

7-1998

The Poetic Art of Aldhelm

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Publication Info

Published in *Speculum*, Volume 73, Issue 3, 1998, pages 877-879.

Gwara, Scott. (1998). The Poetic Art of Aldhelm. *Speculum*, 73 (3), 877-879.

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thought will have to continue for the foreseeable future to check and cross-reference both editions. On the broader issue of editorial diligence, one must note that the original pagination of Offler's typescript has frequently been allowed to stand uncorrected. There are dozens of improperly numbered lines in the textual commentaries, and two important manuscript sources (Vat. Lat. 4008 and 4009) have been repeatedly misprinted as "48" and "49." One hopes all these (and other) errata will be listed as an addition to the British Academy's planned index to the *Opera politica* (p. v).

Offler's dating of CE, Br, and DIPP has not been entirely successful. The problems surrounding the exact time frame for the emergence of Br and DIPP demand lengthy analysis and cannot be fully examined in this review. Suffice it to say that the reference to a living Pope Benedict XII in Br (p. 136), usually accepted as a reliable terminus ante quem, is in fact nothing of the sort, since Ockham was perfectly aware of the technique of "as if" dating, which can be traced (as a borrowing from Cicero) within his own *Dialogus*. On this understanding Br could have been (and probably was) finalized as late as 1345–46, and not in 1340–41 as Offler surmised (pp. 86–90). Similarly, DIPP need not necessarily have been composed prior to October 1347 (Offler's view on p. 266). There are serious indicators, such as Ockham's largely nonaggressive attitude toward a Charles IV seen as leading the stronger German party, his concern about personal safety, or his use of "fuisset" at p. 318, line 6² (all difficult to imagine in the context of the 1347 Bavarian military successes or during Lewis's lifetime), that suggest a slightly later period, though not by much since Ockham died on 9 April 1348. In the matter of CE, which Offler now dates "between April and June 1337" (p. 7), one must respectfully disagree. There frankly can be no doubt that the work mentioned on page 77 (cf. the parallel in *Dialogus* 3.2.2.9) is indeed Ockham's *Contra Benedictum*, as Offler once correctly believed (p. 6 and n. 18). Since CE was written after *Contra Benedictum*, a more likely date for its appearance would thus be 1339 or 1340.

None of this significantly derogates from the overall excellence of Offler's final contribution to Ockham studies. Like Moses (though in his case voluntarily) he did not reach the promised land. But his shadow surely looms gigantic upon all contemporary students of Ockham's social and political ideas, and his hermeneutic accomplishments will, in their preponderant majority, stand the tests of both time and dialectic.

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ANDY ORCHARD, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*. (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 8.) Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. xiii, 314; tables. \$59.95.

Andy Orchard has written a penetrating, eloquent, and original volume on Aldhelm of Malmesbury's Latin poetry. In his lifetime (ca. 640–710) Aldhelm earned a reputation both for his abstruse, "hermeneutic" Latin prose and for his hexameter verse, all shamelessly plundered by a host of less accomplished imitators. To his great credit, Orchard has traced Aldhelm's literary debts and highlighted his innovations in octosyllables and hexameter verse. In many cases Aldhelm's most remarkable departures in versification seem to have been influenced by Old English.

After briefly introducing Aldhelm and his oeuvre, Orchard launches into a discussion of Anglo-Latin octosyllables, focusing on the 212 verses in Aldhelm's *Carmen rhythmicum*. Aldhelmian octosyllables are characterized by proparoxytone stress (on the antepenult, e.g., "Quæ cātĕrvátĭm cælíttŭs," line 53), rhythmic couplings shared by verse pairs, and abundant alliteration (as in the example just cited). Aldhelm probably composed these verses after learning quantitative composition, for they often incorporate "reverse cadences": *mundi machina* (line 17) = *māchĭnā mŭndī*, etc. An intriguing discussion of the develop-

ment of the octosyllable from quantitative iambic dimeter ends with the surprising, but unsupported, assertion that vernacular Irish models could have influenced this verse form. Certainly the most exciting moment in Orchard's chapter on the octosyllable occurs in the study of alliteration, where Aldhelm's contemporary Æthilwald takes first prize for creativity. Double alliteration in Æthilwald's octosyllabic verse, Orchard concludes, was probably derived from Old English practice and modeled after Aldhelm. Hence, words beginning in *f* or *v*, *st*, and vowels (or *h* + vowel) alliterate according to vernacular, not Latin, conventions. Why not, then, write such verses in a long line, like this example from Æthilwald 4.25–26?

Statura, valde stabilis statu et forma agilis . . .

Orchard's investigation of Aldhelm's hexameter composition is no less compelling than his work on the octosyllable. He studies four writings: Aldhelm's treatises *De pedum regulis* and *De metris*, the *Carmen de virginitate* (*Cdv*, 2,904 lines), and the *Aenigmata* compendium. All along Orchard has taken pains to compare contemporary or antecedent works in order to isolate Aldhelm's idiosyncrasies, and here we find tables of statistical material derived from Vergil, Ovid, Statius, Corippus, Juvenius, Sedulius, Arator, and others. Following a study of prosody, including Aldhelm's use of *communes*, elision, hiatus, and rhyme, comes an astute examination of metrical patterning. Because the fifth and sixth feet of the hexameter were generally fixed, poets theoretically deployed only sixteen patterns of dactyls (D) and spondees (S) in the first four feet. Aldhelm favored the patterns DSSS, DDSS, SDSS, and SSSS to such a degree that his verse can fairly be called quantitatively monotonous.

