ALDHELM OF MALMESBURY AND HIGH ECCLESIASTICISM IN A BARBARIAN KINGDOM

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In 634, the freshly consecrated bishop Birinus, having promised Pope Honorius that he would spread the faith in "the remotest regions of England," arrived in the territory of the West Saxons (or the *Gewisse*, as they were then still known).[1] He found them so thoroughly pagan ("paganissimos") that he opted to remain there to preach the gospel. The following year he baptized Cynegils, the first of the West Saxon kings to accept Christianity. The *Brytenwalda*, Oswald of Northumbria, stood sponsor.[2] Together, the two kings endowed Birinus with the *civitas* of Dorchester-on-Thames as his see. Over the next few years, both Cynegils's son Cwichelm and his grandson Cuthred were baptized, the latter in 639 by Birinus in Dorchester. It would have been in or near this year that Aldhelm was born,[3] though his native area was said by William of Malmesbury to have been Sherborne, in the southwest of Wessex, on the border with the British kingdom of *Dum-*

[1] Note on names: the majority of personal names from this period have been received with now-standardized spelling — e.g., Bede, Wilfrid, Hadrian, and Aldhelm himself. In four cases, Maildubh (Aldhelm's Irish schoolmaster), Ehfrid (recipient of a famous letter from Aldhelm), Egwin (the bishop of Worcester who is said to have brought Aldhelm's body back to Malmesbury for burial), and Hlothhere (bishop of Wessex, 670–76), the spelling and even usage varies widely. For the first three, I adopt the spelling used by Rudolf Ehwald, Aldhelm's modern editor, and for Hlothhere I adopt the Kentish spelling of his name (as does Charles Plummer) to emphasize his Frankish origins. In direct quotations, of course, I leave the spelling as it stands.

[2] For a succinct account of the determination of the title *Brytenwalda* (vice the long-standing modern usage *Bretwalda*), see Patrick Wormald, *The Times of Bede* (Oxford, 2006), 131–32.

[3] The major source for Aldhelm's life is the biography, from ca. 1125, in Book 5 of William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2007); vol. 1 ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom, with the *Commentary* in vol. 2 by R. M. Thomson. (William knew, corrected, and greatly expanded on the earlier — ca. 1093–99 — *vita* by Faricius; "Vita S. Aldhelmi," ed. Michael Winterbottom, *Journal of Medieval Latin* 15 [2005]: 93–147.) Scott Gwara, in the introductory volume to his edition of Aldhelm's *Prosa de virginitate*, CCL 124 (Turnhout, 2001), 22 and n. 10, 23–24 and n. 16, 32–34 and n. 54, 38, and 47–55, addresses the reliability of William's factual assertions concerning Aldhelm's life and his use of evidence. Overall, he finds William more corroborated by other evidence than not. Aldhelm's works are in *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Rudolf Ehwald, MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi 15 (Berlin, 1919), and in *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, ed. and trans. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Ipswich, 1979), and *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier (Cambridge, 1985).

nonia (Devon and Cornwall) and, thus, far from Birinus's episcopal seat in the upper Thames valley. Would this be an indication of the rapid spread of Christianity in the West Saxon kingdom? Notably, well within a generation a West Saxon became the first native-born archbishop of Canterbury when Deusdedit was consecrated in 655 (his Anglo-Saxon name was remembered as Friðuwine).[4] But where Deusdedit received his ecclesiastical training is unknown; Bede can tell us only that he was a "West Saxon by race" ("de gente Occidentalium Saxonum").[5] Or was Aldhelm's being Christian due to his royal status? It may be that another of Cynegils's sons, Centwine, who became king in Wessex in 676, was Aldhelm's father.[6] By this time, Aldhelm was a senior cleric in the West Saxon church.[7]

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[4] Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (London, 1984), 67–69, and Richard Sharpe, "The Naming of Bishop Ithamar," *English Historical Review* 117 (2002): 889–90.

[5] Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3, 20 (ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors [Oxford, 1969], 278).

[6] *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 181 n. 6. Lapidge ("The Career of Aldhelm," *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 [2007]: 15–22) expands on his initial hypothesis that Centwine was Aldhelm's father, through self-acknowledged but informed conjecture; he highlights the importance of Aldhelm's own *titulus* for the church of Bugge (more on this dedicatory poem below).

[7] Birinus's ethnic origin is unknown (the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *s.a.* 650, refers to him as a "Roman" bishop). He was consecrated in Genoa by Asterius, the archbishop of Milan. Following his initial successes, he fades from historical sight, and the next bishop in Wessex is Agilbert, a Frank who had studied in southern Ireland and who had been consecrated in Gaul. He arrived in Wessex sometime towards the middle of the century and was installed in Dorchester by King Cenwalh (another son of Cynegils, he succeeded his father in 642, was driven into exile by Penda of Mercia and converted to Christianity during the three years, 645–48, he was in refuge with Anna, king of the East Angles). Cenwalh, however, reportedly grew weary of Agilbert's inability to speak English and, in 660, "sub-introduced" a bishop Wine in Winchester (Dorchester came under the control of King Wulfhere of Mercia). Wine had also been consecrated in Gaul. Agilbert next surfaces as the senior representative of the Roman party in the debate over Easter-reckoning at the Synod of Whitby in 664 (he had, apparently, been in Northumbria as a guest for some time, having in 663 ordained Wilfrid a priest) and, in 667/8, he becomes bishop of Paris. In that position, he entertained Theodore while Theodore was *en route* to his post as the new archbishop of Canterbury. In 670, Agilbert's nephew Hlothhere was consecrated by Theodore to the then-vacant see of Winchester (Wine, having quarreled with Cenwalh after some three years, had subsequently purchased the Mercian see of London from King Wulfhere). In 676, Hlothhere was succeeded by Hæddi, presumably a West Saxon. Upon Hæddi's death in 705, the see was divided with Daniel succeeding in Winchester and Aldhelm establishing a new see at Sherborne. This historical sketch of the episcopal framework for Aldhelm's life comes from Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3, 7 and 25; 4, 1 and 12; and 5, 18 (ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 232–37 and 294–309; 328–33 and 368–71; and 512–17, respectively, with the various dates taken largely from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*); cf. Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971) 117–18, 122–23, and 131–33; Charles Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* (Oxford, 1896) 2, 144–45; and Barbara

Alone among the peoples of Western Europe in this age of conversion, the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons would needs rely on native-born clergy as the bishops and abbots and the theologians who would secure the consolidation of Christianity. There existed no residual "Roman" stratum in their societies from which the religious leadership could emerge as it did naturally in Spain or in Gaul or in Italy. There was no English (or Irish) Isidore of Seville or Caesarius of Arles or Gregory I from the Caelian Hill. In Ireland and England, the clerical class was constituted by those born into a barbarian society. That Aldhelm was Christian at birth is no more than a presumption, though, indeed, there is little surviving evidence suggestive of those elements in Aldhelm's cultural inheritance that would be racial and pre-Christian, his Anglo-Saxonness. We have from William of Malmesbury the story that King Alfred considered Aldhelm unequalled as a poet in Old English,[8] and there is a macaronic poem — Old English, Latin, and transliterated Greek — surviving in a tenth-century Canterbury hand, in which Aldhelm is designated an *aeþele sceop*.[9] And we have his letters of admonition to two of his students, Wihtfrid and Æthilwald.[10] To Wihtfrid on the verge of setting out for Ireland to study, Aldhelm warns against patronizing brothels. To Æthilwald, Aldhelm writes to admonish him to pay attention to his studies and not to dissipate himself, in his "young manhood" ("adolescens aetate") in drinking parties and banqueting and in riding about aimlessly. These would seem strange warnings, indeed, to be directed to clerics.[11] Headstrong princelings would seem likelier to be in need of such strictures — Anglo-Saxon *aeþelings* or high-born *thegns* perhaps, like Guthlac. Or like Wilfrid who obtained for himself arms and horses and suitable clothes in

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Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995), 171–73. And see Paul Fouracre, "The Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate the Cult of Saints," *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Anthony Hayward (Oxford, 1999), 157–61, for a consideration of the interconnections between Agilbert and Hlothhere and both Frankish and Kentish politics. Interestingly, while the two Frankish bishops were not so honored, Birinus and Hæddi were venerated as saints, cults developing soon after their deaths; see John Blair, "A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints," *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), 517 and 537.

[8] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, chap. 190 (p. 506).

[9] *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 6 (New York, 1942), xc–xcii, clxix, and 97–98; and *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ewald, 219–20 (where Ehwald provides a Latin translation). See also L. G. Whitbread, "The Old English Poem *Aldhelm*," *English Studies* 57 (1976): 193–97.

[10] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 479–80 and 499–500.

[11] See, however, Bede's cautionary tale (*Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 6 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 464–69]) concerning one of Bishop John of Beverley's young clergymen.

order to present himself at the royal court.[12] We do not, in fact, know when Aldhelm was decided upon a career in the church. But we do know that, at Malmesbury, Aldhelm's first teacher was the Irish schoolmaster Maildubh and that, subsequently, he studied at the school established at Canterbury by Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian.[13]

Maildubh, likely from that south-east part of Ireland that was home from the 630s to the *Romani*, would have brought with him to his school at Malmesbury knowledge of the *computus* commonly used in Irish foundations in calculating the date of Easter while adhering himself to the Roman practice, a restrained literal approach to interpreting the Bible where certain names and places and facts, now historically exotic, needed such explication for contemporary readers, a rhythmical verse-form suitable for epigraphs and other contemporary memorials, and a readiness to use, without compunction, the theological masterpieces of Theodore of Mopsuestia and (albeit perhaps via misattribution) Pelagius.[14] Archbishop Theodore, a native Greek

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[12] Eddius Stephanus, *Vita S. Wilfridi*, chap. 2 (ed. Bertram Colgrave [Cambridge, 1927], 5–7).

[13] For all three, see my article, "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 99C (1999): 1–22. Michael Lapidge's "The Career of Aldhelm," which fortunately appeared during the revision stage of the present article, proposes a radical revision of Aldhelm's early schooling with the Irish. Lapidge ("Career," 22–48) proposes that Aldhelm studied with Adomnán at Iona. "Two classes of evidence" (27) support his hypothesis: Aldhelm's rhythmical Latin verse and connections of various glossaries to Aldhelm and to Adomnán. However, while the first certainly does require an Irish schoolmaster (as I note in regard to Maildubh), there is nothing pointing exclusively to Iona; and, while Lapidge, building on the work of other scholars, does securely link Aldhelm to the Leiden and Épinal-Erfurt glossaries and makes a good case (46) for "a link" between Adomnán and the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary, the linkages are independent and separable. In contrast, against any association of Aldhelm and Adomnán is the telling lack on the part of Aldhelm of any knowledge of Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* or his *Vita S. Columbae*. Most troubling, this hypothesis necessitates the dismissal of the traditional account of Aldhelm's early schooling under Maildubh, an account not just endorsed, in telling detail, by William of Malmesbury but corroborated by a range of evidence for both Maildubh's historical existence and his schoolmastering of Aldhelm at Malmesbury (as set out in my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish," 5–9), which Lapidge simply ignores. In particular, all the early variants of the place-name supports its derivation from "Maildubh" (or, more properly, its Old Irish counterpart, Máeldub). Perhaps most strikingly, a fellow monk, in writing to Lull to recall the friendship of their early years under Abbot Eaba (apparently Aldhelm's immediate successor), refers to Malmesbury as "Maldubia civitas" (*S. Bonifatii et Lulii Epistolae*, ed. Michael Tangl, Ep. 135, MGH, Epistolae Selectae 1 [Berlin, 1916], 274); presumably, if Maildbuh had not existed, Archbishop Lull would have been aware of it.

[14] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish," 4, 7, 10 and 14–15; and my "'Claviger aetherius': Aldhelm of Malmesbury between Ireland and Rome," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 131 (2001): 13–14. On these issues, my articles incorporate findings by, amongst others, Kathleen Hughes, Dáibhí Ó Crónín, Bernhard Bischoff, Martin McNamara, Michael Herren, Andy Orchard, and Michael Lapidge. That Maildubh was

speaker from Tarsus via Rome, and Hadrian, a native Latin speaker from North Africa via Naples and Rome, would have brought not just Roman orthodoxy but erudition so at home with the riches of the late antique world — its Christian and secular literature, its concepts and attitudes — that Aldhelm would come to declare himself intellectually impoverished by his early nurturing in the hermetic world of early Christian Irish scholarship. A close reading of Aldhelm's writings and other documents associated with him reveals evidence of all these aspects of his teachers — indeed, it is by their reflection in Aldhelm's scholarly output that we know much of what we know about Maildubh and about the teachings of Theodore and Hadrian — but what Aldhelm made of their influences was not an amalgamation but an adaptation. As we shall see, he absorbed the virtues of *amicitia*, of seeking and acquiring protection through the cultivation of epistolary friendships. He sought patronage to obtain the landed resources and the legal guarantees that would ensure, for his church and for his own monastic *familia*, security not just for his monks to live in peace in a time of endemic war, but to provide, as well, the *otium* necessary to produce the interpretive works of theology that would teach his people how to live their Christian lives. Aldhelm was not a Byzantine. Nor was he an Irishman born into a society already, in the seventh century, traditionally Christian. He was born, rather, into a society recently both heathen and barbaric, a society on the cusp of both Christianity and literacy, and he would view the merits of his acquired learning through the prism of one so born. He had an innovative mind. What is evident was the intellectual capacity to so master Latin as to move far beyond rote learning to endow this learned language with his own unmistakeable voice. What is also evident was the mental acuity to interiorize the credal abstractions (new and alien to his Germanic

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from such an intellectual coterie as the *Romani* is speculation based on his student Aldhelm's knowledgeable censure of errant calculations of Easter (notably in his letter to Geraint, which shall be dealt with in the text) and his sensitivity to Antiochene exegesis. On the latter, see my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Paris Psalter: A Note on the Survival of Antiochene Exegesis," *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (1987): 381–82. While Aldhelm was one of the first to list the fourfold scheme of exegesis that became traditional — *historia*, *allegoria*, *tropologia*, *anagoge* — he signaled, in the introductory part of his *Epistola ad Acircium* (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald [n. 3 above], 74), his sensitivity to Antiochene concerns with historical reality: "quamvis catholici patres spiritalem semonum medullam enucleantes latentemque in litteris sensum perscrutantes allegorice ad sinagogae tipum retulerint, nullatenus tamen sacrosanctae matris personam fuisse historica relatione infitiari noscuntur." It may well be that, here, Aldhelm directly reflects a schooling in the Irish adaptation of Antiochene exegesis; see Martin McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church* (Sheffield, 2000), 272, who notes that the Irish used *sensus* as a specific technical term denoting "the mystical sense of Scripture" in distinction to the historical interpretation (this usage was restricted to Hiberno-Latin texts).

people) of Christian orthodoxy. What has not always been so evident — witness the long-standing disregard of Aldhelm as little more than an exotic aberration — was his intuitive concern to inform traditional Christian concepts with barbaric content, transforming them into something vibrantly new and setting new meaning to the terms of theological discourse. Hence, Aldhelm's centrality to the absorption of Christianity into mainstream Anglo-Saxon culture. His society was an aristocratic one, still imbued with the long-traditional beliefs and patterns of behavior of its hitherto pagan and barbarian culture, and Aldhelm came to produce work radically other, as he wrote directly to the needs of this society.[15] As we shall see, in the detailed arguments of this essay, Aldhelm would bring this same level of sophistication, which he demonstrated theologically, to bear, legally, in the administrative dispositions he employed to safeguard the productive independence of his monastic regime.

