

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. STUDIES  
IN ENGLISH. THE MIDDLE  
ENGLISH PENITENTIAL LYRIC: A  
STUDY AND COLLECTION OF  
EARLY RELIGIOUS VERSE**

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Columbia University  
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# THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PENITENTIAL LYRIC

A STUDY AND COLLECTION  
OF EARLY RELIGIOUS VERSE

BY

FRANK ALLEN PATTERSON, Ph.D.



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TO  
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

*This Monograph has been approved by the Department of  
English in Columbia University as a contribution to knowl-  
edge worthy of publication.*

A. H. THORNDIKE,  
Secretary.

## PREFACE

THE main object of this study was at first the investigation of the relations of the Middle English religious lyric to various other kinds of lyric poetry that were well known in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but as the work advanced it became apparent that the exact provenience of the religious lyric could be shown satisfactorily only by printing a large number of these poems with notes pointing out in detail the sources of general ideas and of specific lines, phrases, and words. Accordingly the completed monograph has taken the form of a collection of sixty-nine lyrics, with rather extensive notes and an introduction that sums up the results of the more minute study.

Of these poems six are here printed for the first time.<sup>1</sup> The prayer, No. 21, is interesting. Lydgate's poem, *Timor Mortis Conturbat Me*, No. 38, hitherto unpublished, has much literary quality, and belongs to a class of poems having a curious source. I am gratified from a study of these *Timor Mortis* lyrics to be able to throw light upon the models that Dunbar used in the *Lament for the Makaris*, for it is clear that he took his refrain and other lines from these popular songs on the fear of death.

The sixty-nine poems as a whole show a deep sincerity and a mystic ardor that give them unquestioned beauty. Such a prayer as that beginning 'Ihesu, mercy! mercy, I cry,' No. 22, well bears the sub-title, *A deuoyt Meditacione*. The paraphrase of the *Ave Maris Stella*, No. 43, to mention but one of many songs to the Virgin, is a beautiful expression of the knightly yet religious chivalry that delighted to honor Mary, 'al in liht I-schrud.'

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 6, 21, 26, 28, 38, 60.