For the Love of Right Angles: Bedan Archetypes of Ethnicity as a Mystical Map of the Human Condition Integrated in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Wycliffe College and the Historical Department of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of Saint Michael’s College

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Abstract
The Venerable Bede (673–735) was an Anglian priest-monk who appreciated the human condition as a multifaceted reality; and it was the fullness of his appropriation of Christianity that enabled him to admire many types of saint and to project salvific harmony upon Britain. Analysis of his corpus suggests that Bede essentialises Britain’s peoples, interpreting their relations as the interplay of archetypes bearing salvific traits. One may link these traits to Bede’s treatment of religious roles through a heuristic whereby inherited Israelite institutions reflect a Christian hermeneutic. In this way, Bede interprets the apostate and the warmongering isolate, the egalitarian prophet, the network about the rightful king and the priestly hierarchy in sacred idiom as anagogical, tropological, historical/literal and allegorical ways of being. Corroborated by his life’s experiences, and by sources of varied provenance from his own library, Bede assigns literal kingship to his own people as Israel de novo; the prophetic role to the tropological Irish abbots; and the priestly teaching office to transnational Rome, which discerns sound dogma through allegory. The British, as his own people’s mortal enemies, become isolated apostates who so thoroughly embody the death-dealing side of anagogy that they serve as a multifaceted foil to all other archetypes. Finally, as the English mature, they take up the salvific functions of the other peoples to attain the fullness of the life-giving side of anagogy. Deeper analysis of Bede’s treatment of ethnicity further suggests that Bede aspired to the salvific harmony within himself also. For, in secular idiom, a corollary appears between types of brain function and those
psychical states and social structures that Bede associates with the peoples collaborating to attain sublime knowledge. Such a corollary illustrates the infusing and incarnating nature of holiness that completes the saint, who becomes a concretisation of oneness, catholicity and apostolicity. Interpreted this way, one can discern and describe several profiles of Bede in scholarly literature. As prophetic moral reformer, he is the rightly indignant, imperative Bede. As apocalyptic harbinger of judgement, he is the aptly apprehensive, subjunctive Bede. As kingly minded missionary statesman and advocate for local identity, he is the nobly cheerful, optative Bede. As priestly doctor of the church and as master of the churchly sciences, he is the sensibly sorrowful, indicative Bede. One also discerns, by contrast, a non-activist profile of Bede as a contemplative soul who admires St. Cuthbert of Farne Island. Bede’s admiration of the anchorite appears rooted in the intuited sense that Cuthbert harmonises ethnicities, religious roles and the antimonies of the human condition as a whole person on intimate terms with the transcendent God. Meditating upon the fullness of Cuthbert’s life in God, Bede actualises within himself Irenaeus’ memorable dictum, *Gloria enim Dei uiuens homo: uita autem hominis uisio Dei,* as Jesus Christ would have it, who asserts, *Ego ueni ut uitant habeant et abundantius habeant.*

In sum, Bede finds in the interactive demesne of Britain’s peoples a resolution to his own inner yearnings for shalom so that his love of right Angles provides a mystical map of the human condition integrated in the Holy Church, which is also One and Catholic and Apostolic.

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* See *AH* 4.20.7/SC 101.2: 648 and John 10:10. In English translation, these lines read: “For the glory of God is living man: and the life of man is the sight of God (incarnate)”; and “I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly” (Douay-Rheims).
Ad Murray Adkins

patrem familias, regem in proprii domi causa Christo, spe gloriae

Ad Janis Adkins

matrem meam, prophetissam propriis paruis causa Iesu, pacifico pacificorum

Ad Allan and Annette Drinkwalter

antiquos amicos cordis aurei qui, si rogem, abradant mihi castorem niccoleo nummo Canadensi
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*Multas gratias ad Elizabeth, qui semper in spe suboritut ut suauem salvatorem suam laudet; et ad Saram qui, sicut angelus custos, me monstruosa morte in turbida turba carp sit.*
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Primary Sources: Classical, Patristic and Mediæval Works, with Translations

AH  Adversus haereseos (Irenaeus)
    Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. “Irenaeus Against Heresies.”

AP  Altus Prosator (Columba or Adamnán of Iona)
    Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus. “Altus Prosator.” In Iona:

BEO  Beowulf (Anonymous Old English Poem)

CIH  Corpus Iuris Hibernici (Irish secular law in Old Irish)

CCH  Collectio Canonum Hibernensis (Irish canon law in Latin)

CCSL  Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Bede: Volumes 118A–123C)

COL  Collationes patrum (John Cassian)

COM  Commonitorium (St. Vincent of Lérins)

DAP  Demonstratio apostolicae praedicationis (Irenaeus)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCD</th>
<th>De ciuitate Dei (Augustine of Hippo)</th>
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<tr>
<td>DDC</td>
<td>De doctrina Christiana (Augustine of Hippo)</td>
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<td>DDI</td>
<td>De die iudicii (Bede or Alcuin)</td>
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<td>DEB</td>
<td>De excidio Brittanniae (Gildas)</td>
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<td>DePr</td>
<td>De principiis (Origen)</td>
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<td>DLSA</td>
<td>De locis sanctis (Adamnán of Iona)</td>
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<td>DLSB</td>
<td>De locis sanctis (Bede)</td>
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<td>DMSS</td>
<td>De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae (Augustinus Hibernicus)</td>
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<td>DOC</td>
<td>De ordine creaturarum (Augustinus Hibernicus)</td>
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**DNR**  
*De natura rerum*  

**DP**  
*De paradiso* (Ambrose of Milan)  

**DST**  
*De schematicibus et tropis* (Bede)  

**DT**  
*De temporibus*  

**DTB**  
*De tabernaculo* (Bede)  

**DTM**  
*De templo Salamonis* (Bede)  

**DTR**  
*De temporibus ratione* (Bede)  

**DVI**  
*De uiris illustribus* (Jerome of Bethlehem)  

**EA**  
*Expositio Apocalypseos* (Bede)  
EE  Epistolam ad Egbertum (Bede)


ET  Etymologiae (Isidore of Seville)


HA  Historia abbatum (Bede)


HE  Historica ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (Bede)


HB  Historia Brittonum (attributed to Nennius)


HOM  Homeliae euangelii (Bede)


IAA  In actus apostolorum (Bede)


IE7C  In epistolas VII catholicas (Bede)


In *Lucam* (as yet unavailable in translation)

*In primam partem Samuhelis* (translation by George Hardin Brown forthcoming)


Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi

Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae Karolini Aeui

Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae Selectae

Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Poetae Latini Aeui Carolini

Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptum Rerum Merovingicarum


Patrologia Latina (Bede: Volumes 90–95)

Patrologia Graeca (Origen: Volume 11)

PR  Republic (Plato)


QSOLB  Qui sunt orates, laboratores, bellatores (Ælfric of Enysham)


SC  Sources Chrétienes (Patristics in Latin and French)


RP  Regula pastoralis (Gregory the Great)


TF  Transitus beati Fursei (Anonymous)


VB  Vita Brigitae (Cogitosus)


VCA  Vita Columbae (Adamnán of Iona)


VCB  Vita sancti Cudbercti (Bede)

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<th>Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>VL</td>
<td>Vetus Latina (Old Latin Bible)</td>
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Preface

*A review of Bede’s exegesis and hagiography can elucidate his other writings, all sharing a single purpose: to express the working out of salvation history particularly among the English. – George Hardin Brown¹*

The Venerable Bede (673–735) is a renowned Northumbrian priest-monk who stands at once in two literary traditions. He models himself after the historical, hagiographical, homiletical, exegetical and dogmatic writings of the church fathers, such as Eusebius (d. 340), Athanasius (d. 373), Ambrose (d. 397), Jerome (d. 420) and Augustine (d. 430). Yet, unbeknownst to him, he also participates in an emerging literary tradition of early Germanic writers, such as Jordanes (fl. 550), Gregory of Tours (d. 594) and Paul the Deacon (d. 799), who narrate national histories. Bede’s literary corpus shows that he perceived the Christian faith to be as much present at Canterbury, Armagh, Paris, Toledo and Trier in his own time as present at Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome in the first Christian centuries. Indeed, a straightforward reading of his culminative work written in 731, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (hereafter *HE*), reveals that Bede took an interest in particular expressions of the Christian faith as regional warbands and various cultures of Britain came to terms with Christianity and with one another. A typological reading involving Cassian’s fourfold hermeneutic, which culminates in the mystical awareness of God, is also plausible. For Bede makes much of Cassian’s heuristic in his own exegesis, never once adding a feature to it even though he does simplify Cassian’s model to a two- or threefold hermeneutic from time to time. Cassian outlines his hermeneutic thus:

“Application”, thus, is diverted to many…disciplines, but “insight” is divided into two parts; that is, into historical interpretation and spiritual understanding. And thus, when Solomon had itemised the multiform grace of the Church, he added: “For all who are with her are clothed doubly” [Prov. 31:21 LXX]. Indeed, there are three kinds of spiritual knowledge, tropology, allegory and anagogy, concerning which it is said thus in Proverbs: “But you describe those things for yourself in a threefold manner according to the breadth of your heart” [Pr. 22:20 LXX].

By the very plurality of modes, Cassian intends to register varied dimensions of meaning; and by their shared object, the holism of mature understanding. To firmly establish nuance and holism, Cassian proceeds to clarify the pluriform significance of but one entity, Jerusalem:

\[ \text{Igitur praedictae quattuor figurae in unum ita, si volumus, confluunt, ut una atque eadem Hierusalem quadrifarie possit intelligi: secundum historiam ciuitas Judaeorum, secundum allegoriam ecclesia Christi, secundum anagogen ciuitas Dei illa caelestis quae est mater omnium nostrum [Gal. 4:26], secundum tropologiam anima hominis, quae frequenter hoc nomine aut increpatur aut laudatur a Domino. De his quattuor interpretationum generibus beatus Apostolus ita dicit: Nunc autem, fratres, si unenero ad uos linguis loquens, quid uobis prodero, nisi uobis loquar aut in revelatione aut in scientia aut in prophetia aut in doctrina? [1 Cor 14:6] [COL 14.8.4].} ^{3} \]

Therefore, the aforementioned four figures join together so that, if we will, one and the same Jerusalem can be understood in a fourfold manner: according to history, the city of the Jews; according to allegory, the Church of Christ; according to anagogy, that heavenly city of God “which is the mother of all” [Gal. 4:26]; according to tropology, the soul of a man, which frequently by this name is either reproached or praised by the Lord. Of these four genres of interpretation, the blessed Apostle speaks thus: “Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what profit will it be to you unless I speak to you by revelation or by knowledge or by prophecy or by instruction?” [1 Cor. 14:6].

In the paragraphs after this quotation, Cassian claims Pauline authority for his fourfold hermeneutic by pinning the substance of each element of spiritual meaning to one of four terms present in his citation of the apostle, bolded here for emphasis. He associates revelation with allegory, knowledge with tropology, prophecy with anagogy and instruction with history

\(^{2}\) SC 54: 189–90.  
\(^{3}\) SC 54: 190–91.
In doing so, Cassian explains that through allegory one discerns the noetic structure within which God intends special revelation and all of life’s situations to be understood – namely, Jesus Christ. Through tropology, one gains discretion in the relationships of daily life and, assisted by natural revelation, that which becomes moral knowledge. Through anagogy, one gains eschatological perspective in the breath-by-breath reality of the immediate present. Finally, through history, one learns the course of events whereby God does and will effect salvation.

Given Cassian’s ascetical ethos, one surmises from this pluriform view of spiritual reading that, for him, those thoroughly engaged in the world transcend the tunnel vision entailed by such engagement as they withdraw from the marketplace to meet God through holistic reading. Such reading is historical and allegorical, tropological and anagogical [COL 1.8.2]. As one engages in this nuanced activity with the goal of meeting God in contemplation, a unitive vision results. As Christopher Kelly remarks, Cassian teaches that Scripture is to be approached as a whole, with Jesus Christ as “both the message and the means by which that message could be discerned.” Cassian expected spiritual reading to affect “the monk’s body, mind, and soul” so that his life itself becomes the hermeneutical medium for understanding the text as he withdraws to meet God. The communion desired, and completion of the person attained, occurs as the monk partakes of what can be actualised of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:3–11).

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4 Christopher Kelly, Cassian’s Conferences: Scriptural Interpretation and the Monastic Ideal (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 1.
5 Ibid. 3, 88–92. Moreover, David B. Perrin, inspired by Donald Cupitt, notes that “we… must not turn away from the multiplicity of this world to the oneness of the ‘other’ world in order to delve into the depths of life”. Why this is so, suggests Perrin, is that “a God intimately inserted in the complexity of everyday life, its burdens and joy failures and successes, is the God of everyday mysticism and the mysticism of secondariness”. See Perrin, “Mysticism” in The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality, ed. Arthur Holder (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005: 442–58), 449, 451. The notion of mysticism reflected here is that the human person knows intimate blessed communion with God as such a person discerns a whole that is other than and greater than the sum of all aspects of the witness to the divine embedded as the divine image within.
Similar to the tradition of classical authors and their Christian progeny, Bede’s account reflects a pluriform typology of multiple ways of being; and like Cassian’s account of the spiritual life, conversion is completed as the whole emerges to transcend its parts. Yet, unlike Cassian, who addresses the inner dimensions of Christian life with his accent upon nuanced meanings, Bede applies such meaning to observable ethnic entities as he expresses the full mystery of salvation. For, in this view, the human condition is integrated. Salvation is as much corporeal as spiritual, as much about creation as redemption, as much corporate as individual and as much physical-sensory and emotive-relational as logical-directional and noetic-structural.

It is reasonable to presume that any typology used to interpret Bede must be either explicitly or implicitly articulated by him. To this end, it is especially important to note that Bede introduces the English, the British, the Irish and the Latins as distinct, collective personalities in the opening gambit of HE 1.1, and has them arrive at harmonious equilibrium in the concluding synopsis in HE 5.23. That a table of nations becomes his cast of characters in HE 1.1 strongly suggests that Bede essentialises nations as particular personalities; and the fact that he believes himself to have discerned a way for each nation/character to fit within the whole that is Britain strongly suggests that Bede also essentialises Britain as a collective soul that transcends its parts.

As noted above, Bede introduces the linguistic groups of Britain in HE 1.1 as though they were individual actors on the stage of Great Britain’s history. He writes:

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6 Consider Plato [PR Book 4], especially I: 375, 395, 403, 405, 419, 425, 427; Irenaeus [AII 5.6–8], 531–34; and Origen [DePr 2.8, 3.4], 286–89, 337–40/ PG 11: cols. 218–225, 319–325. See also, 1 Thes. 5:23.

7 Maria Luiselli Fadda notes that the general resurrection of humanity is not depicted iconically before eighth century; and that of Christ, not before the twelfth. Studying evidence from Britain and Ireland, she observes the importance of the soul-body problem and the difficulty of representing this graphically. Once the matter is addressed, she shows that “the idea of wholeness is associated with salvation and that in the moment of corporeal resurrection incorrupt bodies with their souls will be fully alive again”. See Luisella Fadda, “The Mysterious Moment of Resurrection,” in Text, Image, Interpretation, eds. Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (Leuven: Brepols, 2007), 149, 161–62, 167.

8 While Bede does identify the Pictish as one of ethnic actors, he does not spend much energy on them and he often associates them with the Irish as northern peoples connected by marriage. With these facts in mind, and recognising that little evidence exists beyond Bede, this study omits his treatment of the Pictish.
This [island has], presently, according to the number of books in which the divine law is written, five languages of the peoples – each discerns and confesses one and the same knowledge of sublime truth and of true sublimity – namely, [the languages] of the English, British, Irish, Pictish, and the Latins, which, through the study of the scriptures, is made common to all the rest.9

And in HE 5.23, also noted above, the actors introduced in 1.1 find equilibrium thus:

Pictorum quoque natio tempore hoc et foedus pacis cum gente habet Anglorum, et catholicae pacis ac ueritatis cum uniuersali ecclesia particeps existere gaudet. Scotti qui Brittaniam incolunt, suis contenti finibus, nil contra gentem Anglorum insidiarum molient aut fraudium. Brettones, quamuis et maxima ex parte domestico sibi odio gentem Anglorum, et totius catholicae ecclesiae statum pascha minus recto moribusque inprobis impugnent, tamen et divina sibi et humana prorsus resistente uiurtue in neutro cupitum possunt obtinere propositum, quippe qui, quamuis ex parte sui sint iuris, nonnulla tamen ex parte Anglorum sunt servitio mancipati.

Qua adridente pace ac serenitate temporum, plures in gente Nordanhymbrorum, tam nobiles quam priuati, se suosque liberos depositis armis satagunt magis, accepta tonsura, monasterialibus adscribere uotis quam bellicis exercere studiis. Quae res quem sit habitura finem, posterior aetas uidebit.

Hic est inpraesentiarum uniuersae status Brittaniae, anno audentus Anglorum in Brittaniam circiter ducentesimo octogesimo quinto, dominicae autem incarnationis anno DCCXXXI. In cuius regno perpetuo exultet terra, et congratulante in fide eius Brittania, laetentur insulae multae et confiteantur memoriae sanctitatis eius [HE 5.23].

The nation of the Pictish also have a pact of peace with the race of the English and rejoice to be a participant in both the catholic peace and truth with the Church universal. The Irish who settle in Britain, contained with their own boundaries, undertake no plots or treason against the race of the English. The British, even still for the most part through their inbred hatred, assault the English and the state of the whole catholic Church by their less than correct Easter and their unapproved customs; yet, with divine and human power resisting them, they are

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9 Latin text of Bede’s HE and page numbers are from Colgrave/ Mynors (1969). Translations of Latin passages are mine, unless indicated otherwise.
able to secure their desire against neither – seeing that, although in one part they may have their own law; yet, in another part, not a few are bound to servitude of the English.

With peace and serenity smiling upon the times, many of the race of Northumbrians, as much nobles as footsoldiers, having put down their arms, and having taken the tonsure, prefer rather that they and their children should enroll in monastic vows rather than exercise themselves in the warlike arts. What end this reality is going to attain, a subsequent age will see.

This is the state of the whole of Britain in present times, about two hundred eighty-five years after the advent of the English to Britain, even in the year of our Lord 731. In whose perpetual realm, “Let the earth exult” [Ps. 96:1b/97:1]; and with Britain grateful in [the Lord’s] faith, “Let many isles also rejoice and confess the memory of his holiness” [Ps. 96:12/97:12].

Now three types of observation lifted from HE 1.1 and HE 5.23 anticipate what follows in the exposition of this study. The first type of observation arises from the shared content of passages that serve as book-ends of Bede’s HE. For ethnicity as an organising principle at the alpha and omega positions of the text speaks to its prominence in Bede’s worldview. Instead of individuals acting in their own name, Bede announces ethnic groups as the dramatis personae who will carry his plot to a climax; and he resolves the story by resolving ethnic relations.

The second type of observation stems from Bede’s identification of distinct ethnic groups and his assertion of their unity in HE 1.1 and HE 5.23. While the fact that Bede addresses King Ceolwulf in the preface of his HE strongly suggests that really does refer to actual ethnic groups, his view that each linguistic group contributes to unity supposes a guiding set of references by which he describes each and its contribution to that unity. Moreover, since his primary actors are representatives of various kinds of collective, which fact implies various ideals, his set of guiding references are likely symbolic, perhaps universal values aligned to archetypical offices.

The third type of observation pertains the content of Bede’s ethnic archetypes, and arises from the order in which Bede presents each of them, and the substantive commentary he offers.
To begin, Bede names the English first in HE 1.1 and last in HE 5.23. This detail implies that he views the English as his entry point into the story and as his concrete reference point at the end. In HE 5.23, under English rule “the earth” rejoices alongside “Britain”, with both “earth” and “Britain” defining territorial limits of social space that differ only in scope. The former is a metonym for the human race redeemed; and the latter is a metonym for all persons under Anglo-Saxon rule. In both spheres, the English serve as efficient cause – the actor among actors who advances the plot toward unity. Such surmising on Bede’s view of the English proves true between HE 1.1 and HE 5.23. For English kings such as Edwin and Ecgfrith act as the most significant historical actors, whether to abet or to obstruct the island’s transformation. It is as though Bede views them as shepherds who guide God’s people as did the Israelite kings of old.

A similar observation arises from the order in which he presents the British, and from what he says about them. Interestingly, in HE 1.1 Bede lists the British second, immediately after the English; and second to last, immediately before the English in HE 5.23. In addition, the British attract the most comment and the worst review in HE 5.23, which, given their proximity to the English in both HE 1.1 and HE 5.23, suggests that Bede sees the British as foil to the English. This view is ratified by what happens between HE 1.1 and HE 5.23. The British appear primarily as villains until HE 2.20, and then drop from view until – always a menace – they reassert their independence in HE 4.26. Given these facts, the question arises: In what way does Bede understand the British to be interested in “one and the same kind of wisdom”? What could the villainous British contribute to the soul of Britain? One wonders whether they serve as a material cause of sorts. For the original Christian residents of Britain remain, for Bede, in the same sinful state which refuses that shape which the chisel of ultimate destiny requires. In the same way, the Israelites had to face apocalyptic circumstances to learn the anagogical lesson that God had for them: yield to the Potter and live (Isa. 64:8), or be dashed to pieces like a potter’s vessel (Ps 2:9).
Again, another observation of this sort pertains to Bede’s view of the Irish. Placed in the midst of both lists, the Irish do not occupy the attention-grasping role at the head of the first or at the tail of the last. Nor are the Irish situated immediately before or after the protagonist (the English) as a foil. Instead, as their middling spot telegraphs, the Irish receive Bede’s praise in *HE* 5.23 for embracing a supplementary role. Indeed, Irish counsellors such as Aidan become chaplains of English kings only to make way for English priests trained in the Latin tradition. The ambiance of their character endures after their royally-sanctioned sacerdotal function ends, so that their legacy becomes that of the moral exemplar who holds the charismatic authority of the prophet. As the prototype of good conduct, the Irish become tropology incarnate serving Bede as formal cause by modelling the relational simplicity of the Garden of Eden before sin.

The final observation of the third type pertains to Bede’s view of the vast influence of Rome. The Latins hold a position *HE* 1.1 and *HE* 5.23 that is paradoxically ultimate in terms of ethos and transitional in terms of actual agents. The ultimate quality of their position is stated overtly in *HE* 1.1, where the Latin Bible becomes the medium of inter-ethnic unity in Britian; and its transitional quality is observed in the fact that Bede does not mention Rome overtly in *HE* 5.23. While Roman ways triumph as the standard of orthodoxy, English priests take over the ministry of word and sacrament in Britain.10 What is important to Bede here is that Latinate prelates, such as Augustine and Paulinus at first, and Theodore and Hadrian later on, do embody the ultimate cause (unity of faith and worship with the Holy See); and that English priests, such as Wilfrid, attain to this honour insofar as they are in communion with the Apostolic See.

10 The Pictish feature less prominently as a neutral party, as though their presence is mentioned to provide a fifth entity to symbolise the five books of Moses [1.1/16]. On this theme, Alan Thacker finds Bede as neutral on the Pictish, as he is favourable to the Irish and irritated by the British. See Thacker, “Bede and the Irish,” in *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk & Northumbrian*, eds. L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (Gronigen: Forsten, 31–60), 33.
However intriguing my initial findings have been, and however inviting the observations of 
*HE* 1.1 and *HE* 5.23 are, the investigation in the chapters to come does not rely upon anecdotal evidence from Bede’s *HE* alone to confirm and to flesh out Bede’s typology indexed by ethnicity. Instead, I have expanded the scope of sources to include those that promise both to be helpful in two ways: to clarify the existence and substance of Bede’s fourfold typology, and to consider how its distinctive ways of being fit together, for Bede, as a local description of the salvation available to the human race in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Naturally, first among relevant sources is Bede’s own corpus, most of which he wrote before his *HE*. I also consult sources available to Bede (Gildas, Gregory, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Adamnán of Iona, Irish theological works) to discern the provenance of his views of particular ethnicities and his association of ideas and institutions. Third, I consult near contemporary sources (Aldhelm, Stephen of Ripon, the Anonymous *Life* of Pope Gregory, early Irish law, Fursa’s hagiographer) for clues from other early medieval writers that the association of particular ideas and institutions is not unique to him, and that the association of same ethnicities and traits is amenable to the understanding of the period. Fourth, I consult Boniface and Alcuin to illustrate the legacy of Bede’s view of the *gens Anglorum* among early mediæval Englishmen. Finally, I consult secondary sources to bolster cultural and historical awareness of Bede’s context, and to draw into the conversation voices common among Bedan scholars.

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Ch. 1: Profiles of Bede, Ethnic Archetypes and the Marks of the Church

Three Inter-Related Assertions: Archetypes, Ethnicities and Diversified Holism

In the pages that follow, an argument emerges that posits three inter-related assertions, which, given adequate demonstration, lead to a deeper Verstehen of The Venerable Bede’s witness to a salvation that he believed to overcome the disintegration of the human condition on account of sin. One may identify the means as the salvific trait of holiness diffused through human experience and manifest fully as oneness and catholicity and apostolicity.

The first assertion is that Bede constructs archetypes that couple a nuanced manner of spiritual reading fostered by Christians who are *nouus Dei populus* [the new people of God] and a straightforward adoption of religious functions evident among the Israelites who are *antiquus Dei populus* [the ancient people of God]. The three main forms of religious leadership – kingship, prophethood and priesthood – are understood as incarnations of the theological hermeneutic of history, tropology and allegory. As the literal hermeneutic personified, the ruling network of a godly society insist in the spirit of catholicity that peoples everywhere enter and keep this covenant with God: to effect the divine will in history, namely, the Christianisation of culture. As the tropological hermeneutic in the flesh, an enclave of prophetic egalitarians model inter- and intra-personal authenticity and the oneness of a truly angelic society by means of thoroughgoing righteousness, embraced individually and collectively. As the embodiment of the allegorical hermeneutic, the priestly hierarchy orders the mind by apostolic doctrine and restores purity of mind in the sacraments.

Given that the anagogical hermeneutic points to heaven and hell, its manifestation appears in two ways. The dark side of anagogy is seen in the apostate, who treads upon the realms of societal governance and human dignity and sound teaching in the spirit of Satan to become a
tyrant (or coward) and a schismatic (or heretic) and a hypocrite, reduced to the level of body-and-senses. The bright side of anagogy, by contrast, fuses eschatology with literalism, tropology and allegory to produce signs of divine life and presence by means apt to kingship, evident in the royal aura attendant upon providential victories; apt to prophecy, evident in miraculous power to overturn the curse of the ground; and apt to priesthood, evident in the concrete, supernatural grace effected by celebrating sacramental rites.

The second assertion is that Bede, with the aid of his library, living sources and experience of life, perceives the ethnicities of Britain to be embodiments of the complementary sets of idea and institution, or of social meaning and of social mechanism, present in the archetypes of literal king, tropological prophet and allegorical priest. For him, the Irish cœnobium guided by its abbot exemplifies oneness of community in a tropological mode of being. The English king-in-council in the historical realm of politics implements the liberty and loyalty proper to catholicity. The priestly succession from Rome ensures apostolicity by shaping the mind through doctrinally sound allegory. Now the contrast between the British tyrant/coward, schismatic/heretic and hypocrite at the beginning of Bede’s Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (hereafter HE) and the matured English at the end of the same volume shows the two sides of the life-or-death principle of anagogy, which turns upon the attendance or absence of the manifest presence of God. Associated with this second assertion is the notion that selected individuals, through sage-like contemplation, aspire to the integration of the best features of each archetypes to approach holism.

The third assertion is that Bede’s parsing of theo-social archetypes appears to be motivated by his own yearning for a salvation that would make humans whole by healing every element of human experience. To this end, the archetypes of ethnicity are presented as ways of being that evince differing orientations toward space-time, the relation between the cosmos and
human nature, moral foundations, conflict resolution strategies, the most self-evident truths, theories of knowledge, social relations and institutional structure, and psychological climates pertaining to distinct loci in the brain. Emerging from speculation in this vein, the full mystery of salvation can be seen to transcend the microcosmic, mesocosmic, macrocosmic and ultracosmic realms of the human experience. For it speaks to the subjunctive dread of the contingent creature who, dwelling also in the optative mood, yearns freely to create a stabilising identity. It also speaks to outrage over violations against the imperative of the Golden Rule – outrage boundless in potential, yet bounded by the sorrowfully indicative frame of the mind that admits the need for absolution.

A Diversified Point of Entry into the Study: Seven Profiles of Bede in Secondary Literature

As a point of entry into this study, one may consider seven profiles that are evident in the secondary literature on Bede, which project the many sides of his persona. As a baseline from which opinion develops and deviates, the renowned Charles Plummer (1896) takes Bede to be a recluse, “a saintly scholar-priest” who lives “an uneventful life, spent in a round of religious service and of quiet study”, and who tutors pupils in the sacred faith and writes of its deepest mysteries. Patrick Wormald (1983) embraces this notion also, if not to praise Bede (as might Plummer), then to note how very disaffected he is with the manifestations of the heroic culture all around him. Unlike Bishop Wilfrid, who appropriates Christianity in sympathy with the Germanic cultural ideals of loyalty and ostentation, this type of Bede appears ethereal. He lives apart from Germanic tradition (if not above or beyond it). For unlike Beowulf or Gregory of

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Tours, he reflects precious little of it in his writings.\(^2\) Together, Plummer and Wormald interpret Bede as *contemplator sublimitatis* [a contemplator of sublimity], one who would emulate one upon whom he writes much: St. Cuthbert of Farne Island (d. 686), the anchorite alone with God.

Alan Thacker (1983) proposes a second slant on Bede. In this view, Bede emerges from his contemplative cocoon late in his career as *corrector morium* [reformer of morals]. Thacker notices in Bede’s *Epistola ad Ecgberctum*, and in others of his late works, the ever-increasing regularity with which Bede addresses rectores, doctores and praedictores ecclesiae. Thacker concludes that Bede acts tirelessly to reform monk and bishop, king and society at large. Clare Stancliffe’s (1983) article in the same volume associates this reforming zeal with the Irish, whose impact upon the normally willful English king results in many an abdication to the monastery to pursue peace with God and neighbour. In a similar vein, David Hurst and Lawrence T. Martin, who study Bede’s homilies, show that Bede concerns himself with the spiritual tenor of his monastic peers, gathered to perfect the moral life, without regard for the political connexion or the brilliance of any. His sermons feature the analogy of Scripture in simplicity rather than extended research and citation of the fathers, for Bede addresses a live audience on the existential matter of the Christian life lived in the present.\(^3\)

Ian Wood (2001), however, subsumes Bede’s reforming zeal under the centrifugal motif of mission to arrive at Bede *advocator Dei missionis* [the missionary statesman]. For Wood, there is continuity on that trajectory meant to thicken Christian identity which begins with the initial

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impulse to convert pagans, continues with campaigns to correct apostates, and never ends in its subsequent efforts at the re-Christianisation of culture. In this light, Bede’s *HE* “can be read as a history of the Christianisation of the English kingdoms one by one”, with mission as the “driving force of [his] narrative” to the end of Book Three. As confirmation of this assessment, Wood notes that “missionary activity came to the fore as a historical and hagiographical topic only with Bede’s composition of the [HE]." In this view, Bede writes on the “psychological frontier” to establish among the Germanic sons of Japheth a common front for Jesus Christ that knits church to state, and one state to another. Writing his *HE* with an eye to the Germanic heartland, where Willibrord and Winfrith act as ambassadors of the *ecclesia Anglorum*, Wood’s Bede shows the *gens Anglorum* to have come of age in the faith, unlike the stunted British who keep it to themselves. Wood, in collegial connexion to Walter Pohl’s quest for the historical basis for the cultural identity of Germanic nations, shows the mediaeval missionary to be an apologist for a definitive Germanic-Christian identity to be exported – even to *cynocephali* should they be judged human. David Rollason (2001) joins Wood in observing the prominence of missiological motifs in Bede’s *HE*. He demonstrates that missionary tactics, whether by persuading many of the utility of Christian identity or by assimilating pagans to Christian identity by military means, pertain to the reality of English (and Frankish) missionaries among cognate tribes on the European Continent. Judith McClure’s (1983) interest in the parallel Bede sees between Hebrew and Anglo-Saxon kings also fits well with talk of Bede’s interest in missionaries as ambassadors

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6 *Ibid.*: 265. Wood also writes: “Alcuin is the earliest hagiographer who can be identified as making mission the central issue of a piece of hagiography.” See, *ibid.*, 249.
of Christ and of Christian civilisation. For Bede to see the English as a New Israel implies that he finds a basis for the glory of salvific statehood in his own people and in the mandate to be a light to other nations.\(^\text{10}\) Thus, the overall effect of the missionary work of Boniface and Willibrord is to place the English in a strong position within the missioning network of Christian powers.

Nicholas Higham (2006) finds the missionary motif significant too; yet, he locates Bede’s animating force elsewhere, namely, in an eschatological vision tied to the affairs of the royal court in the immediate present. He finds Bede to be on edge for King Ceolwulf’s sake, whom Bede urges to heed the urgent message of the true agents of history, God and Christ. The message is stark: seek heaven and shun hell, and survive in the meantime. Higham’s prior interest on English-British relations in his trilogy on Bede’s Britain (1994, 1995, 1997) followed by works focused on the British (2007) is instructive here. For just as Higham tells of a racially based caste system at work in early medieval Britain, so also Bede finds the concrete nature of the British fate to be a paragon of poetic justice. The survival-instinct and caste-consciousness fit well together, for both stress the fixity of the cosmos. Peter Darby (2012) also highlights the eschatological motif in Bede, tracing the growth of such tension in his writings. Distress over the loss of Ceolfrith, his abbot, and his own advancing age, in particular, are personal factors that push Bede into a state of urgency. To advance his argument, Darby draws significantly from the rather visceral poem, *De die iudicii*, which exhibits an anxious, anagogical ethos.\(^\text{11}\) In this view, the visceral, zero-sum tension of English-British relations and the stark, sensory impact of poetry, achieved by graphic diction and by metrical rhythm, belong together. The resultant outcome is

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\(^{10}\) Judith McClure, “Bede’s Old Testament Kings,” in Wormald *et al.*, 76, 98.

\(^{11}\) Although J. Fraipont notes that some early scholars credit Alcuin with authorship of this poem, Graham Caie argues for Bedan authorship based on the poem’s motifs, Bede’s interest in poetry and the fact that the full recension is found only in Britain, not on the Continent where Alcuin lived. Although Michael Lapidge suggests the probability of Bedan authorship, he notes in his Jarrow Lecture of 1993, *Bede the Poet*, that the poem’s metrical errors and verbosity are atypical of Bedan poetry. See Fraipont in CCSL 122: 440; Caie, *The Old English Poem ‘On Judgement Day II’* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), 32–35; Lapidge 1993, 21n33; Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600–899* (London: Hambleton, 1996), 17, 366.
the portrayal of Bede as *senescens praedicator iudicii* [aging doomsday prophet], riveted upon concrete matter of survival in eternity.\(^\text{12}\)

In a fifth, rather gritty mode, Walter Goffart denies any alignment between Bede’s declared intent and his purpose for writing the *HE*. On the cusp of the See of York receiving metropolitan status, “the ghost of Bishop Wilfrid” haunts Bede enough for him to engage in the negating propaganda of faint praise that would discreetly diminish Wilfrid’s reputation. For such a Bede prefers a candidate unlike the Wilfridian Acca, someone more amenable to his own taste for the moral stringency of the Irish. Bede’s material interest as the calculating partisan who jockeys for survival comes to the fore. Vicky Gunn casts a similar vision of Bede as a spin-doctor, yet with a much more self-serving agenda than that envisioned by Goffart. For her, Bede is animated by disdain for that-which-is-not-Bede. Rather than pressing for the more remote cause that the “Cuthbertians” should attain metropolitan status, Gunn’s Bede limits his concerns to elevating himself to the abbacy of Wearmouth-Jarrow or his monastery to episcopal status. Her Bede cannot abide the idea that monasteries with lesser doctrinal or disciplinary pedigree, such Lindisfarne and Whitby of the Ionian tradition and the Wilfridian York, Hexham and Ripon already have a bishop. Hence, Bede critiques the Irish and suppresses Wilfrid’s true impact, while praising Wearmouth-Jarrow both directly in specific passages and indirectly in the very fact of his own voluminous output. As for counter-evidence, she contends that Bede concedes a compliment only to the remote or to those whose impact she presumes his audience would find impossible to ignore. Hence, Bede reports Wilfrid favourably when far afield in Sussex and Cuthbert’s reputation remains untainted because of his incorrupt body.\(^\text{13}\) Such a Bede is like the

\(^{12}\) Nicholas Higham, *(Re-*)Reading Bede, 169–72, 184–86, 211–12; Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of the Age* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 198–214.

British he despises – interested, as the bigot is, in himself alone. By the logic that none bound for perdition suspect their own candidacy for hell (or even its existence), the Bede of Goffart and Gunn appears dim to the wider implications of his own message as *aduocator causae localis* [local activist].

Sceptical of Bede’s protested humility, yet convinced of his theological rather than his political intent, Roger Ray and Scott DeGregorio project a sixth profile of the prolific exegete as a would-be *doctor ecclesiae*. According to Ray, Bede has “a profound meeting of the minds with his patristic forerunners” and thinks that he has “become a part of their sometimes querulous company.” In a similar vein, DeGregorio notes that Bede not only makes original contributions to knowledge, but also actually claims to do so in the final remarks of *In Ezram*. This Bede is a confident figure in at least three ways. First, he adds to church tradition by commenting upon biblical material the church fathers had overlooked. He also frames his *HE* as a series of exemplars for no less an audience than the king; and finally, he dares to advise the foremost Northumbrian prelate in his *Epistola Ecgbertum*. Ray and DeGregorio surmise, then, that Bede, the scholarly priest devoted to the ministry of the word, views himself (with warrant) as a fifth father of the Church after Saints Gregory and Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose.

Finally, Charles Jones (reprint 1994) and Margot King (1979), Faith Wallis (1999, 2010) and Calvin Kendall (2008, 2010) all reflect a seventh profile of Bede as a *devoté* to grammar and  

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14 Michael E. Hoenicke Moore’s article is similar to Goffart and Gunn. He says Bede merely names Wearmouth’s culture Roman, without its actually being Roman, to ensure cultural hegemony. See M. Moore, “Bede’s Devotion to Rome: The Periphery Defining the Center,” in *Bède Le Vénérable Entre Tradition et Postérité*, eds. Stéphane Lebecq *et al.* (Lille: Université Charles de Gaulle/ Lille 3, 2002).


to the maths and sciences as the foundations of Christian rationality. By composing works that reflect the spiritual significance of language and of the numerical order in the space and time, Bede as *magister scientiis ecclesiasticis* [master concerning the ecclesiastical sciences] projects the indelible imprint of the divine upon the mind and the material world. The especial importance of precision in paschal calculations is no trifling matter for Bede, but the duty of every priest who would minister at the altar in any place or time. For number allegorically understood, thinks Bede, transcends local language and custom. For him, “comprehension of the physical world” is essential to understanding the identities of “a Christian, a monk and an Englishman.”

**A Contextual Account of Diversity: Varied Private Interests and Shifting Public Taste**

While one may locate evidence for each of the seven profiles of Bede in his corpus, the particular interests of an academic could influence which aspect of Bede to emphasise. This choice of Bedan profile could be based on practicality, as when a scholar takes up a niche not occupied within a field. This choice could stem from preference, as when a scholar seeks to accomplish one purpose, such as the entrenchment of a revisionist perspective, by means of another, the study of an important cultural figure such as Bede. Whereas practical interests likely moved Calvin Kendall and Faith Wallis to describe Bede as *devoté* to grammar and the ecclesiastical maths and sciences; a conscious, personal interest in revisionism appears to animate Vicky Gunn, who leaves her normal scope of interest to write of a Bede as the self-absorbed Anglo-Saxon male. The impact of personal interest may be unconscious also, directed

by the intuitive needs of one’s private life that come to inform one’s professional interests.

Patrick Wormald’s scholarly corpus, which includes works such as *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West* (1998), suggests that he enjoyed ruminating upon the mediæval Christian roots of his own English culture. The reclusive Bede, for Wormald, appears to be a refreshingly contemplative foil to the warlike *Germanitas* of early mediæval times.

The public taste of one’s times may influence a writer also. Thus, Alan Thacker’s thesis of a reforming Bede resonates well with the aftermath of civil rights movements prominent at its first printing; Ian Wood’s thesis of an identity-asserting, pan-Germanic Bede speaks well to the identity-crisis that Walter Pohl discerns in Europe; and likewise, Walter Goffart (and Vicky Gunn) evinces the nebulous post-modernism proper to current times, which resists the role of ideas upon people as though history and commentary were always code for *Realpolitik*. Also, the *Zeitgeist* of imperial Britain may have influenced Charles Plummer’s thesis of an ostrich-like, reclusive Bede, for Plummer wrote from the enclave of Britain in the heyday of British rule, insulated from realities of cultural contention in Africa, India and East Asia. This said, while agency and context influence the selection and perception of fact and interpretation, a consensus has been emerging in academic literature that affirms the plausibility of many profiles of Bede, without also asserting that Bede endures unliveable cognitive dissonance.

**The Status Quaestionis: The Holism of Bede’s Aims**

Granted that the seven profiles portray aspects of Bede tellingly, several anthologies and monographs centred upon Bede and his writings have pointed to, if not outright affirmed, the comprehensive nature of his person and the complementarity of his deepest aims. To this end, G. F. Browne pens a volume entitled *The Venerable Bede: His Life and Writings* (1919), in which he organises his depiction of Bede as an author writing in varied genres, but with the sense
that his work as historian is the apex of his career. A. H. Thompson, editor of *Bede: His Life, Times and Writings*, first printed in 1935, also acknowledges “the wide field” of Bede’s literary oeuvre on Bede as author in numerous genres by various English scholars and two of their German cousins. He remarks that, except for the limited references to Bede as scientific thinker, “little remains to be added” to adequately represent the man in his fullness. *Famulus Christi* (1976), edited by Gerald Bonner, consciously follows in the tradition of the earlier volume, yet addresses the wider setting in which Bede ought to be interpreted, both geographically and temporally, and praises ‘interdisciplinary’ perspectives. It is fitting that contributions from Ireland and France appear alongside those from England and Germany; even as the Anglo-Saxonist, Latinist and Celticist contribute alongside the priest and nun, and the archaeologist, historian and theologian. As for particular comments on Bede’s expansive nature, Roger Ray looks at the hybridity of Bede as exegete and historian, even as Paul Meyvaert praises Bede’s synthetic mind, despite a modernist milieu bent upon causal (analytical) knowledge.

Also consciously following in the tradition of *Bede: His Life, Times and Writings*, R. T. Farrell edits *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England* (1978) in belated commemoration of Bede’s birth rather than of his death. Two of its seven articles specifically deal with Bede himself. The rest register changes in or contributions to scholarly opinion on various aspects of the material culture of Bede’s period. Relevant to the discussion here, however, are articles by Patrick Wormald and Winthrop Wetherbee that showcase Bede’s versatility. Wormald remarks upon how Bede influences the self-understanding of Britain’s Germanic tribes by posing the Christian

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20 For a review of literature on Bede as historian, see Timothy J. Furry, *Allegorizing History: The Venerable Bede, Figural Exegesis and Historical Theory* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 12–43.
faith as the locus of unity. Making the same point from the opposite perspective, Wetherbee notes that Bede has the “unique ability to recognize value in the product of an alien culture and make it serve his own sure Christian purpose”.24

Two Festserffen follow, one for Charles W. Jones (1979) and the other for J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (1983), which contain a series of articles that present Bede in a variety of ways. Saints, Scholars and Heroes (1979) offers articles which deal with Bede in broad terms as grammarian and exegete (Margot King), as exegete and historian (Donald Fry, Thomas MacKay) and as historian and grammarian (Calvin Kendall). Profiles of Bede in essays by Judith McClure, Alan Thacker, and Clare Stancliffe illustrate various ideal types of Bede identified above that, in contrast to Wormald’s article and editorial vision in Ideal and Reality (1983), accent engagement in the cultural realities of Anglo-Frankish society that appear in the evidence left behind.

Beda Venerabilis (1996), edited by L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald, takes the discussion of Bede in the direction of the impact of this one man beyond Britain. Rather than opining that “little remains to be added” as did A. H. Thompson in 1935, Houwen and MacDonald admit “how much there still is to say concerning this giant”.25 In the words of its opening article, Jan Davidse observes that “Bede’s world is as wide as the historia ipsa, which includes not only the past and the present, but also the future”, and that contra the modernists, Bede does not live in tension with himself, nor does he operate with a half-baked notion of history. Instead, his Christocentric vision prompts within him an all-the-more intense interest in history wie es eigentlich gewesen and in Christ’s aims as Narrator-in-Chief at multiple levels of entry into it.26

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24 Winthrop Wetherbee “Some implications of Bede’s Latin Style,” in Farrell, 28; Patrick Wormald, “Bede, Beowulf and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy,” in Wormald, 70; and in Farrell, 69.


Bède le Vénérable entre Tradition et Postérité (2002), edited by Stéphane Lebecq, further presses the breadth of Bede’s person and his impact, with articles from scholars hailing from an even wider variety of nations. The views of George Hardin Brown and Georges Tugène, enfolded together, show Bede charging Anglo-Saxon kings and priests to operate within their proper bounds, on the understanding that each nation (Jew or Gentile, Irish or English) plays its own role, and on the grounds that there are many ways to illustrate God’s salvation.27

Furthermore, contributions from François Dolbeau, Diarmuid Scully, Stéphane Lebecq, and Jennifer O’Reilly in the same volume speak of Bede as “un personnalité complex”, interested in “the unity of believers across time and space and all other divisions”, who, while mining wisdom from the Latin fathers, also unearths the good “de ceux qui professaient des opinions singulières”, such as Aidan and Tyconius, in a way that facilitates insight into Bede’s comprehensiveness and complementary. For Bede wishes to articulate a way of being that maintains rightful loyalties and external forms, without nullifying their inner authenticity.28

Another anthology of note, the extended length of which demonstrates ongoing interest in Bede, is Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald (2009). This volume sets Bede

27 George Hardin Brown writes: “Ce ne’est pas que Bede évite d’habitude de critiquer les mauvais souverains; il ne les épargne pas plus qu’il n’épargne les mauvais prêtres. Mais il faut remarquer qu’il ne fait pas reproches à la prêtrise elle-même; de même, Bède se garde bien de remettre en cause l’institution de la monarchie” [It is not that Bede avoids the custom of criticising evil sovereigns; he spares them no more than he spares evil priests. But one must remark that he does not reproach priesthood itself; just the same, Bede is careful about putting the monarchy in its place]. See G. H. Brown, “Le Commentaire Problématique de Bède sur le Premier Livre de Samuel,” in Lebecq et al., 95. Georges Tugène points to DTB where Bede remarks: uterque populus discretim partes agebant [DTB 2.248–49; CCSL 119A: 48/PL 91: 428A] [each people distinctly plays its part]. See Tugène, “Le Thème des Deux Peuples dans le De Tabernaculo de Bède,” ibid., 83–84.

28 See François Dolbeau, “Épilogue: Travaux Récents sur Bède: Le Point de Vue d’un Philologue,” in Lebecq et al., 321; Diarmuid Scully, “Bede, Orosius and Gildas on the Early History of Britain,” ibid., 37; and Stéphane Lebecq, “Conclusion: Un Bilan Provisoire,” ibid., 332. Jennifer O’Reilly shows that for Bede “full membership of the universal Church does not simply consist in receiving instruction and baptism... from ‘the centre’, but in interiorising and practising what such visible signs of the unity of Christ’s body represent, a process which is continuous and life-long”. See O’Reilly, “Islands and Idols at the Ends of the Earth: Exegesis and Conversion in Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica,” ibid.,141.
in historical context, with five chapters in the midst of nearly thirty on medieval English and Carolingian subjects. The articles by Alan Thacker on Bede’s disdain for the British and by Éamonn Ó Carragáin on the unity of the Ruthwell Cross (that ends with the quotation of Bede below), when taken together, serve to illustrate well both his specificity and expansiveness convinced that

\[ ubi \ mediator \ Dei \ et \ hominum \ est \ corpore, \ ibi \ nimirum \ et \ nunc \ subleuatae \ ad \ caelos \ animae \ et, \ celebrata \ gloria \ resurrectionis, \ colligentur \ etiam \ corpora \ iustorum \]

where the mediator of God and men is in body, there already even now souls are raised to heaven; and, with the glory of the resurrection celebrated, the bodies of the just are also gathered [DST 2.2.259–62].

Most recently, Scott DeGregorio, editor of Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of The Venerable Bede (2006) and its more thematic sequel, The Cambridge Companion to Bede (2010), speaks of the “New Bede”, who is as much an exegete as an historian, and whose works cross-pollinate in a ouevre that shows him to stand in mature, interdependent relationship to his forbears. In the earlier volume, Alan Thacker and Roger Ray observe that Bede plies his scholarly trade equally well in multiple genres, even as Faith Wallis demonstrates Bede’s interest in “permanence”, “predictability” and “consistency”, which reveals a programmatic mind amenable to archetypes; and Calvin Kendall remarks how Bede understands the Christian exegete as “synecdoche of the Church” that each discerns in Scripture. The first five chapters of the latter volume present the situatedness of Bede, followed by a thematic treatment of the genres of his corpus and a segment on its warm reception over time. As a whole, the Cambridge Companion underscores Bede’s versatility and the singularity of his person over space and time.

29 Éamonn. Ó Carragáin, “Chosen Arrows, First Hidden then Revealed: The Visitation-Archer Sequence as a Key to the Unity of the Ruthwell Cross,” in Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald, eds. Stephen Baxter et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 204. CCSL 123A: 168/ PL 90: 185D.
In the midst of many anthologies, a Jarrow Lecture given by R. A. Markus and tomes by three other individual scholars have provided contributions that further the collective witness in favour of Bede’s magnanimity. R. A. Markus remarks in his Jarrow Lecture (1975) that “unification is Bede’s central theme”, while also noting that Bede is “acutely aware of the complexities of the process of its achievement.”\(^{31}\) Now the complexities of which Markus speaks appears front and centre in Peter Hunter Blair’s *The World of Bede*, first printed in 1970. To increase the reader’s esteem for Bede, Blair sets him in the midst of tumultuous times as one unwilling to let the world pass by, and as one who aims for a worldview that accounts for the full gamut of human experience. Challenging the facile though “fashionable” tendency in high modernist times to lampoon Bede for an allegedly puerile perspective, Blair reminds his readers that they, unlike Bede, perceive what they perceive with the benefit of the vast libraries of a literate culture that has transcended nature-religion for over a millennium.\(^{32}\)

Other book-length works on Bede by individual scholars include George Hardin Brown’s *Bede, the Venerable* (1987), its revision entitled *A Companion to Bede* (2009), and Benedicta Ward’s *The Venerable Bede* (1990). Like the later anthologies, these works emphasise Bede’s expansive interests by making the diversity of genre in Bede’s corpus their organising principle for understanding and integrating his legacy. George Hardin Brown comments overtly on this theme, impressed with “Bede’s extraordinary talents for synthesizing and presenting knowledge”. He reaffirms this earlier judgement in his revised account of Bede in the spirit of the very Bede he has studied for years; and remarks that his “new analysis of Bede’s writing and influence synthesizes recent and older critical studies, especially his less well-known writings, and


re-examines his historical, exegetical, pedagogical, and epistolary writings from a unified perspective reached by years of study”.

Bede’s prolific and variegated corpus, understood through the anthologies and monographs cited above, becomes a ring of large windows through which readers may peer from multiple points on the compass in search of Bede’s soul. Even if different persons find in Bede aspects of their own soul, or era, each may still have discovered something particular to Bede as a man dissatisfied with anything less or other than wholeness.

A Holistic View of Diversity: Ethnic Reconciliation and Dynamism vis-à-vis Stasis

Thus far the literature reviewed depicts Bede as a man who lives without psychological breakdown in the midst of contrasting proclivities. The problem arises as to how the diversity of Bedan profile, which suggests dynamism, relates to a stable personality, which suggests stasis. The argument presented here is counter-intuitive in that the many profiles of Bede refer to points of stasis within the human person, and that the matter of holism is dynamic in that one must find a reasonable arrangement that gives each point of stasis its due. The will must have the scope for fealty and freedom; the heart must face no absolute barrier to relationship; and the mind must have the prerogative to recognise the truth amidst of motley mixture of meanings. Several writings in academia suggest that Bede’s way into this insight comes through his wrestling with the matter of inter-ethnic reconciliation within the Church in Britain as she finds her place among God’s own.

Among various authors that concede the overt place of ethnicity in Bede’s quest to express the requisite diversity that makes for the achievement of the fullest unity is H. M. Mayr-Harting. His *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (1976) declares in the preface that he

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consciously draws attention to the many cultural influences that produced Anglo-Saxon Christianity, which fact sets the historical stage for the prominence of ethno-linguistic identity as a motif in Bede’s writing.\(^{35}\) In a similar vein, yet more overtly, Barbara Yorke organises *The Conversion of Britain, 600–800* (2006), which describes the cultural realities of Bede’s day, with subheadings that name each member of his *dramatis personae* \([HE\ 1.1]\)\(^ {36}\). Such historical treatment of Bede’s times point to the inescapable fact of cultural diversity proper to the conversion period of seventh and eighth century Britain, and thus, its importance to Bede.

Michelle Brown (2000) and Clare Stancliffe (2003) note in contributions to the Jarrow Lectures that Bede concerns himself with the grand matter of the reconciliation of the races of Britain, and that ethnicity is the language through which this comprehensive ethos is interpreted. Stancliffe, following Michelle Brown, asserts that the *HE* “should not be seen as a polemical riposte, but rather as a work of reconciliation; one where that which was good in the Roman, Irish and Anglo-Saxon traditions could all be affirmed.”\(^ {37}\) To specify, Stancliffe argues that Bede salvages Iona’s influence upon Northumbria under the rubric of their biblical vision of reality and relational integrity, traits associated with the prophetic ethos articulated in chapter four below.\(^ {38}\)

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\(^{38}\) “But Ireland had a different past, devoid of Graeco-Roman intellectual influence; and its best-known missionary, Patrick, took his ideas form the Bible, not classical tradition, and showed more concern for
Stéphane Lebecq and Olivier Szerwiniack further highlight the significance of specific job descriptions attached to religious roles in Bede’s thought, and of specific content of ethnic ethos as illustrative of universal values that he holds dear. Lebecq informs his readers of how Bede longs for a golden age of local kings and a universal priesthood. Britain becomes

une petite Rome de la périphérie, laboratoire d’une conception nouvelle de l’universalisme romain, et de rois qui avaient un sens aigu de leurs devoirs de princes chrétiens

a little Rome on the periphery, a laboratory of a new conception of Roman universalism and of kings who have an acute sense of the duty of Christian princes so that Bede,

l’homme de son lieu et de son temps a été tellement préoccupé par le bien et le salut d’une Église à la fois singulièr et universelle que son ouvre a eu un tel rayonnement.39

a man of his place and his time, had such a preoccupation with the well-being and salvation of a Church at once particular and universal that his work has such a radiance.

Oliver Szerwiniack shows how Bede applies his ideals beyond religious functions deployed within one entity (ancient Israel) to actual ethnic groups in Britain:

Le message de l’Histoire ecclésiastique est avant tout moral: les Anglo-Saxons doivent retrouver le temps de l’innocence perdue et prendre exemple sur les Irlandais et les fondateurs de l’Église anglaise, s’ils ne veulent pas finir comme les Bretons. ...Les trois peuples qu’il met en scène, Bretons, Irlandais et Anglo-Saxons, ont aussi une valeur allégorique pour l’humanité toute entière à toutes les époques... Cette valeur allégorique ... lui donne une dimension universelle qui explique son succès constamment renouvelé au cours des siècles dans de nombreux pays.40

The message of the *Ecclesiastical History* is above all moral: the Anglo-Saxons must recover the time of innocence lost and take an example from the Irish and the founders of the English Church, if they do not wish to end up like the British... The three peoples that he places on the scene, the British, the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons, also have allegorical value for humanity as a whole from every epoch... This allegorical value... provides a universal dimension that explains his constantly renewed success over the course of centuries in many countries.

Finally, in an article early in his career, Calvin Kendall comments upon Bede’s subtle skill.

Kendall remembers that, though Bede writes history with the intent to write about real people in real time, he is a man well-versed hermeneutics, who expects his initial readership to treat his *HE* in the self-same way that he expects them to read any text, such as his, intended as Holy Tradition.

To uncover spiritual truths which the “letter” sometimes conceals, whether in the Bible or in his narrative of the sixth age in Britain, is part of the exercise of Christian discipline which Bede could expect the learned members of his audience to engage in.\(^{41}\)

All in all, with such insight in mind, it is not surprising that Bede, observing the contended ethno-linguistic realities of his day, would classify secular ethnicity in the language of spiritual truth.

**Chapterisation: A Synopsis of the Study**

This first chapter has presented a review of secondary literature on Bede that centres upon the diversity of his modes of engagement evident in his corpus as historian, hagiographer and homilist; exegete and poet; numerologist and grammarian; and upon the holism of his aims implied in his last major work, his *HE*. Seven profiles emerge that identify Bede variously thus:

1) *contemplator sublimitatis* [contemplator of sublimity]
2) *corrector morium* [reformer of morals]
3) *advocator Dei missionis* [advocate of God’s mission or missionary statesman]
4) *senescens praedicator iudicii* [aging doomsday prophet]

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\(^{41}\) Calvin Kendall, “Imitation and Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica,*” in King and Stevens, 182.
5) _aduocato causa proprio loco_ [advocate for one’s own local cause or local activist]
6) _doctor ecclesiae_ [teacher of the Church]
7) _magister scientiarum ecclesiasticarum_ [master of the churchly sciences].

On the one hand, scholars note the diverse modes of engagement evident in this list of profile, which implies dynamic tensions within Bede’s personality; on the other hand, academics also remark upon his unitive aim, which implies stasis. While one may account for such diversity in Bedan profile as the climatic flux of private or public opinion, it has become the _status quaestionis_ that Bede’s unitive aims must guide one’s view of the real diversity evident in his texts. To navigate between these two poles of dynamism and stasis, some writers hint at the view, clarified in the chapters which follow, that Bede projects the static diversity of fixed loci for motifs projected upon particular ethnicities, with each serving as a unswerving exemplar of a fixed good. Chapters two through five explore this idea formulated at the head of this chapter as the first and second assertions to be demonstrated. Additionally, one also suspects that, given Bede’s unitive aims, he projects the dynamic singularity of holism upon his own _gens Anglorum_ as they perfect their own charism and mature into that of all the others to become the fully spiritual people _par excellence_. Chapters six and seven develop this idea devised as the third notion to be considered.

Now, concerning the methodology of chapters two through five, arguments from association and logical extrapolation, supported by primary source evidence, demarcate archetypical ways of being that Bede projects upon peoples resident in Britain. The provenance of the evidence presented in each chapter pertains to the ethnicity under examination (British, Irish, English, Latinate) and to that section of Bede’s corpus most amenable to the discovery of Bede’s own take on the relevant religious institution (apostasy, prophethood, kingship, priesthood). Fleshing out the content and contours of the resultant theo-social archetypes, each chapter features an orientation to the cosmos and its self-evident values, a social structure and its
preferred strategy to resolve conflict, a psychological climate and its ethical implications. The cluster of associations and arguments of each chapter, in turn, portrays each archetype as a way of being that emphasises a salvific trait that marks the Church in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. There is caveat, however. While reading the chapter on the British, one must bear in mind that Bede’s dark caricature of his people’s enemies is the multipurpose foil that supports his commendation of other peoples. For this reason, the bright side of anagogy is developed separately in chapters three, four and five as a factor of enhancement to the tropological, historical and allegorical modes.

Chapter six reflects upon relationships of enhancement and resistance between the three main archetypes of prophetic abbot, covenantal king and priest in communion with the Apostolic See. The ultimate purpose of this chapter is to establish the parlance of relations of resistance and relations of enhancement, which accounts for the hybridity involved in Bede’s ultimate contrast between the fully apostate British and the fully matured English saint. The British embodiment of all three relationships of resistance makes them the demonic foil to the angelic English, who incarnate the best of all three archetypes in the midst of relationships of enhancement. To illustrate, Bede’s favourite English saint, Cuthbert of Lindisfarne and Farne Island, is singled out for special comment, as are the profiles of Bede presented in this chapter, in order to discern in them the cartography of Bede’s soul en route to self-transcendence, which map locates particular virtues in each way of being social and the integration of all sought by the solitary.42

Finally, chapter seven addresses the third assertion presented above (see above, 2) from themes developed in chapters two through five. The theo-social archetypes of ethnicity appear in

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42 One observes solitary and social tendencies in the life of Jesus (Mk. 1:35–39). Taking Jesus as a model, one may note with Simon Coates that “both Bede and Cassian formulated concepts of ascetic authority which catered for the coenobite but also remained attached to eremitic values”. See Coates, “The Bishop as Pastor and Solitary: Bede and the Spiritual Authority of the Monk-Bishop” in Journal of Ecclesiastical History 47 (1996): 618.
sacred idiom according to their locus of self-evident virtue, their most dramatic mode of witness and their ultimate theological purpose. Afterward, the same theo-social archetypes of ethnicity appear in secular idiom according to their possible locus in the human brain, their natural realm of engagement and the resultant psychological climate. Putting sacred and secular motifs together, one discovers how Bede offers a glimpse into orthodoxy as that dispassionate disposition in communion with God which enables a person to accept creaturely status fully in anticipation of eternal life; that transcends bondage to creaturely dread and that surpasses limiting delight in one’s own creations; that resolves boundless outrage over the brazenness of sin; and that addresses the binding power of guilty sorrow over the losses of all kinds that result from sin.
Ch. 2: Unholiness, the Body and British Apostasy: The Dark Side of Anagogy

Bede’s view of Britain’s first nation forms the bedrock from which he parses the isle’s ethnicities. By judging the British to be apostates, Bede has them serve as an all-purpose foil over against which to praise their subsequently converted Irish neighbours and English overlords, and those previously converted from across the English Channel. One discerns in Bede’s view of his peoples’ chosen enemies a case study in the dark side of anagogy (hell as the eternal death) and of the apprehensive yearning of humanity for everlasting life. For Bede conceives of the British as that hell-bent melee of unholy traits, such as tyranny and cowardice in the face of thereof, which results in slavery to the body-cum-senses. While Bede does expect resurrection in the body [HE 2.1; 3.17, 330], the physicality of salvation stands distinct from the merely physical-sensory existence defended by the amygdalic law of the claw and the fang proper to the British.

