
An Encyclopaedic Sequence in Cotton Julius A. ii

Introduction

The nine leaves in which these notes were transmitted, latterly bound together with the other parts of Julius A. ii, are an encyclopaedist's guilty pleasure: they contain a wisdom dialogue, selected *Distichs of Cato* and other maxims, and this sequence of trivia on biblical and general matters, with just a single verse prayer distracting from the encyclopaedic focus of the whole. One could pick a worse MS on which to write a term paper, provided you can read the OE, as I suspect none of it is available in translation.

The MS suffered some considerable damage in the 1731 fire at Ashburnham House, hence two names in the first note have had to be editorially restored.

Manuscript

London, British Library, Cotton MS Julius A. ii, fol. 140v

Text

1. (a) Her sagað embe þa twegen sceðan, þe mid [Criste] hangedon. (b) Hy wære on ebreisc genemede [Acha]sachat and Macros, and on greckisc Malica and Loca, and on romanisc Cismus and Dismus. (c) Cismus gelifde, and Dismus ne gelifde.
2. Noes arc wæs iii hund feðma lang, and fiftig wid, and þrittig heah.
3. (a) Sancte Petres cyrice is þreo hund fota lang, and twa hund fota wid, (b) and þar is twa hund swera and twentig, (c) and þara leohtfata xii þusenda and fifti, (d) and on þære hlæddra is twa and sixti stapa.
4. (a) Salemannes templ wæs sixti fæðma lang, and sixti heah, and þrittig wid; (b) and þara wyrehtena wæs ðe þane stan bæron hundseofontig þusenda; (c) and hundeahtatig þusenda hine sniðon and feidon; (d) and þar wæs þreo ðusend gerefena and þreo hundred.
5. (a) Istorius sæde þæt þyses middangeardes lenga wære xii þusend mila, (b) and on bræde six þusend, (c) and þreo hundred butan litlum ealandum.
6. (a) Man hafað bana twa hundred and nigontine, (b) and he hafað æddrena þreo hundred and fife and sixti; (c) and swa fæla daga beoð on twelf monðum, (d) and hundtwentig geara hafað þritti þusend daga and six hundred.

Notes

3a Sancte Petres cyrice: i.e. in Rome.

3b–c swera, leohtfata: The so-called partitive genitive expresses a quantity *of* something.

4b,d wyrehtena, gerefena: See previous note.