

## 112. Coligny-Genève, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, MS Bodmer 2

Fragment of Ælfric, Homily for Septuagesima Sunday  
[Ker 285 & Supp., Gneuss 828]

**HISTORY:** A late 11c fragment consisting of one leaf trimmed at the top containing most of the Gospel text of Ælfric's Homily for Septuagesima Sunday from the second series (on Matt. 20.1–15, the parable of the workers in the vineyard). The leaf had formed the wrapper of Domenico Mancini, *De quattuor virtutibus* (London: R. Dexter, 1601); the volume was bought in the Howard of Corby Sale at Sotheby's, Lot 29, August 1, 1934 by the book dealer E. P. Goldschmidt and the leaf, detached, sold separately by him to the collector Wilfrid Merton; later bought by the book dealer Martin Breslauer (no. 4 in his 1958 catalogue) (see Ker 1962: 77). It was purchased for the Bodmeriana by auction in July 1958 for £250. The verso was pasted to the binding. It is now preserved between sheets of plate glass, kept in a box labeled 'M. MS. I.6 cod. Bodmer 2'. The text varies slightly in grammatical details and vocabulary from the received text (see Ker 1962: 78–79, Potter 1964: 67), enough so that Godden did not attempt to collate variants from it (Godden 1979: 348–49).

[Note: Ker (1962: 77) notes that this copy "does not set out to be a faithful transcript of what Ælfric wrote," that the scribe was simplifying the text. The Bodmer text is related to the tradition preserved in such manuscripts as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340, 342 [358], Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MSS 162 [33], 198 [41], 303 [49], and other of the "B group" of the "first recension" of manuscripts of Ælfric's second series of Catholic Homilies (cf. Godden 1979: xxv–lxv). Manuscripts of this group probably go back to a south-eastern ancestor but the type spread to the West Midlands and Worcester (Godden 1979: lx–lxii). Though the Bodmer fragment is a slender sample, dialectal variants and corrections point to a south-western scriptorium in possession of a IW-S first-recension copy of the second series.]

**CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:** A single leaf measuring ca. 185 × 138 mm. (as trimmed it varies in size 185/189 × 138/141 mm. from left to right

measured from the recto). Remaining writing area is 152/154 × 122 mm. The top half of the first line on recto and (somewhat less) on verso has been trimmed away. Probably five lines of writing have been trimmed away at top. Ruled heavily on the verso (hair) side with 20 long lines remaining. A small amount of paste is still visible on the bottom left of the recto; paste discoloration on the verso at bottom left quarter. In late A-S caroline minuscule in dark brown ink.

**CONTENTS:** Ælfric, Homily for Septuagesima Sunday (ÆCHom II, 5):

Recto (20 lines, top line partially trimmed from the top, restored letters in round brackets): [. . .] ‘(merigen 7 wolde hirian wirtan) into his winearde. | Þa worhton hig foreward se hlaford 7 þa wirht[.] | wið anu(m) pen` in `eg(e) . . . þa underfeng heora ælc anne pening. swa swá þa oððr(e)’ [. . .]; (transcription, Ker 1962: 80; cf. Godden 1979: 41/5–42/23);

Verso (20 lines, top line partially trimmed but legible; lines 12–14, 20 partially damaged by folding and paste): [. . .] ‘unc to anu(m) peninge. Nym þine foreward 7 ga þe | forð. Ic wylle soðlice syllan þisum látemæstan . . . Soðlice godes wineard | ys israhele híwræden. Mid þa(m) naman ys g(e)swu|[telod . . .] (transcription, Ker 1962: 82; cf. Godden 1979: 42/28–44).

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Godden, Malcolm, ed. *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, The Second Series: Text*. Early English Text Society s.s. 5. London: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Ker, N. R. “The Bodmer Fragment of Ælfric’s Homily for Septuagesima Sunday,” in *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J. R. R. Tolkien on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Norman Davis and C. L. Wrenn, 77–83. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962.
- Manuscripts and printed books from the eighth to the present century from the library of the late Wilfred Merton, F.S.A., and other distinguished collections*. London: M. Breslauer, 1958. [no. 4]
- Potter, Simeon. Review of *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J.R.R. Tolkien . . .*, *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 15 (1964): 65–9. [contains rev. of Ker art. above]