



S T E P H E N J . H A R R I S

Bede and Gregory's Allusive Angles

THE VENERABLE BEDE, monk of the twin monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow and doctor of the Catholic Church, was known throughout the Middle Ages primarily for his Scriptural commentary. In 731, he produced the single most influential history of England, the *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*HE*), our best written source on seventh-century England. Classed as history, the *HE* is today embedded in a generic context which, however helpful, commits us to selective methods of interpretation, ostensibly proper to historical works. Attending chiefly to causal or factual issues in the *HE* can keep us from considering the literary or symbolic measure of this seemingly nonfictional narrative. Bede assessed this measure as a *vera lex historiae*, a true law of history, by which facts are ultimately at the service of (and sometimes changed by) spiritual truth.¹ Bede's approach to the interpretation (and production) of narrative generally indicates that his texts included, in their stylized evocation of spiritual truth, an important figurative sense. Indeed, Bede's interpretative methods suggest that learned readers of his *HE* expected his historical narrative both to engage a symbolic language and to reproduce allusively the traditional discourse of Christian faith.

The *HE* was composed in the context of Bede's Scriptural commentary.² Scripture provided Bede with the paradigmatic medieval historical narrative, and the Catholic commentary tradition offered Bede a way of understanding the role of history in the scheme of salvation. Although the past comprises events and persons and texts, Bede also understood the past to be indicative of a divine order—rational, numbered, and sometimes symbolic.³ A king's name, the number of vessels carried to a city, the height of a wall, the mention of a cloak—all offer themselves in a narrative as historical facts and as possibly significant of larger spiritual truths. More important, perhaps, Bede wrote at great length and with deep conviction about the role of priests and monks as spiritual teachers; and his historical work, equally with his commentaries, aimed at extending the franchise of his faith through teaching and scholarship. The possible coincidence of Bede's exegetical method and his curatorial view

of historical narrative may be at work in the *HE*, a work intended ultimately to configure the *gens Anglorum*⁴ symbolically as God's new chosen people (although salvation is extended by Bede to some co-religionists).

Bede famously said in his *Preface* to the *HE* that he writes “ad imitandum bonum auditor sollicitus instigatur” (“to urge the solicitous listener into imitating the good”).⁵ His explicit aim is curatorial, “generalis curam”—from the Latin *cura*, care, devotion, or attention; those who teach or write are to some degree curates, taking pastoral care of a community. Though we may mine the *HE* for a factual history of early Britain, its author was foremost a priest, and its chief function was the demonstration of a *vera lex historiae*.⁶ To those unfamiliar with the exegetical method, or whose experience of it has been overwhelmed by its wholesale application to late medieval literature by D. W. Robertson, history may seem an ordered collection of facts, insignificant of spiritual meaning.⁷ Bede's theological elaborations have struck more contemporary secular readers as sometimes fantastical, but they define Bede's method and what we may presume to be his expectations of his own readers.⁸ The Church father Origen had written in his *Against Celsus*, “if anyone has the capacity, let him understand that in what assumes the form of history, and which contains some things that are literally done, yet it conveys a deeper meaning. . . .”⁹ Augustine of Hippo, perhaps the most influential doctor of the Church, defines history as *sive divinitus sive humanitus gesta*, deeds effected by human or divine agency, and, like Origen, as revelatory of the divine plan.¹⁰ Bede, following Origen and Augustine, writes in his commentary on the book of Ezra that certain spiritual implications of history are clear to the learned or skilled (*doctus*) reader and we must take care (*curabimus*) to elaborate them for the less learned.¹¹ Whether there is actually a spiritual meaning to medieval historical narrative or not, one cannot ignore the probability that these narratives were generally written so as to imply a spiritual meaning.

That Bede expects much of his learned readers is illustrated in his version of the famous story of when Pope Gregory the Great sees Angles for the first time. The Angles held Gregory in particularly high esteem, and traced their conversion to his missionary efforts in 597 A.D., even though Roman Britain had seen Christianity hundreds of years earlier.¹² Bede retells the story in *HE* II, i, as culmination of a longer obituary of Gregory (see Appendix). Current in Anglian oral tradition, the story was reputedly expressive of Gregory's *tam sedulam* (“earnest solicitude”) for the salvation of the *gens Anglorum*, whom Bede calls *nostrae gentis* (“of our race”).¹³ Bede's own racial identity as a Christian Angle is at stake in this origination story. Bede had recently written a commentary on Ezra, which describes the important relation between race (the Jewish people) and salvation (the Jewish faith), so one can be reasonably sure that Bede is alert to the salience of race in salvation history—salvation is understood by early medieval Christians to be given to a community.¹⁴ The story,

as Bede tells it, has Gregory in a Roman market when he sees two boys (*pueros*) for sale. He asks if they are heathens, and sighs on hearing they are, commenting on the disparity between their outward beauty and their inward error.¹⁵ When he is told they are called Angles, he says, "Good . . . they have the faces of angels, and such men should be fellow-heirs of the angels in Heaven."¹⁶ There are a number of things to notice in Bede's careful choice of terms throughout the story; in this instance, Gregory called the Angles *homines*, men, where earlier they were called *pueros*, boys. Gregory does not make men of boys, but widens his frame of reference in this moment of missionary zeal to include all Angles, thus implying his desire for the salvation of the entire Anglian race. This is not suggested in the earlier Whitby version of the story (see Appendix), which notes that the Angles may have been either boys or youths, neither term equivalent to Bede's *homines*, meaning both men and the human race. Bede's description of the boys as slaves or chattel implies, again unlike the Whitby life, that Gregory is delivering the Angles from bondage. These larger implications, though, are rarely pursued.

Bede's story has been read literally for well over five hundred years. In 1551, John Bale used it to impugn Gregory with its implicit flirtatiousness.¹⁷ Bale made the not uncommon slur that unmarried Catholic clergy like Gregory, who looks to be lusting after the boys, had always been either "sodomites or lechers."¹⁸ If it has not been read as a moment of sexual slippage, the passage has been read as a language game, as a series of playful puns.¹⁹ But Bede tells us quite clearly that this passage illustrates Gregory's sedulousness. We might want to take Bede at his word, and begin with the assumption that Gregory is not insincerely playful with either meaning or innuendo. The libidinous implications are more recent, and possibly one effect of post-medieval cultural shifts. Protestant anti-Catholicism and critical primitivism in their more extreme forms may imagine a naïve and base clergy, and perhaps therefore fail to engage the knowledge assumed of learned Anglo-Saxon readers. Ancillary to a titillating reading may be the strong influence of the ninth-century Old English version of the story, which appeared as a result of King Alfred's efforts at translating important Latin books into English.²⁰ This version is the one most familiar to students of Old English literature, since it appeared in most Old English grammars and readers. As students and scholars translate the Old English, they rarely engage the Latin tradition within which Bede's story was first shaped, its allusions set, and its terms chosen.

