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The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi, Vol. I

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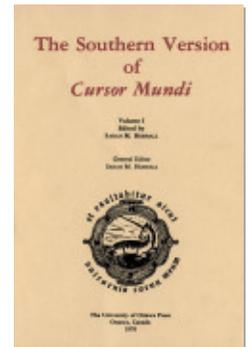
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Introduction

The *Cursor Mundi* is a verse history of the world, based on scripture, telling the story of mankind from Creation until Doomsday. The poem, which is almost 24,000 lines long in some versions, was written by an unknown poet in the north of England about 1300. Although the original composition has not survived, it was copied many times over the next 150 years, and is now extant in nine manuscripts.¹

The poem is the best and most comprehensive of its kind in Middle English. Most Middle English biblical paraphrases base themselves on a very few sources, usually relying heavily on the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor. The *CM* poet, on the contrary, has shown a wide knowledge of the traditional motifs of biblical exegesis, and he draws on an unusual variety of French, Latin and English sources. The poem which he produced is a well-proportioned compilation of pre-existing material translated into serviceable Middle English verse.

The only modern edition of the work appeared between 1874 and 1893, when Richard Morris and several colleagues published a transcription of five manuscripts of the *CM*, four of which were in northern or north Midland dialects. The transcriptions were accompanied by a sketchy, inaccurate critical apparatus which is now completely out of date. However, because Morris' work is the only edition of the whole poem available, most generalizations about the *CM* are based on it, and on the conclusions suggested by his critical apparatus. A new edition of the poem, with thorough analysis of the poet's sources, ideas and techniques, has long been needed.

Since Morris' version appeared, many more of the sources used by the *CM* poet have come to light. Comparison with these sources confirms Morris's finding that MS C,² a northern version,

¹ MS McGill Univ. 142, listed as a tenth MS of *CM* in BROWN, *Index*, 2153, is in fact part of a version of the *Southern Assumption*. See Michael G. SERGENT, "The McGill University Fragment of the Southern Assumption", *Mediaeval Studies*, XXXVI (1974), 186-98.

² See below, p. ff., for an explanation of the MSS sigla.

is the extant MS which is closest to the poem actually written by the mediaeval poet. Morris stopped there, however, considering that all other MSS, though perhaps dialectally interesting, were simply less perfect copies of the poet's original. Because the southern MSS (HTLB) differed most from MS C, Morris and his collaborators considered them to be merely hopelessly corrupt copies of the original poem, worthless for establishing the text of the original.

The present edition is based on entirely different assumptions. At some time in the late fourteenth century, someone in the south central Midlands came across a copy of the *CM* in a MS something like the extant MS G. The MS, or perhaps MSS, which he found, contrary to Morris' assumption, did preserve several original readings which are lost in each of the northern versions. Systematically this person revised the poem he found in the MS or MSS, changing phonology, morphology, rhymes, vocabulary and ideas, and completely revising the ending of the poem. As a result, southern England acquired not a corrupt copy of a northern poem, but a new poem, substantially changed in language and scope from its original.³

Southern audiences seem to have appreciated the revisor's efforts. The new version of the poem was copied at least four times, in formats ranging from parchment volumes with decorated initials, to large paper compilations of romances, adventures, and works of moral improvement. One of these is known to have belonged to a nun at the Bridgittine double monastery of Syon, just outside London. As late as 1442, the scribe of MS B was so aware of the *CM* as a living poem that he again modified the work, revising many lines and substituting extracts from another poem for some parts of the *CM*, exactly as the scribe of MS C had done 100 years before him.⁴

The text of the northern versions of the *CM* has long been available in Morris' edition, which was reprinted in 1961-6. For the first time, the present volume makes the southern translation of the work, including the highly interesting Bedford MS (MS B), equally available for consideration by scholars. The *CM* is here printed from a little known MS in a south Midland dialect (College of Arms Arundel LVII), with variants from three more, two of which have never been printed before (MSS Trinity College, Cambridge R.3.8; Bodleian Laud Misc. 416; British Library Additional 36983). The present volume contains approximately one third of the southern version of the poem. The rest will appear in two further volumes,

³ Cf. Rolf FAISER, *Zur Geographie*, whose work documents some of these processes of revision.

⁴ See, e.g., Carleton BROWN, "*CM* and the Southern Passion".

the last one containing a discussion of the authorship, place and date of composition, MS relations, etc.

The present volume constantly invites the reader to compare the readings of the southern version of *CM* with those of the northern MSS as printed by Morris. In order that these comparisons be as accurate as possible, each volume will contain a list of corrections to Morris' transcriptions of the northern MSS.

