

FASHION IN MEDIEVAL MANUALS OF SIN

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Özet

Bu makalenin amacı, Ortaçağ günah el kitaplarını ele almaktır. Lüks ve abartılı kıyafetler dikkat çektiğinden, din adamları kostümleri ve modayı yererler. Günahla, moda aşırı merakı betimlemek için, yeni modaları yakıdann takip edenleri gösterişli, çok şık, iki yüzlü ve şehvet düşkünü bularak, onlara karşı çıkmışlardır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Günah el kitapları, moda, Hristiyanlık, Ortaçağ İngilizcesi, Ortaçağ edebiyatı, gelişim, müsriflik, kostüm.*

Abstract

The aim of this article is to study Medieval manuals of sins. Clergymen condemn costumes and fashion in manuals of sins because luxurious and exaggerated garments attract attention. They derided the people who followed the new fashions closely, as rakish, jaunty, hypocritical and lecherous to portray the vagaries of fashion to the sins.

Key words: *Manuals of sin, fashion, Christianity, Middle English, Medieval literature, development, extravagance, costume.*

There are radical changes in Medieval fashion that may be analysed under the title of sins, and the reasons for the common influences in English and Continental tastes can be found from contemporary works. The new fashions attracted the attention of homilists, historians and literary men, who

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decried them for superfluity, extravagance, immoderation, luxury and foreign influences. When they condemned unrefined and rustic garments as below one's social stratum, or ornamented costumes as above one's social status, they used a sonorous style of writing designed to show a cause-and-effect relationship, and usually they condemned the profanity of immodest garments and the profligacy of ostentatious clothes. Homilists and chroniclers derided the people who followed the new fashions closely, as rakish, jaunty, showy, hypocritical and lecherous to depict the vagaries of fashion to the sins (Ege, 1993: 248).

In literary works, however, the moral teaching is brought out through the plot or through confessions as in *Confessio Amantis* by Gower. Satirical poems narrate the popular fashions by mocking the new fashions usually with reference to sins. All these works denounce the exaggerated hair styles, new shapes, and lascivious showing off of the shape of the body (Ege, 1993: passim). The garments of the ecclesiastics were advised to be loose as the clothes of apostles and saints as the writer of *Dives and Pauper* writes: "... for they weryn alwey soo loos from here herte that/they geuyn no greet tale therof ne te lesyn hem" (Anonymous, 1976: I, vii, 15-16).

Manuals on the Seven Deadly Sins Intended for Preparation for Confession (e.g. *Ayenbite of Inwynt*, *The Parson's Tale*). Chronicles (e.g. John Of Reading's *Chronica* and *The Brut*, by an anonymous author) and literary works depict the fashion and the sins.

Manuals on the Seven Deadly Sins focus on garments when they are commenting on pride, hypocrisy and lechery, so that under the heading of pride, authors often refer to people who take pride in fashion and superfluous clothing. The theme of hypocrisy, a branch of the sin of pride, is usually based on the New Testament discussions by Christ, mostly aimed against the Scribes and Pharisees. The imagery of a wolf in sheep's clothing in *attendite a falsis prophetis, qui ueniunt and uos in uestimentis ouium: intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces: a fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos* ("Beware of false prophets, who come to you clad in the sheeps' garments, but who are actually, underneath ravening wolves"; Matthew, 7,15), for example, shows that clothing may be a pious concealment of a rapacious reality and this is often a major image used for the clergy. Under the heading of lechery, women are accused of attracting the attention of men with their beautiful garments and décolleté dresses, though men's garments, which are short and revealing, are not generally claimed to be seductive to women.

Preachers also narrate exempla, teaching the necessity of appropriate dress, and the lesson can often be quite extreme. A poor clerk wearing the costume of a knight, for example, is burnt to death by the interference of supernatural forces; a didactic parable showing that people who are clad in a fashion unbecoming their social status and rank would be severely punished.

Before giving a review of the literature on the moral aspect of costumes, it is necessary to explain why the following works have been chosen. Firstly, the sources of Chaucer's *The Parson's Tale*, which belongs to the sermon genre is studied. After following up the sources, it has become clear that the *Tractatus de Viciis*, c. 1236, by Gulielmus Peraldus was the only source of the passages on costume in *The Parson's Tale* and the extent of Chaucer's indebtedness to Peraldus will be studied in this article. Secondly, works have been chosen which give a general picture of attitudes to fashion in Medieval times.

Most of the manuals of sins are indebted to previous works: they are sometimes eclectic in their borrowing material and they may be amplified or they may be direct translations. Such eclecticism was common throughout the Middle Ages, but tracing the family tree of these sermons produces the following scheme:

Tractaus de Viciis, c.1236

by Gulielmus Peraldus

⋮

The Parson's Tale,* c.1390

by Geoffrey Chaucer

*This only shows the source of the sermons on costume in *Pars. T.*

Manual des Péchiéz, c. 1260

by William Wadington

⋮

Handlyng Synne,** 1303-1338

by Robert Mannyng

** *Handlyng Synne* is the amplified translation of *Manual des Péchiéz*

Somme Le Roy,*** 1279

by Laurentius Gallus

Ayenbite of Inwyt,****
1340 by Michel of
Northgate

*The Book of Vices and
Virtues*,***** c. 1340
by an anonymous English
author.

****Somme Le Roy* also appears in two more forms called *Somme Proper* and *Miroir du Monde* and was translated into six languages.

*****Ayenbite og Inwyt* is a direct translation of *Somme Le Roy*.

******The Book of Vices and Virtues* is also a direct translation of *Somme Le Roy*.

La Tour-Landry, 1371

by Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry

⋮

*The Book of the Knight of
La Tour-Landry*,***** c. 1450.

******The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* is the direct translation of *La Tour Landry*. The reason why this work, which was written by a knight from Normandy, is of interest for English fashion will be explained later.

