

MS. 320

Isidore, *Etymologies*, Books I-X

England; s. x med. or x^{3/4}

Text

1. (fols. 1v-2r) Thirty lines of elegiac verse: ‘*In nomine trinitatis | Sericeum tegmen gemmantia tecta laconum | ... | Rusticus et seruus petat euceriam.*’ (Dieter Schaller and Ewald Könsgen, *Initia carminum Latinorum saeculo undecimo antiquorum* (Göttingen, 1977), no. 14935, and Walther, *Initia carminum*, no. 17556, each citing only the present manuscript; printed and translated by D. R. Howlett, ‘Miscouplings in couplets’, *Bulletin du Cange: Archivum latinitatis medii aevi*, 55 (1997), pp. 271-6). The text is not unique, but is elsewhere (e.g. Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 405, fols. 1v-2r; s. ix) preceded by another six lines of verse (‘*Discipulis cunctis domini prelatu amore | ... | Sectarum cumulis consociare uolo*’) and is attributed to Braulio or to Chintila the Visigothic king (*CPL*, no. 1534; Schaller and Könsgen, *op. cit.*, no. 3763). [\[Image\]](#)
2. (fol. 2r) List of twenty-two headings: ‘*Incipiunt capitula | De grammatica & partibus eius. | De rethorica & dialectica | ... | De mensis et escis et postis ... siue de instrumentis equorum.*’ [\[Image\]](#)
3. (fol. 2v-6v) Five letters between Isidore and Braulio: [title added in the 12th-century:] ‘[D]omino meo & dei seruo Braulioni episcopo; hisidorus. [original text:] *Omni desiderio desideravi nunc uidere faciem tuam. ...*’ (ed. Lindsay, see below, Epp. I-V; and ed. José Madoz, *Epistolario de S. Braulio de Zaragoza* (Madrid, 1941), pp. 74-89). [\[Image\]](#)
4. (fol. 6v) List of twenty-six chapters: ‘*Capitula subsequentis libri primi De disciplina et arte ... De historia.*’ [\[Image\]](#)
5. (fols. 7r-177r) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, Books I-X, lacking 10.41-63 (from ‘*Cautus acauendo dictus. ||*’ to ‘*|| eo quod intercurrat ...*’) due to the loss of a leaf after fol. 165: ‘*Expliciunt capitulae Incipit liber primus. Disciplina a discendo nomen accepit; unde et scientia dici potest; ... alatores praesores. Deo gratias*’ (*CPL*, no. 1186; ed. W. M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri xx* (Oxford, 1911), siglum ‘Reg.’). [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#)

Decoration

(fol. 7r) Very fine ink-drawn interlace initial ‘d’, similar in form to an ‘S’-shape, the main body of the letter composed of two thick lines terminating at each end with in an animal head with closed mouth; their mouths holding interlace ornament; the lower part of the bowl of the letter with a trilobe panel of acanthus framed by addorsed bird heads with their beaks wide open. Three relatively unusual formal details are, first, that one of the animal heads is turned slightly to give almost a three-quarter view (cf. Salisbury Cathedral Library, MS. 38; BL, Harley MS. 110; Trinity College, MSS. O.3.7, B.11.2, and O.1.18; see Elzbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon manuscripts 900-1066*, A survey of manuscripts illuminated in the British Isles, 2 (London, 1976), ills. 68, 69, 76, 80, and

103 respectively, all attributed by her to Canterbury); second, that although bird-beaks are usually shown closed, the examples of open beaks illustrated by Temple are all taken from Canterbury manuscripts; and third, that the interlace ornament of the present initial is formed of a central thicker line and two flanking thinner lines (no examples are illustrated by Temple). [\[Image\]](#)

Physical description

Parchment, *c.*265-70 x *c.*210 mm., rather thick.

ff. 177, foliated in modern pencil, a few leaves foliated in 19th-century pencil.

Quires mostly of 8 leaves each, hair-side facing hair-side, and flesh facing flesh (an early example of the 'Continental' arrangement): 1-10⁸ (fols. 1-80), 11¹⁰ (fols. 81-90), 12-20⁸ (fols. 91-162), 21⁸⁻¹ (4th leaf missing after fol. 165, leaving a narrow stub) (fols. 163-169), 22⁸ (fols. 170-177); quire signatures: quire 5 has a trace of a roman numeral in ink: '.V.' (fol. 40v).

Ruled in drypoint, with 26 horizontal lines, between pairs of vertical bounding lines extending the full width of the page; the ruled space *c.* 200 x 140 mm.; prickings survive in the outer margin, and often in the lower margin.

