

Epistle of Adalhard the Seneschal to the abbot of Reichenau (Walafrid Strabo)

(late 839)

[ed. Karl Zeumer, MGH, *Formulae Merowingici et Karolini aevi* (Hannover, 1882–86), 374, n° 21.]

Translated by

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On this letter, see Courtney M. Booker, “*Imitator daemonum dicor*: Adalhard the Seneschal, Mistranslations, and Misrepresentations,” *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik* 33 (2001): 114–26.

Wishing everlasting salvation in the Savior for that dearest abbot, [and] for all his companions. I do not suppose that you are unaware, that, when the Lord Emperor [Louis] was recently staying at that [royal] domain [in Bodmann], standing not far from you, it was pleasing for me to come to your monastery, being incited [to do so] by the renown of your devotion. I came to that place and, when I beheld your most

5 kind piety, it seemed good that I, however much soiled by crimes, should entrust myself to the prayers of you and yours. And being full of charity, as it were, both you and yours accepted this [request] with the kindest affection. Although I am [presently] unable to repay you a very worthy recompense for this favor [namely, the prayers], nevertheless I shall not hesitate to return however many great devotions and thanks as I can in the future. [But for] now I send to you thirty silver solidi, and bowed I entreat, and

10 humble I beg, and obeisant I request, that our memory may remain in your most skillful prayer, and I, however much I shall be able, will honor immaculate friendship with you. If our faithful men and horses were not wearied because of the length of the journey, which we travelled in this year, going to and returning from Rome, in no way might I have neglected to speak with you and hold a shared [moment of]

peace with my fathers, who live under your paternal care. I [can only] pray that, lest it be a burden to dip
15 [your] pen [in ink] and, once it has been dyed, to drag it on to the 'calf-and-sheep-like field' [namely,
parchment], you will write back about their health and wholesome well-being, [as well as] yours. Peace be
with you!

He, who cherishes his God in [this] life,
[will gain?] the greatest rewards of the coming eternal kingdom.

20 I beg, recommend me in your prayers to the 'Thunderer'

So that I will gain with you a place in the kingdom of Heaven

Hail, dear Lord.