The boys or men are called *venustus*, handsome or beautiful; it is a term which in Latin connotes grace, charm, proportion, and harmony. Classical use of *venustus* is sometimes markedly sexual, but centuries later, it seems to generalize and to become roughly synonymous with *pulcher*.²¹ In fact, physical beauty was often conceived of as indicative of something spiritual. We see Alcuin of York, Charlemagne's celebrated court scholar, using *venustus* to describe St. Willibrord, an Anglo-Saxon cleric sent in 690 to convert the

Frisians.²² Bede's choice of terms here is important, since *venustus* appears only once in all of Latin Scripture: in Genesis 29:17 it describes Leah's sister Rachel, Jacob's favorite, and mother to Joseph, patriarch of the tribes of Israel. As a beautiful point of origin, she therefore stands in genealogical relation to Israel much as the Anglian boys do to the *ecclesia anglorum*.²³ In his Homilies on the Gospels, Bede explains that Leah and Rachel signify the two lives which one may have in Christ: the temporal in which we labor, and the eternal in which we are charmed or drawn (the verb used is *delectare*) by the contemplation of God.²⁴ In this scheme, one begins uncertainly, laboring in faith, unable like Leah to see clearly (her eyes are compared to those of an animal, and thus her sight is physical, almost bestial).²⁵ But, as Bede explains in his commentary on the Pentateuch, Rachel represents a potential knowledge of God's beauty, as in the adjective *pulcher*, for which *venustus* is a vehicle.²⁶ Alcuin, too, explains that beauty can lead to a right contemplation of God: beauty in men as in women, who are then *venustusa* or *pulcherra*, is a vehicle for the contemplation of God.²⁷ Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Germans, writes in a letter to his disciple Lull that the quality described by *venustus* is even a kind of divine wisdom.²⁸ Divinity is often implicit in the ecclesiastical and Bedan use of the term. Bede relates that when Whitby's Abbess Hild dies, a *pulchraque rerum concordia*, a more beautiful harmony of events takes place (IV, xxiii). *Pulcher* refers to a kind of intelligible beauty which does not deny the sensuous, but exists as physical beauty's *telos*, its proper goal or perfected state.²⁹ Bede tells in the *HE* of a Mercian man who had a vision of two beautiful young men (*duo pulcherrimi iuvenes*), one of whom carried a thoroughly beautiful (*perpulcher*) white book, the book of good deeds. Here the corporal and the literary collaborate in an image of perfected beauty, notably of two young, *pulchri* men who, unlike Gregory's *venusti* Angles, have attained to the Book. Bede notes that the beautiful Angles led Gregory to contemplate the distinction between a physical beauty significant of God and an interior darkness equated with an absence of God. This is further implied, but more deeply set into a frame of Christian discourse, with the term *venustus*.

The boys are, according to Bertram Colgrave's suspect translation, of "fair complexion," *candidus corporis*. *Corpus* is a body or sensible matter, and only by association skin or complexion. And *candidus* is a dazzling white—used also in the Whitby version.³⁰ In Acts 10, an angel is described as *candidus*. Also *candidus* is the bridegroom in Canticles 5:5, and so is the Son of Man in Revelation 1:14. In the *HE* (V, xii), a Northumbrian man risen from the dead describes the "white-robed spirits" of Heaven as *spirituum candidatorum*. (*Candidus* is intriguingly the name of Gregory the Great's nuncio in Gaul.) Most important, Christ ascends to Heaven as *candidus*: "And his raiment became shining, *exceeding white as snow*" (KJV 9:2). If one were to accept Colgrave's translation, one would have to allow that when Christ ascended into

Heaven, His complexion cleared up. These Anglian boys, Bede says through the term *candidus*, shine like holy angels. Holiness is sometimes portrayed as luminescent, and God's truth, according to Augustine, also shines.³¹ Bede presumably chose the adjective *candidus* to emphasize the Anglian boys' potential salvation, or that of their race. The text promises through this term to fulfill the promise of their angelic candidacy.

Neither do the boys have, as Colgrave suggestively translates it, "lovely hair," but *capillorum quoque forma egregia*. The *forma* of the hair refers in one respect to its style, typically among early Germanic tribes a physical sign of their tribal affiliation. It is *egregia*, outstanding, or perhaps unusual or unique.³² Caesar had noted in the middle of the first century B.C. how the tribes of Kent wore their hair, *capilloque promisco*.³³ This is not lovely hair, but a foreign hairstyle. Furthermore, *egregia* denotes something remarkable or splendid. The term probably indicates a hairstyle worn only by Anglian nobility. But in another respect, there are Scriptural connotations to the description. *Pulcher* and *capillus*, beauty and hair, are famously associated in the Canticle of Canticles, a book on which Bede made a commentary not long before writing the *HE*. The bridegroom says of the bride in Canticles 4:1 that her eyes are like doves, *columbae*³⁴, and that "*capilli tui sicut greges caprarum quæ ascenderunt de monte Galaad*" ("your hair is like a herd of goats which ascends the mount of Gilead"). Bede, in his commentary on the passage, gives this image a spiritual significance, noting especially the act of ascent and comparing it to an achievement of purity. In the next verse, her teeth are compared to "*greges tonsarum*" ("a flock of shorn ewes"). The proximity of *greges* to *capillus* in both Canticles, and perhaps homophonically in the *HE* episode, is mildly suggestive, especially given Bede's important involvement with the commentary tradition of Canticles.

Apponius' *In Canticum canticorum* describes plainly the received interpretation of these images: "*In oculis, ut dictum est, duces populi christiani intellegentur*" ("By 'eyes,' it is said, is to be understood the leaders of the Christian people").³⁵ One might recall here that Leah's eyes were compared to a beast's, and the import of this received interpretation lends weight to the primacy of Rachel (and by association with her description as *venusta*, the Angles) as indicative of Christian leadership. The text continues, "*in capillis vero religiosorum divitum persona monstratur*" ("indeed, through hair is indicated a person of religious riches"). Apponius, in his commentary on Canticles, writes that the movement of the herd up the mountain is significant of the movement from a physical or carnal sense to a spiritual one, much like Jacob's move from Leah to Rachel. "*Capilli,*" he writes, "*ecclesiae esse meruerunt*" ("By hairs churches are indicated").³⁶ The same movement is described by Bede, and Bede also speaks about the ascending movement away from sin and temporality. For Bede, as for Apponius, hair signifies Christian churches, in turn comprising all believers. The complexity of allusion in Bede's description of the

beautiful men with noble hair involves ecclesiastical leadership, a movement towards God, and the natural predilection of all Angles for Christianity.

