

PERFORMANCE AND
PERFORMATIVITY IN THE
BLICKLING HOMILIES

Name Hanna Muller

Supervisor Dr. Marcelle Cole

RMA Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies

Utrecht University

2021-2022

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the Blickling homilies (Princeton University Library, Scheide MS 71) as texts with a performative nature. Based on an examination of their performance style and the ways in which they construct the identities of preacher and audience, this thesis reflects on their performativity. The analysis reveals that the preachers of the Blickling homilies employed different strategies, such as asking questions and inserting dialogue, to ensure an effective oral delivery. It also demonstrates that the homilies construct the identities of the preacher and audience in different but overlapping ways. Furthermore, this thesis shows the advantages of treating the Blickling homilies as belonging to a performative genre.

Blickling homilies; performance; performativity; identity; Old English.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction	4
1. The Blickling homilies in context.....	5
1.1 Terminology	5
1.2 Preaching in the Middle Ages	7
1.3 The Blickling homilies	9
1.3.1 Codicology and content of the Blickling homilies	10
1.3.2 Scholarship on the Blickling homilies	12
1.4 The audience of the Blickling homilies.....	14
2. Performance and performativity in homiletic prose.....	22
2.1 Performance studies.....	23
2.2 Performativity.....	24
2.3 Performativity in performance studies	27
2.4 Performance and performativity in homiletic prose	28
2.5 The original performance of the medieval sermon	29
2.5.1 The <i>artes praedicandi</i>	30
2.5.2 Performance indicators	32
2.6 Examining a homily's performativity	36
2.6.1 Homiletic speech acts	36
2.6.2 Identity formation.....	39
2.7 Methodology and data selection	40
3. The Blickling homilies for analysis	42
3.1 Blickling 1	42
3.2 Blickling 2	44
3.3 Blickling 3	45
3.4 Blickling 4	46
3.5 Blickling 11.....	47
3.6 Blickling 12.....	48
3.7 Blickling 14.....	49
3.8 Blickling 15.....	50
3.9 Blickling 16.....	51
4. Performance indicators and positional rhetoric in the Blickling homilies	54

4.1 Performance indicators	54
4.1.1 Preacher-audience dialogue	54
4.1.2 Fictional dialogue	61
4.1.3 Direct speech	64
4.1.4 Public addresses	66
4.1.5 Exclamations and expressive sentences	67
4.1.6 Deictics	70
4.2 Positional rhetoric	71
4.2.1 Addressing the audience	71
4.2.2 Defining the audience	72
4.2.3 Setting the tone	73
4.2.4 Instructing the audience	75
4.2.5 Using ‘I’	77
4.2.6 Exhorting the audience	78
Conclusion	82
Bibliography	85

Introduction

Unfortunately, we do not have access to the original performance of medieval sermons and often, questions about their intended audience and the circumstances of their performance must remain unanswered. This is also true for the tenth-century collection of Old English homilies called the Blickling homilies (Princeton University Library, Scheide MS 71). It is the earliest surviving collection of homilies in England but despite that, academic interest has often overlooked it. Scholarship about the homilies has mainly focused on determining the Latin sources and their intended audience and, until now, it has ignored the performative nature of the texts.

Because the sermon genre is “essentially oral and performative”¹ and the Blickling homilies fall within this genre it is necessary to examine the texts as being oral and performative. This thesis, therefore, studies the performative nature of the Blickling homilies and analyses the homilies for clues about their original, oral, performance. This thesis answers the following research question: ‘What results does a study of the performative nature of the Blickling homilies yield?’ To answer this question, this thesis concentrates on two aspects of performativity: the original performance and the construction of a Christian identity. The first aspect is examined through the following sub-question: ‘How do the Blickling homilies employ techniques to ensure an effective, oral performance?’. The second aspect is addressed in the following sub-question: ‘How do the Blickling Homilies construct the identities of preacher and audience?’.

This thesis is structured as follows: the first chapter addresses some terminological concerns, provides the necessary background information and examines previous scholarship on the Blickling homilies. The second chapter introduces the concepts ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’ and the theories and methodologies that this thesis applies to the Blickling homilies. The third chapter gives an overview of the Blickling homilies that are analysed in this thesis. The fourth chapter contains the analysis of the Blickling homilies and focuses first on the performance style of the homilies and then on the identities of the preacher and audience. Lastly, the conclusion returns to the questions asked here.

¹ Kienzle 2002: 89.

1. The Blickling homilies in context

1.1 Terminology

First, it is necessary to discuss some terminological issues so that the remainder of the thesis is well-understood. It concerns the terminology of ‘sermon’ and ‘homily’. In studies of Old English, it is customary to refer to all preaching texts as homilies.² However, the medieval usage of the terms is worth discussing as it gives insight into the way medieval people thought about preaching and if they differentiated between types of preaching.

Thomas N. Hall provides a detailed overview of the medieval terminology for preaching. He explains several Latin terms commonly associated with preaching. The first is *sermo* which by the end of the fourth century had gained precedence as the standard term for a preacher’s address to his audience, disregarding the content of the address or the identity of the preacher or audience.³ Augustine and Ambrose in particular helped establish *sermo* as the primary term for the message of instruction or exhortation that a Christian preacher gave in the context of public worship.⁴ For them, the term *sermo* was interchangeable with *tractatus*, which then meant a learned exposition, oral or written, on a sacred or literary text.⁵ Augustine associated *tractatus* with another term, *homilia*, derived from Greek. A *homilia* or *omelia* indicated a public address given openly to a group.⁶ It was not regarded as a text studied in private but when homilies started to be written down and copied, the term’s meaning was extended to written texts as well, blurring the original distinction.⁷ For much of the medieval period, these three terms could be used interchangeably, all referring to written or oral addresses to a Christian audience.⁸

Modern scholars have tried to introduce some precision and distinction in this terminology which, according to Hall, is “admittedly somewhat artificial” but “not wholly out of line with medieval practice”.⁹ The most important modern difference is that a ‘sermon’ is “fundamentally a catechetical or admonitory discourse built upon a theme or topic not necessarily grounded in scripture” while a ‘homily’ indicates “a systematic exposition of a pericope (a liturgically designated passage of Scripture, usually from a Gospel or Epistle) that

² Swan 2008: 177n.

³ Hall 2000: 203.

⁴ Hall 2000: 204.

⁵ Hall 2000: 204.

⁶ Hall 2000: 204-205.

⁷ Hall 2000: 205.

⁸ Hall 2000: 205.

⁹ Hall 2000: 205.

proceeds according to a pattern of *lectio continua*, commenting on a given passage verse by verse or phrase by phrase”.¹⁰

Hall describes the characteristics of homilies and sermons respectively and, while acknowledging that these broad definitions have become essential for the study of medieval preaching, adamantly emphasises that they are based on distinctions imposed by modern scholars and do not completely reflect the medieval usage of the terms *sermo* and *homilia*.¹¹ He concludes that a scholar of medieval sermons and homilies needs to be aware of the flexibility of medieval practice as well as the inadequacy of modern classifications.¹²

According to Hall’s discussion, almost none of the Blickling homilies are actually homilies but sermons. Some of the homilies are exegetical in nature and follow a pericope, but do not strictly follow the pattern of *lectio continua*. Most of the texts that lean towards the definition of a homily are also exhortatory, which, according to J. E. Cross is a characteristic of a sermon.¹³ Looking at the Anglo-Saxon world, Cross shows that the Anglo-Saxons employed both Old English and Latin terminology for the sermon genre, for example, *godspelltraht*, *trahtboc*, and *spelboc* for collections and *spell*, *cwide*, and *sermo* for individual texts.¹⁴ The varied usage implies that Anglo-Saxon authors were “more concerned about the effectiveness of their writings for the faith than about echoing models or conforming to strict rules of genre”.¹⁵

The diversity of preaching texts represented in the Blickling collection, from hortatory pieces to homilies following a pericope, to stories about saints in itself shows the wide range of directions preaching could take. The titles of the texts do not include a term for a preaching text; only the texts for St. John and Saints Peter and Paul indicate that the following is a *spel*.¹⁶ The lack of written-down terms for the individual Blickling texts and the limitations of modern classifications result in the choice of the term ‘homily’ when referring to the Blickling collection in this thesis, following the established title of the collection and the common use in Anglo-Saxon scholarship.

Nevertheless, when talking about preaching texts in general, I will employ the term ‘sermon’. In *The Sermon* Beverly Kienzle gives a definition of the sermon genre as a whole: “the sermon is essentially an oral discourse, spoken in the voice of a preacher who addresses

¹⁰ Hall 2000: 205.

¹¹ Hall 2000: 211.

¹² Hall 2000: 212.

¹³ Cross 2000: 563.

¹⁴ Cross 2000: 563-565.

¹⁵ Cross 2000: 565.

¹⁶ See the digitalised version of the manuscript, f.98v for St. John and f.104r for Saints Peter and Paul (<https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9934995233506421#view>)

an audience, to instruct and exhort them, on a topic concerned with faith and morals and based on a sacred text”.¹⁷ This broad definition of the sermon (genre) makes the term applicable to virtually all preaching texts and is, therefore, an accurate term to use for preaching texts in general. Convention makes the use of the term ‘homily’ for the Blickling homilies the preferable choice.

1.2 Preaching in the Middle Ages

Many scholars have argued the existence or non-existence of preaching, and specifically mass preaching, in the medieval period. From the time Christ himself preached based on Jewish scriptures, the sermon became a “bulwark” of Christian culture.¹⁸ Preaching took different forms in different periods and for a good understanding of Anglo-Saxon preaching, we first turn to the Carolingian church.

Scholarship on early medieval preaching on the Continent can be divided into two standpoints, either ‘maximalist’ or ‘minimalist’.¹⁹ The maximalists argue that sermons were the main medium through which the Carolingian church taught and through which the Carolingian rulers and bishops attempted to Christianise the entire Frankish people.²⁰ To achieve this, bishops and priests would regularly preach to their congregation in the vernacular, using Latin exemplars.²¹ In contrast, the minimalists maintain that the extant Latin sermons were primarily meant for the clergy and that preaching to the laity was uncommon.²² The maximalist view has become prevalent.

Mary Clayton argues for the existence of preaching to the laity in the Carolingian period. She distinguishes between three types of Carolingian homiliaries: collections for use in the night Office, collections for private devotion, and collections for use in preaching to the people.²³ The homiliaries of Hrabanus Maurus and St. Pèrre of Chartres are examples of collections used for preaching to the laity, indicating that a distinct genre of ninth-century collections for mass preaching existed.²⁴ Thomas Amos summarises his findings about lay preaching in the Carolingian as follows:

¹⁷ Kienzle 2000: 151.

¹⁸ Connell 2015: 1576.

¹⁹ McCune 2013: 283.

²⁰ McCune 2013: 283.

²¹ McCune 2013: 283.

²² McCune 2013: 283-284. Milton McC. Gatch is extremely sceptical of mass preaching in the Carolingian period. Based on a review of Carolingian homiliaries and legislation, he concluded that the surviving Carolingian sermons were all intended for liturgical or monastic purposes. See his book *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan*, mostly pages 30-39.

²³ Clayton 1985: 216.

²⁴ Clayton 1985: 216.

[T]he Carolingians produced a copious body of legislation which announced their intent to reform the religious life of the peoples of their empire. They sought to effect their reforms through the preaching of the reform ideas and practices to the populace. The message of reform was contained in the many sermons which the Carolingian clergy wrote and in the collections they adapted and compiled. These sermons were preached to the people at Mass after the Gospel reading, with the exception of missionary sermons, and provisions were made to ensure that they could be preached in the vernaculars. The Carolingian legislation concerning preaching and the content and style of most of the surviving sermons clearly support these contentions.²⁵

James McCune also argues in favour of preaching to the laity in the Carolingian period. Examining different primary sources, including Carolingian legislation, inventories and booklists, and other literary evidence such as letters, he shows that the evidence points to the practice of Mass preaching.²⁶

Many Old English homilies show the influence of Carolingian homiliaries²⁷ and from the vernacular texts, it is clear that a range of Latin homiliaries must have been available in England before the Conquest.²⁸ The compiler of the *Old English Martyrology* also used homilies as his sources, probably in the ninth century.²⁹ The first Blickling homily shows that early African homilies also circulated.³⁰ Ælfric made use of several Carolingian homiliaries and the Blickling collection is very similar to some Carolingian homiliaries aimed at preaching to the laity.³¹ Thomas Kearns concludes that “the English in the tenth century were particularly influenced by Carolingian policies of *ad populum* preaching and these shaped their practice of liturgical preaching”.

In Blickling homily 4, the homilist refers twice to the importance of preaching to the laity during the Mass. The first instance states the following:

(1) *Se biscop & se mæsse preost gif hi mid rihte willaþ Gode þeowian, þonne sceolan hi þegnian dæghwamlice Godes folce, oþþe huru embe seofon niht mæssan gesingan for eal cristen folc, þe æfre from frymþe middangeardes acenned wæs, & Godes willa sy þæt hi foreþingian motan.* (Morris 45.29-33)

²⁵ Amos 1989: 52.

²⁶ See McCune 2013: 283-325.

²⁷ Kearns 2020: 41. Gatch 1977: 26.

²⁸ Clayton 1985: 217.

²⁹ Clayton 1985: 217.

³⁰ Clayton 1985: 217.

³¹ Clayton 1985: 217, 223.

The bishop and the priest, if they will rightly serve God, must minister daily to God's people, or at least once a week sing mass for all Christian people who have ever been born, from the beginning of this world.³²

Here, the bishop and priest are urged to care for their congregations and to organise a Mass at least once a week for the common people. The second passage also instructs the clergy:

(2) Se biscop sceal beodan mid þon mæston bebode þæm mæssepreostum, gif hi hi sylfe willon wiþ Godes erre gehealdan, þæt hi secgan þæm Godes folce þæt hi Sunnandagum & mæssedagum Godes cyrican georne secan, & þær þa godcundan lare lustlice gehyran. (Morris 47.26-28)

The bishop must lay a great injunction upon the priests, if they will preserve themselves from the wrath of God, to tell God's people that on Sundays and Mass-days they should diligently visit God's church, and joyfully hear there the divine instruction.

In this passage, the clergy are not instructed to hold Mass, although that is implied, but to exhort lay people to come to church on Sundays and Mass days so that they can hear the word of God. In his letter to Wulfsgie, Ælfric also indicates that the priest should tell the Gospel to the people on Sundays and Mass days.³³ It is clear, then, that Anglo-Saxon priests did preach to the laity and encouraged them to come to church for Mass.

1.3 The Blickling homilies

We have seen that preaching to lay people was common in both the Carolingian period and the Anglo-Saxon world and that even a homily in the Blickling collection indicates that Mass preaching was encouraged in the early Middle Ages. How, then, do the Blickling homilies represent this preaching and what type of audience can we envision for these homilies? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to first introduce the Blickling homilies and the scholarship about the Blickling manuscript. Once we have a clear idea of the type of collection it is, we can take a closer look at its intended audience.

³² This thesis relies on Richard Morris' edition of the Blickling homilies and his Modern English translation. The first number refers to the page on which the Old English text is found followed by the line numbers. Sometimes, the Old English reference continues on the next page because the Old English and Modern English translations are alternated. This means that the reference skips a number, resulting in, for example, 45.35-47.3.

³³ Clayton 1985: 221.

1.3.1 Codicology and content of the Blickling homilies

The Blickling homilies is a collection of eighteen homilies that survives in an incomplete manuscript – it lacks the beginning and end as well as internal leaves and possibly whole quires. Four quires are missing from the beginning and an unknown number from the end.³⁴ It is likely that the collection began with homilies for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany; it is unknown how the manuscript ended.³⁵ The book is arranged according to the liturgical year with homilies for Annunciation to Pentecost and several Saints' Days. The contents and structure of the book indicate that it is a homiliary, a collection of sermons and homilies organised to follow the feast of the liturgical year.³⁶ The size of the book (20cm by 15cm) means that it could easily be transported and held while reading.³⁷ The manuscript consists of several originally separate booklets that were bound together, most likely before 1304, by which time the book had arrived in Lincoln.³⁸

In Lincoln, more textual material was added. Apart from the homilies, the manuscript contains a calendar from the mid-fifteenth century and a selection of Gospel passages from the early fourteenth century, both in Latin.³⁹ The manuscript was used to administer oaths to municipal officials at Lincoln. It also contains extensive marginal notes concerning the Lincoln city government; the names of mayors and other officials are written throughout the manuscript.⁴⁰ The earliest name can be dated to 1304, which gives us the date by which the manuscript must have been in Lincoln. From 1740 to 1930 the manuscript resided in Blickling Hall, in Norfolk, from which the manuscript derives its name.⁴¹

The manuscript is generally dated to the end of the tenth century. Homily 11 refers explicitly to the year 971, but whether this note is original to the homily or a later addition is unclear.⁴² The language and syntax of the Blickling homilies suggest a relatively early date of composition, and they may have been written down as early as the late ninth century.⁴³ In any case, Blickling homily 11 was performed in 971, although the text itself may pre-date that, and

³⁴ Scragg 2000: 82.

³⁵ Wilcox 2011: 98.

³⁶ Kearns 2020: 10.

³⁷ Kearns 2020: 10.

³⁸ Kearns 2020: 11.

³⁹ Kelly 2003: xxix. The information at Princeton University Library indicates that the Gospel passages stem from the sixteenth century. It is unclear where this difference originates.

⁴⁰ <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9934995233506421#view>. See also Kelly 2003: xxxi.

⁴¹ Wilcox 2011: 103.

⁴² Amodio 2014: 87. Homily 11 says the following: *efne nigon hund wintra & lxxi. on þys geare* “even nine hundred and seventy-one years, in this (very) year”. (Morris 119.2)

⁴³ Amodio 2014: 87; Wilcox 2011: 100.

the collection as a whole can be dated to 971 or sometime afterwards.⁴⁴ It is the earliest surviving Anglo-Saxon homiliary written entirely in the vernacular.⁴⁵

The provenance of the Blickling manuscript is not generally agreed upon. The main dialect of the homilies is late West Saxon, but many scholars have found traces of Anglian spelling and vocabulary and there are also examples of Mercian words in the homilies.⁴⁶ D. G. Scragg has shown that there is a textual connection between the Blickling manuscript and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198 Part II, noting that copies of Blickling homilies (certainly 13 and 18, but possibly 10 too) were available to the scribes of CCC 198 Part II.⁴⁷ Mary Swan has further strengthened this connection, suggesting that the Blickling manuscript might have been the direct exemplar for a composite homily in CCC 198 which reinforces the argument that CCC 198 Part II was composed in a scriptorium directly connected to, or even identical with, the one where the Blickling manuscript was located in the first half of the eleventh century.⁴⁸

Based on this link, the possible origin for the Blickling book might be established. CCC 198 started as a south-eastern collection but Part II was added later, possibly in an Anglian environment.⁴⁹ This then points to a probable Anglian origin for the Blickling homilies.⁵⁰ However, Blickling's connection with CCC 198 (and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121) could also indicate a Worcester provenance.⁵¹ Its later stay in Lincoln has led Jonathan Wilcox to suggest that the manuscript was composed there.⁵² However, few Lincoln manuscripts have survived from the same time period as the Blickling homilies and it is hard to say if and how much the Blickling manuscript resembled the Lincoln compositions.⁵³ In short, there is no consensus on the provenance of the Blickling manuscript except for – not unfounded – speculation.

The homiletic part of the manuscript is the work of two scribes. The first scribe wrote homilies 1 to 6 and was the principal scribe of homilies 7 to 15.⁵⁴ The second scribe also wrote parts of these homilies, and the last three homilies are by his hand only.⁵⁵ The quires and the homilies they contain may be divided into three blocks. The first set of homilies (1 to 7) is

⁴⁴ Wilcox 2011: 100.

⁴⁵ Kearns 2020: 10.

⁴⁶ Kearns 2020: 18.

⁴⁷ Scragg 1985: 313.

⁴⁸ Swan 2006: 96.

⁴⁹ Wilcox 2011: 103.

⁵⁰ Wilcox 2011: 103.

⁵¹ Kearns 2020: 19.

⁵² Wilcox 2011: 103-106.

⁵³ Kearns 2020: 19.

⁵⁴ Scragg 1985: 303-304.

⁵⁵ Scragg 1985: 303-304.

ordered to follow the church year to Easter. Homily 1 is for Annunciation and 2 for Quinquagesima, or Shrove Sunday, which is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent. The following three homilies (3 to 5) are for the first, third and fifth Sundays in Lent. Next are the homilies for Palm Sunday (6) and Easter Day (7).

The second block of homilies continues with pieces suitable for the Post-Easter period. These are three homilies for Rogationtide (8 to 10), the days of prayer and fasting before Ascension Day. These are followed by homily 11 for Ascension and homily 12 for Pentecost. Then this set moves into a Sanctorale, the section of the homiliary which contains the homilies for particular Saints' days. First is the Assumption of St. Mary (13), followed by the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (14) and homily 15 for Saints Peter and Paul. The third set continues the Sanctorale and contains three homilies. Homily 16 for St. Michael, homily 17 for St. Martin and, lastly, homily 18 for St. Andrew. The last homily is incomplete and the original conclusion to the Blickling manuscript is unknown.

1.3.2 Scholarship on the Blickling homilies

Academic interest in the Blickling homilies started at the end of the nineteenth century when Reverend Richard Morris edited and translated the homilies in his 1880 edition *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*. The book contained the Old English text on one side and the Modern English translation on the other. Morris saw the manuscript in disarray and published nineteen homilies, including one fragment. Later it became clear that the text Morris identified as a fragment was in fact part of homily 4.⁵⁶ Therefore, we now refer to eighteen Blickling homilies, instead of nineteen.

His edition opened up possibilities for other scholars to examine the homilies and the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were marked by several publications about the Latin sources of the Old English homilies. One of the earliest contributions was by Max Förster, who published the article *Zu den Blickling Homilies* in 1893.⁵⁷ In it, Förster managed to locate the major Latin sources for seven of the homilies, and later on, he also identified sources for two more homilies. Other scholars, such as H.G. Fiedler, continued early research into the Latin sources of the Blickling homilies.

From the 1930s Rudolph Willard adopted an important position in the research about the Blickling homilies. He also concentrated on the Latin sources, not only of the Blickling homilies

⁵⁶ Morris homily XIV should be inserted into his homily IV at page 53, line 2, and his homilies XVII-XIX are referred to as Blickling Homilies 16-18. See also Wilcox 2011: 98n.

