

363. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 577 (27645)

Aldhelm, "Carmen de virginitate",

"De octo uitiiis principalibus"

[Ker 314, Gneuss 584]

HISTORY: Dated by Ker to "s. x/xi", and associated with Christ Church, Canterbury. Owned in the 16c by William Ryffe and William Seller, in the 17c/18c by William Brewster of Hereford, who donated it to the Bodleian Library in 1715 (see inscriptions on ff. 1r and 76v).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: [i] + 77 + [i] leaves, foliated i-ii + 1-77. Ff. i and 77 are modern paper paste-downs, ff. ii and 1-76 vellum and comprise the manuscript proper. Leaves are arranged HFHF. Leaves measure 203 × 134 mm., with a writing grid of 130 × 89 mm. Ruled for 20 lines, with double bounding lines. F. 4v shows a light stain at the bottom; natural defects in the vellum occur at ff. 19, 37, and 50.

Main text and glosses, Latin and English, are written in anglo-caroline script. The main text has sporadic punctuation by simple *punctus*, *punctus eleuatus* (inverted semi-colon, indicating rising tone), and *punctus uersus* (semi-colon, indicating falling tone). Titles and chapter headings are in red ink. Small initials are in red ink throughout, with larger initials in black. The acrostic preface sets off initial and final letters as red capitals in columns which repeat the first line of the poem, 'METRICA TIRONES NUNC PROMANT CARMINA CASTOS', the initial column to be read top to bottom, the final column to be read from bottom to top. The last line of the preface (l. 38) repeats the same initial phrase backwards. F. ii, a singleton, contains on the recto a framed portrait of Aldhelm in brown ink at a writing desk, with aureole in tooled gold; clothes are lightly tinted with red and purple washes; the area at the base is colored a yellow-green. At the top of the leaf is written in a 17c hand 'Aldhelmi liber'. On the verso is a portrait, outlined in brown, of Aldhelm on the left presenting a book to four male figures, dressed in robes and cowls, on the right. The headdress of the third figure to the right at the back is colored with a red wash; the foliage at the

left is in a yellow-green wash. There is very light brown wash to Aldhelm's left arm and lower portion of tunic, as well as (partly) to the tunic of the figure on the left. The recto of the leaf (a half-leaf) is darkened at top and lower edges. There are occasional syntactical underdottings and grammatical glosses (e.g., ff. 33r, 36rv, 37r, 45v, 49v), and scattered Latin glosses in the same hand as the main text. OE glosses occur on ff. llv, 35v, 36r, 65v, 71r, and 73v (ed. Napier 1900: nos. 14, 19).

On f. 1r is written in a 17c hand 'Liber Aldhelmi ep(iscop)i de Virginitate | De Laude S(an)c(t)or(um) Patrum atq(ue) Virginum'; at the bottom of the leaf is written 'Maij 7<sup>o</sup> .MDCXXV. | Bibliotheca Bodlejane dono dedit Vir | pereruditus Guilielmus Brewster, de Herefordia, M. D'. The leaf also shows the early shelfmark of the codex, indicating it was housed in the "New End" of the Bodleian Library ('NE F. 9. | 17. | EN. 90'). F. 76v contains two 16c ownership inscriptions: 'Versus possessor meus est Guilielmus | Seller', 'Thys hys Wyll(ia)m Ryffe hys boke', the latter stricken out.

The volume is in a modern binding of tooled leather, with the old shelfmark 'NE F. 9. 17' on the spine.

**COLLATION:** i, ii singletons; I<sup>8</sup> (ff. 1–8), II<sup>8</sup> (ff. 9–16), III<sup>8</sup> (ff. 17–24), IV<sup>8</sup> (ff. 25–32), V<sup>8</sup> (ff. 33–40), VI<sup>8</sup> (ff. 41–48), VII<sup>8</sup> (ff. 49–56), VIII<sup>8</sup> (ff. 57–64), IX<sup>8</sup> (ff. 65–72), X<sup>4</sup> (ff. 73–76); a stub visible after f. 76, on which is written the old shelfmark 'NE F. 9.17'.

#### CONTENTS:

1. ff. 1r–64r/19 Aldhelm, "Carmen de virginitate" with Latin and English glosses ("Carmen" ed. Ehwald 1919: 350–452.2445, collated as O; four English glosses, ed. Napier 1900: no. 14):
- ff. 1r–2r/l *Incipit liber aldhelmi ep(iscop)i de uirginitate* | 'METRICA TYRONES | NUNC PROMANT CARMINA CASTOS | Et laude(m) capiat quadrato carmine VirgO . . . Omnia cum nullus uerbis explanet apertE || Sot saca nimract namor pcnun se norit acirteM' [i.e., "Metrica tirones nunc promant carmina castos"];
- ff. 2r/2–4v/l *INUOCATIO AD D(EU)M DE LAUDIB(US) S(AN)C(T)OR(UM) UIRORUM.* | 'Om(ni)p(oten)s genitor mundu(m) dicione gubernans . . . Mundani luxus calcans ludibria falsa';
- ff. 4v/2–64r/19 text: *DE LAUDE VIRGINITATIS* | 'VIRGINITAS SU(M)-MO UIRTUTUM UERTICE FLORET | Dum soror angelicę const& castissima uitę'; ends: 'Plumabant pariter macta uirtute corona(m)' | *EXPLICIT LIBELLUS ALDHELMI EPISCOPI DE | LAVDE S(AN)C(T)OR(UM) PATRUM ATQUE UIRGINUM.*

[Note on textual division: The main body of the text is divided into chapters, usually on a particular saint or saints. The unnumbered chapter titles partly correspond to those given in Ehwald (1919: 334–35).]

2. ff. 64r/20–76r: Aldhelm, “De Octo uitiiis principalibus” (“Carmen de virginitate,” ll. 2446–2904, ed. Ehwald 1919: 452–71, PL 89.281–90): IN-CIPIT LIBER EIUSDEM DE OCTO UITIIS || PRINCIPALIBUS | ‘DIGESTIS igitur s(an)ctorum laudib(us) almis’; ends: ‘Adduci merear (gl: ‘s. utina(m)’) chr(ist)o regnante p(er) æthram’ | LIB(ER) ALDHELMI DE OCTO VITIIS.

[Note: The last section of the “Carmen”, ll. 2446–2904, is sometimes, as here, separately headed “De octo uitiiis principalibus”. The text is divided by unnumbered marginal chapter headings naming individual vices.]

f. 76v blank, except for 15c and 16c scribbles in English, latter crossed out.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Ehwald, Rudolfus, ed. *Aldhelmi Opera*. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi 15. Berlin: Weidmann, 1919.

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

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