn the yere yeff seknesse contynewe & peryll appere, &
how þat his vertu is to do & putt away venyall synne &
f.49v to restore þe seek sonnere to | bodyli helthe yeff it
please God þat þey [s]hall lyve; & yeff þey shal dye, to
915 a more gracyows disposicyon to gadre þeyr mynde togyder
yn þeyr ende towarde God.

[Ordo]

I haue also erryd yn the sacramente of holy ordre
of presthode, demynge þe vertu of mynystracyon of þe
920 sacramentys to haue procedyd only fro þe goodnesse &

914 shall] first letter illeg. in MS.
illeg.

918 ordo] MS

holynesse of the mynystres, & not of þe auctorite of God
grauntyd to hem; so demynge vs vn^{sure} wheþer we haue
receyved our sacramentys or noo. syth we be vn^{sure} of þe
925 holynesse & goodnesse of the mynystres, & not of þe
auctoryte of God com^{my}ttyd & grauntyd to hem withoute
empeyrynge of hyr vertu, - the badde only to hyr owen
hurte, & þe goode to hyr bothe wele.

I haue also withdrawe dewe reuerence & obeysance þat
I awgth to haue doon þerto, for þe demerytes & hate of
930 þe persoone only, & for þat cause haue often disclaundred
it etcetera.

Matrimonium

I also ordred yn the holy sacramente of matrymonye,
haue offendyd thre maner wyse:

935 Ffirste, yn vnleffull contractys makynge, demynge
þat a lattyr contracte with fleyshly knowleche sewynge
after afore contracte lawfully made, makyth matrymonye
& fordoeth þe firste contracte lawfully made. Which is
a gret errour, ffor aftyr two persones consente eyther
940 to oper with good deliberacyon, & þervpon expresse þeyr
consente after þe fourme ordeyned be þe chirche, þer is
verrey matrymonye afore God, thove þey neuer comen
fleyshly togydyr, & also yn þe chirche, & yeff it be not
contraryed of euer eyther or preved be wytnesse; and alle
945 oper contractys sewynge with fleyshly knowleche been

advoutrye.

Also yn vnreuerently vsynge this sacramente, yn vnlawfull tyme forboden, in vnreuerente wyse, & for an vnlawfull ende, as it is afore seyde.

950 Also yn procurynge, laborynge, ymagenynge, oper iuggynge an vnlawfull deuorce. Of which I crye God mercye.

Thus I haue openyd my woundes, shewynge & tellynge howe I haue erryd yn the[m], & also bothe þi medycynes, & not sadly belevyd to haue been curyd, be þe vertu of þe & hem. But now wele avysed, I beleue bothe yn þe & hem, & hertely I pray þe to heele me, begynnynge þe prayer þat þou commaundyte with feyth, hope & charyte. Wheryn þou wolt not be clepyd ovr God, a name of ynfynyte power, neþer our Lorde, a name off grett feer & drede, & yett þou arte bothe. But þou byddest vs clepe the ffadir, a name of love & pyte, byndynge vs thy children naturally to loue the.

955
960

<Prohemium>

965 Also þou wolte be clepyd Our fadyr to putt vs yn hope þat þou wolte as a propyr fadre haue pyte on vs thi children. Thou wolte also þat we knowleche þe to be, whome we may neþer see neþir be reson knawe to be, but
954 them] MS the.

970 only be feyth, þat is be a sadde beleue yn that thynges
þat we may neþer see neþer knawe be reson. þerfor we aske
that þi holy name be halowed yn vs.

Septem petitiones oracionis dominici.

1

975 Cryste is þi holy name, of whome be clepyd crysten
men be þe vertu of þi holy sacramente of crystendome;
f.50r therefore we aske þat our werkys may | answer to this holy
name, to þentente þat be our merytes & thi grace we may
fynally atteyne þi kyngdome.

[2]

980 And þerfor secundaryly we aske þat þi kyngdome may
come to vs, as who say þat we þi trewe crysten children,
beynge þi ryalme yn whome þou reygne be grace, may
come to þi kyngdome wher þou shalt reygne vpon vs be þi
glorye, which þou awghe not to graunte vs withoute our
985 congruente deserte þat cometh be a conformable wylle.

3

Therfor we aske þe thirde, þat our wylle & werkys
her yn erthe be confourmed to þi wylle, doynge þat þou
woldest, & levyng þat þou forbedyste.