⁵⁷ Förster 1893.

but also of other anonymous Old English homilies. In 1960, Willard published a facsimile edition of the manuscript while the manuscript was disbound and the leaves were being restored for rebinding. He included an extensive introduction describing the codicology and the marginalia of the manuscript.⁵⁸ More recently, the manuscript has been digitised and is freely available at the Princeton University Digital Library.⁵⁹

Later scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s saw a continued interest in the codicology and the sources of the Blickling Homilies. Scholars such as Cross and Scragg focused on determining further Latin sources of the homilies and examined the structure of the manuscript. Milton McC. Gatch's article *The unknowable audience of the Blickling Homilies* instigated an ongoing debate about the audience of the Blickling homilies.⁶⁰ More than a century after Morris's edition, Richard J. Kelly published a new edition of the Blickling homilies.⁶¹ However, this much-needed updated edition is found lacking in many respects.⁶² Therefore, in this thesis, I rely on Morris' edition as a primary source.

Most scholarship on the Blickling homilies has concentrated on finding the Latin sources of the homilies and not so much on the Old English texts themselves. One issue that has emerged from the emphasis on sources is that the homilies have often been valued in terms of their respective success or failure in translating the sources well. Fiedler, for example, while examining the sources for the first homily, noted that the “[t]ranslator has frequently misunderstood his original” and “[h]is style, by the side of the Latin original, seems crude and clumsy”.⁶³ Charles D. Wright has recently considered the work of the pioneers Förster, Willard, and Cross and their efforts to find sources for the Old English Anonymous Homilies.⁶⁴ He notes that the first two scholars shared a conviction that knowledge of the Latin sources was key to the meaning of the Old English texts.⁶⁵ This understanding has long pervaded scholarship on the Blickling homilies and resulted in a lack of research into the homilies as Old English texts.

Recent research has fortunately already begun to examine the Blickling homilies in new and different ways. For example, in his 2020 doctoral dissertation, Thomas Kearns uses the Blickling homilies – and the Vercelli Homilies – to analyse religious thought in late tenth-century England. This century was marked by the Benedictine Reform which aimed to reform

⁵⁸ Wilcox 2011: 99.

⁵⁹ See <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9934995233506421#view>.

⁶⁰ Gatch 1989.

⁶¹ Kelly 2003.

⁶² Wilcox 2011: 98 and 98n.

⁶³ Fiedler 1903: 123.

⁶⁴ See Wright 2021.

⁶⁵ Wright 2021: 66.

religious life in accordance with the Rule of St. Benedict and the traditions of the ninth-century Carolingian reforms.⁶⁶ Traditionally, writers such as Ælfric and Wulfstan are considered reformers whereas the Blickling and Vercelli homilies reflect the non-reformed point of view.⁶⁷ Kearns, however, offers a more nuanced view of the relationship between reformers and the non-reformed in the late tenth-century Anglo-Saxon church.⁶⁸ He shows that non-reformed ideas were not as different from reformed ideas and that the impact of the Reform was not as visible and profound as other scholars have suggested.⁶⁹ Studies like Kearns' dissertation indicates the value of research into the Blickling collection as an independent Old English product.

1.4 The audience of the Blickling homilies

As stated above, Gatch's article *The unknowable audience of the Blickling Homilies* instigated a continuing debate on the intended audience of the Blickling homilies. The title clearly indicates the argument Gatch makes. His claim resonates in other research dealing with the audience of the Blickling homilies: Kearns asserts that the audience is only "partially knowable"⁷⁰ and Wilcox indicates that he explores "knowable and probable uses"⁷¹ of the Blickling manuscript.

In what follows, we examine what scholars have argued about the audience and uses of the Blickling homilies. Firstly, we take a closer look at Gatch's claim that the audience of the Blickling homilies is unknowable. Secondly, we see how other scholars have disproved his claim. Lastly, we return to the evidence for Anglo-Saxon lay preaching, since that gives insight into the context of the Blickling homilies and their intended use.

In Gatch's article, he analysed four of the Blickling homilies (4, 5, 10, and 11) for signs of an Anglo-Saxon audience. He considers internal evidence for insights into the condition and needs of the audience of the Blickling homilies.⁷² He specifically concentrates on indications of what kind of audience the preachers, adapters, or anthologisers of the homilies had in mind when they translated the Latin sources.⁷³ The homilies Gatch chooses for his analysis are all catechetical in nature, meaning that they provided basic instruction on fundamental Christian

⁶⁶ Hill 2017: 151.

⁶⁷ Kearns 2020: 6-7.

⁶⁸ Kearns 2020: 8.

⁶⁹ Kearns 2020: 167-169.

⁷⁰ Kearns 2020: 37.

⁷¹ See Wilcox 2011.

⁷² Gatch 1989: 101.

⁷³ Gatch 1989: 100.

doctrines.⁷⁴ The homilies he selects are for Lent and Rogationtide, times in the year that general instruction was most often found.⁷⁵ His analysis assumes that “[if] the writers or translators of the sermons anthologized in the Blickling Book [were] attempting to speak to contemporary conditions, these materials and times of the year would, thus, be the most likely to invite reflection on the specific needs of the audience or congregation and, indirectly, upon its character and composition”.⁷⁶

The analysis itself is based on the way that the Blickling homilies adapt their Latin sources for an Anglo-Saxon audience. For the fourth Blickling homily, which has as its source a homily on tithing by Caesarius, Gatch judges that “the sermon [...] must be regarded as containing only confused, and therefore confusing, evidence concerning its audience. It mixes apparent address to laity with address to the clergy. It cites sources in difficult and misleading ways. Its use of *godspel* for a source that is not a pericope from the canonical gospels is especially worrisome” and “it seems very deeply flawed and confused both conceptually and rhetorically”.⁷⁷ Marcia Dalbey also analysed this homily but comes to a different conclusion. She argues that the Blickling homilies repeatedly moderate the harsh hortatory tone of the Latin original to a more benevolent exhortation, showing that the Latin sources were adapted to suit an Anglo-Saxon audience.⁷⁸ The other homilies fare a little better but suffer similar verdicts. Gatch’s analysis reveals nothing that indicates that the homilists were tailoring their sources to suit a specific Anglo-Saxon audience.

One of the problems in Gatch’s articles is that he assumes that the Blickling homilies can only have one type of audience and that lay and clerical audiences are mutually exclusive.⁷⁹ However, it has been shown that a mixed audience of laity and clergy would have been usual at the Mass.⁸⁰ Gatch further claims that books do not reveal something about the persons for whom they were intended.⁸¹ In the following, we will discuss these two claims, first concentrating on the likelihood that the Blickling homilies were preached during the Mass and then focusing on the manuscript itself to show what it reveals about its uses and the persons for whom it was written.

⁷⁴ Gatch 1989: 101.

⁷⁵ Gatch 1989: 101.

⁷⁶ Gatch 1989: 101.

⁷⁷ Gatch 1989: 105.

⁷⁸ Dalbey 1969.

⁷⁹ Kearns 2020: 46.

⁸⁰ Kearns 2020: 46. For a detailed discussion of the problems in Gatch’s article, see Kearns 2020: 42-47.

⁸¹ Gatch 1989: 114.

As we have seen, in the fourth Blickling homily we find two passages indicating that Mass preaching happened in early medieval England. We have also established that the Anglo-Saxon homilists were influenced by the Carolingian homiliaries meant for preaching to the laity. This is particularly true for the Blickling collection, as Clayton demonstrates. She compares the Blickling collection with Carolingian homiliaries for preaching to the laity and finds that both the homiliary of St. Père and that of Hrabanus are very similar to the Blickling collection.⁸² The homiliary of St. Père is especially alike with regards to the liturgical structure, the choice of texts, and the use of narrative texts for the saints' days.⁸³ Both collections cover the major feasts of the *temporale* until Pentecost, followed by texts for saints' days. They both draw on similar types of sources, and include, often apocryphal, saints' lives for the homilies for the feast days of the saints.⁸⁴ It seems that the compiler of the Blickling book had a model in mind similar to the homiliary of St. Père.⁸⁵ Clayton finally states that “[i]t is significant that the closest analogues are collections specifically designed for the laity;” and that “[i]t would appear, then, that we have in Blickling a collection of homilies for preaching to the people, probably in connection with the Mass, similar in general outline to continental collections”.⁸⁶

However, it is worth questioning if the Blickling homilies themselves were actually preached at Mass. In an attempt at answering this question, we consider the research of two scholars: M. J. Toswell and Wilcox. Both scholars contributed to the volume *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation* and discussed several aspects of the Blickling manuscript that shed light on possible uses and audiences.

Toswell draws attention to the fact that the majority of Old English homilies survive in collections in a single manuscript and that these manuscripts are worth investigating themselves for what they might reveal about the intellectual and spiritual concerns of the Anglo-Saxon compilers.⁸⁷ Her focus is on the compilation and layout of these manuscripts, and the evidence provided by the quiring, wear on the folia, copying process, and punctuation used by the scribes.⁸⁸ Focusing on the Blickling manuscript, she considers how the copying of many of the homiletic manuscripts as collections of booklets changes our perception of the homogeneity of Anglo-Saxon homiletic collections.⁸⁹ She builds on an earlier article by Pamela Robinson, who

⁸² Clayton 1985: 223.

⁸³ Clayton 1985: 223-225.

⁸⁴ Clayton 1985: 223-225.

⁸⁵ Clayton 1985: 225.

⁸⁶ Clayton 1985: 225, 225-226.

⁸⁷ Toswell 2011: 209.

⁸⁸ Toswell 2011: 210.

⁸⁹ Toswell 2011: 210.

argued that it might have been common to keep a collection of homiletic booklets loose in a wrap rather than bound together in one manuscript.⁹⁰ These booklets could be carried around easily, whereas homiliaries themselves tended to be large and needed to be kept in one place.⁹¹

Several features of the Blickling manuscript support Robinson's proposition: the highly irregular arrangement of folia into quires with a surprising number of quire ends that correspond to homily endings, signs of wear on the last pages of several homilies which suggest individual circulation and also an extreme amount of wear at the end and beginning of some of the quires, the small size of the manuscript and the different size of each quire, words that rarely break at the end of the line and a lack of abbreviations which would make it easier to read the texts aloud, and the suppleness of the membrane which might have made it simpler to roll up.⁹² Toswell then indicates how the Blickling manuscript is divided into booklets: some contain only one quire while others contain multiple quires.⁹³ The manuscript is split cleanly into seven booklets: three booklets contain one homily, two of them include two homilies, and there is one each with respectively three and eight homilies.⁹⁴ The quiring and wear support this division of the manuscript into seven booklets.⁹⁵

For our study, Toswell's argument that the Blickling manuscript was divided into smaller booklets and her notes on the wear, quiring, size, and membrane of the manuscript are especially interesting. These things indicate that the manuscript was small enough to carry around and the booklets would have been even smaller, so they would have been even easier for the clergy to bring with them. The lack of abbreviations and interrupted words at the end of a line makes it possible to read the homilies aloud with ease. The wear on the first and last folia of individual booklets or homilies implies that they circulated individually. This all suggests that the Blickling homilies were used actively, and it stands to reason that they would have been used for preaching to the people.

Wilcox comes to a similar conclusion but looks at a different kind of evidence. He pursues the following claim made by Gatch: "It is an attractive assumption that books can tell us something about the people for whom they were written".⁹⁶ Gatch implies that the Blickling homilies do not reveal anything substantial about the people for whom they were written.

⁹⁰ Toswell 2011: 212. See also Robinson, Pamela, 'Self-Contained Units in Composite Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Period', *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978) 231-238.

⁹¹ Toswell 2011: 212.

⁹² Toswell 2011: 219-220.

⁹³ Toswell 2011: 220. A handy table shows the division of booklets in the Blickling manuscript.

⁹⁴ Toswell 2011: 220.

⁹⁵ Toswell 2011: 221.

⁹⁶ Gatch 1989: 114. Wilcox 2011: 109.

Wilcox, in contrast, argues that with a different methodology something can definitely be said about the audience and use of the manuscript.

His methodology consists of examining the material record of the book so that one can “recover the communication circuit from homilist to scribe to page to performer to audience”.⁹⁷ He specifically considers the user marks – later insertions and corrections – actual users left in the manuscript. There are some challenges that make isolating these user marks difficult but despite that, it is possible to identify some of the marks that were written by users of the homilies after the moment they were written down and before they became unreadable due to the change in language.⁹⁸ Wilcox then examines some of the insertions made in the third Blickling homily.⁹⁹ Examples of these insertions include the addition of the demonstrative *se* before *hælend* ‘Saviour’, the insertion of a missing *us* and *gedon*, and the alteration from *þe* to *þy*.¹⁰⁰

Wilcox argues that these changes to the text were most useful for somebody who was going to deliver the homily orally because the changes do not make much sense if someone would engage with the text just for reading.¹⁰¹ The addition of a demonstrative shows a linguistic preference of someone who wanted to feel comfortable with the rhythm of the language he needed to speak.¹⁰² The addition of missing words would be helpful for someone preparing the text for oral performance.¹⁰³ The alteration of *þe* to *þy* was unlikely to confuse a reader as it simply provided a variant spelling but it probably would affect the pronunciation of a word.¹⁰⁴ This usage of *þy* parallels the use of *þy* a line earlier and a performer concerned with making the best oral effect of a passage would be the most likely person to make such a change.¹⁰⁵ Other small insertions and corrections would mainly change the rhythm and speaking comfort of the text more than comprehension and sense. and therefore, Wilcox argues that these marks are best explained as produced by one or more priests refining the text before it had to be read aloud to a congregation.¹⁰⁶ He then examines other user marks that indicate that readers engaged with the text and illustrate how other users of the manuscript added their own reflections to the Blickling homilies.¹⁰⁷ Some of these additions are dated to the late eleventh

⁹⁷ Wilcox 2011: 109.

⁹⁸ Wilcox 2011: 109.

⁹⁹ Wilcox 2011: 110-111.

¹⁰⁰ Wilcox 2011: 110-111.

¹⁰¹ Wilcox 2011: 110-111.

¹⁰² Wilcox 2011: 110.

¹⁰³ Wilcox 2011: 111.

¹⁰⁴ Wilcox 2011: 111.

¹⁰⁵ Wilcox 2011: 111.

¹⁰⁶ Wilcox 2011: 111.

¹⁰⁷ Wilcox 2011: 111-112.

century.¹⁰⁸ This suggests at the very least that the homilies continued to receive attention for more than a century after the manuscript's creation.¹⁰⁹

Wilcox thus shows that the Blickling manuscript can reveal something about the people for whom it was meant and the people who used the manuscript, in contrast to Gatch who concluded that no information about the users of the Blickling book could be found in it. Wilcox and Toswell's research indicates that the Blickling homilies were used actively, both for performing aloud and private reading. Using different methodologies, they both come to similar conclusions about the use of the Blickling manuscript. Combining this knowledge with Clayton's arguments that the Blickling book was modelled on Carolingian homiliaries intended for lay preaching, we can with strong certainty say that the Blickling homilies were indeed intended for and actually used in preaching to the laity in Anglo-Saxon England.

An issue that has not yet been discussed is introduced by the following statement of Gatch's about the language of the Blickling homilies: "The fact that the books were written in English is perhaps the most useful datum we have concerning the audience and its culture".¹¹⁰ Here, Gatch points to an important characteristic of the Blickling homilies as a whole and that is the fact that they were written in the vernacular. Although I do not agree that this is the most useful identifier for the intended audience of the Blickling homilies, Gatch rightly recognises a significant aspect of the homilies.

Previously we saw the similarities between the Blickling collection and two Carolingian homiliaries. Despite the connections, one of the differences is that the Carolingian homiliaries are written in Latin and the Blickling homilies are written in the vernacular. For research into Carolingian preaching, one of the obstacles is the question of whether the Latin sermons were preached in Latin or in the vernacular. This is in turn crucial to the question of whether or not the non-Latin speaking public understood what was preached.¹¹¹ There is a distinct lack of evidence about the language in which Carolingian sermons were preached.¹¹² In contemporary literary works, there is no reference to the language in which sermons to the laity were delivered and there is only one Carolingian homiliary in which the preacher explicitly states that he will speak in the vernacular.¹¹³ Some legislation suggests that the existing practice was to preach in Latin to the laity and that the reformers wanted to change this.¹¹⁴ McCune suggests that actual

¹⁰⁸ Wilcox 2011: 112.

¹⁰⁹ Wilcox 2011: 112.

¹¹⁰ Gatch 1989: 114.

¹¹¹ McCune 2013: 290.

¹¹² McCune 2013: 290.

¹¹³ McCune 2013: 290.

¹¹⁴ McCune 2013: 290-291. See also Amos 1989: 45-46.

practice might have differed according to the occasion or venue, for example, preachers might have used Latin homiliaries as models for composing their own vernacular sermons when they needed to preach to a large group of lay people but at other times resorted to the Latin sermons.¹¹⁵

The difficulty in determining the language of popular preaching in the Carolingian empire does not exist in Anglo-Saxon England. The vernacular is used in all of the large collections of homilies making it very clear that Old English would have been the language the clergy used to preach, in any case to the laity but probably to the clergy as well since a mixed audience is not unexpected during an Anglo-Saxon Mass.¹¹⁶ Therefore, we can definitely assert that the Blickling homilies were intended for an Old English speaking audience. The fact that the homilies were composed and performed in Old English brings us to another point: the preacher and listeners would have engaged with the Old English version of the homilies. Unfortunately, when we study the Latin sources of the homilies, as previous scholarship has mostly done, we seem to disregard that the Blickling homilies are an independent product in themselves. The listeners, and probably the preacher himself, would have no idea about the Latin originals hiding behind the texts they heard; for them, the Old English text was the original. It is essential to remember that the original preachers, listeners, and readers, would have engaged with the homilies in Old English.

Gatch describes the homilies as “thoroughly conventional” and “general and commonplace”.¹¹⁷ It is indeed true that the Blickling homilies are often formulaic in nature. However, this does not mean that they have no value as Old English texts used for preaching and that we can only learn something about the nature and purpose of the Blickling homilies if we know exactly which Latin sources were used and how they were adapted to serve the needs of an Anglo-Saxon congregation.¹¹⁸ It is precisely concepts such as convention, tradition, and identity that are important in theories on performativity. If we move away from discussions about the Latin sources of the homilies and the specific types of listeners they are addressing, we can look at the Old English homilies themselves as performative texts. Then the conventionality of the homilies forms the basis of our analysis, and we might come to different conclusions about the Blickling homilies and the work they perform as texts meant for preaching to Christian Anglo-Saxons. Therefore, the next chapter concentrates on the concepts

¹¹⁵ McCune 2013: 291.

¹¹⁶ The Blickling book, of course, but the Vercelli book and Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies* are also written in Old English.

¹¹⁷ Gatch 1989: 108, 112.

¹¹⁸ Gatch 1989: 115.

of performance and performativity and discusses theories and methodologies that will be used in our analysis of the Blickling homilies.

2. Performance and performativity in homiletic prose

The previous chapter demonstrated what preaching in the Anglo-Saxon world looked like and how the Blickling homilies fit into this practice. The chapter ended with a discussion on the uses and audiences of the Blickling book, illustrating how this discussion is a continuous debate and the different claims scholars have made regarding the uses and audiences of the Blickling homilies. This thesis takes a different approach to the question of the audience of the homilies. Instead of attempting to determine for whom the homilies were intended, this thesis looks at the performative nature of the Blickling homilies instead.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Blickling homilies were most likely performed orally during the Mass. Later additions or improvements indicate an ongoing tradition of preaching and reading the Blickling homilies.¹¹⁹ The fact that the manuscript originally consisted of several smaller booklets shows how preachers would have been able to easily take the homilies with them when they would preach somewhere.¹²⁰ It has also been shown that the Blickling homilies were not necessarily carbon copies of their originals.¹²¹ All of these arguments come together in two closely connected concepts: performance and performativity.

The debates about the uses and audiences of the Blickling homilies attempt to partly reconstruct the original performance of the homilies. Knowing that mass preaching was a possibility in the Anglo-Saxon world and that the Blickling homilies were likely used for preaching to both laity and clergy reveals something about the circumstances of the original performance. The arguments about whether or not the homilies were adapted from their Latin sources to accommodate an Anglo-Saxon audience touch upon the performativity of the homilies: the way in which the homilies try to change the mind or behaviour of the listeners. If the homilists tailored their texts to their specific audiences, it shows how they thought they could persuade their listeners – how they could get them to perform certain actions.

This thesis employs the concepts and theories and methodologies that are built on performance and performativity to study the interaction between preacher and audience. Firstly, this chapter elaborates on the development of the study of performance and performativity. Despite the close relationship between the two concepts, this chapter initially introduces them separately and then pays attention to the ways they are inseparable. Secondly, it considers how we can access the original performance of a sermon, especially the Blickling homilies. Thirdly,

¹¹⁹ Wilcox 2011: 109-112.

¹²⁰ See Toswell 2011.

¹²¹ Dalbey 1969.

it examines how we can explore the performativity of the Blickling homilies. Lastly, it explains what form the analysis takes and how the homilies were selected.

2.1 Performance studies

Performance studies is an area of scholarship that is often difficult to identify. The sheer number of occasions that can be seen as performances complicates their study significantly. According to Richard Schechner, the “one overriding and underlying assumption of performance studies is that the field is open”.¹²² However, this does not mean that performance studies as an academic discipline lacks specific subjects and questions to focus on, nor does it mean that it has no values.¹²³ Actions are central to performance studies and as a discipline, it takes them seriously in four ways: first, behaviour is the object of study, focusing on what people do “in the activity of their doing it”; second, artistic practice plays a big role and the relation between studying and doing performance is essential; third, fieldwork in performance studies is performed actively, and fourth, because performance studies is actively involved in social practices, it challenges practitioners of performance studies to become aware of one’s own positions in relation to those of others and to maintain or change one’s stance.¹²⁴

Under the broad spectrum of performance fall “ritual, play, sports, popular entertainments, the performing arts (theatre, dance, music), and everyday live performances to the enactment of social, professional, gender, race, and class roles, and healing (from shamanism to surgery), the media, and the internet” and to this continuum, new genres are added and others deleted.¹²⁵ Any action that is framed, enacted, presented, highlighted, or displayed is a performance.¹²⁶ The limited notion of performance as entertainment has for many evolved into ways of comprehending how humans fundamentally “make culture, affect power, and reinvent their ways of being in the world”.¹²⁷

In *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* written by O. B. Hardison, but cited in Schechner, the close relationship between interpretation of the Christian liturgy and the history of drama is made apparent.¹²⁸ Amalarius (c.775- c.850) was a Frankish liturgist who also wrote extensively on the Mass. His writings present the Mass as an elaborate drama with specific roles assigned to the participants and a storyline that culminates in the renewal of the

¹²² Schechner 2013: 1.

¹²³ Schechner 2013: 1.

¹²⁴ Schechner 2013: 1-2.

¹²⁵ Schechner 2013: 2.

¹²⁶ Schechner 2013: 2.

¹²⁷ Madison & Hamera 2006: xii.