Bede's allusions are made in the context of an early medieval theology of grace and predestination.³⁷ This theology is at play in the discourse that governs Gregory's puns, and directs Bede's language as he tries to imply that even in this Roman marketplace, the Angles are clearly predestined to become God's chosen people. Gregory says explicitly that the external beauty of the Angles is not in harmony with their internal beauty. That internal beauty, according to both Augustine and Gregory, is given by grace. It is through grace, as Augustine explains, not merit, that God predestines his elect. Grace moves men out of sin and confusion, that is, out of anger (*ira*).³⁸ Augustine also says in his commentary on the book of Judges that, as an angel of God had told the Hebrew people, one must attend to the will of God to escape the wrath (*ira*) of God.³⁹ Accordingly, Gregory says that the Angles will move out of anger or wrath, *de ira*, in his Latin pun on the name of the Angle's home, Deira (a province in the northeast of England just south of Bede's home at Jarrow). The process of conversion requires not only a movement of the soul out of sin, but also a verbal confession of faith; thus, the Angles are shown to be already prepared in their own language to sing "alleluia." This is Gregory's third pun on the name of the king Ælle.⁴⁰ Bede reports that Gregory notes in his commentary on Job, "Behold, the languages/tongues of Britain . . . begin to sing the praises of the divine with the Hebrew Alleluia."⁴¹ To Bede, just as the physical form of the Angles shows them prepared for Christianity, so does their language—even in their pagan state, the Angles have unwittingly been praying to God. Perhaps to emphasize this association, Bede adds independently of the Whitby version that this praise is sung to God the Creator, the one person of the Christian trinity responsible for the form of all created things. According to Gregory, form itself (like that of the beautiful Angles) declares its ultimate submission to God.⁴² Bede is employing at almost every moment the allusive language of tribal salvation.

Tribal salvation is essential to Bede, writing as he is about the church of *nostrae gentis*. The elect, according to Bede's commentary on Ezra 6:14–15, comprise both angels and men. Paul's letter to the Colossians 1:12, alluded to by Gregory in both the Bedan and Whitby version, tells us that the faithful are promised a place in Heaven among the angels.⁴³ In the numerical perfection of divine creation, the elect will replace the fallen angels. Bede points this out in his commentary on Tobias: "Having been led to the heavenly homeland, humanity's [elect] will be welcomed by God, . . . and also by the angels whose number they will complete."⁴⁴ On Ezra 1:7–8, Bede comments that the prince's vases are counted in order to signify that the Lord knows "*numerus electorum suorum*" ("the number of His elect"). Gregory's so-called pun tells

Bede's readers that the Pope earnestly sought to bring Christianity to the worthy, foreign race of Angles in order to transform them into the elect of God, into a portion of the beautiful angelic multitude. In their graceful appearance and in their language, the story implies, the Angles show they are already predisposed to receiving salvation. Bede has weighed each word carefully, and meticulously built this scene, as might be expected of a priest and one of the most revered of Christian commentators, on a nexus of allusions to Scripture.

The Old English translation of Bede's Latin, made over 150 years later probably by a member of King Alfred's circle, appears to maintain (and thus presumably to confirm) the allegorical significance of the Latin. There are intriguing differences, though, and primary among them is the Old English version's changed emphasis on race. The Old English introduces merchants from Britain ("cypemen of Brytene") who bring the slave boys to Rome. Both Bede and the Whitby version report that the boys were there, but neither mentions sixth-century Britain. Bede alone mentions merchants, but not their British origins. This poses a slightly thorny problem for the Old English version, since traditionally, the Anglo-Saxons are thought to have wrested control of the island from the indigenous Celtic Britons in the mid-fifth century. If the merchants were displaced Britons, second-class subjects of Anglo-Saxon kings, how did they come by Anglian or Anglo-Saxon ("Ongle") slaves? If the merchants were Saxons or Mercians or Goths, does the Old English term "Ongles" imply their shared exclusion from an Anglian/Angelic salvation? The narrator of the Old English story avoids the issue of race and says that "heo of Breotone ealonde brohte wære" ("they were brought from the island of Britain"). He collapses all races (*gentes* or *þeodan*) current in ninth-century Britain into a single people, apparently many or some of whom exhibit similar physical characteristics: "ond þæs ealondes bigengan swelcre onsyne men wæron" ("and of this island's inhabitants were men of such form").⁴⁵ The Old English version thus avoids the racial designation "Briton," and thereby excises the Celts from this originary English narrative.

An interest in race is also evident in the Old English request by Gregory to hear "of hwelcon londe oðþe of hwylcre þeode" ("of which land or of which tribe") the boys were brought. This replicates Bede's Latin almost exactly, but is nevertheless relatively unusual. A statement of inquiry into geographical origins is atypical in Anglo-Saxon texts. A heathen judge asks Bede's Alban, a Celt and the British proto-martyr, "Cuius . . . familiæ vel generis es?" ("What is your family or race?" I,vii.30)—the Old English version of this episode omits the question entirely. The emphasis here is on kinship, not geography. Beowulf, on his arrival in Geatland, is asked by the shore guard, "Nu ic eower sceal/frumcyn witan" ("Now I must know your ancestry," ll. 251b–252a).⁴⁶ Beowulf is commonly named "bearn Ecgþeowes" ("son of Ecgþeow"). Characters tend to be introduced into Old English poems by their ancestry, rarely by

their place of birth. It is their nobility, not their homeland, that gives them social worth. Consider *Andreas*, a long Old English poetic life of St. Andrew in the Vercelli Book, which introduces the apostles as “þeodnes þegnas” (“thanes of the lord,” 3a), Germanic heroes associated with a high king⁴⁷; Widsith, a traveling poet who tells of his ancestry (4a–5b), and for whom tribes, not countries, define a community; and St. Margaret, whose sanctity is tested in one version of her *passio* by a demon whose lineage she demands to know.⁴⁸ Since a nobleman’s holdings could be in a number of different kingdoms, association with the family will have taken primacy over association with its sometimes scattered territory. A possible exception comes in the eleventh-century poem *The Battle of Maldon*, where Ælfwine is “bearn Ælfrices” (l. 209b), although he notes his kin is from Mercia.⁴⁹ In short, the introduction of “londe” into Gregory’s question is marked by its relative infrequency in such situations, and indicates that a broad geographic identity can meaningfully mask ethnic differences.

With respect to the Latin terms under consideration, *venustus* is translated in the Old English by “fæger.” In Old English, the term “fæger” generally means the same thing as beautiful. As Ælfric of Eynsham, the prolific tenth-century Anglo-Saxon homilist and teacher, clearly notes in his glossary, “*pulcher homo fæger mann.*”⁵⁰ While “fæger” can mean proper, righteous, honest, and pleasing to the eye, it carries much the same connotations in monastic writing as *pulcher*. Aldhelm, an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon bishop and scholar, in his prose *De virginitate*, uses the adjective *pulcherrime* which is glossed in Old English as “fægestre.” Intriguingly, *venustate* is later glossed in that text with the same Old English term, “fægerneſse,” perhaps suggesting in this instance a collapse of distinction between sorts of beauty.⁵¹ The mid-eleventh-century *Liber scintillarum* of Defensor, a monk of Ligugé, reads, “*Christus non in corporis sed in anime pulchritudine delectatur illam ergo et tu dilige in qua delectatur deus*”; this is glossed in Old English, “*crist na on lichaman ac on sawle fægernysse gegladað þa eornostlice eac þu lufa on þæra gegladað god*” (“Christ allures with beauty not of the body but of the soul so that you may with earnestness love each one who is drawn to God”).⁵² Note the use of *delectare*, which Bede used in his homily on Matthew in direct relation to *pulcher*, perhaps modeled on Augustine’s *Confessions* (II, vi)—beauty draws one to God. Defensor continues in his extended definition of *pulcher* to attribute to Gregory the notion that heavenly beauty can be confounded by earthly beauty.⁵³ Perhaps to warn of such confusion, and to alert learned Anglo-Saxons to the symbolic function of beauty, an Old English prognostication reads, “*Si videris faciem tuam pulchram gaudium significat,*” glossed, “*gif þu gesihst ansine þine fægere blisse getacnaþ*” (“If you see beauty in your own form, this signifies grace/joy”).⁵⁴ Again and commonly, physical beauty enjoys a symbolic and allusive function in these Anglo-Saxon texts.