Sources by Which to Access and Elaborate upon Bede’s Archetype of the British

To access Bede’s view of the British, several sources are especially apropos. First among them is Bede’s HE itself, which associates the British explicitly with apocalyptic motifs, such as carnality and violence, rampant heresy and schism, demonic possession and damnation. A source useful to trace the formation of Bede’s perception of the British is Gildas’ De excidio Britanniae [DEB], for Bede identifies Gildas the Briton as an insider and character witness who pronounces authoritatively against his own people [HE 1.22]. Third, given that St. John’s Apocalypse and the Catholic epistles zero in upon apostasy at the end of time, Bede’s commentary on these works affords the modern reader ample opportunity to unpack Bede’s perspective on the British, albeit indirectly. Finally, De dei iudicii is a poem that evokes the raw physicality and life-and-death urgency of the anagogical motif of damnation as understood in the eighth-century, valid as an
illustration of the early Anglo-Saxon thought world, whether Bede or Alcuin is the author.¹

Secular and Sacred Grounds for Bede’s Unqualified Disapproval of the British

There is also a bright side to anagogy, associated with joyous victory of the holy ones over evil, which results in bodily life forever (Apoc. 19). In Bede’s primary source, the Bible, only God is holy because only God is life (Gen. 1:1–31 cf. John 1:1–4), who stands above, beyond and apart from non-life. To be holy, then, is to be filled with the life principle, that is, with God.² By contrast, Bede understands the British by means of the dark and unholy side of anagogy: the disintegrating and sin-filled principle of death and hell (which is the ever-conscious dying). For without God, who is life, the British apostate is driven by demons to the physical level of the beast who enters the ground forever (Eccl. 3:21). And thus Bede follows St. Peter, who says of the apostate: velut inrationabilia pecora naturaliter in captionem et in perniciem [2 Pet. 2:12]. For to Bede, the British infidels are like brute beasts naturally caught and destroyed by the royal English hunter anointed of God to protect his people from wolves unable to hold sound doctrine, to behave uprightly or to accept civil governance.

One factor that accounts for the visceral force of this judgement of Britain’s first Christians is the inevitable animus between conqueror and conquered. For each views the other as part of the hostile, physical environment to be subjected or held at bay. To survive without fear, one must protect crops from vermin, kill wolves and rid the land of enemies. Thus, at the outset of Bede’s HE, readers meet the British in a constant state of war that culminates in their subjection by the descendents of Hengist and Horsa [HE 1.2–16]. At the end of his HE, the inter-ethnic

¹ See above, 6n11.
² Consider the following Johannine texts as affirmation of the point that salvation and life are connected. Believers are “born...of God” (Jn. 1:12–13), “born again” or “born from above” (Jn. 3:7), and have “rivers of living water” within (Jn. 7:38–39) because Jesus said: “I have come that you might have life” (Jn. 10:10).
nature of Bede’s animus toward the British reappears in the context of Ecgbert’s planned missionary activity on the Continent. Bede comments thus:

\[
Quarum in Germania plurimas nouerat esse nationes, a quibus Angli uel Saxones, qui nunc Britanniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur; unde hactenus a uicina gente Brettonum corrupte Garmani nuncupantur. Sunt autem Fresones, Rugini, Danai, Hunni, Antiqui Saxones, Boructuari [HE 5.9/476].
\]

Of which [Ecgbert] had known there to be very many nations in Germany, from whom the race of Angles and Saxons (who now inhabit Britain) know to derive their race and origin; hence even to this point they are corruptly called ‘Garmani’ by the race of the British, their neighbours. Now these are the Frisians, Rugians, Danes, Huns, Old Saxons, and Boructuari.

While Bede’s overt purpose is to trace the common ancestry between various Continental tribes and his own people, he also highlights the foreignness of the British as “neighbours” rather than as a cognate race. For the very meaning of the term that unites the Germanic tribes – *Germani* – means “brothers”, suggesting that *Brettones* are not ethnic family. Bede then completes his thought by deploying the term *corrupte* to entrench the idea that the British are not only of alternative stock, but uncultured aliens also. For what else could they be who garble Latin, the tongue of the universal brotherhood, the church?

To imply that Bede views the British as merely uncultured philistines is an understatement. Instead, Bede links the English problem of British hostility to the life-and-death struggle between man and beast. Indeed, Bede’s commentary upon James 3:15 locates in the earthly realm the contentious spirit of those who fight against God and men. Bede writes:

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3 The translator of Bede’s *HE* into Old English omits this clause: *unde hactenus a uicina gente Brettonum corrupte Garmani nuncupantur* [hence even to this point they are wrongly named ‘Garmani’ by the neighbouring race of the British] [*OEB* 1.2: 408–09]. This omission suggests that in Alfred’s time (d. 899) the English may not have wished to acknowledge the British perspective at all, or their status as neighbours. One may also note that *gar* is “spear” in *OE*, and *sax* is “knife”.

Deservedly, therefore, contentious and proud wisdom is recalled to be earthly, animal, and diabolical... being deluded justifiably by a malignant spirit, one turns to mad and harmful things.

Again similar sentiments appear elsewhere in Bede’s corpus:

\[ \text{Vnde bene cum dixisset, et vita erat lux hominum [Jn. 1:4]. subiunxit et de his qui ab humanae conditonis honore procul recedentes conparati sunt iumentis insipientibus et similis facti sunt illis atque ideo recte ueritatis luce priuantur [HOM 1.8.93-98].} \]

Whence it is good that when he had spoken, “And the life was the light of men” [Jn. 1:4], he added also (a point) about those who, nearly receding from the honour of the human condition, are compared to foolish livestock, and have become like them, and thus rightly deprived of the light of truth.

The connexion is clear, for Bede, between sound doctrine (light) and the prospect of salvation afforded to the human being (life), created above the estate of animals. Conversely, rejection of rightly guided conscience reduces a people, such as the British, to the level of livestock.

The animal-like person appears yet again when Bede comments on the divine command to Noah that he should cultivate the earth. Bede writes:

\[ \text{Contra naturam quippe superbire est ab aequali uelle timeri, et tamen necesse est ut rectores a subditis timeantur, quando ab eis Deum minime timeri deprehendunt. In eo enim quod metum sibi a peruerse uiuentibus exigunt, quasi non hominibus sed animalibus dominantur, quia uidelicet ex qua parte bestiales sunt subditi, ex ea debeat etiam formidini iacere substrati [IG 2.2095-2101].} \]

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4 CCSL 121: 209/ PL 93: 30D.
5 CCSL 122: 54-5/ PL 94: 40C.
6 CCSL 123A: 131/ PL 91: 107B.
To wish to be feared by an equal is indeed to vaunt contrary to nature; and yet rulers must be feared by their subjects, when [rulers] perceive that they fear God not at all. For in that rulers exact fear of themselves from those those living perversely, they dominate their subjects as though animals, and not men; for clearly since they have been subdued as beasts; for this reason, they must also lie prostrate in awe.

For Bede, the English ruler has no choice but to inspire dread in the subjected British to maintain order. The British, as a people descended to the physical state, are not equals. Instead, as cowherds the English rulers must prod the indigenous people with the goad of law-and-order.

Several modern writers comment on the inequitable social reality of British-English relations in the early mediæval times known to Bede. Leslie Alcock and Nicholas Higham assert that in fully conquered areas, English overlords simply executed the political class of the British in order to rule an underclass of valuable peasant labour.\(^7\) Slaves outnumbered the free in early England; and, as Richard Abels notes, slaves were chattel without the right to self-defence.\(^8\)

In western areas not fully conquered, Martin Grimmer and Alex Woolf report that the British survived as free men with unequal access to the law. Over time, many British lost control of their lands through a legal mechanism that required British defendants to pay damages to English plaintiffs at a higher rate, and English defendants to pay damages to British plaintiffs at a lower rate.\(^9\) Such a mechanism accounts both for the desire to shed a British identity and for the presence of British among the Anglo-Saxons – evident in place names and law codes of predominantly English areas. It also explains the surprising lack of British influence on the speech patterns and vocabulary of the English. Unlike the Visigoth, the Frank, the Norman, the


Lombard and the Rus, the Anglo-Saxon warrior caste refused the language of the conquered.\textsuperscript{10}

The second factor that accounts for Bede’s association of the British with the dark side of anagogy is the need for the English conquerors’ hegemony to be justified in terms of the very Christian religion that they come, by a circuitous route, to share with the conquered British. For this purpose, Bede turns to a source of British provenance in his own library: Gildas’ \textit{DEB}. While Gildas (d. 570) writes his \textit{DEB} as an insider hoping to shock his own people from complacency to greater faithfulness to God, Bede uses his testimony in a new context as though Gildas were a whistleblower whose testimony has become admissible in a foreign court.\textsuperscript{11} As noted above, Bede’s people systemically expunged British identity, whether decisively by military means or gradually by a legal process calibrated to elevate alpha \textit{Angli} over beta \textit{Brettones}. Although the matter comes down to warlike aggression between two peoples claiming the same land and resources, Bede opts to articulate this stark reality in churchly idiom.

Gildas, the first barbarian to write his nation into the biblical story,\textsuperscript{12} models for Bede the anagogical reading of a people’s history. In his opening paragraphs, Gildas writes:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ne quis me affectu cunctos spernentis omnibusue melioris, quippe qui commune honorum dispendium malorumque cumulum lacrimosis querelis defleam, sed condolentis patriae incommoditabus miseriisque eius ac remedias condelectantibus edicturum putet...}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Videbamque etiam nostro tempore, ut ille defleuerat, solam sedisse urbem viduam, antea populis plenam, gentium dominam, principem provinciarum, sub tributo fuisse factam [Lam. 1:1], \textit{id est ecclesiam}...}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ista ego et multa alia ueluti \textit{speculum} quoddam uitae nostrae in scripturis ueteribus intuens, conuertabar etiam ad nouas, et ibi legebam clarium... ueritatate firmius inlucscenete. Legebam... dominum dixisse: “non ueni nisi ad oues perditas domus Israhel” [Mt. 15:24]. Et e contrario: “filii autem regni huius eicientur in tenebras exteriore” [Mt. 8:12] [\textit{DEB} 1.1, 5, 7–8/87–88].\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{10} Nicholas Higham, “Introduction,” \textit{ibid.}, 15. See also, Bryan Ward-Perkins, esp. 523–29.

\textsuperscript{11} Goffart 1988, 299. For Goffart, Bede’s \textit{HE} uses three literary models: \textit{DEB}, \textit{VG} and \textit{VV}.

\textsuperscript{12} Alan Thacker, “Bede and History,” in DeGregorio 2010, 173.
Lest anyone should suspect that all I am about to say [is said] with the sentiment of spurning or [being] better than everyone; seeing that I mourn with lamenting tears the loss of the common good and the cumulation of evils, [let him think], rather, [that it is said with the sentiment of] consoling the adverse miseries of my fatherland, and of delighting in remedies...

And I could see that in our time too, just as [Jeremiah] had lamented that “the city” (that is, the church) “sat solitary, as a widow; formerly full of people, mistress of the Gentiles, prince of provinces, now is made tributary” [Lam. 1:1]...

Reflecting on these and many other things in the ancient scriptures [Old Testament] as in the same mirror of our own life; I began to turn to the new [New Testament] also, and began to read there... with the truth illuminating more clearly. I read... that the Lord said: “I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel” [Mt. 15:24]. And on the other hand: “but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness...” [Mt. 8:12].

Bede observes Gildas making several connexions in the text bolded for emphasis. Gildas assumes to himself the role of apocalypticist.14 This is seen in the parallel drawn between Jeremiah, who mourns Jerusalem’s debased state, and Gildas, who mourns widespread evil in Britain [defleam/ ille defluerat]. Bede also observes Gildas’ pesher hermeneutic. He reads his own British people into the sacred texts as though biblical times were a mirror of Gildas’ own time [speculum/ nostro tempore]. One observes this motif developed in DEB when Gildas proceeds to decry British leaders after the manner of the Hebrews prophets, who discredit Israel’s leaders. Gildas writes:

Reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos; iudices habet, sed impios [DEB 27.1/99].

Britain has kings, but they are tyrants; she has judges, but they are wicked.

And completes his message by denouncing men in holy orders also:

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13 The quotation of Lam. 1:1 is not verbatim. Latin text of DEB and page numbers are from Winterbottom.
Sacerdotes habet Britannia, sed insipientes; quam plurimos ministros, sed
impudentes; clericos, sed raptores subdolos [DEB 66.1/118]

Britain has priests, but they are unwise; very many ministers, but they are shameless;
clerics, but they are treacherous thieves.

The biblical parallel between Gildas’ people and the Israelites is made all the more explicit as
Gildas bemoans the sensate state of British priests. He asks:

*Quis uero eorum uel in extirpationem usque ad internicionem de terra repromissionis
septem gentium morali intellegentia uel ad constabilitationem spiritualis Israhel pro
eis Iesum Naue imitatus est [DEB 70.1/121]?*

Who among (the British priests) imitated Joshua, son of Nun, in the moral sense
either in the extirpation to the point of the slaughter of the seven races from the land
of promise, or toward the establishment of the spiritual Israel in their place?

With such remarks, Gildas fosters in Bede the notion that a Gentile people may read themselves
into sacred history and that the British practice of the Christian religion tends toward corruption
for its failure to confront sin definitively.

Again, Bede observes Gildas’ noting that the Lord Jesus [*dominum*] carries forward the
motif of judgement upon apostasy into the very Church Age that Gildas and Bede himself share.

At this point, Bede faces a problem with Gildas’ text. For while Gildas’ own British are judged
as lax in their faith, Bede’s Germanic forbears debut in Gildas’ text as *ferocissimi illi nefandi
nominis Saxones deo hominibusque invis* [DEB 23.1/97] [Fiercest men of that unspeakable name,
the Saxons, hated by man and God].

Which people is it, then, who merit God’s most severe
judgement? Gildas’ view of the Germanic residents of Britain who honour their traditional gods
hardly squares with Bede’s vision of his own people as foreordained to rule Britain in the name
of God as *reges Christianissimi*. Gildas unwittingly enables Bede to resolve the tension over

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15 See also, Scheil 2004, 147.
16 Perhaps, if Bede followed Higham’s view that Gildas’ anonymous king more powerful than
Maglocunus was a Saxon, he would have more to dislike. Bede did, after all, prefer the term *Angli* to
*Saxones* for its pejorative sense. See Higham 1995, 17, 35.
suitable referents for ancient archetypes by tagging the British as morally bankrupt rebels who resist a rightful foreign ruler. He writes:17

*Haec erecta cervice et mente, ex quo inhabitata est, nunc deo, interdum civibus, nonnumquam etiam transmarinis regibus et subiectis ingrata consurgit. Quid enim deformius quidque iniquius potest humanis ausibus vel esse intromitti negotium quam deo timorem, bonis civibus caritatem, in alitore dignite positis absque fidei detrimento debitum denegare honorem et frangere divino sensui humanoque fide, et abiecto caeli terraeque metu propris adinuentionibus aliquem et libidinibus regi?* [DEB 4.1/90]

This [people], being-stiffnecked and high-minded from the time [Britain] was inhabited, has thanklessly risen up now against God, now against the citizenry, sometimes [lit. not never] even against kings from overseas and their subjects. For what more deformed and what more iniquitous dealing can be introduced by brash men, than to deny reverence to God, charity to good citizens, due honour to those set in higher dignity (except to the detriment of the faith); and to break faith with good sense divine and human; and, casting away dread of heaven and earth, to be ruled each one by his very own predilections and passions?

With the bolded remarks on record from a British source, Bede can substitute his own English for “kings from overseas” without any pang of conscience. Just as easily, he can interpret the British to be that baser sentiment incarnate which, left unchecked, could lead to the mayhem of anarchy as each follows his own path without thought for the stabilising values of loyalty, justice and truth.

Armed with Gildas’ categorical judgement of the British, Bede reverses Gildas’ judgement of the Germanic people as *deo hominibusque inuisi* [hated by God and men] [DEB 23.1/97] and fixes it to the British, who are those putatively hateful to the men God has appointed to lead.

Recording the initial contact between the British and the English in the south, Bede writes:

*Placuitque omnibus cum suo rege Uurtigerno, ut Saxonum gentem de transmarinis partibus in auxilium uocarent; quod Domini nutu dispositum esse constat, ut ueniret contra improbos malum...*

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Siquidem, ut breuiter dicam, accensus manibus paganorum ignis iustas de sceleribus populi Die ultiones expetiit, non illius inpar qui quondam a Chaldaeis succensus Hierosolymorum moenia, immo aedificia cuncta consumsit. Sic enim et hic agente impio victore, immo disponente iusto Judice, proximas quasque ciuitates agrosque depopulans, ab orientali mari usque ad occidentale nullo prohibente suum continuauit incendium, totamque prope insulae pereuntis superficiem obtexit [HE 1.14–15/48, 52].

All, including their king Vortigern, agreed that they should summon the Saxons to their aid from across the seas; it is clearly evident that this was the will of God so that evil might come against the ne’er-do-wells...

Indeed, briefly put, the fire lit by the hands of the [English] heathen exacted the just vengeance of God on the [British] people for its crimes, not unlike [the fire] once kindled by the Chaldeans, which consumed the walls of Jerusalem, or rather all her buildings. For thus here [in Britain] also, with the impious victor acting, or rather the just Judge disposing, their firestorm continued, depopulating all neighbouring cities and fields, with none prohibiting [them] from the eastern to the western sea, and it covered nearly the entire surface of the perishing island.

Here Bede discerns that God allows his own Germanic ancestors to serve as the rod of divine wrath, though serving false gods, after the manner of Jeremiah the Prophet who discerns the same role for the pagan Babylonian against faithless Israel (Jer. 36:29–31; 2 Chron. 36; see also Isa. 10:5). For like Esau, the Brettones sell their birthright as rulers of southern Britain to the English mercenaries (Gen. 25:29–34; Heb. 12:16–17), rather than muster the energy to help themselves [HE 1.15]. Also, like the lazy steward of parabolic fame who buries his master’s coin only to have it given to a busy steward, so also do the British forfeit divine favour by burying the gospel among their own people only to have God transfer his favour to the English (cf. Mt. 25:14–30).18

Blending these biblical motifs, Bede writes that British segnitia [slackness] convinces the

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18 Gildas writes: Quia non tam fortissimorum militum enuntiare trucis belli pericula mihi statutum est quam desidiosorum [I speak not so much to declare the dangers of the bravest soldiers of savage war as to declare (the dangers) of the indolent][DEB 1.2/87]. Later on he continues: In proverbium et derisum longe lateque efferretur quod Britanni nec in bello fortes sint nec in pace fideles [It became a proverb and derision far and wide that the British are not brave in war, nor faithful in peace][DEB 6.2/91].
English to arrive in greater numbers and, in league with the northern Pictish, to oust them from their southern lands. Indeed, Bede’s presentation of British indolence also appears in Alcuin, who takes up the theme in the next generation, even after the British do embrace Roman *pascha* in 768. For Alcuin begins his epic on the metropolitan See of York thus: *urbis tunc tenuit sceptum gens pigra Britonum* [The lazy race of the British then held the sceptre of the city][VPRS line 4].

Bede’s sentiment *contra Brettones* appears all the more intense when he recounts the English conquest of British lands in his native northeast at the end of Book One. Bede writes:

> *His temporibus regno Nordanhymbrorum praeuit... Aedilfrid, qui plus omnibus Anglorum primatibus gentem uastauit Brettonum; ita ut Saul... conparandus uideretur, excepto dumtaxat hoc, quod diuinae erat religionis ignarus. Nemo... in regibus plures eorum terras, exterminatis uel subiugatis indigenis, aut tributarias genti Anglorum, aut habitabiles fecit. Cui merito poterat illud, quod benedicens filium patriarcha in personam Saulis dicebat, aptari: “Beniamin lupus rapax, mane comedet praedam et uespere diuidet spolia”* [HE 1.34/ 116].

At this time, Æthelfrith... ruled over the realm of the Northumbrians, who devastated the race of the British more than all the leading men of the English to the extent that he might be compared to Saul... excepting only this: that he was ignorant of the divine religion. For, having exterminated or subjugated the indigenous peoples, no one... among the [English] kings made many lands [of the British] tributary to, or as settlements for the race of the English. To him it might justly be applied, that which the patriarch, blessing his son in the person of Saul, uttered: “Benjamin, a ravenous wolf, will devour the prey in the morning, and in the evening divide the spoils.”

As Alan Thacker reads the account above, he finds that Bede identifies with Æthelfrith because of his need to locate the threat of the chaos that undermines stable government and sound doctrine in his own day. Thacker writes:

> The gloating reference to Æthelfrith’s executing a savage vengeance on the perfidous Britons in the guise of Saul the Benjaminitie, long after the commentary [on First Samuel] was written, suggests that the link between the book of Samuel and the Britons was deeply embedded in Bede’s mind. The fact that the perfidious heretics and Jews were seen as both contemporary and threatening is clearly significant.
If these connections are right, they suggest that the Britons and those allied with them loomed large in Bede’s eyes as a problem, still near at hand and threatening, perhaps indeed still relatively numerous in Northumbria and a cause of division within the ruling elite.¹⁹

If Bede harbours such angst, as Thacker discerns, what could be more amenable to his reading of his own people as godly rulers than for him to tag a foreign people as upstarts and traitors?

Now combining inarticulate animus and the articulate trope of the apostate, Bede recounts the static cause of British-English relations in narrative terms. The British become an underclass because they lose divine favour on account of their chronic carnality that makes them susceptible to spiritual disease. Bede opens his narrative explicitly acknowledging the Brettones as the first and sole residents who arrive on the island of Brittanis in the unrecorded past. This primacy might be taken to imply legitimacy of tenure; but this is not so. Instead, it merely fixes a height of legitimacy from which the British surely tumble.

Two characters in particular establish such a height: King Lucius and Alban martyr. King Lucius, the first British Christian to be named in Bede’s HE, requests conversion from Pope Eleutherius by letter and then governs a Christian people in idyllic conditions. Bede writes:

_Susceptamque fidem Brittani usque in tempora Diocletiani principis inuiolatam integramque quieta in pace seruabant [HE 1.4/24]._

The British preserved the faith received, inviolate and entire, in quiet peace until the times of Emperor Diocletian.

One notes from the central idea of the sentence – _usque... servabant [preserved... until]_ – that the British become a people, fallen from a state of grace, who do not exhibit true sincerity of belief.

The modifiers of the direct object – _inuiolatam integramque [inviolate and entire]_ – further imply that the British will not maintain the apostolic faith whole, insinuating that they corrupt it with heresy, or truncate it by refusing the synodical judgements of Rome. Finally, the adverbial aspect

¹⁹ Alan Thacker, “Bede, the Britons and the Book of Samuel,” in Baxter _et al._, 144.
of the clause *quieta in pace* [in quiet peace] describes how they preserved the faith. It shows the contrast to their later tendency to express contempt for duly constituted political authority established by God – first the Roman, and then the English governing classes. Gildas himself supplies Bede with such judgement in his complaint regarding infidelity in Britain after the Romans leave: *Insula nomen Romanu nec tamen morem legemque tenens* [DEB 13.2/93] [The island was still Roman in name, but not by law and custom].

Alban, for his part, is the first personage over whom Bede lingers; and he does so, following Gildas, to describe the early purity of British faith [DEB 10.1–2, 11.1/92]. For Alban becomes a Christian *integro ex corde* [fully from the heart], who resolves to withstand the pagans through a red baptism of blood [HE 1.7].

But after Lucius and Alban, British faith does not last long before sin takes root. For in *HE* 1.8, the serpent of heresy enters explicitly as the British face times of “Arian insanity” [*Arrianae uaesaniae*]. One heresy then leads to others. Bede explains:

\[Hac quasi via pestilentiae trans oceanum patefacta, non mora, omnis se lues hereseos cuiusque insulae noui semper aliquid audire gaudenti et nihil certi firmiter obtinenti infudit [HE 1.8/34, 36].\]

With the way of every disease having opened across the ocean without delay, by it there poured in[to Britain] the vile heresies of an island which both always delights in hearing something new and holds firmly to nothing sure.

As the physical body becomes susceptible to multiple diseases after a breach of its defences, so also does Arianism lead to other heresies that undermine the spiritual health of the British.

With their spiritual health compromised, Bede finds that the British will always need external support against threats physical and spiritual – both at the beginning of the story in

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20 Gildas further shows Britain to have produced Maximus, *non legitime sed ritu tryannico* [not legitimately, but by tyrannical rite], one who would overthrow Rome [DEB 13.2/93].
21 Stephen J. Harris notes that rather than identifying him as *Albanus Bretto* [Alban the Briton], Bede introduces him thus: *Albanum egregium fecunda Britannia profert* [Fruitful Britain produces the illustrious Alban]. His Christian identity masks the lot of his race, for Britain also produces Bede himself. See Harris, *Race and Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Francis G. Gentry (New York: Routledge, 2003), 57.
22 Cf. Gildas: *Ariana perfidia, atrox ceu anguis* [Arian treason, like a vicious viper] [DEB 12.3/93].
HE 1.14–16 and at the end in HE 5.18. After a series of invasions and requests for aid, the British do not muster the courage to resist the advance of pagan peoples or heretical teachers. Twice Germanus of Auxerre appears from the Continent upon invitation to oust the Pelagians and turn back the Pictish and Saxons in a miraculous victory without blood\(^\text{23}\) [HE 1.17–22]. Germanus is significant to Bede, who grants him considerable attention.\(^\text{24}\) As Ian Wood discerns, Bede’s purpose for lingering upon Germanus, and for adjusting the time of Germanus’ mission is strategic.\(^\text{25}\) He maintains his focus upon Germanus to project a parallel between the multiple times the British require military assistance and the multiple times they require spiritual help. In fact, even when some of the British do come to their senses – metaphorically speaking – at the end of Bede’s narrative, they require outside help. Bede writes:

Denique Aldhelm... scripsit, iubente synodo suae gentis, librum egregium aduersus errem Bretonum, quo uel pascha non suo tempore celebrant, uel alia perplura ecclesiasticae castitati et paci contraria gerunt, multosque eorum, qui Occidentalibus Saxonibus subditi erant Brettones, ad catholicam dominici paschae celebrationem huius lectione perduxit [HE 5.18/514].

Thus Aldhelm... obeying the synod of his own race wrote a book against the egregious error of the British (by which they either celebrate Easter not at the proper time, or by which they do rather many things contrary to ecclesiastical purity and peace); and he led many of them, who were British subjected to the West Saxons, to the catholic celebration of the Lord’s paschaltide by this reading.

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\(^{23}\) This anecdote recalls the biblical story of Jehoshaphat’s battle with Moab, at which choristers sing their way to victory (1 Chron. 20). The British lose a bloodless victory to the Romans in 1.3.

\(^{24}\) Others to whom Bede grants significant attention include Gregory and Augustine [HE 1.23–33; 2.1–3], Paulinus [HE 2.9, 12–14, 16–18, 20], Aidan [HE 3.3–6, 14–17], Theodore [HE 4.1–3, 5–6, 17, 21, 28; 5.8], Cuthbert [HE 4.27–32], Wilfrid [HE 3.25, 28; 4.12–13, 16, 19; 5.19] and John of Beverley [HE 5.2–6].

To maintain his ethnic typology, Bede cannot acknowledge the British as the source of their own amelioration. They must have external help. In this case, the dim-witted British acquire the aid of an Englishman who enables them to absorb, by the yoke of discipline, the change of heart that they cannot achieve through coherent thought or the spark of initiative.\textsuperscript{26}

In sum, given the inherent tension between the English and British and the rhetorical opportunity afforded by Gildas, Bede opts to view the British not as a noble type of the chosen people of God, but as apostate Israel or as the culpable, Christ-rejecting Jew. By contrast, he views Woden’s people not as a type of the inveterate enemy of Jesus’ people, but the rod of divine wrath and as a tribe in the Church Age yet to hear the gospel preached.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{The Apostate as Pragmatic: Subjunctive Contingency, Immediacy and Pragmatism}

Having established that Bede views the British through a darkened anagogical lens, the task at hand is to define the content of the archetype of the apostate, and to illustrate such content by means of Bede’s comments on the British and on apostasy. Perhaps the most foundational trait of outlaws at the end of time is that they indwell the subjunctive mood’s preoccupation with contingency. Everything for the ideal type of the apostate is about the precariousness of life in the face of clear and present danger. Speech about metaphysical dogma or a morality of deference to other persons is superstructural non-sense to them. Instead, the scope of their attention is as immediate as the ground underfoot and the time it takes to draw one’s next breath. The only basis for assessment of life’s circumstance is pragmatism: what works to keep one alive.

\textsuperscript{26} Barbara Yorke notes that the clergy of Dumnonia assisted Aldhelm in southwest England. Furthermore, greater co-operation between British and English appears in the archaeology of the West Midlands, where the Anglo-Saxon practice of burying gravegoods appears to have tapered under British Christian influence. See Barbara Yorke, \textit{The Conversion of Britain: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain c. 600–800} (London: Pearson–Longman, 2006), 120.

Arguments from traditional beliefs, from abstract values or from mandated authority commissioned to effect the peace pale in comparison to arguments from material necessity.

Indeed, to lead one’s life through the darkened lens of anagogy is to lead life in the interrogative mode ever attentive to shifting sensory data: such a person trusts nothing and no one, and questions all things.

The contingency implicit in the spectre of eternal dying in hell is graphically described in the Northumbrian poem of eight-century, *De die iudicii*:

> Quid tu in sorde iaces, scelerum caro plena piaclis?
> Cur tua non purgas lacrimis peccata profusis
> Et tibi non oras placidae fomenta medelae?
> Fletibus assiduis est dum data gratia flendi,
> Paenituisse iuuat tibi nunc et flere salubre est.

> Quid, caro, quid facies, illa quid flebilis hora,
> Quae modo vae! misera seruire libidine gaudes
> Luxuriaeque stimulis te tuae agitabis acutis.

> Vox ibi nulla sonat, dirus nisi fletus ubique;
> Non nisi tortorum facies ibi cernitur ulla.
> Non sentitur ibi quicquam nisi frigora, flammae.
> Fetur praeningenti complet putredine nares;
> Os quoque flammiuomo lugens implebitur igne,
> Et uermes lacerant ignitis dentibus ossa

Why, O flesh, replete with the wickedness of crimes, do you lie in filth?
Why do you not purge your sins with profuse tears,
And plead for yourself the poultsice of a soothing remedy?
While the grace of weeping with perpetual tears is granted,
It is helpful to have repented already, and healthful to weep.

What, O weeping flesh, what will you do at that hour?
Alas! What you rejoice to serve now with wretched lust
Will vex you with the pointed prickings of luxury, also.

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No voice sounds there, except deep sobbing everywhere;
Not ever a face is discerned there except that of the torturers [or tortured].
Nothing is felt there except the freezing and the flames.
The stench of putrid decay fills the nostrils;
One’s moaning mouth [taste], also will be filled with flame-vomiting fire,
And worms eat away at bones with fiery fangs.

The strident vocabulary and sensory nature of the poetic genre is especially suited to establish the psycho-sensory reality of hell’s horrors through the medium of every sense. If a physical-sensory life is all that reprobates want, a physical-sensory life is all that reprobates will ever know. For the author of this poem, all must accept the remedy of holy fear and of the godly sorrow that follows. Otherwise, the matter of contingency looms as each must face the eternal reality of sensory data far too vivid too handle as each one cries: If only I had heeded more than my senses!29

On the matter of immediacy of scope, it is instructive that Bede does not portray any British person (except for Ninian) outside the island of Britain, or interested in what lies beyond Britain, after the British first land on the island’s shores from Armorica. One suspects that Bede finds them particularly parochial, like a stone immovably at rest, and so dense that it will not yield to the artisan’s chisel. Space for the British is the soil underfoot. As for the British sense of time, they discontinue their past purity and are impervious to what makes for a better future in time: peace with God and their neighbours. Rather than address extremi discrimen examinis [the decisive point of ultimate examination], words by which Bede depicts The Day of Doom while describing an icon in his Historia abbatum, they hope to avoid the fact heads will roll in eternity,

29 Thomas O’Loughlin notes how Bede, more than previous authors, reflects upon the five senses several times in his corpus. See O’Loughlin, Teachers and Code-Breakers (Turnhout, Brepols: 1998), 198.
if they do not embrace a wider perspective of time. As noted, for Bede, the British are all-too-sensitive to novelties that appear from moment to moment [HE 1.8/ 34, 36] (see above, 35–36).

The pragmatic basis of assessment proper to the apostate is seen in Bede’s interpretation of Pelagianism in his comment on St. Jude’s epistle (vv. 20–21). Bede writes:

*Ita igitur nos admonet beatus Judas... ne quis iuxta dogma Pelagianum a se ipso se saluari posse pronuntiet... ne forte cum his qui spiritum non habent ideoque animales perseverant, a sanctae ecclesiae societate segregemur [IEC Jude: 250–51, 255–59].*

So Blessed Jude, therefore, admonishes us... lest anyone, according to the Pelagian dogma, should announce that he can be saved by himself... lest perchance, with those who have not the Spirit, we be separated from the society of the holy church and thus persist as animals.

For Bede, to isolate oneself from the Church is to dwell in a state of matter over mind as beasts concerned only for survival that interpret life in pragmatic terms attentive only to their own perception of data.

**The Apostle as Fearful: The Stark Physicality of Organic Authority**

Life within the psychological biome of fearfulness follows naturally from the worldview of the apostate that emphasises the contingency of life. For without a stable basis of interpretation, one faces even the immediate present as an unknown, and one yearns all the more for the sensation of joy in triumph. Within this matrix of fear of death and joy over life, it follows that

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30 Bede shares with Pope Gregory I a sense of immanence, and with Augustine agnosticism concerning the precise hour of the end. See Gerald Bonner, *St. Bede in the Tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary*, Jarrow Lecture (Newcastle upon Tyne: J. & P. Bealls, 1966), 5. Christopher Rowland and Ian Boxall point to Bede’s interpretation of Apoc. 8.13, where he writes: *Huius aquilae vox per eximiorum in ecclesia cotidie peruolat ora doctorum, cum... diemque iudicii amatoribus terrae praedicant grauiter adfuturum [EA 2.12]; CCSL 121A: 345/ PL 93: 157A]*[The voice of the eagle flies about daily through the mouth of the eminent teachers in the church, when they announce... the day of judgement that will come with severity upon lovers of the earth]. See Rowland and Boxall, “Tyconius and Bede on Violent Texts in the Apocalypse,” in *Ancient Christian Interpretations of ‘Violent Texts’ in the Apocalypse*, eds. Joseph Verheyden et al. (Gottingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), 162, 173.

31 CCSL 121: 341/ PL 93: 129D–30A.
apocalyptic isolates become especially attuned to miraculous phenomena that deliver from peril, so much so that, given their short memory, they demand miracle upon miracle. In the absence of repeated miracles, apostates seek every opportunity to wield the organic authority of the owner (or parent). They grasp a problem physically in order to escape, for now, from the spectre of defeat.

Many times Bede comments upon the British tendency to skittishness and to wanton violence, credited to insanity. Whether he could be aware of it or not, what these traits share in common is physically-rooted fear. For persons in a heightened state of fear are likely to flee from others; or to attack without mercy, when their sense of space is violated. This sensibility is evident in the exchange between the British bishops and Bishop Augustine of Canterbury, whom the pope elevates to serve the English. Well-established British bishops are expected to acknowledge the precedence of Augustine over Britain, and to aid him in converting the English countryside [HE 2.2]. Such a state of affairs poses a problem for the British bishops, who were accustomed to rule the Christians of Britain. They become concerned that the new bishop would act as a tyrant, without concern for them or the British laity. So they devise two tests that reveal their fearful mindset. First, they expect a physical demonstration of miraculous power. When Augustine meets their demand, they follow up the first test with a second: that Augustine should stand to greet his brother bishops as a physical demonstration of his rejection of tyranny. For Bede, Augustine had not appointed himself to high office; and therefore, could not be judged a tyrant simply for behaving as an icon of authority by remaining seated. Thus, Bede blames the British implicitly for fearful dereliction of duty. As gatekeepers, they should have held their initial judgement favouring Augustine. Instead, they confess that non se posse absque suorum consensu ac licentia priscis abdicare moribus [they could not drop former customs without the
agreement and permission of their own]. Sadly, the British face what they fear, for Augustine prophesies their subsequent massacre at the hands of Æthelfrith [HE 2.2/140, 142].

The physicality of the claim to organic authority appears in the cycle pertaining to Germanus, who perceives a demonic presence in the British leaders that must be exorcised by claiming ownership for God of God’s own children. Germanus’ opponents are identified in HE 1.17 as inimica uis daemonum [the inimical power of demons], as maligni spiritus [malignant spirits] and as sinistri spiritus [sinister spirits]; and in HE 1.19, as insidiator inimicus [inimical ambusher/plotter]. The introduction of Germanus as exorcist is especially significant, given that he sustains the longest relation to Brettones of any character. If anyone knows the British, it is Germanus; and Germanus knows them to be wrested forcibly from God’s family by demons who claim the organic authority of ownership (or parenthood) by possessing their hosts’ bodies. Indeed, the British bishops themselves house in their very persons those demons that refuse to release the British faithful to the rightful custody of God’s rightly-guided priests. Instead, they are those qui tantos talesque uiros ad recuperandam tendere populorum salutem inuiderent [who begrudge that such qualified men hold to the restoring of the people’s salvation] [HE 1.17/54].

Evoking the image of demonic possession common to Mark’s Gospel (esp. chs. 1, 5), Bede connects their desire for the physical control of another with evil. For the survival instinct gone awry arrogates to itself the prerogative not only to own, but also to consume others. Demons, as noncorporeal beings, are obsessed with entering physical hosts in order to put them into physical and spiritual jeopardy; and then, after they destroy their first victims, they move on to others. Bede writes of demonic British bishops:

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32 David Howlett suggests that Augustine of Canterbury knew of the prophecy in Gildas’ DEB that the British would be subject to the Saxons for three centuries. Thus, Augustine may have influenced the fulfillment of the prophecy of the British demise by issuing the first law code of Æthelfrith in reaction to the uncooperative spirit of the same. See Howlett, “The Prophecy of Saxon Occupation in Gildas’ De Excidio Britanniae,” in Peritia 16 (2002): 156–60.
hidden, the authors of false opinion lurked; and, like malignant spirits, they used to lament to lose the people evading them.

Rather than care for the well-being of their flock, Bede finds that the British pastors look on hungrily as Germanus wins their dupes to the truth.

Bede clearly associates evil with a decidedly physical and sensory mode of existence. For the context of such connexion, one may look to Andy Orchard, who writes of how, in addition to Augustine of Hippo and Isidore, Aldhelm and various other Anglo-Saxon (and even Irish) authors associate the physical threat of monsters, giants and bellicose warriors to the realm of the earth, to arrogance and to the fullness of evil. While Orchard’s purpose is to illustrate the physical and psychical sense of horror associated with Grendel’s lair in Beowulf, one discerns a parallel between the Beowulf poet’s view of Grendel and Bede’s view of the antediluvian giants in his comments on Gen. 9:4:

Ferunt autem quod in hoc maxima fuerit prevaricatio gigantum, quia cum sanguine carnem comederent [IG 2.1238–39].

they say what has been in this matter the greatest transgression of the giants: that they consumed flesh with blood.

Both Grendel and the giants are characterised primarily for their physicality, given their great size and their passion for inflicting mortal wounds and consuming bloody flesh. Just as the poet behind Beowulf can think of no evil greater than the monster that operates by the law of the claw and the fang, so also Bede finds the heretical and recalcitrant British to be particularly physical, particularly unable to transcend themselves, and thus, particularly evil.

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Further to the point of the British being defined by the physical is the place of the sense within their worldview:

*Ad extremum, diuturna meditatione concepta, praesumunt inere conflictum; procedunt *conspicui *diuittis, *ueste fulgentes, circumdati adsentatione multorum, discrimenque certaminis subire maluerunt quam in populo quem subuerant pudorem taciturnitatis incurrire, ne uiderentur se ipsi silentio damnauisse* [1.17/56].

At last, after long deliberation on the idea, they ventured to join battle. They advanced *conspicuous *in wealth, *flashy in dress, *and surrounded by the assent of many. They preferred to undergo the crisis of battle rather than to incur shame of muteness before the people whom they had subverted, lest they be seen to have damned themselves by silence.

Here the text in bold print shows how the British bishops play to the immediate and the concrete. As peacocks with tails fanned, they aim for dramatic sensory effect in their bout with Germanus.

**The Apostle as Isolate: Atomistic Sociology, Agnosticism and Iconoclasm**

Yet another trait of the apocalyptic rebel, heretic and apostate, is the atomistic sociology of the isolate, with its various implications. For Bede, the battle between *Pelagius Bretto* [Pelagius the Briton] and the See of Rome best personifies the topos of the solitary British heretic versus Augustine of Hippo *et ceteri patres orthodoxi* [and the rest of the orthodox fathers] [*HE* 1.10].

In the few lines conceded to Pelagius, Bede refers to his teaching as *uenena suae perfidiae, dementia *and *uaesania* [his treacherous poison, madness and insanity], and refers to the motives of his ilk as the stubborn refusal of truth and obdurate resolve to hold church office outside the provisions of canon law.

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35 Wood 2001a, 10.

36 Thacker’s study on Bede’s use of the term *perfidia* is useful here, which connects heresy, hostility, and faithlessness. In his exegesis of the Book of Samuel, Bede uses *perfidia* often of heretics and most often of unfaithful Jews. In his *HE*, Bede assigns it to the heresiarchs, Pelagius and Arius; to Cædwalla and other apostate rulers, who overthrow budding Christianity; and to the Saracens and Penda, pagans who persecute [*HE* 1.7, 8, 10,17; 2.5; 3.1, 7, 24, 30; 5.21; 5.23]. See Thacker, in Baxter *et al.*, 135–37.
The results of the heretical spirit of isolationism appear soon afterward. Enemies plunder the Brettones to such an extent that physical deprivation and social chaos ensue, prompting them to steal from one another to avoid starvation [HE 1.12]. After a series of interventions that oust enemies physical and spiritual on their behalf, the same anarchic spirit descends upon the next generation never to be lifted again [HE.1.22]. Bede writes of the first generation:

_Cessante autem uastatione hostili, tantis frugum copiis insula, quantas nulla retro aetas meminit, affluere coepit; cum quibus et luxuria crescere, et hanc continuo omnium lues scelerum comitari adceleravit, crudelitas praecipue et odium ueritatis amorque mendacii, ita ut, si quis eorum mitior et ueritati aliquatenus propior uidetur, in hunc quasiBrittaniae subuersorem omnium oda telaque sine respectu contorquerentur. Et non solum haec saeculares uiri, sed etiam ipse Domini eiusque pastores egerunt; ebrietati, animositati, litigio, contentioni, inuidiae, ceterisque huiusmodi facinoribus sua colla, abiecor leui iugo Christi, subdentes [HE 1.14/48]._

With the devastation of the enemy having ceased, however, the island began to abound with such a surplus of produce, an amount the age never before remembered; with these things, they grew also in luxury, and there hastened to follow without delay this plague of every crime; foremost, cruelty, hatred of truth, and love of falsehood; so that if anyone among them seemed to be milder, and somewhat nearer to truth, hatreds and designs turned against him without respect as though [he were] a traitor of Britain.

Not only were secular men playing the part, but also the very flock of Lord and their shepherds; casting off the light yoke of Christ, they submit their own necks to drunkenness, enmities, quarrels, contentions, jealousies, and other such vices.

And again, Bede writes of the next generation:

_Interea Britanniae cessatum quidem est parumper ab externis, sed non a ciuilibus bellis... Attamen recente adhuc memoria calamitatis et cladis inflictae seruabant utcumque reges, sacerdotes, privati, et optimates suum quique ordinem. At illis decedentibus, cum successisset aetas tempestatis illius nescia et praesentis solum serenitatis statum experta, ita cuncta ueritas ac iustitiae moderamina concussa ac subuersa sunt, ut earum non dicam uestigium, sed ne memoria quidem, praeter in paucis, et ualde paucis, ulla appareret [HE 1.22/66, 68]._
Meanwhile Britain had ceased briefly, in fact, from foreign but not from civil wars... Yet, with the memory still fresh of the calamity and inflicted carnage, somehow the kings, priests, nobles, and private citizens preserved order. But, with them departed, when an age had succeeded unaware of this tempest and experienced only the state of the present peace, all moderation of truth and justice was beaten down and subverted to such a degree that I may not say that there was vestige [of the former peace] – but not even the memory [of it] appeared, except among a few, and very few at that.

Several sociological observations arise from the citations above which assert that, facing death, the people – even the priests – turn on one another. The first observation is that the British apostate operates from substantive reason (exceptionalism), which refuses any arrangement that leaves oneself without the means to live securely. Indeed, Bede’s comments on 2 Jn. 1 clarify well his understanding of the sociology of the apostate:

\[
Re\ uera\ enim\ omnes\ per\ orbem\ catholici\ unam\ ueritatis\ regulam\ sequuntur,\ at\ non\ omnes\ heretici\ et\ infideles\ unianimo\ errori\ consentiunt,\ uerum\ non\ minus\ semet\ alterutrum\ quam\ ipsam\ ueritatis\ uiam\ impugnant\ [IE7C\ 2\ Jn:\ 22–25].^38
\]

For, truly, all Catholics throughout the world follow one canon of truth, but not all heretics and infidels consent with one mind about their error, but attack each other no less than the very trail of truth.

Such infighting suggests strongly that no thought is given to equitable arrangements in the present, to faith rooted in the past or to the hope of future stability. Such persons on the dusky side of anagogy seek survival just now even as God, the cosmos and human nature fade into barely discernable shades of agnostic gray.\(^39\) For standardised beliefs and ethics become useless when they are perceived to impede one’s quest for survival. Rather than detecting any enduring

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^37 For the sake of fluid English, *ita* [so that] is left untranslated.

^38 CCSL 121: 329/ PL 93: 121A.

^39 The similarity of the heuristic for studying history promoted in David D’Avray’s *Rationalities in History* to Bede’s set of archetypes is striking. Bede’s apostate is much like D’Avray’s exceptionalist, who embodies substantive rationality. Other corollaries are those between rationalities centred upon beliefs, instrumentality and natural law and Bede’s priestly allegorists, utilitarian kings and prophetic moralists.
pattern, institution, strategy or goodness proper to the cosmos or to the human soul, reality becomes capricious: sometimes helpful, sometimes harmful, but without any stable basis from which to assess the world or people in general.

Such space-time immediacy results in a second observation: that multiple generations of apostates learn nothing from one another. As transgenerational memory recedes, icons that help a people discern their identity, and each member his station within the social order, are forgotten as apostates enter the school of hard knocks on account of their inherent cosmic alienation and iconoclasm. Thus, they stick to particulars and reject icons, which are stable symbols of shared faith or shared experience of social reality. In the absence of any enduring icon and without external threat in the present, the best that children of isolates can hope for is a fleeting pact that could dissolve into anarchy at any moment should pact members turn against one another, whether out of fear or gluttony.

One cannot help but suspect that Bede finds a parallel between the multigenerational apostasy of the British and the apostasy prevalent among the Israelites before the rise of the Davidic monarchy (typified, for Bede, by the English). The Vulgate, Bede’s Bible, reads:

*Surrexerunt alii qui non nouerant Dominum et opera quae fecerat cum Israhel. Feceruntque filii Israhel malum in conspectu Domini et servierunt Baalim; ac dimiserunt Dominum Deum patrum suorum… iratusque Dominus contra Israhel tradidit eos in manibus diripientium… Suscitavitque Dominus iudices qui liberarent eos de uastantium manibus… Postquam autem mortuus esset iudex reuertebantur et multo maiora faciebant quam fecerant patres sui… Non dimiserunt adimuentiones suas et uiam durissimam per quam ambulare consueuerant* [Judges 2:10–19].

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And there arose others that knew not the Lord and the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim. And they left the Lord, the God of their fathers... And the Lord being angry against Israel delivered them into the hands of plunderers... And the Lord raised up judges to deliver them from the hands of those that oppressed them... But after the judge was dead, they returned and did much worse things than their fathers had done... They left not their own inventions and the stubborn way by which they were accustomed to walk.

Just as the Israelites and their children fall into apostasy and turmoil, so also do generations of British descend into the same as apostates in good times and bad alike. Similarly, just as the Israelites end up losing organic authority over Palestine to the Assyrians and Babylonians as society devolved into oppression, so also do the British apostates feel the physical impact of their stubborn indiscipline and cowardice that stand for nothing other than survival as an isolate.

**The Apostate as Slothful Slave or Gluttonous Tyrants: The Binary View of Conflict Theory**

For Bede, heresy in the apostate amounts to an isolate (or a pact among isolates) resisting all others for the survival of his (or their) own opinions. There is no mutual trust essential to a group of equals (the abbot with his monks as a prophetic utopia). There is no sense of stability and duty proper to a hierarchical group (the priesthood). There is no combination of effective performance and loyalty, with which one may negotiate privilege and responsibility within a stratified network (the royal class). Instead, one assesses life by means of a binary rule: death (whether of oneself or one’s view) is either on the horizon, or not on the horizon. Such a binary vision of reality leads to a conflict theory of social relations, which sponsors total capitulation and total combat, whichever is necessary in the circumstances. By way of example, one may consider the conflictual, binary way in which Bede frames relations between Germanus, loyal to Rome, and the disciples of the British heresiarch:

*Hinc diuina fides, inde humana praesumptio; hinc pietas, inde superbia; inde Pelagius auctor, hinc Christus* [HE 1.17/56, 58].
From here divine faith, from there human presumption; from here piety, from there pride: from there Pelagius as innovator, from here Christ [as founder].

Only two outcomes are possible here: either the British heresiarchs win or they lose face.

As things turn out, Germanus eliminates his opponents by casting out the sinister spirits *ab obsessis corporibus* [from besieged bodies] [*HE* 1.17/56]. For just as one can build no bond with a rabid dog, so also must one act forcefully against a devil.

Indeed, Bede’s comments on *Apoc.* 14:10–11 reveal that he does not share the “modern unease with the language of violence” used against Satan and those under his control:

*Iuste autem qui calicem irae fornicationis propinanț, calice irae domini sternuntur, non ut iuxta Hieremiam, malitiam cordis euomant mundandi, se ut damnati pereant aeterna morte sopernandi... Non enim eos iusto iudici concordantes uisa prauorum tormenta contristant, sicut nec diuitem in flammis sepultum uisa Lazari requies refrigerare ualebat* [*EA* 2.24].

Rightly, however, those who pass around the chalice of fornication are flattened by the chalice of the Lord’s wrath, not, as according to Jeremiah, that they might vomit out the malice of the heart that must be cleansed, but that the damned might perish in a stupor by an eternal death... For the torments of the depraved rightly do not grieve those in concord with the Judge, just as the obvious repose of Lazarus was unable to refresh the rich man buried in flames.

Instead of feeling dread over the judgement of the damned, the text in bold print draws attention to Bede’s sense of order in it, and thus his relief. A final, violent end is the just desert of those who do violence to the souls of others by preaching heresy or modelling it in their practice. In a similar vein, one finds Bede relieved at the demise of the Pharaoh of Egypt, plagued by the sad condition of Spiritual Attention Deficit Disorder, in his commentary upon 1 Samuel 6:6.

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41 Rowland and Boxall, 178.
42 CCSL 121A: 429/ PL 93: 175B.

“Why harden your hearts like Egypt and Pharaoh harden their hearts? After they were struck, then did they not release [the Israelites] and did not [the Israelites] depart?” which, clearly, is to say about the reprobate: After they received the sentence of eternal death, then did they not cease at first to sin and to harm good men.

No one sheds a tear for a fire-breathing dragon that lies dead at the feet of a knight in shining armour. Rather, one rejoices that body and soul are still together. In the same way, Bede interprets the plight of the British who succumb to a numb, fear-based social ethic. He writes:

> Interea subito corruptae mentis homines acerba pestis corripuit, quae in breui tantam eius multitudinem strauit, ut ne sepeliendis quidem mortuis uiui sufficerent; sed ne morte quidem suorum, nec timore mortis hi, qui supererant, a morte animae, qua peccando sternebantur, reuocari poterant. Vnde non multo post acrior gentem peccatrice ultio diri sceleris secuta est [HE 1.14/48].

Meanwhile a bitter plague suddenly befell the men of corrupt mind, which in short order flattened such a multitude of them that, indeed, the living did not even suffice to bury the dead; but, indeed, those who survived could not be recalled from the spiritual death (by which they began to be laid low by sinning) through the death of their [relatives] or fear of death [itself].

The parallels are surely clear enough to discern that Bede reads the British into the dark side of anagogy fallen upon the enemies of God in the Apocalypse.

In effect, a conflict theory of social relations means that the path to survival for the isolate passes either by the way of slavery or of tyranny. One accepts subjugation in place of death; or one uses overwhelming force to subject or annihilate others. One looks to another for food; or one looks at another (or another’s stores) as food. One faces the temptations of acedia, compliant indolence and impotence, on the one hand; or of gluttony _en route_ to bloodthirst, on the other.

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43 CCSL 119: 55/ PL 91: 536D–537A.
For Bede, the British are both slaves and tyrants, prone to sloth and to bloodthirst halted only by their English overlords. In fact, his concluding remarks say as much:

*Diuina sibi et humana prorsus resistente uirtute in neutro cupidum possunt obtinere propositum, quippe qui, quamuis ex parte sui sint iuris, nonnulla tamen ex parte Anglorum sunt seruitio mancipati [HE 5.23]*.

With divine and human power resisting them, [the British] are able to secure their desire against neither – seeing that, although in one part they may have their own law; yet, in another part, not a few are bound to servitude of the English.

It is clear to Bede that the British must be contained when they cannot be controlled.

The first impression Bede leaves with his readers is that the British espouse the psychology of the slave. Both before and after the Germanic tribes dock their ships on Britain’s shores, the British whine constantly for Roman aid until their rescuers urge them to resist fear and sloth [inertia] for their own manful defence. But, time and again, they would rather depend upon others to defend their interests [HE 1.12–22].

The lasting impression of the British that he cultivates, however, is that of the tyrant, a trope he pins on Cædwalla of Gwynedd. To set up a contrast between the English king and the British tyrant, Bede depicts Edwin of Northumbria wielding the sword to establish safe conduct of the defenceless [HE 2.16] and Cædwalla of Gwynedd sparing neither women nor children in collusion with the pagans [HE 2.20]. Even the pagan king, Penda of Mercia, behaves better. For he tolerates baptised persons who are well-behaved [HE 3.21]. Bede’s contempt for the British, and their tyrant, is palpable in the way he presents King Oswald’s victory over Cædwalla’s pretension to power. Bede writes:

*Infandus Brettonum dux cum inmensis illis copiis, quibus nihil resistere posse iactabat, interemtus est [HE 3.1/214]*.

The unspeakable leader of the British was destroyed along with the vast forces against which, he used to claim, nothing was able to resist.
Just as Oswald silences the boastful Cædwalla, so also had King David silenced Goliath the braggart. As Judith McClure has observed, Bede tends to identify Oswald with David. With the correlation in mind, the replies of David the shepherd boy to Goliath’s arrogance in 1 Samuel 17:45–7 are but a precursor to the battle cry of the young Oswald who exposes Cædwalla for the godless braggart that Bede understands him to be. Bede writes:

Ostendit aperte dominus et hominibus quos iuuabat et potestatibus quas debellabat aeriis diabolum [Goliath] superbiae solum ac fallaciae armis quibus uel sua prava defendat ac tuetur uel ueritatis sensa perfringat indutum se autem ipsum esse de quo psalmista praecinuit: Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini [Ps. 117:26/ 118:26] [IPPS, 3.914–19].

The Lord openly shows both to those men whom he was helping, and to the airy powers whom he was overthrowing, the sole demon [Goliath] clothed with the weapons of pride and deceit, with which he might either defend and guard his own evil deeds, or shatter the substance of truth; moreover, [he shows] that it is he himself concerning whom the Psalmist prophesied in song: “Blessed be he that comes in the name of the Lord” [Ps. 117:26/118:26].

For Bede, God’s man always beats down the tyrant so that his man is the last man standing. For if it were not so, then tyrannical heretics would murder the souls of all who fall under the spell of their words. Bede registers such sentiments in comments on Jude 11:

Sic profecto sic faciunt heretici qui ad increpationem sanctae ecclesiae emendari despiciunt, quin potius fratres gladio malae doctrinae, sicut Cain, interficere, malo consilio decipere, sicut Balaam, contra doctores catholicos erigere, sicut Core, ad suam ipsorum perditionem contendunt [IE7C Jude: 134–38].

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45 CCSL 119: 158/ PL 91: 620B. Note the resonance of Eph. 2:2 and 2 Cor. 10:4 in Bede’s comments. 
46 Bede’s urgency against the British is especially evident at in his comment on King David’s leaving Keilah, written about the time Coelfrith was leaving: Sane notandum quod haec generaliter ad omne tempus ecclesiae cui numquam falsi fratres desunt sed specialiter ad nouissima tempora quibus amplius abundabunt possunt typice referri quorum leuitati ac perfidiae ipsum etiam nomen Ceilae conuenit [IPPS 4.177–79; CCSL 119: 216/ PL 91: 667C–D] [One must note well that, in general, these things can refer typically to every era of the church, from which false brethren are never absent, but especially to the most current times, which abound all the more (with them), of whom (as touching) levity and perfidy the very name Keilah is suitable].
47 CCSL 121: 338/ PL 93: 127A.
Having departed thus, in this way do the heretics act who, at the reproof of the holy Church, hate to be corrected; and even more, they contend like Cain to kill their brothers with the sword of evil teaching; to deceive them with evil counsel like Balaam; to rise up against catholic teachers to their own destruction like Korah.

Perhaps at the heart of Bede’s frustration with the British is the trenchant unsociability of the heretic and the tyrant, who refuse to trust the good graces of the English [HE 2.20]. To Bede, contempt for the English that minimises their dramatic spiritual growth and the preferment of the papacy [HE 2.2] is inexcusable, and speaks to the British disposition as hard-wired for evil, even if Aldhelm manages to persuade a few of them [HE 5.18].

A Caveat: The British Apostate as Carnal Foil to the Spiritual Archetypes of Three Peoples

As one considers the second position of the Brettones on Bede’s table of nations [HE 1.1] over against his uncomplimentary view of them, one recognises that one cannot put this position down to the British being only second in favour to the English. Bede clearly esteems the other nations on the list above the British. In juxtaposing the English and British in his list, rather than placing the British at the end, Bede reminds the English of their epic status as plebam suam quam praesciuit [HE 1.22] over against the British, who embody the elegiac side of the populus Israhel motif. In his narrative, British recalcitrance serves as a thorn in the English rulers’ flesh that checks unholy ambition. For the English must yield to God’s will and not to their own will à la mode de Brettones. The unqualifiedly epic status of the English is no fixed reality for Bede. From the point that the English attack holy Ireland without cause, Bede does find the distinction between English and British fortunes blurred. Bede writes:

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48 Louis Dumont observes that when there exists a deeper presumption of equality among human beings (for Bede, the imago Dei), divergence between juxtaposed communities could be perceived as rooted in somatic characteristics. In a similar vein, it may be that Bede supposed that the British had a particularly bad case of original sin, mystically rooted in the progeny of apostates. See Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus: An Essay on the Caste System (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 16.

49 Andrew Scheil 2004, 101–110.
Ex quo tempore spes coepit et virtus regni Anglorum “fluere ac retro sublapsa referri.” Nam et Picti terram possessionis suae, quam tenuerunt Angli, et Scotti, qui erant in Britannia, Brettonum quoque pars nonnulla libertatem receperunt; quam et hactenus habent per annos circiter XLVI [HE 4.26/428].

From this time, the hope and the strength of the realm of the English began “to flow back and, having slipped, to recede”. For both the Pictish and the Irish, who were in Britain, have land in their possession that the English held; also part of the British received some of their liberty, which also at this point they have had for nearly forty-six years.