Each volume of this edition will also contain extensive explanatory notes. These are designed first of all to explain the *CM* itself. They deal first with the poet's sources, how he combines them or shifts from one to another while composing his own work. They also show how his original conception, most often preserved in MS C, changes as the poem is copied, revised, and copied again. However, the notes also attempt to place the *CM* in the context of similar literature in Old and Middle English, Old French, Latin, Hebrew and to some extent Celtic. This study of analogues to the *CM* enables the editor to determine in each instance whether the poet is using a commonplace of biblical exegesis, or a motif rare in Middle English but common in Old French biblical paraphrases, or an idea so rarely found in extant works that the *CM* poet's use of it remains a mystery. These notes should help to illuminate not only the *CM* itself, but also the large body of biblical literature in several mediaeval languages which has been relatively little studied of late. In this biblical literature, the *CM* occupies a unique place, because of its length, its scope, and its author's broad and eclectic knowledge of the traditions of exegesis in his time.

THE MANUSCRIPTS

H Arundel LVII⁵ College of Arms, London

Vellum, 175 fols., approximately 12½ × 8½ inches, usually in double columns⁶ of forty lines each. Fols. 1-132 contain the *CM*.⁷

⁵ See William Henry BLACK, *Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Arms* (London, 1829), pp. 101-3; Hupe, *CM*, p. 68*.

⁶ In MSS GHTLB the passion story, 11.14934-17110, is copied in single columns of long lines.

⁷ Fols. 133-75 contain a copy of the *Pricke of Conscience*, imperfect at beginning and end. Cf. Richard MORRIS, ed., *The Pricke of Conscience*.

Collation: ⁸ flyleaf

a⁸ with aⁱ missing fols. 1-7

b⁸ fols. 8-15

c⁸ with cⁱ missing fols. 16-22

d⁸ with d^{viii} missing fols. 23-9

e⁸ with eⁱ missing fols. 30-6

f⁸-i⁸ fol. 37-68

j⁸ with j^v missing fols. 69-75

k⁸-o⁸ fols. 76-115

p⁸ with p^{viii} missing fols. 116-22

q⁸ with qⁱ⁻ⁱⁱⁱ missing fols. 123-7

r⁶ with rⁱ missing fols. 128-32

s⁸ with s^{i-v} missing fols. 133-5

t⁸-x⁸ fols. 136-75

y missing; perhaps contained 10 fols.

to accommodate the remainder of *Pricke of Conscience*.

Handwriting: A clear, regular bastard hand. y and þ are always distinguished, u and n only sometimes. Initials, etc. are decorated in red and blue.

Date: About 1400?

History: The MS was probably copied at or near Lichfield.⁹ Although it is kept with the Arundel MSS at the College of Arms, it was not part of the original bequest of the Duke of Norfolk.¹⁰

Previous editions: Morris, *CM*, printed a few lines of the MS, chiefly 11.153-270, pp. 1657-63, and 11.17853-18028, pp. 1024-32.

T Trinity College, Cambridge R.3.8¹¹

Vellum, 144 leaves, approximately 12¹/₄ × 8¹/₄ inches, usually in double columns¹² of 40 lines each.

Contains only *CM*.

Collation: a⁸-r⁸ r^{vii-viii} blank.

⁸ The collation printed by MORRIS, *CM*, p. 1663, contains a number of errors. The MS itself has pencilled signatures in a modern hand, but these err at fol. 128 and thereafter.

⁹ DAREAU and MCINTOSH, "A Dialect Word", p. 21.

¹⁰ See BLACK's *Catalogue*, p. [99].

¹¹ See MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Cambridge*, II (Cambridge, 1901); HUPE, *CM*, pp. 67*-8*.

¹² See note 6 above.

Handwriting: A clearly written bastard hand. *p* and *y* are distinguished and so often are *u* and *n*. Large initials are decorated in red and blue. There are frequent marginal notes in 16th and 17th century hands, mainly summarizing the content of the poem.

Date: About 1400?

History: McIntosh believes this MS was copied at Lichfield by a scribe who is responsible for several other extant MSS.¹³ Various names in later hands appear at the end of the MS, which was given to Trinity College by George Willner.

Previous editions: Printed in full by Morris, *CM*.

L Laud Misc. 416¹⁴ Bodleian Library

Paper, 289 leaves approximately 12 × 8½ inches.

The *CM* occupies fols. 65r-181v¹⁵ usually in double columns¹⁶ of about 46 lines each.

Collation:¹⁷ a fols. 1-8 The original folio numbers in Roman numerals indicate that 36 fols. are missing from the beginning.

b¹²-d¹² fols. 9-44

e¹² fols. 45-55 e^{ix} is partly torn out.

f¹² fols. 56-64 with f^{x-xii} missing.

g¹² fol. 65 with g^{i-xi} missing.

h¹⁶-k¹⁶ fols. 66-129

l¹⁶ fols. 130-43 with lⁱⁱ and l^{xv}, conjugate leaves, missing.

