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J. E. CROSS: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

J.E. Cross was born in 1920 in the Forest of Dean - an area of South West Gloucestershire set apart by its height, forests, and mining from the surrounding gentler farming country of the Severn lowlands, and the Herefordshire plain. The Forester is, or was in the nineteen twenties, conscious of his own individuality, of his rights and duties, and in this ambience young Cross, the eldest of four children, was educated at East Dean Grammar School, Cinderford. The man who taught him history remarked only recently with considerable relish, "My word, Jim did work". The work was successful and Jim went up to Bristol University in 1938. As the late Professor Elizabeth Salter (also brought up in the Forest of Dean) used to say, she and Jimmy exemplified 'rural emergence'.

His studies were interrupted by war and he became a subaltern in the Field Artillery, spending some time in North Africa. 1944 was a significant year. On 12th February he and Joyce Bower were married, on 6th June he was part of the D-Day invasion of Europe and on 20th October he drove his jeep over a mine with fairly serious results, although happily, after six months' 'resting' he went back to soldierly duty in England.

Eventually he returned to Bristol, in reasonably good shape, in 1945. In 1946 he gained a first class honours degree in English with the Hannam Clarke prize for the best Shakespeare paper. The following year he gained a Diploma in Education, again with first class honours. Jimmy edited the student magazine during this period, ghosting a piece from the University's Chancellor, Winston Churchill. This was signed and approved by the great man, although the editorial committee held its breath while waiting the outcome, on account of the extremely authentic style.

Jimmy and Joyce went to Sweden in 1947, where Jimmy was English Lektor at Lund University. His direct and clear lecturing style was much appreciated and also, during this time, his own brand of disciplined and dedicated scholarship began to emerge. He worked on the Old Swedish version of the national patron saint's legend "Erik den Heliges Saga", a subject suggested for an M.A. thesis by his mentor and friend Susie I. Tucker, Lecturer in charge of English Language teaching at Bristol. Many years later in 1978 he fittingly delivered the first Tucker-Cruse Memorial Lecture.

Though Jimmy is best known for his work in the Old English field, the Scandinavian influence has been strong and lasting. He became a member of The Viking Society for Northern Research and was its President in 1964-66. He is Filosofi Doktor at the University of Lund, where his collected publications under the title

of *Latin Themes in Old English Poetry* were presented in 1962. Lund also awarded him an Honorary Docentship in the same year. In 1972 he attended the International Saga Conference in Iceland, and he has lectured in Denmark and Finland. This year (1985), he is visiting Oslo and Bergen at the invitation of Professor Bertil Sundby.

After two years in Sweden, he returned to Bristol as a lecturer in 1949, with Joyce, and a daughter, Jane, born that year. Over the following ten years a steady stream of papers appeared, reflecting his growing interest in understanding the Christian Latin roots of Old English literary culture and in using them to further and enrich critical explication. These were seminal papers both for Old English scholarship and for literary critical understanding of Old English poetry; in their enterprising use of *Patrologia Latina* and source study, they opened up fresh perspectives on Anglo-Saxon culture and literary achievements. It was fitting that, later on, his 1972 Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture for the British Academy should be entitled "The Literate Anglo-Saxon".

In 1959 he was invited for the second semester to the University of Rochester, N.Y., as Visiting Professor in Medieval Studies. All four Crosses set sail - a son, Andrew, had been born in 1954. As Professor Rowland Collins says, "Jimmy Cross began the regular instruction in Old and Middle English which has flourished there ever since. The whole family were superb ambassadors for Britain and Bristol".

Jimmy enjoyed the enthusiasm and dedication of American post-graduate students which matched his own. In the early nineteen-seventies he went back to Rochester to open the Medieval House, a residential centre for undergraduates with special interests in the Middle Ages.

Back in Bristol from his first Rochester trip, Jimmy was made a Reader in Old English in 1962. In the next few years there was increasing transatlantic communication and visits from American scholars, as overseas interest in his publications grew.