Candidus, a shining white, is glossed in Old English simply as “hwite,” or white. Sometimes one finds the term glossed as “scynende,” shining.⁵⁵ Heaven, angels, and divine light are often described in Latin texts as brilliant or shining white; these associations also pertain to the Old English term “hwite.” Perhaps foretelling the King James “exceeding white as snow,” an Old English antiphon gloss renders *candidus* as “þurhhwit,” thoroughly white.⁵⁶ In the Old English poetic version of Genesis, Satan is described before his fall as shining white: “Þa spræc se ofermoda cyning, þa wæs engla scynost, hwitost on heofne” (“Then spoke the insolent king, who was most shining of the angels, whitest in Heaven,” *Genesis B*, l. 338).⁵⁷ The light of Heaven, too, is described as shining white (l. 614), as are angels (l. 349). The face of Moses, according to Ælfric, “scean swa swa sunne and his gewæda scinon on snawes hwitnysse” (“shone like the sun, and his clothing shone with the whiteness of snow”).⁵⁸ Again, in a homily Ælfric wrote for the second Sunday of Lent, he renders Isaiah 1:18 into Old English, “Þis sæde drihten, and gif eowre synna wæron wolcnreade ær ðan, hi beoð scinende on snawes hwitnysse” (“Thus saith the Lord, ‘And if your sins were whelk-red [scarlet] before then, they shall become shining with the whiteness of snow’”).⁵⁹ Whiteness is symbolically a quality of holiness, of spirituality, and of purity. Its attribution to the Anglian boys in both the Latin and Old English carries with it these familiar connotations.

Bede’s *capillorum egregia* is translated in the Alfredian Old English as “æðellice feax.” “Æðellice” literally means noble, but is commonly broadened to encompass things or persons of a superlative quality. The minster at Wearmouth is described as “æpele,” for example.⁶⁰ A Durham *Hymnal* typically glosses *egregius* with “æðele,” but uses this same Old English term for *inclitus*, *gloriosus*, and *nobilis*.⁶¹ “Feax” is the hair of the head, sometimes the Old English gloss for *coma*, Latin simply for a lock of hair or an animal’s mane.⁶² It is important to note that hairstyle was sometimes a marker of class or *gens*, as among the Merovingians.⁶³ The Burgundian Law Codes, compiled by King Gundobad in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, speak to the shame or disgrace of having one’s hair cut off.⁶⁴ Like the Burgundians, Kings Ine and Alfred, both of Wessex, fined freedmen if one grabbed another violently by the hair.⁶⁵ A good deal is said in the *HE* about tonsure, the monastic cut of the hair. Bede includes a version of a letter of Abbot Ceolfrith to the Pictish King Nechtan, sent after 706 (*HE*, V, xxi), in which the cut of the hair plays a major role.⁶⁶ In short, “æðellice feaxe” speaks to an involved and complex cultural tradition of hairstyles among nobles and among races, far more complicated than “lovely hair” implies. Like “fæger” and “hwite,” the noble hair of the boys indicates a level of cultural, social, and spiritual significance to the story beyond the literal and beyond the libidinous.

Bede presumably wrote his history in a library whose shelves were stacked with Augustine, Jerome, Origen, Gregory, and others. His *HE* was written to

fit into those shelves, to respond to their order, and to take up or to modify their metaphors and their semantic systems. Stories such as that of Gregory in the marketplace are written in language resonant with Scripture and commentary. If we are to reconstruct how communities—tribes, nations, provinces, churches—were understood by Bede, we must first consider his response to early medieval techniques of reading and writing. The exegetical method and the importance of recurrent symbols in historical narratives point to a way of thinking about a historical community like the *gens Anglorum* not only as the result of a shared compendium of stories, but more importantly, as a consequence of a common manner of interpreting old books.

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Appendix: Gregory and the Anglian Slaves

1. From the anonymous monk of Whitby, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge University Press, 1968); 90–91; dated by Colgrave to 704 × 714 A.D; translation by Colgrave:

Quod omnino non est tegendum silentio, quam spiritaliter ad Deum quomodoque cordis incomparabili speculo oculorum nostram porovidendo propagavit ad Deum conversionem. Est igitur narratio fidelium, ante predictum eius pontificatum, Roman venisse quidam de nostra natione forma et crinibus candidati albis. Quos cum audisset venisse, iam dilexit vidisse eosque alme [albe] mentis intuitu sibi adscitos, recenti specie inconsueta suspensus et, quod maximum est, Deo intus admonente, cuius gentis fuissent, inquisivit. Quos quidam pulchros fuisse pueros dicunt et quidam vero crispus iuvenes et decoros. Cumque responderent, “Anguli dicuntur, ille de quibus sumus,” ille dixit, “Angeli Dei.” Deinde dixit, “Rex gentis illius, quomodo nominatur?” Et dixerunt, “Aelli.” Et ille ait, “Alleluia. Laus enim Dei esse debet illic.” Tribus quoque illius nomen de qua erant proprie requisivit. Et dixerunt, “Deire.” Et ille dixit, “De ira Dei confugientes ad fidem.”

(So we must not pass over in silence how, through the Spirit of God and with the incomparable discernment of his inward eye, he foresaw and made provision for our conversion to God. There is a story told by the faithful that, before he became Pope, there came to Rome certain people of our nation, fair-skinned and light-haired. When he heard of their arrival he was eager to see them; being prompted by a fortunate intuition, being puzzled by their new and unusual appearance, and, above all, being inspired by God, he received them and asked what race they belonged to. (Now some say they were beautiful boys, while others say that they were curly-haired, handsome youths.) They answered, “The people we belong to are called Angles.” “Angels of God,” he replied. Then he asked further, “What is the name of the king of that people?” They said, “Ælli,” whereupon he said, “Alleluia, God’s praise must be

heard there.” Then he asked the name of their own tribe, to which they answered “Deire,” and he replied, “They shall flee from the wrath of God to the faith.”)

