The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi, Vol. IV

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Linguistic abbreviations are standard, and those for books of the Bible are taken from *Biblia Sacra juxta Vulgatum Clementinam* (Rome, 1956). Most citations in the notes are by author and short title. Full information may easily be located in the Bibliography.

In the following list, the abbreviation used is followed, where necessary, by the complete title of the work, and the first word or words of the entry in the Bibliography.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*Blickling Homilies* — Morris, Richard, ed.
*Chateau d'amour* — Murray, J., ed.
*CM* — *Cursor Mundi*. Morris, Richard, ed.
*EETS* — Early English Text Society.
*Elucid.* — *Elucidarium*. Honorius Augustodunensis.
*Gosp. Nic.* — *Gospel of Nicodemus* (the Middle English verse translations) in Hulme.
*MED* — *Middle English Dictionary*.
*OT* — Old Testament.
*PG* — *Patrologia Graeca*.
*PL* — *Patrologia Latina*.
*SA* — *The Southern Assumption*, in McKnight, G. H., re-ed. *King Horn, Floriz and Blauncheflur*, *The Assumption of Our Lady*. 
NOTES

17289ff. The part of the CM dealt with in this volume comprises the material described in II. 199–210 of the poet's versified table of contents.

In I. 17287–8 the poet indicates that the next section of his monumental work is a translation of the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. The latest editor of the Gospel, H. C. Kim, pp. 1–2, presents four distinct phases in its textual development. (His work is based on that of G. C. O'Ceallaigh, “Dating the Commentaries.”)

1. Form A, Greek, ca. 600 A.D. This is the Greek Recension A in Tischendorf's Evangelia Apocrypha, pp. 210ff., properly called the Commentaries of Nicodemus. The story of the descent into hell is not yet integrated into this text.

2. Form B appeared somewhat later, “while the first version was still current.” It is the Early Latin Recension, which translates the Commentaries of Nicodemus and incorporates the Harrowing of Hell. Nothing in Tischendorf exactly corresponds to this version.

3. Form C is a loose Greek paraphrase of the preceding Form B. See Tischendorf, pp. 287–332.

4. Form D appeared still later. It represents the Late Latin Recension, printed in Tischendorf, pp. 389–434, which includes the Commentaries of Nicodemus (I–XVI), the Harrowing of Hell (XVII–XXVII), and the letter of Pilate (XXVIII). The oldest manuscript of this recension is the basis for Kim's edition. This text forms the main source of the first 1300 lines of this volume of CM. Kim's Latin edition will henceforth be cited by its manuscript title, Gesta Salvatoris (Gesta Salv.).

Doubt has recently been cast upon some of O'Ceallaigh's and Kim's conclusions by J. J. Campbell in “To Hell and Back,” especially pp. 111–12 and n. 9, but no further work has been published on the subject. For an excellent bibliography of editions and studies of the work see Alvin E. Ford, ed., L'Evangile de Nicodème, pp. 35–38.

The work was translated many times into English. An Old English translation, extant in three manuscripts, was edited by S. J. Crawford and more recently by Thomas P. Allen. For studies of this translation and other Old English material on the subject see Gary L. Aho, A Comparison of Old English and Old Norse Treatments of Christ's Harrowing of Hell, and J. J. Campbell, “To Hell and Back.” Two Middle English verse versions of the story are printed in Hulme, The ME Harrowing of Hell. Seven ME prose translations exist in at least thirteen manuscripts. See Drennan, Short ME Prose Translations, pp. 18ff. for editions. Old French translations are edited in Ford, L'Evangile de Nicodème, and in Paris and Bos, Trois versions rimées.

References to elements in these stories antedate any of the texts mentioned above. See Hennecke, NT Apocrypha II, 444–49, for references to the writings of Justin, Tertullian, Eusebius, and Epiphanius.

17289 Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Jesus in his own tomb, was connected by later legend with the Holy Grail and Glastonbury. For the story of Joseph in ME

17289–364 These lines are mainly based on Gesta Salv. XII. Cf. Matth. 27:57–61; Marc. 15:42–7; Luc. 23:50–6; Ioan. 19:38–42.

17294 Of all the canonical authors, only St. John mentions Nicodemus. See Ioan. 3:1–9, 7:50, 19:39. Christian legend has it that Nicodemus was a sculptor. See Dobschütz, Christusbilder, pp. 268**ff.

17304 CM has “How dar je com e in,” which does not translate Gesta Salv., which has “quomodo ingressus es.” Cf. however the ME verse Gasp. Nic. which has “how dar je negh” (I. 742).

17308 Nicodemus’ threefold “Amen” takes on the form of an oath, as in Num. 5:22.

17312–13 Luc. 23:53 insists Joseph’s tomb has never been defiled by the presence of another corpse. 17312 is wrongly copied in C.

17324–35 There prevailed in antiquity the belief that the souls of the unburied were unable to find rest. Cf. II Reg. 21:10–14; III Reg. 14:11; IV Reg. 9:34–37. Leaving a body to dogs and vultures was regarded as a disgrace.

17325–6 Cf. I Reg. 17:44: “dixitque ad David: Veni ad me, et dabo carnes tuas volatilibus coeli et bestiis terrae.”

17331–2 Cf. Rom. 12:19; Hebr. 10:30; Deut. 32:35.

17333–4 The reference to Pilate’s blindness is a possible echo from Gesta Salv. XII, 1.27–28: “Obstructus corde, Pilatus lauit manus suas suor coram sole.”

17345 Not in Gesta Salv.

17355–6 Only HTLB have these lines. The Latin sources, however, did not repeat what actually had been expressed in II. 17351–2.

17357 C is in error with “bai sperd fast,” which contradicts the following line.

17365–46 Gesta Salv. XIII.

17367 “quidam de militibus” (Gesta Salv. XIII, 1.1–2). CG follow the Latin more closely here.


17370 HTLB have “grau e stone,” which is closer to Gesta Salv.’s “lapide monument!” than CG’s “mikel stan.”

17371 CG’s “suan” / “suannes” differ from HTLB’s “snow” which is also found in the sources, both biblical and apocryphal. See Gesta Salv. XIII, 1.7, Matth. 28:3.

17372 CG’s “slaght o fire” translates Gesta Salv.’s “fulgar.”

17380 C uses a passive structure like the Latin “crucifixus est.” GHTLB use the active voice, but, having changed “rode” to “cross,” lack a rhyme.

17396 “Kiye” HTB, “kyth” L means “capture, arrest, or entrap.” See MED “cacchen,” 2(a). Kaluza’s glossary in Morris, CM, VI, gives only “to make known, discover, reveal” for “kyth.”


17407 Only C has the correct pronoun: dixistis / Yee said.

17429–46 Gesta Salv. XIII, 3.4–8 is based on Matth. 28:12–14.

17429 C alone has “scomed,” which Kaluza’s glossary in Morris, CM, VI, reads as the present participle “scondan” of “scon’V to shun.

17443 The Latin source has “vobis dormientibus,” CG have “bai,” while HTLB have “we.”

17444 B is closest to the source “discipuli.”
This reflection on covetousness is not in *Gesta Salv.*, but is based on biblical teaching. Cf. *Marc.* 7:22; *Luc.* 12:15; *Rom.* 1:29; *II Pet.* 2:3.

*Gesta Salv.* XIII, 3.8-10, somewhat abbreviated.

*Gesta Salv.* XIV. The Latin source has the names of the three, Finees, Adda, and Aggeus.

Based on *Marc.* 16:15-16, 19.

HTLB follow the Latin more closely here: “si uera.” CG omit this reference to “truth” and speak only of “swearing.”

*Gesta Salv.* XIII, 3.8-10, somewhat abbreviated.

*Gesta Salv.* XIV. The Latin source has the names of the three, Finees, Adda, and Aggeus.

Based on *Marc.* 16:15-16, 19.