¹²⁸ Schechner 2013: 33.

whole plan of redemption through the re-creation of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹²⁹ The drama enacted in the church – the theatre – has a coherent plot with a conflict between a victor and an antagonist, resulting in the passion and entombment of Christ, but a dramatic climax reverses death and celebrates the Resurrection.¹³⁰ Hardison asks whether liturgical clothing should be considered costumes, objects like the chalice and candles stage properties, the chancel and altar of the church a stage, and its windows, statues, images and ornaments a setting. He argues that it is indeed possible to answer in the affirmative, as long as it is recognised that these elements are sacred and that they are the hallowed counterparts of the elements used secularly on the profane stage.¹³¹

So, it is possible to view the medieval Mass as a dramatized performance and within this performance, there is also the performance of the sermon. The preacher and the audience are participants in this performance; the preacher is the presenter and the audience is the recipient. The preacher performs the act of preaching, presenting the message he wants his listeners to receive. In this way, the sermon counts as a performance; they are not simply theological commentaries that authorise the meaning of Christianity for the church, but they are also a matter of religious practice, a set of discourses that construct, through reiteration, that Christian meaning in the world.¹³² As Clare Lees states: “preaching is the primary medium through which belief, by the use of conventions, is ratified and made coherent”.¹³³

The ritualised context of the sermon and the importance of preaching in the reiteration of faith, of Christian identity, make it very much a performance that is not limited to entertainment but tries to establish a Christian culture and reiterate how the listeners should be in the world, as Soyini Madison and Judith Hamera noted. Herein, authority – or perhaps power – is important as well. The preacher performs his sermon from a position of power and needs to maintain that position in order to give an effective performance.

2.2 Performativity

The concept of performativity, like performance, is difficult to define. And, like performance studies, it has a wide range of meanings and can be used in many circumstances. In performance studies, performativity refers to various topics, including the construction of

¹²⁹ Schechner 2013: 33.

¹³⁰ Schechner 2013: 33.

¹³¹ Schechner 2013: 33.

¹³² Lees 1999: 255. This number refers to the location of the book, not the page number.

¹³³ Lees 1999: 657.

gender and race and the possibility of performances to restore behaviour.¹³⁴ The performative was explored by linguist and philosopher John Austin in the 1950s. In a series of essays, posthumously published as *How to do things with words*,¹³⁵ he drew attention to different types of utterances, the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary or performative.

Locutionary sentences make simple statements, which Austin describes as ‘the act of ‘saying something’’.¹³⁶ The illocutionary utterance is the intended action of a speaker. A speaker can use a locution in a certain way, for example, to answer or ask a question, to warn someone, or to announce something.¹³⁷ Perlocutionary or performative utterances are statements that achieve a certain effect; they affect the ‘feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience’.¹³⁸ Promises, bets, curses, contracts, and judgments do not describe or represent actions, but they are actions. The name performative is derived from the verb ‘perform’ and it indicates that “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something”.¹³⁹ So, when someone says “I apologise” or “I promise” or “I do (take this man/woman ...)”, whether true or false, it is not merely a matter of uttering words, but these statements are actions themselves.¹⁴⁰ Convention is important in Austin’s work because it marks a crucial aspect of the difference between illocutionary and performative utterances.¹⁴¹ The performative act requires a conventional aspect, and must invoke procedures or formulae, in order to achieve its effects and make its intended impact on the world; this is not true for the illocutionary utterance.¹⁴²

In the 1960s, John Searle, a student of Austin’s, further developed his work. He asserts that the basic units of linguistic communication are speech acts, acts that make statements, give commands, ask questions, make promises, and so on.¹⁴³ He proposes that to speak a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour.¹⁴⁴ Because it is rule-governed, he insists that speech acts must be studied within specific contexts, not purely as formal structures but as fully-organised systems just as baseball should be studied not only as a formal system of rules but as a game.¹⁴⁵ In contrast to Austin, Searle believed that whenever there is intention in speaking, it

¹³⁴ Schechner 2013: 123.

¹³⁵ Austin 1976 (first published 1962).

¹³⁶ Austin 1976: 94.

¹³⁷ Austin 1976: 98-9.

¹³⁸ Austin 1976: 101.

¹³⁹ Austin 1976: 6-7.

¹⁴⁰ Austin 1976: 10-11, 83.

¹⁴¹ Loxley 2007: 53.

¹⁴² Loxley 2007: 53.

¹⁴³ Searle 1969: 16. Schechner 2013: 125.

¹⁴⁴ Searle 1969: 16.

¹⁴⁵ Schechner 2013: 126. Searle 1969: 17.

concerns the performative – that all language is doing – whereas Austin only designated particular moments when words are uttered performative.¹⁴⁶ Like Austin, he separated real-world talk from fictional discourse; they did not recognise that art can be a model for life as well, and not just a mirror or escape from life.¹⁴⁷

Jacques Derrida disagreed with Austin and Searle's position that a performative utterance creates a particular reality.¹⁴⁸ He argued that repetition and familiarity, and not language, are the causal factors that make an utterance performative.¹⁴⁹ Madison states that for Derrida "if something is done with words, it is because it has happened before and we know out of convention and custom to continue to do it".¹⁵⁰ Derrida argues that speech is citational; that what is spoken has been uttered many times before, and its effects, its performative power, are the result of its repetition and citational force.¹⁵¹

Based on speech act theory that used the term 'performative' to describe an utterance that has an effect, cultural and queer theorists have used the term to describe how identities are created and manifested in the world by being acted out through words and gestures.¹⁵² Judith Butler, like Derrida, understood the performative as a "stylized repetition of acts"¹⁵³ and argued that our gendered acts, our postures and gestures, serve to create or bring about, and not only express or represent, our identity.¹⁵⁴ These acts are conventional and through the repetition of these recognised gestures, movements and styles "we come to be the gendered self we have learnt to perform".¹⁵⁵ In this view, performativity becomes simultaneously a cultural convention, value, and signifier that is performed through the body, through the acts we perform, to mark identities.¹⁵⁶ Gestures, posture, clothes and habits are performed differently depending on the gender, as well as class, sexuality, and race, of the individual.¹⁵⁷

The emphasis on performativity as repetition helps us to understand how identity categories are not biologically but socially determined by cultural norms that differ widely from period to period and culture to culture.¹⁵⁸ This, in turn, opens the possibility for alternative ways

¹⁴⁶ Madison & Hamera 2006: xvi.

¹⁴⁷ Schechner 2013: 126.

¹⁴⁸ Madison & Hamera 2006: xvi.

¹⁴⁹ Madison & Hamera 2006: xvi.

¹⁵⁰ Madison 2005: 162, cited in Madison & Hamera 2006: xvi.

¹⁵¹ Madison & Hamera 2006: xvi.

¹⁵² Swan 2004: 189.

¹⁵³ Butler 1999: 179, cited in Loxley 2007: 119.

¹⁵⁴ Loxley 2007: 118-119.

¹⁵⁵ Loxley 2007: 119.

¹⁵⁶ Madison & Hamera 2006: xviii.

¹⁵⁷ Madison & Hamera 2006: xviii.

¹⁵⁸ Madison & Hamera 2006: xviii; Schechner 2013: 152.

of being,¹⁵⁹ for refusing to perform one's assigned gender.¹⁶⁰ Butler also shows how performative acts are forms of authoritative speech, and that their authority comes from the reiteration of the speech, and not from the individual power of the speaker, stating that "it is through the invocation of convention that the speech act [...] derives its binding power".¹⁶¹ This is similar to Derrida's view that repetition and familiarity – or convention – cause the performative power of a speech act.

2.3 Performativity in performance studies

It becomes clear that both performance and performativity are broad concepts and that they can be applied to many situations. Both terms derive from the verb 'to perform' and this 'performing' is elaborated in different ways. Although Austin and Searle made a clear distinction between real and fictional discourse (in, for example, theatre pieces) – even calling fictional forms of performative speech "parasitic" –¹⁶² many artists and theorists worked to demolish the boundaries between fiction and reality.¹⁶³ The interplay between the real and fictional world has become a central theme in performance art, film and television, the internet, etc.¹⁶⁴ Schechner discusses the emergence of reality television and other ways in which the real-fictional boundary is confused.¹⁶⁵

Butler speaks of gender as an act, as a performance, and her ideas about gender identity make it necessary to resort to concepts of theatrical performance.¹⁶⁶ Looking at the drag act, she draws attention to the difference between the performance onstage and the sight of the same transvestite offstage.¹⁶⁷ In the theatre, one can say that the transvestite simply plays a role and that the performing of a gender identity on stage is unreal, as opposed to the 'actual' identity of the person offstage.¹⁶⁸ In real life, when a person meets a transvestite on the bus, it cannot as easily be counted as just playing a role, making it more challenging.¹⁶⁹ In this way, the performative and the performance interact and complicate the boundaries between real and fictional.

¹⁵⁹ Madison & Hamera 2006: xviii.

¹⁶⁰ Schechner 2013: 152.

¹⁶¹ Swan 2004: 189; Butler 1993: 225 (cited in Swan).

¹⁶² Austin 1976: 22; Searle 1969: 78.

¹⁶³ Schechner 2013: 126.

¹⁶⁴ Schechner 2013: 126.

¹⁶⁵ See Schechner 2013: 126-129.

¹⁶⁶ Loxley 2007: 141.

¹⁶⁷ Loxley 2007: 141.

¹⁶⁸ Loxley 2007: 142.

¹⁶⁹ Loxley 2007: 142.

Performativity and performance studies are closely connected and are sometimes used interchangeably. Performances are part of everyday life and include situations in both reality and fiction. Performativity is found everywhere as well, in speech and acts, both real and fictional. As Tracy C. Davis states, “[The variety, fluidity, and playfulness of the performative turn] convey how performance itself is a tool for innovative exploration, flexing under many circumstances, transforming when necessary, and apt to flow from one instantiation to another”.¹⁷⁰

2.4 Performance and performativity in homiletic prose

The study of performativity and performance in homiletic prose is not easily separated. When considering the actual performances of the sermon, one instinctually also looks at performativity to assess the effectiveness of the performance and asks whether or not the performance of the homily achieved its performative effect. Beverly Mayne Kienzle notes that the sermon genre “remains essentially oral and performative”,¹⁷¹ and any attempt to reconstruct the original performance of a sermon needs to keep in mind that the performance is structured specifically to adhere to its performative nature.

The previous discussion has made clear that concepts such as convention, repetition, identity and authority are important in both performance studies and performativity. These concepts are also found in homiletic prose. The status and authority of Old English homilies rest on their traditionality – the way in which they repeat familiar, authorised phrases, images, and ideologies – and the identity of their original audiences as belonging to a Christian community is made apparent through the text’s authoritative repetition.¹⁷²

In *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Lees examines tradition in Old English religious writing in general, applying speech act theory and performativity as formulated by Butler and other theorists.¹⁷³ She argues that Old English religious writing, with its two main sub-categories of homilies or sermons and hagiography, is “evidence for a cultural practice that constitutes itself as traditional and is constitutive of social practice”.¹⁷⁴ The homilies are also a public and communal enactment of Christian belief, part of the ritual – and the dramatized performance – that is the Mass.¹⁷⁵ As stated above, preaching

¹⁷⁰ Davis 2009: 2.

¹⁷¹ Kienzle 2002: 89.

¹⁷² Swan 2004: 190.

¹⁷³ See Lees 1999; Swan 2004: 190.

¹⁷⁴ Lees 1999: 229.

¹⁷⁵ Swan 2004: 190.

is the primary medium through which belief is confirmed and this is an ongoing process: the repetition of preaching continuously re-presents basic Christian doctrine and participation in the Mass.¹⁷⁶

Although the works of cultural and queer theorists do not focus on preaching texts, they emphasise how performative texts appeal to and reiterate existing categories and they concentrate on texts that function in ritual contexts and make an appeal to authority.¹⁷⁷ This, then, is exceptionally applicable to sermons or homilies, because these texts always exist in the ritualised context of the liturgy: they are either performed during a liturgical celebration or read or spoken outside a liturgical context, but with clear structural and rhetorical anchors to that context.¹⁷⁸ The concept of performativity can thus be applied to preaching texts, and Old English homiletic prose specifically.

2.5 The original performance of the medieval sermon

Another way in which performativity and performance studies can be applied to medieval preaching texts is through the study of the original performance of the sermon. The sermon is a “public, staged, performed delivery” and scholars have considered what we can uncover about the context of delivery of sermons and how this might have affected their reception, and thus the meaning for their audiences.¹⁷⁹ The relationship between the surviving medieval preaching texts and the actual medieval preaching events, or performances, has also been studied.¹⁸⁰

In *Medieval Sermons and Their Performance: Theory and Record*, Kienzle explores three questions related to the task of reconstructing a lost preaching event: first, how can modern performance theory contribute to the study of medieval sermons?; second, how did medieval authors view the performance of sermons?; and third, what sort of historical evidence do we have for the performance of sermons?.¹⁸¹ After a discussion of performance theory and several other associated concepts, such as efficaciousness and multimediality, she looks at the *artes praedicandi* in order to determine how medieval authors viewed the performance of sermons and to see whether there are medieval counterparts of the modern concepts important in performance theory. Her discussion of the *artes praedicandi* is especially useful for understanding how medieval preachers would address their audience.

¹⁷⁶ Swan 2004: 190.

¹⁷⁷ Swan 2008: 178.

¹⁷⁸ Swan 2008: 178.

¹⁷⁹ Swan 2008: 177.

¹⁸⁰ Swan 2008: 177-178.

¹⁸¹ Kienzle 2002: 89.

2.5.1 The *artes praedicandi*

The *artes praedicandi* are theoretical works on preaching and they are studied primarily for their instructions on the formal compositions of sermons.¹⁸² An analysis of several major treatises on preaching from the fifth to the fifteenth century shows the *artes praedicandi* also give directions for the effective preaching of sermons. Kienzle notes that Augustine's concern for the efficaciousness of the sermon dominates his work as well as that of his successors.¹⁸³ He warns against overuse of rhythm, gives examples of voice modulation, alerts the preacher to signs that they should observe in silent listeners, and describes demonstrative reactions, such as tears or applause, which show the efficaciousness of the sermon.¹⁸⁴

Augustine also puts forward the idea that the sermon's potential for transforming the audience, thus its performative power, depends closely on the preacher's moral fibre.¹⁸⁵ The idea of moral performance remains important in later texts on preaching, such as in Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis*.¹⁸⁶ For both authors, the concept of moral performance implies a distrust of theatre and a wariness of actors.¹⁸⁷ In other *artes praedicandi*, moral identity, transformation and efficaciousness are further emphasised.¹⁸⁸ In terms of modern theory on performance and performativity, the preacher constructs a moral identity that forms the basis for authority.¹⁸⁹

Kienzle notes that the actual delivery of sermons receives far less attention in the *artes praedicandi*.¹⁹⁰ Some texts warn against excess, both of language and of gestures, and specify that sermons should contain no ornamentation of speech.¹⁹¹ Other instructions for the performance of the sermon take into account modes of locution, sometimes considering forceful speech appropriate but at other times calling for restraint.¹⁹² The preacher should take care to speak loudly and clearly and rehearse the text privately, correcting any speech defect such as poor voice quality or mispronunciation of letters.¹⁹³ Despite the warnings against entertaining

¹⁸² Kienzle 2002: 94-95.

¹⁸³ Kienzle 2002: 95-96. Kienzle examines Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, book 4, which is the basis for Christian theories of preaching.

¹⁸⁴ Kienzle 2002: 95.

¹⁸⁵ Kienzle 2002: 96.

¹⁸⁶ Kienzle 2002: 96-97.

¹⁸⁷ Kienzle 2002: 97.

¹⁸⁸ Kienzle 2002: 97.

¹⁸⁹ Kienzle 2002: 97.

¹⁹⁰ Kienzle 2002: 98.

¹⁹¹ Kienzle 2002: 98.

¹⁹² Kienzle 2002: 99.

¹⁹³ Kienzle 2002: 100.

speech and gestures, some medieval authors express the appropriateness of moderate facial expressions and gestures.¹⁹⁴

Kienzle concludes that the *artes praedicandi* address some of the same concepts as modern theorists, in particular, efficaciousness and transformation of the audience, but also multimediality, in that it involves emotive language and gestures, and moral exemplarity, insofar it corresponds to the construction of social identity.¹⁹⁵ Preachers would practice not only what the *artes praedicandi* advised but whatever was needed for persuading their audience.¹⁹⁶

Valentina Berardini also pays attention to the *artes praedicandi* and the way medieval sermons were most likely delivered to their original audience. Her research entails a consideration of the instructions the *artes praedicandi* give preachers and suggests a methodology to uncover embedded theatrical elements implied in medieval sermons.¹⁹⁷ She gives an overview of the most important directives for a successful delivery in the *artes praedicandi*.

She first states that a sermon's delivery needed to reflect the topic; not all topics could be presented in the same manner, so it was necessary to identify and use an appropriate style.¹⁹⁸ She then notes that the preacher's voice and inflection needed to be in accordance with the topic of the sermon and the type of audience the preacher addressed.¹⁹⁹ It was also necessary to find the right words and to be mindful of the sermon's length and timing.²⁰⁰ She observes that the *artes praedicandi* also allowed for some 'amusement' in the form of *exempla* and narrations in order to inspire curiosity and emotions in the listeners.²⁰¹ Another important element is the use of gestures and like Kienzle, Berardini notes the seriousness with which the *artes praedicandi* distinguished between the secular theatre and the religious performance of the sermon.²⁰² Lastly, she mentions how the *artes praedicandi* highlight the importance of proper conduct of the preacher.²⁰³

Berardini's discussion of the *artes praedicandi* is more succinct than Kienzle's and has a slightly different focus. While Kienzle very much stresses the necessity of the preacher's moral fibre for an effective delivery of the sermon, Berardini is more concerned with the instructions

¹⁹⁴ Kienzle 2002: 101-102.

¹⁹⁵ Kienzle 2002: 103, 122-123.

¹⁹⁶ Kienzle 2002: 123.

¹⁹⁷ Berardini 2010: 75.

¹⁹⁸ Berardini 2010: 76.

¹⁹⁹ Berardini 2010: 76-77.

²⁰⁰ Berardini 2010: 77-78.

²⁰¹ Berardini 2010: 78.

²⁰² Berardini 2010: 79.

²⁰³ Berardini 2010: 80.

about the preacher's tone of voice and the ways a preacher was allowed to enliven his sermon with, for example, gestures and the use of stories. This fits with the methodology she proposes for the analysis of medieval sermons because her methodology attempts to find embedded theatrical elements in the texts themselves.

2.5.2 Performance indicators

Berardini calls these theatrical elements 'performance indicators'. She argues that these performance indicators highlight a way of speaking or communicating in sermons that is similar to techniques usually utilised in theatre.²⁰⁴ Theatre is generally based on mime, disguise, and gestures, and it relies on a way of speaking that employs made up of exclamations and the demonstration of emotions that intends to create a sort of pathos through with the audience becomes involved.²⁰⁵ The performance indicators carry out the dramatization of preaching in that they give sermons a theatrical element.²⁰⁶

The first performance indicator is dialogue and Berardini identifies two types of dialogue.²⁰⁷ The first type is 'preacher-audience dialogue' which occurs when the preacher and his listeners interact, for example, through the preacher asking a question, whether rhetorical or not.²⁰⁸ Another form of preacher-audience dialogue transpires when the preacher articulates the audience's concerns in order to express their fears, doubts, or questions.²⁰⁹ The second type is 'fictional dialogue' which happens between two or more characters in, for example, an *exemplum*.²¹⁰ Berardini argues that the use of *exempla* in itself can also count as a performance indicator.²¹¹ The preacher could decide to summarise the story by providing a few sentences or he could choose to dramatize it by reporting the words of each character.²¹² Both types of dialogue would ensure that the preacher changed his tone of voice and his inflection which helped him to liven up the sermon and to draw the audience's attention.²¹³ It would also break up the monologue of the sermon, diverting the attention of the listeners.²¹⁴ When a preacher

²⁰⁴ Berardini 2010: 75-76.

²⁰⁵ Berardini 2010: 76.

²⁰⁶ Berardini 2010: 81.

²⁰⁷ Berardini 2010: 81.

²⁰⁸ Berardini 2010: 81-82.

²⁰⁹ Berardini 2010: 82.

²¹⁰ Berardini 2010: 81.

²¹¹ Berardini 2010: 83.

²¹² Berardini 2010: 83.

²¹³ Berardini 2010: 82-83.

²¹⁴ Berardini 2010: 82.

would try to express the feelings and thoughts of the audience, it would reduce the distance between the two and let the preacher become one of the common listeners.²¹⁵

The second performance indicator is direct speech which consists of a faithful reproduction of what another person has said.²¹⁶ It is closely related to fictional dialogue in that the preacher reproduces another's discourse and that it is possible to imagine that in doing so the preacher tried to mimic the voice of the other person, acting like an impersonator.²¹⁷ Berardini argues that both dialogue and direct speech imply a theatrical situation because in the preacher's delivery of the sermon he would be the primary actor.²¹⁸

The third performance indicator involves addresses to the public.²¹⁹ Audience addresses occurred when the preacher stopped his discourse and turned to speak directly to his listeners, breaking up the preacher's monologue and creating a stronger connection between him and his audience.²²⁰ Sometimes these addresses were meant to catch the audience's attention; in that case, they were accompanied by a standard formula such as 'consider that ...'.²²¹ Berardini states that it is possible that with these addresses and the attention-gaining formulae, the preacher used an eye-catching gesture as well, for example, pointing his finger upwards.²²² Sometimes the addresses were meant for specific persons in the audience, for example, when the preacher addressed fathers and/or mothers.²²³

The fourth performance indicator comprises exclamations and expressive sentences that appealed to different emotions like fear, surprise, pain, and fury.²²⁴ They show that the monologue could contain an emotional element to gain the listeners' attention.²²⁵ Because of this, it is likely that these sentences were uttered in different kinds of tones so that the preacher could convey the appropriate emotion.²²⁶ Berardini also argues that it is reasonable to imagine that the preacher would change his facial expressions according to the emotion expressed.²²⁷

The last performance indicator is the use of deictics, linguistic elements connected to spatial or temporal circumstances.²²⁸ This includes words like 'here', 'there', or 'over there'

²¹⁵ Berardini 2010: 82.

²¹⁶ Berardini 2010: 83.

²¹⁷ Berardini 2010: 83.

²¹⁸ Berardini 2010: 84.

²¹⁹ Berardini 2010: 84.

²²⁰ Berardini 2010: 84.

²²¹ Berardini 2010: 84.

²²² Berardini 2010: 84.

²²³ Berardini 2010: 84.

²²⁴ Berardini 2010: 84.

²²⁵ Berardini 2010: 84.

²²⁶ Berardini 2010: 85.

²²⁷ Berardini 2010: 85.

²²⁸ Berardini 2010: 85.

and since they refer to the contexts in which they are spoken, it is likely that they were accompanied with gestures.²²⁹ Like the other indicators, deictics contribute to the immediacy of the sermon which would emphasise the didactic message to the audience.²³⁰

Berardini thus argues for the existence of theatrical elements in medieval sermons and that the performance indicators listed above indicate that the preachers used techniques reminiscent of theatre, even though the *artes praedicandi* caution against the use of dramatic techniques in sermons lest they be seen as entertainment instead of the preaching of God's word.