A unique manuscript of Trinity College Ms. B. 14.52, c. 1198 is a collection of homilies. In a sermon on *Assumptio S. Marie Virginis* (“The Assumption of St. Mary”), the homilist criticizes those priests who disregard the Church, but honour their concubines, as examples of pride—he compares the fresh, neat costume of his concubine with the coarse and dirty cloths used in church liturgy:

Ac his daie the is his hore awlenth hire mid clothes more than him seluen. Te chire [che] es ben to brokene and ealde, and hise wiues shule ben hole and newe. His alter cloth great and sole and hire chemise smal and hwit and te albe sol and hire smoc hwit... The meshakele of medeme fustane and hire méntel grene other burnet.¹

(Anonymous, 1973: 163)

(He adorns his servant, who is his whore, with clothes more than himself. The church cloths are totally rent and worn out, and his woman’s must be whole and fresh. His altar cloth large, coarse and soiled, and her chemise small fine and white. The alb is soiled and her smock is white... The Mass-cloth is of fustian, and her mantle is green or burnet.)

This theme is repeated in Chaucer’s time when Gower in *Mirour de L’Omme* mentions married women sleeping with priests for cash presents which will enable them to buy fine dresses.

Tractatus De Viciis, c. 1236 by Gulielmus Peraldus is one of the sources of Chaucer’s *The Parson’s Tale*, c. 1390 and in order to see the continuity and discontinuity, both of the texts will be quoted. *Tractatus De Viciis*, is a treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins, illustrating some of the vices with animal types and parables. *The Parson’s Tale* is also a sermon on penitence in which a treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins is embodied. Peraldus in his *Tractatus De Viciis*, states that superbia (“pride”) can be seen in *ipso corpore* (Peraldus, 1497: II, 6, iii,9) (“the body itself”) whereas the Parson explains that one of the outward signs of pride is “outrageous (excessive, inordinate) array of clothynge” in *Parson’s Tale* (Chaucer, 1985: 412). The reference to “outrageous” garments is also a preparation for the criticism of short garments, which is Chaucer’s invention. Both Peraldus and Chaucer quote St. Gregory’s criticism of the expensive, excessive, soft and strange garments, but the “scanty” garments, which became popular in the late fourteenth century, are obviously not criticized by Peraldus because in 1236, excessively short garments were not fashionable. Peraldus, however, condemns the excessive length of priests’ gowns. Chaucer’s Parson does not

mention the garments of the clergy. However, as will be discussed, his contemporaries criticise them severely. Peraldus writes as follows:¹

Notandum ergo quod superbus habitus potest esse culpabilis multis de causis. Prima causa est Preciositas. Unde super Luc XVI, de divite qui induebatur purpura et bysso, dicit Glo. Si culpa preciosarum vestium culpa non esset, sermo Dei non ita vigilanter experiment quod dives purpura et bysso indutus apud inferos torqueretur. Gregorius Nemo preciosa vestimenta nisi ad inanem gloriam querit. Secunda causa est Mollicies vestium Gregorius: Nemo estimet. Tertia causa est Extraneitas, quando scilicet, aliquis vult habere vestes aliis dissimiles. Quarto causa est Superfluitas. Potes autem ista superfluitas esse duplex: vel quoad multitudinem vel quoad magnitudinem. Primo modo est superfluitas in illis qui volunt habere vestes longas ut majores esse videantur. Quod vitium multum abundat in quibusdam prelatiis...

(Peraldus, 1497: II, 6.iii, 14)

(Well then, note that pride in clothing can be blameworthy for many reasons. The first reason is costliness. Concerning which in Luke 16 [Luke, 16, 19], about the rich man who was dressed in “purple and bys”! the Gloss says “if there had been no sin in costly clothes, the word of God would not then preach strongly that the rich man dressed in purple and bys should be tortured in hell.” Gregory: No-one seeks costly clothing except for vain glory. The second reason is softness of clothing. Gregory: It is of no value. The third reason is strangeness, that is to say when someone wants to have clothes different to other people. The fourth reason is excess. Such excess moreover can be two-fold: either in regard to the number or in regard to the great size [of clothes]. The first kind is excess in those who want to have long gowns so that they may be seen to be more important. Which great sin abounds in certain priests...)

The following is Chaucer’s equivalent of the above quotation:

For certes, if ther ne hadde be no synne in clothyng, Crist wolde nat so soone have noted and spoken of the clothyng of thilke riche man in the gospel [Luke, 16,16] / And as seith Seint Gregorie, that “precious clothyng is cowpable for the derthe of it, and for his softnesse, and for his strangenesse and degisynesse, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinat scantnesse of it” / Allass! May man nat s een, as in oure

¹ All the material of this article was collected between 1989 and 1993 when I was working towards my Ph.D. in Britain. I kindly thank Professor MA Twycross and Mrs. Olga Horner for their kind help.

dayes, the synful costlewe array of clothyng, and namely in to muche superfluite, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse?

(Chaucer, 1985: 413-415)

Both of the authors discuss the subject under the headings of pride and vainglory, but Chaucer updates Peraldus' comments by relating them to contemporary fashion. The visual arts also showed "too much excess" or "too extreme scantiness" in costumes in Chaucer's time.

Where Peraldus talks about the thirteenth century fashion slashes in the skirts, Chaucer's Parson writes about the fourteenth century fashions of notching (indentations) and barring (adorning with bars) and fur-lined and dagged costumes. Peraldus condemns the excess in ornamentation as follows:

Octavo potest esse reprehensibilis habitus vel ornatus propter formam vel compositionem. In forma vero reprehensibilia sunt ista: Incisio ex parte inferiori, sicut fit in vestibus Joculatorum; Corrugatio ex parte superiori.

(Peraldus, 1497: II, 6,iii, 14)

(In eighth place can be reprehensible clothing or ornaments because of their appearance or construction. Among the truly reprehensible appearances are these: slashes of the lower parts, like those made in the clothes of jesters/actors: pleating of the upper parts.)

In the corresponding passage of *The Parson's Tale*, dagging replaces the slashes of the skirts and Chaucer equates this over ornamentation with waste.

As to the first synne, that is in superfluitee of clothyng, which that maketh it so deere, to harm of the peple;/nat only the cost of embrowdyng, the degise endentyng or baryng, owdyng, palyng, wyndyng or bendyng, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee;/but ther is also costlewe furryng in hir gownes, so muche pownsonyng of (stabbing with) chisels to maken holes, so muche daggyng of sheres...