The closest biblical analogues to Christ’s Ascension were the translation of *Enoch* and the assumption of *Elijah* in *Gen.* 5:24 and *IV Reg.* 2:11. *Gesta Salv.* is here based upon *IV Reg.* 2:16-17.

C’s “clintes” is an original reading cited in *MED.*

*Gesta Salv.* XV, 1.20-6.20.

The *Evangelium Nicodemi* printed by Tischendorf ended with a recommendation to observe Joseph when he received the letter, to see whether he read it. If he did not do so the messengers were to greet him in peace and return alone.


CG’s “leuening” translates “fulgorem.”

HTLB translate the Latin “noli timere.” C has “be noght sor” and G “be noght cri.”

See note to II. 17545-62 above.

In *Hennecke, NT Apoc.* II, p. 444, F. Scheidweiler argues that the forty days found in *Gesta Salv.*, the Gospel of *Nicodemus* as printed by Tischendorf, and all their derivatives, should actually read four days.

*Gesta Salv.* XVI.

C errs in having *Nicodemus* instead of Joseph finish the tale.

C’s reading “Israel” is correct. GHTLB’s “ierusalem” probably originated as an incorrectly expanded abbreviation.

The only *Levi* mentioned in the NT is the son of Alpheus, in *Marc.* 2:14 and *Luc.* 5:27-9. Comparison with *Math.* 9:9-10:3 led to the belief that Levi and Matthew were one and the same.


HTLB’s “in pees” more correctly translates “in pace.” CG read “in rest.”

Anna and *Caiaphas* ask the questions in *Gesta Salv.* XVI, 3.1.

See *Deut.* 17:6; 19:15; *Math.* 18:16; *Ioan.* 8:17; *II Cor.* 13:1; *Hebr.* 10:28; etc.

CG’s “Inogh” is a corruption of *Enoch*. The reference is to *Gen.* 5:24. HTLB further corrupt the sense.


See the note on *Longinus* in *Staufenberg, SVCM* II, 16835-44.

*Gesta Salv.* XVII. This begins the section describing Christ’s descent into Hell, which was not part of the early versions of the source text. It appears
first in Form B, the Early Latin Recension. See note to II. 17289ff. above.

17787-91 Joseph here refers to the event recorded only in Matt. 27:52-53: "Et monumenta aperta sunt: et multa corpora sanctorum, qui dormienter, surrexerunt. Et exeunte de monumentis post resurrectionem ejus, venerunt in sanctam civitatem, et apparuere multis."

17792 This is the Simeon of the Gospel; see Gesta Salv. XVII, 1.7-9. See Luc. 2:25ff.

17805 G’s “fulsumli” is an error for C’s “lufsumli.”

17818 Gesta Salv. XVII, 2.4-5 has the brothers “in oratione fixis genibus.” See also the ME Gosp. Nic., 1127-8.

17826 Adonai, the perpetual substitute for the ineffable OT name “Yaweh,” to which it lends its vowel signs. Cf. Exod. 6:3.

17838 CG’s reading “taking” translates the Latin “fecerunt signaculum crucis” (Gesta Salv. XVII, 3.4).

17840 “manes” in GHTLB may be a corruption of “one,” Lat. “simul locuti sunt” (Gesta Salv. XVII, 3.5).

17845-8 Cf. Dan. 13:51: “Et dixi ad eos Daniel: Separate illos ab invicem procul, et dijudicabo eos.” Kim comments that “identical production is clearly meant to establish the authenticity of the thing written.”

17849-924 Contain the story of the Harrowing of Hell by Christ as told by Carius and Lenthius. The event is not described in the Bible, although various NT texts were thought to hint at it, especially Eph. 4:9; Phil. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:19; Rom. 10:7. Several OT passages were said to prophesy the Harrowing, especially Ps. 15:10; 70:20; Is. 9:1-2; 26:19; 35:10; 45:2; 47:7; Zech. 9:11. For the inclusion of the descent into Hell in the Creeds of the Church, see J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, esp. pp. 378-83. The subject was often treated in Old English and Middle English literature and in art.

For Old English see the references given in Gary Aho, A Comparison of Old English and Old Norse Treatments of Christ’s Harrowing of Hell, and I. I. Campbell, “To Hell and Back.” In Middle English, the most striking representations of the scene are in the drama. See Lud. Cov. Plays 33-35; R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds., The Chester Mystery Cycle, Play XVII; G. England, ed., The Towneley Plays, Play XXV; L. T. Smith, ed., The York Plays, Play 37. The third play of the Cornish Ordinalia also deals with the subject. See the edition by Edwin Norris, Vol. II.

17855 The “swete croys” has various liturgical echoes. See Stauffenberg, SVCM, III, n. to II. 16585-92.

17857 Christ similarly forbade Peter, James, and John to tell others about his transfiguration; see Marc. 9:8; Matth. 17:9.

17859 L’s “Thow diddyst” is closer to the Latin “fecisti” than CGHTB’s “to [he] dedis.”

17863-18512 Contain the story of the Harrowing of Hell by Christ as told by Carius and Lenthius. The event is not described in the Bible, although various NT texts were thought to hint at it, especially Eph. 4:9; Phil. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:19; Rom. 10:7. Several OT passages were said to prophesy the Harrowing, especially Ps. 15:10; 70:20; Is. 9:1-2; 26:19; 35:10; 42:7; 45:2; Zech. 9:11. For the inclusion of the descent into Hell in the Creeds of the Church, see J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, esp. pp. 378-83. The subject was often treated in Old English and Middle English literature and in art.

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17879-82 See Is. 9:2: “Populus, qui ambulabat in tenebris vidit lucem magnam; habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est eis.”

17883-4 MS. G translates Gesta Salv. XVIII, 1.18-19. The lines have been accidentally omitted from the southern version.

17885-96 Cf. Luc. 2:25-32.

17915 For a discussion of the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit see Stauffenberg, SVCM, III, n. to II. 12885.

17918 HTLB have a better reading of the line than G.
17925–76 Gestā Salv. XIX. For a note on the quest of Seth see Horrall, SVCM, I, n. to l. 1237ff.

17930 In Gen. 3:24 a cherub is sent to guard the gate of Paradise. In the legends of Seth’s journeys, however, the guardian is Michael.

17931 G has the correct “Archangel.”

17950 Adam’s limbs were “lame” because of the effect of original sin.

17954–5 Gestā Salv. XIX, 1.19: “v milia et D anni.”

17965 Adam had not yet been anointed.

17967 The reference to baptism is founded on Ioan. 3:5.

17968 The idea expressed is found in Ioan. 4:13–14.

17972 In the NT the word Hell or Hades, like the Hebrew “Sheol,” sometimes refers merely to the grave as in Apc. 20:13; Act. 2:31, or in general to the unseen world. It is in this sense that the Creeds refer to Christ’s descent into Hell, meaning the state of the dead in general, without any reference to happiness or misery.

17977–18072 Gestā Salv. XX.

17981–2 Ps. 23:7–9.

17984 This apparently refers to Christ’s agony in Gethsemane; see Matth. 26:36–46; Marc. 14:34–42; Luc. 22:39–46. Satan implies here that Christ is only a man, which is the Arian heresy.


18024 Death is here personified and seen as a servant of Satan, rather than of God.

18040 For the story of Lazarus see Ioan. 11.

18041 HTLB’s “pe ferpe day” is correct. See Ioan. 11:39 “quatriduanus est enim.” CG have “Pe third day,” perhaps in an attempt to make clearer the analogy with the three days Christ spent before his resurrection.

18042 CG’s “Laisd” translates Ioan. 11:44 “solvite eum, et sinite abire.”

18045 See Ioan. 8:44.

18060 T. H. White, The Bestiary, speaks of the aging eagle in search of the fountain which will give it new vigour and vision.

