

289. London, British Library, Royal 6 B. vii  
Aldhelm, "De laudibus virginitatis"; relics list  
[Ker 255, Gneuss 466]

**HISTORY:** A deluxe copy of "De laudibus virginitatis" "indisputably based on Canterbury models" (Gwara 2002:115\*, 122\*). Dated by Ker (*Cat.*) to s. xi<sup>2</sup>, by Gwara (see 1999 and 1997, but cf. 2002:113\*) to ca. 1078; densely glossed in OE and Latin in the same hand as the text. Text is Gwara's R5, in Class III, Latin glosses possibly derived from an exemplar of Digby 146 [370] (Gwara 2002: 115\*). Localized to Exeter by decorative features (Drage 1978: 372), script (Gwara 2002: 113\*) and by the added list of relics given to Exeter by King Æðelstan (ff. 54v–55r). A name, 'Tho(mas) polk' (15c?), on the recto of the vellum fly before f. 1. Listed as no. 63 in the old Royal catalogue of 1542 (London, BL, Add. 25469, f. 24).

**CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:** [iii] + [i] + 55 + [i] + [iii] leaves. The first three and last three leaves are modern paper. The fourth leaf and the leaf preceding the three endleaves are vellum, part of the original manuscript, or at least medieval. Leaves measure 300 × 205 mm., with a writing area of 215 × 135 mm. Quires are individually secured to modern guards. Leaves arranged HFHF. Ruled for 25 lines, with single bounding lines. Pricking visible along the outer edge. Text in dark brown ink. Leaves have been slightly trimmed (see, e.g., f. 8r). Vellum is a creamy white and finely prepared; the first leaf, f. [i], and the last three leaves, ff. 54, 55, and its conjugate f. [i], are thicker and coarser, much darkened; the last three leaves are ruled for 34 lines. Foliation in modern pencil. Holes occur in f. 35, 44, and 55. Wormholes visible on the inner margin of ff. 1–7 and again on ff. 54 and 55 (the beginnings of the relics list), but not on f. 53, the end of "De laud. virg." which suggests the relics list was added. F. 25 has the lower right corner missing; a modern repair to a tear in the gutter of f. 53. There is sporadic punctuation by *punctus*, *punctus elevatus* (=inverted semi-colon), and *punctus versus* (=semi-colon). Interlinear Latin and OE glosses throughout, often in much lighter ink than the text, especially after f. 38. At f. 10r a

gloss on 'Cerethi . . . et Felethi' extends into the margin on six ruled lines as a substantive comment (ed. Gwara 2001: 136. 6–10); at f. 10v, to the left of the last four lines, drypoint ruling is added for 12 lines of a marginal gloss, although none was ever entered.

F. 15r has a green 'T' in the right margin, without apparent purpose, in a dull chromium green different from that used elsewhere. Initial 'H' on f. 17v has had its ascender lengthened by the original rubricator, the original top-stroke having been erased. On f. 1r, the display line is written in red, the second line in green, the third line in red, the fourth in green, the fifth in red, and the sixth in green. The initial 'D' in the fourth line is a darkened red, with the lobe filled with blue. The linework of the foliate design is in red and brown. The list of chapters on ff. 1–3 has numbers in red, with initial letters alternating green and red throughout. The final line is in red (the rest of the leaf after l. 15 is blank). On f. 3v, the text proper begins with lines alternating red and green (ll. 1–6), then two red (ll. 7–8), one green (l. 9), two red (ll. 10–11), one green (l. 12), three red (ll. 13–16), and one green (l. 17). On f. 4r the first four lines alternate green and red, with the initial 'T' in red line-drawing against a blue background, showing a male figure climbing up the branches that form the stem of the letter; a dragon nips at his feet. Starting with chap. 2, each chapter begins with its number and initial letter in red, followed by a line written in black capitals. Small initials throughout are in red. Chap. 21 begins with a blue initial. Virtually all initials have oxidized. No chapter numbers are entered after chap. 52 (f. 47v ff.); small initials in red on ff. 52 v and 53r. The explicit (f. 53r/10–11) has the first line in red and the second in green.

At the top of f. 1r is written the old Royal pressmark 'N° 63 | 6. B. vii. P. 100'. Scattered marginal notes and scribbles in a light tan ink in an antiquarian hand, mostly noting specific words in the text. Drawings and jottings on f. 6v, bottom margin (a head), f. 7r, bottom margin, f. 11r, bottom margin, f. 11v, left margin, f. 19r, bottom margin, f. 21r, bottom margin (fish), f. 34v, bottom margin. A crossed circle marks the so called 'Amos' interpolation (f. 25r), and in the capitula list the title 'amos nitrię &' on f. 2r/10 has been cancelled with a horizontal line. The name 'Tho(mas) polk' written on the recto of the blank leaf preceding f. 1 [not shown on film]. A large brown stain in the upper part of f. 54v.

Binding dates to 1983: a notice of repair and examination is pasted on the verso of the first paper endleaf.