The partial freedom of the British in HE 4.26 is not a sign that they have amended their ways. Rather, it is a sign of divine judgment upon the epic English who must accept the presence of Canaanites in the Promised Land on account of poor political judgement.\(^{50}\)

This episode strengthens Bede’s typology as the exception that proves this rule: to maintain rightful rule one must always rule honourably in the name of God. The British are the foil to the English precisely because of the combination of cowardice and immoderate violence [HE 1.2–16, 2.20; 3.1–2]. The possibility, then, of an English fall from grace is taken quite seriously. Abbot Higbald receives a letter after the Viking raze Holy Island in 793, in which Alcuin writes:

\[Quae est fiducia aeclesiis Brittanniae, si sanctus Cudberhtus cum tanto sanctorum numero suam non defendit? Aut, hoc maioris initium est doloris aut peccata habitantium hoc exigerunt. Non equidem casu contigit, sed magni cuiuslibet meriti indicium est [epistola 20.12–15].\(^{51}\)

What assurance is there in the churches in Britain, if holy Cuthbert with such a number of the saints does not defend their own [church]? Or, is this the beginning of greater pain! or do the sins of those who dwell [there] require it! Indeed, it has not befallen [you] by chance, but judgement is warranted for something substantial.

Bede’s disciple, Alcuin does become one, like Job’s comforters, who blames a friend for his own plight. However, he does not make too fine a point of equating devastation, divine displeasure

\(^{50}\) Colin Abbot Ireland, *The Celtic Background to the Story of Caedmon and his Hymn* (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1986), 59.

\(^{51}\) MGH EKA 2: 57.
and the divine intent to destroy the evildoer. For a few lines later, Alcuin notes that Christendom itself, the institutional custodian of truth, faces hardship also. He continues:

*Tamen de ista miseria nolite mente consternari. Castigat Deus omnem filium, quem receptit; et ideo forte uos plus castiguit, quia plus dilexit. Hierusalem, ciuitas Deo dilecta, cum templo Dei Chaldea flamma perit. Roma, sanctorum apostolorum et innumerabilium martyrum corona circumdata, paganorum uastatione disrupsta est; sed pietate Dei cito recuperata. Tota pene Europa Gothorum vel Hunorum gladiis evacuata et flammis; sed modo, miserante Deo, ut celum stellis, ita aeclesiis ornata fulgescit et in eis officia uigent et crescent religionis [sic] christiane [ll. 28–34].*

But concerning this tragedy, do not be troubled in mind. “God chastises every son, whom he [has received]” [Heb. 12:6]; and from this he has chastised you greatly, because he loves you more. Jerusalem, the city loved by God, with the temple perished by the Chaldean flame. Rome, a crown surrounded by holy apostles and innumerable martyrs, was disrupted by the devastation of the pagans; but, by the pity of God quickly recovered. Almost the whole of Europe was gutted by the swords and flames of the Goths and Huns; but now, God having mercy, [Europe] is as bright with churches as the sky with stars, and in them the offices of the Christian religion thrive and grow.

What one finds here in these comments are the epic and elegiac perspectives on Israelite history. The cosmic allegiance of epic consciousness leads a people who believe that they have a covenant with God to view their own success as divine imprimatur; and the same cosmic allegiance leads them to revert to the elegiac mode, when faced with external jeopardy, so that hardship becomes divine discipline. Cosmic alienation, however, is projected upon the British. Without a covenant with God, their hardship amounts to the divine intent to destroy tyrants and evildoers.

In addition to their being a foil to the English ruler in the political realm, the British are also foil to the Irish in the social realm.52 For, unlike the indigenous Irish who share the gospel of Christ with the English, the British keep it to themselves [*HE* 2.20–3.6]. Bede’s soreness on this

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52 The idea that the British isolate serves as a foil to English individualist, Irish egalitarian and Roman hierarchist is similar to views expressed in *Cultural Theory* by Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky. See Michael Thompson *et al.*, *Cultural Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990), 93–96.
point shows in the fact that the *Brettones* appear only once in the annals of *HE* 5.24. Bede records their memory thus:

*Anno CCCCXLVIII, Marcianus cum Valentiniano imperium suscipiens, VII annis tenuit, quorum tempore Angli a Brettonibus accersiti Brittaniam adierunt [HE 5.24/562].*

In the year 449, Marcianus, receiving power with Valentinianus, held it for seven years, during which time the English, summoned by the British, came to Britain.

For Bede, only once do the British show hospitality; and their selfish motives backfire in the end.

Explicit contrast between Irish sociability and British unsociability is evident when Bede describes the conversion of Iona to the Roman paschal calculations in *HE* 5.22. Bede muses:

*Quod mira diuinae constat factum dispensatione pietatis, ut gens illa quam nouerat scientiam diuinae cognitionis libenter ac sine inuidia populis Anglorum communicare curuit: ipsa quoque postmodum per gentem Anglorum in eis quae minus habuerat, ad perfectam uiuendi normam perueniret. Sicut econtra Brettones, qui nolebant Anglis eam, quam habebant, fidei Christianae notitiam pandere, credentibus iam populis Anglorum, et in regula fidei catholicae per omnia instructis, ipsi adhuc inueterati et claudicantes a semitis suis, et capita sine corona praetendunt, et sollemnia Christi sine ecclesiae Christi societate uenerantur [HE 5.22/554].*

By a wondrous dispensation of divine mercy, it happened that since that race which had known divine knowledge, freely and without envy, took the trouble to speak of their understanding to the people of the English. Afterward,[that very race] has arrived through the race of the English at a complete way of living in those things of which they had less [knowledge]. Likewise, to the contrary, the British who did not wish to explain to the English that notice of the Christian faith which they had; with the peoples of the English now believing, and being instructed in all things in the rules of the catholic faith, [the British] themselves, inveterate and limping along their own pathways until this point, both expose their heads without the crown [tonsure], and honour the solemnities of Christ without the society of the church of Christ.

Here Bede notices a pattern to the British way of being. The Irish share the gospel even when they understand it incompletely; and they accept correction and embrace Rome, when others bypass them to attain fuller knowledge. By contrast, the British hoard good news when they do understand it rightly; and they spew lies when they lapse into error. The Irish are sincerely open-
hearted, whereas the British lack an affective centre. Their conflict theory of social relations reduces relations with the English to the physical plane of war. As Thacker notes, it may be that, given Aldfrith’s alliance with Dál Riada, the British could be implicated in the death of King Osred (d. 716); and thus, from Bede’s point of view, the enemy still proves anti-social.  

Finally, over against the priests from Rome, Bede finds the British confused on matters of fundamental truth. In retrospect, Bede finds himself relieved that his people receive the faith from Roman emissaries rather than from British heretics and apostates. He explicitly contrasts the British and Pope Gregory’s envoys thus:

\[ quin \multum \digniores \genti \memoratae \praecoones \uerritatis, \per quos \credet, \destinavit \left[ HE \ 1.22/68 \right]. \]

but He destined heralds of the truth, through whom [the English] believed, worthier by far of this famed race.

For Bede, to contrast the British and the Romans is to contrast the merely physical state of madness with soundness of mind, rightly shaped by wise counsel. For the British, like Pelagius, are heretics and hypocrites more interested in their own views or in office-holding than in the true apostolic teaching office of Rome [\( HE \ 1.8–10, 17–22 \)].

Having clarified Bede’s position on the British, three caveats are in order. The first pertains to Ninian the Briton, whom Bede praises for sound doctrine and missionary sociability despite his British ancestry. Bede’s trope remains intact, despite this counter example, since Bede overtly associates Ninian with Rome, rather than with his own people [\( HE \ 3.4 \)]. The second is

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53 Thacker, in Baxter et al., 145.
Nicholas Brooks’ observation that Bede’s sources come from the east coast. Bede was likely unaware of the degree of inter-relation between the West Saxons and the indigenous peoples, which is evident in archaeological finds.  

The third is Barbara Yorke’s observation that Bede’s expectations seem unreasonable when one considers their duress. After all, would Bede himself expend energy to assist mortal enemies or those who would extinguish the English identity in toto? 

The Unholy Path of Damnation: Apostasy, the Creature and Divine Ownership Contended

In sum, Bede’s thoroughly negative impression of Brettones suggests that he concerns himself as much with what they do not typify as by what they do typify. Such negation speaks to Bedes’s trope of the British as those who view the world through the lens of anagogy, but darkened by setting the physical aspect of human condition at the centre of their experience. This way of being operates in the binary mode of immediacy, mortal struggle, violence and finality. For Bede, there is also the finality of everlasting death that follows physical death. This everlasting death is one of ever-present immediacy: the sensory overload of flames, stench and shrieks of terror and the perpetual state of contingency in the bottomless pit. If one has opted for such a physical-sensory perspective while in the body, one receives the same forever. For while one was alive in the body, one’s life was not significantly mitigated by other dimensions such as the disciplined will to covenantal identity, sociable respect for others’ dignity and the conscience formed by sound teaching. One did not rise with courage to the challenge of red martyrdom that merits the joy of cosmic victory. Instead, heeding the id of the amygdala, one has run in terror as a coward who will not die for righteousness’ sake, or one has imposed the red martyrdom on others as a tyrant (see above, 48–53). For the apostate Cædwalla illegitimately opts for the rule

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55 Nicholas Brooks, “From British to English Christianity,” ibid., 8–9, 13.
56 Yorke 2006, 118.
of one: himself. Bede’s trope of the apostate British accents the principle of the holy otherness of the Church, of God and of salvation, which is life and not death. One is either God or not God; and if God is God, then he holds true organic authority as Father and Author, progenitor of life and owner of everything. To reject the organic authority of the rule of one God, and his son the rightful king, for Bede, is to play the tyrant or the apocalyptic coward, who chooses zero over one at the binary level of amygdallic consciousness. Rightly, so Bede argues, must British political independence and ecclesiastical autocephaly end. For the pathway to holiness, and to life, begins with the fear of the Lord, that is, with the acknowledgement that oneself belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has generated the holy church, which is his body. Now, having considered the foundational matter of holiness (or lack thereof) in association with the British, who choose death over life, the salvific traits unique to various modes of religious leadership exemplified by Bede’s favoured peoples come into view. And so, one turns to the matter of the oneness of the community of righteous ones proper to the prophet-like abbots of Ireland and Iona.
Ch. 3: Oneness, Tropology and the Affectivity of Prophetic Irish Abbots

Bede’s view of the Irish is nuanced in the same way that the term “prophet” is nuanced. Moses and Elijah are at once tropological and anagogical figures. They remind leaders and laity of the moral code governing societal relationships here-and-now (Dt. 5:1–22 cf. 1 Ki. 21:1–29), and they announce the ways of everlasting life and death in vivid words and miraculous acts (Dt. 30:15–20 cf. 2 Ki. 1:2–17). In the tropological-anagogical role of the prophet, one discerns the contrast Bede supposes between British and Irish, which turns on the interpersonal affectivity associated with the limbic system and the hippocampus. For the Irish establish utopic communes led by abbots who earn moral authority as righteous iconoclasts by detecting arrogance and avarice in holders of high office. In essence, the prophetic Irish distinguish between the holy, life-bearing icon and the unholy, death-dealing idol. By contrast, the British are socially dysfunctional, self-idolising tyrants for Bede. As a result, the two peoples perform opposite roles anagogically. Whereas the British embody anagogical darkness, being debased to the mere physicality of hell, the Irish manifest the emotional maturity of righteous relationality in the concrete, anagogical terms of miraculous power, bodily incorruption and the company of angels. Filled with God’s presence, the Irish incarnate the integrating reality of divine life that restores humanity in, through and from the affective and relational mode.

Key models of this prophetic way of being include Columba of Iona, the fountainhead of Irish tradition in Britain [HE 3.4, 25; 5.9, 21, 24]; Aidan, the founder of Lindisfarne [3.5–7, 3.14–17, 25–26, 28; 4.23, 27; 5.22, 24]; and Fursa, the founder of Cnobheresburg in East Anglia [3.19]. Numerous other characters also support Bede’s purpose of presenting a distinctive Irish ethos. Other Irishmen include Abbots Segéné and Adamnán of Iona [HE 3.5, 5.15], Abbots Finan uir Dei and Colman of Lindisfarne [HE 3.4–5, 25–26; 4.4]; Abbot Columbanus [HE 2.4]; a nameless Irish scholar [HE 3.13]; Abbot Fursa and his brother, Foillán, together with Gobán,
Dícuill and Ultán, a hermit \([HE\ 3.19, 4.13]\); Bishops Diuma and Coellach \([HE\ 3.21]\); the ailing Bosel \([HE\ 4.23]\); Boisil, prior of Melrose \([HE\ 4.27]\); and the soulful Adamnán of Coldingham \([HE\ 4.25]\).

In addition, although somewhat less tidy for his set of ethnic archetypes, Bede also presents *English* protégés of Irishmen as bearers of the same prophetic ethos.\(^1\) Prominent examples include Bishop Cedd, founder of Lastingham \([HE\ Preface,\ 3.22–23]\); Bishop Cuthbert, most notable product of Melrose and Abbot of Lindisfarne \([HE\ Preface,\ 4.27–31]\); and Bishop John of Beverley, most notable abbot trained at Whitby \([HE\ 5.2–5]\). Other Irish-trained English who exhibit the Irish ethos include Abbot Eata \([HE\ 3.26]\); Bishop Chad \([HE\ 3.28, 4.3]\); Bishop Trumwine \([HE\ 4.12]\); Abbot Oethelwald \([HE\ 5.1]\); the lay ascetic Drythelm *uir Dei* \([HE\ 5.12]\); Father Ecgbert, a *peregrinus* who wins Iona to the Dionysian calendar \([HE\ 5.9–10, 12, 22]\); and various holy women, including Queens Aethelburh and Æthelthryth, and Abbesses Hild and Æfledd \([HE\ 3.8; 4.19, 23, 26]\). To these, Bede also acknowledges Irishmen trained in that part of Ireland accepting the Roman *pascha* before Whitby, such as Father Ronan \([HE\ 3.25]\) and Bishop Tuda \([HE\ 3.26]\).

Although Bede presents the face of the British isolate through only two figures (Pelagius and Cædwalla of Gwynedd), the very sociability of Bede’s archetype of the Irish leads him to identify many more persons as representatives of it. Their contribution to Christian life in Britain, as Bede sees it, is to model the trait of oneness of community proper to the Church. As the Irish indwell the hortatory imperative, they express the indignant yearning of humanity for salvation to be realised in the emotive, interpersonal and egalitarian terms of dignity, mutuality and justice.

Sources by Which to Access and Elaborate upon Bede’s Archetype of the Irish

To access Bede’s view of the Irish, several sources are especially apposite. First among them is Bede’s *HE* itself, which associates the Irish explicitly with prophetic motifs. The Irish are known for moral rigour and miraculous healing, clairvoyance and care for the poor, righteous iconoclasm and bodily incorruption. Given the very exhortational nature of the hagiography and the sermon, Bede’s prose *Vita Cudbercti (VCB)* and *Homeliae (HOM)* also elucidate themes that Bede associates with the interpersonal impact of Irishmen. In addition, there can be no doubt that Bede’s view of the Irish is formed in part by his own educational lineage under Trumhere and Chad and by his ecclesiastical lineage under John of Beverley. The significance here is that all of these mentors were trained in the Irish tradition at Lindisfarne and Whitby [*HE* 4.3, 5.24].

Sources useful to trace the formation of Bede’s perception of the Irish include Adamnán’s *Vita Columbae (VCA)* and *De locis sanctis (DLSA)*, and the anonymous *Altus Prosator (AP)*, *Vita Fursei (VF)*, *Transitus beati Fursei (TF)*, and *Vita Cudbercti*, written at Whitby (*VCW*).\(^3\) All of these sources illustrate well the miraculous mode of prophecy and the prophetic penchant for the legislative ethos of tropology, which demands right relation to God and neighbour.

Finally, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae (DMSS)* and *De ordine creaturarum (DOC)*,\(^4\) two Irish treatises known to Bede, also serve to illustrate the Irish accent upon miracles and morality in Bede’s sources. Some may find it problematic to the thesis presented here that *DMSS* and *DOC* are treated as Irish works, given that Bede believes them to be Augustinian and Isidorean. In this view, Bede’s erroneous attribution would misalign the linkage of theme and provenance,

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\(^2\) All page references pertaining to *VCW* and *VCB* are to be found in Colgrave (1935).


confusing the outcome of his set of tropes. Two arguments meet this challenge, however. On the one hand, the argument from Bede’s discretion deflects its force. For, even if he knew of the Irish provenance of these scientific sources, Bede does tend to tidy up categories of thought with silence. He might be tempted to suppress such knowledge because he already ties such themes to the urbane, intellectual culture of the Mediterranean. On the other hand, since Latin is the sole language of Bede’s sources, one may presume that Irish authorship could be obscured by that fact. Even if Bede got the provenance wrong, the argument from literary comparison actually supports his set of tropes rather than undermining it. For the content of DMSS and DOC does match Bede’s trope of the Irish; and one may infer that Bede forms his opinions of the Irish, unbeknownst to him, from at least mediated contact with the Irish culture that produced them.

**Bede’s Qualified Approval and Reckoning of the Abbots in the Irish Tradition as Prophets**

The first Irish residents of Britain to be named in his *HE* include King Aedan; Columba, Abbot of Iona; and Aidan, Abbot of Lindisfarne. Bede’s comments on these figures reveal that Bede does not acknowledge any royal role for the Irish in the greater part of Britain, and that he does not admit a primarily sacerdotal role for the Irish, despite the ordination of Irishmen. In *HE* 1.34, the Christian king of the Irish pre-emptively strikes an unbaptised English king. The battle ends in a drubbing that teaches a lesson to the Irish in Britain. Bede writes:

5 Faith Wallis comments upon Bede’s discrete silences. In addition to the matter of the Irish origins of DMSS and DOC, there is the matter of the Irish origin of Bede’s computistical tables, pointed out by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, and the possibility that Bede may have suppressed the connexion. Wallis notes that Charles Jones and Alan Thacker, unlike Ó Cróinín, think that Bede knew not that his computistical sources had any Irish connexion. If he had known otherwise, Jones says, he may not have used them. Contra Ó Cróinín Wallis agrees with Alfred Cordoliani that the Celtic lunar limits (14th–20th, not 15th–21st, days of the moon) were defended by attaching them to the 19-year cycle and not to the 84-year cycle. For, though Wilfrid attacks the Irish for their 84-year cycle, Colman defends criteria for alternate lunar limits and not the length of the cycle. Given that the British held to the 84-year cycle to Bede’s own day, Wallis suspects that Bede associated the longer cycle with them and not with the Irish *per se*. See Wallis 1999, Ixvi–lix, Ixxix–lxx; Ó Cróinín, “The Irish provenance of Bede’s computus,” *Peritia* 2 (1983): 247.
Neque ex eo tempore quisquam regum Scottorum in Brittania adversus gentem Anglorum usque ad hac diem in proelium uenire audebat [HE 1.34/116].

And neither from that time have any of the kings of the Irish in Britain dared to come against the race of the English race in battle up to this day.

For Bede, the Irish are a quick study: they never pose a military threat to the English again. Bede names no more Irish kings since he has the Irish accept his archetype of the English as the ruling people. Instead, the Irish find their niche elsewhere: not as milksops, but as a people of moral fibre, rather than military force.

While Bede introduces Columba as ordained, he minimises his sacerdotal function immediately, by emphasising his role as an abbot with authority over bishops. Bede writes:

Venit de Hibernia presbyter et abbas habitu et uita monachi insignis, nomine Columba Britanniam, praedicaturus uerbum Dei prouinciis septentrionalium Pictorum... gentemque illam uerbo et exemplo ad fidem Christi convertit...

Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper abbatem presbyterum, cuius iuri et omnis prouincia et ipsi etiam episcopi ordine inusitato debeant esse subiecti, iuxta exemplum primi doctoris illius, qui non episcopus sed presbyter extitit et monachus, de cuius uita et uerbis nonulla a discipulis eius feruntur scripta haberi [HE 3.4/220, 222, 224].

A famous priest and abbot distinguished both by the habit and by the life of a monk, came into Britain, Columba by name, to preach the word of God to the provinces of the northern Pictish... and he converted that nation to the faith of Christ, by his preaching and example...

It is customary, however, for this island always to have an priest-abbot as ruler, to whose law both the whole province and even bishops themselves, by an unusual order, must be subject; according to the example of their first teacher, who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk, concerning the life and words of whom not a few writings are held by his disciples.

Bede continues by assessing such an idiosyncratic arrangement:
Of whatever kind he was himself, we hold this for sure about him: that he left successors renowned for great continence, divine love, and the institution of a Rule, even though at that time following dubious tables of the highest festival (seeing that, with them positioned far away at the ends of the earth, no one had brought them the synodical decrees of paschal observance); [and] observing diligently works of piety and chastity – such things that they had been able to learn in prophetic, evangelical and apostolic writings.

In this evaluation, Bede begins and concludes with a favourable judgement of Columba’s tradition because it produces right relation to God that is evident in right relation to one’s neighbour. While he praises their interest in Scripture and their acts of kindness, he faults them only for ignoring the judgements of ecumenical synods on calendrical matters as though the authentic example of godly living should trump the sacramental role of the dogmatic and ritual specialist. One must recognise here that such muted critique from Bede is remarkable in light of the hostility for opponents that is common in the late antique sources that line Bede’s library. His reserve shows just how pleased Bede is with the Irish. For contrast, when Jerome suspects Helvidius of purposely omitting a fact to protect what Jerome believes to be error, Jerome rants:

\[ O\ furo\ caecus,\ et\ in\ proprium\ exitium\ mens\ uesana! \]

O blind madness, and an insane mind en route to its own demise!\(^6\)

In his qualified acceptance of the Irish as good people, Bede stakes out a role for them. He defends their reputation by minimising their errors – sometimes with explanation, sometimes

through discreet silences not afforded to the British. One such explanation turns on the number of Irish who err and the nature of their errors. As opposed to the entire British population, only part of the Irish people (the Ionians) err during Bede’s adult life; and those who do err maintain the core essentials of the faith, which the British heretics and schismatics fail to do.  

Bede considers the context and the manner of their respective introduction to Christian truth and finds that the Irish who err are located so far away from Christendom that they may be excused for their ignorance. By contrast, the British receive the faith long ago within the Roman civilisation and even introduce heresy at Rome through Pelagius. Summarising a papal letter, Bede writes:

\[
\text{Quo epistulae principio manifeste declaratur, et nuperrime temporibus illis hanc apud eos heresim exortam, et non totam eorum gentem sed quosdam in eis hac fuisse implicitos [HE 2.19/200].}
\]

At the beginning of this [papal] letter, it is clearly asserted that this heresy had sprung up among them [the Irish] very recently; and that not all the race, but only certain of them, were implicated in it.

While all of the British have erred for a long time, some of the Irish err rather recently.

Bede likely mitigates his views of the Irish as a people on account of the fact that Ireland began to adopt Roman liturgies almost a century prior to the time of writing. Rather than continuing his initial polarity of pagan Irish warrior versus defenceless British Christian [HE 1.12–14], the polarity becomes the Irish Christian, who accepts his lords temporal and spiritual, versus the British apostate, who spurns both [HE 5.23]. In Lawrence’s letter, the Irish follow the putatively British practice of refusing table fellowship to the English [HE 2.4]; yet Bede omits

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8 The British embrace the views Bede expects of them in 768, a generation after his death in 735.
the doubtlessly hostile response of the Irish to Archbishop Lawrence’s “offer” of episcopal oversight. This difference of treatment implies Bede’s concession on account of the subsequent Irish embrace of Romanitas.⁹

Defending the Irish on matters of doctrinal-liturgical substance, Bede writes of the Irish:

In quo tamen hoc adprobo, quia in celebratione sui paschae non aliud corde tenebat, venerabatur et praedicabat quam quod nos, id est redemptionem generis humani per passionem, resurrectionem, ascensionem in caelos mediatoris Dei et hominum hominis Iesu Christi. Unde et hanc non, ut quidam falso opinantur... cum Iudaeis... sed die dominica semper agebat... propter fidem uidelicet dominicae resurrectionis [HE 3.17/266].

In this [matter], however, I do approve this: that in his celebration of pascha he used to hold in his heart, venerate and preach nothing other than we do: that is, the redemption of the human race by the passion, resurrection, and ascension into the heavens of the one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. Whence also he did this not, as some falsely suppose,... with the Jews, but on the Lord’s day always,... on account of faith in the Lord’s resurrection.

For Bede the Irish are true believers. They accept the doctrine of salvation by grace through the death and resurrection of Christ (contra Pelagium) and they worship on Sunday (contra the Quartodecimans, who hold a type of Messianic Judaism for Gentiles). The Irish may err in liturgics, but they are a far cry from the British Arians and Pelagians [HE 1.8, 10].

Bede also excuses the Irish on geographical grounds, after the same manner that St. Luke excuses the disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19 for not knowing about Jesus. Bede writes:

Sed ut barbari et rustici quando eadem prima sabbati... ueniret, minime didicerant. Verum quia gratia caritatis feruere non omiserunt, et huius quoque rei notitiam ad perfectum percipere meruerunt [HE 3.4/224].

⁹ Alan Thacker remarks that Bede edited out part of a letter from Rome to save embarrassment to Rome for its inaccurate charge of Quartodecimanism and to protect the reputation of the Irish. See Thacker, in Houwen and Macdonald, 39. On sources of Bede’s views, see Stancliffe 2003, 23; and for theological issues behind the paschal controversy, see Charles-Edwards 2000, 415.
But, as barbarians and rustics, [the Irish] had never learned... when the same first day of the Sabbath might come. But, because they did not lack the fervent grace of love, they also deserved to perceive notice of this matter to their perfection.

For Bede the Irish are *barbari et rustici* [barbarians and rustics], not rebels. Being remote from the urban think-tanks of Christian church, Irish chary of synodical wisdom are to be tolerated. This argument appears again in Bede’s account of the Synod of Whitby when Wilfrid excuses Columba to prosecute Colman, who now has contact with the rest of the world [*HE* 3.25/306].

Alongside Bede’s efforts to salvage the reputation of the Irish by the apologies and silences of his *HE*, Bede also rewrites the anonymous hagiography of Cuthbert (*VCW*) in order to lift the taint of schism that might dim the glow of the Irish tradition of the righteous life ratified by miracle. In doing so, he inserts a monologue into the mouth of Cuthbert. Bede writes:

> *Sciatisque et memoria retineatis, quia si uos unum e duobus adversis eligere necessitas coegerit, multo plus dilogo ut eruientes de tumulo tollentesque uobiscum mea ossa recedatis ab his locis, et ubicunque Deus prouiderit incole maneatis, quam ut ulla ratione consentientes iniquitati, scismaticorum iugo colla subdatis* [*VCB* ch. 39/284].

You must know and retain the memory that if necessity compels you to elect one of two adversities, I would like much more that you, exhuming my bones from the tomb and bearing them with you, depart from this place and remain as settlers wherever God may foresee, than that consenting to iniquity for any reason, you submit your necks to the yoke of schismatics [*VCB* ch. 39/285].

Here Bede assures his readers that Cuthbert’s Irish eccentricities have not clouded his mind to the value of correction by Roman priests. Even so, the Irish prophetic accent serves a rhetorical purpose in the mutual relation of types. For the Irish bring personal and prophetic warmth to the cold necessity of the icons of the divine will in kingship and of the divine mind in priesthood.

Bede does not only protect the Irish from unqualified criticism, he also commends the Irish in their own right as those who serve the necessary function of prophethood. Michael Enwright observes that the early Irish, more than other European peoples, favoured allegiance to saints of
the Old Testament. This affinity may pertain to the prominence within the Old Testament of iconoclastic motifs favoured by the Irish, such as natural science and natural law, which in theory debunk the delusion and idolatry of all, and by prophets as iconoclastic agents who check the powerful. In particular, Gearóid Mac Niocaill notes the importance of law to the early Irish. To illustrate, one notes that the early Irish monasteries promulgated laws in the name of their patron, such as the Law of Adamnán or the Law of Patrick, to establish themselves as peers. With this in mind, the tension between Iona and the See of Armagh becomes the rivalry between Columba as a type of Prophet Samuel, judge and kingmaker, and Patrick as a type of Prophet Moses, the Lawgiver for all of Israel. Kim McCone further affirms the value that the early Christian Irish place upon a prophetic ethos by noting how St. Patrick’s hagiographer, Muirchú (d. 697), has a lawyer, Eric, and a prophet, Dubthach, as the first witnesses to the new faith brought by Patrick, the implication surely being that pre-Patrician law and poetry were related to the Christian dispensation in Ireland in much the same way as the law and the prophets of the Old Testament were to the New Testament in the Bible.

Rather than identifying with the patriarchs or the ancient Israelite monarchy, such as Abraham or David, the early Irish writer remembers his pre-Christian past through prophetic figures such as Moses and Elijah. Among the ordained structures of priesthood and kingship in the Senchas Már, rather than identifying with the patriarchs or the ancient Israelite monarchy, such as Abraham or David, the early Irish writer remembers his pre-Christian past through prophetic figures such as Moses and Elijah. Among the ordained structures of priesthood and kingship

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11 See Kim McCone, Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart, 1991), 90. Thus, in the Senchas Már, nine men gather: three bishops (Patrick, Benén, Cairnech); three kings (Lóegaire of Ireland, Dáire of Ulster, Corc son of Lugaid of Munster); and three scholars (Dubthach moccu Lugair the poet, Fergus the poet, Ros mac Trícim, expert in legal language). What is interesting is that there is a role for a prophet-like native poet or lawyer among the ordained structures of priesthood and kingship. See McCone, 97. Beyond the legislative ethos of native Irish poets, Joseph Falaky Nagy also discerns the liminal status associated with the filid, rather much like that of the anchorite. In particular, he points to the ageless, mythical Fintan, who, in contact with reality beyond the empirical and social conditions of the present, mediates between elements of society and between society and the ultimate. See Nagy, “Liminality and Knowledge in Irish Tradition,” Studia Celtica 16–17 (1981–82): 143.
there is a formal role for prophet-like native poets or lawyers, who remind iconic figures of the law, such as kings and priests, and satirise them when they contravene it.

Now Bede identifies Irishmen and their protégés with the technical term “man of God”, an epithet of Hebrew prophets in biblical literature. It is curious that parallels exist between Bede’s HE and the biblical canon on the use of the title “man of God”. Just as biblical usage varies uit Dei and homo Dei, so also does Bede’s text employ uit Dei and uit Domini interchangeably. Just as the Bible acknowledges one king (David) thus, so also does Bede’s text admit one king, Sebbi of Essex, in the same company [HE 4.11/366]. Again, just as the Hebrews include a nameless uit Dei (2 Chron. 11, 25:7, 9), so also does Bede’s English history include the same [HE 4.8]. Just as the Israelites admit only a few obscure entities into this company, such as Igdaliah, Shemaiah (Jer. 35:4) and the angel appearing to Samson’s mother (Judges 13:6, 8), so also does Bede admit only a few obscure persons, such as Adamnán of Coldingham and Drythhelm [HE 4.25, 5.12]. Finally, just as Moses is so named in more unrelated books and unrelated passages of the Bible than other major prophetic figures, such as Elijah and Elisha, Samuel and David, so also does Bede name Cuthbert “man of God” more often than anyone else. The prophetic epithets in question occur in Bede’s prose Life of St. Cuthbert some fifty times in two-thirds of its forty-six chapters. This is more often than the usage in HE in terms of hard numbers; and much more often, when one considers the length of VCB over against that of

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12 Colgrave and Mynors tend to translate both phrases as “man of God”. However, at least once they translate uit Domini as “saint” [4.30/443] and once as “man of the Lord” [5.10/481]; moreover, at least once they render uit Dei as “the king” [4.11/367] and another time, they do not render it at all [4.23/411].

13 For Moses as homo Dei or uit Dei, see Dt 33:1; Josh 14:6; Ps 89 (90):1; 1 Chron 23:14; 2 Chron 30:16; Ezra 3:2. For Samuel, see 1 Sam. 2:27, 9: 6–8, 10; 1 Ki. 12:22. For Elijah see, 1 Ki. 17: 18, 24; 20:28; 2 Ki. 1:10,12. For Elisha, see 2 Ki. 4:7, 9, 16, 21, 22, 25, 27, 42; 5:8, 14–15, 20; 6:9–10, 15; 7:2, 17–19; 8:2, 4, 8, 11; 13:19. For David, see Neh. 12:24, 2 Chron 8:14. For the prophet contra Jeroboam, see 1 Ki. 13:1, 4–8, 11–12, 14, 21, 26, 29, 31; 2 Ki. 23:16–17.
The association of Cuthbert and prophecy is strengthened by the fact that Bede carries over the term *uir Dei* and cognates of *propheta* from his primary source on Cuthbert, the *Life* written at Whitby. Indeed, to avoid ambiguity about Bede’s claim of prophethood for Cuthbert, Cuthbert speaks *prophetice* of his own death (*HE* 4.9/124); and, in the final anecdote, Cuthbert responds to requests before they are voiced *prophetali spiritu* (*HE* 4.18/138).

Bede also presents Ireland itself as Eden, a land bearing the mystical, heavenly aura of physical health, insulated from the sullying sway of sin. Bede comments that

> *Hibernia autem et latitudine sui status et salubritate ac serenitate aerum multum Brittaniae praestat... nullum ibi reptile uideri solet, nullus uiuere serpens ualeat. Nam saepe illo de Brittania adlati serpentes, mox ut proximante terris nauigo odore aeris illius adacti fuerint, intereunt; quin potius omnia pene quae de eadem insula sunt contra uenenum ualent... Diues lactis et mellis insula nec uinearum expers, piscium uolucrumque sed et ceruroum caprearumque uenatu insignis. Haec autem proprie patria Scottorum est; ab hac egressi, ut diximus, tertiam in Brittania Brett onibus et Pictis gentem addiderunt* (*HE* 1.1/18, 20).

Ireland is broader than Britain, the state of its air healthier and milder... No reptile is apt to be seen there, no serpent able to thrive. For oft serpents have been brought to [Ireland] from Britain. As soon as a ship approaches landfall, [snakes] are contacted by the scent of its air, and expire. Indeed, nearly everything that the same island produces works against poison. Rich in milk and honey, the island is not without vines, fish, and birds; but is noted for the hunting of stags and roedeer also. It is properly the fatherland of the Irish; being emigrants from it, as we have said, they add to the British and the Pictish a third race in Britain.

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14 Bede uses *uir Dei* and *uir Domini* of Cuthbert eight of the thirty-four times that he deploys the terms in his *History* (*HE* 4.27, 28–32). He also uses the terms of Italian miracle workers, Augustine, Lawrence and Paulinus (*HE* 1.27; 2.2, 7, 13); of Irish clairvoyants, Aidan, Fursa, Bosel, Adamanán of Coldingham (*HE* 3.15, 19; 4.23, 25); of Irish-trained English monks, Cedd (4x), Trumwine, and Herebert (*HE* 3.22–23; 4.26; 4.29), Oethelwald, John of Beverley and Ecgbereht [5.1, 2, 4, 10, 22, 23]; of an English king, influenced by Irish ways, Sebbi [4.11]; of an ascetical layman, Drythelm [4.12]; of biblical figures, Joseph and Job [5.21]; and of an unnamed clairvoyant [4.8]. One must note that before Bede introduces Aidan, he does present three Latin figures as *uir Dei*: Augustine and Mellitus of Canterbury [HE 1.27; 2.2], and Paulinus of York [HE 2.12]. Two interpretations are possible which still concede Bede’s prophetic archetype of the Irish. One may view these bishops as stand-ins until the Ionians enters the story; or one may infer that Roman bishops transcend the incompleteness of any one archetype as models of mature hybridity. Two other discernible exceptions to the observation that *uir Dei* speaks of the Irish prophet are an unnamed prophet (who may have been Irish) (*HE* 4.8), and Sebbi of Essex (*HE* 4.11).
Biblical allusions here assert the life-giving holiness of the soil beneath Irish feet. An occidental Eden, Ireland teems with life of all sorts [Gen. 1–2]; but, even better than the Garden of God, it resists serpents and poison [Gen. 3]. Abounding in milk and honey like the Promised Land, Ireland also boasts the best hunting [Ex. 3:8; Dt. 6:3]. For Bede, Ireland exudes supernatural power as though it were heaven on earth, a suitable land from which to call holy and righteous prophets. The halo effect is no clearer than when he rebukes his own English king for attacking holy Ireland, the sacrosanct soil of saints and scholars [HE 1.1, 3.28]. Indeed, Ecgfrith’s assault upon Ireland nil se laedentem [not harming him] is a sacrilege that incurs his violent death and God’s abiding displeasure with the English. For since that time, Bede observes, the chided English have ruled with lesser glory [HE 4.26/428].

Taken together, Bede’s view of the Irish as men of God and of Ireland as the Garden of God show how Bede is quite taken by the Irish as those who evince an aura of palpable righteousness. For Bede, the prophetic ethos encompasses the ethical motif of righteous relation to God and neighbour, and the eschatological motif that manifests the health of Eden. Bede connects these two dimensions of prophecy in narrative form by recounting how the foremost exemplars of natural law experience the supernatural vindication of God. In HE 3.15, God vindicates Abbot Aidan’s meritorious heart by marvels done through him: *Qui cuius meriti fuerit*,

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17 One might also note that Bede’s transition from royal tussle in HE 4.21 to individual faith after HE 4.22 (Caedmon, Cuthbert) appears parallel to the transition between the account of disloyal kings in the historical books of the OT to the righteous example of those known as minor prophets. See Karl Lutterkort, “Beda Hagiographicus: Meaning and Function of Miracle Stories in the *Vita Cuthberti* and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*,” in Houwen and MacDonald, 102–105.
etiam miraculorum signis internus arbiter edocuit [Of which merit he was, the Arbiter of inward parts also taught even by the signs of miracles] [HE 3.15/260]. In this same context, Bede names Aidan uir Dei, and declares straightforwardly that he operates per prophetiae spiritum [through the spirit of prophecy] [HE 3.15/260].

Bede says as much of Cuthbert also in the prose Life:

Internis id est animi uirtutibus, ea quoque quibus foras effulgebat miraculorum signa testimonium dabant [VCB ch. 26/ 242].

These signs of miracles by which [Cuthbert] used to shine outwardly gave witness also to inner virtues, that is, of his soul.

The healing power of God, then, is channelled through the righteous Cuthbert. Intrinsic to the two sides of prophecy is the notion that one’s orientation toward God and toward one’s neighbour are intertwined. Bede writes of this relational intent of revelation with the Irish-trained Cuthbert, thus:


This very thing [Cuthbert] held also in the place of prayer: [that] one should grant weak brothers the aid of exhortation; knowing that he who said, “You shall love the Lord your God”, also said, “You shall love your neighbour” [Matt. 22:37–39].

Cuthbert understands well that performing one’s prayers in the spirit of discipline is meaningless if one neglects to come to the aid of the brother monk in need of one’s presence and counsel.

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18 Contra Charles Plummer and Kathleen Hughes, James Bruce opines that Vita Columbae shows Columba to be a prophet in the biblical tradition, and not a pagan clairvoyant. Like the Eastern Church, morality and miracle go hand in hand. Bruce writes: “Basil specifically mentions obedience to the commands of Christ as qualification for the reception of the Spirit, and most significantly for Abbot Columba, states that the Superior of a coenobium needs the gift of foreseeing the future, he being the eye of the body.” Jonathan Wooding reviews Bruce’s motifs affirmatively, though he wishes for interaction with Borsje and other writers in the field. See Bruce, Prophecy, Miracles, Angels, and Heavenly Light?: The Eschatology, Pneumatology, and Missiology of Adomnan’s Life of Columba (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 94, 226; Wooding, review of Prophecy, Miracles, Angels, and Heavenly Light? by James Bruce, Journal of Religious History 32 No. 3 (2008), 372. See also Katja Ritari, Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland: Moral Theology in the Lives of Saints Brigit and Columba (Turnout: Brepols, 2009), 29–43.
From such insight, one discerns that what holds the motifs of eschatological awareness and the other-centred ethic together intuitively is that miracles and morality speak to the twin aspects of feeling proper to existential awareness, namely, physical sensation and social sentiment. To play the prophet, one concludes, is to address life as that which must be made liveable in the moment. And Bede credits the Irish with this contribution to the development of the new faith in Britain.

The Prophet and Normativity: Life in the Imperative Mood of Tropology Incarnate

The prized ideal implicit in the Decalogue and at the heart of the prophetic worldview is human dignity in the image of God. For to be righteous is to accept one’s status before God and the fact, inherent in the Golden Rule, of God’s image in one’s fellows. The result is the liveable space of shalom. Now to create such liveable conditions, the Irish prophet detoxifies the social realm itself of egoism by impressing divine law upon human hearts. Their tropological souls accent the legislative authority of God and value relational authenticity so dearly that they demand as much of themselves as of those with whom they interact face to face. Indeed, they become the imperative mood incarnate, rectifying abuses perpetrated within living memory. For in the Irish way of being, one must not only confess the sociable ideal, but must concede one’s innermost self to it, conduct oneself accordingly and confront all those who deny it or balk at it.

One may say that Bede finds the Irish cœnobium to be that society envisioned by Moses, who wished _ut omnis populus prophetet_ [that the entire people would prophesy] (Num. 11:29). For the early Irish adhered to Bishop Patrick as to a New Moses, the very essence of the legislative ethos. Irish figures, for Bede, become normativity itself. This totalising imperative is so strong that it makes the cœnobitic monastery what it is – an enclave in which justice for all trumps the prerogatives of power. For if all monks follow the Rule, so the logic goes, all display

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19 On the image of God, see Malcolm Jeeves and Warren Brown, _Neuroscience, Psychology, and Religion_ (Conshohocken, PA: Templeton, 2009), 121–27. Of the three views suggested, the Irish prophetic view seems relational, the English royal view functional, and the Latinate priestly view substantive/rational.
the requisite respect for God and their fellows in his image; and, with each conceding to the other his due, peace obtains. The imperative even extends to guests. For should one linger, he will wear out his welcome when he refuses the spade assigned to earn his keep.

In *Altus Prosator*, a poem hailing from Iona, imperative motifs associated with the legal ethos of the prophet are prominent. The poem reads thus:

*Excelsus mundi machinam prauidens et harmoniam
Caelum et terram fecerat mare aquas condiderat...
hominem demum regere protoplaustum praesagmine.*

*Quis ad condictum Domini montem ascendit Sinae?
Quis auduiit tonitrua ultra modum sonantia...
Praeter Israhelitici Moysen iudicem populi?*

*Stantes erimus pauidi ante tribunal Domini...
Uidentes quoque posita ante obtutus crimina
librosque conscientiae patefactos in facie
in fletus amarissimos ac singultus erumpemus
subtracta necessaria operandi materia.*

*Xristo de caelis Domino descendente celsissimo
Praefulgebit clarisimum signum crucis et uexillum...*

*Quis potest Deo placere nouissime in tempore...
exceptis contemtoribus mundi praesentis istius? [AP – stanzas E, Q, S, X and Responsio]*

The Most High, foreseeing the system of the world, and [its] harmony, Had made heaven and earth, had founded the sea, the waters... And, at length, the first-formed man to rule by prophecy [lit. with foreknowledge]. Who has ascended Sinai, the agreed mountain of the Lord? Who has heard the thunders beyond measure sounding... Except Moses, the judge of the Israelite people?

We will be standing terrified before the tribunal of the Lord. Seeing also our crimes placed before our eyes And the books of conscience opened in [our] face; We will erupt in bitterest and singular weeping, With the necessary thing to be done [repentance] taken away.

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20 For a discussion of authorship, see page 63n3.
21 Clancy and Márkus, 44, 50, 52.
With Christ, highest Lord, descending from the heavens
The clearest sign and banner of the cross will shine forth...

Who can please God in the last time...
The despisers of this present world being excepted?

In this Ionian poem, God the High King, who rules without opposition, assumes the royal motif. The cross, which might have been an altar of priestly sacrifice and vehicle of divine mercy, is God’s blazon of arms. By contrast, the poet presents the human element in terms of prophetic motifs. The first man rules by prophecy. The only man named is Moses the Prophet and Lawgiver; and the demand for righteous deportment in anticipation of divine judgement pervades from beginning to end.

The totalising effect of the universal imperative is observed in the primacy of abbot over bishop in the Columban tradition, and in the penchant to establish alternative societies in seclusion. Whereas the abbot, as the embodiment of the Rule, holds the authority to oust any unsociable person from the confines of his holy city, the monastery; the bishop excludes only the most egregious apostate and, only then, from the altar alone rather than from the diocesan territory also ruled by the king. The abbot ensures the universal compliance his entire community. By contrast, a bishop does not actively impose compliance upon anyone (except his clergy). For sacerdotal influence is felt, in principle, only by those who seek access to the sacraments. Perhaps the most poignant way to underscore the totalising impact of the Irish prophetic tradition is to note their association with islands untainted by exchange with the broader world. Ireland is a holy island of the righteous, as are Iona and Lindisfarne. When an island is unavailable, Dicuill gathers his monks at Bosham siluis et mari circumdatum [surrounded by woods and the sea] [HE 4.13].

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22 Jennifer O’Reilly notes the connexion between the Irish and islands, finding the enclave of Dicuill to be an island oasis of sorts, even extending the metaphor to Hartlepool in HE 3.24 as insula cerui [island of
The Prophet and Community: Connection between Social Responsibility and Salvation

Supporting the imperative motif of Bede’s trope of the Irish is the connexion between salvation and the cardinal virtue of justice, equal access of penitents to God and social responsibility. One finds such themes attached to Fursa *uir Dei* in particular, both in Bede’s anecdote on Fursa *HE* 3.19 and in the literary source behind it. Bede’s source reads thus:


But another [junior devil] said: “Until now the narrow door, through which [people] do not enter unless poor, refuses [Fursa]; there we can overcome him: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’” [Mt. 22:39]. The holy angel responded: “This man worked good for his neighbours”. The adversary responded: “It does not suffice to do good works, unless also one loves [others] as himself.” The holy angel responds: “The fruit of love is to do good works, because ‘God will render to every man according to his works’” [Rom. 2:6].

Here an angel and a devil argue in ethical terms over Fursa’s salvation. Rather than addressing the matter in sacerdotal terms by referring to Fursa’s baptism or his penitent reception of Christ’s body and blood, the prophetic themes of divine justice and social responsibility emerge.

The same themes appear in Bede’s own account of Fursa’s vision of hell. Four devils taunt the Irishman: *unum mendacii... alterum cupiditatis... tertium dissensionis... quartum impietatis* [*HE* 3.19/272] [one of deception... another of greed... a third of discord... and a fourth of injustice]. Each devil invites the social irresponsibility that Fursa must overcome to secure salvation. He must reject deception of other persons and renounce greed that seeks their property; he must refuse discord among his peers and resist injustice by acknowledging and protecting the

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23 In *VF*, Fursa is *uir Dei* [chs. 4/282] and *uir Domini* [ch. 11/291]. For significance, see pages 71–72.
weak. After passing the test, Fursa exhibits the trademark Irish concern for the well-being of others by refusing to regale a jovial sensationalist with tales of his foray into hell [HE 3.19/274] because penitence and not pleasure is his goal.

Bede’s own sympathy with the Irish accent upon the salvific role of the moral life appears in his homilies even though he makes much of the absolution of the Roman hierarchy. Bede writes:

\[Neque\indoctus\quose\ignarus\christianae\fidei\potest\eiusdem\fidei\sacramentis\ablui\nequelaucro\baptismi\apeccatis\emundari\sufficit,\si\non\post\baptisma\studeat\quese\bonis\operibus\insistere\[HOM\2.8.82–86].\]

It is not possible that anyone uninstructed and ignorant about the Christian faith can be purified by the sacraments of this faith; nor is it sufficient that one be cleansed from his sins in the bath of baptism, if he does not strive to devote himself to good works after his baptism.

And again:

\[Bene\ praedicatio\paenitentiae\et\remissionis\peccatorum\quae\ingentes\idolatras\et\uariis\pollutas\sceleribus\erat\euangelizanda\ab\Hierosolimis\sumit\initium\ne\ullus\scilicet\suorum\magnitude\facinorum\perterritus\de\inpenetranda\uenia,\si\dignum\paenitentiae\fructum\faceret,\dubitaret\quando\etiam\Hierosolimis\qui\filium\Dei\blasphemauere\et\crucifixere\indultum\esse\constaret\[HOM\2.15.79–85].\]

It was fitting that the preaching of penitence and remission of sins, which had to be spread among races idolatrous and defiled by various crimes, should commence from Jerusalem, lest any... thoroughly petrified by the magnitude of its misdeeds, should doubt concerning an inaccessible pardon, if he bore fruit worthy of repentance, when indulgence might exist even for Jerusalem, which had blasphemed and crucified the Son of God.

What unites these Bedan quotations is the theme of equality as it pertains to salvation. Just as all sinners, even the worst, may approach God in penitence assured of their initial reception; so also

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24 Thomas O’Loughlin contends that early Irish law gave a measure of justice to the weak. Among such were Patrick’s law not to kill the clergy; Adamnán’s law not to kill women; and Dáire’s law not to kill cattle. See O’Loughlin, *Celtic Theology* (London: Continuum, 2000), 70–71.


must all saints continue in the same good works to maintain their cleansed state before God who discerns the intent of the heart that discerns the relational import of salvation.

**The Prophet and Proper Anger: Caring, Compunction, Coherence and the Charismatic**

Now leadership among the ethical Irish is interpersonal in nature. In sociological terms, one may understand the Irish abbot himself to be a canon of charisma because the Rule of Columba or of Columbanus is their very person. For their exemplary presence mediates the affective intent of natural law and creates a just peace within their communities. In essence, they model indignant insistence upon *caring* for the weak, *compunction* from the strong and the *coherent vision* of the humane treatment for all persons. The charisma of the Irish abbacy, then, stems from the righteous indignation of those who seek to create a social world in which all people of goodwill may dwell in a safe, dignifying social environment of mutuality. The weak receive care, the strong hold themselves accountable and their leaders fear not those of the wealthy or sacerdotal classes tempted to play the bully.

As for the caring spirit, Bede shows the Irish-trained Cuthbert as one who initiates contact with the lowborn and avoids the ostentatious display of office. Bede writes:

*Solebat autem ea maxime loca peragrare, illis praedicare in uiculis, qui in arduis asperisque montibus procul positi aliis horrori erant ad uisendum, et paupertate pariter ac rusticitate sua doctorum arcebant accessum... [Cudberct] demoratus in montanis plebem rusticam uerbo praedicationis simul et opere uirtutis ad caelestia uocaret [HE 4.27/ 433, 435 cf. VCB ch. 9/ 186].

Mostly he used to travel through those places to preach in those villages that were positioned on difficult and rough mountains far away; they were dreaded to visit by others, and equally for their poverty as for their rusticity, they prevented access of other teachers... [Cuthbert], lingering in the mountains, would call the rustic people to heavenly things by the word of preaching likewise also by his work of virtue.

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And again:

*Vestimentis utebatur communibus, ita temperanter agens, ut horum neque mundiciis neque sordibus esset notabilis* [VCB ch. 15/212].

Using common dress, so as to behave temperately, that he would be notable neither for spotless nor for filthy [clothes].

By lingering among folk of low estate, Cuthbert creates (and reveals) their equal value quite apart from practical considerations, such as remuneration. For him, people are people. True to his interpersonal ethos, Cuthbert opts to avoid ostentatious dress despite his iconic status as a bishop and his reputation as an anchorite.

Bede shows his own affinity to this Irish ideal of caring acceptance of others in a homily on the shepherds who spread the news of Jesus’s birth (Lk. 2:15–20). Bede writes:

*Non solum pastores episcopi presbyteri diaconi uel etiam rectores monasteriorum sunt intellegendi sed et omnes fideles... Et quicumque uestrum saltim uni aut duobus fratribus cotidiano regimine praest pastoris eisdem debet officium qui in quantum sufficit pascere hos uerbi dapibus iubetur* [HOM 1.7.104–105, 108–111].

Not only bishops, presbyters, deacons, and even governors of monasteries, must be understood as pastors, but also all the faithful... And whoever among you is set over even one or two brothers in a daily regimen, who suffices to a certain degree to feed them with feasts of the word, ought by the same office of pastor to be obeyed.

For Bede, the pastoral role of caring for others permeates a community so that the respect proper to teachers extends widely to those with but a little more knowledge than the novice. Bede’s presses the matter again in a homily on the consecration of an altar at the middle court of Solomon’s temple (2 Chron. 7:17). He remarks:

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28 Trent Foley shows that Cuthbert won the court of public opinion and in the manuscript record, which, I suspect, speaks to an aspect of sociology: egalitarianism. Few are disposed to the voice from above, a point of scandal in Christian discipleship which some refuse. See *ibid.*, 26–31.

29 CCSL 122: 49/ PL 94: 37A.
Again, it is an act by the wonderful grace of the Holy Spirit that the life of believers,
both in place and in time, both in rank and in condition, both in sex and in age,
though remote to one another, still by one and the same faith and love is connected
one to the other.

In the bolded comments, one understands from Bede that interpersonal care is at the root of the
oneness of Christian community. For the baptised must accept all believing persons into
relationship regardless of inconveniences proper to natural or historical conditions.

Compunction from the strong entails the imperative that authorities engage in sincere self-
confrontation, a practice which communicates to a community’s membership that they need not
fear the nepotistic application of moral law. Compunction, for Bede, is also a trait Cuthbert
models marvellously. The moral authority of his very presence leads others to confess dark
secrets [HE 4.27/432]. For recognising the personal reality of Christ’s sacrificial suffering,
Cuthbert weeps often over the pain of Christ in the Eucharist. Bede writes:

Erat abstinentiae castigatione insignis, erat gratia compunctionis semper ad
caelestia suspensus. Denique cum sacrificium Deo uictimae salutaris offerret, non
elevata in altum uoce, sed profusis ex imo pectore lacrimis, Domino sua uota
commendabat [HE 4.28/438].

He was also notable for the self-censure of abstinence, and on account of
compunction always lifted up to heavenly things. At length, when he used to offer
the sacrifice of the saving victim to God, he would commend his prayers to the Lord
not raised in a loud voice, but with overflowing tears from the depth of his heart.

Here Cuthbert’s own tears demonstrate the personal reality of Christ’s suffering and the effect sin
ought to have upon a person. Cuthbert shows that leadership is not a vehicle of self-promotion,

30 CCSL 119A: 202/ PL 91: 782B–C.
for godly leadership models penitence in order to lift people to the social climate of repentance and social maturity. In this vein, Aidan chides a fellow monk who lacks self-effacement but rather displays impatience with the foibles of English pagans. Bede writes:

\[\text{Videtur mihi, frater, quia durior iusto indoctis auditoribus fuisti, et non eis iuxta apostolicam disciplinam primo lac doctrinae mollioris porrexisti, donec paulatim enutriti uerbo Dei, ad capienda perfectiora et ad facienda sublimiora Dei praecepta sufficerent \[HE 3.5/228].}\]

It seems to me, brother, that you have been rather harsh to your unlearned hearers: you did not offer them the milk of easier teaching at first according to apostolic discipline, until little by little, nourishing by God’s word, they were able to grasp more complete instruction and enact the more sublime commandments of God.

Rather than expressing disgust for the boorish, Aidan expresses surprise toward his peer’s dismay. Aidan knows that contempt perceived to arise from lack of compunction ensures the loss of an audience, regardless of the intelligence or pathos of the speaker. Aidan addresses his peer as an equal (frater) even as he challenges the categories of “us” and “them”. The pagan “them”, who happen to be English, could in time become part of the Christian “us”, who happen to be Irish, only as “we” model compunction and not contempt.\(^{31}\)

Finally, a coherent vision of social reality admits no exceptions from moral law based upon personal likeability or political utility. Again, Aidan illustrates well the person-centred ideals of charismatic authority. Bede writes of Aidan:

\[\text{Numquam diuitibus honoris siue timoris gratia, siqua delinquissent, reticebat, sed aspera illos inuactione corrigebat \[HE 3.5/226].}\]

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\(^{31}\) Thomas O’Loughlin contrasts the processual approach of the Irish penitentials to the Latin patristic mode of handling post-baptismal sin. Whereas the Latin discerns such sin as a willful crime requiring punitive suffering, the Irish find sin to be disease human requiring continual therapy. See O’Loughlin, \textit{Celtic Theology} (London: Continuum, 2000), 65–66. Richard North says that the Irish prefer an irenic model of conversion, sensitive to the culture of their hosts. See North, “End Time and the Date of \(V\)\(\text{\textipa{u}}\)\(\text{\textipa{s}}\)\(\text{\textipa{p}}\)\(\text{\textipa{a}}\): Two Models of Conversion,” in Karkov and Howe, 235.
Never on account of honour or dread toward the rich did he keep silence, if the rich did wrong; but he would correct them with a stern rebuke.

Aidan further shows that the charismatic leader pulls no punches in his affirmation of human dignity. If powerful men opt not to embrace the self-evident ideal of human dignity, they must face the ire of the righteous.

Now, in confronting the powerful, Aidan behaves as would an early Irish poet. Poise and attention to detail are necessary to deliver to the powerful an unwelcome message face to face. Such a poet must not waver in confidence as he thinks on his feet, as Robin Stacey explains:

Politics and aesthetics were intimately conjoined. Kings, jurists, and litigants performed their statements within established structures and lexicons. Within those parameters, however, creativity and artistic innovation would seem to have been greatly prized; a particularly intricate or moving formulation might go a long way toward persuading an audience of the incontrovertibility of a given political truth.32

In Stacey’s comments one notes how a rousing, live performance from the Irish poet could sustain a point of law. In Aristotelian terms, the charismatic Irish rank *pathos* and *ethos* as high as they rank *logos*, or even higher. Aesthetic affectivity and the coherence of speech and life supersede erudition. For prophets, persuasion is a personal reality. They are aware of the impact of persons, and not simply the force of ideas and arguments.

The importance of coherence to the Irish outlook is observed further in Thomas Charles-Edwards’ comments on the idealism of early Irish ecclesiastical lawyers. He writes:

The Irish legal tracts are rich in legal contrivance... They assume that, for all their talk of ‘nature’; and even ‘the law of nature’, much of human society has to be constructed.33

33 See Charles-Edwards 1999, 61. On the constructed nature of human – and Irish – society, Declan Kiberd remarks that “all laws are, in one sense, lies, representing as they do an ideal aspiration rather than actual practice, but the way in which the work of the *file* (poet) and *breitheamh* (judge) overlapped in ancient times suggests that Irish cynicism about the forces of law and order has an ancient pedigree... The poets have the power to change reality by their words... poetry being based on a truth of internal
In the absence of a system of canon law, they simply created one supported by a variety of authoritative sources, beginning as often with an existing rule or practice as finding an authority for it, in order to establish substantive and procedural law.\textsuperscript{34} They viewed law not only as corresponding to political realities on the ground, but also as a coherent, idyllic construction. Fergus Kelly observes in Old Irish law the nascent prophetic ideals of social responsibility and social mobility that are connected with human dignity, roughly conceived. For classes of person are not absolute in native Irish law even though, like all early law, stratification abounds. Persons could lose their status for irresponsibility or improve their status based on a sense of fair play.\textsuperscript{35}

The combination of caring, compunction and a social vision of coherence fixes a community upon what David D’Avray calls “formal rationality”, that is, a life governed by rules equally applicable to all.\textsuperscript{36} Formal rationality is evident in the mouth of Cuthbert, when Bede writes:

\textit{Pacem inquit inter uos semper et caritatem custodite diuinam, et cum de uestro statu consilium uos agere necessitas poposcerit, uidete attentius ut \textit{unanimes existatis} in consiliis. Sed et cum aliis Christi seruis \textit{mutuam} habetote \textit{concordiam}, nec uenientes ad uos hospitalitatis gratia domesticos fidei \textit{habeatis contemptui}... \textit{nequaquam uos meliores arbitrantes}... Cum illis autem qui ab \textit{unitate} catholicae pacis uel pascha non suo tempore celebrando, uel \textit{peruerse uiuendo} aberrant, uobis sit nulla communio [VCB ch. 39/282, 284].}

\textsuperscript{34} See Charles-Edwards, \textit{The Early Mediaeval Gaelic Lawyer}, Quiggin Memorial Lecture, No. 4 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 1999), 2.

\textsuperscript{35} While Fergus Kelly traces this budding egalitarianism of early Irish law to the influence of Christian canons in general, one may note that Gearóid Mac Niocaill senses that the exacting standards of Christian canons are softened (that is, made amenable to self-interest) by native Irish law. See F. Kelly, \textit{A Guide to Early Irish Law} (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1991), 7–12; Mac Niocaill, 156.

\textsuperscript{36} D’Avray, \textit{Rationalities}, 146.
“Peace among yourselves,” he said, “you shall keep always, and divine charity; and when necessity compels you to take counsel about your estate, see very earnestly that in your counsels you are unanimous in essence. But also have mutual concord with other servants of Christ, and you should not hold contempt toward members of the household of faith who come to you for the sake of hospitality... by no means esteeming yourselves better... But have no communion with those who wander from the unity of catholic peace either by not celebrating pascha at its own time or in perverse living.

As the bolded text indicates, Cuthbert orders the community to keep the peace, and to do so by maintaining unanimity within each chapter of monks and mutuality between the chapters. The prize for their efforts is the kind of oneness that is achieved by guarding against contempt toward those seeking hospitality and by refusing contact only with those who refuse the communal consensus on the schedule of worship or standards of conduct.

Charismatic authority rooted in personal relationships, then, leads to formal rationality as the community seeks to retain the personable and dignifying ethos of its founder.37 For to adopt a coherence theory of truth is amenable to an approach that begins with the values of a saintly person held as self-evident. In fact, the principle of coherence may lead a community to reduce (royalist) arguments from historical precedent to injustice; to understand (priestly) arguments from received wisdom as insights nonetheless subject to the egalitarian ideal of human dignity; and to treat arguments from pragmatism as (isolates’) cowardice. Among the theoretical effects of such a legislated way of being is the potential reverence afforded to abbesses, who practice the righteousness of natural law as sincerely and consistently and fearlessly as do the abbots.

