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Accepted Version

Morrissey, M. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9287-3460 (2017) Sermon-notes and seventeenth-century manuscript communities. Huntington Library Quarterly, 80 (2). pp. 293-307. ISSN 1544-399X doi: 10.1353/hlq.2017.0017 Available at https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/56163/

Sermon-notes and manuscript communities

Mary Morrissey

Abstract: Any reader of manuscript catalogues knows how common the unhelpfully vague entry "sermon notes, 17th-century" can be. This essay explores whether we can find in sermon notes the kinds of textual communities that have been found through the reconstruction of other routes of manuscript circulation. It will unpick what those laconic catalogue entries mean, and distinguish the different kinds of sermon notes found in our archival collections (some derived from the original preacher, some from hearers, some from readers of manuscript and printed copies). The physical forms of different sorts of "sermon notes" alerts us to the different types of authors who created these manuscripts, and the different purposes involved in preserving an oration in textual form, purposes which included fostering the creation and maintenance of communal identities among the self-consciously godly or Catholic recusants.

"Community" is a word whose "rhetorical warmth" has been noted.[1] Our wish to investigate manuscript communities may owe something to this warmth: the sense of inclusion and belonging, even at a distance, that the term connotes. And much of the work on this topic has focused on the ways in which the circulation of manuscripts fostered the maintenance of communities, particularly among minority identities in early modern England like the Puritans (in the letters of Brilliana Harley, for example)[2] and among the Catholic recusants (perhaps best represented in the Blundell family's "Great Hodge Podge").[3] There are a variety of reasons why a

[1] Phil Withington and Alexandra Shepard, "Introduction", in Phil Withington and Alexandra Shepard (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2000), 1-15 (2). Withington and Shepard are commenting on Raymond Williams' observation that community "can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relations" or an alternative set of relations, and that "unlike all other terms of social organization [...] it seems never to be used unfavourably": *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 2nd edn (London, 1983), 76.

[2] Jacqueline Eales, "Harley, Brilliana, Lady Harley (*bap.* 1598, *d.* 1643)", *ODNB* [accessed 1/1/2014]. See also Jacqueline Eales, "Patriarchy, Puritanism and Politics: The Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley (1598- 1643)", in James Daybell (ed.), *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (London, 2001).

[3] On the Blundell family and their manuscripts, see Margaret Sena, "William Blundell and the networks of Catholic dissent in post-Reformation England", in Withington and Shepard

community might wish to use manuscript as its preferred medium, and for disenfranchised groups like recusants the advantages of evading state-censorship are obvious. The same wish to restrict access to a self-selecting community motivated some poetic manuscript communities too, whether their material was transgressive politically or sexually, or whether it was merely about private jokes that the members of the group did not wish to make public.[4] But this might be turned around and viewed from another angle: manuscripts may have enabled the continuation of these communities but they did not designate them, or call them into being. Gaining access to one of these manuscripts accidentally did not, for example, confer membership to the group or coterie for whom it was intended. To the "rhetorically warm" stress on inclusion we might add that a manuscript community also *excludes:* those who did not identify with a specific religious confession or who were not members of a particular coterie.[5] Manuscripts also circulated by looser and less easily traced paths than those mapped by passage through the hands of a known community of users. Sermon-notes, for example, survive in a great many forms and are found in many contexts, and often they do not suggest the kinds of textual communities that have been found through the reconstruction of manuscript circulation for other genres, notably poetry. The principles by which sermon-notes circulate, however, remind us of some of the other reasons why manuscripts survive and why parts of our scribal heritage present larger challenges than others to our wish to recover the past.

Before going further, I want to unpick the term "sermon-notes" because there are many different kinds (some derived from the preacher who delivered the sermon, some from hearers, some from readers) and not all circulated very far. That familiar and laconic entry in so many manuscript catalogues, "sermon notes, 17th cent." gives

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(eds), *Communities in Early Modern England*, 54-75; and Geoff Baker, *Reading and Politics in Early Modern England*: *The Mental World of a Seventeenth-Century Catholic Gentleman* (Manchester, 2010). For a thorough study of "The Great Hodge Podge" and the ways in which this extraordinary manuscript miscellany fostered a gentry and recusant identity for generations of the Blundell family, see Julie Van Vuuren, "The Manuscript Culture of an English Recusant Catholic Community in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Study of The Great Hodge Podge and the Blundell Family of Little Crosby, Lancashire" (University of Reading PhD thesis, 2011).

[4] The now-classic studies on this subject are Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1993); Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY, 1995); and Henry R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford, 1996).

[5] Compare, for example, O'Callaghan's use, in this volume, of Ernest Sullivan's metaphor of the private party with a "very restricted 'guest list'" (p. ??).

the researcher only enough information to avoid the designated manuscript if they already know they have no interest in early modern English religious culture, but it reveals next to nothing about the uses of the manuscript concerned. The study of sermon manuscripts, as with the study of manuscripts from any performative genre, involves a consideration of the relationship between the performance as an event and the textual witnesses it leaves. There is an ineliminable element of uncertainty here, but no more than that encountered by students of drama or parliamentary speeches.[6] By tracking the process by which a sermon was composed and delivered, we can identify the points at which paper copies might be generated and can go some way towards determining who the creator of those paper copies might have been.

