Finite Clauses in Trinity Homilies and Lambeth Homilies

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On *Trinity Homilies* and *Lambeth Homilies* Ian A. Gordon remarks as follows :

> The majority of extant sermons from this part of period, whether they are the old-fashioned anecdotal sermon or the friars' 'syllogistic' sermon, assume a conversational tone and a normal, virtually modern, sentence-structure.   Twelfth-century examples are found in the Trinity and Lambeth homilies, written in a style little removed from the Alfredian prose of exposition: . . . This remains basically the standard style of preaching throughout the period.[1]

As is clear from the above passage, Gordon claims a stylistic similarity between *Trinity Homilies* and *Lambeth Homilies*.   Thus, the aim of the present short paper is to examine the validity of Gordon's claim by investigating the distribution of finite clauses in both homilies.

A few observations should be made about the finite clauses in the present paper.   Only *dependent* finite clauses have been considered, by which I mean clauses which are introduced by subordinators and make up grammatical sentences only if subordinate to a further clause.[2]   Finite clauses introduced by subordinators other than *that* have been disregarded, except in their adjunctive use.   Finite clauses of place have, however,

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1)   I. A. Gordon, *The Movement of English Prose* (London: Longman, 1966), pp. 49 -50.

2)   Cf. R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, J. Svartvik, *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (London: Longman, 1972), p. 722.

been excluded from consideration.[3]

The present corpus is as follws:

> a1225 (? a1200) *Trin. Hom.* (Trin-C): Old English homilies, ed. R.
> Morris, rer. 2, *EETS* 53 (1873); the first 1000 lines of prose.
>
> a1225 (? OE) *Lamb. Hom.* (Lamb): Old English homilies, ed. R.
> Morris, ser. 1, *EETS* 29, 34 (1867-8); the first 1000 lines of prose with
> the exception of 'Pater Noster.'

In the above list the manuscript date is followed by the composition date
enclosed in parenthsis if the latter is thought to be at least 25 years
earlier.   As for the dates and abbreviations of the texts I have followed
'Plan and Bibliography' (1954) (*MED*).[4]

The categories I have examined in this study are the following four:
Subject, Complement, Object and Adjunct.

The distribution of finite clauses in each of the four categories in *Trin.
Hom.* and *Lamb. Hom.* is shown in the following table.

	Finite Clause	
	Trin. Hom.	Lamb. Hom.
Subject	7	18
Complement	7	6
Object	30	41
Adjunct	186	232

In the *subject* category there appear in *Lamb. Hom.* about three times
as many finite clauses as in *Trin. Hom.* (18 : 7).

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3)   K. Manabe, *Syntax and Style in Early English—Finite and Nonfinite Clauses c.
900-1600* (Tokyo: Kaibunsha, 1979), pp. 2-3.

4)   H. Kurath and S. M. Kuhn, eds., *Middle English Dictionary* (Michigan and
Oxford, 1952-).

For-þi leofe breðre hit is muchel neot *þet we þonkien ure drihten þa haued þa stronge ealde laʒe auulsed mid þere newe.   Lamb. Hom.,* 9. 22-4[5]

Soðliche me þunched gode men *þet al þas wrake is icumen ouer alle þeode.   Lamb. Hom.,* 15. 5-6

. . . hit is riht *þet me hem spille.*   forþan betere hit is *þet heo beon ispilled of heore licome þenne mid alle fordon to þes deoles hond. Lamb. Hom.,* 17. 2-4

Gif hit itit *þet þu brekest godes heste unþonkes.* . . .   *Lamb. Hom.,* 21. 15

hit mei ilimpen *þet he wile seggen þah ic hefde al þet ic efre biʒet ne mahtic ʒelden swa muchel swa ic habbe idon herme.   Lamb. Hom.,* 31. 11-3

Hit me i ilimpen *þet he wile seggen þam þeoste.   Lamb. Hom.,* 31. 16

wa is me *þet ic efre dude swa muchele sunne. and heo ne ʒe bette. Lamb. Hom.,* 35. 8-9

Betre hit is *þet mon ne iknawe noht þe wei to godalmihtin þe he hine icnawe and seodðe hine for-hoʒie* ; . . . *Lamb. Hom.,* 49. 5-6

Some examples from *Trin. Hom.*:

and forþi hit is riht *þat we forleten. and forsaken nihtliche deden. Trin. Hom.,* 9. 25-6

þeih lerdemen segen þat hit be muchel sunne *þat man his licames lust drige.   Trin. Hom.,* 31. 9-10

Swo bihoued us *þat we don. þe beð on þis shiþe:* . . . *Trin. Hom.,* 43. 3 -4

and forþi him bicumeð *þat he offri þe heuenliche kinge.   Trin. Hom.,* 45. 20-1

Only in the *complement* category, clauses in question are slightly more

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5)   References are to the page and line numbers.

frequent in *Trin. Hom.* than in *Lamb. Hom.* (7 : 6).

