

286. London, British Library, Royal 5 E. xi
Aldhelm "De laude virginitatis"

[Ker 252, Gneuss 458]

HISTORY: Dated by Ker (*Cat.*) to late 10c or early 11c, with two strata of glosses dated to the early and mid 11c. Localized to Christ Church Canterbury (Gneuss).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: [iv] + 120 + [iv] leaves, foliated 1-120. Leaves measure ca. 216 x 140 mm., with a writing grid of ca. 163 x 85 mm. Ruled for 19 lines. Prickings mark double bounding lines. Parallel rows of prickings appear in the outer margins through f. 81, after which the single inner row continues. The outer row was made first and rejected, as the written lines follow the inner row of prickings. Ff. 33, 35, 38, 40 (most clearly), 90, 94, and 95 show a row of prickings running across the leaves below the first line of text along with prickings in the right margin, suggesting that the top margins of these leaves (as well as others) originally formed the outer margins (before text was entered); the leaves were then turned counter-clockwise and a new set of prickings added to form a new outer margin. Holes and defects are visible on ff. 4, 18, 27, 38, 41, 50, 53, 54 (modern repairs), 55, 65, 68, 69, 73 (modern repairs), 75, 77, 78, 93, 102. F. 82, right margin, contains a crude scratched drawing of a spear with an ornate base. Throughout the manuscript, the letter 'K' (for 'Kapitalis') is written in the margins, the first appearing on f. 36v. Four modern paper flyleaves begin the codex, the last of which contains two backstrips from medieval bindings. The first strip bears the title "DE LAVDE VIRGINITATIS," from another copy of Aldhelm; the second bears the title "ALDELM(U)S DE LAUDE VIRGINITATI(S)," and originally stood as the backstrip to the medieval binding of this manuscript. Four paper endleaves, the first of which contains a diamond-shaped fragment of a late 12/13c text (33 mm. x 62 mm. at extreme points) with part of an alphabet and an excerpt possibly from Psalm 9.26: 'e f g h [] | [] mini . + t a a b c d e | Omni-

um inimicorum s[] |[] a[]'. The first line and part of the second ('e ... mini.') is written in yellow ink, the remaining lines in red. Leaves throughout are somewhat stiff, with hair sides markedly yellow in comparison with flesh sides, and are ingenerally excellent condition. Leaves are arranged HFHF. The binding is of black leather, with gold embossing and the stamped date 1757.

COLLATION: F. 1 tipped in, with stub showing after f. 5. I⁶ (ff. 2-7), II⁸⁺¹ (ff. 8-16; f. 8 inserted, with stub showing after f. 9), III⁸ (ff. 17-24), IV⁸ (ff. 25-32), V⁸ (ff. 33-40), VI⁸ (ff. 41-48), VII⁸ (ff. 49-56), VIII⁸ (ff. 57-64), IX⁸ (ff. 65-72), X⁸⁺¹ (ff. 73-81; f. 80 inserted, with stub showing after f. 73), XI⁸ (ff. 82-89), XII⁸⁺¹ (ff. 90-98; f. 91 inserted, with stub showing after f. 95), XIII⁶⁺¹ (ff. 99-105; f. 100 inserted, with stub showing after f. 104), XIV⁸ (ff. 106-113), XV⁶ (ff. 114-119). F. 120 tipped in.

CONTENTS:

f. 1rv '[obsta]culo tricabatur.... Uerumtamen promissum' (= PL 89, chaps. 59/23-60/12). Contains scattered OE glosses (ed. Napier 1900: no. 8 B). [The leaf was evidently cancelled, as virtually the same text (agreeing also in layout) appears at f. 116rv; a number of substantive differences appear in the glosses. See also f. 120 for a second cancelled leaf.]

f. 2r Blank except for British Museum stamp, pressmark, and the word 'banisus' (?).

f. 2v Drawing in brown ink of St. Aldhelm, with the book open to the first words of chap. 1 of "De laude virginitatis": 'Iam|dudum | ad pon|tifica|le pro|ficiscens'.