Aldhelm ends both of his major prose works — his *Epistola ad Acircium* and his *De virginitate* — with the apologetic explanation that he had seen each work through to completion despite being burdened with both ecclesiastical and secular affairs, which had deprived him of the needed scholarly *otium*.[16] This may be a well-used topos but, in Aldhelm's case, it would also be true (we shall return to Aldhelm's lament at the end of this essay). Because we know little of Aldhelm's life, and what little we know comes primarily from his own writings, our prevailing image of him is shaped by his scholarly output: we see him, justifiably, as the "first English man of letters."[17] Aldhelm was to produce, mostly before the end of the seventh century, an impressively large body of work in both prose and poetry, exhibiting a high command of Latin and a wide knowledge of both Patristic and classical Latin writers. However, unlike Bede, Aldhelm did not produce

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[15] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Social Theology: The Barbaric Heroic Ideal Christianised," *Peritia* 15 (2001): 58–80.

[16] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 202 ("inter tot tantosque saecularium rerum tumultuantes strepitus constitutum et ecclesiastica pastoralis curae sollicitudine depressum") and 320 ("pastoralis curae sarcina gravatus negotiorumque terrenorum ponderibus oppressus ita perniciter . . . quia securae quietis spatium et morosam dictandi intercapidinem scrupulosa ecclesiastici regiminis sollicitudo denegabat et tumultuans saecularium strepitus obturbabat. Otium namque clandistinae quietis et remotio secretae solitudinis largam scribendi materiam dictantibus affatim conferunt, sicut econtrario . . . infesta saecularium negotia . . . violenter auferunt"). Aldhelm is noting not just that he is aware of the distinction between the two spheres of the "affairs of state," but also that he is intimately involved in both.

[17] The judgment is that of Michael Lapidge (*Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren [n. 3 above], 1). We are, of course, dependent on William of Malmesbury's great biography for the preservation of many of Aldhelm's letters and pertinent charters, as well as for a deepening of Aldhelm's life.

this output as a cloistered religious, but as a senior cleric: serving as abbot of the monastery at Malmesbury for well over a quarter-century and as bishop of the newly established diocese of Sherborne for four years (having taken on this burden at an advanced age), founding daughter monasteries and building churches, dealing with and advising Mercian and West Saxon kings, journeying to Rome, and mixing in the high ecclesiastical politics of his period.

Like his illustrious descendant (if we may speak broadly), King Alfred, Aldhelm was purposeful in his literary efforts. It may be credited as his particular insight that a singular need of his fellow Anglo-Saxons, addressing Latin as a learned language, was not another simplified Latin prose grammar but an aid to proper quantitative prosody, given the failure of their Irish schoolmasters to acquire this skill.[18] Aldhelm supplied this need in the metrical sections of his *Epistola ad Acircium*, providing not just a sort of metrical first-steps but also a ready list of vocabulary for each foot. He went on, in this work, to illustrate the principles he has set down in a series of one hundred *enigmata* (commonly translated as "riddles"), fittingly choosing this most popular of literary genres among his fellow countrymen. He would go on, as well, to produce in his *carmina ecclesiastica* and the verse version of his *De virginitate* over three thousands lines of quantitatively correct hexameter verse, endowing his newly christianized society with a poetic corpus equal to that of the Gaulish Christian poets in demonstrating that Latin verse could also sing of the Christian mysteries and virtues. Aldhelm was exceedingly proud of his accomplishments, boasting that he was the first of the "Germanic people" ("Germanicae gentis") to have produced a written guide concerning the "discipline of the metrical art," comparing his pioneering role to that of Virgil producing the *Georgics* for the Romans.[19] Aldhelm is self-consciously aware of his origins and of his having surmounted in delivering such a culturally vital skill the barbaric limitations of his people. Most tellingly, Aldhelm established, in his *De virginitate*, a new paradigm for his barbaric society of how to live the heroic life in Christian terms.[20] He provided for his violent society, in terms they could appreciate, a normative model in the consecrated virgin of a christianized heroic ideal for both male and female, a way of living a truly Christian life in terms commensurate with the violent norms of the Germanic heroic code. Martial imagery comes naturally to Aldhelm, and examples can be found throughout his writings. In his *enigma* on the elephant, for instance, he writes of

[18] Cf. Michael Lapidge, "Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse," in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London, 1996), 249–50.

[19] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 202; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 45–46.

[20] Again, my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Social Theology."

"the roar of battle" and "the iron-clad battle-lines" and the "strident battle-horns."[21] But, in all his writings, there is but a sole explicit reference to contemporary violence; in one of his *tituli* he refers to King Centwine as having victoriously "waged war in three battles" ("tribus gessit certamina pugnis").[22] If Centwine was Aldhelm's father, then Aldhelm would surely have had the experience of violence brought home to him, from within his immediate family, from infancy on. In 644, an uncle, King Cenwalh, was driven from his kingdom by Penda. Certainly, Aldhelm would also have heard of Cwichelm, another uncle, who in 626 had attempted to assassinate King Edwin of Northumbria, the predecessor of the King Oswald who stood sponsor at the baptism of Aldhelm's grandfather, Cynegils. And, throughout Aldhelm's adulthood, there were wars — recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* — of the West Saxons against the British, the Mercians, the men of Kent, and the men of Sussex. Aldhelm's silence, particularly measured against his literary readiness to call on martial imagery, suggests an indifferent acceptance of secular violence as part of the natural order. Aldhelm, of royal kin, brought a Germanic aristocrat's empathy for heroism in violence to bear on his theological certitudes and sought to make of the life of consecrated virginity the Christian counterpart of the Germanic warrior. In doing so, both in drawing his arguments from the extensive body of Patristic literature on consecrated virginity — a central concern of Christianity from the days of the Pauline epistles onwards — and in illustrating his arguments from the *vitae* and *passiones* that had long served as the staple of Christian popular reading, Aldhelm provided to his people a unifying guide on how to read Christian literature. Fittingly, his earliest work, the first three of his *carmina ecclesiastica* that served as dedicatory *tituli* for churches built either by Aldhelm himself or by (most likely) his sister, brings us most immediately into Aldhelm's ecclesiastical world.

Aldhelm became abbot of Malmesbury in 675 (as with his birth, this date can be calculated from statements by Aldhelm's twelfth-century biographer, William of Malmesbury).[23] Here, Aldhelm's first concern was to establish

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[21] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 142–43; *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier (n. 3 above), 91.

[22] *Aldhlemi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 15; *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier, 48.

[23] The one fixed date is that of Aldhelm's death, noted in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *s.a.* 709; William of Malmesbury (*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* [n. 3 above], chap. 188.3 [p. 502]) states that Aldhelm was not less than seventy years old when he died (thus placing his birth in the later 630s), and (chap. 231 [p. 576]) that Aldhelm died in the thirty-fourth year after he had been made abbot by Bishop Hlothhere. William also prints (chap. 199 [pp. 524–27]) the text of Hlothhere's grant, dated 26 August 675, of Malmesbury to Aldhelm (more on this grant below).

this foundation on a more stable basis.[24] He began — or so William of Malmesbury tells us, though his wording is not entirely clear — by building, next to the church surviving from Maildubh's school, a much grander church, for which he wrote, as a dedicatory *titulus*, his *carmen ecclesiasticum*, "In Basilica SS. Petri et Pauli." An ecclesiastical building program had long been a traditional manner by which a high ecclesiastic could augment his institutional authority. Just as the notables in classical antiquity made concrete their devotion to the *paideia* of their city through the endowment of public buildings, so bishops of the new Christian identity in the successor barbarian kingdoms renovated church buildings fallen into disuse or devastated in war and built new ones. And their poets, like Venantius Fortunatus, celebrated their defining actions.[25] They were enrolled in the shared community of the sanctified past. In the *titulus* for his own church, Aldhelm speaks of the multitudes who will come seeking the intercession of the apostles; and, in a phrase confected from the *De actibus Apostolorum* of Arator (publicly declaimed in Rome, before Pope Vigilius, in 544), he addresses St. Peter as the celestial keybearer who can open heaven's gate: "Claviger aetherius, portam qui pandis in aethra."[26]

William of Malmesbury is our source for Aldhelm's church-building activities. In addition to the main monastic church at Malmesbury (its complete dedication was to the Holy Savior and Sts. Peter and Paul), Aldhelm was to build two additional churches at Malmesbury (dedicated to St. Mary and to St. Michael) and churches at the two sub-monasteries he established,[27] the first at Frome (St. John the Baptist's)[28] and the second at Bradford-on-Avon (St. Laurence's). He is also said to have built churches at Wareham and at Bruton — the one at Wareham was built while Aldhelm was await-

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[24] In his references to Malmesbury and to Aldhelm in both his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (ed. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom [Oxford, 1998], chap. 29 [pp. 44–45]) and his *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (chap. 189 [pp. 502–5] and chap. 197 [pp. 520–24]), William of Malmesbury's emphasis is very much not just on Aldhelm's success in rescuing the foundation from its early impecuniousness but in enriching it.

[25] See Simon Coates, "Venantius Fortunatus and the Image of Episcopal Authority in Late Antique and Early Merovingian Gaul," *English Historical Review* 115 (2000): 1122–24; and Michael Lapidge, "Knowledge of the Poems of Venantius Fortunatus in Early Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899*, 400–403.

[26] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald (n. 3 above), 11, line 6 (William of Malmesbury's reading is "Clauiger o caeli, portam qui pandis in aethra").

[27] The term "sub-monastery" usefully distinguishes those daughter foundations that remain under the rule of the abbot of the mother-house from those that have their own abbot.

[28] Apparently, the only dedication to John the Baptist in early Anglo-Saxon England; see Catherine Cubitt, "Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England," *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (n. 7 above), 446.

ing a ship for his journey to Rome, the one at Bruton was dedicated to St. Peter (there was another church at Bruton dedicated to St. Mary in which King Ine is said to have installed the marble altar that Aldhelm brought back from Rome and presented to the king). William also tells us that Aldhelm, upon becoming bishop of the new diocese of Sherborne in 705, built there a magnificent cathedral, still to be seen in William's time.[29]

We are given few details of the construction of these churches. William describes St. Mary's at Malmesbury as having a stone floor and timber construction (indeed, William tells us that Aldhelm's miraculous intervention was required to rectify an error in the cutting of one beam), which was likely to have been the pattern of the others as well. Jackson and Fletcher have projected that Aldhelm's church at Wareham as wooden-built;[30] in his rhythmical poem describing a storm that occurred while he was on a journey from Cornwall to Devon (more on this poem later), Aldhelm was singing matins with the monks in a wooden church when the storm so shook the church that its roof was ripped off, the monks fleeing in terror;[31] and it was in a wooden church at Doulting that Aldhelm died in 709.[32] His body was

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[29] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, chap. 197–98 (pp. 520–25) for Aldhelm's primary monastic foundations; chap. 216 (pp. 544–47) for St. Michael's and the construction of St. Mary's; chap. 217 (pp. 546–49) for the church at Wareham; chap. 222 (pp. 558–61) for the marble altar and Aldhelm's church at Bruton; chap. 225 (p. 566) for the cathedral at Sherborne (this cathedral, though abandoned by the Normans who moved the see to Salisbury, was partially rebuilt in 1122 "incorporating parts" of the Anglo-Saxon building; see Eric Fernie, "Architecture and the Effects of the Norman Conquest," *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates and Anne Curry [London, 1994], 107 n. 4). Cf. Thomson, *Commentary* (n. 3 above), 330–33, "Appendix B, The Churches of Malmesbury Abbey." Also see Jeremy Haslam, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England* (Chicester, 1984), 90–94 for Bradford-on-Avon (with maps and town-plan); 111–17 for Malmesbury (with maps and town-plan); 174–76 for Bruton (with a map); 176–78 for Frome (with a map); 208–12 for Sherborne; and 213–14 for Wareham.

[30] E. Dudley C. Jackson and Eric G. M. Fletcher, "Aldhelm's Church near Wareham," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 26 (1963): 1–5.

[31] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 524–28; *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, ed. Lapidge and Rosier, 177–79.

[32] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, chap. 228 (p. 572). William tells us that Aldhelm had given the village (*villa*) of Doulting to the monks of Glastonbury (an Irish foundation), reserving the use to himself for his lifetime; however, evidence of such a donation does not survive in the Glastonbury archives (see Lesley Abrams, *Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury* [Woodbridge, 1996], 114; and eadem, "A Single-Sheet Facsimile of a Diploma of King Ine for Glastonbury," *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey*, ed. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley [Woodbridge, 1991], 127–28 and n. 141). See F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, ed. Jane Stevenson, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge, 1987), 85–88, for the building of churches in wood as an Irish practice; the construction of such a wooden church is described in detail in *The Hisperica Famina:* I. *The A-Text*, ed. Michael W. Herren (Toronto, 1974), 108–9, lines 547–60: "De oratorio" (see also 187). For the Anglo-Saxon

taken from there by Bishop Egwin (or so William tells us) to be buried in St. Michael's, the second of Aldhelm's monastic churches at Malmesbury; some 246 years later, the shrine containing his bones was transferred to St. Mary's, the third of the three churches Aldhelm built at Malmesbury.[33].

Aldhelm's churches are not thought to have survived. However, a church, today, in Somerford Keynes does incorporate a doorway dated to 650–800;[34] in 685, Berhtwald, a local Mercian ruler, granted forty hides in this location to Aldhelm (we shall return, shortly, to the question of the grants made to Aldhelm at Malmesbury).[35] And there is also the *ecclesiola* of the sub-monastery at Bradford-on-Avon, dedicated to St. Laurence. The date of the small stone-built church that has survived in Bradford has been much debated, almost from the time of its romantic rediscovery in 1856 by Canon W. H. Jones.[36] The judgment, once, was that the "main fabric [was] indeed the work of Aldhelm's period," though this is not now generally accepted.[37] The church is small, though very high, taller than it is long, with a nave and a square-ended chancel and a large northern porch-chamber. There is an entrance via this porch-chamber, as well as an entrance in the south wall. It would appear, though, that there was also once a south porch-chamber and that the original entrance was in the west wall with both *porticus* serving as side chapels without exterior entrances.[38]

This church-building activity, comparable to that of Wilfrid, demonstrates both that Malmesbury became a substantial foundation under the abbacy of Aldhelm and that he disposed of a considerable income (the establishment of the two sub-monasteries testifies particularly to this). To this end, Aldhelm was accustomed to receiving grants for his monastery at Malmesbury from various kings and notables, both Mercian and West

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use of wood for churches, see Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600–900* (Cambridge, 2006), 111–16.