Charlotte Steenbrugge is unconvinced by Berardini's and other scholars' attempts to find theatrical elements in medieval sermons, noting that elements such as dialogue, which Berardini and other scholars acknowledge as hallmarks of theatricality, are not necessarily inherent to the theatre.²³¹ Steenbrugge does not rule out any overlap between the performance aspect of medieval drama and preaching and, in fact, states that the performance styles of drama and sermons must have been similar to some extent.²³² A great deal of medieval literature would in many instances be performed orally.²³³ However, that does not mean that dialogue could not be dramatic in performance but probably no more so than dialogue in other literary genres.²³⁴ Steenbrugge also notes that dialogue in a sermon would be more similar to dialogue in other literary genres than to theatrical dialogue because in a play it would be spoken by two or more actors, whereas in sermons, just like in other genres, only one speaker would say the lines, making the experience of the two distinctly dissimilar.²³⁵

She argues that it is more realistic that elements like gestures, exclamations, and dialogue indicate a shared common performance style which was adopted across several literary genres rather than signalling a special relationship between theatre and preaching.²³⁶ Although these features then do not reflect theatrical uses, I would argue that elements such as exclamations and (rhetorical) questions do have the effect of the preacher changing his inflection tone of voice, like Berardini suggests, making the sermon more lively and enabling the preacher to attract the attention of the listeners. In this way, the preachers ensure that the message comes across and that their sermon will be effective.

²²⁹ Berardini 2010: 85.

²³⁰ Berardini 2010: 86.

²³¹ Steenbrugge 2017: 28.

²³² Steenbrugge 2017: 28.

²³³ Steenbrugge 2017: 28.

²³⁴ Steenbrugge 2017: 28.

²³⁵ Steenbrugge 2017: 29.

²³⁶ Steenbrugge 2017: 29.

Steenbrugge proposes something similar, saying that the preachers carefully employed the performative, oral aspect of the sermon to great effect.²³⁷ She enumerates strategies preachers used to ensure the listeners remain attentive to what they are saying and these include the use of (rhetorical) questions, dialogue, direct speech, and audience addresses²³⁸ – precisely the techniques Berardini lists as well. Questions served to present a piece of information with special emphasis, interrupt the monologue, and cause the preacher to change his intonation.²³⁹ Rhetorical questions are also employed to instruct and engage the audience indirectly.²⁴⁰ Sermon authors took care to maintain a didactic focus when implementing dialogue into their texts, staying away from a more expressive and entertaining performance.²⁴¹ The use of direct speech broke up the discourse and provided a change in tone of voice.²⁴² Audience addresses served the preacher’s didactic ends by emphasising particular lessons they wanted to impart.²⁴³ Steenbrugge concludes that generally, the surviving vernacular sermons from late medieval England “suggest that the writers were fully aware of the oral, performative angle to preaching, but that they chose to exploit this aspect in moderation, never losing sight of the didactic aim of the event”.²⁴⁴

I agree with Steenbrugge that these ‘performance indicators’ – I will continue to call them this as the features do indicate something about the performance of a sermon – do not specifically denote theatrical techniques. They can, however, signal a change in the preacher’s tone of voice or inflection which gives a more effective delivery. The *artes praedicandi* were very much concerned with the efficaciousness of preaching; the first step in delivering an effective performance is to ensure that the audience actually listens and pays attention to what the preacher is saying. Questions, dialogue, and exclamations would capture the audience’s attention, perhaps anew. This makes the study of performance indicators in sermons a compelling method to analyse sermons in order to gain insights into their original performance. Since both Berardini’s and Steenbrugge’s studies concern late medieval sermons in Italian and English, it will be valuable to apply their methodologies to an earlier set of homilies.

²³⁷ Steenbrugge 2017: 29.

²³⁸ Steenbrugge 2017: 29-33.

²³⁹ Steenbrugge 2017: 29.

²⁴⁰ Steenbrugge 2017: 29.

²⁴¹ Steenbrugge 2017: 30.

²⁴² Steenbrugge 2017: 32.

²⁴³ Steenbrugge 2017: 32.

²⁴⁴ Steenbrugge 2017: 33.

2.6 Examining a homily's performativity

As stated above, the sermon genre is “essentially oral and performative”,²⁴⁵ and we have seen that different scholars have used the performative in various meanings. The initial meaning of performative stemmed from a linguistic point of view, calling utterances performative when they achieved a certain effect once spoken. Later theorists developed this speech act theory and applied the concept of performativity to the formation of an identity. In the context of medieval preaching, both are possible avenues for investigation.

Speech act theory is applicable because sermons have a certain aim and attempt to achieve a certain effect, making a study of the types of utterances employed possible. Kienzle, for example, states that verbs with an illocutionary force occur frequently in preaching.²⁴⁶ The ritualised context of preaching, the work it performs in establishing a Christian identity, and its appeal to authority make the work of queer theorists relevant for sermons as well.²⁴⁷ Several scholars already applied performativity and related concepts to medieval preaching and suggested methodologies to use in the analysis of sermons. In the following sections, I consider different ideas that have been carried out and propose how to apply them to the Blickling homilies as well.

2.6.1 Homiletic speech acts

For the specific application of speech act theory in Old English homiletic texts, we must turn to Eugene Green's *Anglo-Saxon Audiences*. He proposes several approaches to answering the question: ‘How is it possible to respond to an Old English text, whether of the law or otherwise, confident that it offers access to distanced and mostly unlettered audiences?’²⁴⁸ He calls for the use of semiotic studies focused on linguistic patterns and interpretative strategies as they suggest at least three promising approaches that help to understand the relation of Old English texts to their immediate audiences.²⁴⁹

Green explores how homiletic discourse attempts to persuade the congregation to commit themselves to God and devote themselves to good works.²⁵⁰ He compares the homiletic effort to persuade the listeners to the strategies of admonishment used in the codes of law but unlike the law codes, homiletic prose seeks not just the congregants' obedience but their categorical

²⁴⁵ Kienzle 2002: 89.

²⁴⁶ Kienzle 2002: 90.

²⁴⁷ Swan 2008: 179.

²⁴⁸ Green 2002: 1.

²⁴⁹ Green 2002: 1.

²⁵⁰ Green 2002: 2.

affirmation.²⁵¹ Admonishments and exhortations are the linguistic patterns that assist the semiotic endeavour.²⁵² Green shows that the homilists repeatedly hone grammatical features of Old English to warn the listeners against temptation and to urge them to live according to Christ's teaching.²⁵³ He argues that the homiletic speech acts are expressive of the Anglo-Saxon homilists' temperaments and that their sense of rhetoric reveals what they believed appropriate for their congregations.²⁵⁴

The purpose of Green's analysis of homiletic speech acts, drawn from Ælfric, Wulfstan, Blickling, and Vercelli, is "to relate choices of linguistic form to parenetic rhetoric".²⁵⁵ Speech acts in homilies involve a mode of rhetoric that provides the congregants with opportunities to consider their own impulses, which they will probably find difficult to do.²⁵⁶ Their responses, therefore, are varied and the likelihood of their adherence to the exhortations is challenged by other possible attitudes.²⁵⁷ This then contributes to the need for speech act conventions: "the work of inculcating congregants, of winning their allegiance, demands a use of institutional authority, of frequent speech acts abetted by effective deployments of linguistic structures".²⁵⁸

Green employs Halliday's functional grammar in order to explore the linguistic structures associated with speech acts and recognise how those structures work in evoking the audience's responses.²⁵⁹ It is likely that a homilist's exhortations and admonishments rely on grammatical patterns that encourage thought and changes of heart.²⁶⁰ Since Halliday's grammar is concerned with interpersonal exchanges and pays attention to grammatical structures designed to persuade listeners, it might prove useful to apply to homiletic texts which also aim to win the listeners' allegiance.²⁶¹

A complete overview of Green's analysis is irrelevant here, but there are some aspects that are useful for our analysis of the Blickling homilies and need to be discussed. The first aspect concerns orientation and the second value. Halliday distinguishes between subjective

²⁵¹ Green 2002: 2.

²⁵² Green 2002: 2-3.

²⁵³ Green 2002: 3.

²⁵⁴ Green 2002: 4.

²⁵⁵ Green 2002: 35.

²⁵⁶ Green 2002: 35.

²⁵⁷ Green 2002: 35.

²⁵⁸ Green 2002: 35.

²⁵⁹ Green 2002: 35. The linguist Michael Halliday believed that "a system of grammar needs to address interpersonal exchanges that typically involve auditors' contingencies in response to speaker's utterances. Such a system characterizes exchanges that entail the proposals of speakers, who expect some resistance to commitments sought from auditors. Since speakers need to accommodate contingency and to overcome resistance, their proposals are likely to exemplify grammatical patterns designed, not to demand, but to win commitment." (Green 2002: 35).

²⁶⁰ Green 2002: 36.

²⁶¹ Green 2002: 36.

and objective orientation as well as implicit and explicit orientation. A subjective orientation expresses a speaker's opinion and an objective orientation can be ascribed to general belief (in homilies this means a belief associated with God or church doctrine).²⁶² Each orientation has features of delicacy which Halliday calls explicit and implicit. An orientation is explicit when its grammatical forms plainly reveal the source responsible or the general appropriateness of the view expressed.²⁶³ Implicit orientations use a grammatical subject in the third person.²⁶⁴

The second aspect has to do with value, that is, the force of an utterance whether high, median, or low.²⁶⁵ Green proposes using the Old English pattern of verbal forms to make the scale of value work for Old English texts.²⁶⁶ He puts forward the following scale of value: the modal auxiliary *sculan* 'must' and the imperative mood are accorded high value, the subjunctive mood has median value, and the verbal *uton* 'let us' is accorded low value. This scale helps to contrast homiletic patterns across different collections and to see how different authors preferred to persuade their audiences to reflect on their behaviour and to act as urged.²⁶⁷ Based on this scale of value, Green shows how the Blickling homilists prefer to use *sculan*, which has high value and a subjective orientation.²⁶⁸ Often, the pronoun *we* is the subject which indicates an appeal to inclusiveness.²⁶⁹

From his analysis of homiletic speech acts, Green concludes that Anglo-Saxon homilists used a variety of techniques which indicates that they were aware of different methods of discourse.²⁷⁰ With regard to the Blickling homilies specifically, he concludes that "speech acts in the Blickling homilies, mostly ameliorative, take sight of eternal joy reserved for the devout. ...[they] reinforce spiritual self-interest as a characteristic of will receptive to a catechesis foreshadowing heavenly life for the obedient".²⁷¹

²⁶² Green 2002: 36.

²⁶³ Green 2002: 36: This means that the homilist's use of the first singular pronoun to express his view exemplifies an explicit, subjective orientation, whereas the use of an impersonal verb is an example of an explicit, objective orientation.

²⁶⁴ Green 2002: 37: When such a subject appears with a modal auxiliary like *sceal* 'ought to' the orientation is implicit and subjective. When no such emphasis or intensity is present, it concerns an implicit, objective orientation.

²⁶⁵ Green 2002: 52.

²⁶⁶ Green 2002: 52-53.

²⁶⁷ Green 2002: 54.

²⁶⁸ Green 2002: 55.

²⁶⁹ Green 2002: 55.

²⁷⁰ Green 2002: 79.

²⁷¹ Green 2002: 81.

2.6.2 Identity formation

As discussed above, Lees applied the concept of performativity to Old English religious writing and claimed that homilies attempt to formulate and reiterate a Christian identity, both of preacher and audience. Another scholar who has worked with performativity in Old English homilies and the work they do in forming a Christian identity is Swan.

In *'Men ða leofestan: Genre, the Canon, and the Old English Homiletic Tradition'*, Swan draws attention to the difficulties surrounding the research of Old English homiletic prose. By nature, the homily or sermon is a polemical text and assumes an audience that shares the same belief and emotions and participates in the same rituals.²⁷² She proposes that scholars of Old English homilies should analyse the performativity of homiletic prose and move away from issues such as authorship, canonicity, genre, and originality which often seem like dead-ends.²⁷³ As Swan notes: "Interpreting [homilies] as performative texts makes the committed nature of homilies the *point* of our analysis, rather than the thing we try to avoid".²⁷⁴

In a later article, Swan takes her own advice to heart and concentrates on the concept of performativity in order to reflect on how a homily encourages particular kinds of identities in the preacher and the audience, how it creates a moral agent, and how the moral agency of the preacher and audience overlaps or differs.²⁷⁵ She does this by studying how the preacher and the audience are positioned relative to each other and she calls the devices through which this positioning is realised 'positional rhetoric'.²⁷⁶ Positional rhetoric are "linguistic markers, in the form of pronouns and verbs, of the position of the preacher, often the first-person speaker, and of where that person positions the audience in physical and ideological terms."²⁷⁷

In homiletic prose, the preacher's position is one of power: he is the one who has the right to take the stage, has control of the text, and the authority to explain sacred text and to teach and exhort the listeners.²⁷⁸ Therefore, the voice of the preacher is always more powerful than that of the audience, but his voice is "meaningless – has no impact; affects and effects nothing – without the presence and cooperation of an audience".²⁷⁹ This makes preaching "dynamic and context-specific" because of the ongoing interdependency and tension as the preacher attempts to position himself and his audience where he wants them.²⁸⁰ To be successful, preaching must

²⁷² Swan 2004: 186.

²⁷³ Swan 2004: 191.

²⁷⁴ Swan 2004: 191. Emphasis Swan's.

²⁷⁵ Swan 2008: 178.

²⁷⁶ Swan 2008: 179.

²⁷⁷ Swan 2008: 179.

²⁷⁸ Swan 2008: 179.

²⁷⁹ Swan 2008: 179.

²⁸⁰ Swan 2008: 179.

adhere to existing formulae and tradition but simultaneously must maintain contemporary ideals which are always defined by contrasting ones.²⁸¹ A sermon must not only assert fundamental Christian doctrines and identities but also continue to reassert and reconstruct them so that they will be sustainable and effective.²⁸²

Swan applies her ‘positional rhetoric’ to three homilies for the First Sunday in Lent, including the third Blickling homily which also forms part of our analysis and to Ælfric’s prefaces. The three homilies for Lent are all for the same occasion but set about performing the identities of preacher and audience in different, but overlapping ways.²⁸³ All three construct Christian identity as something that relates to a group in which both preacher and audience participate in the same beliefs and rituals.²⁸⁴ The preacher is part of the group but also has a superior position as someone who is morally, performatively, and pedagogically in charge.²⁸⁵ Swan’s analysis of Ælfric’s prefaces shows how he skilfully shapes an identity for himself based on the function of the text and also defines the identity of his addressees.²⁸⁶

Apart from the one Blickling homily Swan analyses, no other Blickling homilies have been studied for their positional rhetoric. It is expected that much of the positional rhetoric reflects the usage of their Latin sources, as Swan states,²⁸⁷ but an analysis of multiple homilies helps to understand the rhetoric employed by the Blickling homilists. This study allows us to test whether Swan’s methodology works for a larger-scale analysis in which multiple texts are examined.

2.7 Methodology and data selection

The analysis of the Blickling homilies is set up as follows: it begins with an overview of the homilies before moving on to the analysis itself, which is divided into two parts. The first part concerns the performance indicators found in the Blickling homilies. It attempts to find clues about the original performance of the homilies. Here, the performance indicators as selected by Berardini are employed, meaning fictional and preacher-audience dialogue, direct speech, public addresses, exclamations, and deictics. In line with Steenbrugge, these performance indicators are not seen as the result of a special relationship with theatre but as indicative of a performative, oral style used across different literary genres. These indicators

²⁸¹ Swan 2008: 179.

²⁸² Swan 2008: 179-180.

²⁸³ Swan 2008: 188.

²⁸⁴ Swan 2008: 188.

²⁸⁵ Swan 2008: 188.

²⁸⁶ Swan 2009: 268.

²⁸⁷ Swan 2008: 182.

often mean that the preacher would change his tone of voice or inflection to capture the audience's attention. This in turn would ensure a more effective delivery of the godly message the preacher wanted his audience to understand.

The second part of the analysis discusses the ways in which the preacher attempts to position himself and his listeners relative to each other. Using Swan's framework of positional rhetoric this part analyses how the Blickling homilies perform their work as forming, altering, and reiterating a Christian identity. This section of the analysis also takes a closer look at the speech acts found in the homilies. Whereas Green's analysis of speech acts approaches the Blickling homilies as a collection, the present study considers the speech acts in individual homilies. It provides a framework that in combination with Swan's positional rhetoric gives a valuable understanding of the Blickling homilies and their performative nature, both in trying to persuade the audiences and establish a Christian identity. The speech acts in the homilies only take effect if the homilies also perform their work to (re)assert and (re)construct the identities of preacher and audience.²⁸⁸

Scragg identified eight unique homilies in the Blickling manuscript, meaning that they have no other Old English counterpart.²⁸⁹ These are homilies 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16. They reflect the variety within the manuscript well; they include homilies for particular feast days as well as homilies for three saint's days. Because these eight homilies are representative of the variety of the Blickling homilies, they will be the major sources for the analysis. Since they have no other Old English counterparts, it is not necessary to pay attention to different sources outside of the Blickling collection which make them a practical choice with regards to the scope of this thesis. I have chosen to add Blickling homily 4 as well. Although this is not one of the unique homilies, it provides a valuable addition to the analysis because its positional rhetoric differs from the rhetoric used in the other homilies. Therefore, the inclusion of this homily results in a better understanding of how homilists positioned the preacher and audience in the Blickling homilies.

²⁸⁸ Swan 2008: 180.

²⁸⁹ Scragg 2000: 83.

3. The Blickling homilies for analysis

Before analysing the nine Blickling homilies, it is essential to know what the different homilies are talking about. Therefore, this chapter gives an overview of the homilies to be analysed. Attention is paid to the contents of the homily, their Latin sources, if known, and previous scholarship on the separate homilies, if any. As stated above, the homilies under scrutiny are unique in that no other versions of the homilies are extant in Old English. This selection reflects the variation of homilies in the Blickling collection as it includes homilies from both the *temporale* and *sanctorale* sections of the manuscript. In addition, a ninth homily is analysed, not unique like the others, but a homily that gives insight into a different kind of interaction between preacher and audience.

3.1 Blickling 1

The beginning of this homily is missing.²⁹⁰ The extant text starts mid-sentence, detailing the birth of Christ and contrasting Eve, who was destined to bring forth her children in pain and sorrow, and Mary, who, through birthing, Christ brought joy to the whole world. From there, the homily discusses the meeting between the angel Gabriel and Mary, or the Annunciation. After the treatment of the Annunciation, the homilist continues with a hortatory section, followed by an allegorical interpretation of Mary's womb as Solomon's bed²⁹¹ and a consideration of the humility exemplified in Mary and Christ. A brief conclusion ends this homily.

Kelly, and earlier Fiedler, argued that this homily is for the Nativity. Fiedler noted that if the homily were for the Annunciation, which was celebrated on 25 March, it would disrupt the chronological order of the manuscript.²⁹² The homily is followed by one for Shrove Sunday, which takes place earlier in the Church year and since the ending of the first and the beginning of the second homily are on the same folio, the binder did not just misplace Blickling 1.²⁹³ Kelly states that, although this homily discusses the Gospel passage for the feast of Annunciation (Luke 1:26-36), its scope is broader than just this passage.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ The Latin source seems to indicate that just one folio may be missing from the manuscript (see Kelly 2003: 164). Scragg notes that in total up to four quires might have been lost from the beginning.

²⁹¹ This image of the Virgin Mary as Solomon's bed is very unusual. It shows that the homilist must have been a man of esoteric learning (Clayton 1990: 227, for more information on this allegory, see Clayton 1990: 227-229).

²⁹² Fiedler 1903: 124.

²⁹³ Fiedler 1903: 124.

²⁹⁴ Kelly 2003: 164.

Other scholars, however, including Morris in his edition and translation, regarded Blickling 1 as an Annunciation homily.²⁹⁵ The Latin source is a pseudo-Augustinian sermon for Christmas Day, which suggests that the homily is indeed for the Nativity. However, it describes the circumstances of the Annunciation in great detail.²⁹⁶ Robert Getz notes that precisely this section of the Latin sermon forms the basis for most of the extant part of Blickling 1.²⁹⁷ He also indicates that another Latin homilist had already reused parts of *Sermo* 120 for an Annunciation homily and that the Old English homilist might have found it fitting for the same purpose.²⁹⁸ He, therefore, regards Blickling 1 as a homily for the Annunciation. Clayton argues that Blickling 1 was meant for the Annunciation as well. She shows that an original passage in the homily refers to Christ's descent into Mary's womb and not his birth.²⁹⁹

As for the apparent misplacement of the homily, Scragg notes that the chronological order presented in the Blickling manuscript was not unknown elsewhere in Old English.³⁰⁰ Once it is clear that the order in which the homilies occur was not necessarily uncommon in Old English, the arguments of Getz and Clayton in favour of the homily being appropriate for the Annunciation gather strength. Therefore, the first homily is here regarded as intended for the Annunciation.

Fiedler argued that the homilist merely translated the Latin sources and that passages of the homily “[should] now be recognised as nothing but a literal translation from the Latin”.³⁰¹ Challenging Fiedler's judgment, Kelly notes that the homilist indeed faithfully follows the structure and content of the Latin source but also enriches the text with extra material, either from a different Latin source or of his own making.³⁰² Both scholars agree that the homilist of Blickling 1 sometimes misunderstood his Latin source, making the Old English text somewhat clumsy and awkward.³⁰³ Kelly, therefore, asserts that this homily was geared toward a “general and not overly sophisticated audience”.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁵ Morris 1880: 1-2.

²⁹⁶ Kelly 2003: 164. Getz 2008: 58. The Latin source is pseudo-Augustine *Sermo* 120.

²⁹⁷ Getz 2008: 58.

²⁹⁸ Getz 2008: 59. The Latin sermon which reuses material from *Sermo* 120 is pseudo-Augustinian *sermo* 194.

²⁹⁹ Clayton 1990: 223.

³⁰⁰ Scragg 1985: 303.

³⁰¹ Fiedler 1903: 124.

³⁰² Kelly 2003: 166.

³⁰³ Kelly 2003: 166; Fiedler 1903: 123.

³⁰⁴ Kelly 2003: 166.

3.2 Blickling 2

This homily is for Quinquagesima Sunday or Shrove Sunday. This is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which marks the start of the liturgical season of Lent. The homily begins immediately with the pericope assigned to this day, Luke 18:31-44.³⁰⁵ This passage tells how Christ healed the blind man on the road to Jericho. The homilist based his text on a homily of Gregory the Great for Quinquagesima Sunday.³⁰⁶ The homily is exegetical in nature; the homilist explains the need for penance for the listeners to convert, turn away from sin, and cleanse their hearts.