(Chaucer, 1985: 416-417)

Chaucer's Parson enlarges on the topic and writes that "... if so be that they wolde yeven swich pownsoned and dagged clothyng to the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hire estaat, ne suffisant to beete hire necessitee, to kepe hem fro the distemperance of the firmament" (Chaucer, 1985: 420). This idea is not found in Peraldus, but the concept of wearing garments, which are unsuited to one's status, is a major theme of moralists. The garments mentioned cannot be given to the poor because it would be

unfitting for them to wear costumes belonging to the upper classes: but, more practically, they will not be warm enough. The theme of giving garments to the poor comes from Matthew, 25, 35-37 which illustrates “The Corporal Acts of Mercy” where Jesus commands his disciples to give garments to the poor. By carrying out these acts, Christians are told that they clothe Christ when they clothe the poor. However, the costumes must be according to the social status of the poor.

Peraldus also decries pierced shoes. Chaucer does not mention this, although this fashion of shoe was popular in the fourteenth century. Peraldus writes as follows:

Perforatio etiam in sotularibus magna videtur fatuitas; cum sotulares integri meliorest sint quam perforati.

(Peraldus, 1497: II, 6, iii, 14)

(Also a great silliness is seen in piercing shoes when complete shoes are better than ones with holes.)

Both Peraldus and Chaucer condemn very long garments and state that materials are wasted. Peraldus identifies these garments as belonging to women, because men did not wear extremely long garments in his time but both women and men wore very long garments in Chaucer’s time. Both of the authors state that these garments are dirtied because of their excessive length. Peraldus writes as follows:

De caudis mulierum. Hoc vitio laborant domine que longas caudas trahunt post se terram preciosis vestibus induentes... caudis suis pulices colligunt et pulverem movent hominibus...

(Peraldus, 1497: II,6,iii, 14)

(Concerning the trains of women. By this sin they vex the Lord putting on costly clothes with long trains trailing behind them on the ground... their trailing skirts collect fleas and stir up the dust for everyone...)

Chaucer’s corresponding passage is almost the same: “forthwith the superfluitee in lengthe of the foreseide gownes, trailyng in the dong and in the mire, on horse and eek on foote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailyng is verraily as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge...” (Chaucer, 1985: 418). As will be seen, other writers also condemned very long costumes.

Clearly, Chaucer is indebted to Peraldus though he combined Peraldus’ concepts with references to contemporary fashion. However, there are also original parts in *The Parson’s Tale* which show Chaucer’s reaction to the popular garments of his time. He condemns the very short male garments which were popular mainly in the late fourteenth century: “.. to speken of the

horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothyng, as been thise kuttid sloppes, or haynselyns, that thurgh hire shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres o man, to wikked entente” (Chaucer, 1985: 1421). The quotation implies that the “short *sloppes or haynselyns*” could be similar garments. Descriptions of haynselyns can be found in the wardrobe accounts of 16,17, Richard II, 1393, 1394, where the King paid 14s. *Pur J hancelet de blanc satyn embroude* (Baildon, 1911: 510) (“for I haynselyn of embroidered white satin”). VJ li (£) was paid item pur 1’ enbroude d’une ancelyn blant oue leches tout le garnement oue ewe et rokkes (Baildon, 1911: 511) (“also for the embroidery of a white haynselyn all over the garment with leeches, water and rocks”). The short *haynselyn* or *sloppe* here is seen to be an expensive costume which can be ornamented.

Chaucer’s Parson also condemns the tightness of the above garments, and of the hose, and the *mi-parti* hose:

Allas! Somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lik the maladie of hirnias, in the wrappyng of hir hoses;/and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hyndre part of a she-ape in the fulle of the moone. / And mooreover, the wrecched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh disgisyng, in departyng of hire hoses in whit and reed, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres weren flayne.

(Chaucer, 1985: 422-425)

In conclusion, Chaucer’s Parson reproaches his compatriots with a two-fold folly concerning their costumes; for the superfluity on one hand, and for the inordinate scantiness of it on the other. Although he is indebted to Peraldus for the commentaries on long gowns and ornamented costumes, the comment on the short garments is entirely his. Where Peraldus relates these follies only to *superbia* (“pride”), Chaucer’s Parson says that they show both “likerousnesse” and “pride” (Chaucer, 1985: 1429) because short garments reveal the body.

The Parson also recommends how a woman, who is faithful to her husband, should be dressed:

She sholde... serven hym in alle honestee, and been attempree of hire array... nat by hire queyntise of array [I Peter, 3,3] / It is a greet folye, a womman to have a fair array outward and in herself be foul inward.

(Chaucer, 1985: 932,935)

Chaucer’s discourse in *The Parson’s Tale*, is put into the mouth of a pyreacher (the Parson), whose business was to condemn the vices and follies of the era and his advice on moderation in clothing and condemnation of

tight garments and hose and of *mi-parti* hose is found in the writings of other moralists and historians.

As mentioned before, the *Manual des Péchiéz*, c. 1260, by William Wadington is the source of *Handlyng Synne*, c. 1303-1338, by Robert Mannyng of Brunne. *Handlyng Synne* is the amplified translation of *Manual des Péchiéz*, although *Handlyng Synne* has more costume descriptions. They analyse both the doctrines of Christianity and the Seven Deadly Sins which keep man from service to Jesus and in order to observe the continuity and, discontinuity from *Manual des Péchiéz*, both texts will be quoted.

They each condemn exaggerated hairstyles and garments under the heading of pride. Wadington in the Anglo-French *Manual des Péchiéz* writes as follows:

Ki de ces cleuols est trop geluz,
 Cum sunt suent les orgoilluz;
 Ou de autre manere de atiffement
 Qe a la teste ou al coirs apent,
 Ceo ne deuez vblier,
 Si dreit vus volez confesser.

(Wadington, 1972: 3331-3336)

(If you are proud of your hair
 like proud men often are,
 or of another form of decoration, to do with the head or the body,
 you must not forget this!
 Go straight to confess it to your priest.)

Robert Mannyng translates the passage:

Gyf thou art proud of thyn her,
 As proud men beyn eurywher,
 Or gyf thou tyffyst the ouer proudly,
 Ouer mesuer on thy body,
 Swych synne ys nat the lest:
 Y rede the: tell hyt to thy prest.

