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## **'Ða Gregorius gamenode mid his wordum': Old English Versions of Gregory's Bilingual Puns**

Emily V. Thornbury

The story of St Gregory's encounter with some Anglian slave-boys in a Roman marketplace became so central to the narrative of the English conversion that, from the time of Bede, scholars have been forced to reckon with it whether they believed it or not.<sup>1</sup> As a story, indeed, the episode has much to recommend it; commentators have used it as proof of themes as diverse as the formation of English nationhood and the unnatural vices of the Roman clergy.<sup>2</sup> As it portrays the encounter between the ancient language and civilization of Rome and a few innocents from the far and heathen north in a way highly flattering to the latter, it is unsurprising that English writers recorded the story first, and preserved it the longest.

Versions of the encounter almost invariably fall into two parts.<sup>3</sup> The first describes the beauty of the slave-boys,<sup>4</sup> and Gregory's regret at their heathenism; the second recounts his enquiries about their origin, and his interpretation of the names given. As preserved in chapter 9 of the *Vita S. Gregorii* of the Anonymous of Whitby, the latter part is fairly brief, the questions and responses amounting only to a few lines:

Deo intus admonente, cuius gentis fuissent, inquisivit. [...] Cumque responderent, 'Anguli dicuntur, illi de quibus sumus,' ille dixit, 'Angeli Dei.' Deinde dixit, 'Rex gentis illius, quomodo nominatur?' Et dixerunt, 'Aelli.' Et ille ait, 'Alleluia. Laus enim Dei esse debet illic.' Tribus quoque illius nomen de qua erant proprię requisivit. Et dixerunt, 'Deire.' Et ille dixit, 'De ira Dei confugientes ad fidem.'

[with God's inward prompting, he asked, of what race they came. [...]] And when they replied, 'The people of whom we come are

called *Anguli*,' he replied, 'Angels of God.' Then he said, 'The king of this race, what is his name?' And they said, 'Aelli.' And he said, 'Alleluia. The praise of God belongs in that place.' He enquired also as to the name of their own tribe. And they said, 'Deirae.' And he said, 'From the wrath of God they flee to the faith.']<sup>5</sup>

Bede's version may well have been entirely independent. It is slightly more diffuse, but considerably more elegant:

Rursus ergo interrogavit, quod esset uocabulum gentis illius. Responsum est, quod Angli uocarentur. At ille: 'Bene,' inquit; 'nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales angelorum in caelis decet esse coheredes. Quod habet nomen ipsa prouincia, de qua isti sunt adlati?' Responsum est, quod Deiri uocarentur idem prouinciales. At ille: 'Bene,' inquit, 'Deiri; de ira eruti, et ad misericordiam Christi uocati. Rex prouinciae illius quomodo appellatur?' Responsum est, quod Aelli diceretur. At ille adludens ad nomen ait: 'Alleluia, laudem Dei Creatoris illis in partibus oportet cantari.'

[Once more, therefore, he asked what the name of their race might be. He was told that they were called *Angli*. 'Good,' he said; 'for they have an angelic appearance, and such people deserve to be co-heirs with the angels in heaven. What is the name of the province, from which they were taken?' He was told that the people of that region were called *Deiri*. He replied, '*Deiri* is right: snatched from ire, and called to Christ's mercy. What is the king of their province called?' He was told, that he was called Aelli. And he, playing upon the name, said 'Alleluia; it is right that the praise of the Creator should be sung in those regions.']<sup>6</sup>

Here, the puns have been carefully but not obtrusively explained, and the realistic touch of the interpreter allows Gregory to be the only direct speaker in the passage. Moreover, the sequence of questions in Bede's account not only moves more smoothly from general to specific information than does the Whitby version; it also concludes with an implicit statement of Gregory's resolution to convert the English, which makes his subsequent declaration of this intention to

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the pope seem less abrupt. Bede's account of this episode became the standard one, and later writers—such as Paul the Deacon<sup>7</sup> and William of Malmesbury<sup>8</sup>—adhere to his sequence, and often his words, in recounting the episode.