**COLLATION:** I<sup>8+1</sup> 1 added (ff. [i], 1–8), II–VI<sup>8</sup> (ff. 9–48), VII<sup>4+1</sup> 5 added (49–53) + singleton (f. 54) + bifolium (ff. 55–[i]).

[Note: The last five leaves of the text proper, ff. 49–53, are mounted in separate guards as singletons; the arrangement of the quire seems originally to have been with 5 added. F. 54 is an added leaf, and ff. 55 and the following unnumbered leaf form a bifolium.]

## CONTENTS:

f [i] Blank except for the name ‘Tho(mas) polk’ in a late medieval hand on the recto.

1. ff. 1r–53r Aldhelm, “De laudibus virginitatis” (prose), with interlinear and marginal glossing. (main text, ed. Ehwald 1919: 211–323; rev. ed. Gwara 2001: 2.19–761, on odd-numbered pages; 502 OE glosses, ed. Napier 1900: no. 2; also Richter 1996; Latin and OE glosses ed. Gwara 2001, II:26–760, on even-numbered pages facing the text):

ff. 1r–3r/12–14 list of capitula: INCIP(IT) CAP(ITU)LA LIBRI | ALDELM I EP(ISCOP)I | DE LAVDE VIRGINU(M). | ‘DE GYM|NICOR(UM) | EXEMPLIS. | Q(U) IN AGONE CIRCENSI UICTORIE PALMAM PROMERENTUR . . . LVIII Quod uirginitatis preconium sicut in presenti opusculo rethoricis rela|tibus digestum est. ita in futuro op(er) metricis carminib(us) expolietur. | EXPLICIUNT CAP(ITU)LA [rest of f. 3r blank].

ff. 3v/1–18 Prologue: ‘REUEREN|TISSIMIS (gl: ‘i(d est) dignissimis (ue)l uenerabilissimis’) | CHR(IST)I VIRGINIB(US) OM(N)IQ(UE) | DEVOTEꝞ (gl: ‘amice (ue)l debite’) GERMANITATIS (gl: ‘i(d est) fraternitatis’) | AFFECTU (gl: ‘(ue)l amore i(d est) studio’) UENERANDIS (gl: ‘i(d est) honerandis’ [sic]) . . . ALDELMUS (gl: ‘s(cilicet). mitto ego’) SEGNIS (gl: ‘i(d est). tardus’) CHR(IST)I (gl: ‘i(d est). ꝥccl(esi)ꝥ’) CRU|CICOLA (gl: ‘i(d est). crucis | adorator’). ET SUPPLEX (gl: ‘i(d est) humilis’) ECCL(ESI)Ꝟ UERNACULUS. (gl: ‘i(d est) seruus’) OPTABILEM (gl: ‘i(d est) desiderabilem’) P(ER)PETUEꝞ | PROSPERITATIS SALUTEM (gl: ‘s(cilicet). mittit’). ORDITVR LIBELLVS DE VIRGINITATE | SACRIS VIRGINIBUS EDITUS:

ff. 4r–53r/12 text: ‘IAMDUDU(M) | AD PONTIFICALE (gl: ‘i(d est). episcopale’) | PROFICISCENS (gl: ‘i(d est). pergens’) CON|CILIABVLV(M) (gl: ‘i(d est). conloquium’) FRAT(ER)NIS SODALIV(M) (gl: ‘i(d est) sociorum’) CA|TERUIS (gl: ‘i(d est) agminibus’) COMITATUS (gl: ‘i(d est). sociatus’); ends ‘Valetē o flores ꝥccl(esi)ꝥ. sorores monasticę. alumpnę | scolasticę. chr(ist)i margaritę. paradisi gemmę. & ꝥlestis patriae partic`i`p`e`s [corr. from ‘particeps’]. | EXPLICIT LIBER ALDEL|MI EP(ISCOP)I DE VIRGINITATE. [lines 13–25 blank]

[NOTE: The text is unsystematically divided by roman numerals. There are none between xxxi and xxxvi, for example, and none after lii. Correspondence to the capitula list on ff. 1–3 is likewise inexact.]

ff. 53v–54r blank.

2. ff. 54v/1–55r/12 List of relics given by Athelstan to Exeter: ‘Hęc s(un)t nomina s(an)c(t)aru(m) reliq(u)iaru(m). quę habent(ur) (Excestrię in) monasterio s(an)c(t)ę marię | (et sancti Petri) [words in brackets obscured by dark stains] . . . His exceptis (added above the line: ‘Maxilla s(an)c(t)ę brigidę u(ero)’)| plurimę alię ibi habent(ur) s(an)c(t)or(um) reliq(u)ię . qu(oru)m q(uia) n(on) inuenim(us) nomina scripta. quę | sint ignoramus. (added in much later hand ‘7 reliqua’)’ (as Orchard 2002: 2.8–13). [Portions have been erased and areas further obscured by the use of a reagent, giving a dark ochre color; some additions and alterations made by another hand.]

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