[33] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, chap. 229–32 (pp. 572–79); cf. Thomson, *Commentary*, 327–28.

[34] Cf. Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (n. 7 above), 151; and H. M. Taylor, "The Eighth-Century Doorway at Somerford Keynes," *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 88 (1969): 68–73.

[35] Heather Edwards, *The Charters of the Early West Saxon Kingdom*, British Archaeological Report 198 (Oxford, 1988), 93–94.

[36] W. H. Jones, *An Account of the Saxon Church of St. Laurence, Bradford-on-Avon* (Bradford-on-Avon, 1907) and *The Life and Times of Saint Aldhelm* (Bath, 1878).

[37] See now John Blair, "Bradford-on-Avon," *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al. (Oxford, 1999), 72; and, for the quotation, H. M. Taylor and Joan Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1965), 1:86–89 (and, for illustrations, 2:401–2).

[38] E. Dudley C. Jackson and Eric G. M. Fletcher, "Porch and Porticus in Saxon Churches," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 19 (1956): 5. See also Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1983), 145–53.

Saxon. Malmesbury is sited in what was a frontier region of the two kingdoms on the river Avon;[39] from this site the river flows south and, once past the line between the east and west Wansdyke, turns west. At this point, Aldhelm founded his sub-monastery at Bradford-on-Avon. The river then turns north and, flowing beyond the west Wansdyke again, it passes Bath and flows northwest into the Bristol Channel. Aldhelm founded his other sub-monastery at Frome on the Frome River, a tributary that, from far south in Somerset, not far from Doulting, flows north to join the Avon, just after that river has passed Bradford. As we have already noted, it was to Doulting that Bishop Egwin of Worcester was to travel to take Aldhelm's body back to Malmesbury for burial.

From the period of Aldhelm's abbacy, there survive but a half-dozen or so charters, conveying grants of land or privileges, which, though most are likely to have been "interpolated," are considered "substantially genuine."[40] These surviving charters are unlikely to represent the true total of Aldhelm's ongoing search for patronage, over some three decades, to secure the needed resources for his monastery, but taken altogether they are adequate to illustrate Aldhelm's administrative tenacity. In 681, King Æthilred of Mercia grants to Aldhelm fifteen hides at Tetbury; for this grant, there survive two charters that, rather than being distinct, appear to be two versions of one charter.[41] Similarly, there survive another two charters that, again, appear

[39] Specifically, at the frontier of the sub-kingdom of the Hwicce; see K. R. Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom* (London, 1994), 107–8. In addition to Aldhelm's receiving grants from both Mercian and West Saxon, a further indication of Malmesbury's frontier condition would be that Bede had the story of the errant military aide of King Cenred of Mercia from Bishop Pehthelm of Whithorn, previously a monk at Malmesbury under Aldhelm (*Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 13 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 498–503]). Augustine's abortive meeting with British bishops also took place "in confinio Huicciorum et Occidentalium Saxonum" (Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2, 2 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 134]). Katherine Barker, "Institution and Landscape in Early Medieval Wessex: Aldhelm of Malmesbury, Sherborne and *Selwoodshire*," *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* 106 (1984): 33: Malmesbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Frome, and Sherborne are all to the west of the watershed marked by Selwood forest.

[40] Edwards, *Charters*, 126. For this summary account of the grants received by Aldhelm at Malmesbury, I rely largely upon the findings and judgments of Heather Edwards's rigorous scrutinies (a study conducted under the supervision of Patrick Wormald), as confirmed in the main by S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of Malmesbury Abbey*, British Academy Anglo-Saxon Charters 11 (Oxford, 2005); in the note citing each charter, I quote the specific overall judgments of both Edwards and Kelly.

[41] Edwards, *Charters*, 90–92, and Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 133–38; the charters are S71 and S73 (S = P. H. Sawyer *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* [London, 1968]; texts at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 134 and 135. S73 would add thirty hides west of the Fosse Way [at Long Newnton]. Edwards's overall judgment of the grant [90], "appears to be authentic"; Kelly's [135], "essentially acceptable" [both judgments pertain to the shorter

to be variant versions of a grant to Aldhelm in 688 by King Cædwalla of Wessex of 132 hides on either side of a wood named Kemble.[42] Kemble is north of Malmesbury as well as north of Tetbury, the location of King Æthilred of Mercia's earlier grant. It is also somewhat to the north of Somerford Keynes, the site of the grant to Aldhelm in 685 of forty hides by Berhtwald, a local Mercian ruler (termed a "rex" in the charter but identified elsewhere as a "prefectus"), his grant being confirmed by King Æthilred.[43] Heather Edwards suggests that Cædwalla's extensive grant would indicate that the "border appears to have been shifted to the north, so that Malmesbury was brought firmly within the West Saxon orbit."[44] This would not appear to have been a matter of particular concern to Aldhelm. He dealt with Mercian and West Saxon alike. Cædwalla also confirmed an exchange of land between Aldhelm and Baldred, a West Saxon notable (who also granted land to Glastonbury). The exchange took place initially sometime during the reign of King Centwine of Wessex, 676–85, who is described as giving his consent.[45] The land obtained by Aldhelm was some one hundred hides adjacent to the river Avon and much nearer to Malmesbury than the estate Aldhelm gave in return. Here, according to Edwards, we should detect a deliberate policy on Aldhelm's part of consolidating the landholdings of Malmesbury.[46] King Cædwalla's confirmation of the exchange was

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version]). See also Anton Scharer, *Die angelsächsische Königsurkunde im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1982), 148–50.

[42] Edwards, *Charters*, 97–100, and Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 142–46 (S231 and S234); texts at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 142 and 143–44. S234 would add another eight hides to the grant at Kemble Wood, as well as thirty hides east of Braydon Wood and five hides at the confluence of the Avon and Wylye rivers. Edwards's overall judgment (97), "basically authentic"; Kelly's (144), "of very uncertain authenticity, although there can be little doubt that they are based on early documentation."

[43] Edwards, *Charters*, 93–94, and Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 138–41 (S1169); text at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 139. Presumably, this is the Berhtwald who is identified by Eddius Stephanus (*Vita S. Wilfridi* [n. 12 above], chap. 40 [ed. Colgrave, 80–81]) as Æthilred's nephew and who gave land to Wilfrid for a monastery. For his status as a "ruler" of some sort, see Patrick Sims-Williams, "St. Wilfrid and Two Charters Dated AD 676 and 680," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 39 (1988): 177–79 (reprinted in idem, *Britain and Early Christian Europe* [Aldershot, 1995]). Edwards's overall judgment (93), "appears to be authentic"; Kelly's (140), "very probable that a genuine seventh-century diploma underlies the present text."

[44] Edwards, *Charters*, 98.

[45] Edwards, *Charters*, 94–97, and Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 147–50 (S1170); text at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 147. Aldhelm received land at Startley and Sutton Benger in exchange for land east of Braydon Wood. Edwards's overall judgment (94), "appears to be authentic"; Kelly's (148), "authenticity . . . uncertain" (more on this below).

[46] See Edwards, *Charters*, 94–97. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (n. 3 above), chap. 211.3 (p. 536), claimed that Aldhelm had increased the monastery's land-holdings from sixty hides to over four hundred, all of which then lay so close to the

given in 688 (we shall return to this). Finally, in 701, King Ine of Wessex grants some forty-five hides in three locations around Malmesbury.[47]

There has long prevailed a predisposition to dismissal of the authenticity of early documents, its origin undoubtedly a critically healthy reaction to the overly credulous reception of these documents in the first centuries of historical (or perhaps we should say antiquarian) research into our period (a credulity extending, in some quarters, into the early years of the twentieth century). But a cynical reception can also go too far, particularly in demanding of the practitioners of this very early age a uniformity of practice that, historically, is just not in the cards. It has also quite regularly gone too far in rejecting the substance of a document due to perceived, or demonstrable, irregularities or anachronisms in form. Simply put, it is not credulous to believe that the people of our period acted purposefully, and it is not fanciful to require that the burden-of-proof should lie with those who would reject as inauthentic a document whose overt (that is, in most cases, openly stated) purpose is historically supported. Aldhelm did receive substantial grants for his monastery at Malmesbury. As Heather Edwards and Susan Kelly (and many others) have detailed, the forms in which these several charters have reached us and the specifics of the lands involved in the grants are problematic. Nevertheless, these charters we have been considering are the surviving charters whose grants to Aldhelm at Malmesbury are considered "essentially authentic" (this would be, in the first instance, Edwards's collective judgment of these charters, but, with the exception of Baldred's exchange with Aldhelm [S1170], Kelly would stand, in the main, in agreement).

In addition, there are three other documents relating to the administrative side of Aldhelm's abbacy: a foundation charter consisting of a grant of the land at Malmesbury to Aldhelm by Bishop Hlothhere, a papal bull of Sergius I bestowing privileges on Aldhelm's monasteries at Malmesbury and Frome, and a testament by Aldhelm concerning, primarily, abbatial succession at Malmesbury, Frome, and Bradford-on-Avon.[48] Taken together with

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monastery that they could be visited in a single day. Alan Thacker, "England in the Seventh Century," *New Cambridge Medieval History* 1, ed. Paul Fouracre (Cambridge, 2005), 495, notes that the assessed holdings of some 110 hides of the joint monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow equated to "over a third of the size, on the evidence of the *Tribal Hidage*, of a small province or kingdom."

[47] At Garsdon, Gauze Brook, and Rodbourne; Edwards, *Charters*, 105–7, and Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 150–53 (S243); text at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 151. Edwards's overall judgment (105), "may well be wholly authentic" and (107), "The wording and content of this document seem equally to indicate that it is a genuine charter of Ine"; Kelly's (151), "fundamentally authentic."

[48] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald (n. 3 above), 507–9, 512–14, and 514–15.

the evidence provided by Aldhelm's charter transactions, these documents would confirm the deliberateness of Aldhelm's strategy of securing stability for his monastic *familia* through legal guarantees of their independent administration of their acquired landed resources. The scholarly consensus regarding the authenticity of these three documents has, over time, been variable. Ehwald considered all three to be authentic and, in this, was reflecting what, in the main, was a long-standing consensus. Soon, however, the critical attitude shifted until it became the norm to reject, virtually out-of-hand, the three documents as later forgeries. But, as we shall see, this "consensus" condemnation has also begun to shift, turning to a more favorably nuanced judgment on all three documents, but particularly as regards Sergius's bull and Aldhelm's testament. Let us begin by seeing what we can make of Bishop Hlothhere's grant.

Heather Edwards rejects the authenticity of the charter conveying Bishop Hlothhere's grant (as does Susan Kelly).[49] Despite noting such attractive seventh-century features as the Aldhelmian diction and an authentic witness list (Hlothhere attesting "with his characteristic humility formula 'ac si indignus episcopus'"[50]), Edwards wholly rejects the charter as a fabrication on the basis of its substance: "There is no parallel for the grant of an existing monastery to a priest."[51] But this is not what the charter says. The plain sense of the charter is that Hlothhere, with the concurrence of his diocese's abbots, grants to Aldhelm the "land" at Malmesbury ("terram illam, cui vocabulum est Mealdumesburg") so that he might institute a monastic establishment there ("ad degendam regulariter vitam"). The implication is that, previously, a school had existed there in which Aldhelm had received his early training ("in quo videlicet loco a primo aevo infantiae atque ab ipso tirocinio rudimentorum liberalibus litterarum studiis eruditus").[52] Malmesbury is clearly *not* identified as a preexisting monastery.

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[49] The text of the charter (S1245) is also at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 125–27 (with discussion at 127–31) and at BCS 37 (BCS = W. de G. Birch, ed., *Cartularium Saxonum* [London, 1885–93]).

[50] On Hlothhere's use of such a formula, see also Patrick Sims-Williams, "Continental Influence at Bath Monastery in the Seventh Century," *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975): 5–7 (reprinted in idem, *Britain and Early Christian Europe*); and, for associated usage by Aldhelm, see idem, "St Wilfrid and Two Charters Dated AD 676 and 680," 165–66. Additionally, Edwards notes that the sanction and dating clause "may well derive from an authentic charter of the 670s." Kelly (*Malmesbury*, 129–30) confirms the "convincing" seventh-century nature of the dating clause, the "humility formula," and the witness-list (in particular, the spelling of Bishop Hlothhere's name as "Cleutherius [is] unlikely to be later than the seventh century").

[51] Edwards, *Charters*, 85–87.

[52] That Maildubh's foundation was a school (attached to his hermitage) would seem to have been the distinct tradition in our earliest surviving medieval accounts as subsumed in

It was demonstrated long ago that the lengthy proem of this charter was thoroughly Aldhelmian, with virtually every word in it, and even whole phrases, paralleled elsewhere in Aldhelm's writings.[53] However, rather than substantiating the charter as showing it to be the work of the recipient (the common early medieval practice), this has been taken to be a clever pastiche by a later forger determined "to enhance the status" of Malmesbury.[54] This seems a rather nebulous motivation. Susan Kelly would judge the charter, much less harshly, as "best regarded as a fabrication partly based on a genuine document from the later seventh century," arguing that there "may well be some basis in the story that [Hlothhere] was responsible for establishing his protegé at Malmesbury."[55]

In contrast to her views on Hlothhere's grant, Edwards argues persuasively for the authenticity of Pope Sergius I's bull (as do also H. H. Anton and Christine Rauer [see below]); this bull survives in both an Old English and a Latin version.[56] Aldhelm is known to have traveled, at least once, to Rome. An unknown Irishman mentions this in his letter to Aldhelm,[57] and William of Malmesbury dwells in delightful, if miraculous, detail on Aldhelm's Roman experiences (there is a papal paternity crisis, and a chasuble

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both William of Malmesbury's account and, separately, in Thomas of Malmesbury's *Eulogium historiarum* (1361), which seemingly drew on traditional accounts of Maildubh preserved at Malmesbury. See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish," 6 n. 27 and Richard H. Luce, *The History of the Abbey and Town of Malmesbury* (Malmesbury, 1929 [repr. 1979]), 4–5. See also Sarah Foot, "Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Review of Terminology," *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), 214–25.

[53] A. S. Cook, "A Putative Charter to Aldhelm," *Studies in English Philology*, ed. Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud (Minneapolis, 1929), 254–57.

[54] Edwards, *Charters*, 87; cf. *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, ed. Lapidge and Herren (n. 3 above), 173. But the presence of Aldhelmian phrases ("nearly every line of the poem reproduces a phrase from somewhere or other in Aldhelm's corpus") is used by Lapidge (ibid., 17) to argue *for* the identification of Aldhelm as the author of the first rhythmical poem included by Ehwald (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald [n. 3 above], 523–28). Lapidge ("The Career of Aldhelm" [n. 6 above], 48–52) continues to deny any authenticity to Hlothhere's grant and argues for 682x685 as the beginning of Aldhelm's abbacy. His arguments, however, are highly conjectural and require him to dismiss as a "forgery" or a "fabrication" or "suspicious" a half-dozen charters with conflicting dating; see his nn. 156–59.