The customary description of Gregory's replies as 'puns' has often tended to lead commentators to see his speech as frivolous or joking. This is by no means accurate, as Howe has explained:

For a man like Gregory, wordplay offered a powerful means to apprehend God's truth as contained in human language. The episode [...] translates the unintelligible terms of a pagan, Germanic language into the meaningful terms of a Christian, Latin language. [...] As Gregory demonstrates, each name associated with this pagan people—Angli, Deiri, and Ælle—has an erroneous meaning in heathendom and a true meaning in Christendom.<sup>9</sup>

One might also say that the act of performing exegesis of these names elevates them to a status like that of Biblical names, which were endlessly productive of such interpretation: thus also proving the English worthy of conversion.

To a degree, the conversion itself assisted Gregory's flock in rendering this story in the vernacular. By the time of the translation of the *Old English Bede*, two of Gregory's three puns were easily recognisable in English as well as Latin:

Eft he frægn, hwæt seo þeod nemned wære, þe heo of cwomon. Ondswarede him mon þæt heo Ongle nemde wæron. Cwæð he: Wel þæt swa mæg: forðon heo ænlice onsyne habbað, 7 eac swylce gedafenað, þæt heo engla æfenerfeweardas in heofonum sy. Ða gyt he furðor frægn 7 cwæð: Hwæt hatte seo mægð, þe þa cneohtas hider of lædde wæron. Ða ondswarede him mon 7 cwæð, þæt heo Dere nemde wæron. Cwæð he: Wel þæt is cweden Dere, *de ira eruti*; heo sculon of Godes yrre beon abrogdene, 7 to Cristes mildheortnesse gecegde. Ða gyt he ahsode hwæt heora cyning haten wære: 7 him mon ondswarade 7 cwæð, þætte he Æll haten wære. Ond þa plegode he mid his wordum to þæm noman 7 cwæð: Alleluia, þæt gedafenað, þætte Godes lof usses scyppendes in þæm dælum sungen sy.

[He asked again, what the race might be called, from which they came. He was told that they were called *Ongle*. He said: 'It is well that it is so: for they have unequalled countenances, and for such people it is fitting that they should be the equal heirs of angels in heaven.' Then he enquired yet again and said: 'What is the tribe called, from which the young men were brought?' Then he was answered, and told that they were called *Dere*. He said: 'It is very properly called *Dere* (*de ira eruti*); they must be rescued from God's wrath, and brought to Christ's mercy.' Then he also asked what their king was called: and he was answered, and told that he was called *Æll*. And then with his words he played upon the name, and said: 'Alleluia, it is fitting, that the praise of God our Creator should be sung in that region.']<sup>10</sup>

The ecclesiastical Latin words *angelus* and *alleluia* (themselves borrowed from Greek and Hebrew) were naturalized enough in English that extended explanation was unnecessary. The word *engle* could mean either 'English' or 'angels'; while the translator of the *Old English Bede*<sup>11</sup> seems to have preferred to spell the tribal name in <o> (as in this passage), it seems—if the Tanner manuscript's reading is correct—that he thought the pun obvious enough to enable him to attempt to create a rhetorical contrast between *ænlice onsyne* and *æfenerfeweardas* ('unequalled appearance' and 'equal heirs'), instead of reiterating the boys' angelic appearance. His cleverness, as it happens, seems to have created problems for later copyists. Oxford, Corpus Christi College, 279 has *engceli* over an erasure, while Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41 has the comical reading *englisce onsyne*:<sup>12</sup> both, presumably, were striving toward the more Bedan *englelice* in Cambridge, University Library Kk.3.18.<sup>13</sup>

The pun on *Deira*, however, proved troublesome. In Old English, the word was usually spelled *Dere*. It is not entirely clear how this name was pronounced, especially in the earlier period;<sup>14</sup> however, it certainly bore no resemblance to any English word for anger. The translator, therefore, was forced to provide a gloss in Latin to account for Gregory's comment.