The homily starts with reading the scripture for the day and moves on to treating several themes. First, the homilist discusses who the blind man denotes, explaining that he exemplifies all of humankind that was blind and in darkness before Christ came to this world and brought with him heavenly light. Next, he describes how the multitude that tried to restrain the blind man signifies sin and that the listeners should learn from the example of the blind man calling out to Christ to save him. From there, the homilist discusses how they should do that and explains how the believers are exiles in this world and that they should seek not things of this world but of the world that is to come. He ends his homily by urging his listeners to repent of their sins and follow God's commands.

The Blickling exegetical homilies generally utilise the "continuous gloss" technique developed by the Church Fathers. Dalbey regards Blickling 2 as a rather literal translation of its Latin source and the most successful in applying this technique.³⁰⁷ While acknowledging that the homilist follows the structure and culture of Gregory the Great, Kelly notes that he also seems to adapt his source for an Anglo-Saxon audience, both linguistically and thematically.³⁰⁸ For example, the homilist uses specific Anglo-Saxon terms such as *þegnas* to denote Christ's disciples.³⁰⁹ Another example is the portrayal of the bond between Christ and the blind man as a lord-thane relationship based on loyalty and trust.³¹⁰

Such details might indicate that the homilist was doing more than just translating the Latin text, as Förster concluded for Blickling 2 and other homilies in the Blickling collection.³¹¹ Compared to the first homily, this one shows a more coherent and flowing prose style,

³⁰⁵ Kelly 2003: 166.

³⁰⁶ Kelly 2003: 166. Förster 1893: 180.

³⁰⁷ Dalbey 1978: 223.

³⁰⁸ Kelly 2003: 167.

³⁰⁹ Kelly 2003: 167.

³¹⁰ Kelly 2003: 167-168. Kelly notes that this bond is the most important social bond in Anglo-Saxon society.

³¹¹ Kelly 2003: 168. Förster 1893: 179 states that the translator seems almost afraid to let go of his Latin source, translating it word for word without criticising the contents nor allowing additions.

delivering the content of the homily more effectively to the intended – general and lay – audience.³¹²

3.3 Blickling 3

Blickling 3 is for the first Sunday in Lent. Its primary source is a homily for the first Sunday in Lent written by Gregory the Great.³¹³ The pericope for this day is Matthew 4:1-11, which narrates the temptation of Christ in the wilderness.³¹⁴ This homily is again exegetical.³¹⁵ It is an appropriate introduction to the Lenten season because it emphasises the importance of repentance and the continuous need to struggle against the devil's temptations.³¹⁶ It also inspires listeners by detailing Christ's actions in the Gospel story.³¹⁷

The homilist starts with the reading of the Gospel and, in the next section, highlights the greatness of Christ and the love and mercy he shows in his actions.³¹⁸ The following section is the central exposition, and the homilist explains why Christ came to the desert and the threefold nature of the temptation.³¹⁹ He ends this passage with a discussion of the devil's lies and his audacity in tempting Christ.³²⁰ The last section is mainly hortatory and explains proper conduct during the Lenten season.³²¹ The homilist urges the believers to fast during the Lenten season, as Christ did in the wilderness, to pray and give alms to the poor, purging their hearts and bodies from sin.

Blickling 3 is not entirely successful when dealing explicitly with exegetical material.³²² When the homilist attempts to explain the meaning of the forty days in Lent, his discussion lacks logical connections and appropriate patterns, whereas his source's analysis is detailed and precise.³²³ Dalbey argues that this might be understandable if one remembers that the intent of the Blickling homilist differed from Gregory's in that the Blickling homilist cares far more for the good behaviour of his audience than Gregory.³²⁴ The numerological analysis of the latter forms an essential point of his exegesis.³²⁵ Therefore, the Blickling homilist imbues his text

³¹² Kelly 2003: 168.

³¹³ Kelly 2003: 168. Förster 1893: 180.

³¹⁴ Kelly 2003: 168.

³¹⁵ Dalbey 1978: 221-222.

³¹⁶ Dalbey 1978: 222.

³¹⁷ Dalbey 1978: 222.

³¹⁸ Dalbey 1978: 223.

³¹⁹ Dalbey 1978: 224.

³²⁰ Dalbey 1978: 224.

³²¹ Dalbey 1978: 225.

³²² Dalbey 1978: 225.

³²³ Dalbey 1978: 225.

³²⁴ Dalbey 1978: 225.

³²⁵ Dalbey 1978: 225.

with concrete examples and a certain sense of emotional intensity.³²⁶ The straightforward style combined with the emotional emphasis makes the homily suitable for a general lay audience, teaching them and motivating them to act on what they have heard.³²⁷

3.4 Blickling 4

The fourth Blickling homily is for the third Sunday in Lent. This homily is not unique; an abbreviated version also survives in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 and 86.³²⁸ This version contains some verbal differences, and its ending is imperfect.³²⁹ The homily is based mainly on a sermon of Caesarius of Arles, *De reddendis decimis*, a text concerned with tithing.³³⁰ Passages from the *Visio Pauli* also feature.³³¹ The fragment Morris called homily 14 should be inserted into this homily on page 53, line 2.³³²

The first reference to tithing in the Old Testament is found in Genesis 14:17-20, where Abraham is said to give a tenth part of his battle spoils to Melchizedek.³³³ The laws in Deuteronomy establish many regulations for tithing: the Israelites were instructed to offer up a tenth part of their crops (including grain, wine and oil, but also the firstborn animals) every year and to use this portion for a feast at God's sanctuary.³³⁴ Every third year they needed to set aside the whole tenth part so that the Levites, the foreigners, the orphans and the widows were provided for.³³⁵

The New Testament continues to urge believers to take care of the physical needs of the Christian communities.³³⁶ Based on the advice Jesus gives to the rich young man to sell all his possessions and follow Christ, the Church Fathers argue that Christians should go beyond what was done in Judaism.³³⁷ Even so, they complained about the Church's lack of generosity.³³⁸ In a Christian context, tithing was meant to cover all of one's possessions and be used for the clergy's support and charitable deeds.³³⁹

³²⁶ Dalbey 1978: 225; Kelly 2003: 170.

³²⁷ Kelly 2003: 170.

³²⁸ Kelly 2003: 170; Scragg 1985: 83, 85.

³²⁹ Scragg 1985: 85.

³³⁰ Dalbey 1978: 232; Dalbey 1969: 649.

³³¹ Kelly 2003: 170; Dalbey 1969: 650.

³³² Wilcox 2011: 98n. In Kelly's edition this fragment has been put in its correct place.

³³³ Kelly 2003: 171.

³³⁴ See Deuteronomy 14: 22-23. Kelly 2003: 171.

³³⁵ See Deuteronomy 14: 28-29. Kelly 2003: 171.

³³⁶ Kelly 2003: 172.

³³⁷ Kelly 2003: 172.

³³⁸ Kelly 2003: 172.

³³⁹ Kelly 2003: 172.

Blickling 4 can be divided into three parts. The first is an explanation and justification of the Biblical instruction to tithe.³⁴⁰ Here, the Blickling homilist attempts to persuade his audience by showing Christ's mercy and generosity and inviting them to imitate him and thus participate in the abundance that will be their reward.³⁴¹ The second part addresses the clergy and their obligations, using passages from the *Visio Pauli* to illustrate the torments of hell awaiting priests and bishops who do not fulfil their commitments and then listing the duties they must perform.³⁴² The final section returns to the adaptation of Caesarius' tithing sermon, with a stronger emphasis on exhortation, stating the rewards and the consequences for those who tithe and those who do not.³⁴³

Kelly asserts that a dual audience is addressed because it has a mixed address to the laity and clergy.³⁴⁴ This seems to indicate that a clerical audience is central; they were required to utilise the text in their instruction of the laity, and that instruction also entailed a discussion of the responsibilities of both clergy and laity in the observance of tithing.³⁴⁵

3.5 Blickling 11

This homily remembers Ascension Thursday, celebrated when Christ ascended to heaven forty days after Easter Sunday. The homily begins with an exposition of the events of the Ascension as recounted in Acts 1: 1-11. The homilist based his text on three sources: the first is a sermon of Gregory the Great, *In Ascensione Domini*; the second is from Bede, *Expositio super Actuum Apostolorum*; the last is *De Locis Sanctis* from Adamnan.³⁴⁶ This homily contains a passage indicating that this sermon was composed in or shortly after 971 (*efne nigon hund wintra & lxxi. on þys geare* 'even nine hundred and seventy-one years, in this (very) year').³⁴⁷

Blickling 11 begins with a discussion of the events of the Ascension. Cross argued that this homily is "obviously a freely-written English sermon",³⁴⁸ which according to Kelly, would make it one of the earliest examples of creative prose writing in Old English.³⁴⁹ The commentary on the Biblical account holds echoes of material written by Gregory and Bede, but

³⁴⁰ Dalbey 1969: 650.

³⁴¹ Dalbey 1969: 651.

³⁴² Dalbey 1969: 650.

³⁴³ Kelly 2003: 171; Dalbey 1969: 650.

³⁴⁴ Kelly 2003: 171.

³⁴⁵ Kelly 2003: 171.

³⁴⁶ Kelly 2003: 182.

³⁴⁷ Morris 119.2.

³⁴⁸ Cross 1969: 230.

³⁴⁹ Kelly 2003: 183.

these are more a recall than an actual translation of the sources.³⁵⁰ This is different from the other Blickling homilies analysed here that seem to follow their sources more literally.

Then, the homilist reflects on the expectation of the second coming of Christ and the Final Judgment and notes that all signs of the apocalypse have come to pass, except the arrival of the Antichrist.³⁵¹ In this section, the dating passage is found, the homilist stating that most of the last age of the world has already passed. All of this is still part of the expository retelling of the Ascension. Kelly notes that this section is, in fact, one of the most strictly exegetical passages in the entire collection.³⁵² Despite the dating passage and the approach of the year 1000, this homily does not include any of the anticipatory millenarian thinking – in a stark contrast with, for example, Wulfstan’s *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*.³⁵³

The homily ends with an account of the place of the Ascension, drawn from a passage in *De Locis Sanctis*. The details of Adamnan’s text are reflected accurately in the Blickling text.³⁵⁴ This section explicitly presupposes an audience interested in this knowledge about the holy place.³⁵⁵ Christians were generally interested in these details and would imitate in their liturgies what was done in Jerusalem at the sites of the original events.³⁵⁶ The homilist concludes by expressing the hope that on Ascension Day a year hence, the listeners may be better than they are now.

3.6 Blickling 12

The twelfth Blickling homily is for Pentecost, or Whitsunday, celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. Pentecost takes place fifty days after Easter and ten days after Ascension Day. It is one of the shortest pieces in the collection. It follows the biblical account of Pentecost, narrated in Acts 2:1-47, closely, giving a clear account of the events.³⁵⁷ The specific source is unknown, but a certain resemblance with Gregory the Great’s *Die Sancto Pentecostes* can be found.³⁵⁸

The homilist begins with a brief discussion of the pericope of the day, John 14:23-31,³⁵⁹ explaining how Jesus promised to send someone, the Holy Paraclete, to comfort his disciples

³⁵⁰ Cross 1969: 231.

³⁵¹ Kelly 2003: 183.

³⁵² Kelly 2003: 183.

³⁵³ Kelly 2003: 183.

³⁵⁴ Cross 1969: 235-236. Except for one explicable juxtaposition and one detail changed by the homilist which cannot be explained readily. See also Cross 1969: 236n.

³⁵⁵ Kelly 2003: 184.

³⁵⁶ Kelly 2003: 184.

³⁵⁷ Kelly 2003: 185.

³⁵⁸ Kelly 2003: 184.

³⁵⁹ Kelly 2003: 184.

after he ascended to heaven. He then moves on to a commentary on the events of Pentecost as detailed in Acts 2, returning to the pericope throughout. At the end of the text, the homilist connects the events of Pentecost with the present-day audience, saying that not only did the apostles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins and the deliverance from the devil's power, but all believers are granted these gifts.

3.7 Blickling 14

This homily is the second of the *sanctorale* section of the Blickling collection. It celebrates the Birth of John the Baptist on 24-25 June. The primary source of the homily is a sermon by Peter Chrysologus, *De Zacharia Sextus*, first discovered by Förster, which was regarded as an Augustinian sermon in the early Middle Ages.³⁶⁰ It is very likely that the homilist also consulted a pseudo-Augustinian sermon³⁶¹ and various other sources, which Cross identified as biblical passages from both the Old and New Testament and excerpts from several Latin homilies.³⁶² Although both the theme and content of Blickling 14 are conventional,³⁶³ the combination of sources makes the Blickling text an original and unique occurrence within the Old English homiletic tradition.³⁶⁴

The pericope for the feast day is Luke 1:57-68, which narrates John the Baptist's birth, circumcision and naming.³⁶⁵ The homilist begins by stating the importance of this feast, noting that John is the only saint to have his birthday honoured by the Church and the special relationship John the Baptist had with Christ.³⁶⁶ He then focuses on John's parents, accentuating their obedience and righteousness and explaining how the birth of John was even more wondrous because of Elizabeth's old age. Here, John is also introduced as the greatest man, prophet, and messenger; he was the dawn before a new day and the trumpet heralding the birth of Christ.³⁶⁷

The following sections of the homily invite the listeners to celebrate John's birth and recall the pericope to illustrate how John was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born, starting his mission to announce Christ when he was still in his mother's womb. Then,

³⁶⁰ Förster 1909: 246; Cross 1975: 145. Kelly 2003 states that this homily is based on a pseudo-Augustinian sermon and then mentions other patristic texts that are similar. I am unsure if this pseudo-Augustinian sermon is the same as mentioned by De Bonis. Kelly does not indicate any other sources for Blickling 14, unlike Förster, Cross and De Bonis.

³⁶¹ De Bonis 2014: 258. It concerns *Sermo cxcix*, which is the short version of the sermon by Chrosologus.

³⁶² See Cross 1975. De Bonis 2014: 258 summarises the sources identified by Cross.

³⁶³ Kelly 2003: 189.

³⁶⁴ De Bonis 2014: 258.

³⁶⁵ Kelly 2003: 187.

³⁶⁶ Kelly 2003: 188.

³⁶⁷ De Bonis 2014: 261.

the homilist describes John's first miracle and concludes his text by encouraging his listeners to imitate John so that, on Doomsday, everyone may hear the words of the Lord welcoming them into heaven.

3.8 Blickling 15

The fifteenth homily continues the *sanctorale* and is for the Passion of Saints Peter and Paul, celebrated on 29 June. Förster identified the source for this homily as the Latin *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, which is a Latin translation of a Greek legend, telling how Peter and Paul meet in Rome and there contend with Simon, the sorcerer and are martyred under the emperor Nero.³⁶⁸

The homilist starts with an introduction, comparing Peter and Paul and giving an overview of the story's contents. Then the homily simply moves on to a translation of the *Passio*. The translation is so precise, Förster states, that it is possible to fill in the gaps that have occurred because the upper side of the manuscript is cut off, using the Latin source.³⁶⁹ The homilist does not stray from the narrative and finishes with a brief homiletic conclusion.³⁷⁰

The hagiographical account begins with Peter and Paul reconvening in Rome; Paul because he was shipwrecked and brought to Rome as a captive. Peter explains the opposition Simon the sorcerer has given him, and they decide to take him on together. The emperor Nero hears of the miracles both Simon, through the devil's help, and Peter, through God's will, have done and first summons Simon to ask what is going on. After Simon takes on different forms (that of a young child and an old man), Nero believes Simon to be the Son of God. Simon complains about Peter and Paul, and Nero commands that all three men should come before him the next day.

The following day, Nero questions Peter and Paul, asking about Christ and demanding them to show that they are not afraid of Simon and to prove that they know what Simon thinks before he does anything. Simon summons great hounds to bite Peter, but Peter, having asked for a loaf of bread beforehand, shows them the bread, and they vanish. Nero first asks Paul how this could have happened and then questions Simon to prove that he is God. Simon then orders a tower of wood to be assembled and states that he will climb on top and summon his angels to bear him up to heaven. Paul argues that this will reveal that Simon is possessed by the devil instead.

³⁶⁸ Förster 1893: 185; Getz 2008: 165.

³⁶⁹ Förster 1893: 185-186.

³⁷⁰ Getz 2008: 166.

The main story is then briefly interrupted to recount how Simon made Nero believe that he rose from the dead, and then Paul gives a long speech, first warning Nero to not believe in Simon's sorcery because it will result in him losing his kingdom and his soul. He follows with an explanation of Christ's teachings and how Paul taught others. Nero becomes afraid and turns to Peter to see what he has to say, upon which Peter affirms Paul's words, concluding the many contentions with a statement that Christ is the true king. Then Nero commands that a tower is built and that Simon's idea will be carried out the next day.

The next day, Peter and Paul and the people and Roman officials are summoned to watch the spectacle. Peter and Paul kneel, pray, and state that God's power will be manifested and refuse to be swayed from their belief, even when Simon, having climbed the tower, starts to fly upwards. Peter prays that the devils who keep Simon in the air leave him, and Simon falls to the ground and dies. Nero still believes that Simon will rise on the third day, so until then, Peter and Paul are kept in chains, but it does not happen, and Nero accuses Peter and Paul of murder. He orders Paul to be beheaded and Peter to be crucified. Paul is beheaded without fanfare, but Peter, when he comes to the cross, asks if he can be crucified upside-down because he is not worthy to die in the same way as Christ. After rebuking the crowd watching and mocking him and praying to Christ to take care of his people, he dies. The story ends by describing Nero's fall from grace, his subsequent death, and the burial places of Peter and Paul's bodies. The conclusion states that believers can visit their burial places with prayers, and if they confess their sins, they will receive forgiveness from the Lord.

3.9 Blickling 16

The last homily of the analysis is for the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, which was celebrated on 29 September. Förster also identified the source for this homily, namely the *Narratio de apparitione s. Michaelis in Monte Gargano*.³⁷¹ This Latin legend describes St. Michael's first appearance at Mount Gargano, the site of a famous church dedicated to him formed from the hollows of the mountain's rock.³⁷² The homily is characterised by the frequent use of doublets to render a single Latin word, especially verbs,³⁷³ and the frequency of alliterative pairs, which Förster thought part of a more general poetic mode of thought and expression.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Förster 1893: 193.

³⁷² Getz 2008: 262.

³⁷³ Getz 2008: 263.

³⁷⁴ Getz 2008: 263. See also Förster 1893: 194-195.

The homily recounts why a church for St. Michael was built in Northern Italy. The homilist first states that the story about the building of St. Michael's church comes from a book found in the church itself, thus adding a certain authority to the account.³⁷⁵ He then begins the story: a rich man, Gargan, has a large herd spread all over the countryside. One day a bull escapes the herd and flees to the mountains, where they find it in a cave. One man shoots an arrow at it, but the arrow returns immediately, killing the man who shot it. The people are terrified and ask the city's bishop what they should do. He instructs them to fast for three days, and after those three days, St. Michael appears to the bishop, declaring that he chose this place for himself. The bishop and the people are glad to hear this and go to the cave, only to see that two doors have already been built.

The homilist then moves on to a different story, also describing an apparition of St. Michael. In this story, the heathen neighbours of the Christians of the previous tale challenge them to a battle. The bishop again orders a three-day-fast and St. Michael appears to him, promising them that they would win the battle and that St. Michael and his angels would be there. The next day, they go to fight, and a storm comes, and lightning kills many of the heathen people. They get scared flee, the Christians killing them with their weapons. The Christians go home and give thanks at the church of St. Michael, and there they find a man's footsteps in the stone. They determine that St. Michael must have been present at the time of the battle, and they build a church on the stone.

The Christians then become afraid because they do not know whether they should consecrate the church and the bishop advises them to go to the pope, asking what they should do. The pope suggests a four-day-fast, and again St. Michael appears to the city's bishop, saying that they do not need to be afraid to consecrate the church in his name. The next day, they hold mass and sing sacred songs at the church, and they are all happy. The homilist then describes the church and recounts that a stream of water flowed from the roof of the church, and the people who drank from this water were healed from many diseases.

The text ends by explaining that angels are ministering spirits sent by God to help fight against evil. It all comes to a dramatic conclusion with the addition of the *Visio Pauli*, where mists and monsters create a fearsome atmosphere. This passage has attracted quite some scholarly attention, mainly because of its similarity to *Beowulf*. Förster was unable to identify the underlying source.³⁷⁶ Because both the conclusion of Blickling 16 and *Beowulf* similarly describe a hoary stone, dark mists and monstrous creatures seizing the black souls hanging on

³⁷⁵ Kelly 2003: 191.

³⁷⁶ Förster 1893: 195.

icy trees, scholars have debated the parallels and the direction of influence.³⁷⁷ Wright, however, found parallels in several recensions of the *Visio* and concluded that some version of the *Visio* was undoubtedly the source for this part of St. Paul's vision as narrated in Blickling 16.³⁷⁸

Kelly states that in the sequence of the Blickling *sanctorale*, a clear pattern is emerging.³⁷⁹ Blickling 14, for the Birth of John the Baptist, complements the previous text on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary; Mary is the mother of all saints and John the first and greatest, according to Christ.³⁸⁰ Whereas Blickling 14 concentrates on the proclamation of Christ at the incarnation, Blickling 15, for Saints Peter and Paul, focuses on the proclamation of the risen Christ in contemporary times.³⁸¹ Blickling 16, for St. Michael, expounds on the theme of missionary expansion by portraying the current and living Church as the only true means for salvation.³⁸²

³⁷⁷ Getz 2008: 264.

³⁷⁸ Wright 1993: 121; Getz 2008: 264-265.

³⁷⁹ Kelly 2003: 192.

³⁸⁰ Kelly 2003: 189. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Blickling 13) is not analysed in this thesis. Blickling 13 is the first homily in the *sanctorale*.

³⁸¹ Kelly 2003: 190.

³⁸² Kelly 2003: 192.

4. Performance indicators and positional rhetoric in the Blickling homilies

The analysis consists of two parts: a study of the performance indicators found in the Blickling homilies to gain insight into the actual performance of the homilies and an examination of the positional rhetoric in the Blickling homilies to see how the homilies construct the identities of preacher and audience and how the preacher positions himself and the audience relative to each other. This analysis is conducted through close reading.

4.1 Performance indicators

Preachers would employ several techniques in order to draw the attention of the audience. In the following, we explore if and how the so-called performance indicators are used in the Blickling homilies. This section answers the research question: “How do the Blickling homilies employ techniques to ensure an effective, oral performance?” The performance indicators consist of dialogue, both preacher-audience dialogue – this includes (rhetorical) questions and instances where the preacher expresses possible thoughts and feelings of the audience – and fictional dialogue; direct speech; public addresses; exclamations and expressive sentences; and deictics. While these indicators do not demonstrate an actual theatrical element to the homilies, they do cause changes in intonation and inflection which has the effect of capturing the listeners’ attention.

