

## Bishop Altfred of Hildesheim's Report, summer 862

*This is a complete English translation of the 1965 edition of a transcription preserved by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century archivist Nikolaus Kindlinger but made in 1641 in Cologne from a now lost medieval (Carolingian?) manuscript which included a copy of Altfred's letter – a reminder of how complex the transmission of early medieval sources can be.*

*Already in 1641, the medieval Cologne manuscript was damaged and in places difficult to read. The transcriber, the Jesuit Johannes Veldes, could not decipher a few sentences, and left gaps represented by ellipses (...). In two cases, the editor, the archivist Joseph Prinz, supplied what the missing words might have been; we have preserved his plausible but speculative suggestions between angle brackets <>.*

*The early modern manuscript that preserves Veldes's transcription is in the Nordrhein-Westfalen Landesarchiv in Münster, Kindlingersche Sammlung vol. 40, and has been digitised: [http://www.landearchiv-nrw.de/digitalisate/Abt\\_Westfalen/Msc\\_II/00040/MSC\\_II\\_00040\\_235.jpg](http://www.landearchiv-nrw.de/digitalisate/Abt_Westfalen/Msc_II/00040/MSC_II_00040_235.jpg)*

*Edition: Joseph Prinz, 'Ein unbekanntes Aktenstück zum Ehe Streit König Lothars II', Deutsches Archiv 21 (1965), 249-63, available [online](#). Note that the transcription manuscript has been refoiled since Prinz's edition, and the transcription is now fols. 210-211.*

*Translation by Hayley Harrison and Charles West, 2019*

To the most glorious and most fervent ruler (*gubernator*) of the Christian religion Louis [the German] the most excellent king, Bishop Altfred [of Hildesheim] and his colleagues... your supplicant servants, send faithful service and devoted prayers.

We have anxiously striven to complete the embassy which your Eminence had enjoined upon our humble selves, according to the grasp of our intelligence. For hastening to Asselt, we met Lord Lothar [II] there.

When we announced to him all the true and intimate benevolences of your Clemency, he gave thanks for these with most genuine affection (*intimo affectu*), and instructed that his thanks in every way be reported back. He promised that, after God and his saints, to no-one else would he be more obedient (*obediturum*) in all things, and that he would serve according to his strength as long as he lived. Finally, he sent two of his men, that is Count Nanthar and Berand his chaplain, with us to your brother [King Charles the Bald].

When at last we found him [Charles] in the palace of Compiègne, we were all led at the same time to his presence. We set out to him everything you had instructed, as far as the small measure of our ability permitted, in the presence of Lothar's envoys (*missi*). Charles most graciously heard everything, and he replied about all the matters with kindly affection, with the exception of the case of Lothar.

Concerning this, he said that he could do or promise nothing before he personally had the chance to speak with you, in Lothar's absence. And this he wanted and asked for most pressing, in order that it might happen as quickly as possible. When we in turn replied to

him that, due to the immediate time of your departure, this could in no way happen at the moment, he replied that he would meet your Eminence wherever was convenient.

Finally, when he had accepted nothing calmly (*nihil placide*) from the embassy of Lothar's envoys, he said to them '... <If your lord, like a Christian king, wishes to live with his legal wife> in accordance with the practices of the Christian religion and to hear ...<the commands of the apostolic lord> and to save himself, I shall gladly repay him with good deeds (*beneficia*) of loyalty and love, as is right. But if not, I refuse to have dealings with the sins of others, as the Apostle orders'. And after these words he allowed them to leave, saying to us that we should wait there, so that he might be able to indicate to your Excellency more intimately and privately (*secretius*) what he wanted.

So, as if at your feet, we therefore thank your Majesty for all things, that Charles hosted us intimately and with benevolence far beyond our merits, on account of your love and honour, supporting us with provisions and bestowing us with money.

And so, to sum everything up in a few words, whatever your Benevolence had entrusted to Charles, whether about the unique love of your brotherhood or about mutual business (*procuratio*) for the salvation of your souls, or about your kingdom, which ought to be united in Christ, guarding it unanimously and watching over the advancement of the Christian religion, or even about provision for your nephews and relatives which should not be overlooked, and indeed concerning many other things which your Clemency had entrusted to him – Charles declared (*contestatus est*) in his own truth that he was willing to undertake and willingly to keep watch over everything freely; with the exception that he decreed the case of Lothar had to be discussed with you. This your Prudence will be able to see in this other record (*scedula*), which... etc.