

203. London, British Library, Cotton Nero A. ii

Three combined MSS: an 11c English prayerbook,
an 8–9c northern Italian prayerbook,
a 12c English collection of St. Cuthbert material.

[Part 1: Ker 157 (with BL Cotton Galba A. xiv), Gneuss 342; Part 2: Lowe 2.186]

HISTORY: Nero A. ii is a compendium by Robert Cotton (see the note on f. 2r) of three quite distinct manuscripts of diverse origins: Part 1 (ff. 3–13), an 11c A-S private prayer book with a calendar and computational material (it contains no OE, but was almost certainly once part of Cotton Galba A. xiv); Part 2 (ff. 14–45), an 8–9c north Italian collection of devotional texts and liturgical ordinations, compiled before 767 (Hallinger 1963: 79–80), showing Insular decorative elements (e.g., ff. 27v, 45r), probably prepared for private use; and Part 3 (ff. *44, 46–108 + 1), a 12c small-format compilation of texts on St. Cuthbert. Part 3 is probably the latter half of a manuscript that once contained Bede's prose "Life of St. Cuthbert." The exact relationship of Nero, Part 1, to Galba is not clear, nor is the date of separation known; Nero has escaped the fire and water damage that marks Galba. Part 1 was written at Winchester, probably at St. Mary's (Nunnaminster). Its range of dates is indicated by the inclusion of a lunar table pertaining to the years 1029–1047.

[Further Notes on Part 1: Taken to be part of Galba A. xiv by Ker (*Cat.*, 200) because of similarities in page size, layout, contents, abbreviations and punctuation and in some of the handwriting. At least three hands can be distinguished in this part. Ker and Muir (1988) see the same hand on Nero ff. 10v–12v as on Galba f. 125r. Ker also identifies the "backward sloping" hand on Nero ff. 1–10 with that on Galba f. 2 (the Galba hand seems much less expert), and Nero f. 13v as similar to Galba f. 54 (the similarity seems very general). Lapidge (1981) disputed Ker's conclusions for the unity of the two manuscripts (85–86, where he argues for an origin of Nero in the far west of Wessex, perhaps St. Germans, Cornwall), but Muir's summary of the evidence for unity is conclusively in favor (Muir, xi–xii; see in this series the "History" section in the description of Galba A. xiv for Lapidge's later opinion, that Nero was produced at Winchester for one of its dependencies). According to Muir (xvi), the book (i.e., Nero and Galba considered together) was originally blank and items were written in as occasion offered, without regard for the boundaries of gatherings. The texts seem to be drawn informally from a variety of liturgical and computistical sources and follow

no particular order. Muir suggests (xvii) that the handwriting and Latinity show either beginning or poorly trained writers. (See also the description of Cotton Galba A. xiv.)]

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: [iii] + [iv] + 109 (present foliation 3–108, 44* uncounted [+ 1]; older cancelled foliation 1–108 [+ 1]). Rebound and repaired in January 1865. Present average page size 158 x 111 mm. Three modern paper flyleaves; four parchment flyleaves, the first marked “x1,” a repaired leaf of a 13c or 14c breviary; the next, “x2” (canceled), has the Cotton press-mark on the verso; “x3” is blank; the fourth, marked “Fol. 1,” has an elaborate painted Cottonian frontispiece pasted to the recto and the Cottonian table of contents on the verso (third and fourth now counted as 1 and 2 in the present foliation). Endleaves are modern paper.

COLLATIONS AND CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE THREE PARTS:

Part 1: Hair on outside of all sheets. Writing area 145 x 100 mm. in calendar; 130 x 75 mm. in prayer text. Ff. 3–8 are ruled for 31 lines, with double bounding lines on outside margins (ignored by scribe). Ff. 9–12 are ruled (roughly) for 18 lines (with perhaps 12 extra lines scratched in, scribe using only about one of three) and more or less ignored by scribes. F. 13, which seems more carefully prepared and executed than the rest of Part 1, is ruled for 13 lines. Writing in both Insular and Anglo-Caroline minuscule.