Izaak Walton tells us that John Donne began composing a sermon by choosing "a new Text, and that night cast his Sermon into a form, and his Text into divisions".[7] So Donne first chose a short extract from the Bible, often of no more than one verse, around which his sermon would be built; once the text was chosen Donne structured the sermon around it, with the various steps in the argument (the divisions) mapped onto the biblical extract: he "cast his Sermon into a form, and his Text into divisions". Walton makes Donne's handling of a quotation from the Bible central to his method of preparing a sermon, and this accords with the advice given in most contemporary preaching manuals, where the preacher's task is described as threefold. The first was to "explicate" the passage from the Bible that he had chosen. "Explicating" retained much of its original meaning in this sense; it was an "unfolding", an opening out to reveal, hidden in the multiple layers of meanings that the words of the Bible contained, some advice, or warning, or comfort that would address the concerns of those listening. Then the preacher needed to impress upon his hearers that this message was addressed *to them*: he "applied" the lessons of Scripture to his hearers and the occasion of his sermon. Hearers were advised to pay particular attention to the "application". "Exhortation" was the third (and often final)

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[6] In particular, see Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010), 13, 94-114, 124-63. A useful summary of the arguments is provided by James Rigney, "Sermons into Print", in Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford, 2011), 198-212. See also Mary Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* (Oxford, 2011), 35-67.

[7] Izaak Walton, *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert, and Robert Sanderson*, ed. George Saintsbury (Oxford, 1927), 67.

task undertaken in a sermon. The preacher encouraged and admonished his hearers to follow the lessons he had just delivered. Exhortation was effected partly by the preacher communicating his own belief in what he said, and partly by his rhetorical skill. These three tasks (explication, application, exhortation) allow us to interpret the sermon-notes that survive in writing, because they allow us to relate the textual witnesses to the preacher's activities in writing, delivering and recording the sermon.

The need to "explicate" the text, for example, meant that sermon-notes prepared by preachers are often rich in scriptural (and Patristic) references, as the preacher "opened out" his text with reference to the interpretative traditions that he inherited. In the *Arte of Prophecying*, William Perkins tells his readers that the preacher's preparation for a sermon has "two parts: Interpretation and *right division, or* cutting". "Interpretation" is defined as "*opening* of the words and sentences of the Scripture, that one entire and naturall sense may appeare" (30). The means to do this were by the comparison of biblical "places" (verses or short passages treated as distinct propositions) in order to identify "one entire and naturall sense" for the passage that was consistent with the rules of grammar, the Biblical context of the passage, and the traditional formularies of the Christian faith (the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer). Preachers studied the Bible in the light of their prior knowledge of Christian doctrine, and developed habits of mind that encouraged cross-referencing one scriptural text with other analogous and supporting "places" of Scripture.[8]

"Cutting" the text is what we might call the composition of the sermon itself, or *dispositio* in classical rhetoric, where the sequence of topics and arguments are arranged. It was termed "cutting" as a translation of 2 Tim.2:15, which literally means "straight cutting" and is usually rendered in English as the "right handling" or "right dividing" of the word. Perkins describes this "cutting" as the process "wherby the word is made fit to edifie the people". So the biblical extract on which the preacher spoke is "divided" into sections, and each section helps to explain the doctrinal messages of the biblical passage under discussion. The preacher will

[8] See my "Nut, Kernels, Wading Lambs and Swimming Elephants: Preachers and their handling of biblical texts", in Tadhg O'Hannachrain and Robert Armstrong (eds), *The English Bible in the Early Modern World* (Ashgate, forthcoming).

“explicate” those doctrines and “apply” them to his hearers. A summary of the sermon’s argument was usually given near the beginning of the oration (the “division” or *divisio*): this provided the hearers with a summary of the oration and demonstrated the close relationship between the sermon as a whole and the biblical text that it explains.[9]

Once we are aware of this notion of preaching (as the “unfolding” of a biblical text’s meaning through comparison with other biblical commonplaces and in the light of pre-established doctrine) then the physical layout of many sermon-notes becomes easier to understand: there are diagrams in which elements (often no more than one word) in the biblical passage become headings where a series of related ideas or doctrines are explained. Scriptural references are given, demonstrating the cross-referencing by which the interpretation of one passage is established with respect to other scriptural proof-texts, “collating” the places of Scripture (as Perkins puts it). The words of the biblical quotation have been “unfolded” to reveal their meaning and “divided” or “cut” aright to communicate that meaning most effectively to the hearers. We do not know whether the task of “casting the sermon into a form, and the text into divisions” (to paraphrase Walton) was always written out; if it was, it would be the first paper witness to a sermon that we might have. Even if such notes did not survive, the imprint of that process is visible in what is more usually the first version of the sermon committed to paper. These are the preacher’s “pulpit notes”: the notes that preachers made to use as their script when delivering a sermon.

