

156a. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek

Vossianus Lat. F. 96A

Medicinal recipes

[Ker —, Gneuss —]

HISTORY: A loose fragment containing medicinal recipes, diets, and the Egyptian days. It was discovered in the 1890s by the Leiden librarian S. de Vries in MS Vossius Lat. F. 96, a combined manuscript consisting of three separate sections of historical texts, two of which originate from Fleury, the third from France, unspecified (de Meyier 1973: 210–14). This may suggest a Fleury provenance for the fragment too (Mostert 1989: 96). In 1908 the fragment was given its separate shelf mark (de Meyier 1973: 215). It has been dated by Fleuriot (1964: 18) to the late 8c, and by Schlutter (1910: 239) to the 9c; it contains some seventy integral Breton words, regarded by Fleuriot as the oldest preserved specimen of the Breton language. Stokes (1896), the first to publish the contents of the leaves, designated it as a “Celtic leech-book.” Though the script is insular, the ancient Breton glosses have led Fleuriot (1964: 18) to suggest that the fragment originates from Landévennec in Brittany. Stuart (1979: 239–41) notes parallel texts of the “*Dies egyptiaci*” in manuscripts from Amiens and Laon, both of which are related to the Leiden fragment. Apart from the Celtic glosses—one of which is Irish, the rest Breton—the fragment contains OE: one gloss and one word in the text. This manuscript was not included or even mentioned by Ker, presumably because he doubted that it contained genuine evidence of Anglo-Saxon (cf. Lambert 1986: 318).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: A folded membrane. The complete fragment when open measures 145 mm. (right vertical) × 277 mm. (bottom horizontal). Due to a triangular piece cut away from the foreedge of f. 1 the face sides are shorter: 142 mm. (vertical), and 182 mm. (horizontal). The top of the original folio was cut away, including the first written line. All folios are ruled in drypoint (very faintly visible), and all still contain 25 lines

of text. There are no prickings visible. In the right margin of f. 2r and the left margin of f. 2v double bounding lines with a 4 mm. gutter can be seen. The average line height on f. 1r is 7 mm.; on f. 1v 7.2 mm. The length of the lines and the width of the margins vary.

[Note: The images show a) the outside of the sheet, f. 2v and 1v, b) the inside, f. 1v and f. 2r. Stokes (1896) and Schlutter (1910) confusingly refer to ff. 2v., 1r, 1v, 2r as pp. 1, 2, 3, 4, respectively.]

On f. 1r the inner margin measures between 10 and 12 mm.; part of the outer margin was cut away so that between 3 and 10 mm. remain. The length of the written lines measures 122–126 mm.; the two bottom lines are very difficult to read due to glue stains. The bottom margin measures 8–10 mm. On f. 1v the left margin (mostly cut away) measures 5 mm.; the right margin between 5 and 10 mm.; the bottom margin 4–7 mm. The length of the written lines varies between 125 and 129 mm. At the bottom of the page ‘discutiet’ is set off with three points. On f. 2r the inner margin measures between 5 and 7 mm.; the outer margin (unevenly cut) between 5 and 9 mm.; the bottom margin c. 10 mm. The length of the written lines is about 130 mm. On f. 2v the left margin varies between 3 and 10 mm. due to cutting of the page. The gutter between the bounding lines has been used for capital letters only, so that the length of the written lines varies between 120 and 130 mm. There is only a minimal right margin (3–4 mm.). The bottom margin measures about 5–7 mm. In the top left margin, in ink: ‘Voss. Lat. F. 96.’

Schlutter (1910: 245) and after him de Meyier (1973: 215) distinguish three different insular hands: two Irish hands on ff. 2rv, and an A-S hand on ff. 1rv. A horizontal crease, on average 10 mm. from the bottom margin, is the result of its use in the binding of MS Voss. Lat. F. 96. The legibility of the text on ff. 1r–2v has suffered from its having been pasted on to the board of the binding. The fragment contains several holes as well as some brownish spots. The text shows that this folio was not the central leaf of a quire.

CONTENTS:

1. f. 1rv Medical prescriptions (top outside corner cut off): ‘Columbin[a] [. . .] | ualde prodest Co [. . .]’: ends abruptly at the bottom of f. 1v: ‘omne(m) caligine(m) mirabilit(er) | discutiet’ (ed. Stokes 1896: 18–19; Schlutter 1910: 239–41, 244–45).

[Note: Parallels to this text in the Old English translation of Sextus Placitus and the Old English “Læceboc” and “Lacnunga” are mentioned by Stuart (1979: 238), who also points to the section letters *b*, *c*, *d* on f. 1r and *f* on f. 1v, with the remark that the missing section *e* was probably on the missing first line of f. 1v. F. 1v contains

- the Old Irish gloss and the two OE glosses spotted by Schlutter (1910: 240): f. 1v/10, in minute and vague characters 'ellærn' written slanting upwards to the right, partly through 'ite(m)', as gloss to 'sambuci'; l. 11, 'ex rebellum' is explained by Schlutter (1910: 241) as a misrepresentation of OE *ex* glossing *cerebellum* in the exemplar, but incorporated into the current text by the scribe (DOE 2003: *s.v.* *ex*², *exe* f. "brain").]
2. f. 2r Medical prescriptions: (first part of line illegible because of trimming) '[. . .] lac captat et | butiru(m) et cram occifæth p(er) aruin-
as ariætis sanat'; ends: 'ubi fuærit fistuca et san[us] [or "sani"; Stokes's
reading seems wrong] ærit' (ed. Stokes 1896: 19–20). These prescrip-
tions, unrelated to the previous set (this was not the inside sheet), con-
tain the Breton glosses (listed Stokes 1896: 21–27).
3. f. 2v Rules concerning diets and Egyptian days (days to use and avoid
certain substances) to be observed throughout the year: '[Incipient]
dicta que p(er) totu(m) annum [ob]seru[ar]e [oportet]'; ends: '&
an(te)q(uam) exeat diem xii' (ed. Stokes 1896: 20 [unreliable]; Stuart
1979: 241–42).

[Note: For parallels to this text in French manuscripts, see Stuart (1979: 242–44).]

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