Ælfric, it is now generally accepted, relied on the Old English version of Bede in his account of this episode in his homily on Gregory in the second series of *Catholic Homilies*.<sup>15</sup> He appears to draw on the translation nowhere else, and it has been several times suggested that he knew the story of the Anglian slave-boys

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as an extract.<sup>16</sup> Although containing very close verbal similarities to the *Old English Bede*, however, his version is not identical:

Eft he axode hu ðære ðeode nama wære. þe hi of comon; Him wæs geandwyrð. þæt hi angle genemnode wæron; Ða cwæð he. rihtlice hi sind Angle gehatene. for ðan ðe hi engla wlite habbað. and swilcum gedafenað þæt hi on heofonum engla geferan beon; Gyt ða Gregorius befran. hu ðære scire nama wære. þe ða cnapan of alædde wæron; Him man sæde. þæt ða scirmen wæron dere gehatene; Gregorius andwyrde. Wel hi sind dere gehatene. for ðan ðe hi sind fram graman generode. and to cristes mildheortnyse gecygede; Gyt ða he befran. Hu is ðære leode cyning gehaten? Him wæs geandswarod þæt se cyning Ælle gehaten wære; Hwæt ða Gregorius gamenode mid his wordum to ðam naman. and cwæð; Hit gedafenað þæt alleluia sy gesungen on ðam lande. to lofe þæs ælmihtigan scyppendes;

[He asked again, what the name of the race was from which they came. It was told him that they were called *Angle*. Then he said, 'They are justly called *Angle*, for they have the beauty of angels, and it is fitting for such people that they should be the companions of angels in heaven.' Again Gregory asked, what the name of the district was, from which the boys had been taken. He was told that the people of that district were called *Dere*. Gregory answered, 'They are very properly called *Dere*, for they shall be saved from wrath, and called to Christ's mercy.' Once more he asked, 'What is the king of that people called?' And he was told in reply that the king was called Ælle. Now, then Gregory with his words played upon the name, and said, 'It is fitting that *alleluia* should be sung in that land, in praise of the almighty Creator.']<sup>17</sup>

Ælfric's stylistic improvements upon this passage in many ways resemble Bede's refinements upon the Whitby version. The word-order is more smoothly idiomatic, and the final sentence in particular shows the stylized chiasmic alliteration that would become one of the hallmarks of Ælfric's *kunstprosa*. But the puns, in particular, are treated quite differently. The *Old English Bede's* *ænlice onsyne* has been replaced with *engla wlite* (perhaps in consultation with the Latin *Historia ecclesiastica*).<sup>18</sup> This renders the play more obvious; but the final pun on

*Ælle*—*alleluia* has been made somewhat more difficult by the separation of the two words. The most immediately noticeable change, however, is the omission of the gloss: as Godden notes, 'Ælfric seems to lose the point by not citing the Latin base of the pun, *de ira*'.<sup>19</sup>

As I read it, there are three potential explanations for this omission. One is negligence; though as Ælfric was generally a careful reviser of his own work, he might have been expected to have corrected so easily remediable an oversight.<sup>20</sup> Another and perhaps more likely explanation is that this story was so well known to Ælfric's audience that the Latin form of the pun needed no gloss. This possibility is ultimately unverifiable, but on its behalf we might cite Ælfric's apparent prior knowledge of the story in Old English, and one certain (though post-Conquest) instance of the separate circulation of an Old English text of the episode.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, Ælfric's assertion at the beginning of the homily that 'Alfred's' Old English translation of Bede was not very well-known, would seem to argue against this explanation.<sup>22</sup> One further option, however, deserves consideration: namely, that Ælfric was attempting a quite different pun on *Dere*.

The Old English word *dēore* ('precious' or 'beloved') probably sounded sufficiently like *Dēre* for an Anglo-Saxon hearer to appreciate such wordplay: in this case, Gregory's reply would be translated as 'They are very properly called *dear*, for they shall be redeemed from wrath, and called to God's mercy.' The double (and here triple) meaning of *deor* would have resonated with audiences familiar with the Biblical metaphor of Christ redeeming mankind from its enslavement to the devil with the purchase-price of his blood. Archbishop Wulfstan was particularly fond of this idea, and these clauses from the law-code *V Æthelred* are typical of his usage:

2. 7 ures hlafordes gerædnes 7 his witena is, þæt man Cristene menn 7 unforworhte of earde ne sylle, ne huru on hæþene leode, ac beorge man georne, þæt man þa sawla ne forfare, þe Crist mid his agenum life gebohte.