Elizabethan and early Stuart preachers who achieved the sort of status that made their sermon-notes likely to survive in our archives were preaching at least once a week, and for practical reasons many did not prepare a full script for each sermon. We know that Donne reckoned it would take him a working day to make a fair copy of one sermon.[10] For many of these preachers, brief headings for each section of the sermon were the most efficient form of pulpit notes. In his very popular handbook on preaching, Richard Bernard advised new preachers to “note the chiefe heads of thy speech briefly in a little peece of paper, a word or two for every severall thing”. These preparatory notes could be brought into the pulpit (if a little disguised) in “little

[9] William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecying* (1607), 30, 90.
[10] John Donne, *Letters to Several Persons of Honour* (1651), 154-5.

paper books bound like Testaments, or the Bible with a paper fastned in it".[11] Many of the surviving notes take the form of synoptic tables, or include such diagrams, in which the relationship between the scriptural quotation on which the sermon is built and each "division" is clear from the arrangement of the headings on the page.[12] This reflects the method of composition described above; it also acted as an *aide memoire*: each stage in the argument was tied to an element of the scriptural text, and so by memorizing how the text had been "divided", the preacher could remember the sequence of the elements in his oration.[13] Bernard's advice to disguise the notes demonstrates how far the sermon as an oral performance (prepared in advance, not composed *ex tempore*) was prized, and men like Robert Sanderson, whose inability to memorize sermons Walton also reports, were clearly embarrassed by their inability to do this.[14] The letter forms in some surviving pulpit notes are very small, and thus would be difficult to read when held at arms-length. Their usefulness depended on the preacher's ability to recognize a heading at a glance, rather than the ability to read all the words on the page. They acted as an aid to memory only, as Bernard's description implies, providing a reassuring plan of the oration for a preacher already familiar with the structure of his talk.

But there were other reasons why a preacher might want pulpit notes that offered more than "a word or two for every severall thing". Preachers at high profile pulpits, such as the court or the university churches, were under intense scrutiny from their hearers, and many controversies began with reports of things spoken in a sermon.[15] Not surprisingly, such preachers chose their words with care, and where their notes survive we see how far they wrote up most of what they intended to say. Because

[11] Richard Bernard, *The Faithfull Shepheard* (1607), sig. M3r.

[12] Dr Mary Ann Lund alerted me to this useful phrase for describing these summary diagrams. Good examples of pulpit notes that consist of, or include, such synoptic diagrams can be found in Bodleian MS Eng.th.e.48. Printed examples of synoptic tables are included in some sermon-books: Thomas Bedford, *The Sinne unto Death* (1621), sig. A4r; John Stoughton, *Five Sermons on II Cor. V.XX,* in *XV Choice Sermons* (1640), sigs A2r-A4r.

[13] For manuscripts as *aides memoires*, see also Smith in this collection.

[14] Walton, *Lives*, 385.

[15] The use of sermons to launch, or stifle, doctrinal innovation can be seen from the narratives provided by Peter Lake and Nicholas Tyacke on the development of English anti-Puritanism: Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans: Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London, 1988); Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987). The Act sermon was often the focus of very particular scrutiny for changing attitudes to doctrine: see Tyacke, "Religious Controversy during the Seventeenth Century: The Case of Oxford", in *Aspects of English Protestantism, c. 1530-1700* (Manchester, 2001), 262-319.

Lancelot Andrewes left some complete scripts for his sermons, for example, William Laud and John Buckeridge could publish them posthumously without evident signs of tampering with the text (although their choice and arrangement of the sermons was driven by ideological considerations).[16]

Some preachers wrote their sermon out in full and brought their script into the pulpit: this was Robert Sanderson's method, and it may have been Andrewes; others (like Donne) made a full copy of the oration after the sermon was delivered, and others may have written a full script but delivered their sermon from briefer notes. Many sermons from the early modern period may not ever have been written out in continuous prose before or after they were delivered. But those sermons preached in prestigious pulpits or at noteworthy events were more likely to be written out in full, as the preacher then had a complete record of what he spoke. This would be useful should he choose to print the sermon or if the authorities demanded to know what he had said. We see the difference between these full text manuscripts and the shorter "pulpit notes' in the extant manuscripts of John Warner (1581-1666), Bishop of Rochester from 1637.[17] Warner kept notes of his Paul's Cross sermon of 1611 in two very different manuscript copies: one (Bodleian MS Eng.th.b.5, ff. 93-94) is a rough sheet of pulpit notes. The biblical text is given as a heading at the top of the page (but the quotation is not copied out in full), and the sermon begins with a very brief prayer. This is followed by a series of paragraphs, each paragraph containing lists of numbered points of about one sentence long. A word from the scriptural text in Greek acts as the heading for each paragraph. For example, the first heading in the first paragraph notes that the word "deute" ("come") is a word of exhortation and invitation in Greek. So the notes remind the preacher of the sequence of topics in his sermon and how they relate to his scriptural text. But the wording of each paragraph is not copied out verbatim. We can contrast this with Bodleian MS Eng.th.b.5, ff. 95r-102v. This is also written on quarto sheets of paper, but the sermon is here transcribed in continuous prose. It begins with an introduction and a brief "division", summarizing the oration to follow: "In the Invitation wee have first a calling. Come.