18070 The Latin source, Gestā Salv. XX, 3.22–25, describes the “prisoun of my cruelte” more precisely: “Et si perduxeris illum ad me, omnes qui sunt hic in incredulitatis claustri et in insolutis uinculis peccatorum constricti soluet.”

18073–160 Gestā Salv. XXI.

18075–8 Ps. 23:7–9. Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church, I 92–93, and O. B. Hardison, Jr., Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages, pp. 113–14, describe the liturgical use of this Psalm.

18079–84 In Gestā Salv. XXI, 1.8, as in CM, Satan is physically expelled.

18093–7 Earlier tradition has Christ descend alone, although some commentators have him accompanied by angels. See, e.g., Eusebius, De Demonstratione Evangelica, X, PG XX 779; Pseudo-Chrysostom, In Sancta et Magna Parasceve, PG LXII 722.

18101–2 Ps. 106:15–17.

18103–4 Is. 45:2.


18108 CG’s “pai” is original, HTLB’s “he” an error.

18115–16 The lines omitted in HTLB translate Gestā Salv. XXI, 2.13–14. See Os. 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:55.

18125–7 Cf. Ps. 23:7,9.

18131 Cf. Ps. 23:8.
18410-6 This section paraphrases Ps. 23:8 and Ps. 101:20-21.
18155c’s “Wit-in be scape of ur manhede” correctly translates Gesta Salv. XXI, 3.17, “in forma hominis.” The reading has been lost in HTLB.
18158CG’s “And visit us wit grett delite” is an attempt to translate Gesta Salv. XXI, 3.19-20: “uisitauit nos sedentes in tenebris delictorum.” HTLB’s line has no authority.
18160 Cf. the description of paradise in CM 1009.
18161-228 Gesta Salv. XXII.
18169-70 Death and Hell admit they have become powerless because of Christ’s victory over them; cf. Rom. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:54.
18193-6 Gesta Salv. XXII, 1.18-20.
18227 For “gerard” see HORRALL, SVCM, 1, n. to l. 7487.
18229-90 Gesta Salv. XXIII.
18230 Balsabuk, Lat. Baalzabub, meaning lord of flies, was originally a Philistine god worshipped at Ekron, believed to be creator and controller of flies. In Matth.
12:24 the Pharisees refer to “Beelzebub principe daemoniorum . . .”
18247-50 Only in CG, but the lines are authentic, translating Gesta Salv. XXIII, 1.13-16.
18289-90 Not in Gesta Salv.
18291-378 Gesta Salv. XXIV.
18304 Cf. Is. 2:4; 9:5-7. Peace was the kernel of the Messianic hope for the Kingdom of God.
18309-18 Gesta Salv. XXIV, 1.10-17, quotes Ps. 29:2-6.
18319 Cf. Phil. 2:10.
18346 Cf. Gesta Salv. XXIV, 2.5-9, quotes Ps. 97:1-2.
18353-74 In Gesta Salv. XXIV, 2.1-16, Habakkuk speaks before Micheas.
18353-60 Micheas, the sixth of the twelve minor prophets, a contemporary of Isaias, writes in the book bearing his name regarding the Messiah. After reproaching the people for their ingratitude, he ends the final chapter with the words: “Quis, Deus, similis tui, qui auferit iniquitatem, et transis peccatum reliquirum hereditatis tuae? Non immittet ultra furorem suum, quoniam volens misericordiam est. Revertetur, et miserabitur nostri; deponet iniquitates nostras, et projiciet in profundum maris omnia peccata nostra.” Mich. 7:18-19.
18361-2 These lines, found only in CG, translate Gesta Salv. XXIV, 3.12-13.
18369-72 Habakkuk, author of the eighth book of the minor prophecies, showing Christ’s power over hell and death, says: “Splendor ejus ut lux erit, cornua in manibus ejus; ibi abscondita est fortitud e ejus. Ante faciem ejus ibit mors; et egreditur diabolus ante pedes ejus.” Hab. 3:4-5.
18374 Gesta Salv. XXIV, 3.4-5 paraphrases Ps. 117:26-27.
18390-402 Gesta Salv. XXV.
18390-2 Enoch and Elijah were both assumed bodily into heaven. See Gen. 5:24; Hebr. 11:5; Eccl. 44:16; IV Reg. 2:1-12. It was maintained, in view of Mal. 4:5, that Elijah was to return before the Second Coming. He and Enoch are commonly understood to be the two witnesses of Apoc. 11:3ff.
18394-6 These lines suggest a millennial view, which is expressed in the Latin source, Gesta Salv. XXV, 1.11-12: “non gustauimus mortem sed in adventum Antichristi reseruati sumus.”
18403-48 Gesta Salv. XXVI.
18416–18 CG’s reading is closest to Gesta Salv. XXVII, 1.9–11: “et credidi eum creatorem omnium esse creaturarum et regem omnipotentem.” The exemplar of HTLB, having changed the rhyme word in 18415, had to add two lines to make sense.

18421–2 Cf. Luc. 23:43. Christ’s promise to the thief “Hodie mecum eris in paradiso” raised some speculative problems in connection with his descent into Hell. How could Christ be in Hades and Paradise at the same time? The Fathers proposed various solutions, but the question does not seem to have bothered the author of Gesta Salv. or the CM poet.

18449–50 The prayer seems to have been added. It is not in Gesta Salv. or in C.

18451–52 Gesta Salv. XXVII.

18473–4 C follows the Latin source “tres dies” (Gesta Salv. XXVII, 1.15). This was corrupted to “thoru” in G and further to “prow” in the exemplar of HTLB.

18478–80 This refers to the baptismal ceremony, where a white veil is placed over the baptized person’s head. For early traditions of the rite of baptism see, e.g., Isidore, De Ecclesiasticis Officiis II 25, PL LXXXIII, 820ff. Isidore does not mention the white robe, but a contemporary, Hildefonse of Toledo, incorporates it in his treatise De Cognitione Baptismi, PL XCVI, 171–2, quoting Rom. 13:12–13 and Gal. 3:27–28. See also Augustine, Sermo 223, PL XXXVIII, 1092.

18482–4 The three days obviously echo the time of Christ in the tomb and his resurrection.

18497 These transfigurations are modelled on the Transfigurations of Jesus, Moses, and Elias. Cf. Matth. 17:1–8; Marc. 9:2–8.

18505 Gesta Salv. XXVII, 4.2, has “omnis synagoga,” which is rendered by “hale” in CG. The exemplar of HTLB read “hale” as “bale”, and rewrote the line, contradicting its sense.

18517–18 Pilate had the story written in the temple. This information is not in Gesta Salv. as printed by Kim, but cf. ME verse Gosp. Nic. 1. 1661.

18522–80 Gesta Salv. XXVIII. These are the “protocols” or “acts” of Pilate (Acta Pilati), in which Pilate was supposed to have recounted the story of Christ’s trial, crucifixion, and resurrection.

18524–7 See Hennecke, NT Apoc. I, 477 Note. The Acts of Peter and Paul 40–42 has the original report. In this version it is not Claudius but Tiberius to whom Pilate allegedly addressed his letter.

18533 CFG read “dun,” but HTLB translate “de coelo” with “from heaven.”

18535–6 Cf. Is. 7:14, which is known as the Emmanuel Prophecy.

18542–56 Cf. Evangelium Nicodemi in Tischendorf, pp. 413–14, which lists seven different miracles.

18548 F alone preserves the correct reading “dry to walke upon his fete,” translating Gesta Salv. XXVIII, 1.13: “ambulare siccis pedibus super undas maris.”


18577 The final word by Pilate to his superior in Rome is made into a warning in CM. The Latin has “suggero.”

18586–7 The number of years should presumably be thirty-three, as, for instance, in Pseudo-Isidore, De Ortu et Obitu 57, PL LXXXIII 1286.

18595–600 Elucid. I 159.

18601–4 Elucid. I 160 says his soul was in heaven. Cf. above note to l. 18421–2.

18605–16 Elucid. I 161.

