

405. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawlinson C. 697 (12541)  
Aldhelm, “Ænigmata,” “Carmen de virginitate,”  
“De octo uitiiis principalibus,”  
Prudentius, “Psychomachia,” acrostic poem on Æthelstan  
[Ker 349, Gneuss 661]

**HISTORY:** A continental (NE Francia, Bischoff 1976: 211) manuscript of ca. 900; in England by the mid-10c, when the acrostic poem on f. 78v was added, along with various glosses and corrections. Several of the annotations appear to be in “Hand D” attributed to St. Dunstan by R. W. Hunt (e.g. ff. 17r, 36v, see Bishop 1968: 399–400). A 13c ex libris and pressmark associate the codex with Bury St. Edmunds; its earlier provenance in England is unknown, perhaps Malmesbury or Glastonbury. Acquired by the Bodleian with Richard Rawlinson’s manuscripts in 1756.

**CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:** 78 leaves measuring 257 × 147 mm., with a writing area of 181 × 102 mm.; ruled for 32 lines, with double bounding verticals. Leaves are arranged HFHF. On f. 1, a section measuring 21 × 45 mm. is cut from the outer margin, above which is a hole with rust (?) stains on edges; the top is torn away from the gutter; a much darkened leaf in comparatively poor condition. At the top of the leaf in a 13c hand is written ‘lib(er) s(an)c(t)i Edmund(i) reg(is) & m[a]r(ty)ris’, and in the upper right corner is the shelfmark ‘A 119’. On f. 2 is written ‘Su(m) liber J. B.’. At the bottom of f. 16 a section has been cut away measuring 108 × 139/150 mm. A capital ‘M’ remains visible near the gutter on the verso. A section is also cut from the outer margin of f. 13, and small holes are found at ff. 9, 8, 11, and 54. Leaves are eaten away along the outer edge from ca. f. 40 to end (except f. 77). There is damage to the gutter, ff. 73–end.

Text is in brown ink, in continental carolingian minuscule, with corrections and additions in darker ink in an English hand. Punctuation in the “Carmen” is by simple *punctus* and *punctus elevatus* (inverted semicolon). Incipits and titles as well as initials of first lines are in red ink, some of it oxidized to black. Each line of the acrostic preface to the “Ænigmata” (Glorie

1968: ll. 1–36, ff. 1r/1–1v/4) begins and ends with a red capital, making two vertical columns spelling out “Aldhelmus cecinit milenis versibus odas”. On f. 17r the acrostic preface to the “Carmen de uirginitate” (Ehwald 1919: 350.1–352.39) repeats the opening line, ‘METRICA TIRONES NUNC PROMANT CARMINA CASTOS’ as a descending column on the left, an ascending column read from top to bottom on the right and as a horizontal line read backwards at the end (f. 17v/8 = ed. line 38). Scattered construe marks appear, for example, on ff. 34r, 54rv, paving letters on f. 24v. Sections of texts are marked with a sign resembling the letter K in the left margin and a semi-colon in the far right margin. F 16v is blank. From 20r/32–20v/10, a series of Roman numerals ‘I–VI’ in the left margin number alternating lines, and another series of Roman numerals, ‘i–iii’, appear in the left margin of f. 19r, without apparent logic. Small ink drawings (heads) appear in the margins of ff. 1r and 18v.

Ff. 62–63 comprise a bifolium inserted one leaf before the end of “De octo uitiiis principalibus,” bearing in a 12c English hand the text of Prudentius’ Preface to “Psychomachia” (Cunningham 1966: ll. 1–64) which had been omitted; these leaves are shorter than the rest, measuring 228 × 134 mm. and ruled for 24 lines, with pricking in the outer margins. Sections titles are in red, and lines begin with red initials, again with some oxidized to black.

