

161. Lincoln Cathedral Library 298, no. 2
OE “Heptateuch” (fragment)
[Ker 125, Gneuss 276]

HISTORY: A fragment consisting of the remains of one bifolium (two once-conjugate leaves) containing part of the text of Numbers from what was probably a manuscript from the OE Heptateuch; it dates from the second half of the 11c. Wanley (1705: 305) mentioned that it was used as the cover of another manuscript. According to Crawford (1920: 1), the fragment was considered lost in the 19c, only to be rediscovered by R. M. Woolley in the process of his cataloguing the manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library. It has the siglum “Ln” in Marsden’s edition (2008), who gives a description (lxiii–lxv), and discusses its textual tradition (clvii–clx). The fragment is now kept as item ‘B’ (no. 2) in an album containing a collection of fragments from the Library of Lincoln Cathedral.

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: Membrane. The central bifolium in a quire, measuring 298 × 210 mm.; written space 273 × 191 mm. The average line height is 7.2 mm. Although ruling is extremely difficult to see, the bifolium was ruled in dry point for 37 long lines, with single vertical bounding lines extending into the margin [see f. ii verso top right]. The horizontal ruling is irregular, as appears from the variation in line height. Lines 3, 9, 16, and 17 are visibly higher than the rest. Since the fore-edge of the bifolium is trimmed, no prickings can be seen. Nothing can be said about the hair or flesh side. The leaves are slightly curved and the parchment wrinkled. Wanley’s remark (1705: 305) may suggest that they were once used as flyleaves.

The hand, an A-S minuscule, was characterized by Ker (*Cat.*, p. 159) as ill-formed, a view which is corroborated by Marsden (2008: lxiv–lxv). Capital letters are red-touched; other initials do not occur. There are no underlinings and no glosses, except for ‘ic’ on f. 1r/26.

The trimming of the fore-edge, mentioned above, has resulted in some loss of letters. The lower-outside corners are badly damaged because a piece

of parchment, measuring ca. 90 mm. on the right hand side of the page, was torn out, as a result of which much of the lower ten lines on the two sheets is missing. The trimming and the damage is identical on both half sheets, and it is clear that the bifolium was trimmed and torn while in a folded position. The front page, f. 1r, is dirtier than the rest. Towards the fore-edge in the center of the page, the parchment becomes a yellowish hue, and is almost transparent, perhaps from grease.

COLLATION: One central bifolium of a quire.

CONTENTS:

ff. 1–2 a fragment of the OE “Heptateuch,” Numbers 10:28–16:3: ‘Ða hi þa ut foran of egipta lande’; runs more-or-less continuously to Numbers 16:3: ‘[. . .]ligrá bearn. 7 god wunað on him’ (ed. Crawford 1920: 2; coll. Crawford 1922: 208 and Marsden 2008: 140–47)

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