18617 CFG apparently mean the seventh day of the week (i.e. Sunday). The exemplar
of HTLB misunderstood and corrected it to the third day (after his death). Cf. 
_Elucid._ I 164.

18623ff. The _CM_ poet links the preceding action with the themes of Adam's quest 
for the Oil of Mercy and with his devotion to the Virgin.

18627–8 The number 4404 seems highly artificial and probably reflects the biblical 
interest in four as an especially significant number, representing the number of 
letters in God's name (YHWH), the number of rivers in Paradise (Gen. 2:10), 
the number of winds (Ez. 37:9), the quarters of the earth (Apoc. 7:1), the number 
of kingdoms of the world (Dan. 7:3ff.), the number of the Gospels, etc.

The number 4404 is, however, in contradiction to the 5100 years mentioned 
in _CM_ 17954–5, where the source had 5500. See note to ll. 17954–5 above. It 
is different from but closer to the numbers in _CM_ 1443–4, namely 4304 in CFG, 
4300 in HTL, and 4604 in B. See Horrell, _SVCM_ I, n. to ll. 1435–48.

18630 See note in Morris, _CM_ VI, p. li.

18631–2 See _Gen._ 5:5.

18639–860 The representation of the lion, the prince of animals, in _CM_ follows the 
bestiary tradition. No good edition of the Latin text exists, but cf. _The Bestiary: 
A Book of Beasts_, trans. T. H. White, pp. 7–11. The relevant section of the 
ME version is edited in Joseph Hall, _Selections from Early Middle English_, 
XXI. _CM_ follows the order of the Latin by having each characteristic of the lion 
immediately followed by its significance. The ME version gives the three 
characteristics first and then the three interpretations.

18643–54 The lioness gives birth to dead cubs, and lays them up lifeless for three 
days, until their father, on the third day, awakens them with a roar. Other versions 
say that he breathes in their faces and makes them alive. See White, _The Bestiary: 
A Book of Beasts_. This characteristic is given third in Latin and second in the 
ME Bestiary.

18655–60 Another feature of the lion of the Bestiary is that when he sleeps he keeps 
his eyes open. So did Christ. This is number two in Latin, but three in ME.

18661–683 The source for the lines is the Old French _Chateau d'amour_, ll. 1396– 
1414, as noted by Kari SäJäVäJäRa, in "The Use of Robert Grosseteste's _Chateau 
d'amour_," 191–92. This is the fourth passage of Grosseteste's poem that forms 
the basis for a section of the _CM_. The _Chateau d'amour_ is explicitly referred to 
in l. 9516 as "seyn Robardes boke."

21:25; _Act._ 1:3; _I Cor._ 15:5.

18663ff. Hänisch, _CM._, p. 41*, thought this whole section of the _CM'_s life of 
Christ was based on the Vulgate, but in fact the borrowing is from _Chateau 
d'amour_: 

_Od eus e but e manga,
Quarante jurs i demura,
A eus le regne Deu precha._ (1398–1400)

18668 This reference to the Ascension has its source in _Marc._ 16:9–20, _Luc._ 24:50–53 
and _Act._ 1:9–12. Although the place of the Ascension is not distinctly stated, it 
would appear from _Act._ 1:12 that it was Mount Olivet, since after the Ascension 
the disciples are described as returning to Jerusalem "a monte qui vocatur Oliveti, 
qui est juxta Jerusalem."


18684–700 The _CM_ poet has interpolated further dialogue from _Ioan._ 20:25–29.

18701 _Chateau d'amour_ 1417; cf. _Ioan._ 20:28. The act of faith by the believing 
Thomas is the fullest and most explicit recorded in the Gospels.
18707–50 *Chateau d'amour* 1423–68.
18709–16 Cf. *Matt.* 28:19–20; *Marc.* 16:15–18. This section is known in exegesis as the Universal Mission, and the Gentiles are included here. The rite of membership with Christ is baptism (18714–16).
18711–12 These lines are found only in the southern manuscripts HTLB, but they are authentic, translating *Chateau d'amour* 1429–31:

A universe creature,
C'est un home par dreiture.
E k'il en le Fiz Dee creissent.

See SAIJAVAARA, "The Use of Robert Grosseteste's *Chateau d'amour*," p. 193. For the implications of this see the General Introduction, "Stemma."

18719–20 These lines express in a positive form the same thought as the two preceding lines did in a negative way.

18721 Cf. *Ioan.* 13:15.

18722–50 This section paraphrases *Ioan.* 3:3–8 in which Nicodemus during a nocturnal visit to Christ questions him on the kingdom of God.

18729–50 This whole section about Christ and Adam echoes ideas Paul expounds in *Rom.* 5:12–19, in which he shows the effects of Adam's deeds and those of Christ. The CM poet reiterates the contrasting theme in this passage, which might be summed up by *I Cor.* 15:22: "Et sicut in Adam omnes moriuntur, ita et in Christo omnes vivificabuntur."


18761 *Luc.* 24:50.

18762 See above, n. to l. 18668.


18765 The CM poet is emphatic that Christ ascended by his own strength, although the Latin verbs are usually in the passive voice: "assumptus est" *Marc.* 16:19; "ferebatur" *Luc.* 24:51; "elevatus est" *Act.* 1:9. Cf., however, *Luc.* 24:51 "recessit" and *Ioan.* 6:62 "ascendentem."

18781–816 The exact source of these lines is unknown.

18805–6 Cf. *Marc.* 16:19; *Matt.* 26:64; *Act.* 2:33; *Rom.* 8:34.

For a modern review of some of the early descriptions of Christ’s appearance, see Ian Wilson, The Shroud of Turin.

18817–20 This paraphrases the end of the “Letter” as printed by Dobschiitz. The brightness alludes to the glorified Christ, as he appeared in his transfiguration. See Math. 17:2.

18827 This is the beginning of the description of Christ in the “Letter.” The CM poet follows the order of features mentioned there.

18835–6 The CM’s description is simpler than that in the “Letter” as printed by Dobschiitz:

“[er] planos fere usque ad aures, ab auribus [vero] circinos crispos aliquantulum ceruliores et fulgentiores, ab humeris ventilantes.”

18843–4 “barbam habens copiosam [et impuberem] capillis concolorum, non longam sed in mento (medio) [parum] bifurcatam.” This is one of the features common to many iconographic representations of the Christ figure. See Wilson, The Shroud of Turin, pp. 85ff.

18845–8 repeat information already given in 18833, 18837, and 18843–4. The exemplar of HTLB seems to have recognized this and has rewritten I, 18848.

18851–2 This is not in the “Letter” as it has been printed. While the CM poet seems to have known a version of the “Letter” close to that printed by Dobschiitz, there were undoubtedly many variations among the Latin manuscripts which could explain the seeming divergence of the CM poet here and elsewhere.

18853–4 “in increpatione terribilis, in admonitione blandu et amabilis.” The CM poet did not add the translation of “hilaris servata gravitate,” found in Dobschiitz.

18855–6 Several places in the NT can be referred to: Math. 23:1–39; Marc. 12:38–40; Luc. 11:37–53; 20:45–7.

18855–6 PC’s “thris” seems to be a scribal corruption, as the Latin text has “aliquando flevit,” and Christ weeps only twice in the Gospels; see Luc. 19:41; Ioan. 11:35.

18857–8 The “Letter” in Dobschiitz does not speak of Mary. However John Damascene in Epistola ad Theophilum Imperatorem, PG XCV 350, writes: “... homo ipse ex sancta Virginie ac Dei Genitrice Maria sine mutatione aut variatione factus, ... nostrae simili forma conspicuum esse ac maternae similitudinis proprietates exacte retulisse, Adamique formam exhibuisse.”