[55] Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 128–29.

[56] Edwards, *Charters*, 100–105. For new editions of both the Old English and Latin texts, see Edwards, "Two Documents from Aldhelm's Malmesbury," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 59 (1986): 16–19; Edwards's critical edition of the Old English text has now been superseded by Christine Rauer, "Pope Sergius I's Privilege for Malmesbury," *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s., 37 (2006): 271–76. The texts are also found, respectively, at BCS 105 and 106, and the Latin text also at *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 512–14.

[57] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 494.

hangs on a sunbeam).[58] Though the specific dates of Aldhelm's trip are unknown, it can be placed, on the basis of the bull, within the papacy of Sergius I (s. 687–701). It is tempting to suggest that Aldhelm traveled with King Cædwalla, who abdicated in 688 to go on pilgrimage to Rome, there to be baptized (by Pope Sergius) and to die among the shrines of the apostles. In his dedicatory poem on the dedication of the church built by Bugge (daughter of King Centwine), Aldhelm's lines on Cædwalla deal virtually exclusively with his journey to Rome, describing how the keel of his ship cut through the briny sea and how he then crossed the Alps on foot, amidst glaciers and mountain peaks.[59] In this poem, Aldhelm refers to the pope as "clementia Romae" (given Aldhelm's penchance for punning on names, could this be a reference to Sergius's having renamed the English missionary Willibrord "Clement"?[60] — this renaming occurred upon the occasion of Willibrord's consecration as archbishop for the Frisians in 695). Sergius's bull places two of Aldhelm's monasteries, at Malmesbury and at Frome, under the protection of papal privilege, freeing them from secular duties and from the jurisdictional rights of the diocesan bishop (no episcopal see may be established there and the bishop may not even celebrate mass in the monasteries without the invitation of the abbot and monks), and establishing the right of the community to elect their own abbot. Edwards has demonstrated the authenticity of both the structure and substance of this document as exemplified by other papal privileges of this period; similarly, Rauer, expanding on Anton's work, would conclude that the Latin version represents a "directly transmitted . . . text . . . whose seventh- or eighth-century phraseology is substantially preserved."[61] Typically, such privileges were obtained by personal application at Rome (as, for example, by Benedict Biscop for Wearmouth).[62]

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[58] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (n. 3 above), chaps. 218–21 (pp. 548–59).

[59] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 15, lines 17–32. Lapidge ("The Career of Aldhelm," 52–64) provides a highly plausible reconstruction of Aldhelm's activities in Rome, involving fruitful study of Latin epigrammatic inscriptions (*tituli*).

[60] Cf. Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge, 1994), 211–12.

[61] Christine Rauer ("Pope Sergius I's Privilege," 261–81) and H. H. Anton (*Studien zu den Klosterprivilegien der Päpste im frühen Mittelalter* [Berlin, 1975], 60–61, 67–82, 91, and 117) base their conclusions on close stylistic comparisons of the formulaic nature of the document with other papal privileges and documents (particularly with the *Liber diurnus*). Rauer also (266–68) argues, persuasively, that the Latin version is the original (Edwards, "Two Documents from Aldhelm's Malmesbury," 9–10, believed the Old English "the earlier of the surviving versions and . . . the Latin . . . a translation of it.").

[62] Bede, *Historia Abbatum*, chap. 6 (ed. Carolus [Charles] Plummer [Oxford, 1896], 1:368–70).

The question of abbatial election was also the subject of a testament by Aldhelm, dated 705.[63] In the text, Aldhelm states that, in concession to the requests of his monks, he would remain as abbot of Malmesbury, Frome, and Bradford-on-Avon for his lifetime (he had proposed stepping down upon his becoming bishop of Sherborne) and that, after his death, the monks would freely elect their own abbot. This agreement is said to have been reached at the monastery of Wimborne whose abbess was Cuthburg, the king's sister, and to have been agreed to by King Ine and Bishop Daniel of Winchester. Shortly afterwards, a synod of all the West Saxon abbots at the river "Noodr" concurred.

Edwards rejects the document's authenticity, considering it "scarcely believable" that such a transaction should have taken place at Wimborne.[64] It is clear, however, that this was a "transaction" of some moment. As we have seen, Aldhelm's monastic *familia* had grown to considerable size, with extensive landholdings. Additionally, the West Saxon diocese had been involved in a dispute with Canterbury, involving the ostracism of West Saxon clerics from ecclesiastical company, perhaps over a refusal by Bishop Hæddi to consent to the division of his diocese.[65] In this document, Aldhelm refers to Daniel as "coepiscopus."[66] It may well be that neutral ground had

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[63] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 514–15 (text also at Kelly, *Malmesbury* [n. 40 above], 159–60 and at BCS [n. 49 above], 114).

[64] Edwards, *Charters* (n. 35 above), 115–16; cf. Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650–c. 850* (London, 1995), 260. Kelly (*Malmesbury*, 38, 56–58, 127–31, and 160–65) is not so certain (more on this below) but would link a rejection of the authenticity of Hlothhere's grant with Aldhelm's testament, arguing that both, in the form in which they have reached us, were devised for "polemical purposes" and reached their final form during the period in which William of Malmesbury was revising the first edition of his *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ca. 1125–1135, a period when the abbey was in especial need of defending its independence against episcopal encroachment. Both, though, were known, at least in substance, to Faricius, with this biographer of Aldhelm from a generation earlier (as we noted, William cites his work) specifically noting that Sergius's bull guaranteed freedom from both secular and episcopal interference and that Aldhelm's testament, deposited "in Meldunensis ecclesie armario," provided for the free election of the abbot by the monks ("Vita S. Aldhelmi," ed. Winterbottom [n. 3 above], 105 and 110).

[65] See Pierre Chaplais, "The Letter from Bishop Wealdhere of London to Archbishop Brihtwold of Canterbury: The Earliest Original 'Letter Close' Extant in the West," *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries*, ed. M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson (London, 1978), 3–23; and Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042* (London, 1955), #164 (729–30), for the letter from Wealdhere, bishop of London, to Berhtwald, archbishop of Canterbury, touching on this dispute (text at BCS 115). William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, chap. 223.7 (p. 562) identifies Berhtwald as a fellow student and old friend of Aldhelm's, who as archbishop would consecrate him bishop of Sherborne.

[66] Daniel, Bede tells us (*Historia ecclesiastica*, *Praefatio* [ed. Colgrave and Mynors (n. 5 above), 4]), was his informant on church matters West Saxon. Aldhelm is described by Bede (*Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 18 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 514]) as administering his dio-

been sought. At the same time, there seems nothing odd with such a West Saxon ecclesiastical summit meeting taking place in a monastery whose founding abbess was Cuthburg, sister of King Ine (see the entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *s.a.* 718) and *quondam* wife of King Aldfrith (and, previous to coming to Wimborne, one of the nuns at Barking to whom Aldhelm addressed his *De virginitate*).[67] Edwards must also explain away other authentic features, such as the synod on the river "Noodr" and the document's attestation (along with Ine and Daniel) by a *patricius* Æthilfrith. Edwards acknowledges that such a layman was active in Ine's reign and that his inclusion in the witness list is hardly to be a "lucky guess." She acknowledges, also, that the "Noodr" is identified as the Nadder River in Wiltshire (now the Salisbury Avon), but claims that the (required) later forger simply muddled "Noodr" out of the Northumbrian synod held at the river Nidd.[68] I would think this to be scarcely believable.

More credibly, Edwards notes that the document is simply "unlike . . . genuine charters" of the time. But she also notes that it "appears to derive its details from narrative sources." Indeed. It could well be that the document reflects a genuine testament by Aldhelm, recording the agreement on the abbatial succession of his monasteries reached with Ine and Daniel and confirmed by the other abbots (just as they are said to have originally agreed to Bishop Hlothhere's grant of the land at Malmesbury to Aldhelm), originally composed in a period before "legal" documents became standardized.[69] It would, then, have been a later copyist who recast the document in the to-him-required format of a charter, adding the proem, *dispositio* and sanction, as well as the incarnational dating clause. This would appear to be, essentially, the conclusion reached by Susan Kelly in her searching reexamination of the question of authenticity in her critical edition of the text:

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cese *strenuissime*. Daniel, who also corresponded with Boniface, resigned his see in 744, having become blind, and retired to Malmesbury as a monk.

[67] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (n. 24 above), chap. 36 (pp. 52–53); and cf. *Aldhelmi Opera* (n. 3 above), 229 n. 1. We shall take particular, and telling, note in the text of the concurring findings of Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 164–65. Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (n. 7 above), 160, treats Aldhelm's dispositions as normative.

[68] Edwards, *Charters*, 115–16. It would be more sensible to view this Northumbrian synod — which reached a final settlement of the long dispute of Wilfrid with Northumbrian kings over the disposition, *inter alia*, of his monasteries and which was apparently hosted by Abbess Ælffled — as mirroring the West Saxon synod that, in the preceding year, had endorsed Aldhelm's settlement (see Eddius Stephanus, *Vita S. Wilfridi* [n. 12 above], chap. 60 [ed. Colgrave, 128–33]).

[69] For the "incorporation of direct speech" into documents as modeled on the accounts of proceedings of papal synods, see Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils*, 81–84.

> we need not rule out the possibility that Malmesbury preserved some genuine record of Aldhelm's arrangements for the organization of his minsters after his death. A late Malmesbury forger is unlikely to have invented without any foundation a document which covered not only Malmesbury but also two other Aldhelmian foundations. . . . Wimborne was a royal foundation, and would not have been an implausible venue for a royal council, with a location close to the boundary between the Sherborne and Winchester dioceses. . . . Thus there may be a case for thinking that an early document in Aldhelm's name does lie behind the received text [with] one possibility [being] that a charter of Aldhelm was rewritten in the tenth century.[70]

It would, after all, not have been the first time that Aldhelm would have been involved with King Ine in securing his monasteries.[71] We shall, shortly, consider such involvement by Aldhelm with secular power. First, though, it is important to note that the various guarantees and exemptions spelt out in the ecclesiastical documents we have been considering are not discrete and isolated but follow a clear pattern. In Hlothhere's grant of the land at Malmesbury, the bishop specifically addresses the issue of thus alienating the land from episcopal control, asserting that the alienation cannot be exploited by any succeeding bishop (or king) to invalidate the grant: "ut nullus succedentium demum episcoporum seu regum hanc nostrae donationis cartulam tyrannica fretus potestate violenter invadat, asserens pertinaciter, quod de iure potestatis episcopatus ablatum sequestratumque fuisse videretur."[72] Pope Sergius's bull spells out this inviolability in practical terms, particularly, as we have noted, regarding the rights of the abbot and monks to regulate their own liturgical and ecclesiological matters.[73] And Aldhelm's testament ensures that his own retention of the abbacy while bishop could not be construed in the future as a contravention of these legal norms, since his continuance in monastic office followed, in due form (as he specifically notes), on the freely expressed choice of the monks of Malmesbury — as it would in the future: "ut nullus post obitum [Aldhelmi] nec regalis audacitas nec pontificalis auctoritas vel aliquis ecclesiasticae seu saecularis dignitatis vir sine nostro voluntatis arbitrio in nobis sibi vindicet principatum."[74] It is

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[70] Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 164–65.

[71] Edward, *Charters*, 127; *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, chap. 226 (pp. 568–71).

[72] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald (n. 3 above), 508–9; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren (n. 3 above), 174. Patrick Wormald, *Times of Bede* (n. 2 above), 162 n. 14, singles out this admonitory section of Hlothhere's charter as, along with the witness-list, fitting "the early West Saxon pattern well." Overall, he puts the charter in his "Class *III*" (141), which "show clear signs of forgery or interpolation, but have what might be called 'original symptoms'; they offer corroborative, but not unsupported, testimony."

[73] See in particular the second paragraph of the privilege as edited by Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 513–14.

[74] Ibid., 515. Bishop Erkenwald's foundation charter for Barking (dated 677), where he installed his sister Ethelburga as first abbess, similarly assures to the nuns perpetual free-

largely due to these expessions of practical administrative measures that, as we have noted, their latest editors, Susan Kelly and Christine Rauer, would judge that, at the least, authentic documents of Aldhelm's time underlie our texts. Aldhelm secured his testament with the consent of his king. This is key, for complementing Aldhelm's pursuit of independence, ecclesiastically, for his monastic *familia* would be a like effort with secular powers.[75] We shall consider, below, the linkage of ecclesiastical with secular freedoms, involving the presence (controversial in the eyes of modern scholars) of clauses of exemption from secular services in a number of grants from kings, both Mercian and West Saxon, with which Aldhelm was involved, either as the recipient or the drafter (or both). For now, however, we should note that the bull Aldhelm obtained from Pope Sergius was confirmed by both Ine of Wessex and Æthilred of Mercia.[76] Aldhelm's own endorsement states that the two kings had agreed that, whether war or peace reigned between the two kingdoms, the monasteries would be left in peace ("otium"). We should, I would argue, take this as Aldhelm's own deliberately chosen designation of his strategic aims and, as such, its implications are telling. As we shall see, *otium* was the keystone in Aldhelm's pursuit to establish Malmesbury as a center not just of monastic prayers, but of scholarly endeavors. It was on this

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dom from episcopal control and the right to elect their own abbess; see Cyril Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England* (Leicester, 1966), 117–23, with the text of the charter (S1246) on 122–23 (the charter also refers to privileges obtained orally from Pope Agatho, and it was witnessed, amongst others, by bishops Wilfrid and Hæddi); and idem, *The Early Charters of Essex* (Leicester, 1971), 10: "The text of [Erkenwald's] charter may now be accepted as wholly authentic." It was to Hildelith (Ethelburga's successor as abbess) and her nuns that Aldhelm addressed his *De virginitate*. See Patrick Wormald, *The Times of Bede*, 144–45, for a consideration of Bishop Erkenwald as a "source or channel" of diplomatic desiderata and formulae in both Essex and Wessex.

[75] For a similar (and, perhaps, innovative) concern by Archbishop Theodore for the independence of monasteries, see Martin Brett, "Theodore and the Latin Canon Law," *Archbishop Theodore*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1995), 127–28. Indeed, Aldhelm's efforts in this area were fully in line with the policy of Archbishop Theodore, as evidenced both by the provisions of the third chapter of the Synod of Hertford (672/73), the first national synod over which the archbishop presided (see Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4, 5 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 348–55]), and by numerous canons in his penitential (see Book 2, 6 in the *Die Canones Theodori Cantuariensis und ihre Überlieferungsformen*, ed. Paul W. Finsterwalder [Weimar, 1929], 319–21).