990 4

And sith we may not lyve heer to deserue to come to
þi kyngedom withoute sustenance bothe bodily & gostly,

979 2] missing in MS.

therfor we aske the [fourthe] þat þou yeve vs our dayli
bodily sustynance, as mete, drynke, cloth, with all oper
995 necessaryes, & gostly, as trewe catholycall doctryne,
with þe most blyssed sacramente of þe awter þat
strengtheth vs gostly. And yeff we slepe yn synne & wole
not labour for our lyflode we be vnworthi to haue our
sustynance.

1000 5

Wherfor we aske þe [fifthe], praynge `hym´ to
foryeve all our synnes, as we foryeve to our
trespasoures.

6

1005 And syth it profyteth lytyll or nowth to be pardoned
of evyll paste but yef we þerwith be yn wylle to eschewe
all evyll occasyones comynge, þerfor we aske þe sexte,
þat he suffre vs not to be brought ynto delyberatyff
consente of þe temptacyones of eny of our iii enmyes.

1010 7

And þat graunted, we may aske of verrey truste to
be delyuered frome euerlastynge peynes dewe for synne
vnsorowyd.

But I haue erryd yn this prayer thre maner wyse:

1015 Ffirste, of myn owen symple conceyte & fantesye I

993 fourthe] MS iiiii'the.

1001 fifthe] MS v'the.

haue lefte it vnseyd & seyde oper of lasse auctoryte & trowgth.

1020 Secunde, I haue lyved so beestlye þat I neuer yett cowthe hit, neþer wolde kan hit & clerly vndirstande hit, wher it is most shorte & þe sonnere to be cowde withoute excuse of ignorance, oftner seyde & better kepte yn mynde.

1025 Also levynge it, & sayenge oper of lasse vertu, wher it is moste conteynynge all þynge necessarye to man for bothe lyves.

 Of which I aske mercy.

Septem opera misericordie

1030 Also I haue not payde, neþer I haue had good wylle to paye, to thi power seruantes aftyr my power for thi benefetys shewyd, fulfyllynge þe vii dedys of mercye, bodyli & gostly, neþer vysited þe seeke, Goddys power prysonerys, neþer hem þat wer yn streyte bondys, neþer fedde the hungrye, neþer yaff drynke to þe thyrsty, neþer clothed þe nakyd, neþer herboured þe destytute, neþer 1035 haue beryed the frendles; but often mokked & rebuked hem þat askyd yn thi name.

1034 herboured] MS heb. canc. herboured.

1040 Neper I haue fulfilled þe gostly werkys of mercye,
not foryoven hertyli to all my trespasoures, neper
f.50v pacyently suffred holsome counceyle to swage myn ire,
neper discretly snybbed & correctyd þe trespasour, neper
mekly reducyd | & tawghte þe ignorante, neper trewly
counceyled hem beyng destytute of counceyle, neper
confortyd þe heuy yn þeyr perplexite, neper hertyli
prayed for þe helth of my neyghbor.

1045 Of all which I crye God mercy.

1050 Now of alle þise synnes rehercyd & of all oper
foryoten, which I wolde reherce & þey kame to my mynde,
& yn especyall of þe gret ignorance contynuall reygnyng
yn me, yn þat I knawe not neper wole knawe tho þynges to
the which I am bownde yn eny maner wyse pertenynge to
me, & also of þe contynuall negligence, yn þat I nethir
haue preuysyon, neper do dewe executyon withoute delay
or omyssion of þynges knawe longynge to me, neper yn
attendance takynge hede to my dayli thoughtes, wordes &
1055 dedys lyke as I am bownde.

1060 Wherfor I nowe wele avysed & for repentaunce with
fulle wylle & purpose to eschewe outtyrly all occasyones
þat shulde ynduce me to synne yn tyme comynge, offre me
hoolly to þe ynfenyte mercy of our most mercyfull lord
Iesu Cryste, now & euer. Amen.

**Explicit forma generalis confessionis ac specialis, provt
patebatur autem.**

1061 ac] MS ac &.

Index of Manuscripts Discussed in Part 1.

i) United Kingdom.

Bristol.

Central Reference Library:

- MS 6 pp.127-128, 130-132.
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Cambridge.

University Library:

- MS Additional 2829 p.30.
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ii) France.

Paris.

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iii) Norway.

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iv) United States.

New Haven.

Yale, University Library:

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