18877 Act. 1:15.

18887 Act. 1:18 does not mention the hanging, but cf. Math. 27:5 and CM 16504.

18889 The reference is to Ps. 68:26 and 108:8.

18912–25 Act. 2:1–4. The Upper Room of Act. 1:13, according to tradition, was the Cena, the scene also of the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

18919 CM’s “wynd” translates the Latin “spiritus vehementis” (Act. 2:2). This passage was often linked with Ioan. 3:8.

18929–30 The comparison is not in the sources.

18935–6 Act. 2:4. All were filled with the Holy Spirit, although the apostles had already received Him. See Ioan. 20:22–33.

18945–6 The lines are omitted in HTLB, but translate Act. 2:5 and are, therefore, probably authentic.
18978 Joel. 2:28–32.
19013 The line is very weak in HTLB.
19015 L's "ij" is a misinterpretation of the final preposition "to."
19032 Act. 2:41 says 3000 people were baptized. All CM MSS read 300.
19061–4 These lines are found only in EC, but they are based on Act. 3:4–6.
19079–80 This reference is to Is. 35:6.
19083–4 ECG add a little colour to the account of Act. 3:10, having some of the people swoon because of the miraculous cure of the lame beggar. HTLB omit this.
19100 Cf. Christ's words in Luc. 23:34.
19115–204 Act. 4:1–21, but the CM poet has added dialogue.
19137–8 Only F has these lines. They are probably not original.
19146 The exemplar of HTLB has misread "sot-hede"/folly as "sophede"/truth, thus reversing the meaning of the lines.
19156–7 Cf. Ps. 117:22, Is. 28:16.
19163–72 These lines are found only in F. The source is as yet unknown.
19185 EF preserve the correct reading "Calde," Lat. "vocantes."
19191–200 The CM poet expands the dialogue.
19217–22 The speech is necessary in the poem to explain why Ananias must give the apostles all the money. The community of property among the early converts is set out in Act. 4:32–37.
19230–2 Cf. WHITING, Proverbs, S.953.
19258–70 This explanation of the harshness of the penalty is not in Act.
19277 Only C reads correctly "scape," from Act. 5:15 "umbra . . . obumbraret."
19289–352 Act. 5:7–32.
19301–2 These lines are only in HTLB. They paraphrase the action of Act. 5:21 but occur in the middle of the translation of Act. 5:20, and are probably a later interpolation.
19352–62 Act. 5:33, 40–42.
19389–91 In Act. 6:5 the names are Stephanus, Philippus, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus.
EXPLANATORY NOTES

19419-24 Act. 6:11-14, with details, such as the two witnesses, taken from Petrus Comestor, Hist. Schol. Act. xxxi, PL CXCVIII 1663.

19425-32 Stephen’s sermon in Act. 7:2-53 recapitulates OT history. It is much abbreviated here.

19433-76 Act. 7:54-60.

19439, 19443-4 Jesus is usually said to sit at God’s right hand.

19444-6 F’s lines are different from those in the other MSS.


19461-2 These lines, which appear only in MS F, may refer to Act. 7:58-59. Cf. also Ioan. 8:7.


19471-6 The text of Act. parallels Luc. 23:34 and 46, and Ps. 30:6.


19509-16 Philip the Deacon; Act. 8:5-6.

19517-600 Hist. Schol. Act. xxxix-xl, PL CXCVIII 1668-70. Gnostic legend gave Simon Magus great importance, but this chapter of the Acts is all the NT has to say about him. This was the first encounter of the Christian church with the magic of the pagan world.

19571 The word “simony” comes from Simon Magus, and means the buying and selling of a church office. ECFG translate the biblical “Date” (Act. 8:19) by “gius,” but HTL’s “Selle” makes clearer the link between Simon and simony.

19573-4 MS F’s reading of these lines is corrupt.


19609-10 F’s odd line “christen man pat euer ete brede” could refer to the Holy Eucharist.

19613 GHTL read “fire of hell” although Act. 9:3, 22:6, and 26:13 all speak of a “lux de caelo.” B corrects the reading to “heuen smote hym douH.”

19617-20 Morris’ layout of lines is misleading here. Two lines, numbered 19619-20 in ECG, 19617-18 in T, correspond to 19617 and 19619 in F. F has added a further two lines to no purpose.

19618 Act. 9:4: “Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris?” Christ identified himself with the persecuted Church.

19626 F’s reading is closer to Act. 9:5 here: “againe be prik” for “contra stimulum.” EC’s “Ogain bi stranger” (G “wranger”) could be a corruption of an original “stang.”

19627-32, 19635-6 are found only in F and have no counterpart in Act.

19653-6 These lines may have been suggested by Hist. Schol. Act. xlii, PL CXCVIII 1671, which quotes Gal. 1:1 here.

19657-740 Act. 9:10-29.

19668 ECF’s “santis” is original. GHTLB change this systematically to “servandes.” Cf. 1. 19682 below.

19678-80 Paul’s sufferings are outlined in II Cor. 11:23-33.

19711-12 This plot to kill Saul because he was an apostate from Judaism took place three years after his conversion. See Gal. 1:18. This date is confirmed by the mention of the Ethnarch of Aretas, II Cor. 11:32, who apparently ruled in Damascus ca. 38-40 A.D. See Hist. Schol. Act. xliiv, PL CXCVIII 1673.
19718 ECGB read "Paul" here, while GHTL have "Saul." Act. 9:24 reads "Saulo," and he is not called "Paul" until Act. 13:9. The reading in ECGB could be original, however, as tradition held that Saul's name was changed to Paul at baptism.

19739-40 Act. 9:29 mentions only Greeks, but Comestor explains that the hostile Jews were "Judaei conversantes inter Graecos, cum quibus disputabat." Hist. Schol. Act. xlv, PL CXCVIII 1673.


19752 Act. 9:33 says eight years, as does MS E: "In parlesie gia aʒte gier." CG's "mar ban seuen yeire" is perhaps an emendation for metre, which has predictably been corrupted to "vij sere" in FHTLB.


19803-80 Act. 10:1-16.

19841-9 and 19859-61 Lev. 11 gives God's commands on the subject of clean and unclean animals.


19944 CFG's "persun" has been corrupted to "prisoun" in HTLB and independently also in E.

19945-6 HAENISCH, CM. p. 13*, sees another example of Petrus Comestor's influence on CM. Hist. Schol. Act. xlvii, PL CXCVIII 1677 has "nec discernit inter Judaes et gentes." Act. 10:34 contains this exclamation of Peter too, but it does not directly oppose Jews and heathens, as Comestor does.

20011ff. The story of the Assumption of Mary. The belief in this event, although popular in Catholic tradition, was declared a dogma only in 1950. Accounts have circulated from early times in many languages; see especially Martin JUGIE, La Mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge, p. 327, et passim; A. A. WENGER, L'Assomption. TISCHENDORF, Apocalypses Apocryphae, pp. 113-36, edited two Latin versions which became known as Transitus A and Transitus B. The latter was commonly, although wrongly, attributed in the Middle Ages to St. Mellitus of Sardis. Another Transitus text was edited by Monika HAIBACH-REINISCH, Ein Neuer "Transitus Marie." See also B. CAPELLE, "Vestiges grecs et latins d'un antique transitus"; HENNECKE, NT Apoc. I, 429; O'CARROLL, "Assumption" in Theotokos.

The story exists in OE in Blickling Homily XfII, ed. R. MORRIS, pp. 136-59, and in ME in seven renderings in verse and four in prose. For details of these versions see SEVERS, Manual II, pp. 450-51, 642-44. To the editions listed there, add Walter SAUER, ed., The Metrical Life of Christ ed. from MS BM Add. 39996 (Heidelberg, 1977), Middle English Texts 5. The Lud. Cov. pp. 354-73 also has a play of the Assumption.

