

Session 2: Translation & Mediacy



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The Venerable Bede

Biography

- ▶ 672x673–735
- ▶ Entered Wearmouth aged 7, spent his life at Jarrow

Overview of Latin Works

- ▶ Biblical commentaries, incl. on the Old Testament:
 - ▶ Genesis
 - ▶ Samuel
 - ▶ Ezra and Nehemiah
 - ▶ Proverbs
 - ▶ Tobit
 - ▶ Habakkuk
 - ▶ *On the Temple*
 - ▶ *On the Tabernacle*
- ▶ Works on time-reckoning
- ▶ Church History (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*)
- ▶ Hagiography
- ▶ Homilies
- ▶ Letters

Translation Activity

Propter quod et ipse multis saepe sacerdotibus idiotis haec utraque, et symbolum uidelicet, et dominicam orationem in linguam Anglorum translata[m] optuli.(Plummer 1896, 409)

(Therefore I too have myself often made available these both, the Creed and the Paternoster, translated into the language of the English to unlearned priests.)

Alfred of Wessex

Biography

- ▶ c. 849–899
- ▶ Sixth child of King Æthelwulf of Wessex
- ▶ King of Wessex 871–c. 886; King of the Anglo-Saxons c. 886–899
- ▶ Traditionally believed to have authorized a translation programme

PR Activities

Preface to the OE *Pastoral Care* announces his translation programme and a general education programme. There is no evidence his school system was ever realized.

Translation Programme?

Texts possibly authorized by Alfred:

- ▶ Gregory's *Pastoral Care*
- ▶ Gregory's *Dialogues*
- ▶ ? Augustine's *Soliloquies*
- ▶ ? Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*
- ▶ ? Orosius's *Historia adversus paganos*
- ▶ ? **Psalms 1–50**

For the most cynical view, see Godden (2007).

From the Preface to Alfred's *Pastoral Care* 1/2

Me com swiðe oft on gemynd, hwelce wiotan iu wæron giond Angelcynn, [...] 7 hu man utanbordes wisdom 7 lare hieder on lond sohte, 7 hu we hie nu sceoldon ute begietan gif we hie habban sceoldon. Swæ clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelcynne ðæt swiðe feawa wæron behionan Humbre ðe hiora ðeninga cuðen understondan on Englisc, oððe furðum an ærendgewrit of Lædene on Englisc areccean; 7 ic wene ðætte noht monige begiondan Humbre næren.

From the Preface to Alfred's *Pastoral Care* 2/2

Da gemunde ic hu **sio æ wæs ærest on Ebreisc geðiode funden**, 7 eft, ða hie **Creacas** geliornodon, ða wendon hie hie on hiora agen geðiode ealle, 7 eac ealle oðre bec. 7 eft **Lædenware** swæ same, siððan hie hie geliornodon, hie hie wendon ealla ðurh wise wealhstodas on hiora agen geðiode. Ond eac **ealla oðræ Cristnæ ðioda** sumne dæl hiora on hiora agen geðiode wendon. Forðy me ðyncð betre, gif iow swæ ðyncð, ðæt we eac **sumæ bec**, ða ðe **niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne**, ðæt we ða on ðæt geðiode wenden ðe we ealle gecnawan mægen [...]. Lære mon siððan furður on Lædengeðiode ða ðe mon furðor læran wille 7 to hieran hade don wille.

A Translation Committee?

Da ic ða gemunde hu sio lar Lædengeðiodes ær ðissum afeallen wæs giond Angelcynn, 7 ðeah monige cuðon Englisc gewrit arædan, ða ongan ic ongemang oðrum mislicum 7 manigfealdum bisgum ðisses kynerices ða boc wendan on Englisc ðe is genemned on Læden Pastoralis, 7 on Englisc Hierdeboc, hwilum word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgiete, swæ swæ ic hie geliornode æt Plegmunde minum ærcebiscepe 7 æt Assere minum biscepe 7 æt Grimbolde minum mæsseprioste 7 æt Iohanne minum mæssepreoste.

→ If this description is accurate, the clergymen will have served as gatekeepers, perhaps warning against OT translation.