The Prophet and Personalism: Personalist Ideals, the Present and Real People

Bound up with the charismatic authority of the Irish abbot is the priority of personhood over canonical status or propertied interests. Bede notes how Aidan’s person is so respected that Honorius of Canterbury and Felix of East Anglia maintain communion with him despite his

37 One considers Max Weber’s renowned theory of the routinisation of charisma.
irregular liturgical practice [HE 3.25]. Given Bede’s own critique of Aidan for liturgical irregularity, Aidan the man must have been compelling. Indeed, Bede notes that Aidan exerts influence in the context of personal relations, rather than of high office. Bede writes:

Inter alia uitendi documenta... exemplum reliquit; cuius doctrinam id maxime commendabat omnibus, quod non aliter quam uiuebat cum suis ipse docebat [HE 3.5/226].

Among other lessons on living... he left an example; it commended his doctrine most greatly to all that he used to teach not otherwise than [how] he lived among his own.

Aidan’s approach to life prizes live encounter, moral outcomes within relationships, and a moral vision that recognises human dignity in everyone. To leverage personal influence, Aidan travels on foot as a commoner rather than ride on horseback as a bishop. Bede writes:

Discurrere per cuncta et urbana et rustica loca non equorum dorso sed pedum incessu uectus, nisi si maior forte necessitas conpulisset, solebat; quatinus, ubicumque aliquos uel diuites uel pauperes incedens aspexisset, confestim ad hos divertens uel ad fidei susciptiandae sacramentum, si infideles essent, inuitaret uel, si fideles, in ipsa eos fide confortaret, atque ad elimosynas operumque bonorum executionem et uerbis excitaret et factis [HE 3.5/226].

He used to travel everywhere, both urban and rural places, borne not on the back of horses but by the pacing of his feet, unless perchance greater necessity compelled him; so that, as he walked, whenever he saw people whether rich or poor, at once approaching them, he would either invite them to receive the sacrament of faith, if they were unbelievers; or, if they were believers, [he would] strengthen them in that faith, and urge them both by word and deed to practise almsgiving and good works.

Aidan clearly seeks common ground with everyone, rich or otherwise, believer or otherwise, as a man with sacerdotal status who could have aligned himself with propertied interests, but did not do so. Instead, as an abbot, he wins people by example to a way of being that is to be appropriated in the personal relationships of daily life.
Now a spirituality that accents the priority of personhood is a spirituality that accents oratio in the now over disputatio pertaining matters of the past or future. For a devotional piety is all about the suspension of all temporal cares and dogmatic debates to feel the divine presence in the moment. Bede depicts the importance of lectio divina over synodical disputation to the Irish in an anecdote at Boisil’s deathbed, where Boisil and Cuthbert read John’s Gospel for a week. Bede is careful to note the devotional tone of such reading. He writes:

Quam ideo lectionem tam citissime complere ualebant, quia solam in ea fidei quae per dilectionem operatur [Gal. 5:6] simplicitatem, non autem questionem profunda tractabant [VCB ch. 8/182].

Which reading, then, they could complete most quickly because they were considering simplicity alone in things “of faith that works by charity” [Gal. 5:6], but not a profound question.

For Bede, the Irish way of being is commendable precisely because it recognises the importance of right relationship apart from erudite theological articulation. In tune with this very quality himself, Bede expresses as much on his own deathbed. An amanuensis captures his devotional sentiments thus in the language of the heart, learned upon his mother’s knee:

Foreðæm nedfere nænig wiorðe
ðonc snottora ðon him ðearf siae
to ymbhyggenne ær his hinionge
hwæt his gaste godes odhæ yfles
æfter dead daeg doemed wiorðe.38

Facing that necessary voyage, none can be wiser than he has need to be, who, before his going hence, thinks about what of good or evil in his soul shall be judged after his death-day.

For Bede, the soul in right relation to God ponders two points of time: today, in which he communes with his neighbour; and the day that never ends, when he faces judgement.

38 See Colgrave/Mynors, 582–83. Thanks to Prof. Andy Orchard for oversight of Old English translations.
The presentist orientation of the personalist Irish abbot is perceived well in the contrast between the primacy of a devotional reading of Scripture over a synodical reading of the same. For devotional reading involves the live encounter of a person with God through the sacred page; whereas synodical reading requires an awareness of a tradition taught by the episcopate that extends into previous centuries. Bede explicitly associates Columba and Aidan with Scripture itself and with the sincere, though for him misguided, attempt to appropriate it. Although Bede chides the Irish tradition for failure to recognise the erudite contribution of the Roman party to the paschal controversy, the bucolic Irish do have virtue. Only for lack of access to erudition on account of their remoteness do they face the practical problem of not having Bede’s extensive library. While such circumstances impose present-orientation upon a people, the social structure of the Irish ecclesiastical tradition suggests a preference for the same also. As David Dumville notes:

Adamnán’s testimony... allows the possibility that non-episcopal synods were convened [at Iona] in which the principal participants were the heads of monastic or quasi-monastic churches who had status derived either from such office [of abbot] or from perceptions of their personal holiness of life.

To achieve respect as an abbot, moral consistency in the present matters. For it is one’s person

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39 Kathleen Hughes describes Irish relations with the papacy as respectful, but not reverential. The early Irish collected no Peter’s pence, sought no pallium and were sent no papal legate, and recognised greater authority in the whole church than in any individual pope. For Gildas, every sacerdos holds Peter’s seat, and for Columbanus, the pope is not above rebuke. Jane Stevenson, moreover, notes the significant role of the laity is also seen in the Tripartite Life of Patrick in which the people beat the bounds to “establish the new territorial unit in their collective memory”; and she observes that the CCH also grants a significant role to the people, stating: Tres personae consecrant terminum loci sancti: rex, episcopus, populus [three persons consecrate the boundary of a holy place: king, bishop, people]. See Hughes, “The Celtic Church and the Papacy,” in The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages, ed. C. H. Lawrence (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 16, 21; Stevenson, “Literacy and Orality in Early Medieval Ireland,” in Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration, ed. Doris Edel (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995: 11–22), 14.

40 Wallis, 1999: lxxx.

41 See David Dumville, Councils and Synods of the Gaelic Early and Central Middle Ages, Quiggin Memorial Lecture, No. 3 (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 1997), 21.
that reflects the timeless standard of conduct commended in Scripture as the moral centre around which all of life coheres.

It is likely this very ethos that drew Englishmen to Ireland, the land of saints and scholars for mentorship in spiritual things, even during the time of Theodore and Hadrian. Bede writes:

\textit{Erant ibidem eo tempore multi... de gente Anglorum... uel diuinae lectionis uel continentioris uitae gratia illo secesserant... Quos omnes Scotti libetissime sucipientes, uictum eis cotidianum sine pretio, libros quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum praeere curabant [HE 3.27/312].}

There were in the same place at this time many from the race of the English... who... retired [to Ireland] either for the sake of divine readings or a more disciplined life...
The Irish, receiving all freely, began to take care to provide daily food without payment, and books to read and instruction free of charge.

In fact, the motif of English retreat to Ireland is salient enough to evoke the ire of Aldhelm, who cannot understand why Heahfrith would forgo a local education of highest calibre at Canterbury.

The incredulous Aldhelm writes:

\textit{Cur, inquam, Hibernia, quo catueratim instinc lectitantes classibus aduecti confluunt, ineffabili quodam priuilegio efferatur, acsi istic, fecundo Britanniae in cespite, dedasculi Argiui Romaniue Quirites reperiri minime queant?} \textsuperscript{42}

Why, I ask, is Ireland, over there where readers being conveyed by the boatload flow in abundance, granted a certain ineffable privilege, as if here in the fecund soil of Britain, Greek and Roman teachers cannot be found at all?

Similarly, to Wihtfrith, Aldhelm remarks:

\textit{Et idcirco uita comite optatum Hiberniae portum tenens sacrosancta potissimum praesagmina refutatis philosophorum commenticiis legito! Absurdum enim arbitror, spreta rudis ac ueteris instrumenti inextricabili norma per lubrica dumosi ruris diuerticula, immo per discolos philosophorum anfractus iter carpere seu certe aportriatis uitreorum fontium limpidis laticibus palustres pontias lutulentasque limphas siticulose potare, in quis atra bufonum turma catueratim scatet atque garrulitas ranarum crepitanus coxat.} \textsuperscript{43}


\textsuperscript{43} MGH AA 15: 479.
Therefore, with life as your companion, as you sail toward the desired port of Ireland, read (my) most sacrosanct predictions, with the fiction of [Irish] speculators [lit. philosophers] having been refuted. I judge it absurd that the inextricable rule of the New and Old Testaments is spurned (as you travel) through the slippery byways of the thorny countryside, or rather, to take the roundabout path through the uncultivated views of speculators; or surely, (it is absurd), rather than from the clear, flowing waters of glassy springs, to gulp thirstily from peaty pools and murky meres, in which a dark throng of toads teems in abundance and the noisy chattering of frogs croak.

The answer English students had for Aldhelm appears to be this: They were not looking for the intellectualism of a classical education based upon the weight of erudition (logia). Instead, they sought spiritual mentorship and the personal authenticity of the Irish tradition, being persuaded by a riveting presentation (pathos) and interpersonal trust (ethos). What Aldhelm understands to be the sophistry of Irish “speakifications”, his students recognise to be esoteric spiritual guidance.

Bede also reports the personalism of the Irish tradition by means of Cuthbert’s handling of the sinner. For Cuthbert, the goal of the spiritual guide is primarily to address sinners as people who have lost their way. It is less to maintain public standards by addressing instances of sin as divergences from a truly Christian identity that must be dealt with severely as breaches of moral

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44 To reinforce this idea that Englishmen trained in letters by Mediterranean scholars believed their erudition to exceed the derivative knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Britain, one might consider Aldhelm’s letter to Heahfrith (c. 675), a student enamoured of Irish learning. One might note the taunting mood of the opening line, alliterated with the letter ‘p’, a sound that does not occur in the Irish tongue: Primitus pantorum procerum praetorumque pio potissimum paterernoque praeertim privilegio panagericum poemataque passim prosatori sub polo promulgantes stridula vocum simphonia et melodiae cantilenaeque carmine modulaturi yminizemus. [Principally, with particularly pious and paternal privilege, publicly proferring beneath the pole panegyric and poems promiscuously to the Procreator of all princes and praetors, let us raise a hymn in measured rhythms with a loud bending of voices and with song of melodius music]. For the Latin, see MGH AA 15: 488; for the English, see Lapidge and Herren, 160.

45 The delightfulness of this nonsensical, yet polysyllabic term is that it captures Aldhelm’s contempt for the pseudo-intellectual. I credit Andy Orchard for its coinage, from whom I heard it in private conversation.
law in order to maintain public standards. For those unaware of the full gravity of their sins, Cuthbert weeps in compassion and as a model of what compunction is. Bede writes:

*Nunnquam confitentibus sibi peccata sua his qui deliquerant, prior ipse miserans infirmos lacrinas funderet, et quid peccatori agendum esset ipse iustus suo praemonstraret exemplo* [VCB ch. 16/ 212]

Sometimes, for those who erred, [Cuthbert], commiserating with the weak, would find tears beforehand while they were confessing their sins to him, and show by his own example what sinners must do.

And for the particularly obdurate, Cuthbert persuades them to contrition steadily. As Bede notes:

*Ac sequente nichilominus die quasi nil obientionis pridie sustinuisset, eadem quae prius monita eisdem dabat auditoribus, donec illos paulatim ut diximus ad ea quae uellet conuerteret* [VCB ch. 16/210].

Nevertheless, on the following day, as if [Cuthbert] had undergone no obedience the day before, he began to give the same admonition as before to the same hearers, until, little by little, as we have said, he converted them to the things that he desired.

In Bede’s witness to the kind of man Cuthbert was, Cuthbert’s concern for real sinners as people comes through to the reader. For Cuthbert’s leadership consists in the unflappable consistency by which he gradually brings the stubborn, everyday man to embrace his ideals. A king might simply arrest the insincere or the wilfull according to his duty to maintain public decorum and identity. Cuthbert takes an affective approach with the goal of changing the inner disposition of the person to be sorry for sins committed, to avoid sinning thereafter and to come to belong within the community of the righteous. For remorse and fair play acknowledges the dignity of others.

In addition, Cuthbert’s interest in the interpersonal dimension of sin is seen in that he does not merely affirm the principle (or idea) of original sin in general, but reveals the interpersonal injury of sin upon the soul. Instead of celebrating the Eucharist mechanistically, as noted above, Cuthbert weeps at the presence of Jesus Christ in the elements of bread and wine [HE 4.28/438].
Christ’s bodily sacrifice for sin is brought to mind in I-Thou relation as Cuthbert recognises that his own sins have made this bloody reality necessary.

Righteousness becomes such a personal, palpable reality that trust emerges. Indeed, a key to Cuthbert’s effectiveness, for Bede, is his sensitivity to the saving of face while still noting the truth. Once, when attending the exorcism of a nobleman’s wife, he tactfully states that he is aware of her deplorable state and that she is not responsible for it. To allow his host to save face, Cuthbert heals the wife’s mind while still en route so that his noble host would not have to watch such an honourable man of God seeing his wife in a dishevelled state [VCB ch. 15/ 206].

In similar fashion, Ecgbert wins an audience through emotional intelligence, rather than with foolproof logic and formal evidence. He receives from Boisil the difficult task of correcting Iona, which believes it has Christian truth already [HE 5.9]. In persona Ionae filii Amathi, Ecgbert sails in the opposite direction to accomplish the simpler task of winning tribesmen of his own German stock to the faith. As a prophet absent without leave like Jonah, he confesses in the face of a storm on the high seas: propter me est temptestas haec [HE 5.9/478] [On account of me this tempest exists]. Yet, after a false start, he fulfills his mission to Iona by communicating through a mode of being that has currency among the Irish. Bede writes:

Qui quoniam et doctor suauissimus et eorum quae agenda docebat erat executor deuotissimus, libenter auditus ab uniuersis inmutauit piis ac sedulis exhortationibus inueteratam illam traditionem parentum eorum [HE 5.22/552].

Since [Ecgbert] was a most gracious teacher and a most devout practitioner of things that he used to teach must be done, freely heard by all, he changed by pious and earnest exhortations that inveterate ancestral tradition of theirs.

How he communicates – affectively and by example – wins him a hearing among the personalist Irish, who respond to trusted persons rather than to point for point argumentation. Only after spending time in relationship with the Irish does Ecgbert earn the right to a hearing.
Adamnán of Coldingham is another example of the personal concern of the Irish as presented by Bede. Two intuitively opposite words encapsulate him: judgement and sympathy. He prophesies doom upon the wayward, and he shows tearful concern in the midst of it [HE 4.25]. This blend of judgement and sympathy shows forth the dual role of the prophet as an ethical figure bent upon maintaining a moral community. Judgement indicates the interpersonal necessity of a public standard of conduct, and concern for violators displays the yearning that all find their way into the communal consensus.

**The Prophet and Communal Conflict: Symbolic Interactionism and the Concessive Spirit**

Bede also portrays egalitarianism as latent in the personalist worldview of the prophetic Irish. For the monastic cœnobium is built upon two key features of egalitarianism. The first is that the social collective of the Irish monks is a group, and not a network of mutual convenience. The group’s members share a common identity, rather than each individual bearing the quantitative value of a serviceable identity – such as king or thegn or coerl – within a network. There must be equality of affection among all members. All brothers or sisters must live in peace together according to a common Rule, attached no more to one member than to another. For contrast, in the secular world of the ruling class, fealty is rewarded rather than discouraged.

This first feature of the egalitarian way of being of universal acceptance among members suggests that egalitarians favour the symbolic interactionist theory of social relations. For this theory affirms that people are agents who achieve psychical coherence by engaging the world through shared symbolic meanings that are associated shared experience of phenomena. Group members understand these symbols in social contexts as they experience emotively poignant interaction with other agents. The shared meaning that emerges, whether it crystalises or shifts, is the product of an endless conversation. This way of being is reflected well in Rodney Hutton’s
defining of the prophet as the insider who stretches the limits of the acceptable from within.46

For by stretching the limits from within, the prophet’s universalist sensibilities allow maximal potential for new membership while retaining his own insider status. Fission of the community is possible, however, when the mutual concession advocated by prophets is pushed so far that longstanding insiders find their identity unrecognisable to themselves and their initial ideal of daily living. In such a totalising social structure, one must either accept the other as insider and partner-in-dialogue or dismiss the other – at least on some level – as one who rejects the deeply and emotively rooted shared meanings believed by the prophets to make social coherence possible.

An example of Irish symbolic interactionism occurs when Abbot Aidan gives a beggar a gift-horse previously received from King Oswine of Deira. The king objects; and Aidan responds with surprise in the dialogical form of a question thus:

“Quid loqueris,” inquit, “rex? Num tibi carior est ille filius equae quam ille filius Dei?” [HE 3.14/258]

“What are you saying, O King?” [Aidan] replied, “Surely this son of a mare is not dearer to you than that son of God?”

Bede subsequently reports the effect of a witty Irish quip upon an English conscience. Cut to the heart, Oswine blurts out that he wishes no symbol to obscure his interaction to Aidan, or to God. In the context of interaction, the king learns to attach new meaning both to a beggar as a fellow human being in imagine Dei and to a stallion as a gift freely given without expectation in return. Aidan had coaxed Oswine to adopt new symbols through interaction so that Oswine might desire and remain in a coherent, personal relation to Aidan.

One implication of this view of social relations in which relationship itself holds currency

46 Rodney Hutton, Charisma and Authority in Israelite Society (Minneapolis: Fortress), 136.
is the dignity afforded to the *ius naturale* of native tradition (cf. Romans 2:14–15). For the early Irish, self-respect and social respect (dignity and justice) are especially important. The peculiar position of the Irish poet illustrates such personalist sensibilities well. For the Irish poet utters panegyric or satire of named persons publicly in their very presence as would a biblical prophet who proclaims against a king. Such prophetic utterances were taken very seriously in early Ireland.47 For indeed, libellous satire is equated at law to murder in an Old Irish legal maxim:

\[.i. \text{ni toimnenn nach neolach combadh lugha do pecad gao i mbriathraib ina todhail f[h]ola ó laim [CIH 4.1383.10–11].}\]

No knowledgeable person thinks that false words are any less of a sin than shedding blood by hand.48

A society with such laws prizes self- and social esteem, which are the *sine qua non* of symbolic interactionism. The spoken word becomes more potent than the drawn sword.

### The Prophet and Human Nature: Spectral Orientation, Envy and the Egalitarian Utopia

The second feature of egalitarianism present within the monastic cœnobium is *equality of status among group members*. No member may command another, nor is one beholden to another particular member. For a group must hold the equal value of all of its constituent relationships to become a truly egalitarian value structure.49 The exception in the case of the

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47 Kim McCone notes that formal shaming was a function of the Irish poet. The *Crith Gablach* [para. 21] says that the satirised have *cacc fora enech* [dung on the face], and Cormac’s Glossary defines a blister [*ferb*] as *bolc do: cuirethar for aigid duine iar n-iar nó iar ngúbreth* [a bubble that comes upon a person’s face after satire or after false judgement]. The importance of esteem is seen further in CIH 2.587.23–4 also, which cites Prov. 27:21 in Latin: *ut salmon: quomodo conprobatur argentum in conflatona  \( \chi \) in fornace aurum, sic homo ore laudantis* [After the manner that silver is proven in the foundry and gold in the furnace, so is a man by the mouth of one who praises]. See W. Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862), 19; McCon, 124, 173, 177.


49 Perhaps since the blending of sexuality and the egalitarian principle leads to polyamory, single sex monasteries have been the norm to remove any basis for pairing. That Hild governs a monastery for men speaks more to her royal status than to a strict application of the egalitarian ideal. See below, 149–50.
cœnobium is the special affection afforded to the leader, the abbot or abbess. In its purist form, the abbacy is filled by the acclamation of peregrine peers who have left familiar lands and faces to testify to God as a city operating on divine peace, rather than blood bonds. Candidates for abbacy, thus, require a magnetic personality and an exemplary life. Acclamation is evident by the fact that followers still follow without force, incentive or a formally declared edict (as from the papacy) that requires it. Instead, the consensus arises from the collective agreement on the ethical stature of the candidate. He or she must embody the utopian ideal as one who lives disinterestedly in right relation to God and neighbour; who, in hospitality, embraces the human dignity of the stranger; yet, who is prepared to hold in check those who take advantage of the community’s goodwill.

The natural implication of the social world of equals is that egalitarians assess the social world in the spectral mode. Human beings do vary in their traits: some are aged, others young; some are wealthy, others poor; some healthy, others ill; some are Irish, others English; but, all belong on the same spectrum labelled “humanity”, with none as inherently sub- or superhuman. An Irish text known to Bede also relates to this perspective well. It reads thus:

Parique infirmitatis conditione pauperes et reges, stulti et sapientes uexantur. Nam similiter omnes somno indigent, et cibo refici, et uestibus indui necesse habent... Eodem modo auditu, uisu, tactu, gustu, odoratu sentiunt et uiuunt. Eodem etiam nexu originalis peccati astringuntur; eodem Redemptoris munere ditali undis baptismatis et Spiritu sancto abluuntur [DOC 12.3–4].

Kings and paupers, fools and sages are vexed by the same conditions of infirmity. For in like manner all need sleep, and are refreshed with food; and have the necessity of clothes to don... In the same way, they sense and live by hearing, by sight, by touch, by taste, by smell. Also by the same grip of original sin they are bound; by the same rich reward of the Redeemer they are enriched by the waves of baptism and washed by the Holy Spirit.

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50 PL 83: 944B–C.
As is clear in this passage, the Irish author, who likely lived among monastic peers, looks through the spectrum of human distinctions to observe a common humanity. In like manner, the archetypical Irish abbot or abbess, as received leader of an egalitarian group, seeks to foster the human dignity of all under his or her care by recognizing equal status among them regardless of comeliness, likeability, social utility or the iconic status of any one of them.

The downside endemic to the egalitarian society of would-be angels is the temptation to envy. As the saying goes: *non est propheta sine honore nisi in patria sua* [a prophet is not without honour but in his own country] (Mk. 6:4). For if any one member receives treatment perceived to be preferential, resentment could take root. Similarly, if one candidate for abbot or abbess finds that another candidate exudes greater charisma, and receives greater recognition from insiders, rivalry and even the fission of the community may result as two egalitarian groups emerge each affectionately bonded to its own candidate for leader. By way of illustration, one may observe the same phenomenon pertaining to prophets in biblical literature. Prophets vie for the ear of the people until one is judged true and the other false. For, barring the miracle, a prophet’s words will fall to the ground without popular support. By contrast, while the priesthood is a group with a shared identity, stratification defines the social reality of holy orders. In theory, conflict will be resolved by the excommunication of dissidents rather than by fissure based upon personality, as when Colman adheres to Columba after agreeing that Peter holds the keys of heaven [*HE* 3.25].

Now the egalitarian utopia of the cœnobium is predicated upon straightforward cosmic alienation. For the monks flees a social world rife with the restlessness of greedy ambition and the hypocritical pride that tends to accompany high status. Those who want a life of interpersonal immediacy retreat to a moral oasis of mutuality established in the here-and-now. However, unlike the alienation of the apocalyptic rebel that concerns one’s own survival, the tropologically
accented alienation of the ethical monk speaks forth the protest in favour of a society of mutual respect from the high ground of the moral enclave, whether that enclave is an island such as Iona or Lindisfarne, or a remote island-like place such as that of Dicuill in southern Britain [HE 4.13].

This tropological type of alienation demands a high view of human potential to form oases of mutual support rather than the isolate’s uncertain view of human nature. The egalitarian coupling of cosmic alienation and a positive view of humanity appears in Bede’s perception of the Irish [HE 2.19]. The liturgical irregularity of the Irish presumes their alienation from a world in which a centralised authority decides for peoples; and the charge of Pelagianism presumes that moral outcomes matter and are possible for all to achieve. For Bede, liturgical schism is an error proper to an all-too-narrow vision of society (such as a single monastic paruchia); and Pelagianism, one may argue, is the error of the self-righteous moralist all the more likely to enter an enclave. Both errors are anathema to Bede’s Augustinian notion of the church as full of saints and sinners; and both errors speak to the outcome of mutual respect expected by enclavists.

Augustinus Hibernicus’ DMSS (c. 655), another Irish source familiar to Bede, displays such proclivities well. The source reads:

51 See Michael Thompson et al., 35–36.
52 Interestingly, the Old Irish version of Bede’s HE (translated two centuries later) omits Bede’s many references to heresy and the letter from pope-Elect John. Joseph Kelly observes that “the Irish were not Pelagians in the classical sense, although occasional references to a lex naturae can be found in their writings. They used Pelagius because they considered him a good exegete, especially of the moral sense of Scripture”. See Josephy Kelly, “Hiberno-Latin Exegesis and Exegetes,” Annuale Mediaevale 21 (1981): 56, 65; Próinséas Ni Chatháin, “Bede’s Ecclesiastical History in Irish,” Peritia 3 (1984): 119, 130. For comment on the charge of Quartodecimanism, see Wallis 1999, 229; Kenneth Harrison, “Letter from Rome to the Irish Clergy, AD 640,” Peritia 3 (1984): 222–29.
52 Interestingly, Charles-Edwards writes: “The Hibernensis, then, is a book founded upon exegesis – specifically of the moral sense – and addressed to judges who were themselves trained in the same tradition.” Furthermore, “its combination of moral persuasion and legal rule” implies “a corresponding combination... of two roles: judge and ‘soul-friend’”. See Charles-Edwards 1999, 21.
Yet this [factor] served to lighten the wrongdoing of man: he did not happen upon transgression of the commandment of his own accord alone, but consented to the serpentine suasion; but also, he did not lead another rational creature into an offence against God. And through this, more easily he found the door of repentance open; which [door] he who would not enter will lie below through the loss of perpetual life, but he, who by repentance will have washed away his sins, will be a partaker of the happiness of the angels forever.

The author explains God’s inscrutable judgement in terms of relational justice. Latent in this perspective is the notion that humanity is sociable and corrigible at heart. Though duped into sin, humanity misleads no other species and so God affords each human the opportunity to reset relationship with him (and others), if so inclined.54

Another example of the sunny disposition of the Irish toward human nature is found in Adamnán’s *Vita Columbae*. Columba prophesies that a pagan known for goodness will merit baptism as does the virtuous Cornelius in Acts 10. Adamnán writes:

\[Hodie... quidam gentilis senex, naturale per totam bonum custodiens uitam, et habitzabitur et morietur et sepelietur [VCA 1.33].\]

Today... a certain elderly pagan, guarding natural goodness throughout his life, will be baptised, will die and will be buried.

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53 MacGinty, 15–16. PL 35: 2154 A.
54 The Irish Christian tradition did not view the world as under the sway of Satan, but open to God’s progressive revelation. Satan appears infrequently as in the Bible; and is not at work in people or animals. Columbanus ascetical writings, for example, expect full moral accountability for one’s own fault. See Stancliffe, “The Miracle Stories in Seventh-Century Irish Saint’s Lives,” in *The Seventh Century: Change and Continuity*, Studies of the Warburg Institute 42, ed. J. B. Trapp (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1992), 105–07.
Deep within this mindset resides the notion that humane living is paramount – even if one could not articulate true doctrine. In support of this notion, one observes that the Irish did not leave the care of the ill or the honour of women to the church. Rather, such matters were enshrined in secular law, showing the incipient egalitarian ethos of the Irish alienated from the wider world.

By implication, then, moralistic alienation leads to the embrace of scarcity as a vehicle of social harmony. For if all accept little, share and share alike, then envy abates and the opportunity for indignation over injustice vanishes. And so Bede writes of Aidan:

\[ Nihil enim huius mundi quaerere, nil amare curabat. Cuncta quae sibi a regibus uel diuitibus saeculi donabantur, mox pauperibus qui occurrerens erogare gaudebat \]

\[ HE 3.5/226 \]

[Aidan] cared to seek or love nothing of this world. Everything which was given to him from kings or the wealthy of the world, soon he rejoiced to bequeath to the poor he happened upon.

Poverty becomes a virtue when it is received widely as a control on acquisitiveness that debunks the equal dignity of persons and on pridefulness that denies equal status to a group’s members.

The Prophet and Proper Iconoclasm: The Hortatory Negative and Possible Wrathfulness

All in all, as one considers the relationship between the ethical Irish and Bede’s other tropes, one discovers their abiding distinctive as indignant iconoclasts who keep the iconic figures of king and priest in check. For righteous iconoclasm is the desacralising disposition that demands humility from holders of iconic office lest they idolise themselves. The \textit{modus operandi} of the prophet, therefore, is to indwell the hortatory negative of “Thou shalt not”\textsuperscript{57} that limits royal ambition, and exposes the pride of priests who become convinced of their own worthiness to hold office. A story of Bishop Chad, who studied in Ireland, illustrates well this iconoclastic

\textsuperscript{55} Michael Richter, \textit{Ireland and her Neighbours}, 33–37.


demand for moderation and humility. When storm clouds gather and thunder claps, Chad urges his people to escape God’s wrath by behaving justly; and when a thunderstorm dissipates, Chad urges his people to heartfelt gratitude for divine mercy [HE 4.3/342, 344]. The Ionian poem Altus Prosator evokes the same theme thus:

Regis regum rectissimi prope est dies Domini
dies irae et uindictae tenebrarum et nebulae
diesque mirabilium tonitruorum fortium [AP stanza R].

The Day of the Lord, most righteous King of kings, is near:
A day of wrath and vengeance, of darkness and cloud,
And a day of thunderings, awesome and mighty.

With the prospect of justifiable indignation looming, humility becomes the only sensible response; and Chad humbly practises the virtue he preaches. For Chad offers to relinquish the high status of holy orders when the canonicity of his ordination is questioned. Chad does not idolise himself, and to his credit, Archbishop Theodore regularises his ordination to avoid losing the services of such a humble man [HE 4.2/334].

Associated with the hortatory negative that demands humility is the tendency toward desacralisation. For to desacralise and to become humble are to attend to the unmediated essence of something (or someone). One observes desacralisation in Augustinus Hibernicus’ account of Moses’ miracle (Ex. 4:1–7). He writes:

Virga igitur in anguem uersa et rursum serpens in arborem mutatus, laborem naturae inquisitoribus praeparat... Si omnia quae de terra sunt facta in alterutrum mutari uicissim conceduntur... nihil ex his firmare non posse intra suae naturae terminos permanere, et ridicolosis magorum fabulationibus dicentium in auium substantia maiores suos saecula peruguasse assensum praestare uidebimur... quod absit, ne illum post primam naturarum omnium conditionem aliquid nouum, quod non propria natura retenet, facere credamus: Nihil enim sole nouum, nec ualet quisquam dicere, hoc recens est [Eccl. 1:9b–10] [DMSS 1.17].

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58 Clancy and Márkus, 50.
59 MacGinty, 51–2. PL 35: 2164D.
Therefore, the staff turned into a snake and the serpent changed again to wood prepare toil for those who inquire into nature... If all things, which are made from earth, be conceded to be changed into one another by turns... we would seem to establish that none of these could remain within the bounds of its own nature, and to provide assent to ridiculous fables of druids saying that their elders flew through the ages in the substance of birds... Far be it from us to do so, **lest we believe that after the first foundation of the natures of all things, he made aught new, which does not retain its proper nature.** For [there is] nothing new under the sun; nor can anyone say, this is recent [Eccl. 1:9b–10].

One extracts especially from the bolded text of this commentary the Irish monk’s proclivity to destroy idolatrous claims, such as the claim of the druids to superior ontic status. Here Augustinus identifies the lack of coherence between what druids claim and what the baptised community knows about the essential nature of things – in this case, human nature itself. Therefore, this desacralising mode of being enables the Irish prophet to pump the blood of divine compassion and spiritual vigour through the hardening arteries of royal and ecclesiastical institutions in Britain that are tempted to make overbold claims for office-holders. The text of *Transitus Fursei* articulates this same righteous iconoclasm thus:

> Si enim legentes prophetarum dicta intellegeant Nec his qui a mortuis resurgenter plus timoris atque compunctionis audientibus inferri potuit sed nemo est qui prohibet atque propellat rex enim sacerdos unusquisque secundum hoc quod scriptum est quod sibi rectum uidetur hoc facere [TF ch. 14].

For if readers of the prophets had understood their sayings, and him who rose from the dead, they could have brought more dread and compunction to the hearers. But there is none who forbids and goads. For king and priest, each according to that which is written, does that which seems right to him.

In this passage about the Irishman Fursa, the narrator clarifies the role of the prophet well. Kings and priest do what seems right to them (and even for them), but the prophet serves the negative function of forbidding evil and goading the powerful into the good. The line between righteousness and self-righteousness, however, is thin; and so the prophet, as a human being,

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60 Oliver Rackham, 36.
must not tap into his own alienated rage, but must meekly express divine anger. Recognising that wrathfulness kept the meekest man from the Promised Land (Num. 20:1–13), the righteous monk frustrated by the sins of others must also avoid the error of the archetypical prophet, Moses.

**A Caveat: Natural Law, Supernatural Powers and Divine Affirmation of the Prophet**

In the pages above, the case is made that Bede views the Irish as a tropological people, a prophetic nation with a heart. But an indignant rant about the harsh treatment of some against others could have the prophet ignored or left as carrion in the fields. Hence, Bede shows that God vindicates the prophetic desire for oneness of community in Irish sentiments about events in the now by granting them miraculous power. One knows that Irish sentiment reveals the eternal sentiment of God because it is God who infuses the abbots of Iona, Lindisfarne and Whitby with his holy, life-giving power. The righteous Irish embrace creaturely status through prayerful ascesis; and God enables them to address non-moral evil in the elements and the animal world – even to the point of reversing the curse of disease, decay and death. The righteous Irish demand dread obedience to God’s natural law; and God grants them miraculous power to confront the moral evil of magnates. Moreover, on account of Irish intrapersonal, unassuming authenticity in the moment, God allows the Irish the gift of clairvoyance and the company of angels.61

To transcend cosmic alienation, the Irish reverse the primordial curse (Gen. 3:17–19) by self-exposure to the harshness of the physical environment and by facing down the hard edge of biotic desire that concentrates feelings on oneself. Bede records how Cuthbert, *uir Dei* [VCB ch. 10], and Drythhelm, *uir Dei* [HE 5.12], submerse the body to the neck in cold water while reciting the psalms to God. In the frigid water, the heat of jealousy or revenge would hardly be in

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61 Stancliffe notes how the Irish write much more of angels than demons, and how they record a greater percentage of miracles demonstrating a thaumaturge’s relation to God rather than, like hagiographies of the continent, miracles demonstrating compassion for people. See Stancliffe 1992, 94–96, 104–07.
one’s breast! Yet, even without an icy dip, Bede notes how virgins immersed in the Irish ways, such as Queen Æthelthryth, warrant divine praise for bodily self-control, refusing baths and soft fabric fit for royalty [HE 4.19–20]. Another such practice is fasting. It is interesting that all three anecdotes of the HE in which fasting plays a key role display two features. The protagonists are those of the Irish tradition; and the plotline recalls one or the other Old Testament prophet. In one episode, Bede associates Cedd’s fasting on the site for Lastingham to remove the taint of sin from the soil and Isaiah’s prophesy that the righteous would one day joyfully occupy the wilds full of fiercesome beasts [HE 3.23 cf. Isa. 35:7]. At another time, the plague devastates a monastery in Selsey. In the midst of the misery, mysterious visitors assure a lad of his place in heaven so the lad inquires of their identity from Abbot Eappa, who identifies them as Saints Peter and Paul. One finds here a parallel between the lad’s query to his abbot and Prophet Samuel’s query to High Priest Eli [HE 4.14 cf. 1 Sam. 3]. Third, Bede openly associates Adamnán of Coldingham with Prophet Jonah, who warns the Ninevites to repent [HE 4.25 cf. Jonah 3]. In these stories, one demonstrates repentance through fasting.

The nature miracle, suspending the dangers of the fallen world, becomes the solution to the divine curse. Jacqueline Borsje finds that the monsters of Adamnán’s Vita Columbae reflect non-moral or unintended evil as the de facto state of affairs upon the earth. She remarks how Columba deals with environmental evil through Christian calmness or obedience to Christ’s

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62 What is especially noteworthy of Dryhthelm is that he appears in a subset of chapters [HE 5.12–14] in which Bede brings forward eschatological themes of judgement, heaven and hell. Surely these are prophetic themes that, coupled with Dryhthelm’s Irish-style ice baths, suggest Bede’s reflection of Irish influence. Alan Thacker diminishes the Irishness of chanting psalms while immersed in cold water, assigning the practice to northern Europe generally. See Thacker, in Houwen and MacDonald, 56.

63 In addition to persons noted above, others include Aidan, exemplar par excellence; Eggerht, who survives a plague through fasting; John of Beverley, who breaks his fast for hospitality’s sake; Dryhthelm, whose vision reveals how fasting aids others in purgatory; and King Coenred of Northumbria, who adopts the rigours of monastic life at Rome [HE 3.5, 27; 5.4, 12, 19].
commands. In a similar way, the Irish demonstrate mastery over the elements of fire and earth, water and air in Bede’s *HE*. One finds dominion over fire exemplified in Aidan of Lindisfarne twice [*HE* 3.16–17], when he urges God to spare Bamburgh, King Oswiu’s capital, from fires lit by Penda; and when a relic of his survives a fire. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne manifests power over the earth *in persona Antonii Aegypti*, by reaping a miraculous crop and calling forth springs from the ground [*HE* 4.28/434 cf. *VCB* ch. 18]. Aidan and Oethelwald of Lindisfarne demonstrate the same power of Jesus Christ over wind and water as they calm storms at sea for sailors on the brink of drowning [*HE* 3.15; 5:1 cf. Mt. 14:22–33].

The monastic saints’ authority over animals also appears in the offing. In one instance, Cuthbert *motato spiritu* orders crows to leave an island *in nomine Iesu Christi* for disrupting his crops, and then forgives them when they posture penitence and offer restitution [*VCW* 3.5/ *VCB* ch. 20]. In another, an eagle feeds Cuthbert, who then orders his monks to share the bounty with their avian host [*VCW* 2.5/ *VCB* ch. 12]. Finally, in a third instance, otters comfort Cuthbert after night’s chanting psalms while immersed to the neck in cold water [*VCW* 2.3/ *VCB* ch. 10].

Numerous examples also exist in Irish hagiography, which mixes the motifs of saint-among-animals with that of saint-confronts-powermonger. St. Ciarán (Kieran) of Saighir (d. circa 530) curses a hawk for attacking a songbird; with a curse St. Cainnech (Kenneth) of Aghaboe (d. 600) protects a deer from a hunter; and St. Ciarán of Clonmacnoise (d. 546) raises to life the skeleton

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65 Note Germanus, Mellitus and Marcellinus also have power over fire [*HE* 1.19, 2.7].

66 Trent Foley compares the usage of *confessor*, *martyr*, *apostolus* and cognates of *propheta* in *VCW* and *VV* to show that, whereas Wilfrid faces down opposition from human government, Cuthbert overcomes evil within nature through clairvoyance and healing powers. See Foley 1992, 108, 149–51.

67 Similarly, a cow licks the feet of St. Cóemgen (Kevin) of Glendalough (d. 618) in *VSC* [chs. 6–7] (O’Riain-Raedel, 160).
of a calf devoured by a wolf. Such actions show the Irish saint to prosecute “a form of divine social justice” for “all the powerless of Creation” both human and otherwise.  

Finally, the Irish also exhibit the same power as that held by Jesus, Prophet like Moses, who reverses disease, decay and death itself. Bede’s spiritual father, the Irish-trained John of Beverley, is the quintessential healer in Bede’s HE. He opens the mouth of a mute man as Jesus does in Matthew’s Gospel [HE 5.2/ Mt. 9:32]; he restores an abbess’ daughter to health as Jesus does for Jairus in Mark’s Gospel [HE 5.3/Mk. 5:22]; he revives a thegn’s mother-in-law with holy water as Jesus does for Peter in Luke’s Gospel [HE 5.4/Lk. 4:38]; and he heals a thegn’s servant with holy wine just as Jesus heals a Roman centurion’s son in John’s Gospel [HE 5.5/Jn. 4:46f]. In a final miracle, he revives a lad mortally wounded from falling from horse after being forbidden to ride just as Paul revives Eutychus after falling from a window during a sermon [HE 5.6/ Acts 20:9–10]. What is significant here is that, as with Jesus so with John, physical touch or the bodily presence of a prophet brings healing. Further to this theme, death itself is overcome when, at Cedd’s own grave, Cedd raises a boy from the dead in persona Helisei [HE 3.23/ 2 Ki. 13:21]. Decay after death is also halted by several persons associated with the Irish tradition. Aidan blesses Oswald’s hand so that it does not decay after death, and the bodies of Fursa, Queen Æthelthryth (who hails from East Anglia where Fursa preached) and Cuthbert are discovered to

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68 Ciaran of Saighir curses a falcon, restoring a songbird from its grasp in Vita Sancti Ciarani Episcopi Saigirensis [ch. 2/VSHH 347]; after rendering his dogs motionless, Kenneth assigns a hunter to hermithood for chasing a deer upon pain of death commands in Vita Sancti Caimnechi [ch 49/ VSHH 195] and Vita Sancti Cainnici [ch. 43/VSHP 1: 168]; Ciaran of Clonmacnoise resurrects a calf after wolf had eaten it in Vita Sancti Ciarani de Cluain [ch. 5/VSHP 1: 202]. See also, Dominic Alexander, Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2008), 82, 84, 168.

69 The import of miracles to Jesus’ prophetic ministry is seen in how it is introduced. “They presented to him all sick people... and such as were possessed by devils, and lunatics, and those that had the palsy, and he cured them,” (Mt. 4:24). Charles Thomas notes the import of physical contact for healing. John of Beverley heals imponens manus [laying on the hands] See Charles Thomas, Bede, Archaeology and the Cult of Relics, Jarrow Lecture (Newcastle: J & P Bealls, 1973), 6. Ann Dooley observes the healing motif as well in Táin Bó Cúailnge. See Dooley, Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 146–49. See also, Lapidge 2013, 251–54.
be incorrupt long after death as harbingers of the resurrection to come [\textit{HE} 3.6, 19; 4.19; 4:30 cf. \textit{VCB} ch. 42].\textsuperscript{70}

Now the anagogical motif connects most closely to the tropological ideals associated with the Irish when the Irish saint confronts moral evil with divine power. While Charles Plummer finds the saintly Irish unbecomingly temperamental, Dorothy Bray, Wendy Davies and Máire Johnson note that Irish abbots are not in need of breathing exercises or anger management training. Máire Herbert adds that Columban heroes are as formidable in severity as they are in sweetness of spirit. For while they “[perform] miracles” and “[route] the devil in debate” as “influential and irascible churchman, whose curse herald[s] the downfall of the secular leaders”, they also exhibit “stock saintly attitudes”.\textsuperscript{71} Hence those known for hospitality and care for the poor also face down glib disregard of social mores. Just as dire consequences follow those who disregard Prophets Moses, Elijah or Elisha, (Num. 16:28–35; 2 Ki. 1:9–15, 2:23–24), so must the physical administration of social boundaries befall the sociopath who gives cause for righteous anger. Bede shows in an episode before the Council of Whitby that the word of the prophetic Irish does not fall to the ground. The Irish-trained Abbot Cedd warns King Sigebert of Essex to dissociate from his sexually deviant friend. Bede informs his readers that the king’s death at the hands of his own people came as a penalty of God for disregarding Cedd’s word [\textit{HE} 3.22].

The tropological ideal of the righteous Irish is most aptly affirmed, however, not in

\textsuperscript{70} Note how the Irish redeem the concept of body, which in relation to the British is connected to evil passions; and thus, acts as a prisonhouse of the soul. See Kendall 1978, 166.

anagogically-empowered acts of anger but in their realisation of the state of peace with God and his heavenly neighbour evident in the anagogical gifts of clairvoyance and the company of angels. Cuthbert foresees and makes peace with his own death because he is filled with the prophetic spirit of God [*prophetali spiritu Dei imbutus*], and he grants requests before they are asked through the prophetic spirit [*prophetali spiritu*].

72 Like Columba, founder of Iona, Cuthbert is aware of events in real time though not present in the body. In one instance, Bede writes:

> Tunc liquido omnibus patuit, quia multiformis prophetiae spiritus uiri sancti praecordis inerat, qui et in praesenti occultum animae raptum uidere, et quid sibi in futuro ab aliis indicandum esset, potuit praeuidere [VCB ch. 34/264]

> Then it was clearly apparent to all that the spirit of prophecy was manifold in the heart of the holy man, who could not only see the secret removal of a soul in the present, but could also foresee what would be told him by others in the future.

Not only could Cuthbert see the soul of one fallen from a tree ascend to heaven, but he could announce the news before the bearer could bring it. Cuthbert also establishes rapport with angels as did Elisha of old [2 Ki. 6:17]. The anonymous hagiographer from Whitby writes:

> Sepius ex eo tempore angelos uidere et alloqui... meruit [VCW 7/178].

> Rather often from that time he was counted worthy to behold and to converse with angels.

God had sent angels to test Cuthbert’s hospitality and, in his thoroughly sociable manner, he entertained angels unaware thinking they were travellers (Heb. 13:2). And so, Alcuin affirms that, like Prophet Moses, Cuthbert bears the glow of holiness:

> Vir... fulgebat / Angelicam Cuthberctus agens in corpore vitam
> [VPRS II. 646–7/ Godman, 54].

> A man who used to glow, Cuthbert lives the angelic life in the body.

72 See *VCW* 4.5/128 and *VCW* 4.18/138; see also *HE* 4.29/ 440 cf. *VCW* 4.9; *HE* 4.5/128 cf. *VCB* ch 28.
In the end, whether in parley with animal or angel, the Irish project the utopia desired by tropological soul in which the orders of creation make peace within one harmonious community. For, as revelators of God’s presence interested most in godliness lived out in the here-and-now, the prophet experiences the realities of remote time and space as present to their senses.

**The One Path to Salvation: The Ethical Prophet and Eternity in the Human Heart**

The Irish, then, are not simply ethicists for Bede; nor are they mere sensationalists. Instead, as prophets from on high, they overcome cosmic alienation by placing the social dimension at the hub of the human condition. By means of a spectral mode of judgement, they affirm the dignity of persons *in imagine Dei*, embrace the human potential for palpable righteousness and aspire to the ideal of mutuality proper to an egalitarian community. In sum, the Irish discern eternity within the human heart that makes interpersonal relationship to God possible. The church, in this view, is the oneness of the righteous, and those inspired by them to become so, by practising respect for the eternal God and for the eternity in their neighbours’ hearts. The enclavism of the Irish shows forth the Irish response to the call to the green martyrdom of exile from one’s own kindred, as peregrine prophets *with* honour in a foreign land, who foster justice through their example of a consensual community ruled by the mutual affection of all. In the midst of the oneness of the Church in right relation to God and to neighbour, the baptised show hippocampal sensitivity to relational, charismatic authority that is established through welcoming respect for others and that resists the respect of particular persons. Rightly, Bede argues, must the English follow the example of Irish piety, sociability and righteous indignation. For the pathway to the one God is taken together in prophetic oneness of community aspiring to a just peace with God and with one’s neighbour. With the contrast between Bede’s unqualified disapproval of the British apostate and his qualified approval of the Irish prophet in mind, the time has come to consider Bede’s view of his own royal English as purveyors of the salvific trait of catholicity.
Ch. 4: Catholicity, Historical Identity and the Will of the English King-in-Council

The title of Bede’s *magnum opus* provides a strong clue to a primary interest of his life, namely, the role of his own recently Christianised Germanic people in establishing the rational will of God within the history of Britain. The noun *Historia* points to his belief that he has recorded a trajectory of epic events, even as the modifying phrase *gentis Anglorum* identifies the English nation as his protagonist. The adjective *ecclesiastica* characterises the nature of the plotline: the putatively permanent redirection of his people’s religious and cultural identity from honouring Woden and Thor to honouring Jesus Christ. Taken together, the elements of Bede’s title suggest that Bede believes his English people to have become a new people of God similar to the ancient people of God.

Now Bede makes it clear that the British devolve into anarchy, and thus return to what amounts to the amygdalic consciousness of barbarism. The barbarian English, however, come to personify the higher brain function of the neocortex, capable of logical, instrumental reason and longterm memory, as hopeful administrators of the rational will of God. Indeed, a parallel exists between the Old Testament and Bede’s *HE* which confirms that Bede views his own people as *Israelis redivivus*, those who rise above idolatry to worship the one, true God. The Israelites cross the Red Sea out of Egypt, conquer spiritually wayward people in a new Land of Promise and establish tribal identities among themselves there. Eventually, they adhere to the covenantal kings of the Davidic line, who administer a godly identity to the praise of the King of Heaven. Similarly, the English migrate across the English Channel from the pagan hinterland, conquer what Bede believes to be British apostasy and establish a heptarchy in Britain, which gradually forms into godly culture under the protection of a godly line of Northumbrian kings to the glory of God. Just as the Davidic line receives divine patronage and discipline (2 Sam. 7:13–14), so also does the line descended from Æthelfrith receive blessing (Oswald) and chastening.
Moreover, just as King David gathers about himself thirty thegn-like leading men to prosecute war and impose the king’s peace (2 Sam 23), so also do English overkings, such as Æthelberht and Edwin, Oswald and Oswiu, lead such a band of thegns to govern and defend the covenantal people as they fulfill their mission from God in history.⁴ In sum, as William Chaney remarks, the Anglo-Saxons “turned their paraphrases of Old Testament Scripture into reflections of their own Germanic society”.

Now the impetus driving Bede’s archetype of the English is his desire for a godly culture that will not revert to traditional gods. Such a vision of kingship stems from Deuteronomy, which establishes the role of the godly king as custodian of culture thus:

\[
\text{Describet sibi deuteronomium legis huius in volumine... et habebit secum legetque illud omnibus diebus vitae suae ut discat timere Dominum Deum suum et custodire verba et caerimonias eius quae lege praecepta sunt [Dt. 17:18–19].}
\]

(The king) shall copy out for himself the Deuteronomy of this law in a volume... And he shall have it with him, and shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and keep his words and ceremonies, that are commanded in the law.

Now Bede’s archetype of the royal English administration consists of two components. On the one hand, the divinely appointed king is a victorious icon of life whose role is to keep the ruling class faithful to God. On the other hand, the council protects the principle of freedom from the tyranny, lest the king should confuse himself with God. The ruling class looks to the king for

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leadership in the protection and promotion of the Christian identity and its interests among enemies and neighbours; and the king, with the consent of his thegns, becomes provider and proscriptor of the Christian culture at home. Through this two-sided job description, and its implications articulated below, one understands the literalist ethos of Bede’s view that the English king-in-council is history incarnate. Moreover, one discerns in the archetype of the royal English an affirmation of catholicity, one of the four marks of the Church. For catholicity understood in this royalist vision arises from the cheerful yearning of humanity, expressed literally in history, for salvation to be experienced in cultural terms as a directional identity: it acknowledges the god-like liberty of a people to enflesh the God’s rational will as they do so loyal to his directives.

**Sources by Which to Access and Elaborate upon Bede’s Archetype of the English**

One naturally looks to Bede’s *HE* for proof that he views kings as providers of the faith and protectors of the faithful. For his account of his people’s conversion shows that he is not naïve. He recognises that the staying power of Christian identity is connected to royal patronage and tenacity. One may also look to his commentaries on Genesis, First Samuel and Acts to tease out his own articulation of related motifs and associations. Bede’s *HE* begins with the origins of Britain’s peoples just as Genesis begins with the origins the earth’s great peoples descended from Shem, Ham and Japeth. In his commentary, Bede fuses his own *gens Anglorum* to the line of Japheth. This is significant since Noah promises to Japheth the increase of Shem, who is the progenitor of Israel, the Lord’s inheritance. The English, for Bede, as the latest and last of the Japhetic people to embrace the God of Israel receive the blue-blooded benefits of Israel, which name means “prince of God”. In reading of the orgins of Israelite kingship in First Samuel, Bede finds a template for the godly governorship of English kings in King David, who receives
covenantal status as a son of God who will beget a noble line of leaders. Finally, in writing the saga of the spread of Christian hope from Rome to the ends of the earth in Britain and Ireland, Bede adds a sequel to the biblical account in Acts of the spread of Christian hope from Jerusalem to Rome.

Beyond Bedan sources, *Beowulf* illustrates the dynamics of the kingship of early mediæval times. In particular, the saga evinces the principle among Germanic peoples that loyalty in war must be purchased (negotiated) in peace time. Alcuin of York is another useful source, for he shows how Bede’s countrymen gladly receive his claim of covenantal status for their own English nation that warrants their right to rule. For Alcuin perpetuates Bede’s notion that God has chosen the English over the British as governors of Britain on the ground that they would prove faithful to him rather than devolve into anarchy. Boniface of Mainz and Aldhelm of York are useful Anglo-Saxon authors who elaborate upon motifs of kingship. Boniface supports Bede in this notion that English missionaries fulfill the noble, fame-seeking military ethos of the English when they serve as promoters of the faith in the old country. Aldhelm of Sherbourne, himself a bishop of royal stock, also affirms the same military ethos of the English in an ecclesiastical context. He remarks how those priests who desert a bishop in disfavour (Wilfrid of York) are like retainers who desert their lord in the heat of battle and become a laughingstock.

**The Sacred and Secular Grounds for Bede’s Covenantal View of English Kingship**

At the outset of this inquiry into Bede’s treatment of the regal English, it is useful to reflect upon Bede’s inclusion of two papal letters that comment upon kingship [*HE* 1.32, 3.29]. For outside of Bede’s own saturation in holy Scripture, Bede surely would take papal views on the subject seriously. Pope Gregory’s letter to King Æthelberht reads thus:
Omnipotens Deus bonos quosque ad populorum regimina perducit, ut per eos omnibus, quibus praelati fuerint, dona suae pietatis inpendat... Christianam fidel in populis tibi subditis extendere festina; zelum rectinudinis tuae in eorum conversione multiplica; idolorum cultus insequere; fanorum aedificia euerte; subditorum mores ex magna uitae munditia exhortando, terendo, blandiendo, corrigendo et boni operis exempla monstrando aedifica, ut illum retributorem inuenias in caelo, cuius nomen atque cognitionem dilataueris in terra.

Quaeque uos ammonet libenter audite, deuote peragite, studiose in memoria reseruaye: quia si uos eum in eo quod pro omnipotenti Deo loquitur auditis, isdem omnipotens Deus hunc pro uobis exorantem exaudit [HE 1.32/110, 112].

Almighty God has led certain good men to the rule of peoples, that through them he may grant the gifts of his pity to all over whom they may be set... Hasten to extend the Christian faith among the people subjected to you; multiply the zeal of your righteousness in their conversion; suppress the cult of idols; overturn the temples of idols; build the morals of your subjects through great purity of life by exhorting, terrifying, coaxing, correcting and showing by the example of good works, so that you may find him the Recompenser in heaven, whose name and knowledge you have enriched on earth.

Whatever [Bishop Augustine] advises you, listen freely, enact devotedly and earnestly keep it in mind; because if you hear him in what he speaks on behalf of Almighty God, that same Almighty God will listen fully to him who prays for you.

From Gregory’s words, Bede understands that kings receive their station from God as good men who guarantee God’s righteous standards among a people called by his name. For Gregory, the king is a protector of the faith, who defends religious personnel in his demesne; and, through enforceable love of neighbour within his borders, he is a proscriptor of the faith. In addition, the Christian king is a promoter of the faith through enforceable dogmatic, liturgical and institutional standards beyond his household. Good kings, under contract from God the Recompenser, are providers of the faith also in that they overturn places of idolatrous worship, replacing them with ecclesiastical infrastructure.

Supplementing Pope Gregory, Bede also records Pope Vitalian’s letter to King Oswiu:
Quia et gens uestra Christo omnipotenti Deo credit... sicut scriptum est in Esaiam...
“Audite insulae, et adtenite populi de longe”... et rursum: “Rex uidebunt, et
consurgent principes, et adorabunt”; et post pusillum: “Dedi te in foedus populi,
ut ... possideres hereditates dissipitas...”

Festinet igitur, quaesumus, uestra celsitudo,... totam suam insulam Deo Christo
dicare. Profecto enim habet protectorem... Iesum Christu, qui ei cuncta prospera
inpertiet, uti nouum Christi populum coaceruet [HE 3.29/318, 320].

For your race also has believed in Christ, who is God Almighty, as it is written in
Isaiah...”Listen, O isles, and attend, you peoples from afar”... And again, “Kings
shall see, and princes shall arise together and worship.” And a little later, ‘I have
given you in a covenant of the people, that you might... possess the scattered
heritages...”

We trust that Your Highness will speedily... dedicate the whole of his island to
Christ our God; for you indeed have a protector... Jesus Christ, who will prosper you
in all your efforts to gather together a new people of Christ.

In this letter, Vitalian’s diction lays Judeo-Christian identity over the geography of Britain. In
essence, the papal hope is that Oswiu will set his sights on governing a kingdom for God that
covers the length and breadth of Britain, inspired by the Solomonic vision that extends God’s
rule from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (Dt. 11:24; 1 Ki. 4:20–25). The bolded
terms insulae... de longe and hereditates populum dissipitas, when placed alongside the bolded
terms foedus and nouum populum, communicate the idea that the Angles, gathered anew, are a
covenantal people under a covenantal king like the Israelites of old. One discerns in the scale of
these comments, indicated by the bolded phrase totam suam insulam, that Vitalian speaks of the
royal role in the promotion and hegemony of Christian faith. Putting together the papal letters of
Gregory to Æthelberht and Vitalian to Oswiu, Bede finds a job description of kingship that
involves the defence and advancement of adherence to Christ as well as the facilitation of a more
thorough embrace of the Christian hope as a culture-defining reality through provision for
Christian worship and proscription of other gods.
Now one cannot help but believe that Bede’s exalted view of the English as administrators of the divine will in Britain is connected to the fact that he reckons himself to be of English stock. But there is another factor, beyond his own ethnic identity, which shapes his expression of his ideal type of the English, namely, the potential for disquiet in his pious soul over the strategic use of political and physical force in favour of spiritual ends. The outwardly focused angle of Bede’s archetype of the king’s role as promoter of the Christian culture becomes his attempt at theological justification. Two passages in particular, beyond his HE, suggest that Bede delights in the papal directives to English kings because they suggest a special role for the English. About Peter’s admonition to Christians scattered throughout the world, Bede writes:

Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus adquisitionis [1 Pet. 2:9]. Hoc laudis testimonium quondam antiquo Dei populo per Moysen datum est quod nunc recte gentibus dat apostolus Petrus... genus electum uocat propter fidem ut distinguat ab eis qui lapidem uiium reprobando facti sunt ipsi reprob... Gens quoque sancta... uocantur iuxta id quod apostolus Paulus... dicentis: Iustus autem meus ex fide uiuit, quod si subtraxerit se non placebit animae meae, not autem, inquit, non sumus subtractionis in perditionem sed fidei in adquisitionem animae... [Heb. 10:38–39]. Populus ergo adquisitionis facti sumus in sanguine nostri redemptoris... Vnde et in sequenti quoque uersiculo... hanc etiam nouo Dei populo spiritualiter docet imp lendam [IE7C 1 Pet: lines 164–66, 168–69, 174–79, 181–85].

“But you are a chosen [race], a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people [gained]” [1 Pet. 2:9]. The apostle Peter now rightly gives to the nations this testimony of praise, which once was given by Moses to the ancient people of God... He calls them a chosen race for their faith, that he may distinguish them from those who, rejecting the living stone, are themselves rejected... They are called a holy nation... according to what Paul the Apostle says, “Yet my just man lives by faith, but if he withdraw himself, he shall not please my soul. But we are not the children of withdrawing unto perdition but of faith” [Heb. 10:38–39]. Therefore, we have become the people gained in the blood of our Redeemer... Hence also in the following verse... he teaches spiritually that this also is to be fulfilled in the new people of God.

And, in a homily that affirms the anointed status of the baptised of New Testament times and of his own times, Bede writes:

2 CCSL 121: 237/ PL: 93: 50D.
Vocabantur autem Christi, et sacerdotes in lege et reges in figuram nimium eiusdem ueri regis, et pontifcis magni domini ac salvatoris in cuius typo etiam materiali lineabant oleo. Non solum autem illi sed nostri temporis fideles ut a Christo christiani ita etiam ab ipsa sacri chrismatis unctione... consecrantur christi recte nuncupantur propheta teste qui ait: Existi in salutem populi tui ut saluos facias christos tuos [Hab. 3:13 VL] [HOM 1.16.123–32].

But both priests in the law and kings are called “christs” doubtless as a figure of the same true king, and high priest, the Lord and Saviour, as a material type of whom, they were also anointed with oil. Not only are they rightly labelled “christs”, but also the faithful of our own time; as they are from Christ called “Christians”, so also by the anointing of the holy chrism... are they consecrated. The prophet, who being a witness, said: “You exist for the salvation of your people, so that you might save your christs” [Hab. 3:13 VL].

In the bolded text of both passages, Bede takes the leap from biblical times to his own time when considering the anointed status of a believing people. Just as the ancient people of God anointed kings and priests with oil as a sign of sacred status, so also is Jesus the Anointed One, both as Lord (king) and as Saviour (priest). The parallel between the singular populi tui and the plural christos tuos in the second passage provides Bede with sufficient evidence that his own freshly converted English nation is indeed a people upon whom the regal oil rests; and that, like Christ, the anointed English exist to effect salvation within their demesne.

