

MRST 5301-001: Methods in Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Spring 2016
April 10, 2018

Selections from Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price

Selections from King Alfred's Translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, from *Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader*, eds. Cassidy and Ringler

Passage from *Juliana*, from *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records III: The Exeter Book*, eds. Krapp and Dobbie

Translations of Selections from Ælfric's *Preface to Genesis* by Brian McFadden

CHAPTER 24: *A brother of the monastery is found to possess God's gift of poetry* [A.D. 680]

IN this monastery of Streanaeshalch lived a brother singularly gifted by God's grace. So skilful was he in composing religious and devotional songs that, when any passage of Scripture was explained to him by interpreters, he could quickly turn it into delightful and moving poetry in his own English tongue. These verses of his have stirred the hearts of many folk to despise the world and aspire to heavenly things. Others after him tried to compose religious poems in English, but none could compare with him; for he did not acquire the art of poetry from men or through any human teacher but received it as a free gift from God. For this reason he could never compose any frivolous or profane verses; but only such as had a religious theme fell fittingly from his devout lips. He had followed a secular occupation until well advanced in years without ever learning anything about poetry. Indeed it sometimes happened at a feast that all the guests in turn would be invited to sing and entertain the company; then, when he saw the harp coming his way, he would get up from table and go home.

On one such occasion he had left the house in which the entertainment was being held and went out to the stable where it was his duty that night to look after the beasts. There when the time came he settled down to sleep. Suddenly in a dream he saw a man standing beside him who called him by name. 'Caedmon,' he said, 'sing me a song.' 'I don't know how to sing,' he replied. 'It is because I cannot sing that I left the feast and came here.' The man who addressed him then said: 'But you shall sing to me.' 'What should I sing about?' he replied. 'Sing about the Creation of all things,' the other answered. And Caedmon immediately began to sing verses in praise of God the Creator that he had never heard before, and their theme ran thus:

Praise we the Fashioner now of Heaven's fabric,
The majesty of his might and his mind's wisdom,

Caedmon's poetry

[IV.24]

Work of the world-warden, worker of all wonders,
How he the Lord of Glory everlasting,
Wrought first for the race of men Heaven as a roof-tree,
Then made he Middle Earth to be their mansion.

This is the general sense, but not the actual words that Caedmon sang in his dream; for verses, however masterly, cannot be translated literally from one language into another without losing much of their beauty and dignity. When Caedmon awoke, he remembered everything that he had sung in his dream, and soon added more verses in the same style to a song truly worthy of God.

Early in the morning he went to his superior the reeve, and told him about this gift that he had received. The reeve took him before the abbess, who ordered him to give an account of his dream and repeat the verses in the presence of many learned men, so that a decision might be reached by common consent as to their quality and origin. All of them agreed that Caedmon's gift had been given him by our Lord. And they explained to him a passage of scriptural history or doctrine and asked him to render it into verse if he could. He promised to do this, and returned next morning with excellent verses as they had ordered him. The abbess was delighted that God had given such grace to the man, and advised him to abandon secular life and adopt the monastic state. And when she had admitted him into the Community as a brother, she ordered him to be instructed in the events of sacred history. So Caedmon stored up in his memory all that he learned, and like one of the clean animals chewing the cud, turned it into such melodious verse that his delightful renderings turned his instructors into auditors. He sang of the creation of the world, the origin of the human race, and the whole story of Genesis. He sang of Israel's exodus from Egypt, the entry into the Promised Land, and many other events of scriptural history. He sang of the Lord's Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the teaching of the Apostles. He also made poems on the terrors of the Last Judgement, the horrible

pains of Hell, and the joys of the Kingdom of Heaven. In addition to these, he composed several others on the blessings and judgements of God, by which he sought to turn his hearers from delight in wickedness and to inspire them to love and do good. For Caedmon was a deeply religious man, who humbly submitted to regular discipline and hotly rebuked all who tried to follow another course. And so he crowned his life with a happy end.*

