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# **The Heliand manuscript**

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Preface

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## PREFACE

How far the attempt made in the following pages to suggest a solution of the vexed question of the origin and home of Heliand C—Cotton Caligula A. VII of the British Museum—will prove convincing, I must leave to the reader to judge. The difficulty inherent in investigations of this type where the MS. presents no external clue to its provenance, is aggravated in this case by the inadequacy of our present knowledge concerning the development of the handwriting prevalent in the various *scriptoria* of southern England during the 10th and early 11th centuries. Similar difficulties confront us where questions of Comparative Palaeography are involved, i. e. in the *subtle* differences marking off the Insular from the Carolingian minuscule of the aforesaid period, or still more in distinguishing the Continental type of the Carolingian minuscule from that used in A.S. schools of writing or by individual scribes. As an example of such problems I would cite the case of the ligature of f and τ, discussed below. It will thus readily be understood that the detailed presentment of the palaeographical features of the codex has necessitated a considerable amount of spade work among the rich stores of original MS. material and facsimile publications available in the British Museum, without which institution the work could never have been done; but the ever-ready assistance of the Museum officials has lightened this heavy task wherever possible.

I desire especially to record the names of Messrs. J. A. Herbert, R. Flower, and D. T. B. Wood of the MSS. department, and of A. Ellis of the department of printed

books. I am further gratefully indebted to Mr. Kenneth Sisam of the Clarendon Press with whom, in conversation and by letter, I could fruitfully discuss several points relating to the Heliand MS. and to English MSS. of the 10th and 11th centuries in general, and whose ready help has considerably mitigated the technical difficulties inseparable from the printing of a work of this character; to Sir Israel Gollancz for kindly lending me an advance copy of his forthcoming facsimile-reproduction of the Bodleian MS. Junius 11; to my friend Professor W. E. Collinson for kindly reading a copy of the proofs. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the help given towards the expenses of the publication by a grant of the Senate of the University of London from their Publication Fund.

The five plates inserted afford full-size reproductions of the MSS. from which they are taken, and have been selected with a view to illustrating the most salient of the palaeographical and ornamental features of Cotton Caligula A. vii.

R. P.

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