As noted above, Bede is not naïve to the impact of godly rulers. As far as Bede is concerned, the nouus Dei populus of his own English does administer God’s rational will. He congratulates English kings for creating a Golden Age in Britain in these words:

Neque umquam prorsus, ex quo Britanniam petierunt Angli, feliciora fuere tempora, dum et fortissimos Christianosque habentes reges cunctis barbaris nationibus essent terrori, et omnium uota ad nuper audita caelestis regni gaudia penderent, et quicumque lectionibus sacris cuperent erudiri, haberent inpromtu magistros qui docerent [HE 4.2/334].

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3 CCSL 122: 114/ PL 94: 259A. In this homily, Bede addresses Jn. 1:35–42.
Never before, since the English sought out Britain, were there happier times; when, having both most brave and Christian kings, they were a terror to all the barbarous nations; and the desires of all men were weighed toward the joys of the heavenly kingdom recently introduced; and whoever wanted to be instructed in sacred readings had teachers available who taught them.

Bede admits the need for rational enforcement in the achievement of a settled Christian culture. For Christian kings provide the conditions on the ground for churchmen and monastics to perfect their appreciation of heavenly things.⁴ Proud of the conversion of English kings, Bede finds that Gregory the Great’s commentary on the conversion of Britain, set down in Gregory’s *Moralia in Job*, applies to his own warlike people. Quoting the pope, Bede writes:

“*Qui cateruas pugnantium infidelis nequaquam metueret, iam nunc fidelis humillum linguas timet... Virtus ei divinae cognitionis infunditur, eiusdem divinitatis terrore refrenatur, ut prae agere metuat ac totis desideriis ad aeternitatis gratiam venire concupiscat.*” *Quibus uerbis beatus Gregorius hoc quoque declarat, quia Augustinus... gentem Anglorum ad agntionem veritatis perducebant* [HE 2.1/130]

“He who, as an infidel, by no means used to fear bands of fighting men, even now as a faithful one honours the tongues of the humble... The power of divine knowledge is poured into him; he is restrained by dread of the same divinity, so that he fears to do evil and he yearns with all desire to come to the grace of eternity.” With these words blessed Gregory declares this also: that Augustine... began to lead the race of the English to the recognition of truth.

The English warrior, tamed by the gospel of Christ, has become a suitable instrument to administer the divine will. The inner struggle to survive transposes upward into the key of a sane mind properly constrained by the prospect of better things.

⁴ One this theme, Jane Stevenson writes: “Bede’s implied view...is that a country is ‘Christian’ once its ruler has firmly accepted the faith, prevailed upon his heirs to do likewise, acquired a bishop, and put good money into the formation of an ecclesiastical establishment on his territory.” See Stevenson, “Christianity in Sixth- and Seventh-Century Southumbria,” in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in Northwest Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1992), 182.
In fact, Bede is so convinced of the destiny of the English as creators, maintainers and promoters of Christian culture in Britain that he discerns this role in the very foreknowledge of God, who would not leave such valuable agents in spiritual darkness. Bede writes:

[Brettones] inter alia inenarrabilium scelerum facta... hoc addebant, ut numquam genti Saxorum siue Anglorum, secum Brittaniam incolenti, verbum fidei praedicando committerent. Sed non tamen diuina pietas plebem suam, quam praescuit, deseruit; quin multo digniores genti memorerate praecones veritatis, per quos crederet, destinuit [HE 1.22/68].

[The British], among other acts of unspeakable crime... began to add this: that they never committed to preach the word of truth to the race of Saxons or Angles inhabiting Britain with them. But still Divine Pity did not desert His people, whom He foreknew, but He destined heralds of the truth, through whom [the English] believed, worthier by far of this famed race.

The English and British switch places in this transitional passage. The English are singled out for great fame, and the British are relegated to ignominy for their spiritual stinginess. This theme of noble English identity even passes from Gregory to Alcuin via Bede, so that Alcuin casts Bede’s Golden Age into a national epic. A brief selection captures the theme well:

Hoc pietate Dei visum, quod gens scelerata ob sua de terris patrum peccata periret intraretque suas populus feliciar urbes, qui servaturus Domini praecepta fuisset. Quod fuit affatim factum, donante Tonante iam nova dum crebris viguerunt sceptrum triumphus et reges ex se iam coepit habere potentesses gens ventura Dei [VPRS II.71–8/ Godman, 10].

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5 Several writers note how Bede has the English take up the epic side of the populus Israhel motif so that they become a type of Israel rightly guided. See Wallace-Hadrill, 1971: 72–97, esp. 76–8, 97, 107; McClure1983, 86–8; Scheil 2004,101–110, esp.104–106; and Howe 1989, 33–71, esp. 47, 70.
In his rectitude, did God see to it that, for their heinous sins,
A race should lose the lands of their fathers;
And that a more fortunate people should enter their cities,
Who would preserve the precepts of the Lord.

Happily this happened, with the Thunderer granting,
While a new power then flourished with multiple triumphs;
And the up-and-coming race of God
Then began to [produce] powerful kings of itself.

Alcuin agrees with Bede upon the special role for the English, who, as the bolded text shows, realise the divine purpose in the course of insular events going forward.

To illustrate the acquisition of exalted status, one may consider Bede’s account of King Edwin. He writes of Edwin’s providential rise to power [HE 2.9, 12], his deliberations in council over baptism [HE 2.10–12], his impact for Christianity once baptised [HE 2.13–18] and his heroic death as a Christian king [HE 2.20]. Each of these elements portrays something of what role Bede believes that God has in mind for the English people.

In the first stage, God blesses the pagan Edwin’s rise to power in anticipation of the king’s favourable response. Bede writes:

*Cui videlicet regi, in auspiciun suscipiendae fidei et regni caelestis, potestas etiam terreni creuerat imperii, ita ut quod nemo Anglorum ante eum, omnes Brittaniae fines, qua vel ipsorum vel Brettonum provinciae habitabant, sub dicione acciperet [HE 2.9/162].

Namely to this king, the power of earthly rule had increased, as an augury of his receiving the faith and the heavenly realm, so that he placed under governance what none of the English before him had: all the bounds of Britain, whether of the province where his own lived, or of the province where the British lived.

The point here is Bede’s discernment that highest favour settles upon the king who will rule the entire island of Britain for God.

Next, Bede presents the factors involved in Edwin’s deliberations, alone and in counsel with his thegns, on the matter of baptism. On the one hand, the king personifies the power of one;
and on the other, the council personifies the power of many leading men. In comparing and contrasting the two perspectives, one discerns in their interaction the anagogical and the historical modes of being as they fuse into a divinely sanctioned ruling class. In the spirit of anagogy, the would-be Christian king concerns himself with survival, yet with a twist. He needs definitive proof by providential circumstance or by miracle that he is chosen.7 Proof comes to Edwin when his thegn, Lilla, takes a poison arrow for him at about the same time that Edwin receives a letter from the new religion’s highest ranking priest [HE 2.9]. Rattled, Edwin concedes the baptism of twelve relations in a pledge of good faith, and promises to receive baptism himself when the Christian God secures supremacy in Britain for him. At this stage, one learns what Bede recognises to be paramount in a king’s mind: rulership, and the warrant to rule. God meets Edwin where his mind is, granting him rulership because he has pledged to rule for God. Miraculous confirmation then follows to press Edwin to the baptismal font. For Edwin suddenly recognises that Bishop Paulinus is the one who appeared in his dream as a young man, forlorn and facing death [HE 2.12]. Paulinus interprets the vision in accordance with Bede’s archetypes thus:

\[ Si\ deinceps\ uoluntati\ eius\ quam\ per\ me\ tibi\ praedicat,\ obsecundare\ uoleris,\ etiam\ a\ perpetuis\ malorum\ tormentis\ te\ liberans\ aeterni\ secum\ regni\ in\ caelis\ faciet\ esse\ participem\ [HE\ 2.12/180]. \]

If henceforth you will follow [God’s] will, which he proclaims to you through me, liberating you also from the torments of the wicked in perpetuity, [God] will make you to be a partaker with him in the eternal realm in the heavens.

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7 Tim Furry notes that Bede “thought of historical events as lacking any intrinsic revelatory value” unless God takes “them up into his providential care”. Furry further notes that while historians describe events in context, their task leads inevitability to figural reading “insofar as [history itself] is representational.” For historians often interpret one time in light on another. See Furry, Allegorizing History, 91, 126.
The king administers the rational will of God as ruler in space and time, but the priest reveals its substance. The king strategically adapts temporal means to divine use; but the priest provides the end, that is, the standard of alignment to the cosmos.

The role of the king vis-à-vis his council also appears in Edwin’s deliberations. While providence and paranormal experience confirm for the king his own divine right and moves him to baptism, he must still persuade his thegns that their future also lies along the trajectory of the new religion. After some deliberation, which reflects the thegns’ calculation of the viability of the new religion, the council freely pledges fealty to the king’s new religion [HE 2.13]. Carole Cusack notes a similar pattern in her study of the Christianisation of northern Europe. Societies organised around a king come to discern an uncertain future for their local tradition and a political threat in incidental contact with conversion agents. The moment of formal conversion arrives when the ruling class negotiates corporate conversion as a way to safeguard elements of the old culture in the new religion, and thereby, to protect their cultural identity. Thus, northern cultures adapt to the Christian hope even as Christianity adapts to the ancestral customs of the north.

With his thegns onside, Edwin then proceeds to fulfill his mission to Christianise English culture. Among his first acts is the building of a stone church for Paulinus [HE 2.14], followed by royal oversight as his bishop catechises the people en masse. Soon after, Edwin turns his attention from Northumbria to missionising his tributaries in East Anglia and Lindsey [HE 2.15–16]. The result of this royal sponsorship of evangelisation is realised in tangible terms in this way:

Tanta autem eo tempore pax in Britannia, quaquae rerum imperium regis Eduini peruenerat, fuisse perhibetur ut, sicut usque hodie in proverbio dicitur, etiam si mulier una cum recens nato paruulo uellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se ledente ualere [HE 2.16/ 192].

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Moreover, there is said to have been such peace in Britain, at that time, wherever the
rule of King Edwin had reached; that, just as it is said in the proverb up to this day,
even if a woman with a little one recently born would traverse the island from sea to
sea, she could [do so] with no one harming her.

For Bede, the existence of a *pax Eduiniana* after the king embraces Christianity is proof that God
strategically appoints the English to establish his rational will in Britain.

In the last phase of the story, the pope honours Edwin by granting the pallium to his bishop
\[HE 2.18\]. Even so, Bede grants him greater honour in the way that he presents his death at the
hands of Cædwalla of Gwynedd. For Bede shows Edwin to be a royal martyr, the iconic
protector of true believers against the tyranny of their godless enemies \[HE 2.20\]. Bede writes:

\[
\text{At uero Caedualla, quamuis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo tamen erat animo ac moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui quidem muliebri, uel innocuae paruorum parceret aetati, quin uniuersos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contradaret, multo tempore totas eorum prouincias debachando peruagatus, ac totum genus Anglorum Brittaniae finibus erasurum se esse deliberans. Sed nec religione Christianae, quae apud eo exorta erat, aliquid inpendebat honoris, quippe cum usque hodie moris sit Brettonum fidem religionemque Anglorum pro nihili habere, neque in aliquo eis magis communicare quam paganis \[HE 2.20/202, 204\].}
\]

But Cædwalla, although he had the name and profession of Christian, was still in
spirit and ways such a barbarian that he did not at length spare the womanly sex or
the harmless age of children. But he, for a long time traversing all of their provinces
in rage, determining also that the whole race of the English from boundaries of
Britain must be eradicated, spoke against all with savage atrocity to the point of death
through torments. But neither did he pay any honour to the Christian religion, which
had arisen among them – seeing that until today it is the custom of the British to hold
as nothing the faith and religion of the English, and not to communicate with them in
anything anymore than with the heathen.

When one compares this passage to Bede’s account of Edwin’s peace in \(HE 2.16\), one observes
that while Edwin’s Northumbria is safe for women and children, Cædwalla of Gwynedd is a
butcher of both. For Bede, no sacred administrator of the God’s rational will could allow such a
travesty without interposing his own blood; and so, a routine death on the battlefield becomes a
royal martyrdom. Edwin is now not only the promoter of the new religion, and a provider and
proscriptor among its faithful; he is also its protector. And Bede, in his treatment of Edwin, shows him to be an historical fulfillment of the biblicist vision of kingship encouraged by popes.

**The Nature of English Christian Leadership: The Royal Aura and Quantitative Hierarchy**

Two questions now arise at this juncture: Who are the English? and how can one say that kings and overkings are their literary representatives in Bede? Two lines of argument converge to show that Bede views the Germanic residents of Britain as one ethno-linguistic entity, which he names *gens Anglorum*, and that kings and overkings are their rightful representatives. First, Bede uses the term *gens Anglorum* to distinguish between the Germanic residents of Britain and the speakers of indigenous yet foreign languages. Neither his table of nations in *HE* 1.15, nor his summation of inter-ethnic affairs in *HE* 5.23 mention *Saxones* or *Iutes* alongside *Brettones*, *Scotti* and *Picti*; and, as noted above, Bede draws a distinction between *Brettones* and numerous Germanic tribes on the Continent (see above, 25). Since Bede’s view of the Germanic residents of Britain, whom he names the English, centres upon his sacralisation of their hegemonic position over all the indigenous peoples within the *saeculum*, the intuitive choice for their leader is the king, and even more, the overking.

The second line of argument relates to Bede’s use of the term *gens Anglorum* collectively, despite his reports of internecine skirmishes among various polities of Angles in the north and east, Jutes in the southeast and Saxons in the south and west [*HE* 2.9, 4.21]. In the preface to his *HE*, several observations show Bede interacting with the reality of a collective and its cognates. On the one hand, the English are a single race; yet, on the other, they are subdivided into provinces with distinct interests. Bede reflects the single collective when he implicitly includes Saxons and Jutes among his own Anglians of Northumbria. He writes to the Northumbrian king thus:
You [Ceolwulf] devote effort vigilantly to the acts and words of those gone before that must be known, and most especially of the illustrious men of our race.⁹

The question arises: who are the illustrious men of our race? If one were to judge by the plotline of his story, one would have to include those from all parts of Britain: Æthelberht hails from Kent, Anna from East Anglia, Wulfhere from Mercia, Cædwalla from Wessex and his beloved Edwin, Oswald and Oswiu from Northumbria. Yet, Bede includes all of them in his gens Anglorum.

Alcuin, for his part, operates from the same mental construct as Bede: that the Germanic residents of Britain are one people. Alcuin writes:

_Est antiqua, potens bellis et corpore praestans_  
_Germaniae populus gens inter et extera regna,_  
duritiam propter dicti cognomine saxi [VPRS ll. 46–8/ Godman, 6, 8].

An ancient race exists, powerful in war, outstanding in body,  
Between the people of Germany and the outer realms  
Said to be “rocks” by name for their hardness.

In this quotation, Alcuin identifies the Germanic peoples of Britain as one gens just as Bede does. Yet, playing on the meaning of “Saxon” [rock] and not Angle, Alcuin implies that, although his own people are Angles, they nonetheless belong together under the name “Saxon”.

Turning back to the preface of Bede’s _HE_, further reading confirms this viewpoint. In the midst of mentioning many provinciae, Bede identifies one gens [race]. So Bede writes:

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⁹ While Stephen Harris disavows a broad understanding of _gens Anglorum_, he notes that Peter Hunter Blair and Patrick Wormald affirm it, and that J. N. Stephens suggests that only the Angles enter Britain _in toto_, entering the church as _gens_, not _natio_. See Harris, 2003: 60–72. Moreover, David Kirby finds that the Celts and Continentals viewed Angles and Saxons as one people. See Kirby, _The Earliest English Kings_ (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991), 12–14. In _HE_ 5.9, Bede’s comments on British mispronunciation suggest his awareness of a common Germanic heritage among the sundry continental tribes as Germans. The unity of the north and the south is most meaningful to Bede, then, when non-Germanic peoples are within his purview.
Thus, from the beginning of this volume until the time at which the race of the English took hold of the faith of Christ, we have learned what our efforts at research deserve [lit. we deserve] mostly from the writings of earlier [writers] collected here and there. From then, however, up to current times we have learned something of the church of the Kentings through the disciples of blessed Pope Gregory or of his successors... Also, they provided not a little data to me from the region of the province of the East and likewise the West Saxons, and of the East Angles and the Northumbrians besides, by which bishops or in the time of which kings they took hold of the grace of the gospel.

The second aspect – that of one race manifest in many polities – is drawn out in the same preface:

Furthermore, I humbly beseech all those reading or hearing, whom the same history of our nation is able to reach, that they remember to intercede rather often with the Supernal Mercy for my infirmities both of mind and body, and repay me this return of their own remuneration, each in their own provinces.

Noting the bolded text, one sees how Bede speaks of one natio residing in suis quique provinciis, with each provincia having its own episode in the grander story of national conversion. What one draws from the idea of many provinces is the existence of many kings; and what one draws from the theme of one nation is the greater import of overkings to Bede’s notion of the English people. This observation implies that the English people convert proleptically as natio under Æthelberht of Kent, and actually under kings of the provinces. Furthermore, it shows that, for
Bede, the English approach the status of a Christian nation as they are ruled by the widest ruling overkings.

One further observes the notion of a single nation arising from many Germanic polities in Bede’s list of overkings [HE 2.5]. Ælle of Sussex (d. 514) and Cælin of Wessex (d. 593) head the list, receiving mere mention because they reign before any English baptism. Æthelberht of Kent (d. 616), Rædwald of East Anglia (d. 624) and Edwin of Northumbria (d. 633) begin the Christian era among the English. Of these three, Bede lays his accent on Æthelberht [HE 1.25–2.4] and Edwin [HE 2.9–20] as those overkings who first establish a beachhead for Christianity below and above the Humber River. Rædwald, in the middling position, reigns half-way up the eastern coast of Britain and exhibits half-hearted loyalty to Woden and to Christ. For this, he also receives minimal coverage [HE 2.12, 15]. Bede concludes his list of overkings with a pair of brothers, Oswald of Northumbria (d. 642) and Oswiu of Northumbria (d. 670), who establish a singular and most Christian rule across the widest range of any before them [HE 3.6; 3.24].

Two traits of overkings are reflected in the list. First, they come from various provinces; and second, only one ruler gains pre-eminence at any given time. Since Bede overlooks the potent Wulfhere of Mercia (d. 675) and the disappointing Ecgfrith of Northumbria [d. 685], one may detect parochial pride in Bede that ignores rivals and minimises the failings of one’s own local man. Conversely, given his listing of seven names, one may detect a numerological interest in the number of perfection. Either way, whatever else this list does, it speaks to this point: that at any given time, an English overking best fulfills the role of Christian administrator over Britain.

In addition to the preface and the list of overkings, one discerns the primacy of the king in the very way Bede structures his tale of the introduction of Christianity among the English. For
the first named actor among the English to convert is King Æthelberht of Kent. The king is also the first Englishman to speak, and he speaks on behalf of all the English. Æthelberht remarks:

*Pulchra sunt quidem uerba et promissa quae adfertis, sed quia noua sunt et incerta, non his possum adsensum tribuere reliquit eius, quae tanto tempore cum omni Anglorum gente servaui [HE 1.25/74].*

Beautiful, truly, are the words and promises you bring; but, because they are new and uncertain, I cannot agree to concede to them relinquishing what I, with the whole race of the English, have preserved for such a [long] time.

Here Æthelberht rules Kent, a region that Bede has previously identified as Jutish [HE 1.15]; yet, the king claims, as the bolded text indicates, to hold his beliefs *cum omni Anglorum gente*. The comment does not reflect the political reality of the time – for the island did not come under general rule until centuries later. It does reflect, however, Bede’s notion of the common origin of Germanic peoples and the role of the king as their rightful representative.

Finally, the climax of the story shows the importance of the kings to the religious history of the English people. While some may suggest that the Synod of Whitby pits sympathy for Irish propheticism over against Latinate sacerdotalism, the real story to be told is the triumph of the executive right of the English overking, as a metonym for the people, to sponsor a hearing and decide the future contours of culture for his people. Wilfrid has his opinion, and Colman also; but Oswiu reduces the conflict to one key question, and selects the outcome.

To clarify Bede’s typology of the English king more precisely requires an appreciation of what the rightful king and the tyrant hold in common, which opens one’s perspective to the nature of an aura. At bottom, monarchical rule operates in the physicalist and anagogical logic described above in the chapter on the British. This logic begins with the immediacy of the senses and ends in the psychical biome of dread. From the spatial-temporal immediacy of the merely physical plane, one arrives at a binary mode of being that necessitates the conflict theory of
relations: one perceives and performs well, or one dies. From a fixation upon survival, one arrives at a pragmatic theory of truth that focuses upon what works in a world of contingency. Given the substantive (exceptionalist) nature of this type of rationality, a moral matrix defined by courage in the face of all odds emerges from a psychical climate of dread associated with contingency. In the rightful king, such dread transforms into holy fear; and in the tyrant, violent thrashing about as he attempts to remain alive by stamping out every threat. Unlike the tyrannical monarch, the rightful king knows himself to be but a creature alive by the favour of Almighty God for a purpose that includes but goes beyond his own person.

With this line of reasoning clarified, one observes that both tyrannical and rightful monarchs operate in the world of war, which is the crucible that defines their identity. To the courageous victor goes the spoils, including the intangible aura attached to someone who overcomes death in battle. The aura of the rightful king and of the tyrant, then, is the aura of dread. For just as one dare not rise against the overwhelming power of the tyrant, so also one dare not touch the Lord’s anointed summoned to protect, promote, proscribe and provide for his people. This kind of aura becomes so bound up with the rightful king and tyrant that it is fused to the body. In the tyrant, the aura manifests itself through his fear-inducing scowl and his terrifying and physically-rooted madness; in the rightful king, through the king’s handsome frame and his line of bluebloods. For the king symbolises the principle of life. In crying Vivat rex!, a people intuitively yearns for survival and for the victory of its own cultural identity and civilisation.

Such insights aid in the interpretation of Bede’s winsome inclusion of an anecdote that has Pope Gregory affirm the royal aura of his own English people. To establish the organic (genetic) nature of their inherent right to rule, Bede reveals Pope Gregory’s motivation to win the English barbarians to the Christian faith. Bede writes:
Therefore, again [Gregory] asked what the name of this race was. He was told that they were called Angli. “Good,” said he, “for they also have the angelic face, and it is apt that such be co-heirs of angels in heaven. What is the name,” he asked, “of the very province, from which they have been brought?” He was told that same provincials were called Deiri. “Good!” he replied, “Deiri! snatched de ira [from the wrath] and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of this province called?” He was told that he is said to be Ælle. And playing on the name, he said, “Alleluia! It is fitting that the praise of God the Creator be sung in those parts”.

This story highlights resonances between the names of the English stock [Angli], English land [Deira] and the English king [Ælle] and words from the holy languages of Greek [angeli], Latin [de ira] and Hebrew [alleluia]. Such resonances, for Bede, imply the same sacral aura that dominates Whitby’s Life of Gregory, in which Bede finds this witty anecdote [VG chs. 9, 13]. For these word-plays in the mouth of the pope reinforce the halo effect that produces an inalienable aura, as though a deeper, providential meaning were embedded in English bloodlines.¹¹

¹⁰ Observe that despite the boys being from Deira, the southern district within Northumbria, Bede allows them to represent him in the northern district as well as the rest of the Germanic residents of Britain.

¹¹ Note the use of the tres linguae sacrae: angelus is Greek, de ira Latin, and alleluia Hebrew. Damian Fleming affirms that Bede honoured Hebrew as a holy language. Imitating Jerome’s penchant for lower criticism, Bede viewed Jerome’s Vulgate as hebraica uestitas. Earlier, Roger Ray has shown how Bede argued for Jerome’s use of Hebrew against Augustine’s preference for the Septuagint. For the significance of the three sacred languages, see David Howlett,“’Tres Linguae Sacrae’ and Threefold Play in Insular Latin,” Peritia 16 (2002): 94–115. Special thanks to Professor Andy Orchard for putting me on to the linguistic aspect of this insight in remarks made casually during one of our first conversations. See also Fleming, The Most Exalted Language”: Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of Hebrew (Ph.D. Diss., Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, 2006), 19; and Ray, “What Do We Know about Bede’s Commentaries?” Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale 49 (1982): 5–20.
The physical nature of the aura of the English is further illustrated in the same anecdote. After seeing saleable pagan English boys *uenales positos candidi corporis, ac uenusti uultus, capillorum quoque forma egregia* [attractive, poised with white body, and comely face, also in handsome styling of the hair], Pope Gregory sighs:

“*Heu, pro dolor!*” inquit “*quo tam lucidi uultus homines tenerbrarum auctor possidet, tantaque gratia frontispicii mentem ab interna gratia vacatur!*”

[HE 2.1/132]

“Oh, the pain,” he remarked, “that the author of darkness should possess men so bright of face, and that he should control the mind empty of internal grace despite such grace of appearance!”

Why does Bede say that Gregory converts the English? On account of their milky complexion, which bespeaks the wholesome potential for goodness within. Bede takes up this very motif in his treatment of King David, known for his good looks, in his commentary upon First Samuel:

> Erat autem rufus [1 Sam. 16:12] *ob cruorem passionis quia pastor bonus animam suam posuit pro ouibus suis, erat et speciosus forma prae filiis hominum* [Ps. 44:3/45:2] *quia peccatum non fecit nec inuentus est dolus in ore eius* [1 Pet 2:22]. *Cui simillimum est quod in eius laude sponsa loquitur, Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus* [Cant. 5:10], *candidus scilicet actione rubicundus sanguine. Et quod ibi sequitur, electus ex milibus* [Cant. 5:10], *hoc est quod hic repobatis fratribus solus ungitur Dauid* [IPPS 3.174–81].

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12 In Gregory’s own words, he converts the English as though he himself were a vassal of God, who wishes to prove himself worthy of appointment to his post in quantitative terms: *Ibi Petrus cum Iudaes conuersa, cum post se traxit, apparebit. Ibi Paulus conuersum, ut dixerim, mundum ducens. Ibi Andreas post se Achaiam, Johannes Asiam, Thomas Indiam... Cum igitur tot pastores cum gregibus suis ante aeterni pastoris oculos uenerint, quid nos miseri dicturi sumus, qui ad Dominum nostrum post negotium uacui redimus...?* [Homelia in euangelia 1.17.395–98, 400–402; CCSL 141: 132. PL 76: 1148B] [Peter will appear with a converted Judea, when [the nation] follows after him. Paul will appear, so might I say, leading a converted world. Andrew will lead a converted Achaia after himself, John Asia Minor, and Thomas a converted India, in this sight of her converted king. When so many shepherds with their flocks come before the eternal shepherd, what are we going to say, we miserable ones, who return to our master empty-handed after business hours?]. See John Martyn, “Introduction,” in *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, trans. John C. Martyn (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004), 1: 48, 66.

13 CCSL 119: 141/ PL 91: 606B.
“But he was ruddy” [1 Sam. 16:12] on account of the blood of passion since the good shepherd placed his soul for the sake of his own sheep; he was also “beautiful above the sons of men” [Ps. 44:3/45:2] in that “he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” [1 Pet. 2:22]. With respect to whom, it is most like that which the bride says in his praise, “My beloved is white and ruddy” [Cant. 5:10] – white namely in behaviour, ruddy in blood. And there is that which it follows there, “chosen out of thousands” [Cant. 5:10], that is, that here David alone is anointed among his reprobate brothers.

The bridge is short indeed between Bede’s perceiving David as white in heart, ruddy in pastoral concern, and Bede’s perceiving his own English as white in body and in heart, and as ruddy in their pastoral (rightfully royal) concern. By contrast, Bede’s portrayal of Cædwalla reminds one of a Solomonic proverb:

*Si contuderis stultum in pila... non auferetur ab eo stultitia eius* [Prov. 27:22].

Though you grind a fool with mortar and pestle... his foolishness is not taken from him.

For the evil aura of Cædwalla is just as physical as the noble aura of a rightful king like Oswald.

Now given the singularity of the role, and the weight of the responsibility, a rightful king must become convinced of his own right to rule in a way that is true to the anagogical matrix of meaning described above. One type of confirmation of rightful status involves the patently supernatural. Thus, as noted above, Bede tells the tale of Edwin’s vision during his youth in which Edwin promises to follow the lead of a mystical stranger, if the stranger would assure him of survival and victory over his enemies. Later, Paulinus fulfills the dream by introducing himself as that mystical stranger of his dream, confirming that God has chosen Edwin to rule in God’s name [*HE* 2.12].

Utmost in a king’s mind, however, is victory in a decisive battle. King Edwin of Northumbria states as much when he makes victory over Cwichelm of Wessex the condition of his baptism [*HE* 2.9]. Even more honourably, Oswald dedicates his efforts at Heavenfield (c. 635) against the incursion of Cædwalla of Gwynedd by the cross of Christ before his victory against all odds [*HE* 3.2]. In a throw away line, Bede reveals the relation between the royal aura
and victory. For he refers to Oswald as sanctissimum ac uictorissimum regem [most holy and most victorious king] when Oswald presides over the baptism of Cynegisl of Wessex [HE 3.7]. The holiness of an aura and victory go together. Oswiu of Northumbria also ratifies his right to rule in a defining battle against Penda of Mercia at Winwæd in 655 [HE 3.24]. With victory in hand, Oswiu confirms that he is chosen by God to hold organic authority as a protective father who defends his own. Now, armed with this insight into the nature of the royal aura, one can perceive the connexion between this aura and the king’s job description as a protector of the faith within his borders (Oswald defeats Cædwalla) and as promoter of the faith beyond them (Oswald sponsors Cynegisl).

Both the rightful king and the tyrant possess a mesmerising aura: the one is the noble aura of organic (paternal) authority that scatters those who would harm his own and imposes the fear of the Lord on subjects (children) who would do evil; the other is the aura of the monster that purposely and gratuitously evokes terror upon others as though they had fallen into the maw of evil itself. The bases for this difference are twofold. The primary difference is that the king and the ruling class recognise the king’s appointment as divine by one means or another, such as a victory, an omen or a birthright. (Bede notes in HE 5.10 that the Old Saxons cast lots to determine a war leader). Now, in early mediaeval times, the sine qua non of the recognition of divine right was providential (or miraculous) success on the battlefield. After all, a victorious king secures the conditions needed for any network of thegns to establish, maintain and expand their borders. One can hardly believe that Edwin’s thegns would have had much interest in following him anywhere, let alone the baptismal font, if he did not succeed in war [HE 2.9, 13].

However, while victory is necessary, it is not a sufficient basis for the recognition of a rightful king. For the tyrant can succeed in battle, yet still lose legitimacy because he is judged as self-appointed. So there must be some additional method by which one may recognise divine (or
external) approval. This method, for Bede, was not the oil of anointing, as would become the case after his time, but the aura of the royal miracle. It is no surprise, then, that Bede recounts numerous miracles that he credits to his favourite king, Oswald of Northumbria [HE 3.6, 9–13; 4.14]. In a similar way, the writer of Whitby’s *Life of Gregory* recounts a miracle to honour King Edwin, whose relics were located by supernatural means [VG chs. 18–19].

In addition to the recognition of a king, there is the matter of his reception by the peerage. For the rightful king assumes power *de iure*, gathering his nobles to deliberate upon matters of state in order to determine a sensible course of action in the midst of the vicissitudes of circumstance and the trajectory of cultural identity. By contrast, the tyrant grasps for power *de facto*, turning one noble against another until he gains such a stranglehold on power that he imposes mortal fear upon all who resist him – even high-ranking officials. Given its military motif, one connects the recognition of an aura to the king’s roles as protector and promoter of the people’s interests and identity; his reception, however, pertains to the king’s peace and to his roles as provider and proscriptor within an alternative understanding of the social world, namely, that of the oligarchy of many rather of free persons with whom the monarch must deal to be received.

Now reception of a king by the peerage is done within a framework that perceives the world through an historical lens, rather than through the anagogical lens deployed to recognise him. To orient the reader to the inner logic of the ruling elite who receives a king, one may consider the following series of interlocking affirmations that begins with an expansive interest in freehold lands and ends with a tableau of cheerfulness, namely, with a king among his thegns making merry in the mead hall.14 From an expansive territorial outlook arises a political mode of being that lends itself to the exchange theory of relations and negotiated interests. From the

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14 As Rowan Williams remarks in his article’s title, Bede celebrates his identity in the faith as much as he argues like an apologetic theologian in its favour. See Rowan Williams, “Chosen People,” 15.
relative valuation of negotiated successes comes the rule of many, with each concerned about both collective and individual outcomes. From an interest in outcomes, this class of person settles upon a theory of truth as historical correspondence (precedent) because this theory sponsors a moral matrix that praises enjoyment of the fruit of one’s labours within the bounds of rational (moderate) self-control. Finally, a sense of control of oneself and of the world is the most reliable basis from which to create a psychological climate of cheerfulness. (See Appendix B below, 248).

From this type of reasoning one understands that the landed gentry is a quantitative hierarchy that pays close attention to the trajectory of events on the ground with a view to where they are headed. Indeed, their relative dominance depends upon the vigilant retention of wealth, which is the medium of social influence and creativity on a grand scale. The exchange of goods and services allows multiple parties to agree upon terms that allow each to finance some measure of his own happiness. Naturally, the decision-making authority to implement any grand agenda requires the stability of landed interests, protected by the king from war and uprisings, so that a happy, recognisable trajectory of cultural and familial identity endures for generations to come.

The king then receives legitimacy as he fulfills the domestic roles of provider and proscriptor, which entrench the exchange theory of relations through the network that is the king-in-council. As provider, the king-in-council establishes, stabilises and directs a sensible identity worthy of loyal preservation into the future. As proscriptor, the king-in-council maintains stable rules of engagement by which freemen negotiate the terms of their enterprise. For without sensible terms, tempers could flare to the point of insurrection; and without stable terms, arbitrary conditions become tyranny. Hence, the idyllic king-in-council offers plenty of room for freemen to seek their own fame and happiness while also loyalty supporting the fame and happiness of the king, who embodies the state and his people’s cultural-linguistic identity.
Liberty and Loyalty: Optatively Cheerful Traits of Mandated Authority

Of the moral foundations common to humanity, the two primary values most consistent with the function of the king-in-council are loyalty and liberty, for these facilitate the evolution of a cheerful life in the optative mood attentive to what is becoming the case on the ground.\(^\text{15}\) For the goal of the oligarchy is a seamless identity that proceeds into the indefinite future, aided by stratagems that fuse various eras of experience together into one continuous identity. Even though the Christian king-in-council may borrow the rhetoric of the past, the true focus of the royalist is continuity into the future. For the ruling elite are at once provincialists and qualified universalists, who hope to maintain and expand their horizons. They deploy the matter-of-fact sensibility of the literalists who shakes off tropological arguments from utopian principle or allegorical arguments from metaphysical order in favour of the liberty to decide upon one’s local direction as they work out how to remain loyal to God and to their own kin, to their own kind and to their own king.

The opening passage of *Beowulf* illustrates well how loyalty pertains to benefaction. Rich royalty in the poem maintain productive retainers by rewarding them with prestige through generous gift-giving from the treasury.\(^\text{16}\) The saga’s author writes:

\(^\text{15}\) Jonathan Haidt, after gathering extensive evidence, postulates six foundations of human moral thought, which, arranged into three pairs, suggest the roles of the prophet (caring, fairness), the priest (authority, sanctity) and the king (liberty, loyalty). See Haidt, *The Righteous Mind* (New York: Pantheon, 2012).

\(^\text{16}\) One further notes various terms for king – dryhten [ruler], beorn-cyning [warrior], leod-gebergea [protector], beag-gyfa [treasurer] – which suggest his role as the centrepoint of a network centred upon wealth, its acquisition and its distribution through prestigious ceremonial exchange. Similarly, one may find economic dependency in the terms hlaf-ord [bread-guardian] for lords and hlaf-oeta [bread-eater] for retainers. See Jos Bazelmans, *By Weapons Made Worthy: Lords, Retainers and Their Relationship in Beowulf* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 176, 125–26; and Michael Enwright, *The Lady with the Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), 20.
Swa sceal geong guma gode gewyrcean,
fromum feohgiftum on fæder bearme,
þæt hine on yide eft gewunigen
wilgesipas, þonne wig cume,
leode gelesten; lofdædum sceal
in mægna gehwere man gepeon [BEO lines 20–25].  

So ought a young man to dispose goods
from the cash-gifts in his father’s bosom,
that when older afterwards will remain
his welcome companions, so when war comes,
men may repay the prince; by praise-deeds
among peoples everywhere a man shall thrive.

Loyalty, for the barbarian warrior of this passage, translates into a basis of contract and incentive.

For loyalty is not ultimately about commitment to the wholly other. Rather, it is a function of the will to be free: a thegn grants loyalty to that king who can increase the scope of the thegn’s own liberty and happiness. Bazelmans also illustrates the same by invoking Ernst Leisi:

The significance of wealth in Germanic society therefore lies not in its aesthetic enjoyment or the life comforts that it yields – valuable gifts should, after all, be reciprocated and passed on – but rather in the raising of the personal worth of its giver or recipient.  

Personal worth is a numeric idea that fits well with the idea of a quantitative hierarchy. For one’s status is calculated in gradient terms that assess the scope of one’s freedom of action. With multiple parties gaining high station to form a ruling class, the rule of one-alongside-many requires negotiation at various levels of common interest within the overall bounds of the executive will.

Bede illustrates the fact that a king, as benefactor, must show that he has the means to purchase loyalty when he records how King Æthelwealh grants Bishop Wilfrid land, property and the inhabitants of Selsey after the bishop converts the South Saxons. No doubt Æthelwealh

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17 Fulk, 86–87; Klaeber, 3–4.
follows the practice of his overking, Wulfere [HE 4.13], knowing that he entrenches his own position by asserting that land and largesse are his to give. Richard Abels concludes that it is H. M. Chadwick, and not Frank Stenton, who is correct: English kings took loyalty and their aristocratic right to rule most seriously, conceding as little freedom to underlings as possible. Christian kings negotiated their identity with Christian priests in the spirit of do-ut-des, and promulgated law that directed affairs to the advantage of those loyal and able to deliver results. And indeed, would-be retainers took the issue of loyalty seriously also. For they recognise it as the pathway to greater fame and freedom of action. Hence, Lilla took an arrow for King Edwin, refusing the Hebrew insight that “a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Eccl. 9:4). For Lilla lived in the world of history in which a good name in death was more valuable than shame in life. Edwin, for his part, keeps his end of the bargain: he consults with his thegns on the matter of conversion rather than risk losing the loyalty of men who come to believe that their own freedom and interests are compromised.

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19 Richard Abels argues that while kings initially granted land in perpetuity to the church, they soon recognised the unsustainability of such an agreement for their ability to retain control. Thus, they devised the ingenious solution of attaching the render of labour for infrastructure to it, such as bridge-works or fortress-works. While foreign churchmen such as Theodore the Greek and Hlothhere the Frank (and Wilfrid sympathetic to them) provided the skills developed abroad, “it flourished in England because the concept of do-ut-des informed Anglo-Saxon society; the notion that a man gave so that he might receive was anything but foreign to the pagan English”. In fact, grants may have been sales. See Abels 1988, 4, 7, 45, 49, 52, 186. Gareth Williams concludes that the warrior elite conducted aggressive warfare alone, yet called upon those of lower station in defensive situations. See Gareth Williams, “Military Institutions and Royal Power,” in Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe, eds. Michelle Brown and Carol A. Farr (Leceister: Leceister University Press, 2001), 308–309. For a brief literature review on the nature and scope of military obligation, see Gareth Williams 2001, 295–99.


Even Bishop Boniface of Mainz (d. 754), an Anglo-Saxon commander of sorts, follows along in the heroic value system of the Germanic elite. For in the particularly vernacular (loyal) way of an English proverb, he charges an English missionary in Germany not to shirk his duty to King Jesus on the battlefield. Boniface writes:

Audio de te, quod iter vis incipere; orter, ut non deficeris. Eia fac, quod incipisti. Memento Saxonum uerbum: Oft daedlata dome foerldit, sigistha gahuem, suylit thi ana [letter 146.25–28].

I hear concerning you, that your journey began in strength; I urge that you do not fail. Do the things that you have begun. Remember the Saxon proverb: Often a deed-slack man puts off glory, every chance of winning: for that, he dies alone.  

His medium of choice, the language of kin and king, sets the message in the context of the twin motivations of every Germanic warrior: the king’s demand for valiant deeds of loyalty and the thegn’s optative demand for the reward of prestige and property that increase his own fame and freedom. Ronald Murphy, in his comments on The Heliand, shows how the Old Saxon merged fame-seeking with the Bible by naming the God of Israel Metod [The Measurer]. The Christian Germanic warrior, aware of the all-seeing eye of Metod, wishes to use his freedom to make his mark count for his new God and his new God’s loyal adherents.  

Bede also illustrates the importance of freedom as a royal value in his depiction of the king as proscriptor, one who alters law in his administration of the affairs of state. This fact is seen in how Christian fortunes rise and fall with the vicissitudes of royal favour. When Æthelberht dies, Christianity in Kent and nearby Essex suffer, causing Lawrence to flee. The heir, Eadbald,  

22 MGM ES 1: 283–84.  
23 G. T. Dempsey notes how Aldhelm also operates within a value structure centred on loyalty. Whereas Mediterranean writes value virginity as such, Aldhelm presents virginity to his English audience as a loyal sacrifice in the line of duty which merits reward from the king of heaven. See Dempsey, “Aldhelm of Malmesbury’s Social Theology: The Barbaric Heroic Ideal Christianised,” Peritia 15 (2001): 80.  
breaches Christian ethics to marry his father’s widow; and the unbaptised sons of Sebbi, Æthelberht’s vassal, shake off former contraints and expel Kentish priests for refusing them the Eucharist [HE 2.4–8]. Similarly, when Edwin dies, Paulinus flees his apostate heir – leaving only James the Deacon to maintain a Christian presence [HE 2.20].

The freedom whereby English kings accept and reject a Christian identity is also the freedom-tied-to-loyalty that is endemic to Anglo-Saxon royal law. For such law entrenches the freedom, and thereby the sufficient loyalty of landed interest, that sets fines to be received or paid based upon a numeric value (wergeld) assigned to one’s position within the network. Possession truly is nine-tenths of royal law. For higher ranks receive greater compensation for offences perpetrated against them. Upward mobility (and greater freedom), then, becomes the prerogative of the king to grant based upon loyal service to the state. Although mobility is not the inalienable right of the commoner to pursue, the lot of the lowborn may be improved – at least theoretically – through loyal acts of valour, by purchase or by escape from the sociology of exchange as holy man.

The Iconic King and Correspondence: Realist Traits of Mandated Authority

Contra the iconoclasm of the prophet, the monarchical vision credited to the English is iconophilic. For the Christian king is a national icon of the rational will of God in history. In this iconic way of being, the Christian king projects the cosmically-allegiant worldview of God benevolent and of nature bountiful. The Christian king leads his people into the world, as a David-like son of God, to bend the resources of nature (his Father’s treasury) and direct the peoples of the earth to purposes befitting the Progenitor of all things. In fact, this royalist kind of allegiance to the cosmos is unqualified: God the High King is omnibenevolent, and he gives good gifts to his children from his storehouse.
Coupled with unqualified allegiance to the cosmos, this royalist vision locates evil unqualifiedly in the human soul, which, in response to such bounty is sorely tempted by the desire to possess all things in uicem Dei. This amalgam of unqualified cosmic allegiance and unqualified human corruption sponsors a correspondence theory of truth in those who, in the optative mood, believe they are the royal offspring of God. For if God literally created the world, it is his to give to whom he will; and if a king (as the iconic embodiment of a people) becomes convinced that the ever-good God has bequeathed his bounty to him as a son, then control of lands, resources and laws becomes the primary theological issue. A coffer full of coins, victory on the battlefield and a culture obedient to divine law are connected to divine blessing (Dt. 28). The assertion of God’s unqualified goodness, in this view then, must be matched by corresponding evidence in the literal and historical world of fact.

Similarly, the assertion that humanity is unqualifiedly corrupt must correspond to what actually happens in the world when humanity’s freedom is unchecked by civil law. These two poles of divine benevolence and human corruption merge in the assertion of the unqualified grace of God for sinners, who most desperately cannot become good without it. The biblical texts pertaining to King David are a case in point. God adopts King David as his son, grants him victory over his enemies and sets him over the people to ensure compliance to God’s will. Although loyal (allegiant) to God, David allows the freedom of his office to overwhelm him. He lusts for his thegn’s wife; and ambitiously sets out to have his thegn killed. Afterward, the desire for the unqualified grace of God appears in David’s psalms of lamentation (Pss. 32, 50/51). Two stories illustrate the same point in Bede’s HE. In the first, King Ecgfrith greedily blocks his ears from hearing the godly counsel not to assault Ireland. Ecgfrith acts on his own and divine favour leaves the English for a spell [HE 4.26]. Again, the covetous King Oswiu murders his cousin Oswine to increase his own demesne [HE 3.14], and then yearns for the unqualified grace of God.
Bede then portrays Oswiu as a blue martyr, one who redeems himself through tears of contrition. Oswiu mourns his sin by grants of land for twelve monasteries; and assigns one of these monasteries to pray for himself and for his murdered cousin.  

**Commensurability and Calculation: Logical Traits of Mandated Authority**

Now undergirding the gentrified class that receives the king as leader lies a bedrock of calculation proper to the neocortex, which functions with logic. In such a class of person that turns upon consequential reason, one expects to find the idea of commensurability proper to exchange theory and the fixing of profit as a self-evident value. And indeed, profit is the self-evident value of the Germanic warrior. It motivates him to seek fame through gallant deeds that are sure to be rewarded with gifts from the king. For the spectacle of gift-giving can reflect commensurability between objects and persons.

The potential for instability does exist in such a social structure that encourages wrangling for position. Somehow the king at the hub of a network of fame-seekers must bestow varying levels of praise while still affirming those whose service he values less. Insight from Michael Enwright shows how factionalism is averted within such arrangements. He writes:

> This brittle equilibrium is achieved through a periodic renewal of the bond between lord and warband which is easily strained because of the inherently subjective judgements involved in the distribution of plunder, treasure and land together with the accompanying tensions and calculations. Conflict is bound to be endemic since rivalry for the lord’s favour is constant and normally determines the future of the retainer.  

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25 Clare Stancliffe notes the Irish contribution to the theory of martyrdom, which adds a “blue martyrdom” of penitence, which affords the sincere layman heavenly status alongside those who align their lives according to the white martyrdom of the humble ascesis of those who embody church teaching, or who have faced the red martyrdom of death or severe injury for the faith. To these, one may add the green martyrdom of self-exile. See Stancliffe, “Red, White and Blue Martyrdom,” in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe*, eds.Dorothy Whitelock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982: 21–46), 45.

26 See Enwright, 35. For more on the exchange motif, see Bazelmans, 149; and Régine Le Jan, “Frankish Giving of Arms and Rituals of Power: Continuity and Change in the Carolingian Period,” in *Rituals of*
In order to create camaraderie among those overlooked in spite of their loyalty and those credited for advancing the common interest the most, a person with liminal status must concede prizes for participation that honours loyalty. Such a person, in the early mediæval period, was the queen, who placated the aggrieved parties by serving alcohol to every fighting man even as she presented prestigious gifts only to some of them.

The principle of commensurability appears in Bede’s *HE* in the story of a negotiated settlement paid by King Æthelred of Mercia to King Ecgfrith of Northumbria. Æthelred kills Ecgfrith’s brother in battle. Given the status of the victim and of the aggrieved party, the sum demanded to settle the score for peace is substantial [*HE* 4.21]. Connected to the same battle, another illustration of the principle of commensurate worth is seen in the warrior who impersonates a peasant to save his own life. He knows well that, once discovered for his high worth, he could be sold as a slave to a foreigner or, if not killed as a combatant, ransomed by his family for a tidy sum [*HE* 4.22]. The principle also appears in the complaint of Coifi to Edwin that Coifi’s efforts to ingratiate himself to the king are not rewarded to the degree Coifi judges commensurate to their value [*HE* 2.13]. In yet another scenario, the overking Rædwald recognises that Edwin of Deira, a rival dynast whom he was sheltering from Æthelfrith of Bernicia, is valuable dead or alive. He opts to keep him alive since in this state he would be worth more than the sum he would receive from his enemy. For, should Rædwald kill Æthelfrith on the battlefield, he could place the grateful Edwin on the neighbouring throne as a compliant vassal [*HE* 2.12].

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In Bede’s *HE*, one observes the impersonal nature of commensurability and calculation, even in familial relationships. For the rational will tends toward a goal in increments without becoming bogged down with extraneous considerations that cannot affect the outcome. King Æthelberht of Kent needs Charibert I of Paris as an ally, so he marries Bertha, Charibert’s daughter [*HE* 1.25]. King Edwin of Northumbria needs King Eadbald of Kent as an ally, so he weds Æthelburg, Eadbald’s sister [*HE* 2.9]. There is little concern here for the happiness of the bride, whose safety now rests on impersonal factors pertaining to the political dynamics between her father/brother (and his thegns) and her husband (and his thegns). A son can be used in the game of political chess as a guarantee of goodwill also. King Oswiu of Northumbria trades his son, Ecgfrith, as a hostage to King Penda of Mercia. When Wulfhere ascends to the Mercian throne, Oswiu attempts to buy peace with tribute. When Oswiu recognises that the calculating Wulfhere is bent upon war to increase his fortunes, Oswiu offers his stores to God as a pledge for victory on the battlefield instead [*HE* 3.24]. In a third instance, the late King Oswald’s son, Oethelwald, displays the calculative approach by withdrawing from a bid to power when his uncle, the reigning King Oswiu, goes to war with his Oethelwald’s father-in-law, Paeda of Mercia. Oethelwald knows that once loyalties are established and battle engaged, cowardice is treason. So he hedges his bets by re-emerging when the conflict is decided [*HE* 3.24].

**Decisiveness and Restraint: Strategic Traits of Mandated Authority**

Coupled with the impersonal logic of the king-*cum*-thegns’s worldview is the matter of strategy. A successful king is a man who understands his times and is prepared to act with decisive, yet restrained violence as needed to secure a happy outcome for his own cause. He must maintain the balance between sufficient centralisation to safeguard his throne from usurpers, and sufficient freedom for his thegns to retain their loyalty. For the iconic Christian king aims not only to preserve a tradition, but also his right to shape it by edict, by war and by diplomacy as
needed. Examples of the demand for decisive royal violence appear in two anecdotes of thegns who draw a reluctant king into action. Both stories end with a dead king because the king refuses to act decisively. King Sigeberht of East Anglia (d. early 640s) dies unarmed on the battlefield when his men force him out of monastic retirement to lead them in a decisive action of self-defence [HE 3.18]; and Sigebert of Essex (d. late 650s or early 660s) suffers regicide at the hands of his men for opting to forgive rather than deal decisively with their enemies [HE 3.22]. Clearly, for the Anglo-Saxons, worthwhile kings decisively enforce the mutually-held interest of the governing class: contemplation and clemency suppress the rational will, and are far too expensive.

Restraint is also necessary. For acting too narrowly for his own interests could have a king held in disfavour among his men. A sensible king, then, recognises the invested position of others in the process of negotiation. Bede shows that Edwin does not dominate the conversion of his thegns. Instead, he persuades or induces them because he needs their help to implement any course of action [HE 2.9, 2.14]. Thus, Bede writes:

*Sicque uictor in patriam reuersus, non statim et inconsulte sacramenta fidei Christinae percipere voluit, quamuis nec idolis ultra seruiuit, ex quo se Christo seruiiturum esse promiserat; uerum primo diligentius ex tempore et ab ipso uenerabili uiro Paulino rationem fidei ediscere et cum suis primatibus, quos sapientiores nouerat, curauit conferre, quid de his agendum arbitrarentur [HE 2.9/166].

And so the victor returned to his own country; but he did not wish to accept the mysteries of the Christ in faith right away and without consultation, even though he did not serve idols after he had promised that he would serve Christ. But first he took care more diligently from that time to learn the rationale of the faith from that venerable man, Paulinus; and to consult with leading men, whom he considered rather wise, regarding what they thought he ought to do concerning these things.

And the words of the men Edwin consults reveal the concern to safeguard their own interests:
Coifi... respondit... “quid nihil omnino uirtutis habet, nihil utilitatis religio illa, quam hucusque tenuimus. Si autem dixi aliquid ualerent, me potius iuuare uellent, qui illis inpensius seruire curau.”

Alius optimatum regis... subdidit,”... quid autem sequatur, quidue praecesserit, prorsus ignoramus. Vnde, si haec noua doctrina certius aliquid attulit, merito esse sequenda uidetur,” [HE 2.13/182, 184].

Coifi responded... “the religion which until now we have held possesses nothing altogether of virtue, nothing of utility... If, however, the gods could do aught, they would have helped me rather, who took greater pains for [other thegns].”

Another of the king’s leading men... submitted: “...What may follow or what may have come before [us], we do not know. Hence, if this new doctrine has brought something certain, it seems that by rights it ought to be followed.”

What these words hold in common is a man’s concern for his own fortunes. Coifi airs his frustration that his efforts for the king are not sufficiently rewarded; and the nameless thegn voices his inner worries over the uncertain end of the religion that, until then, bound the warrior band together. The king, in this anecdote, wisely exercises his restraint by allowing the frustration and worry of his men – normally expected to show loyalty and bravery – to be heard.28

Now the necessity of strategic violence to enforce a will-to-identity, even Christian identity, butts up against the equally important ideals of the Irish prophet and of the Romanised priest, namely, human dignity in imagine Dei and the sacrificial triumph of truth. Hence, Bede engages in damage control on behalf of his royalist archetype in his account of the conversion of the bloody king Cædwalla of Wessex. Avoiding the gory details, Bede states discreetly that Cædwalla, deuictis a tque amotis subregulis [overcoming and removing petty kings], reigns for two years before migrating to Rome to receive baptism there [HE 4.12]. This laconic treatment

28 R. I. Page notes that Coifi may have been both a pagan priest and a secular lord. See R. I. Page “Anglo-Saxon Paganism: The Evidence of Bede,” in Pagans and Christians, eds. Tette Hofstra et al. (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), 118–120.
of violence is further elaborated in two episodes. In the first, the unbaptised Cædwalla attacks the freshly converted South Saxons, who survive only in a weakened state [HE 4.15]. In the second, he massacres the residents of the Isle of Wight, resettling the island with West Saxons. Surprisingly, Cædwalla allows baptism to the rulers before execution [HE 4.16]; and, shockingly, Bishop Wilfrid accepts the booty (viz. the Isle of Wight) for God’s service. Such wanton violence so stretches Bede’s notion of godly kingship (and episcopacy!) that he discretely overlooks the unpleasantness to rejoice that the petty kings of Wight receive baptism, and that idolatry ends in Britain. Contrasting Cædwalla’s bloody start and his blessed end in Rome, Bede likely views this royal migration after but two years of baptism as the penitential rite of blue martyrdom.

A brief excursus is in order here on the contrast between the bloody lives of kings and the praise of royal women such as Queen Æthelthryth [HE 4.19–20] and Abbess Hild [HE 4.23–24] in Book Four of Bede’s HE. One suspects that the tributes to these highborn women positioned immediately before the great disappointment of King Ecgfrith are intended to establish a contrast. For while Æthelthryth and Hild are both righteous and royal in their own right, their shining example may serve not only to honour royal blood, but also to shame their murderous men. Bede would have read Isaiah the prophet, who wrote:

Vae impio in malum: retributio enim manuum eius fiet ei. Populum meum exactores sui spoliaverunt et mulieres dominatae sunt eius [Isa.3:11–12].

Woe to the wicked unto evil: for the reward of his hands shall be given to him. As for my people, their oppressors have stripped them, and women have ruled over them.

There is marked contrast between the body of King Ecgfrith, bloodied in an unjust war, and the incorrupt body of his consort, serene and lauded with a hymn. In a similar way, Bede includes story of the judgement of the women of Lastingham [HE 4.25] to prepare his reader for the more

29 One notes Wilfrid’s class-consciousness in his keeping of a lowborn lad from his mother [VV ch. 18].
serious judgement of the man who represents the people [HE 4.26]. Now, J. M. Wallace-Hadrill believes that Bede frames female royalty in familial terms as Christian mothers, wives and daughters. Several writers, however, comment on the role of women in a way that pertains to Bede’s ideal types. Max Weber offers the insight that as personal charisma is routinised, the public status of women – as essentially egalitarian beings – recedes. Weber’s insight fits in well with Bede’s ideal type of the prophetic Irish, whom one might expect to hold a place for charisma as a property especially suited the egalitarian female. In this vein, Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha notes how Adamnan’s *lex innocentium* of 697 specifically protects women by doubling fines for killing them and how the Irish made St. Brigid into a national icon alongside Bishop Patrick.  

Barbara Yorke, for her part, suspects that the priesthood actually preferred women as saintly icons of the sacral bloodline because kings do shed blood. In this view, the kings, recognising their own tension with priests, settled for royal influence on the church through female bluebloods. Affirming Yorke’s opinion, Alan Thacker points to Lindisfarne’s minimalist view of royal relics.

**Foresight and Abrogation: Future-Oriented Traits of Mandated Authority**

Naturally, the class of person that holds and grants the mandate to rule is also the class of person most likely to adopt a future-oriented outlook. With political independence and financial freedom as self-evident goods, those who would retain government must demonstrate the  

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foresight to anticipate the outcome of deep level conflict in advance with only modest information. For glory resides not so much in becoming king as in remaining king. Thus, leaders must recognise the need for timely, decisive shifts in their identity – or at least in the public face of it. This reality translates, in hermeneutical terms, into amenability to abrogation. For to abrogate is to retain control of a trajectory of identity by conceding to a new cultural force at the level of nomenclature in order to retain the right, at the institutional level, to direct what a culture is becoming.

One sees abrogation in Bede’s introduction of Hengist and Horsa, perpetuators of the royal stock of Woden. They arrive late in the narrative after actors from the British, the Irish and the Latins have made their uninspiring debuts, and the limelight shifts to their descendents for the duration of the story [HE 1.15 cf. HE 1.2–14]. The reign of Eadbald of Kent, successor to the first convert king, is significant here. For, after a period of resistance to his father’s new religion, Eadbald not only receives baptism but bans the traditional religion from his realm. Thereafter, Christian belief begins to take irreversible control of English identity [HE 2.7]. The climax of Bede’s HE continues the motif of abrogation overseen by the king-in-council, but on a more refined level. King Oswiu reads well the writing on the wall with respect to the political viability of his own Irish form of Christianity. He understands that the joint forces of Bishop Agilbehrt of Paris, the eloquent priest Wilfrid and his son Alchfrith could spell disaster for his own position as king. Hence, Oswiu summons the Council of Whitby to create the venue at which he himself could decide between the parties in a way that would appear neither heavy-handed, nor weak-willed. After Bede reports the outcome, there is no more to be said about Alchfrith. For Oswiu anticipates which way things were going, and prepares himself for what appeared inevitable, namely, that he himself must abrogate Irish ways in favour of Latin ways rather than allow a coup by those who would do the job without him [HE 3.24–26].
Now the principle of abrogation is a dominant theme in the biblical playbook of the early Anglo-Saxons, groping their way toward a new identity. Indeed, Genesis is full of abrogation in that there is a marked preference for the younger over the elder (Abel over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau);\(^{32}\) which motif captures Bede’s theological and historical imagination.

Commenting upon Gen. 9:26 and 10:1–2, Bede writes:

\*Diximus in Sem priogenio filio Noe primituam ecclesiam, quae ex israelitico populo collecta est, in Iapheth minimo filio electionem gentium quae secuta est esse designatam... Congruit autem prefectibus sanctae ecclesiae, quibus orbem impeluit totum, etiam nomen Iapheth, quod “latitudo” dicitur [IG 2.2347–50, 2.2369–71].\(^{33}\)*

We said that in Shem, first-born son of Noah, the primitive church was signified, which was gathered from the Israelite people; and that in Japheth, the youngest son, the election which followed of the Gentiles... Moreover, with the advances of the holy church, by which it has filled the whole world, even the name Japheth, which means “breadth”, is suitable.

And Bede continues elsewhere:

\*Filii autem filiorum Noe... ita inter se orbem diviserunt, ut Sem primogenitus Asia obtineret, Cham secundus Africam, Iafeth [sic] ultimus Europam... omnia maritima loca usque ad oceanum possidere Britannicum [IG 3.8, 10–12, 54].*

\(^{32}\) Kendall, “Introduction,” in Bede: On Genesis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 19. As Katharine Scarfe Beckett notes, Bede’s view of the sons of Abraham’s elder son, Ishmael is most unfavourable. Among Bede’s remarks on the Saracens are those in his commentary upon Gen. 16:12: *Nunc autem in tantum manus eius contra omnes, et manus sunt omnium contra eum, ut Africam totam in longitudine sua ditione premant [IG 4.250–52; CCSL 118A: 201/ PL 91: 159B] [Now, however, in everything his hand is against everyone, and the hand of everyone is against him; so that the entire breadth of Africa is held in his command]. One might say that, for Bede, the Saracens are to the ancient Christian world what the British are to Britain – except that they are not apostates but those who have refused baptism altogether. Bede ends his *Chronica Maiora* on a grim note concerning the Saracens’ treatment of St. Augustine’s memory: *Sarraceni [sic] depopulata Sardinia etiam loca fedarent ulla, ubi ossa sancti Augustini episcopi... olim translata [DTR 66.2061–63; CCSL 123B: 535/ PL 90: 571C] [The Saracens, depopulating Sardinia, even dug up the place where the bones of holy bishop Augustine had once been translated]. See Beckett, Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of the Islamic World (Cambridge, 2003), 116–139.