(Mannyng, 1983: 3201-3206)

Both authors also emphasize that women should not attend Church with smart headdresses. Wadington writes:

Trop est geluz de sun croket
 Qu e la messe souent la main met.
 (Wadington, 1972: 3337-3338)
 ([A person], who often fingers her
 headdress at mass, is proud of it.)

Mannyng translates the passage:

Be nat proud of thy croket,
 Yn the cherche to tyffe & set.
 (Mannyng, 1983: 3207-3208)

Mannyng, however, amplifies the subject and condemns the horned headdress, which was popular in the early fourteenth century:

Gret pryde hyt ys & vyle outrage,
 That she ys nat payd of goddys ymage.
 Heuedys tyffed wyth gret pryde
 Wyth her & wyth hornys syde,
 Men mowe wete hyt ys gret synne
 To haue moche pryde ther ynne.
 Men seye & haue seyde here before,
 For swych pryde are wymmen forlore.
 (Mannyng, 1983: 1223-3230)

Mannyng like Chaucer, updates his source by condemning the popular fashion of his own time.

Wadington and Mannyng also condemn women's wimples and kerchieves. Wadington only speaks of *Les gympeus... safrones* ("the wimples... dyed yellow with saffron"; Wadington, 1972: 3525), but Mannyng enlarges the subject:

Wymples, kerchyues, saffrund betyde,
 Gelugh vndyr gelugh thay hyde.
 Than wete men neuer whether ys whether
 The gelugh wymple or the lether.
 (Mannyng, 1983: 3447-2450)

The reference to yellow skin implies that Mannyng's women are old. The author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* also mentions in the late fourteenth century that old women and "golge" (yellow) skin: "For if the gonge watz gep, golge watz that other. (Anonymous, 1987: 951).

Both Wadington and Robert Mannyng condemn the trailing garments of women as Peraldus did. Wadington writes as follows:

Des dames, dium nus auant,
 Qe trop longes robes uunt trainant.
 (Wadington, 1972: 3221-3222)

(What do you say about the ladies
 who walk in their trailing robes which are too long.)

Mannyng also says:

What say ye men of laddyys pryde
 That gown traylyng ouersyde
 (Mannyng, 1983: 3441-3442)

Robert Mannyng also decries women's beautiful garments used for sexual attraction, which therefore fall under the heading of lechery:

Lecchery ys also grete gernyng
 To be desyred thurgh feyre clothing,
 What wymmen hemtyffe with ownewyl,
 To foly loue, outhen men to tulle.
 Gyf men, thurgh here feyre atyre,
 Wyth hem to do foly, haue desyre,
 They shul answeere for here synne,
 Notheles, the cōsentour
 Shal be holde for a lechour;
 Eune peynē shul they bere,
 The toon the touthen shal answeere.
 (Mannyng, 1983: 7611-7617, 7619-7622)

Both Wadington and Mannyng recommend how one should dress: firstly to be well-dressed according to social position. Wadington writes:

Nepurquant, chescun, solun ceo qe il est
 Cointer li purra, ci li plest.
 Mes, quant passe sun afferant,
 Bien veez qe il peche en tant.
 (Wadington, 1972: 3437-3440)

(Nevertheless everyman is allowed to
 be well-dressed according to his position.
 But when he goes beyond what is proper
 You can see clearly that he sins to that extent.)

Mannyng echoes this, but also advises moderation in clothing:

Ne dysgse nat thy clothyng
 Ouer mesure for thy preysyng...
 God and grace wyth hem wroth
 That haue for pryde dysgysed here cloth.
 Notheles eury man may
 Aftyr hys astate make hym gay.
 But whan he passyth our mesure
 Ther of cumth mysauenture.
 (Mannyng, 1983: 3323-3325,3329-3334)

In conclusion, although Mannyng translated Wadington quite closely he also produced his own evidence, which reflected the fashion of his era.

As the family tree shows, the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, 1340, by Michel of Northgate, and *The Book of Vices and Virtues* c. 1340 are the direct Middle English translations of the French *Somme Le Roy*, 1279 by Friar Lorens. As the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* is “the best-known English translation (largely on linguistic grounds)” (Bloomfield, 1967: 125) and in order to avoid repetition, only quotations from this will be used.

The Ayenbite of Inwyt, 1340 is a treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins, virtues, and the ten commandments. Unlike the other works so far studied, it does not talk about the follies of an era, but it gives advice on the principles of dress.

The speaker believes that vanity is a branch of pride. He places the “goods” which God gives to human beings in a Boethian ethic. The “goods” of fortune are high-estate, riches, delights and prosperity. When Lady Fortune hands out these things, man who cannot control his soul, becomes proud of his dignity “afterward / to the vayre mayné / thet him serveth

efterthan / to his vayre maneres efterward / to his vaire ridinges / efterward / to the plenté / of vayre robes” (Michel of Northgate, 1965: 24, 45-49) (“next / of his fair household / who serve him also / of his good manners next / of his fair ridings / next / of the profusion / of good clothes”).

Robert Mannyng in his *Handlyng Sin*, c. 1303-1338 states that every man is allowed to be well-dressed according to his position, a similar idea, related to women, is found in the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*. Here the extravagance of women is extended to include the quantity of clothes that a woman possesses as well as the excess of cloth or ornamentation in a single Robe:

the wyfmen hi ssole ham agraythi.../Vor zothe thet ne is naght wyth-
oute ouerdoinge. Thet on wyfman, ssel habbe our hare body ine one
yere zuo uele payre of robes / and of diuerse maneres / huerof manye
poure mighten by sostened of than that is to moche...

(Michel of Northgate, 1965: 258, 18, 23-26,1)

(the women shall adorn themselves.../For truly that is done with excess /
That one woman shall have for her body in one year two good pair of
robes / and of different fashions / whereof many poor people might be
sustained then by that that is too much...)