The CM poet certainly knew Wace's Old French version of the story in
L’Établissement de la fête de la conception Notre-Dame, and he may also have known HERMAN DE VALENCIENNES’ De l’assomption Nostre Dame, a poem which appears at the end of many MSS of Herman’s Bible. See the edition by C. A. STRATE. As HAENISCH, CM, pp. 42*-47*, demonstrated, however, the poet has turned instead to the earliest of the ME verse translations, that known as the Southern Assumption, and printed in King Horn . . . ., ed. J. Rawson Lumby, re-ed. G. H. McKnight.

The Southern Assumption is preserved in seven MSS. The McKnight-Lumby edition, hereafter abbreviated as SA, printed two MSS in full, most of a third, and generous variants from two more in the notes. A further fragment was edited by Michael SARGENT in “The McGill University Fragment of the ‘Southern Assumption’.” The McKnight-Lumby edition used two different sets of MS sigla, one in the introduction and another in the notes. To avoid confusion connected with this edition, and also to avoid confusion with CM MS sigla, the SA MSS will here be designated as follows:

Cambridge University Gg. IV.27.2, p. 26ff. (Camb. G)
Chetham MS 8009, fol. 4r ff. (Chet.)
Cambridge University Dd.I.1, fol. 175r ff. (Camb. D)
Cambridge University Ff.II.38, fol. 40 ff. (Camb. F)
BL Harley 2382, fol. 75r ff. (Harl.)
BL Add. 10036, fol. 62r ff. (BL)
McGill University 142 (MG)

The CM used a manuscript which was close to BL, and references will normally be made to this manuscript. Lines found only in other manuscripts will be noted, as will lines found exclusively in MS BL.

20043–58 This is similar to the ending of SA in BL, ll. 879–96.


HAENISCH, CM, p. 46*, suggested that the poet’s attribution of authorship of the SA to St. Edmund of Pontigny was caused by a misunderstanding of ll. 893–6 of the poem in a MS like BL:

And be archibishop seynt Edtnound
Hap granted x l daies to pardoun
To alle bat bis vie wol here,
Or with good wille wol laer.

20058 EC say forty while FGHTLB say twenty. SA, BL i. 894 says forty also.

20061–4 The northern MSS ECFG have four lines here which mention that the poem was taken from a southern dialect and translated into a northern one. HTLB omit these lines, because for the southern version the lines have been re-translated into “sotherin englis.”


20081–7 There exists an extensive “planctus Mariae” tradition in Latin hymns such as the “Stabat Mater Dolorosa” and “Stabat Mater Speciosa,” and also in vernacular lyric. A version of one of these Planctus poems finds its way into the northern copies of CM, MSS ECFG, ll. 23945ff. For frequently copied works see Index, 771, 1869, 3208. For recent bibliography on this topos see D. C. BAKER, Late Medieval Religious Plays, pp. xc ff. Middle English prose lamentations are found in several MSS. See Elizabeth SALTER, “The Manuscripts of Nicholas Love’s Myrrour,” p. 127, item 3(A).

For the tradition in Old French see BOSSUAT, Manuel bibliographique, 3105–3111, and Supplement 1, 6598.
The line is closer to SA Camb. G 34.

Cf. Ioan. 19:26–27.

The lines are only in SA BL 55–8, and may have been inserted to emphasize the universal spiritual maternity of Mary. The idea appears in the writings of Augustine; see De Sancta Virginitate, vi 6, PL XL 399.

EFG preserve the original reading. See SA BL 57.

This is closer to SA Camb. G 66.

SA Camb. G 84 says that Mary lived this way for ten years.

In SA it is Christ who wants Mary with him. See SA Camb. G 85. The situation is reversed in CM.

This is closest to SA MG 34: "Ne schalt bou here no lengere wone."

These lines are in SA BL 121–2 and MG 41–2, but not in Camb. G.

These lines are erased in C. The lines do not appear in any of the SA MSS in print. They anticipate the information in CM, II. 20187–8, SA Camb. G 126–7, BL 134–5, MG 56–7. They are apparently authentic in CM, however, appearing in FGHTLB, and originally in C. The erasure raises the possibility that someone corrected C against a copy of SA itself.

This is expanded from the two lines of SA. See SA BL 139–40,Camb. G 131–2. MG 45ff. also expands the speech.

In SA Mary is given only clothes, but in CM the original "schred" (SA BL 159)"schurd" (Camb. G 153), has become "schod."

Most like SA Camb. G 169–70.


Two lines of SA are omitted here. See BL 221–2, Camb. G 217–18 and MG 143–4.

The lines are found only in CG, but are authentic.

The lines are not in SA Camb. G or MG, but are in BL 237–8.

HTLB reverse these lines compared to CG, but the order of HTLB is also that of SA BL 253–4, Harl. 247–8, MG 175–6.

The CM’s lines are not verbally close to any of the printed MSS of SA. An early copy of CM seems to have slightly expanded the material in BL 269–74, Harl. 263–9.

Mary’s concern over her earthly remains is documented in various apocryphal writings. See M. R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament, pp. 109, 123, 126, 196, 197, 199, 205.

Morris, CM, VI, p. iii, suggests that the reading "comfort" in GHTLB shows that C’s "clad" is a blunder for "gladden." The SA MSS, however, contain both readings: Harl. 298 has "comfort," BL 302 "gladen."

These lines are only in SA BL 307–45.

HTLB preserve a better reading here. In SA BL 317 it is Peter who speaks.

These lines are not in SA Harl., but occur in two other MSS. See SA, p. 150, n. to II. 332ff.

HTLB preserve the name of the speaker, John, which has dropped out of CG. See SA BL 337.

These lines are not found in SA BL, but are in two other MSS. See SA, p. 150, n. to II. 347ff.

SA Camb. F 331 reads "Than went be apostelys oon lasse ben xii." This presumably anticipates the story of the doubting Thomas, who was not present.

SA BL 348–56.
20439-50 SA BL 359-70.
20440 SA BL reads “bi and bi,” as do HTLB. The readings of the other MSS of CM do not correspond with the other MSS of SA.
20451-2 Variants of these two lines are in SA Harl. 309-10, Camb. F 359-60 and Camb. D 367-8. They do not appear in BL.
20453-6 SA BL 371-74.
20457-60 Only in SA BL 375-78.
20461-90 SA BL 379-408.
20491-508 These lines are not in SA BL, which has instead the long passage which follows at CM 20509-78. The lines are, however, in SA Harl. 345-64 and also in Camb. F and partly in Camb. D.
20492 SA Harl. 346 speaks only of “a swete smell” rather than a song, but other versions of the Assumption story speak of both songs and odours. See, e.g., the Greek narrative of the Assumption translated in M. R. JAMES, The Apocryphal New Testament p. 208; M. HAIBACH-REINISCH, Ein Neuer “Transitus Mariae,” p. 87, i. 6.
20499 SA Harl. 354-6 has both thunder and an earthquake.
20503-4 SA Harl. 359-60 says there were three maidens and that none of Mary’s kins awoke.
20509-78 The passage is found only in SA BL 411-74.
20541-2 SA BL 443-4 refers to the scourging of Christ here.
20547-8, 20555-8 Nothing in SA BL corresponds to these lines.
20579-672 SA BL 475-568.
20581 SA Harl. 367.
20591 SA Harl. 377.
20603 SA Harl. 393.
20617-18 Not in SA.
20619-22 SA BL 518, 515-16.
20658-60 Not in SA.
20667-8 Not in SA.
20675-82 Only in SA BL 569-76 and Camb. F.
20679 SA BL 573.
20683-714 SA BL 577-610.
20690 HTLB differ greatly from CF and SA BL 586 and Harl. 468 here. G’s line is missing, and was evidently so in the exemplar common to G and the exemplar of HTLB. The southern reviser had to make up a new line.
20699-702 Only in SA BL 595-8.
20714 CF’s line “And go we singand thoru bis tun” corresponds with SA Harl. 490 “And go we synyand thurgh pe toune.” GHTLB, on the other hand, have “And sing we faire thoru pe tun,” which is more like SA BL “And synge we faire þorw þis toum.”
20715-30 This passage appears here in SA Harl. 491-506, but was transposed in SA BL, where it appears at ll. 689-702. Textually, however, the passage is closer to BL than to Harl.
The plot to defile Mary’s body is vividly portrayed in many Assumption texts and in paintings. In ME see especially Lud. Cov., p. 357.
20731-40 The text of SA Harl. diverges somewhat here, and CM remains close to SA BL 703-10. SA BL continues for a further forty-four lines which do not appear in CM.
The lines appear only in GHTLB and not in SA.