For, when the time of his death drew near, he felt the onset of physical weakness for fourteen days, but not seriously enough to prevent his walking or talking the whole time. Close by there was a house to which all who were sick or likely to die were taken. Towards nightfall on the day when he was to depart this life, Caedmon asked his attendant to prepare a resting-place for him in this house. The attendant was surprised at this request from a man who did not appear likely to die yet; nevertheless, he did as he was asked. So Caedmon went to the house, and conversed and jested cheerfully with those who were already there; and when it was past midnight, he asked: 'Is the Eucharist in the house?' 'Why do you want the Eucharist?' they enquired; 'you are not likely to die yet, when you are talking so cheerfully to us and seem to be in perfect health.' 'Nevertheless,' he said, 'bring me the Eucharist.' And taking it in his hands, Caedmon asked whether they were all charitably disposed towards him, and whether they had any complaint or ill-feeling against him. They replied that they were all most kindly disposed towards him, and free from all bitterness. Then in turn they asked him to clear his heart of bitterness towards them. At once he answered: 'Dear sons, my heart is at peace with all the servants of God.' Then, when he had fortified himself with the heavenly Viaticum, he prepared to enter the other life, and asked how long it would be before the brothers were roused to sing God's praises in the Night Office. 'Not long,' they replied. 'Good, then let us wait until then,' he answered; and signing himself with the holy Cross, he laid his head on the pillow and passed away quietly in his sleep. So, having served God with a simple and pure mind, and with tranquil devotion, he left the world

and departed to his presence by a tranquil death. His tongue, which had sung so many inspiring verses in praise of his Maker, uttered its last words in his praise as he signed himself with the Cross and commended his soul into his hands. For, as I have already said, Caedmon seems to have had a premonition of his death.

CHAPTER 25: *A man of God sees a vision portending the destruction of Coldingham monastery by fire*

AT this time, the monastery of nuns called Coludesbyrig, which I have already mentioned, was burned down through carelessness. However, all who knew the facts could readily perceive that it happened because of the wickedness of its members, and in particular of those who were supposed to be in authority. But God's mercy gave them a warning of punishment, and if they had followed the example of the Ninevites in fasting, prayers, and tears, they could have averted the anger of the just Judge.

In this monastery lived an Irishman named Adamnan, who led a life so devoted to God in prayer and austerity that he took no food or drink except on Sundays and Thursdays, and often spent the entire night in vigil and prayer. He had originally adopted this severe life from necessity, to overcome his evil inclinations; but as time went on, this necessity became his custom. During his youth he had committed some crime for which, when he came to his senses, he was thoroughly ashamed, and dreaded punishment by the strict Judge. So he visited a priest from whom he hoped to learn a way of salvation, confessed his sins to him, and asked for advice how he might escape the wrath to come. When he had heard his confession, the priest said: 'A severe wound calls for an ever more severe remedy. Therefore spend your time as far as possible in fasting, reciting the psalter, and prayer, so that you may avert God's anger in confession, and deserve to find His mercy.' Already deeply smitten in conscience and longing for speedy release

In ðeosse abbudissan mynstre was sum brōðor syndriglice mid godcundre gife gemæred ond geweorðad, for þon hē gewunade gerisenlice lēoð wyrcean, þā ðe tō æfæstnisse ond tō ærfæstnisse belumpen, swā ðætte, swā hwæt swā hē of godcundum stafum purh bōceras geleornode, þæt hē æfter medmiclum fæce in scopgereorde mid þā mæstan swētnisse ond inbryrdnisse geglengde, ond in Engiscgereorde wel geworht forþbrōhte. Ond for his lēopsongum monigra mōnna mōd oft tō worulde forhogdnisse ond tō geþeodnisse þæs heofonlican lifes onbærnde wæron. Ond eac swelce monige ððre æfter him in Ongelþeode ongunnon æfæste lēoð wyrcean, ac nænig hwæðre him þæt gelice dōn mehte: for þon hē nales from monnum ne purh mon gelæred was, þæt hē þone lēoðeræft leornade, ac hē was godcundlice gefultumed ond purh Godes gife þone songeræft onfēng. Ond hē for ðon næfre nōht lēasunge ne idles lēopes wyrcean mehte, ac efne þā ān þā ðe tō æfæstnesse belumpon ond his þā æfestan tungan gedēofanade singan.

In huius monasterio abbatissae fuit frater quidam diuina gratia specialiter insignis, quia carmina religioni et pietati apta facere solebat; ita ut, quicquid ex diuinis litteris per interpretes disceret, hoc ipse post pusillum uerbis poeticis maxima suauitate et compunctione compositis, in sua, id est Anglorum, lingua proferret. Cuius carminibus multorum saepe animi ad contentum saeculi, et appetitum sunt uitae caelestis accenssi. Et quidem et alii post illum in gente Anglorum religiosa poemata facere temtabant; sed nullus eum aequiparare potuit. Namque ipse non ab hominibus, neque per hominem institutus, canendi artem didicit, sed diuinitus adiutus gratis canendi donum accepit. Unde nil umquam friuoli et superuacui poematis facere potuit, sed ea tantummodo, quae ad religionem pertinent, religiosas eius linguam decebant.