[76] Michael Lapidge (*Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 204 n. 2) initially rejected Sergius's bull as "patently spurious"; he then upgraded ("Aldhelm," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 6 vols. [Oxford, 2004], 1:261) his judgment of it to "not beyond suspicion" and further judged that "if genuine, it would be consonant with Aldhelm's ambitions on Malmesbury's behalf"; and now ("The Career of Aldhelm" [n. 6 above], 62–64) he agrees that a genuine privilege of Pope Sergius is involved and, in particular (64), he notes that "the endorsements by the kings of Wessex and Mercia (Ine and Æthelred) preserved in the Old English version are likely to be an original feature."

occasion of welcoming Aldhelm on his return from Rome and endorsing, on the spot, his papal bull, that the two kings, according to William of Malmesbury, praised God for bringing back to them the "lumen Britanniae."[77]

This phrase points us to a third aspect of Aldhelm's ecclesiasticism, along with his scholarly output as a practical theorist of the Christian life for his own people and his administrative and strategic skills as abbot and bishop: that of a ranking cleric playing leading roles in the affairs of both the wider English church and his own kingdom. Perhaps the earliest of Aldhelm's efforts in this wider world was the letter that he wrote to the abbots of Wilfrid's monasteries, urging them to accompany Wilfrid into exile.[78] Arguments have been put forward for each of the occasions when Wilfrid sought papal intervention in his disputes with kings and their councils in Northumbria: 678, 692, and 703.[79] Ehwald dates the letter to 705/6, when Aldhelm was a bishop, arguing that he would not have wished to offend Archbishop Theodore on the first occasion nor King Aldfrith on the second (Theodore died in 690 and Aldfrith in 705).[80] But by 705, the quarrel had been resolved (if not wholly to Wilfrid's desires) by the synod held by Archbishop Berhtwald of Canterbury near the river Nidd.[81] Accordingly, Herren argues for 678 since Aldhelm's letter clearly refers to a "transmarine" exile, fitting Wilfrid's passage first to Frisia after his expulsion by King Ecgfrith in that year (following upon his second expulsion from Northumbria in 692, this time by King Aldfrith, Wilfrid went to Mercia).[82] Certainly, only the exile following his expulsion in 678 could have involved a number of Northumbrian abbots of Wilfrid's monastic *familia*. Subsequently, Wilfrid, prior to his expulsion in 692 or his journey to Rome after 703, had either been stripped of his hitherto total control of the Northumbrian diocese and restricted, finally, to

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[77] Aldhelm's endorsement survives solely in the Old English version of the privilege (Edwards, "Two Documents" [n. 56 above], 13 and 17), though William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (n. 3 above), chap. 222.5–6 (p. 560), both describes the occasion and paraphrases the endorsement; see also *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 514; and Edwards, *Charters* (n. 35 above), 104. Rauer ("Pope Sergius I's Privilege" [n. 56 above], 268), pace Edwards, has demonstrated, persuasively, that the Latin is the original, representing a "more or less formulaic document," while the Old English version "displays a distinctively . . . quasi-homiletic idiom." It may be, then, that the Old English translator was concerned to demonstrate the particular relevance of the bull to Malmesbury within the society of the time (a translation as interpretive as this Old English version would seem to be has independent value as a witness).

[78] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 500–502.

[79] See the revised dates as given by Michael Lapidge, "Wilfrid," *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (n. 37 above), 474–75.

[80] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 500 n. 1.

[81] Eddius Stephanus, *Vita S. Wilfridi* (n. 12 above), chap. 60 (ed. Colgrave, 128–33).

[82] Michael Herren in *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 150–51.

Ripon or had actually resided outside Northumbria, travelling or working in Frisia, Gaul, Rome, Sussex, Wessex and Mercia. Aldhelm's letter has been read as echoing the Germanic heroic ideal of a warrior's loyalty to his lord.[83] Certainly, it expresses Aldhelm's idea of monastic discipline.[84]

The extended metaphor he employs in the letter is that of the bee that follows its "king" with total obedience. Aldhelm received from classical antiquity the belief that bees procreated without sex (hence, the mistake in the gender of the queen bee). In his *De virginitate*, Aldhelm employs, at length, the bee as the ideal metaphor for nuns and monks: chaste, industrious, and obedient.[85] Aldhelm also employs, in his letter to Bishop Wilfrid's abbots, *necessitas* in the sense of "obligation" (the "rerum necessitas" obliging Wilfrid's abbots to accompany him into exile), a legal usage that Aldhelm regularly employed.[86] We are not told why Aldhelm felt obliged to write,[87] but we can suspect that Aldhelm may have been pleading an unpopular cause. It may also be that, with Aldhelm, his letter was a matter of friendship trumping loyalty. His was a barbaric world of kings as warlords, of feuds and savage killings, but it was also a world that, amongst the literate, shimmered with reminiscences of daily life in classical Rome: quaestors and jurisconsults, the Olympian gods, silk and ambrosia, Virgilian tags, and the utility of *amicitia*. Certainly, Aldhelm would have, through his immersion in the writings of the great late antique Gaulish poets and transmitters of Roman virtues, have been positively exposed to the lessons of *amicitia*; and, clearly, both the obligations of friendship (his letter to Wilfrid's abbots) and its privileges (his appeal in his *Epistola ad Acircium* to the protection of King Aldfrith) are manifest in Aldhelm's writings, as in his beneficial dealings with West Saxon and Mercian magnates alike. This is not superficial recourse to the commonplaces of the educated, but internalization of a mechanism of survival in a rough world.

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[83] Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042* (n. 65 above), 730.

[84] As well as Wilfrid's own conception of Gaulish episcopal dignity and might; see Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1991), 132–34.

[85] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Social Theology" (n. 15 above), 61.

[86] See my "Legal Terminology in Anglo-Saxon England: the *Trimoda Necessitas* Charter," *Speculum* 57 (1982): 847–48.

[87] Aldhelm and Wilfrid, exact contemporaries (both were born in the 630s and both died in 709) though from opposite ends of Anglo-Saxon England, were united by their devotion to the same *idée fixe*: a bitter opposition to Irish influence in the English church (for Aldhelm, see my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish" [n. 13 above], particularly 14–22; and, for Wilfrid's career as a combative rejectionist of the Irish tradition, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* [Cambridge, 2000], 318–26). Ironically, each began his ecclesiastical life in Irish foundations: Aldhelm at Malmesbury and Wilfrid at Lindisfarne.

Monastic discipline would seem to have been a problem in seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England. In the concluding chapters of the *De virginitate*, Aldhelm rails against both monastic and secular clerics who violate canon law and monastic rule by adorning themselves with brightly colored clothes, embroidered with silk and adorned with ribbons, and with red-leather trimmed shoes and who curl their hair and wear their fingernails long and curved.[88] As we have noted, he writes in similar admonitory vein to two of his students, Æthilwald and Wihtfrid, who would seem to have been colleagues in their studies with Aldhelm (in his own letter to Aldhelm, Æthilwald mentions that he had sent a copy of a poem on a sea voyage to Wihtfrid as well).[89] Ehwald identified this Æthilwald[90] with the subsequent king of Mercia, Æthilbald (716–57). Certainly, Aldhelm's advice would be more fitting for a princeling. This identification has been generally rejected, on orthographical grounds.[91] While I would not argue to the contrary, it should be noted, pace Herren, that Ehwald's identification rests on more than the

[88] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald (n. 3 above), 317–18; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren (n. 3 above), 127–28.

[89] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 497. In the only surviving copy of this letter, the name of Æthilwald's fellow student ("meo tuoque clienti") is given as "Wynfrido" (cf. the facsimile edition, *Sancti Bonifatii Epistolae [Codex Vindobonensis 751]*, ed. Franz Unterkircher [Graz, 1971], fol. 36r, second line from the bottom). This was emended by Ludwig Traube to "Wihtfrido" on the grounds (as Ehwald gives them, *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. idem, 497 n. 14) that whereas Aldhelm's letter to a Wihtfrid exists, neither Aldhelm nor Boniface (born Wynfrid) makes any reference to any personal relationship with the other (amidst his missionary labors, Boniface is not shy about asking his fellow countrymen at home to send him books, including the works of Bede, but it is left to Boniface's disciple and successor, Lull, the former student at Malmesbury (apparently under Aldhelm's successor, Abbot Eaba; cf. Kelly, *Malmesbury* [n. 40 above], 10–11), to write requesting "Aldhelmi episcopi aliqua opuscula . . . ad consolationem peregrinationis meae et ob memoriam ipsius beati antestitis" (*S. Bonifatii et Lullii epistolae*, ed. Tangl [n. 13 above], 158 and 144). However, Aldhelm does write to Wynberht, Boniface's teacher (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 502–3, and 502 n. 1), and the codex that preserves Æthilwald's letter is primarily a collection of the letters of Boniface.

[90] David Howlett (*British Books in Biblical Style* [Dublin, 1997], 128 and 254) considers Aedeluald, bishop of Lindisfarne (721–40), "probably identical" with this pupil of Aldhelm's. His predecessor in the see of Lindisfarne, Eadfrith (698–721), was also one of the possibilities for Ehfrid, that student of Aldhelm's to whom he wrote such an exuberantly scolding letter upon Ehfrid's returning from school in Ireland; see Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (London, 2003), 105.

[91] Ingeborg Schröbler, "Zu den Carmina rhythmica in der Wiener Handschrift der Bonifatiusbriefe (MGH AA XV, 517 ff.) oder über den Stabreim in der lateinischen Poesie der Angelsachsen," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 79 (1957): 2–7. Unfortunately, Æthilwald's poems to Aldhelm survive in only one manuscript. However, if Wynfrid (that is, Boniface) did study with Aldhelm along with an Æthilwald (see discussion in n. 89 above), we can only imagine the implications if the latter were, as Ehwald argued, the future king. See now Brent Miles, ed. and trans., "The *Carmina Rhythmica* of

similar strictures on youthful excesses in Boniface's later letter to King Æthilbald. Of the five surviving rhythmical poems that he included in his edition of Aldhelm's works, Ehwald ascribed four to Æthilwald.[92] One of them, though not the sea voyage poem that Æthilwald speaks of in his letter to Aldhelm, is addressed to a certain Hova; Ehwald identifies this friend with Obba, the companion in exile of Æthilbald who is mentioned in the *Vita Guthlaci*. Additionally, Ehwald takes Æthilwald's comment on having studied with Aldhelm at a time when his own country was being ravaged by successive attacks as referring to Æthilbald's expulsion from Mercia by King Ceolred (it was also during this period that Æthilbald appears as an exile sheltered by his kinsman, Guthlac of Crowland).[93]

Lapidge has identified the remaining rhythmical poem as clearly the work of Aldhelm himself.[94] It is addressed to a certain Helmgils, yet unidentified,[95] and describes the devastation wrought on a church by a mighty storm. Aldhelm, who states that he was traveling to Devon through Cornwall towards the end of June, was chanting matins with fellow monks when the storm that had been raging through the night ripped apart the roof of the wooden church, causing the monks to flee in terror. The location of the event is not specified, though certain of the lines in which Aldhelm is describing the effect of the storm upon the neighboring sea (lines 99–114) are reminiscent of Aldhelm's description of the return sea voyage, from several years of study in Ireland, of his student Ehfrid (that description is likely that of a voyage up the Severn River and, in this rhythmical poem, *dodrans* [line 108] may likewise identify the Severn bore).[96] Hence, Aldhelm may be describing the north coast of Cornwall. In the concluding lines (165–200), Aldhelm speaks himself (the only time in all his writings in which we seem to hear his voice freed from rhetoric); regrettably, the tone is rather prissy and hectoring.

Æthilwald: Edition, Translation and Commentary," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 14 (2004): 73–117.

[92] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 528–37.

[93] *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 147; *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 522–23 and 536; and *Vita Guthlaci*, chaps. 45 and 49 (Bertram Colgrave, trans., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* [Cambridge, 1956], 138–39, gives "Ofa" as the Old English equivalent).

[94] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 524–28; *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier (n. 3 above), 171–79. For a new edition and translation, see David Howlett, "*Aldhelmi Carmen Rhythmicum*," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin du Cange)* 53 (1995): 119–40.

[95] The name of the recipient has been deduced through a typically Aldhelmian pun, setting the *lector* in apposition in the first two lines of the poem as *casses* (= Old English *helm*) and *obses* (= *gisl*); see *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier, 172.

[96] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish" (n. 13 above), 15 n. 85.

Aldhelm adopts a similar lecturing tone in his letter to Geraint, king of *Dumnonia* (Devon and Cornwall).[97] The date of this letter has also been much debated. Aldhelm states that he is writing it at the command of a council of bishops "ex tota paene Brittania." Ehwald followed Heinrich Hahn in identifying the synod of Hatfield in 679 as the council in question; Herren argued for the council convened by Archbishop Theodore at Hertford in 672.[98] I would argue that both suggestions suffer from the same difficulty: the failure by Aldhelm in this letter, which deals with the Petrine authority in matters of ecclesiastical discipline, to refer to Archbishop Theodore.[99] Surely, then, the letter would need to date from after Theodore's death in 690. His esteem for the archbishop, his revered teacher and master, is ever present in Aldhelm's writings. In his letter to Ehfrid, Aldhelm speaks of Theodore and Hadrian as teachers reflecting the "luculent likeness of the flaming sun and the moon."[100] Indeed, Aldhelm would seem to have been intellectually awakened by his attendance at the school at Canterbury of Theodore and Hadrian, as evidenced — perhaps even more than by his extravagant praise of them — by his deprecatory references to his earlier

[97] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 480–86; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 155–60.

[98] *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 141–42. Herren argues that, while the council at Hatfield was convened specifically to endorse the condemnation of Monothelitism (vice Herren's Monophysitism) at the Lateran Council of 649, the council of Hertford "dealt precisely with the issues raised by Aldhelm in his letter to Geraint." This is not accurate. As I note in the text, Aldhelm has two polemical objectives: the proper calculation of Easter and the proper form of tonsure. He goes on at equal length about both. While the proper calculation of Easter is the subject of Chapter I at Hertford (Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4, 5 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors (n. 5 above), 348–55]), tonsure is nowhere mentioned; rather, there are nine additional chapters dealing with other matters of ecclesiastical discipline and organization. Additionally, Hertford's Easter reference is summary, merely noting that it was to be celebrated "on the Sunday after the fourteenth day of the moon of the first month," while Aldhelm, as I also describe in the text, provides in detail the methods of both the proper and errant calculations. As Catherine Cubitt (*Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, c. 650–c. 850* [n. 64 above], 21–24) concurs, Aldhelm's council "could equally well refer to . . . otherwise unknown councils." Lapidge ("The Career of Aldhelm" [n. 6 above], 67–68) endorses Cubitt's judgment and specifically "rules out the possibility" of Hertford.

[99] As noted, Aldhelm identifies the episcopal council in question as involving nearly all Britain: "ex tota paene Brittania." Among Aldhelm's rare uses of *Brittania* are two in connection with Theodore and Hadrian in his letter to Ehfrid (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald [n. 3 above], 492). We might also project Aldhelm's fulfilling of this ecclesiastical commission as the origin of the phrase "lumen Britanniae"; it is very much the focus of Bede's brief account of Aldhelm (*Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 18 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 514–15]).