The *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, 1340 also specifies how ladies should attend the church. First of all (as in Wadington and Mannyng), Dan Michel advises that women should not be too busy about ornamenting their heads with gold, silver and precious stones for a visit to church, because there they have to cover their heads. This is a reference to St. Paul’s words in I Corinthians, 11, 5: “... every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”

Efterward / he nele naght thet hi bi to bysi / of hare heueden to
agraythi mid gold / and mid zeluer / and mid preciose stones. And he
wile yet eft / thet at cherche / thet hi habbe / have heueden y-wreghe ne
bi ine kuede thogtes uor ham.

(Michel of Northgate, 1965: 216, 45-52, 217,1.2)

(Next / he did not want them to be too busy / with their heads to
ornament it with gold / and with silver / and with precious stones. And
he wishes yet again / that at church / that they have / to cover their
heads nor have any wicked thoughts for them.)

Also like Wadington and Mannyng, Michel of Northgate advised that ladies should not wear fine and expensive robes in church. “Alsuo the greate iheuedyes / thet cometh zuo idight mid gold / mid zilver / mid stoness of pris / and mid robes of great cost / to cherche be-uore god” (Michel of Northgate, 1965: 216, 5-10; “Also the great ladies / that come so decked with gold / with silver /with precious stones / and with robes of great price / to church before God”) as “Vorzothe / and zuo heth god grat wlatiynge / to ham / thet ine thise thinges habbeth blisse / and ham agraytheth / ham our to sseyw...” (Michel of Northgate, 1965: p.216, 21-26; “Truly / and so has God great disgust / with / those /who rejoice in these things / and they adorn / themselves to show off...”). In order to please God with a mild heart and a pure conscience, clean garments, which fit a woman’s social status, are recommended as proper dress to attend a church: “He zayth thet hi ssole habbe clenliche clothinge / wythoute to moche. Thet is to onderstonde: be than thet the wyfman is” (Michel of Northgate, 1965: 216, 33-34; “He says that they should have clean clothes / without excess. That is to understand: according to the woman’s position”).

In the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* under the heading of “chastity in widowhood”, the author discusses how widows should dress themselves. According to this, they must wear humble clothes, imitating Judith, who clothed herself in a hair shirt and fasted every day as a sign of humility:

... as lowe clothinge nought proud / ne bisiuol / to the uorbisne of iudit., thet let hire uayre robes / and hare riche agraythinges / tho hire lhord wes dyad. And nom clothinge of wodewehad / onworth / and low / and more wes točne of wepinge / and of zorwe: thanne of goye. And of ydele blisse. Theruore thet hi ledde chasteté / and hi hit wolde loki al hare lif. Hy hire ssredde mid the here / and ueste eche day...

(Michel of Northgate, 1965: 226, 35-44, 227,1-2)

(... as humble clothing not proud / nor ornate / to the example of Judith who left her fair robes / and her rich ornaments / when her lord was dead and took widow’s clothing / poor / and humble / and more a sign of weeping / and of sorrow: than of joy and of idle bliss. Therefore let them practise chastity / and follow it all their lives. She clothed herself in a hair shirt / an fasted every day...)

In the story of Judith in the Apocrypha; when Nebuchadnezzar sent his general Holofernes to punish the Jews, Judith made her way to the camp of Holofernes and captivated him by her charms. She took off her sackcloth

and dressed herself up exceedingly elaborately in order to seduce him (Judith, 10,3-4).

In these works, Friar Lorens, who wrote the *Somme Le Roy*, 1279, Michel of Northgate, who translated the above work into Middle English (*Ayenbite of Inwyt*, 1340) and the anonymous author of *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, c. 1340, who translated Friar Lorens' work into Middle English, gave instructions to people on how to dress in their particular society.

In contrast, to those texts that gave instructions to people on how to dress in their particular society the Dominican John Bromyard's *Summa Praedicatorum*, c. 1370, written in Latin, is a preacher's handbook which among a multitude of other subjects, deals with the allegorized Seven Deadly Sins as individual vices.

Under the heading of lechery, Bromyard condemns the wearers of fashionable sideless surcoats/*supertunicae* which have been noted as worn mainly by female royalty and aristocracy in visual evidence:

Quo vanitate multum utuntur modo qui aperturas habent, et supertunicilibus suis fere ab humero usque ad crura, ut interiores ostendant curiositates circa cingulum et corporis facturam.

(John Bromyard, 1586: 208)

(Where they are possessed of much vanity now they have openings, and in their *supertunicae* almost from the upper arms all the way to the shin, to reveal inside the ornamentations made around the belt and the body.)

La Tour-Landry, 1371, written in French, was translated into Middle English c. 1450. It is a treatise written by a Norman father to his two daughters warning them against the evils of the world. This work has been chosen for three reasons. Firstly, the fact that it was translated into English shows that the English recognized its relevance to English life and fashion. Secondly, the work condemns English fashions just as English works condemned French fashions, proving that strict attitudes towards clothes, as well as chauvinism, existed in both countries. The Norman knight, for example, does not want his wife to follow the English fashion:

And as to my wiff, the / shal not; but the princesses and ladyes of Ingland haue taken / up the ... stat and gise, and they may well holde it geg / hem luste.

(Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 30,25-28).

Thirdly, because the exact date of *La Tour-Landry* is known, any fashion mentioned can also be accurately dated. As *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* is a direct Middle English translation of *La Tour-Landry*, I will only quote from the former in order to avoid repetition.

The Norman father advises his daughters not to be the first to follow the new fashions of foreign countries. “Faire doughters, y prairie you that ye be not the furst to take / new shappes and gises of array of women of straunge / contrey” (Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 29, 30-32), England being one of these foreign countries.

The knight also states that his wife should not dress after the manner of harlots who have become the mistresses of English and other foreign soldiers who introduced the “great purfiles and slit cotes”.

And suppose ye not y will see that she be arraied / after the state of the good women and worshipfull of Fraunce, / nor of them of this cuntre, [Bretaine] that hath not take, the state of / the unthrifti women that bene euell women of her body and / chambereres to Englisshe men and other men of werre that / duellen with hem as her lemmannys, for thei were the furst / that brought up this astate that ye use of gret purfiles and / slitte cotes, for y haue of that tyme and y sawe it. And to / take arraie that such women bringithe up furst, y holde / hym that doth it but febly conseled.

