

466. Sens, Musées de Sens
(Trésor de la Cathédral) [Prou 158]
Detached Relic Label
[Ker 383, Gneuss –]

HISTORY: A label once attached to a relic now lost from the large collection of relics at Sens, most deriving from the gift of Charlemagne, listed in a catalogue of 1192 compiled by Guy de Noyuers, archbishop of Sens (pr. Prou and Chartraire 1900: 135–40); perhaps the label became detached from its relic in the disordering and removal of the relics from the cathedral following the French Revolution (Atsma et al. 1987: 40). The provenance is unknown. It is one of four (all of which are reproduced on the fiche) in the Cathedral Treasury written in A-S hands. Perhaps they show the influence of the A-S Beornred, who was archbishop of Sens 785 × 6–797. *Authentiques* nos. 107 and 114 are in Latin. No. 159 consists of the name ‘Torhtburg’ written twice (with a crease in the middle, which makes it seem likely that the parchment scrap was wrapped around a corner). No. 158, which we are mainly concerned with here, is written in a mixture of Latin and OE. On paleographic grounds, Förster (1935:291) dates the copy to ca. 800, Ker to “s. xi’(?)”. On linguistic evidence, Oliver (1995: 143–50) argues that the text was probably composed prior to 731. The discrepancy between linguistic and paleographic form leads Dahl to postulate that this is a copy of an earlier exemplar (Dahl 1938: 11). All four of these *authentiques* are currently mounted on small pieces of cardboard and pinned (with others) to a larger tablet stored in a drawer of a display cabinet in the Treasury Room of the Musée de Sens; they are identified by typed labels referring to the numbers in the Prou and Chartraire catalogue, and the first three (Nos. 107, 114, 159) are transcribed.

DESCRIPTION of No. 158: Single parchment label, 34 × 24 mm. Margins on top, bottom and sides. Nine lines of text, written in insular minuscule in brown ink, badly faded on the lower half, particularly lower right. No

pricking, ruling or pointing. A vertical tear in the bottom extends upward through the bottom line; the bottom of the label is stretched.

CONTENT: The first four words are in Latin, the next twelve in OE:

uirgu misit | hominib(us) ad s|unnu husl | and raecisl. | and oeli | and
d[.]et | [g]uirdisl | in daem | bind[.(.)]dae

[**Note:** Ker reads the first word as “uingu,” but admits the possibility of “uirgu,” which Oliver (1995: 145) argues agrees better with the sense. Förster (1935: 291) was the first to restore the “[g]” in line 7, which remains partly legible. Ker brackets the first three characters in the last line: they appear fairly unambiguous in the original. Ker postulates that one or two letters may be lost across the tear; it is also possible that the tear antedates the writing. As the tag is glued to a board, it is impossible to determine whether there is writing on the dorse. The text may be translated: “The virgin sent [for the sake of] men to [her] son the eucharist and incense and oil and this belt in this binding” (Goffart and Ganz 1990: 928–9 translate the first part “Virgu sent to the men at Sens . . .”). Apparently, the authenticite was once attached to a belt or sash purportedly belonging to Christ. Förster and Dahl both take this to be a charm which has found its way into the relic tag collection, but this seems unlikely.]

IMAGE NOTES No. 158 is shown in three images of various exposures, the second being the best. No. 114 is shown in three exposures and no. 159 in two.

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† L.O.