The bottom half of fol. 141 is also gone.

m¹⁶ fols. 144-59

n¹⁶ fols. 160-71 with n^{iii-iv} and n^{ix-x} missing.

¹³ MCINTOSH, "A New Approach", pp. 6-7; DAREAU and MCINTOSH, *A Dialect Word*", p. 26 n. 5.

¹⁴ See H. O. COXE, *Catalogi Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae Partis Secundae* (Oxford, 1858), p. 306; HUPE, *CM*, pp. 68*-9*.

¹⁵ The MS also contained: unknown material on the missing first 13 fols.; *Peter Idley's Instructions*, lacking about 1900 lines, on 23 fols. at beginning and otherwise imperfect, fols. 1-64v (*Index* 1540); *Vegetius* in prose, fols. 182r-226v (*Index* 3185); *LYDGATE's Siege of Thebes*, fols. 227r-254r (*Index* 3928); *LYDGATE and BURGH's Secrees of Old Philisoffres*, fols. 255r-287v (*Index* 935); *CHAUCER's Parlement of Foules*, fols. 288r-9v, imperfect at end (*Index* 3412).

¹⁶ See note 6 above.

¹⁷ Determined by original numbering of folios, catchwords and watermarks. The latter indicate that fols. 66-226 are on different paper from the rest of the MS. These fols. contain the entire *CM*, except for its table of contents, and the prose *Vegetius*.

- o¹⁰ fols. 172-81
 p¹² fols. 182-92 with p^{ix} missing.
 q¹²-r¹² fols. 193-216
 s¹² fols. 217-26 with s^{xi-xii} missing.
 t¹² fols. 227-38
 u¹⁶ fols. 239-54
 v¹² fols. 255-65 with v^{xii} missing.
 w¹² fols. 266-76 with wⁱ missing.
 x¹² fols. 277-87 with x^{xii} missing.
 y only fols. 288-9 remain. Approximately 8 fols. would be required to complete the *Parlement of Foules*.

Binding: The covers are wooden and the back is leather. The MS formerly had clasps, which are now broken. MSS Laud Misc. 503 and 512 have similar bindings.

Handwriting: A neat bastard hand. *p* and *y* and *u* and *n* are clearly distinguished. Final *n* and *r* sometimes end in a flourish.

Date: 1459, from an inscription on fol. 226 v:
 "Scriptus Rhodo per Johannem Newton die 25 Octobris 1459".

History: Belonged to the Bridgettine Abbey at Syon, just outside London.¹⁸ On the back flyleaf is the name Syster Anne Colvyll. Archbishop Laud's name appears on fol. 1.

Previous editions: Morris, *CM*, printed 11.1-270, pp. 1651-62. He also printed 11.9325-11614, 11.16227-18512, and various smaller sections to fill in gaps in MS F. Brandl and Zippel print 11.10647-10782 and 11177-11276.

B MS Additional 36983¹⁹ British Library

Paper, 305 leaves, approximately 11 × 8½ inches. The *CM* occupies fols. 1-174,²⁰ usually copied in double columns²¹ of 31 lines each.

¹⁸ See FER, *Medieval Libraries*.

¹⁹ See *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the Years MDCCCC-MDCCCV* (London, 1907); HUPE, *CM*, p. 68*.

²⁰ However, *CM* 11.14916-17288 are replaced, on fols. 118r-127v, by 11.1-1140 of the *Meditations on the Supper of Our Lord*; see the edition by J. M. COWPER (London, 1875), EETS OS 60. *CM* 11.22005-23898 are replaced, on fols. 159r ff. by 11.4085-6407 of the *Pricke of Conscience*. Cf. the edition by R. Morris.

The MS also contains: CHAUCER's ABC Hymn to the Blessed Virgin, fols. 175r-178v (*Index* 239); *The Three Kings of Cologne* in prose, fols. 179r-215v; the rhyming *Titus and Vespasian*, fols. 216r-254v (*Index* 1881); "Michael III" from the *SEL.*, fols. 255r-261v (*Index* 3453); CHAUCER's *Truth*, vol. 262 r (*Index* 809); LYDGATE's "A knyght that is hardy as a lyon", fol. 262r-263r (*Index* 55); "The ABC of Aristotle", fols. 263r-v (*Index* 471); a single stanza in praise of Mary, fol. 263v (*Index* 4091); "The Legend of Ipotis", fols. 264r-268r (*Index* 220); *Speculum Gy de*

The first 174 fols. are numbered in Roman numerals in the upper right hand corner.

