THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL VIRTUES

an edition by

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

A hitherto unpublished poem on the seven Principal Virtues is preserved, in slightly differing versions, in Harley MS. 3954 and in Cambridge University Library MS. Ii 4.9. This poem, here called 'The Seven Principal Virtues', is the subject of the present edition.

Neither of the extant versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' appears to be the original. However, because substantive variants between the two versions are few, a single edited text will be presented. The Harley MS. version will serve as copy-text. A faithful transcription of this version will be presented; apparent scribal errors will be emended, and omissions will be supplied from the Cambridge MS. version. The edition will follow the format prescribed by the Early English Text Society, as outlined in its *Notes for Editors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

With the exception of one Latin poem in the Cambridge MS., both manuscripts are written in what might be described as a uniform late Middle English. The two manuscripts contain a number of more or less well-known works in prose and verse. The manuscripts have in common 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and three other didactic poems written in a similar style: a poem on the seven Virtues versus the seven Deadly Sins, a poem on the seven Works of Mercy, and a poem on the seven Sacraments. These four 'shared' poems appear in the same order in the two manuscripts. In addition, there are four other didactic poems of similar style in the Cambridge MS., three preceding and one following the aforementioned group of four.

Both the four poems in the Harley MS. and the eight poems in the Cambridge MS. appear to form a distinct sequence within the respective manuscripts. Evidence suggests that the sequential arrangement of poems apparent in the two extant manuscripts was present in a hypothetical lost original, that the poems were originally meant to be read in relationship to one another, and that all but one of the poems in the sequence as presumed in the hypothetical lost original were by the same author.

A review of the history of the literature of the seven Virtues and of ecclesiastical events and didactic literature immediately preceding and contemporary with the composition of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' leads one to expect

the present poem to appear within some sort of sequential matrix, in company with other didactic poems. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to consider editing 'The Seven Principal Virtues' without some reference to the poems which accompany it in manuscript.

The combination of internal and external evidence suggests that 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and, by implication, its companion pieces in the hypothetical original sequence, were probably written by a parish priest some time between 1325 and 1425.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

The Harley and Cambridge University Library manuscripts may each be described as a collection of miscellaneous pieces, many of which are religious in subject matter. All the works in each manuscript are in Middle English except for one poem in the Cambridge University Library manuscript, which is written in Latin.

HARLEY MS. 3954

Binding: Now bound in half-blue morocco of the 18th century [1].

Composition: 125 leaves of parchment, plus one final leaf of paper or parchment, 285 x 140 mm.

Collation: A-F^{8} G^{10} (leaves 1, 7 tipped in) H^{10} (lacks leaf 9) I^{2} J-P$^{8\ 2}$.

Catchphrases: Catchphrases appear on the *verso* of leaves 8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 48, 58, 67, 77, 85, 101, 109, 117.

Signatures: Gatherings A through H are signed, irregularly[3], *a* through *h*; gathering I is unsigned; gatherings J through L are signed, irregularly, *a* through *c*; the remaining gatherings are signed, irregularly, *a* through *d*.

Page make-up: The frame of text measures 208 x 93 mm. throughout. Folios 70 *recto* through 88 *recto* are double-columned. Columns contain 39-40 lines each. All folios are framed and ruled. All folios have prick holes on the outer edges, and folios 68 *recto* through 69 *verso* have prick holes on the inner edges as well as the outer.

Features: Folios 1 through 88 are numbered in a hand later than the manuscript. Folios 88 *verso,* 89 *recto* and *verso,* and 90 *recto* have no writing on them, while folio 90 *verso,* originally left blank, contains prose written in what seems to be a later hand: 'This bowke [s]ers I radyd is full of

Features (cont'd.): many and prisid stories and where do some most excelente and pleasant vnto layne readers [INXE SE8]'. Folio 89 is un-numbered, and folios 90 and following are numbered incorrectly. Manuscript is written in black ink, now faded to brown, with rubrication in red ink. A decorative capital, or a gap left for a decorative capital not completed by the rubricator, occurs at the start of sections of many works. A scribal explicit, 'Quod Heron', occurs at the foot of folio 124 *verso,* at the conclusion of the final work in the manuscript.

Paleography: The manuscript is written in two hands, the main hand responsible for all but the 'Lament of the Blessed Virgin' (*Index* 404)[4]. The main hand has been termed Textura by Seymour[5], but might more properly be considered Fere-textura, described by Parkes[6] as an idiosyncratic handwriting of the late fifteenth century. The features of the hand include ascenders of 'b', 'h' and 'l' vertical and oblique-splintered, and of 'd' oblique; open 'e'; final 'e' kidney-shaped. There is no apparent distinction to be made between lower-case 'þ' and lower-case 'y'. The rubric is written in a Textura hand[7]. Seymour says the main hand is similar, but not identical, to Hand II of B.L. Arundel MS. 327, which he assigns to a S.W. Suffolk scribe writing in Cambridge in 1447[8].

The second manuscript hand is similar to the main hand, though slightly more compact.

Seymour assigns the main hand to a Norfolk scribe writing in the first half, possibly the second quarter, of the fifteenth century[9].

Contents:[10]

1 *recto*	*MANDEVILLE'S TRAVELS*[11] prose; B-text; includes colour illustration throughout
70 *recto* a	*APOCRYPHAL HISTORY OF CHRIST*[12] *Index* 250: variant first line
74 *recto* a	*MERITA MISSE*[13] *Index* 1986
76 *recto* b	*VIRTUTES MISSARUM*[14] *Index* 1988

Contents (cont'd.):

78 *verso* a	*SEVEN VIRTUES VERSUS SEVEN DEADLY SINS* [15] *Index* 2059; W.L. Braekman (ed.)[16]
81 *recto* b	*SEVEN WORKS OF MERCY* *Index* 2062; W.L. Braekman (ed.) [17]
82 *recto* b	*SEVEN SACRAMENTS* [18] *Index* 1901
85 *verso* a	*SEVEN PRINCIPAL VIRTUES* *Index* 2045
87 *recto* a	*ABC POEM ON THE PASSION* [19] ***Index*** 1523
91 *recto*	*LAMENT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN* *Index* 404
93 *recto*	*PIERS PLOWMAN* [20] *Index* 1459; B-text Prologue to V 105 plus A-text V 106 to XI

Manuscript make-up:

The manuscript now bound as Harley 3954 appears originally to have been written as three distinct manuscripts.

The first section, folios 1 through 69, contains 'Mandeville's Travels'. It comprises gatherings **A** through **H**, which contain regular catchphrases and are signed *a* through *h*, and gathering **I**, a single pair of conjugate leaves. Gathering **I** requires no signature; however, it also lacks a catchphrase, which one would have expected if the gathering had been originally connected to the following gathering in the manuscript as presently bound.

The second section, folios 70 through 92, contains a number of religious poems, all but the last of which are written double-columned. (The exception, the 'Lament of the Blessed Virgin', is written in the second manuscript hand, and follows the manuscript's blank pages.) This second section comprises gatherings **J** through **L**, which are signed *a* through *c*. Like gathering **I**, gathering **L** lacks a catchphrase to the gathering which now follows it.

Manuscript make-up (cont'd.):

The third section, folios 93 through 125, contains 'Piers Plowman'. It comprises gatherings M through P, which are signed *a* through *d*. It too has regular catchphrases, except in the final gathering, where in this instance no catchphrase would be expected.

The fact that the lay-out of works in Harley MS. 3954 corresponds exactly with the way the manuscript is now gathered, the manner in which the gatherings are signed *a* through *h*, then *a* through *c*, then *a* through *d*, and the evident irregularity of the catchphrases are all consistent with the hypothesis of a tri-partite manuscript. The fact that the final leaves of the posited second section were originally left blank supports this hypothesis; evidently the scribe had more space than he needed to copy in the poems at hand, space which later was used by another scribe to copy the 'Lament of the Blessed Virgin', and later still by a reader to recommend the 'bowkes' contents [21].

Ownership: Nothing is known of the ownership of the manuscript before it belonged to Edward Harley (d. 1741), with whose collection it came to the British Museum[22].

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY MS. Ii 4.9

Binding: Now bound in quarter-brown morocco with marbled paper sides (Cockerell's of Grantchester, 1974); re-backed in 1920; former binding 18th century [23].

Composition: 197 leaves of paper, 240 x 165 mm.

Collation: A^{16} (lacks leaf 2) B-K^{16} L^{20} M^{2} (only) [24].

Catchphrases: None.

Signatures: None.

Page make-up: The frame of text measures 190 x 95 mm. throughout; manuscript is single-columned throughout, columns containing 29-30 lines each. All pages are framed and ruled, without prick holes.

Features: Leaves and works each numbered in pencil in later hands.

Manuscript is written in ink which has faded, variously [25], to browns, with rubrication in red ink. A decorative capital, in red ink, occurs at the start of many works in the manuscript.

Folio 96 *verso* is blank, except for what appears to be an addition in a later hand [26].

Manuscript bears a variety of marginalia, apparently of various origins. Rubrication often appears in the margins, in the hand of the rubricator and in a different hand, in slightly darker ink (e.g. folio 163 *verso).* Paragraph marks in various styles, brackets marking sections of verse, and numbers signalling the start of parts of poems also appear, in various shades of ink. Asterisks and small pointing hands identify points in the verse [27].

On several occasions, marginal notes appear (e.g. folios 64 *recto* and 100 *verso).* One substantial and lengthy marginal note appears, on folio 169 *verso.* It is written sideways in the outer margin, in red and brown (i.e. faded) ink, in a hand that would seem to be different from the main manuscript hand [28]:

Ageyns temptationns & trybulacouns

I rede how oure lady taught seynt Bryde.
Whanne sche was tempted with ony wikked spiritt
that sche shuld sey with a lowde voyce to the fende dispysyng
hym . [ ] ecede a me maligne
spiritus . nolo vias tuas . That is to sey go awey fromm me þu
wikked spryt . I will not
of thy wayes

Also it is gret confusyon to þe devill whan he is reperled and
dispysed.

Throughout the manuscript, the word 'pope' is blotted out, each time it appears (e.g. folios 87 *recto,* 90 *recto,* 91 *recto,* 92 *verso,* 111 *verso*) [29].

A scribal *explicit,* 'Nunc finem feci da michi quod merui', occurs at folio 190 *recto,* at the conclusion of the 'Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost.'

Paleography: The manuscript is written in three hands; the main hand is responsible for the bulk of the manuscript, the second for its final work (folios 190 ff.), and the third for the translation of the Latin poem which appears on folio 69 *recto,* written in the hand of the rubricator. No description of the manuscript hands has been published.

The main hand would seem to be a form of Anglicana, as described by Parkes *30*. It has the characteristic two-compartment 'a', the 8-shaped 'g', the cursive 'e' formed in a single circular movement, and looped ascenders on 'd', 'h', 'l' and 'b'. The relative lateness of the script, by Parkes's measure, is shown by the short descender on 'h' to distinguish it from 'b', by diminution of the shoulder on long-tailed 'r', and by the broader downstrokes of all letters. There is no apparent distinction to be made between 'þ' and 'y' in lower case.

The main hand has been dated to the second half of the fifteenth century.

The second manuscript hand is similar to the main hand, though slightly more compact and angular.

The third manuscript hand is also similar to the main hand, but is more compact and contains elements of Fere-textura, as described by Parkes.

The hand of the rubricator contains even more elements of Fere-textura.

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1 *recto*	*NORTHERN PASSION* *32* *Index* 1907
42 *verso*	*LONG CHARTER OF CHRIST* *33* *Index* 4154; B-text
47 *verso*	*LAMENTACIO SANCTE MARIE* prose; colophon runs 'Quod Ambroos' *34*

Contents (cont'd.)

97 *recto* — *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* [40]
Index 976; extracted from *Handlyng Synne*

142 *verso* — *SHRIFT AND THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS*
Index 976

163 *verso* — *FIVE WITS*
cited as part of *Index* 976

165 *verso* — *SEVEN VIRTUES VERSUS SEVEN DEADLY SINS*
Index 2059; W.L. Braekman (ed.)

173 *recto* — *SEVEN WORKS OF MERCY*
Index 2062; W.L. Braekman (ed.)

177 *verso* — *SEVEN SACRAMENTS*
Index 1901

185 *verso* — *SEVEN PRINCIPAL VIRTUES*
Index 2045

188 ***recto*** — *SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST*
Index 215; Robert H. Bowers (ed.) [41]

190 *recto* — *FORME OF LIVING* [42]
prose; colophon [43] runs 'Here endith the inform acion of Richard the Ermyte that he wrote to an Ankyr translate oute of Northarn tunge in to Sutherne that it schulde the bettir be vnderstondyn of men that be of the Selbe countre Amen.'

Manuscript make-up:

The manuscript appears to have been written in one piece. Each

Manuscript make-up (cont'd.)

work after the first begins in mid-gathering, including the final work, written in the second manuscript hand. That would seem to indicate that the final work was inserted after the manuscript had been bound together. This hypothesis is further substantiated by the note written at the foot of folio 195 *recto,* the original final leaf of the book, to judge from the scribbles and dirt on its *verso.* The note, in a hand contemporary with if not identical to the second manuscript hand, reads as follows: [44]

> Turne to the begynnyng of þis book and þer shall
> 3 e fynde the Ende of this matier.

The 'matier' referred to is the 'Forme of Living', which evidently the scribe had not room to complete in the pages left at the end of the manuscript as then bound. Of further interest is the fact that the note has been emended to 'Turne over' in what appears to be an early eighteenth century hand, and the conclusion to the 'Forme of Living' follows, on the pair of conjugate leaves which constitute gathering M. In all likelihood, this pair of leaves was originally bound in at the start of the manuscript book, though the pair was never part of gathering A, and was moved to the end when the book was re-bound [45].

Ownership: [46] Folio 195 *verso* contains several traces of the manuscript's early ownership.

> 1) This is the boke of S Will [Trew] . I[n] witnesse where for I Thomas B[a] r[e] yle hauyng knowlage thereoff haue putt to myn signe. [*device following*]
>
> 2) [John Cuttyng worsted in comitatu]
>
> 3) This is the boke of Ser Robt Hawe.

The Bareyle hand has been dated fifteenth century. The Cuttyng hand has been obliterated and thus is impossible to date. The Hawe hand has been dated sixteenth century [47].

The manuscript may have come to the Cambridge University Library with the collection of John Moore, Bishop of Ely (d. 1714), which the university acquired in 1715 [48].

THE RATIONALE OF COPY-TEXT

The Harley MS. version of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' will serve as copy-text for the present edition. Although this version is not the poem's original, as will be demonstrated below, it does seem to be a conservative text, transmitting many older linguistic, orthographic and paleographic forms. It would also seem to be the better of the two extant texts, showing a greater consistency of these forms and fewer indications of scribal tampering or error.

That both extant versions are in fact copies would seem very likely. In the Harley MS. version, scribal errors are relatively few, but they are telling. For example, the omission in Harley of lines 16 and 17 (supplied in the edition from the Cambridge MS. version) probably stems from scribal eye-skip -- from 'certeynly', the final word of line 15 in the scribe's presumed original, to 'certeynly', the final word of line 17. The omission makes nonsense of the Harley MS. version at this point and is almost enough in itself to prove copying. Other nonsense readings in the Harley version also seem to result from errors of copying. In line 3, the manuscript reads 'iii' where clearly the subject matter requires 'vii'. Another reading apparently produced by faulty copying occurs at line 145 of the Harley MS. version: ' Quat man þat wyl þerouer stope'. The Cambridge MS. version of this line reads 'Quat man wel þeron grope'. The crux of this variance in the readings would seem to be the first two letters of the final word of the line. It is a distinct possibility that the Harley scribe, or a predecessor, was faced with an unclear rendering of the two letters in his original, and deciphered them as best he could. He then would have had to make sense of the line's penultimate word, fitting the letter forms of his original to context as established by the word 'stope'. This word, presumably with the sense of 'stoop', is not a normal form recorded in the standard sources. (The alternative reading 'grope', provided by the Cambridge MS. version, is the normal past participle of the verb 'grippen', 'to grasp, take hold of'.) In context, 'stope' would require 'þerouer' and it is easy to see how the scribe might have taken the minim of 'þeron' as 'u' rather than 'n', and assumed the 'er' abbreviation to have been inadvertently omitted by his predecessor.

Evidence of copying in the Cambridge MS. version is not so obvious as that provided in the Harley MS. version, nor is it the same kind of evidence. While the Harley scribe seems to have followed his eye, wherever it led, the Cambridge MS. version appears to be the result of a scribe (or scribes) exercising a free hand with the original reconstructing the sense of the verse where it made no sense to him. In doing so, he left evidence of apparent scribal method and signs of copying different from those in the Harley MS. version, but equally unmistakable.

Consider, for example, lines 25 and 26 in the Cambridge MS. version, which read as follows:

> þere hast non myȝth bodyly
> But if men þat helpe þe nye.

The Harley MS. version, which presents a more intelligible reading of these lines, runs as follows:

> þer haste þou myth bodyle
> Of þos men þat helpe þe.

Presuming, for the sake of argument, the Harley reading to be close to the original, the substantive variant readings in the Cambridge MS. version of these lines could arguably have resulted from two distinct errors, in two different scribal generations.

The first of these posited errors is a misreading of 'þou' in line 25 for 'non'. Having made this error, the scribe might then have realized that what he was about to write would convey exactly the opposite meaning to his original, and reconstructed line 26 to preserve the original sense, probably rendering the two lines as follows:

> þere hast non myȝth bodyle
> But of men þat helpe þe nye.

He could not altogether save the sense of the original, however, for he had already

written 'þere' instead of 'þou', as full reconstruction of the two lines would have required.

This hypothesis still does not account for the nonsense reading produced by the presence of 'þat' in line 26 of the Cambridge MS. version. A second scribal error, necessarily belonging to a later-generation copyist, possibly the Cambridge scribe himself, must be posited. This error would seem to have taken place in copying the word 'of' in line 26, which the scribe evidently mistook for 'if', taking the 'o' for 'i'. This posited error had the result of making the word 'þat' redundant in line 26, and placing undue emphasis in meaning on the men administering baptism.

Another example of apparent two-stage scribal reconstruction in the Cambridge MS. version occurs in line 21. This and accompanying lines read as follows:

> Into þe þis warde quan þu fyrst cam
> þu may no3t resceyue þi Crystendamm
> Wythowtyn helpe of a preste ...

This passage in the Cambridge MS. version strains to make sense. Lines 21 and 22 appear to be disconnected, in a manner unusual for this poem, and the meaning of line 21 is ambiguous.

The corresponding lines in the Harley MS. version, while syntactically convoluted, make much better sense:

> Fyrst into þis werd quan þou com
> þou myth not reseyue þi Crystyndome
> Wythoutyn helpe of a prest ...