[100] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 492; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren (n. 3 above), 163.

education.[101] In his letter to Hadrian regretting his enforced absence from Canterbury due to illness, Aldhelm terms the abbot the teacher of his "rudis infantia," and says that his first stay at Canterbury had concerned the "prima elementa" (by the time Hadrian arrived in England, Aldhelm would have been in his 30s!).[102] In a separate and presumably earlier letter that describes the course of study at Canterbury,[103] including metrics, arithmetic, astrology, and Roman law, Aldhelm refers to himself as a *sciolus* (a superficial scholar) and quotes Jerome to the effect that he must begin anew as a student, since his past study had been "of little value" ("parvi").[104] This second letter was stated by William of Malmesbury to have been written to Hæddi, who became bishop of Winchester upon Hlothhere's death in 676 (the name of the addressee is lacking in the surviving manuscripts).[105] However, Rudolf Ehwald, the modern editor of Aldhelm's writings, argued that the recipient was Hlothhere; his arguments were accepted by Lapidge and Herren.[106] The key element of the argument was that Aldhelm, writing from Canterbury, would have been a student there prior to his becoming abbot of Malmesbury in 675. The import of the letter — that Aldhelm had just embarked upon his new and exciting studies at Canterbury — would argue for an early date as well. But we do not, in fact, know whether or not Aldhelm continued (or even started) his studies with Theodore and Hadrian after becoming abbot (Aldhelm would seem to have been in attendance at Canterbury more than once, for his letter to Hadrian speaks of his burning desire to return to Canterbury being frustrated by the same illness that had forced him to return to Malmesbury some three years previously after his second stay at Canterbury). The letter could, then, be to Hæddi, as William of Malmesbury assumed. Indeed, a long-recognized problem with the traditional interpretation of these two letters — that Aldhelm wrote both while a student of Hadrian and Theodore and that he ceased being their student upon becoming abbot in 675 — is the highly restricted period this would leave for Aldhelm's entire length of study at Canterbury: a mere two years, at most! As Lapidge comments, "The problem remains that, wherever he

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[101] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish" (n. 13 above), passim.

[102] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 478; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 153–54.

[103] As James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxons* (New York, 1982), 50–51, observes, Canterbury, at the time of Theodore's arrival, was "recognizably a Christian capital" in an otherwise still-barbarian England — surely, a further reason for Aldhelm's anguish.

[104] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 475–78; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 152–53.

[105] *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (n. 3 above), chap. 195.2 (p. 514).

[106] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 475 n. 1; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren, 137.

studied, Aldhelm acquired an astonishing breadth of learning."[107] The likelihood, then, is that Aldhelm's intellectual intercourse with the masters at Canterbury was ongoing, regardless of his own standing as an ecclesiastic; and, if he was ready to cite the excellence of their erudite teaching in his arguments concerning the relative merits of the education now available in England versus that in Ireland, then surely he would be no less ready to cite the archbishop's authority in his arguments concerning the validity of the ecclesiastical practices of Rome versus those prevailing in British territories. Indeed, it is likely that it was not just Aldhelm's regional-specific knowledge but his learned association with the archbishop that led to his being commissioned to this task by a national synod. It was, after all, a matter of the highest ecclesiastical politics of the time. Nevertheless, the specific episcopal council that commissioned Aldhelm's letter to King Geraint may never be identified; many such that took place must be entirely lost to historical record.[108] No one, after all, has yet even identified the site of *Clofeshoh*, where, by agreement at the council of Hertford in 672, an annual synod was henceforth to meet.

This letter to King Geraint constitutes the most comprehensive statement by Aldhelm of his ecclesiology, and it is rigidly papalist:[109] the Church is that body of belief and practices defined by the pope as the successor of St. Peter, and outside this Church there is no salvation — "Quid enim prosunt bonorum operum emolumenta, si extra catholicam gerantur ecclesiam?"[110] Aldhelm proceeds to various biblical quotations concerning the unity of the Catholic Church and the harmony of the Christian religion ("de ecclesiae catholicae unitate et christianae religionis concordia") and claims that King Geraint's bishops and clerics are in violation of this necessary unity in two regards: in refusing the Petrine tonsure and the Roman calculation of Easter as established by the Council of Nicaea. Rather, Aldhelm argues, they tonsure themselves in the fashion of Simon Magus and they follow the Easter computation of Anatolius, as set out in the eighty-four-year cycle of Sulpicius Severus (Aldhelm's ascription of an Insular lunar cycle to Sulpicius Severus has recently been vindicated).[111] In this latter error, Aldhelm claims bluntly, they are heretical "quartadecimani," those who celebrate Easter on the Jewish Passover on the fourteenth day of the

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[107] *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier (n. 3 above), 7.

[108] Again, cf. Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils*, 21–24 and 261.

[109] Henry Mayr-Harting (*The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* [n. 84 above], 122) terms it the "most unequivocal enunciation of papalism in seventh-century England."

[110] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 481.

[111] By Dan McCarthy and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín; see my article "Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish" (n. 13 above), 14–15.

Paschal month.[112] Indeed, Aldhelm goes on, the bishops of *Demetia* (Dyfed) on the other side of the Severn river (southwest Wales) are so obstinate in their errors that they exceed King Geraint's clerics by refusing even to celebrate the divine office with the West Saxons or to eat with them; they violate Christian charity itself in their refusal to have any dealings with the West Saxons (whom Aldhelm identifies as the "Catholici," while he accuses the clerics of Dyfed of imitating the heretical "Cathari"). The evidence here is slight, indeed, but both these tendencies — that is, the Quartodecimanism of Geraint's clergy and the ostracizing behavior of the Dyfed clergy — have been cited as indications of lingering Pelagianism in the Insular Church.[113] Overt Pelagianism would seem to be ruled out, at least, by Aldhelm's failure to explicitly name the heresy. On the other hand, Aldhelm himself in his *De virginitate* approvingly quotes from Pelagius's *Epistola ad Demetriadem* (albeit anonymously).[114] Here, in his letter to Geraint, Aldhelm recapitulates his argument by founding it finally on the absolute authority granted by Christ to Peter, citing the central Petrine text concerning the keys of the kingdom of heaven in Matt. 16:18–19 and capping this with his favorite poetic line: "Claviger aetherius, portam qui pandit in aethra." Aldhelm's conclusion: "Frustra de fide catholica et inaniter gloriatur, qui dogma et regulam sancti Petri non sectatur." However unyielding, this letter, as well as the rhythmical poem, do indicate that Aldhelm's relationships with the British kingdoms in the southwest were open (though, in his rhythmical poem, he does refer to "nasty Devon" — "diram Domnoniam").[115] It would seem that the West Saxon monastery at Sherborne was founded on the site of an existing British monastery dedicated to a St. Probus, which had

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[112] In fact, the "quartadecimani" always celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day (the date of Passover) regardless of its day of the week, while these traditionalist British, like the Irish (such as Columbanus) who resisted the imposition of the Roman calculation of Easter, simply believed that if Easter Sunday happened to coincide with Passover, then it was still Easter; see T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (n. 87 above), 396–405.

[113] By Michael W. Herren and Shirley Ann Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity* (Woodbridge, 2002), 56–64, 87–88, and 130–34.

[114] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Social Theology" (n. 15 above), 73–76.

[115] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 524, line 9; *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier, 177. Cf. Martin Grimmer, "Saxon Bishop and Celtic King: Interactions between Aldhelm of Wessex and Geraint of Dumnonia," *Heroic Age* 4 (2001): 1–9. See also Barbara Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (n. 7 above), 179–81, for prevailing attitudes between the Wessex and British churches in this region. Aldhelm moves, in his writings, in a world exclusively peopled by Christians (however heretical some of them may have been); the only pagans appear in Aldhelm's use of *passiones* in his *De virginitate*. See also Malcolm Todd, *The South West to AD 1000* (London, 1987), 270–73, for a succinct listing of the various battles between West Saxon and British in this area in the seventh century, though Wessex was not to "absorb" *Dumnonia* until the mid-ninth century.

received a grant at some point from King Geraint. In 705, it became the seat of Aldhelm's new diocese.[116]

In addition to thus chastising one king ecclesiastically, Aldhelm was also involved with another king in an initiative with far-reaching implications that were secular as well as ecclesiastical. In 704, King Ine grants freedom from all secular obligations and taxation to the churches and monasteries of his kingdom: "sine impedimento secularium rerum et absque tributo fiscalium negotiorum." The grant is made "cum consilio et decreto presulis nostri Aldhelmi." Surely, as we briefly suggested earlier, this is to be read as the secular counterpart of Aldhelm's strategy of ensuring independence from external ecclesiastical control for his monastic *familia*. Edwards has argued persuasively for the authenticity of this decree, aligning it with Nicholas Brooks's validation of the similar grant by King Wihtred of Kent in 699.[117] Curiously, Edwards takes a different tack in two other charters associated with Aldhelm. We have already referred to both. One is the grant by Berhtwald (of Mercia) to Aldhelm of lands at Somerford Keynes in 685; the other is King Æthilred of Mercia's grant of lands at Tetbury in 681. Berhtwald's charter contains a sentence exempting the land from all secular services: "ut omni servitute secularium potestatum portio terrae illius perpetualiter sit libera." Though this sentence "resembles" the like clauses in one of the extant versions of King Æthilred's grant ("in libertatem terrenarum servitutum perpetualiter"), Edwards argues that both are later interpolations, essentially on the grounds that "immunities were not introduced until the late eighth century in Wessex following a slightly earlier introduction in Mercia."[118] This argument would seem to contradict what Edwards has argued concerning King Ine's decree. It is likely that the originals of both Berhtwald's and Æthilred's grants were drafted at Malmesbury, and the logic of it would argue that Aldhelm's role in Ine's similar grant of exemption from secular services in 704 would be strengthened by prior experience

[116] Edwards, *Charters* (n. 35 above), 252–53; Barbara Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages*, 178; Katherine Barker, "The Early History of Sherborne," in *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. S. Pearce, BAR 102 (1982): 77–116; eadem, "Sherborne in Dorset: An Early Ecclesiastical Settlement and Its Estate," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 3 (1984): 1–33; and M. A. O'Donovan, ed., *Charters of Sherborne*, British Academy Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988), 87–88.

[117] Edwards, *Charters*, 107–14 (S245); new text edition in Edwards, "Two Documents" (n. 56 above), 15–16; and also at Kelly, *Malmesbury* (n. 40 above), 154, who agrees on the substance: "there is a valid contemporary context for the grant of general privileges to the West Saxon churches," also citing (156) Wihtred of Kent's grant in 699.

[118] Edwards, *Charters*, 93. Edwards (91–92) argues that the longer version of King Æthilred's grant, S73, is a later copy of S71 with interpolations, notably the exemption clause, essentially because a later copyist "would have chosen to omit" such validating clauses. However, it is S73 that contains the correct incarnational year; it may not have just been the dating that the copyist of S71 got wrong.

in a Mercian context. Such secular exemptions also clearly complement (indeed, they complete) Aldhelm's securing of ecclesiastical independence for his monasteries. Edwards notes the high level of Latinity of Ine's decree, in particular, that the "balancing of pairs of phrases [was a] feature of Aldhelm's prose style." It is particularly notable that Ine's grant balances, as well, secular freedom with religious obligation — Ine is freeing his minsters from secular obligations and fiscal tribute so that, thus freed to serve God and to observe monastic discipline, they may be worthy to pour out prayers on behalf of the prosperity of his kingdom: "ut . . . liberis mentibus Deo soli serviant, et monasticam cenobii disciplinam . . . ac pro statu et prosperitate regni nostri . . . preces fundere dignentur." Recognized as set apart from the secular world, West Saxon religious are to meet their obligations to their king by adhering to the discipline of their religious function, paying their dues in the otherworldly coin of their own minting. That the grant was explicitly made on the advice of Aldhelm suggests a preeminent position for him among Ine's ecclesiastical counsellors. Edwards suggests that it may, indeed, have been on Aldhelm's advice that Ine rectified the position of the Wessex church vis-à-vis Canterbury following upon Hæddi's death in 705.[119]

By the time of this decree by Ine, Aldhelm, like other senior clerics, had been extensively involved with the secular functions of various West Saxon kings.[120] He had witnessed charters of Kings Cenwalh, Centwine, Cædwalla, and Ine, involving grants to Glastonbury, Abingdon, Winchester, and Muchelney, as well as to his own monasteries. He witnessed a grant, in 692, of Nothelm, king of the South Saxons (both Ine and his father Coenred also witness the charter).[121] Aldhelm also had occasion to seek the restoration of lands apparently inadvertently alienated by Cædwalla. These would be the one hundred hides obtained in the exchange with Baldred that we noted above. In a surviving letter, Aldhelm requests the assistance of Wynberht, described by William of Malmesbury (who relates the affair of the exchange) as a "clericus regis" of both Cædwalla and Ine (he was later abbot of Nursling and the teacher, there, of Boniface).[122] Edwards suggests that Cædwalla may have alienated the estate following upon his conquests in the

[119] Edwards, *Charters*, 112 and 114; see discussion above, concerning the division into two of the West Saxon diocese.

[120] Aldhelm's involvement is considered to have extended to being a member of King Ine's *witan*; see for example Michael Lapidge, "*Beowulf*, Aldhelm, the *Liber Monstrorum* and Wessex," *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (n. 18 above), 275 n. 20 (274–76 provide a summary of Aldhelm's extensive contact with kings and nobles: "Aldhelm was an exceedingly active man of the world.")

[121] Edwards, *Charters*, 21, 30, 133, 204, and 292–94.

[122] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald (n. 3 above), 502–3; *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (n. 3 above), chaps. 207–11 (pp. 532–37).

region and that his restoration of it to Aldhelm was marked by his confirmation, in 688, of the exchange originally consented to by his predecessor Centwine.[123] We shall return to this.