(Geoffroy de la Tour Landry; 1868: 30, 16-25)

Therefore, the daughters are advised to dress in the “middle way” of virtuous women like the “common estate” of the realm:

And therfor, doughtres, ye may see by this eusaumple / hit is good to holde the mene astate of the good women, and / of th[e] comune astate of the rewme...

(Geoffroy de Tour-Landry, 1868: 30, 35,36.1)

Like Peraldus, Wadington and Mannyng, Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry condemns long trailing costumes. He especially criticises serving women for wearing unsuitable fur on their collars and “heels” (i.e. the hems of their skirts). Thus, he says ironically it would be warmer on their stomachs in winter, and in summer it would be better left off as it provides a good shelter for flies.

...And there is a maner now / amonge seruyng women of lowe astate,
 the whiche is comen, / for thei furre her colers, that hangin doune into
 the middil of / the backe, and thei furre her heles, the whiche is doubed
 with / filth, and is sengill about her brest; the whiche arraie y / praise
 not in winter nor somer, for hem were beter take the /furre that
 hanggithe about her helis in the winter and sette it / about her stomakes,
 for that had more nede of hete thanne / her helys, and in somer it were
 beter away, for flies hidethe / hem therinne...

(Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 31, 22-31)

The story of the girl who lost a good husband by arraying “herself in the / best guyse that she coude, forto have a sclender and a afaire / shapin body... in a [tight-fitting] cote hardy.../whiche satte right streite upon her...” (Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 165, 28-31) “forto make her gentill, and small / and faire bodied” (Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 167, 2-3) to meet a potential suitor, but was so blue with cold that the suitor chose one of her sisters dressed in less revealing garments, shows that close-fitting garments revealing the silhoutte of the body may provoke lechery but do not necessarily attract the opposite sex.

In another story about the cote-hardie, two old knights condemn Sir Pierre, a young squire, because he is vainly dressed “in a cote hardy upon the guyse of Almayne...” (Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 159,1) and they pretend to think he is a “mynstrall” (Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 159,7) because he was “clothed... in suche array” (Geoffroy de la Tour Landry, 1868: 159, 14). The young squire then altered his cote-hardie and was praised for respecting the advice of his elders and rejecting the despised cote-hardies of German fashion.

Mirour de L’Omme, c. 1379 by John Gower is a branch of confessional literature structured on the family tree of the Seven Deadly Sins and their counteracting virtues. In the first part (11.37-18420) there is a description of the vices and virtues; the second part (11.18421-27360) tells about the victory of the vices over the virtues in the various estates and the last part (11.27361-29945) is about the life of the Virgin Mary.

Mirour de L’Omme is also an estates satire. It organises its analysis of society in hierarchical groups and all estates are shown as corrupt. The following social groups are analysed: the Pope and Cardinals (11.18421-19056); Bishops (11.19057-20088); the lower dignitaries of the Church (11.20089-20208); priests and the candidates for priesthood (11.20209-20832); monks and friars (11.20833-21730); secular rulers, Emperors and Kings (11.21781-23208); lords (11.23209-23592); knights and squires (11.23593-24180); men of law; 11.24181-24816); reeves., and jurymen

(11.24817-25176); merchants and traders (11.25177-25500); artists, craftsmen (11.25501-25980); victuallers (11.25981-26424); and country workers (freemen) (11.26425-26520).

Under the heading of hypocrisy, Gower describes clergy who are dressed in saintly habits, which should indicate a clean soul, but who are actually wicked and two-faced. Again, the argument is based on Mathew, 7,15, which talks about wolves in sheep's garments:

Ipocresie est a la veu
 Du saint habit dehors vestue,
 Auci comme l'aignel graciouse;
 Mais en la fin, quant se desnue,
 Si comme le lou que l'aignel tue,
 Perest cruele et perillouse.¹⁴

(Gower, 1901: 1099-1104)

(Hypocrisy is outwardly clothed in saintly habit to the view, just like a lamb full of grace; but in the end, when she undresses, just like the wolf which kills the lamb, she looks cruel and full of danger)

(Wilson, 1970: 29)

Gower, like earlier moralists, targets the clergy for wearing elaborate garments: *C'est un pecché q'apostazer / Fait maint et mainte reguler / Trestout lessant et frocke et haire* (Gower, 1901: 2020-2022; "It is a sin [Dirobedience] which makes many a monk and nun abandon the religious life entirely, leaving frock and hairshirt"). (Wilson, 1970: 52).

Priors, who wear soft wool instead of the hairshirt, are severely criticised:

N'est pas bien ordiné ce cours;
 Car ce dist dieus, q'es roials courtz
 Sont cil qui vestont mole leine,
 Nounpas en cloistres n'en dortours;
 Mais tant sont tendre ly priours
 N'ont cure a ce que dieus enseigne.

(Gower, 1901: 5311-5316)

(This course of conduct is not well regulated, for God says that those who wear soft wool belong in the royal courts, not in cloisters nor in dormitories. But the priors are so soft they care not what God teaches).

(Wilson, 1970: 137)

Like the poems in Trinity College Ms. B. 14.52.c.1198, Gower discusses the clergy who consider worldly affairs more important than their vocations and implies that a Prior who wears fur-lined mantles but leaves his parish poor, is corrupt.

Dont ses manteals furrez enpile,
 Et paist et veste sa famille,
 Et se chivals tient sojournez:
 Mais, comme l'en dist, aval la vile
 Il laist sa cure povre et vile
 Des almes, dont il est chargez.
 (Gower, 1901: 19327-19332)

(He gathers together his fur-lined mantles, feeds and clothes his household, and keeps his horses fresh. But [as they say] down in the town he leaves his parish, with which he is charged, poor and bereft of souls.)

(Wilson, 1970: 490)

Under the heading of lechery, Gower criticizes the priests who buy fine clothes for wanton wives (compare Trinity College Ms.B. 14,15, c. 1198 which comments on a priest's concubine in the same way).