Collation:²² a indeterminate, fols. 1-16. Probably a¹⁶, with a^{ix} missing and an extra leaf added after a^{xvi}.

b¹⁶-j¹⁶ fols. 17-160

k¹⁸-l¹⁸ fols. 161-96

m indeterminate; fols. 197-215. Sewing and watermarks suggest m²⁰, with m^{xx} missing.

n¹⁴ fols. 216-29

o¹⁸ fols. 230-47

p¹⁶ fols. 248-63

q indeterminate; fols. 264-80. Sewing and watermarks suggest q¹⁶ with a leaf added at the end.

r indeterminate; fols. 281-92. Probably r¹², but rⁱ and r^{xii} are not conjugate.

The rest of the gatherings cannot be determined. Modern pencil numbering says s³ and t¹⁰. Three more fols. are required after fol. 305 to complete the "Life of St. Dorothy".

Handwriting: A vernacular hand, with many tags and tails, especially on final letters. *þ* and *y* are distinguished but *u* and *n* are not. Many words are separated by dots or by fine vertical strokes.

Date: Fol. 215v bears the date Jan. 1, 1442.

History: The MS came to the British Museum from the Bedford Public Library.

Previous editions: Morris, *CM*, printed 11.1-270 and the colophon in his edition, pp. 1651-62.

C Cotton Vespasian A iii²³ British Library

Vellum, 163 leaves, approximately 8⁷/₈ × 6¹/₂ inches, in double columns containing about 46 lines per col.

Warewyke, fols. 268r-275r (*Index* 1101); William LYCHEFELDE's "Complaint of God", fols. 275r-279v (*Index* 2714); "Passio Sancti Erasmi", fols. 279v-280v, imperfect at end (*Index* 173); "The Abbey of the Holy Ghost", fols. 281r-285v; "The Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost", fols. 285v-297v; "The Myrroure of Mankind", fols. 298r-305r (*Index* 1259); Osbert BOKENHAM's "Life of St. Dorothy", fol. 305v, imperfect at end (*Index* 3936).

²¹ See note 6 above.

²² Determined by original numbering of folios 1-174, catchwords, watermarks and sewing. There is also a pencilled signature in the upper left corner of the first folio of most of the gatherings. This was presumably done when the MS received its modern binding. The watermark throughout is very similar to Briquet 2784-5.

²³ See *A Catalogue of the MSS in the Cottonian Library Deposited in the British Museum* (London, 1802); HUPE, *CM*, pp. 63*-5*; LAMBERTS, *Dialect*, p. 7.

Contains only *CM*.

Collation: ²⁴ fol. 1 a flyleaf

a¹²-g¹² fols. 2-85

h, fols. 86-101, originally had fourteen leaves, with sewing visible after fol. 92. Fols. 96 and 97 have been pasted on to stubs.

j¹² with ji missing fols. 102-112

j¹².l¹² fols. 113-48

m¹⁵ fols. 149-63

Handwriting: Wright calls the first hand in the MS "a round heavy characteristic 14th-century hand."²⁵ p and y are not distinguished, nor are u and n. A second hand appears on fol. 92r and continues until 8 lines down on fol. 93v col. 1. Much of the material in this hand is unique to MS C. The first hand resumes until halfway down fol. 95v col. 2. The second hand then carries on until the end of fol. 98v. This second hand is a much more cursive bastard. It does differentiate between u and n, but still fails to distinguish p and y. A third hand has made occasional corrections in the MS.

The MS is decorated with occasional red capitals and with a few marginal sketches, such as that of Noah's ark on fol. 12v. These are labelled in the same handwriting as the text.

The lines which appear in Morris' text as headings in heavy type are actually running headlines in the MS. Several more have been cropped after fol. 28.

Date: About 1340.²⁶

Previous studies: This MS has had more attention than any other because it represents the original poem more closely than any of the other complete MSS extant. It was edited in full by Morris, *CM*, and extracts have often been printed. Several studies of the MS have also been done. Wright reproduces part of fol. 123v in facsimile.²⁷

²⁴ Several pages have been copied in the wrong order. They must be read as follows: 2r 3r 2v 3v; 131r 132r 131v 132v.

²⁵ C.E. WRIGHT, *English Vernacular Hands*, p. 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ MORRIS and SKEAT, *Specimens of Early English*, II 11.11373-11796; ZUPITZA, *Ubungsbuch*, 11.19603-19732; EMERSON, *A ME Reader*, 11.1-270; SAMPSON, *Cambridge Book of Prose and Verse*, 11.7439-7592; BRANDL and ZIPPEL, *Mittelenglische Sprach-*, 11.10647-10782, 11177-11276; DICKENS and WILSON, *Early ME Texts*, 11.1-38; BROWN, *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, 11.25403-25486, 25487-25618; BENNETT and SMITHERS, *Early ME Verse and Prose*, 11.1-100, 1237-1432. Work on this MS alone is by BROWN, "*CM* and the Southern Passion"; LAMBERTS, *Dialect of CM*; SNOUFFER, *Verbal Syntax of CM*. The facsimile is in C.E. WRIGHT, *English Vernacular Hands*, Sample 11.