Like Aldhelm, Wynberht was a witness to many royal charters. Another that he witnessed, conveying a grant to Aldhelm by Cædwalla, was that (which we have also already noted) of substantial lands either side of the wood named Kemble. The proem of this charter — in both the shorter version, S231, and the longer, S234 — echoes that of King Centwine's grant to Hæmgils, abbot of Glastonbury, in 682, in quoting 2 Cor. 4:18: "quae videntur temporalia sunt; et quae non videntur æterna sunt." In King Centwine's grant, the scribe is self-identified as Aldhelm: "Ego Aldhelm hanc scedulam scripsi."[124] Naming the scribe followed Frankish practice, perhaps introduced by Bishop Hlothhere (or his uncle, Bishop Agilbert).[125] In the longer version of the grant by Cædwalla, a phrase is added to the proem: "Nichil intulimus in hunc mundum: vero nec auferre quid possumus. Iccirco terrenis ac caducis eterna et mansura celestis infule corona comparanda est."[126] The contrasting of the transitory nature of earthly things with the permanence of heavenly things was a commonplace in the proems of West Saxon charters from this period[127] (a much extended meditation on this theme decorates the proem of Bishop Hlothhere's grant of Malmesbury to Aldhelm, while a succinct consideration introduces Aldhelm's testament).[128] The overt purpose of this pointed language was to bring home to these barbarian kings and notables that they owed their worldly success to the Christian God and, accordingly, they should use their wealth to "purchase" their places in heaven, God's kingdom. The first sentence of the addition to Cædwalla's proem is a Vetus Latina version of 1 Tim. 6:7, which is also found in Cyprian, Paulinus

[123] Edwards, *Charters*, 96–97 (S1170). Kelly (*Malmesbury*, 148–49) raises numerous objections to this interpretation, judging that the "details of the letter and the charter are not really compatible." Considering that she also judges the "formulation of [S1170 as] not intrinsically suspicious," her various objections seem, to me, to be more quizzical than convincing. Thomson (*Commentary* [n. 3 above], 265 and 267), though he refrains from the same level of detail, seems inclined to accept William of Malmesbury's (and Heather Edwards's) account that the charter and letter pertained to "Cædwalla's confirmation of Baldred's grant."

[124] Edwards, *Charters* (n. 35 above), 97 and 13 (S231 and S237).

[125] For this "Frankish custom," see for instance Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), 227–28.

[126] S234; text at Kelly, *Malmesbury*, 143.

[127] Edwards, *Charters*, 309.

[128] Aldhelm also concludes his *Epistola ad Acircium* with identical sentiments (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 204): "Quae est enim labentis mundi prosperitas aut fallentis vitae felicitas?"

of Nola, Pelagius, Ambrosiaster, and the Book of Armagh.[129] In addition to the proem of this grant by Cædwalla, this reading is also found in a grant by King Cenwalh to Glastonbury, in a grant by Bishop Hæddi also to Glastonbury, in King Æthilred's grant to Aldhelm, in Baldred's exchange with Aldhelm, and in a grant by King Cædwalla to Wilfrid.[130]

This latter grant has generally been considered a later forgery (it also shares with Cædwalla's grant at Kemble an *invocatio* — "In nomine salvatoris nostri Ihesu Christi" — that is much associated with Theodore's councils[131]). Nicholas Brooks has argued that this charter was a Canterbury forgery of the tenth century, concocted in collusion with Selsey (another forged charter, now in Chichester, was involved) to reclaim various estates for the two sees.[132] He seems to me to be half right. Whether the Chichester charter (which did serve to confirm eighty-seven hides for Selsey) is a forgery or not, the historical integrity of Cædwalla's grant to Wilfrid has not been demonstrably impugned.[133] Cædwalla was known to have made extensive grants to Wilfrid, following his killing of Wilfrid's earlier patron, King Æthilwalh of the South Saxons. Wilfrid also witnessed other of Cædwalla's grants, one being a grant in 688 of an estate at Farnham in Surrey to three laymen for the foundation of a monastery; Aldhelm also witnessed this charter.[134] Brooks also acknowledges that Canterbury's claim to these estates could well derive from an authentic transfer of them by Wilfrid to Theodore at the time of their reconciliation in 686 or 687 (an endorsement on the back of Cædwalla's charter has Wilfrid presenting the charter to Theodore). And, finally, the shared *legalia* of the two charters could more plausibly be explained as the tenth-century forger of the Chichester charter taking them from an authentic grant by Cædwalla (as W. H. Stevenson noted long ago, the invocation, proem, and anathema are all found in seventh- and eighth-

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[129] See J. Armitage Robinson, *Somerset Historical Essays* (London, 1921), 51–52; altogether, a notable confluence of rigorism, Pelagianism, Ireland, and Wessex.

[130] S227 (Cenwalh's); S1249 (Hæddi's); S71 and S73 (Æthilred's); S1170 (Baldred's); and S230 (Cædwalla's).

[131] W. H. Stevenson, "Trinoda Necessitas," *English Historical Review* 29 (1914): 702–3. "It is also found in the continental models on which the first surviving English diplomas were based; in particular, in the influential charter of Gregory the Great for his monastery of St Andrew in Rome, in Roman synodal decrees, and in the *Liber diurnus*"; see Lesley Abrams, "A Single-Sheet Facsimile" (n. 32 above), 113.

[132] Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (n. 4 above), 240–43. The Chichester charter is S232.

[133] Also for references to W. H. Stevenson's analysis in "Trinoda Necessitas," see my "Legal Terminology in Anglo-Saxon England: The *Trimoda Necessitas* Charter" (n. 86 above), 843–49.

[134] S235; Edwards, *Charters* (n. 35 above), 132–37. See also John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), 57 n. 181.

century grants).[135] In short, the charter would seem to stand condemned for its use, in King Cædwalla's subscription, of the phrase "trimoda necessitas" (the misreading "trinoda" is down to the antiquarian John Selden in 1610) — a phrase that is viewed as anachronistic (or, more precisely, prochronistic) in these last decades of the seventh century. But, as we have just noted in connection with King Ine's grant of exemption from secular services in 704, such arguments are, to say the least, questionable. I would argue that Brooks, like W. H. Stevenson before him, has fundamentally erred by not considering the role, in Cædwalla's charter, of Aldhelm,[136] who names himself in his subscription as the charter's author (just as he did in Centwine's grant to Glastonbury): "Ego Aldhelmus, scolasticus archiepiscopi Theodori, hanc cartulam dictitans . . . scribere iussi." Indeed, in addition to following the Frankish practice of naming himself as the author and in addition to the dire admonition of the proem, a third Aldhelmian feature of this charter of Cædwalla's is precisely its concern with exemptions from secular obligations. Here, we have Cædwalla granting the lands free except for bridge and fortification work and service in the *fyrd*: the "threefold obligation" ("trimoda necessitas") of all Christian people.[137] As in Aldhelm's letter to Wilfrid's

[135] W. H. Stevenson, "Trinoda Necessitas," 694–95; he also finds the witness list and the dating to be historically acceptable.

[136] S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of Selsey*, British Academy Anglo-Saxon Charters 6 (Oxford, 1998), 102–3, states that I "tried to rescue the charter in its entirety" in my 1982 article. I believe that it would be more accurate to say that I was attempting to cast doubt on the doubts, by focusing on the role of Aldhelm. Thus, while Kelly claims that the rhyming couplets appended to Aldhelm's lengthy and ornate subscription are "highly unlikely to be the work of Aldhelm, as argued by Dempsey" (though she does not say precisely why), I would point to the rhyming couplets Aldhelm inserted into his *De virginitate* (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 235), an octosyllabic poem that Andy Orchard (*The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* [n. 60 above], 19 n. 2) linked with the rhyming couplets in Cædwalla's charter as "poems most probably by Aldhelm." Similarly, while Kelly cites "the use of the rare verb *perstringo* in the immunity clause" (in the form "perstrinxi" in Cædwalla's subscription) as one of the anachronistic "tenth-century 'symptoms'" to be found in this charter, I would point to Aldhelm's use of this verb (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald [n. 3 above], 478: "perstrinximus") in a letter to his ordinary from the school at Canterbury (the authenticity of this letter, dated to 671, remains uncontested). Accordingly, and keeping in mind the separate acceptability (within the history and "diplomatic" of Aldhelm's time, that is) of all the various procedural and substantive elements of the charter, I suggested in my 1982 article, and will argue now, that this charter's core historical declarations (if I may use this term to designate the charter's invocation of purpose in its proem — that the grant is to Wilfrid — and its statements of intent in Cædwalla's and Aldhelm's subscriptions) are historically valid — that is, that they are the work of Aldhelm as he wrote them in the ninth decade of the seventh century. Beyond that, it may well be that the tenth-century copyist manipulated our preexisting text to serve the interests of Canterbury.

[137] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 510–12. Indeed, why would a forger go to such elaborate lengths as to concoct a subscription clause (for Cædwalla) defining the common bur-

abbots, we see *necessitas* used in the sense of "obligation," a usage that W. H. Stevenson believed derived from the Theodosian Code via the *Breviarium Alarici*,[138] a text that Aldhelm is projected to have used in his legal studies, undoubtedly in Roman vulgar law, with Theodore at Canterbury.[139]

There can be, sometimes amongst historians, a subconscious depreciation of the purposefulness of action by the men of these ancient and dark times and of the deliberateness with which they proceeded. In an age of endemic warfare, the needs of church and state were often set against each other: the church required security from the destruction brought by war; the state needed resources, in a time when virtually the sole source of certain wealth was landed. The balancing of these needs is not something that simply arose spontaneously. They must have discussed it, endlessly, high ecclesiastics and secular notables alike, both in their own conclaves and together in the councils of state (the *witan*).[140] The solution was that land, however granted or transacted, inalienably brought with it dues and burdens owed to the king but that church-land ("book-land") would be exempt from all except those inescapably vital to support of the kingdom in war. These were the three burdens of Cædwalla's subscription,[141] acknowledged by Aldhelm to be his text written in accordance with the commands of the king and notables as consented to in their councils ("prout regis maiorumque imperia . . . Anglorum atque coetibus, / Qui dona firment nutibus").[142] Too much must not be made of a church/state dichotomy. The leading men (and women) in both were drawn from the same class; there would have been little distinguishing the future abbot or bishop from the future thegn or ealdorman. And, in their exercise of their respective particular responsibilities, they all did service to the king and their kingdom, whether in its immediate survival in this world or as passage to the heavenly paradise: "ob amorem cœlestis pat-

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dens, as well as appending a rhythmical poem in genuine Aldhelmian style to Aldhelm's subscription, if all he needed were believable formulas? In telling contrast, the Chichester charter is short and sweet and utterly bereft of these typically Aldhelmian elaborations (text in S. E. Kelly, *Charters of Selsey*, 3–4).

[138] W. H. Stevenson, "Trinoda Necessitas," 691–92.

[139] My article, "Legal Terminology" (n. 86 above), 846.

[140] As summarily reflected by the regular reference in royal grants to the grant's having been petitioned ("rogatus") or consented to ("cum consensu") by leading men; cf. S71 and S73, S79, S230, S232, S236, S241, S243, S245, S246, and S248.

[141] In another charter (S242), which is also considered spurious, a grant by King Ine to Winchester cathedral and subscribed by Aldhelm, the burdens are given thus (text at BCS 102): "tribus exceptis expeditione pontis arcisve restauratione"; see Edwards, *Charters* (n. 35 above), 137–38.

[142] From Aldhelm's subscription, the last couplet is from the short rhythmical poem he appended; *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 512.

riae."[143] Just as we saw Aldhelm commissioned by a national synod to represent to a neighboring British kingdom the proprieties of Roman ecclesiology, so we can see him advising his king on the proprieties of the relationship of the religious establishment to the kingdom, whether counseling King Ine on the freedoms due to the church and its holdings or drafting the requisite definition for these freedoms. Aldhelm was a purposeful and inventive (not to say, devious) manipulator of patristic texts in support of his social theology of aggressive *virginitas*. We would expect him to be no less erudite and resourceful in the use he made of his legal training, under Archbishop Theodore, in support of both his king and his church.[144]

Aldhelm's friends were many, and not always compatible. Aldfrith and Wilfrid and Theodore and Egwin, Æthilred and Cædwalla, Geraint (perhaps), and Ine. As we noted above, Æthilred and Ine, kings of Mercia and of Wessex, together greeted him on his return from Rome as the "lumen Britanniae." His correspondence was far-flung: to King Aldfrith in Northumbria and to the abbots of Wilfrid, to the nuns of Barking in Essex, to Abbot Hadrian at Canterbury, to students at home and those coming from or going to Ireland, from Irishmen at home and on the continent.[145] Within the world of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, this is reminiscent of the late-Roman Christian network of literary communication of Jerome and Paulinus of Nola and Augustine. The cultivation of friendship and patronage through literary resources — letters and poems and panegyrics — intensified as barbarian control closed in on this cultured world, closing off traditional access through political office. The villa became not just a place of leisurely retreat but a self-contained self-supporting economic and cultural refuge.[146] In his letter to Wynberht seeking his aid in obtaining the royal favor of the resto-

[143] As Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3, 24 (ed. Colgrave and Mynors [n. 5 above], 292), puts it, in reference to the dedication by King Oswiu of his daughter Ælfflaed to consecrated virginity and his endowment of her monastery with land: "in quibus ablato studio militiae terrestris ad exercendam militiam caelestem supplicandumque pro pace gentis eius aeterna devotioni sedulae monachorum locus facultasque suppeteret."

[144] Surely, nameless forgers are not to be the only ones to be credited with linguistic inventiveness. Put simply, you could not find a more Aldhelmian phrase than "trimoda necessitas," considering the two words both individually and in combination. As noted in the text, Aldhelm consistently uses *necessitas* in the post-classical sense of "obligation," while *trimodus*, a post-classical coinage (see J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* [Leiden, 1976], 1045), is precisely the sort of quantifiable modifier Aldhelm was enamored of (cf. Erika von Erhardt-Siebold, *Die lateinischen Rätsel der Angelsachsen* [Heidelberg, 1925], 242).

[145] John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (n. 134 above), 99–100.

[146] John Percival, *The Roman Villa* (Berkeley, 1976), 166–82; and Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2005), 465–81.

ration of alienated estates,[147] Aldhelm explicitly notes, indicating his husbandry, that the land transferred to Malmesbury by the *patricius* Baldred (presumably S1170) was particularly valued for its fishing ("praecipue pro captura piscium apta"). At the beginning of this brief business letter, Aldhelm paraphrases Daniel 2:31–45, citing the cornerstone of the two testaments overwhelming the statue fabricated of four kinds of metals, which signified the four kingdoms of men. This is an apparent, at least not overly allusive, reference to the mutability of this world and its kingdoms. In his prose *De virginitate*, Aldhelm also cites this passage, noting there that the stone is said, in the Vulgate, to have been cut out "sine manibus" and arguing that this signifies "sine maritali complexu." In his exegesis of this passage in his *Chronicon*, Sulpicius Severus interprets this virginal stone as signifying Christ himself who would reduce the kingdoms of the earth to nothing.[148] Additionally, Ehwald noted that in devising in his *Epistola ad Acircium* the sobriquet *Acircius* for King Aldfrith of Northumbria (from the invocation, "Acircio aquilonalis imperii sceptra gubernanti"), Aldhelm may have gone to Daniel 11:15; this chapter treats of the king of the north — "rex aquilonis" — defeating the king of the south.[149] Aldhelm may have found the book of Daniel particularly apt reading for a religious seeking ways of dealing with kings.[150] In his own treatment of Daniel in his *De virginitate*, Aldhelm forcefully sets out that Daniel's ability to elucidate to kings the meaning of hidden things flowed from his virginity.[151]. This topos — indeed, belief — that the gift of prophecy necessitated the precondition of virginity was one that Aldhelm made much of.[152] In his *De virginitate*, Aldhelm explicitly credits to their virginal status the gift of prophecy not just of the Old Testament prophets Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Daniel, but also Joseph, John of Lycopolis, and Benedict.[153] In the case of Joseph

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[147] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 502–3; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren (n. 3 above), 170.

