

298. London, British Library, Royal 12. D. xvii
"Bald's Leechbook"
[Ker 264, Gneuss 479]

HISTORY: Written in third quarter of the 10c at Old Minster, Winchester, by the scribe who is also the main hand of the Parker Chronicle (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 173) and the Tollemache Orosius (London, British Library, Additional 47967). The original compilation has been connected with King Alfred because, on ff. 105v/21–106r/2–3, remedies are said to be supplied to him by Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem (fl. 879–907). Despite some 13c marginal notations (one of which, f. 125v/16–18, shows a good understanding of OE), nothing is known of its medieval history. In the Royal Library since 1542, whence it passed to the British Museum in 1757. Somner used this manuscript for his *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum* (Oxford 1659).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: iv (paper) + 128 + iv (= 129–132). Parchment thin and limp but rough and of irregular quality. Leaves are arranged HFHF. Page size 260/265 x 175/180 mm., varying because quires have been separately trimmed, with a writing area of 185 x 130 mm. Hair sides pricked on outer margins and ruled for 21 lines, with double verticals on both margins of each page. Rebound in 19c.

Ink is dark to reddish brown. The main hand is the same throughout and identical to that of the 892–955 entries of Parker Chronicle and Tollemache Orosius. Ker locates the hand at Old Minster Winchester. Wright (1955: 22) dates the hand to 960s. Colored capitals on f. 1r *LÆCEDOMAS WIÐ* (black touched with silver). There are also touches of this silver on the "L" that starts each item in the contents. Brownish-orange touches on f. 6v, at the start of Book 1. There are crude decorated (acanthus) initials from f. 18v onward.

Between f. 103v, where numbered chapter "lvi" begins, to f. 106, where "lxv" begins, about eight and a half chapters are missing, suggesting the loss of a quire after f. 104. An inserted text (some Greek letters) is written vertically on f. 127v but has been rendered mostly illegible by a stain or reagent. There is extra pricking (in groups of three) on ff. 42–36.

F. 1r is discolored as if it had for a long time formed the outside cover, similarly f. 127v. Ff. 2v–3r have undergone heavy staining, as have to a lesser extent several other of the earlier pages. On f. 125/4–16 a long stain has washed out the letters on the extreme right side of the page, and they have been touched up by another A-S hand. On the fourth flyleaf (as of 1992, order differs in photo) is pasted a 13c strip of darkened parchment bearing the hardly legible title **MEDICINAE ANGLIC**, probably from a medieval binding. Above it is a pigskin label with early 18c writing *medicinalie Anglicus*.

A recipe 'Wip þa blacan blege' with a cross to indicate its place between recipes 58 and 59 is entered in the margin of f. 49r in a different and irregular hand (7 lines of writing, unruled). Many medieval *nota* marks in the margins throughout. Neumes in margins of ff. 30v, 89v. Marginal note *gedon* on f. 56 next to recipe 76. A Latin note of 12/13c *not(a) q(uoa) i(n) o(mni) potu* (etc.) in margin of f. 125v and what appears to be a note in the same hand erased in margin of f. 103v/20–21. Brown crayon design or doodle like a bundle on f. 47v bottom and similar but less distinct on 40v. Seventeen silver circles painted at various points appear to be notation marks (Voigts 1979: 258). On f. 110v is written a late alphabet (a-m).

COLLATION: I–V⁸ (ff. 1–40), VI⁸ 5 & 7 halvesheets (ff. 41–48), VII⁸ 5 & 7 halvesheets (ff. 49–56), VIII–XIII⁸ (ff. 57–104) [quire missing after XIII], XIV⁶⁺¹ (f. 111) after 6 (ff. 105–111), XV⁸ 5 & 7 halvesheets (ff. 112–119), XVI⁸ (ff. 120–127). Probably a leaf, at least, gone after f. 127.

[Note: Medieval signatures on last verso of quires I–VIII. Wright (1955) says XIII is 7 leaves. Ker (*Cat.*) says added leaf in XIV is f. 106, but it is definitely f. 111.]