F Fairfax 14²⁸ Bodleian Library

Vellum, 125 leaves, approximately 10¼ × 6½ inches in double columns of 48 lines per col. Contains only *CM*, to which is appended a version of the *Distichs* of Cato.

Collation: fols. 1-3 consist of one flyleaf and 2 fols. of table of contents.

a¹²-d¹² fols. 4-51. The pricking of gathering d was done with an awl.

e¹² missing. This would have contained 11.9325-11614.

f¹² This is incorrectly bound. f^{i-xi} are fols. 53-63. f^{xii} is fol. 52.

g¹² fols. 64-75

h¹² missing. This would have contained 11.16227-18512.

i¹² fols. 76-85 jⁱⁱⁱ and its conjugate i^x are missing.

j¹²-l¹² fols. 86-121

m fols. 122-5 An indeterminate number of fols. is missing from the beginning of this gathering.²⁹

Handwriting: A neat bastard hand. y is clearly distinguished from þ, but u and n are not.

Date: Late fourteenth century?

History: The MS is connected with Lancaster.

A colophon on fol. 123v says: "Stokynbrig scripsit istum librum willo keruour de lances". Fols. 1 and 3v contain scribed accounts related to that county.³⁰

Previous editions: Printed in full by Morris, *CM*. Furnivall also printed 11.304-78 of the *Distichs* of Cato from this MS.³¹

See FAUSBØLL, *A Study*.

G Göttingen University theol. 107 r³²

I have examined this MS only on microfilm.

²⁸ See Falconer MADAN and H.H.E. CRASTER, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford, 1937), II ii, pp. 777-8; HUPE, *CM*, pp. 66*-7*.

²⁹ The gathering probably contained 14 leaves. The Table of Contents in this MS indicates that it would have contained the same material as MS C. C's 1648 further lines would have filled about 8½ fols. in F. No other copy of this version of the *Distichs* of Cato exists (BROWN's *Index* 169 is in error here). Comparison with the Latin version of the *Distichs* printed by Boas and the French version edited by Furnivall, *Minor Poems*, suggests that no more than 13 cols. are missing from the Fairfax poem, and probably rather less. Thus gathering m would have been composed of 8½ fols. of *CM*, about 3 fols. of Cato (missing) and 2 fols. of Cato (extant).

³⁰ See also MOORE, MEECH and WHITEHALL, *ME Dialect Characteristics*, p. 2.

³¹ FURNIVALL, "How Cato was a Paynym"; cf. WHITING, "Notes on the Fragmentary Fairfax Version".

³² See *Die Handschriften in Göttingen. II Universitäts-Bibliothek* (Berlin, 1893), p. 353; HUPE, *CM*, pp. 65*-66*.

Vellum, 169 fols., approximately 27 × 18 cms., usually in double columns³³ with about 36 lines each. Contains only *CM*, but the table of contents shows that it would have ended with "Saint Patrick's Purgatory".³⁴

Collation:³⁵ a¹²-f¹² fols. 1-72
 g¹⁴ fols. 73-86
 h¹²-m¹² fols. 87-158
 n¹² fols. 159-69 with nⁱⁱ missing.

G's Table of Contents indicates that the MS would have contained approximately the same material as C. This would have required another 25 leaves, plus more to accommodate "Saint Patrick's Purgatory". Probably at least three gatherings are lost at the end of the MS.

Handwriting: A neat vernacular hand. þ and y are not always distinguished, nor are u and n.

Date: Second half of the fourteenth century?

History: A colophon on fol. 114v gives the name of the man who had the MS made: "Iohn of lindbergh"³⁶ On the flyleaf is a book-plate of C. T. Sullow, with a note that he purchased the MS at auction in Hanover, June 14, 1786.

Previous editions: Morris, *CM*, prints the MS in full. Brown also prints the "Song of the Five Joys", 11.25619-25683.³⁷

E Edinburgh Royal College of Physicians³⁸

I have seen this MS only on microfilm.

Vellum, 50 leaves plus several fragments, in double columns containing approximately 40 lines per col.

Collation: This is impossible to determine, as the leaves are now pasted on to modern paper. The pages are incorrectly bound. *CM*, 11.18989-22417 appears on fols. 37r-50v. *CM*, 11.22418-24968 appears on fols. 1r-15v, although one fol., containing 11.24520-24968, is missing. Four leaves are lost between fols. 43 and 44, and two are lost between fols. 45 and 46.

³³ See note 6 above.

³⁴ See MORRIS, *CM*, V, p. 4a.

³⁵ Based solely on catchwords.

³⁶ See MORRIS, *CM*, p. 979.

³⁷ See BROWN, *Rel. Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, 31.

³⁸ See John SMALL, *Engl. Met. Homs.*, xi-xxii; Hupe, pp. 62*-3*.