[148] Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* 2, 3, 3 (ed. Ghislaine de Senneville-Grave, SC 441 [Paris, 1999], 228–29); as Aldhelm knew Sulpicius Severus's Paschal *computus* (as well as his *Vita S. Martini*), he most likely knew his *Chronicon*.

[149] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 502 and 61 n. 1.

[150] In his direct address to King Aldfrith in the opening chapters of the *Epistola ad Acircium*, Aldhelm refers (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 69) to Daniel as "ab ipso tirocinio rudimentorum licet in medio barbarae gentis divinis cultibus mancipatus"; Bishop Hlothhere's charter refers (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 508) to Malmesbury as the place in which Aldhelm "ab ipso tirocinio rudimentorum liberalibus litterarum studiis eruditus."

[151] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 250–51.

[152] Cf. John Bugge, *Virginitas* (The Hague, 1975), 44–47; and Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (London, 1988), 66–67.

[153] In some cases, this quality is particularly emphatically accentuated by the language of the verse *De virginitate*; Elijah: *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 249–50 and 363–65 (partic-

as well as Daniel, their prophetic powers were exhibited in their abilities to decipher the dreams of kings. In his *De virginitate*, Aldhelm sought to direct the aggressive energies of his aristocratic society into religious dedication through his formulation of a social theology for this violent and newly Christianized society, a new paradigm of heroic behavior — the preservation of virginity — for both male and female.[154] In his intercourse with kings, he sought to stand as Daniel did, an interpreter in the new Christian dispensation of barbarian dreams of conquest, as a man of God who, sprung from Germanic royal kin, was now learned in the new mysteries and inspired to expound the means of the new sacral access to divine favor.[155]

Aldhelm was born into and lived throughout his life as an ecclesiastic in a Germanic society. At his birth, it was a pagan barbaric society; by his death, it was Christian. Yet the needs and preoccupations of his society remained unchanged: warlords and the loyalty of their men; loyalty and rewards. These concepts, determined by the necessary relationships of a barbaric society, constituted the intellectual world into which Aldhelm was born. Christian truths were received as applicable within this world, and the patristic works conveying these truths were so read. Aldhelm was also a traveler, both actually, in his own travel to Rome, and intellectually, through the presence of Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian. He knew, thus, the sophisticated world of high theology, this intellectualization of Christian teachings over centuries by civilized societies. Separately, I have traced out the conflictual tension — in his didactic exposition of extreme measures to preserve physical virginity — between the needs of his received cultural inheritance and the demands of his learned erudition.[156] Here, the projection by Aldhelm of heroic physical violence — including castration

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ularly lines 250–51); Elisha: ibid., 250 and 365 (particularly line 284); Jeremiah: ibid., 250 and 365–66 (particularly lines 301–6); Daniel: ibid., 250–51 and 366–68 (particularly lines 324–33); Joseph: ibid., 310–11 and 457; John of Lycopolis: ibid., 267–68 and 388–89 (particularly line 837); and Benedict: ibid., 268–69 and 389–90.

[154] See my article, "Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Social Theology" (n. 15 above), 58–80. Did Aldhelm so pursue this physically imperative vision that he ran afoul of a king, as Wilfrid had with King Ecgfrith, by urging a royal wife to enter the religious life? Cuthburg, a sister of King Ine and abbess of Wimborne and previously one of the nuns at Barking to whom Aldhelm addressed his *De virginitate*, had been married to King Aldfrith of Northumbria, abandoning this marriage to enter religious life. In his *Epistola ad Acircium*, Aldhelm puts forward a plea to Aldfrith that their friendship be resumed. The reason for its having lapsed is not given, but one of the reasons why Aldhelm dedicated this work to Aldfrith could have been as a peace offering (Aldfrith was, as well as a dispenser of royal favor, a noted scholar).

[155] Cf. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), 55–65.

[156] See my "Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Social Theology."

and suicide — as commendatory runs up against the Christian ethics prohibiting violation of the body. Yet, by positing this living of the angelic life on earth (via forceful preservation of physical virginity) as *heroic*, Aldhelm was nudging the balance of his society's evaluation of the benefits of Christianity from its Germanic preoccupation with this-worldly success towards appreciation of other-worldly gain (just as the proems of the charters drafted for the grants of kings and notables are at pains to argue).

What Aldhelm sought from Æthilred and Ine, upon his return from Rome with the papal bull of Sergius I, was *otium* for his monasteries. No longer the cultivated leisure time of the late antique villa, but the seclusion — the "otium clandistinae quietis" — of the monastery where the normative works of theology were written. To judge from his quotations and his *nominatim* references, Aldhelm was at home with the Christian poets of the late empire: Juvencus, Proba, Cyprianus Gallus, Paulinus of Nola, Prosper of Aquitaine, Alcimus Avitus, Caelius Sedulius, Arator.[157] Aldhelm shared, through this inherited literary discourse, the values and the attitudes of the late antique world, but as transmuted by the conditions of the barbarian successor kingdoms. Like all high ecclesiastics in barbarian societies, Aldhelm sought the patronage of kings and notables; like fellow scholars in such societies in the age of conversion he cultivated the self-protective virtue of *amicitia* through his poetry and his letters.[158] He sought *otium*, in the midst of an endemically violent world, in order to produce the works by which he would instruct his society in the new habits of Christianity. Aldhelm speaks of *otium*, not as Gregory I did of his administrative labors interfering with his contemplative life,[159] but of his desire for the scholarly leisure of a cultured man. Unlike Bede, Aldhelm did not live in a society and in a time in which Christianity had become so traditionally the norm that the minds of scholars were tuned yet again to the long orthodox concern,[160] inherited from primitive Christianity as embedded in the gospels and epistles, with the second coming of the Lord.[161] Unlike Bede, Aldhelm portrays no more than per-

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[157] Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (n. 60 above), 161–221.

[158] Cf. Simon Coates, "Venantius Fortunatus and the Image of Episcopal Authority in Late Antique and Early Merovingian Gaul" (n. 25 above), 1110–11; and Ralph W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul* (Austin, TX, 1993), 13–16, who notes that the conviction that one could seek favors on the basis of friendship (as Aldhelm did of King Aldfrith) lay at the very core of *amicitia*.

[159] Cf. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2, 1 (ed. Colgrave and Mynors [n. 5 above], 124–25); and Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2003), 199–201. It was Augustine who restored to the Christian usage of *otium* the classical sense of leisure devoted to productive efforts; see Jean Leclercq, *Otia Monastica* (Rome, 1963), 37–40.

[160] Cf. N. J. Higham, *The Convert Kings* (Manchester, 1997), 15–16.

[161] Cf. Robert Markus, "Living within Sight of the End," *Time in the Medieval World*, ed. Chris Humphrey and W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, 2001), 23–34.

functory obeisance to this perduring notion of the world collapsing, of the hastening of the end.[162] The end of the world was certain, but it was not imminent;[163] and, for Aldhelm, it was life that was transitory. A certainty of the imminent end of the world itself could encourage a near-fatalistic inclination on the part of kings and notables to abandon all worldly responsibilities in favor of immediately efficacious concentration on personal salvation (like Cædwalla's departure "ad limina beatorum apostolorum"), while emphasizing, instead, the transitoriness of the individual's own life would feed directly into kings' continuing to do the kingly job of pursuing wealth in order to invest some of their holdings in a return in this future after-life of the Christian. Aldhelm seeks, then, in a society in transition from heathen to Christian, to provide for his people an approach to their new beliefs by which they could cope with this business of living. In so many ways, a portrait of Aldhelm as scholar would limn the features familiar to us from Augustine: the shared delight expressed in "puns, rhymes and riddles," the working belief that the "sheer difficulty" of a piece of writing made it the more valuable, the certainty in the centeredness of grammar to the explication of hidden meanings, the trained advocate's "need" for controversy, and the disputatious thriving on self-justification — and even an appreciation for the literary qualities of work from the pen of Pelagius.[164] But Aldhelm did not live in the eternally settled and organized world of Roman civiliza-

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[162] Aldhelm's only such references seem formulaic rather than normative, and are to be found in the proems of two charters: S1166 ("Fortuna fallentis seculi procax") and S1245 ("iamque appropinquante eiusdem [mundi] termino," with a reference to Christ's prophecies of the end-time in Luke 21). The first charter is uniformly held to be a forgery (see for instance Kelly, *Malmesbury* [n. 40 above], 132–33); the phrase in the latter reproduces a phrase from Gregory I's letter to King Æthelbert, which also leads into a paraphrase of Luke 21 (cf. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1, 32 [ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 112]). Perhaps Aldhelm read Gregory's letters while resident in Canterbury; certainly, having the assertion fresh in his memory could account for its replication in Bishop Hlothhere's grant (S1245) dated 675. More typical of Aldhelm's outlook is to be found in the grant (S236) of Baldred (of Mercia) to Hæmgils, abbot of Glastonbury, which Aldhelm subscribes as its drafter: "quia incertus humanae vitae status evidenter agnoscitur."

[163] This is the specific message of the acrostic Sibylline text *De die iudicii*, which Aldhelm cites and which he may have been the translator of, under the tutelage of Archbishop Theodore; see Patrizia Lendinara, "The *Versus Sibyllae de die iudicii* in Anglo-Saxon England," *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Kathryn Powell and Donald Scragg (Cambridge, 2003), 85–101, especially 95–96; and *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, trans. Lapidge and Rosier (n. 3 above), 16. Aldhelm also acknowledges that the world would end after the seventh age of the reign of Christ (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald [n. 3 above], 70; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. Lapidge and Herren [n. 3 above], 41, 188 n. 5, and 189 n. 20). Cf. Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours* (Cambridge, 2001), 79–83.

[164] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo,* new edition (Berkeley, 2000), 10, 257, 261, 272, and 342.

tion, in cities of paved streets and vaulting dressed-stone buildings. He lived in a barbaric kingdom. We must, rather, imagine him at work in a relatively cramped space like that provided by the still-extant buildings of St. Kevin at Glendalough[165] or what archaeology has revealed of the contemporary buildings at Whitby,[166] however well appointed, even luxuriously ornamented his churches may have been. An extended passage in Sergius's bull speaks of the purposes to which Aldhelm's monasteries are to be dedicated.[167] Uniformly, these concern matters of monastic discipline and routine, of charity, of giving examples of religious dedication. Aldhelm's monks are to be assiduous in their prayers and in praise of God, adhering to abstinence and to chastity and to charity, showing themselves as lovers of obedience and of the humility of Christ, keeping true to the Apostolic faith by adherence to the rules of the holy fathers, succouring pilgrims and giving due veneration to those presiding over God's churches, fleeing secular cares and concerns, loving poverty and temperance, cultivating intercourse with God through psalms and hymns and frequent prayers, being heedful of their own salvation and trusting in God's care, keeping themselves immaculate not only from bodily contamination but also from harmful words and thoughts so that the chastity and sobriety of their bodies and minds alike might be evident in the sight of God.[168] In telling contrast, in his own reflections on the life of consecrated religious — notably in his opening address to Abbess Hildelith and her nuns in the prose *De virginitate* and in the concluding sections of both the prose and verse versions of this treatise as well as in the *Epistola ad Acircum* — Aldhelm speaks of the dedicated cultivation of the life of the mind. His focus is rigorously on the life of scholarship. Be like the bee, he instructs Hildelith, in your dedication to gleaning droplets of learning as you roam widely through the flowering meadows of Scripture

[165] See Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology* (London, 2000), 132–33.

[166] Sir Charles Peers and C. A. Ralegh Radford, "The Saxon Monastery at Whitby," *Archaeologia* 89 (1943): 27–88; Philip Rahtz, "The Building Plan of the Anglo-Saxon Monastery of Whitby Abbey," *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. David M. Wilson (London, 1976), 459–62 (with site drawing on 224–25); and Rosemary Cramp, "A Reconsideration of the Monastic Site of Whitby," *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. R. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh, 1993), 64–73: here, the buildings of restricted dimensions were stone-walled with thatched roofs and (perhaps) with internal dividers of wattle-and-daub and timber.

[167] Edwards (*Charters* [n. 35 above], 102–5), though finding, as we have noted, authenticating parallels — both in the formulas of the *Liber diurnus* and in other Anglo-Saxon monastic privileges of the time — for the various substantive elements contained in Sergius's bull, is uncertain of the origin of this exhortatory passage.

[168] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 513: "ut castitas atque sobrietas corporis simul et spiritus vestri ante Dei oculos luceat."

and of the works of scholars.[169] Do not let your trained mind, he warns King Aldfrith (and through him all those who would read his works), grow rusty through disuse.[170] More yet remains, he cautions the nuns of Barking, to be learned of the triumphs of virginity by those who scorn idleness and pursue learning.[171] And so, in his cramped monastic study, Aldhelm would have labored, in particular, over the turning into hexameter verse of his masterpiece of social theology, the *De virginitate*, as he had promised Abbess Hildelith and her nuns he would do. Much he could leave out — the difficult expository passages could well stand in prose — but he could add much as well. Fully a quarter of this verse version either introduces material not in the prose version or expands on ideas treated briefly there.[172] And he could indulge, to the full, his predilections for fabulist elements, bringing for instance Bel and the dragon into his story of Daniel and turning his prosaic account of the vices and virtues in the prose version into a full-scale psychodrama. *Virginitas*, in verse, becomes an altogether more aggressive virtue. All this would have occasioned much labor. We must appreciate Aldhelm's regret (of which we made special note as we began this article) that, in the face of so many and such great ecclesiastical and secular burdens, there remained so little time free for withdrawal into the measured and leisured cultivation of scholarship: "Otium namque clandistinae quietis et remotio secretae solitudinis largam scribendi materiam dictantibus affatim conferunt."[173] In concluding his verse *De virginitate*, Aldhelm speaks of his library as a small vineyard offering him golden grapes and laments that even the prolonged daylight hours of hot July and August do not give him time enough to press all those grapes of chastity into the must of his verses — we can imagine him doing so longingly.[174]

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[169] Ibid., 231–32.

[170] Ibid., 203.

[171] Ibid., 465.

[172] See Gernot Wieland, "*Geminus Stilus*: Studies in Anglo-Latin Hagiography," *Insular Latin Studies*, ed. Michael W. Herren (Toronto, 1981), 115–18.

[173] *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, 320.

[174] Ibid., 466, lines 2781–93. The relatively small library of even so learned an Anglo-Saxon scholar as Aldhelm would have been commensurate with his cramped working-space; Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), 60–62, estimates Aldhelm's library at ca. 120 books (Bede's at ca. 230–50) and visualizes them stored not on shelves in a book-press but in wooden chests on the floor (an image drawn largely from Aldhelm's own *enigma* 89, "Arca libraria").