The same early hand that added sporadic numbering for the riddles has written quire signatures at the bottom of ff. 8v ‘i’, 9r ‘ii’, 17r ‘iii’, 25r ‘iiii’, 41v ‘v’, 42r ‘vi’, 49v ‘vi’, 50r ‘vii’, 57v ‘vii’, 66v ‘viii’, 67r ‘viii’, 74v ‘viii’, 75r ‘x’. There are scattered glosses added “before [the manuscript] came to England” (Ker, *Cat.*, who thinks the hand may be the same as that of the continental manuscript BL Cotton Vespasian B. vi, ff. 1–103 [241], Bede “De temporum ratione”), some black, some very faint, some dry-point, occur throughout. OE glosses (dated 960 × 980), five to the “Ænigmata,” 64 to “Carmen de uirginitate,” and 10 to “De octo uitiiis principalibus” (ed. Napier 1900: nos. 24, 17, 21). At f. 30v, a 17c hand has written Greek cases for the article horizontally in the margin.

**COLLATION:** iii + 78 + iii leaves, foliated 1–78, the six modern paper endleaves unfoliated. I–II<sup>8</sup> (ff. 1–16), III<sup>8+1</sup> 2 added (ff. 17–25), IV–VII<sup>8</sup> (ff. 26–57), VIII<sup>5+2</sup> 2 singleton; 5/6 added (12c) bifolium (ff. 58–64), IX<sup>6</sup> (ff. 65–70), X<sup>s</sup> (ff. 71–78).

## CONTENTS:

1. Aldhelm, “Ænigmata” (ed. Ehwald 1919: 97–149, coll. as *E*; rev. Glorie 1968, coll. as *O*: 377–540; five English glosses ed. Napier 1900: no. 24):

f. 1r/1–1v/4 Acrostic preface: UERSUS ALDHELMI | ‘Arbiter a&hereo iu-  
giter qui regmine sceptrA. . . Soluere iam scelerum noxas dignare ne-  
fandaS’;

[Note: The initials and finals of the 35-line poem each spell ‘ALDHELMUS  
CECINIT MILENIS UERSIBUS ODAS’. Line 20 in Ehwald’s edition, “Lustrat ab  
oecani iam tollens gurgite cephal,” is missing.]

ff. 1v/5–16r/19 INCIPIUNT ENIGMATA AEDITA AB | ALDHEL-  
MO ARCHIEP(ISCOP)O THEODORI RE|THORIS DISCIPI-  
LO DACTILICO CARMI|NE QUATERNIS QUOQUE UERSIBUS  
CON|TEXTA. QUAE GRECA LINGUA TETRASTICA | DICUN-  
TUR. TERRA [‘TERRA’ is the riddle title] | ‘Altrix cunctorum quos  
mundus gestat in orbe’; ending with Ænigma 100, beg. f. 15r/1: C. DE  
CREATURA. | ‘Conditor æternis qui fulcit saecula columnis . . . Scisci-  
tur inflatos fungor quo nomine sophas’ [the lower half of the page has  
been excised].

[Note: Ff. 13v/21–14v/20 comprise the anonymous UERS(US) DE NOMIN(IBUS)  
LITTERARU(M) | ‘A Principium uocis ueterumque inuentio mira . . . Per me saepe  
pat& numerus de lege sacratus’; this item is numbered in margin ‘XCVIII’, coming  
after XCVIII. ELLEBORUS and before (unnumbered) DE CAMELO, but there is  
also on the title line the number ‘C’; the text is itemized in left margin from ‘A-X’,  
omitting Y and Z and ending imperfectly at l. 63 (coll. Glorie 1968: 729–40; SK  
12694). The riddle titles, inconsistently numbered, correspond roughly to those in  
Ehwald 1919: 57.]

f. 16v blank.

2. Aldhelm, “Carmen de uirginitate” (ed. Ehwald 1919: 327–471, collated  
as *E*; 63 English glosses, a number of which are scratched, ed. Napier 1900:  
17):

ff. 17r/1–17v/8 (prologue) INCIPIT LIBER EIUSDEM ALDELMI  
EP(ISCOP)I | DE UIRGINITATE SEU LAUDE S(AN)C(T)ORUM |  
‘Metrica tirones nunc promant carmina castoS . . . Sot sac anim ract  
namor pcnun seniorit acirtem’ [last line is first line spelled backwards;  
initials of poem spell the first line, finals this last line];

