

63. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 557
(with 153 Lawrence, Kansas, Kenneth Spencer
Research Library Pryce MS C2:1)
Fragments of "Legend of the Holy Cross before Christ"
[Ker 73, Gneuss 117]

HISTORY: Two narrow strips from a single leaf containing an early to mid-11c OE version of "The Legend of the Holy Cross before Christ" are preserved in the Corpus Christi College Library. Most of another leaf from the same manuscript and text is preserved in Lawrence, Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, Pryce MS C2:1 [153] (formerly MS Y 103). The only other copy of this work is in a late OE/early ME version ("xii", Ker, *Cat.*: 368) in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 [359], ff. 14v–20v (ed. Napier 1894). The Kansas leaf is here designated Fragment 1 and the Corpus strips are designated Fragment 2:1 and 2:2. Corpus Fragment 2:2 was found in 1936, in the leather binding of Johannes Carion, *Chronicon* (Basel, 1563, 1568; first reported by Ker 1940). Corpus Fragment 2:1 was found in the early 1950s in the parchment binding of Donatus Gotvisus, *Fides Iesu et Iesuitarum* (Christlingæ, 1573). Both books are from the library of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury (1559–1575), and passed to Corpus Christi College in 1575. The Parkerian bindings date from the 1570s (see Page, Budny, and Hadgraft 1995: 502–4).

Ker, from photographs of the Kansas leaf, recognized the identity of the hand of the three fragments (Ker, p.c., 4 July 1961, to B. Colgrave; see Colgrave and Hyde 1967: 61–62; also Ker, "Suppl.": 122). There are annotations on all three fragments by the distinctive "tremulous Worcester hand" of the early 13c. Following Ker's initial observation (1940: 84) of a resemblance between the scripts of Fragment 2.2 and of Scribe 9 of CCCC MS 198 (ff. 367r–374v), and given the similar formats and shared glosses by the "tremulous Worcester hand," Colgrave and Hyde (1962: 77) suggested that the fragments were once bound with MS 198 or "a similar manuscript which has since disappeared."

The two fragments were mounted in a paper frame by V. S. Stoakley in 1952. This arrangement proving unstable, Nicholas Hadgraft in 1991–1992 created a butterfly pressure mount made of acid-free board with fitted recesses for each fragment. As mounted and photographed, the presentation is some-

what confusing: 2.2 is above 2.1, inverting the relative position of the fragments on their original leaf, and 2.2 is reversed (verso to front).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: Two strips: Fragment 2.1, ca. 75 x 145 mm., from the top of the leaf, showing part of the upper margin, contains six incomplete lines of text on each side and fragments of a seventh on the verso; Fragment 2.2, ca. 45 x 155 mm., from further down the same leaf, contains four incomplete lines of text and bits of two more on both sides. On Fragment 2.1 three narrow channels to accommodate a binding thong, ca. 25 x 7 mm., are cut into the top and bottom. Fragment 2.2 is an irregular rectangle without channels. Vellum is rather thick and stiff, with yellowish or brownish surfaces, recto flesh on both fragments. No prickings survive. Irregular ruling, about 18 mm. apart, by drypoint from the verso. Rectos truncated on left margin, versos truncated on right. Length of written lines vary.

[**Note:** In Kansas, Fragment 1, the width of the writing area is preserved: the vertical rulings provide a central area of ca. 170 x 115 mm., with about three lines of writing cut from the top; the written line-length, with both beginnings and ends preserved, varies between ca. 132 and 157 mm. If three lines are cropped from the top of the Kansas leaf, then it contained 26 lines of writing. The Corpus recto then probably represents (2.1) lines 1–6 and (2.2) lines 16–21, with a nine-line gap between them.]

Ink on both sides of 2.1 and 2.2 is faded in places, 2.1 more than 2.2. Script is a single hand, rather simple, upright and undistinguished A–S minuscule; text-initials are sometimes filled in with dull reddish-orange wash. Latin glosses in light brown ink in the early-13c “tremulous Worcester hand” (Franzen 1991: 54, her forms “B” and “M”); hand also provides additional punctuation, accent marks, and diacritics, some very faint. On the upper left edge of 2.1, recto, is a small decorative motif, drawn free-hand and in a different ink from either the main text or the Worcester glosses, presumably an added decoration or doodle (Page, Budny, and Hadgraft 1995: 510).

CONTENTS: Fragments from a single leaf of an 11c OE text of “The Legend of the Holy Cross before Christ” (text otherwise known only in the 12c version of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343 [359]; ed. Napier 1894; the Corpus fragments are transcribed Page, Budny, and Hadgraft 1995: 524–25):

[**Note:** As mounted and shown on the fiche, the lower fragment is from the top of the leaf and the upper fragment is from the lower part of the leaf; the upper fragment is reversed.]

- Fragment 2.1 recto [lower fragment]: '[. . .] þa eodon hi in to ða⟨m⟩ cyninge. 7 him cyddon þ⟨æt⟩ hi o[n e]allu⟨m⟩ . . . [stowe fin]dan mag[on] 7 hi swa dydon. 7 [wær]on seofon nih[t o]n sócne [. . .]' (= Napier 22.26–32);
- Fragment 2.2 recto [upper fragment, reversed]: '[. . . þæ]rto þe hit ær ametan hæf[don þa] [the rest of the line trimmed and partially visible] . . . (lines 5–6) þ⟨æt⟩ hi deapes scyldige wæron. | [::::::::::::::::::::::::::] gebroht hæfdon[.] Het hit ða up [. . .]' (= Napier 24.9–16);
- Fragment 2.1 verso: '[. . .] asendan wolde. 7 hi þa fóron. 7 ðam ylcan dæg. fundon eall . . . nima[n wol]dan. 7 hit to ðæs [sac]erdes botle ber[an] woldon. þæ[s nama . . .]' [part of another line visible] (= Napier 24.22–29);
- Fragment 2.2 verso [first half of line trimmed but partially visible]: '[. . . sceold]on. Ða færinga heo⟨m⟩ eallu⟨m⟩ on ha[wiende] | aspráŋ þær fyr on ðreo halfe . . . [ceaster] | waru on hierusalem. Þ⟨æt⟩ se [lig . . .]' [rest of line trimmed but partially visible] (= Napier 26.2–7).

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M.B./R.I.P./A.N.D.