2. From Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds. and trans., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 132–35; dated to 731 A.D.; translation by Colgrave:

Nec silentio praetereunda opinio, quae de beato Gregorio traditione maiorum ad nos usque perlata est, qua videlicet ex causa admonitus tam sedulam erga salutem nostrae gentis curam gesserit. Dicunt quia die quadam, cum aduenientibus nuper mercatoribus multa venalia in forum fuissent conlata, multi ad emendum confluxissent, et ipsum Gregorium inter alios aduenisse, ac uidisse inter alia pueros uenales positos candidi corporis ac uenusti uultus, capillorum quoque forma egregia. Quos cum aspiceret, interrogauit, ut aiunt, de qua regione uel terra essent adlati; dictumque est quia de Britannia insula, cuius incolae talis essent aspectus. Rursus interrogauit utrum idem insulani Christiani, an pagani adhuc erroribus essent implicati. Dictum est quod essent pagani. At ille, intimo ex corde longa trahens suspiria, “Heu, pro dolor!” inquit, “quod tam lucidi uultus homines tenebrarum auctor possidet, tantaque gratia frontispicii mentem ab interna gratia uacuum gestat!” Rursus ergo interrogauit, quod esset uocabulum gentis illius. Responsum est quod Angli uocarentur. At ille: “Bene” inquit; “nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales angelorum in caelis decet esse coheredes. Quod habet nomen ipsa prouincia, de qua isti sunt adlati?” Responsum est quia Deiri uocarentur idem prouinciales. At ille “Bene” inquit “Deiri, de ira eruti et ad misericordiam Christi uocati. Rex prouinciae illius quomodo appellatur?” Responsum est quod Aelle diceretur. At ille adludens ad nomen ait: “Alleluia, laudem Dei Creatoris illis in partibus oportet cantari.”

(We must not fail to relate the story about St. Gregory which has come down to us as a tradition of our forefathers. It explains the reason why he showed such earnest solicitude for the salvation of our race. It is said that one day, soon after some merchants had arrived in Rome, a quantity of merchandise was exposed for sale in the market place. Crowds came to buy and Gregory too amongst them. As well as other merchandise he saw some boys put up for sale, with fair complexions, handsome faces, and lovely hair. On seeing them he asked, so it is said, from what region or land they had been brought. He was told that they came from the island of Britain, whose inhabitants were like that in appearance. He asked them again whether those islanders were Christians or still entangled in the errors of heathenism. He was told that they were heathen. Then with a deep-drawn sigh he said, “Alas that the author of darkness should have men so bright of face in his grip, and that minds devoid of inward grace should bear so graceful an outward form.” Again he asked the name of the race. He was told that they were called *Angli*. “Good,” he said,

“they have the face of angels, and such men should be fellow-heirs of the angels in heaven.” “What is the name,” he asked, “of the kingdom from which they have been brought?” He was told that the men of the kingdom were called *Deiri*. “*Deiri*,” he replied, “*De ira!* Good! Snatched from the wrath of Christ and called to his mercy. And what is the name of the king of that land?” He was told that it was *Ælle*; and playing on the name, he said, “Alleluia! The praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts.”

3. Thomas Miller, ed. and trans., *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [Early English Text Society, o.s. 95. London: Oxford University Press, 1890 (reprint, 1997)], 96–97; late ninth century; translation by Miller:

Nis us þonne se hlisa to foreswigenne, þe be þam eadigan Gregorie þurh yldra manna segene to us becom, for hwilcum intingan he monad wære, þæt he swa geornfulle gymenne dyde ymb þa hælo ure þeode. Secgeað hi, þæt sume dæge þider niwan come cypemen of Brytene ⁊ monig cepe þing on ceapstowe brohte, ⁊ eac monige cwomon to bigenne þa ðing. Þa gelomp þætte Gregorius between odre eac þider cwom, ⁊ þa geseah between oðer þing cype cnehtas þær gesette: wæron hwites lichoman ⁊ fægres ondwlitan men ⁊ æðellice gefeaxe. Ða he ða heo geseah ⁊ beheold, þa frægn he, of hwelcon londe oðþe of hwylcre þeode hy brohte wæron. Sægde him mon, þæt heo of Breotone ealonde brohte wæron, ond þæs ealondes bigengan swelcre onsyne men wæron. Eft he frægn, hwæðer þa ilcan londleode cristne wæron þe hi þa gen in hæðennesses gedwolan lifden. Cwæð him mon to ⁊ sægde, þæt heo hæðne wæron; ⁊ he ða of innewardre heortan swiðe sworette ⁊ þus cwæ: Wala wa: þæt is sarlic, þætte swa fæger feorh ⁊ swa leohtes ondwlitan men scyle agan ⁊ besittan þeostra aldor.

Eft he frægn, hwæt seo þeod nemned wære, þe heo of cwomon. Ondswarode him mon þæt heo Ongle nemde wæron. Cwæð he: Wel þæt swa mæg: forðon heo ænlisce onsyne habbað, ⁊ eac swylce gedafonað, þæt heo engla æfenerfewardas in heofonum sy. Þa gyt he furðor frægn ⁊ cwæð: Hwæt hatte seo mægð, þe þa cnehtas hider of lædde wæron. Þa ondswarede him mon ⁊ cwæð, þæt heo Dere nemde wæron. Cwæð he: Wel þæt is cweden Dere, *de ira eruti*; heo sculon of Godes yrrre beon abrogdene, ⁊ to Cristes mildheortnesse gecegde. Ða gyt he ahsode hwæt heora cyning haten wære: ⁊ him mon ondswarede ⁊ cwæð, þætte he Æll hatan wære. Ond þa plegode he mid his wordum to þæm noman ⁊ cwæð: Alleluia, þæt gedafenað, þætte Godes lof usses scyppendes in þæm dælum sungeð sy.

(We cannot pass over in silence the report which has come to us by the tradition of older men about the blessed Gregory, as to the reason why he was warned to take such zealous care for the salvation of our people. They say, that one day merchants came there fresh from Britain, and brought to market many

wares, and many also came to buy those things. Then it happened that Gregory among others also came there, and saw among other objects for sale, youths placed there: they were men of fair complexion and handsome appearance with beautiful hair. When he saw them there and regarded them, he asked from what land or race they were brought, and was told that they were brought from the island of Britain, and that the inhabitants of this island had this appearance. Again he asked, whether the people in that country were Christians or still living in heathen error. They replied and told him that they were still heathen; and he then sighed deeply from the bottom of his heart and thus spoke, "Alas the pity! It is grievous that such fair forms and men of such bright faces should be owned and possessed by the prince of darkness."

Again he asked what the people was called from which they came; they answered that they were called English. He said, "That may well be; for their look is angelical, and also it is fit that they should be joint-heirs with the angels in heaven." Then he further asked and said, "What is the people called, from which the youths were brought here?" They answered him and said that they were named Deiri. He said, "Deiri is well said, *de ira eruti*; they shall be rescued from God's wrath and called to the mercy of Christ." Further he asked their king's name; and they answered and said that he was called Ælle. And then he played on the name in his words and said, "Alleluia, 'tis fit that the praise of God our creator should be sung in those parts."