SA BL 611ff., but CM begins to diverge considerably from all the SA MSS here. SA BL 623-38 says that the injured Jew was one who had helped Peter when he denied Christ.

SA refers to a Jew, not a priest here.

The account of a non-believer touching the bier and having his hand stick to it echoes II Reg. 6:6-7, where Oza was struck dead because he touched the ark of the Covenant.

The standard number of baptisms is 20,000. See SA Harl. 576-7, BL 686-7.

This line as found in CM is original in its wording, although SA BL 761-2 expresses the idea of ritual associated with the burial, as CM does.

SA Harl. 601-2. At this point SA BL, Harl., Camb. D and Camb. F all have more than 200 lines on a miracle involving the apostle Thomas, who had been absent when Mary departed from this life. However, the CM poet did not insert this apocryphal section into his work.

The flowers in the tomb come from SA BL 844-6, Harl. 676-8. An alternative tradition says that manna was found instead. See, e.g., HERMAN DE VALENCIENNES, De l'assomption, I. 662.


For a discussion of the tradition of Mary as mediatrix of grace see "Mediation, Mary Mediatress" in Michael O'CARROLL, Theotokos, pp. 238-45.

Most apocryphal texts agree that Mary was fourteen when she bore Christ. See CROSS and HILL, The Prose Solomon and Saturn, p. 80.

Christ's age is attested in scripture. See, e.g., Luc. 3:23.

A prayer by the author on the completion of a section.

These lines deal with the "Works and Death of Each of the Apostles." The CM poet's account is based on ISIDORE of Seville's De Ortu et Obitu Patrum, "Ex Novo Testamento," PL LXXXIII 147-56, as HAENISCH, CM, p. 56*, pointed out. From time to time, however, the CM supplements Isidore's material. Haenisch thought that the poet was getting his additional information from the Leg. Aur., but Paul BEICHNER, "The CM and Petrus Riga," pp. 247-50, has shown that a more likely source of the supplementary stories was a Pseudo-Isidorian text also called De Ortu et Obitu Patrum printed in PL LXXXIII, Appendix XX, cols. 1275-94. This is now thought to be of Irish provenance; see Robert E. MCNALLY, "'Christus' in the Pseudo-Isidorian Liber de Orito,'" pp. 168-69.

A few details do not appear in either text. They may have come to the CM poet from Leg. Aur., or from commonly known oral tradition. On the other hand, McNally points out that some of the manuscripts of Pseudo-Isidore contain a text more expanded than that printed in PL, and it is possible that the CM poet was using such a text.

For details of the origin and early history of the stories of the later lives of the apostles, see HENNECKE, NT Apoc. II, pp. 25-74, and the introductions to the Acts of each apostle in the same volume. The texts in their original languages are printed in LIPSUS, Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten. See also Otto HOPHAN, The Apostles, and for an overview of material available to an Old English poet, see J. E. CROSS, "Cynewulf's Traditions about the Apostles."

20859 Cf. Matth. 4:18; Marc. 1:16.

20861–2 Cf. Ioan. 1:44.


20867 Cf. Matth. 16:16; Ioan. 6:69.

20869 Cf. Matth. 16:19.


20876 ISIDORE, De Ortu, PL LXXXIII 149, names six countries: “in Galatia, Ponto, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Asia, atque Italia.” The first five names come from I Petr. 1:1 which is addressed to “electis advenis dispersionis Ponti Galatiae, Cappadociae, Asiae et Bithyniae.”

20878 The scribe of the exemplar of HTLB misread the initial minim of “in asie,” to produce “Masi.” There may also have been confusion with “Mysiam,” where Paul preached in Act. 16:7.

20880 Not in Isidore.

20882 Cf. Matth. 14:24–33. ECF’s “scaldant” translates the wrong meaning of Isidore’s “fervidum.” GHTLB’s “flouand” is closer to the Vulgate, where the sea is clearly not hot but windy and rough.

20883 Apparently a conflation of Act. 5:15 with the raising of Tabitha, Act. 9:36–43.


20891–4 Simon Magus is mentioned in Act. 8:9–24, but the incident referred to here is told in The Acts of Peter. See HENNECKE, NT Apoc. II, pp. 311–16.

20906–7 ISIDORE, De Ortu, xviii, 116, PL LXXXIII 149, has Peter bishop for twenty-five years. His martyrdom occurs thirty-six years after that of Christ. The same numbers are given in PSEUDO-ISIDORE, De Ortu 39, PL LXXXIII 1287.

E’s reading “x” for “vj” in l. 20907 is an error.

20913–18 Not in Isidore or Pseudo-Isidore.

20915–16 The exemplar of the southern version completely misread the sense of these lines. Perhaps because they are so awkwardly expressed, F changed them considerably too.


20963–4 Cf. Act. 28:8. ECG refer correctly to one man, the father of Publius.

20965–98 Cf. II Cor. 11:23–27, 33.

20973 The three shipwrecks of ECFG come from PSEUDO-ISIDORE, De Ortu 40, PL LXXXIII 1237. L. 20974 may also reflect this text.

20983 At this point our text is from MS T, as H has lost four leaves here.


20987 Nero is not named in the NT, but he was the emperor referred to in Act. 25:11 and Phil. 4:22.

Andrew was one among the first called; see Ioh. 1:40; Matth. 4:18.

Isidore says his name means “decorus,” but Pseudo-Isidore elaborates “virilis, vel decorus.”

These details are found in Pseudo-Isidore. The cross on which Andrew suffered is commonly held to have been the decussate cross, now known as St. Andrew’s, though evidence for this view seems to be no older than the fourteenth century. See Cath. Enc., “Andrew, Apostle, Saint.”


Cf. Matth. 4:21; Marc. 1:19; Luc. 5:10; et passim.


The printed edition of Isidore says James was buried “in Marmarica,” a district in Africa. The CM poet either used a MS in which this word read “marmore,” or he mistranslated the Latin, to produce the “kiste of marbir stane.”

Neither Isidore nor Pseudo-Isidore mentions the length of time, but cf. Leg. Aur., p. 57: “Eodem anno.”

From Pseudo-Isidore, De Ortu 43, PL LXXXIII 1288. L. 21045, however, seems to echo a fuller version quoted in Leg. Aur., p. 56: “ille autem inde exiit illaesus, sicut a corruptione carnis exstiterat alienus.”

Neither Isidore nor Pseudo-Isidore mentions the length of time, but cf. Leg. Aur., p. 57.

The name of the widow is not found in Isidore or Pseudo-Isidore, but is in Leg. Aur., p. 57.

TLB’s “six jeer & seven” is a corruption of the correct “sexti gere ande seuin,” as in ECFG.

ECF’s “slepand” is correct, translating “dormientem.” G’s “spelland” is an error by metathesis, which is translated to “preching” in TLB’s exemplar.

Isidore, De Ortu, lxxi, 131, PL LXXXIII 152. Cf. Hennecke, II 57–58; Lipsius II 2, 1–53; Hophan, 141–53.

Cf. Ioh. 1:44.


Cf. Matth. 10:3; Marc. 3:18; Luc. 6:15; Act. 1:13. For Didimus cf. Ioh. 11:16; 20:24; 21:2.

Bartholomew is mentioned in all four of the lists of apostles: Matth. 10:3; Marc. 3:18; Luc. 6:14; Act. 1:13. He was often identified with Nathanael of Ioh. 1:45, 21:2.