Again presuming the Harley reading to be close to, if not identical with, the original, the substantive variation evident in the Cambridge MS. version of line 21 would

seem to have resulted from two acts of scribal reconstruction, by two different generations of scribes.

The Harley MS. reading, and therefore (in this argument) the original, while it does make sense, is syntactically awkward. A scribe of reconstructive habits might well have seen good reason to change line 21 of his original slightly, to transmit the author's sense more clearly -- perhaps as follows: 'Into þis werd quan þu fyrst cam'. Evidently, however, the posited second scribe was unfamiliar with 'werd' in his original, probably taking it to mean 'word' instead of 'world'. In order to save the sense of the line as he read it, the second scribe apparently felt the need to insert the pronoun 'þe'.

Such hypotheses of exact scribal practices and derivation of readings are highly conjectural and subject to modification. They have been put forward in some detail to illustrate the sort of evidence of copying contained in the Cambridge MS. version. Even if the hypotheses prove unfounded, the evidence of copying remains, a point which has bearing on the choice of copy-text for the present edition. If, on the other hand, the existence of a reconstructive predecessor to the Cambridge scribe may, by this or additional evidence, be deemed a plausible explanation for nonsense readings in the extant text, the usefulness of the Cambridge MS. version, for purposes of editorial emendation, becomes distinctly limited. Such conclusions, one way or the other, must await the proof of further study.

For now, it may be said that both extant versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' are almost certainly copies, and that neither would seem to be a copy of the other. The eye-skip from line 15 to line 17 by the Harley MS. scribe would probably not have taken place had he been copying from the Cambridge MS., for the word 'certeynly' is spelled differently in the two lines in the Cambridge version, with one occurence involving an idiosyncratic scribal abbreviation. Nor would the Harley MS. reading at line 145, the most plausible explanation for such an unusual variant reading in the work of a normally conservative scribe, be likely to have resulted from his having copied from the Cambridge MS. version, where the words 'þeron grope' are clearly written and unmistakable. Similarly, it is difficult to

imagine how the Harley MS. reading of line 21 could have been derived from the Cambridge MS. reading. And finally, the Harley MS. version preserves many older forms which do not appear in the Cambridge MS., by all evidence a later manuscript -- probably too many to have been idiosyncratically re-introduced by the Harley scribe or a predecessor.

The Cambridge MS. version, on the other hand, could possibly be a copy of the Harley MS. version, but not a direct copy, by virtue of the nature of its nonsense readings outlined above. It does, however, seem unlikely that the Cambridge MS. version is a descendent of the Harley version for, were it so, the Cambridge scribe or his predecessor would have had to omit lines which make good sense in the Harley version, and grossly misconstrue words and phrases which in Harley are clearly written and entirely understandable.

In sum, the combination of evidence seems to indicate transmission of the text of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' from the hypothetical lost original through independent lines to two extant copies, the more faithful of which appears to be the Harley MS. version.

LANGUAGE AND ORTHOGRAPHY

The language in which 'The Seven Principal Virtues' now appears provides few if any clues to the nature of the language in which the poem originally was written. In each extant version, and indeed throughout both the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts, language is so far levelled that dialectal features are practically obscured. If one had more than two versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' to compare, more than just two hundred lines of verse in which to find significant repetition of apparent dialectal features, and more than one hundred rhymes to contain remnants of original vowel configurations, unaffected or recognizably affected by scribal alteration, an analysis of the poem's original language might successfully be undertaken. However, in the present edition, it will only be possible to identify, in each text, certain features of Middle English which normally are taken as indicators of dialect and by analyzing these arrive at a range of dates and provenances for the two extant versions of the poem.

Examples of these features are presented as they appear in the Harley MS. text, with significant variants in the Cambridge text noted. References are made to the standard textbooks on Middle English for each feature noted.

Orthographic features in Middle English are generally considered to belong principally to the scribes of manuscripts [54] and rarely to the authors of the works contained therein. Normally, a scribe would insert his own spelling of a word, especially where his original's spelling was archaic or unfamiliar to him, because his principal purpose was to disseminate the author's work in a readily comprehensible form rather than to preserve the work precisely as the author wrote (or spelled) it. If one assumes this general premise to apply in the present case, orthographic features of the extant versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' should properly be analyzed with respect to the dates and provenance of the manuscripts at hand rather than in connection with the poem's original spelling. That will be the assumption and the practice here.

Vowels (long and short) [55]

1) OE ā

OE ā becomes ɒ in ME in S and M dialects by about the middle of the 13th century, spreading gradually northward as far as the River Humber, north of which OE ā remained ā until the end of the 13th century, when it became open ē, written 'a'. [Wright 50; [56] Wyld 156,157; [57] Brook 3.23; [58] Jordan 44,50. [59]]

e.g. gostly (18), soule (20), knowyn (35), fon (37), gon (38), holy (119)

2) OE y̆

OE y̆ was unrounded to ĭ in N, most eM and some SW dialects early in ME, first appearing in neM dialects. It spread gradually westward. OE y̆ had already been unrounded and lowered to ĕ in OE in SE and some seM dialects (Kentish, Sussex, Surrey, Essex, Suffolk and some Norfolk). OE y, written 'u' or 'ui', is retained in wM and some SW dialects until the 14th century, when it is unrounded to i. A mixed form of unrounded OE y̆, written 'i' beside 'e', appears in some texts of Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (thought to be in S. Lincs. dialect). [Wright 49,57; Wyld 158; Brook 3.22; Jordan 39-43.]

e.g. mankynne (4), qwych (7) [C. qweche],
synne (12), chyrch (126), *beside* wetun (6, 59, 132)

3) OE ă/ŏ before nasals

OE ă/ŏ before nasals becomes ă, written 'a', in all dialects of ME except wM, where it becomes ŏ, written 'o'.
[Wright 42; Wyld 161; Brook 3.26; Jordan 30; see also Wright 72; Jordan 31.]

e.g. man (1), quan (21), wram (75), manere (106)

4) OE ŏ

OE ŏ remains ŏ in all ME dialects except N, in which early ME ŏ becomes ŭ, generally written 'u' or 'ui' after about 1300.
[Wright 55; Wyld 163; Brook 3.25; Jordan 53.]

e.g. bok (5), comyn (8), oþer (24), good (44), qwom (84), godmoder (127)

Diphthongs (long and short)

5) Early ME ai and ei

In most cases, ei falls in with ai about 1300, except before 'gh', where ei is retained until the 15th century and, in some words, into modE. Instances of ei unrelated to 'gh' persist in Kentish later than in other dialects.
[Wright 106-109; Brook 3.352; Jordan 93-96.]

e.g. say (13), fay (14), ay (68), *beside* seyd (117), feyth (120), neybore (183) [C. shows similar apparent lack of differentiation.]

6) OE ea

OE ea falls in with OE ae and becomes a in the 12th century in most dialects, but was generally written 'ea' until the middle of the 13th century, when it came to be written 'e'. In Kentish, however, OE ea remained a diphthong, written 'ea', until the 14th century, when it came to be written 'e'. Before the consonant group 'ld', OE ĕa fell in with OE aĕ to become ă and was lengthened to ā. In N dialects, this ā was preserved; in S and M dialects, this ā became ō; in Kentish, because ea remained a diphthong until late in ME, the changes associated with 'ld' could not take place.
[Wright 59,63,71; Jordan 61.]

e.g. behold (1) [C. behelde], cold (75) [omitted in C.], hold (76) [omitted in C.]

7) OE **eo**

OE **eo** becomes **o** in late OE, although 'eo' was written until well into ME. During the 12th century, **eo** was unrounded to **e** in N, eM and sM dialects, but remained in wM and S dialects (except Kentish) until the end of the 14th century, written variously over this period 'e', 'o', 'ue', or 'u'. ME **e** of various origins, including that derived from OE **eo**, before 'r' becomes **a**, written 'a', in N and northerly dialects during the 14th century and in M and S dialects during the 15th centuries. There are, however, instances in which 'e' and 'a' spellings are preserved side by side in different words of the same origin.
[Wright 59; Brook 3.272; Jordan 65-67.]

e.g. werd (21) [C. warde], prest (33), werke (63) [C. warke], fer (66) [C. fare], erthely (95), fend (164)

Consonants

8) OE **sc**

OE **sc** was preserved in all ME dialects, with various spellings: 'x', 'sh', 'sch', 'ss'.
[Jordan 183.]

e.g. xul (6), shryue (43), short (117), shent (122)

9) OE **hw**

OE **hw** remains voiced and comes to be written 'qu', 'qv', 'quh', 'qw', or 'qwh' in N dialects of ME, while it becomes unvoiced and written 'wh' in M and S dialects of ME and in modE.
[Wright 303.]

e.g. qwych (7), quan (21), qwy (94) [C. qwhy]

10) Initial f and s

Initial f and s remained voiceless spirants throughout ME in all N and M dialects. In Kentish, S and SW dialects, they become voiced, and are written 'v' and 'z' respectively.
[Wright 236.]

e.g. fyrst (11), sent (4)

Plural forms

11) Plural forms /es/ and /en/

The /es/ plural endings gradually spread to all classes of nouns by the end of the of the 12th century in N and nM dialects. By about 1250, /es/ had become the plural ending for all strong nouns, but many weak nouns preserved the old /en/ ending, which characterized them. During the 13th century, the /es/ plural ending gradually encroached upon the /en/ plural, extending into all dialects during the 14th century, and becoming standard for all dialects by the 15th century.
[Wright 317.]

e.g. virtuwys (3), wytts (34), werks (79), spycs (107), vycs (108), artyclys (129), neyborys (191), *beside* fon (37), ȝourselfyn (98) [C. ȝeselfe]

Pronouns

12) Third person plural forms

In eM dialects, the native form 'hie' had begun to be supplanted by the Scandinavian form 'þei' in the 12th century. By the 14th century, 'þei' had become standard in

eM. By the end of the 14th century 'þei' had become standard in other M dialects, and during the 15th century 'þei' became standard in S dialects. In N dialects, 'þei' occurs throughout ME. The native form 'hem' gave way to 'þeim' about the year 1500 in M and S dialects, having been standard in N dialects throughout ME.
[Wright 377.]

e.g. he (5) [C. þei], hem (82), *beside* þei (131)

Verbs

13) Second person singular, present tense

The second person singular, present tense, ends in /est/ in all dialects except N, which has /es/, until late ME, when levelling takes place.
[Wright 391.]

e.g. haste (25), mat (50) [C. may], owyst (82) plecyst (134)

14) Third person singular, present tense

The third person singular, present tense, ends in /eþ/ in S and eM dialects of ME, prior to levelling. N and wM dialects have /es/.
[Wright 391.]

e.g. delyth (103), seyth (119), ȝyuyt (34)

15) Third person plural, present tense

The third person plural, present tense, ends in /en/ in M dialects of ME until levelling takes place. N dialects have /es/, while S dialects have /eþ/ third plural present endings.
[Wright 391.]

e.g. wyllyn (10) [C. wyll], tymyn (80) [C. tyme]

It is impossible to say whether the mixture of linguistic forms which occurs in each of the manuscript versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' is the result of the poem being well-travelled and often-copied, or of Middle English being much-levelled, or both. However, certain tentative conclusions can be put forward which have bearing on a range of dates and provenance for each manuscript version.

Although the language of both manuscript versions contains apparent N dialectal features (especially 9, above), it would seem, on balance, best to place both manuscripts south of the River Humber (consider 1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). Furthermore, certain features would seem to rule out wM or SW dialectal places of origin (especially 2, 3, 14 for wM and 10 for SW). Both versions contain features which are unique to Kentish, SE and eM dialects (e.g. 2, 5, 14), yet Kentish and other S dialects would seem to be disqualified by the lack of voiced initial consonants (unless they had been unvoiced by the time the manuscripts were written) and by the third person plural verb endings (see 15). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the Cambridge MS. version contains more southerly dialectal features than does the Harley MS. version (e.g. 2, 6).

The evidence would seem to place both the Harley and Cambridge MS. versions north of the River Thames, perhaps as far north and east as Norfolk (see Jordan 183, remark 2) and as far north and west as southeast Lincolnshire (see 2, above). The language of both manuscripts seems to be relatively late (e.g. 6, 7, 11 and examples of levelling and modernizing of forms throughout), qualifying statements of manuscript provenance somewhat. Nevertheless, both manuscript versions (particularly Harley) still contain older forms throughout; one instance is the word 'wram', contained in both manuscripts, which shows metathesis from OE had not yet been completed. The language of the Harley MS. version is a form of late Middle English, placing manuscript composition as late as but no later than the middle of the fifteenth century. The language of the Cambridge MS. version is also late Middle English, later than that of the Harley MS. version, but still of the fifteenth century.

These dates and provenances seem to concur more or less with dates and provenances published in editions of other poems in the two manuscripts [60].

Generally speaking, the orthographic features of the two manuscript versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' sustain the evidence of language used in putting forward dates and provenances, above. Certain features of spelling appear regularly in the Harley and Cambridge manuscript versions . The Harley MS. version regularly has 'ou' where the Cambridge MS. version has 'ow' (e.g. wythoutyn] wythowten), the Harley version often has the older form 'o' for 'u', where the Cambridge version has 'u' (e.g. most] muste), and where the Harley version has 'sh', the Cambridge version generally has 'sch', a more northerly feature [Jordan 17]. In general, the Harley MS. version spelling is more regular than that of the Cambridge MS. version, the latter displaying a greater mix of older and more modern forms.

Both manuscripts retain 'þ' and '3'. In the Harley version, 'þ' is used regularly for the alveolar fricative, except next to 'y' and in 'thar' and 'erthely', where the spelling 'th' is found. In the Cambridge version, 'th' appears more often than in the Harley (e.g. strenkthe, bothen, other, etc.). In ME spelling, 'þ' gradually was replaced by 'th' after about 1400, especially near London [Jordan 16]. Both manuscript versions are irregular in their use of '3'. Generally it signifies /y/ initially or /g/ or /gh/ medially. In ME, '3' is retained, especially in provincial texts, as late as the end of the 15th century.

The Harley MS. version regularly has 'v' initially for /u/ and 'u' medially for /v/. The only exceptions occur in 'uede' and 'uest' (line 24). The Cambridge MS. version also has 'v' initially for /u/, with the same exceptions; but often it has 'v' medially for /v/, in accordance with modern spelling, and 'w' initially for /v/, indicative of transitional orthography.

Neither manuscript version uses double vowels to indicate length, a feature typical of London and Oxford orthography from about the middle of the 14th century [Jordan 19] and of other dialects later in the development towards modE. (The only exception in the two manuscripts is 'good', used irregularly.)

Both versions contain the 'myth' spelling for 'might', and the initial 'x' for the /sc/ of 'xal' ('shall'). These features are typically East Anglian [Jordan 16, remark 4, and 181]. They occur more frequently in Harley than in the Cambridge

version, perhaps reinforcing the hypothesis of a more southerly provenance for the Cambridge MS.

METRE AND RHYME

In considering the metre of late Middle English poetry, it is often difficult to make exact syllable counts or determine exactly which metrical forms are in use in any given line or poem. This difficulty results principally from the linguistic changes which took place during the Middle English period and the consequent effect of orthographic irregularity on metre, not only among scribes, who preserved the spelling of their originals with various degrees of accuracy, but also among the authors themselves, whose use of language, of any dialect at any given date, might have been more or less 'modern'. Within these parameters and with this general proviso, it may be posited that 'The Seven Principal Virtues' appears from its extant manuscripts to have been written in lines of eight syllables (more or less), in irregular iambic metre, with lines regularly combining to form rhyming couplets.

In each of the extant versions, some lines appear to lack metrical feet, while others seem to incorporate extra feet. Where these apparent metrical anomalies occur in both manuscript versions, they may be presumed to belong to the poem's original. Such is the case with a number of 'headless' lines, lines in iambic containing one syllable too few and commencing with a metrically stressed syllable. Where, on the other hand, apparent metrical imperfections occur in one manuscript version but not in the other, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine exclusively on metrical grounds which readings are correct. Such a determination would ultimately rest on an assumption that the original as a whole was, or was not, metrically regular. With only two extant versions of the poem to study, to make such an assumption, one way or the other, would be entirely arbitrary. Therefore, in the edited text, metre has not been a determining factor in the choice of readings: while the Cambridge manuscript version may appear to present readings which are more metrically regular at a number of points, the readings of the Harley manuscript version, the copy-text, have been adopted unless there is a substantive reason, other than metre, for doing otherwise.

The metre of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' must be considered in relation to the poem's rhyme scheme, for all lines are strongly end-stopped by rhyme and as a result the couplet, rather than the single line, is this poem's actual

formal unit. In most instances, whether regular or irregular, the two lines of a couplet mirror one another metrically. Even in couplets where line length and syllable count do not match from line to line, the metre usually runs in parallel. Consider lines 189 and 190, for example:

> Cryst is charyte / I holde wythalle
> 3yf þou loue Hym / þou louyst gret and smalle.

Despite metrical variations within each line and between the two lines, the strong caesura in each is metrically predominant and creates in the two lines an analogous metrical effect. There are also some couplets in which neither line length nor metre of the two lines matches, as, for example, in lines 127 and 128 or lines 143 and 144, but here the verse tends towards prose anyway, and the lack of matching may be deemed to be more a failure of, rather than a departure from, poetic method. A similar conclusion may be drawn from those couplets in which metre is irregular in its first line but is restored to regularity in its second, as, for example, in lines 33 and 34, 43 and 44, 145 and 146, *etcetera*. The importance of the couplet form in determining metre is reinforced by the occasions when metre which has been regular within a couplet changes to a different kind of regularity in the next couplet, and in the next; see, for example, lines 47 through 54, which show four main shifts of metre, corresponding with the four couplets.

Within the couplet, syntax and therefore meaning become subservient, in large degree, to metre and rhyme. Syntax is often convoluted, within single lines, sometimes to the point where sense is obscured for the sake of metre or rhyme (for example, lines 21, 33 and 144). The usage of words and phrases seems sometimes to have been modified, at least in terms of recorded forms, to make a rhyme (for example, 'be do' (95), 'be went' (121)). The extensive use of line fill and rhyme tags reinforces the evident predominance of metre and rhyme.

One result of this verse form is that statements of meaning are almost invariably confined within one or sometimes two couplets. Normally, an idea is expressed in one couplet and complemented, rather than developed, by another, distinct, idea in the next; alternatively, an idea may be introduced in the first line

of a couplet, a parenthetical phrase inserted in the second line, and the idea concluded in the two lines of the following couplet. In either case, the couplet predominates over what might be termed a more natural flow of meaning. The effect of this poetic method is an accretive series of statements, more strongly linked by association than by continuity of thoughts. In the one or two instances where a couplet is apparently split, its first line completing one idea and its second introducing another, the result, lacking original punctuation, is syntactically ambiguous; see, for example, lines 92 through 95 or lines 146 through 149.