Orchard elaborates on Michael Lapidge's discovery (*Comparative Literature* [1979]) that Aldhelm systematically treated the final cadence of the line as a detachable unit. Aldhelm's verses disclose a fondness for B1 and C2 caesuras, between which Aldhelm regularly lodges a single word, almost always a verb. Similar lexical localizations can be found everywhere in Aldhelm's hexameters: *aurea* almost always occurs at the beginning of a verse; *deus* almost invariably as the second word following a monosyllable. Orchard convincingly attributes this phenomenon and others like it to an oral-formulaic mode of composition arguably similar to that practiced by an Anglo-Saxon *scop*. (Aldhelm was traditionally alleged to have been an oral poet.) While such a deduction engenders multifarious problems, the analyses underlying Orchard's conclusions are bedrock. The Old English parallels, by contrast, are rather slender.

A substantial portion of Orchard's volume takes up the problem of "remembered reading," for the most part cadences and verbal reminiscences that seem to come from sources familiar to Aldhelm. (Max Manitius, Rudolf Ehwald, and Neil Wright began much of this source work, as acknowledged.) The method here is to find word groups in Aldhelm's corpus that have parallels in the presumed sources, such as Prudentius's *Contra Symmachum* (S):

Splendentemque die medio non cernere solem (S 1.577)
Et redivivus item *splendentem cernere solem* (*Cdv* 1418)

Although impressive, this methodology affirms rather blandly that Aldhelm had actually read some of the authors he cites, that he did not read others firsthand, and that there is "doubtful or insufficient evidence" proving his acquaintance with Lucretius, Pseudo-Vergil (*Culex*), Persius (*Satires*), Statius (*Achilleid*), etc. Indeed, if we accept all of the allusions in appendix 4.1 (by no means the author's intention), 546 verses of *Cdv* show parallel diction with more than fifty works. No one could fathom the possibility, even for a polymath like Aldhelm.

Orchard's book concludes with a study (reprinted from the *Journal of Medieval Latin*)

showing how tenth-century readers zealously digested Aldhelm's poetry as part of a revival of Latin learning. Aldhelm's star, alas, was eclipsed by Norman fashions and has only risen again in this century with Ehwald's monumental *Aldhelmi Opera*.

Predictably, some points will deserve elaboration in a future study, first and foremost the issue of Latin pronunciation in the seventh century. Orchard presumes that Anglo-Latin pronunciation mirrored classical pronunciation, a circumstance not to be taken for granted. The article by Thomas Pyles (*PMLA* 1943) does not appear in the bibliography, and manuscript orthography receives no treatment in the text. Here Orchard might have found room for some speculative remarks on Old English and Latin (including Vulgar Latin) pronunciation or entertained the artifice of poetic pronunciation, the case with Old English "Anglian" coloring.

A significant finding of Orchard's study concerns the influence of vernacular oral-formulaic style on octosyllabic and hexameter verse. Does this practice mean, then, that Aldhelm recited Latin hexameters the way he might have sung Old English poetry? And is octosyllabic verse, like Henry of Huntingdon's experiments (see A. G. Rigg, *Journal of Medieval Latin* [1991]), a conscious imitation of Old English? Consequently, can we speak of abstruse Latin in the same terms as Old English poetic diction? Did Aldhelm bridge oral and literate cultures in the oral-formulaic approach to his work? If so, why is Aldhelm's prose treatise on virginity (*Pdv*) also laced with formulas: *Pdv* 230.10–11 = *Aenigmata* 33.7; *Pdv* 233.9 = *Pdv* 231.12; *Pdv* 231.14 = *Pdv* 237.6, etc. Finally, I would like to suggest that studies on second-language acquisition might account for some of the bilingual features documented in Aldhelm's poetry, especially regarding diction. C. Myers-Scotton's "matrix language turnover" hypothesis (see *Endangered Languages* [1998]) might usefully explain some of the syntactic oddities as well.

Perhaps the most notable accomplishment of this fine book has been to convey Aldhelm's staggering intellectual energy. Born of pagan parents and dubiously trained in a Malmesbury copse, Aldhelm inaugurated Anglo-Saxon belles-lettres. In another age he might have authored a rival *Hamlet*, published the *Patrologia Latina*, or split the atom.

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ANDY ORCHARD, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the "Beowulf"-Manuscript*. Woodbridge, Suffolk; and Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell and Brewer, 1995. Pp. viii, 352; tables. \$71.

This study takes its impetus from Kenneth Sisam's well-known characterization of the Nowell Codex, the part of British Library MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv that includes the *Life of St. Christopher*, the *Wonders of the East*, the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*, as a *Liber de diversis monstris, anglice*. Like Sisam, Orchard makes quick work of the superficial connections of *St. Christopher* and *Judith* in the scheme and is left with an altogether compelling collection of monsters in the three remaining Old English texts. According to Orchard, "two themes, perhaps best typified by the recurring images of Babylon and Alexander the Great in the *Wonders of the East*, connect the texts, together with analogous material such as the *Liber monstorum* and the Icelandic *Grettis saga* . . . : pride and prodigies" (p. 27). In the ensuing five chapters—"Psychology and Physicality: The Monsters of *Beowulf*," "The Kin of Cain," "The *Liber monstorum*," "The Alexander-Legend in Anglo-Saxon England," and "Grettir and Grendel Again"—Orchard advances his thesis that *Beowulf*, as a monster slayer, becomes a monster himself and is ultimately damned by his overweening pride. I can most economically illustrate the overall thesis by discussing Orchard's extensive treatment of the *Wonders of the East*, the text he says best typifies the themes of pride and prodigies.