

152. Copenhagen, Kongelige Biblioteket,
Ny kgl. Sam. 167b (4°)
“Waldere” (fragments)
[Ker 101; Gneuss 816]

HISTORY: Two leaves remaining from the lay of “Walter of Aquitaine” in a poetic OE version; to judge from its expansive narrative style probably originally a poem of considerable length (the 10c Latin analogue is 1456 hexameter lines). The leaves are informally prepared and poorly written. Ker says “s. x/xi(?)” and calls it “an irregular and ill-formed hand”; Stokes (2014: 161) suggests similarities to Cotton Charter viii. 35, another poorly written 11c piece, in this case a possible forgery of a 9c document. Pointing out the high number of errors in the writing and, supposedly, in the language, Himes (2009: 11–13, cf. 15–35) suggests foreign influence, perhaps a Frankish-trained scribe. Gameson speculates that manuscripts like this one (and the *Beowulf*-manuscript), with hands difficult to parallel elsewhere, may be from royal or secular writing shops (Gameson 2012: 98) and the poorly prepared surface and chaotic layout and script suggest origin in an unpracticed or unprofessional milieu. On the verso of Leaf 1 is added in different ink a floral (acanthus) interlace design of the late 10c/early 11c (Winchester style, T. D. Kendrick in Norman 1933: 4–5). (The terms “Leaf 1” and “Leaf 2” reflect the conventional ordering of the leaves based on their presumed place in the story of “Walter of Aquitaine”; on the literary issues see Norman 1933: 7–34, Dobbie 1942: xx–xxvi). Merely on grounds of probability, it has been assumed since Stephens’ *editio princeps* that the leaves were brought to Denmark by Grímur Thorkelin, some of whose “bundles” came to the Royal Library (Stephens 1860:15). Found “among unarranged fragments, ‘mostly taken from books or book-backs’, by the librarian, E. C. Werlauff, 12 Jan. 1860” (Ker, *Cat.*, cf. Dobbie 1942: xix).

[**Note:** Stephens’ 1860 edition included “photographic” facsimiles which are in fact hand-made facsimiles superimposed over photographic images (Himes 2009: 14); these are virtually illegible in the copy available to the describer, and Holthausen (1899: 1) noted that this was also the case in the copy he saw; Holthausen’s edition

contains “actual size” autotype reproductions which are legible; facsimiles in Zettersten 1979: 14, 16, 18, 20; Himes 2009 presents facsimiles taken in UV light. There is now an online digital facsimile; see “Image Notes.”]

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: Two complete (but crudely trimmed) disjunct leaves, used probably as sewn- and pasted-down “end-papers” of a manuscript book, to judge by the creasing, extra punctures, remains of the conjugate leaf, and irregular trimming.

On Leaf 1 the text-area is about 150 × 100 mm., with a single horizontal outer bounding line scored from the flesh (verso) side; no other scoring or ruling is evident. Fifteen lines of writing, the lines running slightly “uphill” from left to right on the recto and correspondingly “downhill” on the verso. The ink is black with some fading and rubbing towards the outer edge on both sides; the hand is irregular English vernacular minuscule with caroline features (insular ‘f’ is a modified high ‘s’, ‘p’ is usually avoided, failure to distinguish between insular ‘s’ and ‘r’) (cf. Stokes 2014: 161). On leaf 2 are 15 lines of writing, which run perpendicular to the crease; the ink and script are as on Leaf 1. The rune for “æðel” occurs on Leaf 2 verso, line 15.

Leaf 1 is irregularly trimmed, with the page size, measuring from the central crease, 208/212 × 118/125 mm., the remains of the contiguous leaf being about about 14/15 mm. wide (traces of letters at ends of lines, given in “Contents” below). The recto is hair. The membrane is dark brown on the recto, a lighter brown on the verso, medium thickness, very stiff, rather smooth. The recto, beg. ‘hyrde hyne’, is stained darker around the top and outer side, probably glue-staining, while the verso is fairly clean. What appear to be the original sewing holes along the crease occur at about 13 and 30 mm. from the top and 150 and 164 mm. from the top. The crease is now bent to make the current recto the outer page and this is probably the original disposition. There are two patterns of irregular punctures near the crease: at the top, in the range of 10 to 30 mm. down, an irregular pattern of eight holes; at the bottom in the range of 20 to 35 mm. up, an irregular but similar pattern of about nine holes: these may be evidence of the leaf being crudely sewn as stiffening to a cover or backing of some kind. There are some slits along the crease but not such extra crease-holes as would be expected if the leaf were re sewn into the binding as a flyleaf. A pattern of an additional four holes are in the upper and lower outside corners, the latter still having threads attached which show on the verso. There are, moreover, three horizontal lines of holes, one of ten running just above the top line of text, one between lines 7 and 8 of eleven, and one 18/20 mm. up from the bottom edge of fourteen; all the “additional” holes (i.e., those not part of