Moreover, the sons of the sons of Noah... so divided the world among them, that Shem, the first-born, obtained Asia; Ham, the second [son], Africa; the last [son] Japheth, Europe... to possess all maritime places as far as the British ocean.

Here Bede observes that Noah’s youngest son, Japheth, becomes the actual father of Christian Europe, and – most relevant to the point made here – of Bede’s English. When one notes that Bede presents the English as the youngest nation in Britain, who replaces the eldest nation, it becomes clear that he believed himself to have the warrant to claim, by the principle of abrogation, that his Japheth-like English replace the Shem-like British as la crème de la crème of Britain.

**Adaptability and Adhesion: Flexible Traits of Mandated Authority**

Adaptability is yet another trait of the king-in-council. For, when continuity and control of identity into the future is primary, one must be firm enough not to fall to pieces under significant external pressure, and yet not so brittle as to break. One must retain sufficient flexibility to make mid-course corrections en route, and recognise the utility of adhesion to multiple sources of strength. In other words, one must exercise the freedom to adapt to new technologies and new ways of perceiving historical circumstances in ways that are nonetheless faithful, on some level, to one’s existing identity. Naturally, the trait of adaptability merges well with the logical and impersonal, strategic and future-oriented traits described above because the extent and context of proposed measures are valued in gradient terms over against the prospect of success that is attained without, in the process, undermining the desired end.

While Daniel Anlezark’s *Water and Fire: The Myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England* shows how Anglo-Saxons found the Bible helpful as a source by which to orient themselves between the flood of Noah and the fiery eschaton, Shami Ghosh shows the adaptability of the Germanic ruling class of mediæval Europe, which also deployed secular tropes as it wrestled with the questions of continuity and change. Ghosh writes:
Theodoric was Germanic, but also Macedonian, just as the Franks were Trojan but also Scandinavian: secular historical consciousness was influenced by whatever traditions of distant history were available, without necessarily differentiating clearly between the Roman and the non-Roman past.\textsuperscript{34}

In this quotation Ghosh directs attention to the fact that the ruling class of medievæl times hedged its bets by establishing links with various types of origin myth. By inference, a ruling class negotiates the relative merits of averring multiple roots in order to project a fuller, more durable self-image: biblical, classical and heroic.\textsuperscript{35}

Further to the point, James Russell identifies how Germanic tribes with military and agricultural concerns tend toward \textit{adhesion} to a folkish and world-accepting religion, rather than \textit{conversion} to a universalist and world-refusing religion. The primary appeal of Christianity to the Anglo-Saxon ruling class, then, would be its utility, “its potential as a force for enhanced social cohesion”.\textsuperscript{36} Embedded in this Germanic royalist worldview is the deep anxiety among kings and thegns alike over how best their current network of connexions, real and rhetorical, may establish a prestigious identity that justifies retention of a mandate to rule and to produce an heir.\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} Shami Ghosh, \textit{The Barbarian Past in Early Medieval Historical Narrative} (Ph.D. diss., Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, 2009), 236.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Another example of this ethos is seen in lines 2080–83 of \textit{LPBV}, a poem by Abbo of St. Germain, which notes the expectation of gifts from a king taken in the Viking’s sack of Paris in 885: \textit{Mox reliquis ut uisus adest gentilibus Eriveus, / Rex, quoniam facie splendens formaque venustus, / Creditur atque sui donis grassante tuetur} [Dass, 58; MGH PLAC 4: 95–96; PL 132: 738A] [Soon, Eriveus is seen by the remaining gentiles, / A king he is believed to be, for lustre of face and comeliness in shape, / and, approaching him for gifts, he is guarded]. Again, in the Anglo-Saxon poem \textit{Andreas}, the cannibalistic Mermedonians appear abnormal on yet another account: they disregard wealth: \textit{næs him to māðme wynn, hyht to hordgestreornum} [they had no delight in treasure, no hope in hoards] [lines 1113b–1114a].
\item \textsuperscript{37} David Kirby writes: “Perhaps one driving force was uppermost in the minds of these early kings... to keep control of the royal succession within their own family”. Part of maintaining such control is access to technology. No doubt Edwin recognised that the skill of writing made relationship to Paulinus valuable, moving forward, in the practical matter of mundane administration. Nicholas Higham associates the Tribal Hidage with Paulinus, Eric John with Mercia. Craig Davis observes that antiquity of royal lineage
\end{itemize}
Though Bede does favour abrogation as a strategy for upholding the Christian identity of English governance, he nonetheless reports the twin traits of adaptability and adhesion in his coverage of King Rædwald of East Anglia [HE 2.15]. For the East Anglian overking hedges his bets by seeking an identity that adheres to Christ and to the Germanic pantheon. A second example is the subkingdom of Essex, which vacillates between adhesion to Christ and adhesion to the old gods as it sifts through the utility of both in a time of famine [HE 3.30].

Now adaptation implies that kings-in-council recognise the importance of new technology in their quest for success. Whereas the Irish abbot *tames* his environs by miracle and by moral discipline so that the lamb may live together with the lion in the now (Isa. 11:6), the English king harnesses the natural environment in order to harvest ever-increasing yields that ensure decidedly leonine ends. This optimistic, adaptable and technology-friendly mindset guides the king’s perception of his world. Foreign priests do introduce writing to the English king as a vehicle for recording special revelation, setting liturgy and articulating dogma. Yet to the king, writing *becomes* a means of establishing the rules of engagement for daily business (royal law), for registering titles to lands and for recording taxed owed. The Tribal Hidage commissioned by King Edwin in the putative hand of Bishop Paulinus, the law codes of Kings Æthelberht and Ine, and various charters such as that by Bertwald are examples of writing adapted to royal ends.

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is less the issue that direct descent from a god. Paternity, thus, looks forward from a father figure because genealogies are “the focal point of broader cultural formation”. Hence, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (c. 855) takes the genealogy back to Christ, as king of Wessex, because he is the most prestigious ancestor and not because he is the eldest. For when Woden is toppled, he is replaced by Frealaf, then Geat, then Sceaf and then Christ. See Kirby 1974a, 17; Higham 1995, 97–99; Eric John, *Reassessing Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 15; Craig R. Davis, “Cultural Assimilation in the Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 21 (1992): 25, 28, 30–31, 36.
Avarice and Lustfulness: Possessive Traits of Mandated Authority

Heretofor the presentation of various traits of Bede’s archetype of the ruling class has been merely descriptive. However, the endemic trait of possessiveness, manifest as avarice (pining after another’s property) and lustfulness (pining after another’s person), is not a morally neutral phenomenon. Just as the ways of being delineated in earlier chapters have a underside, so also does the trope of the English ruling class. For rulers are bent upon possession, which is – axiomatically speaking – nine-tenths of the (royal) law.

Two instances of royal greed in particular are judged harshly by Bede. The first instance appears in connexion to Oswiu, the king who presides at Whitby over the climax of his HE. In marked contrast to Oswald, Bede introduces Oswiu as a greedy murderer who kills his cousin, Oswine – and possibly other relatives – to retain the throne [HE 3.14].38 The only way to redeem Oswiu’s self-centred act is for him to pass through the throes of the blue martyrdom that is proper to those who overengage, namely, bitter weeping over one’s sins. For the next best option to a king’s righteousness is his repentance, restitution, and restoration upon the resolve to sin no more. Oswiu strategically erects a chapel to honour his Oswine as a show of contrition. This contrition must happen for Bede because he simply cannot have an evil king preside at Whitby, where the English people unite within the universal church. A second instance occurs in connexion to Ecgfrith, the king whom Bede believes to have marred what would have been a faultless resolution of Bede’s narrative. Bede’s initial enthusiasm for Ecgfrith wanes because this king’s avarice undermines the moral basis of the divine right to rule. Since the king launches

38 On aristocratic violence, see Alcock 2003, 33; Kirby 1974a, 18; Wormald, “Bede, the Bretwaldas and the Origins of the Gens Anglorum,” in Wormald et al., 117, and in Wormald, 116; Peter Fox, An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Kingship (Frithgarth, Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books), 44. David Rollason remarks that the English tendency to canonise murdered kings is intended to safeguard social stability by accentuating the blame fallen upon traitors. See Rollason 1983, 16.
unprovoked attacks on Ireland and Pictland, despite stern warnings, Bede tells of judgement befalling the English. Ecgrfrith dies and the tide of English good fortune recedes [HE 4.26].

Local Identity and Familial Salvation: Vernacular Traits of Mandated Authority

To this point, the description of Bede’s archetype of the king-in-council points to his concern for the development and maintenance of a resolutely Christian culture that revels in its covenantal status in a land of promise. Salvation, in this vision, is membership in the family of God, which enacts the rational will of God in history, resists the sons of Satan and becomes a fruitful and multiplied subduer of the earth. This salvific familial identity reflects three salient features: it is willed, it is localised and it is shared.

On the matter of the will, Walter Pohl’s insight is helpful. For he observes that central to the function of kingship is the desire within a people for an integrated identity; and central to the function of nationhood is the will to a distinct identity vis-à-vis other peoples. While the specifics of identity – hairstyle, clothing, land, religion, and language – may be in flux, the will to a distinct, socially integrated ethnic identity itself remains fixed. As Rosemary Woolf notes, kings and the thegns loyal to them “neither exemplify nor deny a moral commandment but rather illustrate the heroic dimensions of the human will”. Bede’s commentary on Cornelius’ visit at Joppa illustrates well this steely, heroic resolve to establish identity and promote it. Bede writes:

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39 While Bede does not say so, Higham suspects that he perceives divine favour to rest upon Mercia, whose kings migrate to Rome and whose bishop occupies the See of Canterbury. See Higham 2006, 99. For an account of increasing Mercian power, see Barbara Yorke 1990, 100–127, esp. 104–05.


Cornelius sent three men to Peter because the gentile world about-to-believe subjugated Europe, Asia and Africa, [which were] occupied partly by military zeal (that is, by the insistence of preaching), partly by domestic business.

And, urging the promotion of Christian identity, Bede writes the divine command to Peter,

“Arise, Peter; kill and eat” (Acts 10:13) in this way:

\[
\text{Occide in gentibus quod fuerant et fac quod es [IAA 10.69–70].}^{43}
\]

Kill in the peoples what they had been, and make [them] what you are.

The force of the will-to-identity is unmistakeable here. For Bede asserts the necessity of decisive royal action in favour of the Christianisation of culture at home and abroad.\(^{44}\) That Bede notes the special position of the English king and English missionaries as agents within a Germanic culture, one might consider his comments on 2 Chron. 5:6:

\[
\text{Sed gentiles ab errore conuersi atque ad ueritatem evangelii tranformati, melius ipsos gentium errores nouerant, et quo certius nouerant, eo artificiosius hos expugnare atque evacuare didicerunt [DTM 1.120–23].}^{45}
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\(^{43}\) CCSL 121: 51/ PL 92: 967D. He comments on Gen. 9:3 thus: \text{Surge, Petre, occide et manduca [Acts 10:13] – id est, exstingue gentiles ab hoc quod male uixerant ueritatem praedicando, et infer in ecclesiae membra sacris mysteriis initiando [IG 2.2123–25; CCSL 123A: 132/ PL 91: 107D]} “Arise, Peter. Kill and eat” (Acts 10:13) – that is, remove the Gentiles’ evil habits (lit. from that which they live out wickedly) by preaching the truth, and bring them as members into Church by initiating them into the sacred mysteries.

\(^{44}\) Bede notes the special position of agents within a culture, such a king or local missionary. Consider his comments on 2 Chron. 5:6: \text{sed gentiles ab errore conuersi atque ad ueritatem evangelii tranformati, melius ipsos gentium errores nouerant, et quo certius nouerant, eo artificiosius hos evacuare didicerunt [DTM 1.120–23; CCSL 119A: 150/ PL 91: 740D]} [but Gentiles, converted from error and transformed toward the truth of the Gospel, knew the errors of the nations better, and since they understood (the errors) with greater certainty, with this (understanding) they taught in order to combat and eviscerate them]. In this vein, Robert Hanning writes: “The society is at its zenith when it can reenact the evangelical propensities of its individual members and send them forth to begin again the cycle of an ever new, ever recreating ecclesia”. See Hanning, \textit{The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 89.

\(^{45}\) CCSL 119A: 150/ PL 91: 740D.
But Gentiles, converted from error and transformed toward the truth of the Gospel, knew the errors of the nations better, and since they understood (the errors) with greater certainty, with this (understanding) they taught in order to combat and eviscerate them.

The force of logical argument within the confines of a culture is in view here. Bede recognises that the sweet spirit of mutuality and acceptance, à la mode de Irish monasticism, may not persuade powerful cultural agents to embrace the new religion. Arguments relevant to the station of the ruling class are required from those among them newly converted who wish their colleagues to recognise the possibility of family resemblance between old cultural premises and new beliefs.

Bede’s commentary on the anointing of Israel’s first king also draws out the role of the will to live out a felicitous identity and to impress it upon the nations. Bede writes:

Et deosculatus est eum et ait: Ecce unxit te dominus super hereditatem suam in principem [1 Sam. 10 :1]. Et prophetiae figuras euangelicae ueritati fideique gratiae legis decreta diu desideratae pacis unione sociauit et ait, Ecce unxit Deus Deus tuus oleo exultationis prae participibus tuis [Ps. 2:8] ut postules ab eo et det tibi gentes herditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminos terrae [IPPS 2.747–53].

“And [Samuel] kissed [Saul] and said: ‘Behold, the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his inheritance’[1 Sam. 10:1]. And he has associated figures of prophecy to the evangelical truth of the faith and the grace of the law through the decreed union of peace long desired and said: Behold, “God, your God, has anointed [you] with the oil of gladness above your fellows” [44:8/45:7] that you may claim from him, and that he may give you the races for your inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for your possession.

The bolded text concerning the “oil of gladness”, “decreed union of peace” and claims that other peoples are one’s own “inheritance” and “possession” speak to the regal oil, the divine appointment of the king, and the kings’ iconic role as he who ensures that God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Writing like this, Bede could easily believe that his racial family, and

46 CCSL 119: 86/ PL 91: 561A.
their over-kings, are anointed above other families in Britain to effect a Christian identity upon Britain to the shared delight of God and his faithful.

Next, the saving collective identity is also a local identity. For it exalts the king’s language and his lands to sacred status because royalty protects the language, and thus the identity, of a people.\footnote{Sometimes the impact of foreign forces, which take no account of intra-tribal dialect and discrepancy, press various septs to adopt a common identity, language, military uniform. Sometimes, a people may adopt the \textit{lingua franca} of a region as a better vehicle for identity retention, as when the Batavians adopt Latin and Galatians, Greek. See John Hines, “Welsh and English: Mutual Origins in Post-Roman Britain,” \textit{Studia Celtica} 34 (2000): 87–89, 99–100; Derks and Roymans 2009, 2.} To illustrate, Anna Maria Luiselli Fadda demonstrates how the English wrestled with the meaning of Christian ideas rather than simply adopting transliterated, foreign nomenclature. At the school of Canterbury, for example, evidence exists for glosses of common words, rather than simply of theological concepts. This shows the attempt to understand, rather than regurgitate by rote. Some Old English words take on the character of theological vocabulary as substitutes for Mediterranean terms (\textit{dryhten} for \textit{dominus}); others are built with Latin words as a model (\textit{godspell} for \textit{euangelium}); and still others are deputised in order to concretise Latin theological jargon (\textit{dry-nes} for \textit{Trinitas}; lit. three-ness). What all of these examples have in common is that they reflect literal contact between peoples and the effort of the Anglo-Saxons to \textit{indigenise} alien ideas.\footnote{Consider how Pope Gregory respected the identity of barbarian kings to obtain a hearing: “What [Gregory] left as his extraordinary inheritance was the fertile idea that in order to transmit the Christian message it was necessary to establish solid human contacts and solid intercomprehension between missionaries and their audience”. See Luiselli Fadda, 14.}

In \textit{HE} 3.7–8, Bede describes how King Cenwealh of Wessex grows tired of Bishop Agilbert’s Gallish tongue and replaces him with Wini, a local bishop. This act displays the willful royal temperament: it requires foreigners with a universal message to adopt local ways.\footnote{Andrew Walls refers to this motif as the indigenising principle, which stands in tension with the pilgrim principle, favourable to universals. See Walls, \textit{The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith} (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 7–9.} The royalist veneration of the vernacular also pops up in \textit{HE} 5.8, when Bede lists the knowledge
of the Saxon language as a mark of erudition alongside the biblical and ecclesiastical languages of Greek and Latin. In the end, just as the family descended from Jacob worshipped in Hebrew at the temple in Jerusalem, so also does any self-consciously appointed family conduct it spiritual business, first and foremost, in its own tongue upon its own land.\(^50\)

Finally, the saving collective identity is also a shared identity, personified in the godly king who is the state. The Council of Whitby is, perhaps, the case in point. Bede writes:

\[
Rex Osuiu praemissa praefatione, quod oporteret eos qui uni Deo servirent unamuiuendi regulam tenere, nec discrepare in celebratione sacamentorum caelestium, qui unum omnes in caelis regnum expectarent; inquirendum potius quae esset uerior traditio, et hanc ab omnibus communiter esse sequendam [\textit{HE} 3.25/298].
\]

King Oswiu declared that it was apt that those who served one God should observe one rule of life and not differ in the celebration of the heavenly sacraments; all those who began to hope for one kingdom in heaven ought rather to inquire as to which was the truer tradition, even that to be followed by all together.

King Oswiu’s interest as iconic head of the national household is unambiguous.\(^51\) The purpose of the Council of Whitby is to settle norms by which the entire community may hold a common

\(^50\) King Alfred’s program of the vernacularisation of Latin literature, exemplified in the \textit{OEB}, speaks to the sacralisation of secular and familial rule. In the \textit{OEB}, an Englishman introduces himself as a spiritual authority in his own tongue to his own people. See Nicole Guenther Discenza, “The Old English Bede and the Construction of Anglo-Saxon Authority” in \textit{Anglo-Saxon England} 31 (2002: 69–80), 72, 79–80. One notes here the concealed Celtic identity of Cædmon \cite{HE 4.24/414}, whom Bede credits for setting Christian identity among Bede’s people through Germanic poetry. Whereas priests may use an esoteric, ancient or academic language (Latin), Cædmon allegedly uses the language of heart and will. Kenneth Jackson notes, however, that “Cædmon” is a Celtic name. See Jackson, \textit{Language and History in Early Britain} (Dublin: Four Courts, 1994), 554. Colin Ireland suggests that Cædmon was likely British, though bilingual (Ph.D diss., 235). In support of this claim, Ireland observes how, in Bede’s stating that \textit{alii post illum in gente Anglorum religiosa poemata facere temtabant} [others of the English race after him attempted to create religious poems] \cite{HE 4.24/414}, the phrase \textit{in gente Anglorum} would be superfluous if Cædmon were an Angle (Ph.D diss., 237). He further interprets Cædmon’s reluctance to perform publicly as evidence that Brittonic was his mother tongue (Ph.D. diss., 238); and his practice of retiring for inspiration as Celtic, for the Anglo-Saxon \textit{scop} [bard] learned his trade from others \textit{in conuuiuim} (Ph.D. diss., 240, 244).

\(^51\) Barbara Yorke notes how Isidore of Seville, an author engaged by Bede, defines a nation in familial terms thus: \textit{Gens est multitudo ab uno principio orta, siue ab alia natione secundum proprium collectionem distincta, ut Graeciae, Asiae. Hinc et gentilitas dictiur. Gens autem appellata propter
identity in concrete terms: they must work out their salvation by worshipping in the same place, in the same way and at the same time. The particular details are beside the point for the king, who is adept at using the tools described above (decisive action, restraint, abrogation, adaptable adhesion) to sponsor any particular stage in the evolution of an identity. As Jeffrey Burton Russell observes, ruling elites find the dynamic, evolutionary notion of conversion as direction set aright more appropriate than the static and purist notion of adherence to the most ancient articulation of dogma that is more amenable to priests. Joint direction and movement are key. King Oswiu has clerical scholars sort through complex arguments about remote lands and customs in order to clarify his options. When the time comes, the king cuts to the chase: Who rules in heaven: Peter or Columba? When both sides acknowledge Peter, however begrudgingly, Oswiu recognises a shared and familial pathway to happiness going forward.

The importance of the king to the familial notion of salvation also appears in another anecdote in which a people must decide upon their common religious identity. When the kingdom of Essex defects from Christianity over a famine, the king of Mercia intervenes, sending missionaries to re-establish Christianity in Essex. Bede reports their return thus:

*Populum et regem... reduxit; adeo... nomen Christ... confiteri gauderent [HE 3.30/322].*

Both the people and their king returned; as a result... they began to rejoice to confess the name of Christ.

generationes familiarum, id est gignendo, sicut natio a nascendo [A nation (gens) is a number of people sharing a single origin, or distinguished from another nation in accordance with its own grouping, as the ‘nations’ of Greece or of Asia Minor. From this comes the term ‘shared heritage’ (gentilitas). The word gens is also so called on account of the generations (generatio) of families, that is from ‘begetting’ (gignere, ppl. genitus), as the term ‘nation’ (natio) comes from ‘being born’ (nasci, ppl. natus)] [ET 9.2.1]. Translation compliments of Barney et. al. See Yorke, “The Origins of Mercia,” in Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe, eds. Michelle Brown and Carol A. Farr (Leceister: Leceister University Press, 2001), 21–22.

52 James Russell, 43.
In juxtaposing people and king happily confessing their common affiliation, Bede portrays the royalist conception of salvation as a common, familial identity led by a patriarchal progenitor who exercises executive authority for all, by protecting and promoting, providing for the helpful and proscribing the unhelpful in consultation with constituent heads of household.

**A Caveat: Kings Who Transcend Bede’s Typology**

A caveat on monastic kings is appropriate before the concluding summation because of the inherent tension between the royal and the prophetic archetypes. For Bede records that not a few English kings retire to the egalitarian environment of the monastery. Some, like Sebbi of Essex (d. 695), enter a monastery near home [HE 3.18, 4.12]. Desirous to part company with his wife, he seeks a meditative rather than a managerial life. More striking, however, is the fact that several kings set their sights on a one-way pilgrimage to Rome [HE 5.7].

Oswiu, after a long reign, dies before the undertaking [HE 4.5], but Ine of Wessex abdicates in 726 to complete his journey after a reign of nearly forty years [HE 4.12]. Cædwalla of Wessex (d. 688), his predecessor, stands out all the more, being the first English king to migrate to the Holy See, and after only two years in power [HE 4.12]. Bede even commemorates Cædwalla of Wessex in the

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53 Clare Stancliffe traces the ideal of the monastic king to the Irish, who never knew Roman rule or its Constantinian settlement. Christopher Kegerreis suggests that Bede may have viewed kingship and monasticism as successive realities in the life cycle, so that a king should serve with valour until he should leave the function to younger men. Kegerreis he also suggests that Bede could recognise cross-fertilisation between kingship and monasticism in royal retirements, with the monastery strengthened by the zeal of younger monk-kings, rather than simply the strengthening of kingship by the retirement of older kings without the fighting spirit. See Stancliffe 1983, 160–61, 171–3; Keggereis, “Bede’s Monk-Kings,” Fons Luminis 2 (2011): 102, 103, 105.

54 In addition, Oswiu forbids his son, Alchfrith, to visit Rome [HA ch. 2], even though Oswiu himself dies before his own pilgrimage [HE 4.5]. See next footnote also.

55 Rather than being prompted to retirement by penitence, Wallace-Hadrill suggests Cædwalla of Wessex was motivated by knowledge of terminal illness. He also comments on Bede’s admiration of monk-kings. Aldhelm, a royal kinsman who accepted abbacy as a resolution of dynastic conflict, may have escorted Cædwalla of Wessex to Rome. If so, he also fulfills a royal pilgrimage of sorts, albeit in clerical garb.
annals of *HE* 5.24 as though he were an iconic leader guiding his people beyond the shores of
Britain to their true home among the saints. Perhaps his commentary on Samuel’s rebuke of Saul
in 1 Sam. 15:22 explains Bede’s approval of such royal retirements. Bede writes:

*Laude dignum ducit populum legis qui pia cordis deuotione suis holocausta de gregibus offerebat auctor i sed laudabiliorem multo designat eum qui ad consilium euangeliu* *xibet corpus suum* hostiam uiuentem sanctam Deo placentem [Rom. 12:1] [*IPPS* 2.2734–44].

With praise he leads a people worthy of the law, who devotedly with pious heart
began to offer holocausts from the flock to the founder; but more laudable by far, he
designates one who shows forth his own body “as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing
unto God” [Rom. 12:1] according to the counsel of the gospel.

Here Bede could easily imply that the regular obedience involved in royal retirement, which
parallels Prophet Samuel’s command that the King Saul should not perform religious rites,
trumps any sacrifice undergone in the course of a king’s own initiatives. The straightforward
obedience of the monk-like king trumps the sacrificial efforts of a heroic king in a rush to do
God’s will. For a good king truly seeks out how he might not confuse his own will with God’s
will.

**The Catholic Path to Salvation: Creativity and the King as Custodian of Salvific Identity**

In conclusion, one notes that Bede takes his cue from Scripture and from the papacy that
his own English family of peoples have struck a covenant with God to administer his rational
will in Britain. Bede’s archetype of the godly English king-in-council accents the neocortical role
of consequential logic and longterm memory that produces instrumental intelligence, foresight
and strategy that carries a familial identity through to future generations. The king, bearing the
royal aura of victory, and his council, as history incarnate, fuse the optative mood with the literal

See Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentar*

56 CCSL 119: 133/ PL 91: 600A.
hermeneutic of correspondence theory. Their delight, for Bede, is to accomplish a great name for God as the provider, proscriptor, protector and promoter of a culture awakened by the Christian hope. As they find their own self-determination in the development and furthering of God’s own glory, they establish, maintain and adjust precedents that evolve into a localised form of Christian culture. In doing so, they hold the via media between two virtues – loyalty and liberty – so that history itself, a context turning upon language and culture, becomes for them a medium of God’s salvation as they remain in fealty to God and king, while free to refuse the monarch turned tyrant.

The resultant quantitative hierarchy is that network of loyal individuals who centre their moral sensibilities upon moderation, who resolve conflict by negotiation and who motivate (and are motivated) by incentive within an incremental way assessing the relative utility of options (and persons). Such free agency tethered by loyalty sponsors that happy principle of catholicity, which results in the enculturation of the gospel. This way of being also hears the call to the blue martyrdom of repentance when instrumental reasoners succumb to the possessive sins endemic to their way of being, and in this way compromise divine truth for their own utilitarian ends.

Now the trope of the catholic English king may raise disquiet in the iconoclastic or the contemplative soul over the strategic use of political (and physical) force in favour of spiritual ends. Yet kingship’s very orientation to engagement does illustrate well the nature of man as creator in his own right. This creative will to a localised Christian identity becomes salvific as it facilitates loyalty to the rational will of God in ways recognisable to baptised outsiders. For as St. Vincent of Lérins once said of the scope of the Christian hope: *Id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est* [We hold that which everywhere, which always, which by all is believed]. The benefit of catholic kingship, for Bede, is that mandated authority

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57 For COM 2.3.5–7, see Moxon, 10.
ensures the freedom to pursue the rational will of God against apostasy-*cum*-power, which supplants the general will to recognise divine wisdom within a territory. There is an aspect of the catholic principle of kingship undeveloped by Bede, however, that must be addressed. True catholicity extends the divine mission to other nations *liberally*, inviting them to realise their own yearning for happiness in the freedom to be found in their own creative incarnation of the gospel of grace that dries the tears of the blue martyrdom with divine grace preached in the vernacular language and custom of their own space-time. In essence, while God the High King may have raised the English family to the status of a covenantal people, he may also do the same – on one level or another – for other families also. This said, Bede clearly does not have his own English settle for covenantal status with God as mere implementers of the rational will of God in Britain, without also having them aspire to the qualitative and wisdom discerning function of priesthood in communion with the Apostolic See.
As observed above, Bedan archetypes fuse two modes of theological reading – the anagogical, concerned with the miracle of life in itself, and another mode consistent with a workable basis for social life. As a baseline for comparison, the apostate and atomistic British indwell that unidimensional state, which is the dark side of anagogy. For they fixate upon the mere physicality of life which, taken alone, debases the human soul to amygdallic fear and leads to tyranny, slavery and damnation. By contrast, the prophetic and egalitarian Irish combine anagogy and tropology. Inspired by a righteous iconoclasm, and mediated by miracle and morality, the relational authority of the Irish abbot attracts a utopian community of persons who desire to overcome cosmic alienation through ascesis and righteous indignation that demands a just peace, mutuality and dignity for all in the here-and-now. Evoking the affectivity and short-term memory of the hippocampus, the prophetic commune of the coenobium becomes a model of the sexless life of angels free from passions, private property and pride. The English, as a royal network of individuals, merge the anagogical aura of victory with historical literalism to become divinely appointed shepherds who lead God’s heroic, covenantal people and claim the nations as an inheritance for him. Cheerful, future-focused and geared to literal outcomes, they dwell upon a land of promise in hope of God’s reward to come for administering his rational will within time through the development and the spread of ever-evolving Christian culture.

Bede’s trope of the priest also follows the pattern of the prophet and the king. For priests also hold an office that blends two hermeneutical stances. The anagogical aspect pertains to the physical and life-grasping phenomenon of the sacrament. For in role of minister altaris, the priest deploys physical signs that mediate the spiritual life-force of primordial events recapitulated in immediate space-time by the Alpha and the Omega, who says “This is my body”. The allegorical aspect is intuitive and truth-grasping. For in the role of minister uerbi, the priest
deploys the teaching office that shapes the conscience, speaks of the divine intent of mercy and
instructs the faithful in the means by which to clear the conscience for everlasting life. Indeed,
the priesthood is a sober, even sorrowful institution that must listen to the reality of human
depravity in the confessional, and offer the Man of Sorrows as the Victim for the remedy to sin.
This sober yearning in Bede’s priestly archetype, expressed in the indicative mood of the
certainty of faith, affirms that salvation involves profound conversion of the *Gestalt*, that
qualitative level of the mind which serves as that patterned template by which all things are understood!¹

    Now astronomy, numerology, grammar, allegorical exegesis and the scholarship in general
practised by the Christian priesthood are, for Bede, lofty disciplines produced by the
Mediterranean world. For in the Levant roamed that most heavenly-minded band, Jesus Christ
and his apostles; and positioned around the Great Sea stood the patriarchal sees of Jerusalem,
Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome who have discerned sound doctrine. Moreover,
from beyond the Alps, the papacy was founded *ab soli mediatori Dei et hominum* to administer
the priesthood by whom God confers his word and sacrament of mercy to clear the sad sinner’s
conscience. Indeed, for Bede, the teaching office of the priesthood and celebration of the
mysteries belong to the Apostolic See of Rome and its universal medium, the Latin language.

**Sources by Which to Access and Elaborate upon Bede’s Archetype of the Mediterraneans**

    Now to access precisely how Bede construes the transnational influence of the Christian
heartland upon Britain, one may consider patterns in the *HE*’s treatment of the popes and

¹ Rudolph Tanzi and Deepak Chopra speak of a fourth phase of the brain beyond instinct/amygdala,
emotion/hippocampus and logic/neocortex, which they identify as intuition. This last phase, they insist, is
real even though neuroscientists have not linked this function to any particular part of the brain other than
to affirm that the cerebral cortex is involved. See Tanzi and Chopra, *Super Brain* (New York: Harmony
Books, 2012), 163; for comment upon the other three phases of the brain, see pages 110–11.
Continental prelates in Britain. In addition, Bede’s architectural commentaries of *De tabernaculo* (*DTB*) and *De templo* (*DTM*) and his scientific work *De temporum ratione* (*DTR*) are especially suitable sources to explore the mindset animating Bede’s priestly archetype. For they emphasise the ultracosmic interface between Christian dogma and what Bede perceives to be the structure of the created order redeemed. His *In Ezram et Neemiam* (*IEN*) and *Historia abbatum* (*HA*) are also useful. For in commenting upon Ezra *pontifex*, Bede articulates his understanding of priesthood; and in writing a history of Wearmouth-Jarrow, Bede comments upon an attempt to reconstruct Rome through the monastery’s floor plan, script, library, music, icons and commemorations. Finally, Bede’s library itself also colours his view of the sacerdotal impact of Christian Latinity. In his commentary on Luke, he identifies four *doctores ecclesiae* whom he believes to model the erudition of the converted mind, ready to be shaped by divine truth. Bede writes:

> Quid beatus Ambrosius quid Augustinus quid denique Gregorius uigilantissimus iuxta suum nomen nostrae gentis apostolus quid Hieronimus sacrae interpres historiae quid ceteri patres... senserint quid dixerint diligentius inspicere sategi [IL: Preface 98–102].²

I have tried rather diligently to inspect what Ambrose, Augustine, and lastly Gregory, most vigilant according to his own name as apostle of our race, as well as [what] Jerome, the interpreter of sacred history, and other fathers perceived... and what they said.

Which such commendation, it follows that the writings of Bishop Ambrose of Milan, Bishop Augustine of Hippo, Father Jerome of Bethlehem and Pope St. Gregory the Great are especially useful to grasp the motifs by which Bede would define the Roman and priestly way of being.

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² CCSL 120:7/ PL 92: 304D.
The Grounds for Linking the Transnational Roman Influence to the Office of Public Truth

For Bede, the Apostle Peter holds a special place as *princeps apostolorum* among the priestly forbears of the Christian faith. Bede remarks that sacerdotal authority passes down through time and throughout the world by apostolic succession, with the primacy fixed at Rome *ubi beati apostoli Petrus et Paulus uixere, docuere, passi sunt, et seulti* [where the blessed apostles Peter and Paul lived, taught, suffered and were buried] [*HE* 3.25/ 300]. To reflect papal authority at decisive points in the narrative, Bede quotes *verbatim* from letters sent by Gregory I [*HE* 1.24, 27–32], Boniface V [*HE* 2.8, 2.10–11], Honorius I [*HE* 2.17–18], John IV [*HE* 2.19] and Vitalian [*HE* 3.29]. These letters occur to show how the premier priest at the heart of Christendom commends godly wisdom to convert kings and their clergy in the outlying area of Britain and Ireland. In total, Bede identifies fifteen bishops of Rome as *papa* in his *HE*, some of them as *pontifex* and one as *apostolus*. Direct access to Bede’s archetype of the Roman priesthood, then, could be had by tracing his treatment of persons in his *HE* to whom he grants the lofty titles of *papa*, *pontifex* and *apostolus* [pope, high priest, apostle].

While the term *papa* is rather exclusive, Bede widens the pool of candidates for the appellation *pontifex* to include those who never wore the triple crown. Among such non-papal *pontifices*, most are continental bishops. Those so honoured include Archbishops of Canterbury such as Augustine, Mellitus, Justus and Theodore [*HE* 2.2, 5, 8; 4.5]; several Gallish prelates such as Germanus of Auxerre, Agilberht of Paris and Dalfinus of Lyons [*HE* 1.17, 3.7, 5.19]; and a Burgundian prelate known as Felix of East Anglia [*HE* 2.15]. In addition to continental figures, Bede also graces one Romanised Irish bishop and three English bishops as *pontifex*: Tuda of Lindisfarne, who becomes Oswiu’s bishop after the Council of Whitby [*HE* 3.26], Cedd of Essex,

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3 The popes in Bede’s *HE* include Gregory I [*HE* Preface, 1.23], Gregory II [*HE* Preface, 5.7], Eleutherius [*HE* 1.4], Celestine [*HE* 1.13, 5.24], Boniface IV [*HE* 2.4], Boniface V [*HE* 2.7], Honorius I [*HE* 2.17], Severinus [*HE* 2.19], John IV [*HE* 2.19], Vitalian [*HE* 3.29], Martin I [*HE* 4.17], Agatho [*HE* 4.18], Pope Sergius I [*HE* 5.7], Constantine [*HE* 5.19] and John VI [*HE* 5.19].
who converts to Roman ways after Whitby \([HE 3.22 \text{ cf. } HE 3.26]\); Wilfrid of York, who argues for Roman ways at Whitby \([HE 5.19 \text{ cf. } HE 3.25]\); and Willibrord of Frisia, who is an English bishop on the Continent \([HE 5.11]\). Bede also associates the terms *pontifex* or *pontificatus* [pontificate] with various sees other than Rome. He includes the archbishoprics of Alexandria \([HE 5.21]\) and Canterbury \([HE 3.28]\) as well as lesser bishoprics such Aldhelm’s post at Sherbourne \([HE 5.18]\) and Agilberht’s post at Dorchester \([HE 3.7]\). Writing about times after the Romanisation of Britain’s priesthood, Bede even uses cognates of *pontifex* to refer to bishoprics in outposts such as Selsey \([HE 5.18]\) and Whithorn \([HE 5.23]\). Finally, he also refers to the worldwide episcopate by the same term \([HE 2.19]\).

Even more interesting than Bede’s application of *pontifex* and its cognates to non-papal Romanised clergy is Bede’s conferral of the epithet upon two never-Romanised Irish bishops – Aidan \([HE 3.5, 6, 17]\) and Colman \([HE 3.26]\) – and upon Coifi, a pagan priest \([HE 2.13]\). While the bulk of Bede’s usage defers to those in communion with Rome, the breadth of referents suggests that Bede still understands the role of the Ionian bishops and pagan priests to be one of religious education, despite their alleged errors.

As for the term *apostolus* and its cognates, Bede’s usage appears tighter than his use of *pontifex* and its cognates. Naturally, he names Peter and Paul \([HE 1.33]\), Andrew \([HE 2.3]\), John \([HE 3.25]\) and the twelve \([HE 3.8]\) in this way; but the only person not mentioned in the New Testament whom Bede identifies as apostle in his *HE* is Gregory the Great \([HE 2.1]\). Bede does, however, use the adjective *apostolicus* [apostolic] to refer to several popes as *apostolicus papa*, namely, Gregory I \([HE 2.1]\), Boniface IV \([HE 2.4]\), Vitalian \([HE 4.1]\) and Agatho \([HE 4.18, 5.19]\). For variation, Pope Sergius is named *apostolicus uir* [apostolic man] \([HE 5.7]\).

Just as Bede extends his usage of *pontifex* to include non-papal prelates, so also does Bede grace Germanus and Lupus as *apostolici sacerdotes* [apostolic priests] and *apostolici duces*
[apostolic leaders] [HE 1.17, 1.20]; and Theodore as *domnus apostolicus* [apostolic lord] [HE 4.1]. It is interesting, in this connexion, that Germanus and Theodore are the first and last foreign bishops to whom Bede concedes significant coverage for their sponsorship of the cause of apostolicity in Britain. Though not popes themselves, one suspects that Bede finds them to be acting vicars of the Apostolic See.

In sum, the only person styled *papa, pontifex* and *apostolus* in Bede’s *HE* is Gregory the Great. This pope receives a disproportionately high number of references for the first two titles; and, as noted above, he is the only man specifically named with the noun *apostolus* [HE 2.1]. To understand just how important Gregory the Great is to Bede, one must consider that Bede mentions him in the Preface, names him *papa* four times more often than any other (despite his brief tenure); and names him *papa* constantly from the beginning of his *HE* to the end. Bede also graces Gregory as *pontifex* almost as often as all the other popes so honoured (16 of 36 usages for popes). What one gathers from the evidence of Bede’s usage of the three titles of *papa, pontifex, apostolus* and their cognates is that Gregory the Great gleams gloriously as the noblest occupant of the highest sacerdotal office: The Chair of St. Peter. When wise men disagree, it is Peter through Gregory who most clearly enunciates the truth – even to the ends of the earth in Britain.⁴ Armed with this perspective on Bede’s usage of terms, the popes and foreigners named *papa* or *pontifex*, such as the first archbishops of Canterbury to Theodore and the native bishops ordained and shaped by them, become the representatives of Bede’s priestly ideal type.

Nicholas Howe argues that the Eternal City became the ultimate reference point for successive generations of Anglo-Saxon Christian, as though Rome were the virtual capital of

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⁴ Bede is not the only Englishman of his age to venerate Gregory as father of the English faith. Whitby’s *VG* and Alchelm’s prose *De Virginitate* also share this sentiment. Interestingly, Aelfric of Enysheam (d. 1010) proposes a typology of those who pray, labour and fight in *QSOLB*, which appears to exclude the theologians, or at least, which equivocates them with the monks who pray. See Anton Scharer, “The Gregorian Tradition in Early England,” in Gameson 1999, 190.
Anglo-Saxon England. Rome’s ideational-institutional structure, expressed through her liturgical timing, tonsure and tongue, conveyed to the Anglo-Saxon that metaphysic which made sense of life itself. A look of Bede’s HE confirms Howe’s judgement. Curiously, Bede opens his history by describing his island home of Britain as a remote place prope sub ipso septentrionali uestice mundi [nearly under the very northernmost end of the world] [HE 1.1/16]. He relativises Britain by implying that a visit by the Roman army is what situates the island and its indigenous peoples within an historical context that matters [HE 1.2]. In fact, Bede says as much in the fact that he identifies the Latin in his table of nations as the locus of unification [HE 1.1/16].

Given the Germanic penchant for ethnic loyalty in early mediæval times, this de-centred perspective is striking. It suggests that Bede’s ultimate frame of reference is not his native land of Britain. Instead, Bede writes from the perspective of a man on the periphery as though his beloved English people and their lands were not at the centre of things.

Similarly, the climax of the story at the Council of Whitby relativises the geographical and theological position of Britain’s indigenous peoples [HE 3.25]. The Roman curia, rather than Iona, receives recognition as custodian of the faith, namely, that impregnable noetic structure made manifest in liturgies to be celebrated by canonical clergy and to be held with universal

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5 Nicholas Howe observes Bede’s sense of being decentred, unusual for a nationalist writer: “Jerusalem may have been the center of the world for Bede within the abstract cosmology of the universal church, but Rome was the capital of England within the political and conversion history of the Anglo-Saxons.” Jerusalem is mentioned four times [HE 1.15, 5.15–17], Rome more than twice forty. He further notes that Cynewulf’s Elene positions Rome between Jerusalem and Canterbury, where Jew and pagan alike are unified by apostolic efforts. See Howe, “Rome as Capital of Anglo-Saxon England,” in Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England (New Haven: Yale, 2008), 111, 121–3. For an earlier version of this article, see Howe, “Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England,” Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 34 No. 1 (2004): 147–172.

6 On the importance of Latin, Orchard writes: “Far from stifling vernacular languages and cultures in the British Isles, Latin could well be said to have provided the necessary stimulus and vehicle form their development and (in the case of written records) their very survival”. Orchard in Charles-Edwards, 219.
Leading up to and beyond Whitby, Mediterranean prelates from Augustine to Paulinus to Theodore instruct the English in person for an incubation period of nearly a century. As a result, English bishops could be ordained in communion with the Apostolic See, that office at the centre of things, which transmits the apostolic worldview originally hailing from Palestine.

At the end of his narration in his HE, Bede further entrenches the notion that Britain is remote. One wonders why Bede would include Adamnán of Iona’s travelogue of Palestine until one realises that he means to set Britain in the shadow of the land where Jesus Christ entered and exited the world. Starting with the sites of Christ’s birth upon the earth [HE 5.16 cf. DLSA 2.2], his burial below the earth [HE 5.16 cf. DLSA 1.1–4] and his ascension above and beyond the earth [HE 5.17 cf. DLSA 1.21–23], Bede moves on to sites commemorating the father of the human race and the fathers of the faith [HE 5.17 cf. DLSA 2.10] in order to show the faith of Britain to be rooted in primordial events that happened far away at the centre of all things.

Now just as Bede consigns the British to remain in their defeat [HE 1.22], and just as he provides rhetorical space for the Irish in the wake of their defeat at the hands of the English [HE 1.34], so also does Bede assign rhetorical space to envoys from Rome in the wake of imperial Rome’s retreat from the island of Britain [HE 1.16]. For just as Bede does not have British or Irish kings rival his archetype of the royal English, so also does Bede not have Roman rulers intrude upon the role assigned to the English. To ease the tension, Bede redefines universal authority. Rome can remain a universal head, but headship need not imply political rule.

7 Note that in HE 5.24 and HE 5.21, Bede refers to ordained persons as minister uerbi and minister altaris [custodian of the word and custodian of the altar]. See Colgrave/Mynors, 562 and 552.
8 Thomas O’Loughlin shows that DLSA articulates Ionian interest in the Holy Land as witness to Christ and the saints, as geographical knowledge which improves biblical exegesis, as portal to the noumenal world (with places as relics), and as a landscape which serves as a vehicle for depicting sacred space in the liturgy. See O’Loughlin, Adamnán and the Holy Places: The Perceptions of an Insular Monk on the Locations of the Biblical Drama (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 205–210
9 For texts of DLSA, see Meehan, 40–49; 64–69; 74–75; 80–81. For comment on how Gildas also sets his own people within the biblical narrative, see above, 28–31.
One finds a cue to this redefining of Rome’s role in the two Mediterranean frames of reference that Bede deploys to record time: the regnal years of emperors \(HE\) 1.11, 23–24, 28–31 and the years passed since the birth of Christ \(HE\) 1.2–6, 9–11, 13, 15, 34.\(^\text{10}\) At first, Bede’s narration of Roman rule in Britain causes the Romans and the English to look alike as conquerors and civilisers of the indigenous population \(HE\) 1.2–11. But this state of affairs will not do because it is the English alone who occupy the role of ruler in Bede’s schema. So he finds another niche for continental foreigners who appear in Britain. Accordingly, the nature of continental influence changes as Roman prelates replace Roman prefects. The battle to form the conscience now becomes the task of the Christian Mediterraneans. For the convert Alban testifies to “the true and living God” with his blood \(HE\) 1.7; Germanus banishes wrong-headed heresy from Britain \(HE\) 1.17–22; and Augustine persuades the English to receive Christian truth and papal counsel as the guide to their faith \(HE\) 1.23–33.

Indeed, just as the English come to control British tyranny in the political realm, so also do the Romans in their new role lead minds away from heresy as the victorious Constantine convenes the Council of Nicea that delineates orthodoxy \(HE\) 1.8. While the imperial Romans build the physical infrastructure of cities, temples, bridges and paved roads for commerce as well as walls and earthworks for defence \(HE\) 1.11–12; prelates in communion with Rome build noetic infrastructure through the dogma and doxology promulgated by popes and synods. One observes the transition between political and noetic ordering in the parallel pattern of the Roman

\(^{10}\) R. A. Markus opines that Bede’s Orosian spatial mode “was forced upon him because the ecclesiastical history of the English plainly could not be written without alluding to the British,” who were present before them. See Markus 1975, 4. See also, Higham 1995, 18–21. On the matter of Bede’s dating of history by Christ, Timothy Furry writes: “When Bede names the time after Christ’s incarnation and before his return the sixth age, it functions, philosophically speaking, in the same way as claims about the Reformation, Renaissance, Enlightenment, and revolutions. Objections that Bede’s language of the sixth age in unhistorical or theological (and therefore not historical) simply reveal an aesthetic (representation) bias that constitutes the practice of history and how it is conceived” (emphasis his). He concludes that Bede is useful as a historian even in our day. See Furry, 129–31.
rescue of the British that occurs between *HE* 1.12 and *HE* 1.21. The first series of rescues occurs on the political plane, culminating with Ambrosius Aurelius at Mount Badon [*HE* 1.12–16]; the second, and more significant, occurs on the ideational plane through Sts. Germanus and Lupus [*HE* 1.17–21]. In the end, apostolic teaching exemplifies the central function of the priesthood that defines and defends the rubrics of the *Gestalt* by which to guide the conscience.

The Latin image of priestly sanctity, then, shows prejudice to the hierarchical principle. The mind formed by truth, articulated as point and counterpoint, and memorialised in icons, displayed in liturgy and sacrament, supersedes the intense personal piety of the Irish as well as English royal zeal for the Christianisation of culture. For the priesthood, as Bede sees it, is the office of argument and icon for the public defence of truth. Trent Foley observes as much in his contrast between Irish and Latin piety. With the Latins, Bishop Wilfrid understands “ecclesiastical offices, institutions, icons, and tradition as the conduits through which God chooses to save a sinful humanity”. Sin is located not so much in the physical cosmos, as the Irish thaumaturge sees things, nor is authority rooted in holy personalities like Columba or Aidan. Instead, sin is wilfull human logic overriding the divinely instructed mind, as when political powers exercise freedom contrary to ideas rooted in divine law. Authority, then, must rest in appointed office. Wilfrid, thus, continually turns to the rational nerve centre of Christendom for vindication against the hand of kings who depose him [*HE* 5.19]. Although banished from the See of York, Wilfrid persists until he holds at least a minor episcopal charge. In his persistence, he vindicates Roman authority somewhat as the conscience ordered by the purity of divine truth.

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The Sacerdotal Vision: The Indicative, Icons and Salvation through Space and Time

Gregory the Great is, for Bede, that holder of the office of argument and icon who excels all others as peerless spiritual guide of Britain. Pope Gregory appears in Bede’s comments upon the laver in Solomon’s temple in 2 Chron. 7:30. Bede writes:

\[Rotae basem subpositae ad portandum luterem templi a terra sustollebant cum nostris nuper temporibus beatus papa Gregorius euangelicis roboratus eloquiis Romanam rexit ecclesiam; rotae eadem currus Dei subnexae longe gestabant cum reverendissimi patres Augustinus Paulinus et ceteri socii eorum eisdem euangelicis confirmati oraculis iubente illo uenere Brittanniam et uerbum Dei incredulis dudum commisere gentibus [DTM 2.1041-48].\]

The wheels placed underneath to support the laver of the temple raised the base from the earth when, recently in our own day, blessed Pope Gregory, strengthened by evangelical eloquence, ruled the Roman Church; the same wheels fastened under God’s chariot passed a long way when the most reverend fathers, Augustine, Paulinus and the rest of their companions, confirmed by evangelical orations, came to Britain, with [Gregory] commanding, and recently committed the word of God to unbelievers.\(^\text{12}\)

Bede affirms that he opens the consciences of Britain’s residents to the word of God, and is worthy of commemoration in the midst of Bede’s own elucidation of Scripture. And Bede is not alone in this sentiment. A monk from Whitby writes this of Pope Gregory:

\[Plus igitur nobis Christus per sanctum loquendo profuit Gregorium, quam quod Petrum apostolum per undas fecit ambulare, uel quod per Paulum eius co-apostolum cecitate malignum percussit magum [VG ch. 6/ 84].\]

Therefore, Christ proffers more to us by speaking through St. Gregory than when he made the apostle Peter walk on the waves; or when through Paul, Peter’s co-apostle, he struck the evil magician with blindness.

And:

\[Quis igitur dubitet et huic celos pape nostro apertos, quorum ille clauicalarios sibi aperire cum Petro potentiam habuit [VG ch. 27/ 122].\]

\(^{12}\) CCSL 119A: 218/ PL 91: 795A–B.
Therefore, who will doubt, even, that to this pope of ours the heavens were opened, of which [heavens], he had the power alongside Peter to open the locks?

While some may display sanctity in miracles like Sts. Peter and Paul, Gregory’s superior wisdom warrants his succession to the teaching office of the papacy, for his writings unlock the mysterious wisdom of the supernal realm.

The contours of the ideal of priesthood come to the fore in Bede’s extended presentation of Pope Gregory in *HE* 2.1 as custodian of the rubrics of the universe. As celebrant-in-chief, Gregory *minister altaris* deepens the appreciation of truth through the iconic means of the liturgy. In particular, Bede finds that Gregory enhances mass by celebrating over the bodies of Peter and Paul. In this action, he draws the people into close proximity to the premier apostles and to the certainty of their faith in the prospect of eternal life. Bede also adds that Gregory augments the liturgy with petitions for temporal peace and eternal salvation [*HE* 2.1/130].

As scholar-in-chief, Gregory *minister uerbi* exegetes sacred scripture on a grand scale, unlocking arguments of truth through allegory. Indeed, Bede is impressed that Gregory should tackle *librum beati Iob magnis inuolutum obscuritatibus* [the book of blessed Job rolled up in great obscurities] [*HE* 2.1/126]. Bede continues:

\[
\text{Eundem librum, quomodo iuxta litteram intellegendus, qualiter ad Christi et ecclesiae sacramenta referendus, quo sensus unicuique fidelium sit aptandus, per XXX et V libros expositionis miranda ratione perdociuit [HE 2.1/126].}
\]

He taught the same book [Job] thoroughly in thirty-five books by an awe-inspiring method of exposition, just as [Job] must be understood according to the letter, just as [Job] must be referred to Christ and the sacraments of the church, how the sense must be applied to each of the faithful.

Allegory here is fundamental because the Author of Life has already revealed the pattern of truth through his apostles. Their apostolic successors, the worldwide episcopate under the presidency of the pope, have drafted the creed at the ecumenical councils. The focus here is not an instrumental type of rationality that aims to harness power through the observation of evidence
Such a way of being produces technology and political influence, but does not yield the truth of divine purpose as special revelation does, when mediated through God’s appointed elders. For Bede, the truth is so fixed that it is not subject even to the high office of the Patriarch of Constantinople, bishop of the Byzantine Emperor. Even before Gregory’s elevation to the papacy, he maintains apostolic truth by deploying the patterned (allegorical) nature of Christian thought to the question of the bodily resurrection of believers [*HE* 2.1/124]. As he confronts the said patriarch on a point of doctrine, Gregory intuits that just as Christ rose from the dead in the flesh, in this way also, according to this pattern, must Christians rise.

In describing Gregory’s personal life, Bede shows that the high-mindedness of the priest who, indwelling the indicative mood that treats the full counsel of God as fact, is not overcome by the passions, putative progressivism or the pursuit of proprietary interests. Bede writes of Gregory:

_Tanta perfectionis gratia coepit conversari ut... animo illius labentia cuncta subteressent, ut rebus omnibus quae voluuntur emineret, ut nulla nisi caelestia soleret, ut etiam retentus corpore ipsa iam carnis clastra contemplatione transiret, ut mortem quoque, quae pene cunctis poena est, uidelicet ut ingressum uitae et laboris sui praeimum amaret [HE 2.1/122, 124]._

He began to conduct himself with such grace of perfection that all transitory things had begun to pass under him; that he began to supersede all things that are in flux; that he began to consider nothing but heavenly things; so that, even yet held by the body, he transcended carnal confinement through contemplation; that death also, which to almost all is a penalty, he began to love, namely, as the gateway to life and the reward of his labour.

Such a description points to the highly intuitive worldview of the priest, who discerns and internalises the rubrics of sound doctrine in order to comprehend fully the substantive mysteries of God that lay beneath and beyond the accidents that present themselves to the senses.

Within Bede’s own text of the _HE_, he is keen to show the vast scope of the transnational priesthood emanating from Rome. He does so by including Pope Boniface V’s letter to King
Edwin of the remote kingdom of Northumbria. For an expansive vision prompts the pope to impress upon the distant king the vast gulf between humanity and God. He declares that

\[ \textit{summae diuinitatis potentia humanae locutionis officiis explanari non ualeat} \]

[HE 2.10].

the power of the Supreme Deity cannot be expressed in the offices of human speech.

Even so, Boniface also tells the king that the infinite God does opt to reveal himself to all people across space and through time. He writes:

\[ \textit{Ad adnuntiandam uobis plenitudinem fidei Christianae sacerdotalem curauimus sollicitudinem prorogare... Hunc ergo Deum Patrem, et Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, quod est individua Trinitas, ab ortu solis usque ad occasum, humanum genus, quippe ut creatorem omnium atque factorem suum, salutifera confessione fide ueneratur et colit... Eius ergo bonitatis misericordia totius creaturae suae dilatandi subdi}^{13} \textit{etiam in extremitate terrae} \textit{positarum gentium corda frigida, Sancti Spiritus feruore in sui quoque agnitione mirabiliter est dignata succendere [HE 2.10/166, 168].}

We take care to extend our priestly concern to announce to you the fullness of the Christian faith... Therefore, the human race honours and worships this God, Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, who is an undivided Trinity, through the salvation-bearing confession, the faith, from the rising to the setting sun, seeing that he is the Creator of all and their Maker... Therefore, His Graciousness deigned of his goodness extended to all his creation to overcome the frigid hearts of the nations positioned even at the end of the earth, by the fervour of his Holy Spirit, wondrously also in knowledge of himself.

As the bolded text highlights, the priest is the custodian of a creed [\textit{salutifera confessione fide}] that is valid for all humanity [\textit{humanum genus}] from the furthest point east [\textit{ab ortu solis}] to the furthest point west [\textit{usque ad occasum}], even to Britain at the periphery [\textit{in extremitate terrae}].

\[^{13}\text{Colgrave and Mynors follow Charles Plummer’s text, noting that the phrase} \textit{dilatandi subdi} \text{reveals textual corruption. They suggest} \textit{dilatandae soboli} \text{, rendered “for the extension of his family”, as a possible, though in their own judgement unlikely, correction. See Colgrave/Mynors, 168n. J. E. King’s text in the Loeb Classics series, however, reads} \textit{toti creaturae suae dilatandi subsidii} \text{rendered “in extending His aid to all His creation”. See King, 1: 256; Plummer, 1: 101 and 2: 97.} \]
In quoting this letter, Bede gains papal witness to the priest’s expansive horizons and to a cast of mind that finds salvation in the recognition of metaphysical truth. These observations contrast sharply with the parochial concerns of the letter’s royal audience. Whereas Edwin gives law that protects by imposing caution through fear of reprisal within specified bounds [HE 2.16]; the priesthood, as a truth-bearing shaper of conscience, protects souls everywhere by catechesis.

Now the contrast between the scope and motivation attached to royal and sacerdotal influence clarifies the sacerdotal vision all the more. For the sacerdotal vision is, for Bede, both ideational and nuanced like the sober-minded, yet humane judge. The idea at the heart of the priesthood is divine charity manifest in the cross of Jesus Christ, High Priest and Victim. Nuance enters on account of the paradox of the cross. For the cross speaks to two convictions, neither of which may capitulate to the other. First, there is the universal standard of charity. This charity Jesus Christ displays on the cross for those creatures made in God’s image; and this charity is expected of every human person from within. Second, there is propitiation. By the vicarious death of Jesus Christ, the moral principle of charity retains pre-eminence in the universe, and the uncharitable have opportunity for absolution that resets relation to God.

Now the prophetic Irish abbot emphasises the first aspect of the universal standard through his being an exemplar of goodwill himself and through his charitably irate demand for justice. The English king emphasises the second aspect of propitiation through his job description that imposes divine supremacy on the wider cultural milieu; and that counts upon absolution, should he overstep his bounds in the process – as when Oswiu covets Oswine’s territory. The Latinate priest, by contrast, holds the two sides together as a paradoxical Gestalt. He guides royal action and prophetic affectivity by the sound doctrine of God and of man. Whereas the righteous abbot may forget his own sinfulness, the royal actor may diminish the imperative to attain charity on account of divine mercy in abundance. The priest, then, offers wise counsel to the prophet on the
sound doctrine of man, and to the king on the theotic demand of God. This leaves the priest with a nuanced vision of divine generosity and of human depravity. God offers mercy, says the Apostle Paul, but only to those prepared to work out their salvation (Phil. 2:12–13); and human beings are corrupt from birth, says the Apostle Peter, and yet, by grace, they participate in the divine nature that is able to choose charity (2 Pet. 1:1–11).

Put differently, one finds in the prophet and the king a tendency to locate cause for alarm completely in the cosmos or completely in the human person. The prophet locates his enemy in externals, whether in nature itself (which brings disease and drought) or in political powers gone awry. He proceeds to tame nature by miracle and the king by rebuke. The king, knowing his own insatiable desire to possess, locates evil totally within the human heart. The cosmos is unqualifiedly abundant, with lands there for the taking and God there to grant him blessing and victory in his endeavours. By contrast, the priest views the universe as qualifiedly benevolent and human nature as qualifiedly corrupt. Divine mercy is available, but only to those who truly demonstrate repentance upon hearing the word of God; and original sin is real, but may be transcended by those who lament their sin and then partake of the sacraments.

Put differently yet again, the prophetic abbot operates within the elemental conscience that turns upon coherence to the single ideal of the simple and straightforwardly egalitarian group, namely, justice that recognises the dignified image of God in all persons – especially in the widow and the alien. The idyllic Christian king, by contrast, operates within the framework of resolute fealty to God, who empowers him to defend Christian lands against enemies within and without. Under royal auspices, a moderate culture develops that freely corresponds to the open-ended will to be faithful to a localised expression of Christian identity as it takes hold and adapts to shifting conditions on the ground in territory after territory worldwide. The priest, however, must weigh the claims of various quarters wisely in order to arrive at an impartial and
humane conclusion. He must transcend the straightforward view of the prophetic abbot, charismatic leader of an egalitarian group, and that of the king, exalted among a network of magnates, who is anointed to effect the rational will of God on earth in the midst of potential usurpers and mortal enemies.

Now this nuanced vision turns upon the primacy of the conscientious mind within the human person. The prophetic personality cares most about affective matters (dignity, mutuality); and the governing class cares most about success guided by the rational will to effect an identity characterised by loyalty and the liberty that comes from moderate self-governance. But the priest cares most about the pattern in the nature of things so that he, as the formed conscience incarnate, may navigate between the staunch cosmic alienation of the prophet and the staunch cosmic allegiance of the king. The unqualifiedly alienated prophet and the unqualifiedly allegiant king will tend to interpret natural phenomena as evidence of divine wrath for insincerity of heart or divine reward for compliance to the rational will of God. But the nuanced, ideational disposition of the priest disposes him to acknowledge divine benevolence or divine judgement beyond spontaneous exegesis. While tragedy may spell divine judgement, it may also afford a teachable moment. While the divine blessing of rain does falls upon the just, the unjust also reap their harvest indefinitely – until the last judgement.