4.1.1 Preacher-audience dialogue

Preacher-audience dialogue includes both (rhetorical) questions and instances when the preacher voices the thoughts, doubts, or feelings of the listeners. The Blickling homilies mostly employ the former technique, although there are also a few examples of the latter.

4.1.1.1 (Rhetorical) questions

Questions occur with some frequency in the Blickling homilies. Only in two of the homilies studied here, the preacher does not ask his audience a question. These two are the homilies for St. Michael and Saints Peter and Paul. These homilies consist mostly of a narrative text, so it makes sense that the preacher does not engage with his audience through (rhetorical) questions. All the other homilies contain questions. We see, for example, in the first Blickling homily, that the preacher asks the audience the following question:

(3) *Hwæt cwæp he to hire, oþþe hwæt gehyrde heo, þær he cwæp, 'Wes þu hal, Maria, geofena full, Drihten is mid þe.'* (Morris 3.13-15)

What spake he to her, or what heard she when he spake? 'Hail Mary! full of grace, the Lord is with thee!'

The beginning of this homily is missing so we do not know how the description of the pericope started. Since the homily is for Annunciation, it must have been about the Angel Gabriel coming to see Mary to announce that she would become pregnant with Christ. It would make sense if the preacher had earlier told the story of the meeting between Gabriel and Mary and that he is now explaining it to his listeners. In this case, he starts his explanation by asking the audience what Gabriel's greeting was. If they had heard the pericope before, attentive listeners would be able to answer the preacher's question, saying that Gabriel greeted Mary with the words: *Wes þu hal, Maria, geofena full, Drihten is mid þe*. It is not inconceivable to think that the preacher would pause for a bit after asking the question, inciting his listeners to answer the question for themselves before the preacher gives the answer himself.

In the same homily, the preacher gives an allegorical interpretation of Solomon's bed as the Virgin Mary. It's a difficult passage to understand and in his explanation, the preacher first reads a passage from Song of Songs and then asks the listeners two rhetorical questions:

(4) *Eno nu hwæt was seo Salomones ræste elles buton se halga innod þære a clænan? Þone innop geceas & gesohte se gesibsuma cyning ure Drihten Hælend Crist. Ac hwæt mænde þæt syxtig wera strongera þe þær stondende wæron ymb þa reste for nihtlicum ege?* (Morris 11.19-23)

Now then what was Solomon's bed else but the holy womb of the ever pure virgin? The peace-loving king, our Lord Jesus Christ, chose and sought that womb. But what meant the sixty strong men who were standing about the bed for fear of nightly alarm?

In the first, the preacher immediately answers his own question. The second warrants a separate answer which the preacher gives in the following lines. Here, the preacher is using the questions to explain what he means by his comparison between Solomon's bed and the Virgin Mary's womb. Perhaps the questions help him to get the audience's attention so that they might understand better what he is talking about. The first rhetorical question in a way shows off the preacher's knowledge; he posits the question as if everyone should know that Solomon's bed represents the Virgin's womb. The second question has a more singular concern of teaching the listeners something.

Another rhetorical question which immediately answers itself is found in Blickling 12:

(5) *swa he Drihten gehet his leornerum, & þus cwæþ: he cwæþ, ‘Ne forlæte ic eow aldorlæse, ac eow sende frofre Gast’; swa swa þæt gelimplic wæs þæt he his leornerum frofre sende, se þe ealra soþfæstra Frefrend wæs, swa we magon ongeotan be us sylfum, þonne hwylcum men gelimpeþ þæt his ful leof fæder gefærþ, ne mæg þæt nab eon þæt þa bearn þe unbliþran ne syn, & langunga nabban æfter þæm freondum.* (Morris 131.12-18)

for the Lord promised his disciples, thus saying, ‘I will not leave you without a leader, but I will send you the Paraclete.’ And so it was meet that he, who was the Comforter of all just men, should send consolation to his disciples, as we may understand by ourselves when it happeneth to any one that his dearly loved father dies; are not the children then the sadder, and do not they grieve for those friends?

This homily is for Ascension Day and in this passage, the preacher first quotes a biblical passage of Jesus speaking to his disciples that they should not be sad because he would send the Holy Ghost to be with them. The preacher then, through a rhetorical question, makes the situation understandable for his listeners by asking them what happens to children when their beloved father dies. He answers his own question by stating that they would be sad and that they would grieve. In the following lines, he completes his mission of making the listeners understand what the disciples were going through:

(6) *Swa gemunde & wiste ure se heofonlica Fæder his þa leofan & þa gestreonfullan bearn afysed & on myclum ymbhygdum wæron æfter him. Pa wolde he se Hælend hie afrefran.* (Morris 131.18-21)

So did the heavenly Father bear in mind and perceive that his beloved and treasured children were troubled and in great anxiety about him; then would the Lord comfort them.

The preacher portrays God as a Father who sees that his beloved children are anxious and sad. He is purposely building on the example he gave in his rhetorical question and connecting the image of children grieving their father to God as a Father seeing that his children are anxious and sad and reacting to their grief by sending the Holy Ghost. Through the rhetorical question, the audience is urged to pay attention to what the preacher is saying. The change in intonation would alert the audience and the content would make them able to relate to what the preacher is explaining. The question thus serves several purposes. Without the addition of the rhetorical question, the statement that Christ would send the Holy Ghost to comfort his disciples after he himself had ascended to heaven lacks relatability and rhetorical force.

Another example of the preacher explaining Scripture by asking rhetorical questions is found in homily 4 where the preacher is elaborating on the obligation to tithe. The scriptural passages the preacher quotes might be difficult for the listeners to understand and through the rhetorical questions the preacher posits, he tries to make it more obvious to his audience:

(7) Swa Drihten sylfa was sprecende þurh witgan, he cwæþ, 'Bringað ge on min beren eowerne teoðan sceat.' Hwylc beren mænde he þonne elles buton heofona rice? & he swa cwæþ, 'Gedop þæt eow sy mete gearo on minum huse.' Hwæt mænde he þonne elles, buton þæt we gefyllon þæs þearfan wambe mid urum godum? (Morris 39.16-21)

Thus the Lord himself spake by the prophet, saying, 'Bring your tithes into my barn.' What barn meant he but the kingdom of heaven? And he also said, 'So do, that there may be meat prepared for you in my house.' What else meant he but that we should fill the belly of the needy with our riches?

Especially in the second passage and the subsequent rhetorical question, the relation to tithing is not immediately clear from the biblical command. The preacher answers his questions himself and does not give the audience the opportunity to come up with its own answers, like in the first example we saw. Another rhetorical question in the same homily leaves no room for an answer from the listeners either:

(8) Hwane manað God maran gafoles þonne þone biscop? (Morris 45.16-17)
Whom does God remind of tribute more than the bishop?

In all these rhetorical questions, the preacher displays his own superior position as the one who knows the subject he teaches in his homily. The questions do ensure a change in tone of voice and break up the monologue but the preacher does not expect an interaction with the audience. On the one hand, the question serves its purpose of gaining the audience's attention but, on the other hand, it does not intend to make the audience think for themselves. For now, only the first passage quoted above gives the listeners the opportunity to think of an answer by themselves, even if it is only in their heads.

A different perspective is given in homily 2, for Shrove Sunday:

(9) Hwæt wille we on domes dæg forþberan þæs we for urum drihtne arefnedon, nu he swa mycel for ure lufan geþrowode? (Morris 25.1-3)

What do we desire to bring forth on Doomsday of that which we have endured for our Lord, since he has suffered so much for our sakes?

Here, the question the preacher asks is open-ended and actually calls on the audience to reflect on what they would like to present on the day Christ returns. The question is followed by a short passage in which the preacher explains that many men say they love God but do not act like it. Then, he urges the audience to atone for their sins. In this way, the preacher definitely steers the listeners in the right direction by giving examples of bad and good behaviour. In the question itself, the preacher also guides the audience in the right direction by pointing out how Christ had already suffered so much for their sakes; they could and should do the same. However, the question itself remains unanswered. It is up to the audience to decide what they want to do and what they want to

Another homily which poses several rhetorical questions is homily 14 for the Birth of St. John the Baptist. When the preacher is discussing the faithfulness of John's parents Zacharias and Elizabeth, he asks the following questions:

(10) nu seo heora iugop & seo midfyrhtnes butan ægwylcum leather gestanden, hwylc talge we þonne þæ seo ylde & se ende þæs heora lifes wære ne se fruma swylc wæs? [...] þonne hwæpere æt þære halgan Elizabet seo hire gebyrd naht gemunan, þe heo hire on ylde þa wære? (Morris 163.3-10)

And since their youth and middle age remained without any sin, may we not believe that their old age and the termination of their life were not different from the commencement? [...] for whether with respect to the holy Elizabeth ought not her condition in her old age ever to be borne in mind?

These questions are not so much presenting the preacher's knowledge but rather intend to inspire certain beliefs and thoughts into the listeners' minds. The first rhetorical question lets the listeners consider how in Zacharias and Elizabeth's later life they would act the same as in their youth and middle age. The second question makes the audience think about the fact that Elizabeth was pure and without sin when she bore St. John. The preacher subsequently explains that she was in fact not old at all because several things needed to be done before John could be born.³⁸³

³⁸³ See Morris 163.10-19.

The final section of homily 14 is also interesting in terms of preacher-audience dialogue. In a long list, the preacher asks question after question about St. John. The manuscript lacks some of the Old English text since the page was cut off on the top.

(11) *Hwanne gefyre[*node] [Top line cut off.] be wyrtum & be wudu hunige? oþþe hwær agylte he æfre on his gegerelan, se þe mid þon anum hrægle wæs gegyrwed þe of olfenda hærum awunden wæs? oþþe hu mihte æfre ænig mara beon þe æfre God on eallum his life lufode þonne se þe næfre fram westenne ne gewat? oþþe hwanne besmat hine seo scyld þære fealasprecolnesse, þone þe swa feor from eallum monnum adælæd wæs? oþþe hu scepede him seo synn þære swigunga þe swa stronglice þa Iudeas þreade, þe to him coman toþon þæt hie his lare gehyrdon;* (Morris 167.32-169.10)

When sinned [he in his food, since he lived] on roots and wild honey? Or where trespassed he ever in his clothing who was furnished with only one garment, which was woven of camel's hair? Or how might any one be greater than he who always loved God all his life, and who never departed from the wilderness? Or how did the fault of much talkativeness defile him who was so far separated from all men? Or how did the sin of silence affect him who so strongly rebuked the Jews who came to him to hear his lore?

The questions follow each other at a rapid pace and the use of *oþþe* creates a repetition that has a rhetorical force. The preacher expects his listeners to answer all the questions in the negative: no, John did not sin in his food; no, he did not trespass in clothing; no, no one is greater than John; no, the fault of much talkativeness did not defile him; and, lastly, no, the sin of silence did not affect him. It drives home the point of John's greatness, his worthiness and his virtuous life. The preacher ends the homily for St. John with one last question, a fitting end to his homily intended to celebrate St. John's birthday:

(12) *Hwæt sceal ic ðonne ma secgean fram Sancte Iohanne ...* (Morris 169.23)

What more then shall I say of St. John ...

4.1.1.2 Voicing the audience's thoughts

A few times in the Blickling homilies the preacher tries to connect with his audience by voicing the doubts, thoughts, or feelings of his listeners. In doing so, he reduces the distance between himself as authoritative preacher and the audience because he lets them know that he understands them and is able to come down to their level. He thus engages with the audience and captures the attention of individual listeners if they are experiencing the things he describes

in his homily. Examples can be found in homily 2 and 4. In homily 4 which is about tithing, the preacher twice expresses the possible thoughts and feelings of the audience. The first time he voices the thoughts of his listeners:

(13) *Ne þurfon ge wenan þæt ge þæt orceape sellon, þæt ge under Drihtnes borh syllað, þeh ge sona instæpes þære mede ne ne onfon.* (Morris 41.11-13)

Ye need not think that you are giving that without return (gratuitously) which ye give under the Lord's security, though ye receive not at once the recompense.

The preacher pre-empts any resentment or doubt that the audience might feel at having to pay tithes with no immediate recompense. While recognising these thoughts, the preacher also immediately makes clear that these thoughts are not true and that they will surely receive recompense even if it is not at once but when they go to heaven. The second time, the preacher expresses the doubts his listeners might experience:

(14) *gif ge þonne tweogaþ be þæm ælmessum þe ge for Godes noman syllað, & gee ow ondrædaþ þæt ge onfon to lytlum leanum, þonne forleosað ge þa ælmessan þe ge nu for Gode syllað, & hie eow to nænigre are ne belimpeþ. [...] Agifaþ nu teoþan dæl ealles þæs ceapes þe ge habban earmum mannum, ...* (Morris 41.19-25)

But if ye doubt concerning the alms ye give for God's sake, and fear that ye will receive insufficient reward, then shall you wholly lose the alms which ye now give for God's sake, and they (alms) shall not become of any benefit to you. [...] Give, now, the tenth part of all your acquisitions to poor men, ...

Here, the preacher states the possible doubts and fears of the audience. He recognises that they might fear that they will not receive sufficient reward for their tithing but he is also very quick to ascertain that these fears are wrong. The preacher uses the technique of voicing his audience's thoughts and feelings to indicate that they are wrong and that they should give their tithes graciously without fear and doubt in order to receive their reward. A line later the preacher continues to urge the audience to give a tenth part of their possessions, this time through the use of the imperative mood, commanding the listeners. Both examples prevent possible complaints of the audience, give the listeners the sense that they have been given the chance to voice their thoughts, and show the audience that the preacher understands them. All of this ensures that the audience's continued attention and helps to reduce the distance between the preacher and the audience.

In homily 2, the preacher also expresses the possible thoughts of some individuals. The pericope is about the blind man on the way to Jericho who calls out and Christ heals him. The preacher elaborates on spiritual darkness and lightness and says the following:

(15) Swiþe eaþe þæt mæg beon þæt sume men þencan oþþe cweþan, 'hu mæg ic secan þæt gastlice leoht þe ic geseon ne mæg, oþþe hwanan sceal me cuþ beon þæt ic mid lichomlicum eagum geseon ne mæg?' Ðæm men mæg beon swiþe raþe geondweard. Hwæt gelyfeþ se lichoma butan þurh þa sawle? (Morris 21.17-22)

It may very easily happen that some men will either think or say, 'How may I seek that spiritual light which I am unable to see, or whence shall that be manifested to me which with bodily eyes I am unable to see?' To such a man an answer may very soon be given. What believeth the body but by the soul?

The preacher first notes that some men might think or ask how they should seek the spiritual light. He then gives an answer to the questions these men might think or ask by asking a rhetorical question himself. This example is especially interesting because the preacher is not just stating what the listeners might think but he is framing their thoughts into an actual question they might ask when given the chance to speak aloud. The preacher is combining several techniques in his interaction with the audience. He is acknowledging their thoughts and questions and posing their thoughts in questions the listeners might really ask but also giving an answer to their possible questions by asking a rhetorical question himself. There would be many changes in intonation and tone of voice in this passage which would further help to capture the audience's attention and help them understand how they can search for the spiritual light they cannot see with their bodily eyes but only with their souls.

4.1.2 Fictional dialogue

Fictional dialogue occurs with some frequency in the Blickling homilies. The homilies for St. Michael and Saints Peter and Paul contain the most dialogue since they consist of narratives about the respective saints. However, in other homilies there are also some instances of fictional dialogue mostly within the pericope assigned for the day. We can see this in homilies 2 and 3. In homily 2, the dialogue is between the blind man, the multitude, and Christ. Here follows a section of the dialogue:

(16) Ða fore-ferendan him budon þæt he swigade; & swa hie him swyþor styrdon, swa he hludor cleopode, & þus cwæþ: 'Miltsa me, Dauides sunu, miltsa me.' Hælend þa gestod, & hine het to

him gelædon; & mid þy þe he him genealæhte, he him tocwæþ, 'Hwæt wilt þu þæt ic þe do?' Se blinda him ondswerede & cwæþ, 'Drihten, þæt ic mæge geseon.' Hælend him tocwæþ, 'Loca nu; þin agen geleafa þe hæfþ gehæledne.' (Morris 15.18-25)

Those who were going before (the Saviour) bade him be silent, and the more they restrained him the louder he cried, and thus spake: 'Have mercy upon me, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!' Then the Saviour stood still, and bade the blind man be brought unto him; and when he drew near unto him, he said to him, 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' The blind man answered him and said, 'Lord, that I may see!' The Saviour said unto him, 'Receive thy sight; thine own faith hath made thee whole.'

On the one hand, the preacher only retells the story as it is written in the Bible but, on the other hand, he does choose to imagine the dialogue in the story as well. An entire dramatised performance might not be what the preacher had in mind, but it is not unimaginable that he would emphasise certain parts of the dialogue. For example, when the blind man is calling out '*Miltsa me*', even a little bit of emphasis would enliven the story and attract the audience's attention. The same is true for the question Christ asks: *Hwæt wilt þu þæt ic þe do?* Here, the intonation of the preacher's voice would change and so enliven the homily. The same is applicable to the next statement the blind man says: *Drihten, þæt ic mæge geseon*. The preacher could easily add a little force to the statement and thus capture the audience's attention in his retelling of the story.

Another two examples show how dialogue interrupts a description or monologue, aiming to maintain the audience's attention. One of these is found in homily 3 where the pericope is about Christ's temptation in the wilderness. The fictional dialogue is between the Devil and Christ.³⁸⁴ This dialogue differs from the previous example in that it does not include questions or expressive sentences. This would make it more difficult for the preacher to change his tone of voice. It is possible that he would assume a different tone of voice when impersonating Christ or the Devil, but it could also be that the preacher would just read the story aloud with appropriate pauses between the dialogue and description. In any case, the dialogue interrupts the monologue of the homily which serves the purpose of maintaining the listeners' attention.

In the fourth Blickling homily, another type of fictional discourse occurs. Instead of dialogue within the biblical passages, it concerns a short story that serves as an *exemplum*.³⁸⁵ Having described the obligations and duties of the clergy, the homily proceeds to tell a story

³⁸⁴ For the dialogue, see Morris 27.4-20.

³⁸⁵ For the story, see Morris 43.19-45.2.

about a bishop who skirted his duty and was punished by being thrown into a fiery river and bound with fiery chains by four avenging angels. The main characters are St. Paul who witnesses the situation and the angel who guides him. The dialogue occurs between the angel and St. Paul. Of the bishop is said that he is not allowed to say: “God have mercy upon me!”, adding another sentence in direct speech, even though it is not actually part of the dialogue. The story is effective in vividly illustrating the consequences of a bishop ignoring God’s laws here on earth. The preacher explicitly makes this point after the story is finished. The dialogue would help the preacher to engage the audience and drive home the message of the story.

The homilies for St. Michael and Saints Peter and Paul contain the most fictional dialogue as they are narratives themselves. It is unlikely that the preachers would have dramatised the complete stories, impersonating the different characters and making the story theatrical, as Berardini argues, and this is one of the reasons that this thesis follows Steenbrugge’s view that elements such as fictional dialogue should not be immediately regarded as theatrical. In the homily for St. Michael, there is more narrative than actual dialogue and even the dialogues have long stretches of monologues in them: for example, St. Michael speaking and assuring the bishop and the villagers that they are doing his will.³⁸⁶ If the monologues were not set within an overarching narrative, they would be more similar to direct speech than actual dialogue between various characters. However, St. Michael is speaking to another character which makes it a type of fictional dialogue even if the other character remains silent.

The homily for Saints Peter and Paul differs in this regard. In this story, the main characters are Peter, Paul, Nero, and Simon the Sorcerer and they all have roles to play and things to say. There is fictional dialogue between Nero and Simon, between Simon and Peter and Paul, and Nero and Peter and Paul. Simon and Nero are the adversaries and Peter and Paul are the defenders of the Christian faith. Unlike the homily for St. Michael, this story almost exclusively consists of dialogue. Some of the dialogue involves long speeches. An example is when St. Paul speaks to Nero about his faith. His speech culminates in an impassioned overview of what Paul has taught others about Christ’s teachings. Each sentence starts with *Ic lærde*, creating rhetorical force through parallel sentences that would help the audience to remember what he is saying. In general, the audience would probably enjoy listening to the stories. Precisely because they are stories it is easier to follow the narrative. In contrast with the other homilies, the preacher is not necessarily explaining something or urging the listeners to change

³⁸⁶ See, for example, Morris 199.36-201.9 and also 205.36-207.7.

their behaviour. Instead, they can listen to what happens to other people and hopefully learn something during the stories.

4.1.3 Direct speech

In the Blickling homilies, direct speech often occurs. It consists primarily of utterances from biblical authors, such as Paul, one of the prophets, or Christ himself. Homily 12 is built around several biblical quotations that the preacher explains, following the pattern of the *lectio continua*. The first instance of direct speech has already been mentioned above:

(17) *swa he Drihten gehet his leornerum, & þus cwæþ: he cwæþ, ‘Ne forlæte ic eow aldorlæse, ac eow sende frofre Gast’* (Morris 131.12-14)

for the Lord promised his disciples, thus saying, ‘I will not leave you without a leader, but I will send you the Paraclete.’

The preacher then explains this passage by making it relatable to the audience through the example of children losing their father. The second instance follows shortly after this passage:

(18) *& þus cwæþ, ‘To eow cymeþ Halig frofre Gast, ...’* (Morris 131.23-26)

thus saying, ‘To you shall come the Holy Paraclete, ...’

Hereafter, the preacher tells the story of how the disciples received the Holy Ghost when they were together on the day now called Pentecost. This whole story is reported in direct speech.

(19) *Lucas se godspellere cwæþ on þæm bocum þe nemned is Actus Apostolorum be þyses dæges weorþunga, he cwæþ, ‘...’* (Morris 133.11-12, story ends at 25)

Luke the Evangelist spake in the book entitled ‘Acts of the Apostles’ concerning this day’s celebration. He said ...

Here, the direct speech is longer than as in the previous examples. There are also different people speaking. The preacher first reports in direct speech the words of Christ to his disciples. Then, he relays what Luke the Evangelist has written down in the book of Acts. A few lines later, David’s words also get quoted:

(20) *Be þæm bryne witgode Daudi, & þus cwæþ to him: 'Forþlæteþ wind of his goldhordum, se is waldend windes & goldes.'* (Morris 133.28-30)

Of that flame (or burning), prophesied David, thus saying, 'He who is the Ruler of wind and of wealth (gold) sendeth forth the wind from his treasure-houses.'

Later in the homily, two more examples of direct speech from Christ to his disciples are found:

(21) *swa he seolfa to his gingrum cwæþ: he cwæþ, 'Swa me lufode min fæder, swa ic eow lufige.'* (Morris 135.13-14)

For he himself said to his disciples, thus saying, 'As my Father hath loved me, so love I you.'

