

# Alcuin Exercise

## Assignment

Edit (sentences from) the below excerpt according to the three witnesses here printed.

### **Witness O: Oxbridge, Imaginary Library MS 320, fol. 451v.**

(1) To the most beloved lord King Ethelred and all his chief men Alcuin the humble deacon sends greeting.

(2) Mindful of your most sweet love, O men my brothers and fathers, also esteemed in Christ the Lord; (3) desiring the divine mercy to conserve for us in long-lasting prosperity our land, which it once with its grace conferred on us with free generosity; (4) I do not cease to warn you very often, my dearest fellow-soldiers, (5) either with words, when present, if God should grant it, or by letters when absent, by the inspiration of the divine spirit, (6) and by frequent iteration to pour forth to your ears, as we are citizens of the same country, (7) the things known to belong to the welfare of an earthly kingdom and to the beatitude of an eternal kingdom; (8) that the things often heard may be implanted in your minds for your good. (9) For what is love in a friend, if it is silent on matters profitable to the friend? (10) To what does a man owe fidelity, if not to his fatherland? (11) To whom does he owe prosperity, if not to its citizens? (12) We are fellow-citizens by a two-fold relationship: sons of one city in Christ, that is, of Mother Church, and natives of one country. (13) Thus let not your kindness shrink from accepting benignly what my devotion is eager to offer for the welfare of our country. (14) Do not think that I impute faults to you; but understand that I wish to avert penalties.

### **Witness L: Londinium, Made-Up Cathedral Library MS 2, pp. 12–13.**

(1) To the beloved King Ethelred and all his chief men Alcuin the humble dean sends greeting.

(2) In remembrance of your most sweet love, my brothers and fathers, also esteemed in Christ the Lord; (3) hoping for the divine mercy to preserve for us in long-lasting prosperity our land, which it once with its grace conferred on us with noble generosity; (4) I do not stop to admonish you very often, my dear fellow-soldiers, (5) neither with words, when present, if God should grant it, nor by letters when absent, by the inspiration of the divine spirit, (6) and by frequent iteration to pour out to your ears, as we are citizens of one and the same county, (7) the things known to belong to the prosperity of an earthly

kingdom and to the blessedness of an eternal kingdom; (8) that the matters often heard may be implanted in your minds for good. (9) For what is friendship, if it passes over matters profitable to one's friend? (10) To whom does a man owe fidelity, if not to his own fatherland? (11) To whom does he owe service, if not to his fellow-citizens? (12) We are fellows by a two-fold relationship: sons of one city in Christ, that is, of the Church, and citizens of one country. (13) Thus let not your generosity shrink from accepting graciously what my devotion is eager to offer for the prosperity of our country. (14) Do not think that I suspect faults on your part; but understand that I wish to avert worse.

### **Witness A: Alexandria, Great Library MS perg. 2270, fols. 32v–33r.**

(1) To the most loved lord King Ethelred and all his chief counsellors Alcuin the humble deacon sends greeting.

(2) Mindful of your most devout love, O men my brothers and fathers, also respected in Christ the Lord; (3) desiring the divine grace to conserve for us in perpetual prosperity our land, which it once with its bounty conferred on us with free generosity; (4) I do not cease to urge you very frequently, my dearest fellow-soldiers, (5) either with words, when near, if God should grant it, or by letters when far, by the inspiration of the divine spirit, (6) and by frequent repetition to pour forth to your ears, as we are citizens of the same kingdom, (7) the things known to pertain to the welfare of an earthly kingdom and to the blessedness of an eternal kingdom; (8) that things often heard may be implanted in your minds for good. (9) For what is charity in a friend, if it is silent on matters important to the friend? (10) To whom does a man owe fidelity, if not to his own fatherland? (11) To whom does he owe his soul, if not to his fellow-citizens? (12) We are fellow-citizens by a two-fold relationship: children of one city in Christ, that is, of the Church, and natives of one country. (13) Thus let not your kindness shrink from accepting humbly what my devotion is eager to offer for the prosperity of our country. (14) Do not think that I suspect faults on your part; but understand that I wish to avert penalties.

## **XML Standard**

Your edition should be in TEI-compliant XML based on our template for critical editions, with a critical apparatus environment using parallel segmentation wherever variation occurs. Enclose the transcription in one or more numbered <p> environments. Give the full manuscript call numbers and the folio numbers of all three witnesses in the TEI header, and provide an appropriate document title.

## **References**

Translation (minus variants) taken from Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents c. 500–1042* (London 1955), 775–776.