Platearius Johannes.

M 873 Compendium Salernitanum. Titled illustrations only.

 Manuscript on vellum, written and illuminated in northern Italy, or Venezia Tridentina, in the middle of the fourteenth century.
 488 colored drawings.
 9 1/4 leaves (11 1/2 ✝ 2 3/4 inches).
 12°, 26°, 38°-12°, 138-2 = 94.

4°. red velvet, French, XVIII cent.

Contents: Original drawings commence f.1: herba de qui fit aloeu through Seccacul..l.irinig; f.92V; followed by seven of the sixteenth century on the last two leaves. They represent medicinal plants, stones and how they are mined, animals, reptiles and other natural products, arranged alphabetically.

Text: Not included; apparently it comprised a separate volume. But, in general, the contents and arrangement of M.873 corresponds to Berlin Hamilton 407, a Platearius discussed by J. Schuster in Festschrift Degering, p.203 and Modena, Bibl. Estense, Estero 28.

Script: Each drawing is accompanied by the object's name in a neat cursive. Identical lettering appears on frescoes at Trent and Bolzano.*

Decoration: The peculiar provincial figure style shows a remote oriental derivation with international European influences; it can be traced to fourteenth-century frescoes in Venezia Tridentina. The previously mentioned Modena MS is illustrated in O. Pächt, Early Italian Nature Studies, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, vol. XIII, (195), pl.6.

In M.873 we have dwarfed figures, with large heads and light colored hair. They wear parti-colored clothes in the mid-fifteenth-century fashion. Some have cone-shaped hats; one has a close-fitting cap; one wears a hood under the cap. The rare glass blowing scene on f.90, also in B.M.Add. 22636, is a strong reason for localizing the manuscript in Italy since it is an early example. The plant drawings fall into two categories, one naturalistic, the other conventional types copied from classical herbalists; they show this by the occasional serpent coiled at the base (f.5V, 9V, 70). The quadrupeds are likewise by two artists, one of whom draws in the delicate manner of de Grassi (f.25, 42, 67V), while the other is a perfurcapyust of earlier bestiaries (f.3V, 60, 62V, 80). There is complete disregard of perspective in the drawing of rivers (f.1, 9, 39V). Such a perpendicular river is also depicted in a fresco at Trent.

History: At this distance from other Platearius MSS the definite localization of M.873 is not possible. On the verso of the last leaf the following inscription shows that it was in France in 1641: Le dict livre ma est donné par monsieur de bonpar medicin du roy en l'année 1641. Marcellin Herculé Bonpart (Noted in Biographie Universelle, III (VI), col. 528) was Louis XIIIth's physician. His

*For reproductions, see A. Morassi, Storia della pittura nella Venezia Tridentina (1933).

(MORE)
books passed on his death to Vallot, first physician to Louis XIV. Owned in 1954 by Emil Starenstein (his ex-libris), professor of pharmacology and pharmagnosis at the German university in Prague, from whose library it was purchased through Gottschalk (Biblion) of Garden City, with the assistance of Wm. D. Skegion in 1955.

Additional cards:

1. Compendium salernitanum.
2. MSS.-Illum.-Italian-XIV cent.
5. Iconography - Plants
6. MSS.-Illum.-Italy: Venezia Tridentina

Coral f.28
Plants
Insects f.60, 62V, 87, 90
Occupation-Mining f.1V, 3, 4V, 9, 16
Bestiary - Castor f.25
Reptiles f.9V, 50V, 70, 80V, 84, 86, 87V
Fish f.8V, 88
Asphalt f.9
Sea Shells, f.63V
Crustaceans 22, 36V

Circa instans, see also

Platearius, Johannes
Compendium salernitanum

Jelly fish f.36
Bestiary - Hedgehog f.42
Fowl f.50V
Bird - Swallow f.53V
Stones f.60
Bestiary - Lynx f.60
Skeleton - f.61V
Plant - Mandrake f.61V
Bestiary: Deer f.67V
Animal: Elephant, f.80
Sponge f.84
Bird: Ostrich - with horseshoe f.87
Occupation: glass-blowing f.90
Bestiary: Bat f.91
Sugar. f.92

Shelf list.

Completed March 25, 1955
Meta P. Harrsen
For printed text or notices of this MS. see:


Lilian Armstrong, "The Illustration of Pliny's *Historia naturalis:* Manuscripts before 1430," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* XLVI, 1983, 27 n.33. (Says M. 873 is Venetian, third quarter XIVth century.)

Morgan MS. No. M. 870-874

For printed text or notices of this MS. see:

Some Remarks on the Illustrated Manuscript, M 873 c, 1350

The important manuscript M 873, listed under the title Circa instans, is, in fact, a style-book intended for the guidance of illustrators of the mediaeval herbals, and as such is much rarer than the herbals themselves. Herbals were so called because their contents, pharmaceutical in nature, treated of medicaments derived chiefly from herbs, although some few animal and mineral substances were also included.

In the case of M 873 the work has much closer affinities with Le Grant Herbier than it does with Circa instans. For one thing it lists 477 items, only 3 more than appear in the printed Le Grant Herbier, whereas Circa instans contains only 273. Still further Circa instans is a 12th century product of the Salernitan School of medicine, written in Latin, while Le Grant Herbier's language is mediaeval French throughout. Although M 873 carries no text each of its images is labelled, and an occasional French term replaces the standard Latin ones used in other herbals. Additionally the arrangement of items closely parallels that of Le Grant Herbier, with some shifting about of blocks upon its alphabetically ordered pages.

Comparative study of M 873's illustrations with the woodcuts of the 15th century herbals may reveal some hitherto unsuspected source materials, and help to clarify some of the bibliographic puzzles our age has inherited.

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