[16] On Andrewes' sermons in manuscript, see *Lancelot Andrewes: Selected Sermons and Lectures,* ed. Peter McCullough (Oxford, 2005), li-liii; on Laud and Buckeridge's editing of *XCVI Sermons,* see McCullough, "Making dead men speak: Laudianism, Print, and the Works of Lancelot Andrewes, 1626-1642", *Historical Journal* 41.2 (1998): 401-24.
[17] Bodleian Library MSS Eng.th.b.4-7.

2ly the person calling, or to whome they are called, vnto mee; 3ly the person called, *all* 4ly the condiccon of the persons called; *wch are weary and laden*. First of these & after of the service they are required & the reward thereof" (f. 95r). This summary of the sermon's structure would be useful to a hearer or reader, but not necessary for the preacher who could see the shape of his oration visible in the headings of his pulpit notes. This copy of the sermon offers the same points as the previous, but now the headings for each paragraph are given in English. I will call this second version a "manuscript copy" of the sermon to distinguish such detailed copies in continuous prose from discontinuous pulpit notes, with their headings and synoptic tables.

Manuscript copies were not the fullest version of a sermon that might be produced, however, and were not necessarily the version of a sermon that a preacher would wish to circulate publicly. In the case of Warner's notes on the 1611 Paul's Cross sermon, for example, the manuscript copy does not routinely translate Latin or transliterate or translate quotations in Greek. (The use of Latin and Greek reflects the multilingual milieu in which the upper clergy wrote and thought; for preachers like Andrewes, the text in the original language remains significant to his explication of it in English.[18]) Unlike copies intended for public distribution, these manuscript copies infrequently use an italic script or underlining to indicate where quotations from the Bible or the Church Fathers are used: the preacher would recognize such quotations, as would his peers. References to the Bible are very numerous but quotations are seldom transcribed in full: instead book, chapter and verse citations point the reader to relevant proof-texts. Although written in continuous prose, there are sometimes abrupt transitions between topics and rhetorical effects are deployed without the necessary "build up". For example, in Warner's notes on the 1611 Paul's Cross sermon, he writes:

> Witnesse those converts Act 2. who were soe grieved with theire offenses past, that they cryed out to Peter & the other Apostles Men & brethren what shall wee doe? It was the voice of one laden & wearyed Luc. 5.8 Goe from me for I am a

[18] For an elegant and thought-provoking account of Andrewes' engagement with the biblical text in its original languages and in translation, see Alison Knight, "Pen of Iron: Scriptural Text and the Book of Job in Early Modern English Literature" (University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 2012), chapter three.

sinnefull man. The voice of one laden & wearyed Luc. 15 Father I have sinned against heauen & before thee, & am not worthy to be called thy sonne.[19]

The repetition of "the voice of one laden and wearied" could be very effective when combined with the quotation of several well-known scriptural pleas for help. But the effect is rather lost here, because the scriptural reference does no more than identify the passage without preparing a reader for its intended emotional effect (in the way that an explicit mention of the returning prodigal son in Luke 15 would do, for example). Unfortunately, this sermon was not printed, and so we cannot compare this copy with a printed edition to see if such rhetorical adjustments were made.

The preacher would revise his "manuscript copy" to produce a different kind of sermon manuscript if he wished his sermon to circulate to a more general readership. We see this in Huntington MS Ellesmere 1172, which contains Ralph Barlow's "rehearsal sermon" at Paul's Cross from 1605.[20] Ellesmere 1172 contains Barlow's sermon as a discrete item and follows print conventions in the presentation of the text: although it does not have a title-page it carries a dedicatory epistle and a large heading announcing the sermon's title at the start; it has marginal references to biblical and Patristic citations, and the text (written in fluent, continuous prose with due attention to rhetorical considerations) includes translations of Greek and Latin phrases. Other such manuscripts follow print conventions even further, with elaborate title-pages and using different scripts, often italic, to designate quotations or to show emphasis. Matthew Griffith's 1626 sermon "preached in St Paul's Church" is another good example.[21] It has a title-page and is paginated throughout. There are marginal notes and it is written in clear italic hand. It even has running headings on each page, which pick up the words of the text ("See that you love one an other with a pure hearte fervently", 1 Pet 1:22) and the keynote of the sermon. It is interesting that this sermon lacks a dedication, because it is something of a political orphan. Preached on the "Forced Loan" of 1626, it stresses the obligations of the hearers to

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[19] MS Bodl. Eng.th.b.5, f. 97r.

[20] This is one of only two complete rehearsal sermons from Paul's Cross extant. The other is Daniel Featley's "The Spouse her Pretious Borders", in *Clavis Mystica* (1636), 409-53.