ff. 3r-7r **Incipivnt capitula libra [for libri] de laude | uirginitatis** 'Saluatio & prologi prefatio'. Table of contents with chapter numbers in red ink. At the end of the list of chapters (f. 7r) appears: 'Apologitica excusatio dilati codicelli | Quod uirginitatis preconiu(m) sicut in pre|senti opusculo rethoricis relatib(us) digestu(m) | est. ita in futuro opere metricis car|minib(us) exspoletur'.

ff. 7v-8r Aldhelm "De laude virginitatis" (prose version): **Saluatio et pro|logi praefatio** 'REVEREN|TISSIMIS | CHR(IST)I VIRGI | NI | BVS'. (= PL 89, chap. 1). [Initial R in green ink with black border and red tint; remainder of the first line written in black, with

the remaining lines of the incipit alternating in red and green ink.] f. 8v Blank.

ff. 9r–119r **Incipit Liber de Lavde | virginitatis | 'IAMDV DV(M) AD | PONTIFICALE | PROFICISCENS CONCILIAVLV(M)'** (= PL 89, chap. 2; Ehwald 1919, chap. 1). ['iamdv dv(m)' in green ink, with initial ornate letter in brown ink, with some red and green; 'ad pontificale' in red ink, and 'proficiscens conciliavlv(m)' in green ink with some black. Small letters have been scratched into the bodies of the letters of 'iandv dv(m)' in two rows; the top row reads 'incipit', the second row is unclear.]. Contains ca. 700 OE interlinear and marginal glosses, of which 436 are ink and 268 scratched (ed. Napier 1900: no. 8; Meritt 1945, no. 2). The earlier glosses are in several hands and are probably contemporary with the manuscript; additional glosses were written later in the 11c.

The disposition of the chapters is as follows: Chap. 3 is unnumbered and ends at 'uerberans' (= PL chap. 3/18; Ehwald 231/8). Chap. 4 begins 'Et quamuis gymnicorum' (= PL chap. 3/18 through chap. 4; Ehwald 231/8). Chap. 14 is misnumbered as 15. Chap. 16 is misnumbered as 15. Chaps. 20 and 21 are unnumbered, but chap. 20 begins with a display line. No break between ff. 50 and 51 (chap. 26), although a stub is showing. Chap. 30 begins 'Amos primus nitrię ... conspex(it)' (ending f. 58v/5), the first six lines of which ('Amos ... refrabat(ur)') = PL chap. 37/1–6 (see Ehwald 268, note s). No break between ff. 73 and 74 (chap. 36), although stub is showing. Chap. 37 is numbered in a different hand (in a lighter brown ink seen elsewhere in the codex) (= PL chaps. 37–38/47 'squalorib(us) eripuit', ending Ehwald 288/7). Chap. 38 (= PL chap. 38/47–end). Number for chap. 39 omitted (see Ehwald 291). Chap. 40 is unnumbered, but bears an incipit: 'Incipit lib(er) de feminis' (no loss of text between ff. 83 and 84, although stub is showing). Chaps. 41–45 are unnumbered (no loss of text between ff. 88 and 89, although stub is showing). Chaps. 45–47 are misnumbered (= chaps. 46–48). No loss of text between ff. 95 and 96 (chap. 48), although stub is showing. The following chap. is misnumbered as 47 (= chap. 49). Chaps. 49–53 (= chaps. 50–54); chap. 54 begins 'Sed ad propositum' (see Ehwald 313, note t). Chaps. 55–59 (= chaps. 56–60); no loss of text between ff. 118 and 119 (chap. 59), although stub is showing.

- f. 119v Blank but for some late jottings (e.g. 'Confitemini domino', Ps. 135)
- f. 120 Canceled duplicate of f. 117, with scattered OE glosses (ed. Napier 1900: no. 8 B). [A few glosses, by comparison with f. 117r, are omitted from f. 120r; but f. 120v contains two glosses not found at f. 117v.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Ehwald, Rudolf, ed. *Aldhelmi Opera*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 15. Berlin: Weidmann, 1919.
- Meritt, Herbert Dean, ed. *Old English Glosses (A Collection)*. New York: Modern Language Association of America; London: Oxford University Press, 1945.
- Napier, Arthur S., ed. *Old English Glosses, Chiefly Unpublished*. Anecdota Oxoniensia. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.