To illustrate from Bedan texts how Bede treats the priesthood as a body given over to ideation, one may consider his comments on the Mosaic provisions for the priesthood. Bede writes:

\[
\text{Hoc est enim eos qui sacerdotio functuri sunt de medio filiorum Israhel ad Moysen applicari, praesules ac doctores sanctae ecclesiae communem uitam electorum singulari mentis culmine transcendere et familiari inspectione quid lex generaliter omnibus electis quid uero paucis perfectioribus specialiter loquatur attendere}
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[DTB 3.125–30].\(^\text{14}\)

It is for this [reason] that men who are going to function in the priesthood are to be joined to Moses from the sons of Israel; and [for this reason] that they, as prelates and teachers of the Holy Church, transcend the common life of the elect by the singular acme of the mind; and [for this reason] that by routine reflection, they attend to what the law says generally to all the elect, and what especially to the more perfected few.

And later:

_Ideo doctrina et ueritas in rationali iudicii... erant imposita ut pontifex eadem ueste indutus meminisset se studiis doctrinae et ueritatis inquirendis non autem curandis rimandisque saecularibus negotiis per acceptum sacerdotium fuisse consecratum_ [DTB 3.614–19].

The reason that doctrine and truth were placed in the rational [breastplate] of judgement was so that the high priest, clothed with that same vestment, would remember that he had been consecrated through reception of the priesthood for inquiring into studies of doctrine and truth, and not for conducting and examining secular business.

As the bolded text indicates, the _sacerdotium_, for Bede, incarnates the function assigned to the few of wise counsel. The priesthood is to be a meritocracy that discerns truth rather than investing in profitable ventures. For as the conscience rightly formed, the priesthood, by thoughtful reflection upon divine revelation, is charged to bring forth divine wisdom into human affairs. Bede discerns similar sentiments in Pope Gregory the Great who, in Book Three of his _Regula Pastoralis_, describes at length how a good bishop administers God’s truth to various kinds of person. Bede’s commentary on the array of vessels in tabernacle in Ex. 25:29 further affirms this Gregorian idea that not all persons can appreciate certain teachings. Bede writes:

_Non enim una eademque omnibus potest conuenire doctrina. Aliter sapientes, aliter insipientes aliter diuites aliter pauperes... aliter uiri aliter feminae aliter caelibes aliter coniugati aliter praelati aliter subditi docendi sunt_ [DTB 1.832–37].

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16 CCSL 119A: 26/ PL 411B.
For one and the same teaching cannot suit all. The wise are to be taught in one way, the unwise in another; the rich in one way, the poor in another;... men in one way, women in another; celibates in one way, the married in another; rulers in one way, subjects in another.

What this segment says is that the sacerdotal vision presumes a role for the priest as the conscientious mind in the midst of the body’s members. He guides relational affectivity and the rational will by means of settled teaching that orients one rightly to God and one’s fellows.

To illustrate the nuanced perspective of the priesthood from Bedan texts, one considers the priestly advice given to commoners by Cuthbert the priest. He teaches them to accept adversity as the correction of a loving God, rather than, from a position of total cosmic alienation, to appease a purportedly hostile cosmos by incantation [HE 4.27/432]. In such guidance, he projects the cosmos to be a nuancedly benevolent order since God chastises sins for the good of sinners who have forgotten their place within that order.

Another example of the nuanced nature of priestly judgement appears in the contrast between the royal penchant to exact penalties and the priestly recourse to remedial judgement. English royal law punishes thieves according to the station of the aggrieved; but Pope Gregory’s canon law indexes punishment to intent, and subjects all judgement to the universal principle of charity.17 Advising Augustine of Canterbury, Gregory writes:

Haec ergo caritas in mente tenenda est, et ipsa modum correctionis dictat, ita ut mens extra rationis regulam omnino nihil faciat [HE 1.27/82].

This charity must always be held in mind, and it should dictate the mode of correction, so that the mind should do nothing altogether beyond the rule of reason.

The contrast between king and priest here is that the king acts politically, resisting the will to power in the lowborn in order to maintain stability, and the priest allows the dogma of charity to

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17 See Kim McConé 1991, 99; R. I. Page 1970, 55–63. One may observe distinctions between priestly canon law, which protects convictions about salvation; prophetic natural law, which protects elemental human dignity; and royal civic law, which protects the financial stability and cultural identity of the state. For contrast of various approaches to law, see above, 68–74; 136–40.
shape the mind enough to distinguish between a grasping for power and a bid for survival. Hence, the king would punish the poor thief harshly, but the priest would reduce his sentence for the fact that he stole bread to survive.¹⁸

**The Scientific Priesthood: Ritual Specialists and the Alignment of Dogma and Cosmos**

Bede *minister altaris* is well-known for his insistence upon the Dionysian date of *pascha*. While the prophetic Irish hold to the personal authority of Columba’s Anatolian date, and King Oswiu concerns himself with the most feasible basis upon which to build a stable Christian culture, Bede’s calibration by the Dionysian dates has everything to do with the intersection of the revelation of God the Creator and the revelation of God the Redeemer. For Bede, heavenly dogma and the heavenly bodies must align in ideational and in physical reality. To celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ before the full moon rises is to preach, with Pelagius, human resurrection without the rising of Jesus Christ the Dayspring [*HE* 3.17].

The importance of this salvific science to Bede is seen in the fact that he devotes the *HE*’s longest chapter of 3568 Latin words to the subject in the form of a letter from Abbot Ceolfrith of Wearmouth-Jarrow to the Pictish king, Nechthan [*HE* 5.21]. (Indeed, the four next longest chapters also deal with various aspects of the influence of Latinate priests upon Britain. In *HE* 1.27, Pope Gregory directs his emissary Augustine on how to influence the English in 3,546 words. In *HE* 5.19, Bishop Wilfrid, champion of Rome, occupies the limelight in 2,073 words. In *HE* 3.25, Bishop Wilfrid influences the outcome at Whitby in 1,970 words; and in *HE* 2.1, Pope Gregory receives 1811 words of praise for his allegorical reading of Scripture.)

In the brief introduction to Ceolfrith’s letter, Bede strengthens the tie between Rome and the

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¹⁸ This distinction also appears in an anecdote about Bishop Patrick in the Prologue of the *Senchas Már*, which recounts a trial in which the king’s man murders a lowborn man among Patrick’s followers. In the end, Bishop Patrick affirms the value of the aggressor’s life with absolution for his soul, and a moral code affirming the equal value of the aggrieved with the execution of the aggressor. By contrast, a king might insist upon a fine suitable to the victim’s station, which allows a freer hand to those in a stronger position.
apostolic teaching office. He deploys cognates of *Roma* and *apostolus* four times each, including the collocation *Romana et apostolica ecclesia*. In the actual letter, Bede shows that generations of competent fathers from Rome in the west (for him the locus of sound dogma) and from Alexandria in the east (for him the locus of the scientific authority) are required to set the churchly calendar.

For Bede, God orders the temporal realm by number, which is the grammar of time; and place-and-event by allegory, the grammar of which is expressed through arrangements of the alphabet’s letters. Carolyn Hartz explains the importance of this distinction thus:

> For Bede, as for Augustine, true spiritual understanding by its own nature requires understanding why God chose the times He did, and hence cannot be separated from the study of number. Not so, the study of grammar. Time cannot be translated into a different numerical system and retain its meaning; but Scripture can, and indeed should, be translated from Latin into other languages…

Apart from the universal aspects of language, the study of grammar seems to have utilitarian value for Bede, but no more. Allegory in particular may transcend merely instrumental status if it, too, is somehow embedded in the nature of things. Indeed, as we have seen, the universe is an intelligible place, and can be in some sense ‘read’, for Bede. Since the world itself has metaphorical import, the study of allegory ranks with that of number as essential for a true spiritual understanding of the world. Indeed, these two studies often coincide, especially in the dating of [pascha].

For Bede the ritual specialist, number and the timing of an event are intrinsic to its meaning. While his *De schematibus et tropis* and *De ars grammatica* are important to him as those works which elucidate the meaning of spiritual literature, he also expends significant effort to discern the importance of nature, number and time in *De temporum ratione*, *De temporibus* and *De rerum natura*. When Jesus says, “The hour has come” (Jn. 17:1 cf. 7:30), Bede believes that Jesus waits for the full moon to align with the religious calendar in order to show the meaningful

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completion of all things in the timing of his resurrection.\(^2\)

To the priestly mind, Church teaching is true because it rightly accounts for the nature of reality created and redeemed, and not so much because Rome sponsors it. Pope Gregory remarks in his letter of Augustine of Canterbury:

Non enim pro locis res sed pro bonis rebus loca amanda sunt [HE 1.27/82].

For things must not be loved on account of places, but places on account of good things.

Substance trumps provenance, and so Bede loves Rome because Rome teaches truth. For contrast, one observes royal-sacerdotal hybridity in Wilfrid, who claims that institutional provenance guarantees substance. As Hartz observes, the wealthy and well-connected Bishop of York believes what he believes because the most prestigious city teaches it [HE 3.25/300].

Another example of the priestly desire to connect abstract idea and concrete reality appears in the phenomenon of purification rites. In order to purge the stain of untold crimes presumed to have been committed on a site for a royal monastery, Cedd conducts a liturgy to align concrete reality to the purity of truth [HE 3.23].

Again, Bede projects a similar ethos in his DTR in which Bede fuses his confidence in the God who reveals his presence in the physical-temporal order through number and the God who reveals himself within human events through allegory. To this end, Bede weaves the particular histories of Israel, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Persia, Gaul, Britain and Ireland into one grand tapestry that features such diverse persons as Adam, Moses and David; Isis, Julius Caesar and Herodotus; Jesus, Peter and Paul; Martin of Tours, Gregory the Great and Bede’s own Abbot Ceolfrith. All the while, he divides the whole of human history into six ages to illustrate the true meaning of paschal observance and the life of Jesus Christ. For he wishes to correct a strict Jewish (and

\(^2\) Ibid., 630.
royalist) literalism with universally-minded allegory, which consists in the doctrinal categories implicit in the conscience guided by the apostles. As Calvin Kendall affirms, Bede intends through the rhetoric of faith, to make the hope of the beatific vision, in which all the contradictions of human experience are to be resolved and transcended... a meaningful reality. Placed as it is, the letter to Nechthan reveals the convergence of this rhetorical purpose with the sacramental meaning of \( \text{pascha} \).  

Bede *minister uerbi* and Bede *minister altaris* unite as Bede *presbyterus*, a man who is thoroughly renewed by the truth sponsored by popes, apostles and the incarnate Word of God crucified.

A final example of the role of number in the salvific science of the liturgy is sacred music. For music is the expression of numerical relationships through the medium of sound. It naturally follows that music, and particularly formal music, is endemic to the priesthood in a way that it is not to the ethical thaumaturge or the victorious king. And so Bede introduces John the Archcantor’s visit to Wearmouth-Jarrow immediately after treating the Council of Hatfield, graced by John’s presence \([HE \ 4.18]\). Bede reports how Benedict Biscop, founder of Wearmouth-Jarrow, escorts John from Rome so that John might help the English learn how to celebrate the liturgy well as it is celebrated in Rome. For liturgy concretises corporate convictions in a multisensory format full of numeric and allegorical significance. For as liturgical space and timing express the dogmatic content, so also does a myriad of auditory, gustatory and olfactory, visual and tactile symbols externalise metaphysical convictions. Bede the priest surely wishes his audience to know that his monastery models this sacerdotal ethos of Rome, sponsored by official music, books and paraphernalia that helps them the heresy.

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\(^{21}\) Kendall 1978, 172.
associated with isolation.\textsuperscript{22} In \textit{HE} 5.20, Acca continues the tradition of unity through liturgical music and theology, ratified in the pedigree that

\textit{Romam ueniens multa illic, quae in patria nequieuerat, ecclesiae sanctae institutis utilia didicit [HE 5.20/ 532].}

coming to Rome, he learned there many useful things of the institution of the holy church, which he could not have learned in his fatherland.

**The Judicial Priesthood: Sound Judgement as the Ethos of the Formed Conscience**

Given that Bede knows his Bible well, one wonders whether Bede discerns the essential distinctions between lay spirituality (prophetic monasticism), royal spirituality and sacerdotal spirituality as parallel to the legislative, executive and judicial types of ethos implicit in Deuteronomy 17. In Dt. 17:1–7, one discerns the legislative ethos or the imposition of the law, when laymen accuse their fellows and insist upon the same dire consequence for one offender as for the other. One reads in Dt. 17:14–20 that the king, administrator of society as executive-in-chief, must write out the law himself to ensure that his free and powerful hand is guided thereby. And between the laymen and the king, one reads of the role of the sacerdotal judge in Dt. 17:8–13, whose court must never face contempt. The text of Dt. 17:8–9 reads:

\textit{Si difficile et ambiguum apud te iudicium esse perspexeris inter sanguinem et sanguinem, causam et causam, lepram et non lepram; et iudicum intra portas tuas uideris uerba uariari: surge et ascende ad locum quem elegerit Dominus Deus tuus. Veniesque ad sacerdotes leuitici generis et ad iudicem qui fuerit illo tempore quaeresque ab eis qui indicabunt tibi iudicii ueritatem.}

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Éamonn Ó Carragáin} writes: “To imitate Rome in turn involved thorough inculturation of Roman ideas, as well as of ideas from other traditions: that is, they had to be adapted to local circumstances and integrated with Irish, and local British, as well as Anglo-Saxon traditions”. He goes on to observe that each community synthesised divergent options hailing from Syria to Ireland. See Ó Carragáin, \textit{Ritual and the Rood} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 266. For a discussion of books imported to England, see Michael Lapidge, “The School of Theodore and Hadrian,” \textit{Anglo-Saxon England} 15 (1986): 45–72; David Dumville, “Mediterranean manuscripts in Theodore’s England,” in Lapidge 1995, 96–119.
If thou perceive that there be among you a hard and doubtful matter in judgment between blood and blood, cause and cause, leprosy and [not] leprosy: and thou see that the words of the judges within thy gates do vary: arise, and go up to the place, which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come to the priests of the Levitical race, and to the judge, that shall be at that time: and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall shew thee the truth of the judgment.

One has articulated here the essential role of a priestly judge in biblical times: to pronounce truthful principle through a concrete judgement in especially difficult cases. Priests must discern first- from second-degree murder, between plaintiff and defendant in difficult civil matters and whether or not to quarantine a potentially diseased person.

In Bede’s own writings, he teaches the judicial nature of the sacerdotal office. In a homily on Jesus’ gift to Peter of the keys to the kingdom (Mt. 16:19), Bede writes:

\[\textit{Necnon etiam nunc in episcopis ac presbyteris omni ecclesiae officium idem committitur ut uidelicet agnitis peccantium causis quoscumque humiles ac uere paenitentes aspexerit hos iam a timore perpetuae mortis miserans absolvat quos uero in peccatis quae egerint persistere cognouerit illos perennibus suppliciis obligandos insinuet}\ [\textit{HOM} 1.20.171–76].

Indeed even now the same office is committed to the entire church in her bishops and priests, so that, knowing the cases of sinners, she perceives now whosoever are humble and truly penitent. Sympathising, she may absolve them from the fear of perpetual death. But she may suggest that those she knows to persist in sins which they have committed should be obliged to perennial sufferings.

The baptised appear before priests to have their conduct weighed, says Bede, not in light of the interests of the executive class, or even in light of the interests of the poor \textit{per se}, but in the light of revealed truth. What matters here is the admission of guilt, which is tantamount to intellectual assent to sound dogma, namely, the pattern of faith working through charity (Gal. 5:6).

Theodore of Canterbury (d. 690), the pre-eminent bishop of Britain during the period identified by Bede as the Golden Age [\textit{HE} 4.1–2], is likely the best example of the judicial ethos

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23 CCSL 122: 146/ PL 94: 225A.
of the priest as it appears in Britain’s story of conversion. Theodore’s gray head, his erudition and his Roman provenance position him not as mere chaplain to the Kentings in the southeast, but as disinterested judge appointed by Pope Vitalian for Britain. Despite Pope Gregory’s earlier vision of York and London as twin seats of authority [HE 1.29], Theodore labours to entrench the Archbishopric of Canterbury as the supreme religious office for all the English, obedient only to Rome. Theodore establishes his grandfatherly presence as the judicial conscience personified among various and sundry English kings by touring the country. He teaches them their role as his adult spiritual sons – themselves fathers in their provinces – and he brokers peace between them [HE 4.2, 21]. In this arrangement between one archbishop and multiple kings, the Lord’s many hands submit to one matured conscience. The new status of Rome is accentuated by the fact that two representative kings, one northern and one southern, agree to send one candidate for archiepiscopal office all the way to Rome for ordination [HE 3.29]. For the ratio of one virtual patriarch to two kings suggests that the gathering of the gens Anglorum proceeds from the church, not the state; from Rome, and not from within. Bede suggests, then, that in a salutary stroke of providence, Wigheard dies so that the pope may send Theodore and Hadrian to be that transnational, doctrinally astute and judicial influence which completes the training of the English on their path to Christian maturity.

The Deliberative Priesthood: Complexity, Past-Orientation and Synodical Judgement

The judgement of the bishops, then, is understood to guarantee that order intrinsic to the value rationality that is the fullness of divine counsel passed down from Christ’s appointed apostles. Bede’s phraseology shows how he equates official doctrine and sound judgement. For Ceolfrith of Wearmouth-Jarrow persuades Ireland through Adamnán of Iona to accept rationabile et ecclesiasticum paschalis obseruantiae tempus [the rational and church-approved time of paschal observance] [HE 5.15/504]. To be rational is to be churchly; to be churchly is
to embrace the judgement of the episcopate worldwide. Indeed, to refuse the understanding of the church-in-meeting under the presidency of the pope of Rome is, for Bede, to refuse the mind of Christ the High Priest and Judge. For this reason, Wilfrid faces mortal danger by travelling to Rome repeatedly: to elevate canonical jurisprudence \([HE \ 5.19]\).

Now the judicial role of the priesthood embodies wisdom that addresses multiple principles in a complex and interrelated system of thought that addresses the ultracosmic realm of life. This complexity reaches back through time to formative events in the primordial past, and extends everywhere by means of synodical discernment, which involves all bishops from all jurisdictions. As things turn out, one specific result has been the complex formulation of Leonine Christology. On the one hand, Pope Leo steers the church away from the not-so-divine Arian Jesus, created in time, which view projects a quantitative hierarchy upon the Trinity. God the Father, in this view, is the High King who spawns his Regent – a view, amenable to many network-oriented Germanic tribes, such as the Burgundians, the Goths, the Lombards and the Vandals. Literalism proper to historical consciousness and correspondence theory prevails. One the other hand, Pope Leo guards the church from the not-so-human Apollinarian Jesus adopted into God. This view affirms the prophetic and tropological impulse that would safeguard the egalitarian coherence of humanity so that no man – even Jesus – is God unqualified. Halting efforts credited to Nestorius and Eutyches subsequently fail for similar reasons: They sidestep the complexity that would hold two principles together in paradox. In the midst of royalist and prophetic tendencies, the priestly mind wades through complexity to discern the incarnation, a pattern by which to judge the truth.

The deliberative nature of episcopal thought is most fully illustrated in the notion of the Holy Trinity. Everyone can grasp the ideas of father and son; and the metaphors of wind, water
or fire concretise the idea of spirit readily; but to appropriate the idea of one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not, in the vocabulary of Harvey Whitehouse, cognitively optimal religion. It requires vigilant confidence in the wisdom of successive generations of synodical judgement.

It is especially interesting that Bede refers to trinitas in his HE in only a few contexts, those involving the episcopate. The first instance occurs when Bishop Germanus confronts heresy among the British [HE 1.17–18]. In HE 1.17 and 1.18, Germanus invokes the Holy Trinity, rather than Almighty God or Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. Bede connotes in this detail the authority of Germanus’ and Lupus’ teaching. In the same context, Bede writes of these apostolici sacerdotes:

Erat illis apostolorum instar et gloria et auctoritas per conscientiam, doctrina per litteras, uirtutes ex meritis [HE 1.17/56].

Both their glory and authority, through conscience, was like that of the apostles; their doctrine [acquired] through literacy (lit. letters), their strength through merits.

For a second example, Boniface V uses trinitas thrice in his brief letter to Edwin. One suspects that in spelling out the full name of God several times as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the pope mystifies the king, and affirms that the priesthood holds profound, complex and even esoteric wisdom. Boniface V’s high-minded introduction suggests the same effect:

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Licet summae diuinitatis potentia humanae locutionis officiis explanari non ualeat, quippe quae sui magnitudine ita inuisibili atque investigabili aeternitate consistit, ut haec nulla ingenii sagacitas, quanta sit, comprehendere disserereque sufficia, quia tamen eius humanitas ad insinuationem sui reseratis cordis ianuis quae de semet ipsa proferetur secreta humanis mentibus inspiratione clementer infundit, ad adnuntiandam uobis plenitudinem fidei Christianae sacerdotalem curauimus sollicitudinem prorogare, ut perinde Christi euangelium, quod Salvator noster omnibus praecedit gentibus praedicari, uestris quoque sensibus inserentes, salutis uestrae remedia propinentur [HE 2.10].

Although the power of supreme divinity cannot be explained in the offices of human speech, seeing that it [exists] by its own magnitude as it consists in invisible and unsearchable eternity. For this reason no wisdom of ingenuity, however much it may be, may suffice to comprehend and articulate it. Still, his generosity toward the entrance of the unlocked heart’s door infuses into human minds the very things he mercifully proffers by secret inspiration concerning himself. We are careful to preserve our priestly duty, the fullness of the Christian faith to be announced to you, so that, accordingly, the remedies of your salvation may be poured out, offering to your senses also the gospel of Christ, which our Saviour commands to be preached to all races.

The pope asserts that humanity cannot ascertain God and that the human mind receives only what God reveals about himself. He then asserts that the role of the priest is to preserve the fullness of revealed knowledge for all nations represented by their cultural leaders, the kings. Again, the profundity of divine revelation and the complexity of doctrinal articulation are connected to the priesthood.

Archbishop Theodore affirms the conciliar truth of the Trinity at Hatfield in 680 [HE 4.17]. Quoting his preamble verbatim, Bede writes:

Praesidente Theodoro grati Dei archiepiscopo Brittaniae insulae et ciuitatis Doruernis; una cum eo sedentibus ceteris episcopis Brittaniae insulae uiris uenerabilibus; praepositis sacrosanctis euangeliis,... pariter tractantes fidem rectam et orthodoxam exposuimus, sicut Dominus noster Iesus Christius incarnatus tradidit discipulis suis, qui praesentialiter uidierunt et audierunt sermones eius, atque sanctorum patrum tradidit symbolum et generaliter omnes sancti et uniuersales synodi et omnis probabilium catholicae ecclesiae doctorum chorus.
We, under the circumstances of Theodore presiding by the grace of God as archbishop of the island of Britain and of the city of Canterbury and of all the reverend bishops of the island of Britain sitting with him, have exposited [the Holy Gospels] together [or in the same manner]. Having the most Holy Gospels before us, we hold the true and orthodox faith just as our incarnate Lord Jesus Christ delivered it to the disciples who saw him in person and heard His words, and just as the creed of the holy fathers has handed [the faith] down – even all the holy and universal synods in general and the whole chorus of the proven teachers of the catholic Church. Following them, professing in a pious and orthodox manner according to their inspired doctrine, we do believe together, and confess – properly and truly according to the holy fathers – the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, a trinity consubstantial in unity, and a unity in trinity, that is, one God subsisting in three, even in consubstantial persons of equal honour and glory.

In the bolded text above, one observes prelates associating themselves with the complex doctrine of the Trinity. They also afford great honour to the past [traditit symbolum] and to the expansive geography implicit in deliberation by universal synod [universales synodi, omnis...chorus]. In sum, what one observes in these contexts is the complex idea of trinitas used by apostolic ministers of the word to orient the baptised to the Word of God incarnate.  

Two other anecdotes also reflect priestly views on time and space. In the first, Bede writes:

Arbitrans oportunum ut membra sanctorum ex diuersis regionibus collecta... sepulchri quoque unitus teneret hospitium [HE 1.18/58].

He thought it fitting that the members of saints collected from diverse regions... should have the hospitality also of one tomb.

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25 In HE 4.20 Bede, himself a Romanised priest, invokes the Trinity in an ode to Queen Æthelthryth.
Here Germanus consolidates the apostolic witness by placing everyone’s relics at Alban’s tomb. In this act, Germanus shows that faithfulness over space and time is paramount for priests as agents of apostolicity. The relics come from everywhere and Alban has long since been dead.

Wilfrid’s performance at Whitby provides another example. For, at the least, his argument rests on two notions: first, that an ecumenical synod is binding, however difficult it may be for spiritual progeny to understand; and second, that Christians everywhere do show that such a synod is binding. On the first point, Wilfrid contends that the hierarchy rightly views a person as obstinate if he consciously rejects synodical judgement [HE 3.25/300]. Wilfrid remarks thus:

“Pascha quod facimus” inquit “uidimus Romae, ubi beati apostoli Petrus et Paulus uixere, docuere, passi sunt et sepulti, ab omnibus celebrari; hoc in Italia, hoc in Gallia, quas discendi uel orandi studio pertransiimus, ab omnibus agi conspeximus; hoc Africam, Asian, Aegyptum, Greciam et omnem orbem, quacunque Christi ecclesia diffusa est, per diversas nationes et lingualas uno ac non diverso temporis ordine geri conperimus, praeter hos tantum et obstinationis eorum conplices, Pictos dico et Brettones, quibus de duabus ultimis Oceani insulis, et his non totis, contra totum orbem stulto labore pugnant” [HE 3.25/300].

“The pascha we perform”, he said, “we saw in Rome, where the blessed apostles Peter and Paul lived, taught, suffered, and were buried; we observed this [pascha] performed by all in Italy, this [pascha] in Gaul, through which we travelled in zeal of learning and praying; we discovered that Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece and the whole world carry out this [pascha], wherever the church of Christ is diffused, throughout diverse nations and tongues at one and not at a different order of time; except such as [the Irish] and their accomplices in obstinacy (the Pictish, I say, and the British, with those from the two remotest isles of the ocean, and not all of them), [who] fight in this silly labour against the whole world.”

And, near his conclusion, Wilfrid remarks thus to Colman concerning his Ionian forbears:

Vnde et illos Dei famulos ac Deo dilectos esse non nego, qui simplicitate rustica sed intentione pia Deum dilexerunt. Neque illis multum obesse reor talem paschae observantiam, quamdiu nullus aduenerat, qui eis instituti perfectioris decreta, quae sequerentur, ostenderet... Tu autem et socii tui, si audita decreta sedis apostolicae, immo uniuersalis ecclesiae, et haec litteris sacris confirmata sequi contemnitis, absque ulla dubietate peccatis [HE 3.25/306].
So I do not deny that [the Ionians] were servants of God, and loved by God, who with rustic simplicity, but with pious intention, have loved God. And I do not think that such observance of *pascha* harmed them, as long as one had come who might show them decrees of more perfect institution, which they might follow... You, however, and your associates, sin without any doubt, if, having heard the decrees of the Apostolic See, yeah rather of the universal church, you deign not to follow that confirmed also by sacred scripture.

One notices the implication in Wilfrid’s comments that complex institutions and ideas, not readily discernible to those outside the trajectory of erudite conversation, are nonetheless binding once they have support that circumnavigates the world. At the end, Bede records that the English church, *abdicata minus perfecta institutione* [having abandoned a less-than-complete institution], seeks communion with St. Peter’s successors at Rome. Agilbert returns home to Gaul vindicated; Colman and his prophetic sympathisers return home to Ireland for good; and the Irish-trained Englishmen who remain, like Cedd, adopt Roman forms even as bishops such as Chad and Wilfrid undergo authentic consecration in communion with Rome. Oswiu sends Chad away to Canterbury for ordination, and Alchfrith sends Wilfrid further afield to Gaul [*HE* 3.28].

**The Functionalist Priesthood: Apostolic Succession and the Qualitative Hierarchy**

While the priesthood shares ordination, the stratified governance within the priesthood mirrors the relationship between the mind and the central nervous system. Pope Gregory’s epithet *eseruuus seruorum Dei* asserts that all bishops are humble servants of God while also asserting, albeit in self-effacing terms, that his service gives him a special relation to each one of the others [*HE* 1.23–24, 28–30]. Bede illustrates how the priestly distinctive of duty to the formed conscience is at the root of papal precedence when he shows the nature of Pope Gregory’s “request” for assistance from a Gaulish bishop [*HE* 1.24]. The apostolic father expects

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26 Clare Stancliffe explains that Wilfrid wished to be ordained in Gaul to avoid association with bishops holding proper dogma, who are nonetheless in fellowship with dissidents. See Stancliffe 2003, 6.
compliance to his directives based on his theoretical position alone, without the exercise of the force of emotion (through shunning) or of the rational will (through negotiation and arms).

Bishop Augustine of Hippo, a favourite author to Bede, also shows esteem for hierarchy when he remarks concerning the administration of heaven:

*Ceterum qui futuri sint pro meritis praemiorum etiam gradus honorum atque gloriarum...? Quod tamen futuri sint, non est ambigendum. Atque id etiam beata illa ciuitas magnum in se bonum uidebit, quod nulli superiori ullus inferior inuidebit, sicut nunc non inuident archangelis angeli ceteri... Sic itaque habebit donum aliquo alio minus, ut hoc quoque donum habeat, ne uelit amplius [DCD 22.30].*27

What degrees of honour and glory will there be then, proportioned to the various degrees of merit...? It is not to be doubted, however, that there will be such degrees. But in this respect also that blessed City will see a great good in itself; for no inferior will envy his superior, any more than the other angels envy the archangels... Thus, one will have a lesser gift than another; but each will have the gift of not wanting more than he has.

What the bishop implies here is that hierarchy, and the apostolic succession, remains in place forever because it is the natural state of heaven. The difference between heaven and earth is that in heaven the egalitarian tendency to envy dissipates with the beatific vision.

Now, at first glance, there is considerable similarity between the hierarchical worldview of royalty and that of the priesthood. For in early medieval society, throne and altar serve as components of a mandarin class, as when King Edwin allows Bishop Paulinus to preside over the people with him *[HE 2.14, 16]*. Notwithstanding their similarity, Bede also shows that king and priest are distinct. For Paulinus asks Edwin to obey his priestly wisdom as though the qualitative mind of wisdom were framing the calculated actions of the will *[HE 2.12/182]*.28 Again, when writing of King Sebbi of Essex, Bede registers the distinction between king and priest thus:

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27 CCSL 48: 863/ PL 41: 802A.
28 For the text of *HE* 2.12 and translation, see above, 121.
Vitam priuatam et monachicam cunctis regni diuitiis et honoribus praeferens, quam et olim iam, si non obstinatus coniugis animus diuortium negaret, relictoregno subisset. Unde multis uisum et saepe dictum est, quia talis animiuirum, episcopum magis quam regem ordinari deceret [HE 4.11].

Preferring a private and monastic life (which life he wanted all along) rather than all the wealth and honours of his kingdom, [Sebbi] would have relinquished his realm if the stubborn mind of his wife had not refused divorce. For this reason, it seemed and often was said that a man of such a mind ought rather more to have been ordained a bishop than a king.

For Bede, the king, having wife and wealth, invests himself in the world, and the bishop concerns himself with contemplation of heavenly wisdom. The king guards the body and the will-to-identity, and the bishop guards the mind from false belief and absolves the mind of true guilt.

To press the distinction beyond the contrast between heaven and earth, one has the sense that bishops hold office within a value-laden and qualitative hierarchy, and kings within an instrumental and quantitative hierarchy. The priest’s role turns upon purity of doctrine and its ritualised performance, but the king’s role is geared to countable outcomes. For a priest is still a priest even when he is poor, and celebrates the mass poorly. To lose sacerdotal status, there must be a qualitative change in a man: he must become a heretic or a profligate [HE 4.5]. But a rightful king or a duke loses recognition based upon quantitative changes, say, if he should lose decisive battles, refuse to engage enemies and become poorer than his underlings [HE 3.22].

To approach the matter another way, when a priest loses his status, it is gone for life; but a king may regroup, increasing his forces and wealth, and then re-assert his right to the throne. Bede confirms the stricter standards for the priest thus:
When ministers of the altar themselves fall into such great crimes and such serious heresies that, although by repenting they can recover the salvation of their souls, they can no longer become worthy to be promoted to the sacerdotal grade which they have lost, or recover the task of preaching the Gospel or of administering the sacraments.

Describing such phenomena noted above in sociological terms, one would say that the quantitative hierarchy of the ruling class is a network of exchange, with conflict theory waiting in the wings in times of war. By contrast, the qualitative hierarchy of the apostolic succession is stratified on the principle of appointment from within to uphold meaning and the principle of seniority to underscore of ideal of maturity (rather than efficiency *per se*). Leadership in the secular and quantitative world is indexed to performance, whether it is measured in gradient terms of largesse and the trickle-down effect, or in the binary terms of victory and defeat. However, if the king-in-council amounts to conflict-cum-exchange theory, then the pope-in-council amounts to functionalism that serves in a role which is recognised by followers as qualitatively distinct, that is, like a heart or a liver within the body. The offices of major and minor orders are fixed roles within the hierarchy, each commissioned with a purpose.[^30] While a king leads a Christian nation as a familial and vernacular network of individuals whose future prospects in time happen to lay on the same trajectory [*HE* 1.27], a pope leads the assembly of


[^30]: Bernard Jussen notes that Pope Celestine and Pope Zachary assert the significance of episcopal dress as pertaining fundamentally to a role within a group. For them to dress as an ascetic before the people is to be either lazy or arrogant, as an individual who dismisses the demands of an office. See Jussen, “Liturgy and Legitimation, or How the Gallo-Romans Ended the Roman Empire,” in *Ordering Medieval Society*, trans. Pamela Selwyn (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001), 157.
all the baptised as an ordered group who believes apostolic dogma and celebrates apostolic
doxology.

Perhaps the best example in Bede’s *HE* of the distinction between the types of hierarchy is
the clash between bishop and king that arises between Bishop Wilfrid of York and King Ecgfrith
of Northumbria. While Wilfrid is the first Englishman to act in the archetypical role of priest for
Bede, his legacy stretches the sacerdotal archetype. He causes such a furor with the king (and
his own archbishop) that Bede minimises Wilfrid’s role as the narrative unfolds. Instead, Bede
ties his extended account of Wilfrid to Wilfrid's death date rather than to his *floruit [HE 5.19]*.
Wilfrid’s acrid relationship to Ecgfrith [*HE 4.12–13*] stands in contrast to Paulinus’ dealings
with Edwin because Wilfrid upsets the template of the pure priestly conscience that advises the
logical and courageous royal will. For Wilfrid himself slips into the quantitative mode by
acquiring many lands, and he presses the king into the qualitative mode by interfering with the
king’s licit conjugal affairs. In response, Ecgfrith (and later Aldfrith) banishes Wilfrid despite
papal vindication, convinced that Wilfrid has moved beyond straightforward functionalism (the
custodianship of word and sacrament) to veiled exchange-cum-conflict theory (political rivalry).

**The Orderly Priesthood: Canon and Discipline within the Hierarchical Group**

In addition to the existence of two types of hierarchy that contrast priest and king, there are
still two bases upon which to organise a collective that one may label as a group, rather than a
network, for their bonded, socialised sense of identity that does not pertain in itself to blood ties,

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31 Bede says of Wilfrid: *qui primus inter episcopos qui de Anglorum gente essent catholicum uiuendi
morem ecclesiis Anglorum tradere didicit* [who (was) the first of the bishops who, among the English race,
learned to hand down to the churches of the English the catholic custom of living][*HE 4.2/334*].
32 At least on the matter of meddling in the king’s conjugal affairs, D. H. Farmer finds Bede sympathetic.
David Kirby suspects Wilfrid troubles are related to his alliance with co-lateral royals descended from
Oswald. In *Reasesssing Anglo-Saxon England*, Eric John rehabilitates Wilfrid’s image as imitator of
Columbanus, claiming that he did more to Christianise English culture than Cuthbert, or even Bede. See
a common mortal enemy, class interests and cultural-linguistic identity. These are the egalitarian group, known to Bede as the Irish cœnobium, and the hierarchical group, known to Bede as the church universal led by the pope at the head of the priesthood. The Irish cœnibium coheres around a beloved personality (Columba, Columbanus), and a common rule of life that idealises human dignity, mutuality and achievable righteousness. The church-at-large centred at Rome holds together through sharing a noetic structure based upon ecumenical creeds, canons and a clerical hierarchy, all of which are judged worthy of merit above everything to the contrary.

For Bede, egalitarianism works best on a small, even interpersonal scale, and hierarchy on the grander scale of nation and world. For, while it is feasible to maintain personal rapport with ten fellow monks; this is not feasible with ten million baptised faithful. By contrast, it is feasible to receive the same sacrament and recite the same creed as believers from anywhere. Again, when egalitarian groups subdivide, each smaller group becomes its own whole in order to retain its trademark affectivity. For each splinter group has removed the source of interpersonal tension. But for the large hierarchical group to justify its distinctive ethos, the formation of the conscience by the Gestalt of universal truth, it must operate based upon received rules of order that co-ordinate the job descriptions proper to various posts. For to the qualitatitive mindset of the hierarchist fission is schism because fission implies intellectual inconsistency.

Canon law becomes the mechanism to maintain order within the priesthood. To illustrate, Bede shows how Theodore guides the English clergy into the specifics of the orderly jurisdiction proper to the qualitative hierarchy in his account of the Council of Hertford (673) [HE 4.5].33 One may summarise the ten canons thus:

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33 Lapidge, in Lapidge 1995, 1–29, esp. 27.
1. *Pascha* is to be celebrated after the universal custom.
2. Bishops rule only within their own diocese.
3. Bishops must leave abbots within their diocese alone.
4. Monks may travel only with their abbot’s permission.
5. Priests may travel only with their bishop’s permission.
6. Travelling clergy may serve in a diocese only by permission of the local bishop.
7. Synods must occur twice yearly.
8. Seniority is recognised by date of consecration.
9. Bishops are to be consecrated only as the laity increases.
10. Spousal separation is allowed as a result of fornication only.

Some canons establish boundaries, such as the line between peers (canons 2–3, 10) and the line between higher and lower ranks (canons 4–6). Other canons establish bridges, such as those between peers of high rank (canon 7), and those between all ranks (canon 1). Finally, some canons establish relations between the dynamic or transgenerational aspect of group identity (canon 8) and the static aspect of fixed ranks (canon 9).34

Negative measures also appear in the concluding remarks of the Council of Hertford.

Those who refuse the conciliary judgement of the hierarchs face this stern warning:

*Quisquis igitur contra hanc sententiam, iuxta decreta canonum nostra etiam consensione ac subscriptione manus nostrae confirmatam, quoquo modo uenire eamque infringere temptauerit, nouerit se ab omni officio sacerdotali et nostra societate separatum* [HE 4.5/352].

Anyone, therefore, who shall attempt in whatever way to come against and infringe the decision, according to the canonical decrees confirmed by our consent and signed in our hand, let him know that he is separated from sacerdotal office and from our fellowship.

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34 Martin Brett finds that no consonance is found between extant codes and Theodore’s wording, “for Theodore, it seems, the tradition of the fathers was specific book, not a state of mind or disposition.” Even so, he nonetheless finds that *Iudicia Theodori* rather loosely cites earlier canons. See Brett, “Theodore and the Latin Canon Law,” in Lapidge 1995, 125–28 esp. 126.
From this warning, one registers the necessity of intellectual assent for the qualitative hierarchy. Dissenting priests are considered rogues. Not only are they defrocked from their high station, but they are also ousted from membership in the group itself, being excommunicated from the faithful.

Examples of the prerogatives of qualitative hierarchy appear in Bede’s fuller account of Archbishop Theodore, who exercises his authority within the priesthood in three ways. First, he regularises Chad’s holy orders, which Chad received from schismatics [HE 4.3], because he is convinced that Chad is a holy man whose services must not be lost.35 Second, Theodore dismisses Winfrith of Mercia for insubordination [HE 4.6]. Finally, Theodore reassigns Wilfrid to a see other than Lindisfarne after only one year, since he recognises the tumult Wilfrid brings to the former headquarters of the Irish tradition [HE 4.29]. Hierarchical administration is clear in all of these actions. Wilfrid’s outrage and protest to the papacy against Theodore’s downsizing of Wilfrid’s See of York also displays hierarchy at work: for decisions are administered from the top, and not by rallying brother bishops, as though they were thegns allying against the king.

The Scholarly Priesthood: The Seminary, Converted Erudition and Sound Judgement

Bede identifies himself as a presbyter whose role is semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere [always either to learn or to teach or to write] [HE 5.24]. Although an autodidact, Bede nevertheless enjoys the instruction of great teachers through the means of writing, with thanks to his fantastic library.36 Bede’s own curriculum vitae, in turn, could easily become a curriculum to be sought by other postulants to the ministry and their teachers. It is notable that he begins his

35 For background, Stancliffe writes: “Theodore’s treatment of Chad ran counter to western canonical practice in two respects: according to western custom he should simply have reconciled Chad as a bishop, not re-ordained him right through all the degrees; secondly, he should not have ordained someone who had had to perform penance.” See Stancliffe 2003, 16. For contrast, she notes that VV has Chad re-ordained, whereas Bede has Chad merely reconciled. Put differently, Alan Thacker suggests that Bede’s Chad’s had only episcopal orders regularised. See Thacker, in Houwen and MacDonald, 48.

36 Michael Lapidge, The Anglo-Saxon Library.
writing career with *De schematibus et tropis* and *De arte grammatica* about the time he receives the priesthood at the canonical age of thirty (c. 703).\(^{37}\) For *ministri uerbi*, priests require the seminary as that context of systematic study by which they may foster the sound judgement of converted erudition. Writing itself, for that matter, is a suitable medium for life in the allegorical mode, for both writing and the priesthood mediate the deeper pattern of meaning behind the symbols of written revelation, and lead to the evermore-thorough conversion of the mind.

In the preface to his *HE*, Bede foreshadows the ultimate intellectual authority that stems from the erudite, sacerdotal office. He credits the acquired wisdom of the English to Pope Gregory and his emissaries; to Archbishop Theodore, Abbot Hadrian and Abbot Albinus founders of the seminary at Canterbury; and to the papal archives consulted by Nothelm while in Rome. Bede even credits Albinus, head of the seminary at Canterbury, with the very motivation to write his history of the English. One receives the sense that Bede follows Jerome, compiler of a dictionary of Christian intelligentsia, in his own attempt to register the intellectual pedigree acquired by his own English people. Jerome remarks in his own preface:

*Desinant fidem nostram rusticae tantum simplicitatis arguere, suamque potius imperitiam agnoscant* [*DVI*: Pref].

Let (pagan writers) cease to accuse our faith of such rustic simplicity, and recognise rather their own inexperience.\(^{38}\)

One can easily imagine Bede, proud of his own library and the seminary at Canterbury, thinking that the British would do well to recognise that the English have arrived, academically speaking.

The fulfillment of what Bede foreshadows in the preface appears in Book Four as the Golden Age of theological education under Theodore and Hadrian. Indeed, that skills are honed at Canterbury in scriptural and patristic languages is no moot point, for Greek and Latin writings

\(^{37}\) Colgrave/Mynors, xxi.

\(^{38}\) PL 23: 634B–C.
transmit the wisdom of ancient texts. Augustine of Hippo illustrates the import of such an erudite tradition when he argues for a scholarly model of teaching truth. Augustine remarks:

Sed cum legit, et nullo sibi hominum exponente intelligit, cur ipse aliis affectat exponere, ac non potius eos remittit Deo? [DDC Pref]

But if one reads and understands without any human expositor, why does he then aspire to expound it to others and not simply refer them to God?

Furthermore, the bishop speaks of the effort required through study to learn divine things thus:

Nam ubicunque uelut aliud dicitur ut aliud intelligatur... tropica locutio est.
Quae cum fit ubi fieri solet, sine labore sequitur intellectus: cum uero ubi non solet, laboratur ut intelligatur, ab aliis magis, ab aliis minus, sicut magis minusue dona Dei sunt in ingeniis hominum, uel adiutoria tribuuntur [DDC 3.37].

Whenever one thing is said in order that something else may be understood, we have a metaphorical expression... When this takes a familiar form, understanding follows without effort; when it does not, effort is needed for understanding, and more in some cases than others, depending on the gifts of God bestowed on our human intellects or the assistance that he gives.

The effort required for metaphorical (allegorical) interpretation shows how the seminary is bound up with the priesthood, which hands down a set of problems and received parameters for their solutions. Interestingly, Alasdair MacIntyre’s notion of rival rationalities overlaps with Bedan archetypes. For MacIntyre’s conjecture of tradition-constituted rationality speaks to inherited wisdom similar to that favoured by Bede, who knows the importance of deliberation in seminaries and sacerdotal synods. To clarify by contrast, one notes that MacIntyre’s encyclopaedic rationality smacks of the control of imperium, as it imposes a culture through categories of thought that do not admit the thinker’s self-interest. One also notes a parallel

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40 PL 34: 18D.
41 PL 34: 88D.
between prophetic iconoclasm and genealogical rationality, which searches for the root of self-interest in state-sanctioned ideas.  

The fulfillment of what Bede foreshadows in the preface also appears in Book Five, which presents a crescendo of erudite witness laid upon erudite witness, all of whom affirm the longstanding intellectual importance of the Apostolic See. By their sheer collective weight, the brothers Hewald [HE 5.10], Willibrord [HE 5.11], the converted Adamnán [HE 5.15–17], Theodore’s pupil Aldhelm [HE 5.18], Wilfrid [HE 5.19], Hadrian’s replacement Albinus [HE 5.20], Ceolfrith [HE 5.21], and Ecgbert, who heads and sums up the list [HE 5.9–10, 22], serve as the exclamatory voice of the priesthood saying: Behold the Word of God incarnate! Behold he who aligns the mind to Heaven! Interestingly, rather than White Hewald, it is his brother Black Hewald, magis sacrarum litterarum... scientia institutus [more established in the knowledge of sacred scripture], who suffers the most vile treatment. One suspects that Bede’s purpose here is to show the more well-read the martyr to have faced the harsher persecution and offered the more glorious witness.

Bede also depicts the importance of priestly erudition in the career of Aldhelm, who writes a treatise to persuade the stubborn British to accept the apostolicity of Roman ways. For context, one might consider Aldhelm’s letter to King Geraint of Dumnonia, in which he complains as Archbishop Lawrence did in HE 2.4. Aldhelm writes:

*Illud uero quam ualde a fide catholica discrepat et ab euangelica traditione discordat... Demetarum sacerdotes de priuata propriae conversationis munditia gloriantes nostram communioen magnopere abominantur... Quin immo fragmenta ferculorum et reliquias epularum lurconum canum ritibus et immundis deuorandas porcis proiciunt [HE 2.4].*  

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43 See MGH AA 15: 484.
How very much it departs from the catholic faith and disagrees with the evangelical tradition that the bishops of Dyfed,... [who] glorying in the private purity of their own lifestyle, thoroughly loathe our communion... Instead, they toss fragments of meals and the leftovers of feasts to be devoured by the jaws of ravenous curs and by filthy swine.

Aldhelm is upset that the British do not recognise the wisdom of erudite tradition over their own perspective on things. Yet, Bede finds Aldhelm impressive because Aldhelm is able to sway at least some of those who, in Bede’s lifetime, proved resistant to apostolic tradition.

Ceolfrith administers Bede’s coup de grâce in display of erudition before the Pictish king in HE 5.21; even as Ecgbert delivers the coup de théâtre which brings the Ionians into the Roman fold [HE 5.22]. In fact, Bede marvels at divine providence in English-Irish relations in the way that St. Paul lauds divine providence in Jewish-Gentile relations (Rom. 11:37–39). Just as Jew induces non-Jew to pursue the rewards of Abrahamic faith through incentive, and non-Jew incites Jew to mature into the universal vision of the Church through jealousy; so also do the non-Romanised Irish offer communal belonging to the English, and in return, the Romanised English lead the Irish into the more sublime aspects of tradition.

The Sorrowful Priesthood: The Wise Conscience Formed by Traditioned Revelation

Bede implies that the apostate becomes the horror of the amygdala incarnate, who threatens physical death and will be terrorised himself in eternal damnation. The prophetic abbot becomes indignation incarnate, insisting upon righteous relations all around that put the short-term, affective memory of the hippocampus at peace. The Christian king adopts a visage of good cheer as he incarnates the logical function of the neocortex, revelling in his instrumental role of ensuring the relevance of God’s covenant among his people. In the swirl of such psychological climates, the priest becomes seriousness, sobriety and sorrow incarnate whose mind is calibrated to the Gestalt, that qualitative sense of ultimate meaning within the matrix of suffering and
sacrifice. For the priestly role concerns the guilty mind in need of absolution that ruminates upon regrets over shrugging off the wisdom of God’s self-revelation present in synodical scriptures, dogma, canons and liturgy.

This sacerdotal seriousness is evident in actions of Archbishop Theodore. For the Sixth Ecumenical Council of the seventh century hardly addresses a subject important to his barbarian converts. Theodore teaches the ecclesia Anglorum what ought to matter to them as a church growing into maturity. At Hatfield he urges his clergy to accept the faith as articulated in a trajectory of thought continues by the living episcopate worldwide [HE 4.17]. Theodore acts in the spirit of Pope Gregory, who highlights inherited conversations and their conclusions thus:

Nam tunc sacerdos irreprehensibiliter graditur, cum exempla patrum praecedentium indesinenter intuetur... ne extra ordinis limitem operis pedem tendat. Quod bene etiam rationale iudicii uocatur, quia debet recto subtili semper examine bona malque discernere... nihilque proprium quaerere, sed sua commoda propinquorum bona deputare [RP 2.2].

For the priest steps blamelessly when he considers the example of preceding fathers unceasingly... lest he should extend the foot of work beyond the limit of his order. Which thing also is well named the breastplate of judgement, because it behoves one always to discern good and evil rightly by a subtle testing... and to seek nothing of his own, but to reckon as his own convenience his neighbours’ [intellectual] goods.

Pope Gregory expresses how the priest traces the steps of his predecessors without fear of plagiarism, for the truth worked out by the fathers becomes the property of the tradition of sober judgement. Names are attached, rather, to heresies: approved results lead to what Bernard Lonergan calls “intellectual conversion”: that deep, intellectual self-transcendence which

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44 Henry Chadwick notes that Theodore included the filioque in Council of Hatfield to shut down Wilfrid’s critiques even though Rome omitted the same at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680 to placate the Greeks. Wilfrid’s enthusiasm, he offers “the kind of help that in 680 Agatho would have preferred not to receive”. See Chadwick, “Theodore, the English Church and the Monthelete Controversy,” in Lapidge 1995, 95; and Farmer 1974, 55.

45 PL 77: 27B–C.
receives a mutually-reinforcing belief system without requiring temporal and immediate benefits.\textsuperscript{46}

The priesthood, then, is sorrowfulness incarnate.\textsuperscript{47} For just as divine revelation lies hidden in apostolic texts; so also do sins lie hidden in the text of each parishioner’s past. As memory incarnate for the people, Gregory urges the English to the baptismal confession of faith, catechesis and confirmation so that they may embrace the mythic vision of an ancient story, even as he guides them to healing through sorrowful confession of sin, penance and eucharistic absolution in tune with ancient wisdom so easily forgotten.

\textbf{The Tempted Priesthood: Humble Innocence and the Pitfall of Prideful Deception}

For Bede, the qualitative basis of priesthood arises from the white martyrdom of purity, the humility and sacrifice of the iconic life of wisdom and innocence. For purity is not only related to sexual abstinence, but also to the mind unswayed by sexual thoughts.\textsuperscript{48} For sexual thoughts draw the person into physical passions, personal bonds and propertied interests that distract the mind from the ministry of word and sacrament and from contemplating the fullness of divine revelation. Such sentiments are found in Jerome’s wistful teasing in \textit{Epistola L ad Domnionem}:

\begin{verbatim}
Non damno nuptias, non damno coniugium. Et ut certius sententiam meam teneat, uolo omnes qui propter nocturnos forsitan metus soli cubitare non possunt, uxores ducere.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{46} Bernard Lonergan, \textit{Method in Theology} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 237–44. David D’Avray shows that values re-inforce one another and are “bound up with images” and experiences that affirm a way of seeing things. See D’Avray, \textit{Rationalities}, 75–77, 90.

\textsuperscript{47} Jan Davidse notes that, in his \textit{DCD}, Augustine believed that “[t]he past had an order”. For Augustine, the very study of \textit{historia} “depends on research into what is effectuated by time or is instituted by God”. See Davidse 1976, 9. Revelation in the past, then, communicates the “order” that abides throughout time.

\textsuperscript{48} It is instructive to consider Genesis 34, Leviticus 21, Numbers 25, which connect sexual honour to the Levitical priesthood. In Genesis 34, Levi executes all males of a village for the sexual violation of his sister. In Leviticus 21, the priests are commanded to marry no raped woman, no divorcée or no widow, and to execute by fire any daughter who goes awhoring. In Numbers 25, Phinehas and his descendents receive the priesthood for unilaterally executing those who committed a pubic offence in public.

\textsuperscript{49} PL 22: 516.
I condemn not marriage, nor conjugal union. Even more certainly, let one hold as my judgement that I wish all who cannot retire to bed alone, perchance on account of fear of the dark, to lead wives.

Celibacy, for this Latin father, emphasises the priesthood as the intellectual life, a state suitably detached from the physical and emotional and economic comforts of marital union, all of which may lead one variously to debase the truth whether by indolence and gluttony, by wrathfulness and envy or by lust and greed.

The importance of the innocent mind to the priest is seen in Pope Gregory’s views of the churching of women and nocturnal emissions. While menstruation could serve as a symbol of the unwilled filthiness of original sin that bars the menstruous woman from the Eucharist, Gregory also recognises that a menstruous woman could approach the altar of Christ with an innocent mind, having repented of sins committed. Since only the woman knows her own rhythms, Gregory leaves each woman free to decide in good conscience. After all, if a menstruous woman has an clear conscience as she approaches the altar, others are in no position to experience scandal, even if they were to believe – iconically speaking – that she should demur in that state [HE 1.27/92].

The importance of the clear conscience is also prominent in Gregory’s priestly approach to nocturnal emission. All sin, for Gregory, is committed in three stages: demonic suggestion, fleshly delight and informed consent. Since the formed conscience alone can distinguish between the three stages, the formed conscience alone recognises a sinful state. For no guilt exists when the mind cannot isolate the point at which oneself sponsored the conditions amenable to fleshy delight; and only limited guilt exists if it cannot determine the point of consent [HE 1.27/100]. The question becomes: Does this particular emission reveal a mind in tune with matter?
Unfortunately, the role of the white martyr is fraught with the dangers inherent to the high status of the priesthood as the icon of life guided by the wise and innocent conscience. For two of the worst sins carry an intellectual ethos: pride and deception. For pride is the presumption that one’s own intellect is the organ of divine revelation; and deception is the attempt to persuade oneself or others that one’s own mind is the final court of appeal. In Bede’s own comments on James 1:19, he recognises that the temptation to pride comes with the teaching office. Bede writes:

Nam et tutius est ut veritas audiatur quam praedicetur, quoniam cum auditur humilitas custoditur, cum praedicatur uix non subripit cuius hominum quantulacumque iactantia [IE7C James: 272–74].

For it is safer that the truth be heard than preached, for when heard humility is guarded, but when preached there may hardly not creep in a little of men’s boasting.

Viewed from the other side of the question, Bishop Ambrose values humility when he writes:

Designatur enim ecclesiae ad Christum futura conversio, et religiosa servitus subdita Dei uerbo, quae multo sit melior, quam saeculi huius libertas. Denique scriptum est: Dominum Deum tuum adorabis, et ipsi soli seruies [Dt. 6:13]. Haec igitur servitus Dei donum est [DP ch. 14 para. 72].

For [wifely submission] depicts the church’s turning toward Christ in the future and a religious servitude submitted to the word of God, which is better by far than the liberty of this world. Hence it is written: “You shall fear the Lord your God and shall serve him only” [Dt. 6:13]. This servitude, therefore, is a gift of God.

If one should apply Ambrose’s words to Bedan archetypes, one must say that in this Latinate priestly way of seeing things, the role of the priest exists in conscious, wife-like submission to a leader. By contrast, the husbandly role of king exists as libertas huius saeculi. Despite his status among the faithful, wife-like humility is essential for the priest whose role may tempt him to combine pride and self-deception, which leads to hypocrisy. To illustrate the seriousness of this

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50 CCSL 121: 190/ PL 93: 16A
51 PL 14: 328B–C.
temptation from a Bedan text, one notes how Gregory warns Augustine of Canterbury not to
become proud when God grants him prophetic powers to complement his priestly role \([HE\ 1.31]\).

**A Caveat: The Royal English and Their Assumption of Sacerdotal Station**

While Bede associates his priestly archetype with foreign prelates as transnational agents
hailing from Rome, Bede also shows that his own English mature into this role without losing
their first charge of kingship. For a half-century (597–655), the royal English come under the
tutelage of five Italian Archbishops of Canterbury: Augustine (d. 604), Lawrence (d. 619),
Mellitius (d. 624), Justus (d. 627) and Honorius (d. 655). Then, after a decade under a West
Saxon, Archbishop Deusdedit (d. 664), providence and the pope set Britain under the personal
oversight of one last pair of foreigners, Archbishop Theodore (d. 690) and Abbot Hadrian (d.
710), who create the Golden Age of theological education. In *HE* 5.8, Bede overtly lauds
Theodore for his unparalleled intellect under the guidance of which the English churches achieve
*tantum profectus spiritualis... quantum numquam ante* [spiritual progress to such a degree as never
before]. Bede points out that Theodore’s work endures in Berhtwold, his successor. The erudite
Englishman, Abbot Albinus (d. 732), eventually takes over from Hadrian, who, though arriving
with Theodore, survives him by two decades. Another English prelate, Tobias (d. 726), *uirum
Latina Greca et Saxonica lingua atque eruditione multipliciter instructum* [a man well-versed in
the Latin, Greek and Saxon languages and in (higher) learning], continues the tradition of higher
learning at Rochester, where Bertwold posts him \([HE\ 5.8]\). The rise of the vernacular to the status
of biblical and ecclesiastical tongues is intriguing. For, articulated typologically, we observe
Bede discerning how Englishness, now matured and multifaceted, reflects the transnational
priestly ken in addition to royalist identity. The English, it seems, come to occupy both the alpha
and omega positions among Britain’s races, receiving the alpha position as custodians of culture
in anticipation of their potential to mature into the omega position as custodians of truth.
To Bede, royal migration also shows the growth of the English toward holism. Bede writes:

*Caedualla... relinquished his throne... and came to Rome; desiring to gain for himself the singular glory that he might be washed in the font of baptism at the threshold of the blessed apostles; in which (baptism) alone, he had learned that entrance to the heavenly life is open to the human race; likewise also hoping that as soon as he was baptised, being released from the flesh to eternal joys, the world might now pass away.*

Although writing of an English king, the cluster of meanings bolded here are all associated with the priestly ideal type. One observes Rome as font of authority (*uenit Romam*), the remedial ethos of sacraments (*fonte baptismatis ablueretur*), essential dogma (*in quo solo*), past-orientation (*ad limina beatorum apostolorum*), universal scope (*generi humano*) and the noumenal world (*ad aeterna gaudia*). It is as though the English, pictured in their king, seek truth and find Rome.

Bede also observes a tight connexion between the royal English and Latin sacerdotalism in the person of Benedict Biscop who imports numerous *objets d’or* from Rome. Bede writes:

*For having left everything behind, (Benedict Biscop) followed Christ when, after he had rejected what he had acquired while in royal service... he would go on pilgrimage to Rome, the threshold of the blessed apostles... There he was educated in Christ... in that same place he would have spent the whole of his life, if the apostolic authority of his lord had not forbidden it, who commanded him to return to his fatherland in order to guide Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory to Britain.*

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For another example, one considers how Bishop Aldhelm of Sherborne also fuses the two types, and suggests the circulation of English blueblood through the heart of Rome.

In addition to particular examples, one discerns the fusion of regal Englishness and the priesthood both in Bede’s summary of the pathway taken by Britain’s peoples to realise the ideal presaged in the table of nations [HE 5.23 cf. HE 1.1] and in his annals which reflect the Mediterranean sway over Britain [HE 5.24]. In the summary, Bede’s Irish receive praise for embracing the transnational church and the providential right of English kings; even as the British receive criticism for refusing both. The Latins, however, do not appear overtly in the summary as they had in the table of nations. One presumes that the English are the new Latins, and that Augustine of Canterbury and Paulinus, Theodore and Hadrian, and others between them, have served a purpose as mentors to English protégés. One also discerns a similar phenomenon in the annals. While the first entry, the last entry and half of those between them pertain to Rome’s influence upon Britain (26 of 51 total entries), the presence of actual Roman figures, regal or sacerdotal, tapers. Initially political, the Latinate role shifts to that of priest before the Latins disappear entirely. The first four entries concern imperial Rome (60 BC, 46 BC, 167 BC, 189 BC), the next four concern the papacy (AD 381, AD 409, AD 430, AD 449); four more concern Gregory or Augustine (AD 596, AD 597, AD 601, AD 605); three mention Paulinus (AD 625, AD 633, AD 644); four mention Theodore (AD 668, AD 673, AD 680, AD 690); two mention Wilfrid (AD 664, AD 678); two mention royal migrants to Rome (AD 688, AD 709); two mention Egbert’s efforts for Rome (AD 716, AD 729); and the last Berhtwold and Tatwine, Archbishops of Canterbury (AD 731). While Rome is a source, a benchmark and a centrepoint of meaning, Romans vanish as Britain steadily achieves her own destiny able to elevate priests from within.
The Apostolic Path to Salvation: The Episcopacy and Seeing through a Glass Darkly

To conclude, Bede sets the thoroughly instructed conscience at the centre of human experience through his trope of the sacerdotal foreigner. The *sacerdotium*, as a qualitative hierarchy, discerns meaning and resolves conflict through the collaborative division of labour; and rests its legitimacy, articulated in the vocabulary of purity, wisdom and authority, in the appointment of successors from within. Through a glass darkly, synods of the few, who stand in apostolic succession, discern the cruciform, incarnational, trinitarian and sacramental pattern of revelatory events and texts of the deep past by means of allegorical reason as a corollary to the qualitative brain function of *Gestalt*.