(22) *& he þus cwæþ, 'Ne þurfe ge beon unrote, ne gedrefed eower heorte; ac ic ow freoþige to Fæder þæt he eow gehealde þurh þæt heofenlice anwald.'* (Morris 135.24-26)

and he spake thus [unto them]: 'Ye need not be sad nor troubled in your hearts, for I will intercede for you with the Father, that he may preserve you through his heavenly power.'

In these kinds of direct speech, I believe there is an extra layer present. The preacher is not just reporting the words of Christ in order to explain them. Christ's words are not just meant for his disciples in biblical times but also apply to listeners of the homily. The Holy Ghost was not just given to Christ's disciples but to all believers,³⁸⁷ just like Christ did not just love his disciples but all mankind and intercedes on behalf of all believers. This gives the words of the preacher a deeper layer and then, the fact that he reports Christ's words through direct speech, saying: *Swa me lufode min fæder, swa ic eow lufige* instead of saying: "Christ said to his disciples that he loved them as his Father loved him", makes the words more powerful and readily applicable to the situation of the believers listening to the homily. It seems as if Christ is speaking to them directly.

³⁸⁷ The homilist says it himself as well when he concludes the homily (Morris 137.8-17): *Broðor mine, nu we gehyrdon secgan þa weorðunga þyses ondweardan dæges, & eac þa gife þe ðam halgan apostolum seald wæs on ðysne ondweardan dæg. Nis his þæt an þæt him anum þæm apostolum wære geofu seald, as eac ðonne eallum manna cynne forgifnes wæs seald ealra synna, & eac se freedom þæs unaræfnedlican þeowdomes, þæt is þæs deofollican onwaldes eallum welwyrceendum: eac us is afeled edhwyrft to þæm ecean life, & heofena rice to gesittene mid eallum halgum & mid Drihtne sylfum, þæm Drihtne sy lof & wuldor on worlda world, a buton ende, on ecnesse. AMEN*

My brethren, we have now heard tell of the celebration of this present day, and also of the gift which was bestowed upon the holy apostles on this present day. Not alone to the apostles was this gift bestowed, but also, indeed, to all mankind was given forgiveness of all sins, and also to all good-doers deliverance from the intolerable thralldom, that is, of the devil's power. To us also is permitted a way of return to everlasting life, and to occupy heaven's kingdom along with all saints and with the Lord himself, to which Lord be praise and glory everlastingly, ever without end, in eternity. Amen.

The other homilies also contain direct speech, much like homily 12. They include words from Christ, the Evangelists, Paul, and prophets. In all but one homily, the direct speech is in Old English. Homily 11 is an exception in that the preacher first utters the words of Luke the Evangelist in Latin and then translates them into Old English:

(23) *Sagað Sanctus Lucas, se godspellere, þissum wordum be þon & þus cwyþ, 'Igitur qui conuenerant usque ad israhel.' Þa halwendan men cwædon, & þa geleafsuman, þa þe to urum Drihtne coman þa he to heofenum astigan wolde, frunan hine & ahsodon, & þus cwædon, 'Drihten, wilt þu nu on þas tid gesettan Israhela folce rice?'* (Morris 117.7-12)

St. Luke the Evangelist speaks concerning it, and in these words thus saith, 'Igitur qui convenerant, interrogabant eum, deicentes: Domine, si in tempore hoc restitues regnum Israël?' The holy and believing men, who came to our Lord when he was about to ascend to heaven, questioned and asked him, thus saying, 'Lord, wilt thou now at this time establish the kingdom of the people of Israel?'

In the Old English text, not even the complete Latin quotation is cited but it is summarised to contain the first few words then it says *usque ad* 'until' and then the last word of the text. It begs the question of whether or not the preacher would know the complete Latin passage from memory or if he had a Bible with him that contained the text. He could, of course, also just read the passage as it was formulated in the homily, including *usque ad*. It is also possible that he would skip the Latin quote and immediately move to the Old English translation since his lay listeners would not understand Latin anyway. It is difficult to assess the direct speech in homily 11 because it is the exception to the rule presented in the other Blickling homilies. Perhaps the Latin would draw the audience's attention anyway precisely because it is a different language. Furthermore, because Latin was the language of the Church, it would give the words a certain authority, even more so when the listeners could not understand it. In any case, it is clear that the preacher knew his listeners would not understand Latin and therefore, he provided Old English translations. It is unclear why he keeps the Latin quotations in this homily and not in other homilies which would also have contained Latin passages.

4.1.4 Public addresses

This performance indicator is closely related to the analysis of the positional rhetoric that follows below. The preachers of the Blickling homilies mostly address their listeners as *men þa leofestan*. It always occurs in the first sentence of the homily, addressing the public as a whole. Throughout the homilies, the preacher continues to address the public. We see, for example, in

the first Blickling homily, how the preacher addresses the listeners again after he has reported some dialogue between the Angel Gabriel and Mary: *Eala men þa leofestan ...* (Morris 9.12-13). Dorothy Haines calls instances such as these, where the direct speech is finished and followed by the narrative, indicators that the performer returns to the preacher persona.³⁸⁸ It signals to the listeners that the direct speech is over and that the preacher returns to his narrative. Other ways in which the preacher addresses his public include: *broþor mine þa leofestan* ‘my dearest brethren’, *broþor mine* ‘my brethren’, or just *men* ‘men’.³⁸⁹

There are no instances of the preacher addressing individuals in the audience. In the fourth Blickling homily, however, there is a section dedicated to the priests and bishops. Their duties are listed but they are not directly addressed:

(24) *Se biscop & se mæsse preost gif hi mid rihte willaþ Gode þeowian, þonne sceolan hi þegnian dæghwamlice Godes folce, oþþe huru embe seofon niht mæssan gesingan for eal cristen folc, þe æfre from frymþe middangeardes acenned wæs, & Godes willa sy þæt hi foreþingian motan.*
(Morris 45.29-33)

The bishop and the priest, if they will rightly serve God, must minister daily to God’s people, or at least once a week sing mass for all Christian people who have ever been born, from the beginning of this world.

Therefore, it serves as more of a reminder for the lay audience than a specific address to the clergy listening to the homily. There are no other examples of individual address in the Blickling homilies.

4.1.5 Exclamations and expressive sentences

The Blickling homilies contain some exclamations but not a lot. These sentences often start with *Hwæt* or *Eala*, immediately drawing the attention of the listeners to what the preacher is saying. In homily 14 there are multiple examples of the following type:

(25) *Eala men þa leofestan, hu þæt wæs wællende spelboda & ungeþyldig heretoga, ...* (Morris 165.32-33)

Oh dearest men, what a zealous messenger and impatient leader was he, ...

³⁸⁸ Haines 2005: 108-109.

³⁸⁹ Morris 43.2; Morris 133.6 and 137.8; Morris 125.13.

The exclamation is introduced by *eala* 'oh, or, behold', immediately capturing the attention of the audience. The use of public address within the sentence further serves to capture the listener's attention. The preacher's tone of voice would likely change and he could easily emphasise the word *eala* signalling a change in the monologue of the homily. Berardini argues that an expressive sentence would likely indicate a change in the facial expression of the preacher as well, further enlivening the homily. Another example of an exclamation in homily 14 is the following:

(26) *Eala hu swiþe eadge wæron þa æþelan cennende Sancte Iohannes, þæm ne sceþede nænig scyld þisse sceþwraþan worlde, ne hie nænige firen ne gewundode, ne yfel gewitnes ne wregde, ne hie nænig leather ne drefde.* (Morris 161.29-163.1)

Behold how very blessed were the noble parents of Saint John, whom no guilt of this noxious world had injured; nor had any sin wounded them; nor had evil witness (testimony) calumniated them; nor any vice troubled them.

This sentence is again introduced by *eala* drawing the audience's attention to the fact that the preacher is breaking up his monologue. This exclamation expresses a positive emotion; it shows how blessed John's parents were and how pure of heart. The first example conveys a positive emotion as well, showing how great John was as a messenger and leader. Another example in this homily shows a different type of exclamation:

(27) *Mycel is þonne þeos weorþung þæs halgan Sancte Iohannes gebyrde, [...] Mycel is se haligdom & seo weorþung Sancte Iohannes þæs mycelnesse se Hælend Drihten sylfa tacn sægde;* (Morris 167.12-18)

Great then is the glory of the holy St. John's birth. [...] Great is the holiness and worthiness of St. John, whose greatness the Lord and Saviour himself pointed out.

Here, the exclamations are not introduced by *eala* but are made parallel through the use of *mycel*. Both sentences communicate the greatness of St. John, and if the preacher emphasised them a bit it would likely make the statements effective in capturing the audience's attention. The use of these expressive sentences in a single homily indicates the variation preachers used to convey different types of exclamations.

In other homilies, we can see more expressive sentences. In the first homily, for example, the Virgin Mary is exalted through the following exclamation:

(28) *Eala hwæt þær wæs fæger eaðmodnes gemeted on þære clænan fæmnan.* (Morris 9.21-22)

O what beautiful meekness was there found in the ever pure virgin!

In this sentence, the preacher again uses *eala* to introduce his exclamation, followed by *hwæt*. It also expresses a positive emotion again. The preacher breaks up his monologue and calls the audience's attention immediately when he begins the exclamation with *eala*. Homily 3 contains a similar example:

(29) *Eala hwæt Drihten deofles costunga geyldelice abær.* (Morris 33.27-28)

O how patiently our Lord bore the temptation of the devil.

Similarly, the exclamation is introduced by *eala hwæt*, attracting the listeners' attention and breaking up the monologue of the homily. Again, it expresses a positive emotion, drawing attention to the manner in which Christ endured the temptation of the Devil. This homily also makes another exclamation:

(30) *Eala soþlice se afealleþ se þe deofol weorþeþ.* (Morris 31.1)

Lo! truly he falleth who worshippeth the devil.

The exclamation is again introduced by *eala*, but this time it is not an exclamation to celebrate Christ's, Mary's, or John's greatness. Instead, it calls attention to the fact that anyone who worships the devil will inevitably fall. The exclamation is placed directly after the Devil says to Christ that he will give him everything if Christ will just fall at his feet and worship him. The preacher uses the Devil's words in a different way, making a bold statement.

Homily 3 also displays a different type of exclamation and it is the only homily to do it to this extent. It concerns the following expression *Hwæt we gehyrdon ...* 'Lo! we have heard ...'.³⁹⁰ This exclamation is introduced by *hwæt* instead of *eala*. In this case, *hwæt* is the only expressive part of the sentence. Using this word, the preacher calls the attention of the audience to what they have heard. Homily 3 is characterised by a continuous use of this expression, constantly drawing the listeners' attention to the preacher again. The other homilies use the same sentence as well but not to the extent to which homily 3 applies this technique.

The fourth homily displays an interesting combination of direct speech and the use of exclamations. Twice it employs this combination: '*Eala, cwæþ Sanctus Paulus, þæt ...*' 'Oh!'

³⁹⁰ Morris 29.12-13. See also 33.2, 35.4, 35.17, 37.22-23.

said St. Paul, ‘that ...’ and ‘*Eala,*’ *cwæp se æpela lareow,* ‘...’ ‘‘Oh,’’ said the eminent teacher, ‘...’.³⁹¹ Here, the direct speech is introduced by the exclamation marker *eala*. Similarly to the other examples of exclamations, it lets the preacher draw the audience’s attention to him. However, here it specifically and emphatically introduces the direct speech of biblical authorities instead of drawing attention to a statement made by the preacher. It focuses the audience’s attention on the words of someone else instead of on the preacher’s words. Direct speech in itself breaks up the monologue of the homilies but also employing an expressive sentence makes the difference even more visible.

4.1.6 Deictics

I have only encountered three examples of deictics in the Blickling homilies. Two of them occur at the beginning of the homily. The examples come from homilies 3 and 14:

(31) *Men þa leofestan, her sagað Matheus ...* (Morris 27.1)

Dearest men, here saith Matthew ...

(32) *Men þa leofestan, her us manað & mynegaþon þissum bocum & on þissum halgan gewrite,*
(Morris 161.1-2)

Dearest men, we are here admonished and reminded in these books and in these Holy Scriptures,

Both sentences use the deictic *her* ‘here’ to refer to what is said in the Bible. Berardini argues that it is likely that preachers would make a gesture when a deictic is employed. In this case, that would mean that the preacher would point to his text or perhaps a Bible. However, Berardini also says that deictics are used in situations where it refers to something concrete and visible like images depicted on buildings and church facades.³⁹² This seems unlikely in the examples from Blickling homilies cited above. Of course, it is possible that the preacher would gesture to a book close by that contained the passages of which he speaks. However, it seems to be more of an abstract way of referring to the scriptures central to the homilies.

The third example is found in homily 2 and like the examples above *her* refers to a biblical passage which seems to indicate a less concrete and more abstract reference:

(33) *Her us cyþ þæt se godspellere sæde ...* (Morris 23.12)

Here is made known to us what the evangelist said ...

³⁹¹ Morris 43.19; Morris 49.34.

³⁹² Berardini 2010: 85.

The scarcity of deictics in the Blickling homilies could be due to the fact that they were not created with, for example, a specific church in mind. Instead, they are general and conventional so that they can be performed anywhere. As such, there is no incentive to use deictics in these homilies. The fact that they are translated from Latin sources might play a role as well because this contributes to the conventionality of the homilies.

4.2 Positional rhetoric

From gentle exhortations to repent from sin to hagiographical stories of important saints, the content of the homilies differs widely. The positional rhetoric in these homilies is also varied. This part of the analysis will focus on how the identities of the preacher and the audience are posited and altered throughout the homilies. This section will answer the question: ‘How do the Blickling Homilies construct the identities of preacher and audience?’ The study of positional rhetoric firstly focuses on the preacher’s initial address of the audience. Then, several aspects of the positional rhetoric, including the preacher’s definition of the audience and how he instructs and exhorts his listeners, are analysed.

4.2.1 Addressing the audience

All of the homilies start with the most common way of addressing the audience: *men þa leofestan*.³⁹³ Morris translates it as ‘dearest men’. Swan notes that this address performs several functions at once. Firstly, it positions the preacher as the person who can define the audience; secondly, it groups the audience as a uniform set of people, all defined as ‘loved’; and, thirdly, it defines them as a group of men.³⁹⁴ Lees notes that “gender in the homilies is not used as a boundary that identifies the Christian from the non-Christian in a process of exclusion and abjection, like the figures of the Jew or the pagan” and from there asks the question of how women figure in the homiletic ideals of the Anglo-Saxon church.³⁹⁵

Blickling homily 10 is not one of the homilies selected for analysis here, but it is worth mentioning because it sheds some light on the group of people identified by the preacher as *men þa leofestan*:

³⁹³ The beginning of the first homily is missing, but we can certainly argue that it would have started with the same address.

³⁹⁴ Swan 2008: 181-182.

³⁹⁵ Lees 1999: 2224. Unfortunately, the e-book version of Lees’s book in my possession does not give page numbers but locations. The references refer to these locations, as I cannot see the page numbers. The discussion of women in homiletic prose of the late tenth and early eleventh century starts in chapter 5 ‘Chastity and Charity: Ælfric, Women and the Female Saints’.

(34) *Men ða leofestan, hwæt nu anra manna gewylcne ic myngie & lære, ge weras ge wif, ge geonge ge ealde, ge snottre ge unwise, ge þa welegan ge þa þearfan, þæt anra gehwylc hine sylfne, [...] forþon þe Drihten wile þæt ealle men syn hale & gesunde, [...]* (Morris 107.1-8)

Dearest men, lo! I now admonish and exhort every man, both men and women, both young and old, both wise and unwise, both rich and poor, - everyone to behold and understand himself, [...] because the Lord desires all men to be whole and sound, [...]

This passage shows how in the address of *men þa leofestan* the preacher includes both genders and pays attention to the age, education and economic status of his listeners as well. It indicates that although the address is only comprised of men, women form part of this united group of Christians too. According to the Bosworth-Toller dictionary, *mann* (and its plural form *menn*) indicates a human being of either sex.³⁹⁶ It seems then that the address *men þa leofestan* does not necessarily carry the gender-exclusive overtones Swan argues.

Throughout the homilies, the preacher addresses the audience as well. We have seen this above in our discussion of public addresses as a performance indicator. Some of them express a familial bond between the preacher and the audience, for example, when the preacher says: *broþor mine* ‘my brethren’.³⁹⁷ This familial bond is created through faith in Christ. Different from the address *men þa leofestan*, the appellation *broþor mine* reduces the distance between preacher and audience. Instead of only defining the audience as a group of men, the preacher defines the audience and himself as part of the same family. In contrast to *men þa leofestan*, the preacher’s address of his audience as *broþor* does carry gender-exclusive overtones – sisters are excluded.

4.2.2 Defining the audience

We have already seen how the preacher defines his audience in his initial address and throughout the homilies as he addresses them as well. In the homilies, the preacher also uses other ways to further define the audience. For example in homily 1, the preacher defines himself and the audience:

(35) *mid þon he us gedyde dæl-nimende þæs heofonlican rices;* (Morris 11.1-2)

and thereby made us participators of the heavenly kingdom;

³⁹⁶ <https://bosworthtoller.com/22348>.

³⁹⁷ Morris 49.18.

The preacher defines the audience and also includes himself as participators of the heavenly kingdom. It is an inclusive group as the use of *us* shows. In homily 16 something similar happens:

(36) *Pa us þa wæs gecyþed Cristenum leodum ...* (Morris 203.20)

Then was it manifested to us Christian people ...

Here, the preacher is still telling the story of St. Michael, but he draws in the audience and puts them and himself in the same place as the Christian people in the story. He blurs the lines between the characters in the story and the ones who listen to the story. He includes himself in this passage through the use of *us* again. The preacher, the audience, and the people in the story are all defined as Christian people as opposed to heathen people.

4.2.3 Setting the tone

The first few sentences of the different Blickling homilies often set a different tone. In some cases, the preacher immediately constructs an inclusive ‘we’ group that includes himself and the audience. Homily 15 does exactly that:

(37) *Men ða leofestan, weorðian we on ðissum andweardan dæge Sancte Petres Cristes apostola ealdormannes þrowungtide, & [Top line cut off.]* (Morris 171.1-3)

Dearest men, let us celebrate on this present day the passion-tide of St. Peter, the chief of Christ’s apostles, and [that of the apostle St. Paul.]

The preacher introduces a plural ‘we’ group that must celebrate the passions of Saints Peter and Paul. The preacher includes himself in this group that needs to celebrate the passions. The preacher does so as well in homily 12:

(38) *Men þa leofestan, weorþodan we & bremdon nu unfyrn, for ten nihtum, þone myclan & þone mæron symbeldæg Drihtnes upstiges foran to þyssum ondweardan dæge; weorþian we nu todæg ...* (Morris 131.1-4)

Dearest men, we have, now not long ago, commemorated and celebrated the great and renowned festival of the Lord’s Ascension, ten days before this present day. Let us now commemorate today ...

The preacher establishes a ‘we’ group that has come together previously to commemorate and celebrate the Ascension. He builds on a relationship that has been forged earlier and this occasion is an opportunity for the ‘we’ group to further commemorate together, this time for Pentecost. The preacher again includes himself in this group that needs to remember and celebrate the feast days of the Church. However, he is also the one who has the authority to urge the audience and himself to commemorate. This creates a certain tension as the preacher is both an authority figure who can give the exhortation and included in the group who is addressed.

In three homilies, the preacher does not immediately construct a group. In fact, he does not formulate any identity except for defining the audience as *men þa leofestan*. Instead, the preacher quotes an authority figure to introduce the subject of the homilies:

(39) *Geherad nu, men þa leofestan, hwæt se æþela lareow sægde be manna teoþungcepe; he cwæþ*, (Morris 39.1-2)

Hear now, dearest men, what the excellent teacher (St. Paul) hath said concerning men’s tithes

(40) *Geherad nu, men þa leofestan, hu Lucas se godspellere sægde ...* (Morris 15.1-2)

Hear now, dearest men, how Luke the evangelist spake ...

(41) *Men þa leofesatn, her sagað Matheus ...* (Morris 27.1)

Dearest men, here saith Matthew ...

Although the preacher does not indicate where he wants to position the audience, in the first two examples he uses the imperative mood to urge the audience to listen. Green accords the imperative mood high value in his scale to assess the force of the utterance, so despite the lack of pronouns signalling how the preacher and audience are positioned, the preacher immediately tries to persuade the listeners to listen to what Paul and Luke have to say. The last example does not include a verb indicating a certain force. Here, the preacher only cites Matthew as an authoritative figure. Referencing an important figure right at the beginning of the homily provides the preacher’s own words with more weight and authority.

In homily 11, the preacher uses a different kind of ‘we’ when he starts his homily:

(42) *Men þa leofestan, magon we nu hwylcum hwego wordum secgan be þære arwyrþnesse þisse halgan tide & þysses halgan dæges, þe we nu on andweardnesse weorþiað. Wæs on þyssum dæge þæt ure Drihten Hælend Crist ...* (Morris 115.1-4)

Dearest men, we may now, in some few words, tell you of the honour of this holy season, and of this holy day, that we at this present time are now celebrating. It was on this day that our Lord and Saviour Christ ...

The first instance of *we* in this opening passage does not reflect a plural 'we' group that includes the audience but rather a singular 'we' which presents the preacher not as a select individual but more as someone who shares his preaching identity with others and adheres to the same tradition. The preacher is still the only one who is speaking, but through the use of a singular 'we' he seems to acknowledge that the words he speaks are not necessarily his own but part of the tradition in which he preaches instead. The second time he uses the pronoun 'we', its meaning shifts to establish an inclusive group of preacher and audience that are celebrating Christ's Ascension.

4.2.4 Instructing the audience

Most of the homilies start with the pericope, telling the biblical story that is assigned for that day. After this section, the preacher often positions his audience again. He does this in several ways. In homily 2, the preacher says the following:

(43) *Hwæt we nu gehyrdon þis halige godspel beforan us rædan, & þeh we hit sceolan eft ofercwepan, þæt we þe geornor witon þæt hit us to bysene belimpeþ eces lifes.* (Morris 15.28-30)
Lo! we have now heard this holy gospel read before us; nevertheless we must repeat it, so that we may the better understand that it concerns us as an example of eternal life.

The preacher establishes a 'we' group including himself and the audience. In this homily, it is the first time he does this; he started his homily by stating that the audience should hear what Luke said. However, the 'we' group is not homogenous. The preacher states that 'we have now heard this holy gospel read before us' but he has been reading the text himself. So, the preacher and audience do not share the same position regarding the reading of the holy gospel. The preacher read and heard the passage, while the audience only listened to the preacher's voice. The next 'we' is accompanied by a high-value construction of *sceolan ofercwepan*, making it an inclusive but strong instruction made by the preacher. The preacher again includes himself in the group but also delivers the instruction from a position of authority, thus establishing a hierarchy as well. The preacher then explains why it is necessary to repeat the gospel: the 'we' group needs to better understand that it serves as an example for them.