[21] "A Sermon preached in St Pauls Church on the 15 day of October beinge the first Sonday in Michaelmas tearme 1626. by Math: Griffith", Huntington Library, MS Ellesmere 35/B/3.

help fellow Protestants but avoids the vexed question of the constitutional basis of the Loan.[22]

I will call these polished manuscripts designed for circulation among friends and patrons "manuscript sermon-books", following Peter Blayney's use of the term "printed sermon-book" to distinguish the printed sermon from the oration.[23] We know the circulation of sermon-books was common: John Chamberlain sent copies of Andrewes' sermons to Dudley Carleton. But accessing these manuscript sermon-books depended on the efficiency of one's friendship networks. Chamberlain was not so close to Donne's circle as he was to Andrewes', and so of Donne's 1617 Accession Day sermon Chamberlain told Carleton, "I know not how to procure a copie of Dr Donne's sermon yf yt come not in print, but I will inquire after it."[24] Indeed, print publication was an obvious next step in publicizing a sermon, and a manuscript sermon-book could function as the copy-text for printers. Jeanne Shami has examined the pattern of corrections in the manuscript sermon-book of Donne's 1626 Gunpowder Plot sermon at Paul's Cross, and has argued persuasively that Donne produced the copy for the king with the hope that the sermon would be authorized for print publication.[25]

We have now traced the sermon in its paper witnesses from composition to dissemination, orally and on paper. At this point, we should also consider the other creators of sermon-notes: those who heard the sermon when it was delivered, and the readers of the sermon when it circulated in manuscript or print. Hearers' notes merit our attention first, because it is often mistakenly assumed that the catalogue

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[22] Richard Cust has demonstrated that Laud took a keen interest in the publication of sermons on the Forced Loan by Robert Sibthorpe and Roger Manwaring, both of which argued for the king's right to tax his subjects: Cust, *The Short Loan in English Politics, 1626-28* (Oxford, 1987), 49-50, 62-67**.**

[23] Peter W. M Blayney, "The alleged popularity of playbooks", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56.1 (2005): 33-50. Other examples of manuscript sermon-books include: Folger MS V.a.251, "A Sermon preached at St. Paules Cross, the firste of June. 1606, by John Dove, Doctour of Divinitye"; St Paul's Cathedral library, 52.D60.01, "Dr Joseph Nailor at Pauls Crosse on the 5 November"; and Cambridge University Library Add. MS 8469, the "Ellesmere" MS of Donne's sermons.

[24] *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Philadelphia, 1939), I.292, II.74.

[25] Jeanne Shami, "Donne's 1622 Sermon on the Gunpowder Plot: His Original Presentation Manuscript Discovered", *English Manuscript Studies* 5 (1995): 63–86; Shami (ed.), *John Donne's 1622 Gunpowder Plot Sermon: A Parallel-text Edition* (Pittsburgh, 1996), 11–14.

entry “sermon notes, 17th cent.” refers to notes made by the sermon’s hearers, not its preacher. How can we tell them apart? Note-taking was a very common practice, and a skill taught in grammar schools. John Brinsley recommended the taking of sermon-notes as a means of teaching the Christian religion to grammar-school boys. The lowest forms were expected to take down only three or four notes, but the older boys were expected to jot down “all the substance and effect of the Sermons”, and to put in the margin all the scriptural references given by the preacher.[26] Hearers might make notes while listening to the sermon, or they might make notes as soon as they returned home; some undoubtedly used erasable table books for taking notes as they listened.[27] These rough summaries could then be copied out later in order to create a more legible text. One avid sermon-goer and note-taker was Sir Simonds D’Ewes, who believed that the practice meant he “had attained before my going to Cambridge a great insight into the very body of divinity”. He continued the practice after university and particularly when in London. D’Ewes was so anxious to have full notes of Donne’s 1622 Paul’s Cross sermon on the *Directions for Preachers* that he got ready particularly early and “by great good fortune and little cost, stood close by him within the Crosse, and ther wrote as much as I desired”. Unfortunately for us, he did not copy his notes into his diary but into another “booke at the end of Mr Iefferayes sermon”.[28] Another keen note-taker was John Egerton, 2nd Earl of Bridgewater, whose notes on sermons preached predominantly in London from *c.* 1645-1650 survive in Huntington MS Ellesmere 34/A/19.

These manuscripts, which I will call hearers’ notes, are usually the hardest to read. They are often found in small notebooks or written on folded single sheets. If we were to formulate a guideline for distinguishing hearers’ notes from the preacher’s pulpit copy the most important criteria we might use is the incompleteness of the former: most hearers could not copy down every word and so they concentrated on

[26] John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius: or, The Grammar Schoole* (1612), 255–9, 255–6; Brinsley, *A Consolation for our Grammar Schooles* (1622), 56.
[27] Peter Stallybrass, Roger Chartier, John Franklin Mowery, Heather Wolfe, “Hamlet's Tables and the Technologies of Writing in Renaissance England”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55. 4 (2004): 379-419.
[28] *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes,* ed. James Orchard Halliwell, 2 vols (London, 1845), I.104, 137; *The Diary of Sir Simonds D’Ewes (1622-1624),* ed. Élisabeth Bourcier (Paris, 1974), 97.

getting a summary of the sermon's main argument.[29] They seldom succeed completely. The main "divisions" of the sermon are usually reproduced, but the links between the sections are not always clear. Sometimes the thread of the argument within a section is lost, and the hearer makes no more than a general comment about what was said. Sometimes note-takers (like Middle Temple's John Manningham) lost concentration before the end of the sermon, and the notes become less coherent as they go along.[30] Hearers' notes offer us no more than an abbreviated version rather than a complete summary. Ideally, we would like to find hearer's notes to a sermon also extant in the preacher's copy, so that we could compare the hearer's impressions with the preacher's version. That is possible, but the number of surviving manuscripts, many of them unattributed and a great number never investigated by modern scholars, means this work is painfully slow. The absence of any database by which sermon-notes could be collated is a particular impediment to this work. Nonetheless, where such work has been done, we can see that hearers' notes generally lose the thread of the argument in ways that preachers' notes do not. The success rate of many early modern hearers is impressive, however, and testimony to the training and practice of the "art of hearing".[31]