the original sewing) were made with a knife-point and vary considerably in size and shape: they may betoken additional securements to some adjacent membrane or stiffening material.

Leaf 2 is irregularly trimmed, but not so as to match the shape of Leaf 1. Page size 200 × ca. 135 mm., a more regular rectangle than Leaf 1, with the remains of the contiguous leaf extending 5/10 mm. from the crease (on which there are no letters visible, except a trace of a bow even with line 14 on the recto and an 's' even with line 14 on the verso). The crease is currently bent so that the recto is the inside leaf, but it appears that originally the crease bent the other way. The recto, beg. 'ce bæteran', is flesh. The recto is light brown, the verso (hair) slightly darker; the inner edge is darkened and probably affected by glue and there are glue-marks on the verso; the lower edge has deteriorated considerably, probably from damp, and this damage makes it hard to judge the additional holes. Original sewing holes at 35/45/55 mm. and 140/152 mm. from the top. Additional sewing holes, probably to secure the leaf as a cover to some backing, but in configurations that differ from those of Leaf 1: two disorderly groups of holes, about 15/20 mm. in from the crease and about 5 to 40 mm. down and 126–172 mm. down may have been additional sewing holes but they have been obscured by damage; three sets of orderly holes made with a knife-point, at about 10, 75, and 175 from the top, consisting of 4, 8, and 8 holes in paired groups respectively, may betoken sewings to fasten the leaf to a backing. On the inner side, about 17 mm. from the crease, at 62 and 100 mm. down, are two largish holes about 5 mm. square, which may indicate where some sort of fastenings were located, but there are no rust-marks. There are no signs of any scoring or ruling on this leaf. There is a large natural hole in the middle of the page, which the text avoids.

Kept in an acid-free paper portfolio within cardboard covers in a purpose-made buckram case with leather spine.

[**Note:** Ker, *Cat.*, says "since the letters 'swil' (at bottom of stub of lost contiguous part of Leaf 1, recto) may be connected with the 'ce' at the beg. of f. '2' to form the word 'swilce', it is possible that the leaf conjugate with f. '1' was adjacent to f. '2'" This is the preference of Norman 1933: 2–3, and Zettersten (1979: 8) is inclined to agree. One should note that this would place a hair side against a flesh side, not unlikely in book(let) as irregular as is already apparent.]

CONTENTS:

Leaf 1: (recto) 'hyrde hyne georne huru . . . fela ðinne byrn || (verso) homon billu(m) heowun . . . swefan gif he ða' (= I: 1–32, ed. Norman 1933: 35–39, Dobbie 1942: 3–7, Hill 1983: 36–37; ed. and trans. Himes 2009: 78–79; diplomatic transcription Holthausen 1899: 4–5);

[**Note:** On the contiguous part of the verso a few letters of the beginning of each line of writing (2–15) are visible. If this were the inside sheet these letters would represent the next fifteen lines of the poem, but it is impossible to tell where this sheet fell in the quire. On the recto opposite lines 2–15 may be seen the last couple of letters of each line of writing (at some further point in the poem); Norman 1933: 2 gives a table of the reconstructable letters.]

Leaf 2: (recto) ‘ce bæteran buton ðam anum . . . feta gyf ðu dyrre || (verso) æt ðus heaðu werigan . . . æhtu(m) wealdan þ(æt) is’ (= II: 1–31, ed. Norman 1933: 39–43, Dobbie 1942: 5–6, Hill 1983: 37–38;; ed. and trans. Himes 2009: 80–81; diplomatic transcription, Holthausen 1899:8–11).

IMAGE NOTES: Full high resolution digital images available at Kongelige Biblioteket website (<http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/materialer/hanndskrifter/HA/e-mss/Waldere-fragments.html>).

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