This couplet-based verse form, with strongly end-stopped, eight-syllable, iambic rhyming lines, is one of the most common in Middle English poetry, adopted, presumably for its straightforward and simple manner of conveying meaning, in such familiar didactic works as the *Speculum Christiani*, Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* and the 'Lay Folk's Mass Book,' as well as in a great number (to judge by the *Index of Middle English Verse*) of shorter didactic works, such as, for example, 'Lesnit nou and habbit lest' (see p. 49 below) and a number of the poems contained in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts in which 'The Seven Principal Virtues' is preserved. Nor is this form restricted to purely religious or didactic literature, as is evidenced in the metrical version of *Mandeville's Travels* or Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, to name but two well-known works. Naturally, various poets handled the form with various degrees of sophistication and success, some managing fluid and lively verse, such as that achieved by Robert Mannyng in *Handlyng Synne*, and others, such as the present author, producing something more nearly approximating what Chaucer's host, Harry Bailey, commenting on another piece of literature in this same verse form, might have termed 'rym doggerel'. Irregularities and awkwardnesses aside, however, didactic verse of this sort had its purpose, which was more to teach than to delight, and it may be presumed, by its remarkable proliferation in the later Middle Ages, to have performed this purpose satisfactorily.

THE POEM IN ITS MANUSCRIPT CONTEXTS

In each manuscript, 'The Seven Principal Virtues' is found together with a number of other didactic poems. In the Cambridge manuscript, there are eight such poems in all. In the Harley manuscript, there are four didactic poems apparently grouped together. In each case, the poems may be said to form a distinct sequence within the manuscript.

It is clear, in each of these manuscripts, that the poems in sequence were meant to be read in relationship with one another. The poems are connected in subject matter and style. Furthermore, in the Cambridge MS. sequence of eight, several of the poems are linked together by means of internal references. In the Harley MS. sequence of four poems, which are analogous to the middle four of the Cambridge MS. sequence, there is no direct but rather implicit linking. By the nature of the linking of the poems in the manuscripts, and by their uniformity of style, it is very likely that the two manuscript sequences are extant versions of a sequence comprising at least eight poems, taken from a manuscript that is now lost.

The first of the eight poems in the Cambridge MS. sequence, the poem on the Ten Commandments (*Index* 778), contains two references to the poem which follows it in manuscript, 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' (*Index* 976). The section on the Ninth Commandment concludes with a reference to the forthcoming treatment of deadly sin [61]. The poem on the Ten Commandments then continues to its conclusion. Its final lines strengthen the already established link with the work that is to follow [62].

The second poem in the Cambridge MS. sequence, 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins,' contains a reference back to the first poem [63]. It is also linked to the third poem in the Cambridge MS. sequence, 'The Five Wits', by means of a tag:

> Now go we on to owr wytts fyue
> I xal hem schewyn here be lyue.

These two poems are also linked in a more sophisticated manner, by means of connected subject matter. 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' begins with a prayer

and a statement of purpose and proceeds to describe the three things man 'must hau in hert/Vnto þi schryfte or þu styrte' -- that is to say, Confession, Contrition and Penance. The next three hundred lines or so are devoted to a description of the three-part penitential process. The section concludes with a model for Confession, the final couplet of which serves to introduce the following section of the poem, on the seven Deadly Sins [64].

Much the same subject matter is treated in 'The Five Wits'. The final third of the poem is taken up by a recitation of the confessional formula, relating the five wits directly to sin and Penance [65]. Within the general hierarchy of confessional formulae, the similarity between the formulae in 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' and those in 'The Five Wits' is remarkable. The invocation of Christ, Mary, the company of heaven and the priest follow in order in the verse, with similar phrasing and cadence, after which comes a prayer to God and the particulars of Penance. The similarity of subject matter and of treatment reinforces the rather tenuous linking created by the tag lines at the end of 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins.' In fact, it might be argued that the reiteration of the subject matter in these two linked poems turns 'The Five Wits' into little more than a reiteration and summary of the didactic thrust of the poem which precedes it in manuscript [66].

There is no direct link between the third poem in the Cambridge MS. sequence, 'The Five Wits', and the poem which follows it, 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins' (*Index* 2059). The remainder of the poems in the MS. sequence are irregularly linked. This irregularity of linking is of some significance in regard to the construction of the original sequence, a matter which will be referred to below.

The next four poems in the Cambridge MS. sequence, 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins', 'The Seven Works of Mercy' (*Index* 2062), 'The Seven Sacraments' (*Index* 1901) and 'The Seven Principal Virtues' (*Index* 2045), are the four poems it shares with the Harley MS. sequence. The fact that the four poems occur in the same order in two manuscripts of independent transmission is compelling evidence that the two extant MS. sequences were taken from a single lost original.

In both of the extant manuscript sequences, 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins' is linked by internal reference to the poem which follows it, 'The Seven Works of Mercy:'

> vii dedes of almes þer bin
> Aftyrward 3e xal hem syn
> Pronouncyd alle by and by.
> To 3oure vnderstondyng opynly.
> *67*

Here is clear evidence that these two poems, like the first three in the Cambridge MS. sequence, were originally meant to be read in relationship to one another. The two poems also contain a shared homily, which serves to strengthen the link between them. Near the end of 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins the following lines appear:

> For as water qwenchyt fer bryth
> So doth almes synne ryth.
> *68*

Lines 11 and 12 of 'The Seven Works of Mercy' read as follows:

> For as water quenchyt fyr bryth
> So dot almesse syn aforn God almyth.
> *69*

'The Seven Works of Mercy' is not directly linked, in either MS. sequence, to the poem which follows it, 'The Seven Sacraments'. Nor is 'The Seven Sacraments' linked to 'The Seven Principal Virtues', the poem that follows next. However, the coincidence of order of the four poems shared by the two manuscripts establishes implicit links among them. These implicit links are made stronger by a reference, contained in 'The Seven Sacraments', back to a tale 'In on of þe commandments x . . . Loke in þe boke before' *70*. The fact that no such poem and no such tale is contained in the Harley MS. is clear proof that the original of the Harley MS. sequence contained a poem on the Ten Commandments, which for some reason has been left out of the extant sequence. It is impossible to say for sure whether that poem on the Ten Commandments alluded to in the Harley MS. is the prototype of the Cambridge MS. poem on the same subject. If so, the Harley MS. sequence

should probably be considered an incomplete rendition of the original didactic sequence, which is preserved more completely, though less accurately, in the Cambridge manuscript [71].

The final poem in the Cambridge MS. sequence, 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' (*Index* 215), contains a weak link with the poem which precedes it in the manuscript. 'The Seven Principal Virtues' contains, in its section on prudence, lines that run as follows:

> þere may non erdly craft be do
> But if sleyth help þerto.

'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' contains similar lines, with reference to an analogous topic, the gift of *scientia Dei* or knowledge:

> þer may no maner crafte be doo
> But if kunnyng go þerto.
> [72]

This rather weak link is supported somewhat by general stylistic and thematic similarities with the other poems in the Cambridge MS. sequence. The notion that 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' belongs with the didactic sequence is reinforced further by the scribal explicit that appears at the end of the poem, the wording of which suggests that he considered he had completed, whole, a larger work [73].

The following table may serve to summarize the relationships between poems of the two extant sequences:

HARLEY MS.	CAMBRIDGE MS.
	poem on the Ten Commandments
	Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins
	The Five Wits
The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins	*The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins*
The Seven Works of Mercy	*The Seven Works of Mercy*
The Seven Sacraments	*The Seven Sacraments*
The Seven Principal Virtues	*The Seven Principal Virtues*
	The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost

The connections among the poems preserved in the two extant didactic sequences are reinforced by the poems' general stylistic similarity. The four poems shared by the two manuscripts are particularly similar to one another in structure and style. Each of the four poems begins with an address to the audience, asking for attention to the matter of the poem to follow, which will help them 'stroyn synne' and 'plece God.' Each is written in seven sections; each section deals with one element of the poem's doctrinal subject. Each section of each poem begins with an introduction and ends with a moral. *Exempla* are used, in all but 'The Seven Principal Virtues', to convey the section's specific moral. Each of the poems concludes with a reiteration of its introduction and a prayer for grace -- that the audience may practise the virtues, may practise alms or rest secure in the Sacraments, so to please God and reach the bliss of heaven.

In each of the poems, the main didactic thrust is consequential: if you do this, then that will happen. If a member of the audience pays heed to the lessons on the Virtues, the Works of Mercy, the Sacraments and the Sins, then he will please God and end up going to heaven; if not, he will be damned endlessly. This didactic thrust is reflected not only in individual lines of the poems but also in the structure of each section of each poem, and of each poem as a whole.

Within this broad and pervasive didactic structure, other structures appear. These vary from poem to poem in the four presently under discussion, according to the subject matter of each poem; however, these devices serve an analogous purpose in each. 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins' displays a balanced structure, reflecting its didactic intent: this virtue remedies that vice. The virtue is named first, its remedy of a particular vice is then articulated, followed by an *exemplum* in which virtue defeats vice. This same pattern is repeated throughout the poem. 'The Seven Works of Mercy' lacks such a clearly articulated didactic structure. Nevertheless, the poem conforms to the general consequential structural principles described above. It treats each of the Works of Mercy in turn, describing the value of each with regard to the ultimate goal of pleasing God and gaining heaven's bliss.

'The Seven Sacraments' proceeds from Holy Orders, at which it 'is leful to begynne' because 'throu hym comyn alle oþer inne' [74], to treat the Sacraments in an order which conforms to a Christian's experience of them in his life. It provides in the structure of the poem a model through the practice of which man 'moun sauyd be/To comyn to blys þat is so fre'. Baptism follows Holy Orders in the verse, so that a man may 'hau up þe Crystyndom þat longyt þerto' [75] at the hands of the parish priest. The third Sacrament, Confirmation, confirms Baptism. The fourth Sacrament, Penance, comes immediately before and prepares the Christian for the fifth, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in accordance with doctrine [76]. The Sacrament of Marriage follows next [77], and then, properly seventh, comes Extreme Unction, 'ryth in a manes laste ende / Quan he xal out of þis werd wende' [78]. This structuring of sections of the poem in an order which imitates the Christian life reinforces the overall consequential didactic thrust, while at the same time adding an immediate frame of reference for the audience.

'The Seven Principal Virtues' displays an internal structuring mechanism -- parallelism in each of its sections -- rather than one which is consecutive, as in 'The Seven Sacraments'. The spiritual and bodily aspects of each virtue are presented, and the connection between the two made clear, in every section of the poem, except that on Prudence. This structural approach is entirely consistent with the consequential didactic method: 'For ȝyf þou leue wrongfully/þou xalt be dampnyd endlesly'.

As well as structural similarities, the four poems presently under discussion have in common several local elements of style [79]. Each poem has an implied narrator, who makes direct address to his audience, calling for their attention, exhorting them to virtuous action and explaining to them the penalty for sinful behavior. It is as if this narrator were preaching to a congregation, often repeating himself for emphasis or to clarify or develop a point of doctrine, as in lines 21 through 26 of 'The Seven Principal Virtues'. Another feature of style common to all four is flat, unsophisticated diction and a reliance on formulae, especially in the introductions and conclusions of the poems. The opening couplet of each provides an example of shared reliance on a formula. Perhaps more striking are the closing lines of the introductions of three of the four poems, which practically repeat one another word for word:

But at þe fyrst I wyl begynne
And shewyn 3ou or þan I blynne.
'The Seven Works of Mercy'

Now at þe fyrst I wel begynne
þat helpyt for to stroyn synne.
'The Seven Sacraments'

Now at þe fyrst I wyl begynne
þat helpyt for to stroyn synne.
'The Seven Principal Virtues'

Formula rhymes such as 'synnes seuene/blys of heuene' or some variation are numerous in these poems. Just as numerous are formula tags: 'more or lesse', 'day & nyth', 'out & inne', *etcetera.*

The four poems shared by the two extant manuscript sequences have much in common stylistically. They also have features of style in common with the other poems in the Cambridge MS. sequence of eight, as will presently be shown. Almost all late Middle English didactic poems share these features in greater or lesser degree, it must be admitted; however, certain stylistic features occur so frequently and with such regularity in the didactic poems of the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts under discussion here -- especially in the four shared poems, but also in 'The Five Wits' and 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' and to a slightly lesser degree in 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' -- that these poems may be deemed to be written in a single style.

'The Five Wits' and 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' have several stylistic similarities to the four poems discussed above. These two poems are structurally regular, but less so from section to section than the four shared poems. 'The Five Wits' contains sections which introduce and consider the merits of each of the senses, but the poem lacks an introduction and its conclusion is more prominent than the conclusions of the four shared poems. 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' treats each of the gifts in turn, yet the treatment is less expansive than that of the four shared poems, and therefore the internal structure of each of its sections does not move as clearly from introduction through application to moral. Both poems are

addressed by an implied narrator directly to an audience, like the other poems discussed so far, and both use the 'consequential' narrative technique apparently typical of this sort of didactic literature. 'The Five Wits' relies less on formula rhymes than the four shared poems or 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost'. It also contains fewer formula lines than the other poems. By contrast, 'The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost' bristles with such lines. Nevertheless, these two poems are so similar, to judge by the homogeneity of certain of their stylistic features, that they may well have been written by a single author, probably the same man who wrote the four shared poems discussed above.

'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' is both similar to and significantly different from the six poems discussed so far. One similarity has already been noted, in the passages on Confession in this poem and 'The Five Wits', quoted earlier. There are several other local similarities: for instance, the introductory line to Shrift, 'Man if þu wylt be schryue', is much the same as the first lines of the four shared poems.

However, 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' is somewhat different in overall structure from all the other poems. It begins with a prayer, a feature typical of more formal preaching literature [80], which none of the others do, before introducing the matter of Shrift. This, the poem's main subject, is then treated in a much more expansive manner than occurs in the other poems, with a more fluid narrative style, as can be seen in the poem's natural transitions from its introduction through each of the three aspects of Shrift and then into and through the seven Deadly Sins. Consequently, the poem's sections flow together into a single unit, rather than standing as largely independent entities within the poem's larger structure, as is the case in the poems discussed previously. Moreover, they possess a less formalized internal structure than the sections of the poems discussed above. Nevertheless, 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' adopts essentially the same didactic ordering principle as the other poems, though applied somewhat differently. This can be seen in the manner in which *exempla* are used in the poem. The use of language in 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' is more sophisticated than that in the other poems discussed. This poem uses few formulae and a wider variety of words.

In numerous places its imagery is relatively vivid, whereas in the other poems imagery seldom appears outside the *exempla*, most of which are likely to have been borrowed from other texts. In sum, 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' may be said to be in the same style as the other six poems discussed above, but to represent a much more refined and fluid version of that style. This poem may be by the same author as the others, or possibly it may have been the stylistic model for the others.

At first glance, the style of the Cambridge MS. poem on the Ten Commandments, excerpted from *Handlyng Synne*, is similar enough to the style of the other poems in the Cambridge MS. sequence to suggest common authorship, or at least not to appear anomalous. Upon closer scrutiny, its style can be seen to be distinctly different. In his article, 'The Cultural Tradition of *Handlyng Synne*' [81], D.W. Robertson Jr. makes note of Robert Mannyng's extensive use of the 'If þou' narrative device, which is essentially the same device as that employed in the 'consequential' structuring of the other poems in the MS. sequence. However, as Robertson points out, the 'If þou' device is used in *Handlyng Synne* to introduce expansive meditative sections of verse. By contrast, in the MS. sequence at hand, the 'consequential' structure of lines is used to enforce a didactic narrative counterpoint, creating the opposite effect.

In *Handlyng Synne*, Robertson says, the address is mainly literary [82]; the use of 'If þou' is almost certainly conventional, he says, imitating the rhetoric of public address. The address of the poems of the MS. sequence, while it also is patterned argument to some extent, is much closer to real speech, of the sort used while preaching, for instance. 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins', though of all the six poems the most literary and fluid in style, provides a striking contrast when its passages and those of *Handlyng Synne* are considered side by side:

Handlyng Synne [83]	**Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins** [84]
Now of þe seuene wyl we telle þat ben þe dedly doghters of helle þe eldyst men kalle pryde She was þe fyrste þat walkyd wyde Yn euery land to euery man þurgh alle þe worlde ouer alle she ran.	Now at pryde we wyll begynne For it is rote of euery synne Be thynke þe wyll ere þan þu ryse How þu hast synned & on quat wyse.

The most obvious difference between these two passages on corresponding subject matter is the rich use of metaphor in *Handlyng Synne,* and Mannyng's use of sounds, in alliteration and repetition, to add flavour to the verse, compared to the stale metaphor of the tree of sins with its roots and branches, implied in 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins', and its lack of apparent verse-craft. More subtle is the distinction to be made between narrative flow in each of the two passages. The passage from *Handlyng Synne* moves from characterization of the seven sins as the daughters of hell to consideration of the activities of the eldest daughter, Pride, in the world. The main idea of the passage -- that pride, the original sin, works in all men -- is made vivid by an extended metaphor which develops, uninterrupted, in a single flow of verse. That same idea is articulated in the passage from 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins', but in a completely different manner, and for different effect. The narrative focus never is on pride, ostensibly the subject matter, but rather on the audience learning about pride. The passage moves from 'we' to 'þe' in two essentially unconnected couplets. whose purpose is unmitigated didacticism. This narrative strategy might be termed detrimental to the verse, placing too much weight on the rhymes and making every line strongly end-stopped, even though, grammatically, they need be no more so than the lines in the passage from *Handlyng Synne.* However, all these features -- the strategy of narrative counterpoint, the simplicity of address, the strongly end-stopped lines -- contribute to the force of the poem's didactic thrust. Adherence to this sort of functional, if prosaic, poetic principle, every bit as much as lack of metaphor and rich language, is what makes 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' and the other six poems distinctly different in style from the excerpt from *Handlyng Synne,* the Cambridge MS. poem on the Ten Commandments.

The poem on the Ten Commandments is different from the others in manuscript not only in style but also in attitude toward subject matter. For example, the treatment of lechery is different in the poem on the Ten Commandments from that in 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' or 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins'. The Tenth Commandment reads 'Coueth noȝt þi neybowrs wyfe', in the Cambridge poem on the Commandments; if a man so covets, the argument runs, he gives over to his own wife the mastery of their marital relationship:

'and if sche þe maystry wynne/Now game sche wyll begynne' [85]. Such an appeal to immediate worldly self-interest as a spur to morality in the husband is as different from the didactic thrust of the other poems under discussion as the poem on the Ten Commandments is different in style. Its treatment of lechery is evocative. The treatment of the same subject in 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins' is prescriptive; in cases of fornication, lecherous thoughts in church, bawdry, incest and a number of other activities, the poem's message to its audience is clear:

> If þu haue wyll to synne
> & putyst all þi myght to wynne
> þow þu þi purpose noȝt fulfyll
> For þu synnyst dedly for þe qwhyle.
>
> [86]

In 'The Seven Virtues Versus the Seven Deadly Sins', the treatment is different again. The virtue of Chastity is extolled, after which follows an exemplary tale of how Chastity overcomes Lechery. The lecherous woman is scourged by the chaste Edmund for her intended act of sin, a figurative penance through which she is cleansed. The doctrine of these three poems is consistent; yet the manner of address, mirrored in the style and general view of the subject matter, evocative in the first case, legislative in the second and figurative and exemplary in the third, is distinctly different.

