

ÆLRED - [Ailred; Aëlred; Aethelred; Ethelred]

Monk/priest-abbot-bishop, writer, historian, protagonist in the medieval debate on the use of organs in church.

* c1110 Hexham, Northumberland (GB:)

1147- Cistercian Abbot of Riévaux [Riedval]

1166 Bishop of Riévaux

†1167 Jan 12 Riévaux Abbey, Yorkshire (GB:)

later canonised

A was an influential monastic in medieval England, Scotland, and France, a vehement opponent to the liturgical use of the organ:

“Let us now turn to those who, under a pretense of religion, conceal the care they lavish on pleasures ... I ask you why, when statues and images are being removed, why, I ask you, do we see such great number of organs and sets of bells in church? Tell me, pray, what use is this terrifying blast from bellows, better suited to imitate thunder than the sweetness of the human voice? ... While all this is going on the people, standing trembling and speechless, are dumbfounded by the throb of bellows, the jingling of little bells, the harmonies made by the organ-pipes ... it is as though the crowd had assembled, not in a place of worship, but in a theater; not to pray, but to witness a spectacle.”
(from Prynne *Histriomastix* ch.xx).