Notes

1. Roger D. Ray, "Bede's *Vera Lex Historiae*," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 1–21. See also R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946; Oxford University Press, 1994), 52–56. My thanks for comments on this article are due to Professors Tom Hall of the University of Illinois, Scott DeGregorio of the University of Michigan, Paul Kershaw of the University of Virginia, Craig Davis and Nancy Bradbury of Smith College, Vince DiMarco of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and especially to Brother Michael Grace, S.J., of the rare book room of Cudahy Library, Loyola University Chicago.
2. Roger D. Ray, "Bede, the Exegete, as Historian" in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1976), 125; James Campbell, "Bede," in *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966); and Peter Hunter Blair, "The Historical Writings of Bede," *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, eds. Michael Lapidge and Peter Hunter Blair (London: Varorium, 1984), 197–221. Bede was also widely known as a poet; see Michael Lapidge, "Bede the Poet," in Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London: Hambledon, 1996), 313–38. Some of his characteristics are "extreme concision; flawless metre and rhythm; light, rapid and unobtrusive allusion to the diction of earlier Latin poetry" (Lapidge, 333).
3. A sense of order which Arthur Holder has admirably described in Bede's work on holy architecture, for example. Arthur Holder, "Allegory and History in Bede's Interpretation of Sacred Architecture," *American Benedictine Review* 40 (1989): 115–31, esp. 120.

4. Sometimes translated “English people,” but “Anglian people” is more accurate; see Stephen J. Harris, “Bede, Social Practice, and the Problem with Foreigners,” *Essays in Medieval studies* 13 (1995): 97–109; Georges Tugene, *L’image de la nation anglaise dans l’Histoire Ecclesiastique de Bède le Vénérable* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2001), 18–26; Patrick Wormald, “Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*,” in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 99–129; Sarah Foot, “The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 25–49; Kathleen Davis, “National Writing in the Ninth Century: A Reminder for Postcolonial Thinking about the Nation,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 28 (1998): 611–37; Michael Richter, “Bede’s Angli: Angles or English?” *Peritia* 3 (1984): 99–114; and Susan Reynolds, “What Do We Mean by ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘Anglo-Saxons?’” *Journal of British Studies* 24 (1985): 395–414. In defining *gens*, I follow in part Herwig Wolfram, who claims that “during the Early Middle Ages the meaning of the term *gens* changed to such an extent that it came to embrace a wide spectrum of meanings, sometimes even contradictory ones”; Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tran. Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 5. Important is Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln: Böhlaus Verlag, 1961), 46–47: “In genauem Gegensatz zum Stammesbegriff der Romantik, der von allem Staatlich-politischen absah und nur das Natürlich-organische betonte, sah die Wanderzeit in der *gens* zugleich einen politischen Körper, einen *populus*, wenn auch der Begriff der *gens* vielfach mit *natio* variiert wird, das vor allem eine bloße Abstammungsgemeinschaft bedeutet. Jede *gens* ist eine *natio*, aber keinswegs jede *natio* eine *gens*. *Populus* is vor allem—nach altrömischen Munster—das den Staat tragende Volk. Nach dem Quellen der Wanderzeit ist also die *gens* gleichzeitig *natio*, Abstammungsgemeinschaft, und *populus*, Staatsvolk.” This is further described by Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 15–40; and Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2000), 7 ff. Michael Wallace-Hadrill sees *gens* as composed of tribes: *The Long-Haired Kings* (Toronto, 1982), 156. I am cautioned in my definition of *gens* by conversations with Walter Goffart of Yale, for which I am grateful.
5. “Praefatio,” *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, eds. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (1969; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 2; their translations unless otherwise noted.
6. See R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, ed. Jan van der Dussen (1946; Oxford University Press, 1994), 53: “The great task of medieval historiography was the task of discovering and expounding this objective or divine plan.” Similarly, Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 7.
7. For example, D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton University Press, 1962), which was thought by many critics unreasonably exegetical. See, for example, Derek Pearsall, *The Canterbury Tales* (London: Routledge, 1985), 32, 83–84, and 98, where he is sharply dismissive of Robertson, calling him oversimple and forceful. For a judicious corrective to both extremes, see David L. Jeffrey, “The Self and the Book: Reference and Recognition in Medieval Thought,” *By Things Seen: Reference and Recognition in Medieval Thought*, ed. David L. Jeffrey (University of Ottawa, 1979), 1–17.

8. For example, G. F. Browne, "The Homilies of Bede" in *The Venerable Bede* (London: E & J.B. Young, 1887), 127–47. Browne comments on "the somewhat far-fetched figurative interpretation in which he constantly indulges his imagination." See Bertram Colgrave, "Bede's Miracle Stories" in *Bede: His Life, Times, and Writings*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935), 201–29, 201.
9. *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, cap. 5, ch. 31.
10. Robert A. Markus, "History," *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 432–35, 433.
11. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (hereafter CCSL) 119A, Lib. II, p. 310. Note the Latin *cura*, implying the pastoral role of textual interpretation. I am distinguishing here between historical narratives and chronicles, although even chronicles show a degree of literary affect; see Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories; Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (University of Toronto Press, 2001). On doctors of the Catholic Church, see Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, trans. Mark Sebanc (1959; Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 2 vols., 1:3–5.
12. Bede writes, "To his [Gregory's] works of piety and justice, this also belongs, that he snatched our race[s] from the teeth of the ancient foe and made them partakers of everlasting freedom by sending us preachers" (Colgrave trans., II, i, 131). According to Gregory, he himself had already undertaken the conversion of the people of Britain before the mission of Augustine to Canterbury. He says in about 595 in his *Moralia in Job* (§ 27.11) that the Christianization of Britain was "well under way"; see Ian Wood, "The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English" *Speculum* 69 (1994): 1–17, 2. For evidence of pre-Anglian British Christianity, see Lucas Quensel-von Kalben, "The British Church and the Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 10 (1999): 89–97.
13. II, i, 132; Colgrave's translation. *Tam sedula* is also "such diligence."
14. The relationship is described by David Kramer, "On the Relation of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," *Journal of the Study of the Old Testament* 59 (1993): 73–92, esp. 91. Boethius connects *gens* and election in his *Confessio Fidei*, "electa est una gens, in qua Dei mandata clarescent," *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter PL) 64:1336B. Similarly Bede, *In primam partem Samuhelis*, III, xxi and IV, xxix; CCSL 119. Paul Mayvaert has dated the Ezra commentary to 715 × 731 in an unpublished paper, "In the Footsteps of the Fathers: The Date of Bede's *Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings* to Nothelm," a version of which was delivered at Western Michigan University, May, 2001.
15. Gregory sighs from the depth of his heart: "ex corde longa trahens suspiria." For Gregory, "every act must be a sacrifice on the altar of the heart," Carole Straw, "Gregory I" in *Augustine through the Ages*, 402–05, 402. Bede uses this same image in his commentary on Habakkuk to describe Habakkuk's reaction to suffering and injustice in the world; CCSL 119B, 381.
16. Colgrave's translation. The allusion of "fellow-heirs" is to Paul's letter to the Colossians 1:12.
17. Ramier Pineas, "John Bale's Nondramatic Works of Religious Controversy," *Studies in the Renaissance* (1962): 281–33, 226; and Allen J. Frantzen, "Bede and Bawdy Bale: Gregory the Great, Angles and the Angli," *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, eds. Allen J. Frantzen and John Niles (University of Florida, 1998), 17–39. John Bale, *The First Two Partes of the Acts or Unchast Examples of the English Votaries . . .* (London, 1551); the story of Gregory appears at C6v. Frantzen