It is difficult to imagine, given the differences in style and approach, that the author of the Cambridge MS. poem on the Ten Commandments could be the same man who in all likelihood wrote the seven didactic poems which now follow it in manuscript. Assume, for the purpose of argument, that the eight didactic poems which appear in sequence in the Cambridge manuscript indeed represent poems present in sequence in a lost original, of which the Harley manuscript preserves four; it becomes a distinct possibility that the presumed author of the seven poems extracted, from *Handlyng Synne*, the section on the Ten Commandments, changed the final couplets to make the borrowed verses a complete poem in its own right, and used it as the first of what he intended to be a linked sequence of didactic poems.

The main purpose of the present section of this introduction has been to examine the relationship between 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and those poems in its direct proximity in manuscript, principally in order to shed light on the poem being edited. A number of conclusions may now be brought forward with regard to 'The Seven Principal Virtues' in its manuscript context. First, it is clear that 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and the other didactic poems in sequence in the two manuscripts are each individual works, were written as such, and never formed part of a larger whole or wholes[87]. Second, it is equally clear that many if not all of these poems, including 'The Seven Principal Virtues', were originally meant to be read in relationship to one another, and that as many of them as were contained in the original manuscript appeared in their present order. Third, it appears that 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and at least three, if not five or six, of the other poems in the two extant manuscript sequences, were written by a single author, who connected them to an excerpt of *Handlyng Synne* or to some other verses, now apparently lost, on the Ten Commandments.

In light of these conclusions, 'The Seven Principal Virtues' clearly ought to be read (if not edited) in relationship to other poems which accompany it in manuscript, as part of a larger didactic matrix of poems, written and put together according to the design of a single author.

THE POEM IN ITS LITERARY AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

The history of the subject matter of 'The Seven Principal Virtues', as it developed from its origins to its place in medieval didactic literature, serves to distinguish the Principal Virtues from other sets of virtues. Such a history is an important first step in setting the present poem in its literary and historical contexts.

The Principal Virtues, *qua* virtues, seem to originate in biblical and classical literature. Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice appear together in the Book of Wisdom [88], and are treated in Cicero's *De inventione* and *De officiis*, with evident Greek derivation, and also in Macrobius's *Super somnium Scipionis* [89]. Faith, Hope and Charity are named together in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians [90].

Many of the early Church Fathers write of various Christian virtues. [91] St. Ambrose termed the first four the 'Cardinal' virtues [92]. St. Gregory the Great assigned pre-eminence instead to the other three, the 'Theological' virtues mentioned in St. Paul, while noting the inter-connectedness of the four Cardinal Virtues [93]. Augustine's works on the subject of virtue seem also to have had considerable influence on later writers [94].

Eventually, the four Cardinal Virtues became pre-eminent as subject matter, in the early literature on the virtues, and spawned numerous sub-virtues which, in later literature, came to be treated as virtues in their own right as well as by association. The four Cardinal Virtues thus served as a tap-root for the proliferation of popular literature on the virtues which extended throughout the Middle Ages, and beyond. The four Cardinal Virtues and the three Theological Virtues eventually emerge together into the popular literature, probably some time in the twelfth century [95], to constitute what then came to be known as the seven Principal Virtues.

Originally, the concept of sets of virtues might well have been related to a parallel concept of sets of sins[96], and possibly these opposites shared an early history. One of the earliest impulses for sins literature is said to have been related to the 'power of the name', which gives a man protection from the sin named and from inadvertent commission. Perhaps the earliest virtues literature had a corresponding power and function, representing an anatomy of man's good nature while at the same time teaching him how to be good.

Among the earliest types of popular virtues literature were those which set virtues and sins in direct opposition, one against another, in an allegorical battle for man's soul. An early example of this now-familiar genre may be found in the Zoroastrian allegory in which the Amesha Spertas, led by Ahura Mazda, oppose the Daevas, led by Ahriman, Prince of Darkness[97]. Of more obvious formal influence on medieval European literature were Prudentius's *Hamartigenia* and *Psychomachia*, the latter presenting a full-dress battle between virtues and vices, with parallel subordinates on each side[98]. This title, *Psychomachia*, now serves to identify the whole genre of literature and art which represents allegorically the battle between good and evil in man. The battle motif proved to have rich potential. It provided Prudentius and the many artists and writers who followed him with a means to portray, vividly and schematically, the interaction of good and evil in man's nature, and gave them the latitude to include all manner of virtue and sin.

In the works of Cicero and Macrobius may be found the essential subject matter, and in those of Prudentius and others, the literary method, which together characterize much of the early medieval popular literature on the virtues. From the four Cardinal Virtues were extrapolated various sets of remedial virtues, which were placed in opposition, allegorically, to sets of vices, which, in most instances, were the outgrowths of the Capital Sins. The literary development of what came to be called the Remedial Virtues out of the Cardinal Virtues is more complicated than can readily be outlined here. One of the chief complications, for authors intending an allegorical treatment based on Prudentius, was that they had at their disposal seven Capital Sins and various subordinates against which to set only four Cardinal Virtues and subordinates. A variety of solutions to this problem were developed, and to track each of the lines of development will not be possible here. Nevertheless, it is worth outlining the development of

this allegorical literature on the Remedial Virtues, however briefly, to make clear the distinction between and separate development from a common origin of the Remedial and the Principal Virtues.

Both Cicero and Macrobius created subordinate virtues under the headings of the four Cardinal Virtues, and these subordinates became the foot-soldiers in early medieval psychomachic literature. Elements of the works of Cicero and Macrobius form the basis of a great many of the popular writings on virtues and vices of the early and high Middle Ages. Even a cursory catalogue and brief description of these works will demonstrate this pervasive influence. St. Boniface's *Aenigmata* contains ten virtues and vices, instead of the usual seven, but they all stem from classical sources [99]. Alcuin's *Liber de virtutibus et viciis ad Widonem comitem* presents a conflict between eight armies of virtues and vices in a manner which draws its method ultimately from Prudentius, while his *De animae ratione liber ad Enlalian virginem* presents a philosophical treatment of virtues and vices using a tree motif, another narrative device often adopted to present the parallel subordination of vices and virtues [100]. Both Theodulf of Orleans and Alanus de Insulis use battle imagery to portray the interaction of virtue and vice in man's nature. Alanus also writes of subordinated virtues and vices in *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, using the tree motif: the tree of vices springs from the root of Pride, while the tree of the virtues is rooted in Humility. Alanus is also thought to have been responsible for introducing the three Theological Virtues into the literature of the Remedial Virtues, as manifestations of *Religio*, one of the Macrobian sub-sections of the Cardinal Virtue, Justice [101].

Virtues were not the only element of doctrine applied in the popular literature in remedy of sin, but they were the most potent, allegorically. For instance, Hugh of St. Victor's *Expositio altera orationis Domini* [102] sets the seven Petitions of the Pater Noster against the seven Capital Sins. Other works use various other elements: the three foes of mankind (the Devil, the World and the Flesh), the five senses, the seven Pains of Purgatory, seven penitential psalms, seven rivers of Babylon, seven streams of Grace, seven Canaanite tribes, Christ's seven wounds and His seven words from the Cross, *etcetera*. Hugh's *Expositio moralis in Abdiam* sets out the Petitions of the Pater Noster, the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven Beatitudes and seven virtues, all in remedy of sin [103].

Eventually, a great number of elaborate constructs such as Hugh's were established, using even more of the doctrinal elements, to demonstrate in popular terms the Christian means to eschew the vices and defeat sin. The literature was well received, it is tempting to suppose, as much for its richness of treatment and symmetry as for its theology, not that these two aspects of medieval didacticism can really be separated from one another. The popular didactic literature of the later Middle Ages represents a remarkable outgrowth from the basic subject matter, as treated by Prudentius, Cicero, Macrobius and others, and constitutes an effective matrix for the wide dissemination of doctrine. Generally speaking, it is within this sort of matrix that popular works on the seven Principal Virtues appear.

The Principal Virtues, as distinct from the Remedial Virtues, are a consistent set of traits, usually cast in the popular literature without subdivision, in general rather than in direct, specific opposition to sin. There seems to have been no single work of classical antiquity, nor a succession of early medieval popular works, which treat the seven Principal Virtues. There are a number of early works in which the four Cardinal and the three Theological Virtues are treated in succession, and these sets of virtues appear together in many popular works, as for example they do in the fresco at the Palazzo Publico at Sienna (1337-40) and in an introduction to the treatment of the seven Remedial Virtues and seven Deadly Sins in *Somme le roi* (1279) [104]. It seems, however, that only well after the onset of the High Middle Ages did works on the seven Principal Virtues *per se* begin to appear. The chief reason for the appearance of such works would seem to be directly linked to the issuance of the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which decreed that bishops were to ensure that their priests were properly instructed in the basic tenets of Christian doctrine [105]. As a consequence, an extensive program of instruction was laid down for the priests. The Principal Virtues were properly part of the curriculum. Yet this does not answer how and why the Principal Virtues came to be viewed as a single construct and emerged, so suddenly it seems, as core doctrine.

These questions deserve more detailed study than is possible here. A tentative hypothesis on the matter may serve as a starting point for future study. It is distinctly possible that the emergence of the seven Principal Virtues is related,

directly or indirectly, to the emergence of the concept of the seven 'deadly' sins, which apparently happened at about the same time. The concept of Deadly Sins, based on the reference in 1 John 5 xvi to 'sin unto death', was apparently the product of the increasing importance of the doctrine of penance in the medieval Church, an importance evident in the Lateran decrees and, later, in the twenty-first canon of the Council of Lambeth, which made annual Confession obligatory *106*.

A number of the later, more comprehensive didactic works seem to place the Principal Virtues and the Deadly Sins in direct relationship with one another. In the *Speculum Christiani*, for example, the three Theological and four Cardinal Virtues are treated as a single unit, the latter four each answering one of the general impulses to sin: Prudence -- sins of the World; Temperance -- sins of the Flesh; Justice -- sins of the Devil; and Fortitude -- all sins. The seven Deadly Sins are treated next, followed by a section on Despair, and then a presentation of the Remedial Virtues versus the seven vices. It is, however, uncertain whether the unit here in fact represents the seven Principal Virtues, as such, or rather the three-plus-four construct used in the *Somme le roi* and elsewhere, here simply run together without distinction. An earlier, more theoretical work on Confession, Robert Grosseteste's *Deus est quo nihil melius cogitari potest*, also apparently links together the three Theological and the four Cardinal Virtues, expressly within the context of Penance. Again, it is uncertain whether Grosseteste considered the three-plus-four to be a single doctrinal construct, but it is significant that he saw these virtues, together, as an apt framework within which to address the whole matter of confession of sin *107*.

It has been suggested above that the poem on the seven Principal Virtues extant in Harley MS. 3954 and Cambridge University Library MS. Ii 4.9 was meant to be read in relationship to a number of other didactic poems preserved with it in manuscript, and that most of these poems might well have been the work of one author. The history of the subject matter would seem entirely consistent with that hypothesis. Independent works on the Principal Virtues seem to have been rare in medieval European literature, and particularly so in Middle English literature. *The Index of Middle English Verse* records only three such works other that the poem edited below *108*. Judging by their descriptions in the *Index*, these

poems bear little if any resemblance to one another. *Index* 272.5 (338.5) is a set of moralizing verses for a pageant, spoken by seven personified Virtues. *Index* 1013 is a prayer for the seven Principal Virtues, while *Index* 3810 is a very short verse outline of the same seven. Other than the present poem, there remains no extensive independent treatment in Middle English verse on the seven Principal Virtues. On the other hand, there are many works in Middle English which treat the Principal Virtues alongside other doctrinal subjects within a larger didactic matrix. In the words of a contemporary source,

> þer ben so manye bokes and tretees of vyces
> and vertues & of dyverse doctrynes þat þis
> schort lyfe schalle raþere have a nede of
> anye manne þanne he may owþere studye
> hem or rede hem.
>
> *109*

The sequences of didactic poems in which 'The Seven Principal Virtues' is now found, together with the lost original from which these sequences come, would seem to qualify as one of these 'bokes . . . of dyverse doctrynes'. A review of ecclesiastical events and didactic literature immediately preceding and contemporary with the date of composition of the poem and of the sequence supports this view; and consideration of some of the original sequence's literary antecedents -- in particular, how and why they were composed -- sheds valuable light on the occasion of, and possible models for, 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and its companion-poems.

The decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 were disseminated in England ineffectively, until late in the thirteenth century *110*. Archbishop of Canterbury John Peckham then undertook the prescribed ecclesiastical reform in England, in much the same spirit as his predecessors, le Poore, Stavensby, Weseham and de Cantilupe, but to greater effect *111*. He called a series of synods to set in place ecclesiastical legislation designed to fulfill the Lateran decrees. The canons of the Council of Lambeth mark the culmination of this legislative process, even though they are essentially re-enactments of previous legislation. In particular, Peckham's decree, *Omnes utriusque sexus*, making annual Confession and Communion obligatory, had far-reaching effect.

These events greatly stimulated the composition of didactic literature, particularly doctrinal manuals for the instruction and use of ignorant clergy, as well as treatises for the religious instruction of the literate laity. Peckham's own instructional outline, *Ignorantium sacerdotum* (1281), issued as a decree, laid out the six things in which a priest was to instruct his congregation, for the cure of their souls: the Articles of Faith, the Commandments of the Old and New Law, the seven Sacraments, the seven Works of Mercy, the seven Principal Virtues and the seven Deadly Sins. Peckham's treatise, both in form and in content, is based on earlier manuals, which in turn look back to the Lateran decrees and, as has been demonstrated, some way beyond. Nevertheless, it was Peckham's manual which became the chief model for the many English manuals of religious instruction which were to follow.

In general, these manuals were written in Latin prose during the thirteenth century and throughout the following two centuries, and in English prose and verse from the first half of the thirteenth century through to the end of the fifteenth century [112]. The Latin works, such as William of Pagula's *Oculus sacerdotis* (1325), the supplementary *Cilium oculi*, the *Speculum curatorum* (1340), the *Regimen Animarum* (1343), the *Memoriale presbiterorum* (1344), and numerous others [113], laid out increasingly elaborate programs of religious instruction to be learned first by the priests themselves and then applied by them to their congregations. These works were distributed among the parishes, for priests to copy out or memorize.

In 1357, Archbishop of York Robert Thoresby gave special force to Peckham's decrees in the North by ordering all clergy under his jurisdiction to present to the congregations in his archdiocese the six points of doctrine outlined in Peckham's manual. To this end, he composed a manual of his own, the *Instructiones*, and commissioned Dan Jon Gaytrege, a monk of St. Mary's Abbey, in York, to produce a vernacular translation which might be more easily memorized by the less learned clergy.

Gaytrege's work, now called the *Lay Folk's Catechism* [114], and another, later, work, John Myrc's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, a loose translation

of the *Oculus sacerdotis*, were particularly important, both for the instruction of clergy and for the development of didactic literature in the vernacular. Not only did these works provide the parish clergy with a simplified outline of prescribed doctrine, but they also provided, by example, both the didactic structure and sometimes the very words the priests could use in ministering to their flocks. For, to quote Professor Owst, the stringencies of a parson's lot would leave little time for study or preparation *115*. That is perhaps a kind way of saying at first what he goes on to expand upon later *116*: 'All of the manuals and treatises may well have been read from the pulpit in sections of suitable length by priests more or less incapable of independent speech'. And for those priests with time and more ability, the two works could have served as models for vernacular works of their own.

The connection between such manuals of instruction, the instructional sermons they were meant to inspire, and metrical homilies and didactic poems found in later medieval 'bokes and tretees' will be discussed at some length below. But first there is another distinct genre of reform-inspired didactic literature to be considered.

The manuals of religious instruction were closely related in subject matter to the many devotional treatises produced in the thirteenth century and after in French and English. The chief sources for such treatises were Peraldus's *Summa seu tractatus de virtutibus et viciis* (before 1260) and Friar Lorens's *Somme le roi*, and other works whose place in the development of medieval didactic literature has been mentioned above. These devotional treatises were influenced, in structure and content, by the programs of the Fourth Lateran Council, although they adhered less rigidly to the programs than did the manuals of instruction. Furthermore, the treatises had a less overtly didactic function. Rather, they were intended for the educated laity and the clergy as a pious substitute for profane literature *117*.

W.A. Pantin has outlined five main sub-genres of this type of devotional literature *118*. These are worth mentioning in order to catalogue some of the more important works of the genre and set them within the literary milieux, and also

because the didactic sequence preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts has features in common with works of the second, fourth and fifth sub-genre.

The first group includes St. Edmund's *Speculum ecclesiae* (before 1240) and Rolle's *Forme of Living* (c. 1350) as well as some other works with what might be termed mystical elements. The second group includes Peraldus's *Summa* mentioned above, Waddyngton's *Manual des Pechiez* (1260), its English translation, Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (1303), discussed in some detail earlier, and a work entitled *Of Shrifte and Penaunce* (1350), as well as others which, following D.W. Robertson Jr.[119], one might term private penitentials. The third group includes the *Somme le roi* and its English offspring, the *Ayenbite of Inwit* (1340), the *Book of Virtues and Vices* (1375) and the *Royal Book*, printed by Caxton in 1480. The fourth sub-genre is characterized by its works' extensive groupings of 'sevens'; it includes works such as Grosseteste's *Templum Domini*, Nassyngton's fourteenth century *Speculum vitae*, and others. The fifth group Pantin terms miscellaneous. It includes such works as the poems of William Shoreham (1320), the *Speculum Christiani* (mid-fourteenth century), the *Livre de St. Medicines* (1354) and the *Desert of Religion* (1400).

It is reasonable to assume that, in putting together the original sequence of didactic poems now preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts, the writer might have had in mind the generic model of the devotional treatise. The sequence has an excerpt from *Handlyng Synne* as a starting point, so the writer almost certainly had access to that work as a model. His grouping of distinct poems treating the 'sevens' would seem to indicate familiarity with works from the fourth sub-genre, as identified by Pantin. And the grouping of separate and distinct works into a single sequence suggests that the present poems have an affinity with the fifth group, miscellaneous in character, and particularly with the poems of Shoreham. Mention should also be made of the general similarities between the sequence and the *Speculum of Gy de Warewycke* (c. 1325), which Homer Pfander says was designed for lay reading: it is in five parts of approximately 200 lines each, treats the virtues versus vices, the Creed, Confession and Shrift, and has features in common with the preaching materials of the day [120].