[...]

3.1. Ac elles geræde man friðlice steora folce to þearfe 7 ne forspille for lytlum Godes handgeweorc 7 his agenne ceap, þe he deore gebohte.

[2. And the decision of our lord and his counsellors is, that innocent Christian people should not be sold out of the country,

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and certainly not to heathen nations: but rather great care should be taken, that those souls should not be lost, which Christ purchased with his own life. [...]

3.1. But on the contrary, merciful judgements should be made for the good of the people; do not destroy for a small offence God's handiwork and his own purchase, which He dearly bought.]<sup>23</sup>

The context of this metaphor in *V Æthelred* is also characteristic: Wulfstan frequently used the language of the 'dear bargain' in discussing the treatment of slaves<sup>24</sup> and overuse of the death penalty,<sup>25</sup> but also referred to it in more general Christian teaching.<sup>26</sup>

Ælfric was also certainly familiar with the image; he used it, for instance, in his homily for St Bartholomew's Day in his First Series of *Catholic Homilies*:

þu ælmihtiga god on þam ðe abraham gelyfde. and isaac and iacob. þu ðe asendest þinne ancennedan sunu. þæt he us alysd mid his deorwurpum blode fram deofles þeowdome. and hæfþ us geworht þe to bearnum;

[Thou almighty God, in whom Abraham believed, and Isaac, and Jacob: thou who sent thine only-begotten Son, so that with his precious blood he might redeem us from the devil's captivity, and has made us thy children.]<sup>27</sup>

This language is found throughout the New Testament, but is perhaps most clearly expressed in the first chapter of I Peter:

18. scientes quod non corruptilibus argento vel auro redempti estis de vana vestra conversatione paternae traditionis, 19. sed pretioso sanguine quasi Agni incontaminati et immaculati Christi, 20. praecogniti quidem ante constitutionem mundi, manifestati autem novissimis temporibus propter vos, 21. qui per ipsum fideles estis in Deum, qui suscitavit eum a mortuis et dedit ei gloriam, ut fides vestra et spes esset in Deum.

[Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers: 19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled, 20. Foreknown indeed before the



foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you,  
21. Who through him are faithful in God, who raised him up from  
the dead, and hath given him glory, that your faith and hope might  
be in God.] (Douay-Rheims Version)<sup>28</sup>

On several levels, this passage is peculiarly appropriate to the scene of Gregory's encounter with the slave-boys. Both figuratively and literally, the Deiran slaves require to be redeemed 'de vana [...] conversatione paternae traditionis'; they are being sold for 'corruptibilibus argento vel auro' but—as Gregory, soon to be pope and apostle in the tradition of Peter, recognizes—on a more profound level they have already been purchased 'pretioso sanguine [...] Agni'. This text, and similar Biblical instances of the metaphor of redemption, are sufficiently relevant—and indeed sufficiently central to the Christian discourse of conversion—that the word *deor* might readily occur to an Anglo-Saxon commenting on, or hearing of, slaves in need of salvation.

Ælfric does not expand on this episode here or elsewhere, so it is impossible to finally confirm whether he was indeed punning on *Dere/deore*. From the evidence of his homily and the corresponding episode in the *Old English Bede*, though, it is clear that the pun on *Deiri/de ira*, relying as it does on a prepositional phrase in Latin, was the most difficult for writers in English to render as it stood in Latin sources on Gregory. After the Anglo-Saxon period, we find the author of the *South English Legendary's* account of Gregory taking bold measures to solve this problem:

Dis holyman faste hom byhuld · an stonde he gan astonde  
He esste wat þe children were · and of wuche londe  
þe marchans sede Engliss hi beoþ · & of Engeland inome  
Such is þe kunde of alle men · þat of þulke londe beoþ icome  
Wel a3te sede þe godeman · þat lond beo god & riche  
þe men beoþ wel Englisse ycluped · for hy beoþ englise iliche  
3if þe lond is such as þe men · name is haþ by ri3te  
Engliss lond it a3te beo · and engliss þer on ali3te  
And suche men a3te in heuene beo · engliss yuere