Les foles femmes mariez,
 Quant n'ont du quoy estre acemez
 Du queinterie et beal atir,
 Lors s'aqueintont des fols curetz
 Qui richement sont auancez...
 La dame avera de quoy vestir,
 Et l'autre avera ses volentés.
 (Gower, 1901: 20365-20369,20372-20373)

(Wanton wives, when they have not the means of adorning themselves with ornaments and fine attire, seek the acquaintance of wanton priests who are richly provided... The lady gets the means of dressing herself)

(Wilson, 1970: 507-508)

Later the author explains: *De celle ne luy puet chaloir, I Maisque s'amie l'amerouse / Soit bien vestue eet gloriouse* (Gower, 1970: 20391-20393; "he [the priest] cannot be bothered about the Church, provided his beloved is well dressed and glorious"). (Wilson, 1970: 516)

Gower also attacks short garments, which he says priests wear in order to please their mistresses: *O prestre, q'est ce courte cote? / L'as tu vestu pour Katelote / Pour estre le plus bien de luy? / Ta Coronne autrement te note* (Gower, 1970: 20677-20680); "O priest, what is that short cote? Didst thou put it on for Katey, to be more pleasing to her? Thy tonsure shows thou art something else") (Wilson, 1970: 516)

Because it deprives the poor, the pride of the priest in his scarlet garments, and white and gray furs are also condemned:

... les biens du sainte eglise
 Sont propre et due au povere gent;
 Mais no curiet d'une autre guise,
 Qui du pellure blanche et grise
 Et d'escarlade finement
 Se fait vestir, dist autrement;
 Qe de les biens primerement
 Son orguil clayme la reprise,
 Mais qant il ad secondement
 Vestu s'ameye gaiement,
 Au paine lors si tout souffise.
 (Gower, 1901: 20450-20460)

(... the wealth of Holy church is the due pyroperty of the poor, but our priest, finely dressed in scarlet and in white and gray furs, says otherwise. His pride makes first claim on the wealth, and thereafter, when he has gaily clothed his beloved, there is scarcely anything left.)

(Wilson, 1970: 516)

Gower invokes the prospect of the Day of Judgement advising the priest to wear sackcloth which "leads to a good end":

O fol curiet...
 Qui tantes pelliçouns avetz
 Du vair, du gris, de blanche ermyne,
 Dont pyortes tes manteals fourrez,

Serraz tu d'orguil excusez,
 Quant dois respondre au loy divine?
 Je croy que noun: ainz en ruine
 Irretz, car fole orguil decline
 Tous ceaux qui sont de luy privez:
 Dont m'est avis par resoun fine,
 Meulx valt ly sacs qui bien define,
 Qe la pellure au fin dampnez.

(Gower, 1901: 20473-20484)

(O foolish priest... with thy many furs of vair, gray, and white ermine, to line thy cloaks, shalt thou be excused of pride when thou must answer to divine law? I think not. Rather shalt thou go to destruction, for foolish pride bends down all those who are intimate with her. Therefore, by pure reason I come to the conclusion that sackcloth which leads to a good end is better than furs which are damned in the end.)

(Wilson, 1970: 516)

Gower concludes ironically that the secular priest is well named: *He, dieus, comme faisoit sagement / Cil qui par noun primerement Les nomma prestres seculiers! / Car ils n'ont reule en vestement, / Ne reule en vivre honestement* (Gower, 1901: 20773-20777); "Ah, Lord, how wise was the man who first called them by the name of secular priests! For they have no rule in vestment nor rule in living honorably toward God" (Wilson, 1970: 518). Secular priests lived in the outside community of a parish, rather than in a monastery or other religious order, and there is a pun on the other meaning of *secular* referring to a concern with worldly and profane things rather than the spiritual world, indicating that secular priests are not devoted to religion.

Gower also condemns of the monks who seem to fulfill their duties, but wear worldly fur-lined cloaks, woollen garments and enamelled silver jewellery:

... moigne porte en sa vesture
 Est un signal exteriour
 Qu il sanz orguil et demesure,
 Du netteté p'est blanche et pure
 Ad le corage interiour:
 Mais nostre moigne au present jour
 Qoiert en sa guise bell atour
 Au corps, et l'alme desfigure:

Combien q'il porte de dolour
 La frocque, il ad du vein honour
 Le cote fourré de pellure,
 Ne quiert la haire ainz quiert le say
 Tout le plus fin a son essay,
 Ove la fourrure vair et gris,
 Car il desdeigne le berbis;
 L'aimal d'argent n'ert pas oubliz,
 Ainz fait le moustre et pent tout gay.
 Au chaperon devant le pis:
 C'es la simplesce en noz pais
 Des moignes et de leur array.

(Gower, 1901: 20990-21000,21016-21024)

(... the impurity which the monk bears in his vestments is an external sign that he has inside a heart without pride or excess, of cleanliness which is white and pure. But our monk nowadays seeks fine adornments on his body, and debases his soul. Although he wears the frock of sorrow, he has the fur-lined cloak of vain honors. He seeks not the hair shirt, but seeks rather the finest woollen materials for his use with furs vair and gray, for he disdains sheep. Enamelled silver jewellery will not be forgotten. It makes a show and hangs gaily from his hood in front of his breast. That is the simplicity in our country of the monks and of their array).

(Wilson, 1970: 524-525)

Gower is also critical of the ermine, cloths of gold and silk, which are worn by nobles, as evidence of pride:

O seignour, d'orguil je t'appell,
 Qui d'ermyne as furré le pell
 Ove les mantleals d'orr et de soie:
 Quant plus te quides riche et bell
 Remembre toy de cest oisell;

(Gower, 1901: 23485-23489)

(O Noble, I call thee proud, for thou hast adorned with ermine skins thy mantles of gold and of silk. When thou thinkest thyself most rich and handsome remember that bird [peacock].

(Wilson, 1970: 576)

Gower writes that *les labourers d'antiquité* ("the labourers in the old days"; Gower, 1901: 1.26449) wore drab coloured garments: *Du gris furent leur vestment* (Gower, 1901: 1.26458; "Their clothing was of gray material"), (Wilson, 1970: 653). He complains that nowadays they wear gay and handsome garments. Artists sometimes painted garments colourfully in the fourteenth century, though we do not know whether the actual costumes were colourful. However, the surviving Danish costumes, in the National Museum of Copenhagen, are drab coloured. Gower relates the fact that workers take pride in their clothes to the corruption of the present time and the social values:

He Siecle, au quoy destournes tu?
 ... se font vestir
 Du fin colour et bell atir,
 Qui sanz orguil et sanz conspir
 Jadis furent du sac vestu.
 (Gower, 1901: 26509,26514-26517)

(Ah, World, wherefore art thou gone astray?.. they [labourers] clothe themselves in fine colours and handsome attire, whereas they were formerly clothed in sackcloth without pride and without conspiracy.)