The fact of human guilt necessitates the white martyrdom of the priest, whose life and teaching must transcend pride and self-deception to testify to the truthful principle of apostolicity. Thus, the priest, operating in the indicative mood that is the certainty of faith, embodies awareness of the full counsel of truth even as he acts for the Man of Sorrows who sacrificed himself for sin, hears confession, assigns penance and clears the saddened conscience through absolution. As the custodian of word and altar, the priest motivates and is motivated by a sense of duty re-enacting the apostolic doctrine of God and of man. He speaks of divine mercy, yet also emphasises original sin, rather than the *imago Dei*. He focuses upon human limitation, rather than the eternity of the human soul. As a remedy that transcends guilty sorrow, the priest announces the apostolic pathway to God by which one can know meaning in the midst of self-imposed suffering (sin), attuned to the ultracosmic dimension of intellectual self-transcendence. Now, this notion of self-transcendence brings the argument full circle. For the concept supposes a level of penetrating reflection upon experience in a deep quest for meaning, and a basis for integration that leads one as much beyond fear, outrage and self-absorbed frolicking as beyond pain, suffering and regret to a salvation of the holistic kind described in next chapter.
Ch. 6: Bede, the Cartography of the Soul and the Holistic Mystery of Salvation

To this point in the study, one has observed how Bede superimposes the salvific ideas inherent in the Church’s theological hermeneutic upon salvific institutions inherited from ancient Israel, and how he assigns the resultant archetypes to particular peoples. In previous chapters, such archetypes considered alone illustrate Bede’s esteem for traits that he judges to be good in-and-of themselves. Relational righteousness, or the tropological way of being, is the salient feature of wonder-working Irish abbots, who personify the elemental conscience grounded in the natural law of dignity, mutuality and equality of persons. Resolve to forge a Christian culture, or the literal way of being in history, is the virtue of the English ruling class, who personify the rational will of God to make himself present in the culture of space-time. Precision of liturgical scheduling in the avowal of truth, or the allegorical way of being, is the virtue of apostolic agents from beyond the English Channel, who personify the conscience formed by the fullness of the counsel of God, which takes human frailty seriously and offers a suitable resolution.

The concern here is to reflect upon the potential for clashes and for cooperation between the three ways of being that Bede judges to be honourable. One can readily resort to strategic convenience as the explanation of alliances between any two archetypes to the exclusion of the third. *Priests and the king’s class* share a worldview allegiance to the cosmos (see above, 140–42, 175–84), which provides a firm basis for their own iconic positions representing the fixed truth and the freewill of God. Naturally, they would ally against the alleged whining of alienated prophetic iconoclasts. Upset about the implementation of the harder edges of the divine purpose. *Prophets and the king's class* share a low-grid orientation that allows maximal latitude for change in cultural symbols, whether on the basis of the ever-emerging consensus of the prophets (see above, 93–95), or on the negotiated interests of the ruling class (see above, 135). Priestly insistence upon *particular* dogmas and forms to guide the mind to God are out of step
with this demand for flexibility. *Priests and prophets* share a group-centred sociology animated by internal factors, whether the factor is the conscience shaped by shared ideas (see above, 196–200) or by the affective bond arising from a shared ideal (see above, 74). Such offices are prone to unite against the individualism of the king-in-council, who judge others strictly in terms of relevance, that is, their loyalty and utility to the implementation of the program already negotiated. From this brief account, one observes the grounds upon which two modes of being may form an alliance against a third. Put in positive terms, these three types of alliance interpret the world on three bases: the iconophilic metaphysic or the flexible hermeneutic or the group-centred ethic (see table below).¹

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<th>Cosmic Orientation</th>
<th>Flexibility of Hermeneutic</th>
<th>Social Structure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>Iconoclastic Alienation</td>
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<td><em>Egalitarian Group</em></td>
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<td>Priest</td>
<td><em>Iconic Allegiance</em></td>
<td>High-grid Firmness</td>
<td><em>Hierarchical Group</em></td>
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<td>King-in-Council</td>
<td><em>Iconic Allegiance</em></td>
<td><em>Low-grid Flexibility</em></td>
<td>Individualistic Network</td>
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**Between Fire, Water, Earth and Air: A Metaphor for Relationships among Archetypes**

The difficulty comes with providing some account of the basis for total chaos and for total cooperation among all three archetypes of prophet, priest and king. One finds a metaphor to illustrate the dynamics of such relationships of mutual resistance and mutual enhancement in the ancient reckoning of the interaction among the elements.² For the ancients, each element, in being what it is, both resists and enhances other elements. Fire consumes air and melts earth; yet

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¹ The inspiration for such reflections comes from *Cultural Theory* (1990) by Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky.

fire also enhances air through heating (providing needed warmth) and earth through rejuvenation (as when a forest fire renews the fertility of the soil). Earth smothers fire and clouds water; yet earth also enhances fire through incubation (as in a kiln) and water through filtration. Water erodes earth and displaces air; yet water also enhances earth through moistening (to produce life) and air through humidification (making it easier to breathe). Air evaporates water and snuffs fire; yet air also enhances water through oxygenation and fire through stoking (see tables below).

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**Relationships of Resistance**

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**Relationships of Enhancement**

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A theoretical account of the idea of relationships of resistance is found in Herman Dooyeweerd’s notion of modal spheres of meaning. He proposes that one may subdivide the
fields of human inquiry into fifteen fields, each of which resists the others by maintaining a kernel of meaning (see Appendix E below, 253). When arranged in clusters, Dooyeweerd’s modes of meaning evince a parallel to Bede’s archetypes, each of which coheres in a particular kernel of meaning. Whereas Dooyeweerd’s foundational spheres (maths, matter, life and perception) characterise the physical-sensory worldview of apocalyptic anxiety over survival, issues proper to Dooyeweerd’s middling spheres – logic, the will to make history, symbols, social structure and economy – occupy kings. Similarly, the loftier normative subjects of idyllic beauty, law and ethics occupy prophets, and as a capstone, the issue of transcendent faith occupies priests.

A theoretical basis for the idea of relationships of enhancement appears also in Dooyeweerd’s schema – in particular, his notion that kernels of meaning anticipate and retrocipate one another even as each kernel holds its own integrity. In this way, the enhancement of meaning involved in inter-model relations holds meaning itself together. In sum, for Dooyeweerd, as for Bede, “the Christian idea of truth can and should permeate scientific thought from root to crown.”

**Relationships of Resistance and the Unholy British as the Worst of the Worst**

The assertion here is that, when they deny that self-evident value which supports another archetype, practitioners of an archetype diminish the beauty of that self-evident value which supports their own way of being. How much more so is this the case in Bede’s mind for that people – the British – without a place in the three-way archetypical relations of prophet, priest and king! For they will try to bring the whole structure crashing down around the ears of everyone (see above, 53–58). Now to appreciate the nature of relationships of resistance among archetypes, one must keep the uniqueness of each mode of religious leadership in mind. For the

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king to be a king, that is, for a king to govern his covenantal people in the midst of their
historical circumstances, he must prize the freedom of action that bolsters the loyalty required
among his subjects (see above, 136–42). The very insistence upon his own royal prerogatives,
however, could lead a king into wrongful conflict with the priest or with the prophet, who, in
their own ways urge the king and the individualistic ruling class to resist the self-worship that
often comes with the boundless exercise of their most prized value of freedom (power). In fact,
in Bede’s narrative, the English king-in-council does demand such power. Against the
sensibilities of the priesthood, the sons of Sæbert of Essex do demand sacred rites from the
Latinate priest without spiritual preparation, and King Eadbald does take his father’s wife to
ascend to the throne [HE 2.5]. Against the sensibilities of the prophetic abbot Cuthbert, King
Ecgfrith does violate the dignity of his blameless neighbours in Ireland [HE 4.26]. In such
actions, the self-evident value of freedom, a necessary condition to follow the truth freely and
faithfully, finds its limit. For the noble use of freedom does not deny truth and, consequently,
real guilt; nor does it encroach upon the survival or basic dignity of others. In such brazenness,
the king succumbs to that idolatrous spirit of self-worship and tyranny from which the priest and
the prophet wish to keep him. Now, with such thoughts in mind, one cannot help but think that
Bede’s believes the British to have refused the voice of priest and prophet, since they act as
tyrant (or coward). For him, they are the worst of the worst, who manifest the depths of
unholiness in the instrumental realm of politics as those full of themselves (yet without substance
whatsoever).

Similarly, for a prophetic community to be prophetic, it must prize its principles of equality,
dignity and mutuality (see above, 77–85). Overzealous commitment to such ideals, however,
could put the prophet into wrongful tension with the priesthood and the monarchy, as though
iconic positions make no contribution to the public good. For the inegalitarian priest and king hold the egalitarian iconoclast from envy-laden heresy and wrath-laden schism (see above, 95–103). In Bede’s narrative, he writes of the Ionian Irish as those whose practice of celebrating *pascha* undermines the most foundational aspect of the faith: redemption through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In their peevish desire to maintain the equal dignity of their own tradition, so the argument goes, they reject the wisdom of the worldwide episcopate and the Apostolic See, lapsing into heresy or the unhelpful appearance thereof [*HE* 3.25]. When faced with a decision from the king as covenantal leader-of-culture, Colman and his monks effect a schism, departing from fealty to their covenantal king and abandoning the culture to which they were assigned to bear witness [*HE* 3.26]. In these thin-skinned actions, Bede portrays the Irish as succumbing to the spirit of heresy and schism. Now against this backdrop, the observer discerns one of the grounds upon which Bede finds the British to be unholy: in the social realm, they remain in the spirit of heresy and schism to the end.

Finally, for the priesthood to be the priesthood, it must safeguard the deposit of faith as wise custodians of purity and authoritative truth (see above, 207–09). However, when holders of sacerdotal office resist the contributions of prophet and king, they succumb to the prideful self-deception of hypocrisy and clericalism. For the prophetic insistence upon authenticity in office is not a trifling matter; and, unlike the honour of the priesthood, the comforts and prestige of kingship come with the regular responsibility to face danger in the deployment of the mandate to rule. Bede’s story of Bishop Wilfrid is a case in point. For Wilfrid appears to rival the quantitative glories of kingship for their own sake, without the risks associated with kingship [*HE* 5.19]; and he does ignore the monastic example of concern for the poor, being full of his own sense of status, as when he wrests a boy from his family of serfs in Stephen’s *Life* [*VV* ch. 18] (see above, 147n29). In such actions, the self-evident value of humble purity,
necessary to a role about the confession of and absolution from sin, is lost in the quest for accoutrements that bolster status. Such a priest presumes that his status involves rightful access to power. In such perlest, one may be said to embody the spirit of hypocrisy; and hypocrisy is precisely the charge Bede echoes from Gildas’ extensive excoriation of British priests [DEB chs. 66–110/118–142]. In the intellectual realm, again the British are the worst of the worst.

It is at this point that one recalls the anagogical basis of Bede’s archetype of the British apostate. For, he discerns in the British the very death principle of Satan himself, who debases them to the merely physical level of existence. As slothful cowards, the British open themselves to every spiritual disease: the prideful self-deception of the hypocrite, the envious rage of the self-righteous who pulls away from others to build a parallel society around other dogma, and greedy lusts so fully consuming that one becomes a gluttonous, even cannibalistic tyrant (see above, 48–53). Isolated within the confines of their own bodies, Bede finds that the British become unholy slaves of Satan who isolate the archetypical functions from one another and set them upon one another, bent on total ruin on the grandest scale possible – the eschaton (see table below).

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**Unholy Relationships of Resistance**

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\begin{align*}
\text{clockwise} & \quad \text{counter-clockwise} \\
\text{Prophet} & \quad \text{Priest} & \quad \text{Prophet} & \quad \text{Priest} \\
\text{ignores} & \quad \text{banishes} & \quad \text{demeans} & \quad \text{abandons} \\
\text{Priest} & \quad \text{rivals (or flees)} & \quad \text{priests} & \quad \text{goads} \\
\text{King} & \quad \text{King} & \quad \text{King} & \quad \text{King}
\end{align*}
\]
Relationships of Enhancement: The Holy English as the Best of the Best for Bede

The premise here is that the practitioners of an archetype reach mature equilibrium when they recognise the contribution to their own effectiveness from those operating from self-evident values not at the core of their own archetypical way of being. The issue is not mutual toleration between two parties in order to unite against that third value jointly judged to be the greater threat (as outlined above). Instead, equilibrium is reached when differing ways of being work together to enhance one another’s performance of differing tasks. Now full symbiosis in a three-way relationship is only possible if a shared principle draws them into Qoheleth’s three-fold cord not easily broken (Eccl. 4:12). At this point, the bright side of the anagogical way of being enters, by way of explanation, as the very principle that draws the archetypes together. Now the bright side of anagogy is holiness or the life principle, which is the breath and presence of God (see above, 24).

For Bede, it is the manifest presence of God in the English that enables them, as but a royal people, to come to recognise the contributions of the Irish prophet and the Latinate priest. In fact, armed with the anagogical enhancement of the historical role (the aura of covenantal kingship), the English come to internalise tropological and allegorical ways of being so well that holiness diffuses among them to manifest in the roles of thaumaturgical abbot and bishop in communion with Rome. As they perform their role as efficient cause of Britain’s journey to wholeness (see above, xxiii), the English display concrete signs of divine life not only in the royal aura that accepts priests and prophets, but also in miracles done by prophetic abbots who honour priest and king, and through the physical signs of divine presence in sacraments performed by priests who embrace royal and prophetic motifs.

To savour relationships of enhancement, one must remain mindful of the distinctives of each kind of religious leadership. The covenantal king, in essence, is the custodian of Christian
culture, whose efforts the prophet enhances as he exhorts the king to his role as provider. For the king who fulfills the duty of *noblesse oblige* bolsters the dignity of his subjects, as when Oswald gives a gold plate to a poor man [*HE 3.6*]. The priest, for his part, enhances the king’s efforts in his role as proscriptor within Christian culture. For, the priest offers absolution precisely when the king recognises failure in his moral life and duty. By putting the king in good standing with God again, the king, encouraged so, will redouble his efforts to govern well (see above, 140–42, 154–55). In return, the king as protector benefits the prophet by vindicating the prophet’s righteous stand in favour of natural law and his right to speak to the nobility from the heart.

Equally, the king as promoter of Christian ways benefits the priesthood by sponsoring seminaries, aids the cultus by building ecclesiastical infrastructure and abets the faith itself, by sponsoring the baptism of lands near and far (see above, 120–24, 155–61). Overall, English kings show the holy principle of life, for Bede, not only by doing their royal duty, but also by showing sympathy for Irish ways (retiring to monasteries) and by becoming amenable to the priesthood in communion with Rome (as when they leave theological debate to ecclesiastical synods).

The prophetic abbot is, in essence, the holy iconoclast who keeps the king and priest true to their iconic roles. The prophet enhances the sacerdotal role by humanising the priest, whose role sorely tempts him to ritualism. For the priest may become so focused on liturgical procedure as to forget the reason for the liturgy: to draw the people to God in worship. Authentic personal warmth and magnetism surely draws the people to the priest, and then on to God (on Irish personal warmth, see above, 85–93). The prophet also abets the king by risking upset in their relations in order to help the king to acknowledge the peasant’s human dignity (see above, 94). The priest augments the prophetic role through an education in the full counsel of God, so that prophet’s demand for righteousness is perfected by his own admission of sin and his own concession to the weakness of others (for comments concerning Pelagianism, see above, 98).
The king also aids the prophet by recognising the prophet’s righteousness, and vindicating the right to speak to all persons – powerful or otherwise. Bede vindicates the Irish as a holy people, ratified through miraculous vindication and bodily incorruption, not only because they inspire the English to oneness of community in baptism, but also because they accept governance from the English and an education from the Roman priesthood [*HE* 5.22–23].

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<td><strong>King</strong></td>
<td><strong>King</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exhorts</td>
<td>vindicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prophet</strong></td>
<td>absolves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educates</td>
<td>humanises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Priest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The priest is, in essence, the fully formed conscience incarnate who guards the gateway to absolution from sin. Priests enhance prophets by keeping them abreast of the depth and insight of synodical judgement in the formulation of doctrine and its celebration in the liturgy. Put differently, the priest moves the prophet from an elemental to a fully formed conscience (see above, 180). The priest aids the king by liberating him from a guilty conscience, which would cripple his ability to perform his duty to the glory of God. In return, the priest receives from the prophet an exhortation to personal authenticity; and from the king, endowment of cathedrals to celebrate the mass in the fullness of beauty. Now the agents of the teaching office of the Apostolic See, guarantor of the apostolicity of doctrine, are viewed as holy because the divine presence appears by faith in the physical signs of the sacraments (see above, 165). However, the life principle of holiness also enables them to emulate the personable ways of the Irish (here one
notes Theodore’s preference for Irish-trained prelates to Wilfrid’s chagrin) and to work in ways respectful of local English identity.⁴

Now to illustrate the equilibrium achieved by the English as they become spiritually whole within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, one may consider the integrated legacy of several Englishman featured in Bede’s *HE*. Cedd of Lastingham, John of Beverley and Ecgbert *peregrinus* are especially loved by Bede as men of English blood and nation, who embrace communion with Rome and manifest Irish relational righteousness – all but Ecgbert ratified by miracle. The wonder-working Cedd is among the first notable Irish-trained converts to Rome, John is the miracle-worker who ordains Bede to the priesthood, and Ecgbert resolves Bede’s storyline by coaxing the Ionians into communion with Rome.⁵

Notwithstanding Bede’s admiration of Cedd, John and Ecgbert, Bede’s favourite peer in the parliament of heaven is Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, upon whom he writes two hagiographies, one verse and one prose. Cuthbert reflects the tropological way of being, namely, the affective oneness of the church, in his prophetic concern for the foreigner and the lowborn [*HE* 4.26–27]. Anagorical proofs of holiness include *ultus angelici lumen* [the light of his angelic face] [*HE* 4.27], nature miracles [*HE* 4.28], clairvoyance [*HE* 4.29] and bodily incorruption [*HE* 4.30]. Cuthbert reflects the freedom and fealty endemic to historical way of being as he, at the behest of the king, drops his hermitage for the episcopacy, and as he travels about winning the indigenous peoples from their ancestral (magical) ways to a catholicity of culture that affirms the will of God [*HE* 4.27; *VCB* ch. 9]. Cuthbert reflects the allegorical way of being in his episcopacy as he

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⁴ Wilfrid takes umbrage at Theodore’s softened stance on discipline, and resists Theodore’s preference for middle party bishops who, though assuming Latin forms, retain affection for Irish ways. Such middle party bishops include Eata, Bosa, Eadhæd, Cuthbert and John of Beverley. For more on the clash between Wilfrid and Theodore, see Kirby 1991, 37–38, 47–51; Stancliffe 2003, 16–17; and Yorke 2006, 12.

⁵ The multisphere conversion of the English is also rather like the process described by Bernard Lonergan, whereby religious identity (commitment of the king), moral responsibility (awareness of the prophet) and intellectual re-orientation (thought structure of the priest) appear successively, enhancing and and overlapping one another as deepening types of self-transcendence.
serves as guarantor of the teaching office of the Apostolic See [VCB ch. 39] and addresses the guilty mind that meets Christ himself in the Holy Eucharist [HE 4.28]. Finally, as though retiring to gain perspective, Cuthbert as anchorite reflects the fully anagogical way of being that indwells each instant as though it were eternity. In the moment of reprieve, he becomes, as it were, an integrated incarnation of God’s prophetic heart, priestly mind and kingly will.

One may also review the scholarly profiles of Bede presented in chapter one in much the same way of one might interpret Bede’s understanding of Cuthbert’s legacy as one would transcend the archetypes (see above, 3–9). The tropes of Bede aduocator missionis Dei, as exemplified by Wood, McClure, and Rollason, and Bede aduocator causae localis, as exemplified by Goffart and Gunn, taken together, show forth Bede’s sense of exceptionalism as a member of a New Anglo-Israel, who, chosen as princes with God, effect his will on earth. One might understand Bede’s enthusiasm for English evangelistic efforts in the old country as the Anglo-Zionist motif of establishing their kingly kin in the ken of covenant. Bede’s sympathy for the Irish reveals his own prophetic inclinations as corrector morium as exemplified by Thacker and Stancliffe, and senescens praedicator iudicii, as exemplified by Higham and Darby. For the aging Bede, evermore alert to his own mortality, becomes evermore concerned about his own acceptability to God and evermore insistent upon coherence between the profession of faith, personal conduct and the deployment of office. The tropes of Bede doctor ecclesiae, as exemplified by Ray and DeGregorio, and Bede magister scientiarum ecclesiasticarum, as exemplified by Kendall, Wallis, Jones and King, show that Bede indwells the Latinate, erudite and allegorical ethos of priesthood. As doctor ecclesiae, Bede performs work of the minister uerbi, who promulgates sound doctrine from the word of God in accordance with the synodical wisdom of worldwide episcopate. As magister scientis ecclesiasticis, Bede performs the work of the minister altaris, who calibrates and celebrates that corporate dramatisation of dogma
which is the liturgy. Thus, in these three pairings of profile, one observes Bede himself attempting to bring the values behind kingship, prophethood and priesthood into harmony within.

Apart from these three pairings of Bedan profile, there is the seventh trope of *contemplator sublimitatis*, exemplified by Plummer and Wormald. In this mode, Bede the sage mediates upon the intersection of various approaches to spiritual life from a position of withdrawal from the busyness of the world. While those in holy orders form the intellectual elite for him, Bede also expects a high moral standard from priests. While self-disciplined lay teachers and preachers form a moral elite, Bede expects all of them to improve their education in sacred letters and practices so that prophetic heart and priestly head are in harmony.\(^6\) Furthermore, while Bede as a member of the royal English people is interested in historical outcomes for the cause of Christ in the world of engagement, he is also prone to withdraw into his monastic cell to commune with God. What pulls all of this together is the palpable reality of holiness – the life principle of God – diffused through various institutional-corporeal expressions amenable to the noetic-intellectual, affective-relational and the volitional-directional dimensions of the human person. In sum, one discerns how the sage-like Cuthbert and Bede withdraw sufficiently from engagement in the world to receive the perspective required to enflesh a fully integrated and eschatological (anagogical) way of being. This way of being displays God’s life principle of holiness in various ways. It enhances the allegorical structure of priestly thought, the tropological authenticity of prophetic feeling and the kingly resolve to implement and extend godly culture in history; and it brings them together in the human being fully alive to the glory of God. And so, we turn to ways of perceiving this reality in theological and non-theological terms.

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\(^6\) Thacker, in Wormald *et al.*, 131.
Aspects of Being in Sacred Idiom: Institutional Hermeneutics and Anagogy

With the benefit of sustained theological reflection, the reader centuries later can discern the honourable motivations that animate prophethood, priesthood and kingship in Bede’s writings as well as the dramatic modes of witness proper to these institutions, which support an assortment of divine purposes. In the prophetic Irish cœnobium, one recognises a motivation for Christian witness in the impulse for a just peace and relations of mutual acceptance. Dramatised in the mode of the green martyrdom (see above, 96), the observer discerns in the self-exile of the monks a purposeful illustration of the affective oneness of a utopian community that stands out as a city on a hill. Some prophets may be without honour in their homeland, but as peregrini who hospitably receive strangers while in a strange land, the monks honourably accent the affective yearning for a salvation, addressing the emotional and relational dimension of human experience, that settles people in mutual acceptance on an equal footing.

In the English king, one discovers a locus of Christian witness in the Christian hope of reward for effectiveness in God’s mission. Dramatised in the mode of the blue martyr’s tearful penitence over zealous transgressions while attempting to turn divine covenant into culture, the observer appreciates the catholicity of purpose in the faithful yet free-forming will-to-become. The catholic king-in-council, then, speaks to the sacralisation of vernacular language and custom in the continuous and evolving trajectory of identity. He is attentive to his (or his network’s) noble abrogation of former loyalties, flexibly implementing the greater loyalty in one way or the other so that historical circumstances do not suppress, but rather encourage the greater loyalty (see above, 148–53).

In the transnational episcopate centred at Rome, one sees the certainty of faith dramatised. For in the white martyrdom of the dutiful life of humility, the sacerdotium orients all things according to the apostolicity of doctrine for the purpose of training the conscience in the full
counsel of God (see above, 207–209). Acknowledging the distinction between the elemental conscience concerned with the prophetic question of dignity and the sober recognition of the full meaning and reality of sin, the sacred college also safeguards what is essential to the mind of Christ in the midst of the flux tolerated by royal brokers of culture. Delimited candidacy for such an office, then, is not to be interpreted as a pronouncement upon the dignity or utility of any person or subset of person, but as the iconic confirmation of the delimited scope of truth. For the rule of the appointed few members of the synod accents the necessity for mature reflection over space and time that converges on a precise formulation of apostolic truth (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Peace in Acceptance</th>
<th>Hope of Reward</th>
<th>Faith Fulfilled in Duty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Witness of Self-Exile</td>
<td>Witness of Penitence</td>
<td>Witness of Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Oneness</td>
<td>Catholicity</td>
<td>Apostolicity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notably missing here is an account of the eschatological nature of Christian priesthood, prophecy and kingship arising from the joy of victory and everlasting life. This joy is dramatised in the red martyrdom of death and, paradoxically, in the most concrete witness to the life principle identified here as holiness (see above, 24). For to be holy is to be set apart as life itself stands apart from the inanimate universe. To be holy is to be like God, animated by the breath of God himself who permeates one’s entire being. While most evident in the body, true holiness pervades the human person, extending through the body to the conscientious mind, the affect and the rational will.

In Bede’s intuitive account of holiness, there are multiple dimensions of the red martyrdom of physical death for the cause of God. The eschatological associations of each vary with respect to the priest as minister altaris, to the prophet as thaumaturge and to the rightful king bearing the royal aura. The priest may be intimidated or killed as a witness to the true doctrine of salvation
through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by refusing the Holy Eucharist to a king unprepared [HE 2.5]. Indeed, in trepidation the priestly witness like that of Augustine of Canterbury takes up the role as the formed conscience incarnate, facing mortal danger from a king who may be the unbridled will incarnate [HE 1.23]. For, as noted above, the priest can be said to need the king’s benefaction even as the king, while establishing and extending his rule for God, looks to the priest for absolution after wrongly upsetting the prophet.

Prophetic abbots, in Bede’s account, do not face the red martyrdom that King Herod imposed upon John the Forerunner. Instead, the physical and anagogical theme appears as corporeal incorruption so that, rather than facing the red martyrdom, the prophetic witness of the Irish abbots of Lindisfarne consists primarily in their dying in self-exile from Iona. In Bede, the Irish prophet and English king develop a mutual understanding of their roles without the spectre of violence – save in the cases of Sigebert of Essex and Ecgfrith, who die after failing to heed a prophetic word from Cedd and Cuthbert respectively [HE 3.22; 4.26]. Truer to ideal type, however, Irish literature shows kings to have had cause to fear the divine wrath fallen upon them by the word of the prophet. Also, in biblical literature, the prophet also may meet his demise for preaching the dignity of those beyond a people’s own identity or for rejecting a king’s ambition or sexual mores.

Interestingly, the Christian king may also face the red martyrdom in Bede. For, although he is prepared to kill on the battlefield, the legitimacy of his cause warrants his veneration when he is killed sword-in-hand. For the royal aura of kingship grants to the king the divine mandate to kill the enemy, the usurper and the sociopath, for the king himself is the fatherly icon of life, the progenitor-provider-protector of the people. Operant in the mode of history, the king has the sacred duty to protect a particular people who live upon a particular land as a beachhead for the ongoing Christianisation of an ever-evolving culture. Thus, King Oswald becomes a red martyr
for withstanding to the death the advance of the pagan king, Penda of Mercia [HE 3.9]. While early churchmen found the idea of the royal martyr unthinkable, and objectionable (see above, 147–48), this clearly is not so for Bede, who attributes many posthumous miracles to Oswald [HE 3.9–13].

| Joy of Victorious Survival in Heaven | ▼ |
| Witness of Death Defending | |
| Doctrine/Sacraments | or |
| Human Dignity/Natural Law | or |
| Christian Lives/Christian Lands | ▼ |
| Holiness |

What one gathers from the varied reasons for undergoing the red martyrdom is the varied permutations of the eschatological motif that affirm holiness as whatever supports the Christian yearning for eternal life, whether in doctrinal-noetic, moral-relational and cultural-volitional terms. Stated otherwise, one suspects that the life principle of holiness as the bodily manifestation of the presence of God, who is Life Itself, is what holds all the archetypes together. With this view in mind, it seems as though the integration of varied ways of being is itself similar to an emulsion that tends to return to its constituent parts unless shaken together. By way of analogy, persons who approach salvific integration of the mind, heart and will are those shaken by God so that his life principle mitigates the disintegrative impact of sin that would have persons so bent upon one archetypical way of being or another that they disregard the others outright.
Aspects of Being in Secular Idiom: The Higher Brain Functions and the Amygdala

Added to an account of Bede’s quest for holism in the theological language of oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity, one may also interpret the same phenomenon in a way that maps on to the full register of human experience captured in the varied sensibilities of the soft sciences, hard sciences and humanities. To begin, one may discern a thematic parallel between physiological loci of particular brain functions and archetypes evident in Bede that sponsor particular types of psychological engagement, philosophical disposition and political result.

The hippocampus, also known as the emotional locus of the brain, serves in that function of short-term memory and sociality by which one person addresses another as an emotive being with whom to interact live in the present. In this type of reality, one locates a basis for the macrocosmic mode of human experience, which is rooted in a sense of the common bond shared by all people regardless of particularities in their profile. Naturally, when this elemental affectivity is frustrated by another’s withdrawal or articulation of superior status or domination or hostility, or any response other than mutual acceptance, an indignant, imperative psychological state ensues like that of the prophet who calls fire from heaven upon those who deny the image of

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7 Deepak Chopra and Rudolph Tanzi, a neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School, suggest a physical basis for the psychological biomes discerned here, identifying the amygdala, the hippocampus, the neocortex and the indefinable integrating function with the instinctual, the emotional, the rational (instrumental) and the intuitive aspects of the brain. To explore such connexions, see Chopra and Tanzi. Kenneth Burke notes similar functions in Bede’s typology. One detects a corollary between Kenneth Burke’s “hortatory negative” and Bede’s prophetic abbots, between Burke’s comments on technology and Bede’s kings, and between Burke’s admission of hierarchy as endemic to humanity and Bede’s priesthood. See Burke, “On the Definition of Man”. Finally, one discerns overlap between Bede’s view of religious institution and Shalom Schwartz’s view of human motivation within the structure of universal human values. Consider the relation between these pairs: prophecy/self-transcendence; openness to change/apostasy; conservation/priesthood; self-enhancement/kingship between universalism.

God in others (see above, 74–76). Reality is assessed by means of the coherence of all experiences to the ideal of sociability. The insights of the symbolic interactionist become prominent as all fit upon but one spectrum labelled humanity, and conflict is resolved by the imperative of mutual concession led by a charismatic authority like an abbot beloved by all.

Similarly, as one ponders the role of the neocortex in long-term memory and the setting of goals, one finds the locus of the instrumental brain, which assesses the utility, and relevance, of persons and objects for attaining desired outcomes. In this type of reality, one discovers the territory of the mesocosmic mode of human experience, that is, of the sense of commitment to that particular collective most amenable to one’s own identity and goals. Naturally, such people are often one’s own spouse and children, one’s own birth or extended family, one’s own profession, one’s own village, language-group, culture or citizenship. The very givenness of such relationships into which one is born makes for an optative way of being that finds happiness in the continued success of one’s network of fealty into the foreseeable future (see above, 136–140).

Reality, then, is approached through the gradient mode, which adjusts identity in order to accommodate those interpretations most correspondent to the shape of the world. Conflict is mediated by that mandated authority which is acknowledged by most power brokers, with happy compromise as that agreement which grants sufficient freedom for sufficient fealty.

Again, as one broods over the role of the mind in creating a global context for meaning from disparate facts, emotions and rates of success, one surmises the qualitative aspect of higher brain function, which interprets suffering in a way that enables a person to cope. In this type of reality, one detects the platform for the ultracosmic mode of human experience that reflects upon the deep, primordial past, intrigued by the absolute bounds between humanity, other orders of

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8 Many thanks to Prof. Bryan Karney, a civil engineer, whose insightful lecture entitled “Five Strategies for Achieving Personal Goals” has inspired me to explore multiple modes of assessment that I have articulated as binary, spectral, gradient, patterned and ultimate.
created being and the Creator. Such a mindset tends toward an indicative climate of soul that, in discovering meaning, produces sorrow (see above, 207–209). For as one recognises sin, one admits the truth that transcends the tension between the contingent, painful and self-absorbed reality of the human being and the universal intent of human awareness of the cosmos and desire to enjoy, to perform, and to embody the good. Reality becomes a pattern that is affirmed by the erudite authority appointed to the few who, in the hierarchical spirit of collaboration among stations, contribute their wisdom by which all may cope with guilt, pain, rejection and reversals of fortune.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physiological Locus</th>
<th>Hippocampus</th>
<th>Neocortex</th>
<th>Neocortex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realm of Philosophical</td>
<td>Macrocosm</td>
<td>Mesocosm</td>
<td>Ultracosm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>of All Humanity</td>
<td>of Particular Loyalties</td>
<td>of the Universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and</td>
<td>Imperative Outrage</td>
<td>Optative Cheer</td>
<td>Indicative Sorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Result</td>
<td>of Charismatic Authority</td>
<td>of Mandated Authority</td>
<td>of Erudite Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, as one reflects upon the role of the amygdala in securing the physical survival of particular individuals, one unearths the locus for the instinctual brain, which decides in the binary mode to fight or to flee when confronted with danger. In this type of reality, one perceives the microcosmic mode of human experience, in which the individual does what is necessary to survive. In Bede’s typology, this reality is assigned to the British apostate who descends to the isolate status of mere physical existence, crippled by the sheer immediacy of an autistic spirituality. Governance in this mode is straightforwardly physical (see above, 40–44). A tyrant, who engages in mortal combat, imposes it; or the slave (or coward), forced into the subjunctive mode of fearfulness for life and limb, concedes it.

At this juncture, it is helpful to note that engagement at the level of the mesocosm, the
macrocosm and the ultracosm, although involving engagement as collectives, is nonetheless the engagement of individuals. Put differently, engagement in the royalist network, the prophetic enclave and priestly hierarchy all require the engagement of individuals as a necessary condition. Now individuals need not be cowardly or tyrannical as they indwell the microcosmic mode of human experience, even though individuals do cultivate awareness of how the larger level of engagement impacts them and their chances of survival. It is here that the insights on the varied nature of the red martyrdom pertain. For to embrace the red martyrdom, whether at one level of engagement or another, is nonetheless the sacrifice of the individual within the individual’s own microcosmic mode of existence. The red martyr must overcome the fleshly amygdala to embrace the amygdala of the spirit – the holy yearning for eternal life. In this act, the red martyr rightly embraces the subjunctive dread of the organic authority of Almighty God who holds all life in his hand. As King Solomon says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7).

By contrast, unholiness becomes the reduction of human experience to the physical level of the body dominated by the amygdala. The ultracosmic level of engagement collapses into clericalism and hypocrisy. Heretical and schismatic fission reduces the macrocosmic level of engagement to pockets of smug self-righteousness that stake a claim to the moral high ground for everyone. The mesocosmic level of engagement becomes characterised by relentless imperialism that treads down the cultural other. When such conditions converge, one is left with cannibalistic tyranny as individuals behave so radically that they become instances of electrical meat that snuff the spark of divine breath within them. The unholy downside possible in each way of being – hypocritical clericalism, totalitarian self-righteousness and cultural imperialism – shows how each archetype (and brain function) needs the others to effect wholeness.⁹

⁹ John O’Malley identifies four ways that Western culture has engaged over the centuries: as artist focused upon the senses; as reformer, who confronts oppression; as humanist rhetor, who shapes
**Physiological Locus**

Amygdala

↓

**Realm of Philosophical Engagement**

Microcosm of the Individual as Body connected to Intellect and Affect and Volition

↓

**Psychological and Political Result**

Subjunctive Dread of Organic Authority

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**Of Boundless Outrage and Bounded Sorrow, Creative Delight and Creaturely Dread**

Having explored in sacred and secular idiom aspects of the human condition brought to mind by Bedan archetypes, it is amusing to consider a proverbial anecdote among existential practitioners of the queen of the sciences: What theologians perceive resting above the mists on the mountaintop of truth other types of inquiry seek to know while enveloped in – yet seeking to dispel – the mists on one side of the mountain or the other. What one observes in the holistic witness to salvation, proffered in Jesus Christ, is resolution of the antimonies embedded within the structure of the human condition itself as expressed by natural scientists, social scientists and philosophers. Whether through contemplation of divine revelation or in the observation of the physical and existential world, one bumps up against the mystery of the human condition itself.

On the one hand, coupling the prophetic ideal of oneness and the imperative outrage of the hippocampal engagement on the level of the macrocosm, one is led to affirm the notion that eternity resides in the human heart, which constantly searches beyond itself for relationship. As the proverb goes, “Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Prov. 20:5); and as the preacher states, “[God] has put eternity in their hearts” (Eccl. 3:11b). Just as the human person explores the depth of feeling within, and in relation to mainstream culture; and as academic, who diagnoses problems. See O’Malley, *Four Cultures of the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2004).
others, so also in rejection is there a taproot for boundless outrage over indignity and isolation. On the other hand, the conscientious orientation associated with the priest leads one to accept the limited nature of the human mind, which “sees through a glass darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12). Clouded by guilt and contingency, the maturing mind recognises, as life progresses, just how self-deluded and limited its self-understanding really is. Whereas the prophet addresses the expansiveness of the human person in imagine Dei, the priest addresses the limited nature of the human mind bound by original sin and without any means to step outside the universe in order to perceive it.

Similarly, antimony emerges between two other dimensions of humanity. The neocortical ways linked to the king display the human penchant to be a fruitful creator who freely builds his world of symbols from materials found here and there. Also cognizant of the need for loyal continuity of identity, he is well suited to managing (subduing) his social and material world (Gen. 1:28). For, as the proverb goes, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter” (Prov. 25:2). And indeed, the research and development of technology is a product of this royalist and neocortical motif. The physicalist sensibilities of the amygdala, however, show the same king to be but a creature, subject to the contingencies of his father’s seed and his mother womb, his next morsel of food and sip of water, his next breath and night of rest, and his next victory over hostile forces from within and without his realm. Whereas the king received by his people emphasises the creative nature of the human person, the isolate draws out rather poignantly the creaturely aspect of contingency.10

Putting sacred and secular motifs together, one discovers how Bede offers a glimpse into salvation as that dispassionate position in communion with God. Such a state enables a person to fully accept creaturely status in anticipation of eternal life. This state also enables a person to slip

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10 The intersecting antimonies presented here are similar to those described by David D’Avray as the value-instrumental interface and the formal-substantive interface. Applying D’Avray’s structural pattern to the content presented here, one would describe the human being as bounded creator (value-instrument) and boundless creature (form-substance).
the chains of creaturely dread and transcend self-absorbed happiness in one’s own creativity, boundless outrage that consumes and binding sorrow that debilitates. On the one hand, the human being, in tune with the prophetic Irish abbot, displays expansive awareness of the oneness of human dignity, fully embracing that charismatic authority which highlights the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Prophet like Moses. On the other, the human being is delimited, and as such, does well to acknowledge the synodical wisdom of the Apostolic See, which takes the erudite authority of the Man of Sorrows seriously. For the Word-Made-Flesh, in his role as High Priest and Victim, wisely discerns a way to restore the cosmos and absolve sin (Isa. 53:11). As a creator of culture, the human being takes well to the directional way of being that, like the English king, accepts the mandated authority of the Son of God the High King in order to recapitulate the religious itinerary of the people of God in culture at new places and times in the free and faithful spirit of catholicity. Finally, like the putatively apostate British, whose way of being chafes against their creaturely status, the human being can refuse the organic authority of the Creator by throwing off the holiness arising from the rightful fear of the Lord.

**Self-Transcendence in Bede, the Mystery of Humanity and Theosis**

Now holiness, or the life-principle of God, resolves the antimonies of the human person by having them function together with a view to a higher principle of integration. As implied earlier (see above, 223–28), there is another archetype that emerges defined by integration under the epithet *contemplator sublimitatis*, that is, the sage or the anchorite who, like Cuthbert, communes in the immediacy of the divine presence, having participated in the divine nature of disinterested love that holds the cosmic alienation of the Irish prophet and the cosmic allegiance of Latin priest and English king at once. While archetypes of engagement have suspected corollaries to parts of the brain’s hardware, there still lingers the matter of consciousness itself, or that *Gestalt* of personhood that transcends the joy of survival and the peace of mutuality, the
hopefulness of the quantitive intellect and the faith of the qualitative intellect. For, as neuroscientists affirm, consciousness itself cannot be assigned to any detectable brain function. Perhaps, then, this entity is one’s personhood intended for theosis that, avoiding distraction, transcends intellect, affect and instinct in right worship of God by ascending the mountain to see the glory of the Transfigured One in space-time.

In the end, by parsing Bede’s archetypes in this way, one discerns the mysterious cartography of Bede’s soul *en route* to theosis. Beauty and stability of structure, precise calculation and numerology captivate Bede, who, though aware of his own mortality, constructs an elaborate account of the universe by measuring it with sense of orthodoxy itself serving mystically as though Jesus the Carpenter’s square. Simultaneously, he perceives life from many vantage points within the process of salvation the virtues that take their place to complete the encounter of the eternal soul with God. Caring much for his people, Bede presents for emulation the exemplary Englishman, Cuthbert, as one perfected among them who humbly approaches his fullest potential through the very embrace of God in the midst of his own human limitation. Indeed, one must gauge from the holistic witness of Bede’s corpus to the diversity proper to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church that our angler of souls has fallen in love with God, and with right Angles in more ways than one.
Ch. 7: An Epilogue of Debriefing and Caveats Pertaining to This Study

Our faculties are disunited and out of order. While the rational intelligence is busy making distinctions, the ‘heart’, in obedience to dark subconscious forces, is obliterating them. We are turned this way and that, lacking any centre of balance.:

— Olivier Clement

If we perform in differing roles in very rapid succession, we may come to seem to ourselves to be acting erratically and out of character, the ensuing puzzlement will increase the likelihood of our reconsidering larger segments of our life as a whole – and thus of the imbroglio of our ‘selves’ encroaching on each other’s territory.†

— John M. Rist

Now, given the nature of their work, mediævalist historians, natural and social scientists, and scholars of the humanities, such as literary critics and theologians, are bound to respond to this thesis with varying degrees of interest, enchantment and incredulity. Common among academics immersed in the western tradition of industrial democracy and cultural individualism, however, is the tendency to resist standardised theories of personhood as though for intellectual reasons and not simply for forensic and political ones. As Mary Douglas has noted:

The self has become a secret, empty place, inaccessible to public probing. We... [find] certain reticences necessary, and [respect] personal privacy. We agree that for all practical purposes the self shall be defined in its juridical posture, unitary and indivisible. It will be a very different kind of community that allows the self to be conceived as divided into identifiable interacting sub-selves. And that community is so much one that we westerners wish to avoid it is difficult for us even to imagine.

Such an observation resigns one to admit that many will find the thesis to be occult or ambitious even though they may find its lexical studies or its interpretation of particular texts engaging. For the preceding chapters do enter into a realm many would find inviolable – the soul as a secret necessary to postmodern pluralism. This said, the linkage of brain function to psychological climate, institutional hermeneutics, social structures and credal affirmations is

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far from self-evident and impossible to prove beyond any shadow of doubt, even if it is plausible on intuitive grounds. Therefore, after the interdisciplinary spirit implied in the quotation above by Douglas,¹ I present assertions that also mark Bede as a generalist groping after the full meaning of salvation. For the most significant implication for this study of Bede is the idea that credal ideals concerning the Church not only reflect Bede’s own quest for salvation, operant within himself and projected upon his social circumstances, but also hold a corollary for other persons and contexts similarly human and likewise in need of salvation.

For mediæval studies, perhaps the most poignant consequence of this study is the idea that other mediæval personages, movements or institutions may be compared and contrasted for their embodiment of particular pairings of idea/meaning and institution/mechanism. For theologians, this study offers food for thought in the spirit of well-known typologies of spirituality and religious institution promoted by H. Richard Niebuhr, Urban T. Holmes, III, and Avery Dulles.² For it posits the notion that the mystical life involves tropology, anagogy, history and allegory in much the same way that orthodoxy, or right worship, reflects the oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of God and his gospel. Theologians may also mull over the possibility that modern Christian movements may exhibit tendencies similar to the archetypes discerned in Bede. For the sacramental motif that shifts the faithful towards elaborate liturgical worship, and the move to interpret Scripture as a canon, overlaps with the priestly ethos that honours an enduring tradition of understanding the Christian faith as questions framed, answered and dramatised in-house. The ecumenical movement, in the same way, overlaps with the prophetic worldview in its concern for the oneness of a community that practices the justice of Christian peace. For its part,

¹ Douglas 1995, 86.
evangelicalism overlaps with the royalist ethos in its catholicising effort to facilitate vernacular expressions of Christian hope everywhere. The flair of charismaticism overlaps with the anagogical aspects of prophecy and kingship in particular, with its accent upon the victory of Christian joy in miraculous phenomena and a providential view of eschatological prophecy that equates the battle evident in apocalyptic scriptures with rumours of war in their place and time. Finally, recent interest in the contemplative life overlaps with the holistic notion of mysticism by which one retreats into the transcendent love of the God by whom, in whom and from whom are all things. To this end, in speaking to the way that Bede indwells the human condition, one acknowledges that theology is but the attempt of human beings to interpret the anitimonies of human condition alienated from yet desirous to find rest in allegiance to God.

Now, despite the ferment this study could provide for mediæval studies and for theology, several caveats are in order. As a first caveat, this study considers Bede by means of his own corpus. While one may apply Bede’s archetypes to other figures or movements, considerable effort must be expended to demonstrate such correspondence from the evidence available concerning them. As a second caveat, one must recognise that, while Bede does suggest from available evidence that various ethnicities do exhibit those particular traits presented in this study, there is no attempt to conclude here that his assignment of archetypes reduces the peoples concerned to the ethos assigned to them. In other words, the British of Bede’s day were not necessarily, nor solely apocalyptic rebels, as though they had no rightful kings or righteous prophets or right-minded priests. A third caveat is that there is no attempt to insist that kingship and priesthood themselves do consist in history of only those traits presented here. For some cultures may impose upon kings traits proper to isolates rather than treating them as the hub of a network. For example, in the case of sacral kingship, a people may depose a king for sustaining a blemish which compromises the physical attractiveness required to symbolise the health of the
people. Peoples have executed kings to reverse their fortunes in a time of famine. A fourth caveat is that this study does not imply that Britain alone evinces the archetypes presented in this study, as though they were solely Bede’s creation and particular to his situation. One may deploy the same archetypes in a study of mediæval Russia or Spain, without reference to Britain’s peoples. A fifth caveat is that this study does not imply that different ethnicities must reflect different archetypes. One may deploy Bedan archetypes to a situation in which all subsets of a society share the same language, land and historical memory. A sixth caveat pertains to the direction of relations between idea and institution within the heuristic presented here. While this study affirms that the two components to a mode of being, meaning and mechanism, relate to one another; it does so without prejudice to the priority of one over the other, for institutions shape ideas (Durkheim) and ideas shape institutions (Weber).

Finally, a seventh caveat is that this study does not attempt to demonstrate that Bede deploys the ideas of unitas, sanctitas, catholitas, apostolitas so precisely that each becomes a technical term that admits little or no interchangeably. One could argue for latitude concerning particular associations between the marks of the Church and archetypical content. For example, whereas oneness is judged here to address the communal and affective aspect of people, intellective or dogmatic implications do follow. For, the beliefs of the Church should be recognisably one thing, that is, not the beliefs of those who reject the claim of Jesus Christ upon their lives. With caveats presented, then, this study is offered to the world for reflection as one way to view the witness of one mediæval man to the human condition integrated in The One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, as she aspires to the fullness of the Spirit and is edified by the sight of God incarnate manifest in his saints.
Appendices

Three traits mark the sources informing the heuristic employed in this thesis. First, it is interdisciplinary. Douglas trained in anthropology; D’Avray in history; and Haidt in psychology. Second, it accounts for varied schools of thought within each discipline. For example, Zeitlin and Collins register the divergent perspectives of functionalist, interactionist, conflict and exchange theories within sociology. Third, it uses authors of divergent commitment. Burke is an atheist; Lonergan a Catholic; and Dooyweerd a Protestant. The result is a typology true to each discipline that includes schools of thought and minimises the bias of any particular worldview. A complete list of the works informing the heuristic appears in a separate bibliography (see below, 280–85).

Since the logic of this thesis involves laying one perspective of the human condition over another, it seems prudent to include several appendices that arrange a lot of information tidily as much for ready comparison and contrast of viewpoints as for discerning their complementarity. To this end, Appendix A presents the central ideas of the thesis in the form of a glossary that defines key terms in relation to one another. Appendix B arranges Bedan archetypes over against a set of composite definitions of religious leadership derived from biblical scholarship in the form of a correlative table. Following these, in the form of the comparative table, Appendix C and Appendix D display the traits proper to each archetype of the Bedan heuristic. Appendix C focuses upon his activist archetypes of apostate, prophet, priest and king; and Appendix D focuses upon the archetype of the contemplative sage. Finally, Appendix E shows in tabular form how Herman Dooyeweerd’s schema of fifteen modal spheres correlates to the concerns of the Bedan archetypes. This table illustrates both the idea of archetypical relationships of resistance (or notional integrity) in the fact of fifteen distinct spheres and the idea of archetypical relationships of enhancement in that one notion builds upon and complements another without losing its constitutive meaning.
Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Ecclesiastical Hermeneutics

*Allegorical Interpretation* – that mode whereby the shape of synodically approved dogma is discerned in the details of biblical passages

*Anagogical Interpretation* – that mode which concerns the matter of survival into eternity

*Historical Interpretation* – that mode whereby one discerns purpose of God within human affairs

*Tropological Interpretation* – that mode which discerns an ethical code granting dignity to others

Traits of the Church

*Apostolicity* – that trait of the Church whereby the authority of Jesus Christ, transmitted through his apostles, shapes the minds of the faithful in all places at all times according to mind of God characterised by received ideas taught by the apostles and mediated through them as received institutions and forms

*Catholicity* – that trait of the Church whereby human freewill exercises the latitude afforded by the apostles that peoples may enculturate Christian identity, according to the will of God, in ways that commend and re-commend the gospel in particular places at particular times without betrayal of apostolic teaching, institution and practice

*Holiness* – that trait of the Church whereby the life-giving presence of God evermore manifests divine life concretely and corporately and corporeally in the particulars of the individual lives and in the common life of the faithful so that God fills all in all

*Oneness* – that trait of the Church whereby righteousness based upon recognition of the redeemed image of God in others, regardless of social indicator or location, reflects in real relationships of mutual respect and concern the heart of God evident in the fellowship that ought to exist in and between local communities of the faithful gathered in the spirit of unity and joined the bond of peace

Psychological Climates

*Life in the Imperative Mood* – that psychological climate of indignation demanding justice now

*Life in the Indicative Mood* – that psychological climate of solemnity fixed upon primordial truth

*Life in the Optative Mood* – that psychological climate of good cheer hopeful for the future

*Life in the Subjunctive Mood* – that psychological climate of dread wary of contingencies to survival
Horizons of Human Experience

Macrocosm – that realm of human experience which recognises all persons living as human

Mesocosm – that realm of human experience which addresses the identities and welfare of various subsets of humanity bonded by language, culture, family or class interest

Microcosm – that realm of human experience proper to the individual human being

Ultracosm – that realm of human experience which concerns human relations to the cosmos

Schools of Sociological Thought

Conflict Theory – that view, associated with Karl Marx, which supposes that the violent struggle to survive evident in class warfare is the force most profoundly shaping society

Exchange Theory – that view, also known as rational choice theory, which judges the ambition to better one’s station to offer the best explanation of social organisation

Functionalism – that view, associated with the earliest sociologists, which supposes that social institutions emerge from latent beliefs held jointly by the members of a society

Symbolic Interactionism – that view, associated with Herbert Mead, which supposes that the cultural world of social meaning emerges as people, though ongoing interaction, seek mutual understanding in shared, yet shifting, symbols

Dynamics of Archetypical Relations

Relationships of Enhancement – relations between archetypical institutions that exhibit holiness by providing mutual assistance without denying the contribution of either

Relationships of Resistance – relations between archetypical institutions that exhibit unholiness in their display of tension as each clings to its own identity by undermining that of the others

Modes of Martyrdom

Red martyrdom – physical witness to divine truth borne at the cost of one’s own life and blood

Green martyrdom – exemplary witness to divine truth in the peaceable commune of the self-exiled

Blue martyrdom – pentitent witness to divine truth evident in tears, and deeds, of a life corrected

White martyrdom – iconic witness to divine truth evident in humility that incarnates true teaching
### Appendix B: Scholarship of Israelite Leadership and Bedan Exemplars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blenkinsopp/Grabbe/Hutton†</th>
<th>Bede</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership in Ancient Israel</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership in Medieval Britain</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diviner-Healer, Judge (Elohist)</td>
<td>Tyrant Cædwalla of Gwynedd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>the securement of specific guidance by lot in the face of total chaos, or a force consolidating partial order in the midst of the same</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King (Yahwist)</td>
<td>King Oswald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>defence of the covenantal land and the enforcement of discipline within the covenantal people</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophet (Deuteronomist)</td>
<td>Abbot Aidan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>the emotive stretching of the mythic consciousness of the covenantal people from within, toward the breaking point of non-descript universalism</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Pope Gregory the Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>the analysis and application of writings that specify the covenantal people’s enduring relations to the cosmos in temporal (salvation history), spatial (land, temple) and, thus, concrete, ritual terms that teach truth</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>St. Cuthbert, the Anchorite</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>ancient wisdom that, through evidence and counter-evidence, integrates priestly organisation of the specifics of revelation and prophetic concern for ethical principles, for a society administered by kings</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

† The definitions provided here are a composite from insights apparent in the works of Joseph Blenkinsopp, Lester Grabbe and Rodney Hutton. See list of secondary sources for details.
Appendix C: Comparative Traits of Bede’s Set of Four Activist Archetypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant Christian Hermeneutic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anagogy</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israelite Institution as Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostate</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bede’s Fusion to Form Ethnic Archetypes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Tyrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anagogy Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aura of Evil</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Exemplar in Bede</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cædwalla of Gwynedd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Witness: The Marks of the Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unholiness Manifest to the Senses</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality of Witness</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refusal of Martyrdom &amp; Imposers of Red Martyrdom</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Models of Ecclesiology</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostate Tyranny/ The Persecuted Remnant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theological Virtue Emphasised

Joy of Victory Peace with God Hope for Treasure Faith in God’s Emphasis in Eternal Life Oneself and Others in Heaven Self-Revelation

Penant toward Deadly Sin

Gluttony/Sloth Envy/Anger Greed/Lust Pride/Deceit

Philosophical Orientation to the Cosmos

Alienated Alienated Allegiant Allegiant

Uncertain Evil/Opaque Cosmos Good/Clear Cosmos Qualifiedly Beneficent

Philosophical Orientation to Human Nature

Uncertain Good-Natured Corrupt/Self-Seeking Qualifiedly Corrupt

Philosophical Orientation to Space

Ground Underfoot Static/Enclavish Centrifugal, Provincial Centripetal, Global

Philosophical Orientation to Time

This very instant Living memory Foreseeable future Traceable time

Epistemological Orientation

Pragmatism Coherence Correspondence Authority/Revelation

Axiological Orientation of Moral Foundation and Cardinal Virtue

Nurture Fairness Liberty/Loyalty Authority/Sanctity

Fortitude Justice Temperance Wisdom

Locus of Psychological Ethos and Corollary to Brain Function

Physical-Sensory Affective-Relational Volitional-Directional Noetic-Structural

Amygdala Hippocampus Neocortex (Quantitative) Neocortex (Qualitative)

Scope of Psychological Awareness

Microcosm Macrocosm Mesocosm Ultracosm of the Individual of the Human Race of Vested Identities of Humanity in the Universe
Psychological Climate and Expression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
<th>Optative</th>
<th>Indicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprehension</td>
<td>Outrage</td>
<td>Cheerfulness</td>
<td>Sorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>Exclamatory</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Has God said? Love thy neighbour! Come, Lord Jesus! It is finished.*

Psychological Sensibilities for Managing Contingency

| Appeal of Binary Contrast | Affinity within a Spectrum | Adaptation indexed to a Gradient | Alignment to a Pattern |

Sociological Theory of Human Relations

| Conflict Theory | Symbolic Interactionism | Exchange Theory | Functionalism |

Anthropological Configuration of Human Collectives

| Fatalist Isolate | Egalitarian Group | Individualist Network | Hierarchical Group |

Nature of Political Authority

| Organic/Physical (enforcement) | Charismatic/Relational (legislative) | Mandated/Political (executive) | Appointed/Erudite (judicial) |

| Rule of One | Rule of All | Rule of Many | Rule of Few |

Strategy and Goals for Conflict Resolution

| Fight to Victory For Survival | Mutual Concession for the Dignity of All | Negotiated Fealty for Freedom | Dutiful Cooperation of Complementary Roles for Complementary |

Truths

Preferred Type of Rationality

| Substantive (exception to rules) | Formal (rules in common) | Instrumental (ability to effect ends) | Values/Convictions (mutually reinforcing tenets concretely mediated) |

Scholary Profile of Bede

| aduocato causae localis | corrector morium/ senescens praedicator iudicii | aduocator Dei missionis | doctor ecclesiae/ magister scientiae ecclesiasticarum |
Appendix D: Traits of Bede’s Composite Archetype of the Contemplative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>The Holy Individual as Sage/ Bede as <em>contemplator sublimitatis</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Witness</td>
<td>Holism of Orthodoxy as Oneness, Holiness, Catholicity, Apostolicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermeneutic</td>
<td>Mysticism as Anagogy, Tropology, History and Allegory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of Cosmos</td>
<td>Alienated and Allegiant at Once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of Humans</td>
<td>Easily Distracted from the Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to Space</td>
<td>Transcendent, while Immanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to Time</td>
<td>Transcendent, while Immanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevailing Mood</td>
<td>Infinitive-like Dispassion Overall; yet, the Right Mood at the Right Space-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive Tone</td>
<td>Multifaceted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of Assessment</td>
<td>Multifaceted Orientation to Ultimate Reality Leading to Apophaticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vices</td>
<td>Susceptible to Solipsism; that is, to Centripetal rather than to Centrifugal Mysticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtues</td>
<td>Multifaceted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Virtue</td>
<td>Disinterested Love of God, Others and Oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Authority</td>
<td>Multifaceted, each type in its place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiology</td>
<td>Mystical Body of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Patient Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Relations</td>
<td>Phenomenological: An Autonomist who Acknowledges the Many Facets of the Human Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of Truth</td>
<td>Holism: One that Allows Each Test Its Rightful Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological Locus</td>
<td>Undefined, or the Whole Person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Dooyeweerd’s Modal Spheres Indexed to Bedan Archetypes

**Foundational Spheres of Meaning: Concerns of the Apocalyptic Worldview**

1. Arithmetic – the distinction between integers; elemental maths
2. Spatial – the continuity between integers; advanced maths
3. Kinematic – the calculation of movement; physics
4. Physical – the principles of matter and its properties; chemistry
5. Biotic – the principles of life and its processes; biology
6. Psychic – the principles of feeling, perception and emotional response; psychology

**Transitional Spheres of Meaning Proper to Humanity: Concerns of the Kingly Worldview**

7. Logical – the principles of analysis, conceptualisation, understanding distinctions; logic
8. Historical – the principles of formation, identity; technology, historiography

**Higher Spheres of Meaning Proper to Humanity: Concerns of the Kings and Prophets**

**First Order: Concerns of the Kingly Worldview**

9. Lingual – the principles of the symbol as shorthand for content; language, semiotics
10. Social – the principles of institution, roles, office; sociology
11. Economic – the principles of resource production, management; economics

**Second Order: Concerns of the Prophetic Worldview**

12. Aesthetic – the principles of harmony, humour, inessential delight; the fine arts
13. Juridical – the principles of justice, duty, symmetric relations; jurisprudence
14. Ethical – the principles of empathy, generosity, other-centredness; ethics

**Transcendental Sphere of Meaning Proper to Humanity: Concern of the Priestly Worldview**

15. Pistic – the principle of cosmic certainty in philosophy, theology, religion, anthropology
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