

275. London, British Library, Harley 3667

Computistica

(with BL, Cotton Tiberius C. i [231])

[Ker 196, Gneuss —]

HISTORY: Harley 3667 is a detached quire from a larger scientific manuscript. Evidence of script and quire signatures demonstrates that other parts of the same manuscript survive in London, BL, Cotton Tiberius C. i, Part 1 [231] (see Ker 1938: 132). The manuscript was written at Peterborough between 1122 and 1135, probably soon after 1122. This is indicated by the presentation of annals concerned with Peterborough Abbey on the Easter tables in the present manuscript (ff. 14–2v), including a reference to the fire at Peterborough in 1116. The last annal entry in the main hand records the death of Radulfus, archbishop of Canterbury, in October 1122; the next entry, recording the death of King Henry I in 1135, is in a different hand. Place and date are confirmed by a similarity of the script of the main hand with that in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 636 [401], the “Peterborough Chronicle,” which records entries up to 1121. The handwriting and decorative pattern of Harley 3667 and Tiberius C. i, Part 1, are similar enough to the work of the first scribe of the “Peterborough Chronicle” to lead Clark (1954: 74) to suggest “that the MSS. were all produced in the same scriptorium, possibly even by the same scribe.” Ker (*Cat.*, 260) considers Harley 3667 a Peterborough production of “no doubt . . . c. 1120.”

In its original form of at least 21 quires, the scientific manuscript probably remained at Peterborough through the Middle Ages, if it can be identified with item A. ii in a late-14c Peterborough book-list (ed. James 1926: 34), i.e., a manuscript of scientific material beginning with Bede “De Compoto et de naturis rerum.” After that manuscript was broken up, this handsome single quire found its way into the Harley collection, receiving two pressmarks on f. [iv] recto. Acquired by the British Museum in 1753 on the death of Robert Harley’s son.

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: Leaves measure 315 x 210 mm., ruled in drypoint with 43 lines per page with double bounding lines in both margins, which extend across the length of the page, as do the top and bottom horizontal lines. Pricking is visible on the outer margins of all leaves. Written area 232 x 143 mm. Good quality parchment, although with a few holes and mends. Leaves arranged HFHF.

Rubrics are in red, initial letters in red, green, or purple. Diagrams and drawings make use of red, green, yellow, and purple. A quire signature, '.xxi.', is entered in ink at the foot of f. 10v in a medieval hand; the same hand entered two quire signatures in Tiberius C. i, Part 1. Ff. 1r and 10v are somewhat darkened through soiling. Leaves are foliated in pencil, perhaps from May 1882, when an inspection is noted on the first endleaf in pencil.

COLLATION: iv + 10 + ix leaves, foliated [i-iv], 1-10, [11-19]. Flyleaves are paper. I¹⁰ (ff. 1-10) (ff. 5 and 6 are singletons).

CONTENTS:

1. ff. 1r-2v Easter tables for the years 1074-1185 [miswritten as 1085], with marginal brief annal entries concerning Peterborough on ff. 1r-2r (ed. Liebermann 1879: 13-14).
2. ff. 3r/1-4ra Dionysius Exiguus, "Epistola de ratione Paschae" **ITEM EP(ISTO)LA PREFATI DIONISÍI AD BONIFACIUM | ET AD SECUNDINVM.** 'D(OMI)NIS á me plurimu(s) uenerandis' (ed. PL 67.23-28).
3. f. 4vb Dual diagram: Sphere of Pythagoras at top, figures of Vita and Mors below. The two figures hold scrolls with numbers corresponding to those in the sphere above. The key for translating the letters (of a name) into numbers is on the far left side of the leaf.
4. f. 5r Diagram "Tetragonus subjectus" (a variation on the Sphere of Pythagoras), headed 'ORGANU(M) PP.' Text, f. 5r/2-31, 'De quacu(m)q(ue) ré scire uoueris (ue)l con|sulere. ut puta de eg(r)is qua dies oc|currerit ea die. & quota luna | fuerit'.
5. f. 5v Byrhtferth, diagram of the twelve winds, followed by text 'MARTIAN-(US) inq(u)it. luna quidem sexcentesima(m)' (see Baker and Lapidge 1995: 426, no. 53; Pulsiano 1994).
6. f. 6r Circular diagram giving ages of the moon for the first day of the month.
7. f. 6v Diagram of branches of knowledge, headed **PHYLOSOPHYAE DIVISIO** (see Baker and Lapidge 1995: 373, no. 2).

8. f. 7r Acrostic diagram.
9. f. 7v Typological diagrams: Christ and Apostles with Old Testament Kings and Prophets. [Names of the winds in OE are added in the four margins in a different hand.] (ed. Logeman 1889: 103–5; Pulsiano 1994: 16, 24–25).
10. f. 8r Byrhtferth's diagram of the Physical and Physiological Fours, headed 'Hęc figura composita est de concordia mensium' (reproduced in Baker and Lapidge 1995: 373–74, no. 3).
11. f. 8v World map, with Britannia on left.
12. ff. 8v/36–10v/35 Abbo of Fleury, "De differentia circuli et sperae": 'STVDIOSIS astrologię p⟨r⟩imo sciendu⟨m⟩ e⟨st⟩ p⟨er⟩ geometrica⟨m⟩'. [Includes tables of astrological signs at f. 9v/7–23 and f. 10v/22–26 and diagram of planets on f. 10r. F. 10v/36–43 blank.] (cf. Van de Vyver 1935: 140–50).

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