Handwriting: The MS is in three different 14th century vernacular hands. Hand 1 (fols. 1-15) distinguishes *p* and *y*, but not *u* and *n*. Hand 2 (fols. 16-36) is somewhat smaller. Although *u* and *n* are not distinguished, *y* is frequently dotted to distinguish it from *p*. Hand 3 is the largest and least neat in appearance. *u* and *n* are sometimes distinguished here.

Date: Late 14th century?

History: The MS was bequeathed to the Library of the Royal College of Physicians in 1741 by Dr. John Drummond, its president from 1722-1727.

Previous editions: A short extract is printed in John Small, *English Metrical Homilies*, and 11. 19603-19732 in Zupitza, *Übungsbuch*. The MS appears in full in Morris, *CM*, pp. 1587-1616, 1237-51, 1616-37, 1367-1429. The MS was studied by Hörning, *Die Schreibung der Hs.E des CM*.

Add. MS Additional 31042³⁹ British Library

Paper, 183 fols., counting 2 flyleaves at each end, approximately 10³/₄ × 8 inches. The *CM* fragments,⁴⁰ 11.10630-14914 and 17111-17188, are found on fols. 3r-32v. These are in double columns of 34-42 lines per col.

Collation: This is impossible to determine finally, as the individual leaves are now pasted on to modern paper. However, the

³⁹ See *Catalogue of Additions to the MSS in the British Museum in the Years 1876-1881* (London, 1882), pp. 148-51; H.L.D. WARD, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum I* (1883; rpt. London, 1961), pp. 928-54; F. BRUNNER, "Hs Brit. Mus. Additional 31042", *Archiv CXXXII* (1914), 316-27; Dieter MEHL, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1968), p. 260.

⁴⁰ The MS also contains: *The Northern Passion*, fols. 33r-50r (*Index* 1907); the alliterative *Seige of Jerusalem*, imperfect, fols. 50r-66r (*Index* 1583); *The Seige of Melayne*, imperfect, fols. 66v-79v (*Index* 234); a hymn to the Virgin, lacking its first stanza, fols. 80r-81v (*Index* 2168); *Roland and Otuel*, fols. 82r-94r (*Index* 1996); LYDGATE's "Complaint pat Crist maketh of his Passioun", fols. 94r-96r (*Index* 2081); verses on the kings of England by Lydgate, imperfect at end, fol. 96 (*Index* 3632); LYDGATE's *Dietary*, imperfect at beginning, fol. 97 (*Index* 824); a four-line song, fol. 97v (*Index* 3778); *The Quatrefoil of Love*, fols. 98r-101v (*Index* 1453); a short rhymed prayer, fol. 101v (*Index* 1051); a translation of Psalm 51, imperfect at end, fol. 102 (*Index* 990); LYDGATE's *Interpretacio Misse*, imperfect at beginning, fols. 103r-110v (*Index* 4246); "The Rose of Ryse", fol. 110v (*Index* 3457); the rhymed *Three Kings of Cologne*, imperfect at beginning, fols. 111r-119v (*Index* *31; Supplement to *Index* *854.3); stanzaic "Prouerbis of Salamon", fols. 120r-122r (*Index* 3861); "Merci Passith Rigtwisnes", fols. 122v-123r (*Index* 560); "Do Merci bifore thi Judement", fol. 123 (*Index* 3533); "Mercy Passes all Things", fol. 123v-124v (*Index* 583); *Richard Coer de Lion*, imperfect, fols. 125r-163v (*Index* 1979); Apocryphal History of the Infancy, fols. 163v-168v (*Index* 250); *Parlement of the Three Ages*, fols. 169r-176v (*Index* 1556); *Wynnere and Wastoure*, imperfect at end, fols. 176v-181v (*Index* 3137).

evidence of catchwords, watermarks,⁴¹ and the comparison with other copies of the same texts suggests the following:

fols. 1-2 flyleaves of vellum from a 15th century breviary.

a indeterminate, fols. 3-8. Watermarks suggest at least a¹⁰.

Watermark A.

b²⁴ fols. 9-32. Watermark A. This ends the *CM* portion of the MS.

c²² fols. 33-53 with c^{xxii} missing.⁴² Watermark B.

d²⁰ fols. 54-73. Fols. 54-60 and 67-73 have watermark C, fols. 61-6 have watermark D.

Fols. 74-124 indeterminate. Fols. 74-9 have watermark E, with at least one leaf lost after fol. 77 and at least one after fol. 79.⁴³ Fols. 80-90 have watermark F. Fols. 95-102 have watermark E with a leaf missing after fol. 96 and another after fol. 102⁴⁴. Fols. 104-119 have watermark G with two unnumbered stubs visible after fol. 110. Fols. 121-4 have watermark E.

e indeterminate but possibly e²², fols. 125-44, with one leaf added after e^{xxii}. Three fols. are missing after fol. 143.⁴⁵ Watermark H.

f²⁴ fols. 145-68. Watermark I.

g indeterminate, fols. 169-81. Watermark I. Watermarks suggest that five leaves are missing at the end of *Wynner* and *Wastoure*.

fols. 182-3 flyleaves as at beginning.