Collation: I¹⁰ (ff. 3–12), II singleton (f. 13).

Part 2: At least a quire missing at the beginning. HFHF. 145 x 82 mm. (trimmed at top). Ruled for 19 lines on the outside of the sheet; double scorings on outside margins, single on inside. Thick parchment. Brownish ink, capitals and decorations by scribe, apparently following an Irish-style exemplar.

Collation: I–III⁸ (ff. 14–37), IV⁸ (2 and 7 half-sheets) (ff. 38–45).

Part 3: HFHF. Written area 122 x 66 mm. 25 pencil rulings on each sheet of finely prepared white vellum. Old *44 blank.

Collation: I⁴ (*44, 46–48, 1 and 4 half-sheets), II–III¹² (ff. 49–72), IV¹² + 1 (ff. 73–84 + f. 85), V–VI¹² (ff. 86–108 + 1). F. 85 (old 84) belongs after f. 47.

CONTENTS:

Part 1 (ed. Muir 1988: 3–23):

1. ff. 3r–8v Calendar.
2. f. 9r Table of lunar cycles from 1029–1047.
3. f. 9v Instructions for computing concurrences: ‘Si uis scire quot concurrentes | in anno sunt’.
4. f. 10r Instructions for computing the age of the moon: **Hee sunt . uiu . etates lune.**
5. ff. 10v–11v/1 Panegyric for King Athelstan: ‘Carte dirige gres|sus p(er) maris et nauium’ (text reconstructed by Lapidge 1981: 87–93).
6. ff. 11v/2–12v Prayer to God the Father: ‘D(omi)ne d(eu)s om(ni)p(o)ten)s rex re|gum et d(omi)n(u)s dominan|tium’ (ed. Birch 1887: 2.332; this text is item 3 in Galba A. xiv).
7. f. 13r Prayer to St. Dunstan: ‘O inclite confessor chr(ist)i’ [neumed].
8. f. 13v Prayer to Æthelberht Martyr: ‘Inclite martir ouans te plebs | uenerator in oda’ [neumed].

Part 2:

9. ff. 14r–25r Sermon, beginning imperfectly: ‘... Isaias p(ro)pheta dicit Uę| uobis qui iungitis agrum | ad agrum... neque maledici regnu(m) di(s)possede|bunt’ (ff. 17v/16–21/4 ed. Levison 1946: 308–12; see 302–14).
10. ff. 25v–27v/17 **De auaricia** . ‘Auarus non im|pletus pecunias . quam de est | quod hab& . quam quod non | hab&’; [explicit:] ‘Quia | beatus est . dare . quam . | accipere expl(i)cit’.
11. ff. 27v/18–30r/1 **Legimus in libro deuteronomium**; ‘**JORDANE** | transmissum p(re)cepit . moy|ses d(omi)no iubente. populum’; [explicit:] ‘Unde aposto|lus dicat Bonum autem faci|entes non deficiamus tempore || [enim suo metemus non deficientes]’ (= Gal. 6.9).
12. ff. 30r/2–31v/4 **de diui(tis) & lazari** ‘Hic diuis populus iudaicus intellegitur’; [explicit:] ‘hii sunt nomina ipsorum | aggeos saradeos & theuma|cus’.
13. ff. 31v/4–33v/11 Sermon (attributed to Augustine) ‘De fide catholica’: **In nom(ine) d(omi)ni ie(s)u chr(ist)i In|cipi(un)t fides s(an)c(t)i a[u]gustini ep(iscop)i | contra om(ne)s hereticus . | ‘Credimus in unu(m) uerum d(ominu)m | patrem & filiu(m) & sp(iritu)m s(an)c(tu)m’**; [explicit:] ‘Siquis aliquas scrip|turas p(re)ter eas quas cathol|lica ecclesia recepit uel in a|uctoritatem habendas esse | uel fuerit uenerandus . anathe|ma sit’ (ed. PL 39.2175–76).

