



**André le Moine, La Penitance Adam. Texte édité, présenté et
annoté par Sylviane Messerli d'après les manuscrits Paris,
BnF, fr. 95 et Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 79.
(Classiques français du Moyen Âge, 198.) Paris: Honoré
Champion, 2022. 178 pp**

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This short work of André le Moine (Andrius li Moines, late thirteenth century) is notable as the oldest of four medieval French translations of the widely diffused apocryphal work *Vita Adae et Evae* [*The Life of Adam and Eve*]. The editor also published one of the other translations, Colard Mansion's fifteenth-century *De la Penitance Adam*, in the same series in 2016 (reviewed by Olivia Robinson, *FS*, 72 (2018), 98–99). An earlier edition of the of the current text by Esther C. Quinn appeared with an English translation and commentary several decades ago (*The Penitence of Adam: A Study of the Andrius MS* (University, MS: Romance Monographs, 1980)). However, it only took into account Paris BnF, fr. 95. This new edition collates this manuscript — known to scholars since at least the nineteenth century — with an Oxford manuscript (Bodleian, MS Douce 79) that the editor, Sylviane Messerli, discovered in the 1970s. She movingly describes this experience in her 'Avant-propos'. The rest of the volume is divided into a lengthy and informative Introduction, the edition and critical apparatus, a rather short commentary on the text, a particularly helpful glossary, and several indices (proper names, biblical citations, and manuscripts). After brief notices on Andrius li Moines (little more than a name and not necessarily even a monk) and the illumination preceding the text, Messerli describes the two primary witnesses. BnF fr. 95 is mainly a collection of Arthurian tales — the first two parts of the Vulgate cycle, continued by New Haven, Beinecke Library, Yale University, MS 229 — with the *Penitance* inserted at the end (Messerli discusses the juxtaposition briefly, pp. 47–49). MS Douce 79 originally formed part of a single codex, a religious miscellany, with BnF fr. 13342. Consisting as it does of little more than the *Penitance*, it is not merely fragmentary but lacunose, leaving BnF fr. 95 as the only choice for the base text. In addition to translating *Vita Adae et Evae*, Andrius included several other associated apocryphal works, such as the *Legend of the Holy Cross*, the *Legend of Judas* (involving the miraculous resurrection of a rooster), the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and a concluding extract of Roman history based on Orosius. Messerli addresses all of the work's Latin sources and provides a separate selective bibliography for each of them. Every one of these apocryphal works has an intricate transmission history beyond the Latin sources (the *Legend of Judas*, for example, is related to an obscure Ethiopic work called *The Book of the Cock*), but one can hardly fault Messerli for not wandering down that rabbit hole. The commentary, though brief, contains some interesting observations, such as the omission of the *Vita*'s non-standard account of the fall of Satan, which is either theologically motivated or a simple scribal error — the manuscripts have several. The glossary is much appreciated, as the text's Franco-Picard dialect is difficult. All in all, this is a handy edition, both affordable and lightweight, that will be of immense value especially to researchers of the Christian apocrypha.

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