Ælfric of Eynsham

Biography

- ▶ c. 950–c. 1010
- ▶ Educated at Winchester
- ▶ Entered the Benedictine abbey at Cerne Abbas (c. 987)
- ▶ First abbot of reformed Eynsham (1003x1005)
- ▶ Most productive named Anglo-Saxon author

Overview of English Works

- ▶ Catholic Homilies (2x40 items)
- ▶ Lives of Saints (40 items)
- ▶ Additional homilies (c. 40 items)
- ▶ Translations of Scripture:
 - ▶ Half of **Genesis**
 - ▶ Part of **Numbers**
 - ▶ Part of **Joshua** (in paraphrase)
 - ▶ Part of **Judges** (in paraphrase)
- ▶ Work on time-reckoning
- ▶ A grammar and glossary of Latin
- ▶ A Latin colloquy
- ▶ Letters

Overview of Old Testament Writings 1/2

Catholic Homilies

- ▶ *De initio creaturae* (1.1)
- ▶ *Dominica Pascae* (1.15, incl. Samson's visit to Gaza)
- ▶ The Passion of St Clemens (1.37, incl. exempla to show God does help those in need)
- ▶ The Nativity (2.1, incl. a discussion of OT types, notably the three youths)
- ▶ Exodus and Joshua (2.12)
- ▶ *De sacrificio in die Paschae* (2.15)
- ▶ Job (2.35)

Lives of Saints

- ▶ Prayer of Moses (13)
- ▶ *De memoria sanctorum* (16, an enumeration of holy individuals)
- ▶ Books of Kings (18)
- ▶ Ash Wednesday (12, incl. a brief exemplum on David and Saul)
- ▶ Maccabees (25)

Overview of Old Testament Writings 2/2

Additional homilies

- ▶ Esther
- ▶ Judith

Translations of Scripture:

- ▶ Half of Genesis
- ▶ Part of Numbers
- ▶ Part of Joshua (in paraphrase)
- ▶ Part of Judges (in paraphrase)

Letters / Synopses

- ▶ Letter to Wulfgeat (on creation and virtue)
- ▶ Letter to Sigeward (*Libelus de veteri testamento et novo*)

From the Preface to *Catholic Homilies I*

Þa bearn me on mode, ic truwige ðurh godes gife, þæt ic ðas boc of ledenum gereorde to engliscre spræce awende, na þurh gebylde micelre lare, ac for ðan ðe ic geseah 7 gehyrde mycel gedwyld on manegum engliscum bocum ðe ungelærede menn ðurh heora bilewitnyse to micclum wisdomes tealdon. 7 me ofhreow þæt hi ne cuðon ne næfdon ða godspellican lare on heora gewritum buton ðam mannum anum ðe þæt leden cuðon 7 buton þam bocum ðe Ælfred cyning snoterlice awende of ledene on englisc ða synd to hæbbene.

The Old Testament in the Liturgy

The Old Testament in the Liturgy

Mass

- ▶ First Scripture reading: e.g. **Old Testament**
- ▶ Second Scripture reading: Gospels

Divine Office

Time	Office
c. 2am	Matins / Night Office
c. 5am	Lauds
c. 6am	Prime
c. 9am	Terce
c. noon	Sext
c. 3pm	None
c. 6pm	Vespers
c. 7pm	Compline

Ordo Romanus XIV Vigils Readings (s. VII)

Quinquagesima to Palm Sunday	Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges
Holy Week	Isaiah, Jeremiah
Eastertide	Epistles, Acts, Revelation
Pentecost to October	Kings, Chronicles
October to Advent	Solomon, Judith, Esther, Maccabees, Tobit
December to Epiphany	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel
Epiphany to Quinquagesima	Ezekiel, Minor Prophets, Job

Ælfric's Readings for the Night Office (Letter to Eynsham) 1/2

1. Septuagesima until Mid-Lent: **Genesis**
2. Mid-Lent until Passiontide: **Exodus**
3. Passiontide to Maundy Thursday: **Jeremiah**
4. Maundy Thursday: **Jeremiah** + St Augustine on **Psalm 63** + St Paul
5. Holy Saturday: **same as above**, but gospel in the third lection
6. Easter Week: homilies on the gospels for Easter
7. Octave of Easter: Canonical epistles
8. Sunday after the Octave of Easter until the Ascension: Apocalypse
9. Ascension until Pentecost: Acts
10. Pentecost: gospel homilies
11. Octave of Pentecost: on the Trinity
12. Sunday after the Octave of Pentecost until the first Sunday in August: **Kings**

Ælfric's Readings for the Night Office (Letter to Eynsham) 2/2

13. First Sunday in August until Kalends of September: **Solomon**
14. First two weeks of September: **Job**
15. Third week of September: **Tobit**
16. Fourth week of September: **Judith, Esther, Esdras**
17. October: **Maccabees**
18. November (until Advent): **Ezechiel, Daniel, minor prophets**
19. Advent: **Isaiah**
20. Christmas (until Epiphany): three specific lections from **Isaiah**
21. Octave of Christmas: appropriate sermons
22. Octaves of feasts of Saints Stephen, John, and Holy Innocents: read about them
23. Epiphany until Octave of Epiphany: Three specific lections from **Isaiah**
24. First Sunday after the Octave of Epiphany until Septuagesima: Pauline epistles or **expositions on the Psalms**

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