A very different form of sermon-notes by members of the laity are those copied from printed or manuscript sermon-books. In these cases, having access to the entire text, readers did not need to record the structure of the whole oration and had time to copy out every word of passages that were of particular interest. An effective contrast would be between the notes taken by the Earl of Bridgewater in Huntington Library MS Ellesmere 34/A/19 and the notes "taken out of Dr Andrewes booke of Sermons" contained in Huntington MS Ellesmere 6871, "Certaine Collections of the Right Honorable Elizabeth late Countesse of Huntington for her owne private use. 1633". These notes are unambiguously taken from Andrewes' *Ninety-Six Sermons* (1626), because Elizabeth Hastings, Countess of Huntington, tells us not only the occasion

[29] Other examples of collections of hearers' notes include British Library Add MS 18,781 (Walter Yonge's "Heads of Sermons Preached in London 1642") and British Library MS Egerton 2877 (Gilbert Frevile's Commonplace Book, 1591-1622).
[30] *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602–3*, ed. Robert Parker Sorlein (Hanover, NH, 1976).
[31] For a detailed comparison of some Oxford sermons preached in the 1650s with surviving print witnesses, see Ceri Sullivan, "The Art of Listening in the Seventeenth Century", *Modern Philology* 104 (2006): 34-71. On practices of note-taking by sermon hearers and patterns of sermon-attendance found in hearers' notes, see Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, 94-114, 204-28.

("Of the Resurrection") and scriptural text of the sermon (as most sermon-hearers will do), but also the page number ("leafe 493") where the sermon can be found in the printed copy. These notes sit easily alongside extracts from Bishop Joseph Hall's meditations and other works in devotional genres, biblical extracts and prayers. Works by other authors, including some 'moderate puritans' like Arthur Hildersham and Henry Smith, sit beside the works of bishops Hall and Andrews: this demonstrates how Hastings could construct a personal 'practical divinity' from the range of devotional styles incorporated with the English Church. In effect, Elizabeth Hastings has repurposed the extracts from Andrewes' sermon that she included in her collection, presumably as an aid to private meditation. They also served a domestic function: Ellesmere 6871 is one of four copies of the "Certaine Collections of [...] Elizabeth Late Countess of Huntington"; all four are presentation copies written by the same scribe shortly after the Countess' death. It seems that they were intended for use by members of her family, both as a handbook for religious devotions and as a memorial of their compiler.[32]

The evidence from our archives demonstrates that sermons were copied, read and re-used by users other than their authors, that finely produced manuscript sermon-books – presentation copies – were produced for patrons and friends and some of those users made copies of their own (of interesting passages if not the full text). What is more difficult to demonstrate is that communities were fostered by the circulation of sermons in manuscript. One obvious reason for this is the abundance of sources and the difficulty of tying groups of manuscripts together: making and keeping notes on sermons were textual practices so pervasive that we are dealing with a textual community almost co-extensive with the English-literate population.

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[32] On this manuscript collection, see Victoria Burke, "'My Poor Returns': Devotional Manuscripts by Seventeenth-Century Women", *Parergon* 29.2 (2012): 47-68 (esp. 50-58). Other examples of notes taken from sermon books (printed or manuscript) include: Dr. Williams' Library MS 12.10, where a Paul's Cross sermon is written in the blank spaces of a commonplace book, ff. 7r-16r, and the note-taker remarks on f. 9r "here two leaves wanting"; and Bodleian Manuscript Rawlinson D.1350, f. 53r-55r, which contains notes on John Wilkinson's *Rabboni, or Mary Magdalens teares* (1620). The heading in the manuscript gives the date of the sermon's printed edition; instead of a summary of the whole, passages of rather purple prose are written out in full, with page references to the printed edition. Another repurposing of notes taken from a sermon is the extract from John Milward's Gowrie plot sermon of 1607, *Jacob's Great Day of Trouble, and Deliverance* (1610), found in BL Add. 12,515. Milward's encomium to Elizabeth is written out in full as "A note of Queene Elizabeth and King James", ff. 22v–23r.

The exclusivity of a literary coterie or a community built on a shared political or religious identity is lacking here. Defining sermon-notes as constitutive of a clerical profession, for example, excludes the very numerous lay users and makers and circulators of sermon-notes. Those lay note-takers cannot be restricted to a particular faction of the English church either: the practice is not a litmus test for Puritanism. An additional problem with attempting to treat sermon-notes as evidence of a textual community is the practical necessity of creating these texts: clergymen used them as the "tools of their trade"; there is little here of the voluntarist element that distinguishes an active community from the working methods of a profession who were trained to deal with these kinds of documents.