In 1965 he was appointed Baines Professor of English Language at Liverpool, and it is in Liverpool that he is celebrating his sixty-fifth birthday. The twenty years on Merseyside have seen the continuing growth and consolidation of an international reputation in the field of Old English and his ability to extract forty-eight hours' value from every twenty-four is witnessed in the uninterrupted flow of his publications.

In the last ten years he has greatly extended his study of the whole corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature, concentrating on the relatively neglected prose writings, and particularly on the *Old English Martyrology*. By tracing sources of material and building an outline picture of the unknown author's reading, working from the unpublished source material, informed assessment of the probable date of this first extant Anglo-Saxon prose writing becomes possible. This extremely wide and deep study is of great value in providing meanings for the Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Jimmy attended

the preliminary meetings for the Dictionary (first projected in Toronto in 1970-1) and in 1974 he became a member of the Editorial Board of this Dictionary in the making (an appropriate position for one who, through the establishment of so many Latin-Old English equivalences, has contributed largely to Old English word studies as a by-product of his own work).

Working on Old English prose and its background has also led to the opening up of new vistas on Hiberno-Latin culture and its relevance for Old English: Jimmy continues to advance and expand the field.

Throughout the Liverpool years, the vigorous exchange with transatlantic Old English and Medieval scholars and institutions has continued and increased. In the Autumn semester of 1974, Jimmy was Visiting Professor of Old English at Yale University, and in the Spring semester of 1975 he was a Senior Fellow of the Society for the Humanities in Cornell. The same year he lectured to the Fiftieth Anniversary meeting of the Medieval Academy of America at Harvard University. In 1982 he was elected a Corresponding Fellow of this prestigious society. Recently he has been a leading figure in a move on both sides of the Atlantic towards the establishment of a body to produce the first 'source index' of Old English literature, including unpublished manuscripts: this project, over the next few decades, is to provide a full account of books and authors known in Anglo-Saxon England. At the first meeting (organized by a contributor to this volume, Joyce Hill) Jimmy, true to form, contributed new sources for a major series of Old English homilies.

During all the years in Liverpool as Head of the Department of English Language, as Dean of the Faculty of Arts 1971-1974 and latterly as Chairman of the combined English Literature and Language Department he has been respected as an honest and forthright man, democratic, generous, accessible and non-stuffy. His phenomenal memory for precedent and his handiness with procedure have stood him in good stead as he steered his Department, Faculty and now his combined Department through difficult times for English Language studies and for universities. He takes a kindly interest in people, creating a strong *comitatus*-bond amongst the members of his department, and seeing with equal concern and practicality to the needs of his staff, his research students and the rawest first-year undergraduates alike. He is appreciated not only as a leader but as an outstandingly generous and approachable colleague in research, with an especially strong commitment to encouraging medieval scholarship amongst young people.

For all this investment of energy in his professional life, Jimmy still finds time to engage in the other things of life with zest. He wages happy and wholesale mechanical warfare in the garden, and over the years has joined battle in the house, almost losing his amateur status when wielding a paint brush. When younger he was an all-round sportsman, playing football and cricket for his school and at university. Nowadays he is an enthusiastic and partisan spectator, his own sporting career continuing only in the garden with his three little grandsons when they have all

finished the digging.

Throughout Jimmy's professional career, Joyce Cross has been beside him as his partner and peer. The editors would like to express their affection and gratitude towards her, not least for her joyful conspiracy of silence with them during the making of this *Festschrift* and for her invaluable help in the preparation of this portrait of Jimmy. Scientist, teacher, welcoming hostess, fount of good sense, she inspires warmth and respect in all those from Jimmy's world who meet her.

Jimmy's present and past colleagues and his friends join in wishing him a happy sixty-fifth birthday and in dedicating this collection of essays as a token of affection, admiration and gratitude.