'The Seven Principal Virtues' and the other didactic poems preserved with it in sequence have their basic didactic aims in common with those of contemporary instructional sermons [121], and the preaching manuals upon which they were based. They also have in common certain features of didactic method. 'The Seven Principal Virtues' begins with an appeal to the audience, to hear 'thyng ful nedful for to lere'. Immediately, the poem's didactic intent and oral address to an audience are established. The doctrine, contained in 'the bok' (line 5) from which the narrator presumably is reading -- conceivably a preaching manual or a doctrinal treatise -- is to be presented, orally, in an expanded form, to all those who 'wyllyn a stounde duelle'. These lines could, of course, be conventional, as they would seem to be in *Handlyng Synne* (see above). Indeed, in an earlier poem in the sequence, the supposed listener is instructed to 'loke in þe boke before'. However, oral forms, such as '3yf 3e wyl lystyn, 3e xul wetun,' are predominant in the poem's address.

The poem is addressed initially to 'man' in the sense of mankind. Matters of doctrine are presented throughout in this collective singular, which addresses the audience as a whole and every member of the audience as an individual. When the narrator addresses the audience more colloquially, he uses plural pronouns. Here again, the mixture of forms suggests both the process of hearing and that of reading; however, the presence of plural pronouns would seem to indicate oral presentation. They would seem to be directly analogous to the parenthetical remarks of medieval preachers, made to quiet noisy elements of the audience, which often are preserved in the sermons of the day and which would probably have been adopted by a poem modelled on one of those sermons, and preserved in its rhymes.

The didactic method of 'The Seven Principal Virtues' may be described as expansive and interpretative. The doctrine, quoted from the 'bok', is often reiterated in the verse. (This also suggests oral as opposed to written presentation.) The poem's treatment of Prudence is a case in point. The poem's purpose is not to expound upon the nuances of doctrine, but rather to get across the basics. Therefore, it presents 'sleyt' as a virtue and then proceeds, through reiteration of its terms and powers, to encourage its right practice. All earthly deeds require some measure of craft or Prudence. However, there is the real danger of too much

craftiness, which turns this God-given virtue into a vice. The poem does not elaborate how, but merely makes the basic doctrinal point. Here and elsewhere, the emphasis is on the practice, not the theology, of doctrine.

In other poems in the didactic sequence, and in most instructional sermons and doctrinal treatises, *exempla* are used to reinforce the practical message. In 'The Seven Principal Virtues', there are no *exempla*, perhaps because the Principal Virtues are more all-encompassing than other points of doctrine, more broad in their application (although the section on 'sleyt' might well have contained a 'tale' to illustrate how virtue can be turned into vice). However, this lack of *exempla* in no way lessens the poem's didactic impact. In a sense, it strengthens it, making the poem's doctrinal message all the more direct. In sum, 'The Seven Principal Virtues' is practical, popular and predominantly oral in its address, and its purpose is clear, simple and ever-present: to teach the people how to 'stroyn synne', 'plece God', and 'comyn to þe blys of heuene'.

'The Seven Principal Virtues' and its companion-poems would seem to be very similar to the contemporary instructional sermons, which Professor Owst says followed 'the simplest and most practical pattern, save for an element of the marvellous scattered here and there' [122]. That phrase seems particularly apt, in light of the analysis of didactic method just completed; and it also would seem to describe the *Quattuor sermones,* as printed by Caxton, a typical prose remnant of this genre, spare and very much to the point [123]. Professor Pfander has attempted, in a book on the preaching of the medieval friar [124], to formalize that simple and practical pattern, by analogy with the formal structure of the sermons proper, in his analysis of what he terms a verse sermon, 'Lesnit nou and habbit lest' [125]. Pfander's 'verse sermon' bears striking similarities in structure, address and style to the didactic poems preserved in the Harley and Cambridge MS. sequences – so much so that each of them could safely be called a verse sermon, if it were not for the fact that they are connected by links and form a distinct poetic sequence akin to the doctrinal treatises.

Professor Owst suggests that there is no valid distinction to be made between treatise and poem and instructional sermon [126]. He quotes a contemporary

source to the effect that 'al that is ywryte may be expounyd and yseyde' [127]. Professor ten Brink provides a partial corollary: 'The substance of didactic poetry proper consisted of sermons and religious treatises, which frequently appeared, as before, in rhyme' [128]. These points can be taken one step further, with specific reference to the poems of the didactic sequence preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts: all that is 'yseyde' may have come from something that originally was 'ywryte', and it may be 'ywryte' again and 'yseyde' again by later generations. In other words, material might appear in a preacher's manual, be presented in an instructional sermon, be turned into a metrical homily for oral or written presentation, be incorporated within a didactic matrix modelled on a comprehensive doctrinal treatise, or any or all of the above. Therefore, the only valid distinction to be made among the various sorts of late medieval didactic literature has to do with how the material might have been used at different points in time. Therefore, poems such as the one analyzed by Pfander, the ones transmitted in sequence in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts, and a host of other, similar poems, probably are hybrid forms, from a variety of parent breeds, which should not be identified, exclusively, with one particular genre or another.

It is impossible to say for sure whether the poems of the didactic sequence preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts were in fact derived from preaching manuals or whether they were ever declaimed from the pulpit. Extensive research might turn up definitive evidence. Instructional sermons are said to have survived, in their original form, by a number of means [129]: they might have been taken down at the time of delivery, systematically collected and edited afterwards; or they might have been written down in skeleton form or in expanded form and arranged later, to be read aloud in their entirety. The second of these possibilities might have been the case with the present didactic sequence. Various features of the poems preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts suggest their oral transmission; and the fact that they are linked in sequence might mean that they were collected, expanded, and arranged in order as a group of sermons. However, the fact that they are tagged on to the excerpted poem on the Ten Commandments suggests, on the contrary, that the sequence, as it is now preserved, was purposely modelled on doctrinal treatises. Of course, the actual history of the original sequence might well be a combination of these two courses of events.

Professor Owst states that English homilies such as these were designed to give the common people instruction in points of ritual and in religious duties [130]. By so doing, they carry one step further the basic purpose of medieval didacticism. In this vein, Professor Pantin remarks that

> For every one person who took the trouble or had the education to read one of the treatises or poems, there must have been hundreds who listened to sermons or looked at the painted walls of their churches.
>
> [131]

But literacy was on the increase through the later fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, a period, Owst points out, not of brilliant authorship 'but of the slow and steady self-education of the middle classes in the art of reading and literary appreciation' [132]. The appeal of the poems preserved in the Harley and Cambridge MS. sequences must have been limited, then as now, compared to more polished and engaging didactic works of literature, such as the *Speculum Christiani* or Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*. Nevertheless, it was just such works, Owst says, that were becoming popular: 'As lay reading increased, the simpler message declaimed in church passed eventually into the religious handbooks of the home' [133]. Still, relatively few could read for themselves. A literate householder might have gathered his folk together at daily prayers for readings. On such occasions, metrical homilies of the sort preserved in the Harley and Cambridge MS. sequences would have served very well.

It is likely that the poems now preserved in sequence in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts were originally written and put together for the benefit of literate laymen. It would have been unusual for parish priests of that time to own such works. Peter Heath's review of the wills of the Norwich parish clergy catalogues books almost entirely of clear religious function: bibles, preaching manuals and the like, but no collections of metrical homilies. He says their books show that 'the mental horizons of the clergy may be drawn very closely around their liturgical obligations' [134]. Maybe so, yet perhaps their mental horizons were circumscribed

as much by the limited range of a small purse as by limited intelligence or small interest [135], so ownership by a cleric is not out of the question.

It is possible that the original manuscript containing the didactic sequence remained for a time in the possession of the person who put it together, and that later on, the sequence, in whole or in part, was included in 'household' manuscripts of devotional and other material, such as (and including) those in which it appears today. Owst points out the tendency for such didactic material to appear in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century manuscripts alongside other, more popular works, such as *Piers Plowman*. Perhaps the original sequence was popular enough to have been copied by a number of scribes, into different manuscripts. Transmission through a number of generations of manuscripts would help to account for the mixture of dialectal forms and irregular linking of poems in the extant versions and for the incomplete rendering of the sequence in the Harley manuscript. These various manuscripts may have passed down through lay families, or they may have been sold, as would seem to have been the case with the Cambridge manuscript, in that its first recorded owner and two successive owners, as recorded on the ownership page, were all members of the parish clergy. (Presumably, the financial lot of the Norfolk parson improved sufficiently towards the end of the fifteenth century to allow him to own such books.) How else it might have survived, how the Harley manuscript survived and came into the possession of Edward Harley, and why no other manuscripts containing versions of this didactic sequence have survived are questions for future study.

For now, it remains to be considered who originally wrote 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and its companion poems, save one; in the present didactic sequences, what sort of man he was and where and when he lived. Tentative answers to these questions may be arrived at by a process of elimination. It is unlikely that the author was a monk. Admittedly, monks were responsible, earlier on, for the translation of preaching manuals into the vernacular, but these poems seem to owe more to actual instructional preaching than to the manuals *per se*. These do not seem to be translations out of Latin.

However, not all parish clergy charged with preaching to lay congregations were seculars. A case in point is John Winton, canon of St. Osyth and vicar of Rickmansworth, who is reported to have served the parish office in 1472, and presumably the preaching office as well, wearing regular habit, it is said, underneath his honest priestly garb *136*. Such a practice likely went on earlier as well, and so the authorship of these poems by a monk cannot entirely be discounted.

It is also unlikely that the author was a friar, despite what Professor Pfander has to say about the authorship of 'Lesnit nou and habbit lest'. Professor Owst says that the friars generally wrote down sermons and manuals in Latin, in order to keep the material away from their rivals, the half-literate priests *137*. Furthermore, the vernacular literature of the friars is typically more lyrical and contains imagery and symbolism *138*. However, the friars were involved in preaching instructional sermons throughout the fourteenth and into the fifteenth centuries, as is evident in their exemption from the Arundel Constitutions of 1409 *139*, which allowed only licensed priests to preach and instructed them to concentrate on the simple topics of lay-folk's faith, as outlined in the Peckham decrees. Furthermore, it is possible that the material which eventually became the poems was taken down by someone other than the preacher, and collected and edited afterwards. Therefore, authorship by a friar of the poems in the didactic sequence is also not out of the question.

Arundel's Constitutions were invoked to stop the spread of Lollard preaching. The followers of Wycliffe might well have preached sermons on the same material that is treated in the present poems. Wycliffe had, after all, said that 'virtues and vices and truths of the Gospel be matter enough to preach to the people' and that his followers 'shulden preche opinli' and 'algatis beware that the peple undirstonde wel, and so use comoun speeche in ther owne persone' *140*. However, the entire thrust of Lollardy was to break episcopal control and return to the 'naked text' *141* . It seems most unlikely that a Lollard would have included a section on the Sacrament of 'Buschopyng' or Confirmation in his works, or that he would have assigned Baptism primarily to 'a prest/Or oþer in uede þat be þe uest'.

That leaves the secular clergy, for lay authorship is almost entirely

out of the question, given the didactic nature of the material. It is unlikely that these poems are the work of a bishop, because of their affinity with the didactic method of vernacular sermons and their general lack of sophistication. In fact, these poems are most likely the work of a simple parish priest, who preached according to the Peckham decrees, as laid out in some instructional manual, and who felt the urge to go one step further and turn some of his sermons into metrical homilies in a sequence modelled on one or more doctrinal treatises.

This hypothesis would seem to be confirmed to some extent by comparison of the present poems with the poems of William of Shoreham, vicar of Charts near Leeds, Kent, from 1375 to 1400 or thereabouts [142]. Shoreham's poems are more scholarly and cultivated than these; nevertheless, they supplement one another much in the same way these do [143]. Four of Shoreham's seven poems are directly didactic: they deal with the seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the seven Deadly Sins and other points of doctrine. (The other poems deal with the Canonical Hours, the Joys of the Virgin and songs to the Virgin.) It is possible, therefore, that Shoreham's poems had a history of composition similar to the poems of the sequence preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts. This hypothesis of authorship by a parish priest would be further strengthened if it turned out that the author of the *Speculum of Gy de Warewycke* was himself a priest. That point, however, remains in doubt [144].

The date and provenance of the poems in the didactic sequence preserved in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts are more difficult to pin-point. Even if all the poems but one are by the same author, that does not necessarily mean that they were all written at the same time or, indeed, in the order in which they now appear. Professor ten Brink says of Shoreham's poems that they were written as the need arose, and that may also be true in the present case; however, Shoreham's poems are not inter-connected, as are the present poems [145]. All that the evidence supplied by the internal linking of the poems in the present sequences shows is that the first two poems of the Cambridge MS. sequence, not including the poem on the Ten Commandments, were written at one time, before 'The Seven Sacraments' was composed. But the unlinked poems in the original sequence may have been written before, after, or during the same period as the others.

The poems of the original didactic sequence were almost certainly written some time after 1303 [146], the date of composition of Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*. Furthermore, it may be assumed that time must have passed before *Handlyng Synne* became popular enough to have served the present author as a familiar and attractive lead-off for his sequence. It may be assumed of the author, given his probable humble station and likely lack of access to libraries, that the nearer he lived to Semperingham, Lincolnshire, where *Handlyng Synne* is thought to have been written [147], the sooner he might have seen a copy of the popular new work, and the earlier his own poems might have been written and attached to it.

'The Seven Principal Virtues' and its companion poems cannot have been written much before the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Circumstances of literacy and the probable use of the poem and the didactic sequence would probably place their composition later in that century. But the poems, and particularly 'The Seven Principal Virtues', can be no later than the second quarter of the fifteenth century, when it is thought they were copied into the second section of Harley MS. 3954. Finally, the bulk of evidence suggests that 'The Seven Principal Virtues' and the other poems of presumed common authorship now found in the Harley and Cambridge manuscripts were written by a parish priest whose name is now lost to us, but who probably lived and worked somewhere in East Anglia.

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

This edition will by and large follow the format of the Early English Text Society, as outlined in its *Notes For Editors* (1972) and displayed in some of its current publications. Emendations of the Harley MS. text are square-bracketed in the edited text and the nature of the emendation given in the textual footnotes. Local paleographic features of both manuscript versions are also noted in the footnotes. Standard abbreviations of letters and words in both manuscripts have been silently expanded, in both the edited text and the notes. One form of abbreviation in the Cambridge MS. version, the use of a tail or flourish on a letter to indicate a minim, sometimes produces ambiguous readings, the nature of which is indicated in the edited text by the use of square brackets. Words which appear in manuscript written in other than modern form are silently emended, except the word(s) 'no thyng', which has been allowed to stand as written. The Harley MS. use of capitalization, regularly at the start of each line and for the first person singular pronoun, has been adopted in the present edition, and extended to such proper names as appear in the text and to references to the deity. The Cambridge MS. use of capitalization is less regular. In the edited text and footnotes, Cambridge MS. capitalization has been silently emended to conform with that used in the Harley MS. version. Modern punctuation has been introduced into the edited text, to supply the lack of original punctuation, but has been kept to a minimum. Original punctuation from the Harley MS. version has been retained where it appears, in the Latin headings, and variants in the Cambridge MS. version punctuation are noted. Punctuation of Roman numerals in the text and the headings has also been retained, and variants have been noted.

The Latin headings have not been counted in the lineation of the text, for there is no certainty that they originally belonged with the poem. They are identified in the text, the footnotes and the textual notes and commentary by Roman numerals. Harley MS. foliation is recorded in the far right margin of the text. Cambridge MS. foliation is recorded in the footnotes. To save space, the following regularly recurrent variants have not been recorded in the footnotes to the text: þou] þu C; 3yf] if C; elle] ell C; sleyt] sleyth C.

TABLE OF SIGLA

H	*British Library Harley MS. 3954, folio 85 verso a*
C	*Cambridge University Library MS. Ii 4.9, folio 185 recto*

THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL VIRTUES

Iste sunt .vii. virtutes principales *f. 85 v a*

Man behold and þou myth here
Thyng ful nedful for to lere
[v] ii. virtuwys ben þerinne
þat God hat sent al mankynne
In þis bok he ben wrytun
3yf 3e wyl lystyn 3e xul wetun, *f. 85 v b*
Wythoutyn þe qwych no man may 3e[n]ene
For to comyn to þe blys of heuene;
Of þese sumdel I wyl 3ou telle,
[3]e þat wylly[n] a stou[n]de duelle,
Now at þe fyrste I wyl begynne
þat helpyt for to stroyn synne.

Prima virtus. Fortitudo.

Þe fyrst virtu þat I say
It is strenkþe be my fay
For wythoutyn þis certeynly
[þer myth no man sauyd be;
But þer is a strenkþe certeynly,]
Boþe gostly and bodyly,
And boþe þou most neds haue
3yf þou wylt þi soule saue.
Fyrst into þis werd quan þou com
þou myth not reseyue þi Crystyndome
Wythoutyn helpe of a prest
Or oþer in uede þat be þe uest;
þer haste þou myth bodyle

i .vii.] semptem C. 1 behold] behelde C; myth] may C. 2 ful] þat C; for] is C. 3 vii.] iii, seuene C; virtuwys ben] virtues arn C. 4 hat sent] hat3 sent to C. 5 bok he] boke þei C; wrytun] wretyn C. 6 xul wetun] xal wetyn C. 7 Wythoutyn þe qwych] Wythowten qweche C; may 3enene] 3euene C. 8 C *f. 185 verso*; For to comyn] May com C; blys] blysse C. 9 þese] þis C. 10 3e þat wyllyn] 3e þat wylly, If þat 3e wyll C; stounde] stoude, stownde C; duelle] dwelle C. 11 Now] Nowe C; begynne] ⟨be⟩genne C. 12 *omitted* C. ii C *underlined*; virtus] vertus C. 13 þe] þe., The C; þat] þat is C. 14 strenkþe] strenkthe C; fay] faye C. 15 For wythowte[n] strenkthe serteynly C. 16, 17 *Restored, with adaptions to language of* H, *from* C; þere may no man sawyd be/ But þer is a strenkthe certeynly C. 19 boþe] bothen C; most] must C. 20 þi soule] þin sowle C. 21 Fyrst . . . werd] Into þe þis warde C; come] fyrst cam C. 22 myth not reseyue] may no3t resceyue C; Crystyndome] Crystendamm C. 23 Wythoutyn] Wythowtyn C; prest] preste C. 24 oþer in] other i[n] C; be þe] ben C. 25 þere haste non my3th bodyly C.