“Suly” is a corruption of “Sury”/Syria, as in Horrall, SVCM I, l. 2106.

These lines, which are found only in F, are not translated from the CM’s usual sources here, and are probably a later addition.
EXPLANATORY NOTES


21117–18 Matthew’s name is given in all four of the apostle lists: Math. 10:3; Marc. 3:18; Luc. 6:15; Act. 1:13.

21118 Only C has the correct reading “chosin,” translating “electus.” EFGTLB all corrupt this to “cosin of criste.”


21128 The title of “bishop” is not, of course, used in the NT. James was, however, a distinguished leader in the early church. See Act. 15:13; 21:18ff.; Gal. 1:18–19.

21130–1 Christ’s brethren are referred to in Math. 12:46; Marc. 6:3; Luc. 8:20; Ioan. 7:3; Act. 1:14; I Cor. 9:5. The word “frater” does not refer exclusively to siblings by birth; cf. its use in Gen. 14:16, Act. 9:17, etc.

James’ mother is called Mary in Matth. 27:56, Marc. 15:40, and Ioan. 19:25. A widespread belief in the Middle Ages was that Anna, the Virgin’s mother, had been married three times, and bore three daughters called Mary. By Joachim, she had the Virgin, by Cleophas she had Mary who became the wife of Alphaeus and the mother of James the Less, Joseph (or Barnabas), Simon, and Jude. By Salomias she had Mary who married Zebedee and bore James the Greater and John the Evangelist. For a discussion of the legend in the Middle Ages see Max Förster, “Die Legende von Trinubium der hl. Anna,” and M. R. James, “The Salomites.” The CM poet has already given the information at II. 12659–12705.

21135–6 Cf. Matth. 9:20; 14:36.

21142–6 The lines are confused in several MSS. L1. 21142–3 seem to have been reversed in the exemplar of G, making the “wicked iuu” of L. 21142 the subject of the following clause. G copied the reversal, but the exemplar of [H]TLB made up a new L. 21142 to improve the sense. Isidore does not mention the smiting with a pole, but PSEUDO-ISIDORE does. De Ortu 46, PL LXXXIII 1290. L1. 21143–4, which are omitted in C, are nonetheless authentic.


21147–8 Cf. Luc. 6:16; Act. 1:13; Judeae 1:1. Judas is also called Thaddeus, as in Pseudo-Isidore, De Ortu 50, PL LXXXIII 1292.

21153 Neither Isidore nor Pseudo-Isidore mention that Judas was beheaded.

21154 The text of Isidore printed in PL reads “Berytho,” but a variant reading is “Nerito,” which the CM poet saw. “Nerito” was easily corrupted to “Nerico.” The scribe of the exemplar of [H]TLB dropped one stroke off the beginning of the word to produce “ierico,” a place name which was familiar to him. “Armeni” became “carmani” in the exemplar of G and thus appears in GTLB.


The election of Matthew is reported in Act. 1:15–26.

21160 “half foure score & two” is 3½ score (i.e., seventy) and two. This refers to the apostles sent to preach in Luc. 10:1.

21163–4 The CM poet did not find Matthew’s death in Isidore, Pseudo-Isidore, or the Leg. Aur.

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21165 Matth. 10:4; Marc. 3:18; Luc. 6:15; Act. 1:13.

21177-82 This short summary in CM has its source in ISIDORE, De Ortu, lxxxi, 143-44, PL LXXXIII 154.

21183-6 These are paraphrased from the discussion by Clement quoted in PSEUDO-ISIDORE, De Ortu 53, PL LXXXIII 1292.

21187-94 No immediate source has been traced for these lines, although they represent widely known traditions about the apostles.


21195-6 Cf. Col. 4:14; II Tim. 4:11.

21200 F may have preserved a better reading for the Latin "et individuus comes peregrinationis ejus."

21215 Only PSEUDO-ISIDORE, De Ortu 55, PL LXXXIII 1293, mentions that Andrew's relics were transported with those of Luke.

21217-20 ISIDORE, De Ortu, lxxxiv, 147, PL LXXXIII 155. Cf. HENNECKE, II 67; LIPSIUS, II 2, 270-320, and PSEUDO-ISIDORE, De Ortu 56, PL LXXXIII 1293. The CM poet is following the order of Pseudo-Isidore, in which Luke, rather than the order of Isidore, in which Mark comes between Luke and Barnabas.


21221-36 The CM poet has expanded the information of Isidore and Pseudo-Isidore here. No exact source has been found, but there are many analogues.

21225-32 These acts are recounted in Leg. Aur., pp. 349, 627-28.


21242-3 Leg. Aur., p. 266, stresses Mark's great humility. Canon 984 of the Codex Iuris Canonici states: "Sunt irregulares ex defectu: . . . Corpore vitiati qui secure propter debilitatem, vel decenter propter deformitatem, altaris ministerio defungi non valeant." Anyone who had lost a thumb, especially the thumb of the right hand, would not be ordained if he could not safely hold and break the Host. See T. L. BOUSCAREN et al., Canon Law, p. 442; cf. p. 447; see also Gilbert GUIYDIER, Les irregularites "Ex Defectu Corporis," p. 132.

21243 CF read correctly "in itali," which GTLB have corrupted to "in a talie."

21251-2 ISIDORE, De Ortu, lxxxii, 146, PL LXXXIII 154.

21253-8 The story of Mark's martyrdom is not found in Isidore or Pseudo-Isidore. The same details, however, appear in Leg. Aur., p. 267.

21263-346 Paul BEICHNER, in "The CM and Petrus Riga," pp. 339-44, first showed that this passage was translated from a Latin poem by Petrus Riga, "De Quatuor Evangelistarum Proprietatibus et Significationibus." The poem is printed by Beichner on pp. 240-42 and is also found in PL CLXXI 1389-90, where it is mistakenly attributed to Hildebert of Lavardin. Beichner suggested that the CM poet found Petrus Riga's poem in the same MS in which he found the version of the Lives of the Apostles which he used.

21265-70 The CM poet, like Petrus Riga, announces the topics with which his poem will deal.

21271 Cf. Gen. 2:10-14.

21272 This is a clumsy translation of "currum Amminadab video quatuor ire rotis." Cf. the allegorical chariot pulled by the four evangelists in Piers Plowman B XIX 257-60, C XXI 262-65. The evangelists appear as the wheels of a chariot.

21277 Petrus Riga mentions the chariot of Amminadab here, from *Cant.* 6:11.


21285 The two laws are the old law of Moses and the new law of Christ, which abrogated the old.

21288 Beichner, "The CM and Petrus Riga," p. 243, points out that "bodi" here is a corruption of "bode"/command, translating the Latin "iugum sunt tua iussa, Deus" (1. 20). Morris, Haenisch, and Kaluza all accepted this to mean Christ's body was the yoke, although he has already appeared as the charioteer.


21293–6 For a slightly different and more conventional comparison see Jerome, *Expositio Quatuor Evang.*, *PL* XXX 534.

21297–330 These lines give seven different activities or attributes to each of the four evangelists, all in allegorical form. St. John often comes as the climax to a series.

21319–21 The imagery here comes from Ez. 1:10 via *Apoc.* 4:7. Ezekiel apparently derived his plastic imagery from composite Babylonian figures (originally astronomical figures), and equipped each Being with all four faces, human, lion, bull, eagle. The first application of this imagery to the four apostles was made by Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* III. xi. 8, *PG* VII 885–90. See also Jerome, *Expositio Quatuor Evang.*, *PL* XXX 534; *In Evang. Matthaei*, Prologue, *PL* XXXVI 19–20; Augustine, *In Ioannis Evang.*, xxxvi, c.viii.5, *PL* XXXV 1665–66.

21320 Only C retains the original reading "marco Icon."

21339–44 The CM poet draws a clear moral from the allegorical discussion by slightly rewording some of the lines of his source.
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