

287. London, British Library, Royal 5 F. iii

Aldhelm: "De laude virginitatis"

[Ker 253, Gneuss 462]

HISTORY: Dated to the 9/10c, with OE glosses of 10c and 11c. Listed in Young's catalogue of Worcester Cathedral manuscripts (ca. 1622) as "253* Aldelmus de virginitate caractere saxonico. 4^{to} imperf." Belonged to John Theyer (1597-1673).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: [i] + 40 + [ii] leaves, foliated 1-40. The manuscript has been heavily trimmed at the bottom of most leaves. Untrimmed leaves (ff. 2, 8, 14, 25, 32, 35) measure ca. 237 x 167 mm.; trimmed leaves vary, but generally measure ca. 195-200 x 167 mm. Writing grid measures ca. 183 x 128 mm. F. 3 has a section trimmed from the bottom margin measuring 107 x 40 mm. F. 10 retains an initial on the recto that extends into the bottom margin, but the rest of the margin to the right of the initial has been trimmed; f. 12 shows a similar practice, although the excised section has been patched. F. 20 is irregularly trimmed, with a section measuring 69 x 35 mm. cut from the right bottom margin (viewed from the recto) and the left bottom margin trimmed at a diagonal. A rectangle measuring 45 x 8 mm. has been cut out of the center of f. 13; a similar excision has been made on f. 9, measuring 54 x 4 mm. Outer margins of ff. 11, 33, and 39 have been trimmed. Modern repairs have been made to f. 2. Ff. 1r-2r, 4v, 5v, 6v, 11r-12v are yellowed. Staining appears at the bottom of many leaves, lessening after f. 19. F. 8 shows heavy staining toward the bottom. A lighter stain is found at ff. 39-40, covering, but not obscuring, a large portion of text on f. 40, less on f. 39. Some staining is also evident on f. 24. F. 8 shows a thick horizontal line in brown ink in the bottom margin below the text, perhaps intended to indicate where the leaf was to be trimmed. The edges of nearly all the leaves are darkened. Leaves are ruled for 24 lines. Pricking is clearly visible in outer margins. The quality of the leaves varies considerably, from stiff, with clear flesh and hair

sides, to limp and suede-like. Natural holes occur at ff. 15, 26, 28, 31, 38. A half-moon shape has been cut out below the initial on f. 30r. After f. 23v 'plenius exposuit' (chap. 27), a number of leaves are lost containing the remainder of chap. 27, all of chaps. 28–33, and part of chap. 34; the text then picks up again at 'sed angelico fultus suffragio' (PL chap. 34, col. 133/8; Ehwald 1919: 276/14). Rough line estimates suggest that an entire quire was lost.

Leaves have two foliations. The first, in ink, skips f. 14, and continues out of sequence to the end. A pencil foliation begins on f. 14 and continues correctly to the end, crossing out the ink numbering from "15" onward. Ink is brown throughout, with ornamented initials in brown ink as well. Chapter titles are in red ink, although oxidation has darkened many of them; chapters are unnumbered. Late incomplete drawings of initials in light brown ink appear on ff. 8r and 32v; an interlace design appears on f. 23v. Traces of musical notation in margins of ff. 21v and 33v. British Museum stamp on ff. 1v, 10v, 16v, 20v, 25v, 31v, 35v, and 40v. At the bottom of f. 2v is written in Theyer's hand: 'Aldhelm(us) fuit p(r)im(us) Ep(iscop)us Sherborn. nunc Salisburiensis | obiit A(nn)o D(o)m(ine) dccvii° fuit Bedæ Coætane(us)'. His notes can be seen elsewhere in the manuscript (e.g., f. 20v).

COLLATION: I⁴⁺³ (ff. 1–7) (wants 1 before f. 1, which was possibly a bifolium; ff. 1 and 7 tipped in; f. 6 inserted as part of original quire, with stub showing after f. 1; original construction of quire in doubt), II⁸ (ff. 8–15), III⁶⁺² (ff. 16–23) (ff. 18 and 21 are inserted as part of original quire, with stub of f. 18 showing after f. 20 and that to f. 21 showing after f. 17), IV⁶⁺² (ff. 24–31) (ff. 25 and 30 are inserted as part of original quire, with stub of f. 25 showing after f. 30 and that to f. 30 showing after f. 25), V⁸⁺¹ (ff. 32–40) (f. 34 is inserted as part of original quire, with stub showing after f. 38). One quire of 8 missing after III.

CONTENTS:
ff. 1r–2v/3 Table of contents (incomplete).
ff. 2v/4–40v Aldhelm, "De laudibus virginitatis" (prose version) (PL 89: 103–47; Ehwald 228–323): 'REUERENTISSIMIS CHR(IST)I | uirginib(us)' (f. 2v/4–15); 'IAMDVDM AD PONTIFICALE pro (cancelled) | proficiscens conciliabulu(m)' (ff. 2v/16–40v, ending incompletely at PL chap. 47, col. 147/25; Ehwald 301/13–15: 'crudeliter

tenerrima membra'). [Chap. numbers omitted. Contains scattered Latin and OE glosses (ed., Napier 1900: no. 9) of 11c as well as 12c scribbles and proper names in OE (ed. Napier 1900: xvi).]

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Ehwald, Rudolf, ed. *Aldelmi Opera*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 15. Berlin: Weidmann, 1919.

Napier, Arthur S., ed. *Old English Glosses, Chiefly Unpublished*. Anecdota Oxoniensia. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.

Young, Patrick. *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Wigorniensis, Made in 1622-1623 by Patrick Young, Librarian to King James I*.

Ed. Ivor Atkins and Neil R. Ker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944.

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: [iv] + 422 + [v] leaves, foliated 1-442. Leaves measure 332 x 225 mm, with a writing grid measuring 322 x 127 mm. Ruled for 27 lines in two columns. Picking (small slash-) in outer margin and gutter. Initials and headers are in red ink, with blue tracery. Medieval quire numbering added in lower margins at the end of each quire, dividing the manuscript into four major parts as follows: (I) i (f. 14v), ii (f. 22v), iii (f. 30v), v (f. 47v), vi wanting, viii (f. 71v), vii and xiv wanting, x (f. 87v), xi (f. 95v), xii (f. 102v), xiii (f. 121v), xiv wanting, xv (f. 131v), xvii (f. 158v), xvi and xviii wanting, xix (f. 171v), (2) i (f. 179v), ii (f. 187v), iii (f. 195v), iii (f. 203v), iv (f. 219v), v wanting, xii (f. 227v), ix (f. 240v), viii wanting, x (f. 248v), xi (f. 256v), xii (f. 262v), xiii (f. 270v), xiiii (f. 279v), xv (f. 287v), xvi (f. 295v); (3) i (f. 306v), ii (f. 318v), iii (f. 329v), iii wanting, v (f. 337v), vi (f. 345v), vii (f. 353v), viii (f. 361v), ix (f. 370v), x (f. 378v), xi (f. 380v); (4) i (f. 388v), ii (f. 396v), iii (f. 404v), iii (f. 412v), v (f. 416v), iv (f. 423v), iv (f. 388v), ii (f. 396v), iii (f. 404v), iii (f. 412v), v (f. 416v), iv (f. 423v), iv