CONTENTS: Entire contents ed. Cockayne 1865: 2.2–278, 288–98, 300–58; also Leonhardi 1905: 1–84, 91–109; complete facsimile ed. Wright 1955. A number of "charms" from all three books have been separately edited by Grendon 1909 and by Storms 1948; see the table in Wright, 15–16. Metrical charm 7, "For the Water-Elf Disease" (ed. Dobbie 1942: 124–25), occurs on f. 125r/20–125v/13.

1a. ff. 1r–6v/14 Table of contents of Book 1 of "Bald's Leechbook": 'i LÆCEDOMAS WIÐ eallum untrymnessum heafdes'.

1b. ff. 6v/15–58v/4 "Bald's Leechbook," Book 1: 'ON þissum ærestan læcecræftu(m) | gewritene sint læcedomas wið eallu(m) | heafdes untrymnessúm' (88 numbered chapters on diseases arranged from head

- to foot). [Chap. 1 is unnumbered, chap. 2 (f. 9v/18) is numbered 1; starting with 3, the chapters are correctly numbered.]
- 2a. ff. 58v/5–65r/1 Table of contents of Book 2 of “Bald’s Leechbook”: ‘.i. ÐAS læcedomas belimpað to eallúm | innoþa mettrymnessúm’.
- 2b. ff. 65r/2–108v “Bald’s Leechbook,” Book 2: ‘Þis sint tacn adliesmagan . ærest ge|lome spætunga oððe hræcunga’ (67 numbered chapters on diseases of internal organs). [One quire gone after f. 104; chaps. 57–63 missing and end of chap. 56 and beginning of chap. 64 imperfect.]
- 2c. f. 109r/1–6 Colophon in Latin verse: ‘bald habet hund libru(m) cild que(m) c(on)scribere iussit’; [explicit:] ‘qua(m) cari libri quos chr(ist)i gratia comit’ (see Wright 1955: 13–14).
- 3a. ff. 109r/7–111r/12 Table of contents to “Læceþoc”: ‘.i. Wiþ heafod ece . 7 wiþ ealdu(m) heafod ece’.
- 3b. ff. 111r/13–127v “Læceþoc”: ‘.i. Wiþþon þe món o(n) heafod ace’ (76 numbered recipes). [No. 72 in table of contents omitted in text, with consequent misnumbering; text breaks off after 5 lines of no. 73 (f. 128 blank).]

PHOTO NOTES (letters in gutter not visible in film photos):

- f. 5r/1 .lviii. /3 .lx. /4 .lxi. /7 .lxii.
- f. 6r/14 .lxiii. /15 .lxiⁱ. /16 .lxxv. /17 .lxⁱxv /18 .lxxvi /20 .lxxⁱvi /21
lxxⁱiii
- f. 8r/1, 3, 5 Cap. *W* (Wyn) /10 Cap. *I*
- f. 43v/20 wiþþon f. 59/15 .xvi.
- f. 62r/2 .xⁱlⁱxxv /5 xⁱlⁱxxv /11 .xl. etc.
- f. 86v/13 nere f. 87v/8 sealfē /14 þear-
- f. 91v/15 adle
- f. 96v/8 tilian /9 sidan /10 gelic lungen /12 .7
- f. 99r/16 spir f. 101v/8 Wyrce
- f. 102v/5 god. /18 snæ
- f. 104v/7 Innop. /10 bedrifen. /17 cyse
- f. 105v/8 sitte /11 midu- /12 7 wiþ /13 brocu-
/14 telami /15 7 þa /17 stane
- f. 109v/15 wenne f. 113v/2 þan f. 115v/17 sel
- f. 116v/7 lice /8 agri /9 sele /10 wiþ /12 scear /13 clæne /15 fac /16 iii.
/19 mod
- f. 117v/13 buccan /17 moran /21 bro
- f. 118v/10 nefþe /13 leaf /16 ne is /19 drince /20 þy læs
- f. 119v/6 rinde /7 mid /11 twiwa; /13 fulne

- f. 124v/5 þone /6 hades /8 mo'n /9 o'n /16 lurlure /18 write
 f. 125v/4 wermod /5 eala þide /10 eorþn 15/ betoni /16 nefæ. /17 mæssan
 /18 eleb
 f. 126v/6 ofgot- 8/ wyrǵ /9 gyþri /10 stan /13 geotmi /14 gnid /15 deofle;
 /17 o-ds treN (?) /20 ær /21 mæssan

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