(Wilson, 1970, 655)

The word *conspiracy* reveals Gower's sensitivity about proletarian revolution. As *Vox Clamantis* shows, the Peasants' Revolt shocked him badly.

Gower considers that people dressed unsuitably for their social status, rank and vocation is not only a wasteful expenditure, but also an inducement to social upheaval, though he admits that everybody should spend enough money to dress according to his social status:

Sicomme ma dame la Contesse,
 Solonc q'affiert a sa noblesse,
 Se fait furrer de la pellure,
 Ensi la vaine Escuieresse,
 Voir et la sote presteresse,
 Portont d'ermine la furrure:
 C'est une cause au present hure
 Que del' argent poi nous demure,
 Dont soloions avoir largesse;
 Si l'en n'en preigne bonne cure,

Puet avenir par aventure,
 Ainz q'om le sache, grant destresse.
 (Gower, 1901: 25693-25701)

(Just as a countess-as befits her nobility-gets herself furs, likewise a vain squire's wife and even a foolish priest's mistress wear ermine fur. This is the reason why, at the present time, there is amongst us very little money left, of which we used to have plenty. Unless care is taken, great distress can perchance come upon us before we know it.)

(Wilson, 1970: 634)

and thus Gower advises saving money instead of wasting it the poorer classes ought to stop emulating higher classes and ought to be thrifty.

Gower also denounces the fashionable hip-belts which were worn by every class of male society though he does not explain his reasoning. When the belts are not worn at the usual waist level, according to Gower, they provoke sexual desire in men. When he *ad bien basse la ceinture* (Gower, 1901: 9365; "wears his belt low") *car tant est plain de variance / Q'il quiert nouvelle a chescune hure* (Gower, 1901: 9371-9372); "he is so full of changeableness that he wants a new one [woman] every hour" (Wilson, 1970: 236)- fickleness in fashion implies fickleness in love.

The Lollard Sermons, c. 1400 are treatises by the followers of Wyclif. They structure their discussion on the belief that pride, envy, ire are the sins of the devil; idleness and avarice are the sins of the world; and gluttony and lechery are the sins of the flesh. They deal with each sin and its remedies and analyse the sins in terms of Medieval estates satire, as did Gower in his *Mirour de L'Omme*.

Various estates are described in terms of those above them on the social ladder, for example, the garments of the prelate, who is dressed as richly as a monarch, show pride:

Pride thlanne schal be ful hig in prelatis /... in proude araye of here owne personnes, bothe in / costlew cloth and pelure, as fyn as emperoure, kyng, or quene.

(Anonymous, 1989: 417,421-422)

The homilist also denounces their costly cloths of gold and silk and jewels:

... prelatis nowadaies ben as hie aboue /semple curatis and preetis as kyngis aboue the comen peple /... araied as realli with costli clothes of gold and selk, and in / multitude of other iewellis, in al maner housis [of] office...

(Anonymous, 1989: 217-218 232-234)

Knights are also condemned by the same criteria. They are clad “in fyn scarlet or other cloth / as good as that, and withynne with as good pelure as the quene hath / any in hire gowne.../Also, thei that ben in the estaat of knyghthode, thoru this foule / synne of pride stieth faste” (Anonymous, 1989: 241-243, 258-259).

Under the same heading, the homilist also compares the cost of a squire’s costumes with his annual income: “Hire clothyng so hie cost, bothe in cloth, peerlis, and / pelure, that oo garnemente passeth in coste half moneie of / hire lifelodes in a yeer” (Anonymous, 1989: 270-273). The conclusion is “Pride goth bifore, and schame cometh after” (Anonymous, 1989: 277).

Like Gower, the homilist also condemns the workers. According to him, they used to wear coarse garments, but nowadays they wear fashionable doublets, costly dagged gowns, and hoods with ornamented tippetts:

... sum tyme a white curtel and a russet gowne wolde haue / serued suchon ful wel, now he muste haue a fresch doublet of / fyue schillyngis or more the price, and aboue, a costli gowne with / baggis hangyng to his kne, and iridelid vndir hir³² girdil as a / newe ryuen roket (outer garment, cloak), and an hood on his heued, with a thousande / raggis on his tipet, and gaili hosid an [d] schood, as thoug it were / a squyer of cuntre. / ... This pride schulle ther maistres / abuye whanne that thei / schul paie hir wagis for.

(Anonymous, 1989: 289-294, 296-297)

“Thus pride stieth in alle astatys.../and harme[th] bothe bodi and soule” (Anonymous, 1989: 301-303). Economics and materialism are also the concern of the homilist.

In conclusion, Seven Deadly Sins play a prominent role in medieval literature. The whole of the Seven Deadly Sins is an effective way of analysing man’s behaviour, describing sinful man’s conduct, and so urging on him the significance of confession and penance. They are the basic errors which pervert the will away from what reason directs to man’s good, and focus it instead on that which only appears to be good at first sight, such as

wordly pride or lechery. These are sinful, as they place worldly pleasures before obedience to God. In most of the works on the Seven Deadly Sins, man is shown to pass through innocence, temptation and sin in order to explain and teach the way of realization and repentance. The most commonly accepted hierarchy of the Seven Deadly Sins, defined by Gregory in c. 500, placed pride at the root of anger, avarice, idleness, envy, luxury and gluttony and was adopted by many medieval authors including Chaucer in his *Parson's Tale*. Through the Seven Deadly Sins, costumes, which are related to the sins of mainly pride, lechery and hypocrisy, are revealed. However, moralists' condemnations did not seem to be successful as people and priests themselves continued to wear luxurious and exaggerated costumes. Thus, the sumptuary laws are enacted to put an end to this extravagance and to persuade people to clad themselves according to their social status and rank.

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