Handwriting: The handwriting is more cursive here than in any of the other *CM* MSS.

Date: Mid-fifteenth century.

History: The MS was copied by Robert Thornton, who also copied Lincoln Cathedral Library MS A i 17. Thornton's signature appears on fols. 50r col. 2 and 66r. He probably came from East Newton near Pickering in Yorkshire.⁴⁶ Unlike the Lincoln Cathedral MS, this one seems to have left the Thorn-

⁴¹ Nine different watermarks appear in the MS: A-a bull; B-rather like Briquet 15203-4, 15206; C-a wagon; D-somewhat like Briquet 4399; E-a long thin spear shape; F-a round mass; G-somewhat like Briquet 11632; H-very like Briquet 3868; I-somewhat like Briquet 4642 and 4644.

⁴² Cf. E. KÖLBING and M. DAY, ed., *The Siege of Jerusalem* (1932; rpt. Oxford, 1971), EETS OS 188, 11.289-374; WARD, *Catalogue*, p. 928.

⁴³ Cf. S. J. HERRTAGE, *The English Charlemagne Romances II* (London, 1880), p. 44; WARD, *Catalogue*, pp. 953-4.

⁴⁴ Cf. BROWN, *Index*, 3632, 990.

⁴⁵ Cf. F. BRUNNER, *Der Mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Löwenherz* (Vienna, 1913), p. 251; WARD, *Catalogue*, pp. 945, 947.

⁴⁶ See M. S. OGDEN, *The "Liber de Diversis Medicinis"*, rev. rpt. (London, 1969), EETS OS 207, pp. x-xvii.

ton family's possession before the middle of the 16th century. Offord has suggested that the John Nettleton whose name appears in a 16th century hand on fols. 49r and 139v is the same man whose name appears in 1565 in a list of people who owned MSS.⁴⁷ The MS apparently found its way to America and was purchased by the British Museum through J. Pearson on July 12, 1879.

Previous editions: This MS has never been printed. See STERN, "London Thornton"; HERRALL, "London Thornton".

SELECTION OF A BASE TEXT

The base text for this edition has been selected for reasons both scholarly and pragmatic. The northern versions of *CM* have long been available in Morris' text. His transcriptions are reasonably accurate and could easily be made more so by a list of corrected readings such as appears at the end of the present volume. However, the MSS of the southern version of *CM* have been rather poorly served because of the attitude to them shown by Morris and his collaborators.⁴⁸ The only southern MS which Morris printed, T, is an excellent one, but its choice was probably dictated largely by its availability and completeness. MS L, while it is a reasonably good text, shows several omissions and misunderstandings as against HT, and would be unsuitable for use as a base. MS B is an extremely interesting version of *CM* which has been virtually unknown until now. The scribe has taken considerable liberty with the phrasing of his exemplar, and has eventually interpolated large sections of a different poem into the *CM*. MS B is obviously unsuitable as a base text, but it deserves to be much better known. Hence the very full apparatus of variants, largely from MS B, which appears in this edition.

MS H, which was finally chosen as a base text for the present edition, contains a text which is very slightly better than MS T's. Unfortunately MS H is missing several leaves, but in the present

⁴⁷ See M. Y. OFFORD, ed., *The Parlement of the Thre Ages* (London, 1959), EETS OS 246, p. xii; cf. C. E. WRIGHT, "The Dispersal of the Libraries in the Sixteenth Century" in WORMALD and WRIGHT, *The English Library*, pp. 157-8 and 173 nn. 24-5.

⁴⁸ See above, p. XI.

edition these are supplied from MS T. MS H has also been less readily available for use by scholars because of its location in the College of Arms.

STRUCTURE OF THE POEM

The *CM* may be roughly divided into the following sections:⁴⁹

I — Chronological History

- (a) Prologue 11.1-270
- (b) 1st age: Creation to Noah, 11.271-1626
- (c) 2nd age: Noah's Flood to the building of Babel 11.1627-2314
- (d) 3rd age: Abraham to the death of Saul 11.2315-7860
- (e) 4th age: David to the Babylonian captivity 11.7861-9228
- (f) 5th age: birth and early life of the Virgin and Christ 11.9229-12751
- (g) 6th age: Baptism of Christ to the finding of the Cross 11.12752-21846
- (h) 7th age: Doomsday 11.21847-23908

II — Short Poems

- (i) Prayer to the Blessed Virgin 11.23909-23944
- (j) Sorrows of Mary 11.23945-24658
- (k) Apostrophe to St. John 11.24659-24730
- (l) Festival of the Conception of the Virgin 11.24731-24970

III — Additional Poems

- (m) Exposition of the Creed 11.24971-25102
- (n) Exposition of the Pater Noster 11.25103-25402
- (o) Prayer to the Trinity 11.25403-25486
- (p) Prayer for the Hours of the Passion (Matins of the Cross) 11.25487-25618
- (q) Song on the Five Joys of Our Lady 11.25619-25683

⁴⁹ These divisions are based on Morris, *CM*. V, pp. vii-ix.