14. ff. 33v/11–34v/10 *Incipit de littera* | ‘Littera quid est elementu(m) | uocis articulati’; [explicit:] ‘Litterae dicitur | quasi lege itera quia legen|tibus iter preb&’.
15. ff. 34v/10–36r/17 *Incip(it) chrono|nica de tempor(ibus) mundi* | ‘Ab exordio mundi . usque | ad diluuium’; [explicit:] ‘Constituit ter|minus gener(a)ti(on)u(m) secundum nume|rum angelorum d(e)i’ (ed. Hearne 1719: 167–68).
16. ff. 36r/18–37r/2 *Sententia s(an)c(t)i iohann[is]|os aurei* [incipit cut off at top of f. 36v; top of f. 37r cut off]; [explicit:] ‘secundum opera sua’.
17. f. 37r/3–18 *Sententia s(an)c(t)i hyeronimi* | ‘Unicuique autem homini | duo adsistunt angeli’; [explicit:] ‘p(er) uinut sint boni sint | mali’.
18. ff. 37r/18–42r/6 *Ratio de cursu qui | fuerunt ex auctores* ‘[Si sedulo inspiciamus auc]|tores in exordium . repper(i)|mus’; [explicit:] ‘nisi sicut ipse | beatus benedictus uixit’ (ed. Hallinger 1963: 83–91).
19. f. 42r/6–15 *de | septe(m) damnacionis peccatoru(m)* ‘Prima damnatio id est a s(an)c(t)is d(e)i sepratio’; [explicit:] ‘Septi|ma disper-teio’.
20. f. 42r/15–42v/14 *de septem | remunerationis iustor(um)*. ‘Prima remuneratio id est re|surrectio’; [explicit:] ‘in sem|piternum’.
21. ff. 42v/14–43v/1 *Cassian, from the fifth “Collation” (chaps. 2–3): sententia de octo | principalia uicia* ‘Primum gastromargia | quod sonat uentris’; [explicit:] ‘ut est sup(er)bia || & cinodoxia’ (ed. Pichery 1955: 190).
22. ff. 43v/1–44r *Sententia s(an)c(t)i hyeronimi* | ‘Nec nos negamus cunctis | pauperibus’; [explicit:] ‘& cu(m) ac|ciperit dolit metens carna|lia . & seminans spiritalia’ | explicit’. [F. 44v blank.]
23. f. 45rv *Sermon (opening): DE CARITATE* | ‘D(OMI)N(U)S DICIT | In euangelium. Maiorem cari|tatem nemo ha|b& quam’ [ends imperfectly].

Part 3:

24. ff. 45r–46r/19 *Bede, “Historia ecclesiastica” 4.32:* ‘[N]ec silentio preterundum q(uo)d ante t(r)i|ennium p(er) reliquas ei(us) factum nup(er)’ (ed. Colgrave and Mynors 1969: 446–49).
25. ff. 46r/19–83r (+84) ‘*Historia translationum Sancti Cuthberti*’: *Quomodo in p(er)egrini habitu a mi|nistro elfredi panem diuisum cuthb(er)tus accep(it)* ‘. . . ita 7 p(ro)essionis. | se(cu)laris . uidelicet uite 7 sp(ir)tua(lis) p(er)sone per’ [ending imperfectly in chap. 18] (ed. Hinde

- 1868: 159–93, also Arnold 1868/1862: 1.229–55, 2.333–53 [chaps. rearranged]; cf. Hardy 1862: 303–5). [F. 84 belongs after f. 46.]
26. ff. 85r–107v *Breuis relatio De s(an)c(t)o Cuthb(er)to . 7 quomodo | corpus eius Dunhelmum uenerit. Et exce(r)pta de uita & mirac(u)lis s(an)c(t)i Cuthb(er)ti.* (ed. Hinde 1868: 223–33; cf. Hardy 1862: 315–16).

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