

288. London, British Library, Royal 6 A. vi  
Aldhelm, "Epistola ad Heahfridum,"  
"De laudibus virginitatis"  
[Ker 254, Gneuss 464]

**HISTORY:** Dated 980–1000, and associated with Canterbury; the main hand is identified with the gloss hand of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 1. 15, part I (Boethius) [343], a St. Augustine's manuscript perhaps written there (Bishop 1957: 329; cf. Hussey 2014: 115) and main hand of Cambridge, Trinity College B.14. 3 (289) (Arator) [78], written at St. Augustine's, as well as with a Muchelney charter of 995 (see Bishop 1971: 9). Gwara flatly calls it "a Christ Church manuscript" (Gwara 2001: 1.177\*, cf. 107–08\*; Gwara 1996: 110–11), seeing the main hand as being identical to the gloss hand to "Epistle to Heahfridum" in BL Cotton Domitian ix [190], ff. 4r, 7r (see Ker, *Cat.*, p. 188). The colophon on f. 109r is identical to that found at the end of the prose "De laudibus virginitatis" in BL Harley 3013 [272], a 12c manuscript whose glosses descend from those in this manuscript. F. 107 is a 16c supply leaf.

**CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:** Ff. 1–4 are singletons from an unidentified "Marian" treatise or treatises on the Song of Songs; writing is of the 13c; ff. 1 and 4 are bound upside-down. F. 1r has the end of a book followed by a capitula list apparently unrelated to the Song of Songs. Leaves, all darkened, are in two columns of 41 lines.

Leaves of the main texts measure 284 × 158 mm., with a writing area of 198 × 97 mm. Pricking in the outer margins, with double bounding verticals, and ruling for 21 lines. Leaves arranged HHHH. The parchment is uniformly light in color and finely prepared; script is anglo-caroline. Written in brown ink throughout, with chapter numbers for "De laudibus virginitatis" in red. In the incipit to the "Epistola," the 'D' of 'DOMINO' (f. 5r) is comprised of biting zoomorphic creatures and interlace in brown and red ink. The first line of the preface to "De laudibus virginitatis" is written in green ink, the second in red. In the incipit (f. 13r), the initial 'R' is written

in green ink, and the rest of ll. 1–2 in red. Major divisions are marked by display lines (e.g., ff. 36r, 78r), with the first and sometimes second letter in green and the remainder in red. Occasional larger capitals occur randomly (e.g., ff. 7r/16, 76v/17). An initial ‘G’ is missing on f. 48v. Chapter numbers are not given for chaps. 20, 23, 25–27, 33, and 35 to end. Construe marks occur throughout. Latin and OE glosses, in a hand similar to the text hand, are in lighter brown ink; Gwara sees the same gloss hand writing as that of the main scribe in two phases, with the OE glosses on ff. 42r–46r being in a different hand (Gwara 2001: 1.178–79). *Signes de renvoi* key long marginal glosses to the text, e.g., ff. 77rv, 78rv, 79rv, 80v. F. 109v dates to the 13c and is ruled for 31 lines. The title of the poem on the death of Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, is in red, and initial letters, as well as some letters in the right margin, are touched with red.

A few 17c glosses in dull red ink (e.g., ff. 28r, 28v, 29r, 30v), probably in the same hand that added small crosses in the margins of many leaves. F. 6r has a modern patch in the outer margin, and there are small holes at ff. 9, 45, 72, and 93, along with a wormhole extending from ff. 91–98. A brown stain occurs on f. 64r, and a crude letter ‘a’ is written in the margin of f. 57r. F. 107 is a 17c transcription on a supply leaf. The ruling is done on the verso in a dull pale-red or brown ink (seen elsewhere in sporadic annotations); written in black ink, with a single red initial.

**COLLATION:** iii + 109 + iii leaves, foliated 1–109. Marbled endleaves, modern paper flyleaves. Ff. 1–4 half-sheets, with four stubs visible before f. 5; I<sup>8</sup> (ff. 5–12), II<sup>6+1</sup> (ff. 13–19), III–IV<sup>8</sup> (ff. 20–35), V<sup>7?</sup> (ff. 36–42), VI<sup>6?</sup> (ff. 37–48), VII–IX<sup>8</sup> (ff. 49–72), X<sup>6</sup> (ff. 73–78), XI–XIII<sup>8</sup> (ff. 79–102), XIV<sup>6+1</sup> 5 added (17c supply leaf) (ff. 103–109).

[Note: Tight binding and HHHH arrangement make collation difficult and somewhat speculative (see Gwara 2001: 1.177\*). Warner and Gilson 1921: 1.129 indicate that quire V is of 7, which is tentatively followed here.]