Of þos men þat helpe þe;
þat tyme ȝyf þi helpe ne wore
Wythoutyn ende þou were lore
For þou hast no myth cekerly
Neþer gostly ne bodyly
Ontyl þou hast þi baptem take
Of þos men þat þe so make.
Sythen quan þou ag[y]st in þi lyue
Cryst ȝyuyt þe þi wytts .v.
To knowyn boþe wrong and ryth
And þerto He ȝeuyt þe myth
For to be strong aȝen þi fon
In quat place þou xalt gon;
For certeyn þou thar neuer don ylle
But ȝyf it be þin owyn wylle.
Gostly myth þou hast also
þou þou haue a syn do;
God ȝeuyt þe myth for to shryue
And comyn aȝen to good lyue.
Bodyly myth þou hast also
To don al þat þ[ou] nedyt to do
þi werds leuyng for to haue
As God Hymself wyl vousaue. *f. 86 r°*
Gostly ne bodyly day ne nyth
þou mat not don wythoutyn myth;

26 Of þos] But if C; þe] þe nye C. 27 þi] þin C. 28 Wythoutyn] Wythowten C. 29 myth cekerly] myȝth sekyrly C. 30 Neþer] Neyther C. 31 Ontyl] Vntyl C; þi] þi[n] C. 34 ȝyuyt þe] ȝeue þe þan þi C. 37 C *f. 186 recto*; be] ben C; aȝen þi] ageyn þi[n] C; wylle] wyll C. 41 C do *deleted after* al. 42 þou þou . . . syn] þau þu haste synne C. 43 ȝeuyt] ȝeuyth C; 44 comyn aȝen] comen ageyn C. 46 þou] þe, þe C; nedyt to] nedyth C. 47 þi werds] þi[n] werdly C. *following* 47 H *catchphrase* As God. 48 Hymself wyl vousaue] Hymselfe wel wowchesaue C. 50 mat not] may noȝt C; wythoutyn] wythowtyn C.

þerfore forsoþe thynkyt me
þis vertu is of gret bounte.
Cryst ȝyf vs grace þis vertu to ply
þat He may be plecyd þerby.

Secunda vertus. Iusticia.

[A] noþer vertu certeyn þer is
þat plecyt Ihesu Cryst in blys;
I telle ȝou -- boþe more and lesse --
It is clepyd rythwycenesse.
þou myth wel wetyn in þi menyng
þis vertu is a princepal thyng;
þou myth neuer þi soule saue
But ȝyf þou þis vertu haue
And haunte for to werke ryth
To þe plecyng of God almyth.
Be rythful to þin euyn Crystyn
Fer and ner boþe out and in
And ȝyf þou be I dar wel say
þou xal han [i]oy þat lestyth ay.

Tercia vertus. Temperancia.

[Þ] e iii. vertu is ful sure
It is clepyd temperure.
Temperure is not elle to say
But for to ben in euene way:
Neþer to hey ne to lowe
Ne to nech no to towe
Neþer to wram ne to cold

51 þerfore forsoþe thynkyt] þerefor sothe thynkyth C. 52 vertu] wertu C; bounte] bownte C. 53, 54 *omitted* C. iii Secunda] Scda, Scda C; vertus Iusticia] virtus iusticia C. 55 Anoþer] noþer, Another C; certeyn þer] serteynly C. 56 plecyt Ihesu Cryst in] plesyth Ihesu in heuen C. 58 rythwycenesse] rythwyssnes C. 59 myth] may C; in þi] i[n] þi[n] C. 60 princepal] princypal C. 61 myth] may C; þi soule saue] þi[n] sowle save C. 62 C But(if). 63 haunte . . . werke] hawnte for warke C. 64 plecyng] plesyng C; almyth] almyte C. 65 þin euyn Crystyn] þi[n] euen Crysten C. 66 Fer] Ferre C; ner boþe out] ner[r]e boþen owte C; in] inne C. 67 C *f. 186 verso;* dar wel say] dare wyll saye C. 68 xal]xalt C; ioy] loy, loye C. iv vertus.] virtus C. 69 þe iii. vertu] e, The thred vertu it C. 72 euene way] euen vay C. 73 Neþer] Neyther C. 74 nech no] nesch ne C. 75 *omitted* C.

But ȝeuyn in þe ryth hold
To temperyn and tyme þe aryth
To þe plecyng of God almyth
þi bodly werks to fulfylle
And tymyn after Crysts wylle.
Of þi gostly werks also
Tempere hem as þou owyst to do
To plece þi God in al thyng
Of qwom þis vertu fyrst gan spryng.
It is a vertu to aplyth
Quat man can tymyn hym aryth
And ofte tyme I haue herd say
þat mesure is tresure -- it is no nay.

Quarta vertus. Prudencia.

[Þ]e iiii. vertu be my fay
It is sleyt -- it is no nay.
Sleyt is a thyng of gret myth
Ordeynyd to synful manes syth.
Boþe gostly and bodyly
Exaumple I wyl telle qwy:
þer may non erthely craft be do
But ȝyf sleyt helpe þerto
Ne no dede in no degre
As ȝe moun ȝoureselfyn se.
It is a vertu wythoutyn pere
ȝyf it be vsyd in good manere:

76 *omitted* C. 77 To temperyn] Temper þe C; aryth] ryth C. 78 plecyng] plesyng C. 79 bodly werks] bodyly werkys C. 80 tymyn] tymen C. 81 Of . . . werks] And of þin gostely werkes C. 82 Tempere] Tyme C. 83 plece þi] plese þi[n] C. 84 qwom] qwhom C; vertu] virtu C; spryng] sprynge C. 85 to aplyth] I þe plyth C. 86 tymyn] tyme C. 87 ofte] oftyn C; herd say] hard saye C. 88 tresure] tresowr C; no] noȝt C. v Quarta vertus] Quartus virtus C. 89 þe iiii.] E, The forte C; be] by C. 90 no] non C. 92 Ordeynyd] Ordeyne C; manes] mannys i[n] C. 93 Boþe] Bothe C. 94 Exaumple] Exawmple C; wyl] xal C; qwy] qwhy C. 95 þer] þere C; erthely] erdly C. 96 C *f. 187 recto*; helpe] help C. 97 no] non C. *both.times.* 98 moun ȝoureselfyn] mown ȝeselfe C. 99 wythoutyn pere] wythowtyn were C. 100 manere] maner C.

And 3yf he wyl wyth falsed tryce
Certeyn I hold hym but a vyce;
As long as he delyth wyth gyle
He may wel be clepyd a wyle;
But certeyn I telle 3ou ful ryth
þer is no wyle aforn God almyth
And þerfore for no bodyly spycs
Torne not 3our vertuwys into vycs.
Sleyt is a vertu wythoutyn les
3yf it be kept in clennes:
It sauyt a man gostly
Fro þe deuel hys enmy;
It makyt hym strong out and inne
For to fle dedly synne;
Quat craft þat a man wyl do
Sleyt wyl helpyn hym þerto
For it is seyd at short and at lenkeþe
A lytyl sleyt is worth mekyl strenkþe.

Quinta vertus. Fides.

[Þ]e .v. vertu holy wryt seyth
Certeyn it is clepyd feyth;
Kep þou þis vertu qwere þou be went
Or certeyn elle þou xal be shent.
Quan þou art baptycyd at þe funt ston
þou art chargyd be Sen Ion
For to leuyn rythfulle

101 3yf] *omitted* C; wyl] wel C; tryce] tryse C. 102 I holde it þan a fals vyse C. 103 long] longe C; delyth] dely3t C. 104 He] It C; be] ben C; wyle] wyll C. 105 certeyn] serteynly C; ful] *omitted* C. 106 þer] þere C; no wyle] non vyle C; almyth] almyte C. 107 þerfore] þerfor C; no bodyly spycs] non bodely spyce C. 108 Torne not] Turne no3t C; vertuwys] vertu C; vycs] vyce C. 109 Sleyt] Sleyth it C; wythoutyn] wythowten C. 110 kept] kepte C; clennes] clennesse C. 111 It sauyt] And sauyth C; gostly] gostely C. 112 deuel] deuyl C; enmy] enmye C. 113, 114 *omitted* C. 115 Quat craft] For quat crafte C; wyl] *omitted* C. 116 wyl helpyn] wel helpe C. 117 it is seyd] men seyn C; short and] woorde C; lenkeþe] lenghe C. 118 strenkþe] strength C. v vertus.] virtus. C. 119 þe .v.] E, The fyfte C; wryt] wryth C. 120 Certeyn] Certeynly C. 121 Kep þou þis] Kepe wel þat C; went] bent C. 122 certeyn] serteyn C; xal] xalt C; shent] schent C. 123 baptycyd] baptyȝed C; þe] *omitted* C. 124 chargyd] charged C; Sen] Seynt C. 125 rythfulle] rythfully C.

f. 86 v a

As Holy Chyrch techyth þe;
þi Godfader and þi Godmoder are borw þore
þat þou xal leuyn in Crysts lore;
Xiiii. artyclys þer be
þat þou most leue suwerle:
In þi Crede þei ben wrytun --
3yf þou wylt loke þou xalt wetun --
3yf þou hem leue and vse aryth
þou plecyst mekyl God almyth.
For in feyth lyth al þi thout:
But for þi feyth þou were ryth nout:
For 3yf þou leue wrongfully
þou xalt be dampnyd endlesly;
3yf þat þou kepe þi feyth aryth
þerfore þou xalt haꝑ endles lyth;
þan may þis be a vertu to telle
þat sauyt a mannes soule fro helle.

vi ta . vertus. Spes.

[Þ] [e] .vi. vertu is hope --
Quat man þat wyl þeron grope --
þis ich vertu certeyn
Kepyt many man fro peyn
Boþe bodyly and gostly
þou myth wel se þat I not ly:
For 3yf a man be in sekenes
Or ony dysese more or les

126 C *f. 187 verso*; techyth þe] techet þe by C. 127 borw] borwes C 128 xal leuyn] xalt leue C; Crysts] Crystes C. 129 Xiiii. artyclys þer] Xii articules þerin C. 130 most] muste C; suwerle] sekyrlye C. 131 þi] þin C; wrytun] wrete C. 132 wetun] wete C. 133 leue] loke 134 plecyst] plesyst C; almyth] almy3t C. 135 in] in þi C; lyth] lyt3 C; þi thout] þin thowt 136 þi] þi[n] C; nout] nowth C. 138 be dampnyd] ben dampned C. 140 þerfore] þerfor C; han] haue C. 141 be] ben C; vertu] wertu C. 142 sauyt] sauyth C; mannes soule] mannys sowle C. vii vi ta. vertus] Sexta virtus C. 143 þe .vi.] E, The sexte C; is] it is C. 144 wyl þeron grope] wyl þerouer stope, wel þeron grope C. 145 þis] þat C; certeyn] i[s] serteyn C. 146 Kepyt many] Kepyth many a C; peyn] peyne C. 147 gostly] gostely C. 148 þis may þu seyn sekyrly C. 149 sekenes] sekenesse C. 150 ony dysese] in dysses C; les] lesse C.

And he be trost þat it xal ende
And kepe þis hope in hys mende
Hys hope is hys helpe þo
And put awey mekyl of hys wo;
þerfore I may seyn sauely
In hope is help bodyly.
Gostly þ[ou] most hopyn ȝe[u]ene
For to comyn to þe blys of heuene;
But þou hope [so] -- so God me saue --
þat blys myth þou neuer haue.
þerfore þis vertu trewely
Is boþe gostly and bodyly
It is a vertu of gret myth
Aȝen þe fend for to fyth
þerfore I dare sauely ȝelpe
Euermore certeyn in hope lyth helpe.

vii ma . virtus. Caritas. *f. 86 v b*

[þ] [e] .vii. vertu sekerle
It may wel be charyte.
Charyte is not elle but loue
Fyrst princepaly to God aboue;
Sythen boþe fer and nere
To louyn þin euyn Crystyn here;
Also loue þ[ou] most oule
For to loue þin owyn soule.
Boþe gostle and bodyle

151 trost] troste C. 153 C *f. 188 recto.* 154 awey mekyl] awaye mekel C. 155 þerfore] þerfor C. 156 help bodyly] helpe bodely C. 157 þou] þe, þu C; most hopyn] may hope C. 158 comyn] com C; blys] blysse C; heuene] heuen C. 159 so so] so, so so C; saue] save C. 160 blys myth] blysse may C. 161 þerfore] þerfor C; trewely] trewly C. 164 fend] deuyl C. 165 þerfore] þerfor C. 166 Euermore certeyn] þat euermore C; lyth] is C. viii vii ma] Septima C. 167 þe .vii.] E, The seuened C; sekerle] sekyrlye C. 168 be] ben C. 169 not] nowt C. 170 princepaly] prin[cy]paly C; aboue] above C. 171 Sythen] And sythen C; fer] fare C. 172 louyn . . . Crystyn] louen þi[n] euen Crysten C. 173 þe, And also fast þu must owle C. 174 loue] louyn C; soule] sowle C. 175 gostle] gostly C; bodyle] bodely C.

þus most þou leuyn in charyte.
And but þou do I dar wel say
þou myth syng wellaway;
For þou þou do al þi wyl
To plece God loud and styl
But charyte be in þi thout
Forsoþe it helpyth ryth nowt.
þerfore loue þin neybore here
þan louyst þou God þat bout þe dere
And þin owyn soule also
3yf þou þis ich vertu do.
Forsoþe þou myth not louyn on
But 3yf þou loue euerychon:
Cryst is charyte I holde wythalle
3yf þou loue Hym, þou louyst gret and smalle
þi neyborys boþe loud and stylle
Elle þou dost not Crysts wylle.
þis is a vertu of gret prys
3yf þou it kepe wythoutyn vys;
þer is no thyng abouyn loue
3yf it touche to God aboue.
þes arn þe vii. vertuwys of prys
þat þ[ou] most kepe 3yf þou be wys;
Cryst 3yf vs grace so hem to 3e[n]ene
þat we moun oulyn þe blys of heuene.

Explicit .vii. vertutes.

176 most] must C. 177 dar] dare C. 178 þu xalt gon a ful hard way C. 179 *first* þou] þow C; al] all C; wyl] wyll C. 180 C *f. 188 verso*; plece] plése C; God loud] God boþe lowd C; styl] stylle C. 181 þi thout] þi[n] thowth C. 182 Forsoþe] Forsoth C; helpyth] helpyth þe C; nowt] nowth C. 183 þerfore] þerfor C; þin neybore] þi[n] neybowr C. 184 þan] þat C; bout] bowth C. 185 þin] þi[n] C; soule] sowle C. 186 ich vertu] vertu welt wyl C. 187 Forsoþe] Forsoth C; myth not louyn] may no3t loue C. 188 3yf *omitted* C; loue] loue hem C. 189 holde wythalle] hode wythal C. 190 loue] louyst C; louyst] louest C; smalle] smal C. 191 þi neyborys] þin neybowrs C; loud] lowde C. 192 Elle] And ell C; not] no3t C; wylle] wyll C. 194 wythoutyn vys] wythowten wys C. 195 þer] þere C; abouyn] abouen C. 196 touche] towche C; aboue] above C. 197 þes] þis, þes C; vii. vertuwys] vertues C; prys] peys C. 198 þou] þe, þu C; most] must C. 199 3yf] 3eue C; so . . . 3enene] to kepe hem 3euen C. 200 moun oulyn] mown com to C; blys] blysse C; heuene] heuen C. ix *omitted* C.

TEXTUAL NOTES AND COMMENTARY

i) The poem's Latin *incipit* translates as follows: Here are the seven Principal Virtues.

1 - 12) The poem's first twelve lines serve to prime the audience for what will follow. In their direct manner of address and introductory function, these lines would seem to be analogous to the opening sections of contemporary instructional sermons (see p. 34, above).

1) **beholde** = behold (imperative, calling attention to rather than directing the eye); **þou** = you (collective singular, used in this poem when doctrine is being discussed; plural pronouns are used when the audience, *qua* audience, is being spoken to directly -- e.g. lines 6, 9, 10, etc.); **myth** (EME *miht*) = may (see also may (7), moun (98)): Man behold and you may hear.

2) **Thyng** = a thing, something (i.e. the poem to follow); **to lere** (OE *laeran* (*originally* to teach), ME *leren*) = to learn, receive instruction: Something that ought to be learned (that you ought to know about).

3) **virtuwys** = virtues (plural form confirmed by similar usage at lines 108 and 197 in Harley MS. version); **þerinne** = therein: Seven virtues are therein.

4) Cambridge MS. version of this line transmits the same sense, and is metrically more regular; this is not, however, a good enough reason to prefer it to the Harley MS. reading -- see p. 24, above.

5) **he** (OE *hie*) = they (i.e. the virtues; this form persists in southern dialects of ME until the fifteenth century -- see p. 20, above; see also þei (131)).

6) **xul** = shall (subjunctive; see also xal (68)); **wetan** (OE *witan*) = understand (see also wetyn (59)): If you will (are willing to) listen, you shall understand (gain an understanding of them).

7) **Wythoutyn þe qwych** = without which (i.e. an understanding of the virtues); **no man may ȝe[n]ene** (from ON *gegna*?, ME *ȝenen, yenen*?) = no man may gain (i.e. prosper spiritually); the form 'ȝenen' is recorded in the *Middle English Dictionary* but the volume containing the word's etymology and meaning has not yet been published: Without which,

no man may prosper (enough) spiritually. *Alternatively,* no man ȝe[u]ene (OE *efen*) = even (an adverb, used as an emphatic -- i.e. in fact, indeed): Without which no man, indeed.

The difficulty in interpreting the final word of line 7 stems largely from the ambiguity of the word's third letter, which is almost certainly either 'n' or 'u'. In the Harley MS. version, the copy-text, the context of line 7 supports the adoption of 'n', producing 'ȝenene', as in the first possible reading of the line as presented above. Context in the Harley MS. version would also support the adoption of 'ȝenene' in line 199, in which a similar difficulty of interpretation is present, while at line 157, context would support either 'ȝenene' or 'ȝeuene'. It must, however, be taken into consideration that the Cambridge MS. version presents the same minim ambiguity in the word in question, and contains readings at lines 7 and 8 and at 199 and 200 in which context supports the adoption of 'ȝeuene', as in the second, or alternative, reading presented above. Other evidence would also tend to support the adoption of 'ȝeuene' at these points in the text: 'ȝeuene' produces a more precise rhyme with 'heuene', the rhyme-word in each of the three instances, a not insignificant point considering the regularity of the poem's rhyme throughout; and furthermore, in other poems in the didactic sequence as recorded in the two manuscripts, context supports the adoption of 'ȝeuene' in every instance but one:

> þat he myth wetyn ȝeuene
> Qwo xuld be lycke hym in heuene
> *Seven Virtues versus Seven Deadly Sins* (29, 30)

> Quat thyng þou bynde in erthe ȝeuene
> Trostly xal be boundyn in heuene
> *Seven Sacraments* (33, 34)

> For qwy it is clepyd ȝeuene
> On of þe sacramentys .vij.
> *Seven Sacraments* (83, 84)

And þerfor I may ȝou wel ȝe[n]ene (?)
þis sacrament is on of þe .vij.
Seven Sacraments (196, 197)

But þe penaunce þat þou takyst ȝeuene
It is on of þe sacraments .vij.
Seven Sacraments (222, 223)

His sowle was take wyth aungell ȝeuene
And born it vp to þe blysse of heuene
Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins (185, 186)

And to alle þe company of heuen
Archangelis and aunglis ȝeuene
Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins (332, 333)

It is also worth noting that the excerpt from *Handlyng Synne* which appears as the first poem in the Cambridge MS. didactic sequence does not contain the word in question, but it does contain 'euene', in the same sense as 'ȝeuene', on two occasions to rhyme with 'heuen' (see Furnivall (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, lines 2489 and 2565).