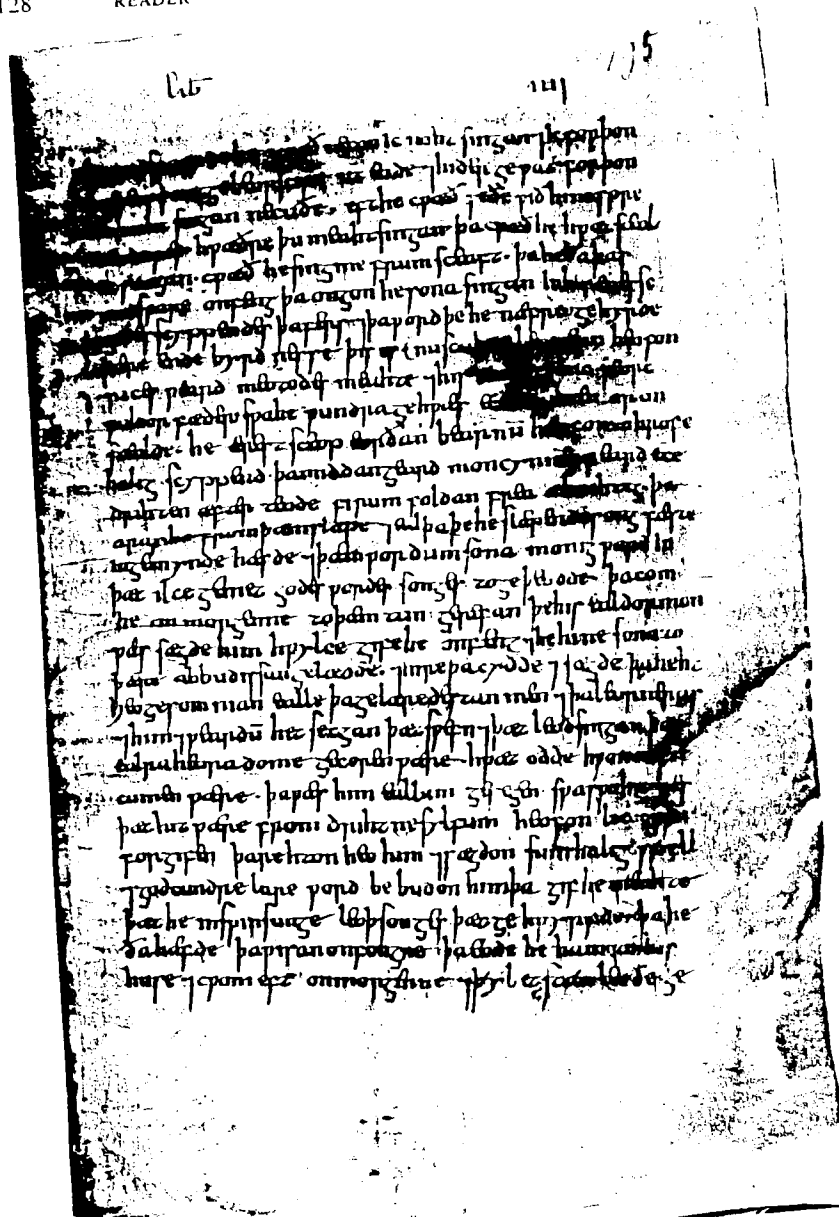
- 1 ðeosse abbudissan mynstre The double Benedictine monastery at Streoness-
health (Whitby), in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Its founder and abbess
between c657 and 680, the years during which the miracle occurred, was
Hild, a grandniece of King Eadwine of Northumbria and the greatest of all
English abbesses (cf. the reading selection on p. 80).
- 2 gemæred ond geweorðad A doublet translating Lat. *insignis*; cf. 1/119 n.
Further examples of the technique occur in l. 27 f. (*þā fers ond þā word*
rendering Lat. *uersus*) and often subsequently.
- 3 belumpen Probably not subjunctive, but rather a spelling variant of *be-*
lumpon; cf. 12/235a. B O Ca read *belumpon* here (though in O the *-on* is a
correction in a later hand of something else, probably *-en*); N reads *be-*
lumpon.
- 4 þæt Correlative with *swā hwæt swā* in l. 3 and d.o. of *geglengde* l. 5 and
forþbrōhte l. 6.
- 9 him ... mehte I.e. *mehte dōn þæt gelice him*.
- 9 f. nales ... mon Cf. Galatians 1:1: *non ab hominibus neque per hominem,*
sed per Iesum Christum et Deum Patrem ("not of men, neither by man, but
by Jesus Christ, and God the Father").
- 12 lēasunge ne idles lēopes Partitive gen. (complement of *nōht*).
- efne þā ān þā ðe "Only those (things) which" (lit. "just those only, those
which").
- 13 his þā æfestan tungan "That religious tongue of his." The use of both a
possessive pronoun and a definite article is not felt to be redundant as in
MnE; cf. l. 59. Note that the phrase *þā æfestan tungan* is acc. (the case gov-
erned by Lat. *decere*) rather than dat. (which is normal in OE with the verb
gedafenian).
- gedeofanade B N have *gedafenade*, O Ca *gedafenode*. T's spelling is un-
usual but not unexampled (see BTS s.v.).