## CONTENTS:

1. ff. 1r–4v leaves taken from a 13c manuscript, used as flyleaves (f. 1/f. 4 is bound in upside-down and reversed; at top of reversed leaf, f. 1r, in 17c hand: ‘Aldelmus de virginitate’):

a. ff. 4v–4r ~ 2r–2v ~ 3r–3v ~ 1v/a1–1r/a35 part of an unidentified commentary on Song of Songs (beg. imperf.): ‘[. . .] 7 in aliis fructum boni op(er)is generetis fidem 7 op(er)a | creatoris’; text continues unbroken in leaf order as shown to f. 1r/a35, ending: ‘uiuit 7 regnat deus p(er) omnia s(e)c(u)la s(e)c(u)lor(um). Amen.’ | **Explicit liber iste**

b. f. 1r/b1–1–41 enumeration of three sins (beg.) and (ends with) four humilities: ‘¶ Tria sunt p(e)cc(at)a que nullo modo remittuntur | Blasphemia in deo. non credere resurrect(ion)em ch(rist)i. de mi|sericordia dei desp(er)are . . . ¶ Puer h(abe)t iiii<sup>o</sup> humilitates q(ui) <con>ueniunt om(n)i | ch(risti)ano. humil(is) <est>. i(m)memor (est) i(n)u(r)e. cast(us). s(i)n(e)[?] cupiditate | eod(em) m(odo) deb(et) [?] o(mne)s e(ss)e. alioq(u)in ut dic(it) d(omin)us n(on) possim(us) int[rare] | i(n) regnu(m) celoru(m). 7 c(etera).’ [four leaves are cut out after this ensemble].

2. ff. 5r–9r Aldhelm, “Epistola ad Heahfridum” with Latin and OE glosses (17c title: ‘Aldelmus de virginitate’): ‘D(OMI)NO VE|NERABILI PRECO|NIO \ (gl: ‘laude’) / OFFERENDO ET S(AN)C(T)ORVM MERITIS | magnopere honorando haehfrido aldelm(us) | exiguus in d(omin)o aeternam salutem’; explicit in seven poetic lines, f. 9r/12–18, ends: ‘Arbiter etern(us) tibi iam miserescat in etu(m). | Fulgens diuitiis semp(er) & ore clarus’ (coll. Ehwald 1919: 486–94 as *R*; text and glosses coll. Gwara 1996 as *R3*);

[**Note:** In most manuscripts the final poem runs “Digna fiat glingio . . . gramma poetae.” The final two hexameters, as quoted, are found here and in BL Harley 3013 (cf. Gwara 1996: 133).]

**OE Content:** Two OE glosses to the “Epistle ad Heahfridum” ed. Napier 1900: no. 13; 396 OE glosses to “De laudibus virginitatis” ed. Napier 1900: no. 7. The transmission of the Latin gloss tradition is extensively discussed by Gwara 2001: 1.188\*–308\*.

3. ff. 9v–109r/4 Aldhelm, “De laudibus virginitatis” with Latin and OE glosses (ed. Ehwald 1919: 211–323, collated as *R3*; rev. Gwara 2001: 1.19–761, collated as *R3*, on odd-numbered pages; Latin and OE glosses ed. Gwara 2001: 2.26–760, on even-numbered pages facing the text):

ff. 9v–12v/15 list of capitula to “De laud. virg.”: **INCIPIVNT KAPITVLA LIBRI SEQUEN|TIS DE LAVDIBVS S(AN)C(T)ARVM VIRGINVM** | ‘SALVTATIO ET PROLOGI PREFATIO . . . .LX. Q(uo)d uirginitatis p(re)coniu(m) sicut in p(re)sentu(m) | opusculo rethoricis relatib(us) digestu(m) est. | ita in futuro opere metricis carminibus | expolietur’ [rest of f. 12v blank];

ff. 13r/2–20 Dedication: ‘REVEREN|TISSIMIS | CHR(IST)I VIRGINIBVS. OMNIQVE DEVOTAE | germanitatis affectu uenerandis . . . p(ro)speritatis salutem’;

ff. 13v/1–109r/3 text of “De laud. virg.”: **IAMDVDVM | AD PONTIFICALI | PROFICISCENS CONCILIABLVLM** | fraternis sodalium cateruis comitatis’; ends: ‘Valet o flores aeclesie. sorores monasticae.

| alumne scolasticę. chr(ist)i margaritae. paradisi | gemmae. & celestis patriae participes;

[Note: Division by Roman numerals is sporadic; correspondence to the capitula list is partial and inexact.]

4. f. 109r/5–6. colophon, two hexameters on the work of the scribe, in a smaller ductus: ‘Tres digiti scribunt totu(m) corpus(ue) laborat. | Scribere qui nescit nullum putat esse laborem’ (ed. Gwara 2001: 2.761 n.) [rest of f. 109r blank].
5. f. 109v poem (late 12c) by Richard of Worcester on the death of Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, d. 1171: Ric(ardus) Vuigorniensis. | ‘[C]lerus; pastore. monach(us). pat(r)e plebis. monitoR | Proh dolor urbs Wenta. Solito uiduat(ur) HonoR’; ends: ‘Pastor vt indempnis maneat sine fine p(er)hennis. AMEN’ (ed. Wright 1846: 2.180–81) [the final matching letters of several couplets are drawn out into the right margin].

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