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Floridus, Macer 267

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives

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Summary Information

Repository:	Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives
Creator:	Floridus, Macer
Title:	Macer Floridus, Pseud. [Odo de Meung / Odo Magdunensis], De viribus herbarium manuscript fragments
ID:	HIBDARC.267
Date [inclusive]:	circa 1150
Physical Description:	.25 Linear Feet 1 volume
Language of the Material:	Latin

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], ca. 1150. Depository: Macer Floridus, Pseud. [Odo De Meung / Odo Magdunensis], De viribus herbarium manuscript fragments, Hunt Institute Archives collection no. 267, Archives, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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Historical Note

Macer Floridus is the alleged pseudonym of Odo de Meung, a French cleric and physician who lived during the 11th century and was the presumed author of the herbal poem *De Viribus Herbarum* (On the properties of plants). The use of "Macer" alludes to the Roman poet, Aemilius Macer (16 B.C.), who authored a poem on remedies for those afflicted with wounds from poisonous serpents. The herbal, commonly referred to as the Macer Floridus, was written in Latin hexameter verse and presented the medicinal uses of plants. The rhyming verse aided doctors and apothecaries in memorizing medicinal recipes and treatments, which made the herbal popular among those who practiced medicine during the Middle Ages.

The Macer Floridus is recognized as a signal of revival in botanical interest following the Dark Ages, so named for the lack of recordkeeping during this time. Though not derived from personal observation, the Macer Floridus was assembled from such sources as *Naturalis Historia* by Pliny the Elder (23–79), the Greek physicians Pedanios Dioscorides (40–90) and Galenos of Pergamon (130–201), as well as the gardening manual *Hortulus* by the Benedictine poet and botanist Walahfrid Strabo (808–849).

On 9 May 1477 printer Arnaldus de Bruxella issued the first print edition of *De Viribus Herbarum*, which included 77 plants and their medicinal uses. A second edition was printed in Milan in 1489. An illustrated edition became available in the year 1500 and presented 66 wood-cut plant illustrations.

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Scope and Contents Note

This collection includes two cropped, handwritten leaves from *De Viribus Herbarum*, estimated to be from the mid-12th century, making these the oldest items in the Hunt Institute's collection. The pages contain information on the healing properties of sage and wild thyme as well as fragments of the descriptions of other plants.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation Archives

Processing Information

This collection was digitized by G. Boardman in 2015.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

For a Modern English translation of the section about wild thyme, see the physic section of our online exhibition *Virtues and Pleasures of Herbs through History*.

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
De viribus herbarium manuscript fragments, circa 1150 Digital Object: De viribus herbarium manuscript fragments	box 1	folder 1