Wæs hē, se mon, in weoruldhāde geseted þā þā tide þe hē wæs gelyfdre ylde,
15 ond næfre nænig lēoð geleornade. Ond hē for þon oft in gebeorscipe, þonne þær
was blisse intinga gedēmed þæt hē ealle scalde purh endebyrdnesse be hearpan
singan, þonne hē geseah þā hearpan him nēalēcan, þonne aras hē for, some from
þæm symble ond hām eode tō his huse. Þā hē þæt þā sumre tide dyde, þæt hē forlēt
þæt hūs þæs gebeorscipes ond ut was gongende tō nēaþa scipene, þāra heord him
20 wæs þære neahte beboden, þā hē ðā þær in gelimplige tide his leomu on reste
gesette ond onslēpte, þā stōd him sum mon æt purh swefn ond hine hālette ond
grētte ond hine be his noman nemnde: "Cedmon, sing mē hwæthwugu." Þā
ondswarede hē ond cwæð: "Ne con ic nōht singan; ond ic for þon of þeossum
gebeorscipe ut eode ond hider gewāt, for þon ic nāht singan ne cūðe." Eft hē

Siquidem in habitu saeculari usque ad tempora proeuctioris aetatis constitutus, nil carminum aliquando didicerat. Unde nonnumquam in conuiuio, cum esset laetitiae causa decretum, ut omnes per ordinem cantare deberent, ille, ubi adpropinquare sibi citharam cernebat, surgebat a media caena, et egressus ad suam domum repedabat. Quod dum tempore quodam faceret, et relictā domū conuiuii egressus esset ad stabula iumentorum, quorum ei custodia nocte illa erat delegata, ibique hora competenti membra dedisset sopori, adstitit ei quidam per somnium, eumque salutans, ac suo appellans nomine: "Cædmon," inquit, "canta mihi aliquid." At ille respondens: "Nescio," inquit, "cantare; nam et ideo de conuiuio egressus huc secessi, quia cantare non

- 14 gelyfdre ylde Descriptive gen.
- 15 ond After this word B N O Ca have *hē*.
- 15 f. geleornade Pret. with past perfect force; similarly *gehyrde* in l. 28.
þonne in l. 15 and *þonne* in l. 17 introduce two asyndetic "when" clauses,
correlative to the "then" clause which begins with *þonne* in l. 17. Precisely
the same pattern is repeated in the next sentence: *þā ... þā* (1.18) = "when,"
þā ... ðā (1.20) = "when," and *þā* (1.21) = "then."
þonne þær was blisse intinga gedēmed þæt etc. Taking the OE in isolation,
we might regard the *þæt*-clause as an explanation of *blisse intinga*: "when a
cause of merriment was settled upon, (i.e.) that" etc. But reference to the
corresponding Latin—*cum esset laetitiae causa decretum, ut* etc., "when it
was decided, for the sake of merriment, that" etc.—shows that the OE trans-
lator has misconstrued Bede's *laetitiae causā* "for the sake of merriment" as
laetitiae causā "a cause of merriment," and this explains the form of the OE
text.
- 16 scalde MS *sealde*. B has *sceoldon*, C and Ca *sceoldan*. O has *sceolde*, with a
final *-n* added above the line, whether by the original scribe or by another
hand is not clear. All of this suggests that T's erroneous *sealde* is the result
of a West-Saxon scribe's dismayed response to *scalde* in his exemplar: this
scalde would have been the archaic 3 pl. pret. subj. without final *-n* (see
1/150 f. n.) in a common Anglian spelling (SB f59 Anm. 1).
- 17 for MS *for for*, an example of the scribal error known as dittography
("double writing").
- 18 sumre tide Temporal dat.; similarly *þære neahte* in l. 20.
- 19 was gongende Cf. 1/74 n.
- 21 æt Postposition governing *him*.
- 22 Cædmon The name—which the MSS give in a number of variant spellings
—is Celtic in origin.
- 23 f. for þon ... for þon Correlative: "for that reason ... that."

