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GHOST-THANKS

OR

THE GRATEFUL UNBURIED,

A MYTHIC TALE IN ITS OLDEST EUROPEAN FORM

SIR AMADACE,

A MIDDLE-NORTH-ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCE
OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

REPRINTED FROM TWO TEXTS, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

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MICHAELSEN AND TILLGE;

(C. G. Iversens Boghandel.)

1860.



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PRINTED BY J. H. SCHULTZ.

CHEAPINGHAVEN.

1860.

А

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

CARL SÄVE,

PROFESSOR OF OLD-NORTHERN LITERATURE

IN THE UNIVERSITY

OF

UPSALA, SWEDEN.

ATHENEUM.

INTRODUCTION.

The Venerable Senate of the University to which I am attacht has kindly assisted me, by a pecuniary grant, in carrying out my wish to procure for the Students who may attend my Lectures access, in an easy and cheap form, to a sufficient specimen of that great Middle-North-English dialect from which our present language is so materially descended. This was the more desirable as the study of a connecting link between the Old and the New English cannot but be extremely useful, while the books in which such pieces are contained are both scarce and costly.

I have chosen for this purpose the elegant and highly interesting Metrical Romance of SIR AMADACE.

This poem, from internal evidence, from its character and style and form and language, was evidently written by some North-English Minstrel in the 13th century. But it has not come down to us in any Manuscript of so early a date, or in a shape absolutely complete. It commences, singularly enough, brokenly and suddenly almost at the same line in both the known texts; while the absence from the older copy of two essential stanzas found in the later, is an abundant evidence of a still more antique and more perfect text having once existed than any now remaining.

SIR AMADACE is preserved, as far as is known, only in two codices; and, as is usual in Middle-age transcripts, the variations are so many and important, that I have thought it best to print them both, side by side.

The better, older and longer text (here called A) is in the IRELAND MANUSCRIPT, containing three poems, and a number of documents connected with the Magna Curia de Hale, of the 14th and 15th centuries. It was printed as No. 2 in: — „Three Early English Metrical Romances. With an Introduction and Glossary. Edited from a MS. in the possession of J. I. BLACKBURN, Esq. M. P. By JOHN ROBSON, Esq. London. Printed for the Camden Society. 1842.” 4to. After remarking that these poems are all in the Lancashire dialect, and in its North-western form, Mr. ROBSON observes (p. XI) that of the two varieties of this old provincial speech there is „one in the South-eastern district, which is well known by Tim Bobbin’s works: the other is used in the North-western division, and, as far as I am aware, has not hitherto been noticed. It is characterized especially by the termination of the past tenses and participles in *-ud* or *-ut*, and the plural of nouns in *-us*: peculiarities which distinguish the Ireland MS. from Weber’s copy of „Sir Amadas”; and from the two MSS. of „Sir Gawan”, which have been so admirably collated by Sir Frederick Madden.” — The date of that part of the parchment volume which contains the poems, is fixt by the editor at 1413 or a little later.

The second, shorter and more modern copy (here B) is contained, says WEBER (Vol. I, p. lx), „in a small quarto paper MS., lately purchased into the Advocates’ library [Edinburgh], (Jac. V. 7. 27.) The MS. was probably written at the end of the fifteenth century, by some monk, for of thirty-seven articles which it contains, only three can be called romances, viz. Sir Ysenbras, Sir Gowther, and the present poem, which unfortunately wants the beginning. The rest, with the exception of the Hunting of the Hare, are religious and satirical. The