[This holy man looked at them keenly, and stood astonished; he asked what race the children were, and from which land they came. The merchants said, 'They are English, and taken from England: all men who come from that land are of this sort.' The

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righteous man said, 'Well may that land be excellent and rich; the people are properly named *Engliss*, for they are like angels: if the land is like the people, it bears its name by right—*Engliss* land it deserves to be, and angels to dwell therein; and such men deserve to be the companions of angels in heaven.']<sup>29</sup>

Here, the pun on *Angli/angeli* (easily rendered as *Engliss/englis* in the writer's dialect) stands alone, as the central linguistic element of Gregory's response. Notably, while Gregory's question as to whether the people in their country were Christian or heathen *precedes* the pun in earlier accounts, it immediately follows this passage in the *South English Legendary*. Like Ælfric,<sup>30</sup> the Middle English text has collapsed the place and race of origin of the slaves into the single category of *Engliss*, making unnecessary the second set of questions eliciting the puns. The emphasis placed upon the excellence of England itself, as well as the beauty of its people, is in keeping with the often-noted pro-English sentiments of the *Legendary*.<sup>31</sup> The author's reduction of the narrative to its barest elements reveals his idea of what was most essential to the story: England's merited place in Christendom, and Gregory's affection for the nation. The specificity of earlier versions—the children's origin in Deira under King Ælle<sup>32</sup>—was outside the author's purpose; clearly, what mattered was that Gregory saw that England was 'a lond fol of so vair folk · þat a3te beo engliss vere' [A land full of such fair people, who ought to be the companions of angels].<sup>33</sup>

The episode of Gregory and the Anglian slaves was from the beginning considered a pivotal moment in the history of the English people. Part of its longevity as a narrative must be attributed to the fact that—whether or not it happened—it reflects genuinely-held ideas about the centrality of language to belief.<sup>34</sup> In the story, the still-heathen English names are converted to Christian purposes, as a symbolic proxy for their bearers. When, some centuries later, the English came to translate the story into that very language, the success of Gregory's endeavour might be judged by the ease with which two of his puns, on *Angli/angeli* and *Ælle/alleluia*, could be transferred to the 'baptized' language, enriched as it had been by Christian-Latin vocabulary.<sup>35</sup> When difficulties arose in presenting the bilingual wordplay to monolingual English-speakers, early English translators used a variety of strategies: either by inserting and translating the Latin, as in the case of the author of the *Old English Bede*, or through constructing new wordplay in English, as Ælfric arguably did with *Dere/deore*, and the *Old English Bede* author with *ænlice*. The pared-down version in the

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*South English Legendary*, on the other hand, reveals in its choice of emphasis a large part of the episode's enduring appeal: the story argued for the beauty and importance of the English people—and their language—even in the far-distant heart of Christendom.<sup>36</sup> It is unsurprising, then, that the English should have exerted themselves to present this moment to their countrymen in their own language.<sup>37</sup>

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> That Bede was sceptical about the episode's authenticity is commonly deduced from his attribution of the story to 'tradition'—for instance: 'Haec iuxta opinionem, quam ab antiquis accepimus' [These events, according to the report which we have received from of old: *Historia ecclesiastica* II.i]—and its placement at the *end* of the account of Gregory's life, following his epitaph. Frequently cited on this point is a brief comment by Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 99-129 (p. 124); see also Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 119, and Mechthild Gretsch, 'Ælfric and Gregory the Great', in *Ælfric's Lives of Canonised Popes*, ed. by Donald Scragg, Old English Newsletter Subsidia 30 (Kalamazoo, MI: The Medieval Institute, 2001), pp. 11-54 (pp. 16 and 23).

<sup>2</sup> On the first, see Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, esp. pp. 118-23, and more recently Kathy Lavazzo, 'Another Country: Ælfric and the Production of English Identity', *New Medieval Literatures*, 3 (1999), 67-93. Allen Franzen discusses the Protestant polemicist John Bale's salacious interpretation of the episode in 'Bede and Bawdy Bale: Gregory the Great, Angels, and the "Angli"', in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, ed. by Allen J. Franzen and John D. Niles (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 17-39.