Ðe þridde is *þat man sitte an euen at drinke. and ligge longe a moregen. and slawliche ariseð. and late to chireche goð.* *Trin. Hom.*, 11. 34-6

Ðe ðridde is *þat man be waker. and liht. and snel. and seli. and erliche rise. and gernliche seche chireche.* Ðat feorðe is. *þat man þe spuse haueð. his golliche. deden wið teo. swo hit be untime. . . .* Ðat fifte is. *þat elc man for oðer bidde* also for him seluen.* Ðat sixte is. *þat elch man luuie oðer al swo alse him seluen. þeih he swo swi-ðe ne muge.* *Trin. Hom.*, 13. 25-31

A couple of examples from *Lamb. Hom.*:

. . . þat þridde is *þet þu scalt bi-wepen þine sunne bi-eften monnen and ʒeoten þine teres swiðe sariliche. . . .* *Lamb. Hom.*, 39. 2-3
. . . þat forðe is *þet þu scalt wakien for þines drihtenes luue.* *Lamb. Hom.*, 39. 6-7

Finite clauses as objects are more frequent in *Lamb. Hom.* than in *Trin. Hom.* (41 : 30).

ʒif eniman seid eawiht to eou segged *þet þe lauerd haued þar-of neode* and redliche heo eou leted fere þer-mid. *Lamb. Hom.*, 3. 8-10
Þet tacnet *þet we sulen habben ure heote and habben godne ileafe to ure drihten.* *Lamb. Hom.*, 5. 35-6
þe witeʒa het *þet we sculde makien his stiʒes. . . .* *Lamb. Hom.*, 7. 1
. . . and þenne þu wenest *þet þu scalt libben alre best.* *Lamb. Hom.*, 7. 23-4
. . . and bidden for heom deies and nihtes *þet crist heom milcie of heore misdede.* *Lamb. Hom.*, 7. 35-9. 1
and ʒerne bidden ure milciende drihten *þet he us leue swa libben on þisse scorte liue. . . .* *Lamb. Hom.*, 11. 3-5

þet is on englis Ihereð ӡe israelisce bem *þet nis buten an god on heofene and on eorðan.* . . . *Lamb. Hom.,* 11. 23-4

ӡe hit maӡen witen iwis *þet hit is al for ure sunne. Lamb. Hom.,* 15. 6-7

and þa monne ec þa nulleð ileuen. *þet he walð beon iboren of ure lefdi sancte marie ne þolien deð for us. Lamb. Hom.,* 21. 36-23. 1

A few examples from *Trin. Hom.*

we radeð on boc. *þat elch man haueð to fere on engel of heuene.* . . . *Trin. Hom.,* 11. 20-1

and ich leue. *þat chireche is holi godes hus on eorðe. Trin. Hom.,* 23. 17-8

Swilche ben alle þo þe hereð godes word on lor spelle. and þenchen *þat hie willeð here synnes leten. and ne don. Trin. Hom.,* 27. 4-6

There is also in *Lamb. Hom.* a greater use of finite clauses as adjuncts than in *Trin. Hom.* (232 : 186).

. . . *þa he com to þere dune oliueti his ihaten* þa sende he is. ii. leornicnihtes. . . . *Lamb. Hom.,* 3. 5-6

Þa apostles eoden and dedeun *alswa þe helende heom het.* . . . *Lamb. Hom.,* 3. 11-2

Ah þu scalt hit ibeten *al swa þin scrifte þe techet. Lamb. Hom.,* 19. 2 -3

er we weren al forgult in to helle þurh adam ure alde feder *for-þon þe he to-brec godes bebode.* . . . *Lamb. Hom.,* 19. 5-7

. . . and þa ӡet he haueð us iӡarket þa ecche blisse *ӡif we wulleð hit iernien in heuene riche. Lamb. Hom.,* 19. 9-11

þe wrecche sunfulle ne elde nawiht þet he ne ga to bote *þe wile he mei.* . . . *Lamb. Hom.,* 21. 23-4

Ne beo heo nefre swa frekel. ne swa heh. ne swa muchel. ne swa eðelic. *þah ure an heofde idon eower alre sunne.* . . . *Lamb. Hom.,*

21. 29-31

ah hit is muchele mare wunder *ʒif he nule nefre swinken.   Lamb.
Hom.,* 23. 29-30

. . . bute he habbe scrift. he is forloren in to helle.   *Lamb. Hom.,* 33. 21
-2

and swa þu hine biddest deihwamliche *þenne þu seist. Lamb. Hom.,*
39. 13-4

Some examples from *Trin. Hom.*:

whu shal þat wurðe *siððen wapman me ne atrineð.   Trin. Hom.,*
21. 16-7

Þo he steah to heuene. *swo þat his apostles and muchel oðer folc mid
eien bihielden hwu he upwende.   Trin. Hom.,* 23. 8-10

Ne mai no man þese word seggen *þanne he godes milce bisecð. gief
he haueð on his heote onde.   Trin. Hom.,* 27. 32-4

There is a great difference in the distribution of finite clauses between
Trin. Hom. and *Lamb. Hom.*: except for the *complement* category,
clauses under discussion in the three major categories are more frequent
in *Lamb. Hom.* than in *Trin. Hom.* Thus, in spite of Gordon's claim of the
stylistic similarity between the two homilies, a fairly great stylistic
difference between *Trin. Hom.* and *Lamb. Hom.* can be observed, so far
as the distribution of finite clauses is concerned.[6]

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6) Cf. K. Manabe, *The Syntactic and Stylisitic Development of the Infinitive in
Middle English* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 1989), p. 83 and p. 164.