The weight of this evidence in favour of 'ȝeuene', combined with uncertainty as to the possible meaning(s) of 'ȝenene', would seem to indicate that 'ȝeuene' should be adopted in the edited text as the more likely reading. This decision would necessitate the adoption of readings from the Cambridge MS. version for lines 7 and 8 and lines 199 and 200 (line 157 makes sense with either 'ȝeuene' or 'ȝenene'). To do so, however, would necessitate some explanation of the apparent reconstruction of these lines in the Harley MS. version. Such reconstruction is difficult to account for in a conservative scribe who was evidently familiar with the 'ȝeuene' form as it appears in 'The Seven Virtues versus the Seven Deadly Sins' and 'The Seven Sacraments'. If reconstruction did, in fact, take place, in all likelihood it involved an earlier-generation scribe in the Harley MS. line of transmission.

Resolution of these matters must await further study. Accordingly, for the purposes of the present edition, the apparent readings of the copy-text at lines 7 and 199 have been diplomatically reproduced, the reading 'ȝenene' adopted at line 157 (for the sake of consistency), and paleographical ambiguity duly noted in each of the three cases.

8) **to comyn to** = to come to (older infinitive form of the verb 'to come', plus 'to').

9) **sumdel** (OE *sumdael*) = somewhat (something): I will tell you something of these (virtues).

10) **wyllyn** = will (desire); **stounde** (OE *stund*) = moment, while (in the Harley MS. version, the scribe has apparently omitted the minim abbreviation on both these words): You who will (are willing to, wish to) stay a while.

12) **stroyn** = destroy (alternate infinitive form of the verb): That helps to destroy sin.

ii) The Latin heading translates as follows: First Virtue. Fortitude.

13 - 14) The Cambridge MS. version of these two lines might suggest that primacy among virtues belongs to Fortitude, in the same manner that primacy among sins in many medieval works is accorded to Pride (e.g., *Handlyng Synne* and 'Shrift and the Seven Deadly Sins', discussed at p. 35, above). While primacy in the order of treatment of the sins is a well-established practice (see Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins, passim.*), this practice or principle of ordering does not seem to be prevalent in works on the seven Principal Virtues.

That being the case, the Cambridge MS. version should probably be taken to have a meaning similar to that of the Harley MS. version, with the additional word 'is' introduced by the Cambridge MS. scribe, or a predecessor, in an attempt to make sense of the syntactically awkward phrase 'þat I say', probably meaning 'of which I speak'.

14-20) It is possible, though unlikely, that 'strenkþe be my fay' (i.e. the 'strength of my faith') is meant to be presented as a virtue distinct from the spiritual and bodily Fortitude introduced in lines 17 through 20 and discussed in the rest of this section of the poem. Such a con-

flation of two of the standard seven Principal Virtues would, however, be highly unusual, especially in the present literary context. More likely, the phrase 'be my fay' constitutes line fill, and lines 17 through 20 are meant as a reiteration of lines 14 through 16.

14) **strenkþe** = strength; **fay** (OF *feid*) = faith.

15) **þis** = this (i.e. strength (not 'faith')).

19) **most** (OE *moste*) = must; **neds** (OE *nydes, nedes*) = necessarily: And both you necessarily must have.

21) An attractive alternative reading of this line presents itself; through slight emendation of the Cambridge MS. version we may arrive at 'Into þis werd quan þou fyrst com'. This alternative reading presents the same meaning as the Harley MS. version. The Harley reading has, however, been retained in the edited text, despite syntactical awkwardness, because it is difficult to imagine how the conservative Harley scribe, or his predecessor, might have arrived at the awkward line transmitted through Harley from this clear and straightforward alternative reading (see p. 13, above); **werd** (OE *weorold*) = world; **com** (OE *cuman*) = came (alternate past form): When you first came into this world.

22-23) You may not receive your Christening (i.e. be baptized) without the help (i.e. except through the agency) of a priest.

24) **uede** (EME *wede*) = garment; **uest** (L. *vestis, vestis*) vestment: Or (an)other in ecclesiastical vestments (i.e. another clergyman). See p. 32, above, concerning the primacy of the sacrament of Holy Orders, through which 'comyn alle oþer inne', p. 53, above, for the significance of this line vis-a-vis possible authorship, and also the following lines from *Handlyng Synne*, outlining which clergy may perform the sacraments:

> And alle prestes have nat powere
> For to assoyle þe ryȝt clere
> But hyt be þy paryssche preste
> Or haue hys leue at þe leste
> Or at þy parsone or vycary
> For þese haue of þy soule maystry.

25-26) The Harley MS. version of these two lines yields the sense 'there you have the virtue of bodily strength -- from those men (i.e. the priest or other clergy) that help you (by having baptized you)'. The lines are syntactically correct, yet they are awkward; perhaps this awkwardness is what spurred the apparent scribal reconstruction which is evident in the Cambridge MS. version (see p. 11, above).

25) **haste** = hast (unusual spelling in the Harley MS. version); **myth** (OE *miht*) = might, power (this spelling may be analogous with myth = may).

27) **helpe** = help (i.e. the helpful power of baptism); **wore** (OE *waere* became ME wM *weore,* later *wore*) = were (this spelling, preserved in the rhyme in both MS. versions, may well be original -- see also þore (128)): If at that time your help were not (available).

28) **lore** (OE *leosan,* ppl. *loren*) = lost: You (would be) lost (i.e. damned) without end.

29) **cekerly** (EME *sikerliche*) = securely, for certain.

31) **baptem** (OF *baptesme, bapteme*) = baptism.

32) Of those men (i.e. the priest, etc.) that make you so (i.e. baptized).

33) **sythen** = since; **þou agyst** (ME *agen*) = you grow old(er): Since when (i.e. baptism), you grow older in your life. *Alternatively,* **þou a gyft** = you a gift: Since when, you [are given] a gift in your life.

The uncertainty of this reading results from paleographical ambiguity in both MS. versions. Neither reading is wholly satisfactory, but no obvious editorial emendation suggests itself.

34) **ȝyuyt** = giveth; **wytts .v.** = five wits, five senses (evidently these are the accessories to bodily strength, the means by which man tells wrong from right (35).

35) **ryth** (OE *riht, ryht*) = right.

36) **ȝeuyt** = giveth (see also ȝeuyt (43)).

37) **aȝen** = against; **fon** (ME *foen*) = foes ('en' plural, with contraction after a stem vowel).

38) **gon** = go (see also don (39, 45) *beside* do (42, 45)).

39) **thar** (OE *þurfan*) = need.

41-44) A sinner who is yet possessed of spiritual strength may still repent, be shriven and achieve atonement.

42) **þou þou** = though thou; **haue** = have (subjunctive): Although you have sinned.

44) **aȝen** = again.

45-47) Bodily might means the physical strength and stamina necessary to meet the daily toils and trials of this worldly life.

46) **þou** = you (both MSS. þe; second person pronominal forms are sometimes undifferentiated in ME).

47) **werds** = world's (worldly).

48) **vousaue** (OF *vocher* + safe) = vouchsafe.

49) **ne ... ne** = nor ... nor; **nyth** = night (perhaps by analogy with myth).

50) **mat** (OE *maehton*) = might (distinct from myth (25) = might, indicating that 'myth' used as a verb probably means 'may', not 'might').

iii) The Latin heading translates as follows: Second Virtue. Justice.

55) The Cambridge MS. reading 'serteynly is' would seem to be a modernization, making clear that the word 'serteyn' is taken as an adverb, modifying 'is', rather than an adjective, modifying 'vertu'.

57) The phrase 'boþe more and lesse' is probably an instance of line fill; see also, for example, be my fay (14, 89), day ne nyth (49), boþe out and in (66), it is no nay (90), more or les (150), so God me save (159), boþe fer and nere (171), I dar wel say (177), loud and styl (180, 191), I holde wythalle (189), each of which occurs at the end of a line and also constitutes 'rhyme tag'; an example of line fill occurring at the beginning of a line is Evermore certeyn (166); sometimes, whole lines may be termed line fill, introduced to produce a desired rhyme with the preceding or following line -- for example line 51. In general, a phrase may be termed line fill when it appears to add nothing to the meaning of the line, or when it constitutes scribal interpolation of a conventional sort. Rhyme tag is a phrase introduced principally for the sake of rhyme; it may or may not add to the meaning of the line.

58) **clepyd** (OE *clypian, clepian*) = called; rythwycenesse = righteousness.

59) **menyng** = meaning (intention, purpose).

60) **princepal** = primary, main.

63) **haunte** (OF *hanter,* ME *haunten*) = to practise (a virtue, righteousness, etc.), to busy oneself with (an activity): And practise so as to work righteousness (i.e. behave in a righteous manner).

65) **be rythful** = behave righteously; **euyn Crystyn** (OE **efencristen,* OFris *ivinkerstena*) = fellow Christian.

67) **dar wel say** = dare well (C. will?) say.

68) **han** (ME *hauen*) = have (older form of verb; not 'hau' -- see also gon (38), don (39), etc.).

iv) The Latin heading translates as follows: Third Virtue. Temperance.

69) The sense of this line would seem to be analogous to the Harley MS. version of line 55; see also line 145.

70) **temperure** (OF *tempreure*) = self control, moderation.

71) **elle** (OE *elles*) = else (both manuscripts use this unconventional form throughout): Self control is not more than to say (i.e. means).

72) **in euene way** = in an equanimitous state.

74) **nech** (OE *hnesce*) = yielding; **towe** (OE *toh*) = tough.

75-77) The omission of lines 75 and 76 from the Cambridge MS. version necessitates the imperative form of the verb 'to temper' in line 77, whereas in the Harley MS. version lines 75 and 76 are syntactically connected to the infinitive form 'to temperyn' in line 77.

75) **wram** = warm.

76) **ȝeuyn** = even (adj.), in right or proper degree (see also euene (72), and the spelling, though with a different sense, of ȝe[u]ene (157)).

77) **tyme** (OE **etimian*) = fare (well or ill); this word would seem to be synonymous with 'temper' (compare line 80 with line 82).

79, 81) Allusions to the bodily and spiritual or ghostly Works of Mercy here tend to link these doctrinal elements specifically to the virtue of Temperance. Similar links are apparent with the virtue of Justice (see 'werke' (63)) and implicitly in such phrases as 'to don al þat þou nedyt to do' (46) and the poem's repeated references to the 'gostly' and 'bodyly' aspects of each of the Virtues.

82) **owyst** = ought.

84) Christ is referred to here as the well-spring of Christian self-control, as typified by his forty days spent in the desert, for example.

85-86) These lines are syntactically awkward in both MS. versions. The Harley MS. version reads 'It is a virtue to apply (i.e. that one should apply)/ ? What (i.e. that) man (who) can time himself rightly (i.e. exercise self-control). The Cambridge MS. version of line 85 differs slightly: It is a virtue, I plight (i.e. promise) you.

85) **aplyth** (OF *aplier*) = apply (i.e. practise, use); the Cambridge MS. reading 'plyte' = plight (as in troth-plighting).

86) **aryth** = rightly.

88) In the context of the preceding line, the phrase 'mesure is tresure' would seem to be proverbial. Indeed, the phrase is recorded in G.L. Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1929) and in other collections of proverbs, as appearing in works by Lydgate (*Minor Poems,* Early English Text Society, ii 776) and Skelton (*Magnyfycence,* line 126), and in other works.

v) The Latin heading translates as follows: Fourth Virtue. Prudence.

90) **sleyt** (EME *sleȝþ*) = sleight (i.e. skillfulness).

91) The idea behind this line is largely reiterated at line 118.

92-94) Syntax is ambiguous in both of the MS. versions: lacking any punctuation, the phrase 'boþe gostly and bodyly' may modify the verb 'ordeynd' in line 92, or it may properly modify the noun 'example' in line 94 (see p. 26, above).

92) **manes** = man's (possessive form; plural *men* (26)); **syth** = sight (i.e. knowledge, insight); the Cambridge MS. reading 'insyth' may result from scribal correction of the metrical imperfection caused by Ordeynyd] Ordeyne **C.**

97) **in no degre** = of any sort.

99) **pere** (ME *peer*) = social equal (unusual spelling).

101) There would seem to be a departure, in this line and the three lines to follow, from the poem's normal second person singular form of address; why this occurs is uncertain. **He** = he (i.e. one); **falsed** = falsehood (i.e. faithlessness); **tryce** (MDu *trisen*) = trice (i.e. overthrow): And if he will (i.e. one desires) to overthrow (someone) by false means.

102) **but** = (nothing) but (i.e. no more than).

103) **gyle** = guile, treachery: As long as he delights in treachery.

104) **wyle** (EME *wil*) = wile (deceitful trick -- apparently applied here to the trickster himself, who becomes the personification of his own action.)

105) **certeyn** = certainly.

107-108) This use of consecutive negatives, common in ME, is meant to intensify the prohibition against turning virtues into vices for bodily delight; see Tanno F. Mustonoja, *A Middle English Syntax* Part 1 -- Parts of Speech (Helsinki: Memoires de la Societe Neophilologique de Helsinki XXIII, 1960), pp. 339 ff, for an explanation of this feature.

107) **spycs** = spices (fig. desires, rewards).

109) **wythoutyn les** = without diminution.

111-118) These lines in particular suggest the general rather than specific application of this Principal Virtue to combat sin. Prudence protects man from the devil and makes him strong against all sin, rather than providing remedy to one specific sin or serving on the level of allegory in the battle against the vices. It *assists* man in any craft or undertaking, rather than in itself constituting that undertaking.

112) **enmy** = enemy: From the Devil, his (i.e. man's) enemy.

113) **out and inne** = i. e. bodily and spiritually.

115) **Quat** = what(ever).

118) Although the phrase which constitutes this line does not appear, verbatim, in the dictionaries and collections consulted, the phrase 'either by might or by sleight' does appear (in F. P. Wilson (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970)). In the context of the preceding line, similar to that used citing a proverb at lines 87-88, a proverbial origin for the phrase would seem indicated. The apparent connection of the line's content to proverbial subject matter, and the line's aphoristic style would also tend to support a proverbial origin.

It is also possible that the posited proverb originally read 'a little sleight is worth much might' and was altered to fit rhyme; it is more likely, however, that the proverb is transmitted as the author knew it, for, given his use of rhyme tags and line fill elsewhere in the poem, he could easily have contrived, in line 117, a rhyme for 'myth'.

vi) The Latin heading translates as follows: Fifth Virtue. Faith.

119) Holy writ does not identify Faith as the fifth Virtue but rather as one of the three Theological Virtues (see p. 39, above).

121) **qwere** = where(ver); **be went** = be gone (i.e. go): Keep (to) this virtue wherever you go.

122) **shent** (OE *scendan*) = shent (i.e. disgraced, ruined).

123) **funt ston** = (baptismal) font stone.

124) The phrase 'by St. Ion' would seem to constitute rhyme tag.

127) **borw** (OE *borgian*) = borrow (i.e. to give security for, to pledge); **þore** = there: Thy Godfather and thy Godmother are pledged there (i.e. at the font stone).

129) The variance between the two MS. versions as to the number of Articles of Faith may indicate that there are two standard sequences of Articles, one containing fourteen and the other twelve elements; alternatively, this variance may simply result from scribal error. A definitive answer on this point must await further study.

129-134) These lines constitute a brief digression on the Articles of Faith, outlined according to the same didactic consequential method used in the poem as a whole and in each of its sections.

130) **leue** = live (i.e. live by); **suwerle** = surely, steadfastly.

134) **mekyl** = much (greatly).

135) The Cambridge MS. reading may have been produced by eye-skip to 'in þi Crede' (131).

136) **nout** = nought (nothing).

138) **dampnyd** = damned.

140) **lyth** = light (or perhaps, by context and convention, 'life'): Therefore you shall have endless light (life).

141) **telle** = tell (count upon as well as tell of).

vii) The Latin heading translates as follows: Sixth Virtue. Hope.

144) **grope** (OE *grapian, gropian*) = to take hold of, grasp, seize; the Cambridge MS. reading would seem to be more plausible in this instance (see p. 10, above).

145) **ich** (OE *ilca*) = each (i.e. same).

146-147) Line 147 would seem to refer back to 'peyn' (146), in the sense of bodily hurts and spiritual suffering, establishing a poetic structure for the ensuing treatment of the two aspects of Hope.

150) **ony** = any.

151) **be trost** (ON *treysta*) = trust (i.e. be trusting, have confidence that something will happen).

152) **mende** (OE *ȝemynd*) = mind; *alternatively,* **mende** (partly aphetic) = mend (i.e. amendment, improvement of health); if the former, this word may constitute a southerly linguistic feature (see p. 16, above).

153) **þo** (OE *þa*) = then.

155) **seyn sauely** = safely say (see also 'dar wel say' (67), 'sauely ȝelpe' (165).

165) **ȝelpe** (OE *ȝielpan*) = boast.

166) Context does not indicate a proverbial phrase in this instance so strongly as it does in the other two apparent instances of proverbs (lines 88 and 118), both of which explicitly quote 'sayings'. Nevertheless, there does, in this case, appear to be implicit quotation established by line 165, setting context for a proverbial phrase to follow. The phrase 'in hope lyth helpe', although it does not appear, verbatim, in any of the reference works consulted, does seem to be connected to the phrase 'hope helpyth', recorded in G. L. Apperson (ed.), *op. cit.*; for these reasons, the phrase is probably proverbial. (The opening two words of the line probably constitute line fill, as indicated in the commentary above.)

viii) The Latin heading translates as follows: Seventh Virtue. Charity.

170-172) These of course recall Christ's two great Commandments, as enunciated in Matthew 22:40.

173) **oule** (ME *oulyn*, from OF *aoillier, aeuller, eullier* and Med. L. *oilliare, uliare*) = to earn, collect, accumulate (i.e. wealth, riches -- here used figuratively in the sense of enriching one's soul (see also oulyn (200)).

178) **wellaway** (OE *weg la weg*) = an exclamation of sorrow (i.e. woe is me); the two MS. versions convey essentially the same reading here: Thou shalt be damned endlessly.

179-182) Hitherto in the poem, pleasing God is cited as the chief means by which to gain the bliss of heaven. These lines make clear that all acts to please God must be based on Charity -- love of one's neighbour and of Christ.

181) Unless you have Charity in mind.

182) **it** = (i.e. thy good will).

184) **bout þe dere** = bought thee dearly (a reference to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross).