The preacher uses the ‘we’ group in every homily to teach and exhort his audience. Often, the group seems inclusive at first but once we take a closer look the group is not homogenous. Within the group, the preacher takes a hierarchical position compared to the listeners. Even in short sentences this becomes clear: *we witon þonne* ‘nevertheless we know’ and *swa we leorniaþ þæt* ‘so we learn that’.³⁹⁸ In both examples, it seems a straightforward and inclusive formation of a ‘we’ group that knows and learns together. However, the preacher is the one explaining what they know and what they learn from the examples he gives. Here, the preacher takes a didactic position relative to the audience’s position as pupils. The preacher assumes an intellectual superiority that the Blickling homilies also demonstrate in other ways. In homily 2, we see a clear example of the preacher’s intellectual superiority:

(44) *Ic þe secge hwæt seo menego tacnode ...* (Morris 19.5)

I will tell you what the multitude denoteth ...

Here, the preacher positions himself apart from the audience through the use of ‘I’. He takes a clear didactic position, stating that he is the one who is able to tell the audience, denoted with ‘you’, what the multitude means. An obvious line is drawn between the preacher and the audience and a hierarchy is established. The preacher positions himself as superior to the audience but uses his authority to teach his inferior listeners something. A few lines later, the preacher returns to the ‘we’ group:

(45) *Gehyran we nu forhwon [...] þæt is þonne þæt we sceolan beon gelærede mid þysse bysene, þonne we beoþ mid mycclum hungre yfelra geþohta abisgode, þonne sceolan we geornlice biddan þæt he us gescylde wiþ þa þusendlican cræftas deofles costunga.* (Morris 19.10-17)

Let us now hear why ... [...] Then ought we to learn by this example that, when we are occupied with great desire of evil thoughts, then we must earnestly pray God to shield us from the thousand crafts of the devil’s temptations.

The preacher continues to take a superior intellectual position. Even though he relinquishes the clear hierarchy he previously established, he does not abandon his didactic aim. The preacher is the one urging the audience to listen when he explains something else and then instructs them on what they need to learn from the example – in this case how the blind man entreated Christ to help him. The next sentence, however, does fully include both preacher and

³⁹⁸ Morris 117.29; Morris 121.5.

audience in the same group. Both can be occupied with evil thoughts and must then pray to God to shield them from the Devil's temptations. In a few lines, we see a change from the preacher positioning himself as superior to the audience to him including himself in the same 'we' group but still maintaining a separate position to a fully inclusive group in which both preacher and audience need God's help against the Devil.

The superior intellectual position of the preacher is also visible in the direct speech used in the homilies. In the previous section of the analysis, we saw how the preacher speaks the words of the Bible, even the words of Christ himself. It affirms his position as the one who is able to read and speak these words. In one homily he further shows his superior intellect by first stating the words in Latin before translating them into the language the listeners would understand. Although these instances do not use any positional rhetoric, the preacher's didactic position remains noticeable.

4.2.5 Using 'I'

The use of 'I' in the homilies is rare. We have seen one example above, but it is one of the few instances when the preacher creates such a clear division between himself and the audience. Other examples of when the preacher positions himself apart from the audience do not establish such a hierarchy. In homily 16, for St. Michael, the preacher interrupts the story a few times to include the following statements: *þe ic ær sægde* 'of which I previously spoke' and *ðe ic ær sægde* 'which I previously said'.³⁹⁹ The preacher clearly maintains his position as a storyteller but here, the division is not obvious because when the preacher is telling the story there is no need for much positional rhetoric. He does break up the story a few times but only to refer to something he said previously. Compared to the other homily that primarily consists of a narrative, homily 15 for Saints Peter and Paul, this homily is unique in that the preacher interjects his narrative with small comments. In the homily for Peter and Paul, this is not the case; the preacher does not interrupt the story anytime.

A different interruption of the story of St. Michael offers a different perspective:

(46) *Ic þonne gelyfe þæt se heahengel ures Drihtnes miccle swiðor sohte & lufode þære heortan clænnesse þonne þara stana frætwednesse.* (Morris 207.23-25)

I therefore believe that the Archangel of our Lord much more required and loved purity of heart than the adornment of the stones.

³⁹⁹ Morris 197.21; Morris 207.12.

Here, the preacher again makes an interjection in the story but here it is a subjective and explicit statement. The preacher explicitly informs the audience of his own belief about the Archangel Michael. This differs from the previous two examples where the preacher is just referring to elements of the story that he told the audience before. In this passage, the preacher shows that he is the one capable of making such an explicit statement about his own thoughts on the subject. The preacher has the position to voice his own thoughts where the audience cannot speak. Earlier we saw how the preacher sometimes voices the audience's thoughts to reduce the distance between them. However, this also further illustrates the difference in position between the preacher and the audience. The preacher can speak his thoughts while the audience cannot. Moreover, the audience is dependent upon the preacher to voice their hypothetical thoughts. As such it gives the distinction between preacher and audience a different dimension.

In the fourth homily, the preacher also uses 'I': *Ponne lære ic eow, broþor mine, ...* 'Then I counsel you, my brethren, ...'.⁴⁰⁰ Here, the preacher again assumes the position of teacher. He is the one with the authority to give advice to his brothers. The preacher takes a distinct position that separates him from the audience even though he calls them brothers which reduces the distance he creates through the use of 'I' and 'you'. Somewhat further in the homily, the preacher uses 'I' again: *Sop is þæt ic eow secgge ...* 'Truth is what I tell you ...'.⁴⁰¹ The preacher uses 'I' in combination with the word *sop* implying that the preacher is the one with access to the truth and the one with the position to share it with the audience. The preacher assures the audience that it is true what he is saying and continues to impart his true knowledge to the audience. The preacher's access to the truth sets him apart from the audience.

4.2.6 Exhorting the audience

Although the homily for St. Michael shows several examples of the preacher using 'I', at the end of the homily the preacher formulates an inclusive group through the following examples:

(47) *Ac uton nu biddan þone heahengel Sanctus Michahel & ða nigen endebyrdnessa ðara haligra engla, þæt hie us syn on fultume wið helsceaðum.* (Morris 209.26-28)

But let us now intreat the archangel St. Micheal, and the nine orders of the holy angels, that they be our aid against hell-fiends.

⁴⁰⁰ Morris 49.18.

⁴⁰¹ Morris 53.2. My translation. Morris translates: "of a truth, I tell you".

(48) *Ac uton nu biddan Sanctus Michael geornlice þæt he ure saula gelæde on gefean, þær hie motan blissian abuton ende on ecnesse. Amen.* (Morris 211.7-8)

But let us now bid St. Michael earnestly to bring our souls into bliss, where they may rejoice without end in eternity. Amen.

With a low-value use of *uton*, the preacher gently urges the audience to pray to St. Michael to help them against evil forces and to bring them into heavenly bliss. Here, *uton* is used without *we* but it still carries the same connotation of inclusiveness. The ‘we’ group is made clear through the use of *us* and *ure*. The preacher takes a different position in the group as the one who can exhort the others. In other homilies, the same occurs in other words. The first homily has some good examples:

(49) *Gifeon we ... Arweorþian we ... Weorþian we ... Weorþian we ...* (Morris 11.4, 7, 9, 10)
Let us rejoice ... Let us honour ... Let us honour ... Let us honour ...

(50) *For lufian we urne Drihten mid eallum urum life, & ofer ealle oþru þing;* (Morris 11.32-33)
Therefore let us love our Lord with all our lives, and above all other things,

(51) *Fordon we sceolan eall ure lif on capmodnesse healdan, ...* (Morris 11.35-13.1)
Therefore we must lead our whole life in meekness ...

(52) *Lufian we hine nu ...* (Morris 13.6)
Let us love him now ...

In these examples, the preacher is repeatedly urging the audience to rejoice, to honour, and to love. He does this through the subjunctive which Green accords median value. The preacher includes himself in the group that needs to rejoice, honour, and love, but he is also set apart because he is the one doing the urging – the only one who has the authority to do that. The third example has a high-value construction through the use of *sceolan*. Still positing an inclusive ‘we’ group, the preacher uses more force to persuade his audience to lead their lives in meekness. These types of exhortations are found in all of the Blickling homilies, emphasising their tendency to create an inclusive group that needs to hold certain beliefs and act in certain ways – things that the preacher urges them to do.

However, a difference is found in homily 4. In this homily, the preacher often creates a clear distinction between himself and the audience. We have already seen two examples in which the preacher uses ‘I’ but in his exhortations, the distinct positions of the preacher and audience become even more visible:

(53) *Forþon, broþor mine þa leofestan, syllap ge eowere teoþan sceattas þyder* (Morris 43.2-3)
Therefore, my dearest brethren, give your tithes to her⁴⁰²

Here, the preacher commands his audience, defined as his brothers, to give their tithes to the church. Instead of the more gentle exhortations of the other homilies, this homily clearly positions the preacher as an authority figure. He is the one able to make demands of his audience and does so through the high-value imperative. The force of the imperative is strengthened by the deliberate positioning of the preacher as ‘I’ and the audience as ‘we’. It seems that the preacher is excluding himself from giving tithes and since he is part of the church that receives the tithes it is possible that he indeed excludes himself from the command. Another example is the following:

(54) *Þonne lære ic eow, broþor mine, þæt ge syllog eowre teoþan sceattas earmum mannum þe her for worlde lytel agan, þonne blissiap ealle halige ofer eow, & God sylf biþ mid eow, & ge mid him, & ge onfoþ eowerra synna forgifnessa;* (Morris 49.18-22)

Then I counsel you, my brethren, to give the tenth of your goods to poor men, who before the world have but little. Then shall all the saints rejoice over you, and God himself shall be with you, and ye with him, and ye shall receive forgiveness of your sins.

We have already seen part of this passage above but here, the remainder is relevant as well. It continues the clear distinction between the positions of preacher and audience. The preacher exhorts the audience, again defined as brothers, to give a tenth part of their possessions to the poor. It further positions the preacher as someone who can promise certain things to the audience if they comply with his commands. He shows that he has the authority to state that the saints will rejoice over his audience, that God will be with them, and that they will receive forgiveness for their sins. The preacher is in a very different position than the audience who needs the preacher to tell them this.

⁴⁰² Her refers to the church.

One last example from the ending of homily 2 shows the usual pattern of exhortation again:

(55) *Forþon we sceolan beon gemyndige Godes beboda, & ure sawle þearfe, þa hwile þe we motan, & biddan we georne urne Drihten þæt he us generige from þon ecan cwealme, & us gelæde on þone gefean his wuldres. Þær is ece blis & þæt ungeendode rice; nis þær ænig sar gemeted, ne adl, ne ece, ne nænig unrotnes; nis þær ege, ne geflit, ne yrre, ne nænig wiþerweardnes; ac þær is gefes, & blis, & fæ[ge]rnes, ... mid Drihtne in eallra worlda world. Amen. (Morris 25.26-36)*

Therefore we must be mindful of God's behests and of our soul's need the while we may; and let us earnestly beseech our Lord to deliver us from the eternal death, and bring us into the joy of his glory where there is eternal bliss, and the everlasting kingdom; there no sorrow is found, nor sickness, nor pain, nor any sadness; there is no awe (fear), no strife, no wrath, nor any opposition; but there is joy and bliss, and fairness ... with our Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

The preacher exhorts his audience to be mindful, to beseech God to deliver them and to bring them into heavenly bliss. The preacher includes himself in the 'we' group but also has a different position as he is the one exhorting the audience. This example shows clearly the main concerns he has about his audience. He wants them to live in God's heavenly kingdom even after they die and leave this earth. The preacher shows them how good it is to live there; there is no pain, no sickness, no sorrow or sadness, no fighting, and no opposition. Instead, they will find joy, bliss, and fairness and they can be with Christ forever. In the end, all the preacher wants for his audience is that they believe in God and can enter the heavenly kingdom. Regardless of how the preacher frames his exhortations, they are all aimed toward the same goal: ensuring that he himself and his audience secure the heavenly kingdom and can be with Christ forever.

Conclusion

This thesis has studied several aspects of the performative nature of the Blickling homilies. Firstly, it examined the context of the Blickling homilies and how academic scholarship has treated them. Secondly, it gave a detailed overview of the concepts of performance and performativity and how they can be used in research on homiletic prose. Thirdly, it introduced the Blickling homilies that were the focus of the analysis.

Then, in order to answer the main research question, this thesis studied the Blickling homilies in-depth for indications about the original performance of the homilies and the work they perform in the creation of a Christian identity. The first part of the analysis answered the following question: How do the Blickling homilies employ techniques to ensure an effective, oral performance?'. The analysis has shown that the preachers used a variety of techniques and strategies to capture the audience's attention and ensure an effective performance. All homilies show signs of a preacher who is concerned with his performance and takes steps to ensure that he reaches his audience effectively. He does this through (rhetorical) questions, dialogue, direct speech, public addresses, and exclamations. The use of deictics is particularly scarce in the Blickling homilies and when the preacher uses them it is unlikely that they refer to concrete objects around him. Because the homilies are general and conventional, so that they can be performed anywhere, there is no incentive to use deictics that indicate concrete objects in the place of performance.

The remaining performance indicators occur frequently in the Blickling homilies. We have seen examples of all these techniques in the analysis. The preacher engages the audience by asking them (rhetorical) questions and pre-empts any complaints or concerns they might have. He adds an entertaining element when he includes fictional dialogue in his portrayal of biblical stories. Direct speech and exclamations interrupt the preacher's monologue and public addresses do the same while also creating a stronger connection between the preacher and his audience. All of this helps the preacher to keep his audience's attention fixed on what he is saying, so that his message actually reached the listeners.

The second part of the analysis answered the question: 'How do the Blickling Homilies construct the identities of preacher and audience?'. The analysis demonstrates that the preacher positions himself and the audience in different and overlapping ways. The preacher often uses an inclusive 'we' group to exhort his audience and to build a connection between himself and the audience. However, the 'we' group is not always homogenous. Even within the 'we' group the preacher frequently delivers his instructions and exhortations from a position of authority.

This creates a certain hierarchy and tension between the audience and the preacher. The hierarchical position of the preacher becomes even more apparent when he employs a singular ‘I’ to deliver his exhortations and instructions. In these instances, the preacher distances himself from his audience and clearly takes a position of authority.

The identities of the preacher and audience differ from homily to homily and even within homilies. This is immediately visible in the first sentences of the different homilies. Although at a first glance, the beginnings seem rather similar – they all start with *men þa leofestan* – the following sentences vary significantly. Sometimes the preacher immediately constructs an inclusive ‘we’ group but at other times he first cites an authority figure to give his own words more weight. Within homilies, the preacher uses an inclusive ‘we’ group but also switches to ‘I’ or ‘you’. Furthermore, he can deliver his instructions in the imperative mood without creating a connection between himself and the audience through the use of ‘we’. The analysis has highlighted even more examples of how the preacher positions himself and the audience in the Blickling homilies to ensure that he reaches his listeners effectively.

These conclusions can answer the main research question: ‘What results does a study of the performative nature of the Blickling homilies yield?’ This thesis demonstrates that a move away from questions about the intended audience, authorship, and source study provides opportunities to examine the Old English texts themselves as they would have been delivered to the original audiences. Studying the Blickling homilies as performative texts yields results about how Old English preachers carried out an effective performance and how they constructed the identities of themselves and their audiences to ensure that they would comply with the instructions and exhortations they provided.

The results of this thesis gain even more significance when the actual uses of the Blickling homilies are taken into consideration. Previous research has demonstrated that the Blickling homilies were used for preaching during the Mass and were aimed towards a mixed audience of lay and clergy. Different priests preached the homilies and the techniques present in the homilies certainly would have helped them to ensure that the audience understood their message and learned how to live a Christian life. Knowing that the homilies were actively preached gives the results of this thesis a remarkable position.

This thesis has been limited to half of the Blickling homilies, but it shows that studying the Blickling homilies as performative texts yields productive results. Searching the homilies for performance indicators has provided many insights into the ways in which Old English preachers ensured an effective oral delivery and the techniques they employed. It would be interesting to investigate whether different collections or authors use the same techniques or if

they differ. Swan's framework of positional rhetoric can be applied to a larger-scale study such as in this thesis. However, the lack of an established methodology apart from close reading at times makes it difficult to identify the irregularities in the homilies. Therefore, an even larger analysis of positional rhetoric might not be desirable. The combination of Green's work on speech acts and Swan's positional rhetoric might prove better applicable. Especially Green's value system to accord low, median, or high force to an utterance is useful for studies also employing Swan's framework since it gives an extra dimension to the analysis.

This thesis has demonstrated that studying the Blickling homilies as Old English texts and not immediately referring to their Latin sources produces many insightful results. Further studies should take this into account and take care not to disregard the Old English texts just because they do not translate their Latin sources well enough. The performative nature of Old English homilies should be studied in-depth before a comparison with the Latin tradition can be made. In conclusion, a move away from questions about authorship and canonicity and instead analysing the Blickling homilies as performative texts has proven productive and advantageous – future research into homiletic prose should further develop our understanding of performance and performativity in Old English homilies.

Bibliography

- Amodio, Mark C., *The Anglo-Saxon Literature Handbook* (Chichester 2014).
- Amos, Thomas L., 'Preaching and the Sermon in the Carolingian World', in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green & Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Kalamazoo, Michigan 1989) 41-60.
- Austin, John, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford 1976).
- Berardini, Valentina, 'Discovering Performance Indicators in Late Medieval Sermons', *Medieval Sermon Studies* vol.54 (2010) 75-86.
- Clayton, Mary, "Homiliaries and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England", *Peritia* 4 (1985): 207–242.
- Clayton, Mary, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge 1990).
- Connell, Charles W., 'The Sermon in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Culture: volume 3* (Berlin & Boston 2015) 1576-1609.
- Cross, J.E., 'On the Blickling Homily for Ascension Day (no. XI)', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70/2 (1969) 228-240.
- Cross, J.E., 'Blickling Homily XIV and the Old English Martyrology on John the Baptist', *Anglia* 93 (1975) 145-160.
- Cross, J. E., 'Vernacular Sermons in Old English', in *The Sermon*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Turnhout 2000) 561-596.
- Dalbey, Marcia A., 'Hortatory Tone in the Blickling Homilies: Two Adaptations of Caesarius', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70/4 (1969) 641-658.
- Dalbey, Marcia A., 'Themes and Techniques in the Blickling Homilies', in *The Old English Homily and Its Backgrounds*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach & Bernard F. Huppe (Albany, NY 1978) 221-239.
- Davis, Tracy C., *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies* (Cambridge 2009).
- De Bonis, Giuseppe D., 'The Birth of Saint John the Baptist: a Source Comparison between Blickling Homily XIV and Ælfric's Catholic Homily LXXV', in *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950-1150)*, ed. Loredana Lazzari, Patrizia Lendinara & Claudia Di Sciacca (Turnhout 2014) 255-291.
- Fiedler, H.G., 'The Source of the First Blickling Homily', *The Modern Language Quarterly* (1900-1904) 6/4 (1903) 122-124.
- Förster, Max, 'Zu den Blickling Homilies', *Archiv* 91 (1893) 179-206.

- Förster, Max, 'Altenglischen Predigtquellen II', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 122 (1909) 246-256.
- Gatch, Milton McC., *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto 1977).
- Gatch, Milton McC., 'The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies', *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989) 99-115.
- Getz, Robert, 'Four Blickling Homilies' (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2008).
- Green, Eugene, *Anglo-Saxon Audiences* (New York 2002).
- Haines, Dorothy, 'Courtroom Drama and the Homiletic Monologues of the Vercelli Book', in *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank*, ed. Antonina Harbus & Russell Poole (University of Toronto Press 2005) 105-123.
- Hall, Thomas N., 'The Early Medieval Sermon', in *The Sermon*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Turnhout 2000) 203-247.
- Hill, Joyce, 'The Benedictine Reform and Beyond', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano & Elaine Treharne (Oxford 2001) 151-169.
- Kearns, Thomas Robert Aris, 'Religious Thought and Reform in Late Tenth-Century England: The Evidence of the Blickling and Vercelli Books' (PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2020).
- Kelly, Richard J., *The Blickling Homilies: Edition and Translation* (London & New York 2003).
- Kienzle, Beverly Mayne (ed.), *The Sermon*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental fasc. 81-83 (Turnhout 2000).
- Kienzle, Beverly, 'Medieval Sermons and Their Performance: Theory and Record', in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden 2002) 89-124.
- Lees, Clare A., *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Minneapolis 1999).
- Loxley, James, *Performativity* (London 2007).
- Madison, D. Soyini & Judith Hamera (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Performance Studies* (Thousand Oaks 2006).
- McCune, James, 'The Preacher's Audience, c. 800-c. 950', in *Sermo Doctorum: Compilers, Preachers, and Their Audiences in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Max Diesenberger, Yitzhak Hen & Marianne Pollheimer (Turnhout 2013) 283-338.
- Morris, Richard, *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century* (London 1880).

- Robinson, Pamela, 'Self-Contained Units in Composite Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Period', *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978) 231-238.
- Schechner, Richard, *Performance Studies: an Introduction* (London & New York 2013).
- Scragg, D. G., 'The Homilies of the Blickling Manuscript', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. Michael Lapidge & Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge 1985) 299-316.
- Scragg, D. G., 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives before Ælfric', in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. Paul Szarmach (New York 2000) 73-150.
- Searle, John R., *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge 1969).
- Steenbrugge, Charlotte, *Drama and Sermon in Late Medieval England: Performance, Authority, Devotion* (Kalamazoo 2017).
- Swan, Mary, 'Men ða leofestan: Genre, the Canon, and the Old English Homiletic Tradition', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. Paul Cavill (Rochester, NY 2004) 185-192.
- Swan, Mary, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198 and the Blickling Manuscript', *Leeds Studies in English* 37 (2006) 89-100.
- Swan, Mary, 'Constructing Preacher and Audience in Old English Homilies', in *Constructing the Medieval Sermon*, ed. Roger Andersson (Turnhout 2008) 177-188.
- Swan, Mary, 'Identity and Ideology in Ælfric's Prefaces', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. Hugh Magennis & Mary Swan (Leiden 2009) 247-269.
- Toswell, M. J., 'The Codicology of Anglo-Saxon Homiletic Manuscripts, Especially the Blickling Homilies', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. Aaron Kleist (Turnhout 2007) 209-226.
- Wilcox, Jonathan, 'The Blickling Homilies Revisited: Knowable and Probable Uses of Princeton University Library, MS Scheide 71', in *The Genesis of Books: Studies in the Scribal Culture of Medieval England in Honour of A.N. Doane*, ed. Matthew T. Hussey & John D. Niles (Turnhout 2011) 97-115.
- Wright, Charles D., *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge 1993).
- Wright, Charles D., 'Sourcing Old English Anonymous Homilies: The Pioneers (Max Förster, Rudolph Willard, and J. E. Cross)', in *The Anonymous Old English Homily: Sources, Composition, and Variation*, ed. Winfried Rudolf & Susan Irvine (Leiden & Boston 2021) 36-84.