<sup>3</sup> In many, the sequel—in which Gregory begs the pope to be allowed to lead a mission to England, but is prevented from doing so—immediately follows the story.

<sup>4</sup> The age varies between accounts; since in the earliest, the Anonymous of Whitby writes that 'quidam pulchros fuisse pueros dicunt et quidam vero crispas iuvenes et decoros' [some say they were beautiful boys, and some, on the other hand, that they were handsome, curly-haired youths], we must assume that this uncertainty is insoluble. The *South English Legendary* specifies 'swete children þreo' [three sweet children], but the number may be a product of the rhyme.

<sup>5</sup> *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great, by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 90. Unless specified, all translations are my own.

<sup>6</sup> *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), pp. 132-34.

<sup>7</sup> *Vita S. Gregorii*, ch. XV, in Walter Stuhlfath, *Gregor I. der Grosse* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1913), pp. 106-07.

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<sup>8</sup> *Gesta regum Anglorum*, I, 45, in *William of Malmesbury: Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998-99), I, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Thomas Miller, EETS 95, 110, 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1890-98), I, p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> Presuming, that is, that the spellings in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner 10—Miller's base text—reflect the archetype's spellings more or less accurately: the question, however, is far beyond this article's scope.

<sup>12</sup> *OE Bede*, II, pp. 80-81.

<sup>13</sup> It is very possible that this is in fact closest to the archetypal reading; though, if so, it seems somewhat odd that O and B (and indeed T) had such difficulty with it.

<sup>14</sup> The etymology of *Deira* is notoriously obscure, though it is usually considered to be of British derivation. For two recent conjectures, see Andrew Breeze, 'The Origin of the Name *Deira*', *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, 19 (1997), 35-39, and J. G. F. Hind, '*Elmet and Deira*—Forest Names in Yorkshire?', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 28 (1980), 541-52. Breeze suggests a derivation from \**de-uir*, 'brave men', while Hind argues for a source in an earlier form of modern Welsh *deri/deiri*, 'oak grove/forest'. Hind writes of the passage in the *Historia ecclesiastica* that the 'pun, quoted as it is by the Northumbrian Bede, probably indicates that the vowel in *Deira* was a diphthong and not simply a long vowel' (p. 551). There are other possible explanations, however; for instance, if the episode was a literary invention, it is not impossible that the pun was visual, not aural (though this would seem to contradict the hints of Bede and the Anonymous of Whitby that the story circulated orally).

<sup>15</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 48 (1962), 57-90 (pp. 58-59 and esp. n. 10), and M. R. Godden, 'The Sources for Ælfric's Homily on St Gregory', *Anglia* 86 (1968), 79-88 (pp. 85-86); against this, however, see Gretsches, 'Ælfric and Gregory', p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59 and n. 18; also Peter Clemoes, 'Late Old English Literature', in *Tenth-Century Studies*, ed. by David Parsons (London: Phillimore, 1975), pp. 103-14 (p. 105). Clemoes speculates that Ælfric may have known the tale as a schoolroom set text.

<sup>17</sup> *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series: Text*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS s.s. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), no. 9, pp. 72-80 (p. 75).

<sup>18</sup> Alternatively, he may merely have known a version with a reading more like CUL Kk.3.18's *englelice*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS s.s. 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 406.

## Old English Versions of Gregory's Bilingual Puns

<sup>20</sup> For detailed accounts of Ælfric's revision of his own work, see Peter Clemoes, 'History of the Manuscript: Origin and Contemporary Correction and Revision,' in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: Basic Readings*, ed. by Mary P. Richards (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 345-62 (reprinted from the preface to the EEMF facsimile of London, British Library, Royal 7.C.xii); Paul E. Szarmach, 'Ælfric Revises: The Lives of Martin and the Idea of the Author', in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. by Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 38-61; and *Second Series*, pp. xxi-xxiv.