188) **euerychon** = everyone (i.e. all your fellow Christians).

193) **prys** = worth, price (i.e. cost (of Christ's sacrifice)).

194) **vys** = vice.

197-200) These lines constitute a brief conclusion to the poem and a closing prayer, consistent with contemporary sermon form; compare, however, lines 53 and 54, a similar conclusory couplet, which one would not have expected to find in its present location in the poem.

200) The word 'oulyn' (earn, collect), preserved in the Harley MS. version, may have been unfamiliar to the Cambridge MS. scribe, or his predecessor. At line 173, this verb appears in a different infinitive form, 'oule', in the rhyme, and so is preserved in both MS. versions; at line 200, it would appear that the Cambridge MS. version substitutes the familiar formula 'may com to' for the evidently unfamiliar word 'oulyn'.

ix) The Latin *explicit* translates as follows: Here ends the Seven Virtues.

FOOTNOTES

1) All commentary derives from examinations of the manuscripts, unless otherwise noted.

2) The collation does not count the manuscript's free end-papers, which by virtue of the apparent history of manuscript make-up were added at the time of binding of three separate manuscripts.

3) The signing of leaves is irregular in the sense that in some gatherings only the first two leaves are signed, in some the first three, in some the third and fourth only, and so on.

4) Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943) and Rossell Hope Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), together referred to herein as *Index*.

5) M.C. Seymour, *The English Manuscripts of* **Mandeville's Travels**, Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions, vol. IV, part 5 (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1966), pp. 187-88. The features are those described by Seymour, with minor changes.

6) M.B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands 1250 - 1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), *passim.* and especially p. xxiv.

7) As described by Parkes, *op. cit.*

8) Seymour, *loc. cit.*

9) *Ibid.*

10) Titles of the poems follow, for the most part, those which appear in the *Index*. Information supplied by the *Index* is taken to be correct; additional information is supplied where it has become available.

11) Kurath, *et al.*, *A Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, *ongoing*) assigns this work to *c.* 1400.

12) John Edwin Wells, *Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050 - 1400*, vol. II (New Haven, Connecticut: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1926) and supplements, p. 325, calls this work the *Childhood of Christ* and says it was originally written in the north Midlands.

13) This work, also known as *Narratio Sancti Augustini*, was originally southern, according to Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

14) Wells, *op. cit.*, assigns this work to the south, between 1350 and 1400. T.F. Simmons (ed.), *The Lay Folk's Mass Book*, Early English Text Society OS 71 (London: N. Trubner & Co., 1879), p. 367, says this work is by John Lydgate. The *Index* holds that it is a version of the 'Merita Misse' (*Index* 1986, above). There is some work still to be done to determine exactly what this work is.

15) Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 968, considers this and the three works that follow it to be somehow connected. He does not elaborate.

16) W.L. Braekman (ed.), 'The Seven Virtues as Opposed to the Seven Vices: a Fourteenth Century Didactic Poem,' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 74 - 2 (1973), pp. 247-68.

17) W.L. Braekman (ed.), 'A Middle English Didactic Poem on the Works of Mercy,' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 79 - 2 (1978), pp. 145-51.

18) W.L. Braekman promises a forth-coming edition of this poem.

19) Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 357, says this poem may originally have come from the north Midlands, but the manuscript he assigns to the south, *c.* 1420.

20) George Kane, *Piers Plowman; the 'A' Version* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), vol. I, pp. 7-8, describes the manuscript.

21) Presumably he was recommending all the religious poems in this part of the manuscript, not just those which precede his remarks.

22) According to Seymour, *loc. cit.*, no reference to this manuscript appears in the diary kept by Humphrey Wanley, Harley's librarian. Nor could the staff of the British Library manuscript room supply any additional information regarding manuscript ownership before Harley.

23) Information supplied by the staff of the Cambridge University Library, checked where possible against the manuscript.

From beneath a bookplate, which the binder's (?) note says was the original, was removed in 1920 a fragment of parchment, written on one side in Latin prose, reportedly in a 13th century hand, the text of which contains references to Norwich and Sedgeford; now called Cambridge University Library Document 799.

24) Assistance with collation supplied by Jayne Cook, Assistant Under Librarian, Cambridge University Library.

25) The various fading of ink might indicate the relative age of various contents of the manuscript.

26) The addition appears to be a later attempt to copy the script on the facing page. If this is so, then the works that follow may be said to have been set off from the rest of the manuscript by that (originally) blank page. This might be significant in view of the following poems' apparent grouping.

27) Apparently the manuscript was well-used, as opposed to being just read, by its later medieval owners. This would be consistent with the suggestion by Frances A. Foster (ed.), *The Northern Passion*, Early English Text Society OS 147 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd., 1916; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), p. 13, who says that the later owners of the manuscript were parsons.

28) It is necessarily so, by virtue of its location on the page.

29) The expunging of the word 'pope' is probably an act of prudence (or conviction?) on the part of one of the manuscript's sixteenth century owners.

30) Parkes, *op. cit.*

31) The same practices have been followed for the contents of the Cambridge MS. as were followed for the Harley MS. The prose titles follow those given in *The Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library* vol. III, entry 1806, pp. 448-50.

32) Dated by Kurath *et al*, *c.* 1375.

33) Dated *ibid.*, *c.* 1450.

34) *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library*, p. 448.

35) Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 355, dates this work *c.* 1300, assigning it to the North.

36) P.S. Jolliffe, *A Checklist of Middle English Prose Writers of Spiritual Guidance*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, *Subsidia Mediaevalia* II (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1974), herein referred to as *Checklist*.

37) This is the (to date) unique third version of 'Erthe vpon Erthe', dated by Kurath *et al*, *c.* 1400.

38) *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library*, p. 449, assigns this work to Alcock, Bp. of Ely. Kurath *et al*, dates it *c.* 1310.

39) *Ibid.* It is reported that this work is said to be extracted from the work of Alrede of Ryuaus (Rievaulx).

40) Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 966. See also Betty Marie Vanderschaaf (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, DAI 39: 3606A; she says the Cambridge University Library 'fragment is on the whole too strongly marked by scribal revision to provide many emendations.'

41) Robert H. Bowers (ed.), 'A Middle English Poem on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost,' *Modern Language Notes* 70 (1955), pp. 249-52.

42) Hope Emily Allen, *The English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 84, assigns this work to Rolle.

43) As quoted by Allen, *ibid.*

44) The assignment of dates to this hand and to the hand of its emendor is made on the advice of Jayne Cook of the Cambridge University Library. Foster, *loc. cit.*, says it is the same as that of the rubricator of the first work in the manuscript, the 'Northern Passion'.

45) Again, credit must be given to the staff of the Cambridge University Library.

46) Since examining the Cambridge University Library MS., I have come upon a full description of ownership (supplied by Foster, *loc. cit.*) which is at variance, in a few key points, with the description I had prepared. I will follow Foster in the text of the introduction, but I wish to note my own readings here. I read Foster's 'Trew' as 'Cray' or 'Tray' (but not 'Gray'). I read 'Bareyle' as 'Berkelye'. And I did not notice at the time of examination, nor can I make out now from xerox copies, the signature of John Cuttyng.

47) Information once again supplied by the staff of the Cambridge University Library.

48) There is, to my knowledge, no comprehensive list of this collection.

49) All line references are to the edited text.

50) I refer the reader to the hypothesis, mentioned in the Abstract of this thesis and dealt with at length in the section of this introduction which follows, that four of the poems in the Harley manuscript and eight of the poems in the Cambridge manuscript in fact comprise extant versions of an original sequence of poems. I have examined the substantive variants in the published editions of two of the poems from the supposed original sequence, as well as variants in the third poem from that sequence shared by the two manuscripts. The evidence presented by the other poems seems at first glance to be entirely consistent with that presented

in the two versions of 'The Seven Principal Virtues.'

51) This reconstruction of scribal practice is, of course, hypothetical, as noted below.

52) Harley MS. '3enene' is the inflected infinitive form of the verb 'gain'; the Cambridge MS. substitutes '3euene', or 'given', which perhaps indicates scribal unfamiliarity with the older form. (See Note 148.)

53) MS. reads *ser*teynly/certeynly.

54) See Richard Jordan, *Handbook of Middle English Grammar: Phonology*, trans. and rev. Eugene J. Crook (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1974), pp. 34 ff.

55) The features of language conform to those described by Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 14, for the Cambridge manuscript.

56) Joseph and Elizabeth Mary Wright, *An Elementary Middle English Grammar*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1929; rpt. 1973).

57) H.C. Wyld, *A Short History of English* (London: John Murray, 1937).

58) G.L. Brook, *English Sound Changes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965).

59) Richard Jordan, *op. cit.*

60) Sadly, though, few editors have gone into enough detail to make the analysis really telling.

61)
Lytyl xal I telle here
But aftyrwarde 3e may lere
Quan we spekyn of dedly synne
Couetyse is þereinne
For it is on of þe seuen
That wrecchest Ihesu Cryste in heuen.
Cambridge MS. f. 141 *recto*.

62)
Now of þis tende wyll I be lete
& spekyn of other synnes grete
þat is to seyn þe synnes seuene
þat put men fro þe blysse of heuen
God 3ef vs grace so to playe
To com to heuen at Domesday
Now god God graunt vs þat it so be Amen for charyte.
Cambridge MS. f. 142 *recto*.

63)
Loke aforn wyth good entente
In þe sexte commawndement
There God hymselfe commawndyd so
þat we xuldyn non hordum do
There xalt þu fynde a fayr tale

How lechery brewyth bale.

Cambridge MS. f. 157 *recto, verso.*

The tale begins at Cambridge MS. f. 122 *verso*.

64) Sey than þese words after me
I am a knowe to God ful of myȝte
& to Hys moder þat maydyn bryȝte
And to alle þe cumpany of heuen
Archaungelis & aungelis ȝeuene
And to þe prest wythowtyn blame
þat syttyst here in Godds name
My gostly fader for to be
I am a knowe to God & The
þat I haue synnyd in wronge gynnys
In alle þe vii dedly synnes
Bothen in pryde & enuye
In slawth and in lecherye
In glotenye and in hate
In couetyse erly & late
Lete vs lokyn of þes synnes
Qwech specys we arn fall inne.

Cambridge MS. f. 148 *recto, verso.*

65) Sey þan wythowtyn stryfe
I haue synnyd in my wytts fyue
Wyth eyne I haue mysseyn in syth
Wyth erys I haue noȝt hard aryte
Wyth nose I haue myssmellyd among
Wyth mowth I haue spokyn wronge
Wyth myn hands I haue mysdon
And wyth my feet I haue mysgon
Wyth my hert I haue mysthowth
Wyth al my body I haue myswrout
Qwherfor I crye Ihesu mercy
And Hys modyr mylde Marye
And alle þe cumpanye of heuen
And þe prest wyth mylde steuen
For me to God sere I praye
Vnto God þat bost maye
I prey þe prest in Godds name
ȝif me penauns for my blame.

Cambridge MS. f. 164 *verso*.

66) The poem's *explicit*, however, refers only to Confession and the Five Wits.

67) W.L. Braekman, 'The Seven Virtues . . .,' *op. cit.*, p. 268.

68) *Ibid.*

69) W.L. Braekman, '. . . Works of Mercy,' *op. cit.*, p. 147.

70)
3e men þat in wedlac be
Kepe 3ou clene for charyte
For 3yf 3e doun wythoutyn drede
þerfore 3e xun hau mekyl mede
A tale þerof 3e xul fynde
3yf 3e wyllyn þerof hau mynde
In on of þe commandments x.
Shewyd tyl alle Crystyn men
Loke in þe boke before
In þe vi commandment it is 3ore
þer xal þou wytyn þi mede I wene
3yf þou kepe þis sacrament clene.

Harley MS. f. 85 *recto* b

71) This conclusion concurs more or less with that of M.W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p. 173 and footnote, but takes the argument farther than either he or his source, Charlton Laird, is prepared to.

72) Cambridge MS. f. 189 *recto*; see also Robert H. Bowers, *op. cit.*

73) However, it was also where the first manuscript hand left off.

74) Harley MS. f. 82 *verso* b; see also Abbot Gasquet, *Parish Life in Medieval England* (London: Methuen & Co., 1907), Chapter IX.

75) Harley MS. f. 83 *verso* a; part of a pastor's responsibility was to teach the laity how to baptize children *in extremis*. See Abbot Gasquet, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

76) Harley MS. f. 84 *verso* a.

77) Harley MS. f. 85 *recto* a.

78) Harley MS. f. 85 *recto* b.

79) This can be seen in casual reading; upon more careful reading, real differences do emerge, as the following analysis will demonstrate.

80) Compare the structure of the older type of sermon, as described in Woodburn O. Ross (ed.), *Middle English Sermons*, Early English Text Society OS 209 (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), introduction.

81) D.W. Robertson, Jr., 'The Cultural Tradition of *Handlyng Synne*,' *Speculum* 22 (1947), pp. 162-85.

82) *Ibid.*, pp. 168 ff.

83) Frederick Furnivall (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, Early English Text Society OS 119, 123 (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint Co., 1975), p. 105.

84) Cambridge MS. f. 154 *recto*.

85) Furnivall (ed.), *Handlyng Synne*, p. 104.

86) Cambridge MS. f. 156 *recto*.

87) Excepting, of course, the Cambridge MS. poem on the Ten Commandments, excerpted from *Handlyng Synne*.

88) St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Blackfriar's edition, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode and New York: McGraw Hill, 1969), 1a2ae, 57,5, makes reference to these virtues, which are named together in Wisdom viii 7.

89) Aquinas evidently was also familiar with these works of Cicero and Macrobius -- see *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, 57,6 and *61,5,* and *passim.*

90) 1 Corinthians xiii 13, quoted by Aquinas, *op. cit.*, 1a2ae, 61,1.

91) See *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), p. 704.

92) St. Ambrose is quoted to this effect by Aquinas, *op. cit.*, 1a2ae, 61,1.

93) St. Gregory is also cited as an authority by Aquinas, *op. cit.*, 1a2ae, 61,3, and is quoted in 1a2ae, 61,4, to this very effect.

94) See, for example, Aquinas, *op. cit.*, 1a2ae, 61,4, quoting St. Augustine's *De moribus Ecclesiae*, and elsewhere in the *Summa*, quoting from a variety of Augustine's works.

95) Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

96) Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, Chapters 1 and 2, in considering the origins of the seven Cardinal Sins, gives the sense that schematic representations of good and evil co-existed side by side from the earliest times. At the end of Chapter 2, however, when he wishes to make clear the separate origins and development of Christian virtues and Christian vices, he emphasizes that their respective early histories were completely independent. This position is entirely consistent with that articulated herein.

97) Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

98) *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 65.

99) *Ibid.*, p. 79.

100) *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.

101) Rosamond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 67. Tuve also writes on the subject of the virtues in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtald Institutes* 26 (1963) and 27 (1964).

102) Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 83, says this work is wrongly attributed.

103) *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 85.

104) Tuve, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtald Institutes* 26, p. 290.

105) Marion Gibbs and Jane Lang, *Bishops and Reform 1215 - 1272* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 106 ff.

106) Decima L. Douie, *Archbishop Peckham* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), pp. 133 ff.

107) Siegfried Wenzel, 'The Seven Deadly Sins,' *Speculum* 43 (1968), pp. 9 ff.

108) In fact, the *Index* does not consider 272.5 to be the same as 338.5; however, judging by the information given, the two appear to be slightly different versions of the same work. (See also *Index* 804, in a sermon.)

109) From C. Horstmann (ed.), 'The Seuene Poyntes of Trewe Wisdom,' *Anglia* 10 (1888), p. 328, quoted in G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926; rpt. 1965), p. 280.

110) *Bishops and Reform*, Chapters II and III.

111) *Archbishop Peckham, loc. cit.*

112) Homer Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals of Religious Instruction in England and Observations on Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*,' *Journal of English and German Philology* 35 (1936), p. 253.

113) *Ibid.*, pp. 243 ff.

114) The *Lay Folk's Catechism* is also known as *Gaytrege's Sermon*.

115) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 2.

116) *Ibid.*, p. 277.

117) *Archbishop Peckham*, p. 134.

118) W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), Chapter X. Pantin does not provide the rationale for his groupings, so I have attempted to provide a tentative one, based on a limited knowledge of the works in question.

119) See above, p. 35.

120) Pfander, 'Some Medieval Manuals . . . ,' p. 250; Professor Pfander considers the *Speculum* to be an example of the 'transference of manual material to books for lay reading.'

121) Abbot Gasquet, *Parish Life*, p. 213. Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, p. xliii , comments that 'the old free method [of preaching] was never [totally] abandoned. It remained particularly popular with preachers of vernacular sermons, which were delivered to the laity.'

122) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 22.

123) Peter Heath, *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (London: Routlege and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 93.

124) Homer Pfander, *The Popular Sermon of the Medieval Friar in England* (New York: New York University Press, 1937). The author analyzes sermon structure in a manner upon which Ross, *Middle English Sermons*, expands.

125) Pfander, *The Popular Sermon*, pp. 39 ff.

126) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 277.

127) *Ibid.*, p. 285.

128) Bernhard ten Brink, *History of English Literature* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904), vol. I, p. 280.

129) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 243.

130) *Ibid.*, p. 222.

131) Pantin, *The English Church*, p. 235.

132) G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (New York: Barnes & Noble), p. 8.

133) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 280.

134) Heath, *The English Parish Clergy*, p. 127.

135) Or so the early ownership of the Cambridge MS. would seem to indicate.

136) Heath, *The English Parish Clergy*, p. 177.

137) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 280.

138) *Ibid.*, p. 56. Owst says that 'scarcely a phase of current thought, scarcely a habit, pastime, occurrence, fails to find a place among [the friars'] homiletical maxims and reflections.' See also D.L. Jeffrey, *The English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), *passim.*

139) *Preaching in Medieval England*, p. 140.

140) *Ibid.*, p. 73.

141) *Ibid.*, p. 132.

142) Wells, *Manual*, p. 349.

143) ten Brink, *History of English Literature*, pp. 280 ff.

144) Georgiana Lea Morrill (ed.), *Speculum of Gy de Warewyke*, Early English Text Society ES 75 (Millwood, N. Y.: Kraus Reprint Co., 1975), draws a rather nebulous conclusion regarding authorship. It was considered beyond the scope of the present edition to look further into this matter.

145) ten Brink, *History of English Literature*, pp. 280 ff.

146) Ruth Crosby, 'Robert Mannyng of Brunne: a New Biography,' *Publication of the Modern Language Association of America* 57(1942), p. 21.

147) *Ibid.*, p. 24 and *passim.*

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APPENDIX

The following dialect chart may prove useful to readers unfamiliar with the various dialectal divisions and sub-divisions in Middle English.

N	Northern
neM	Northeast Midlands
eM	East Midlands
M	Midlands
wM	West Midlands
S	Southern
Kent	Kentish
SW	Southwestern

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