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*The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi* ed. by Henry J.  
Stauffenberg (review)

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HENRY J. STAUFFENBERG, ed. *The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi*. Vol. 3, lines 12713–17082. Ottawa Mediaeval Texts and Studies, no. 13. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985. Pp. xxii, 242. \$25.00.

The *Cursor Mundi* is one of those Middle English poems known better in anthologies than in extenso. Its first and only complete edition was prepared nearly one hundred years ago (between 1874 and 1893) by Richard Morris for the Early English Text Society. Since then the work has tended to recede from view, and oddly enough this may owe something to the fact that, once in print, a text that lacks conspicuous interest, whether literary or historical, is eminently capable of losing something of its urgency for the medievalist. This new five-volume edition, steered masterfully under the general editorship of Sarah M. Horrall, will go some way toward rescuing the *Cursor Mundi* from the atrophy of complacency. When complete, it will be the second edition of the poem available.

But perhaps it would be more nearly correct to say that it too is an editio princeps, for the transmission of the *Cursor Mundi*, like that of many a medieval work, is not a straightforward matter. The poem exists in two versions. It was originally written about 1300 in the north of England, and this is the version which forms the basis of Morris's edition. A second version was composed in the second half of the fourteenth century in the south-central Midlands. It substantially revised the ending of the earlier poem and made its northern text accessible to a southern readership by altering its language. The new edition is putting out this southern version, and to this extent it is an edition of a new poem, fashioned from the earlier one in response to the changed tastes and requirements of a later period; consequently, the earlier northern version still awaits a second edition, and there is ample room for one.

Henry J. Stauffenberg's edition of the portion of *Cursor Mundi* dealing with Christ's ministry and Passion comprises volume 3 of the series. It is attractively printed, with a handsome full-color illustration of folio 87v of the manuscript chosen for the base text of the edition, College of Arms MS 57. Quality of publication happily extends to quality of content, for this edition is of a high standard and can be recommended wholeheartedly. However, readers of it will need all five volumes before they can use this one to fullest effect, and certainly they will need volume 1, which contains an essential apparatus. Consequently, final assessment of the contribution made by this volume must necessarily await publication of the entire series. In the meanwhile volume 3 augurs very well for those that are to come and continues the excellent promise of the first volume published in 1978.

The main concern of the short introduction is with the establishment of the sources of the ministry and Passion section here edited. The sources, many of which were earlier identified by Haenisch and Napier, are briefly but admirably discussed, and the interlace of their use throughout the poem is unraveled with clarity. After the source discussion follows a statement of editorial principles (for a full account of which volume 1 must be consulted) and a note on the presentation of the Passion narrative in this edition. Comparison with its edited text of the portion of text facsimiled (lines 14868–966, pp. 73–76) shows the editor's transcription accuracy to be impeccable, though his exact placing of the *punctus* at the end of verses is often debatable. For example, sometimes the *punctus* is set a little above the line (*here*·, line 14934) and sometimes on the line, like a modern period (*fete*., line 14938). Such a distinction is not categorically justified by the manuscript. Other slips appear no more than printer's errors, as, for example, *Pis Lazarus* (*recte* *Pis Lazarus*), on page 49, line 14128.

The most substantial part of the commentary is found in a series of appended notes on the text. Once more the main concern of these is with source study, and once more they are richly informative. I noticed in this section a solitary printing error: *tristifia* for *tristitia* in the lemma from Luke 22:45 on page 147, notes to lines 15647–68. Another minor slip lurks on the same page in the notes to lines 15623–30, for John 19:34 speaks of *sanguis et aqua*, not *sanguinis et aqua*.

My objections with the content of the notes amount to no more than quibbles. Here are three brief instances. First, the description of the N Town manuscript's glosses on page 138, in the notes to lines 12733–51, somewhat oversimplifies what the glosses actually say, but Stauffenberg is undoubtedly correct to call attention to the currency and interest being shown in Marian genealogy at this date (the gloss on fol. 37 of BL MS Cotton Vespasian D.8, incidentally, reads *Asmaria*, not *Asmonia*). Second, the trained eye of a philologist is necessary to make sense of the presentation of the etymons on page 150 in the note to line 16032, unless procedures are to be clarified in a later volume. Third, Geoffrey Shepherd's useful annotation to the passage of *Ancrene Wisse* discussed on page 155, in the note to line 16869, might have been mentioned, because it comes apropos. The edition concludes with three appendices and a bibliography.

Users of this edition can approach it with confidence. If the three volumes that remain to be published equal the quality of this and the first

one, the shallow familiarity which has conspired the neglect of the *Cursor Mundi* will be deservedly shaken.

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PENN R. SZITTYA. *The Antifraternal Tradition in Medieval Literature*.  
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986. Pp. xvi, 316.  
\$40.00.

The two most necessary things to be said about this book at the start are that its title is misleading but that it is nonetheless a very stimulating and important study. Szittyá's title is a misnomer because more than half of his book is not about literature and because the part that is is not about "medieval literature" but almost exclusively about fourteenth-century English literature. The name Boccaccio, for example, appears just once—in a footnote. On the other hand, taken as a study of an idea complex, with applications to some monuments of Ricardian poetry, the book is excellent.

Szittyá's thesis is that antifraternalism was a "literary tradition," a "complex of hostile ideas about the friars," that can be observed in a variety of works in different genres composed between the middle of the thirteenth century and the end of the Middle Ages. Szittyá wishes to call the tradition "literary" because he believes that it was based on a common language and referred at least as much to itself as to concrete reality. Granted that many of the works in which the "literary tradition" appears are not literary creations, I would go along with this, although I think that it would be less confusing to speak instead of a polemical tradition. According to Szittyá, the tradition's creator was William of Saint Amour, and its two most seminal English exponents were Richard FitzRalph and John Wyclif. In the realm of real literature the tradition can be found in the poetry of Rutebeuf and Jean de Meun, in a number of minor English poems, in Gower, and in the two English giants, Chaucer and Langland. Given this plotting, Szittyá offers separate chapters—consistently with exemplary structure and distinguished prose—devoted to William of Saint Amour, FitzRalph, Wyclif, Chaucer, and Langland, and two connective ones, respectively, on