In John Warner's collection of sermon-notes (mentioned above), there is a manuscript sermon-book which demonstrates this point. Copies of sermons were one of the means used by the episcopal authorities to regulate the performance of preachers in the pulpits; preachers who had complaints levelled against them for things said in the pulpit were asked to submit notes of their sermon to their ordinary (the bishop).[33] Bodl. MS Eng.th.b.6 contains one page (f. 135) of pulpit notes from a sermon on the ominous sounding text "Obey them that have the rule over you" (Hebrews 13:17). On the back, the page has been endorsed, "To y^{e} right hon^{ble} and right reverend Father in God John Lord Bishop of Rochester most humbly p[res]ent these". The manuscript was sent to Warner by the preacher, presumably on the bishop's order so that the content of the sermon could be scrutinized. This manuscript is not a physical trace of a self-defining community constituted through the circulation of manuscripts; it is, rather, part of the paperwork that the members of this professional group handled routinely.

That is not to say that it is impossible to find communities being created and fostered within the clerical profession, or between clergy and laity, in surviving collections of sermon manuscripts. Patronage networks are an important component of early modern communities, and clerics needed a patron in a more literal way than poets. In order to gain an ecclesiastical living they had to be nominated by the person who controlled appointments to that living: literally, the patron. The biggest single patron

[33] On the evidence from Paul's Cross, see Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons*, 79-82, 99-101.

was the Crown and its patronage to clerical livings was exercised by the Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper. When Ralph Barlow sent Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, a copy of his 1605 rehearsal sermon, he did so in an attempt to be drawn further into the circle of Egerton's patronage (in the general sense) in the hope that Egerton would act as his patron literally and appoint him to a clerical living. Egerton was in charge of administering the Crown's "right of presentment": the right to appoint clerics to any vacancies that arose in the parishes that the Crown controlled. He was, in effect, the most powerful patron that an aspiring churchman could have. Barlow already had some access to this charmed circle: he writes that he is already indebted to Egerton whose "voluntary gift and goodnes I reape a yearely benefitt, the best meanes of my living". Barlow had a clerical living at Woodmansterne in Surrey from 1601, and the patron of that living was the Crown.[34] But Barlow was ambitious for something better, and was using his links with more senior colleagues to strengthen his ties to Egerton. Barlow probably received copies of the other four sermons preached in the annual Easter series (at St Paul's Cross and St Mary's Spital) from the men who preached those sermons;[35] it was his task as "rehearser" to repeat them in summary form in his "rehearsal sermon". He tells us (or rather he tells Egerton in his dedicatory epistle) that one of the sermons was given to him by the preacher so that Barlow could present it again in his "rehearsal": it is "a present" for Egerton from his chaplain which Barlow hopes makes it "the more acceptable tho I have half marred it in the bringing". Barlow is keen to stress that Egerton's chaplain is a willing go-between: he would not dare present the sermon "had not my R[ight] worshipfull good freend and your right w^{ll}belou'd vnder whose wings I come kindly p[ro]fered me his Mediation to p[re]sent me to your L:".[36] That "good freend" may have been John King, the future Bishop of London who had been Egerton's chaplain since 1597, or it might have been Roger Fenton, one of the translators of the Authorized Version, chaplain to Egerton since 1600.[37] (Egerton was a known talent-spotter: he had employed Donne, future Dean of St Paul's, as his secretary and would

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[34] Kenneth Fincham, "Barlow, Ralph (1573/4–1631)", *ODNB* [accessed 1/1/2014]; Clergymen of the Church of England database, Person ID: 40917 (http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk).
[35] Thomas Goff tells us that he gave notes of his sermon to the rehearser: *Deliverance from the Grave* (1627), *STC*^{2} 11978, sigs. A2r–v.
[36] Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 1172, f. 1r.
[37] Louis A. Knafla, "Fenton, Roger (1565–1616)", P. E. McCullough, "King, John (*d.* 1621)", *ODNB* [accessed 1/1/2014].

number John Williams, later Bishop of Lincoln and Lord Keeper, among his chaplains[38]). Whether Barlow knew one or both of these men, the fact that two of Egerton's chaplains preached Spital sermons in the year that he was the Paul's Cross "rehearser" was a happy coincidence for Barlow. (The Spital and rehearsal sermon preachers were appointed separately.) It allowed him to produce a manuscript sermon-book that he could present to Egerton as testimony to his learning and to his endorsement by the learned men with whom Egerton surrounded himself. And it worked: in 1606, Barlow was appointed to another living, at Radnage in Buckinghamshire, a living which was controlled by Crown patronage.