- points out that the comparison of the boys to angels in this story is meant to suggest the “angel-like state of their descendants”; Frantzen, *Before the Closet: Same-Sex Love from Beowulf to Angels in America* (University of Chicago, 1998), 268.
18. Pineas, “John Bale,” 226.
 19. For example, Ian Wood, “Mission,” 2, says the puns are “literary devices” used to “popularize the story.” Frantzen remarks that the Angles’ angelic beauty has been largely ignored by commentators on the story, perhaps because of its sexual overtones; “Bawdy Bale,” 21.
 20. See Allen J. Frantzen, *King Alfred* (Boston: Twayne, 1986). Alfred P. Smyth entertains the view that the Old English Bede is not Alfredian at all; see his *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 237.
 21. For example, Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay (London, 1911): “Venus-tus, pulcher, a venis, id est sanguine.” Medieval aesthetics and the notion of angelic beauty are described by Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Yale University Press, 1986); see also John of Damascus, “On Holy Images,” *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, trans. S. D. F. Salmon (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1955), *Nicean and Post-Nicene Fathers* 9, 88. The Norman historian Orderic Vitalis attributes *pulcher* “to the highly born of all races, but it was often emphasized when he wrote of the English”; Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1984), 11–12.
 22. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison (Hanover, 1920); *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereafter *MGH*) ss. rer. Merov. 7, c. 24, 134: “Fuit enim vir sanctus omni dignitate praeclarus, statura decens, vultu honorabilis, faciae venustus, corde laetur, consilio sapiens, ore iucundrus, moribus compositus, in omne opere Dei strenuus.”
 23. See Bede, *In Samuhel*, II, x, *CCSL* 119: “Pulcherrime autem dicitur quia qui ambu-lavit in hac vita prius cum deo obediendo praeceptus eius, ambuavit postmodum cum illo transeundo de hac vita in aliam, ubi in maxima carnis et spiritus quiete et felicitate viveret.” Similarly, the beauty of the Anglian boys moves Gregory to spiritual contemplation and a desire to bring the Angles into the joyful life of the Church.
 24. *Homeliarium evangelii*, I, hom. x, *CCSL* 122.
 25. Compare Bede’s commentary on the temptation of Eve: *In principium Genesis*, I, iii (ll. 1950 ff.), *CCSL* 118A. Rachel literally means “seeing God” (and also “sheep,” a connection commentators on Canticles will raise); Jerome, *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum*, *CCSL* 72, 138; noted by Bede in his homily on Mt 2:13, *Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst, 2 vols. (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1991), 96–102, 97.
 26. *PL* 90:254D, “Cogitationes enim mortalium timidae: spes vero contemplationis Dei habens scientiam, ipsa est Rachel, unde dicuntur pulchra speciae.” Bede says similarly in *De Templo*, “Dixemus de cedro quod insuperabilem virtutum venustatem signaret,” *CCSL* 119A, lib. 1. Bede included this image of Rachel in his poem on the six days of creation: *CCSL* 122, II, vii, i. Isidore of Seville explains that *pulcher* is that which is beautiful in and of itself, not for the sake of something else; *Sententiarium Libri*, I, viii, 8 (*PL* 83:551–52). On the theory of the proper end or use of things, see Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, trans. D. W. Robertson (New York: MacMillan, 1958), I, xxii, 18; and John Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York: Newman, 1997), XXI, xvi, 1, 732.
 27. Alcuin, *Vita II Vedastis episcopi Atrebatensis*, *MGH* ss. rer. Merov. 3, cap. 9, 423; and *Vita Richarii*, *MGH* ss. rer. Merov. 4, cap. 14, 401.

28. MGH Epp. sel. 1, Epist. 9, 5: “vere pulchritudinis venustatem acquirere, id est divinarum sapientiarum, quae est splendor auro, speciosior argento, ignitor carbunculo, candidior cristallo . . .”
29. Bede writes, “Pulcherrime autem dicitur quia qui ambulavit in hac vita prius cum deo obediendo praeceptus eius . . .”; *In principium Genesis*, CCSL 118A, II, v. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, whose neo-Platonism was of tremendous influence on Gregory, writes in his *Divine Names* that there exists a “Superessential Beauty” which “is the cause and harmony and splendour in all things, flashing forth upon them all, like a light”; cited in Eco, *Art and Beauty*, 18; on the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius on Gregory, see Joan M. Petersen, “‘Homo Omnino Latinus’: The Theological and Cultural Background of Pope Gregory the Great,” *Speculum* 62 (1987): 529–51.
30. Bertram Colgrave, trans., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge University Press, 1968). The Whitby version was written at Steonesheal in Northumbria; Wood, “Mission,” 2.
31. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961), 50. The phrase “luminosa veritas tua” is found at II, vi.
32. One wonders whether hearing this passage read aloud, a listener might imagine himself for a moment to have heard, not *forma egregia*, but *formae Greg[or]i*, or in the Gregorian form, perhaps fleetingly implying the propriety of Bede’s Anglian monastic tonsure over the disparaged Irish and British tonsure of Bede’s Celtic neighbors.
33. Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, V, xiv. Whitby uses *crinis*, suggesting long hair like a comet’s tail, which tended to describe hair effeminately.
34. The proximity of *columba* and *gregia* in this passage invites allusion, though coincidentally, given that Columba and Gregory are the ideological apostles to the Northumbrians. See Ludwig Bieler, “Ireland’s Contribution to the Culture of Northumbria,” in *Famulus Christi*, 210–28. Note also that Rachel can mean “sheep,” as Bede points out in his homily on Mt. 2:13–23; see above, n. 25. Bugga, daughter of King Centwine of Essex (676 AD–685 AD), was also pleasantly associated with *greges* and with the term *egregia*; see Andy Orchard, “After Aldhelm: The Teaching and Transmission of the Anglo-Latin Hexameter,” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992): 96–133, 98 (lines 4 and 14).
35. In *Canticum Cantorum Expositio*, CCSL 19, lib. 6. This work was sometimes attributed to Jerome, as *Veris Amoris* (xxviii). A manuscript, Gneuss no. 802, was in England around the time when Bede was writing the *HE*, produced possibly in Mercia. See Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001). Nevertheless, the interpretation is typical. A compilation of commentaries on Canticles is listed among the books donated by Æthelwold to Peterborough in the late tenth century; item 14 in Michael Lapidge, “Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England,” *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards (New York: Routledge, 1994), 87–168; 118–19.
36. In *Canticum canticorum expositio*, CCSL 19, lib. viii and lib. vi.
37. See Jarislav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (University of Chicago Press, 1971), 278–331.
38. Augustine, “On Free Will” in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. J. H. S. Burleigh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 102–217; 171–72. Augustine describes the movement away from the anger of God as a movement of the soul from perturbation to tranquility: *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus*, CCSL 36, tract, 124. See also Gregory, *Moralia in Job*, XXXI.45, CCSL 143B.