ff. 17v/9–19r/17 INUOCATIO AD D(EU)M DE LAUDI|BUS S(AN)C-  
(T)ORUM UIRORUM. | ‘Omn(i)p(oten)s genitor mundum dicione  
(gl: ‘i<d est) potestate’) gubernans | Lucida stelligeri qui condis culmina  
caeli . . . Mundani luxus calcans ludibria falsa’ [rest of f. 19r blank];

ff. 19v–55v/29 text: DE LAUDE UIRGINITATIS. | ‘Virginitatis summo uir-  
tutum uertice flor& (gl: ‘i<d est) pollet’) | Dum soror angelicae const&

castissima uitae'; ends: 'Plumabant (gl: 'ornabant') . pariter. ma`c`ta.  
uirtute. coronam.' | EXPLICIT LIBELLUS ALDHEL|MI EP(ISCOP)I  
DE LAUDE S(AN)C(T)ORUM | 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).]

3. ff. 55v31–61v, 64r/l-6 “De octo uitiis principalibus” (“Carmen de uirginitate,” ll. 2446–2904, ed. Ehwald 1919: 452–471, collated as *E*, ten English glosses, of which four are scratched, ed. Napier 1900: no. 21):  
EIUSDEM DE OCTO UITIIS | PRINCIPALIBUS. || ‘Digestis igitur  
s(an)c(t)orum laudibus almis | Quorum rumores sub caeli culmine fla-  
grant’; ends: ‘Adduci merear (gl: ‘s. utina(m)’) chr(ist)o regnante per  
etram.’ | EXPLICIT ALDHELMI | ARCHIEP(ISCOP)I DE OCTO  
UITIIS PRINCIPALIBUS.

4. Prudentius: “Psychomachia”:

ff. 62r/8–63v/16 (inserted 12c bifolium) Prudentius, Preface to “Psy-  
chomachia”: DEVS TEMPTAT ABRAHAM IN ISAAC. | INCIP-  
IT PRĒPHATIO. | ‘Senex fidelis p(r)ima credendi uia est . . . Herede  
dign`o` patris. implebit domu(m)’ (as Cunningham 1966: 149–51/1–  
64) [rest of f. 63v blank, as are first 7 lines of f. 62r].

ff. 64r/7–78v/8 Prudentius, “Psychomachia”: INCIPIT LIBER (. . . )  
PSYCHO|MACHIAE QUEM COMPOSUIT | AURELIUS PRUDENS  
CLEMENS. | DE UIRTUTIBUS UITIORU(M) ATQUE \ UIRTUTU(M)  
CARMINE HEROICO. | ‘Chr(ist)e graues hominu(m) semper mise-  
rate labores’; ends: ‘Aeternum solio dives Sapientia regnet.’ | (followed  
by added tag) ‘Aurelius prudens uirtutu(m) proelia clemens. | Cum  
uitiis c[ecinit] metrica scolasticus arte.’ | Explici[t] psychomachiae  
aurelii pruden[tis clemen[tis?] [explicit rendered partly illegible by  
oxidation] (as Cunningham 1966: 151–81).

5. ff. 78v/9–16 Acrostic poem (in A-S square minuscule, 10c, SK 989): ‘Arch-  
alis clamare triumuir nomine saxl | Diue tuo fors prognossim felicit(er)  
aeuO . . . Nomina orto petas donet precor inclita doxus’ [‘ADALSTAN’  
down left column, ‘IOHANNES’ down right] (ed. Robinson 1923: 69,  
n. 2; repr., trans., and discussed by Lapidge 1981: 64, 72–83).

[Note: Lapidge 1981: 73–83 notes that while the poem is most likely addressed to Æðelstan, who became king in 924, this is not entirely certain: but granted that this is the addressee, as is most probable, he suggests that considering the low-German spelling “Adal-” the poet was possibly John the Old Saxon, addressing the very young Æðelstan (b. ca. 894) on the occasion, mentioned by William of Malmesbury, of an investiture ceremony for him sponsored by his grandfather Alfred (d. 899).]

PHOTO NOTES: There are two shots of ff. 61v–62r, 64v–64r. A supplementary fiche shows an improved image of f. 1r.

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