Cassidy & Piggles, *Bright's Old English Grammar & Reader*, 3rd ed.
(Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1971)



CÆDMON'S HYMN. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Toller 10, fol. 100r. (See p. 107 and cf. 2/22-50)

25 cwæð, sē ðe wið hine sprecende wæs: "Hwæðre þū meahst singan." Ðā cwæð hē: "Hwæt sceal ic singan?" Cwæð hē: "Sing mē frumsceft." Ðā hē ðā þās andsware onfēng, þā ongon hē sōna singan in herenisse Godes Scyppendes þā fers ond þā word þe hē næfre gehyrde, þære endebyrdnesse þis is:

30 "Nū sculon herigean heofonrices Weard,
Metodes meahthe ond his mōdgēanc,
weorc Wuldorfæder, swā hē wundra gehwæs,
35 ēce Drihten, or onstealde,
Hē ærest sceop eorðan bearnum
heofon tō hrōfe, hālig Scyppend;
þā middangeard moncynnes Weard,

poteram." Rursum ille, qui cum eo loquebatur, "Attamen," ait, "cantare habes." "Quid," inquit, "debeo cantare?" Et ille, "Canta," inquit, "principium creaturarum." Quo accepto responso, statim ipse coepit cantare in laudem Dei conditoris uersus, quos numquam audierat, quorum iste est sensus:

"Nunc laudare debemus auctorem regni caelestis, potentiam Creatoris et consilium illius, facta Patris gloriae. Quomodo ille, cum sit aeternus Deus, omnium miraculorum auctor extitit, qui primo filiis hominum caelum pro culmine tecti, dehinc terram custos humani generis omnipotens creauit."

25 meahst "Can, are able." T's þū meahst singan corresponds to *cantare habes* in Latin MSS of the Cotton Tiberius C. ii type, whereas B's þū mē miht singan and N O Ca's þū meahst mē singan correspond to *mihi cantare habes* in Latin MSS of the Moore type; see the headnote to the textual notes, p. 376. For further discussion see Mossé's n. ad loc. and NM, LXX (1969), 369-80.

28 þære endebyrdnesse Dat. or gen. sg. is inexplicable here. One expects *þāra* (cf. Lat. *quorum*) *endebyrdnes*—which is in fact the reading of O.

Note that whereas the OE translator promises to give the *endebyrdnes* of Caedmon's poem—i.e. the poem itself—Bede in his Latin translation of it can offer no more than the *sensus*.

29 sq. Nū sculon etc. For excellent critical comment and bibliography on this poem see Wrenn, pp. 92-103.

The version of the hymn in our text is naturally in West Saxon, as are a dozen more of the surviving copies. Caedmon presumably composed it in Anglian (Northumbrian), and four Anglian versions have come down to us. The earliest of these (and the earliest of all surviving copies) appears at the top of the last page of the Moore MS of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (see p. 107, n. 9). It was written in 737, some seventy-five years after Caedmon composed the hymn:

Nū scylun hergan	hefaenrīcaes Uard,
Metodæ maecti	end his mōgdanc,
uerc Uuldurfader,	swā hē uundra gihwæs,
ēci Dryctin,	or āstelidæ.
Hē ærist scōp	aelda barnum
heben til hrōfe,	hāleg Scepen;
thā middungeard	moncynnæs Uard,

ēce Drihten, æfter tēode,
firum foldan, Frēa ælmihtig."

Þā ārās hē from þām slæpe ond eal þā þe hē slæpende song fæste in gemynde hæfde, ond þām, wordum sōna monig word in þæt ilce gēmet Gode, wyrðes songes tōgeþeodde.

Þā cōm hē on morgenne tō þām tūngerēfan þe his ealdormon wæs; sægde him hwylce gife hē onlēng, ond hē hine sōna tō þære abbudissan gelædde ond hire þā cȳðde ond sægde. Þā heht hēo gesomnian ealle þā gelæredestan men ond þā leorneras ond him ondweardum hēt seegan þæt swefn ond þæt lēoð singan, þæt

Hic est sensus, non autem ordo ipse uerborum, quae dormiens ille canebat; neque enim possunt carmina, quamuis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad uerbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri. Exurgens autem a somno, euncta, quae dormiens cantauerat, memoriter retinuit, et eis mox plura in eundem modum uerba Deo digni carminis adiunxit.

Ueniensque mane ad uilicum, qui sibi praeerat, quid doni percepisset, indicauit, atque ad abbatissam perductus, iussus est, multis doctioribus uiris praesentibus, indicare somnium, et dicere carmen, ut uniuersorum iudicio, quid uel unde esset, quod

ēce Dryctin, æfter tīadæ,
firum foldu, Frēa allmectig.