39. Augustine, *Quaestionum in heptateuchum libri septem*, CCSL 33, Quaest. Iudicum 13. See also Psalm 6 and its commentary tradition.
40. Thus Bede's Commentary on Ezra 2:65: "each one of the elect should sing a song of praise and confession," trans. Scott DiGregorio, unpublished. See also *HE* II, i, 130, which immediately precedes this story.
41. II, i, 130; my trans.
42. See R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 48. Markus records Gregory's statement in his *Moralia in Job*, XI.4.6: Created things "proclaim by the form they manifest their creator: [this is] as it were the voice of their confession." See also Pelikan, *Catholic Tradition*, 294 and 298.
43. Bede, "On Tobias," 79; Augustine *Enchiridion*, *Nicean Fathers* 9.29.
44. Foley and Holder, "On Tobias," *Bib. Misc.*, 78–79. Notably, the number of nations in the world is set after the number of angels; see especially Deut 32:8, but also Ex 14:19, Bar 6:6, Dan 10:13 and 21, and Ecc 17:17 (Sir 17:14 in the Vulgate); Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo* in *St. Anselm: Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. S. N. Deane (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1962) I, xvi, 235; and Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 32.
45. This corresponds to similar ethnic ambiguity effected by Alfred's program of translation; see Stephen J. Harris, "The Alfredian World History and Anglo-Saxon Identity," *JEGP* 100 (2001): 482–510.
46. The term "frumcyn" or "fromcyn" is also used to describe Adam's descendants ("Gospel of Nicodemus," Cambridge Corpus Christi College Ms. 41, ed. W. H. Hulme, "The Old English Gospel of Nicodemus," *Modern Philology* 1 [1903]: 579–614) and Christ's genealogy (Ælfric, "Sermon on Christmas," 30.5, ed. Peter Clemoes, EETS ss. 17).
47. Kenneth R. Brooks, ed. *Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961).
48. Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book* (Columbia University Press, 1936), Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 3, 149–53; and Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (University of Toronto, 2001), 52.
49. *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. E. V. Gordon (London: Methuen, 1968).
50. A. S. Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses* (Oxford, 1900), no. 299.18; see also Lindelöf (1907–14), ed., *Lambeth Psalter* 44.5; A. N. Doane, ed., *Genesis A* (University of Wisconsin, 1978), l. 899; and Quinn, ed. *Latin-Old English Glossaries* (1956), 69–219, *CIGl* 3 413.
51. L. Goossens, ed. *The Old English Glosses of MS Brussels, Royal Library 1650* (Brussels, 1974), ll. 1103 and 4663. Aldhelm has been called the most important figure of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Latin literature; see Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
52. S. S. Getty, "An Edition with Commentary of the Latin/Anglo-Saxon *Liber scintillarum*," (University of Pennsylvania dissertation, 1969), 53.5 [hereafter *LibSc*]; dated by Gneuss, no. 470 following Ker, no. 256. See also 53.3: "Basilius dixit pulchritudo diligenda est fili qui letitiam spiritualem consuevit infundere evitemus perniciosas pulchritudines ne omnium malorum genera in nos inrogentur"; this is glossed, "[Basil] sæde fægernyss to lufigenne ys la bearn se þe blisse gastlice gewunap onasendan utan forbugan cwyldebære fægernysse þæt na ealra yfela cynrenu on us bon ongebrote."
53. *LibSc*, 58.39: "Gregorius dixit terrena pulchritudo confiditur id est perturbatur cum celsitudo caelestis aperitur," glossed, "[Gregorius] sæde eorðlic fægernysse byð gedrefed þænne hyhð heofonlic byð openud."

54. *Prognostication Glosses* 2 (Fürster, 1910), 274; see also 276.
55. Harvey W. Chapman, *An Index to the Old English Glosses of the Durham Hymnarium* in Fred C. Robinson, *Word-Indices to Old English Non-Poetic Texts* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon 1974) 117–210, 190. Alcuin had an Anglo-Saxon student, Hwita, also known as Candidus; see Michael Lapidge, “Anglo-Latin Literature,” in his *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London: Hambledon, 1996), 1–35, 24.
56. *Antiphon Glosses* 4, 1180; ed. L. Kindschi, “The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32246” (Stanford University dissertation, 1955).
57. I translate “ofermod” as insolent following a gloss on Prudentius, “insolens ofermod.” H. D. Meritt, *The Old English Prudentius Glosses at Boulogne-sur-Mer* (Stanford University dissertation, 1959), l. 236; and Aldhelm, *De Virginitate* (prose), ed. Napier 1900, no. 1.
58. Ælfric, *Homily on Palm Sunday* (Godden, 1979, EETS ss. 5), 137, l. 6.
59. *Feria II in Letania maiore* (Godden, 1979), 184, l. 139.
60. London BL MS Cotton Julius A. x (Katzor, 1981), vol. 2, 101.
61. Chapman, *Durham Hymnarium* based on the edition of Stevenson for the Surtees Society (1851, vol. 23). See also Ludwig Ettmüller, *Lexicon Anglosaxonicum ex poetarum scriptorumque prosaicorum operibus* (London: Willaims & Norgate, 1851; rpt. Rodopi, 1968), p. 15. Stryker, “The Latin-Old English Glossary in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A. III” (Stanford University dissertation, 1951), nos. 1079 and 1524; Wright and Wülcker, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1884), no. 3.2; and Quinn, “The Minor Latin-Old English Glossaries in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A. III” (Stanford University dissertation, 1956), no. 154.
62. *OLD*. Coma can mean a silk thread, as Cassiodorus uses it; see Alexander Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949; rpt. 1996). It can also be broadened to describe any phenomenon resembling hair, such as a wisp of cloud (*OLD*, s.v.). See also Klaus Grübner, *Vocabularius Ex Quo: Überlieferungs-geschichte Ausgabe* (Tübingen: Max Niermeyer, 1984), 6 vols., 2:568.
63. Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, 156–57.
64. Katherine Fischer Drew, trans. *The Burgundian Code* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), section 33.1, 45, and section 92, 82; attribution to Gundobad, 5.
65. *Burgundian Code*, sections 5.4 and 5.5; *Laws of Alfred and Ine*, ed. Lieberman, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903–16), no. 45.
66. On the subject of tonsure in this letter, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 197.