This would suggest that manuscripts of sermons associated with particular people – bishops or lord chancellors, or others around whom patronage networks formed – could act as the nexus for a manuscript community (although of a rather self-serving kind). Universities had a similar role in creating the connections between people out of which manuscript communities might be formed. Bodleian MS Eng.th.e.14 is a collection of sermons "preached by severall men, upon several occasions at St Maryes and other places in Oxford". It was compiled in 1633 by a man called Jeremy Allen, who matriculated from All Souls College in 1629 and proceeded MA from Oriel College in 1632. He was ordained at Winchester in 1639 and later served as Rector of St Laurence's on the Isle of Wight. Allen must have used his personal connections to access these sermon for his collection. Two of the sermons carry dedicatory epistles (both to women with some influence over the patron of a clerical living), but I can find no record that these sermons were printed. One was by Walter Stonehouse, who proceeded MA in 1620 and was licensed to preach from 1628 but who seems to have remained in Oxford until 1630.[39] Allen and Stonehouse were in different colleges and did not coincide at Oxford for very long, but there was a link between them strong enough for Allen to access Stonehouse's unpublished sermons not long after they were preached. Another sermon in Allen's collection does appear to show a group of clerics who used manuscripts as a medium for fostering a sense of

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[38]J. H. Baker, "Egerton, Thomas, first Viscount Brackley (1540–1617)", *ODNB* [accessed 1/1/2014]; R.C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford, 1970), 93-5.

[39] Stonehouse's sermon is dedicated to Mrs Mary Langton and is a funeral sermon for her husband; Stonehouse is a cousin and dependent of some sort. On Stonehouse, see http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/libraries-and-archives/archives/online-catalogues/stonehouse-papers. The other sermon is by William Hayes of Magdalen and it is dedicated to an unnamed Lady.

community. Like Barlow's, this is a "rehearsal" sermon, but one from Oxford, where the practice of having Easter sermons "rehearsed" by another preacher appears to have grown up in imitation of the London series.[40] On page 408 of Allen's manuscript, a marginal note tells us that the sermon is by Mr Lawford of Oriel "repet", the standard abbreviation used for "repeating" or "rehearsing" a sermon, but after two leaves of his introduction, the notes on Mr Lawford's rehearsal sermon break off and there are eight blank pages. Mr Lawford took Acts 13:42 as his text; the notes indicate that he quickly got embroiled in various textual problems and I suspect the note-taker (who may not have been Allen) left off at this (very dull) digression. Allen may have left the blank pages in his sermon-book in the hope of accessing other notes on Lawford's sermon from the point when Lawford return to his ostensible theme (the Church's tradition of commemorating the resurrection). The "rehearser" usually introduced the four sermons, summarised their contents one after another and then concluded with a short sermon of his own, so it would be obvious from the lack of a "rehearser's conclusion" that these notes are incomplete.

Other telling gaps are found in the more complete copy of the 1632 Oxford rehearsal sermon. This was preached by Mr Robinson, and we are given a full account of Robinson's introduction to the rehearsal sermon (88-93), followed by two of the four Easter sermons as summarized by Robinson (by Mr Terrent of Christchurch, 93-103, and Dr William Smith, Vice-Chancellor, 103-113). A marginal note at the bottom of page 113 tell us that the next sermon will be by Mr Claiton of University College but the space below the note and the following pages are blank; on page 124 there is a marginal note announcing a sermon by Mr Bowyer of St John's, but after the scriptural text is written out there are two blank pages until the summary picks up again at the bottom of page 125. At the top of the page 124, the "rehearser" (Robinson) announces that he will "omitt the introduction and beginne at the division" in his summary Bowyer's sermon. It seems likely that the two blank pages

[40] A brief attempt to reconstruct this series can be found in my "Ornament and Repetition: Biblical Interpretation in Early Modern English Preaching", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Bible,* ed. Kevin Killeen (Oxford, 2014). This is based on information in *Oxford University Statutes*, translated by G.R.M. Ward (London, 1845), I.167-71. My thanks to Ms Anna Petre, Assistant Keeper of the Archives at Oxford University, for her assistance on this subject. The only printed example of an Oxford "rehearsal" sermon is Daniel Featley's "Foure Rowes of Precious Stones", in *Clavis Mystica*, 498-536.

in Jeremy Allen's copy were intended for that omitted introduction. All of these blank spaces suggest that Allen thought it possible to recover notes of the sermons "rehearsed" by Robinson; in the case of Claiton's sermon (which is completely missing), the summary could have been recovered from other notes taken at the rehearsal sermon or from the rehearser himself. The omitted introduction and divisions of Bowyer's sermons could not have been supplied from the rehearsal sermon, where the rehearser admits to omitting them. Allen left space in case he could recover those notes from another source, independent of the rehearsal sermon.

Allen appears to have belonged to a circle of clergymen who coincided in Oxford but who were not from the same college. The connections between them were loose enough so that Allen's hopes of accessing other copies of the sermons "rehearsed" in 1632 were frustrated, but they were strong enough for Allen to think it would be possible. The group appears to have extended beyond Oxford, or to have continued after some of the men (Stonehouse for example) had left, and through this network Allen was able to access manuscript sermon-books for his collection. This is mostly a network of junior clergy (though some of the sermons are by more senior men in the university) and it must have had practical uses for them – providing them with models for preaching – and it appears to be a network that needed the circulation of texts in manuscript for that usefulness to continue. The years between graduation and reaching the canonical age for ordination were difficult ones for these men, and a community of like-minded graduates in a similar position may have sustained friendships through the years when university ties were strained by physical distance. This is the closest I have come to finding sermon manuscripts doing work as a medium for the creation and sustaining of a manuscript community, but it is an example that suggests others may survive within our under-explored archives of "sermon notes, 17th cent".