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VI.—“FOR —— SAKE.”

Having had occasion recently to examine the N. T. usage of the expressions *for my sake, for Jesus' sake, for Christ's sake, &c.*, especially with a view to their historical origin and the force of the word *sake*, I determined to push the investigation further, and search for examples of this use in Early English, which I have thrown together below as a contribution to the history of the expressions. It was very soon ascertained that the locution did not occur in the Anglo-Saxon Gospels, nor in Wycliffe's New Testament, judging by a careful examination of all the references given by Cruden, but first came in with Tyndale, and then as a translation usually of *ἐνεκα* or *διὰ*, though in 2 Cor. xii. 10, 3 John iii. 7, *ὁπίρ*, and in Eph. iv. 32 of *ἐν*,—but here Coverdale has *in Christ*, following Wycliffe, and the Revised Version adopts it also.

A very few examples of this usage will suffice. They are taken from Bosworth and Waring's Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Wycliffe and Tyndale Gospels, 2d ed., 1874, Skeat's reprint of Forshall and Madden's Wycliffe and Purvey's New Testament, 1879, and Dabney's reprint from Bagster's edition of Tyndale's New Testament, 1837.

Matt. xiv. 3. A. S.—And sette on cwertern *for* ðam wife Herodiaden Philippes hys brôðer ;

W.—And putte [puttide] him in to prisoun *for* Erodias, the wif of his brother ;

T.—And put hym in preson *ffor* Herodias *sake*, hys brother Phips wife.

John xii. 9. A. S.—And hig cômôn, naes nâ *for* ðaes Hælendes *Þingon* synderlice ;

W.—And thei camen, not oonly *for* Jhesu ;

T.—And they cam, nott *for* Jesus *sake* only.

1 Cor. iv. 10. W.—We foolis *for* Crist ; T.—We are foles *for* Christes *sake*. 2 Cor. iv. 5. W.—And vs 3oure seruantis *bi* Jhesu ; T.—Oure selves youre servautes *for* Jesus *sake*. Phil. i. 29. W.—But also that 3e suffren *for* him ; T.—But also suffre *for* his *sake*.

These examples might easily be multiplied, but the above are sufficient to show the N. T. usage.

The A. S. *sacu* is defined by Grein *contentio, hostilitas, lis, rixa, pugna*, and Bosworth has also “A cause or suit in law, process, accusation.” Stratmann (Dictionary of Old English, XII–XV Centuries) defines *sake, lis, rixa, causa, injuria*, and amongst other references we have *withouten sake* = “*sine causa*,” Psalms iii. 8, the earliest reference for the modern usage being *for hire sake*: Ancren Riwe, p. 4 (Morton’s ed.)

In transmitting to Dr. J. A. H. Murray, editor of the Philological Society’s Dictionary, slips of the second volume of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, I inquired if he could give me the earliest references for the expression, *for —’s sake*. I append his reply, and am indebted to his kindness for the first four quotations given below. He says: “*For —’s sake* I am not able to carry back beyond the Ancren Riwe, though it occurs in several works of that age. But this sense of *sake* does not once occur in Ormin nor in Layamon, both about 1200; it does *not* occur in the Hatton Gospels, c. 1160 (which I have examined with the concordance), and I have no record of it from the Lambeth or Trinity Homilies of 1175–1200. We may, therefore, say that it appears in the first third of the thirteenth century, I presume first in a transferred use of the legal sense of *sacu*, to speak for one’s *cause* or *behalf*. I enclose some of the earliest quotations we have for *sake*.”

Thus it appears that the meaning *pugna, lis, rixa*, the common A. S. sense, which we find in Layamon and Orm, passes to *causa*, and thence to the modern meaning *for my cause* or *behalf, on my account*, most probably as Dr. Murray suggests. The four quotations enclosed by Dr. Murray are as follows:

(1) “Ancren Riwe, p. 4, c. 1220–30. South Western. Dorsetshire. Me aski 3e hwat riwe 3e ancren schullen holden? 3e schullen alle-weis, mid alle mihte, and mid alle strence wel witen þe inre [riwe], and þe uttre *vor hire sake*.”

(2) St. Katherine (Abbotsford Club), p. 6, l. 98, c. 1220. West Midland, c. Herefordshire (considered by some to be by same author as A. R.)

Dus lo for hire sake
Ane dale hu atheld
Of hire eldrene god
And spende al that other
In nedfule and in nakede.

(3) Genesis and Exodus (E. E. T. Soc.), l. 3731, c. 1250. East Midland, Suffolk.