Primo cantauit Caedmon istud carmen ("Caedmon first sang this song").

A study of all the MSS of the hymn shows that the text of this poem was preserved with great fidelity and that the disagreement of our two texts in l. 33—where one has *corðan* and the other *aelda* (= WS *ylða*), the latter agreeing with Bede's *filiis hominum*—cuts across dialectical lines and probably arose at a fairly early stage in the transmission of the text. On this question, and on the reasons for believing that *aelda* represents Caedmon's original choice, see *ASPR* VI, c.

37 After giving his Latin version of the hymn, Bede offers the following perspicacious remarks on the difficulties of translating poetry: "This is the sense, not however the precise sequence of words which he sang while sleeping; for poems, no matter how well written they are, cannot be translated literally from one language to another without detriment to their beauty and dignity." These remarks were naturally omitted by the OE translator.

38 eal þā þe "All those (things) which."

39 þām wordum Governed by *tōgeþeodde* in the next line.

in þæt ilce gēmet The phrase is calculated on Lat. *in eundem modum*; normal OE practice would require that *in* govern dat. in a situation of rest: *in þām ilcan gēmete*.

Gode wyrðes songes "Of song worthy of God" (calculated upon Lat. *Deo digni carminis*, even to the highly un-OE dat. rection of *wyrðe*). The entire OE phrase is a complement of *word*, not *gēmet* (as comparison with the Lat. makes clear).

42 þā Probably acc. pl. neut., "those (things)," but possibly acc. sg. fem. (with *gife* as its antecedent). B C O Ca read *þæt*. There is nothing corresponding in the Lat.

44 him ondweardum The corresponding Lat. (*multis doctioribus uiris praesentibus*) could be either an ablative absolute or an ind. object.

43 ealra heora dōme gecoren wære, hwæt oððe hwonon þæt cumen wære. Þā wæs him eallum gesege—swā swā hit wæs—þæt hit wære from Drihtne sylfum heofonlic gifu forgifen. Þā rehton hēo him ond sægdon sum hālig spell ond godcundre lāre word; bebudon him þā, gif hē meahte, þæt hē in swinsunge lēoþsonges þæt gehwyrðe. Þā hē ðā hæfde þā wisan onfongne, þā ðode hē hām tō his hūse ond cwōm eft on morgenne ond, þȳ betstan lēoðe gēglenged, him āsong ond āgeaf þæt him beboden wæs.

Þā ongan sēo abbudisse clyppan ond lufgean þā Godes gife in þām men, ond hēo hine þā monade ond lærde þæt hē woruldhād ānforlēte ond munuchād onfenge, ond hē þæt wel þafode. Ond hēo hine in þæt mynster onfeng mid his gōdum ond hine geþeodde tō gesomnunge þāra Godes þeowa, ond heht hine lēran þæt gētael þæs hālgan stāres ond spelles. Ond hē eal þā hē in gehȳrnesse geleornian meahte mid hīne gemyndgāde ond, swā swā clāne nēten eodorcende, in þæt swēteste lēoð gehwyrðe. Ond his song ond his lēoð wæron swā wynsumu tō gehȳranne þætte seolfan þā his lārēowas æt his mūðe wreoton ond leornodon. Song hē ærest be

referebat, probaretur. Uisumque est omnibus caelestem ei a Domino concessam esse gratiam. Exponebantque illi quandam sacrae historiae siue doctrinae sermonem, praecipientes eum, si posset, hunc in modulationem carminis transferre. At ille suscepto negotio abiit, et mane rediens, optimo carmine, quod iuebatur, compositum reddidit.

Unde mox abbatissa amplexata gratiam Dei in uiro, saecularem illum habitum relinquere, et monachicum suscipere propositum docuit, susceptumque in monasterium cum omnibus suis fratrum cohorti adsociavit, iussitque illum seriem sacrae historiae doceri. At ipse cuncta, quae audiendo discere poterat, rememorando secum, et quasi mundum animal ruminando, in carmen dulcissimum conuertebat, suauiusque resonando doctores suos uicissim auditores sui faciebat. Canebat autem de creatione

45 gecoren wære "(It) might be decided"—an unidiomatic meaning suggested by Lat. *probaretur*.

hwæt...wære A telescoping of two constructions, *hwæt þæt wære* and *hwonon þæt cumen wære*.

45 f. wæs him eallum gesege "(It) was seen by them all"; another Latinism (*Uisum...est omnibus*).

46 hit² Probably an error for *him* (the reading of the other MSS, confirmed by the Latin); as it stands it must be taken as the subject, with *heofonlic gifu* in apposition to it.