- (r) Book of Penance (Prologue and three parts) 11.25684-29547
 (s) Cato's *Morals* Morris, *CM*, pp. 1669-1674

The *CM* exists in three different forms:

- (A) The oldest appears to have contained only Sections I and II above, ending with item (1). This is the poem described in the prologue, 11.131-222. The only extant MS which might have had this shape is MS E, which ends at 1.24968. Unfortunately this MS survives only as a fragment, beginning at 1.18989. No one can now say whether or not the MS originally contained a full text of the *CM* in a form exactly as described in the prologue.
- (B) The second form of the *CM* is found in three northern MSS. These are the MSS which contain Morris' so-called "additions":
 MS C contains items a-n, p, o and r.
 MS F contains items a-p, r and s
 MS G would have contained items a-r⁵⁰
- (C) The southern version, MSS HTLB, contains only the material of chronological history, ending after the account of Doomsday, although the prologue in these MSS retains 11.217-20, which state that the poem will deal with items (j) and (l).

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

This edition is intended to be a copy of MS H, with only obvious scribal blunders corrected on the basis of the other MSS. Leaves which are missing in MS H are printed from MS T. Abbreviations are expanded in italics, and headings and decorated capitals appear in bold face type. The first letter of every line of the poem is capitalized in this edition, although the scribe occasionally forgot to do so in the MS. Otherwise the scribe's own capitalizations are allowed to stand. The spacing of words is made to conform, as much as possible, to modern practice. Any other changes in the text are enclosed in square brackets and the MS reading is recorded in the variants.

⁵⁰ See MS G's Table of Contents in Morris, *CM*, V, pp. 1a-4a.

The variants are not designed to include differences of dialect or spelling. Only differences in words or phrases, or in word order are included. Rules for transcription of the variants are much the same as for the text itself, except that square brackets which appear in the text are not repeated in the variant. Also, because the capitalization in MS B is so erratic, I have capitalized in that MS only in accord with modern practice. The form for each variant is as follows: the word or phrase as it appears in my transcription of MS H, followed by a square bracket, then the variant readings for that word as they appear in the other MSS, in the order TLB. Different variants of the same word are separated by semi-colons; the whole is followed by a period.

Appendix A is a list of corrections to Morris' transcriptions. In these, the reading from the printed text is followed by a square bracket, the initial representing the MS, and the correct reading of the MS itself. Emendations to Morris' text, printed in square brackets in his edition, are allowed to stand without comment if they are purely conjectural. However, if the letters were originally written by the scribe but have since become illegible through blots, holes, etc., I enclose them in pointed brackets in the MS reading. Thus if Morris' transcription of MS C reads "b[ad]" and no note appears in Appendix A, then the MS reads simply "b". If Appendix A, however, has "b[ad]C b <ad>", then the scribe originally wrote "bad", but the "ad" has since become illegible.

References to other works in the Explanatory Notes and in the Introduction are either by abbreviation or by author and short title. An explanation of abbreviations used precedes the Explanatory Notes. Full information about other works will be found in the Bibliography. Transcriptions in the notes from unpublished MSS consulted on microfilm follow the same rules as all other transcriptions except that no emendations at all are attempted.

To produce the text and variants, I worked originally on microfilms of the MSS. I have since carefully compared my transcriptions of the microfilms with the MSS themselves, except for MSS G and E, which I have seen only on film.

This edition retains the line numbering used in Morris' text. This numbering is often unsatisfactory, for Morris sometimes numbered spurious lines, and at other times printed in parallel columns lines which were not in fact the same. However, I must make frequent references to the northern MSS for comparison with this edition, and a dual system of line numbers proved impossibly cumbersome.

This edition is based on certain assumptions about the relationship among the various MSS of the poem. I can accept none of the previously published MSS stemma, for reasons which will be fully discussed and justified in Volume III. Therefore my own assumptions must be outlined here.

MS C is clearly the extant MS which is closest to the *CM* poet's original version, although it contains many corruptions. In the notes, I assume that MS C's reading is closest to the original French or Latin, unless I state otherwise. The southern version of the poem, represented by MSS HTLB, is derived from a MS similar to G, though not G itself. To produce the southern version, this MS, in a North Midland dialect, was systematically revised and translated.

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