Oc for is benes and *for is sake*[n]
Yet he sal wið hem milche maken.

- (16) King Horn (E. E. T. S., ed. Lumby), 1453-4. 2d half 13th cent.
 þis tur he let make
 Al for þine sake.

Legend of St. Gregory (Zupitza's A. E. Uebungsbuch, p. 53). Before 1300. XX, 37-8.

- (17) þabot bad þe fischers boþe ten mark & the cradel take
 & bad þai schuld nouȝt be wroþ for þat litel *childes sake*.

Sir Tristrem (Maetzner, p. 238). End of 13th cent. 81st stanza, 1-4.

- (18) To prisoun thai gun take
 Erl, baroun, and knight,
 For Douke Morgan sake,
 Many on dyd doun right.

Here we have a proper name without inflection used with *sake*.

Cursor Mundi (E. E. T. S., ed. Morris), 6833, c. 1320.

- (19) Sle þou nan wip-outen *sake* (vv. ll.).

Cursor Mundi in Morris's Specimens of Early English :

- (20) p. 132, 181-2. For he moght find nan wit *sak[e]*
 On the *sakles* he suld ta wrake.

- (21) p. 137, 325-6. Mak us a welle, for *mine sake*,
 þat alle mai plenté o water take.

These examples from the Cursor Mundi are interesting, as showing the three meanings of *sake*, and the second containing also *sakles*=innocent, as in the Ormulum and Ancren Riwe.

Stabat Mater (Wülcker's A. E. Lesebuch .I, p. 47), 31-33. No date, but as it follows Hampole, c. 1350.

- (22) Moder, now y shal the telle,
 ȝef y ne deȝe, thou gost to helle,
 Y thole ded for *thine sake*.

St. Andrew. Alt-Englische Legenden, ed. Horstmann, c. 1350.

- (23) p. 5, 75-7. And unto my goddes offrand make
 Or els I sall for þi *god sake*
 Ger hang þe right on swilk a tre.

- (24) 103-4. I wold be wurthi for *his sake*
 Opon a cross my dede to take.

St. Laurentius. Barbour's Legenden-Sammlung, ed. Horstmann, I, p. 191, c. 1350-1400.

- (25) Quhare-of mene wont war to mak
 In old tyme cronis for þe *sak*
 Of victory þat gudmene wane.

Interesting as the first example I have met with of *for the sake of*.

The Lay-Folks' Mass-Book (E. E. T. S., ed. Simmons), Text B. 453-7 (Royal MS. 17 B XVII), c. 1375.

- (26) Make þi prayeres in þat stede
 for alle þi frendes þat are dede,
 And *for* alle cristen *soules sake*
 swilk prayere shal þou make.

The examples of the use of *sake* in Gower are not numerous, only four in the last half of the second volume; but in Chaucer they are much more frequent. It is strange that the expression should not be found in the New Testament of Wycliffe, when both of his contemporaries make use of it.

A couple of examples apiece from Chaucer and Gower must suffice:

Chaucer's Clerkes Tale. (Skeat's C. P. ed.)

(27) 135. And tak a wyf, *for* hye *goddess sake*.

(28) 560. For this nyght shaltow deyen *for my sake*; also lines 7, 255, and 975.

Gower's Confessio Amantis (ed. Pauli), II.

(29) p. 217. For lucre and nought *for loves sake*.

(30) p. 229. And for Thetis *his moder sake*.

Other examples may be found on pp. 226, 314.

An examination of Morris's Old English Homilies, 2d series, which belong to the *twelfth* century, shows us that the expression *for God's love* was then used where *for God's sake* was more common later. An example of this is found on p. 83, l. 21, 22: "Hie giuen here elmesse noht *for godes luue* ac *for* neheboreden oðer *for* kinraden," translated by the editor, "they give their alms not for God's sake, but for the sake of their neighbors or kinsmen." See also p. 157, l. 24, and p. 159, l. 10. This expression continued in use, as is seen in Lives of Saints: Thomas Beket (Maetzner, p. 177), c. 1300. 1807. A sire! he seide, *for Godes love*, ne passe noȝt ȝut the see. Also lines 1975, 2094, and in 2273, And bad him, *for the love of God*, in such angusse him rede.

A hundred years later Chaucer would probably have used *for Goddes sake*.

These examples show the use of *sake* with the possessive adjectives and genitive during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while the language was forming, and from the rareness with which the form *for the sake of* is met with, this expression was evidently of later origin, and possibly originated in the North. It deserves notice that this form is not found in the Authorized Version, as quoted by Cruden, but the Revisers have occasionally made use of it.

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