49 onfongne A syncopated form of *onfongene*, acc. sg. fem. *Habban* + d.o. + a past participle inflected to agree with the latter is idiomatic OE (cf. 23/64b).

50 geglenged The *þæt* which follows stands for the demonstrative plus the relative (i.e. *þæt þæt*); *geglenged* is to be construed with the former.

53 ānforlēte B C O have *forlēte*, Ca *forlēte*.

54 mid his gōdum A misunderstanding of Lat. *cum omnibus suis* "with all her (people)."

56 eal þā I.e. *eal þā þe* (cf. 1. 38).

57 mid hine "In himself." *Mid* + acc. is an Anglian feature.

swā swā clāne nēten eodorcende This image, which is frequent in Bede, is based upon Leviticus 11:3 and Deuteronomy 14:8. The standard commentaries on these passages interpreted the dividing of the hoof and the chewing of the cud to signify discretion and continual meditation on the law of God. seolfan þā his lārēowas "Those very same teachers of his." The other MSS have *þā seolfan* (variously spelled), which is the more normal word order (see Farr p. 18).

- utgong heonan, ende lifes.
 Wærlic me þinceð þæt ge wæccende
 wið hettendra hildewoman
 wearde healden, þy læs eow wiperfeohrend
 665 weges forwyrnen to wuldres byrig.
 Biddað bearn godes þæt me brego engla,
 meotud moncynnes, milde geweorþe,
 sigora sellend. Sibb sy mid eowic,
 symle soþ lufu." Ða hyre sawl wearð
 670 alæded of lice to þam langan gefean
 þurh sweordslege. Ða se synscaþa
 to scipe sceohmod sceapena þreate
 Heliseus ehstream sohte,
 leolc ofer lagufloð longe hwile
 675 on swonrade. Swylt ealle fornom
 secga hloþe ond hine sylfne mid,
 ærþon hy to lande geliden hæfdon,
 þurh þearlic þrea. Ðær XXX wæs
 ond feowere eac feores onsohte
 680 þurh wæges wylm wigena cynnes,
 heane mid hlaford, hroþra bidæled,
 hyhta lease helle sohton.
 Ne þorftan þa þegnas in þam þystran ham,
 seo geneatscolu in þam neolan scræfe,
 685 to þam frumgare feohgestealda
 witedra wenan, þæt hy in winsele
 ofer beorsetle beagas þegon,
 æppelde gold. Ungelice wæs
 læded lofsongum lic haligre
 690 micle mægne to moldgræfe,
 þæt hy hit gebrohton burgum in innan,
 sidfolc micel. Ðær siððan wæs
 geara gongum godes lof hafen
 þrymme micle oþ þisne dæg
 695 mid þeodscipe. Is me þearf micel
 þæt seo halge me helpe gefremme,

685 feohgestealda] feoh ge stealde 687 beorsetle] beor sele

- þonne me gedælað deorast ealra,
 sibbe toslitað sinhiwan tu,
 micle modlufan. Min sceal of lice
 700 sawl on siðfæt, nat ic sylfa hwider,
 eardes uncyðgu; of sceal ic þissum,
 secan oþerne ærgewyrhtum,
 gongan iudædum. Geomor hweorfeð
 .h. .a. ond .t. Cyning biþ reþe,
 705 sigora syllend, þonne synnum fah
 .m. .p. ond .n. acle bidað
 hwæt him æfter dædum deman wille
 lifes to leane. .f. .f. beofað,
 seomað sorgcearig. Sar eal gemon,
 710 synna wunde, þe ic siþ oþþe ær
 geworhte in worulde. Ðæt ic wopig sceal
 tearum mænan. Wæs an tid to læt
 þæt ic yfeldæda ær gescomede,
 þenden gæst ond lic geador siþedan
 715 onsund on earde. Þonne arna biþearf,
 þæt me seo halge wið þone hyhstan cyning
 geþingige. Mec þæs þearf monaþ,
 micel modes sorg. Bidde ic monna gehwone
 gumena cynnes, þe þis gied wræce,
 720 þæt he mec neodful bi noman minum
 gemyne modig, ond meotud bidde
 þæt me heofona helm helpe gefremme,
 meahtra waldend, on þam miclan dæge,
 fæder, frofre gæst, in þa freccan tid,
 725 dæda demend, ond se deora sunu,
 þonne seo þrynis þrymsittende
 in annesse ælda cynne
 þurh þa sciran gesceaft scrifeð bi gewyrhtum
 meorde monna gehwam. Forgiþ us, mæгна god,
 730 þæt we þine onsyne, æþelinga wyn,
 milde gemeten on þa mæran tid. Amen.