<sup>21</sup> Godden's X<sup>c</sup>, Cotton Faustina A.x, a short excerpt in 'a twelfth-century hand' (*Second Series*, p. lv: the text, damaged by binders, is printed in the textual notes on p. 74). Note, however, that this is Ælfric's version: there is no evidence for the separate circulation of this episode from the *Old English Bede*.

<sup>22</sup> *Second Series*, p. 72: '[...] seo foresæde boc (i.e. 'historia anglorum ða ðe Ælfrid cýning of ledene on englisc awende') nis eow eallum cuð' [this aforesaid book (i.e., the *Historia anglorum*, which King Alfred translated from Latin into English), is not known to all of you].

<sup>23</sup> *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by F. Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903-16), I, p. 238.

<sup>24</sup> See also, e.g., the *Sermo Lupi*, in *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), no. XX<sup>c</sup>, p. 270, ll. 90-1, and *II Cnut* §3 (*Gesetze*, p. 310).

<sup>25</sup> See *VI Æthelred* §10.1 and *II Cnut* §2.1 (*Gesetze*, pp. 250 and 309-10).

<sup>26</sup> See his *Sermo in .XL.*, in *Homilies*, ed. by Bethurum, no. XIV, p. 234, ll. 42-43; *I Cnut* §18.3 (*Gesetze*, p. 300) and *Institutes of Polity*, 'Be eallum cristenum mannum' (*Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical'*, ed. by Karl Jost, Schweizer anglistische Arbeiten 47 (Bern: Francke, 1959), pp. 156-57).

<sup>27</sup> *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series: Text*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 445. The insertion of *deorwurde* here seems to have been an innovation of Ælfric's (cf. the passage from the *Passio Bartholomei* in Godden, *Introduction*, p. 262). In Ælfric's *Glossary*, *deorwurde* is listed as the equivalent of Latin *pretiosus*: see *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, ed. by Julius Zupitza (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1880), p. 320.

<sup>28</sup> I Peter 1:18-21.

<sup>29</sup> *The South English Legendary*, ed. by Charlotte d'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, EETS 235-36, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), I, pp. 81-82 (lines 23-31).

<sup>30</sup> In the first half of the episode, where Bede has the merchants tell Gregory that the boys are *de Britannia insula* (*OE Bede: of Breotone ealonde*), Ælfric has *of engla lande*; as Godden notes, 'Ælfric's *engla* rather spoils the point of the [following] question and answer' (*Introduction*, p. 406). Whether this similarity indicates that the *SE Legendary* has used—and

improved on—Ælfric's text is unclear—but note the correspondence of *engliss yuere* with *engla geferan*, neither of which is an exact translation of *angelorum* [...] *coheredes*.

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, Jill Frederick, 'The *South English Legendary*: Anglo-Saxon Saints and National Identity', in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 29 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 57-73, and Klaus P. Jankofsky, 'National Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 81-93.

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, however, Ælle's part in the conversion story was not forgotten, and attracted a set of stories to his name in the later Middle Ages: see John Frankis, 'King Ælle and the Conversion of the English: the Development of a Legend from Bede to Chaucer', in *Literary Appropriations*, pp. 74-92.

<sup>33</sup> *South English Legendary* I, p. 82 (line 36).

<sup>34</sup> See, for instance, Kees Dekker, 'Pentecost and Linguistic Self-Consciousness in Anglo-Saxon England: Bede and Ælfric', *JEGP* 104 (2005), 345-72, esp. p. 351: 'Gregory's initiative [...] should be seen in the light of the prophecy of Pentecost'. See also Robert Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), esp. pp. 65-66, and Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, pp. 118-23.

<sup>35</sup> In the course of his examination of why *England* and *English* came to designate the nation and its language even under Saxon domination, Wormald argues for the historical impact of this very pun, both in Latin, and, later, English: see 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas*, and the Origins', pp. 124-29.

<sup>36</sup> See Lavezzo, 'Another Country', for arguments on Ælfric's perception of this.

<sup>37</sup> I am indebted for the inspiration for this article to the members of Paul Szarmach's 2006 NEH Summer Seminar on Holy Men and Holy Women in Anglo-Saxon England: most especially to Stephen Stallcup.