Written with 26 lines per page in a fine Anglo-Saxon square minuscule script. Richard Gameson suggests (note in Library files) that it is probably by a single hand throughout, but with some variation, perhaps by the same scribe as BL, Harley MS. 5431. David Ganz suggests (note in Library files) that there is more than one scribe, and that the scribe of the headings in the margins of fols. 23v-29r is perhaps close to the scribe of Brussels, BR, MS. 8558-63 or BL, Cotton MS. Vitellius A.xx.

Secundo folio: 'Cum bubone' (fol. 2r), 'et simille' (fol. 3r).

Binding

'Henry VIII' binding. Red velvet, bosses, etc., cf. MSS. 302, 303, 313, and 319; the spine inscribed '16' (cf. under Provenance). Re-sewn and the boards re-attached since the mid-1980s. [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#)

Provenance

1. Written in England around the second to third quarter of the 10th century, possibly at Christ Church, Canterbury (but if so, it had presumably left by the time corrections were made in late 11th- and early 12th-century Anglo-Norman hands) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#); David Ganz is quoted by Howlett, *op. cit.*, p. 271 n. 1 as dating it to *circa* 940-965 and suggesting that the exemplar was in Insular script.
2. Inscribed, 13th century, 'elias me fecit' (fol. 49r, lower margin, smudged).
3. Inscribed in 13th/14th-century Arabic numerals with the number '71' in the lower fore-edge corner of fol. 2r. [\[Image\]](#)
4. Inscribed, 14th century, in an English hand: 'Liber primus Ysodori Ethemologiarum' (fols. 1r, 7r) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#). Inscribed with a letter 'Y' (fols. 9r, 177v), presumably

for Ysidore, suggesting a library or library-list arranged alphabetically by author.
[\[Image\]](#)

5. Alexander Barking(?): inscribed 14th/15th-century: 'alexander barcking' (or 'barcham'?) (fol. 1r, top edge). [\[Image\]](#)
6. Henry VIII, on the evidence of the binding (cf. Carley, *The libraries of King Henry VIII*, p. lxxv).
7. Thomas Gemini, an unusual surname, and therefore very possibly to be identified with the man of this name in *DNB*, fl. 1540-60: inscribed 'per Thomam Gemini' in a neat 16th-century hand. [\[Image\]](#)
8. Inscribed in fine formal 16th-century hands: 'Elizabethe Francese' and 'Robert' (fol. 174v). [\[Image\]](#)
9. Perhaps in Wales or in Welsh ownership: inscribed 'proclamation of rebellion against John Lewyt of | trustie and right welbiloued we grete you well and will and command you upon receipt that', 16th century (fol. 175v); and 'Davyd ap Morgayn', 16th/17th century (fol. 176r). [\[Image\]](#)
10. Queen's College: inscribed with the Old Library shelfmark '84.8' on both first and last recto [\[Image\]](#); included in Langbaine's mid 17th century catalogue of Queen's MSS (Bodleian, MS. Langbaine 7, p. 417), mentioning the binding; inscribed with the former shelfmark 'Arch:B.3.5.' [\[Image\]](#), also listed in the 1689 catalogue in MS. 555; other former shelfmarks: 'S.16' (cf. spine), and 'C.14' [\[Image\]](#). Photostats were supplied in 1955 to T. A. M. Bishop, having been brought to his attention by Otto Pächt (see Bodleian, Duke Humfrey's Library, Bodleian Letters, box II, under MS. Bodl. 579).

Bibliography

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Henry Nettleship, 'Four Oxford manuscripts of the *Origines* of Isidore', in *Lectures and essays on subjects connected with Latin literature and scholarship* (Oxford, 1885), pp. 359-63 (siglum 'R').

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Isles, 550-1066, Papers in Medieval Studies, 1, ed. Michael Herren (Toronto, 1981), pp. 155-78; revised version repr. in *Anglo-Saxon manuscripts: basic readings*, Basic readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 2, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York and London, 1994), pp. 169-219, at p. 200.

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Helmut Gneuss, 'The study of language in Anglo-Saxon England: The Toller memorial Lecture, 1989', in *Language and history in early England*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS559 (Aldershot, etc., 1996), article III, at p. 12.

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Helmut Gneuss, *A handlist of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. a list of manuscripts and manuscript fragments written or owned in England up to 1100*, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Series: Medieval & Renaissance texts & studies, 241 (Tempe, 2001), no. 682 ('s. x med., Canterbury?').

There is a microfilm at the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (IRHT), Paris.

Status: Draft