698 sinhiwan] sin hⁱwan 701 uncyðgu] uncyðþu þissum] With one
 letter erased after i 723 miclan] miclam

The Exeter Book,
 ed G P Krapp &
 E. V. K. Dobbie
 (Columbin, 1936)
 ASPR III

C h cen
 'torch'

Y A yr 'bow'

n + n y d 'need,
 distress'

e M eoh 'horse'

w p wynn 'joy'

v n ur 'antelope'

f l a s u 'lake'

f f Feoh 'treasure,
 wealth'

þæt sw halge me helpe gessumne þon mege dælad dæpfast. alra
 sibbe tofurdan sin lipan tumcle mod lufan minscæl oflice
 papul onfurdæt. nat ic swlpa hwiðsi anroðf uncyð þu ofscæl
 ic þi sum sctan ofhine aige prphctum gongan ludoedum
 gwmor hwiðfæd. h. m. 7. t. cening bið neþe rizona. swlland
 þon sennum swl. M. p. 7. n. acle biddað hwaet him afcti dæ
 dum ofman wille lifst to lanne. r. r. swfæd swmad forð
 cturiz swi al gwmor senna. punde þeic swi ofþe af georh
 te inporulde þic foriz scæl tæpum mætan swi an tid
 tolaet. þæt ic yfel dæda aige scome de þwiðsi gæst. 7
 lic gædow swiðed an onfuro onawode þon auma bið swi
 þæt me sw halge wið þone hehstan cening gehungige mæc
 þæt þeap swi monaþ micel modf foriz biode ic monna ge
 hwone gumstia cennst þeap gæd swiæc þhe mæc næd ful
 binoman minum gahyne modig 7 mæd biode þme
 hæfona helm helpe gessumne mæhtu palostro on
 þam miclam dæge fædswi swi ofþe gæst in þa fæstnan
 tid dæda dæmst 7 fædswa sunu þon swi þwriw þwri
 witadwe in annstwe ælta cenne þurh þa swi an ge
 swaet swi fæd bige prphctum mædwe monna gehwam
 foriz swi mæstia gæd þwe þine onfæne æhelingu prn
 milde gæmst in þa mæstian tid. Amst 1 : 7

Epeter Book
 F. 76R

Selections from *Ælfric's Preface to Genesis*

The monk Ælfric greets ealdorman Æthelweard humbly. You asked me, sir, that I should translate for you from Latin to English the book of Genesis. Then it seemed to me burdensome to give you this, and you said then that I needed not translate any more of the book except to Isaac, son of Abraham, because a certain other man had translated the book from Isaac to the end. Now it seems to me, sir, that that work is very hazardous for me or for any man to undertake, because I fear if a certain foolish man reads this book or hears it read, that he will think that he might now live under the new law just as the patriarchs lived then in that time before the old law was established, or just as men lived under the law of Moses.... If someone will now live so after the coming of Christ just as men lived before Moses' law or under Moses' law, that man will not be Christian, nor further will he be worthy that any Christian man may eat with him.

Those unlearned priests, if they understand only a little of the Latin books, then to them it will immediately seem that they can be excellent teachers; but they do not know, however, the spiritual understanding thereof, and how the old law was a signification of future things, or how the New Testament after Christ's incarnation was the fulfillment of all the things that the Old Testament signified in the future about Christ and about his chosen ones....

We also said beforehand that the book is very deep in spiritual meaning, and we will not write any more than the bare meaning. Then it seems to the unlearned that all of the understanding is locked in the singular meaning; but it is very far from that....

.... Now is the aforementioned in many places very narrowly established, and yet very deeply on the spiritual understandings, and it is so ordained just as God himself ordained it to the writer Moses, and we dare not write any more in English than the Latin has, nor translate the meaning except the ones that the Latin and the English do not (have) in one way in the establishment of language. Always he who translates or he who teaches from Latin in English, always he must set it down it so that English has its own order, or else it would be very foolish to read to the one who does not know the order of Latin. It is also to be known that there were some heretics who would throw away the old law, and some would have the old and throw away the new.... We must turn our wills to his ordinances and we may not turn his ordinances to our desires. I say now that I dare not and will not translate any book from Latin to English after this one, and I beg you, dear ealdorman, that you no longer command this of me, lest I be disobedient to you or false if I do. God be merciful to you ever in eternity. I ask now in the name of God, if someone wishes to write these books, that he correct well by this exemplar, because I do not have control should someone bring them to error through false writers, and it will be then his risk, not mine; the bad writer does a great evil, if he will not correct his error.